An exploration of Family Learning with particular focus on the perspective of the father

Submitted by Julie Passey to the University of Exeter as a thesis for the degree of *Doctor of Education* (Generic Route)

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Abstract

What is the nature and purpose of Family Learning? The discourses relating to how a strong home-school relationship affects attitudes to Lifelong Learning and the impact of paternal involvement in young children's development have been well researched and document clear links and positive, enduring benefits for families and professionals. In spite, or perhaps because of this focus, the means by which these connections are achieved and maintained remains less well explored. The issues that need addressing now are more tangible challenges, such as: what does good practice look like, who decides which notions are consolidated, when and why?

Coupled with questions such as how do we get more fathers more involved and what will enable these relationships to flourish, this research reports on the initial findings from a small-scale exploratory inquiry, conducted as part of a professional doctorate, which considers a possible approach to these issues. It is an illuminative case study, located within an interpretive research paradigm, based on ontological assumptions of empowerment and emancipation for participants. A sociocultural epistemology informs and frames the work. The study sets out to explore the value and potential of Family Learning as a means of focused intervention in response to the questions raised, whilst also examining and increasing awareness of the issues involved, as seen by participants, to facilitate the expression of paternal agency and voice within the research process.

The data collection, conducted over a period of six months, focuses on an existing Fathers' Group, as they participate in a Family Learning project. It seeks to establish the nature and purpose of this type of provision, by clarifying the processes, outcomes and determinants of involvement through the eyes of the fathers, as they define and ultimately come to terms with their own identity and roles, in relation to their young children's development. The research centres on two workshops supported by several participant-led focus meetings. Two semi-structured staff interviews offer insight into the role that both

professional and personal cultural and historical understandings of Family Learning play in the process, whilst the data analysis illuminates and describes the relationships between parents and practitioners, policy and pedagogy.

The research observations could be used to inform approaches to both the establishment and the development of individual, personalised family frameworks for Lifelong Learning. The findings may also contribute towards a fresh perspective and offer creative approaches for professionals, in which pedagogical practice is not pre-determined but constantly evolving, on an equal and collaborative basis, between professionals and participants. This study offers a critical examination of grassroots Family Learning in practice. It is firmly embedded within and responsive to the needs of its local community. It aims to provide independent evidence to reinforce and extend the current knowledge base and ultimately, to maintain, strengthen and expand the connections between Family and Lifelong Learning.

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Acknowledgements

This research study has taken me down a very long, winding road. I am especially grateful for the company of four fellow travellers, Karen, Fran, Soph and Mo, whose humour and common sense helped me fly kites and slay dragons en-route.

Importantly, without the help of three map makers, I would have turned back at the first crossroads: My stepson Rob, whose personal story inspired me to begin the journey. My brother Daniel, whose outlook on life showed me one of the core purposes of education and persuaded me to take the road less travelled. My daughter Steph, whose patience and calm approach helped make sense of the technological signposts when I lost my way so close to the final destination.

This work is dedicated to my husband David, who despite not comprehending a single milestone, cheered me on every step of the journey, encouraged me to complete the adventure and best of all, welcomed me home at the end.

1. Introduction / background

The purpose of this study is to explore Family Learning from a paternal perspective. It is a study of the nature and process of involvement of fathers in their children's learning. It incorporates issues such as how to get more fathers more involved and what would enable those relationships to flourish. The study considers the value and potential of Family Learning through questions such as what does good practice look like, who decides which notions are consolidated, when and why? The research examined what happened when a group of fathers and their young children accessed a Wider Family Learning project. It sought to capture the essence of what made it special, looking at the project from the perspective of a group of users rather than from the position of a provider of the service. Gaining a deeper insight into the processes, outcomes and determinants of involvement could contribute to the understanding and development of professional practice in this important area.

Many recent study findings implicate families as having a greater influence on their children's development than schools. However, engaging parents, particularly fathers, presents issues on several levels. This layering of contexts has been referred to (Bronfennbrenner 1979) as necessitating close co-operation between all professionals and parents, for the benefit of the child's individual development. As Brookfield stated:

> Many of these approaches can be adapted to help us focus on how
> considerations of power permeate educational process. They also help
> us to detect the presence of hegemonic assumptions that are embedded
> in the way we think about and practice teaching (1995 p218).

Because emerging discourses emphasise the need to value more than the visible and tangible, this research takes a reflexive approach (Brookfield 1995). It is therefore informed by a review of research and professional practice literature, my autobiographical experiences as a Family Learning practitioner and researcher, the fathers' perspectives and input from the staff involved in the project. My aim is to consider both the nature and purpose of Family Learning

and the factors that could be influential in motivating and enabling more fathers to be involved, through an investigation of a range of practical Family Learning activities, which may also offer effective approaches to support parent – professional relationships and promote Lifelong Learning (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Research Overview

An exploration of Family Learning, from a father's perspective.

Key Issues
- How is Family Learning defined in terms of Lifelong Learning?
- How does it affect parent-professional relationships?

Literature
- Desforges, Abouchaar
- Lamb, Macleod
- Vygotsky, Dewey
- Bastiani, Goldman
- Flouri, Buchanan
- Bertram, Crozier

What are the factors that motivate paternal involvement?

Initial question

What is the nature and purpose of Family Learning?

Does inter generational learning impact on individual attitudes to Lifelong Learning?

Methodology
- Interpretive case study
- Sociocultural theory

Data Collection Methods

Questionnaires

Interviews

Observations

My research questions are:

- Does Family Learning constitute part of the parental frame of reference for local fathers?
- What are the factors that motivate paternal involvement?
- What are the processes, outcomes and determinants of involvement, in particular with reference to the culture of parent-professional relations and attitudes towards Lifelong Learning?

- What opportunities arise for intergenerational learning within the Family Learning context?

The study employs questionnaires, interviews and observations to investigate these issues. However, having considered the context for the work, I acknowledge that the entire concept is beset by differences in priorities, perceptions, definitions and structural issues. It requires a research approach based on mutual understanding and the recognition that families are heterogeneous and diverse and cannot be regarded as an homogeneous group. This search for cultural pluralism, in itself complex, lies within a constantly evolving educational landscape, affected by many factors, or 'layers of influence' (Crozier 2000) and dependent on each individual's sense of agency. I recognise that to contextualise my work within a simple triadic partnership, in which schools, communities and families work together, in a mutually trusting and open relationship, is both over simplistic and unrealistic.

1.1 Rationale / context

a) Current policy

The policy agendas of both Family and Lifelong Learning in the currently shifting political climate are still very uncertain. One area that is becoming clearer is the fact that local integration is a key theme of British educational policy. The government is currently in the process of moving towards focusing resources on local-level agencies such as schools, communities and local authorities, to direct resource flows that support the education and development of individuals. These agencies, in turn, are dependent on practitioners working closely with recipients of public services, to ensure that directives and objectives agreed at higher levels are met, that the appropriate services are provided at the point and time of need and that interventions and interactions are of sufficient quality to enhance service users' development and learning.

Current government policy involves a raft of initiatives including several that could be considered relevant to Family Learning. This is because Family

Learning contributes to a range of national, regional, and local strategies, including widening participation, social regeneration and parental engagement. Furthermore, Wider Family Learning helps parents to encourage their children to achieve and gives families the confidence to go on learning. The government has also suggested that Family Learning programmes can support the development of the Big Society, by strengthening family relationships and supporting individual growth. (www.bis.gov.uk/policies 2/12/2011).

Family Learning is one of the programmes funded to date through the £210m per year Adult Safeguarded Learning Fund. This research study was supported by the Department for Education and the Department for Business Innovation and Skills through the Family Learning Impact Fund (FLIF) 2008 – 11. FLIF followed on from the Children's Plan to 'involve parents fully in their child's learning' (2007 p3). This placed the role of parents in the academic and social development of children, as a core dimension of social policy, with a particular emphasis on grass roots reform.

The aim of this specific FLIF programme was to widen the opportunities for Family Learning and increase take-up, progression and achievement amongst disadvantaged groups. It targeted families most at risk, through the delivery of high quality learning opportunities for both the parents and children. This particular research study contributed towards the overall success of FLIF, which achieved the engagement of over 26,000 families during the first two years of the programme.

The study focused on a strand of the FLIF programme which explored effective strategies to engage fathers, through a range of partnerships developed between providers, schools and children's centres. It followed the FLIF recommended framework for an Early Years course for fathers of pre-school children, which aimed to help parents identify and address their own literacy and learning needs, while finding out about the Early Years Foundation Stage and their role in their children's learning and development.

Government targeted intervention strategies also indicated several additional key issues. Many of these were comprehensively collated within the Allen

Review (2011). This argued the case for governmental cross-party co-ordination to redress the current imbalance, which favours the more expensive and less effective approach of later interventions. It listed nineteen early intervention programmes focused mainly on 0 – 3 year olds and their parents, to build resilience and tackle the underlying social and emotional causes of five year olds being unready for school:

> What parents do is more important than who they are. Especially in a child's earliest years, the right kind of parenting is a bigger influence on their future than wealth, class, education or any other common social factor (Allen 2011 p.xiv).

The programmes recommended by Allen included:

- **Breakthrough to Literacy**, an integrated literacy and language programme published by the Wright Group, which aimed to promote language development and literacy skills to preschool children.
- **Let's Begin with the Letter People**, which developed early language and literacy by learning through play and contained a strong home/parent focus.
- **Ready, Set, Leap**, a comprehensive preschool curriculum, which used multisensory technology and research-based instructional approaches.
- **Incredible Years**, which targeted both the parents of children, aged 0-12 with behavioural issues and those at risk of living in poverty. Based on social learning theory it promoted social competence, to reduce emotional problems in young people.
- **Curiosity Corner,** a comprehensive cognitive-development programme, developed by the Success for All Foundation, intended to expand the attitudes, skills and knowledge necessary for later school success, with an emphasis on children's language and literacy skills.
- **Parents as Teachers**, a programme to provide both early detection of developmental delays and health issues and parent education, to help parents understand their role in encouraging their child's development.
- **Triple P**, which aimed to prevent severe behavioural, emotional, and developmental problems in children, by enhancing the knowledge, skills and confidence of parents.

- **Early Literacy and Learning Model**, a curriculum and support system aimed at young children from low-income families, focusing on their early literacy skills and knowledge.

The Allen Review also highlighted the wider social and economic benefits of early intervention programmes and recommended the setting up of an independently funded foundation to carry forward the initiatives.

For the purpose of this research study it is also important to recognise the role and focus of children's centres within this context and particularly in relation to the Family Learning agenda. It is the general policy in the children's centre in which I conduct the research, for staff to work initially with parents. The rationale behind this is to develop trust and confidence, before the professionals can support the parents in helping their children. This approach employs practical strategies aimed specifically at engaging, consulting, valuing, informing and enthusing parents. The fundamental belief, from the staff perspective, is that children expect adults to be interested in what they are doing, demonstrating this interest by joining in, rather than leading on to the next step. As is evidenced in this study, fathers are often particularly skilled in this approach. Including their voices facilitates an understanding of how their personal explanations of the strategies they have implemented play a part in translating good ideas into effective actions. In summary then, as Bertram & Pascal noted:

> In all this, it is important to say that early childhood services are not a women's issue but a societal one and that the education and care of young children should concern us all. But more important than this is the focus on the child, and the child's right to a happy, fulfilling childhood, not as a preparation for something that follows but simply as childhood (2002 p33).

b) Contribution to knowledge / relevance of the topic

Current Family Learning literature raises a number of issues around intergenerational learning and the notion that family life provides a context and basis for all learning. The importance of cultural contexts in early learning is therefore a relevant focus for this study, since Family Learning is seen in terms of young children's development as a vital link to the outside world and

consequent social inclusion. Additionally, the literature review revealed the way in which the contested nature of Family Learning requires a research framework which supports a programme of well-researched developments on parental involvement for children's achievement. The aim of this study is to contribute to this by focusing the research on an established group of fathers with very young children, since the positive impact of paternal involvement in children's learning is already well documented.

In addition to this, the results of the study demonstrate the potential for experimenting with and making sense of innovative ideas. These emerge as a result of the facility within Wider Family Learning to provide the space and opportunities to try different practices. This concurs with Desforges and Abouchar (2003), who advocated a holistic approach to tackling what they described as a multidimensional challenge. For example, current agendas such as the Children & Families Bill (2011) demonstrate a national move from a closed to a more open market economy, as local councils seek alternative ways to reach vulnerable and minority groups. This creates new opportunities for professional Family Learning frameworks and explains why the theoretical concepts underpinning the study will mainly focus on interactions between the Family Learning process, context and participating individuals.

In summary, the literature review revealed a range of approaches to Family Learning. It also expanded the sociocultural context of the study, by highlighting the rapidly evolving roles of parents within the current economic and political climate. This emphasised the relevance of this study, in terms of the processes of paternal involvement in young children's learning and the significant relationships, indicated by the literature, between fathers' involvement in children's education and children's achievement. Above all, this study's focus on the wider implication of proactive parental involvement, particularly the role of fathers in Family Learning, also takes into account the growth of importance of fathers in family care.

Furthermore, existing literature explores the power relations and individual agendas within Family Learning, with a particular focus on the tension between the needs of individuals and the needs of government. There appears to remain

little consideration by policy makers for the relationship between parents and professionals and above all, few research studies into the potential influences on parental involvement. However, some research does emphasise the importance of a cognitively rich home environment in the likelihood of active parental engagement in children's education.

Continuing on this theme, the available literature revealed how the culture and concepts of a Family Learning environment affect parent - professional relations.

It pinpointed parental support as paramount to children's achievement, since the family is the initial source through which, together, individuals build and develop a social and cultural repertoire. Furthermore, research suggests that Family Learning may have an impact on learning disadvantage, since it is a contributing factor in breaking cycles of low achievement. This study explores correlations between paternal interest in a child's development and salient role in parent - professional relations. It seeks to contribute to the existing work into opportunities for parental participation in their children's education. The resulting potential cultural mismatches also create barriers, which this study will consider, alongside the challenges of finding appropriate organisational systems to establish the parent - professional concept.

The notion that Family Learning serves as a stimulus to developing a culture of Lifelong Learning amongst adults and children is a recurring theme within the literature. This study considers the issues surrounding the two main discourses evident in the literature, which differentiate between 'education' and 'learning.' In particular, this study will highlight the fact that many Family Learning researchers believe the government perspective, which centralises Lifelong Learning within the economy, perceives learners as passive recipients. As a consequence, the funding balance focuses on provision that supports the achievement of national targets and this study considers the implications of this from the participants' perspective. In this way, it also contributes to the discussion on the value of the learner's voice, placing individuals as central to the learning process in making it relevant to their social and cultural environment and experience.

A further sociocultural strand is contributed to this study by the literature surrounding the distinct and complementary roles of mothers and fathers. The difficulties of involving fathers in Family Learning have been well researched. Yet evidence suggests that fostering fathers' involvement could play a vital role in protecting children from low educational achievement. A critical analysis of the available literature raised several issues around the factors that motivate paternal involvement. For example, the literature suggested that whilst the majority of fathers were involved in their children's early learning, their contribution was often invisible and under-estimated. By focusing on an already established group of fathers with young children, this study intends to explore these issues further.

The available literatures into factors that motivate paternal involvement are therefore particularly relevant to this study. These include theories of masculinity, the impact of fathers on outcomes for their children and the effects of paternal involvement on early learning. The findings of the research review demonstrated that involvement and interest in children's learning is fundamental to many fathers. However, the links between gender, family structure and educational outcomes were also highlighted. Furthermore, the literature emphasised the powerful impact of their involvement on children's emotional, cognitive and social development and made links to paternal involvement as being associated with educational and occupational mobility, an issue which also arose in the study.

By exposing the participants to an unfamiliar experience, whilst providing a safe space in which to explore alternative solutions, this study challenges the more recognised top-down approach to the provision. It facilitates cultural congruence, by working with and through thresholds, to create new experience. It could therefore inform the development of guidance for professional practitioners and offer evidence – based contribution to policy development. However, throughout the course of this research, one fundamental issue emerges. I experience the conflict of attempting to balance and evaluate two significantly different perspectives, in terms of theoretical understanding and practical experiences. This arises through being embedded within a particular

culture, underpinned by a specific professional language and working practices that, at times, can appear derogatory or misleading, within the context of the research. It therefore raises personal and ethical challenges, in terms of the need to re-examine individual concepts and re-visit particular pre-conceived beliefs.

The study is also intended to be relevant to a wide audience, including colleagues and other professionals, families and local communities, funders, providers and policy makers. It is therefore vital to acknowledge the potential difficulties this conflict of interest presents, both in my working life and my academic studies. On a positive note, the process of coming to terms with this issue pinpoints a turning point in my professional practice, capturing a culturally transitional moment that enables me to clarify my work and re-focus my perspective. Whilst re-emphasising the underpinning qualities of Family Learning that originally attracted me to the research, it encourages me to re-evaluate much that I thought I knew. This reflexive activity also serves as a personally useful reminder that this research study does not set out with the aim of achieving change, but of contributing to understanding.

c) Personal interest

Reflecting on my own biography emphasises what draws me to researching Family Learning. I initially qualified as a Montessori nursery teacher in the mid-1980s. Following ten years in Early Years settings, I retrained to work with adults, although I retained my interest in Early Years developments through a Masters degree, which focused on the importance of environmental context in young children's learning. I have spent the last fifteen years in a range of Further, Higher and Community Education contexts. Working within both the English and Welsh educational systems has also provided me with a valuable overview of the differing political agendas that affect every area of both my professional background and personal experience.

The main aim of this research is to explore the nature and purpose of Family Learning from a paternal perspective. Several models have been developed to categorise the variety of Family Learning provision available (Alexander and

Clyne 1995). My personal experience is based on the Buffton model (1999), which encompasses a range and focus of provision, from child centred to adult targeted programmes. Practical examples from my professional practice include:

- **Workers Educational Association (WEA) New Opportunities for Women**, based in community settings, which focuses on issues that concern families, but does not set out to monitor the involvement of families in any process of learning or change.
- **Adult Learner's Week tasters and Preparation for School courses**, based in children's centres, which provide opportunities for two or more members of a family to learn separately about a common topic.
- **Curiosity Kits, SHARE and Computer Workshops** based in primary schools, which offer the chance for two or more members of a family to become involved in learning about a common topic together and also model, recognise and value that joint achievement.
- **Basic Skills Agency Family Literacy and Numeracy projects**, such as *Keeping Up with The Children,* based in secondary schools, which progress the family, following the initial learning opportunity.

I was also involved in The Park Learning Project, in Gloucestershire, which

> ...involved parents and children, from birth through to seven years, in a
> co-operative effort to help parents take a full part in the education of
> their children and to assist children in reaching their potential as learners
> (Ofsted 2000 p14).

and the 2001 Working Group that developed Gloucestershire County Council's definition of their Family Learning programmes. This research, led by Kay Rhodes, of Stroud College, on behalf of Gloucestershire's Adult Continuing Education and Training Service, developed five models of Family Learning, one in particular of which emphasised Family Learning as an intergenerational, process -oriented theory. This aimed to clarify the intentions of the concept, from the perspective of professional practitioners working directly with families.

This contextual grounding has proved important in enabling me to recognise that the interests of professionals and parents in children's educational

development are not necessarily identical. I am interested in exploring: 'how more effective partnership with parents in children's learning might be achieved' (Bertram & Pascal, 2002 pi) through the consideration of the ways in which Family Learning provides a link between formal and informal learning. In support of this, the Skills Funding Agency's Family Programmes Guidance for 2011/12 includes recommendations based on the findings of FLIF, of which this study was part. It emphasises the relevance of socio-cultural issues in highlighting the fact that of the 13,290 participants on FLIF programmes during 2009/10, 48% were considered to be from a disadvantaged background. 2,850 learners were followed up 12 - 18 months after participating in a (FLIF) course. Data captured from paper returns in 2008/9 and Independent Learner Reviews in 2009/10, suggested 88% had progressed in some way after participating on a FLIF course. In addition, 65% had progressed in terms of their learning or employment and 78% in their social and personal lives. Although the sample size is small and outcomes were self-reported, this may be balanced by participants who had not progressed at this point who may also continue to progress at a later stage.

(http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+/http://www.bis.gov.uk/policies/further-education-skills/learners/informal-adult-learning/ical-evidence-base/supporting-families accessed 24/11/2012).

The view that social background is an important factor in explaining underachievement is a key tenet of Family Learning, which embodies the fundamental principles that adults and children learn best through personal, first hand experiences and that young children learn most from their immediate environment. From this perspective, Family Learning may have a significant role to play in providing opportunities for professionals' and parents' social and cultural identities to evolve and develop over time, preparing both for future educational expectations. For this reason, this case study articulates an exploration of sociocultural issues that demonstrate how experience can affect behaviour. Understanding the values and priorities behind these culturally-based social interactions may offer insight into the outcomes of Family Learning in terms of parent - professional relations and the relevance of Lifelong Learning to individual lives.

In addition, I acknowledge that this study is just one view of a complex and challenging area. Whilst recognising the range of family structures now evident in society, the evidence from a father's perspective of involvement in their young children's development appears to remain less well documented. This is particularly so in terms of positive interpersonal communications and relationships. This small- scale interpretive case study aims to highlight some of the tensions between the vision and the perception of reality, by focusing on the processes involved within a specific Family Learning project. It seeks to hear the fathers' voices, recognise their cultural perspectives and understand their norms and values. From a researcher position of intention to give voice to a marginalised group, through the course of the study, by adapting to the concepts that emerge, I gain insight into the perspective of the fathers. This later proves the catalyst that moves my perception of the research from being a narrative of a vulnerable minority group, in current societal terms, to a case study of a strongly cohesive and potentially influential element of contemporary society.

1.2 Overview of thesis

This chapter introduced the research topic of Family Learning and provided the context and purpose for the study. It then examined the rationale behind the research from three perspectives. First, in terms of the current government policy and initiatives. Next, by considering the study relevance in expanding the available Family Learning literature. Finally, it offered an insight into researcher positionality, based on my personal interest and professional experience in Wider Family Learning.

Chapter two opens by recognising the contested nature and underlying challenges of researching Family Learning. It then proceeds to link the key theoretical models to the core definitions of Family Learning. These are summarised chronologically, to establish the existing knowledge in the field. The main contemporary approaches are then critically analysed, to identify their relevant features. At this stage of the review, the perspective is widened to address the salient features of other parenting programmes. This is followed by a consideration of the sociocultural context of the study. The focus for this will

include the significance of masculinity theories and the evolution of parenting roles within modern society. To close, the relevant literature concerning the parent – professional relationship in young children's learning is evaluated. This is with particular reference to the impact of paternal involvement and the potential issues this presents.

Chapter three considers the research design and rationale for the study. The methodological context and the theoretical approach underpinning this are addressed. A framework for data collection is included with descriptions of the participants, materials, procedures and timetable for the research. The plans for the data analysis are outlined and the chapter concludes with a summary of the key ethical issues involved.

Chapter four opens with a description of an early research encounter within the project. It is then organised by data source. A worked example of the analysis process is provided for each, to demonstrate how the identified themes link into the conceptual framework. The evidence from each data set is then related to the key findings and the data sources synthesised to bring together salient connectives.

Chapter five offers a critical interpretation and discussion of the findings, summarising these in relation to each research question. It provides a consideration of the key strengths and issues of the work and situates the research within the current theoretical and professional contexts. Finally, it offers a reflection and evaluation of the research process, clarifying the significance of the research in terms of its specific contribution to the field of Family Learning and highlighting the potential avenues for future study.

2. Review of Literature

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to review the literature relevant to this research, to indicate where my study contributes to the field and to provide a conceptual framework for the research. I intend to conduct a critical examination of the key literature, grouping, analysing and evaluating existing approaches. For the purpose of this research, I use Murdock's (1995) anthropological definition of a family as:

> a social group characterised by common residence, economic co-operation and reproduction. It includes adults of both sexes and one or more children, own or adopted (cited in Parkin 1997 p47).

Chapter 2 begins by recognising the challenges researching Family Learning presents. Next it identifies the theoretical models addressed. These are then set against the existing approaches to Family Learning and summarised chronologically to relate the subject matter of the research to the existing body of knowledge in the field. The main contemporary models are critically analysed and evaluated to identify key features and the perspective is widened to incorporate the saliences, similarities and differences of other parenting programmes. This is followed by a consideration of the sociocultural context of the study, including the significance of theories of masculinity and the evolution of parenting roles. Finally, literature concerning the parent- professional relationship in young children's learning is addressed, with particular reference to the impact of paternal involvement. The chapter closes with a consideration of the review to demonstrate potential gaps in the literature and the implications of the findings for this research, in order to locate this thesis within the field of Family Learning. It also aims to explicitly evidence and emphasise the originality of this study and therefore the potential to contribute to existing knowledge, whilst acknowledging the contested nature of Family Learning.

Initially, my interest in Family Learning is broad and consists mainly of a consideration of the conceptual framework, in terms of preparing for economic viability, increased academic success and improved personal and social outcomes. However, this focus narrows considerably, in the early stages of the review, as several themes emerge through the literature. They distil into four main strands, which later inform the research questions. Firstly, the opportunities that arise for an exploration into the processes and outcomes of involvement in Family Learning. Secondly, since most studies focus on parents, or mothers, the factors that motivate paternal involvement are relevant to this particular study, both as recurring themes within the literature and since they are dominant issues within the project I have the opportunity to research. Thirdly, how the culture and concepts of a Family Learning environment affect parent - professional relations. Finally, the notion that Family Learning serves as a stimulus to developing a culture of Lifelong Learning amongst adults and children (National Institute for Adult Continuing Education, 2004).

An on-going criticism of current government policy, in relation to parental involvement in children's education, is that it tends to favour a single model of white middle class family values as the societal norm (Lareau 2003). Not recognising the cultural diversity of contemporary British family life can result in variations in parenting practice being viewed as deficit models, with little consideration for their potential contributions. There appears to be a current lack of research that explores this, particularly from the perspective of fathers and their young children and my exploration of Family Learning seems to offer an ideal opportunity to investigate these issues further.

Moreover, Family Learning is a shared endeavour between the government, communities and families, all of whom have contrasting views on its value and future direction. This creates a powerful discourse, over whose purposes, intentions, agendas and freedoms should be considered and I again argue that it offers the potential opportunity for the implementation of a research study to explore these issues. In determining a rationale for the research, understanding the functions and purposes of these opposing intentions is fundamental to the work, since the current pivotal situation, in terms of the balance between community, government and parental perceptions of education provision and

individual rights and responsibilities, has significant implications for future policy and practice.

The complex notion of Lifelong Learning is relevant to this research as it is a major recurring theme in references to the core purpose of Family Learning. I found examples of different intentions and agendas within the interpretations and definitions of this concept. A range of researchers (Ranson 2000, Jarvis 2006, Crowther 2004) saw Lifelong Learning as being connected to individual lifestyle, in terms of a range of informal learning, mostly non-vocational and unmeasured, that were an extension of learning beyond formal education. Jarvis, in particular, also advocated examining the existential nature of experience in any given learning situation, through recognising the importance of learner involvement. Much of the theoretical framework that underpins Family Learning is based on these concepts, yet it appears to remain an under - investigated area, particularly in terms of the small-scale, interpretive, case study research I intend to conduct.

2.2 Challenges

Contemporary pedagogies tend to be in direct contrast to the previously upheld views that distinct boundaries should be maintained between public (formal) education and family (informal) practices. From passive recipients to auditors of the services provided, the role and expectations of parents in education has altered dramatically since the introduction of the Parents Charter in1991. Issues therefore arise because educational professionals and families operate within very different systems, which can cause fundamental difficulties of differential power and conflicting views of the child's needs (Horvat et al 2003). Examining these issues from the perspective of fathers, using a small-scale case study, will add their voice to the debate.

One of the main features of the Family Learning curriculum, that it encompasses a broad range of activities, might create the biggest difficulty in implementing this type of research. This is due to the potential social divisions and logistical challenges that encouraging a diversity of curriculum might create in classroom and institutional management. At the same time, I aim to

acknowledge the complexity of the processes of interaction between children, adults and their environmental contexts and anticipate the most likely principal effects as being interactions between process, person, context and time (Bronfenbrenner 1979). Using this as a theoretical framework to study the interactions that support, sustain, or hinder Family Learning, may offer clarity in creating a more accurate picture of progress.

Because one of the main purposes of this research is to contribute to understanding within professional policy and practice, the search strategy requires a needs-driven, specific focus on local and national policy documents. Examining these documents enables a consideration of the specific outcomes required and how to develop these within the relevant political, social and historical contexts. For example, extensive structural changes to families have occurred over the last half-century, generating a broad range of documents addressing the resulting issues. I intend to limit my consideration of these directly in relation to how and what families learn through formal Family Learning. I therefore developed a list of terms, which I used to search the DfES, Ofsted and NIACE websites for government papers, research reports and local policy documents. This included the following terms: '*Family Learning', 'Lifelong Learning', 'family literacy', 'parent-professional', 'paternal involvement' and 'fathers and child development'*. The databases I used included the British Education Index and ERIC.I also accessed the University of Exeter electronic journals via the E-Library system. The major policies reviewed included Every Child Matters, the 2004 Children Act, The Children's Plan, the Children Schools and Families Act 2010 and the Think Family initiative, which highlighted the continuing relevance of Family Learning:

> Significant economic, social and demographic changes seen in recent decades have had a pronounced effect on family forms, family life and public attitudes... in 2008 64 per cent of children were living in families with married couples,13 per cent with co-habiting couples and 23 per cent with a lone parent (Families and Relationships, 2010 p5).

Synthesising these findings informed and refined the research questions and also supported the conceptual framework for the study. Throughout this, I retained the overall intention of conducting an investigation into the nature and purpose of Family Learning. This was interpreted by the themes of the

opportunities, processes and outcomes of involvement in intergenerational learning, parent-professional relations, Lifelong Learning and determinants for paternal participation, which emerged and remained dominant over the course of the literature review.

2.3 Official approaches to Family Learning

a) Summary of definitions and theoretical models

Within my professional development I have witnessed 3 phases of the history of Family Learning. Many early Family Learning programmes reflected the concept that families are the main context of learning for most individuals, being more lasting and influential than any other form (Alexander & Clyne 1995). However, far-reaching educational reforms over the last three decades have repositioned parents and professionals in relation to each other and the education of children. There now follows a review of each phase, showing how a variety of approaches reflect contrasting understandings, for example within different government agendas. I will also attempt to widen the perspective by considering saliences and similarities of a range of Family Learning models.

i)   **1980 -1996**

In the early eighties, Raven (1980) highlighted the view that few schools knew how to individualise curriculum to create the type of developmental environments most parents model for their children, offering potential as partners in a collaborative approach to curriculum design. Raven suggested that effective schools, which built on individual talents, should reflect effective parents, not vice versa. This research also stated that policy makers must address the complex issues of professionals transmitting their own values to children and find ways for schools to accept alternative values in public education by collaborating with families to understand and respect their values and practices. The 1988 Education Reform Act continued this theme, since it manifested the desire to equalise educational opportunities in the face of social

and gender discriminating forces within both school and the community. This accords with the notion that values are often based on social class:

> Different people confer quite different benefits on society. It is therefore in society's interests to develop the talents of all of them…
> Unfortunately, the notion that public provision should cater for different people in different ways is a heresy which, even if entertained, is regarded as dangerous (Raven, cited in Macleod 1989 p85 & 87).

Over the years, governments trialled a multitude of approaches to developing and maximising children's potential, in partnership with schools and communities. Yet studies indicating the significance of family background on educational achievement (Coleman & Huffer 1987) suggested it had more impact than many school - based factors. Craft, Raynor & Cohen effectively summarised this dilemma:

> Some have argued that the relatively modest short – term benefits of compensatory programmes suggest that we need to look to the home rather than to the school, if we are to make any real headway in overcoming educational disadvantage. A less extreme view has proposed that the regional allocation of educational resources is where our scale of priorities and the distribution of power really counts. Others have argued a less 'macro and more micro' view. It is the school, they suggest, which is the crucial agency, both in the way it defines what is acceptable language, behaviour and knowledge, and in the way it groups children or uses other more subtle means of engendering differential responses; for all such strategies lead to the designation of many working-class children as educationally inept (1980 p x).

In 1988, Bastiani called for more research into schools' parent participation policies and advocated exploratory, survey and information-gathering techniques focused around parents' and professionals' attitudes and aspirations. The aim of Bastiani's work was to establish concrete suggestions as to how links could be fostered and recommended forms of accountability, roles and the contribution of Local Education Authorities and support services. However, the research concluded that the challenge to establishing the parent - professional concept was in finding appropriate organisational systems and demands training for professionals in working with parents.

In support of this notion that family life provides a context and basis for all learning, Bourdieu (1990) argued that parents could provide children with the relevant cultural capital, attitudes and knowledge that made education familiar

and achievable. Furthermore, I would suggest that Family Learning can be viewed as a social vehicle that creates a purposeful and on-going exchange of resources and learning among older and younger generations. This links to the way that children's early understanding of literacy is learned socially and culturally within their family and community, and the types of literacy experience children encounter differ according to families' social and cultural practices (Heath 1983, Taylor 1983, Taylor & Dorsey-Gaines 1988).

Lareau's (1989) 'Unequal Childhoods' research focused on major differences in parenting styles related to class distinctions, from 'concerted cultivation,' which she defined as middle class child rearing practices, to the more 'natural growth' practices of a working class model. She observed how these influenced children's performance and interactions at school and home and suggested that these variations in cultural practices were what perpetuated the cycle of disadvantage.

Furthermore, the promotion and acquisition of the 'curriculum of the home,' (Redding 1992) is relevant to the parent – professional relationship, in terms of the development of habits and attitudes that support a child through school, positive personal skills and attitudes, aspirations and values conducive to self-fulfilment and Lifelong Learning. Likewise, Easen, Kendall & Shaw (1992) believed that professional experience constitutes a public form of theory about child development, whilst parental experience offers a more personal theory about the development of a particular child. This once more emphasises the need for further exploration into this issue and highlights the opportunities for small-scale case studies in this field.

ii) 1996 – 2006

During this phase, models of Family Learning continued to develop which emphasised the relevance of the curriculum of the home in children's early learning. Innes (1999) suggested that from birth, a person was focused on learning about their environment. Others, such as their parents, had a profound influence over the way the child developed and the shaping of their attitudes to the learning process. In addition, the Campaign for Learning's 1998 MORI

survey showed that the home was the most important learning environment for UK adults.

Summarising this view, Buffton's National Advisory Group on Continuing Education and Lifelong Learning working paper offered a definition of Family Learning as:

> Supporting efforts to raise children's achievement levels raise expectations and aspirations of both children and adults, promote active citizenship and, as the family group is the microcosm of the community, is community capacity building at its best (1999 p2).

A significant milestone of this era, Bertram's (1996) work, was adopted within the Primary National Strategy (2005). This large scale national research study offered opportunities to respond to the need for parent – professional engagement. The work encompassed almost 30,000 observations of 15,000 children and families in over 300 settings, over the course of three years. The initial Effective Early Learning project collected a range of qualitative and quantitative data on Early Years settings, including curricula etc. The follow-up work captured data on staff – child engagement in the specific domains of sensitivity, stimulation and autonomy. Amongst the key findings it identified were evidence of high levels of sensitivity, but less of positive autonomous interactions. As a result, it recommended formal staff training to ensure interactions were consistent and appropriately stimulating for the children involved.

One factor that may have impacted on these findings is that all the participating settings had prior training in adult engagement through their link with the earlier Effective Early Learning project. However, in collecting evidence on the quality of adult educative interactions within Early Years settings, it opened up the possibilities of using this research approach beyond measuring *professional* engagement to evaluating *parental* interactions with their young children, within the settings. By providing the tools to monitor and evaluate child involvement and adult engagement in Early Years education, this work also offered the potential to mediate the parent – professional relationship, through the sharing

of best practice, information and training in specific areas such as the quality of adult – child interactions.

Family Learning may be a contributing factor in breaking cycles of low achievement. However, much of the literature based around this notion is concerned with Family Learning as part of a wider governmental social inclusion agenda, which has caused it to become activities and outcome oriented. For example, the White Paper, Excellence in Schools (1997), which formed the basis of the 1998 School Standards and Framework, highlighted evidence of the benefits for children when professionals and parents work together. It described Family Learning as a powerful tool for addressing educational disadvantage and for engendering positive attitudes towards learning. A MORI survey in 2000 revealed that just over two thirds of 12 to 16 year olds rated their parents as the strongest learning influence in their lives. However, Family Learning consists of more than a programme of desired outcomes, since it comprises three integrated dimensions, cognitive, affective and social (Illeris 2002). It also emphasises the spontaneous and informal elements of learning, which may or may not be systematically recorded, yet are still relevant.

The Ofsted (2000) Report was published during the year I began working in Family Learning, so underpinned my understanding of the basic principles and has guided my professional practice over the last decade. This report found that successful programmes resulted in benefits that included increased parental confidence in contacts with the education system, leading to becoming more active partners with schools and a 'deeper understanding of child development and strategies to help children learn' (p7). For the children, the benefits included increased development of academic skills, positive attitudinal changes, enhanced confidence and self-esteem. Overall, the intergenerational benefits included pleasure from collaborative learning and awareness that learning was a normal activity throughout life. In support of these findings, many agencies, including Ofsted, saw an urgent need for more robust research and rigorous evaluations: 'particularly in relation to literacy; qualitative aspects of Family Learning have largely been ignored' (2000 p7).

Whilst Brooker's British review of young children's learning cultures, which followed sixteen 4 year olds through their first year at school found that:

> disappointingly, the pedagogic discourse of the classroom, which aims to be inclusive and egalitarian, has already allowed some children to experience disaffection and failure (2002 p19).

The results of the study also highlighted:

> links between the micro effects of children's daily experiences at home and in the classroom and the macro effects of structural inequalities and cultural difference (2002 p156).

McBride, Schoppe – Sullivan & Ho (2005) suggested that schools could benefit from broadening their orientation to include a multidimensional perspective of involvement to encourage parents, in particular, fathers, to be involved in their children's learning. In addition, parents were highly motivated to help their children and this could lead to participation in a variety of forms of organised learning (Edwards & Warin 1999).

Lifelong Learning agendas during this era mirrored Family Learning theories in several ways, since they encompassed contrasting aims such as the need for economic development, accreditation of achievement and focus on attainment of workplace skills. For example, the Dearing Report reinforced the idea of adults returning to learn as vital to economic regeneration. Referring to the personal development approach of the current education system, it warned: 'a policy of "more of the same" is not an option' (1997 p11). In addition to this, the 1998 Education Reform Act signalled another turning point in that it served to accelerate the movement of Lifelong Learning from a social welfare perspective, to government-funded education.

In consideration of this, it could be suggested that the key to understanding Lifelong Learning lies in the two main discourses evident in the different approaches of the last century, which differentiate between 'education' and 'learning' (Griffin 2001). In my view, the danger here lies in dividing the concept into two individual definitions, each designed for tackling an alternative agenda, since this division has often been used to fit a variety of political agendas, for example, to introduce the concept of a duty, or obligation, to learn. I suggest

that this potentially creates a tension between the needs of individuals and the needs of government. This is therefore an issue that offers supporting themes to the conceptual framework for my research.

This theme of conflicting purposes and agendas continues to surface within Family Learning literature. For example, an investigation into the impact of adults' participation in Family Learning in Lancashire (NIACE 2004) evidenced wide-ranging alternative definitions of Lifelong Learning. These ranged from a government economic interpretation of vocational up-skilling, as a tool for productivity and competitiveness, to the emphasis on individual responsibility, which defined it as a spontaneous, natural, dynamic and on-going process. To resolve this conflict of interest, Brookfield (2007) suggested Lifelong Learning should be separated from government policy, believing it encouraged individual thinking, in relation to adult cognition and learning.

Furthermore, as in Family Learning, some researchers believe that the government perspective, which centralises Lifelong Learning within the economy, perceives learners as passive recipients. The funding balance therefore focuses on provision that supports the achievement of national targets, through the medium of accredited education and training. Jarvis took this further, recognising the view that Lifelong Learning is often seen as a combination of human learning and recurrent education, defining it as:

> every opportunity either individual or made available by any social institution for any person to acquire knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, emotions, beliefs and senses within global society (2006 p218).

Many definitions of Lifelong Learning place the emphasis on cultural practice (Ranson 2000, Crowther 2004, and Jarvis 2006). This approach also emphasises the important aspect of the learner's voice, placing individuals as central to the process, active in moulding curriculums and targets relevant to their social and cultural environment and experience. This theory of Lifelong Learning also portrays it as an extension of learning beyond formal education, by advocating examining the existential nature of experience in any given learning situation. To me, this perspective offers positive opportunities for qualitative research in the form of a small-scale case study to give voice to participants within a Family Learning project. In addition, I consider it pertinent

to my research in terms of the participants' relationships with professionals, together with the cultural and environmental contexts of the study. Finally, in attempting to connect all the varied theories of Family and Lifelong Learning, I conclude that the family is the initial source through which, together, individuals build and develop a social and cultural repertoire, defined by Horvat et al, as: 'material and immaterial resources, that individuals and families are able to access, through their social ties' (2003, p320). These notions will be in my mind as I commence the research study.

iii) 2006 onwards

During this phase, theoretical models of Family Learning continued to evolve. In the process of analysing these, it also became necessary to widen the perspective to consider saliences, similarities and differences between recognised Family Learning approaches and other parenting programmes. As Haggart observed:

> Family Learning has been taking shape fairly quietly on the margins of adult education, school improvement, early years and basic skills…The picture emerging is one in which Family Learning is steadily gaining legitimacy (2008 p82).

Family Learning is seen in terms of early years development as a vital link to the outside world and consequent social inclusion. Geddes (2008) defined this as the capacities to relate to others with empathy and concern and to engage in work and other self-sustaining activities. Following on from this, Family Learning seeks to connect parents and professionals to produce an enriched understanding, as a basis for both to act in relation to the child. In the context of my research, these theories are considered complementary, as the combination of both has the potential to create a more accurate picture of a child's developmental progress.

One example of a parenting programme that echoes this is the Triple P parenting programme, which aimed to prevent severe behavioural, emotional, and developmental problems in children, by enhancing the knowledge, skills and confidence of parents. A central goal of the four levels of Triple P is the development of an individual's capacity for self-regulation. This draws on

Bandura's (1977) cognitive social learning theory and is based on five core parenting principles, which emphasise the importance of parental self-care and also involve ensuring a safe, engaging and positive learning environment for children, using assertive discipline and having realistic expectations and beliefs about the causes of children's behaviour.

Triple P has been extensively evaluated, including for example, the Dutch meta-analysis of the effectiveness of Triple P Level 4 (de Graaf et al 2008). Level 4 is an intensive 8-10 session parent training programme for children with more severe behavioural difficulties, offered either individually or in parent groups. Parents are taught a variety of child management skills. The results indicated that the programme had a large impact on reducing disruptive behaviours in children. These were maintained, with further improvements in long term follow up. Evaluations of Level 3 also produced positive findings, but these were mainly conducted by Triple P practitioners. However, a Canadian study http://wavetrust.org/dfeproject/proveninterventions/december2011accessed Nov 22 2012, which focused on Levels 2 and 3, did not find that Triple P markedly enhanced parent, child and family outcomes. Of particular relevance to my research is the fact that no significant differences were found on secondary outcome measures including parenting stress, parenting practices, family functioning and child behaviours. While recognising that Triple P provides some benefits, such as high quality educational resources, and may increase the effectiveness of group parenting approaches, the study called for further research in this area.

Another parenting programme that emerged during this phase was the Breakthrough to Literacy (BTL). This is an integrated literacy and language programme aimed at preschool children who are making the transition from oral language to reading and understanding printed materials. BTL is based on the finding that early childhood vocabulary development and exposure to printed text is a reliable indicator for later literacy and academic achievement. BTL uses ICT to help teach listening and attention skills. Teachers in the program are also given extensive training in early childhood literacy development and how to determine what individual children need to help them develop literacy skills. However, Layzer et al (2005) in an experimental evaluation of BTL, found that it

had no observable impacts on children's early literacy skills. The programme also had no consistent impact on teacher behaviour or topics that were addressed in the classroom. In the study, which focused on forty four schools in Chicago, 88% of the participants were from low-income families. Findings indicated that there were no differences between the intervention group and the control group on any of the tests of early literacy skills. Likewise, there were no differences observed in teacher behaviours between the control and intervention group in either of the follow-up data collection points. At the year-one follow-ups, teachers in the intervention condition did not differ from teachers in the control group on how much time they spent addressing different language development topics. After two years, teachers in the intervention condition spent more time on oral language topics and less on developing phonological awareness in children compared with the control group, but no other classroom impacts were found.

A further approach, Incredible Years, targeted parents of children, aged 0-12. Centred on social learning theory, it promoted social competence, to reduce emotional problems in young people. Bandura's modelling and self-efficacy theories informed the programme, which was based on principles of videotape modelling, rehearsal, self-management, and cognitive self-control. It has been subject to independent reviews, summarised by Webster-Stratton and Reid (2010). Salient findings demonstrate that standard social learning theory-based parenting interventions can change broader aspects of parent-child relationship quality. In many studies outcomes also included increases in parental praise and reduced use of negative commands, increases in parent use of effective limit-setting and improved monitoring of children. At the same time, reductions in parental depression and boosts in parental self-confidence led to positive family communication and problem-solving and reduced conduct problems in children's interactions with parents. As a result of these findings, the programmes have been recommended by the Home Office as one of the evidenced-based interventions for antisocial behaviour and by Sure Start as a recommended programme for families with children under five years.

Prior to all these approaches, Parents as Teachers, (PAT) was developed in America in the1980s and expanded to the United Kingdom more recently. It

provides both early detection of developmental delays and parent education, to help parents understand their role in encouraging their child's development. It built on earlier research which showed that greater parent involvement is a critical link in the child's development of learning skills. Currently, in the United Kingdom, PAT is being funded by the Department for Education. Although still on-going, many studies have already indicated positive results, though some have been more modest in their assessment of its impact. PAT seems to have a significant impact on some areas of child development and has a particular impact on children from low socio-economic backgrounds. However 'parents with a moderate income tended to be less significantly affected than those in low income families' (Huntington 2011). Additionally, no effects were found on a wide range of other child developmental outcomes (Huntington 2011) and the efficacy of the project appears to be inconsistent.

To conclude this section, Early Literacy and Learning Model, (ELLM), is a curriculum and support system aimed at young children from low-income families, focusing on their early literacy skills and knowledge. Focused on five core elements, including classroom curriculum and an instructional support system, the programme provides children with opportunities to explore, observe, and experiment with written language. Children take part in whole-group literacy instruction as well as small-group activities, where they use their language skills to describe, explain, and inquire. Teachers participate in professional development and a coaching system to build their skills. However, from the perspective of my research, whilst parents receive resources and are encouraged to get involved in literacy activities with their children, one of the limitations of this programme is the lack of focused opportunities for partnership working between parents and professionals.

From reviewing these parent intervention programmes, it is clear that, like Family Learning, most are a shared endeavour between the government, communities and families, all of whom have contrasting views on their value and future direction. This creates a powerful discourse, over whose purposes, intentions, agendas and freedoms should be considered and I again argue that it offers the potential opportunity for the implementation of a research study to explore these issues, whilst the different intentions of Family Learning provide

the chance to develop a conceptual framework for this work. As mentioned earlier, alternative perspectives suggest these as being to prepare individuals for economic productivity, academic success or personal, social and cultural integration. In determining a rationale for the research, understanding the functions and purposes of these opposing intentions is fundamental to the work, since the current pivotal situation, in terms of the balance between community, government and parental perceptions of education provision and individual rights and responsibilities, has significant implications for future policy and practice.

In support of this, Feinstein Duckworth and Sabates (2008) indicated, it is vital to accept the importance of interactions between the contexts in which learners live and work. Whilst highlighting the role of the family as a context supporting or constraining learning, it also emphasises other contexts such as neighbourhoods, communities and workplaces, as sources of influence and structure that impact on the formation of life chances and so constrain or enhance educational investments. This therefore acknowledges the need for interventions that can support resilience, engagement and development, through families, schools and communities:

> The selection of the appropriate intervention at the appropriate time requires developmental information to be centrally collated and analysed and linked to those interventions by skilled professionals, alongside knowledge regarding their availability and effectiveness in different circumstances. These non-teaching, front-line professionals will need to have personal knowledge of the children, their families and communities, built up over a long period. …Their success, however, will depend on the level of integration of information flow, assessment and intervention at local level (Feinstein Duckworth and Sabates 2008 p176).

Evidently then, this study must be considered within the context of a complex set of traditions, value assumptions and attitudes around roles and relationships of parents and professionals in society. Investigating issues of positionality, in terms of power and empowerment, requires a consideration of the knowledges that lie behind voices. The intention is to address questions such as 'who can speak' and 'what can be said', whilst also recognising that these issues are rooted in educational politics and institutional life, where there are no perfect solutions:

In the field of home/school relations, as elsewhere, there are widely differing, competing traditions of study and practice. These different 'versions' of the field represent the ideas and activities of different ideologies and interest groups, different professional groupings and institutions, different agendas and ways of working. For professionals, like parents, are a very amorphous and mixed bunch! (Bastiani 1988 p xix).

2.4 Sociocultural framing of the study

To expand on the social and cultural context of the research study, it is necessary to consider both theories of masculinity and how the work and family roles of males and females have evolved and continue to evolve. This section aims to pinpoint the relevance of these issues to the current study, particularly in terms of the changing patterns of child care and the role of fathers in contemporary society.

a) Theories of masculinity

i) Changing patterns of parenting

Fatherhood has always been a multifaceted concept and understanding of paternal involvement in their young children's learning has significantly changed over time. As a result, the way it has been researched has evolved, yet much of the literature still does not focus on their perspective, nor reflect the fathers' voice. Forty years ago, the effects of fatherlessness were becoming a societal focus and this prompted a shift from qualitative approaches, to quantifiable dimensions such as the amount of time spent by fathers with their children. According to Lamb (2000), this led to a narrowly focused view of fatherhood. A consideration of the broader and more inclusive paternal perspective should contribute to the existing research on the effects of paternal involvement.

From 1990 -2000, government policy adjusted to rapid changes in both family formation and women's position in the labour market. Of the 1.6 million women with children under five who are currently employed in the UK, approximately

1.2 million were brought up by mothers who were not employed, as noted by Sylva et al (2004) in their study of the effects of different kinds of care on children's development in the first five years. The historic division of labour between parents is neither common practice nor widespread aspiration. In two-parent families, two incomes are becoming the norm, equality of opportunity in the workplace the expectation, and equal pay the aspiration.

Whilst these changing patterns have a significant impact on government policy, they also affect families at a very local level, in terms of the amount of childcare that is now dependent on men. However, Sylva also states that the research on the processes involved in parents' child care decisions, and on relationships between aspects of child care and a range of outcomes for different children and families, is inadequate. In particular, data is required that reflects current British circumstances, attitudes and practices. This, Sylva suggests may be of use both to policy makers who must implement programmes, and parents who may be offered them.

Furthermore, according to a recent report from the Equality & Human Rights Commission, while four in ten fathers say they spend too little time with their children, they fear a request for flexible working would damage career prospects and be seen to indicate a lack of commitment. To address this, the government has set out a series of plans to promote and encourage family friendly working practice. These include Building Britain's Recovery: Achieving Full Employment, (2009) Support for All (2010) and Working Towards Equality: A framework for action (2010).

Woodfield & Finch's (1999) research explored the decisions about who should seek paid work dependant on financial and childcare considerations. They found that women's work was perceived to be less feasible financially as employment opportunities were lower paid. Many women also preferred to take responsibility for child care while men's preference was employment. Additionally, in 2001, Kasparova et al noted that 80 per cent of all families in Britain received an income from at least one job of 16 or more hours a week, 39 per cent of all families were dual earners and 41 per cent received one income from 16 or more hours' work. By this time, the majority of couples were dual

earners (55 per cent), which helps to explain why fathers played a more prominent role in the care of children, particularly in low-income families ONS website: www.statistics.gov.uk.

This research echoed the earlier findings, for example, 40 per cent of respondents were working 16 or more hours a week. Again, partners were relied on for care of pre-school children in lower income bands at more than twice the rate of higher earners. Of significance to my research, this finding reflects the higher incidence of dual earners among higher-income couples (Vegeris & Perry 2003), who also stated that children with working parents are more likely to do better at school and less likely to become disadvantaged adults themselves. The researchers also established that working parenthood increases confidence, personal networks and social participation, a factor which connects to the Lifelong Learning strand of my study.

As previously stated, increasing maternal employment was a recognised trend in Britain in the second half of the last century. Between1991 and 2001, the labour market expanded and more jobs became available that offered shorter, more flexible hours. This led to a further substantial increase in the proportion of mothers in work (Labour Force Survey and Family Resources Survey) a situation which was recognised in the government progress report, Opportunity for All (2002). This report suggested a need for wider research into the trend of mothers' increasing participation in the labour market. However, mothers are still less likely than fathers to be in work. Therefore, the gender gap in employment remains an area of concern for government policy (Opportunity for All, 2002). Additionally, mothers in couples who stated their main activity as 'looking after the home and family' tended to be concentrated in low/moderate-income families. Vegeris and Perry (2003) show that earners in families with only one income tend themselves to be lower-income males, linked in turn to lower educational skills and uncertain work histories. The dilemma this creates means that mothers cannot yet transfer a fully equal share of child care to fathers.

In conclusion, a recent study demonstrates the changing patterns of parenting. The Family Resources Survey has collected information on private households

over the last decade. In 2010/11, approximately 25,000 households were interviewed and the results show a continuation of the evolving trends already discussed. For example, in 2011, women were more likely to work part-time (21 per cent) compared to men (7 per cent). Women were also more likely to be looking after family. Of 2,452 couples with young children, 13 % had one or more full-time self –employed, 20% were both in full-time work, 27% had one in full-time work, one in part-time work, 26% had one in full-time work, one not working, 6% had no full-time, one or more in part-time work and 4% had one or more unemployed. This situation demonstrates a potential gap in the current literature to which my research may contribute, in terms of relevance to paternal involvement and Lifelong Learning.

ii) Mapping the evolution of masculinity theories

The concept of masculinity has been widely debated over the past three decades, although modern analysis of masculinity can be traced back at least to the psychodynamic psychologies of Freud. Psychoanalysis demonstrated that adult character was not predetermined by the body, but was constructed through emotional attachments to others. Theorists emphasised cultural differences in the processes and the importance of different social structures and norms between societies. In the 1960s and 1970s masculinity was understood as an internalised identity, reflecting a particular set of cultural norms or values. However, this approach was later criticised because it hid differences between cultural ideals and practices. A consideration of the different theories of masculinity is relevant to this review, as it may provide alternative solutions as to how fathers can be supported in Family Learning contexts.

Since the 1980s, masculinity theories have been refined, in terms of cultural sensitivity and gender ideology (Thompson & Pleck, 1995; Luyt, 2005). Through the1990s the construct drew on the politics of childcare (O'Brien 1981), whilst the social psychological approaches of Connell (1987, 1995) have also been central to the debate. Of particular relevance to this research study is the way that Connell highlighted the importance of the social process and physicality within work and fatherhood, defining masculinity as:

> …the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently
> accepted answer to the problem of legitimacy of patriarchy, which
> guarantees… the dominant position of men and the subordination of
> women (1995 p77).

Though most theories of masculinity evolved within developed countries, global perspectives are increasing (Cleaver, 2002; Pease & Pringle, 2002) and the last decade has seen a period of development in terms of more critical thinking. Of particular significance to my research are the theories of Bourdieu (2001), who considered masculinity in relation to the reproduction of class and other inequalities in education and schooling. Evidently then, contemporary debates on the concepts of masculinity are wide- ranging (Hearn 1992). Of relevance to my research is the strong emphasis on the interconnections of gender with other social divisions, such as class and occupation, Whitehead, for example, argued that:

> …the concept of masculinity goes little way towards revealing the
> complex patterns of inculcation and resistance which constitute
> everyday social interaction (1999 p58).

Following on from this is the notion that masculinity is a primary cause of other social effects, including greater involvement in fathering (Howson, 2006). This makes it important to consider the societal contexts of men's practices, which is fundamental to developing a conceptual framework for my research, for example when considering the underlying rationale behind the development of the Fathers Group.

For the purpose of this research study, there is also the question of how women support or subordinate certain practices of men, particularly in terms of their involvement with their young children's learning, since sometimes theories of masculinity may reinforce a model of gender relations. On the other hand, some theorists (Hearn 2006) consider the focus on masculinity is too narrow, since the definition of men is used in society in many ways. Additionally, it is important to appreciate the impact of theories of masculinity on issues such as economic inequality (UNDP, 2004) and Lifelong Learning, which is an additional consideration within the sociocultural framework of this research study.

iii) Emphasis and importance of this thesis to these issues

As seen in the previous section, one of the key reasons for focusing on paternal motivations and involvement in young children's learning is the growth of importance of fathers in family care. The Skills Funding Agency defined Family Learning as the promotion of Lifelong Learning for the whole family. It saw it as learning that took place as or within a family, which complemented the parental involvement agenda and helped individuals operate as or within a family (Horne & Haggart 2004). Whilst literature concerned with the broader implications of proactive parental involvement is wide ranging, this study's contribution is more specific in terms of paternal involvement and the significance of fathers' voice. Amato (1994) suggested that where fathers are involved, mothers are too, which in turn increases social capital and diversity of stimulation (Coleman 1998). Likewise, positive co-parental relations (Kelly 2000) raising the chances of improved overall family context for child development. More specifically, in terms of a father's involvement, is the fact that they are more likely to engage in physical play, which professionals have suggested is a vital component for emotional and cognitive development (Flouri & Buchanan 2004). Interestingly, Flouri and Buchanan also proposed that involved fathers influence school environments in a positive way, making them more conducive to productive learning experiences. This leads on to a consideration of the parent professional relations within young children's learning, with particular focus on paternal involvement.

2.5 Literature concerned with paternal motivations and involvement in young children's learning.

a) Impact of disadvantage on learning

Vincent & Tomlinson's (1997) work demonstrated the continuing lack of opportunities for parental participation in their children's education. Research by Nechyba, McEwan & Older-Aguillar (1999) continued this theme, by proposing three barriers to parental involvement for families with lower socio-economic status. Firstly, they placed less value on education; secondly, they had less

social capital to assist them in responding to school expectations and thirdly, schools created barriers by being middle class institutions. However, I suggest one limitation to this theory is that it failed to explain the substantial within - class differences in parental involvement, as frequently exemplified in the individual parental take-up of many Family Learning opportunities.

Lareau's (2003) research focused on major differences in parenting styles related to class distinctions, from '*concerted cultivation,*' which she defined as middle class child rearing practices, to the more '*natural growth'* practices of a working class model. She observed how these influenced children's performance and interactions at school and home and suggested that these variations in cultural practices were what perpetuated the cycle of disadvantage. This accords with Brooker's British review of young children's learning cultures, which followed sixteen 4 year olds through their first year at school and additionally found that:

> *'disappointingly, the pedagogic discourse of the classroom, which aims to be inclusive and egalitarian, has already allowed some children to experience disaffection and failure' (2002 p19).

The results of this study also highlighted:

> 'links between the micro effects of children's daily experiences at home and in the classroom and the macro effects of structural inequalities and cultural difference' (2002 p156).

However, the challenge to establishing the parent - professional concept, is in finding appropriate organisational systems and demands training for professionals in working with parents (Bastiani 1988). Bertram's (1996) work, which was adopted within the Primary National Strategy (2005), may offer one solution to this issue, since both large scale national research studies offered opportunities to respond to the need for parent – professional engagement. The work encompassed almost 30,000 observations of 15,000 children and families in over 300 settings, over the course of three years. The initial Effective Early Learning project collected a range of qualitative and quantitative data on Early Years settings, including curricula etc. The follow – up work captured data on staff – child engagement in the specific domains of sensitivity, stimulation and autonomy. Amongst the key findings it identified were evidence of high levels of

sensitivity, but less of positive autonomous interactions. As a result, it recommended formal staff training to ensure interactions were consistent and appropriately stimulating for the children involved. One factor that may have impacted on these findings is that all the participating settings had prior training in adult engagement through their link with the earlier Effective Early Learning project. However, in collecting evidence on the quality of adult educative interactions within Early Years settings, it opened up the possibilities of using this research approach beyond measuring *professional* engagement to evaluating *parental* interactions with their young children, within the settings. By providing the tools to monitor and evaluate child involvement and adult engagement in Early Years education, this work also offered the potential to mediate the parent – professional relationship, through the sharing of best practice, information and training in specific areas such as the quality of adult – child interactions.

Furthermore, this work also linked with the promotion and acquisition of the 'curriculum of the home,' (Redding 1992). This is relevant to the parent – professional relationship, in terms of the development of habits and attitudes that support a child through school, positive personal skills and attitudes, aspirations and values conducive to self-fulfilment and Lifelong Learning. Finally, to emphasise this connection, McBride, Schoppe – Sullivan & Ho (2005) suggested that schools could benefit from broadening their orientation to include a multidimensional perspective of involvement to encourage parents, in particular, fathers, to be involved in their children's learning

b) Positive impact of parental involvement in children's learning

Recently, parents' right to know has created increased accountability on the part of professionals. This repositioning is reinforced by findings such as Peters, Seeds, Goldstein and Coleman (2008) who established that in the UK, 70% of resident and 81% of non-resident parents wanted more involvement in their children's' education.

An on-going criticism of current government policy, in relation to parental involvement in children's education, is that it tends to favour a single model of white middle class family values as the societal norm (Lareau 2003). Not recognising the cultural diversity of contemporary British family life can result in variations in parenting practice being viewed as deficit models, with little consideration for their potential contributions. However, there appears to be a current lack of research that explores this, particularly from the perspective of fathers and their young children.

There are many correlations between parental aspirations for and interest in a child's development and the child's motivations and salient role in parent-professional relations. Communication, educational knowledge, marginalisation, social capital, time and other commitment pressures, inevitably create issues of differential attainment, which have long been debated. These cultural mismatches also create barriers and contribute to parental frames of reference in terms of how they see themselves. For example, Crozier (2000) believed middle class parents were much more visible in parent-professional relations than working-class parents, despite support being equal from both. Her research indicated that working class parents were more resigned to not having access to information, which professionals often interpreted as indifference. However her evidence also showed that these parents placed trust in professionals, deferred to them and were equally supportive, if less openly so, of their children's progress.

In addition to this line of thinking, Family Learning is seen in terms of early years development as a link to the outside world and consequent social inclusion. Geddes (2008) defined this as the capacities to relate to others with empathy and concern and to engage in work and other self-sustaining activities. Following on from this, Family Learning seeks to connect parents and professionals to produce an enriched understanding, as a basis for both to act in relation to the child. This accords with Easen, Kendall & Shaw (1992), who believed that *professional* experience constitutes a public form of theory about child development, whilst *parental* experience offers a more personal theory about the development of a particular child. In the context of my research, these

theories are considered complementary, as the combination of both has the potential to create a more accurate picture of a child's developmental progress.

In the previous decade, Innes (1999) had noted that from birth, a person was focused on learning about their environment. Others, such as their parents, had a profound influence over the way the child developed and the shaping of their attitudes to the learning process. At the same time, the Campaign for Learning's 1998 MORI survey showed that the home was the most important learning environment for UK adults; a later MORI survey also revealed that just over two thirds of 12 to 16 year olds rated their parents as the strongest learning influence in their lives (2000).

More recently, some critics have suggested that this increase in responsibility on parents has led to mutual surveillance. Crozier (2000) examined whether this has improved or worsened relationships between parents and professionals. She challenged the assumption that parental involvement is always a positive and argued the case for addressing this through a process of mutual assimilation, to achieve a sense of participatory democracy and maximise potential for individual success. She found there remains little consideration by policy makers for the relationship between parents and professionals and above all, few research studies into the potential influences on parental involvement. Macleod took the view that:

> ...links between home and school need to be two-way. First there is the question of school practices being reflected in home practices. That is, the ways in which children are being prepared at home for school ways of knowing. Second there is the question of home practices being reflected in school practices. That is, the ways in which home practices can be justifiably integrated into school practices (Macleod 1996a p123).

In the years leading up to the era examined in this review, a large-scale NFER (1976) report on parental involvement in primary schools established the difficulty of attracting parents who never visited school. It also highlighted the factors that influenced involvement as social class as defined by parental employment, housing categories and school location. However, a significant issue with this study is that it excluded direct data from the parental perspective. Without their voice within the research, it is impossible to establish certain

factors, especially as the reasons surrounding involvement are inter-related and difficult to disentangle and reconstruct. On the other hand, Raven (1980) believed few schools knew how to individualise curriculum to create the type of developmental environments most parents model for their children, offering potential as partners in a collaborative approach to curriculum design. In the same vein, he suggested that effective schools, which built on individual talents, should reflect effective parents, not vice versa, also proposing that policy makers must address the complex issues of professionals transmitting their own values to children and find ways for schools to accept alternative values in public education by collaborating with families to understand and respect their values and practices.

Further literature highlighting the positive impact of *parental* involvement in children's learning includes Douglas 1964; Fuerstein, Klein & Tannenbaum, 2000; NCES 1998; Georgiou 1999; Miedel & Reynolds 1999 and Coleman 1998. For example, Feinstein & Symons identified strong links between parental involvement in the education of seven year olds and children's subsequent attainment at secondary school. They emphasised the importance of a cognitively rich home environment in the likelihood of active parental engagement in children's education:

> From a theoretical standpoint, cognitions are a key mediator of education effects. They are important both in themselves and as a channel for intergenerational transmission of learning and achievement, and studying them is likely to afford a more complete understanding of the mechanisms that promote educational success (1999 p95).

To conclude this section, in their meta-review of current research, Desforges & Abouchaar (2003) found overriding evidence that pinpointed parental support as paramount to children's achievement, superceding factors such as parental ethnicity, social class and educational level and school quality. However, they also stressed the importance of recognising that parental involvement was difficult to measure and interacted with many other factors. This may be one reason why they noted that: 'few evaluations of parent-professional links are published for general circulation' (2003 p64).

Whilst recognising that the available evaluations showed a consistent general pattern of high levels of appreciation from both families and providers, they went on to propose that the achievement of particular groups of children could be significantly enhanced if the current understandings of parental involvement were applied. They also called for new Family Learning intervention programmes in the form of targeted multi-dimensional initiatives, based on a strong research design process:

> It can be said that the impact of parental involvement arises from parental values and educational aspirations and that these are exhibited continuously through parental enthusiasm and positive parenting style. These in turn are perceived by the student and, at best, internalised by them. This has its impact on the student's self-perception as a learner and on their motivation, self-esteem and educational aspirations. By this route, parental involvement frames how students perceive education and schoolwork and bolsters their motivation to succeed. For younger children, this motivational and values mechanism is supplemented by parental promotion of skills acquisition (e.g. in respect of early literacy) (2003 p35).

c) Distinct and complementary roles of mothers and fathers

This literature review revealed evidence of the very different roles mothers and fathers play in the development of children's competences. Frequently, these are influenced by parents' own gender (Kennedy, Root & Rubin 2010). This American study, using questionnaires to 64 mothers and 61 fathers of preschool-aged children, established that parents took on distinct parenting roles and responsibilities. The framework it developed offered an insight into how parents could foster the development of early competences. It also suggested that there were fewer studies investigating early childhood parenting practices in lower socio-economic samples and even fewer with fathers from this group.

Fathers have recently become a particular focus for policy-makers in education. One small- scale qualitative study, analysing the data from interviews conducted with a range of mothers who regularly attended Family Learning programmes, also interviewed a small number of fathers to explore the reasons for their non-attendance and what might encourage them to do so. The

research findings indicated that absence did not necessarily equal disinterest or that fathers did not contribute to their child's learning (Rose & Atkin 2011).

Earlier research in America by McBride et al (2005a) noted that a father's interest in his child's education had a greater influence on the qualifications they attained than family background, economic status or individual personality. The study looked into three aspects of involvement: practical activities, discussions with school and talks with their child. All were associated with increased achievement, suggesting that fathers' involvement in school had a positive effect on the relationship between school, family and neighbourhood and also on a child's individual educational achievement. A further major research review in the same year, carried out by McBride et al (2005b) identified the role of fathers' involvement in mediating contextual influences on children's learning. It also considered whether a father's involvement was linked to positive outcomes, beyond that accounted by a mother's. The sample was taken from the 1977 Child Development Supplement of the Panel Study of Income Dynamics, a thirty-year longitudinal study of 2,500 families, begun in 1968. Using 1,334 families with a father figure they considered both practical involvement and verbal communications around learning. Once again, the results found a significant relationship between fathers' involvement in children's education and children's achievement. They also recognised that professionals perceived barriers to positive parent-professional relations as directly related to poor learner achievement. These barriers were conceived as lack of parental interest, poor management skills, low-level parental literacy and, most significantly for my research study, cultural discontinuity between home and school settings. However, a clear drawback of this work was in terms of the limitations of the data, which only took into account residential fathers and also excluded certain ethnic minority groups. Also, the research only considered cognitive and behavioural dimensions of fathers' involvement, although I recognise the difficulties involved, since parental involvement is a multidimensional construct and therefore very difficult to measure. On the other hand, previous studies mainly focused on the behavioural aspects of paternal involvement, so including cognitive dimensions identified the potential impact of different forms of involvement. Another drawback of the research was that it only considered academic achievement, whilst the design meant that the study

only captured data at one point in time, so was unable to identify any causal relationships among the factors examined. However, on the positive side, the study used data collected directly from the fathers and also referenced actual test scores and teacher reports, to measure learning and ensure authenticity and accuracy.

Additional literature on paternal involvement included the1996 study by Updegraff, McHale & Crouter of fathers and girls and Radin, Williams & Coggin's (1993) work with Native American fathers. Hoover-Dempsey, Walker, Whetsel & Green (2004) indicated that fostering fathers' involvement could play a vital role in protecting children from low educational achievement, whilst Fisher, McCulloch & Gershuny's (1999) study evidenced the increase in childcare responsibilities for men. Following this theme, a small amount of research was explored on specific issues surrounding the difficulties faced by fathers as a result of changes in social and cultural attitudes; however, little focus appeared to be given to their experiences with their children in positive interpersonal communications and relationships, with most studies focused on the negative implications of their marginalisation. For example, the work of Bronfenbrenner (1979) emphasised the impact of growth-orientated economies, with their expectations of upward mobility, on the way families functioned and the subsequent stress this placed on men. However, Bronfennbrenner also used an ecological framework to refer to layers of contexts within a child's life, a notion that he likened to a set of Russian dolls. In this way, he highlighted the importance of cultural contexts in educational achievement:

> Different environments produce discernible differences, not only across but within societies, in talent, temperament, human relations and particularly in the ways in which each culture and subculture brings up the next generation. The process and product of making human beings human clearly varies by place and time (1979 pxiii).

On a similar theme, Hobcraft's (1998) research on families concluded that a father's non-involvement in a child's education was a strong predictor of low achievement, leading to social exclusion and economic failure. Conversely, connected parenting, through a positive male interest in schooling, built resilience and had a significant impact on relationships, achievement and social interactions. Blanden's (2006) longitudinal study, was another example of this

deficit model. It established the theory that low paternal interest in children's education had a stronger negative impact on children's academic achievement than factors such as contact with the law, poverty, family type, social class, housing, and even a child's personality. It suggested that in working class communities, this influence proved even more significant, although the challenge here is the small survey sample. To conclude, Garner and Clough (2008) highlighted the broad scope of potential research within this field and actually recommended several possible themes for further enquiry.

Additionally, several studies demonstrate that involvement and interest in children's learning is fundamental to many fathers. One specific example of this is Morgan et al 2009 study which focused on paternal impact on home literacy activities. Over the course of eighteen months, 85 families and 10 professionals were examined to identify the types of literacy used at home, investigate the extent to which fathers participated in a literacy programme and explore parental views of a father's role in Family Literacy. The data, captured through the professionals' records of home visits, group meetings and interviews, of which the vast majority were solely mothers, revealed an important disparity, with the professionals reporting 93% of fathers as having had some involvement, whilst only 77% were recognised as being involved by the mothers. These results suggested that whilst the majority of fathers were involved in their children's' early literacy development, their contribution was often invisible and under-estimated. This may be because, whilst 65% read to their children, 65% modelled active reading at home, including special interest magazines and 45% helped with writing activities, a large number of these percentages were fathers who engaged with their children in practical activities around their own particular interests, such as sports. However, it is also possible that the results of the study were influenced by the fact that the research relied heavily on maternal interpretations and afforded no opportunity to interview the fathers separately, or to analyse their views.

d) Impact of fathers on outcomes for their children

I will now review the literature that explores the specific effect of paternal involvement in young children's development. Firstly, in terms of studies that

investigate the ways in which fathers interact with their children's academic learning, which Desforges & Abouchar referred to as 'educational self-schema'. This will be followed by a consideration of the research on paternal impact on young children's emotional development. However, I recognise the difficulties, given the lack of evidence, in terms of establishing what works in this field, 'the evidence base on which answers to the questions can be mounted is at best threadbare' (Desforges & Abouchar, 2003, p53).

i) Impact of paternal involvement on learning

This section discusses paternal involvement and its impact on early child development and for the purposes of this research, defines fathers widely, to include all males of any age, who are of significance to children in their care, including father-figures and other male carers. Paternal involvement is relevant to the research study because fathers have a fundamental role to play in the development of children's learning aspirations, with learning approaches in the home being recognised as a key factor associated with positive outcomes for children (Feinstein et al, 2008). The process of examining the relevant literature considers investigations such as the strategies to help fathers provide more opportunities for early achievement and ways to enhance their recognition of this. It also explores the role Family Learning plays in terms of paternal engagement in this process. However, in contemporary society, with a multitude of variable factors involved, the possibility of weighing up the role of fathers is complex. It therefore begin with a focus on the current social context of family based units in less affluent communities in Britain, and then goes on to explore how personal and cognitive development may be affected by the involvement of fathers. First though, I briefly revisit the broader research implications of parental involvement.

Both Smith (1988) and Reay (1998) believed that the work of parents, in relation to their children's education, was frequently ignored and rarely analysed. However, work by Sylva, Melhuish, Sammons, Siraj-Blatchford and Taggart including both the Effective Provision of Pre-School Education Project (EPPE) in 1999 and its follow-up Findings from the Early Primary Years in 2004, went some way towards redressing this in-balance. This longitudinal research studied

the intellectual, social and behavioural development of over 3,000 children aged 3 – 7 years, drawn from a broad range of 141 settings in five socio-economic and geographically diverse areas. The findings indicated that multiple disadvantage affected development, with parental qualifications and socio-economic status remaining vital indicators of both intellectual and social development. However, the quality of a child's learning environment at home overrode all other factors examined:

> For all children, the quality of the home learning environment is more important for intellectual and social development than parental occupation, education or income. What parents do is more important than who parents are (pii).

Flouri & Buchanan's 2004 study explored the links between gender, family structure and educational outcomes. The initial sample of 7,259 children was taken from the 17,000 within the National Child Development Study of children born in Great Britain in the first week of March 1958. Of these, 3,303 were used in the final analysis. The results of the study suggested that parental involvement in a child's education contributed significantly and independently to children's attitudes towards formal education. Positive parental engagement at 7 predicted educational achievement at 20, regardless of gender or family structure, but <u>was</u> dependent on educational quality of involvement, which accords with Feinstein & Symons (1999). The study also established that paternal involvement was <u>not</u> more important when maternal involvement was poor. Significantly, it again highlighted the lack of research into the role of fathers' involvement in children's' development and suggested their involvement also made formal educational environments more conducive to children's learning. In my view, this work underestimated the long-term impact of disadvantage, due to the bias within the responding sample, as there was a high loss of fathers within the study from economically disadvantaged groups. The evidence was also dated, and therefore influenced by cultural and social changes. However, the strengths of the work were that it extended research by investigating the long-term contributions of fathers' involvement. It also provided evidence that their involvement was not more important for boys or girls, nor affected by academic motivation or emotional or behavioural issues.

In terms of specific paternal involvement, Lewis, Newson & Newson, in their 1982 survey of English fathers, stated that a father's involvement with his children at the ages of seven and eleven was an important predictor of his child's educational achievement at sixteen. Painter & Levine agreed that father involvement had important implications for early childhood. They also suggested that how men related to children was influenced by how they thought and felt about their role, how others perceived them and whether or not they had a support system (2000). Allen & Daly's extensive literature review (2007) of the effects of paternal involvement appeared to confirm many of these findings.

ii) Impact of paternal involvement on emotions

In addition, is the growing body of evidence focusing attention on the role of fathers, which reflects the powerful impact of their involvement on children's emotional and social development. Many of these studies indicate that paternal involvement in early childhood is associated with more positive outcomes (Fagan & Iglesias 1999; Amato 1994; Fisher, Brooks & Lewis 2002; Tamis-LeMonda & Cabrera 2002) and includes the extensive and wide-ranging work of Lamb and the studies covered in Akerman's 2006 overview of fathers' involvement in their children's literacy projects. Significantly, these all accord with Buchanan (2001), which used data on 17,000 children born since 1953. The findings showed that father involvement was associated with positive relationships in adolescence and adult life, fewer behavioural difficulties, less likelihood of criminal engagement and greater motivation for learning. Overall, the evidence indicated that fathers played a substantial role in a child's capacities to engage in learning and to feel confident to face the challenges of a complex social world. Meanwhile, paternal involvement is also shown to be associated with educational and occupational mobility, whilst lack of involvement is linked to an increased risk of child problems (Amato1994). Fagan & Iglesias (1999) suggested it positively affected children's intellectual development, social competence, internal locus of control and empathy with others, whilst Steele, (2002) proposed that paternal involvement led to stronger social skills. Furthermore, paternally supported children were psychologically

well adjusted and did better at school (Flouri & Buchanan 2004; Kraemer 2005; Gorrell Barnes, Thompson, Daniel & Burchardt 1998).

e) Difficulties of involving fathers in Family Learning

Although well acknowledged (Desforges & Abouchar 2003), the potential power of paternal involvement can be limited by the challenges of engagement. For example, according to the Adult Learning Survey (McGivney 1999), men are more likely than women to hold the views that nothing would encourage them to learn and they had not enjoyed learning at school. In consideration of this, both Donaldson (1978) and Freire's (1970) experience-based learning approach of working from the paternal perspective, exploring their views in a relevant social context, are relevant. More recently, Fletcher and Dally's research (2002) supports this focus on valuing fathers' alternate literacies, situating educational activity within the fathers' lived experience, as opposed to a formal curriculum. Giving fathers time, space and social relationship opportunities within Family Learning projects facilitates this approach.

Only about 12% of learners in Wider Family Learning and 5% of learners in family language, literacy and numeracy initiatives are fathers (NIACE 2002-3). Goldman (2004) cited traditional gender roles, attitudes of fathers, mothers, children and practitioners, work, time and the gender pay gap, fathers' circumstances and confidence as reasons behind this. Lower qualification levels, large families and working in the evenings or long hours were also identified as barriers to involvement. Factors beyond the individual included where the mother has lower qualification level or the child has behavioural problems.

However, from the practitioner perspective, Goldman also noted that fathers are more likely to leave school-based programmes held during daytime hours where mothers are in the majority. The majority of participants tended to be resident fathers in strong relationships, with more egalitarian roles in household/ childcare. In acknowledging this, Kahn (2006) suggested that more training was needed in Early Years settings to raise and develop staff awareness, but also to create local action plans to involve fathers. He also noted the importance of

maintaining contact with separated fathers and of addressing communications and materials explicitly. Finally, he recommended providing managers with diversity training to raise staff understanding of the issues connected to father involvement in settings, which then may support staff in encouraging parents to participate in gender discussions.

Goldman's findings concurred, recognising a lack of male practitioners and information about fathers led to inappropriate recruitment and practice with fathers. Her solutions included a diverse range of programmes in consultation with fathers and strategies specifically for fathers that also extended to other male carers and non-resident fathers. She also emphasised the importance of discussing attitudes and concerns held by practitioners and mothers. These findings demonstrate the potential for a study that addresses specific challenges of paternal involvement from the fathers' perspective, giving a voice to their views. My research uses an original approach to the issue by contextualising the case study within a fathers group where many of these barriers have already been considered. This offers the potential to contribute positively to the current knowledge base.

2.6 Conclusion

Reviewing the literature has enabled me to draw together the conceptual framework for this research study and relate the subject matter of the thesis to an existing body of knowledge. In terms of sociocultural context, the changing role of fathers means that investigating their understandings of Family Learning is increasingly significant. This suggests to me that it is both relevant and important to explore with fathers how they can specifically contribute to their children's learning. More research is required into the nature and purpose, processes, outcomes and determinants of involvement in Family Learning from a paternal perspective. This encompasses an exploration of how fathers consider the culture and concepts of a Family Learning environment affect parent - professional relations. Their views on the notion that Family Learning serves as a stimulus to developing a culture of Lifelong Learning (National Institute for Adult Continuing Education, 2004) are also relevant. Above all, the factors that motivate paternal involvement from their own perceptions are

fundamental to this particular study, as most recurring themes within the existing literature reflect parental or maternal perspectives. Finally, it would also be important to specifically investigate the fathers' role in terms of opportunities that arise for intergenerational learning. Exploring whether all these factors could be influential in enabling more men to be involved in their children's learning would contribute to the existing knowledge in the field.

This suggested research framework concurs with Desforges & Abouchar (2003), who advocated a holistic approach to tackling what they described as a multidimensional challenge. They recognised the wide knowledge base and strength of research on spontaneous levels of parental involvement and the range of theoretical approaches and key principles underpinning how parenting works and how children learn. They also called for a programme of well-researched developments on parental involvement for children's achievement. In this chapter I hope I have demonstrated how my research study relates to the existing body of knowledge within the field of Family Learning and may therefore contribute towards increased understanding and awareness of the important issues surrounding it. Chapter three discusses the process and strategies chosen to implement the research, outlines the plans for data analysis and goes on to address the ethical dimensions of the work.

3. Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a rationale and account of the methodological approaches for the research. To begin, it considers the research design and explains how I endeavour to enable the families and staff to participate in the study, helping to ensure it takes account of their perspective and is not re-cast by the researcher. Next it provides a timetable for the research. It then discusses the epistemology of the study. This is followed by the theoretical background, which examines the chosen research methodology in relation to Family Learning. It addresses the reasons for adopting an interpretive case study approach. It then explores the issues involved in terms of context and participants and provides a framework for the data collection. The materials and procedures are considered as it outlines the approach to data analysis. The chapter concludes with an examination of the necessary ethical considerations.

3.2 Research design and rationale

Research design is a strategic process. The purpose of this section is to clarify the shape of the research and define the types of data collected and analysed. A case study approach, within an interpretive framework was chosen for the research design. The rationale for this will be examined in detail later in this chapter. The focus of this study is the processes, outcomes and determinants of paternal involvement in Family Learning, which links to the arguments in the previous chapters for the need for research in this area. The existence of a successful Fathers Group within a local Children's Centre offers a context for consideration of the potential opportunities and barriers to participation for this particular group. Whilst recognising there is scope for investigating the issues of control in terms of who steers the agenda, from both a professional and family angle, I also acknowledge the complexity of the issue. Seeking a clearer understanding of the various conceptual models espoused by the professionals

and parents involved, assists in establishing who has access to information, how decisions are made in terms of Family Learning opportunities and above all, where the locus of control is located.

Stake (1975) emphasised how research can perform a service and be useful to specific persons, which is also why it is important to understand the interests and language of my participants. Because the fathers are central to the research, it is vital to consider their identities, both actual and designated. For example, assuming the notion of families as competent social actors, agents of their own learning and identity construction, allows me to question how much freedom they have to exercise autonomy and power in their learning. To achieve the research aim of exploring the nature and purpose of Family Learning from a paternal perspective, I consider the following research questions:

- Does Family Learning constitute part of the parental frame of reference for local fathers?
- What are the factors that motivate paternal involvement?
- What are the processes, outcomes and determinants of involvement and what impact does it have on the culture of parent-professional relations and attitudes towards Lifelong Learning?
- What opportunities arise for intergenerational learning within the Family Learning context?

Table 1: Planned timetable for the research

Research Question	How will data be collected?	When will data be collected?	How will data be analysed?
Does Family Learning constitute part of the parental frame of reference for local fathers?	Questionnaire to fathers Discussions with Children's Centre staff and colleagues	September & October 2010	Collate range of responses. Each question will help to establish baseline of current local knowledge. Information will be used to inform planning of F.L. project
What are the factors that motivate paternal involvement?	Digital audiotape, reflective diary and field notes of 3 focus group	November 2010	Transcribe audiotape, compare with field notes & reflective diary. Identify sub themes around motivation.

	meetings	Feb 2011 May 2011	Further categorise main themes under barriers and opportunities.
What are a) the processes, outcomes and determinants of involvement? b) what impact does it have on the culture of parent-professional relations and attitudes towards Lifelong Learning?	Video, reflective diary and field notes of two adult learning sessions Digital audiotape of two staff interviews	January 2011 March 2011	Summarise field notes. Compare with video and identify and transcribe events as sub themes of FL and LLL. Further classify into major themes / implications. Transcribe interviews. Select relevant statements on parent - professional relations. Initial code under sub themes. Further classify into major themes from both parent and professional perspective.
What opportunities arise for intergenerational learning in Family Learning contexts?	Video and field notes of two intergenerational sessions	January 2011	Identify and transcribe key intergenerational incidents from video of joint workshops. Summarise field notes. Categorise within 4 sub themes / learning domains. Further code into major themes according to who initiated the learning.

Epistemological Position

Prior to commencing this study, it is essential to account for my own personal epistemological and ontological assumptions about social reality and aspects of the social world. This can be defined as the epistemological assumptions concerning the nature of knowledge, what constitutes knowledge, how it may be represented and the methodologies which are employed deriving from these assumptions (McNiff & Whitehead, 2002). To uncover and clarify my epistemological assumptions, I will endeavour to make explicit some of my own beliefs about knowledge. This is an important issue to address, since this research examines the lived experiences of a group of fathers on a particular Family Learning project and as Wellington, Bathmaker, Hunt, McCulloch & Sikes (2005) noted, my own personal narrative will inevitably influence how the work is portrayed.

As I view learning as a personal experience and consider knowledge is constantly evolving, the data obtained from the process focuses on a description of observations and events as they occur, alongside a consideration of the relationships between various concepts as portrayed by the fathers. When addressing issues such as what knowledge is and how it is acquired, in contrast to Whitehead & McNiff (2006), I do not consider it to be a collection of undisputed facts, events and information held external to the researcher, 'an empirical object of rational enquiry' (p 33). Nor do I view it as an objective reality, tangible and known; where there is only one correct answer to be found. Unlike Scott and Usher (1999),who regarded knowledge as 'observable, measurable phenomena' (p12) I do not see knowledge as an inanimate object, such as a football, that can be passed from person to person, or an idea to be taught or conveyed. It therefore follows, that in terms of knowledge acquisition, it is my belief that knowledge is not independent of individuals, but socially constructed. In this way, the answers to the research questions lie in the interaction between participants in the study.

Since I hold the view that we create our own understanding of situations according to our personal constructs, I must acknowledge that I bring my own realities to the research questions, in terms of personal social, cultural and professional frames of reference. I therefore recognise that any knowledge or understanding attributed to the actual evidence I gather is affected by my personal interpretation of the experience; for example, my interpretation of an intergenerational learning opportunity is different to the experience of the fathers, due to underlying cultural expectations, driven by divisions of power. I also anticipate that the relationship between the fathers and their children affects the level and quality of interactions the fathers experience in parent - professional relations. Likewise, their views of Lifelong Learning also vary, depending on where on the spectrum they regard learning as being, in terms of personally constructed (Piaget 1956, Bruner1986) or socially constructed (Vygotsky 1962). For these reasons, I intend examining what happens within the context of the Family Learning project, attempting to interpret, analyse and begin to resolve the issues that arise. I aim to be clear about my own biases, presuppositions and interpretations, not intending to seek clear-cut answers from my research, as each situation is dependent on a range of factors,

including the fathers' perceptions and contexts and my own perspective and professional interpretations.

Methodological Context

> The social researcher is faced with a variety of options and alternatives and has to make strategic decisions about which to choose. The crucial thing for good research is that the choices are reasonable and that they are made explicit as part of any research report *(*Denscombe 2007, p12).

Social and educational research methodologies can be defined as the frames of reference, models, concepts and ideas which are appropriate for this specific field of enquiry: 'The strategy, plan of action, process or design,' (Crotty 1998 p3) which guide the selection and use of particular methods. As stated at the beginning of the chapter, this thesis research design adopts a case study approach within an interpretive framework. Despite other approaches being considered, they are regarded as being generally unsuitable for this study for a range of reasons. For example, whilst being more common, the intervention required of a large scale survey risked imposing my views. This would be inappropriate to research that aimed to give a voice to a marginalised group.

Paradigm

Having explored the three dominant research paradigms; positivism, interpretivism and critical theory, as they relate to this research area, I decide an interpretive approach holds the strongest potential to address the relevant themes within the work. It will also enable me to access and collect the data in the most effective way. There are several additional advantages to adopting this approach. Firstly, it is important to hear the views of the fathers within this study and this is a subjective paradigm which accommodates different views of reality. Secondly, the data may contain contradictions, since it is drawn from participants responses to events, from which meanings have to be sought. Thirdly, it may not prove possible within the constraints of the Family Learning project to collect the amount or type of data originally intended for the research study. Adopting an interpretive approach will enable the research to be more

open to modification and adaptable to contextual circumstances. Finally, the opportunistic nature of my employment means the research would depend on which groups I could gain access to within the timescale of the work. In summary, since this research encompasses social issues within organisations and takes its' focus from a learner's perspective, I consider it is best implemented through an interpretive inquiry, which can be responsive to local situations and conditions, whilst also providing the study with direction, framework and methodological boundaries.

It is necessary to take into account the kind of assumptions the chosen methodology makes about the world. Also, to consider what kind of knowledge the methodology aims to produce, for example, descriptions, explanations or a voice to marginalized accounts. This accords with Carr and Kemmis (1986), who argue that interpretivism provides insight, uncovers meaning and deepens understanding. Adopting an interpretive approach opens up the investigation to questions about the nature, type and form of knowledge, since it recognises that Family Learning can be interpreted in multiple ways and can only be understood within the context in which it has been constructed. Involving as many fathers as possible also expands the debate and provides and supports relevant evidence for future decision-making. The theoretical framework for the research therefore is as broad and adaptable as possible, building in space for unexpected outcomes, to find a means of interpreting and exploring the project from all angles.

The choice of an interpretive paradigm affects the type of data collected. Interpretive research spotlights and reflects the complexities of the world. This is important in pinpointing what *actually* occurs within the learning environment, rather than what *should* be happening. The nature of this approach also best enables an attempt to describe and interpret a human phenomenon, often in the words of selected individuals. Hargreaves (1978) argues that interpretive research has several functions, including the appreciative; the ability to understand perspectives that are often missed, to empathise and to assist comprehension. It seeks to understand, rather than judge and requires separating descriptive explanations from judgements. It aims to capture the logic of participants' actions, to inform future policy. Although it risks being seen

as biased in favour of the fathers, it aims to articulate events, to raise awareness of experiences. An interpretive theoretical approach also facilitates an understanding of what lies beneath the statistics within policy discourses when conceptualising what happens in individuals' lives.

Other arguments for the relevance of using an interpretive framework include the small scale of the research, as the data collection and analysis can be time consuming. I need to consider the credibility of the work and the fact that it aims to give voice to a marginalized group. It also creates the opportunity to involve the fathers' voices in practice. It is an approach particularly suited to needs driven research, centred on 'trustworthiness and authenticity' (Denzin & Lincoln 2008 p33). This enables investigation of the practical, operational issues of how best to develop programmes that engage fathers in intergenerational learning. Finally, it provides collective interpretations. These assist in differentiating between current understandings and contradictions and offer potential to generate and integrate collective solutions.

Despite the advantages of using an interpretive approach, this design is not without challenges (Tooley 1998). These may be addressed in several ways, including pinpointing effective pedagogical techniques (Hargreaves 1996) and envisaging practitioners as connoisseurs and critics, filtering learned theory through the lens of experience, to develop and contextualise it (Eisner 2001). In addition, this approach offers insights into how best to interpret and implement government policies in practical and sustainable ways that encourage professionals to work in the best interests of their learners and avoid the de-professionalising of practitioners.

Theory

Adopting a sociocultural approach involves a consideration of social interaction as a key form of motivation, with communication, as the most effective means of social interaction (Vygotsky 1962). This theory provides a means to interpret problems embedded in social practice and is relevant to this research for two reasons. Firstly it offers stability within the shifting landscape encountered during the study. Secondly, it enhances the development of professional

identities and pedagogic expertise, by encouraging responsiveness from practitioners. Additionally, this approach enables the involvement of professionals as intermediaries, to create a community of practice, within which, culturally appropriate interpretations and resources can be provided to enable both the fathers and the professionals to interact with their environment and ensure the resultant learning is cognitively and appropriately absorbed, as Edwards notes:

> An agentic version of professionalism to be found in organisations which allow practitioners to bring to bear their own professional values and knowledge on the changes they deal with as an alternative to rigid compliance (2007 p14).

Furthermore, sociocultural theory also helps in examining the ways in which Family Learning offers opportunities to encourage transition, enabling both parents and professional participants to make a gradual shift into a new culture. Analysis of these issues may help to shed light on how both Family and Lifelong Learning are positioned and perceived in the 21st century:

> A major contribution to be made by research in education is the development of useful ideas i.e. the refining of the conceptual tools that can be brought to bear in educational policy and practice (Edwards 2005 p14).

A partnership working approach amongst professionals can enhance the capacity to negotiate meanings. It also facilitates the development of techniques that encourage co-operation and communication as a means to build resilience. This in turn can offer individualised ways to create new personal learning strategies outside institutional boundaries.

In summary, I am adopting an interpretive approach within a sociocultural framework because I suspect that all accounts of social settings and the social settings occasioning them are mutually inter-dependent. Cohen et al (2000) refer to this as 'reflexivity', which they consider a vital component in this type of research, whilst Mason (1996) defines it as 'critical self-scrutiny' by the researcher to ensure neutrality as far as possible. Being process oriented, the intention is to describe and analyse events, without predicting outcomes,

seeking to identify how they occur, rather than the reasons behind their occurrence.

3.3 Case study

A case study approach is one of many approaches to research. Stake (1994) defines it by the object of study, as opposed to a specific methodology. Others, including Yin (1994) broaden this definition to encompass real-life contexts, where it can be used to contribute to knowledge of a range of phenomena. It is a research strategy often employed to aid the understanding of individual, group, organisational or social issues. It enables a study of the particular to find out more, in order to inform the general. The use of case study in educational research is well documented (Cohen & Manion 1994, Bassey 1999). Several theorists describe it as placing an interpreter in the field, to observe the workings of the case, to record what is happening, examine its meaning and redirect observations to refine those meanings. Stake recommends that the selection of the particular case offers the opportunity to maximise what can be learned: 'The more the object of study is a specific, unique, bounded system, the greater the rationale for calling it a case study' (1994 p237).

Furthermore, case study is a prime research strategy for developing educational theory that illuminates policy and enhances practice. This is since the outcomes can be 'fuzzy generalisations', which may then become part of a professional discourse (Bassey 1999 p4). In addition, since the focus for this case study is to explore Family Learning within the context of a Fathers Group, to describe and interpret its functioning and highlight any significant features, this choice of research design is particularly appropriate, as the focus is on a current phenomenon within some real-life context (Yin 1994). The context for the research is also relevant to the choice of methodology, as this study involves a situation where the researcher has little control over events. Finally, the type of research questions e.g. 'how' or 'why', also have a bearing on the chosen research strategy.

Evidently then, a case study approach to the examination of the Family

Learning project facilitates observations of the interactions between fathers and their children. Stake (1994) proposes it as a means to uncover both the commonality as well as the uniqueness of a case. However, he also warns of the main drawback of this approach, stating: 'Not everything about the case can be understood – how much needs to be?' (1994 p238). Case study research also facilitates a focus on the realities of interactions within the context of the Fathers Group, since it emphasises observation as a primary mode of inquiry: 'If you want to know about something, why not just go where it is happening and watch it happen?' (Babbie 1992 p285). Finally, since this research is rooted in social reality, for the purpose of describing and judging the work, criteria are required that ensure the notions of authenticity and integrity. Using a multiple-data-sources design makes the results more relevant and applicable to a range of situations and also ensures the truthfulness of descriptive data, which strengthens and balances the findings.

The background to the case study provides an insight into how the particular case of family to involve within the research was identified. This was as a result of the experiences encountered within my previous year's professional practice in Family Learning Development. As detailed in chapter one, part of my job description was to find innovative ways to involve more fathers in their children's learning. One of the first activities I experienced that met this remit was a 'Family Dalek Day', organised in November 2009 by the local council and run as a partnership event between the Community Learning team and the Library Service. Being held at a library on a Saturday, it attracted a large number of fathers accompanying their school age children. This offered the opportunity to engage the fathers in an informal dialogue around the potential for similar activities. Many expressed an interest in Family Learning and of these around seventy five provided their contact details for further information. These families were later contacted as part of the group approached to complete the revised questionnaire which was sent out at the beginning of the study.

To capitalise on the success of Dalek Day, Family Learning workshops were organised in a local primary school during the spring term of 2010. Using a male Family Learning tutor, the programme openly targeted fathers. The theme was

Curiosity Kits and the course of six, 2 hour sessions was aimed at creating non-fiction reading packs, themed around the interests and hobbies of individual families. Although the course was considered a success on several levels, it failed to include any fathers and only engaged one grandfather, who only attended one session, so I was unable to use it as the basis for my study.

For the next attempt, a primary school with a young staff team was deliberately chosen as, unusually, it incorporated an equal number of male and female teachers. 'Family Pizza Night' was suggested by parents and staff as a way to include all the family. Over 20 families participated in the session, making and eating pizzas together. This led on to a Family Fire day, in which the 8 strong (all male) local fire and rescue staff team participated and which was attended by over forty families. Unfortunately, during the summer, the school decided to cease delivering Family Learning, citing staff changes and lack of time as major factors. (The summer term events had all involved volunteers from the staff team working outside their usual hours.)

As explained earlier, part of my role involved planning, recruiting staff and delivering Family Learning programmes within the 30 Sure Start Children's Centres within the county. In September 2010, the phone call requesting support for the Fathers Group running within one such centre resulted in the pilot questionnaire and scoping exercise that eventually led to the research study. Having spent a year attempting to set up and research a Family Learning project focusing on involving fathers in their children's learning, the opportunity to consider the research questions from an alternative angle, by focusing on a consideration of a successful on-going project, had arisen. This time the challenge lay in recruiting a male Family Learning tutor who was available on Friday evenings. The previous member of staff for the Curiosity Kits course had left the tutor pool and despite a recruitment campaign, no others were available at the required time. More details of the staff eventually employed are outlined below.

3.4 Participants

a) The 8 families

As mentioned earlier, due to the lack of response to the revised postal questionnaire, it was decided to use the pilot group as the case study participants for this research. This group had all completed the original questionnaire. There now follows an interpretive description of each family involved in the research**.** The information from the fathers' perspective derives from the council's mandatory Community Learning registration forms completed during the second workshop. All the fathers declared themselves and their children white British European Nationals and every family lived within a five mile radius of the Children's Centre. Only one declared a disability and all were currently in full time work. The personal perceptions of the children are based on observations throughout the course of the project. I recognise that these judgements are only one perspective, but offer them to assist in bringing the case study participants to life. The table below gives details of the eight families who agreed to take part in the research.

Table 2: Participating families

Code for family	Child's Age (Years & Months)	Father's Age	Father's Qualifications
Karl	5.4	51	None
Anna	1.10	36	1-4 GCSE's
Jessica	1.7	39	None declared
Emily	2.6	49	HNC No English or Maths
Helena	4	47	B. Engineer (Hons)
Billy	3.6	36	MSc Engineering
Melanie	1.10	19	1-4 GCSE's No English or Maths
Sarah	3.6	37	5+ GCSE's

Karl, as the eldest child in the group, is in the first year at a local primary school. He appears to delight in exploring new ideas and is keen to try things for himself. At the time of the project, he has a new sibling and is finding coping strategies for dealing with the new arrival, who of necessity, takes up much of his father's attention during the sessions.

Anna, one of the youngest, is a very independent member of the group. Self-contained and determined, she is frequently left to her own devices, as her father spends much of his time in the company of his peers. She rarely speaks, but is physically very active, investigating and exploring the boundaries of her world. Her favourite occupations appear to be climbing and tipping out the contents of the toy boxes.

Jessica is the youngest of the child participants. She seems happy to hold her father's hand and observe the other children. She communicates mainly through gestures, but her father remains with her constantly, playing 1:1 with her or carrying her round to watch the others.

Emily and her father are founder members of the group. She spends a great deal of her time observing the older children and tends to use a mixture of sign language and speech, especially when communicating with her father, who is partially deaf. She is close friends with Helena and frequently copies her lead and joins in her games.

Helena the eldest girl appears to be creative, often organising and leading activities. Very close to her father, they interact comfortably, he encouraging her lively imagination and providing the tools to create new games and role-plays.

Billy is a regular member of the group, his verbal reasoning skills and responses to situations often amuse the adults, as he tries to make sense of new language and concepts.

Melanie is a new member of the group. She speaks rarely and appears engrossed in her own little world. Though wary of new faces, she enjoys the stimulation of the staff and displays a cheeky sense of humour in her responses. Her father is the youngest father in the group and seems nervous and unsure, although this may be due to being unfamiliar with the other members, who closely support him.

Sarah is another original group member, she likes to control her environment and play alone with her dolls. Both the boys know her and regularly ask to be involved in her games, but she prefers to do her own thing and tends not to let anyone organise her activities without some persuasion.

Although this group had shown little awareness of Family Learning in their responses to the pilot questionnaire, their regular attendance at the Fathers Group meetings, prior to the research, evidences their collective attitude towards supporting their young children and this offers a good reason to believe that they make a worthwhile focus for a case study. Talking to them over the course of the research makes me aware of their individual recognition of the importance of being involved with their children's development and in some cases, also reveals their personal reasons for doing so. The benefits of using an existing group that is positive towards Family Learning are wide ranging. On a practical level, given the short duration of the study, it assists in building rapport and trust. It is also easier to highlight paternal motivations and offer practical strategies to overcome the barriers to participation. Above all, it facilitates an exploration of the constructive and creative opportunities which can be produced as a result of small-scale investment of time and funding.

b) The 3 Children's Centre staff members

Several members of the Children's Centre staff expressed an interest in being involved in the study. The main participant was the team leader, Mrs Brown. Two development workers, Mr Clarke and Miss Adams were employed to support her. Mrs Brown had particular responsibility for working with groups of people as classified within the government indices of deprivation as 'vulnerable' or 'hard to reach.' The Fathers Group had been brought to my attention a year

before the research took place, when Mrs Brown contacted the council, as she felt they rarely received support from outside agencies, as a result of which, they had become an invisible minority within the local population.

In her late thirties, Mrs Brown was outgoing, friendly and an experienced practitioner. She had worked at the centre for three years and had set up the Fathers Group eighteen months before the study took place. We had worked together to organise several previous events and in each case she had always taken every opportunity to involve the parents in decisions. Having completed her degree in Early Years, towards the end of the research study she was inspired to begin the process of a Masters degree, using her experiences of running the Fathers Group as her research focus. Mrs Brown lived in the area and had an extensive knowledge of local networks and families. She fostered a supportive professional relationship with each family, retaining a detailed knowledge of individual histories. In addition to facilitating their fortnightly meetings, she also spent time consulting and liaising with the fathers, using texts and emails as their preferred method of communication. As a result of this regular contact, she was able to maintain a continuous dialogue with the group, for example sending reminders and information to encourage attendance. This proved a useful form of feedback on several occasions throughout the study.

The other two Children's Centre staff, Mr Clarke and Miss Adams, were in their early twenties. They were mainly responsible for organising and running the crèche that ran during the first half of each workshop. Both also lived locally, had developed a strong rapport with the families involved and were working towards their Early Years practitioner qualifications. Miss Adams had a degree in English and had worked at the centre for two years. A softly spoken member of the team, she took the brunt of the fathers good humoured teasing and was often able to engage quieter children with her gentle approach. Following the completion of the study, she applied to complete her teaching qualification, with a view to becoming a Family Learning tutor. Mr Clarke was in his first year of work at the Centre. He was passionate about sport and played for the local football team. Much of his conversation with the fathers centred around this interest and there was on-going banter around the weekly results. His inclusive,

practical approach made him popular with the children and proved a positive role model for several of the fathers during the study.

c) The Family Learning tutor

Clare had been employed by the Community Learning Service on a regular basis for five years, as a member of their pool team of tutors. She was a mother of two teenage sons, one of whom was visually impaired. With a degree in maths and a strong science interest, she was a knowledgeable practitioner, with a diverse range of Family Learning experience. She was particularly skilled in training teaching assistants and had a sound knowledge of the numeracy curriculum. Clare tended to teach set courses in secondary schools, such as 'Keeping Up With The Children' and when approached was initially wary of the unfamiliar challenge. Not having met the group, her session plans were based on my feedback following the first focus group meeting. Unfortunately, this had the potential for misunderstandings. For example, as she was not familiar with the theme of 'Dungeons and Dragons' a request from one father for activities based around this evolved into a project on 'Fairy Tales'.

On the other hand, the outcomes stated by Clare on her session plans were focused on relevant core Family Learning goals (see appendix 7). She cited her overarching aim for the workshops as *'To engage fathers in fun Family Learning activities with their children with a view to progression to further adult learning*.' Despite recording her evaluation of the first workshop as *'insufficient time to work with the dads, not what they're used to too many activities, children not really interested…I don't think it really worked',* by the end of the research, the fathers had asked her to return to support their book project. The mutual respect and understanding that emerged over the duration of the course was clearly evidenced in later encounters beyond the scope of this study.

3.5 Data collection

a) Procedures

The methods and timetable for data collection are shown in table 3.

Table 3: Framework for Data Collection

Method Schedule & Location	Tool	Participants	Purpose	Format
Scoping exercise & 1st Focus Group meeting Autumn 2010 Children's Centre	Original questionnaire audiotape field notes reflective diary	8 members of local Fathers Group Mrs Brown, Miss Adams & Mr Clarke (children's centre staff)	To establish baseline knowledge and raise awareness of potential barriers and paternal motivation	7 questionnaires completed as part of regular group session Informal discussion
Postal questionnaire Autumn 2010	Revised questionnaire	75 fathers who had previously expressed interest in Family Learning	To gauge interest across county	Postal survey

2 Family Learning briefings January 2011 Children's Centre	Video field notes reflective diary	6 – 10 members of local Fathers Group Mrs Brown, Clare -Family Learning tutor	To gather data on processes, outcomes and determinants of involvement in Family Learning and attitudes to Lifelong Learning	2 x 45 minute theoretical sessions led by Clare, for fathers. Children in crèche with Miss Adams & Mr Clarke

2 Family Learning workshops	Video field notes reflective diary	6 – 10 fathers 6 – 10 children Clare, Mrs Brown, Miss Adams & Mr Clarke	To gather data on opportunities for intergenerational learning.	2 x I hour practical intergenerational sessions to experience and practice concepts.

Interview 1 Interview 2 March 2011	Audio tape	Mrs Brown Clare	To gather data on parent – professional relations.	Semi structured interviews 1 hour each.

2nd & 3rd focus group meetings February & May 2011 Children's Centre	Audio tape field notes & reflective diary	6 -10 members of Fathers Group Mrs Brown, Miss Adams & Mr Clarke -	To gather data on paternal motivations for involvement	2 x 1 hour sharing data and informal discussions around progress of 'Dad's book'.

b) Materials

The first stage of the research was conducted in two ways;

- Through consultations with fellow professionals to shed light on the research questions and inform the planning of the Family Learning project.

- Utilising a questionnaire to establish paternal views, to focus the case study on the most significant issues.

Questionnaires

A questionnaire was sent to all the fathers in the Fathers Group. Below is the matrix to establish the evidence produced and the questions addressed. For each question, I decided how to use the information it would provide. The questionnaire was designed to ensure it related to the themes of the research and the questions were devised to capture responses that shed light on the research questions.

Table 4: Table showing how questionnaires informed research study

Research Question	Target evidence	Question Number
Does Family Learning constitute part of the parental frame of reference for local fathers?	Individual responses to all questions	1 2 3 4 5
What are the factors that motivate paternal involvement?	Barriers. No. of children in family. Convenience.	5 6 1
What impact do fathers say it has on parent - professional relations / Lifelong Learning?	Ranking of benefits.	4
What opportunities arise for intergenerational learning in Family Learning contexts?	Ranking of benefits. Description of Family Learning.	4 2

The original design for the questionnaire (see appendix 2) was based on both my prior experience of recruiting adults to Family Learning projects and

feedback from fathers on previous Family Learning courses. This was underpinned by the findings from my literature review. Many of the tick boxes used phrases or comments made by respondents to evaluative questions on paperwork required for the funding of Family Learning projects. I aimed for a sensible sequence of questions to make the questionnaire easier to complete and help the fathers to feel more comfortable. The design was kept simple, for example, by asking for a maximum of 3 selections and ensuring wording of each question was clear and unbiased.

This early questionnaire influenced and informed the development of the revised questionnaire in two ways. Firstly, it was reviewed to take account of participant responses. Then it was also modified, following feedback around presentation and meaning received from both my supervisor and the staff at the Children's Centre, who supported the fathers in completing the survey. For example, my supervisor highlighted certain questions that made unwarranted assumptions, whilst the CC staff observed that the layout, response set and choice of typeface were as important as the wording of the items, in terms of clarity of meaning. Suggestions included simplifying the text to suit the target audience. Several of the questions were re-phrased to be more appropriate for the fathers, clarify potential misunderstanding and erase inconsistencies. For example, '*barriers*' was used to replace '*disadvantages*', '*I.T'.* became '*Computers'* and '*explains*' replaced '*contextualises*'. Potential bias was addressed by altering the wording. Statements such as '*greater enthusiasm for learning at home*' became '*reinforces things being done at home*' whilst '*Parents need to know what children are being taught*' changed to '*Helps parents to know what's being taught in school*' and '*Formal setting makes it more organised so you know what's been covered*' was simplified to '*Encourages a positive approach to learning.*'

For the revised questionnaire, fathers were asked to rank preferences, to provide additional information. The order of questions was also adjusted, for example, the direct personal question about family structure was moved from the beginning to the end to avoid putting off potential respondents. This input improved the questionnaire and offered more confidence in the results. Finally, it was distributed in the form of a postal survey, to capture the views of a wider

audience. This approach was straightforward, efficient, held no interviewer bias and guaranteed anonymity. However, as Denscombe notes, (2007) I also recognise that the proportion of people who respond to postal questionnaires is quite low.

Only two of the seventy five revised questionnaires were returned, which meant less information to inform the case study. Despite this, I found the process of designing and revising the questionnaire a useful exercise in clarifying my understanding of the research questions and methods. It also emphasised and provided a practical example of the challenges of engagement and reinforced the need for the research, to find ways of encouraging paternal involvement.

The next stage of the research encompassed an in-depth analysis of one particular setting. The focus for this was the Fathers Group, where the original questionnaire had already generated a large amount of interest. The case study was designed around a four hour Family Learning project, divided into two sessions, a fortnight apart. The research design also included two, one hour, staff interviews and two, one hour, focus group meetings for the fathers. Conditions on the ground meant that the focus group discussions evolved into informal 1:1 dialogues, but the data they provided added substantially to the final evidence base. The original schedule was also adjusted later to incorporate an additional one hour focus group meeting, at the request of the fathers.

Focus Groups

Defined by Morgan (1996) as a technique that collects data through group interaction on a topic determined by the researcher, this research tool enabled me to consider whether individual participants were willing to explore their own boundaries, to provoke fresh insights, or test new ideas. In addition, the intention was to examine the motive of the project from the fathers' perspectives, in case competing notions within their intentions created underlying tensions and power issues.

In the first focus group meeting, appendix 3, several factors would be established as swiftly as possible: the 'ground rules', whether every participant had the same intended outcomes and if there are any obvious links or patterns emerging, through familiar exchanges, or recognisable forms of recurring behaviour. I aimed to steer the discussions only to ensure they remained on subject. Above all, I was aware that the use of concepts and language may be open to misinterpretation and therefore my main intention was to be clear and to seek mutual understanding, to avoid the subsequent analysis being flawed (Arksey & Knight 1999). Throughout the process, the assurances set out at the commencement of the study would be repeated, namely that any data captured on the audiotapes would be treated in confidence and any quotes anonymised, to protect the fathers' identities.

Observational field notes and reflective diary

Observational techniques were particularly relevant for this case study, as I spent most of the time in direct contact with the participants and setting. In adopting this data-collecting instrument it was vital to define what was to be documented, paying particular attention to the conversations taking place. Flick (1998) recommended using a combination of three approaches: *descriptive* observations, which provide a broad picture of the process, coupled with *focused* observations that concentrate directly on seeking responses to the research questions and *selective* observations, to clarify the key themes. To achieve this, the data collection incorporated both observational field notes and a reflective diary. Use of the latter generated additional data, which enabled me to explore my understanding and to gain further insight into the research. Above all, it provided distance, which helped make sense of the complexities of the interactions I observed. During data analysis, these two data sets were constantly referred to, to recall the dilemmas of the process and provide an insight into how I approached and tackled them. This also facilitated the creation of a clearer picture of the study and more accurately identified the individual research stages, building horizontal and vertical connections and ultimately creating a clear overview of the work.

Digital videotapes

This data collection method was chosen for several reasons. Firstly, it facilitated an evaluation of the resources, the people, processes and tools available to the Family Learning project under review. Secondly, it provided the staff and fathers involved with an edited version of the project, which they had requested. It was also relevant as an additional means of communication and learning resource, rather than simply a visual chronicle of the events. It proved a useful tool for allowing reviews of events, which underpinned the evidence, balancing the potential weaknesses of the other data collection methods. Both Family Learning workshop sessions were recorded, to ensure the maximum number of interactions and evidence available was captured. In addition, this approach generated a more credible data set than one learning session would offer.

In contrast to these ideas, one of the main limitations of using video as a research tool was its ability to only capture a snapshot of an incident, whilst ignoring the surrounding events. Capturing as much evidence as possible in a variety of ways was essential, as the joint adult – child sessions were extremely interactive. To compensate for this, using both a fixed and a moving camera reflected the descriptive and focused, selective observations approach detailed earlier. It also enabled me to later compare my field notes with the video evidence (see appendix 4 & 5). Using this constant comparative techniques approach enabled me to check the trustworthiness of the evidence (Miles & Hubermann 1994). This proved particularly important in practice, as the setting was a large room and many fathers chose to base themselves out of the line of the fixed camera's focus, which would otherwise have meant that their contributions would have been lost.

Additionally, the video was a reflective tool for fathers to revisit and explore aspects of the sessions from their own perspectives, to identify and expand their personal theories of the value of Family Learning. The analytical strategies were explicitly designed to make use of this mosaic of brief, local narratives to create a bigger, more realistic picture, which explored the fundamental elements of each event. It was hoped that the videotapes would provide a

catalyst for discussion of the issues and emergence of new ideas, amongst both fathers and professional practitioners. As I later discovered, when replaying the tapes to individuals during the second focus group, this particular notion could take some time to develop. Finally, the observations were deliberately naturalistic in nature, and both the fixed and mobile camera had no particular schedule, the operator simply being requested to capture as much activity as possible, to build a more realistic picture of naturally occurring evidence and enable a fairer consideration of the dynamics of the Family Learning taking place.

Interviews

McCracken (1988) describes interviews as investigating below the surface of activities to explore the hidden social and cultural realities expressed through the feelings and experiences of the participants:

> One of the most powerful methods in the qualitative armoury. For certain descriptive and analytic purposes, no instrument of inquiry is more revealing…Without a qualitative understanding of how culture mediates human action, we can know only what the numbers tell us (1988 p9).

I consider the advantage of using interviews is that it allows a mapping out of issues for discussion and ensures pertinent topics are included. As Denscombe notes:

> The data obtained is more detailed and rich, and the face-to-face contact offers some immediate means of validating the data. The researcher can sense if she is being given false information in the face-to-face context in a way that is not possible with questionnaires and less feasible with telephone surveys (2007 p19).

This approach also offered ample opportunities for the interviewees to contribute equally to the process. In this way, the interviews aimed to elicit rich, attitudinal data, and enabled the participants to voice their own epistemological assumptions more easily.

However, I am aware that the *process* of interviewing affects responses. Notions of authenticity and integrity arose and it was necessary to ask indirect questions to gain access to the information required, enabling answers to be

pieced together during the analysis stage of the study. Audiotapes captured evidence and assisted in focusing on both the interviewees' implicit and explicit responses. In addition, the interviews required substantial rapport between interviewer and interviewee, demanding sensitive and ethical negotiation. It was also vital to establish mutual knowledge and to create a constructive rapport, as interviews based on trust elicit more honest responses. This accords with Cornwell (1984) who raised the issue of taped interviews in terms of public and private accounts. I intended to address this issue by clarifying the research relationships with the interviewees at the outset, aiming for a neutral approach and outlining the process, emphasising the fact that the research objectives were non-judgemental and purely an attempt to understand the underlying aims and values of individuals.

The two staff interviews were designed to reflect the professional perspective of the interviewees' experience, to clarify if and how they felt the workshops provided insights into parent - professional relations. The objective therefore, was to attempt to draw a picture of the project from a variety of angles. The policies and expectations of the Children's Centre setting were also considered, prior to the interview with their staff member, because in practice, there were many unwritten, but established meanings and intentions within the context. This was especially relevant in the consideration of early learning as a pre-determinant to Lifelong Learning.

Using my supervisor's recommendations and my own experience of Family Learning projects, I drew up a list of open questions early in the research process, prior to the workshops taking place (see appendix 6). The questions were not ultimately used in the interviews, but provided a useful structure to my observational field notes and reflective diary. They also raised awareness of potential bias: 'The systematic observations to be made, the interviews, should contribute to understanding or resolving the issues identified' (Stake 1975 p17).

Throughout the interviews, issues raised by both the professional practitioners were identified. Transcribing the data enabled me to get closer to these and I became more familiar with the key elements. Subsequent re-readings of the data involved

'Reading between the lines' to see if there are implied meanings contained in the data that are significant in terms of the topic of research. The researcher should also begin to look for things that were not in evidence that might be expected to exist. Silences and spaces have considerable importance for the analysis of qualitative data (Denscombe 2007 p300).

Having transcribed both interviews, I scrutinised the key statements, focusing on those that appeared to shed light on the research question on parent – professional relations. This method of analysis also offered possible interpretations of some of the key incidents raised by the video data which are addressed later.

Fathers Booklet

Although this was not an original part of the data collection, the booklet emerged as an important piece of evidence towards the end of the research study. The roots of the notion can be evidenced in banter and comments made between the fathers during the workshop briefings, appendix 4. The idea became tangible during the second focus group, as the fathers became more familiar with the concepts of Family Learning and began to voice their concerns about the lack of literature written specifically for fathers. At the meeting, the CC staff supported the group to articulate and clarify the rationale behind the booklet and were also asked to choose the title from a list proposed by the fathers. Each family then became responsible for one page and the individual activities developed into email communications amongst the group and later to CC staff, as described in the CC staff interview appendix 6. During the spring, a core group of fathers elicited the help of the Family Learning tutor to form an editing team. This was referred to by one father in the evaluation document appendix 7. The team then collated all the ideas and distilled them into the booklet, which was proofread by CC staff, who also incorporated additional material. The final draft, see appendix 8, was approved by all the members of the Fathers Group, during a meeting in the summer of 2011, before going to print. The local council funded the first print run, with later reprints coming from the Childrens Centre budget.

3.6 Approach to data analysis

a) Procedures

In line with the interpretive methodology underpinning the study, the data analysis will be an on-going, reflexive activity, integral to the research process. At this point I only intend to outline the plans for managing and analysing the data. Initially, I considered a range of approaches (Miles and Huberman 1994, Tesch 1990).I did not intend to use multiple coding approaches, but decided adopting a cumulative approach would best create a coherent, flexible framework. This could offer more opportunities than pre-formed systems, to consider and reflect on the relevance of the research questions, as contexts changed. The following table outlines the process.

Table 5: Summary of data analysis

Data source	Data Collection tool	Purpose and method of analysis	Research question
Questionnaires	7 questionnaires	Responses collated and counted to establish relevance of research questions and inform their individual major and sub themes	All
3 Focus Groups	3 hours of digital audio tape, field notes, reflective diary	Key elements identified from transcription of audiotape, field notes and reflective diary. Categorised to establish sub and major themes for relevance to paternal motivation	Paternal motivation
Digital videos	3.5 hours of observations of families	Categorised for learning domain to establish sub and major themes. Main instigator identified	Inter-generational learning opportunities

Field notes and reflective diary	Written observations of fathers attending 2 x 45 mins briefing sessions with tutor and families attending 2 x 1 hr shared activity sessions	Key elements identified from field notes and reflective diary. Categorised to establish sub and major themes in relation to the processes, outcomes and determinants of involvement in Family Learning and attitudes to Lifelong Learning	Processes, outcomes and determinants of involvement in Family Learning and attitudes to Lifelong Learning
2 Staff interviews	2 hours of digital audio tape	Key elements identified from audiotape. Categorised to establish sub and major themes for relevance to parent / practitioner implications	Parent - professional relations

The evidence will be collated and analysed in these five data sets under each individual research question. The preliminary approach will be to immerse myself in the data, reading the field notes, viewing the video evidence and listening to the audio data of interviews and focus groups. The focus of the data analysis will remain on descriptive techniques, to provide a sound basis for interpretation. The questionnaires will be tabulated and mapped to the research questions. Audio and video evidence will be transcribed and transcriptions scoured for relevant critical incidents.

To establish a means of categorising the themes emerging from the data, I will code each data set (Strauss & Corbin 1990) to identify significant patterns, pinpoint themes and highlight potential links. For example, to inform the research question on Lifelong Learning, the field notes and video from the adult sessions will be used to elicit participants' views. Initially coded into sub themes of factors that motivated or inhibited involvement in Lifelong Learning, these will be further classified into major themes as they are identified. For the research evidence on intergenerational learning, further video data will be scrutinised, incidents compared with the field notes key events identified and transcribed. These will then be codified and organised within a template of four conceptual

categories, revisited and categorised (Miles and Hubermann 1994) under one of three perspectives, depending on whether instigated by a staff, parent or child led initiative.

I will then use a process of interrogation, to create meaning from the evidence and thereby generate broader conceptual frameworks. This effectively allows me to consider how the fathers view the project's values, to create what Stake described as 'a balanced account of perceived strengths and shortcomings' (1975 p30). Finally, the key data sources will be synthesised in order to triangulate the findings. This will bring together the evidence and verify the analysis and interpretations of the data. Viewing the findings through a critically reflective lens will ensure I can comprehend and acknowledge the limitations of the research, which will help to create an ethically sound account, recognising the issues of 'real world' research.

3.7 Ethical issues

Ethical implications were an essential consideration when designing the research, (Fraenkel & Wallen 2009). This was both to protect participants and ensure the data could be used for the fundamental purpose of theory generation and informing my future practice. In order to address my responsibilities as a researcher, I considered a number of questions, broadly based on Denscombe (2007). These included:

> What about the rights and feelings of those affected by the research? Can I avoid any deception or misrepresentation in my dealings with the research subjects? Will the identities and the interests of those involved be protected? Can I guarantee the confidentiality of the information given to me during the research? (Denscombe 2007 p14).

Rationale

In summarising the key ethical issues, a main consideration was to ensure the incorporation of strategies to enhance the trustworthiness and authenticity of the research. This both supported the argument that the inquiry's findings were 'worth paying attention to' (Lincoln & Guba 1985 p290) and ensured participants

were protected from potential researcher bias. It was therefore vital to demonstrate an awareness of a) how personal assumptions affected the research design and choice of methods and b) an appreciation that ethical considerations must be consistently re-appraised throughout the research. As Wellington et al (2005) concluded, the procedures for each research project should be constructed individually and the intention for the case study to be process, as opposed to outcomes, oriented also affected this.

Procedure

An ethics form and research proposal (see appendix 1) was submitted to the University of Exeter Research and Ethics Committee and approval received in October 2009. Further, the British Educational Research Association (BERA 2011) provided a useful framework and assisted in considering the complex themes involved. These included issues around access for vulnerable families, advocacy, informed consent, child protection and duty of care. The range of responsibilities involved also extended to the professional practitioners, research community and my employers, the county council, who part funded the study. As Wellington states: '...there is no room for 'moral relativism' in doing educational research, i.e. there are certain rules which should not be broken' (2004 p57). Following completion of the research study, the approval certificate was revisited and the Ethics Committee approached to clarify if it required updating, due to the very young ages of the children involved. Having reviewed the study procedures, the chair of the committee confirmed that the certificate remained valid.

Anonymity was also crucial in such a small-scale study, together with consideration of the cultural and social viewpoints of individual families involved, to avoid stereotyping. (Bryman 2001) Confidentiality was therefore strictly observed, especially at the focus group and interview stages of the research. All the fathers were assured that all data and transcriptions were anonymised and stored securely. Following completion of the study, the data will be held securely for seven years and then destroyed. Oral and written consent was sought from each adult, both for inclusion in the study and permission for filming of the actual Family Learning project. (Several fathers were prepared to

contribute to the research but not to participate in the video). Each father was also asked to give consent on behalf of his pre-school children. I attempted to ensure that the subsequent permissions provided were evidence of informed consent in several ways; by introducing the required forms following a verbal explanation, and also by including a written description of the research, including the study details and procedures, on each consent form. Essentially, in assessing the ethical issues, a simple, transparent, open approach was applied, emphasising to the fathers that their views were regarded independently and responsibly and treated with sensitivity to individual values and attitudes.

Potential Issues

It was fundamental to examine and acknowledge potential conflicts of interest, for example, in terms of the funding provided by my employer to the organisers of the Family Learning project researched (Burgess 1989). The moral dilemmas that arose from hidden agendas were explored, such as potential personal or individual, participant prejudice towards others. Finally, the risk of data corruption was an important issue, due to the need to justify existence or evidence performance within the current political climate. For example, the Children's Centre involved in the study was operating under threat of closure at the time of the research. Sensitivity to issues of power and authority in the relationship between researcher and researched was also vital. I adopted an inter-subjective stance to the work, where possible (Barnes1979). I was clear about the process for ensuring confidentiality at all times, for which I referred to the data protection policies within my professional setting at the council. This also encompassed clear guidance on the appropriate secure storage of personal information. In addition to all these considerations were logistical issues of funding, time and access, which had to be addressed prior to the launch of the project. These inevitably defined the scope of the research. Nurturing a positive on-going dialogue with colleagues and establishing a clear understanding of the objectives within the professional working relationships from the outset, best addressed most potential difficulties.

Strategies

I used my supervisor to refine my procedures. She received regular progress reports and offered observations and challenges on the methodology, ethics, trustworthiness, and other issues. Vincent & Tomlinson pointed out: 'there are few opportunities for collective parental participation at any level of the education system' (1997 p366).Therefore, the fathers had the opportunity to review the video data and offer comments on whether or not they saw it as a credible interpretation of the reality they experienced. (Although there was little take up of this offer, those who did, made comments that directly connected the findings to one or more personal experiences they had in the process). Focusing on the fathers' perspectives also enabled judgement of events as typical or atypical, provided a means of self-checking individual approaches and aided 'dependability', to ensure results were consistent with the data collected.

In addition to this, to address transferability, examples of the data collection tools, outcomes evidence and data analysis documents are included in the appendices. This access to the research project's paper trail also gives others the ability to transfer the conclusions, or to repeat the procedures. Furthermore, to address issues of dependability and confirmability, a competent peer was employed as an independent reviewer of my research methods (Lincoln & Guba 1985; Patton1990). On completion of the analysis, she examined original transcripts, data analysis documents, my field notes and the text of the thesis itself. She also assessed the ways in which researcher influence was handled.

3.8 Conclusion

Denny (1978) asserted the mark of good research was when a reader felt as though they had actually accompanied the researcher, that they could visit a project and know both how to behave and what to expect there. It is also important to develop a 'sense of other' and maintain a wide-angle lens approach, to ensure a balanced outlook. Overcoming the tendency towards myopia, by retaining a clear view of the construction of a project and remaining constantly alert to unexpected outcomes is vital. As Lincoln and Guba noted:

We stand at the threshold of a history marked by multivocality,
contested meanings, paradigmatic controversies, and new textual forms.
At some distance down this conjectural path, when its history is written,
we will find that this has been the era of emancipation (2000 p185).

In this chapter I discussed the study design and rationale, including the epistemology of my research. I provided a theoretical background to the methodology, justified my decisions and acknowledged their inherent limitations. The framework for the data collection was described, including the materials and methods adopted. The pitfalls that arose and how they were dealt with were also considered, together with an outline of the analysis procedure. Ethical issues were addressed.

I recognise and appreciate the challenges and limits of this work, in the context of the limitations of all similar studies within this field of research. Moreover, as Cronbach (1995) emphasised, there are always a choice of approaches, numerous ways to use resources, and as many individual evaluation styles as there are researchers to interpret a project. Raising, clarifying and comparing all these issues opens up space for debate. Chapter 4 goes on to describe the process of data collection and analysis in more detail.

4. Analysis and Findings

4.1 Introduction

As stated previously, this is an interpretive case study of Family Learning. It uses both deductive and inductive analysis, with the intention of developing themes to inform practice. The main focus of the study is to examine the nature and purpose of Family Learning from a paternal perspective, giving voice to a marginalised group. This is achieved through an exploration of the processes, outcomes and determinants of involvement and a consideration of its potential impact on the culture of parent-professional relations and attitudes towards Lifelong Learning. Being set within the context of a Fathers' Group facilitates an exploration of the factors that motivate paternal involvement and if these could be influential in enabling more men to be involved in their children's learning. This then leads on to a consideration of the opportunities that arise for intergenerational learning within the Family Learning context. I hope in this way, to avoid the danger of separating theory from practice, with a view to informing current understandings within my own professional practice.

Changing work roles after completing the data collection had a profound effect on the research positioning in several ways. On one level, it limited my ability to check data and re-visit the context for additional supporting evidence. However, the distance it provided enabled me to extract myself from the political ideologies of the context and make more significantly reflexive and neutrally objective observations of my practice.

This chapter presents an analysis of the data, explains the process I used for this and summarises the findings. The chapter is organised by data source. For each of the five sources (questionnaires, focus groups, videos, observational notes and interviews) the process of analysis is described and the findings presented. I hope this shows the research to be more than an externally imposed and designed study, by its emphasis on the importance of cultural context and by remaining open to unexpected information that emerges during the analysis, e.g. through supervision and peer debriefings. The chapter begins with a description of my first encounter with the members of the Fathers Group.

Originally planned as the first Focus Group, it took place in November 2010. The description provided helps to articulate the initial challenges and also contextualises events that occur later. The issues encountered on the Welly Walk also act as an introduction and context to the data sources described later.

'We're all going on a Welly Walk...you can come if you like.'

This was the announcement that greeted me from a staff member as I arrived at the Centre, ready to deliver a pre-planned focus group. A year of diplomatic negotiations, requests, proposals, discussions, cancellations, re-arrangements and disappointments, flashed through my head. Torn between frustration and fury at yet another let-down, I struggled to contain myself. I asked to speak to Mrs Brown, who ran the group. 'Oh she went off sick earlier' came the cheerful reply, as adults and children dragged on hats and boots, scarves and coats 'You can stay here and wait for us, if you prefer?' I was offered as someone caught sight of my face and read my thoughts. There seemed no solution, if I stayed, alone, it would just be yet another wasted trip. I reluctantly agreed to shelve my carefully planned script and turn out into the cold and wet of a foggy November evening, not expecting to achieve anything, but unwilling to appear totally un-co-operative.

We trudged along for a while, staff at the front and rear of the straggle of pushchairs and children, through the 1960's designed social housing estate. Cars negotiating the chicanes and traffic calming, headlights momentarily illuminating the group as spray from the puddles threatened to drench the youngest walkers. Even the street lights were struggling to cut through the drizzle and fog. I tried hard not to think of the warm centre and welcoming cuppa I had originally been anticipating. Fathers discussed the latest news events and weekend sports fixtures across their offspring's' heads as we headed on over a bridge across a stream. Why didn't anyone talk about the Billy Goats Gruff, or get the children to stamp their feet to chase away the troll, I wondered.

I was desperately attempting to think of a way to make conversation with people I couldn't see or hear very well and who certainly didn't seem too keen to talk to

me. Head down, trying not to notice the mud creeping over my city smart boots and office suit, I smiled at the little faces and trusting hands that sought me out. At least the children seemed not to mind me being there. Eventually, I found myself alongside an older parent, who I later learned was one of the founder members of the group. Noticing me walking beside his child, he opened up the conversation with a challenge 'who is this stranger in our midst'? He seemed to want me to know I was wasting my time trying to collect evidence. I explained I'd heard about the group and was just keen to see what they did. 'We're not your typical Dads group,' he said rather defensively. Trying to keep my patience, which was beginning to wear a little thin, I asked what he meant. He replied with a definition of council-run groups for teenage boys with multiple families. I responded that that was precisely why they interested me.

As we approached the unlit footpath leading to the recreation ground, one child near me hesitated, reluctant to embrace the darkness. I dug in my pocket for a tiny torch. Delighted, she proceeded to wave it at everyone, prompting a member of staff to warn her not to shine it in people's eyes. I wondered if I had overstepped my role as neutral outsider and, not for the first time, how I would ever be able to gain the trust of such a particular group enough to carry out any sort of participant-led research.

As we stood around in the play area, excited toddlers clambered over equipment slippery with rain. I began to think my line manager would demand to know why I hadn't carried out an activity Health and Safety risk assessment. The excitement heightened as pitch darkness now added to the whole adventure. To distract myself from the thought of all the explaining I'd be doing if I returned to the office empty-handed yet again, I manoeuvred my way next to a couple of the dads with pushchairs. This time, they made no attempt to avoid me, although in a way, there was little option of escape, given the confines of the playground. It seemed as if I had somehow past their first test.

I waited for them to speak, trying to identify their children on the play equipment. After a few minutes of silence, I asked how old one child was, noting how he seemed to be climbing higher and shouting louder than anyone else. This seemed to strike a chord, as his father confided that he was an original founder

member, but now the child had started school he was really almost too old. His dad was concerned that others weren't joining in sufficient numbers to secure the groups' future. I moved round the scattered group, approaching individuals as they stood by the roundabout and slide, trying to give everyone the chance to chat if they chose. One said he couldn't leave work early on a regular basis, so his attendance was limited. A third mentioned he'd heard of my work because both his daughter and his new partner attended the local Young Mums group with their babies. Token gestures perhaps, but it felt as though maybe they weren't quite as disinterested as they at first appeared.

As dusk deepened into darkness, Mr Clarke, Miss Adams and the fathers rounded up the children, who by now very tired, were starting to fall over in the mud and crash into the wire mesh fencing around the play area. One toddler came to hold my hand. Setting off back to the centre, her father walked beside me and explained that the little girl was missing her mum, as his partner was the main carer, but was away for a couple of days. The child was not used to him being around and until recently, didn't look to him, but now because of the 2 hours they spent in the group, she would hold his hand and ask him for help. I began to realise there was a lot more to this group than was evident on first glance, as we approached the lights of the Centre and the welcome return to a world I recognised.

4.2 Analysis of questionnaires data

Following on from the original questionnaire, which had been completed by the local Fathers Group (see appendix 2), seventy-five revised questionnaires were sent out to fathers who had expressed an interest in Family Learning projects during Community Learning taster sessions at local libraries, over the previous three months. Each questionnaire included a post-paid envelope and pen, to encourage completion. As noted in Chapter 3, this approach typically elicits very few responses, but was necessitated by several limiting factors, including time and funding restrictions. Despite an extended deadline, the response was extremely poor, only two respondents returning their forms, one of which is included in the appendix. Unfortunately, I did not have the resources to follow

this up further. Despite this, I found the process of designing and revising the questionnaire a useful exercise, because it produced several positive outcomes in terms of the planned research. For example, it emphasised some of the issues surrounding the notion of giving a voice to a marginalised group. The poor response to the postal survey, despite targeting fathers who had expressed an interest in Family Learning, also provided a practical example of the challenges of engagement, which is a key Family Learning issue.

Due to the lack of revised questionnaires returned, to ensure consistency, I returned to the seven original questionnaires and used these to provide some initial information to inform the procedure for the rest of the study. This data set therefore includes seven original questionnaires, completed in September 2010 by the members of the Fathers' Group (see appendix 2 for examples).

Initial / sub themes

The questionnaire was specifically designed to inform the research questions. Analysis of the range of responses in these seven questionnaires also contributed to the development of both the observation schedule and the staff interview coding frame. For example, it highlighted the respondents' preference for practical activities, e.g. model making, which encouraged the tutor to include paper plane making within the first workshop.

Major themes

Lack of prior knowledge

Only one respondent had heard of the term Family Learning. When offered a range of definitions of Family Learning, most respondents chose '*learning through play*', which was perhaps a reflection of the age of their children. Some questions proved confusing. For example most fathers did not answer the question; 'Do you see any **dis**advantages to participating in Family Learning?' or put a question mark. When asked to describe any disadvantages, one stated '*it sounds great*' and one wrote '*more confident*'.

Interest in expanding knowledge

All replied positively when asked if they would take part in an organised Family Learning activity at a convenient time and place. *'New skills to use at home together'* and '*practical activities'* were the most popular activities chosen. Only one respondent used the opportunity to add a comment: *'What is Family Learning?'*

These themes reinforced the informal findings from the original Children's Centre staff feedback, which suggested a genuine lack of understanding about Family Learning amongst the group. Additionally, the findings indicated an interest in learning more, which had also been reported during the informal discussions.

Evidence linked to findings

The evidence within the main themes that emerged from the analysis of the questionnaires was then interpreted under the relevant research questions, for example;

Does Family Learning constitute part of the parental frame of reference for local fathers?

All the respondents had children under 16, yet only one indicated that he had heard of Family Learning. He described it as learning new ways to support your children. This was his only definition, which suggested he had not had a great deal of first-hand experience of the activity. Three parents did not tick any description. In these cases, the children's ages ranged from 6 weeks to 5 years, so their ages did not appear to have any effect on their fathers' knowledge. This suggests that Family Learning did not constitute part of the parental frame of reference for this group of local fathers. Since all but one also stated that they had never participated in any organised learning activity as a family, it could be assumed this was the case. On the other hand, all the respondents were members of the Fathers Group, which in itself could be said to constitute an

organised learning activity.

What impact do fathers say Family Learning has on parent – professional relations / Lifelong Learning?

Most of the fathers chose two of the six benefits offered. The highest ranked response was that interaction with other families increased opportunities for community involvement. This was closely followed by the notion that it improved adult – child relationships. One father stated that it developed independent learning skills, another that it boosted everyone's self-esteem and confidence and one also ticked that everybody gained skills at the same time. However, none of the participants considered Family Learning generated greater enthusiasm for learning at home, or reinforced and contextualised what is happening at school. This is significant for this study, and in addition, the fathers did not appear to value the concept that the formal setting made it more organised, so they could know what had been covered or that parents needed to know what their children were being taught.

What are the factors that motivate paternal involvement?

When asked if they would take part in an organised Family Learning activity if it was at a convenient time and place, five agreed, one said no and one left the response blank. When asked to choose three activities they would most like to do, two did not respond. Of the remaining questionnaires, most chose new skills to use at home together and practical activities e.g. model-making.
One of the main outcomes from the analysis of the questionnaire data was that it contributed to the development of both the Focus Group and observation schedules, as will be seen in the following sections.

4.3 Analysis of focus groups data

This data set includes evidence from three focus group meetings. The first took place in November 2010 (see appendix 3) and incorporated the Welly Walk, followed by an informal discussion. It involved eight members of the Fathers Group and the purpose was to highlight potential issue and establish the participants' perspectives on the project. The second occurred in February 2011 and was intended to discuss selected video extracts from both Family Learning workshops. It included six members of the Fathers Group and the aim was to consolidate the data on paternal motivations for involvement. The final focus group took place in May 2011 and was designed to gather general reflections on the study, it involved six fathers.

The focus groups were initially planned as formal discussions, in line with Denzin and Lincoln's view of focus groups as a site of education (2000), with the intention of providing an opportunity for developing understandings of social phenomena. However, it soon became clear that I would be unable to accomplish my aim in this way. As described in the field notes, the circumstances and context of the focus group sessions were not conducive to formal discussions for several reasons. Firstly, the children involved were generally younger than anticipated and all required much more parental attention than planned for. Secondly, the barriers between a well-established group of male fathers and a female, previously unknown, researcher created difficulties in terms of power and trust, which made it more important that the first session in particular, established a positive and collaborative relationship. Finally, it had taken months of careful planning and negotiation to engender a productive atmosphere in terms of this research. Whilst recognising the need to apply rigorous confidentiality and anonymity procedures, I was also aware that simply arriving with the required paperwork and expecting the group to sign up risked engendering a sense of distrust which could destroy any chances of the project taking place. This has also been found in similar projects (Young et al 2007).

Being reluctant to lose the opportunity of conducting the study, I had to balance the practical requirements of the fathers with the needs of the research and my

employer, who was funding the Family Learning project. These important ethical responsibilities, as indicated in Chapter 3 over-rode any desire to pursue the research (Wellington 2004), and resulted in the original plan being adapted to incorporate time to build mutual respect, which in turn reflected the essence of the work. For these reasons, the three focus groups evolved into informal, open conversations with individual fathers. Interestingly, these captured useful evidence in terms of personal, real-life experiences and observations, which may have been less likely to emerge in a more formal, group interview situation.

Initial / sub themes

The audio data of the focus groups was transcribed (see appendix 3 for example) and the process of analysis began with an initial coding of the evidence to identify possible themes around the issue of paternal motivation. This was a systematic process, to reduce the potential for bias from pre-existing theories or professional knowledge. The elements identified in the summary of analysis were extracted from the fathers' actual comments during the focus groups. The initial (sub) themes included issues such as the organisation of learning, the framework of activities, the fathers' paternal competencies, location and timings of delivery and the participants' prior experiences of education.

Major themes

The initial / sub themes were then grouped under one of five major conceptual categories: sociocultural repertoires, curriculum, logistics, power and gender / parenting differences. The evidence for each theme was then interpreted into the main findings on paternal motivation in terms of barriers or opportunities for involvement as detailed in Table 6.

Evidence linked to findings

Table 6: Breakdown of analysis process for focus groups data

Data	Initial / Sub	Major	Evidence

	theme	themes of paternal motivation	linked to findings
Sarah's father: *'I guess it depends when people can get out of work as well, (murmurs of agreement and nods from others).*	Attendance limited by work commitments		Barrier: In the current economic climate financial need was prioritised over 'family time'.
Billy's Father: *'I'm supposed to be in work 'til 4, but I've got an agreement with my boss every other Friday that I can leave at half past 3.*	Most of the fathers wanted the workshops on Friday evenings, as they saw this as 'family time'.	Socio cultural repertoires of participation	
Helena's father: *'I think that's partly why some fathers I know have come, then not come afterwards, just 'cos time of work and getting out is hard.'*			Barrier: Timings for fathers were very limited by other family responsibilities.
Sarah's father: *'People are having to work a bit longer than they're wanting to, to make sure they aren't the one missing when it comes to er, evaluating jobs'.* Billy's father: *'Yeah, you always think family time is important, but...when do you do it?'*			

One father explained that his partner was the main carer and his daughter was very close to her, but as a result of attending the Fathers' Group she now held his hand and asked him for help.	Child often more used to father not being around.		Opportunity: 1:1 time spent together in the group encouraged intergenerational bonding.
2 fathers discussing workshop format: *'You'd be linking with stuff you do as a father, as opposed to as a parent? Because there are plenty of things to do, like books for parents.'*	Insufficient information for fathers wanting to interact with their children.	Curriculum	
Helena's father: *'The other part of that is that because fathers like structure, there is actually a programme; we know what we're doing, we knew that we were doing this now, we know what we're doing in 2 weeks' time, I don't know, but I'll look on my calendar and see what it is and it's there! 'Whereas mums just turn up and they don't care what they're doing, but we're like, what're we doing next time? So there is a structure and there is a plan, but there's not a set itinerary.'*	Framework for activities.		Opportunity: Clearly defined pre-planned structure without limiting agenda.
One father said that although a founder member of the group, his child was really too old: *'I think it's a worry, as this group gets older, there'll be a time when we run out of enthusiasm, or because they're just not getting anything out of it. But there's no-one else coming in behind and that's the danger'.*	Fathers were concerned by insufficient numbers to secure the groups' future.	Logistical issues	Barrier: Group only open to pre-school families.

Another father had heard of the group because both his daughter and his new partner attended the Young Mums group with their babies. Helena's father: *'I'm probably the furthest now, the older core is from ***, but there are new people from here.'* Sarah's father: *'Since we moved up here, we've had four join us, - I mean, we were actually down to two of us.* Helena's father: *'When we came here, that's when it started to work.'*	Family links to the Children's Centre. Convenient venue crucial to attendance - needs to be close to young families.		Opportunity: Familiarity of setting encouraged attendance.
'I guess little things like the recipe for the biscuits we made here, ...if I go looking for a recipe tomorrow, which one of the 150 recipe books that she's got do I look in? Whereas I can open this book and oh, that's what we need there, let's do some cooking!'	Several fathers raised the issue of simple appropriate resources being easily accessible	Power	Opportunity: Preference for gender specific activities focused on fathers rather than parents.

Helena's father: *'See there's two sides to it really: why d'you start coming in the first place, 'cos that's the hardest bit for fathers, is to actually get anywhere in the first place.* Others nod in agreement. Billy's father: *'just um, it's not fear, but the apprehension of either taking your child on your own somewhere, or, well – this is something that Mums do.'*	Cultural issue of male competence in participating in offspring's early years development All male environments creates particular atmosphere.	Gender / parenting differences	Barrier: Assumption that child care is maternal role.
Sarah's father: *'But I think we've managed to avoid what some playgroups do, if there's a new person, we talk to them. A lot of playgroups, you walk in and you end up sitting in a corner, and they all get a cup of coffee and you think 'oh'.* Emily's father: '*But then that was almost like it for the first few weeks though, 'cos everyone was new'.* Sarah's father: '*Actually, you're right, because I remember, you know, getting home and waiting for the questions: 'Who goes there?' 'Well, there's Helena, Helena's father, um'....shrugs. I think it works well too, because it's so relaxed. You know, you come in and if you're not having a good day, its fine, Sarah can go and play, I can talk to somebody and just sound off a bit if you need to.'*	Mutual understanding and shared focus on children encourages trust and empathy.		Opportunity: Male support network - built on trust and respect enhances participation

4.4 Analysis of video data

This data set includes videos of two intergenerational Family Learning sessions of one hour each. Both sessions involved between six and ten fathers and their pre-school children, three staff from the Children's Centre (Mrs Brown, Miss Adams and Mr Clarke) and Clare, the Family Learning tutor. Two cameras were used on each occasion, one static to give a wide angled perspective and one moving, to capture close-ups of individual family activities. As described earlier, both these workshops took place immediately following the adult workshop briefing sessions. They followed a familiar Family Learning model:

> '…which concentrates on learning which brings together different family members to work on a common theme…the focus is on planned activity, in which adults and children come together, to work and learn collaboratively' (Ofsted 2000 p5).

In this approach, a recognised core principle is that learning is two-way and is evaluated from an intergenerational perspective. The intention was to gather data on the opportunities for intergenerational learning within the curriculum of Wider Family Learning. This focuses beyond literacy to themes such as art and crafts and has been shown to have greater success in attracting participants from under-represented groups (Ofsted 2000).

Having viewed all the video data several times, I began by comparing it with the observational data, using a process of deductive analysis, with reference to the research question, to pinpoint examples of where intergenerational learning experiences appeared to be taking place. Twenty-four events were considered as the main critical incidents and later checked in two ways, by dialogue with individual participants and asking fathers to view the videos. This also identified which incidents the professionals focused on and if these were different to the fathers' choices. The resulting list was a combination of shared incidents, identified by several participants, plus a range of 1:1 occurrences, highlighted by individuals.

Once these incidents had been identified, they were transcribed and formatted. As in previous sections, an inductive analytical approach was then applied, to code the themes that had arisen from the primary analysis (Silverman 2000). This began with a description of each incident, attempting to capture the fathers' interpretation of each activity, to consider why and how they adopted a particular approach. (See appendix 5 for example of coded transcript). Similarities were then noted between incidents in the data, which enabled categorisation of the interactions.

Initial / sub themes

It was necessary to develop an analytical coding framework to capture the key themes. I needed to balance the limitations of using brief excerpts of video for interpretation, by categorising each incident in several ways, allowing further exploration of participant interpretations and attitudes towards these. An inductive, thematic approach was therefore applied, to create summary categories that captured the key aspects of the themes emerging from the data. Originally, I had intended this to be based on two evaluative tools:
a) Leuven's Involvement Scale (1994) which assesses a child's level of involvement with his or her environment and is used as the foundation for research, structure and programming in Early Education Excellence Centres.
b) Bertram's (1996) Adult Engagement Scale, a modification of Laever's (1994) Adult Style Observation Schedule, designed to assess the effectiveness of the teaching within a setting.

However, the Family Learning focused intergenerational perspective of the research demanded a broader conceptual template. The Early Years Framework appeared to offer a flexible approach to gauging the quality of the adult – child interactions. After reviewing the evidence, this approach was revised and refined (Cresswell, 2002) to suit the intergenerational Family Learning context and environment. The incidents were eventually categorised within the structure of four themes, or inductive codes: academic, physical, emotional and affective domains. These were defined as follows:

Affective Interaction: This category encompassed behaviours that occurred when a child was not engaged in other classifications and examples under this definition included general socialising, chatting, mixing with others, sharing, role-play, imaginative play and following directions.

Emotional Interaction: This category coded behaviours such as seeking comfort or attention, specific body language, especially eye contact, verbal humour and silent but significantly close sequences of 1:1 engagement between father and child, for example, showing affection or interest.

Physical Interaction: This category included behaviours that involved the mastering or refining of active or manual skills and activities requiring co-ordination or manipulation, for example, balancing, crawling, throwing, catching, running, building and using equipment.

Academic Interaction: This category incorporated any activity generally classified as 'educational' and included counting, recognising names, colours, patterns or shapes, reading, sequencing and ordering, fine motor skills, looking at books and listening to stories.

The central issue soon emerged, as I noted that in practice, all these definitions overlapped, in particular, the emotional and affective domains. Therefore, some incidents demanded a high level of decision-making, to situate them within the four classifications. To overcome this, I used my experience of intergenerational learning within Family Learning contexts to assist in the interpretation of the evidence, in line with Charmaz who observed: 'How do structure and context serve to support, maintain, impede or change these actions and statements?' (2003 p94).

I also recognised that the data was the lived reality of these fathers, not necessarily representative of a generalisable truth. I therefore revisited the original video data to determine the events leading up to and immediately following each incident. Other factors, such as the actual time of each incident, facilitated a better determination of the appropriate context for learning. For example, both workshops took place between 4 and 6 pm on Friday evenings,

after many of the staff and parents, had experienced all the demands of a working week. Additionally, events that occurred towards the end of a workshop may also have been the result of the young children being tired and hungry.

Major themes

I then classified each of the twenty-four critical incidents in question, under three categories: adult led, child led, and jointly led (appendix 5). A simple procedure of different coloured highlighters on the transcription record provided a visual aid which assisted in dealing with the large quantities of raw data. Repeated scanning of these transcripts also enabled patterns and significances to be identified (Strauss & Corbin 1990). During this process, how these fathers reacted to the workshops became clearer, which helped identify the potential learning taking place.

Evidence linked to findings

As discussed earlier, interpreting the data required a process of cumulative analysis (Miles and Hubermann 1994); a basic description of how the above concepts and constructs related to each other and a consideration of the ways, if any, in which they acted on and / or influenced each other. This attempt to create horizontal and vertical connections aided recognition and identification of the various personal learning strategies, to establish what the fathers took from each experience. A table was then produced showing a summary of the results and findings, an example of which is included here (see appendix 5 for further examples).

Table 7: Extract from table showing summary of critical incidents

Data	Sub theme	Major theme
Incident 1	**Affective**	
Sarah's father counts on his fingers: '1, 2, 3 bears', picks up a doll to be Goldilocks. Sarah watches.	Father attempts to apply idea from tutor-led introduction.	
Her father talks about sizes, gesturing with his hands: 'can you find something big or small, a big book, a small book?'	Concept of size; first abstract – hand gestures, then related to concrete objects.	Adult led
Sarah hesitates, he points helpfully, 'if that's a big book, can you find me one that is smaller?'		
She looks through the books: 'That one?'		
He asks 'is that bigger or smaller?'	Child unresponsive.	
She plays with her doll and pretends to ignore him.		
'Do big with your hands. Show me what big is.' Sarah waves her fingers.	Father returns to practical gestures.	
Father asks 'Is it big like that?' stretching to arm's length.	Child initially rejects, and then withdraws, but when he persists, responds with concrete object but makes no verbal or eye contact.	Jointly led
Sarah: 'No!' and draws the net curtain around to shut him out.		
He continues; 'Small?' indicating with his hands. She picks up a toy and pushes it through the curtain. 'That's small' he agrees.		
He glances self-consciously at me and gets three pillows to be the beds.	Father continues, but changes approach, using imaginative play. Child begins to join in, responding to role-play through dolls.	
Sarah watches, holding the doll.		
Father: 'Put her in the small bed', she obeys.		
Father snores to indicate the doll is asleep. Sarah starts to smile.		
Father: 'Who's coming back? What will he say?'	Child takes lead showing understanding of sequence of events.	Child led
Sarah hesitates, then in a really animated deep voice: 'Get out of my bed'!		
Her father laughs and Sarah grins broadly.		

Both workshops produced a similar number of incidents within each category. From this it could be inferred that the range of critical incidents pinpointed within the evidence reflected a cross section of activities naturally occurring throughout the process. Additionally, to ensure an unbiased and inclusive approach, having selected the incidents, I checked that all the families were represented, as can be seen in figure 2.

Figure 2: Graph showing coded intergenerational learning data
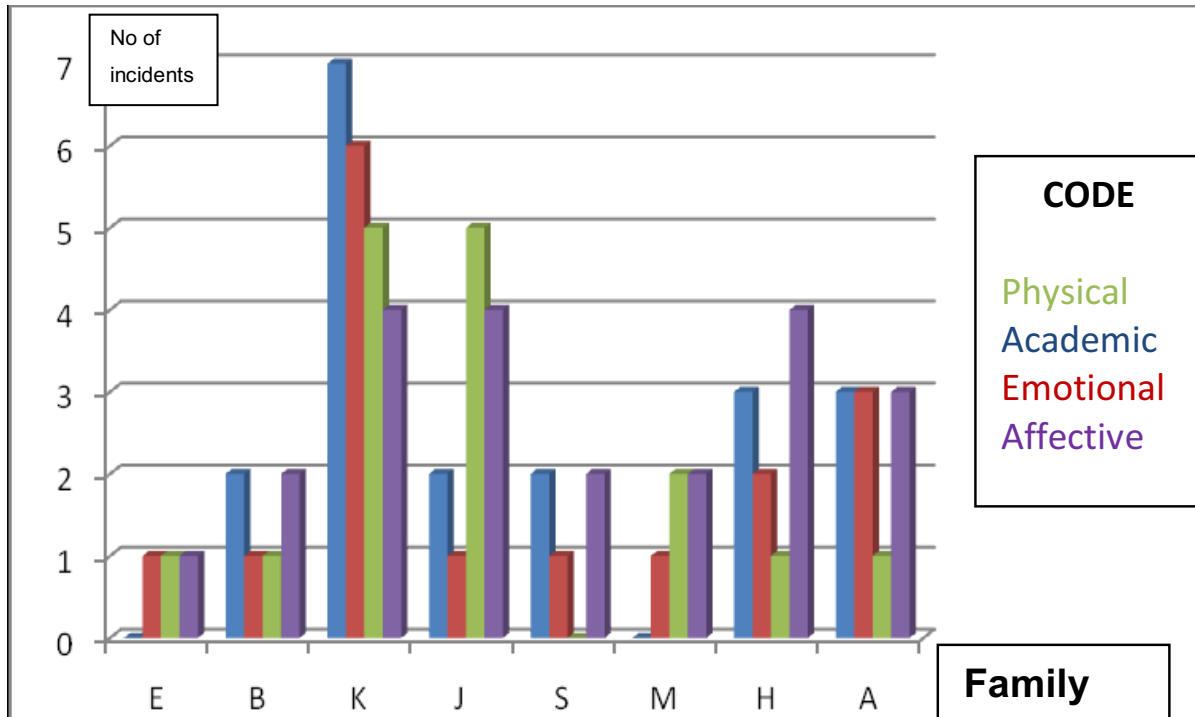
The highest number of critical incidents occurred within the affective domain. These activities were closely followed by academic learning opportunities in quantity. When given the data, Mrs Brown, Miss Adams and Mr Clarke identified the former as anticipated, since this form of interaction could be predicted to dominate in the regular Fathers' Group meetings, but expressed an element of surprise at the latter evidence, stating that they felt that the academic learning opportunities were usually much less prevalent. Moreover, when the incidents were analysed according to who initiated them, it soon became evident that the majority were jointly initiated activities, which suggested that most of the identified learning opportunities occurred as a direct result of close adult / child collaboration; intergenerational learning.

Intergenerational learning themes linked to findings

Affective - The total number of incidents was 22, of which 5 were adult, 4 child and 13 jointly initiated. In general, if the activity lead was shared, positive gains

e.g. shared understanding, were evident in body language and verbal interactions. Father's presence boosted confidence and encouraged child participation / success in activities. Fathers were able to copy others ideas to initiate and extend activities and also had the opportunity and professional support to develop and implement coping strategies. On the other hand, the children were sometimes unwilling to co-operate until fathers followed or responded to their needs. Some fathers became over-involved in the activity, forgetting the child. One family clashed over ideas / lead and one father interrupted his child to implement the activity, which led to it failing.

Emotional – In total, 16 incidents were identified, of which 3 adult, 4 child and 9 were jointly initiated. In general, the children flourished with 1:1 attention. Some children became totally absorbed in an activity because their father demonstrated his belief in it. One child retained his father's attention with positive behaviour strategies and one father evidenced an increased awareness of his child's abilities and vocabulary. However, if a father was unable to engage or his child lost interest, he tended to feel he'd failed. Often all were distracted by / more involved with their peers. Fathers were sometimes unable to see their child's perspective.

Physical – Again, a total of 16 incidents, 7 adult, 5 child and 4 jointly initiated. Generally, the fathers gained from the professional support for ideas to engage their children, who enjoyed the opportunity to share, lead and contribute to ideas. Several children responded to praise and were more willing to try new challenges with their fathers support. Most fathers were able to model physical activities for the children to copy and often they appeared to enjoy the opportunity to share physical activities not available at home. In contrast to this, one parent became over competitive and failed to take account of his child's needs. Some were unable / unwilling to attempt any new activity. Fathers needed to know their child's capabilities to guide choices and ensure success. One child was tempted to cheat to impress his father.

Academic – 19 incidents in total, 5 adult, 4 child and 10 joint. Overall, most fathers were able to pitch the activities to suit their child's personal interest / capability. Several of the children were able to apply abstract concepts through

imaginative play. Most enjoyed an audience, which encouraged perseverance and success. However, several children were unwilling to be limited to the activity and sometimes the activity was too challenging and the father was unable to consider an alternative approach. One found it hard to allow his child time to process information and also tended to end activities abruptly.

4.5 Analysis of observational data

This data set includes field notes, which were an immediate observational account of what happened and a reflective diary. The diary entries were completed up to 24 hours later, which enriched the descriptive accounts and contributed to my interpretation of events. The data set includes descriptive accounts of the 45 minute tutor-led section and the hour long intergenerational part of the two Family Learning workshops. Both workshops took place in January 2011 and involved between six and ten fathers and Clare, the Family Learning tutor. Clare had designed the workshops on Family Learning principles, using Fairy Tales as the basis for demonstrating opportunities for learning. This subject was chosen as a result of discussions in the first focus group meeting, around shared hobbies or interests, where two keen sailors suggested boating for a workshop theme, whilst one father mentioned how much both he and his son enjoyed playing 'Dungeons and Dragons'. When Clare heard the options, she decided the latter was a more suitable subject for an indoor, winter setting and adapted it to the Fairy Tales theme to make it more accessible for all the fathers.

Extract from field notes:

Workshop 1: 'But will anyone turn up?'

It was the first Friday of 2011. The excitement and sparkle of Christmas seemed long gone. I turned onto the estate, negotiating speed bumps and blinding headlights, the scene coming into focus as heater and wipers do battle with the damp and cold. I negotiated my way carefully past the mothers, clustered around the pushchairs at the school gates, hunched under umbrellas, sheltering from the driving rain.

As I parked, I watched a father alone in the shadows across the road, waiting for the school bell. He leaned against the fence, turning away from the wind, shielding a match, which illuminated his features, as he tried to ignite a cigarette. On the radio, the news reported on the continuing hunt for the killer of a local girl, murdered at Christmas. The announcer closed the bulletin with news that research had established this coming weekend as the flattest weekend of the year.

Beyond the CCTV and barbed wire, the Children's Centre was brightly lit, welcoming, the gates thrown open, figures visible inside, busy, preparing the welcome. Security codes, I.D.badges flashed, smiles, warm greetings from the staff: 'Hi! All ready to roll?' Pushchairs emerging through the gloom, the buzzer starting, little fingers demanding attention, anxious faces pressed to the glass doors. The sense of positive enthusiasm was upbeat and infectious; the first 'graveyard shift' of the new term, yet the sense of excitement was tangible. Miss Adams passed me to open up the room: 'Let's run with it!' As the fathers arrived, they settled their children in the crèche. It was taking much longer than I had expected, I chatted to Clare. Still no-one emerged, so she put her head round the door 'We're ready', returned to confide in me; 'I don't think they like being told what to do'. I was unsure if she meant the Children's Centre staff or the fathers.

Eventually, some twenty minutes after our planned start, two fathers emerged from the kitchen and slowly approached us, complaining; 'There's no-one in the kitchen to make the tea'. I realised they were testing Clare. The next two arrived with cups of coffee, which slopped and spilled as they walked. 'We need a cloth fairy' they shrugged. This time she responded –'Oh yes, my boys think we have a dishes fairy and a cleaning fairy in our house too'. The fathers grinned at each other, as others slowly joined them until there were seven fathers around two tables. Forty-five minutes behind schedule, we began.

Initial / sub themes

Evidence of a range of potential perspectives, attitudes and observations on the

processes, outcomes and determinants of involvement in Family and Lifelong Learning were identified, both within the parent – professional interactions and during the fathers' informal peer conversations. These were organised under five themes, derived from both the research question and the reviewed literature; prior experiences of learning, power issues, curriculum organisation, parenting / gender and sociocultural repertoires.

Prior experiences

As I consider all stages of learning as being closely connected, general perspectives on education were important in understanding the reasons behind fathers' responses to particular initiatives or concepts. Evidence of their views arose almost immediately, during the introduction to the first session, when Clare was attempting to establish prior knowledge. She asked a simple opening question to introduce the topic. Most of the fathers appeared aware of the answer, but wary of committing themselves so early in the process. The atmosphere was tense, indicated by the body language of both professional and parents, who had not previously met. The fathers showed general reluctance to participate, the youngest raising a verbal challenge, whilst another requested clarification before responding. Generally, they appeared unsure of what was being asked of them. There may have been several reasons for this, including a lack of prior communication and discussion around expectations for the session, which was reinforced by later comments. However, the group reactions also highlighted the fact that the topic chosen for the workshops was based on a chance suggestion by one father. This was then interpreted by Clare into the Fairy Tales topic, which in practice, initially at least, did not necessarily fit well with the majority of the group.

Lifelong Learning has the potential to add both depth and breadth to an individual's personal learning experience. It can be regarded as an on-going developmental continuum, which extends the role of learning beyond home, school and work, more specifically defined by the European Commission as; 'learning opportunities from childhood to old age in every single life situation.' (eacea.ec.europa.eu/llp/ accessed 14/2/2012). Examples from the data included an incident that occurred whilst fathers were completing the paperwork at the

beginning of session two. This required information on the fathers' academic qualifications as a funding requirement for the project. Generally regarded by both professionals and parents as an un-necessary barrier on introductory Family Learning provision, this demand was frequently inaccurately recorded, for various reasons. The data analysis reflected this view and Clare, who also considered that this requirement was irrelevant to the groundwork of first step provision, attempted to reassure the group, by asking for suggestions of any individual qualifications they particularly rated. One father volunteered a theatrical productions certificate for sword fighting, which raised a few smiles, however, the anxiety raised by the request remained evident, as others continued to express their concern for the demand for information. In a further attempt to use humour to defuse the situation and bring it down to a manageable level within the group, one father proposed an alternative approach, offering to record a British Swimming Certificate as a BSc. The group's reactions highlighted a significant finding in the research, as it suggested to me that most of the fathers did not necessarily value formal educational qualifications within their own cultural repertoires, but at the same time, were keen to recognise individual achievements, which they rated and considered relevant to their lives.

Unequal power issues

As observed by Swain et al (2009), when assessing the impact of Family Literacy programmes, power issues can lead to conflicts of interest and misunderstandings if practitioners do not acknowledge their differences in perspectives from the fathers. In one example, Clare took a concept, broke it down and offered examples to convey meaning. One father tried to suggest ways to adapt the activity to fit their children's ability and Clare seemed happy to take his suggestion on board. However, at times she seemed unwilling to see the fathers' perspective. This lack of professional empathy for the parental perspective emphasised the concept of formal learning as being 'difficult to access'. For example, by the end of the session, she had talked for forty minutes. She concluded by trying to check their understanding of the intergenerational session that followed, but the fathers seemed unenthusiastic and wary. This reaction may have been in part due to the lack of opportunity

built into the project for the professional – parent relationship to develop. One of the key determinants of successful Family Learning, in my view, is the development of a positive, trusting relationship between the individuals involved. If achieved, this rapport can lead to shared objectives and the potential for individuals to experience personally relevant Lifelong Learning experiences.

Organisation of learning

This encompassed the tutor's approach and management of the session. It considered issues such as taking account of fathers starting points and spiky profiles, together with life experiences and prior learning. It addressed the opportunities for alternative teaching strategies. For example, several times a broad range of concepts were introduced simultaneously. There was also frequently a non-negotiated approach, where Clare introduced a range of ideas without asking for the fathers' perspective, or offering a supporting demonstration. In addition to not taking account of their experiences and ideas, the lack of explanation of the procedure meant that the fathers were also unclear of both the structure and requirements of the activity. However, when Clare was asked to clarify the procedure for an activity, she offered clear instructions and evidenced understanding of different approaches.

Parenting / gender differences

Whilst some theorists describe conflicting perspectives regarding parental interactions in terms of *gende*r (Amato 1994,Duursma et al 2008, Rose & Atkin 2011), in general, the majority of examples within this research study tended to suggest that the fathers' behaviour reflected different notions of *parenting* (Parke 1995). These included the fact that only one father attempted the 'homework'. However, the data also highlighted a general expectation amongst these fathers that most professional perspectives favoured a more gender specific approach to parental interactions. This may have been partially because the additional anxiety of the paperwork added to the fathers' stress levels, or it may have indicated a more deeply rooted, intrinsically complex notion of exclusion, within the parent – professional relationship.

Sociocultural repertoires of participation

Definitions of repertoires of participation shed light on both internal and external motivations (Dewey 1933, Schon1983). In this context, Brookers' (2002) findings on how the range of parenting practices, family expectations and beliefs about work and play impacted on a child's later development within a formal setting are relevant, as they suggest that these fathers were able to engage with the Family Learning project without totally comprehending it, by referencing it to prior experiences.

This theory also facilitated a consideration of how current formal, implicit pedagogies related to the culturally diverse backgrounds of the fathers. Whilst examining the data, a wide range of differences in perspectives on learning emerged, where cultural barriers were potentially created, for example, in the previously noted 'homework' incident, when the tutor's ideas should have been filtered by the fathers' discourse. The early introduction of educational terminology and the concept of un-negotiated expectation of further commitment were further examples of dissonance within the parental and professional cultural repertoires. An additional example occurred when the suggestion of role-play in story telling created nervous tension. Whilst this form of experiential learning may have appeared an obvious option for the professionals involved, it was a less natural choice for most of the fathers and therefore inevitably raised anxiety levels.

Major themes

These initial themes were then further coded within three conceptual categories: Sociocultural capital, power and curriculum.

Sociocultural capital

This theme involved a consideration of evidence of applying theory to practice and encompassed the active demonstration of individual social and cultural capital. It is a key component of both Family and Lifelong Learning and

emphasised the importance of relating conceptual information to personal circumstances.

Examples from the data included evidence that demonstrated that amongst themselves, the majority of the fathers were competent in using the cognitive framework necessary to relate the abstract theoretical concepts of the adult workshops to their own concrete real life experiences. Although the evidence for this was not actually witnessed during the adult workshop, it was overheard by chance, as the fathers left a session. This was a fairly frequent occurrence during the study and often provided key evidence.

This data also highlighted another central issue of the research, as it summarised one of the fathers' key concerns and reasons for participating in the project: the challenge of moving from work mode to child mode and the need for creative strategies to support this transition. It later became the motivator for a book of ideas developed by the group as a result of participation in the project. However, at this stage of the study, it was only discussed briefly amongst the fathers and not picked up by the professionals involved.

Again, with reference to individual social and cultural capital, some fathers found it more challenging to relate the theories put forward by Clare to their own personal experiences. An example of this occurred when two fathers challenged the appropriateness of a story-telling activity, believing their children were unable to concentrate long enough for this type of exercise. Initially, Clare offered alternatives, adapting the notion to suit the fathers. However, her view of applying theory to practice did not necessarily relate to theirs and she constantly attempted to maintain control of the learning. However, it is worth acknowledging that this is not the usual Family Learning approach, which encourages shared ideas and participant researched solutions to issues. This data offered an insight into some of the possible reasons for the fathers' resistance to the concept of formalising informal activities. For example, the practical challenges raised by the issue of relating formal learning to home environments from the fathers' perspective. More significantly, it also highlighted the fact that the potential to curricularise family activities, resonated deeply with some of the fathers in terms of power and authority. In contrast, one

father demonstrated a real benefit of applying concepts learned in the workshop, in a reflection on his daughter's birthday activities.

In the second workshop, Clare originally planned to use the homework set for the fathers to inform the session. This is a common approach in Family Learning, to create a link with previous learning, enabling the tutor to revisit the previous session at the introduction to recap for the benefit of newcomers and also to build on and consolidate the ideas introduced a fortnight previously. However, in the interim, I was contacted by the Children's Centre team leader and organiser of the Fathers Group, who explained that the fathers were extremely apprehensive after the first workshop. They found the additional requirement and expectation of homework off-putting and were wary of returning for the follow-up workshop. This situation may have been compounded by the fact that Clare, attempting to allay concerns at the end of the previous session, had tried to reassure the group that she 'did not expect an essay'. This re-emphasised the misunderstandings that could swiftly arise from seemingly insignificant comments, caused by not taking into account the fundamental differences between the parent and professional social and cultural repertoires and this will be addressed in more detail later. Meanwhile, the Children's Centre staff remained positive and were keen to encourage and support the fathers to attend the second workshop. I conveyed this feedback to Clare, who reiterated that the lack of response to the homework request would not have an adverse impact on the session and confirmed that she had adequate plans in place if no-one responded positively or produced the work she had requested. This is an example of how sociocultural capital can account for and impact on personal attitudes to formal education and Lifelong Learning. Evidence linked to findings in this conceptual category also includes the introduction to learning related to individual experiences demonstrated below, which has implications for Family Learning.

Extract from field notes:

Workshop 2 'I'm too old'!

The atmosphere seems somehow lighter today. Perhaps it's the better weather, but there's a definite feeling of optimism as the families arrive. The fathers appear upbeat and positive as they drop their offspring in the crèche and gather in the kitchen to make cups of tea. Clare puts her head round the door and returns to report that they're on their way, but hadn't seemed to like being hurried.

I talked to Sarah's father as we waited to start. He immediately volunteered that he'd done the homework (see appendix 7), so I asked how he had got on. He reported that he had never realised that Jack and The Beanstalk could be so exhausting. He gave examples of how it had been so energetic, describing how they'd imitated the beanstalk, starting curled up on the floor and growing as the beans grew, stretching up to the ceiling, incorporating mathematical language such as largest, smallest etc. He added that he hadn't imagined all you could do with it until he actually tried it out in a practical way. I agreed and emphasised the importance for the children, so they don't see books as all about sitting still. He nodded and then added that he had never read at school, if he could avoid it, because it was boring. It was only when, as an adult, he saw a neighbour who also never read, carrying a book. Very amused, he asked him what it was, because he assumed it must be a car manual. When the neighbour told him it was Harry Potter, he just laughed at him, so the neighbour lent it to him ...and he was hooked. Finally, we discussed the challenges of bringing certain books to life. He said they had read Rapunzel, but he couldn't think how to make it more interesting. I suggested asking the group, as often it helps to share ideas.

Power / autonomy

The evidence within this conceptual category indicated general perceptions of educational hierarchy. Male practices were also significant; within the findings on both parent – professional relations and work / family balance The fathers' confidence levels appeared to be a significant and recurring factor in the data, with individual's perceptions of their role within the project apparently mirroring their belief in their ability to participate and to a certain extent, determining the degree of their involvement. The evidence reflected Eccles & Harold's (1996) findings, in terms of individual beliefs in their ability to support their child and

additionally, belief in their child's abilities to achieve. Examples from the data included a significant piece of evidence that occurred in the homework incident, suggesting the importance of autonomy and agency in enabling participants to retain personal perspectives against opposition. Although reluctant to rebel against his peers, one father seemed sufficiently confident to go against the general feeling and support Clare's request for any activities completed at home, in between the two workshops. This was despite the rest of the group's humorous attempts to distract and disrupt his efforts.

The fathers' regular recourse to humour also evidenced their perspectives on the balance of power during the adult briefing workshops. As a communication tool within their relationships with both their peers and the professionals involved with the group, it was very beneficial to this research. It provided the opportunity to hear their reflections on the issues the workshops raised. It also offered an insight into their personal cultural repertoires and a valuable perspective on the individual reasons for engagement within the activities. Further evidence occurred in the workshop, when the fathers all appeared happy to share strategies for reading with their children at home. This appeared to indicate that when they felt they had power or choices, these fathers were happy to share their ideas and exchange suggestions based on their personal sociocultural experiences. This evidence links to findings in terms of the balance of power within parent – professional relations. It also has implications for Family Learning through the evolving male roles in parenting.

Curriculum

The impact of a parent's negative experiences of formal learning was researched, amongst others, by Mosely & Thompson (1995). They suggested that individuals could become hard to reach, which in turn perpetuated the cycle of disengagement. My evidence echoed the findings and implications of this deficit model in several ways. In addition it highlighted the approach and structure of some formal adult educational settings, which appeared to be continuing to fail many of the fathers in this research study. Examples from the data included evidence of the lack of organisation of learning during an informal discussion within the group that arose around the threatened closure and

merger of several local colleges. On the other hand, several times, evidence was identified that suggested a balanced curriculum, in terms of theory related to practice, facilitated engagement. Additionally, when the learning was structured, yet sufficiently flexible to connect with the participants' sociocultural repertoires, it became relevant to the fathers.

4.6 Analysis of interview data

This data set includes two staff interviews which took place in March 2011, several weeks after the two Family Learning workshops. Both Mrs Brown's and Clare's interviews were semi-structured, took an hour and were intended to gather data on parent – professional relations. They were recorded using an Olympus VN 6800 PC digital voice recorder, then immediately transferred to voice files and transcribed by myself in order to become familiar with the data and also ensure any possible misconceptions were clarified in the process.

The Children's Centre staff interview

Mrs Brown's interview provided important information around some of the key research concepts, because it pinpointed often unexpected and unpredictable ways in which the various constructs related to, acted on or influenced each other. This will be clarified and discussed later within the findings. For Mrs Brown, the interview was intended to encourage her to discuss the outcomes of the workshops and facilitate the information collection from her particular perspective. However, the timing of the actual interview meant that it required further adjustments to the content, as it occurred as a result of a phone call from Mrs Brown to consider future options for the project. Because of this, the overall context of the interview became focused on potential developments from the two workshops, rather than a review of the research. We discussed the notion of a product, or end result of the workshops, in terms of a finished artefact. This notion had been instigated by the fathers themselves, who had adopted an idea that originated as a chance remark made in jest at the first workshop. As a result of recording his homework activity (see appendix 7) in case he forgot it between the workshops, one father had been challenged by his peers to produce a book, as a toolkit of ideas for the group to share and disseminate.

The idea grew over the course of the project and was also reiterated and referenced by the fathers in several of their final project evaluation and feedback comments.

One area in which the original planned interview questioning was retained was '*Did you see any links between what goes on at home and what goes on here?*' The response suggested several examples of evidence of members of the Fathers Group taking the initiative in terms of increased confidence in planning activities. It also highlighted transferable skills in terms of applying ideas for developing their children's learning to their own particular home contexts. See appendix 6 for sample coded transcript of this interview.

The Family Learning tutor interview

This took place on 22/3/2011.The tutor, Clare, was a member of a pool of hourly paid staff who had worked on a casual basis for the local Community Learning Services department for over five years. She was very experienced in Family Learning and regularly ran courses for mothers and children at local primary and secondary schools, libraries and children's centres. She had not worked with an all-male group before and had not met any of the fathers or their children, prior to the workshops taking place.

For this interview the list of interview questions described in Chapter 3 was adapted (see appendix 6). This was because the events that took place within the workshops caused me to reflect on their appropriateness and the final questions evolved as a direct result of this. It must be stressed that I was very aware of the potential barriers in terms of power within this professional relationship, having personally employed this tutor to undertake the teaching sessions and was therefore anxious not to appear to be judging her work, or for her to offer responses she believed I wanted to hear.

The interview audiotapes were scrutinised for themes relating to the research question on the impact of Family Learning on parent - professional relations. A range of initial themes were identified.

Links between formal and informal learning

Discussing and sharing ways to create simple value for money activities consolidates realistic ways to apply concepts: *'They loved just using everyday stuff, not actually going out to buy stuff. The emphasis was on last minute activities to keep the children entertained…They've asked to collect junk, so they're a lot more forward thinking, now, a pack of paper, and some scissors can become something.'*

Formal concepts helped fathers to structure and develop children's play and ensured learning occurs naturally at child's pace. They also increased opportunities for intergenerational interactions by conceptualising activities – fathers learning how to follow and extend their children's learning. On the other hand, the Informal approach avoided over reliance on paperwork and encouraged practical involvement in child's activities: ' *They couldn't verbalise it...what they were supposed to do, they were just doing it...like learning is supposed to be - natural not about writing it and outcome planning it, because there's your outcomes, seeing them do it. I was just like I've never seen a Dad ....just kind of being so involved... they do play, but I think there's a lot of alongside playing, but now he knew how he could extend what she was doing in that home corner.'*

Professionals offering practical support to enable fathers to achieve their chosen aims also extend knowledge of resources available: *'It would give them ownership…They have the ideas, they don't actually know how to make those happen or to extend them… We're just evidencing what they do really, just a case of them putting it in their words, making it fun.'* It also recognises individual abilities and offers the chance to maximise potential by enabling everyone to work at their own pace and access activities at the appropriate level for their child: *'Some hung back and watched. You could definitely see they were watching what others were doing, some went in there with a clear thing, none of it was forced, it was just where their children were playing, at that time.''*

Extends paternal competencies

Using own and peers - shared skills and knowledge*: 'They wanted a book…just a whole Dads Group book, for Dads, by Dads entertaining their children.'* This provided opportunities for peer mentoring: '*I think the more confident ones modelling playing Goldilocks and the Three Bears was really good for other dads.'* It also encouraged fathers to implement their own strategies and recognise their own value and place within children's learning: '*I think the main thing was just the confidence. The bedtime story doesn't need to be about mum doing it…so even in that half hour of play time, it might be really crazy play …that just gives the dads confidence to say that they matter as well.'* It also emphasised the relevance of individual discovery and experiential learning: '*I remember one child doing massive big jumps and counting how far he and the paper plane went. They couldn't explain what they were doing, but I think it had just suddenly given them some worth to it. It wasn't just play.'*

Evidence that the fathers following the child's lead provided opportunities for imaginative play was also identified: '*The children's' play was extended because the dads had naturally gone to where they were, and just tried to make it what it was, it worked, so they got something.'*

Environment encourages inclusion and engagement

The Family Learning project placed emphasis on practical, experiential learning, which also enabled the fathers to be inspired by their peers: '*I don't think they'd realised reading or acting out a book could be that active. I think they generated ideas from each other and the children as well. He was saying you can go to Asda and buy a cheap value spoon for about 10p and put faces on and that becomes a puppet.'* It also encouraged the fathers to take ownership of their learning and gain confidence in their own ideas: '*Perhaps the seed was planted that they could make up activities of their own, they learned from each other a lot."*

Assists communication between professionals and parents

Creates informal opportunities to discuss ideas: '*Well, we kind of heard little bits about it…they've been back a couple of times since the last workshop, so then for him to email me and say 'I have been doing it, I want to now put this into a book!'* This is evidence that it provides opportunities for parents to take initiative and highlights the importance of parental role in early year's development: '*If they see that they are their children's first teacher, then the benefits for that child are huge, but that can also affect the dads.'* It also demonstrated ways to increase vocabulary: '*Considering the children's age we've got, their attention span is going to be really short, but I saw play going on for 5, 10 minutes you think about all the language!'*

Major themes

Four key themes were identified, which linked to both the research question and the literature review in terms of how Family Learning consolidated parent - professional links. These are outlined as follows:

Organisation of learning

A clear structure had benefits from the professional practitioner's perspective in terms of recognised, familiar strategies and increased opportunities for language development. The evidence indicated that the fathers appreciated this differentiated, experiential and practical approach.

Relations

The interview data also indicated that the Family Learning project extended support networks and assisted communication by involving parents with staff for the benefit of the children. The data also suggested paternal benefits in increased inclusion. The approach also encouraged individual family autonomy and cultural repertoire.

Paternal competencies

According to the interview data, from a practitioner perspective, it encouraged engagement and role modelled positive approaches, whilst the fathers evidenced **increased** self-confidence and raised awareness of potential approaches.

Environment

The evidence indicated that the Family learning environment reduced the impact of negative prior learning experiences and expanded creativity, self - efficacy and resilience.

Evidence linked to findings

a) Organisation of learning

Whilst examining the data, several examples of linking theory to practice were noted, when opportunities were identified to establish realistic and practical ways to apply formal concepts. This was an important recurring theme throughout the interview data and showed how parents' ideas using easily accessible everyday objects and inexpensive resources could reinforce practitioner activities. Examples from the data included discussing and sharing ways to create simple, value for money activities using easily available resources.

Mrs Brown: *'They loved just using everyday stuff, not actually going out to buy stuff. The emphasis was on last minute activities to keep the children entertained, as well as things that weren't going to cost a lot of money, because that would put people off.'*

The data also highlighted the importance of informal, creative activities, and opportunities for imaginative play which enhanced adult / child interaction:

Mrs Brown: *'The children's play was extended, so the fathers almost got something back. Whereas before, the children may been playing and if the father had tried to interrupt and do something that wasn't part of what they were doing, it would have broken their play, but because the fathers had naturally gone to where they were, and just tried to make it what it was, it worked, so they got something.'*

When outlining the plans for the book, Mrs Brown again emphasised the importance of capturing learning in informal ways to maintain the emphasis on enjoyment:

'We're just evidencing what they do really, just a case of them putting it in their words, making it fun. I don't want it to come across as professional speak. I want it to be something as simple as a paper aeroplane. You don't actually need any words. A picture of a plane, the word, then different stages, that's enough.'

In addition, she noted that placing emphasis on practical, experiential learning appeared to inspire the fathers:

'Fathers saying "I didn't realise how energetic it was going to be once we started, doing the beanstalk and getting really big and small, it was really active!" '

b) Consolidates relations

This was evidenced by increased communication between professionals, parents and the children, through the creation of informal opportunities to discuss ideas and by professionals offering practical support to enable the fathers to achieve their chosen aims:

Mrs Brown: *'Well, we kind of heard little bits about the idea, [for a book] but always in that very jokey way. I think Sarah's father is obviously serious about it. They've been back a couple of times since the last workshop, but we asked*

them were they doing anything and they were saying yes, but not really giving us any indication and then he emails me and says 'I have been doing it, I want to now put this into a book! It would give them ownership, I mean they can literally, take the activity they most enjoyed and they form that page. It's just more brains are better than one; I think that's what they need. They have the ideas, they don't actually know how to make those happen or to extend them.'

This section also included ways to establish mutual support amongst the parents and opportunities for both the fathers and their children to apply and share their own and their peers' skills and knowledge. Examples from the data included letting parents and children take ownership of their work and the professionals working in partnership with the families:

Mrs Brown: *'They wanted that in a very pictorial, easy to read way, in a book. They wanted to get it published, just a whole Fathers Group book, for fathers, by fathers, for entertaining their children.'*

c) Paternal competencies

Data was identified showing fathers leading, supporting and learning from each other, by providing opportunities for peer mentoring:

Mrs Brown: '*I think the more confident ones modelling playing Goldilocks and the Three Bears was really good for other fathers ...to see that you can be as silly as you like. You know, three year olds really love that!'*

This placed emphasis on inclusive activities and a flattened hierarchy approach, which encouraged co-operation and highlighted the importance of the parental role in Early Years development. Deliberately encouraging parental ownership of activities often provided opportunities for parents to take initiative and acted as a catalyst for practical ideas. In addition**,** recognising individual abilities and sociocultural repertoires of participation, offered chances to maximise potential

and enabled the fathers to each work at their own pace and access the activities at the appropriate level for their child:

Mrs Brown: *'He was saying you can go to Asda and buy a cheap value spoon for about 10p and put faces on and that becomes a puppet...In Early Years, you always hear 'they don't do nothing until they get to five, because that's when schooling properly starts'. We're always saying, 'education starts from day dot, so for fathers with a child of 14 months, realising the power of their knowledge and how that's going to help their child, the learning that's going to happen before 5, is going to increase hugely. Some hung back and watched. You could definitely see they were watching what others were doing, some went in there with a clear thing they were going to do. What was nice was that none of it was forced; it was just where their children were playing, at that time, which is why I think we had so many varieties.'*

d) Environment

It appeared from the evidence that acknowledging and replicating the informal structure of home allowed the children involved in this research to control their environment and develop at their own pace. This accords with Pascal and Bertram, 1997, who explored the notion that high engagement was vital to quality learning in the early years. In addition, the formal conceptualising of activities also helped these fathers to structure and develop learning by following and extending their children's play. Increased understanding of the importance of a safe appropriate environment also offered insight into ways to develop resources to demonstrate concepts:

Mrs Brown: *'A couple of them said to me 'we've taken the junk models home and we're going to use them' and they've asked to collect junk, so they're a lot more forward thinking in their ideas now. At home they haven't got our equipment, but now, just a pack of paper and some scissors can become something.'*

Research also suggests that using an informal approach facilitates learning that occurs naturally at each child's pace (Campbell & Von Stauffenberg 2008).

Encouraging practical involvement in a child's activities also provided strategies and increased opportunities to link formal and informal outcomes:

Mrs Brown: *'When they came in I looked at them, 'so what do you need to do?' and they couldn't verbalise it. But then all of a sudden, you looked around and you've got one doing this and one doing that and without actually knowing what they were supposed to do, they were doing it. It was just like learning is supposed to be - natural, not about writing it and outcome planning it, because there are your outcomes, seeing them doing it. I've never seen a father (struggles for the words) ...just kind of being so involved. She was just making porridge for Goldilocks, yet he was then going 'How many have we got?' I was just amazed ...she was going '1, 2, 3!' and I was going 'oh my gosh! - That was it, for me that was just huge. Because, they do play, but I think there's a lot of alongside playing, but now he knew how he could extend what she was doing in that home corner.'*

4.7 Synthesis of data sources

This section brings together the four main data sources: focus groups, video, observations and staff interviews. It also includes examples of the ways in which the outcomes evidence such as the Fathers' Booklet and Homework incident provided valuable additional perspectives. Synthesising the key findings is an important validation technique (Denzin 1989) and is recognised as adding rigour to the research. Additionally, Cohen et al (2000) considered checking information from multiple data sources ensures consistency of evidence. I based my synthesis on Miles and Hubermann (1994) to assist conceptual coherence. It takes a systematic approach to the data analysis to cluster concepts together into major and sub themes. I synthesised and summarised all these themes using examples from each data set, to aid clarity and highlight connections.

Power

Throughout the data analysis, this concept was frequently identified and took

several forms. For example, the 'Homework' incident (see appendix 7) could be considered a tangible outcome that was almost lost as a direct result of the project's power dynamics. The observational data evidenced two findings in this area. Firstly, the barriers between a well-established group of fathers and a previously unknown researcher created difficulties in terms of power and trust. Secondly, the issue of an unfamiliar Family Learning practitioner setting out the format for the workshops set up potential barriers. At the beginning of each session, several fathers used humour to test the power relations within this. Further examples of the significance of the balance of power were identified in the staff interviews. Here, the emphasis was on emerging paternal strengths. For example, data from both professionals showed the fathers' realisation of the power of their knowledge and how that could help their children's learning.

Gender

This factor impacted on the project in several ways, although the impact of alternative parenting practices was in many ways more evident, as will be considered later. The Fathers' Booklet was an explicit example of this concept, see appendix 8. The focus groups highlighted several references to the need for gender specific activities focused on fathers rather than parents (appendix 3). In addition, the observational data identified evidence of **a** general expectation amongst these fathers that most professional perspectives favoured a more gender specific approach to parental interactions. The tutor interview emphasised the practitioner's lack of experience in working with all male groups a factor which was also evident in the early observational and video data.

Curriculum structure

Curriculum structure was seen as fundamental to the project outcomes across the data sets and examples of a range of perspectives were also evident within the Fathers' Booklet (see appendix 8). However, the evidence for specific approaches to this was sometimes contradictory. For example, both the staff interview with Mrs Brown and the focus group data indicated that these fathers liked structure: ' *so there is a structure and there is a plan, but there's not a set itinerary*.' However, the observational data evidenced that at times, the fathers

were unclear of the structure of the Family Learning project, especially in terms of particular activities. Again, Mrs Brown noted that formal concepts helped these fathers to structure and develop their children's play. On the other hand, she also observed that replicating the informal structure of home allowed the children to develop at their own pace.

Evidence that this challenge of balancing the curriculum delivery extended beyond the home-school approaches was pinpointed across all data sets. For example, the relationship between theory and practice arose as an apparent contradiction in the observational data. When the field notes of the first adult workshops were analysed frustrations emerged around the time spent discussing the rationale behind the joint workshop. However, by the second session, this had become less evident, with several fathers indicating a wish for a longer theoretical session. This lack of clarity suggests to me that further exploration of this concept would aid interpretation.

Relationships

Throughout the study, the relevance of the parent – practitioner relationship frequently emerged. This concept was identified across the data sets, for example, a major finding from the observational data was a lack of opportunity built into the project for the professional – parent relationship to develop. One solution the fathers found to this was their recourse to humour as a communication tool within their relationships with both their peers and the professionals.

Environment

The impact of the environment was a key factor that underpinned the research in several ways. The evidence from all the data sources reinforced this. For example, the focus groups indicated that the all-male environment created a particular atmosphere, see appendix 3. Additionally, the observational data noted that practical challenges were raised by the issue of relating formal learning to home environments from the fathers' perspective. From another perspective, the staff interviews showed that the understanding of the

importance of a safe appropriate environment also offered insight into ways to extend and develop resources and relationships.

Individual sociocultural repertoires

This conceptual category provided key insights into all the research questions with evidence located within every data set. It was also situated at the heart of the Fathers Booklet (see appendix 8) which evidenced a range of approaches and experiences in support of the key findings. For example, the video evidence found firstly, that these fathers did not generally value formal educational qualifications within their own cultural repertoires. Secondly, they frequently related the abstract theoretical concepts of the adult workshops to their own experiences. However, the observational data indicated that some fathers found it more challenging to relate the theories to their own personal experiences. Meanwhile, the staff interviews indicated there were fundamental differences between parent and professional social and cultural repertoires. A wide range of differences in perspectives on learning emerged, providing rich interpretive data.

Perceptions of education

This was a broad category, with a range of evidence highlighted across the data sets. For example, the observational data showed that these fathers were keen to recognise individual achievements, which they rated and considered relevant to their lives. This data set also suggested that some formal adult education settings appeared to be continuing to fail many of these fathers. Additionally, the staff interviews suggested that the professional practitioners considered that even if educationally the fathers did not possess certain skills, they still had the skills in themselves to become their child's teacher. The focus groups reinforced this finding, since they suggested that these fathers were able to engage with the project without totally comprehending it, by relating it to prior learning experiences, see appendix 3.

Paternal competencies

The evidence identified under this theme was linked across the data sources. For example, video evidence highlighted the importance of competencies in enabling participants to retain personal perspectives against opposition. The observational data supported this finding, indicating that the fathers' confidence levels appeared to be a significant and recurring factor. Meanwhile, the staff interviews suggested potential practical solutions from the fathers' perspective. For example, according to Mrs Brown: '*The bedtime story doesn't need to be about mum doing it…so even in that half hour of play time, it might be really crazy play, that just gives the dads confidence to say that they matter as well.'* This was further evidenced in the fathers' booklet, which demonstrated their diverse perspectives and approach to engaging in their children's learning. Having clarified all the elements of the original datasets and provided worked examples of the entire analysis process for each data source, this chapter brought together all the data sources and additional outcomes evidence, such as the Fathers' Booklet, to synthesis the key themes.

Following on from this, Chapter 5 locates this study within the current literature, by identifying how it contributes to knowledge within the field of Family Learning. It reviews the key findings from the research, argues the thesis, clarifies the links to the literature review and introduces new literature. The evidence for and against the findings is summarised and interpreted in terms of each research question. Additionally, the key themes that have come from this research are considered and indications offered for where they might fit within the structure and agency of Family Learning. The chapter goes on to discuss the implications for both professional practice and future research. To conclude, it indicates where this research offers new insights to existing literature. The study may however, raise additional constraints, for example, issues around power, and control, resourcing and the wider nature of professionalism within my practice and these will also be addressed.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

5.1 Summary of key findings

In my professional experience, both Family and Lifelong Learning involve different sociocultural perspectives coming together to build new understandings. The settings for this learning are often microcosms of social literacies and belief systems and as such, they offer a valuable context in which to explore the dynamics of alternatives. This chapter considers what can be learned from this study of Family Learning, drawing together the findings in three ways, to create a coherent and consistent narrative. Firstly, the study is examined in the light of previous research described in the literature review and more recent literature is also explored. Throughout this section, I will discuss what my work adds to current knowledge, underpinning this with examples from the data sources and Fathers Booklet. Secondly, a reflection of the opportunities and challenges presented by the research design enables a consideration of the strengths and limitations of the methods chosen. Finally, the study is reviewed for potential opportunities for dissemination. This situates the work within the current field of Family Learning and facilitates considerations for future research and professional practice.

Interpretation

By exploring the opportunities that arose for intergenerational learning within the Family Learning context, the research had the potential to help inform future strategies for increasing paternal involvement in their children's learning. However, it is impossible to attempt to categorically state the impact of this research, since many of the findings are intangible or not immediately measurable; most are subjective and all occurred as a result of many factors, this research being just one. I can therefore only reflect on the potential implications of any data. On the other hand, I do hope to indicate any way in which this research may have provided new insights or raised additional

constraints, for example, issues around power, resourcing and the wider nature of professionalism within my practice. Over the course of the study, I have learned much about research in these circumstances. For example, it has emphasised how vital it is to gain the trust of participants, remember details and write up notes as soon as possible. Also, the fact that the importance of being open and ensuring work is ethically sound is paramount and at times overrides the need to collect data.

The main research aim was to examine the nature and purpose of Family Learning from a paternal perspective, through an exploration of the processes, outcomes and determinants of involvement. In considering if the findings add to current knowledge of Family Learning, I would suggest that the transferability of knowledge lies in several key areas. These are exemplified in the Fathers Booklet, which emphasises the importance of starting from and building on participants' experiences. I intend to identify and interpret these themes, whilst also incorporating evidence from the Fathers Booklet, to synthesise the findings and clarify their significance in terms of a distinct contribution to the field of Family Learning.

The research findings also indicate that processes, as opposed to outcomes, were a more effective way to evaluate Family Learning. This connects it to research that found that particular processes lead to high quality learning for young children, including Pascal & Bertram (1997). In terms of the overall research question on the nature and purpose of Family Learning, this research finds similar issues to Lareau (1989). The findings suggest Family Learning can encourage the development of a sociocultural repertoire of participation and therefore serve as a link between the home and school. More recent literature supports my finding that Family Learning has developed in many ways over the last decade. For example, Hammond and Gough (2000) propose that legislation requires local authorities to demonstrate ways in which they are supporting and encouraging Family Learning, with the inclusion of clear strategies to ensure that provision automatically reaches those most in need. These proposals, echoed by Buffton, have recently become an integral part of the rapidly developing Family Learning legislative framework:

> Many organisations are already active in delivering family learning …
> but these efforts are uncoordinated at both a national and a local level
> and often rely on short-term funding (1999 p2).

To begin this interpretation, I set out my findings and provide a focused consideration of the key themes in relation to the literature review. This will identify potential gaps and indicate where my research can form a distinct and original contribution to the field of Family Learning. I will address the transferability of knowledge which has clear implications for professional practitioners in terms of broadening out the available literature. The key themes can be summarised as sociocultural repertoires, power, environment, curriculum, gender, paternal competencies and parent-professional relationships.

Sociocultural repertoires

The changing role of fathers means that investigating their understandings of Family Learning is becoming increasingly relevant. An exploration of sociocultural repertoires, as defined by Horvat et al: '*material and immaterial resources, that individuals and families are able to access, through their social ties'* (2003 p320) can facilitate this. A specific example arose during the 3rd focus group, as two fathers discussed recent experiences:

1st Dad: *'I saw something at the weekend that quite impressed me.'* (He is referring to an earlier conversation about spending the weekend on his boat.) *'A 5 year old popped up into the cockpit and said "daddy take a bearing!" She got out the hand bearing compass and took a bearing and daddy sort of said "Yes that was 310 degrees, that's good." And I was just sort of like hmm; I know some twenty odd year olds who can't do that.'*
2ⁿᵈ Dad: Laughs and agrees. *'My little one says to me when she's up with me on the boat and she's looking at the GPS as well, a map version, and she's saying "don't go on the green!" And then if I stray a little bit, 'cos I know that the channels ok in one particular area 'cos of the high tide or something, she goes "no, no, no, you're going on the green!"*
1ˢᵗ Dad: '*So her navigation skills are already coming in!'*

The study highlights the need to hear the voice of these fathers, comprehend their sociocultural repertoires and devise a curriculum based on developing and extending their individual experiences. This accords with the reviewed literature, which places the emphasis on sociocultural practice (Ranson 2000, Crowther 2004, and Jarvis 2006). My thesis observed how most of these fathers were competent in transferring formal theoretical concepts into their own practice. However, I also noted some examples of where additional support, possibly in the form of role-modelling, could have facilitated this. Finally, I also found that a professional tendency to place value on formal curriculums was neither necessarily the best basis for engagement or conducive to paternal motivation.

Following on from this, much of the research reviewed (Desforges & Abouchar 2003), noted how the potential power of paternal involvement can be limited by the challenges of engagement and prior experiences. For example, according to the Adult Learning Survey (McGivney 1999), men are more likely than women to hold the view that nothing would encourage them to learn. My findings concurred with both Donaldson (1978) and Freire's (1970) experience-based approach of working from the paternal perspective. Like Fletcher and Dally (2002) who support this focus on valuing fathers' alternate literacies, my thesis found it important to acknowledge personal, individual achievements.

Furthermore, this study also indicates that the balance of several key themes within the Family Learning project influence individual attitudes towards Lifelong Learning. In contrast, the literature review found that in some contexts, Family Learning is at odds with Lifelong Learning programmes. For example, a study of the effectiveness of Lifelong Learning in Lincolnshire emphasises the mismatch of the views held by education providers and learners. Participants on some courses did not regard them as part of a lifetime of learning, but more as a means of gaining a recognised qualification (Atkin 2000). These findings do not concur with my research, probably because the Family Learning project I researched was not significantly focused on promoting Lifelong Learning. However, this research does accord with the literature in that it re-emphasises the importance of Family Learning programmes that are flexible in their design, take account of a diverse range of abilities and interests and listen to minority groups such as fathers (Fagan 1999). Finally, the findings indicate that Family

Learning programmes should include recognition of paternal involvement and seek to make it more visible, by building on families' existing knowledge, skills and cultures (Nutbrown et al 2005).

The finding that most of these fathers could be their child's first teacher without formal educational qualifications is significant and has a profound impact on the fathers' views of education. This suggests that giving these fathers time, space and social relationship opportunities within the Family Learning project facilitates this perspective. The evidence identifies factors that motivate paternal involvement. These include a broad range of personal, structural and cultural factors, the majority of which supports Goldman's (2004) findings.

The sociocultural repertoires theme also encompasses personal perceptions of male practices and both prior experiences and individual perceptions of education. The data suggests that in general the traditional role of financial provider is still a powerful source of identity (Henwood & Procter 2003), although this study finds evidence of the recognition that paternal earnings are also an important link to positive outcomes for their children (Burghes et al 1997).

The fathers' views of education are identified through a range of data sources throughout the project. According to the findings, poor previous learning experiences discourage commitment. Additionally, if their own sociocultural focus is discounted or ignored, it can isolate or disengage. Based on what these fathers said, when prior knowledge is recognised as of relevance to current experience and used to build understanding and develop transferable skills, it creates a sound basis for learning. Frequently, as in the second tutor briefing when discussing educational qualifications, these fathers indicate they value skills that relate to their individual interests and do not appear to relate paper-based qualifications to real world experience. This finding suggests it is therefore important for professionals to take account of this when connecting theory to practice. However, on several occasions the findings indicate that individual learning techniques were evolving through the experiential activities, using diverse and varied strategies. For example, when one father, having observed a peer bringing a story to life in a particular way, adapted his

approach to the activity, achieving a completely different result to the role model.

The study findings indicate that the opportunities for intergenerational learning within the Family Learning context are wide ranging and have the potential to encourage individual family autonomy, agency and sociocultural repertoires. For example, the development of coping strategies and increased awareness of children's abilities can reduce the impact of negative prior learning experiences and develop self-efficacy and individual resilience. Although the inductive coding approach adopted initially assisted in clarifying and categorising the potential intergenerational learning opportunities, a multitude of factors affect the learning at any one time, for example, proximity of staff, support of peers, etc. In addition to this, the relationships between the four coding categories used were closely linked, which makes differentiation difficult. It is therefore even more important to use personal understanding of the context, environment and events surrounding each incident in deciding how to code each event.

Power

The research findings concur with Horvat et al (2003) in recognition of the parent -professional conflicts of interest. Evidence from the first tutor briefing highlights some of the potential issues. It includes a father discussing how his daughter preferred action to stories:

Dad: '*She watches it 24/7, but yeah, activities, like I said, just, y'know, cos everyone's different, but, it depends on the person really, but I might read the little story, but she **won't** be interested!*'
Clare: '*Mmmm, no, OK*'
Dad: '*The activities would be better.*'
Clare: '*So do some measuring then, do some throwing*'
Dad: '*Mmm,…*'
Clare: '*And then measuring and then you can talk about how far it is and that your feet are bigger, so if you do it with your feet, you're going to have less footprints because you're bigger and she's smaller, so there's going to be lots, and oh, she's thrown it 10 footprints, but you've only thrown it 5 footprints,   you*

know, there's so much you can do, say you threw yours furthest and again, even if they're not interested in language from a story, you're giving her language…'

In this way, this thesis could contribute to the development of the 1990s parenting programmes covered in the review which questioned whose agendas and freedoms should be considered. The study also responds to Feinstein Duckworth & Sabates (2008) call for further consideration of the knowledges that lie behind voices. The thesis also recognises Craft Raynor & Cohen's notion that the regional allocation of educational resources is where the distribution of power really lies (1980). A specific original contribution is the finding that the fathers' knowledge of their own abilities can empower and give ownership to their intergenerational interactions. This in turn can lead to individual adjustment of perspective and motivation for involvement.

Furthermore, in terms of autonomy and empowerment, the study finds that paternal motivations flourish when these fathers are in sole charge, giving them the opportunity to bond with their children (Fagan & Iglesias 1999). On the other hand, there is a risk of inconsistent measurement, as a range of levels of involvement are observed in both the observational and video data, which suggests that *length* is not necessarily indicative of *quality* of interaction (Allen & Daly 2007). Like Macleod (1996), the thesis suggests that joint professional - parental ownership of an activity encourages a mutual learning experience for those involved. Where these fathers and professionals share and recognise skills equally, a positive learning environment is quickly established. However, if the experience is built around a hierarchical structure, involving a lack of recognition of parents' own skills and awareness of their children's abilities, poor working relationships tend to result. For example; when Clare creates an insecure atmosphere by outlining un-negotiated expectations and the fathers' evidence lacks inspiration and independence. Additionally, if the professional's language is accessible to the parents and free of unnecessary terminology, it is acknowledged as legitimate, but when overly formal, is regarded as misuse of power, or not relevant to individuals' personal cultural repertoires.

Environment

Both Feinstein & Symmons (1999) and the Campaign for Learning's (1998) MORI survey showed that the home was the most important learning environment for UK adults. Further to Innes (1999) who stressed the importance of environment on individual development, this research study also emphasises the need to relate formal to informal environments. This concurs with Raven (1980) who called for schools to create developmental environments closely resembling home. Sylva, Melhuish, Sammons, Siraj-Blatchford and Taggart (1999 & 2004) EPPE project findings further clarified this, defining the home environment in terms of what parents do and citing this as more important than a range of other factors.

In addition, Bronfenbrenner (1979) noted how different environments offered substantial differences in raising the next generation, whilst Bandura (1977) stressed the need for positive learning environments. Moving on from this, Feinstein & Symons (1999) highlighted a lack of research into paternal influences on environments, whilst Flouri & Buchanan (2004) stated positive paternal involvement influenced school environments. This thesis extends these observation in the finding that a formal environment offers practical examples of strategies for developing resources and relationships, whilst an all-male environment creates valuable opportunities to learn and make mistakes. This conversation during the 3rd focus group with the youngest father is just one example:

Researcher: *'Do you think it has made a difference, coming to the Dads Group?'*

Dad: *'Yeah. I mean, I missed quite a few sessions 'cos I started a different job. I was working nights. But er, I'm not currently working at the moment 'cos I was on temporary work. So I'm bringing her back now. But the toddler groups and stay and play that she goes to have really helped her a lot too.'*

Researcher: '*Does it give you ideas for things to do at home, or is it more..'*

Dad: '*Yeah, it gives me loads of ideas.*'

Researcher: *'What, different ways? You're bringing things from home and you're taking things back as well?'*

Dad: *'Yeah, it is brilliant for her, but I mean, it's not just sort of educational, it's*

good so she's socialising.'

Researcher: *'That's really important isn't it? Especially if they're on their own at home, it they're the only one.'*

Dad: *'Yeah, well my girlfriend's little brother, he's got sort of social problems, he's not very good at blending in, but he never used to do anything like this when he was a kid.'*

Researcher: *'That makes all the difference doesn't it, if they're used to other people as they grow up.'*

Dad: *'Yeah, they learn to .um…interact with people, don't they?'*

The findings also reveal that the context for learning is an important factor. Familiarity with and suitability of the setting is vital and being sited in a convenient location to the child's home encourages attendance. In general, many of the fathers involved in this research consider particular times of the week i.e. Friday evening, Saturday afternoon and Sundays as 'family time'. This may be due to their prioritising their own needs (Fletcher & Daly 2002), whilst their responses also suggest that some do not necessarily regard involvement in their children's learning to be a key responsibility (Lynch 2002).

Curriculum

One of the key findings in terms of transferability of knowledge in this thesis lies in the finding that in developing and implementing curriculums, professionals need to build on the lived experiences of the families, rather than imposing an externally devised curriculum. This is particularly evidenced in the Fathers Booklet (see appendix 8) For example; one father includes a description of how his son loves dinosaur stories and making up names for different kinds of dinosaurs:

> One day my daddy was reading my book of dinosaurs to me and showing me the pictures of different dinosaurs. I said 'what sort is that?' 'I don't know' he said. 'There's no writing on this page'. Before my daddy could say another word the dinosaur jumped out of the page and we both jumped with fright. Then the dinosaur said 'don't be frightened, I'm a Grasdupod and we are friendly dinosaurs, we only eat grass and sleep in a pod'. 'Do you have a first name?' I asked. 'No' said the Grasdupod 'but I wish I did.' 'How about Gary?' I said. 'Yes' said the dinosaur, all excited, 'Gary the Grasdupod!' (p16).

Further to this, the findings concur with most of the literature reviewed, in terms of the importance of informal structure in enabling children to develop at their own pace. For example, Raven (1980) observed that parents offer potential as partners in a collaborative approach to curriculum design. Redding referred to this contribution as the 'curriculum of the home' (1992), whilst Fletcher and Dally (2002) focused on valuing fathers' alternate literacies, situating educational activity within the fathers' lived experience, as opposed to a formal curriculum. On the other hand, this thesis also finds a range of evidence indicating fathers like a clearly structured programme of activities which suggests there are some benefits to formalising the curriculum.

The data also suggests that a clear agenda and framework for activities inspires participation, especially if a family misses a session. On the other hand, my review of the research carried out by others in this field also finds that situating projects only in venues such as Children's Centres can lead to exclusion of some groups of fathers e.g. non-resident (Edwards 1997). The importance of curriculum structure is supported by several theorists including Macleod (2004). As Bertram observed: *'there are aspects of practice and provision which provide a core set of conditions which favour high quality early learning experiences'* (1996 p47). He also noted: *We believe that the way in which adults intervene and interact is critical to the quality of learning which is experienced by the child* (1996 p146). This thesis indicates a clear structure instils confidence, creates trust and influences results. On the other hand, a lack of planning or framework can lead to distrust and tension around expectations, whilst a lack of clarity and interaction can isolate the audience. In addition, the data indicates the need to ensure all learning styles are addressed and the learning is both experiential and relevant to these participants' knowledge.

Gender

This study finds that particular gender and parenting expectations of Family Learning can create barriers to a shared experience (McBride et al 2005, Macleod 2008). Within this, mothers are often cited as the strongest influence (Macleod 2000) as to whether and how fathers become involved in their

children's learning. The question of how women support or subordinate certain practices of men, particularly in terms of their involvement with their young children's learning, is therefore relevant. The introductory lines of an example from the Fathers Booklet evidence this clearly:

> It was the first sunny day in well over a week so my little boy was itching to go outside. I work nights, so I had been in bed until mid-afternoon and the sun was also inviting me to get out of the house (and my partner's hair), so we decided to go on a bug hunt! (p6).

The findings indicate that in general an all-male environment builds trust and respect, enhances participation and offers opportunities for the creation of strong paternal networks. However, some literature indicates that this can also underline socio-economic divisions (Ferri and Smith 1995, Brennan Barnett & Gareis 2001). Although this does not appear to impact significantly on participation in this study, my previous experiences in Family Learning support others' evidence. This suggests that it can have both positive and negative effects on involvement (Crouter Perry-Jenkins Huston & McHale 1987, Hatten Vinter & Williams 2002). Despite the governmental long-term aim to equalise educational opportunities in the face of social and gender discriminating forces within both school and the community, (Education Reform Act1988), the gender gap in employment is recognised as remaining an area of concern (Opportunity for All 2002). Connell suggested this was a result of the dominant position of men and the subordination of women (1995 p77). Furthermore, Vegeris & Perry (2003) acknowledged a lack of financial incentives to transfer childcare to fathers. However, this thesis accords with Whitehead (1999) who suggested a more complex interplay of the interconnections of gender impact with other social divisions, such as class and occupation.

As stated earlier, this research also evidences how mothers impact on paternal competencies, particularly in terms of their involvement with their young children's learning. This may explain why it also finds some evidence, especially in the focus groups, of underlying paternal notions that indicate mothers are acknowledged as more equal in the development of childrens learning than fathers. This accords with Kennedy, Root & Rubin (2010) who noted how contributions can be influenced by parents' own gender. Like Flouri & Buchanan (2004), they also highlighted the lack of research into the role of fathers'

involvement in children's' development, calling for more studies using lower socio-economic samples.

On the other hand, Kahn (2006) suggested more training & local action plans to involve fathers & recommended providing managers with diversity training to raise staff understanding of the issues connected to father involvement in settings. This thesis also finds a distinct lack of male role models remains within both Family Learning and early years services, which perhaps suggests the work remains undervalued financially. This concurs with Goldman (2004), who also noted that less than 12% of family learning participants were fathers. I would suggest that this study contributes specifically to this, by highlighting the need for more father - focused projects to increase this figure.

Paternal competencies

As noted earlier, the majority of these fathers maintain preconceived gender roles, assuming their partners as the primary caregiver (Karther 2002). However, the evidence also indicates that many appear to lack confidence in their own abilities to support their offspring's learning (Ortiz & Stile 1996). The findings within this category are difficult to interpret. Two contrasting descriptions of one particular incident are included to demonstrate this.

The father in question had indicated his concerns during the tutor briefing:

Dad: *'She's better off just sitting down and leaving her to it, I mean I'd probably just...she'll probably prove me wrong now, at the end of the day now, she'll probably sit down and like, y'know, read it with me, .see, like, she's better off, like I said, just like, going hands - on and doing activities'.*

The Family Learning tutor recalls the incident that followed during the intergenerational session:

Clare: *'Only one father seemed to struggle. He said his daughter was so used to playing with other children...but he didn't really get down to her level. All the other kids went off, their fathers went off to find them, worked with them, but he didn't really, he just sat. He tried a little bit, to do it, I mean, she did keep*

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wandering off, but whether that was because she wasn't used to him doing things with her, or maybe she is very independent, but whether he'll gradually take it on board, because of what the other fathers are doing. He was the exception to the rule, I think.'

The children's centre staff remembers it differently:

Mrs Brown: *'I know one father was really, really nervous about coming, I think it was the pressure of not really 'getting it' for him. He came in and he looked really nervous and I could see his stress, yet all of a sudden, he sat down on a chair, and I think because usually he's so engrossed with his mates, yet he knew he had to do something, and she just came and jumped on his lap and sat there, and he wasn't just looking around, he saw "she wants to do this, I can be part of this" and so he did and he was just fantastic!'*

This finding suggests that a father's lack of belief in his ability to support his child's learning has a profound effect on a learning experience. This is indicated on several occasions when some of these fathers find it challenging to interact with their children on particular activities. Further, a lack of encouragement may mean that a father disengages with the experience (McBride et al 2005). However, as trust develops, evidence of individual paternal confidence and understanding emerge, for example, during the 3rd focus group:

Dad: *'It's weird seeing her like...when she was a baby and seeing her like this now. She's got her own little personality now. She's got her little likes and dislikes. She knows what she wants to play with and what she don't. I think she's brilliant, just hearing her talk and that.'*
Researcher: *'There's a lot more you can do with them too, isn't there. I'm never very good with them when they're tiny babies.'*
Dad: (Nodding) *'You know, I loved her and that, but all you can do is hold them. Now I can take her to the park and that. We can <u>play</u>!'*

This thesis also indicates that respected role models can inspire others and encourage participation, establishing positive experiences and improving outcomes. Once this trust is in place, these experiences have the potential to

build and extend learning jointly, for greater effect. Unlike much of the literature I reviewed, this small-scale case study could not assess if paternal involvement is associated with educational and occupational mobility. (Amato1994). However, it accords with Fagan & Iglesias (1999) who suggested involvement positively affected children's intellectual development, social competence, internal locus of control and empathy with others and Steele (2002) who proposed that it led to stronger social skills. The literature review extended this further in finding that paternally supported children also did better at school (Flouri & Buchanan 2004; Kraemer 2005; Gorrell Barnes, Thompson, Daniel & Burchardt 1998).

In contributing to the current Family Learning knowledge base, I also observed that fathers require self-confidence to enable them to withstand peer pressure and that the results of the Family Learning project in many ways depend on this. Additionally, placing emphasis on the importance of recognising and acknowledging a range of parenting approaches, for example to a bedtime story routine, facilitates diverse and creative solutions and alternatives to a simple book reading. These findings are also highlighted within the alternative approaches taken in the Fathers Booklet (appendix 8).

During the course of this study, the Accounting Early for Lifelong Learning Programme (Pascal and Bertram 2009), was published. It focused on how practitioners might measure learning outcomes more effectively by taking a broader view of the qualities that underpin Lifelong Learning. They listed the key elements of an effective curriculum as language development, communication skills, attitudes and dispositions, social competence, self-esteem, emotional wellbeing and feelings. Their approach may have offered the potential to expand the research and add significantly to the findings, since attitudes, dispositions, emotional wellbeing and emotional literacy are core principles of Family Learning.

Parental – professional relationships

This study reflects Roffey, who highlighted the challenges created by the

diverse nature of families and the fact that schools, communities and families cannot be abstracted from the wider social context. She acknowledged the difficulties presented in analysing the complexities of parent - professional relationships, when she identified fundamental issues that arise when more intensive interactions are required between the systems:

> A spiral of interrelated factors within and across the two systems of school and family that effect on eventual outcomes…Where parents are empowered in school and in their parental role and schools respond to pupils by focusing on needs as much as management, the outcomes for everyone appear to be much more optimistic (2002 p57).

This thesis also resonates with her findings that sociocultural expectations affect the relationship, because families place different emphasis on different aspects of their roles. However, whilst the context of individual families can vary enormously, these findings indicate some common factors that can apply across all families, such as general acceptance of children as learners, which can provide a positive starting point for dialogue. The data frequently evidences this, as well as pinpointing areas where these fathers have little understanding of the rationale behind professional strategies. For example, during the 3rd focus group:

Dad: *'It's funny, I haven't read it properly yet, but she brought home a learning book from pre-school this weekend and I didn't realise what exactly it was, but it's a very detailed document of her life over the last year in pre-school.*
Researcher: *'Really? That's interesting; no I don't know anything about that.'*
Dad: (Sounds surprised) *'Oh, ok, well I don't know whether it's something just they do, but basically, it's um, er... well, it's what they've done. You know those sticky labels about that big, what they've done is they've got an A4 sheet and if she's said something, or if she's done something, they'll write it on that sticky label and stick it in her book, so that it's actually quoted on that day what she did or how she did it or if she interacted. I think there are five different categories that they have to work with. Sort of physical, mental and all that stuff. They've obviously coded it in some way to say 'ok, that was a physical thing, that was a mental thing that was a er communication thing. I'm fascinated by what triggers certain things in children.'* Pause. *'There's obviously, there's, well,*

it's not always what we do. We can push them as much as you like, but they won't do something until they're ready. Therefore, they've got a trigger whether it's mental, physical, or visual, whatever it is, that starts something when they're ready. Someone said one day, there's a trigger like they play with a tea set, and they'll quite happily use a milk jug, a sugar bowl and a tea pot. Yeah, people still use teapots, but how many people use a milk jug and sugar bowl?!'

The research findings referencing parent-professional relations indicate that parents and professionals benefit both as individual groups and mutually, in terms of a strengthened relationship, from being involved in the Family Learning project. For example, the analysis of staff interviews evidences benefits from the professional perspective in terms of the programme structure, recognised strategies and children's early language development. Again, this concurs with Roffey who also recognised the productive results of collaborative partnerships as including responsibility, information, interpersonal skills, positivity and acceptance. Above all, she suggested that effective two-way communication is vital as an effective form of consultation or dissemination:

> Establishing relationships with parents in which they feel safe to talk about their own concerns can make a significant difference to how much they might be positively involved (2002 39).

On the other hand, evidence from the fathers' focus groups suggests they appreciate the benefits of the differentiated, individualised approach, in which experiential, practical activities are made relevant to a range of families, appendix 3. Both these perspectives reveal elements that are intrinsic components of Family Learning projects. The study also notes that professionals and parents appreciate the way in which Family Learning extends the family support network, through the parent – professional partnership. Evidence includes the fact that it encourages engagement by these fathers in their children's early development, assisting two-way communication, increasing inclusion and reducing isolation.

Furthermore, Crozier (2000) believed middle class parents were much more visible in parent-professional relations than working-class parents, despite support being equal from both. Her research indicated that working class parents were more resigned to not having access to information and noted that

few research studies exist into the potential influences on parental involvement. As already noted, this thesis highlights the importance of building on the experiences of participants (see Fathers Booklet, Evaluation and Homework documents appendix 8)

Finally, but significantly, many theorists, including Garner & Clough (2008), called for more positive explorations into paternal involvement, as opposed to the majority, (Hobcraft 1998, Blanden 2006), who focused on the impact of paternal disengagement. Likewise, the parental studies of McBride et al (2005a and 2005b) which, though much larger, only considered academic achievement and did not have the flexibility to identify causal relationships. I would suggest that this thesis contributes from these perspectives, whilst also acknowledging the importance of providing time for the development of the parent professional relationship. This accords with Easen, Kendall & Shaw (1992) who believed that professional experience constitutes a public form of theory about child development, whilst parental experience offers a more personal theory about the development of a particular child. Additionally, Sylva et al (2004) noted the lack of research on the processes involved in parents' child care decisions and on relationships between aspects of child care and a range of outcomes for different children and families. In particular, they called for data that reflects current British circumstances, attitudes and practices. It is therefore possible that this small-scale case study on Family Learning can contribute to this important area.

5.2 Strengths

Adopting a case study approach to the research provided rich, contextual layers of data. The interpretive nature of the research also proved a useful perspective, as it helped facilitate an understanding of Family Learning from the participants' viewpoint. The paternal input to this research was of considerable benefit, as their in-depth knowledge of their children's interests enabled them to explore innovative and creative ways to encourage learning, as exemplified in the Fathers Booklet.

Furthermore, the small-scale of the study provided opportunities to practice qualities such as initiative, observation and confidence through enabling individuals to construct their own narratives, through practical projects and activities. This approach also emphasised the important aspect of the parent's voice. It placed the fathers central to the process, active in moulding curriculum and setting goals relevant to their social and cultural environment, experience and perspectives. Fathers could make choices based on personal imperatives, through the capacity to move between objective and subjective frames of reference, whilst individuals also had the opportunity to apply known facts to specific contexts and make decisions accordingly, as the range of input to the Fathers Booklet demonstrated.

In addition, the practical context of Family Learning, where families work together to resolve issues, had the potential to offer a positive opportunity to apply experiential learning to new situations. This research approach provided opportunities to capture naturally occurring thoughts and observations (e.g. Fathers Booklet) and map these to the theoretical framework, which directly related to the study focus and purpose.

An important concern is for this research to be credible (Denzin & Lincoln 2000) to enable an audience to consider how far the study findings can be relied upon. Being an interpretive case study, located within the perspective of sociocultural theory, the research design, methods of data collection and analysis were all influenced by the literature review, my professional experiences and the theoretical framework. I therefore use my own experiences to recognise connections and patterns within the data. Moving between the theoretical and personal framework helps make sense of the concepts, explains why the evidence applies to Family Learning and evidences the links between experiential learning theory and professional practice (Boud & Walker 1990).

In line with the methodological perspective, I attempted to adopt a participatory approach to the data analysis, involving both professional and fathers, to enable all those involved to see and articulate the value of their contribution to the work. Whilst this was an anticipated strength of the work, these fathers found it challenging to discuss and reflect on their practice, unless it involved familiar

formats for feedback such as the basic evaluation document (appendix 7) introduced by the children's centre staff at the end of the final focus group. However, the professional view of the children's perspective in terms of the intergenerational learning effect on the fathers' involvement was captured quite significantly. Bastiani noted that it should not be overlooked:

> …children can influence the substance and form of their parents' educational knowledge itself as well as their aspirations, attitudes and actions. This can be a potent form of cultural renewal, not only in the way it imports new knowledge and skill into the home, but especially in the way school-related knowledge is used to challenge existing values and patterns of behaviour, either directly or by setting it against a wider background (1988 p102).

Several clear strengths of the case study approach emerged when considering integrating my thesis findings into future practice. For example, data sets such as the focus groups shed light on the potential opportunities offered by a Family Learning project. They also proved a useful vehicle for highlighting any parent / professional communication issues, particularly around voice, philosophy and attitudes to learning. As already acknowledged, the flexibility of the study design also facilitated opportunities for including unexpected evidence, such as the Fathers Booklet, which was a tangible outcome that illuminated and demonstrated most of the key research findings.

The complexities of critical reflection, or 'swamps of practice' (Schon 1983) I adopted, such as the reflective diary, helped find strategies to conceptualise this practice-based research as theoretically situated. The diary also encouraged further diverse explorations which both expanded and enhanced my professional understanding of the study's key themes. Adopting a critically reflective approach emphasised the importance of recognising how my own epistemological assumptions influenced the work. It ensured it both demonstrated critical understanding and developed the chosen themes coherently. The field notes, for example, helped establish the analytical interpretations as both transparent and concise, to eliminate bias.

Throughout the data analysis, sustaining a distinction between my practice and myself was essential. One strategy adopted was to put the focus on the fathers:

'because it is their constructions of reality that the inquirer seeks to reconstruct' (Lincoln & Guba 1985 p41). This also helped to develop a critical position in terms of the research, where the challenge of aligning my own situational and conceptual knowledge (Eraut 1994) with a neutral stance was clearly evident. The Fathers Group project was a research subject of which I had little practical experience, which further enabled me to adopt a critical distance approach.

5.3 Limitations

Several key difficulties emerged during the research, most of which were inter-connected. These included practical design issues, such as the methods used, e.g. video and difficulties of individual fathers' access to the project, which could have impacted on the reliability of the findings. However, the aspect that had the most effect on the research study from several perspectives was the consideration of parent – professional power relations. A particular example was found in the evidence of the fathers' reticence to participate in a tutor-suggested initiative, but the issue permeated the entire study and will therefore be considered in more detail later in this chapter.

As acknowledged earlier, it proved very difficult to interpret the video data, since my perspective was only one possible view of events and therefore this needed addressing reflectively, in order to frame and interpret the evidence responsibly. The issues of power surrounding the interpretation of the video data were acknowledged by using a collaborative approach to shift the balance towards the advantages of utilising this element: '*Film has a unique capacity to evoke human experience, what it actually feels like to be in the world'* (Barbash & Taylor 1997 p74). In my view, the choice of video as a data collection tool was justified for three main reasons, beginning with its relevance to the context. It also facilitated the initial identification of recurring issues and enabled the research outputs to be shared with the fathers in the study. Above all, it enabled these fathers to have a voice, in terms of the way in which they were represented, which also better facilitated an analysis and interpretation of the data.

In contrast to these ideas, it is also important to acknowledge that the use of video evidence may have had a bearing on participants' decisions to be involved with the project, as one father named it as the biggest barrier to the project for him (see evaluation sheet appendix 7), whilst several others chose not to take part, without providing specific reasons. On the other hand, several participants voiced the benefits of participation and this leads onto a consideration of individual access to Family Learning projects. Whilst personal networks of friends and family members are usually of central importance in meeting most parents' needs for resources to support children's early learning, a relevant finding of this study is the importance of the workplace to fathers in terms of access to parenting information. Several participants referred to using colleagues' knowledge, as a means of accessing information about the Fathers' Group, which suggests that the workplace can function as an important information site for these fathers.

One of the most interesting study factors was the way in which electronic media became increasingly evident during the study as a means of communication. Examples included staff texting fathers to remind them of the schedule and email used as a vehicle for exchanging information about the project. Desktop publishing and the Internet also proved vital resources in the final stages of the project, as the fathers were researching and compiling their Fathers Booklet. One father reinforced the relevance of technological competence to the success of the project in the final focus group. He reflected on the media advances within a generation and observed that to be effective in the long term, any intergenerational activity must be relevant to the future, by promoting the skills and knowledge required in contemporary society. He suggested that successful activities should begin by being related to the adult's current knowledge, then advance to explore skills and knowledge that the children will need to become familiar with, to equip them for life in the 21st century.

In considering the more abstract challenges encountered during the study, I underestimated the effect the issue of power, particularly in terms of the parent – professional relationship, had within the work. I now clearly both recognise and appreciate the significant and fundamental challenges this presents, having personally experienced the conflict of theoretical understanding versus being

embedded in a professional culture that espouses certain views. During the course of the research, it became very evident that I needed to question my original perspective of the participants, whom I referred to in terms such as *'hard to reach'*. On reflection, I can re-define this in the light of the study findings. I now recognise the parents as individuals with valuable contributions to offer from very individual personal and cultural perspectives. I acknowledge their approach to information-gathering, overcoming barriers to access and abilities to evaluate opportunities as 'resourceful', rather than 'deficient'. Following on from this emerged the notion of some elements of Family Learning as being 'difficult to access' as a more realistic, appropriate and relevant description of the overall concept. Above all, this consideration is important because amplifying and extending appreciation of parents as active agents in children's early learning and development may significantly assist in reframing their participation in early childhood services.

This notion is echoed by events throughout the study, which illustrate the importance of introductory work to build rapport and mutual understanding of a shared purpose. Time spent on strategies such as developing a shared language and conceptualising a range of cultural differences could have given the fathers in this project the opportunities to offer clearer insights into their own personal and family experiences of learning. Creating this basis to draw on could underpin future studies, with fewer misinterpretations and more jointly negotiated goals, leading to more significant outcomes. On the other hand, the final focus group clearly demonstrated that when given ownership of the project, these fathers embraced the concept, with individuals referring to their own cultural repertoires to provide unique and very personal contributions to the Fathers Booklet. Whilst the concept behind this was very similar to the tutor initiated 'homework' suggestion (see appendix 7), one father for example, was able to use the same idea for both, yet the resulting positive and productive response in terms of the book text, is in direct contrast to the reaction provoked by the professionally led 'homework' activity.

5.4 Conclusion

In the process of this research I created my own case study data set of a Family Learning intervention. The findings indicate that the full potential of Family Learning remains as yet untapped. This is evidenced by Mrs Brown's reflection of involvement in the project:

*'Did you hear that conversation at the end, I don't know if you were present when they were saying about the next event being the Forest Fun trip, and how they straight away went 'The Gruffalo! That fits in with that! Can we do the Gruffalo?' And we're thinking 'Oh my gosh! Absolutely!' So now our trip to the forest is not going to be about going bug hunting, but it's now going to be the Gruffalo! We'll read the Gruffalo in the woods and they can go on a Gruffalo hunt and all that malarkey ...but for them to do that, if they want to do that now, and one of the fathers put it in that book, y'know, Forest Fun trip, related to the Gruffalo. With groups of mums we've done Gruffalo story boxes and things, but it's all very kind of structured; this is what we're doing this week, next week we'll put a game in there, the next week put a counting thing in... They seem quite happy with it, because that's what we're doing each week. What we struggle with, with the fathers, is that **you don't need to make something; you don't have to have an end product, to have some learning taking place.** You see, the fathers who've seen partners doing Family Learning come home and say 'I've made this for my child, look what I've done, how good my day has been today', whereas the Fathers Group go home, and they actually had nothing to show for those two workshops, apart from what's in their heads. That for me is so much more powerful, because they can take that anywhere. You can't take your little box of tricks everywhere. So when they're walking in the woods, suddenly they can think of something, just turn a typical trip to the park to feed the ducks, into a story.'*

This thesis is a description of a Family Learning intervention that resulted in effective outcomes. The findings could be disseminated through a range of courses and papers to assist practitioners within the fields of both Family

Learning and Early Years education. Family Learning offers choices, a voice to minorities and the resources for development of personal and cultural identity. In this way, it enables education to relate to the communities it serves in new ways. This case study could therefore also have implications for professional development in the fields of community and adult education. Bertram & Pascal (1999) referred to "*the knowledge revolution in early learning*" which should be shaping policy and practice. I believe there is a need for a review of parent - professional involvement in children's learning, leading to a common policy, disseminated within initial teacher training courses. In addition, providing opportunities for professional development for serving practitioners could instil parents with confidence and lead to a greater understanding of the relevance of Family Learning within the home - school debate.

Manning and Payne (1993) advocated adopting a Vygotskian theoretical perspective of metacognition to guide thoughts and actions and encourage self-regulated learning, enabling professionals and parents to make their learning visible and bringing implicit theories alive through practice. This approach could encourage staff development in vital areas such as practitioner research and enable families' involvement in children's learning to be seen as a credible vehicle for the practical application of alternative theoretical perspectives. At the same time, this could empower staff by giving them ownership of their own practice, a freedom that in turn may generate change and encourage innovation. It also reveals any contradictions between theory and practice, by enabling reflection on action. As Blumenfeld proposes, to encourage intellectually challenging, purposeful teaching: '*…use modelling and coaching to teach strategies for thinking and problem solving and gradually release responsibility to the learner*' (1992 p277).

This research study highlights the fact that in terms of Family Learning, there currently appears to be very few ways in which policy and practice connect, a finding reinforced by the literature review. The key issues appear to range from the current lack of knowledge of the subject, amongst both professionals and parents, to the motivations for participation. The thesis findings could therefore be disseminated through courses and papers to assist and inform both Family Learning and early year's practitioners. On the other hand, whilst it is important

not to lose sight of and investigate this gap between policy and practice, I recognise that several powerful ideas are emerging in terms of action research partnerships between adult and community education providers and children's centre staff. However, I believe that there is still a void between what policy-makers' judge is needed and what families say is required. This small - scale study suggests that the barriers to understanding ultimately centre on the values that underpin an institution's educational and social culture. The findings could therefore have implications for professional development and practice within the fields of community and adult learning. Significantly, this thesis suggests that the solution may be found by inhabiting the middle ground. I would propose that this is where it offers a distinct contribution to the current research knowledge in the field of Family Learning, by advocating a simple approach of listening to fathers in order to acknowledge the significant contribution they make to their children's learning. One point that is now clear to me is the need to further investigate this concept. Giving a voice to fathers' beliefs may enable us to find the evidence that can help to inform both current and future practice.

The study findings also emphasise the democratic nature of Family Learning, in that it is personal as well as historical, both socially and culturally situated and not easily measurable. It frequently produces original and unexpected outcomes. It can contribute to family survival and well-being by harnessing tools such as exploratory engagement and in this way, is also integrally linked to the development of personal cultures and family traditions. This research also contributes to the current understanding of the ways in which paternal involvement in young children's development can have a formative effect on social, physical and emotional competencies. Using an interpretative framework enabled the subsequent development of unanticipated themes, as exemplified by this quote from a member of staff as she read from a father's project evaluation sheet, *'Hey, listen to this! We've learned about something for when we're on pushchair trips – adapting the way we play and how to make games from stories.'* She put the paper down and added reflectively; *'I never expected that.'* Reflecting back to my experience during the very first encounter with the fathers on the Welly Walk, I had to admit to having harboured similar thoughts.

As stated earlier, a key finding of the research study was that the Family Learning environment provided the opportunity to recognise the fathers' value and place in children's learning in a way that was different to the commonly recognised roles of financial providers or logistical analysts (Sherbert Report 2009). Giving the fathers voice central stage enabled them to explore different activities and develop their own independently relevant ideas. Evidence reinforcing this included a quote from a professional who considered this the most important impact of the research study:

Mrs Brown: *'I think the main thing for me was just the confidence. The bedtime story doesn't need to be about mum doing it, or about the favourite story, because even a princess story can have a cave in it and then go exploring, so it just goes on! Father comes home, mum's just got them into this routine, and they come home, wind the kids up, go a bit crazy, it's because they don't see that being their role. But I think now that fathers have got some power and some knowledge to know that they can impact on the children as well. So even in that half hour of play time, it might be really crazy play, they might be acting out something, there might be a story behind it, that just gives the fathers confidence to say that they matter as well.'*

I would also note the way in which the findings highlight how the process of organising, delivering and participating within a Family Learning project enabled the professional practitioners, both experienced in their own fields, to share positive practical strategies. This offers the potential for the study to disseminate best practice approaches within the fields of family and early year's education. As Mrs Brown noted: *'The tutor got stuck in with them and that's what you've got to be like with the fathers.'*

One piece of evidence emphasised the fundamental concept that initiated and underpinned this research study. Occurring almost by chance, at the end of the 3rd focus group, it perhaps best reflected the reasons and justified the purpose of this thesis:

Researcher: *'So we've got a lot of ideas that have come in from home and ideas that have gone from the Children's Centre back home as well, presumably. So there's a real mix?'*

Helena's father: *'Yeah, bit of both things we've learnt here as well as things that you do at home.'*

Researcher: *'Do you think it would be a good idea to go into other groups and suggest a book, or do you think it was something that just worked here?'*

Helena's father: *'No, I think it's a good idea. Y'know, documenting and sharing ideas, whether it's book form, whether it's Internet form, whether it's written down, is obviously a good thing to do. It gives other people ideas.*
The idea is more, (pauses), well, I think you do it anyway – isn't it Family Learning?' (Lowers his voice and speaks hesitantly) *'...But in our case, fathers learning...being patient and doing stuff you er, you don't think you can do and you don't think you can, um...there's this, this thing,...that...not a stigma as such, but this idea that...that mums are good at this, but fathers aren't really.'*
(He breaks off abruptly and returns his focus to his daughter.)

For me, this comment encapsulated the essence of both the Family Learning project and this research study. Firstly, a participant was able to identify what for them was an important issue and secondly, felt that it was safe to express this view. This was perhaps a further indication of the research's unique contribution to the current knowledge in the field of Family Learning, both in terms of demonstrating how to support fathers to relate the main tenets of Family Learning to their own sociocultural repertoire and in giving a voice to a minority and a platform to develop future practice.

Implications for further research

Firstly, many of the adults who participate in Family Learning projects are relative newcomers to the concept of Lifelong Learning. Both the psychological barriers and theoretical challenges surrounding returning to learning for these adults are well documented. Brookfield (1995) stresses these links between the emotions and adult learning, arguing that it is necessary to focus on the transformative dimensions and personal voice of learners, in order to understand and appreciate the importance of a sustainable learning society for

individual members. This suggests to me the need to research opportunities to access, utilise and make sustainable, alternative avenues into Lifelong Learning.

Secondly, the recent changes to the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum continue to indicate the growing awareness of the importance of environmental context and adult role models in children's social and emotional development. Family Learning potentially offers a versatile tool for investigating how staff interpret these changes, whilst its focus on attitudes and beliefs provides further informal opportunities for analysis of both parental and practitioner values. The latest developments within the Early Years Framework, which remove the demand for total homogeneity by simplifying the curriculum, will also raise the profile of settings. This will help to support and implement a positive approach to the development of a broad profile of young children's competencies, through their relationships with both professional practitioners and families, in both policy and practice. Continuing this theme, Ball & Ball (1973) also identify criteria such as expert support to overcome challenges, enjoyment from learning with a familiar group and the opportunity to create new networks, as both immediate and long-term values, enabling children to *'learn real things from real people'* (1973 p199).

Implications for future practice

I would suggest that there is a role for Family Learning in stimulating specific, practical initiatives, as Buffton noted:

> Many organisations are already active in delivering family learning …
> but these efforts are uncoordinated at both a national and a local level
> and often rely on short-term funding (1999 p2).

The findings from this research emphasise how Family Learning projects offer opportunities to raise awareness of and reflect on differences in social and cultural repertoires, through enabling parents and professionals to engage, interact and share learning experiences on an equal basis. Family Learning may therefore have a significant role to play in providing chances for individual social and cultural identities to evolve and develop over time, in preparation for future educational expectations.

In contrast to these findings, as this research study indicates, these concepts also present challenges. We therefore need clarity over how to tackle these challenges and develop a clearer understanding of exactly which are preventing the development of best practice. This case study suggests that using a sociocultural approach can enable a multi-modal view in considering various models of Family Learning to inform new thinking. The non-statutory nature of Family Learning also enables it to remain free and independent, to take account of local need and utilise external relationships. Maintaining theories of ownership and self-initiated learning provides individuals with the requisite skills to make choices and decisions. This builds on Family Learning's core value of creativity through enjoyment. This may be of most benefit to families who are the least likely to acquire this from outside influences and on whom the notion of Lifelong Learning has the potential to exert a measurable effect.

For these notions to succeed, a change of culture is required to address the absence of agency and voice for all families. From an original intention to give voice to a marginalised and invisible group, in seeking to hear the fathers' voices, I now have a profoundly increased awareness of their cultural perspectives, norms and values. As previously stated, through the course of the research, this insight has become the catalyst that moved my perception of the study from being a narrative of a vulnerable minority group, in current societal terms, to a case study of a strongly cohesive and influential element of contemporary society.

Family Learning is a multi-faceted phenomenon. Throughout this research study, I have attempted to set the concept within the current educational context. As noted earlier, in many ways this thesis raised as many questions as it answered. However, I have hopefully pinpointed the paradigmatic shifts in research, whilst also attempting to clarify its aims, objectives and ultimately, whose interests it serves. In common with most social research, I believe my work reflects the circumstances, perceptions and realities of a small group of families as they engage with a specific Family Learning project. However, I fully recognise that the version of reality I have attempted to describe, whilst being both complex and unique, is also profoundly influenced by my own ontological

and epistemological assumptions. Whilst seeking to portray the project context and situation through a variety of lenses, to retain a measure of distance and objectivity, I appreciate that the essence of the study still hinges on my own interpretations. As Denzin and Lincoln observed:

> 'Objective reality can never be captured. We know a thing only through its representations' (2005 p5).

Appendix 1: Ethics

Certificate of ethical research approval

Your student no: 570036276

Title of your project:

An exploration of Family Learning and its impact on the culture of statutory education and home-school relations.

Brief description of your research project:

My research will focus on the links between formal and non-formal learning, through an intensive analysis of a Family Learning project, based on the concept of non-fiction reading packs.
The project is specifically designed to meet government priorities as highlighted in the Children's Plan, by increasing the engagement of hard to reach parents in their children's learning. I will use Cultural Historical Activity Theory to consider the internal dynamics of the project, to create a collective narrative of the factors promoting or preventing the effectiveness of Family Learning activities. Information provided by this research will also inform the strategic development of the multi-agency Family Learning work within the ███████████ Community Learning Service.

Give details of the participants in this research (giving ages of any children and/or young people involved):

The research will involve a group of up to twenty children, aged 6 – 11, their parents / carers, a Family Learning Tutor, school / children's centre staff and a librarian.

Give details regarding the ethical issues of informed consent, anonymity and confidentiality (with special reference to any children or those with special needs) a blank consent form can be downloaded from the SELL student access on-line documents:

The need for honesty and academic integrity in my work will be paramount at all times. I will operate within both the County Council's recognised Ethical Code of Practice and the BERA (1992) code of ethics and conduct.
As the views of families and professionals will be central to the project, I intend to always obtain informed consent for their contributions, including the right for participants to withdraw from any part of the research. To respect the rights of participants, I will also ensure confidentiality, using procedures such as identity protection and informed consent. In particular, I will endeavour to ensure that the children involved will understand they have the right to choose when, where and how to be involved. All participants will be offered the opportunity to choose their own pseudonym and /or numbers will be used where necessary to avoid any possible individual identification.
I intend using accessible language in all communications and placing emphasis on privacy, confidentiality and independent adjudication of the work. Permission to access and research the project will be covered by an agreement between the County Council and Local Education Authority, but I will also, in particular, check issues around interviewing and photographing children by liaising with staff and families, if necessary, as each establishment has a separate policy on this.

Give details of the methods to be used for data collection and analysis and how you would ensure they do not cause any harm, detriment or unreasonable stress:

Chair of the School's Ethics Committee
last updated: August 2009

Primary evidence would be collected with the consent of all participants and would include:
Video recordings which would be observed / transcribed manually to supplement observation field notes and provide further safeguards for participants. In the unlikely event that data raises serious concerns for the safety of participants or others, it will be made clear to all involved that this will be reported in line with the current safeguarding procedures.
Interviews would employ careful use of appropriate language to ensure good communication and active listening skills and a non – judgemental style to reduce any potential stress in this area.

Secondary evidence would be generated through relevant supporting documents, including baseline data on each participant, acquired from SATs results, Standardised Reading Test Scores and school attendance records for the children and evidence of prior learning and experience, plus Basic Skills initial assessment results, where appropriate, for the adult participants.
The course outline, planning and evaluation strategies would also be used to construct the socio-cultural context and ensure, where possible, that the cohort encompassed participants of both sexes, with a range of ages, abilities, backgrounds and ethnicities, across the study.

Give details of any other ethical issues which may arise from this project (e.g. secure storage of videos/recorded interviews/photos/completed questionnaires or special arrangements made for participants with special needs etc.):

Throughout the research, all records and data, both electronic, digital and paper based, will be appropriately and securely stored, in accordance to County Council procedures and destroyed once no longer needed.
Data gathering will be carried out with an awareness of participants needs and comfort at all times. In particular, sensitive consideration will be given to the use of cameras to enable participants to gather data at home. Advice will be sought on the appropriateness of this data being used in the context of focus group interviews and adjustments made accordingly where necessary. Interview venues will be chosen to take into account both the physical needs of those involved, the confidentiality of the data and to respect the need for participants' privacy and opinions.

Give details of any exceptional factors, which may raise ethical issues (e.g. potential political or ideological conflicts which may pose danger or harm to participants):

The well-being of participants will be an intrinsic part of the research design, implementation and dissemination. I will endeavour to maintain an awareness of the political and ideological context of the work, to anticipate, pre-empt and eliminate any potential areas of possible conflict. I intend to ensure that my data collection procedures remain transparent, by never adopting covert practices, and also that I clarify my implicit values and philosophical assumptions about the project from the outset.

This form should now be printed out, signed by you on the first page and sent to your supervisor to sign. Your supervisor will forward this document to the School's **Research Support Office** *for the Chair of the School's Ethics Committee to countersign. A unique approval reference will be added and this certificate will be returned to you to be included at the back of your dissertation/thesis.*

N.B. You should not start the fieldwork part of the project until you have the signature of your supervisor

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This project has been approved for the period: until: 13 | 9 | 2013

Chair of the School's Ethics Committee
last updated: August 2009

By (above mentioned supervisor's signature): .... *[signature]* .... date: 4/11/09

N.B. To Supervisor: Please ensure that ethical issues are addressed annually in your report and if any changes in the research occurs a further form is completed.

SELL unique approval reference:................. D/09/10/17

Signed:.......*[signature]*................................date: 5/11/09
Chair of the School's Ethics Committee

This form is available from http://education.exeter.ac.uk/students/

Reply Reply All Forward

Chair of Ethics Committee approval

Passey, Julie

To: Barrett, Jess
CC: Fisher, Ros

Dear Sir

Is it possible for you to clarify an issue with my Ed D certificate of research approval please?

I am currently in the process of completing major corrections, following a Viva in September. I gained ethics approval in October 2009 but because of difficulties with access had to make some changes to my actual project from the details I had given for approval. The research is in Family Learning, which involves parents and practitioners working collaboratively to support children's learning.

The following changes were made to complete the final project:

- • Topic changed from non-fiction literacy to reading in general.
- • Age of the children changed from 6-11 years to 18 months to 5 years.
- • I originally stated that the children would be given the right to say whether and how they were involved but actually this agreement was given by the parents as the children were younger.
- • The approval was for working with parents but the final project only involved fathers.

The examiners asked me to check if retrospective approval was required for the study, so I would appreciate your views.

Julie Passey

Reply Reply All Forward

RE: Chair of Ethics Committee approval

Fisher, Ros

To: Passey, Julie; Barrett, Jess

This is just to confirm (as discussed with Nick Givens as chair of the ethics committee) that, although there were changes to the project from the original plan, I am very content that ethical procedures were followed throughout. Ethics were discussed regularly in supervision meetings. Also Julie is an experienced professional in family services and is very clear of the importance and necessary procedures for safeguarding children, care was taken to get the necessary permissions and give appropriate explanations at every stage.

Dr Ros Fisher (supervisor)
Associate Professor
Director of Doctoral Studies
Graduate School of Education
University of Exeter

Please note that I work at the University on only three days a week: Wednesday, Thursday and Friday

Reply Reply All Forward

RE: Chair of Ethics Committee approval

Barrett, Jess

To: Passey, Julie
CC: Fisher, Ros

Hi Julie

Nick Givens, the GSE representative on the College Ethics Committee, confirms ethical approval for your project.

Kind regards

Jess

Appendix 2: Questionnaires

Analysis of questionnaires

The following results are from the pilot questionnaire which was distributed to the members of a Fathers Group at a local Children's Centre.

Table 8: Results from pilot questionnaire

Have you heard of Family Learning? If so, what do you think best describes it?

Doing things as a family	Meeting other families 1	Helping with homework
Learning new ways to support your children 4	Helping at school 1	Reading together 1
Attending classes in Children's Centre	Learning through play 2	Staff supporting parents
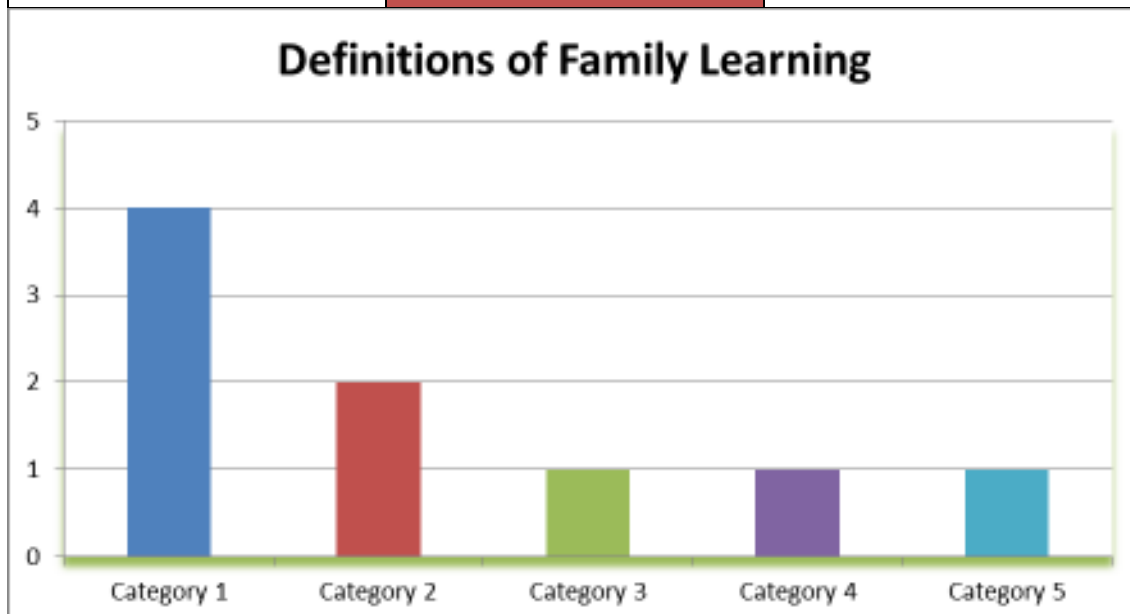
Figure 3: Definitions of Family Learning

The adults were asked to tick their top 3 choices, or add their own definition. Of the seven questionnaires returned, only 1 father had heard of Family Learning before. His children were a 13 week-old baby girl and a 4 year-old boy. He described it, as did 3 others, as learning new ways to support your children. This was his only definition, which suggested he had not had a great deal of first-hand experience of the activity. Two other parents indicated 3 definitions, whilst a third adult chose 2. Three parents did not tick any description. Their children's ages ranged from 6 weeks to 5 years, so this did not appear to have any effect on their knowledge.

Responses to Q.3

None of the parents said they had ever been involved in any organised learning activity as a family.

Table 9: Responses to Q.4

Greater enthusiasm for learning at home	Develops independent learning skills 1	Improves adult – child relationships 3
Reinforces and contextualises what's happening at school	Interaction with other families increases opportunities for community involvement 4	Formal setting makes it more organised, so you know what's been covered.
Everybody's gaining skills at the same time. 1	Boosts everyone's self-esteem and confidence 1	Parents need to know what children are being taught.

Respnses to Q.5

This was another example of using confusing language. The original question read 'Do you see any disadvantages to participating in Family Learning? 2 replied no, 2 said yes and 3 left the answer blank or put a question mark. When asked to describe any disadvantages, one stated '*it sounds great'* and one wrote '*more confident'*.

Responses to Q. 6.

When asked if they would take part in an organised Family Learning activity if it was at a convenient time and place, 5 replied yes, one said no and one left the response blank. When asked to choose 3 activities they would most like to do, 2 did not respond. From the remaining questionnaires, the following results were achieved:

Table 10: Responses to Q.6

Finding out about the school curriculum *	Sport*	I.T. *
Practical activities eg model making * *	Art and craft *	New skills to use at home together * * * *

Only one used the opportunity to add a comment: *'What is it?'* which emphasised the lack of understanding about Family Learning amongst the group.

Feedback from the pilot questionnaire was also received from the staff at the Childrens Centre who supported the participants in completing the survey. They indicated that the layout, response set and choice of typeface were as important as the wording of the items, in terms of clarity of meaning. This was reinforced by the responses, for example, half the respondents put a question mark through Q 4 and several participants did not attempt to answer most of the questions.

As a result of this, I refined and clarified the questions for a postal survey to capture the views of a wider audience. I chose this approach because it was straightforward, efficient, held no interviewer bias and could guarantee anonymity. Unfortunately, the response was extremely poor and I did not have the resources to follow up. For this reason, I decided to pursue my pilot group in more detail. The data I had collected from this small group was interesting in its own right and justified further research. I appreciated that it would be difficult to trust the data to be representative of the wider population, but hoped that by limiting my research population I could be reasonably sure my sample was a fair one.

Completed questionnaire version 1, Dad 1

<u>2010 Family Learning Questionnaire.</u>

1. How many children are in your family?

Number of girls under 16:	Number of boys under 16:
Their ages:	Their ages: In months

2. Have you heard of Family Learning? ......N.o........ If so, what do you think best describes it? Please tick your top 3 choices, or add your own.

Doing things as a family	Meeting other families	Helping with homework
Learning new ways to support your children ✓	Helping at school ✓	Reading together ✓
Attending classes in school or Family Centre	Learning through play	Teachers supporting parents

3. Have you ever been involved in any organised learning activity as a family?....N.o...

If you have, what did it involve?

....

4. Please tick the 3 most important benefits of taking part in Family Learning, and / or add your own.

Greater enthusiasm for learning at home	Develops independent learning skills ✓	Improves adult – child relationships ✓
Reinforces and contextualises what's happening at school	Interaction with other families increases opportunities for community involvement ✓	Formal setting makes it more organised, so you know what's been covered
Everybody's gaining skills at the same time	Boosts everyone's self esteem and confidence ✓	Parents need to know what children are being taught

5. Do you see any disadvantages to participating in Family Learning? ...No.....

If you do, can you describe them?...

6. Would you take part in an organised Family Learning activity if it was at a convenient time and place? .Yes. If so, please tick the 3 activities you would most like to do:

Finding out about the school curriculum	Sports	I.T.
Practical activities eg model making	Arts & Crafts ✓	New skills to use together at home
Other:		

Is there anything else you would like to add?................No.................................

(please continue over the page if necessary).

Thank you for taking part in this survey. Your views are important to us and will help to shape our work for the coming year.

Completed questionnaire version 1, Dad 2

2010 Family Learning Questionnaire.

1. How many children are in your family?

| Number of girls under 16: | 1 | Number of boys under 16: | 1 |
| Their ages: 13 weeks | | Their ages: 4 yrs | |

2. Have you heard of Family Learning? .....Yes.... If so, what do you think best describes it?   Please tick your top 3 choices, or add your own.

Doing things as a family	Meeting other families	Helping with homework
Learning new ways to support your children ✓	Helping at school	Reading together
Attending classes in school or Family Centre	Learning through play	Teachers supporting parents

3. Have you ever been involved in any organised learning activity as a family?.....N.O......

   If you have, what did it involve?

   ....

4. Please tick the 3 most important benefits of taking part in Family Learning, and / or add your own.

Greater enthusiasm for learning at home	Develops independent learning skills	Improves adult – child relationships
Reinforces and contextualises what's happening at school	Interaction with other families increases opportunities for community involvement ✓	Formal setting makes it more organised, so you know what's been covered
Everybody's gaining skills at the same time	Boosts everyone's self esteem and confidence	Parents need to know what children are being taught

5. Do you see any disadvantages to participating in Family Learning? .....Yes......

   If you do, can you describe them?.....more confident.......................................

6. Would you take part in an organised Family Learning activity if it was at a convenient time and place? .Yes.   If so, please tick the 3 activities you would most like to do:

Finding out about the school curriculum	Sports	I.T. ✓
Practical activities eg model making ✓	Arts & Crafts	New skills to use together at home ✓
Other:		

Is there anything else you would like to add?..........:...

(please continue over the page if necessary).

Thank you for taking part in this survey. Your views are important to us and will help to shape our work for the coming year.

Completed questionnaire version 1, Dad 3

2010 Family Learning Questionnaire.

1. How many children are in your family?

Number of girls under 16: 1	Number of boys under 16:
Their ages: 2	Their ages:

2. Have you heard of Family Learning? ....No.... If so, what do you think best describes it? Please tick your top 3 choices, or add your own.

Doing things as a family	Meeting other families	Helping with homework
Learning new ways to support your children	Helping at school	Reading together
Attending classes in school or Family Centre	Learning through play	Teachers supporting parents

3. Have you ever been involved in any organised learning activity as a family?...No....

    If you have, what did it involve?

    ....

4. Please tick the 3 most important benefits of taking part in Family Learning, and / or add your own.   ?

Greater enthusiasm for learning at home	Develops independent learning skills	Improves adult – child relationships
Reinforces and contextualises what's happening at school	Interaction with other families increases opportunities for community involvement	Formal setting makes it more organised, so you know what's been covered
Everybody's gaining skills at the same time	Boosts everyone's self esteem and confidence	Parents need to know what children are being taught

5. Do you see any disadvantages to participating in Family Learning? ....?

    If you do, can you describe them?...?..............

6. Would you take part in an organised Family Learning activity if it was at a convenient time and place? .... If so, please tick the 3 activities you would most like to do:

Finding out about the school curriculum	Sports	I.T.
Practical activities eg model making	Arts & Crafts	New skills to use together at home
Other:		

Is there anything else you would like to add?...............?..

(please continue over the page if necessary).   what is iT.   ████

Thank you for taking part in this survey. Your views are important to us and will help to shape our work for the coming year.

Completed questionnaire version 1, Dad 4

<u>2010 Family Learning Questionnaire.</u>

1. How many children are in your family?

Number of girls under 16:	1	Number of boys under 16:	0
Their ages: 2½ 4 13		Their ages:	

2. Have you heard of Family Learning? ......No....... If so, what do you think best describes it? Please tick your top 3 choices, or add your own.

Doing things as a family	Meeting other families	Helping with homework
Learning new ways to support your children	Helping at school	Reading together
Attending classes in school or Family Centre	Learning through play	Teachers supporting parents

3. Have you ever been involved in any organised learning activity as a family?...No.......

   If you have, what did it involve?

   ....

4. Please tick the 3 most important benefits of taking part in Family Learning, and / or add your own.

Greater enthusiasm for learning at home	Develops independent learning skills	Improves adult – child relationships
Reinforces and contextualises what's happening at school	Interaction with other families increases opportunities for community involvement	Formal setting makes it more organised, so you know what's been covered
Everybody's gaining skills at the same time	Boosts everyone's self esteem and confidence	Parents need to know what children are being taught

5. Do you see any disadvantages to participating in Family Learning? ....

   If you do, can you describe them?..

6. Would you take part in an organised Family Learning activity if it was at a convenient time and place? ..No... If so, please tick the 3 activities you would most like to do:

Finding out about the school curriculum	Sports	I.T.
Practical activities eg model making	Arts & Crafts	New skills to use together at home
Other:		

Is there anything else you would like to add?...

(please continue over the page if necessary).

Thank you for taking part in this survey. Your views are important to us and will help to shape our work for the coming year.

Completed questionnaire version 1, Dad 5

2010 Family Learning Questionnaire.

1. How many children are in your family?

Number of girls under 16:	Number of boys under 16: 2
Their ages:	Their ages: 6WKS + 5 YRS

2. Have you heard of Family Learning? ......NO...... If so, what do you think best describes it? Please tick your top 3 choices, or add your own.

Doing things as a family	Meeting other families	Helping with homework
Learning new ways to support your children	Helping at school	Reading together
Attending classes in school or Family Centre	Learning through play	Teachers supporting parents

3. Have you ever been involved in any organised learning activity as a family?......NO......

If you have, what did it involve?

....

4. Please tick the 3 most important benefits of taking part in Family Learning, and / or add your own.

Greater enthusiasm for learning at home	Develops independent learning skills	Improves adult – child relationships
Reinforces and contextualises what's happening at school	Interaction with other families increases opportunities for community involvement	Formal setting makes it more organised, so you know what's been covered
Everybody's gaining skills at the same time	Boosts everyone's self esteem and confidence	Parents need to know what children are being taught

5. Do you see any disadvantages to participating in Family Learning? ....

If you do, can you describe them?..

6. Would you take part in an organised Family Learning activity if it was at a convenient time and place? YES If so, please tick the 3 activities you would most like to do:

Finding out about the school curriculum	Sports	I.T.
Practical activities eg model making	Arts & Crafts	New skills to use together at home ✓
Other:		

Is there anything else you would like to add?..

(please continue over the page if necessary).

Thank you for taking part in this survey. Your views are important to us and will help to shape our work for the coming year.

Completed questionnaire version 1, Dad 6

2010 Family Learning Questionnaire.

1. How many children are in your family?

Number of girls under 16:	Number of boys under 16:
Their ages: 2	Their ages: 1

2. Have you heard of Family Learning? ...No........... If so, what do you think best describes it? Please tick your top 3 choices, or add your own.

Doing things as a family	Meeting other families	Helping with homework
Learning new ways to support your children ✓	Helping at school	Reading together
Attending classes in school or Family Centre	Learning through play ✓	Teachers supporting parents

3. Have you ever been involved in any organised learning activity as a family? No.............

If you have, what did it involve?

....

4. Please tick the 3 most important benefits of taking part in Family Learning, and / or add your own.

Greater enthusiasm for learning at home	Develops independent learning skills	Improves adult – child relationships ✓
Reinforces and contextualises what's happening at school	Interaction with other families increases opportunities for community involvement ✓	Formal setting makes it more organised, so you know what's been covered
Everybody's gaining skills at the same time	Boosts everyone's self esteem and confidence	Parents need to know what children are being taught

5. Do you see any disadvantages to participating in Family Learning? .No......

If you do, can you describe them?..........*hands great*...................................

6. Would you take part in an organised Family Learning activity if it was at a convenient time and place? .Yes.. If so, please tick the 3 activities you would most like to do:

Finding out about the school curriculum	Sports	I.T.
Practical activities eg model making ✓	Arts & Crafts	New skills to use together at home ✓
Other:		

Is there anything else you would like to add?...

(please continue over the page if necessary).

Thank you for taking part in this survey. Your views are important to us and will help to shape our work for the coming year.

Questionnaire version 2

<u>**Community Learning Service**</u>

<u>*Family Learning Questionnaire.*</u>

1) Have you ever been involved in any organised learning activity as a family?.............

   If you have, what did it involve?...

2) Have you heard of Family Learning?   .... Please number your top 3 ways to describe it, or add your own.

Doing things as a family	Meeting other families	Helping with homework
Learning new ways to support your children	Helping at school	Reading together
Attending classes in school or children's centre	Learning through play	Teachers supporting parents

3) Please number the 3 most important benefits of taking part in organised

   Family Learning, or add your own.

Reinforces things being done at home	Develops independent learning skills	Improves adult-child relationship
Explains what's happening at school	Interaction with other families increases opportunities for community involvement	Encourages a positive approach to learning
Everybody is gaining skills at the same time	Boosts everyone's self esteem and confidence	Helps parents to know what children are being taught in school

4) Do you see any barriers to taking part in Family Learning? ....If you do, can you describe them?...

5) Would you take part in a Family Learning activity with your child if it was at a convenient time and place?................. If so, please tick the 3 activities you would most like to do.

Finding out about the school curriculum	Sports	Computers
Number games	Art & craft e.g. building models	New skills to use together at home
Making kits based on children's books	Hobbies	Other:

6) How many children are in your family?

Number of girls under 16:	Number of boys under 16:
Their ages:	Their ages:

Thank you for taking part in this survey.

If there is anything else you would like to add, please continue over the page.

Questionnaires should be returned by **Friday 15th October** to **Julie Passey, Community Learning Service, *****

Completed questionnaire version 2

Family Learning Questionnaire. | Received |

1) Have you ever been involved in any organised learning activity as a family?...YES...

   If you have, what did it involve?...MAKING pizza Together...

2) Have you heard of Family Learning? ...YES.... Please number your top **3** ways to describe it, or add your own.

Doing things as a family _1_	Meeting other families	Helping with homework
Learning new ways to support your children _2_	Helping at school	Reading together
Attending classes in school or children's centre _3_	Learning through play	Teachers supporting parents

3) Please number the **3** most important benefits of taking part in organised

   Family Learning, or add your own.

Reinforces things being done at home	Develops independent learning skills	Improves adult-child relationship
Explains what's happening at school	Interaction with other families increases opportunities for community involvement _3_	Encourages a positive approach to learning _1_
Everybody is gaining skills at the same time	Boosts everyone's self esteem and confidence _2_	Helps parents to know what children are being taught in school

4) Do you see any barriers to taking part in Family Learning? ...NO....If you do, can you describe them?...

5) Would you take part in a Family Learning activity with your child if it was at a convenient time and place?....YES.... If so, please tick the **3** activities you would most like to do.

Finding out about the school curriculum	Sports	Computers
Number games ✓	Art & craft e.g. building models ✓	New skills to use together at home
Making kits based on children's books ✓	Hobbies	Other:

6) How many children are in your family?

Number of girls under 16: _2_	Number of boys under 16:
Their ages: _9 / 4_	Their ages:

Thank you for taking part in this survey.

If there is anything else you would like to add, please continue over the page.

Questionnaires should be returned by **Friday 15th October** to **Julie Passey, Community**

Appendix 3: Focus Groups

Transcripts from Focus Group 1

From the questionnaire, what came back was that people wanted to do Friday night, family time.

Researcher: So Friday nights work well?

Friday nights do work well, I mean, I know 4 o'clock is a bit tight for some people, but if we're talking about having a bit of a training session that's like an hour and a half long, or something, if I turned up here at half past eight on a Saturday morning and got home at ten o'clock, its got to be serious, I mean, she does like her lie in on a Saturday!

There's no reason why it couldn't be alternate Fridays to what we do now I suppose?

Yeah, I'd have no problems, I could take S and be back here half an hour later...
Researcher: That would be brilliant for us, actually, Friday night would be easier to get a tutor for, but we'll go with whatever you think.

What, the alternate Fridays to now?

Researcher: Just for a couple – that's all it is isn't it?

I guess it depends when people can get out of work as well, (murmurs of agreement and nods from others).

I'm supposed to be in work til 4, but I've got an agreement with my boss every other Friday that I can leave at half past 3.

Researcher: That's useful.

So whether she'd let me go every Friday at half past 3, or cut the sessions down and make them shorter?

Researcher: Yes, that's why we're only doing a couple, it's so difficult for you isn't it, to fit it in...

I think that's partly why some Dads I know have come, and then not come afterwards, just 'cos time of work and getting out is hard.

Well thinking now as well, people are having to work a bit longer than they're wanting to, to make sure they aren't the one missing when it comes to er, evaluating jobs.

Researcher: You've got to think about those things haven't you.

Yeah, you always think family time is important, but...when do you do it?

Researcher: Yeah, getting that balance! OK, well that's really useful, actually, something like that, we haven't had that suggested, a toolkit of activities of 10 mins, quarter of an hour, 20 minutes, ideas...

Mmm, yeah, (nods).

Researcher: I could see that working quite nicely...

A toolkit of things for Dads to do, er...

Yeah, if I know that, I knew a week in advance, last Sunday, when W was out at Boys Brigade parade service, for Remembrance Sunday, so I was able to put my mind to it the week before and think, what can we do on Sunday, had something planned, other than just sitting in front of the tv or something, but if, ..when I got up tomorrow morning, or Wednesday or something, 'I've got to go

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to such and such,' ?

Researcher: Quick! Think!
So if we did that, you'd be linking with stuff you'd do as a Dad, as opposed to as a parent?

Nods, murmurs of agreement...

Because there's plenty of things to do, like books, for..like parents,..

Yeah, I guess little things like the recipe for the biscuits we made here, ...if I go looking for a recipe tomorrow, which one of the 150 recipe books that W's got do I look in, where as I can open this book and oh, well that's what we need there, let's do some cooking S.

Researcher: So you could almost perhaps base it on some of the things you've done already, but maybe other ideas as well?

Mmm.nods all round

Researcher: But making it very specific to Dads , I think, would be really handy – I haven't seen anything like that.

No, and that would differentiate it between, er, a set book...

Researcher: Mmm, just another, run of the mill...?

Yeah,

Researcher: No, I could see that working, 'cos its not too.. impractical either, we've got to keep it fairly, sort of so we can deliver it. And if it can be in the centre that's even easier. Does that fit with everybody? Is it convenient enough? I mean, I hear people come from quite a distance, to here, but...?

I'm probably the furthest now, - D and I are the furthest.

*No, M's from *****...I think that about the most...*

Researcher: We were talking about this earlier, weren't we?

*I mean, the older cores from *****, but there are new people from here, ...*

'Cos we used to be in *****, but when we moved up here, we've had, (looks round room, counting) 1,2,3,4..

Researcher: All new ones..?

(Finishes counting..Four,) four join us,

Researcher: That just shows...

I mean, we were actually down to...well, I turned up the one week and there was me and S(child), S and H(child) and that was it.

Researcher: Wow, so you've done well to keep it all going, excellent.

And when we came here, …

That's when it started to work, there's just sometimes I can't make it, or maybe I'm off sailing...(grins)

All laugh

Researcher: That's not a reason I've come across yet before - off sailing!

Staff: How's it going? Had any ideas come up? A. got any? *All grin.*

Researcher: Yeah, we've had some good ones,...

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I was just asking, defensive! All laugh.

Researcher: Yeah, excellent. Some really useful stuff! (Gives mind map to staff.) Maybe if people have a think, maybe just jog their memory, if it had been pouring with rain, we'd have just been sitting, looking at that, trying to just talk about what you think is family learning, what you think is the benefits of it..what do you think would be the problems, like the barriers to it, so any comments on that would be great , if anything comes back into the centre, that would be good...

We're not going to get into Bowlby and things like that, are we?

Others: Into Barbie?!

Bowlby.

Researcher laughing: Definitely not! None of them! Nothing like that!
Others shrug and laugh –Over my head.

Researcher: No, very simple ideas, just anything that will kind of work for a book, just anything you can think of.

Mother arrives, approaches me with consent form in hand: Is this to do with here, or you?

Researcher: Well it's kind of both. It's called FL, the council does it, we provide it, but we need to know what you need first, if you see what I mean, what you want. You know, it's no good us saying well, we'll provide a teacher to make things with the children, or do cooking, or something, if it's not what the dads want. So it's about asking the dads first really.

Oh! So this is for the <u>dads!</u> (Laughs and turns to return consent form to partner.) So you handing this to me, ...

A's Dad, defensively: For you to hold it!

Researcher: Just to get the signature on the bottom, if you're happy to sign and give it back now, that's great, just to say you don't mind being part of the project. We might video the actual activity...and then you've got a chance to say you're not involved if you don't want to be.

Others – shall I sign this now?

Researcher: Yeah, that would be brilliant. The other sheet is just a memory jog. It's more the consent form, if you don't mind signing that.

Others – What's the consent form for?

Researcher: It's to say you don't mind being part of the project and that you don't mind us videoing the activity with you and your children and you can at any time say, I don't want that bit in...

Others - OK, I just fill in this form? … Have you got a pen that writes?

Researcher: Yes, and you can opt out at any time and you're not identified on the research or anything. It just means we can use it as part of the work of the university.

So you just use it for the university do you?

Researcher: Oh yes, (smile) it will probably only be used by my supervisor really, you know! (Pauses, collecting consent forms in and thanking individuals as they leave)

Dad on sideline who hasn't spoken yet: See there's 2 sides to it really, y'know, why d'you start coming in the first place, cost that's the hardest bit for, for Dads, is to actually get anywhere in the first place.

Researcher: Nodding in agreement, yeah....

And work pressures is one, but just the, um, it's not fear, but the apprehension of, of, ...either taking your child on your own somewhere, or, well – this is something that Mums do.

But I think, I think we've managed to avoid what some playgroups do, and if there's a new person, we talk to them. Yeah, a lot of playgroups, you walk in and you end up sitting in a corner, and they all get a cup of coffee and you think oh.

But then that was almost like it for the first few weeks though, cos everyone was new.

Actually, you are right, because I remember, you know, getting home and waiting for the questions...and who goes there? Well there's H, H's Dad, um....shrugs.

That's right yeah. Smiles.

Researcher: It seems very different to when I came a year ago. You know, it's really evolved.

You came a year ago did you?

Researcher: Bonfire night, a year ago.

Oh, OK, I wasn't here then it must have been J (Staff) all laugh.

Researcher: It's really moved on, really interesting, and really helpful for us, to get an idea of it, we're just trying to measure the value of it, and is there any point in it and is it justifiable to fund?

It's justifiable to fund us for the Council?

Researcher: No, the FL, what is it about what goes on in the Dads groups, that makes it different?

Mmm, 'cos I think it's a worry, as this group gets older, there'll be a time when we run out of, um, enthusiasm, or because they're just not getting anything out of it. But there's no-on else coming in behind, just A(child) and C(child) and that's, y'know that's the danger.

I think it works well as well because it's so relaxed. You know, you come in and if you're not particularly, y'know, you're not having a good day, its fine, y'know, S can go and play, I can talk to somebody and y'know, just sort of sound off a bit if you need to....

Researcher: So it's almost the lack of structure...?

Well, yes and no, because the other part of that is that because Dads like structure, there is actually a programme that you've got, we know what we're doing, we knew that we were doing this now, we knew what we're doing in 2 week's time, I don't know, but I'll look on my calendar and see what it is and it's there. Whereas Mums just turn up and they don't care what they're doing, but we're like, what're we doing next time, so there is a structure and there is a plan, but there's not a fixed timetable to it all.

Appendix 4: Observational data

Field Notes

Second Workshop 21/1/2011

'I'm too old!'

The atmosphere seems lighter today. Perhaps it's the better weather, but there's a definite feeling of optimism, as the families arrive. The dads appear upbeat and positive as they drop their offspring in the crèche and gather in the kitchen to make cups of tea. The tutor puts her head round the door and returns to report that they're on their way, but hadn't seems to like being hurried.

I talk quietly to the father sitting nearest to me as we wait to start. It's the dad who did his homework. I ask how he got on. He reports that he never realised Jack and The Beanstalk could be so exhausting. 'Quite a workout'. He gave examples of how it had been far more energetic than he'd expected, including describing how they'd imitated the beanstalk, starting curled up on the floor and growing as the beans grew, stretching up to the ceiling, incorporating mathematical language such as shortest, largest, smallest etc. He added that he hadn't imagined all you could do with it until he actually tried it out in a practical way. I agreed and emphasised the importance for the children, so they don't see books as all about sitting still. He nodded and then added that he had never read at school, if he could avoid it, because it was boring. It was only when, as an adult, he saw a neighbour who also never read, with a book. Very amused, he asked him what it was because he assumed it must be a car manual. When the neighbour told him it was Harry Potter, he just laughed at him, so the neighbour lent it to him ...and he was hooked.

Finally, we discussed the challenges of bringing some books to life. He said they had read Rapunzel, but he couldn't think how to make it more interesting. I suggested asking the group, as often it helps to share ideas.
The tutor then opens the session.

(Discussing & filling in paperwork.)
D1: Wait 'til you get to this question: How many GCSE's A – C do you have.

D2: That was a long time ago!

D3: Mmm, well I've gotta say no to that, cos I've got 'O' levels.
All laugh.

D3: Just put zero then, that's the answer!

D3: I'm too old for GCSE's.

D1: Do we really have to list other qualifications?

D4: Just show off!

T: No, Just anything you think's interesting. I had someone who'd got a sword-fighting qualification, which I thought was **really** interesting!

D1: Didn't know they did 'em!

D2: Yeah, probably * College do somewhere.

D5: Yeah, my missus has got one, I know that!

D6: What is it?

D5: It's a Sword fighting qualification. It's for stage combat
.

All laugh.

D3: You couldn't write it, could you?!

D2: I don't see the point of that.

D5: Only if you was going on the stage, cos you can't do sword-fighting on the stage without stage combat .Its a bit silly.

T: Well you've, gotta know you're not going to kill somebody. I thought that was really good – not one I'd heard of before.

D2: Shall we put our yachting ones in? What, Day Skipper?

T: Well that's interesting.

D3: Level 2 powerboat...

All laugh.

D2: VHF Radio.

D1: Laughing That's right!

T: So where do you take your boats then?

D2: *

D1: Along the south coast.

T: You don't putt around * Lake or something?

D1: No, real sea.

T: Real sea.

D3: I'm in * Sailing Club as well.

T: Oh right? Up and down the river?

D3: No, lake.

T: Lake, oh ok. Didn't know there was one up there.

D3: It's a flooded gravel pit.

T: Oh yeah yeah, like South C?

D3: I got my stuff through on Monday. Cos, with the sailing club you have to do certain opportunities during the year. That way it's so much cheaper than employing people to do things...

T: Yeah.

D3: I got the list through this week of when the working parties are. I'm supposed to be on a working party tomorrow.

T: Do they sail at this time of year? I mean, are the boars actually on the water?

D3: The big ones do.

D2: They're draining the lake....and you've gotta clear it out!

D1: Of all the shopping trolleys.

All laugh.

D3: I'm supposed to be pollarding and coppicing.

T: Wow!

D2: Killing all the trees off?!

D1: Yeah, killing trees.

D3: I wish they'd told me like a fortnight ago, cos I'm out tomorrow.

D1: But pollardings something that they did for cattle, wasn't it? So that everything came down, so that the cattle were then able to graze...or was it to stop them grazing? No, it's to stop them a bit, so it could come down, like a willow tree, so that they could actually eat the stump of it.

T: What is it when they chop the hedges? Cos the council do that to the hedges don't they?

D2: What, they hack them, you mean.

D3: yeah! They hack them, with a tractor! Flail them.

D5: Thwack them!

T: No, no, no, when they break one, and bend it...which is that then?

D1: Oh, topiary!

T: No, no, it's like to make it grow more densely, I suppose.

D5: I know what you mean. We did that at school.

T: Like the hawthorn hedges, they come and sort of...(gestures with hand)

D2: They sort of hedgerow it.

T: But they kind of have a straight one and they sort of chop it so that it goes sort of goes that way, so it sort of goes into each other. I thought that was one of those coppicey, pollardy things.

D1: Could be, yeah.

T: Coppicing is when you thin out hazel, isn't it.

D1: Well I know, I'm fairly sure pollarding is topping..

T: yeah, chopping them off, sort of layering.

D3: I phoned the chap who was in charge of it and he asked me what tools I had so we could do this, right.

D3: A knife?

All laugh.

D3: I said, well, I've a long reach hedge trimmer. He went, oooh, that'd be good, could we use that from a boat?

All laugh.

D3: No, I don't really fancy that, trees right in front of me, lean out of the boat, I'll go for a bungee...settle for that!

T: turns to other group and asks how they're getting on with the forms. Father with baby in arms says

Bit slow at the moment.

T: You mean you can't multi-task?

D: I'm not a woman.

T: laughs. We can do that and cook tea and keep a toddler amused, you know that don't you.

Ds laugh. Fair play.

T: I'm lying!

D5: Yeah, just looks like that when we come home, doesn't it.

All smile. D asks what to put in space for suggestions.

T: Well, y'know, we're open to ideas, you know for courses you want us to put on. I can't guarantee that we'll do them, but y'know, if there are courses that you think would be useful. If we don't know about the need, then we can't do them.

D3: (Points to 'other quals' box on form). Shall I put BSc down for that?

D1: Is it a true BSc?

D3: Nods. British Swimming certificate

All laugh.

D1: I knew it was going to be something different to a degree in science.

D3: Last time I put it my mate went 'I didn't know you had that, when did you get that? I said, when I was about 11.

All laugh.

D1: That's probably not the right one to put down then, is it.

D3: This course I'm doing at the moment, with the exams, it's at S. College, it covers communication skills, everything. This course finishes 2 weeks on

Wednesday and the next one starts the following Tuesday. We're worried we won't get done in time and they just say don't worry, there's loads of time, you won't have a problem. I said can you confirm I've got a place for the Tuesday? They looked at the diary then and went, mmmm, it's pretty full! The whole class went 'hang about, you told us' ...and they went, 'well ok then' ...

D2: I did a Masters course an MSc at **** Uni and they were absolutely appalling. It just seemed to be that they weren't geared up for handling non-students. They'd give you such little notice, they were just there expecting you to be slumped in a doorway somewhere, able to react at like a moments notice. So they'd say 'you've got a 2 week course in 2 weeks time and you'd say, oh well actually I can't make that, y'know, I need a little bit more notice than just 2 weeks...

D1: Yes, I did some of my work like y'know, as day release, we'd turn up like for a 9oclock start and we'd be there, expecting a full day. And they'd turn up sort half an hour later and we were like hang on a minute, we've taken time out of busy lives, to do this and you come waltzing in with .....?

D3: Yes that was like our exam, we got there at 9 o'clock as most people's letter said, got put in a room, were told the adjudicator will be here in a bit but she's running a bit late, she's on her way... Later they said you've all been interviewed to be here and you've all passed it. I thought: No one interviewed me, I found out yesterday that I'm supposed to be here today....They didn't have records of who's paid, ...I was bringing in like my bank statement that said there's the record that its gone out to you, there's me cheque stub, ...it was one thing after another...We had an exam a few weeks ago and half way through they said 'if you're still working on your exam can you save it now 'cos we're going to have to move to another room. I went 'What'?! She went, 'we're going to have to move to another room...'it was just unbelievable'...

General discussion follows comparing state of local colleges and confusion over potential amalgamations.

T: OK then, paperwork done! Last week you were all given some homework, you were lucky, you weren't here ...

(general blank looks and grins, tutor addresses dad who was absent last session:

T: ...and I asked them to think of things they could do from a story their children enjoy, or a rhyme, or something like that, so did you come up with any ideas?

Pause

A: I came up with...

T: that we can write on the board, or for you to take and then put them in your book (looks at A.)

A: Am I getting a job at the end of this?

All laugh.

T: Well everyone says it's A who wants to do this and it's A who's the, ringleader

D: The Key man!

T: Key man, yeah that's right!

D to A: I never said a word mate!

All laugh

A: I s'pose I'm gonna be the only one that's done homework as well aren't I, so thanks a lot for that!...

More laughter

A: Thanks guys!

D3: I wasn't here!

D2: If I <u>had</u> of written it up, I was gonna do a castle,

T: A castle, hang on, let me get a pen....

D2: B has actually made a castle from toilet rolls and things.

T: So is that based on a particular story?

Pause.

D2: Er, no, not particularly, er...it could be applied to a story with a castle in it...

T interrupts, laughs: very good! Very good!

D4: Good answer!

D5: Multi-purpose castle!

T: Can we think of a story with a castle in it?

D: What about Sleeping Beauty then?

T: Sleeping Beauty well done!

General banter amongst the dads.

T: So junk modelling, and I've got some cardboard boxes and things for junk modelling today. Writes on board. Good, 'cos it just makes the story come to life a bit, something else to do with it. Is that it? A?(Laughing)

A Producing piece of paper from pocket, almost defensively: I did write it down 'cos i knew I'd forget it. (Reading from paper) :We did Jack & The Beanstalk.

T Writing on board : Oh, right, brilliant!

D3: But it still hasn't grown yet!

A Grins and nods: yeah, we're still waiting for something to happen! Umm,

T prompts: And what were your ideas from Jack & The Beanstalk?

A: We were throwing bean bags,

T: Oh right, good,

A: Which was er, throwing the beans out the window, and then seeing how far they went,

D3: (Trying to make a joke) Top or bottom window?

A: Just generally.

Pause.

T starts,

K interrupts tutor: What's he talking about, in work now , are you?
All laugh awkwardly.

D3 continues: Throwing 'em out on the main road?

Silence

A responds: Alright K thankyou! Umm...

T encourages: You're doing really well,

A Consults his notes: Umm, making animal noises as Jack was selling the cow,

T Writing on board: So acting it out, that's really good as well.

K: He's got the wrong piece of paper there...

A Laughs, but continues: so we were doing like cows, pigs, chickens, sheep, basically made it up and changed what the other people were wanting to swap the cow for.

T Yeah, that's good...

A: So that it was something that made a noise.

T: When you've got little kids, this is the time to be an actor, 'cos you have such an appreciative audience. It doesn't matter what you do, they love it if the story comes alive.

A :and whilst we were doing the animals, we were counting the number of animals as well.

Total silence, everyone listening.

A: So like, 2 pigs for a cow and stuff like that. We had to count the 1 and the 2 and try...

T: Good!

A: And tried to teach her bartering skills as well, so like, 2 sheep aren't worth 1 cow and stuff like that.

Others smirk at shared joke, but tutor continues

T: Family finance.

A gathers himself, consults his paper again: umm, what did we do, we grew from a seed, we were crouched down on the floor, then we had to stand up,

T nods encouragingly

A: Stretch up as tall as we could, ...others laugh, ...that was the very energetic bit, cos we had to grow about 10 times.

T: Small and tall, yeah.

Others start to join in.

D4: You should have got H to pour a drink over you...

A: I wouldn't go that far.

D4: Well, in the shower you could do it...

A Interrupts: We were pretending to climb as well...

T: Yeah?

A: Up the beanstalk, then we were measuring things for tall and short. Where the short came in, I don't know. Oh wait, I think I know , I think it was Jack was short, the giant was tall.

D4: So that's a comparison as well.

T: Writing comparisons, yeah, big word,...

D: And then found other things that were in the house that were similar that were tall and short.

D: Same but different.

T: Brilliant, that's fantastic.

D: But I couldn't come up with a second one. And I thought everyone else would come up with a second one, stuffing paper back in pocket.

T: Well wait, they might have done.

D: Well, we did, but you've set the bar now.

D: laughs.
:
T Go on then, have a go.

D: I were only joking.

All Laugh.

T: Did anyone else come up with any ideas? They were fantastic, thank you for sharing those.

All clap.

D to D: I'd like to try and throw teabags from my office at you, - all laugh- There he is over there, I'll have him!

D4: I think that what I did more was when reading stories, not necessarily a specific one, is stop and look at the pictures a little bit more. Especially with her age. There's usually some good animations of stories, so sort of stop and look for colours, look for people, look for, whatever, rather than just read the writing and go onto the next page.

T: Yeah.

D: Have you got the books with the little ducks in as well? Where they hide on each page?

D5: Oh they're quite good aren't they?

D6: where it makes you actually look at the whole picture.

T: Yeah

D6: There's so many ducks on each page isn't it?

All joining in: Or one duck on each page. Yeah, that's it.

T: Yeah.

D: I'll obviously have to stop doing so much overtime!

All laugh.

T: But I think that's good, because you're talking about the story and you're looking at the pictures and what's happening in them and that kind of adds to understanding the story as well. So when they do start to read they think perhaps more about the words rather than just reading through the story. Cos readings more than just about recognising the words, its understanding whats on the page. So that's good, cos, you know, you need to stop and think.

D4: It's also, y'know, the animal noises and things,

T: Yeah, and its acting it out. H was brilliant last week at acting out Goldilocks and the 3 Bears, with the porridge and things. Just taking time. And also you can ask questions like what do you think is gonna happen next, especially if its a story they know...

D4: She knows yeah, she knows the next page...

T: Exactly. The next page and why did they do that...

D4: And sometimes, if it's something she knows then I'll stop halfway, or three quarters of the way through the sentence, to get her to say the last 2 words.
T Yeah, well do you ever read it wrongly?

D5: I do that with W. Replace words, and he'll know, so I just see what words i can replace...

D2: I used to do that as well...

D5: With him noticing...

T: Or tell the story slightly differently...

D4: Yeah, think you're confused about it, and that keeps her attention as well, doesn't it.

T: Yes, that's it.

D: Yeah, it's almost them helping you as well. Like I read to S and go 'oh what happens next?'

T: Yeah, so they're almost sat there reading it then aren't they, they're sort of in partnership. Any other ideas?

All think.

D: Just trying to think of the things I have done, but that is the sort of things I have done.

T: Yeah, but its just thinking about it. Taking a story, especially a story they're familiar with and talking about it a bit more, doing something from the story...

D: We've tried to do like a follow-on story, sometimes.

T: Yeah, made it up you mean.

D: Yeah, like you saying what happens next, but instead of saying what happens next in the middle of the book,

T: Yes..

D: ...what might be the next book that you could do on that sort of, with that character or something like that.

T: Yes and that's lovely, 'cos that's using your imagination isn't it, that's creating another story and things. Especially as story they're very familiar with, that's a really nice idea.

D4: We've got a Peter Rabbit book with tabs and they say things like 'Peter Rabbit or all the different characters and there's 4, er 4 rows of ...3...different options for each one.

T: Oh OK,

D4: And you have to choose, y'know, um, Peter Rabbit, what's he gonna do today? Is he playing, is he sleeping, is he doing something else...and then, who was angry with him, was it his mum, was it his sisters or something and you end up with 4 of those and then you have to tell the story. And probably in the 6 months I've been telling the story now she's started to do it with me. She'll always choose the various things and then she's gradually now being able to come up with the story herself. So that's good, good to do.

D6: It's like those adventure books that you get for children isn't it?

T: Yes, there's some on the internet.

D6: If you choose to do this turn to page 107...

D5: Oh yes, I've seen some of them, you go backwards and forwards through the book

D6: Yeah, and then you die. Either that or you've gotta start again.

All laugh.

D1: So it's quite short then!

D6: Yeah, they are for the older children!

T: Perhaps just not quite yet then!

D6: But the same idea, just for younger ones...

D2: Choose your own adventure.

T: Yeah. Brilliant, well that's some fantastic ideas, so (indicates flipchart) I'll leave this here, you can take it away and create your book with it.... Looks at A and laughs... Your masterpiece...that you just mentioned casually one time and is now a full-scale production.

D: Whose gonna be publishing it?

D4: You're copyright.

T: I think Usborne books are looking into it.

Ds all grin. So long as you put a duck on each one.

T: Yeah, so long as you put a duck on each one, you'll be alright then, you'll be away.

D: Your book that you were talking about, you can do that on a computer programme. I've forgotten which one,

D: Powerpoint

D: Yeah, Powerpoint. If you put a link to each page, you can make it go backwards and forwards,

Others nod and agree.

T: So tha'ts another project then, that's the online version!

D: Actually when we do it, we just got Fuzzy Felts, you could do it with that, cos you've just got a blank template, you can just add a couple of things, y'know, and build up from that.

T: Mmm, once you start thinking about things, it's just thinking it's not just a book at bedtime, its thinking of it as sparks for imaginary play. Today my story was the 3 little pigs, actually, so I thought you could junk model 3 little pigs, or make puppets and I've all the stuff in the other room, but I was just going to give you little pigs like that ...

Pause to welcome latecomer.

T: So they can make puppets like that and colour the pigs and there's a wolf there, or you can put them on a lolly stick, or for the big bad wolf you've got paper bags, like the one drawn on by ***** (staff),

All laugh.

T: And then I was in the Scrap store, which you may not know about, its a place full of junk, and I found these. I suppose they're supposed to be little dolls T-shirt clothes, but I thought they made quite nice pigs, so if you wanted to use those, I've got loads of those...

Ds: 'They do actually!'

T: If you want to make little pigs out of those. But do 3 little anythings, I mean, if you don't want to do 3 little pigs you can make puppets or something for a different story. But its counting, I suppose and its having 3 objects and talking about the story and actually it's a take away, because one of them makes a straw house and there's only 2 pigs left, so you're actually doing take away with them. As a numeracy teacher, that's important.

D: In our 3 little pigs book, they all run to the next pigs house..

T: Yeah, they do, but they all go off on the path together, and one goes off to build a straw house, so now you've got 2 going down the path...

D: OK, yeah, I'm with you.

T: Ok, and then you can go up again, so you've got 1 , 2, 3 in the house...you're adding.

D: We won't do the bacon sandwich version.

All laugh.

T: Yeah, wolf stew in our house! There's another book when they're slightly older, well, you can try reading it to them, called 3 little wolves and the big bad pig, which turns the story on its head. Its quite a nice version of it.

D: Why are the end of quite a few books like the 3 little pigs ...

T: A bit gruesome?

D: Yeah, it's a bit gruesome, yeah, they murder the wolf and live happily ever after..

T: Mmm, that's right...

D: Little Red Riding Hood,

D: Yeah, out pops grandma!

T: The axeman cuts the head off yeah. I think children quite like gruesome things, don't they?

D: But then, a lot of Disney films are like that as well.

T looking at her version of book: This one he just drops into the water, so if you want to just sit and read it, I've also got little fold up versions that we made on the computer for a literacy class actually...

D: Oh they're quite cool.

T: If you want to fold one up and take back home, so there's those, so if you want those, they are here for you to fold up and take away.

Ds all trying to fold booklets.

T: And if you want to make the houses, I made tiny ones, but there's lots of really big boxes if you want to make them. But I've got stuff to stick on to make straw...you'll have to use glue I'm afraid, none of these are sticky back..and brick and wood. So if you want to make junk models there's loads of card and glue and sellotape ...if you just want to make your castle (to Dad). I've loads of loo rolls if you want to make a fairy tale castle and go crazy! So that's it really, so puppets and junk modelling , 3 little pigs, but if you have a favourite story, that you want to make something that belongs to you, feel free. Does that make sense?

D: I need folding instructions with this!

D: Yeah, I was going to go away and have a go!

D: Concertina it!

D: There's no page numbers so it's like 'once upon a time,... '

All laugh.

T: Sarcastically, I'm so sorry, I forgot to put the page numbers on. I think that's it – that's how it works. So when you're ready, you can go and find your children...

D: I don't want to!

D: He'll be coming soon on his own...!

D: H had a Pepper Pig birthday party last week

T: Oh how D did it go?

D: Yeah, it was good, it was really good actually! All the kids loved it. I'd been making a load of storage from Ikea, for her toys and stuff, so I kept all the cardboard and used one of the big 2 metre lengths and folded it in half to make a pig sty. She put some farm animals in it. I just thought they'd love going into a den with a few pigs in it. We made a pig cutter, about that big and made pig biscuits and they used icing and decorated them and just ate them all afternoon! Then with a lot more of the card, I drew out a pig and she wrote on the back and painted all that and decorated it with just sticky bits of anything for the eyes and everything and they just had a whale of a time decorating these pigs. With the decorated ones I dotted them all round the room so they had to go and find one to take back to the table.

Sample extracts from reflective diary

December 2010

I have spent much time reflecting on and exploring the latest theories on the consequences of poor literacy skills as a result of the first focus group meeting. My research has included Bird and Bynner, who saw not just economic issues, but also problems accessing services and welfare facilities and participating in public and community life.

However, the Dads Group have also reminded me that most parents in Family Learning groups show higher order verbal and reading than written skills. The telephone, texts and e-mails have replaced letters and learners compensate by being competent oral communicators. This means they are not necessarily socially excluded, as some theorists suggest, but use native cunning and personal strengths to redress the balance. This emphasised to me the fact that social exclusion is based on a multiplicity of deprivations, not just literacy difficulties. I keep coming back to the fact that many adults with low literacy skills contribute to and function perfectly well in society.

January 2011

The experience of the research study and FL project have inspired me to explore the concept of sociolinguistics and led me to my first introduction to Trudgill's theories. I understand this now to be the social nature of language in its wider context; the connection between language and society and the ways in which we use it in different social situations. Trudgill referred to language in society as having two roles: to establish relationships and to convey information. He suggested that the ways in which we communicate can often reveal our age, gender, race or class. For example, the social class of a person's dialect can often indicate their roots and place in society in terms of power, wealth and status. Dialect characteristics can also define ethnicity, whilst lexicon can identify gender. I am enjoying investigating these theories, as the social context of language is constantly evolving.

February 2011

The barriers to Family Learning within the Dads Group are an issue. I am constantly aware of how I phrase things. The use of a particular word can place an immediate barrier to a relationship. Whilst attempting to analyse my own idiolect, I reflect on the notion that we are pre-programmed to acquire language naturally as our linguistic skills have roots in our genes. I also realise that my ability to explain, demonstrate or communicate a concept is a verbal language skill that probably originates from early childhood experience as the eldest of a large family. How we speak is even more determined by our early environment, as a growing brain will organise information by forming grammatical structures to suit its linguistic situation. This is one of the many reasons why I think FL is so relevant to contemporary society!

March 2011

I am becoming fascinated by the concept of learners' voices and have discovered a piece called 'Hearing the learner's voice' by Ursula Howard. This addresses the process by which a learner's voice is considered. It supports the theory that learners should inform future policymaking and provision and emphasises the importance of active listening on the part of professionals to ensure an accurate understanding of aims, aspirations and needs. At the same time, I am developing a strong belief in the value of social networks and the impact these have on literacy skills. Many of the Dads rely on an exchange of skills within their social networks as a coping strategy. Finally, I am now researching reports that emphasise the importance of intergenerational commitments to education.

April 2011

I am enjoying expanding my overview of what is shaping current thinking in terms of communication between parents and practitioners and the implications for policy makers. The importance of past ideological models alongside the relevancies of new research helps me to form my own critical analysis of the subject. I now realise a possible explanation as to why communication is a subject close to my heart, as my father spent his entire working life in the field of telecommunications. I think he will be fascinated to hear how much it has altered and progressed since he retired thirty years ago.

May 2011

My recent experiences with the Focus Groups and FL Workshops have emphasised the importance of language and power. Whilst recognising the value of giving learners critical language awareness skills, the final Focus Group reminded me of the quote from Whorf: 'the world is presented in a kaleidoscopic flux of impressions which has to be organised by our minds'. I believe we should embrace the many and varied ways in which we can evidence this when it occurs in our work.

Throughout the course of the research study, I have attempted, through the use of this reflective diary, to develop a critical evaluation of my approach. It has made me much more aware of what I do in my professional practice, how it relates to theory and how it can inform and create new theories. Though distracting and time consuming, the exploration and discovery of a vast field of associated research studies has provided a great deal of underpinning knowledge to support my professional practice and has also affirmed what I already know and identified where my knowledge and skills require updating. This, in turn, has had a practical impact on my preferences as a practitioner. For example, when I started this project, I disliked group work, preferring 1 : 1 teaching, which I felt was more suited to my own holistic and creative learning style. I now recognise it was also a reflection of my lack of confidence in this area of work. Now I can appreciate the benefits of collaborative enquiry. It is supportive, teaches democracy and most importantly, is a natural way of learning. I am now keen to extend my experience in this type of work.

I hope this diary demonstrates how my approach and attitude has adjusted to take on-board new concepts and reflects the extent to which all my own learning has influenced my views, development and future priority areas as a researcher.

Appendix 5: Video Data

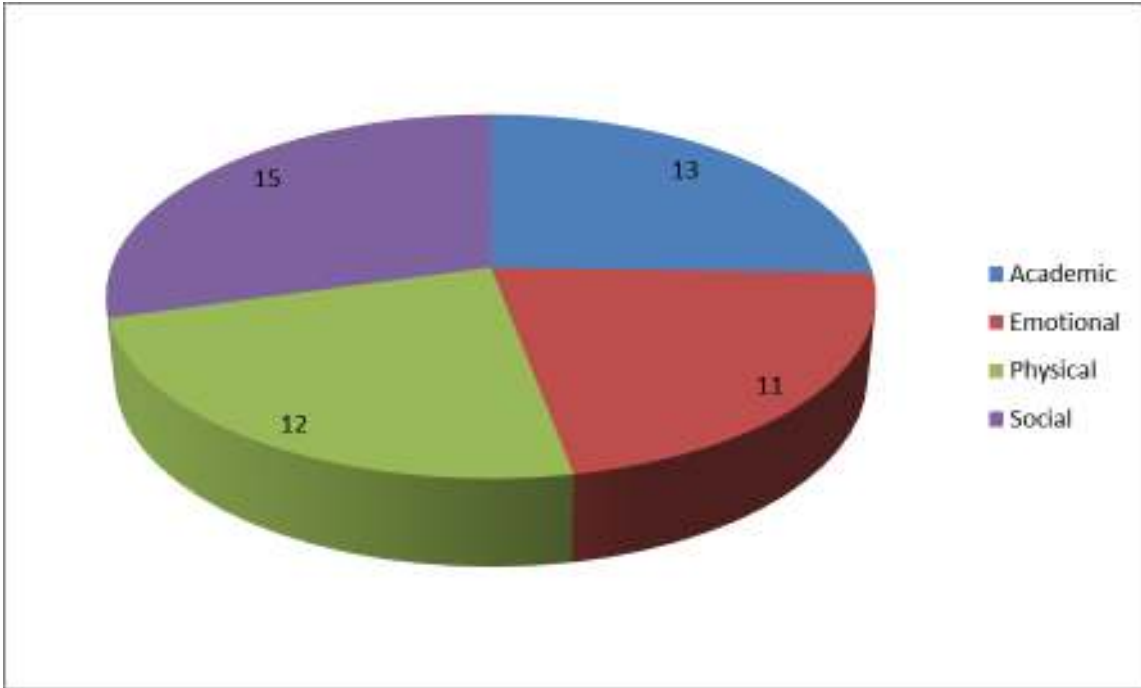**Figure 4: Critical incidents, workshop 1**

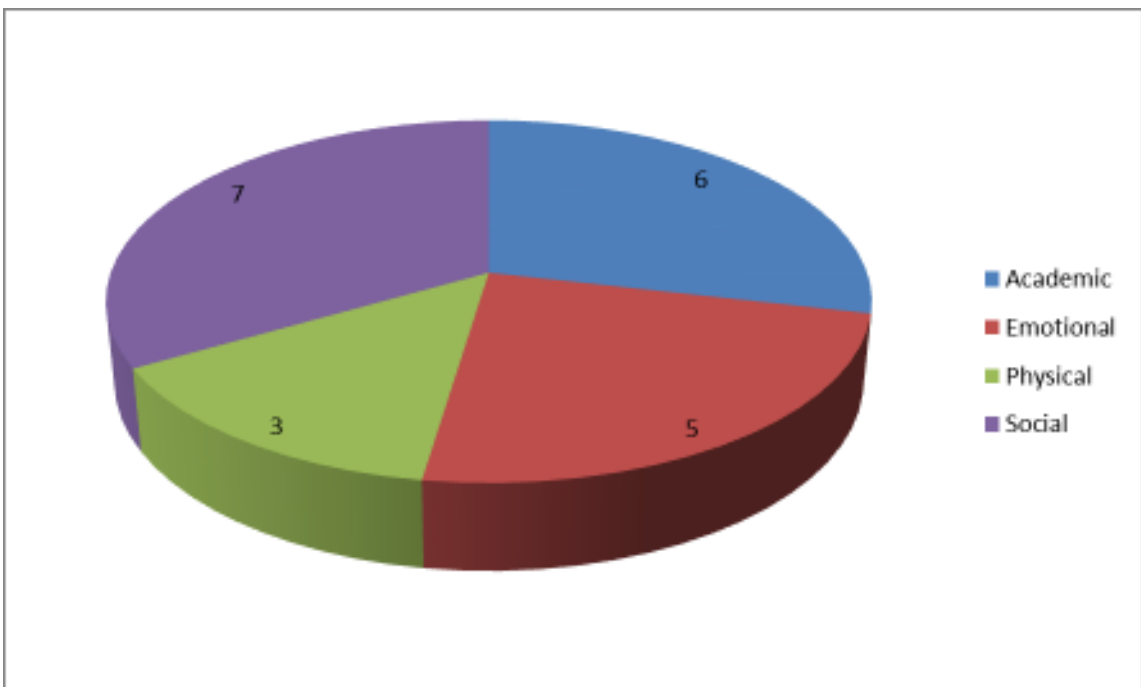**Figure 5: Critical incidents, workshop 2**

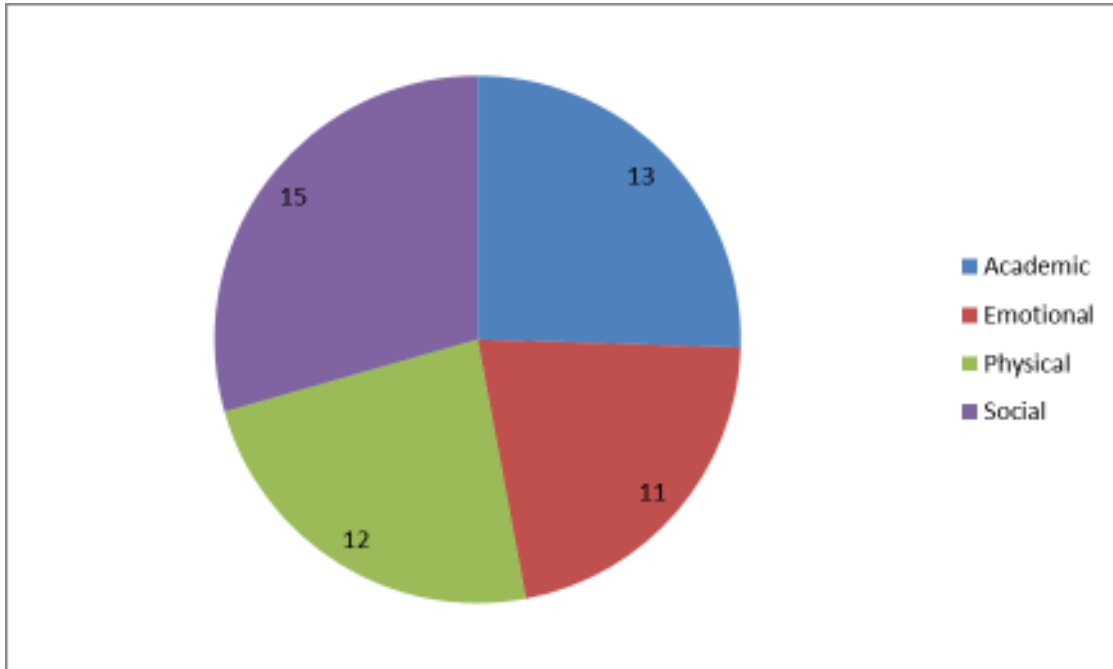**Figure 6: Combination of total critical incidents, workshops 1 & 2**

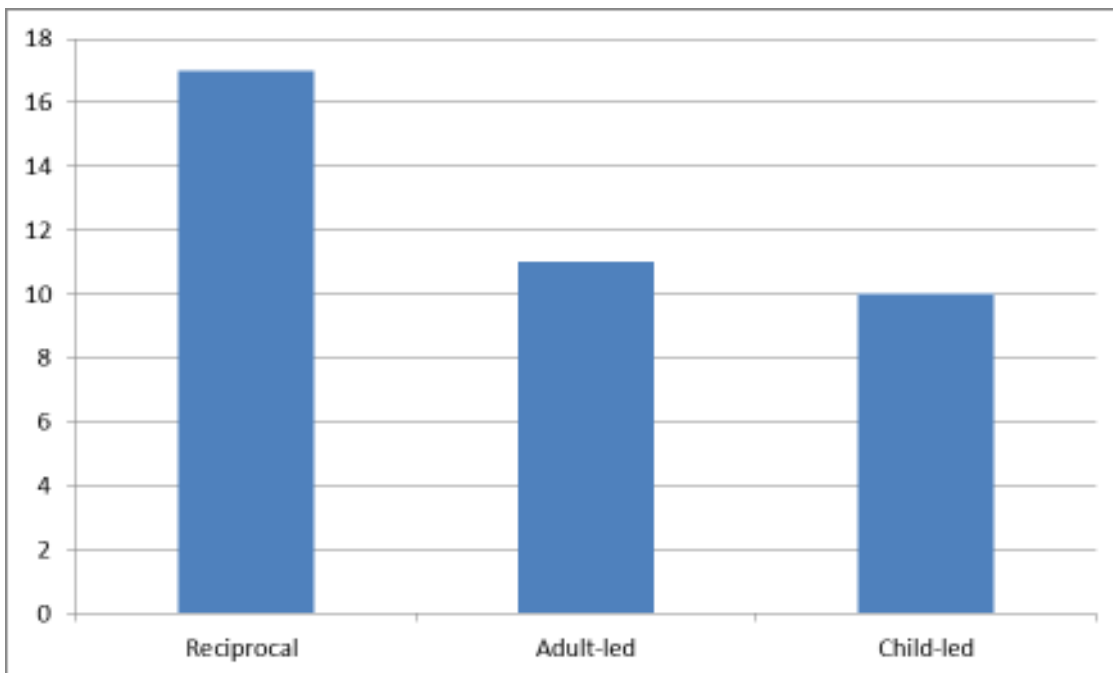**Figure 7: Critical Incidents Workshop 1 - Type of learning**

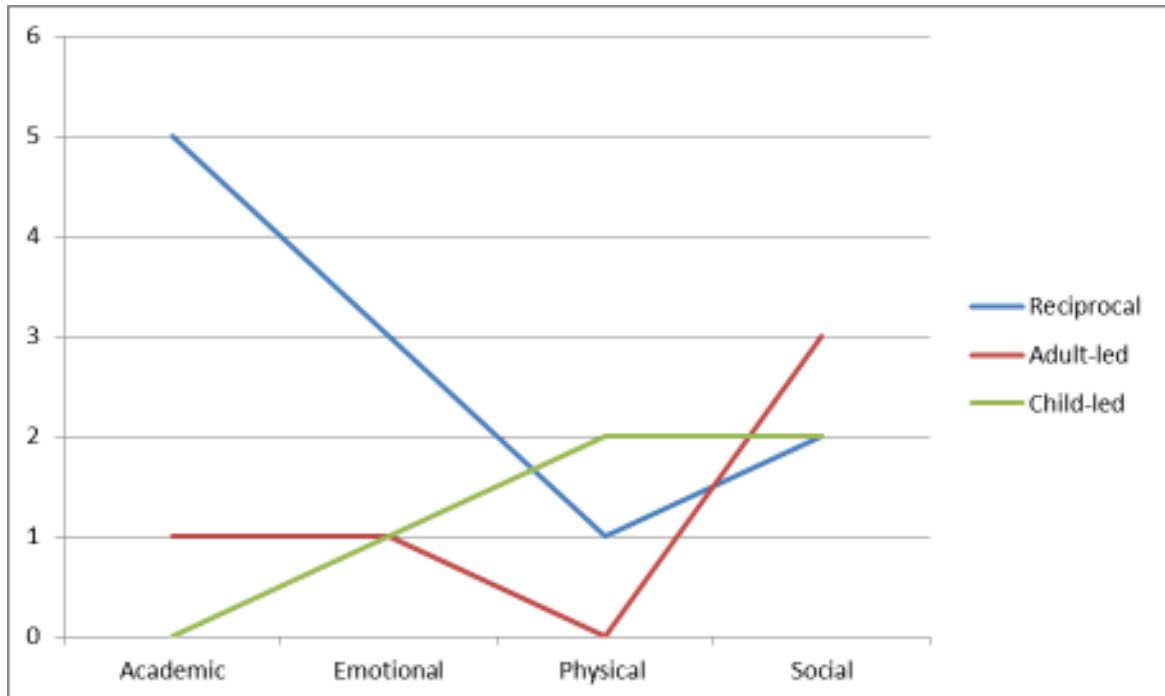**Figure 8: Critical Incidents, Workshop 2 - Type of learning**

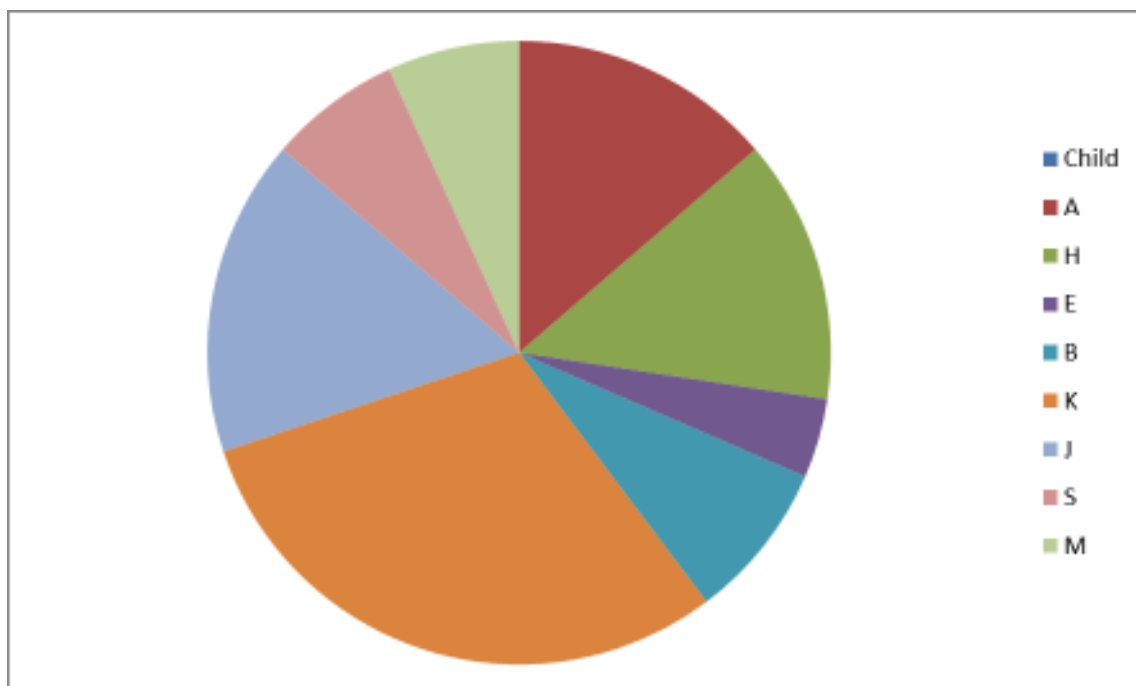**Figure 9: Critical incidents per child**

Table 11: Samples of video data analysis for joint workshops.

Code: A = Academic, S = Social, E = Emotional, P = Physical

Blue = adult led   Brown = Shared   Orange = child led

Data	Initial Interpretation	Code
Incident 1 *Dad counts on his fingers: 1,2,3 bears' picks up a doll to be Goldilocks. Sarah watches, makes eye contact.* *He talks about sizes, gesturing with his hands: Find something big or small, a big book, a small book.'* *Sarah hesitates, he points 'if that's a big book, can you find me one that is smaller?' She looks through the books: 'That one?' He asks 'is that bigger or smaller?' She plays with her doll and pretends to ignore him.* *'Do big with your hands. Show me how big is.'* *Sarah waves her fingers. Dad asks 'Is it big like that?' stretching to arm's length. Sarah:' no' and draws the net curtain around to shut him out. He continues; 'Small?' Indicating with his hands. She picks up a toy and pushes it through the curtain. 'That's small' he agrees. He glances self-consciously at me and gets 3 pillows to be the beds. Child watches, holding doll.* *Dad: 'Put her in the small bed'. Child obeys.* *Dad snores to indicate the doll is asleep. Child starting to smile.* *Dad: 'Who's coming back? What will he say?'* *Child hesitates, then really animated: (deep voice) 'Get out of my bed'! Dad laughs and child grins proudly.*	Dad attempts to apply idea from tutor-led introduction. Concept of size; first abstract – hand gestures, then related to concrete objects. Sarah unresponsive. Dad returns to practical gestures. Sarah initially rejects, then withdraws, but when Dad persists, responds with concrete object but no verbal or eye contact. Dad continues to lead, but changes approach, using imaginative play. Sarah begins to join in, responding to role play through dolls.	A
Incident 2 *Sarah is at table, Dad stands next to her. Dad leans over and Sarah passes saucepan. He puts it on cooker for her. She removes lid and pretends to dish out porridge into large bowl. Dad crouches down behind chair and holds out medium bowl. Sarah puts tiny spoonful in. Dad:' Is that it?' Sarah nods and continues to dish up. Dad watches her closely, when he catches her eye he holds out bowl*	Sarah leading – silent role play. Dad joins in, supporting actions, follows her lead, crouching to her level. Dad uses verbal questioning. Sarah uses body language to respond. Dad follows this	S

for more. She solemnly ladles in a spoonful.	by using eye contact to engage, then continuing to connect with physical gesture to make request.	
Incident 3 *Dad discusses with Mrs B how the tutor's suggestion of reading a story won't work with Anna. He agrees to give it a go. Anna is playing alone at other side of room. Calls across to her. He pauses to point out to Karl's dad that she isn't interested, then goes to get her. Walks to chair, she follows, holding his trouser leg, lifts her arms to sit on his lap. He immediately starts to read, but looks around, every couple of sentences. Karl goes to interrupt, but is swiftly called away by dad. Anna listens for several minutes. Dad keeps looking round. Eventually, she follows his gaze and is distracted watching others. He immediately stops reading and lets her slip to the floor. Staff compliment him on how long she stayed* encouraged, he picks up a toy and calls across the room, asking her what it is. She runs across to him as he shakes the box and proceeds to help him open it. The tutor kneels at her level trying to encourage the interaction. Anna takes things out of the box but her dad takes them away from her. The tutor joins in, talking to her. Anna loses interest and runs off. *Her dad looks upset. The tutor reassures him as he explains how independent she is and that if he tries to help her she just pushes him away.*	Dad challenges tutor, but is encouraged to try theory. Tries unsuccessfully to engage Anna verbally. Seeks confirmation from other Dad that concept won't work. Physically engages her by interrupting. *Goes through motion of reading book, but constantly distracted. Anna copies him and contact ends. Staff interact and support.* Dad makes verbal contact and manages to re-engage Anna. Tutor supports activity, models and scaffolds interaction. Anna loses interest Dad feels has failed. Tutor continues to encourage and listen to his concerns.	A S E

Incident 4		A
Anna playing with baskets. Dad tries to join in and persuade her to put things in basket. Lifts her across to the twigs. 'Let's count the twigs', she hesitates. Dad says 'Anna do it' as he counts '1,2,3.' and does it himself, without waiting for her to think.	*Anna engaged in activity.* Dad attempts to join in, by offering verbal suggestions, but leaves no time to process. Dad offers alternative activity. When Anna hesitates, takes over.	
Incident 5		S
Enter room and move straight to the home corner. Dad asks 'are you going to sit down or am I?' Helena tells him to sit down. Helena goes off to collect toys. Dad gets off chair and begins to search the play boxes. Helena immediately joins him, watching. As he sets a storage box onto floor she says 'let's see what's in there.' He lifts out a box 'that's a big one'. She grabs 2, he points to one 'that's a weeny one' he says, 'where's a middle-sized one?' As she looks, he carefully returns other boxes to the shelf. She responds by tapping the side of the largest box. He copies her and says 'The big one'. 'Which is the baby one?' She hesitates, looking at the 2 other boxes, then looking back to him. He says 'the small one'. She goes to tap the middle box so he quickly says 'which is the mummy one?' As she taps it, he says 'and which is the baby one?' She picks up the smallest and he agrees, as he picks up the paper and continues to read the story…'Goldilocks was so hungry, she ate it all up'. Helena finds a wooden spoon and pretends to eat the porridge. She smiles at her dad. He gives her the thumbs up and she grins. 'Now what else?' asks Helena. 'Hmm, I think we have to wash up now' says dad. Helena: 'Why?' Dad: 'Because we've used up all the porridge.' Helena 'OK, come on then, you wash.' Marches round unit to sink.	Dad asks who leads. Helena takes lead, but Dad takes over. Helena follows his lead. Helena tries to take over lead. Dad begins to apply concept of size from tutor led session. Dad simplifies activity and retains Helena's focus. Helena responds to verbal questions silently, using physical actions, pointing and touching. Dad extends activity by changing pace and using new resources. Helena responds by adding own contributions to materials. Both use body language to communicate. Helena asks and Dad suggests new activity. Helena initially challenges, but then responds positively by taking lead again.	A S

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Incident 6		
Dad: 'Which one is the biggest bowl? Which one is the smallest? Which one is the middle?' Helena points correctly. *Helena: 'I'm going to make a cake in there.'* *She presents Dad with cake. Dad seated on floor, pretends he's a bear eating the cake. Billy approaches.* *Dad: 'Do you want some?' He nods. Dad roars like a bear. Billy jumps. All laugh.Dad continues pretence: 'Yuck, I've got jam in my ear now!'Helena looks solemnly and carefully at his ear, completely absorbed in the make-believe.*	Dad leading abstract sizes activity. Helena following, but then takes over with imaginative idea. Dad follows her lead, embellishing role play. Helena totally involved in joint activity.	A S E
Incident 7		
Melanie wanders round room, Dad watches as she interacts with staff. He sits on floor, turning book in his hand. Melanie approaches him with toy. He takes toy and offers it back. She wanders off and he looks lost, but waits. She sees him and he stands up and calls her. Mr C encourages: 'Whats daddy got?' Dad waves toy at her, but she continues to wander off, so he sits on the floor by the home corner. When she comes close, Mr C helps to catch her attention and dad is eventually able to sit her down on his lap. He reads to her, very focused, and she listens, holding toy and looking at words. When he looks up, she loses attention and waves to staff, gets up and wanders off. *He waits a few minutes, but just as he gets up, she returns.* *Mr C comes over and kneels next to Dad, who sits back down. Melanie hands Mr C a toy and goes off to collect more, bringing them back to him. He tries to redirect her attention to dad and paper, but Dad points out she isn't interested. Mr C proceeds to make faces at Melanie through coloured mirror toy she gave him. She is fascinated. Dad watches, and then calls her name. When she looks, he copies Mr C, who encourages 'look at daddy's face!'. She*	Dad unsure how to get Melanie's attention. Initially tries verbal interaction unsuccessfully, so uses waiting tactic, with staff support, to gain her attention. Dad initiates reading activity but is distracted and Melanie copies this. Dad tries waiting tactic again. Staff demonstrate engagement by following Melanie's lead in activity, then directing her attention to Dad. Dad responds negatively. Staff model activity. Dad observes, then imitates. Melanie immediately engages and interacts. Melanie continues to lead activity with Dad following her.	P E S

runs to her dad and pulls at the toy. Mr C quickly moves away to greet a new arrival and dad continues to keep her attention as she offers him toys.		
Incident 8. *Dad seated with Melanie on lap. Holding brightly coloured plastic square containing four circular mirrors. Melanie points to a mirror. Dad copies her. Continue game until she tires.* *Later, Melanie brings toy ball up behind Dad as he sits on floor and tries to roll it over his head. At first he smiles, then stops and looks round, embarrassed.*	Close physical interaction. Melanie leads activity of pointing to items. Dad follows until she ends game. Melanie initiates second physical activity. Dad unsure and reluctant to respond.	P
Incident 9 *Karl wanders round room, tries unsuccessfully to get Billy to engage in game. Approaches dad and waits while dad talks to staff. Talks to dad who bends down to look at then hold toys. Karl wanders off.* *Dad sits in middle of floor Karl immediately brings toy animals and sits directly opposite him. Dad says 'Put them all out here and see how big they are.' As Karl thinks, he continues 'Put the biggest one first, down to the smallest.' Karl begins with the smallest, so his dad immediately says 'smallest then going up to the biggest, are you?'* *Karl puts another one down; his Dad moves it to the end of the line. Karl says 'no, why?' Dad explains it's the smallest animal. Both begin to place animals on floor. Dad says 'that's it, biggest down to a small one.' Karl puts one down and says 'horse' dad repeats. Karl says 'one' dad repeats, Karl asks 'what else?'* *Both watch others for a minute then Dad asks: 'shall we put them back in a row again?' as he starts. Karl continues row, sorting from small to large shouts to Mr C:' I've done it I've put small to large' Mr C: 'why are they there?' pointing to middle toys. Dad watches. Karl explains Mr C nods to dad and congratulates Karl. Removes toy from line up and asks 'what happens now?'. Karl closes up the line and Mr C again congratulates him, with smile*	Dad and Karl initially engaging individually with peers. Karl opens verbal communication. Dad physical but silent response, so Karl ends interaction. Karl returns and Dad introduces tutor activity. Dad scaffolds responses and encourages verbally. Dad corrects errors. Karl challenges. Joint collaboration on activity. Karl leads verbal discussion then requests new ideas. Dad unsure, observes others, then suggests repeating exercise. Staff extend activity. Dad takes over and continues idea. Karl tries to lead by involving	E A S / A E P

to Dad too. Karl collects more toys and takes to Mr C, but he's busy, so dad recalls Karl 'we can put all of them in order now'. Karl completes row but again looks to Mr C for acknowledgement. Dad watches but is silent. Tutor offers another toy. Karl takes it and begins to count toys. Dad counts to himself, pointing with finger to check. Mr C asks 'Why have you lined them up?' Karl is silent. Mr C rephrases 'What's at the end?' points to smallest. Karl: that's the littlest' Mr C' and that one?' 'The biggest.' Mr C cheers, but Anna spots row and dives in to take middle toy. Karl scoops up line of toys and retreats, returns later as dad says 'you can do it all again now', offering a new toy and asking where it goes in the size line-up. Karl continues, counting line and ignoring disruptions from other children. Dad offers a new artefact; a saucepan. Karl attempts to put toys into pan, whilst Dad, Mr C and Anna's dad watch. Dad asks 'what about these?' 'Is that too many?' Karl piles all into pan. 'No, they can fit!' Mr C and Dad talk across him. Karl watches them but can't get their attention, so leans over and kisses baby. Mr C immediately stops talking 'that's nice Karl – a little kiss for your baby brother'. Adults continue to talk and Karl wanders off, clutching his heap of toy animals.	as many adults as possible. Karl keen to engage dad, less willing to interact with other children. Karl enjoys adult attention Able to find ways to engage adults, but accepts when strategy doesn't work.	A E S / A E
Incident 10 *Karl watches other children throwing paper aeroplanes. Dad calls him and offers small plane. 'Throw that one.' Karl obeys. Dad asks 'how many steps does it take to get to that?'* *Karl counts and walks…'11'. Dad repeats'11, ok try it again, see if you can beat 11.' Karl rushes back to start and throws plane right across room. Dad 'That's gonna be more than 11!'* *Karl starts to stride out, counting fast. Dad interrupts, Karl loses count, returns to start, but is taking larger steps, so only makes 11, then announces 15, repeats action, Dad is no longer watching, so Karl tells him:'18!'* *Dad repeats '18?' then suggests he throws from furthest wall in room. Watches as Karl obeys, but*	Karl keen to follow dads ideas, also able to extend activity Karl aware of when focus not on him able to distort results and bend rules Karl able to distract attention from negative behaviour by physically engaging with dad	P P / A

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ignores as he counts, so Karl kicks toy further as he reaches it, continues to count, then picks up toy and returns. Dad challenges him. Karl replies '100' Dad repeats '100' and laughs to staff 'I think there was a bit of cheating there!' Karl pats toy on his dad's head, then tries to climb on his back. Dad groans and pretends to roll him off.	in a positive way.	E
Incident 11 *Karl asks staff if he can fly a paper aeroplane K refolds plane and hands it over. Karl takes it and throws it upwards, plane falls straight down. Dad laughs and shouts 'no'. Mr C demonstrates and explains how to throw it. Dad holds his fingers together saying 'hold it underneath. Mr C takes over, modelling action, hand on hand with Karl, who then succeeds, runs to collect plane and announces 86 steps. Continues to throw plane and take it back to Mr C. Dad watches and says 'well done!' and laughs with Mr C at how much Karl is cheating. Karl aims plane at Mr C and laughs when it hits him. Mr c returns plane, hitting Karl on head, even though he dodges. Dad laughs. Karl responds, but misses. Mr C laughs and holds up his arms in victory.*	Karl keen to take on new challenge with adult support. Karl uses physical distraction to get adult attention.	P E / S
Incident 12. *Settle next to each other, leaning against wall. Dad begins to read in monotone. Billy listens, but starts to fiddle with plaster on finger. Dad stops and asks 'do you know what she did next?' Billy: 'no'. Continues reading, but Billy distracted by others. As dad reads on, he announces 'I'm just going to knock on that door.' Dad says, 'ok, come straight back'. Billy bangs hard on door, but Helena and her dad ignore him. 'Open the door please' he shouts. Helena's dad says 'There's nobody in.' Billy's dad calls him 'Come back please, I haven't finished'. Billy responds: But I want you to read it when I come out of knocking on the door, ok?' Dad thinks. 'You come and knock on the door here' Billy returns. Dad smiles 'Knock knock, who's there?' Billy stops and looks surprised. 'Me!' he announces, pointing to himself. His dad smiles to*	Dad tries unsuccessfully to engage Billy, watches as child tries to engage with others, then uses similar approach, negotiating learning in partnership with child's request. Dad surprised and amused by child's literal response.	A S E / S

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himself and sits him back down to continue the story.		
Incident 13 *Billy making paper aeroplane with tutor and Dad. Dad: 'Lets see which one goes furthest.' Tutor reinforces 'Good idea daddy.' Watches, as he adds extra folds. 'Oh, your making yours a bit cleverer. Daddy's better at this than me. I'd better watch him. Its aerodynamic, they're always going to work better because of the shape. Nice job. Yeah, very good. ' Billy proudly takes plane and throws across room. Mrs Brown collects: 'You've got a big one and little one. Are you going to fly them to daddy?' Billy obliges. 'They fly well Billy.' Tutor: 'Daddy's got a better design than mine.' Dad 'Where's your other plane Billy? Where's the medium one?' Billy: 'Here's the little one.'*	Adults work together to model activity. Child reacts with pride at involvement and praise. Child endeavours to respond correctly to adult questioning.	P A
Incident 14 *Dad sits at table in home corner. Waits whilst Emily stands in middle of room, clutching toy and watches others. Gets another chair and places at table. Waits. Emily wanders off towards kitchen. Dad follows and redirects her into room, then follows her as she approaches home corner. Overtakes her, sits down at table, but Emily puts toy on chair then stands at table watching others. Copying next family, dad knocks on the table. Emily laughs and goes towards next family. Begins to wander off. Dad gets up and pats his knee, turns his chair towards her and sits down, holding out his hand, palm up. Emily comes immediately and he lifts her onto his lap. Turns her sideways and talks very quietly, close to her face, turning to face away from the room. Uses hand signals to count and sign for 'away'.* *Child wriggles off and follows Helena back to other side of home corner. Dad fidgets on chair, folds arms, watches rest of room. Helena approaches and asks to take Emily's chair. Dad signals agreement, nods and smiles, waves goodbye.*	Adult leads, but when child doesn't follow, lets child choose, then gently guides her choice. Adult sees child's interest in other activities so copies other participants to engage child. Finally, uses familiar body language and signals to communicate and engage child. Dad accepts when child unwilling to co-operate.	P S E
Incident 15 *Jessica stands and watches others for several*	Shared approach, watching	

minutes. Dad kneels down beside her, holding her hand. *Eventually, he pulls nearest toy (a pan on a string) towards her and holds it for her to look at. She watches as he puts another toy inside, lifts it out, and drops it in, then shakes the pan to make it rattle.* *She looks beyond it to the home corner, so he places pan on floor and takes her hand. They walk to corner together and she leads him round room, pausing to watch others. They reach Miss Adams and dad kneels down next to her as she begins to get Jessica's attention. J reaches for dad who lifts her into his arms and rubs her back to reassure her. Miss A talks to her. Dad puts her down and she watches Miss A. Dad leans across and hides face behind a cushion. Jessica turns to look for him. He plays peek a boo several times, but too many distractions and gives up.*	others, adult initiates activity, child ignores, so dad follows her lead. Dad gives physical reassurance for child as she learns to socialise with others.	E P A S
Incident 16 *Jessica and Dad walking across room, past a pull-along train. She stops, let's go of his hand and picks it up, then tries to hold his hand as well. So dad puts train on floor and hands her string to pull it, then steps away, trying to encourage her to follow him. She hesitates then picks up train in arms again and looks round room, watching others, sees him watching her, waves to him, then toddles to him. Again, he repeats exercise. This time, she holds out hand for string, but picks up train. He goes to bricks and bangs 2 together to get her attention. She drops train and comes towards him, so he quickly picks up several toys in turn and offers her them. She takes ball and throws it, then looks at dad, claps her hands and points to more toys. He bangs bricks together to make different sounds. She watches closely. She turns away and starts to play with garage, then points to activity centre. He turns wheels to make sounds. She watches then copies. He takes a shape and tickles her with it. She points to more shapes, but Dad continues to tease her. She perseveres and he follows her pointing to return to activity centre.*	Child chooses activity, dad immediately facilitates. When child unable to extend activity, despite encouragement, Dad initiates next interaction. Child and dad share and negotiate lead through gestures and body language. Dad tries to distract with physical game, but child focused, so stops and encourages her interest instead.	P S

Immediately, she picks up another toy and points with it. He copies her and uses 2 dinosaurs to tickle her. She indicates a larger toy. Dad: 'This one?' *He hands it to her, and then demonstrates the pull along toy again as she watches. Next he gives her a similar toy and she slowly begins to follow him pulling it along. Delighted, he speeds up, but she is swiftly distracted again. Next he shows her how to remove a lid. She copies him. Then they set off again and this time she trails the string properly. Finally, she takes his string and tries to pull both. Dad 'Are you sure you can manage two?' He takes one back and they play for a while, with one each, swapping. When she stops he takes both toys away and follows her crawling on all fours, saying 'Do you want to go over there?'*	Dad physically demonstrates a simple skill, child copies. Dad shows child concepts of sharing and negotiating, by swapping toys with her.	P
Incident 17 *Dad and Jessica standing over wooden toy frame. Jessica holding row of beads shaped like a train. Dad pats runway. She points to hole at end and proceeds to thread string of beads through it, watching them drop down onto next runway and roll to bottom. Smiles and laughs and looks at dad as it finishes. Dad laughs and makes eye contact. He retrieves train 'Shall we put it here as well?' places it at top of run. She immediately removes it and tries to repeat exercise by putting it back down hole again, but begins to get distracted by others. He gently takes it back and returns it to top. 'There we go – shall we let it run?' She tries to stop it and her hands follow the toy down through the game. They repeat the activity again.*	Child tries to adapt toy to fit game. Dad watches. Child seeks his approval when succeeds. Dad extends activity and encourages repetition to consolidate learning.	P S P

Incident 18		
Dad enters room with book and sits on chair some distance from Anna. Calls her name 3 times, quietly, as he opens the book. When she looks up, he says 'story', when she does not respond; he repeats the word, holding up the open book. Anna runs across the room, holding her arms out to be lifted onto his lap. He holds 3 fingers up, says: '3 little pigs' and immediately opens the book, ignoring the brightly coloured front covers and points to the first words. She listens intently and follows his finger as he points to the next page. Then she puts her hand on his as he points, then takes hold of one side of the book herself, pointing and turning the page forward after looking at the pictures. She does this 3 times, then when she gets to the end, turns back a page, then forward, looking and listening intently. Dad shuts the book and moves it away from her reach. Slowly, she gets down from his lap, but stays holding onto his knee, watching the others. After a minute, she gradually moves away, but looks up at his face and holds his hand before she leaves. He is looking elsewhere. She only moves a couple of feet and stays close for several minutes until he gets up and she leads him across to the table, where others are working. She stands at one end, where there are 3 spare seats and he goes to the opposite, hesitates, then follows her to sit nearer, but ignores her and watches the other dads.	Dad distracts child from play to offer activity, child accepts invitation and sit together. Child follows dad's lead as he models reading activity, pointing and turning pages. Dad ends activity although child still interested. Child keen to maintain physical contact and dad's attention gets him to follow her to new activity. Dad goes, but does not maintain contact.	S / E A S / E
Incident 19		
Anna picks up egg boxes and looks at them. Watches others making pig models. Mrs Brown tells Anna she has a piggy on her top today. Dad immediately looks surprised, then stares at Anna, nods 'oh yes!' and laughs. Anna picks up a piece of paper and tries to fit it round a pot. Dad watches for a few seconds then looks away, chats to another dad, who is busy helping his son, glances back at Anna, who offers him a cardboard toothpaste box. He looks at it, takes it, thinks for a minute, then holds it up to his eye and looks through it at her.	Child watches others, but too young to access activity alone. Staff attempt to engage her and dad together without success. Child offers dad object. When put on spot, dad able to instigate activity Child amused, which encourages dad .	P / S

She laughs and takes it to copy him. He grins as she looks through at room, then at him. He waves to her through the tube. She hands it back and he repeats the activity, as she holds it to his eye and giggles. He is distracted and she walks away, holding tube to her eye, but turns back to watch him. He gets up and moves further away, to sit next to Mr Clarke and Anna drifts off.		E
Incident 20 *Family are sitting on floor in middle of room, next to a box of plastic building bricks. Karl: 'Dad watch this, I'm going to make a castle'. Starts with 4 wheels and puts blocks on top. Dad watches, Karl concentrates, seeking out right size bricks and Dad watches quietly for some minutes. Billy approaches and Karl immediately moves his construction nearer his dad. Jessica and her dad come to watch and Karl demonstrates how it moves around and continues to build. She picks up a brick and tries to add it to the tower, then offers it to Karl to do. He ignores her and continues to build. Tutor approaches 'lots of concentration going on here' Dad: 'It's a mobile castle ' Tutor: I thought it was going to be a crane.' Karl 'Yes, its going to be a crane.' Tutor: it would be quite nice if it was a mobile castle, because you could take it wherever you wanted it'. Karl: 'It's a dinosaur one' Tutor 'You like dinosaurs don't you.' Karl 'My favourite is stegosaurus' Tutor 'Yes, such huge long words – do you like sterotopacus?'* Karl continues to build as he talks but stops to copy tutors imitation of a dinosaur. Tutor; 'That's right. I'd say you're building a big machine.' Dad; 'oh yeah, that's right, yeah go for that.' Karl 'look Daddy, that's the door' Tutor 'Is the door open? How are you going to do that? You could join 2 together couldn't you?' Karl watches as she points to blocks, but does not respond. Dad 'Can you find another one like that Karl?' Child offers up a piece. Dad: 'That's it!' as he places it on top of tower. Tutor 'Oh yes, well done.'	Karl enjoying adult attention, initiates idea to build with bricks, asking his dad to watch. Dad obliges, letting child choose approach. Tutor offers suggestion, Karl complies with and copies. Dad still happy to leave karl to his own devices, encouraging verbally but not intervening. When Karl stops following tutor's lead, dad prompts him.	A P S A

Incident 21 *Seated at table, colouring. Dad removes lid and hands Jessica felt pen, as she uses it, 'oh that's really nice.' Both smile and make eye contact. She scribbles for a minute, then offers him back pen. Dad: 'Thank you' as he replaces lid. 'What next?' Pulls another colour from tub. 'Look, there's a purple.' Jessica copies him. 'Is that blue?'*	Joint reciprocal approach, dad facilitating child's efforts, encouraging and using language to support.	S / A
Incident 22 *Dad starts to read story of '3 little pigs', Sarah watches, Dad suddenly stops: 'Shall we go and make some pigs for the story?* *'Sarah nods, really keen. Both go over to junk modelling table together.* *Dad picks up the 3 finger puppets 'Shall we do the 3 little piggies?' She smiles and takes the puppets straight back to the book corner. Dad gets back down on floor, at same level as child and begins to read story again. Consistent eye contact. Suddenly stops and announces: 'I've got an idea'...* *They set off back to the junk modelling table and Dad starts to collect bits to make houses. Sarah tries to help.* *Dad: 'OK? Do we need another box for the pigs house? Will this do for the pigs house?' Sarah losing interest, but Dad doesn't seem to notice: 'We need more bits...'*	Dad initiates and leads interactions. Child follows, unlike last session. Dad so keen, gets too involved and forgets to monitor child's interest.	S E
Incident 23 *Sarah and dad are back in quiet corner, reading story of 3 little pigs. Dad lies, she sits facing him, listening and holding props.* *He prompts her to put a pig with the scraps for straw. She takes both onto her lap. He taps the floor. 'Put them on there.' As she obeys, he says 'so there's the straw – put the pig with it.' She looks at the 3 pigs she's holding and offers one 'Is that it?' Dad: 'Well you choose, then says 'OK, how many pigs have you got left?' She thinks '2'. Dad continues story, 'pig decided to build his house out of…' pauses and holds up lolly stick. Sarah looks at stick and shrugs. Dad says 'Wood' and she smiles and places next to puppet. He asks 'How many*	Dad leading, child following, but dad now offering her choices. Joint, shared interaction immediately rewards both – encourages focus and retained attention.	A

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left?' She holds up one puppet and one finger. Continue with plastic brick to represent house of bricks. When Dad asks 'what's that? And she thinks, then replies 'Duplo brick' he says 'bricks! Well done.' Both are completely focused on story together. **See field notes from 3rd focus group meeting for comment from Dad here.**		
Incident 24 *Dad and Helena sitting on floor by junk modelling table. Dad holds 2 paper cups on his head to be a little pig.' What could this be?' She immediately responds: 'Rabbit!'* *Dad: 'Oh. Shall we use some glue to make a house?'* *Helena nods: 'Yep!'Is this glue?' holding up object from table.* *Dad echoes her: 'Yep! Where does the chimney go, here?' Mr C is sitting at table watching and making suggestions to dad from story book, pointing to pictures of 3 little pigs houses. Helena is busy focused on house with back to Mr C. Dad: 'What are you doing to our house! What's happened to the roof!?' Helena is busy cutting into roof with scissors. Dad suddenly gets an idea, grabs cardboard shape and sticks onto chimney to represent flames. Says quietly 'Helena, don't cut our house up.' She puts scissors down and climbs across him to sit at table. He continues to build house. He tries to re-engage her. 'I don't think there are any windows in this house. See if you can find some.' She collects a box and more scissors. Dad holds up a clear plastic lid 'What are windows like?' he looks through the plastic at her, 'like that?' She shakes her head, he looks puzzled: 'So you can see through?' Looks at it himself, as if to check. He turns behind him and points to glass window. 'Can't you see through windows?' Helena looks, (its pitch dark outside). She shakes her head. Dad looks bemused and insists: 'You can see through windows.'* *Gives her the plastic. 'Cut your window out for our house. Let's have a square.'*	Dad has different idea to child, needs to rethink approach. Willing to adapt and adjust swiftly, means child's attention retained. Imitate each others language. Child decides to take alternative approach and begins to change model. Dad less willing to adapt now, asks her to stop. Child blanks him, so dad re-engages with new idea. Child obliges, but appears unwilling to work as a team. In fact, is responding in literal way to abstract question, using current experience to respond to question. Dad cannot see her viewpoint, but continues to engage her attention.	S P E / A

Transcript of joint workshop 1

Sarah

Incident 1

Settle down in the quiet corner.

Dad counts on his fingers: 1,2,3 bears' picks up a doll to be Goldilocks. Sarah watches, makes eye contact.

He talks about sizes, big, small, gesturing with his hands: Find something big or small, a big book, a small book.'

Sarah hesitates, he points 'if that's a big book, can you find me one that is smaller?' She looks through the books: 'That one?' He asks 'is that bigger or smaller?' She plays with her doll and pretends to ignore him.

'Do big with your hands. Show me how big is. 'Sarah waves her fingers. Dad asks 'Is it big like that?' stretching to arm's length. Sarah: 'no' and draws the net curtain around to shut him out. He continues; 'Small?' Indicating with his hands. She picks up a toy and pushes it through the curtain. 'That's small' he agrees. 'Can you find something that's big?' . He waits and watches her as she searches around, then repeats the question and looks at the story as she continues to search. When she finds something he agrees 'That ones bigger yeah'.

He glances self-consciously at me and gets 3 pillows to be the beds. Child watches, holding doll.

Dad: 'Put her in the small bed'. Child obeys.

Dad: 'Is that the big bed?'

Dad snores to indicate the doll is asleep. Child starting to smile.

Dad: 'Who's coming back? What will he say?'

Child hesitates, then really animated: (deep voice) 'Get out of my bed'

Dad laughs and child grins proudly.

Incident 2

Sarah is at table. Dad stands next to her. Dolls are seated at table. Dad leans over and Sarah passes saucepan. He puts it on cooker for her. She removes lid and pretends to dish out porridge into large bowl. Dad crouches down behind

chair with Mummy bear in and holds out medium bowl. Sarah puts tiny spoonful in. Dad: 'Is that it?' Sarah nods and continues to dish up. Dad watches her closely, when he catches her eye he holds out bowl for more. She ladles a spoonful. He says 'thank you' almost sarcastically. She continues, totally absorbed in role play.

Anna

Incident 1

Dad discusses with E how the tutor's suggestion of reading a story won't work with Anna. He agrees to give it a go. Anna is playing alone at other side of room. Calls across to her. She is pretending to be on phone. He pauses to point out to another dad that she isn't interested, then goes to get her. Walks to chair, she follows, holding his trouser leg, lifts her arms to sit on his lap. He immediately starts to read, but looks around, every couple of sentences. Karl goes to interrupt, but is swiftly called away by dad. Anna listens for several minutes. Dad keeps looking round. Eventually, she follows his gaze and is distracted watching others. He immediately stops reading and lets her slip to the floor. She wanders off and Melanie comes up to him, but he looks away, watching as staff come up. They compliment him on how long she stayed and he makes a joke about what he was reading. Encouraged, he picks up a toy and calls across the room, asking her what it is. She runs across to him as he shakes the box and proceeds to help him open it, standing in front of his chair. The tutor kneels at her level trying to encourage the interaction. Anna takes things out of the box but her dad takes them away from her. The tutor joins in, talking to her. Anna loses interest and runs off. Her dad looks upset. The tutor reassures him as he explains how independent she is and that if he tries to help her she just pushes him away.

Incident 2

Anna playing with baskets. Dad tries to join in and persuade her to put things in basket. Lifts her across to the twigs. 'Let's count the twigs', she hesitates. Dad says 'Anna do it' as Dad counts '1,2,3.' and does it himself, without waiting for her to process the order.

Helena

Incident 1

Enter room and move straight to the home corner. Dad asks 'are you going to sit down or am I? Helena tells him to sit down. Helena goes off to collect toys. Dad doesn't wait, but gets off chair and moves across, lifts down and begins to search the play boxes. Helena immediately joins him, watching. As he sets a storage box onto floor she says 'let's see what's in there.' He lifts out a box 'that's a big one'. She grabs 2, he points at one 'that's a weeny one' he says, 'where's a middle sized one?' As she looks, he carefully returns all other boxes to the storage box. (They are interrupted by another child, but dad keeps her attention, by asking questions e.g. 'so which is the big one?' and touching her arm when she moves away to ere-engage Helena. She responds by tapping the side of the largest box. He copies her and says 'The big one'. 'Which is the baby one?' She hesitates, looking at the 2 other boxes, then looking back to him. He says 'the small one'. She goes to tap the middle box so he quickly says 'which is the mummy one?' As she taps it, he says 'and which is the baby one?' She picks up the smallest' there it is' he agrees, as he picks up the paper and continues to read the story. 'This one (he taps a bowl and Helena looks into it) was a big bowl'. (He continues the story.)….

As he gets to the small bowl…''it was just right, Goldilocks was so hungry, she ate it all up'. Helena finds a wooden spoon and pretends to eat the porridge. She smiles at her dad. He gives her the thumbs up and she grins 'Perfect!' he shouts. 'Now what else?' asks Helena. 'Hmm, I think we have to wash up now' says dad. Helena: 'Why?' Dad: 'Because we've used up all the porridge.' Helena 'OK, come on then, you wash.' Marches round unit to sink.

Incident 2

Dad: 'Which one is the biggest bowl? Which one is the smallest? Which one is the middle?' Helena points correctly.

Dad: 'Well done!'

Helena : 'I'm going to make a cake in there'.

Dad: 'Will it go in the big one?'

She presents Dad with cake.

Dad seated on floor, pretends he's a bear eating the picnic. Another child approaches.

Dad: 'Do you want some? 'He nods and moves forward. Dad roars like a bear. Little boy jumps. All laugh.

Dad continues pretence: 'Yuck, I've got jam in my ear now!'

Helena looks solemnly and carefully at his ear, completely absorbed in the make-believe.

Melanie

Incident 1

Dad enters room and hovers, folding instructions in his hand. Melanie wanders round room, with toy. Dad watches as she interacts with staff. He sits on floor, turning paper in his hand. Melanie approaches him with toy. He takes toy and offers it back. She wanders off and he looks lost, but waits. She sees him and he stands up and calls her. 'Melanie come on!' Mr Clarke encourages her: 'What's daddy got?' dad waves toy at her, but she goes towards another dad. He follows, but she continues to wander off, so he sits on the floor by the home corner. When she comes close, K helps to catch her attention and dad is eventually able to sit her down on his lap. He reads to her, very focused, and she listens, holding toy and looking at words. When he looks up, she loses attention and waves to staff. He tries to get her back by putting paper onto floor, but she gets up and wanders off. He waits a few minutes, but just as he gets up, she returns. K comes over and kneels next to dad, who sits back down. Melanie hands K a toy and goes off to collect more, bringing them back to him. He tries to redirect her attention to dad and paper, but dad points out she isn't interested. K says 'it's got to be exciting dad and proceeds to make faces at Melanie through coloured mirror toy she gave him. She is fascinated. Dad watches, then calls her name. When she looks, he copies K, who encourages 'look at daddy's face!'. She runs to her dad and pulls at the toy. K quickly moves away to greet a new arrival and dad continues to keep her attention as she offers him toys.

Incident 2

Dad seated with Melanie on lap. Holding brightly coloured plastic square containing four circular mirrors. Melanie points to a mirror. Dad copies her. Continue game until she tires. Later, Melanie brings toy ball up behind Dad as he sits on floor and tries to roll it over his head. At first he smiles, then stops and looks round, embarrassed.

Karl

Incident 1

Dad enters room holding baby and talks to Mrs Brown. Karl has been playing with toy animals. Mr Clarke is teasing him, making the wrong noises for each animal. Karl responds explaining which is the daddy. Wanders round room, tries unsuccessfully to get another child to engage in game of chasing 'superhorse' with his dinosaur. Engrossed in game. Approaches dad who has given baby to Mrs Brown and waits while dad talks to other staff. Walks horse along counter edge. Talks to dad who puts baby down to look at then hold toys then Karl wanders off. Dad takes baby and places on pillow in middle of floor. Karl immediately brings toy animals and sits other side of pillow, directly opposite and facing his dad. Dad says 'Put them all out here and see how big they are.' As Karl thinks, he continues 'Put the biggest one first, down to the smallest.' Karl begins with the smallest, so his dad immediately says 'smallest then going up to the biggest, are you?'

Karl puts another one down, his Dad moves it to the end of the line. Karl says 'no, why?' dad explains it's the smallest animal. Both begin to place animals on floor. Dad says 'that's it, biggest down to a small one.' Karl puts one down and says 'horse' dad repeats Karl says 'one' dad repeats. Karl leans down and kisses baby then asks dad 'what else?' Both watch others for a minute then Dad asks : 'shall we put them back in a row again? as he starts. Karl continues row, sorting from small to large shouts to Mr Clarke: 'I've done it I've done it!' Mr Clarke asks 'what have you done mate?' Karl explains 'put small to large' Mr C: 'why are they there?' pointing to middle toys. Dad watches. Karl explains Mr C nods to dad and congratulates Karl. Removes toy from line up and asks 'what happens now?'. Karl closes up the line and Mr C again congratulates him, with

smile to Dad too. Karl collects more toys and takes to Mr C but he's busy playing with Anna, so dad calls Karl 'we can put all of them in order now'. Karl begins and dad points out 'that one goes there' and instructs 'take it back to the smallest'. Karl completes row but again looks to Mr C for acknowledgement. Dad watches but is silent. Anna's dad throws another toy at row which collapses. Karl collects it and re-stands row. Tutor offers another toy cow. Karl takes it: 'A small one'. Stands up and begins to count row. '9'. Dad counts to himself, pointing with finger to check. Mr C says 'shall we try again?' Karl recounts:'10'. K asks 'Why have you lined them up?' Karl is silent. K rephrases 'What's at the end?' points to smallest. Karl : that's the littlest' K ' and that one?' 'The biggest.' Mr C cheers, but Anna spots row and dives into take middle toy. Her dad watches. Karl scoops up line of toys and retreats. Anna follows, trying to take one. Mr C intervenes and Karl's dad laughs. Karl returns with toys dad says 'you can do it all again now'. Starts to line up cows. When Karl tries to distract Mr Clarke and start skylarking, dad distracts to intervene offering a new toy and asking where it goes in the size line-up. Karl continues, counting line and ignoring disruptions from other children. Dad offers a new artefact ; a saucepan. Karl attempts to put toys into pan, whilst Dad, Mr C and Anna's dad watch. Dad asks 'what about these?' 'Is that too many?' Karl piles all into pan. 'No, they can fit!' Mr C and dad talk across him about baby. Karl watches them but can't get their attention, so leans over and kisses baby. Mr C immediately stops talking 'that's nice Karl – a little kiss for your baby brother'. Adults continue to talk and Karl wanders off, clutching his heap of toy animals.

Incident 2 few minutes later.

Karl returns to dump his pile of toys by his dad. Wanders off to watch other children throwing paper aeroplanes. Dad calls him and offers small toy. 'Throw that one.' Karl watches, hands in pockets. 'Throw that one towards the doors and see how far it goes.' Karl takes toy and steps back. *Dad and S watch.* Karl throws toy. Dad asks 'how many steps does it take to get to that horse?' Karl counts and walks…'11'. Dad repeats'11, ok try it again, see if you can beat 11.' Karl rushes back to start and throws toy hard right across room.
Dad 'Oof! That's gonna be more than 11!.'

Karl starts to stride out, counting fast. Dad interrupts, Karl loses count, returns to start, but is taking larger steps, so only makes 11, then announces 15. Starts to return to his dad with toy. Mr C: 'I think you added 2 on then'.

Karl repeats throw. Dad is no longer watching, so Karl tells him:'18!'

Dad repeats '18?' then suggests he throws from furthest wall in room. Watches as Karl obeys, but ignores as he counts, so Karl kicks toy further as he reaches it, to make it go further, continues to count, then picks up toy and returns. Dad challenges him. Karl replies'100' Dad repeats '100' and laughs to staff 'I think there was a bit of cheating there!'. Karl proceeds to pat toy on his dads head, then tries to climb on his back. Dad groans and pretends to roll him off.

Incident 3

Karl asks Mr C if he can fly a paper aeroplane Mr C refolds plane and hands it over. Karl takes it and throws it upwards, plane falls straight down. Dad laughs and shouts 'no' K demonstrates and explains how to throw it. Dad holds his fingers together saying 'hold it underneath. Mr C takes over, modelling action, hand on hand with Karl, who then succeeds to throw plane in straight line. Karl runs to collect plane and announces 86 steps. Continues to throw plane and take it back to Mr C. Dad watches and says 'well done!' and laughs with Mr C at how much Karl is cheating. Then says 'Throw it back now, then!' pointing in opposite direction. Karl obeys, aims plane at Mr C and laughs when it hits him. Mr C returns plane, hitting Karl on head, even though he dodges. Dad laughs. Karl responds, but misses. Mr C laughs and holds up his arms in victory.

Billy

Incident 1

Settle next to each other, leaning against the wall. Dad begins to read in monotone. Billy listens, but starts to fiddle with plaster on finger. Dad stops and asks 'do you know what she did next? Billy: 'no' . Continue reading, but Billy distracted by what Helena and her dad are doing. As dad reads on, he announces 'I'm just going to knock on that door.'(Points to door next to Helena). Dad says,'er, ok, you come straight back'. Helena and her dad are still looking

for a box. Billy bangs hard on door, but they ignore him. 'Open the door please' he shouts. Helena's dad says 'There's nobody in.'

Billy's dad calls him 'Come back please, I haven't finished'. Billy responds: But I want you to read it when I came out of knocking on the door, ok?' Dad thinks. 'You come and knock on the door here' Billy returns. Dad smiles 'Knock knock, who's there?' Billy stops and looks surprised. 'Me!' he announces, pointing to himself. His dad smiles to himself and sits him back down to continue the story.

Incident 2

Making paper aeroplane together with tutor.

Adults folding planes, Billy watching. Dad: 'Let's see which one goes furthest.' Tutor reinforces 'Good idea daddy.' Watches as he adds extra folds. 'Oh, you're making yours a bit cleverer. Daddy's better at this than me. I'd better watch him. Its aerodynamic, they're always going to work better because of the shape. Nice job yeah, very good. ' Billy proudly takes plane and throws across room. Tutor copies. E collects and hands to Billy 'You've got a big one and little on. Are you going to fly them to daddy?' Billy obliges. 'They fly well Billy.' Tutor: 'Daddy's got a better design than mine. 'Dad 'Where's your other plane Billy? Where's the medium one? Billy: 'Here's the little one.'

Emily

Incident 1

Dad went and sat at table in home corner. Waited whilst Emily stood in middle of room, clutching toy and watched others. Got another chair and placed at table. Waited. Emily wandered towards kitchen. Dad followed and redirected her into room. Emily stood and watched cameraman. Dad watched, off camera, waited 'til she moved on, then followed her as she approached table. Overtook her, sat down at table, Emily put toy bus on chair stood at table watching another pair. No spoken communication between dad and Emily. Copying next family, dad knocks on the table. Emily laughs and goes towards next family. Begins to wander off. Dad gets up and pats his knee, turns his chair towards her and sits down, holding out his hand palm up. Emily comes immediately and he lifts her onto his lap. Turns her sideways and talks very quietly, close to her

face, turning away from the room and placing his back to the camera. Uses hand signals to count and sign for 'away', watching her face closely. Total time on lap: 30 secs. Child wriggles as Helena approaches and removes toy bus from chair. Child follows Helena back to other side of home corner. Dad fidgets on chair folds arms, watches rest of room. Helena approaches and asks to take Emily's chair. Dad signals agreement, nods and smiles, waves goodbye. Watches as Helena continues to collect chairs from round room.

Jessica

Incident 1

Enter room together. Dad puts her on floor. She stands and watches others for several minutes. He kneels down beside her, holds her hand. They watch others together. Eventually, he pulls nearest toy (a pan on a string) towards her and holds it for her to look at. She watches as he puts another toy inside, lifts it out, drops it in then shakes the pan to make it rattle. She looks beyond it to the home corner, so he places pan on floor and takes her hand. They walk to corner together and she leads him round room, pausing to watch others. They reach V (staff) and dad kneels down next to her as she begins to get Jessica's attention. J reaches for dad who lifts her into his arms and rubs her back to reassure her. Miss Adams talks to her. Dad puts her down and she watches Miss A. Dad leans across and hides face behind a cushion. Jessica turns to look for him. He plays peek boo several times, but too many distractions and gives up.

Incident 2

Jessica and Dad walking across room, past pull along toy train. She stops, let's go dads hand and returns to pick it up, then tries to hold his hand as well. So dad puts train on floor and hands her string to pull it, then steps away, trying to encourage her to follow him. She hesitates then picks up train in arms again and looks round room, watching others, sees him watching her, waves to him, then toddles to him. Again, he repeats exercise. This time, she holds out hand for string, but picks up train. He goes to bricks and bangs 2 together to get her attention. She drops train and comes towards him, so he quickly picks up

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several toys in turn and offers her them. She takes ball and throws it, then looks at dad, claps her hands and points to more toys. He asks 'Dinosaurs? As he shows her Jessica shakes head. He bangs bricks together to make different sounds. She watches closely. She turns away and starts to play with garage, then points to activity centre. He turns wheels to make sounds. She watches then copies. He takes a shape and tickles her with it. She points to more shapes, but Dad continues to tease her. She perseveres and he follows her pointing to return to activity centre. Immediately, she picks up another toy and points with it. He copies her and uses 2 dinosaurs to tickle her. She indicates a larger toy. Dad: 'This one?' He hands it to her, then demonstrates the pull-along toy again as she watches. Next he gives her a similar toy and she slowly begins to follow him pulling it along. Delighted, he speeds up, but she is swiftly distracted again next he shows her how to remove a lid. She copies him. Then they set off again and this time she trails the string properly. Finally, she takes his string and tries to pull both. Dad 'Are you sure you can manage two?' He takes one back and they play for a while, with one each, swapping. When she stops he takes both toys away and follows her crawling on all fours, saying 'Do you want to go over there?'

Incident 3

Dad and Jessica standing over wooden toy frame. Jessica holding row of beads shaped like a train. Dad pats runway. She points to hole at end and proceeds to thread string of beads through it, watching drop down onto next runway and roll to bottom of toy. Smiles and laughs and looks at dad as it finishes. Dad laughs and makes eye contact. He retrieves train 'Aha! Yes! Shall we put it here as well?' places it at top of run. She immediately removes it and tries to repeat exercise by putting it back down hole again, but begins to get distracted by others. He gently takes it back and returns it to top. 'There we go – shall we let it run? There we go.' She tries to stop it and her hands follow the toy down through the game. They repeat the activity again before being interrupted.

Appendix 6: Staff Interviews

Tutor Interview 22/3/2011

Researcher: So just discussing their toolkit, if that's alright with you, its great to hear what you thought about it. They're really keen for you to come back and do a couple of sessions just to advise them on how to put this book together. So how d'you think it went in the first place, the actual workshops – if you can remember any of it.

CLARE: Er, well, the first one I wasn't sure about, because I don't think they really knew what they wanted and it wasn't quite what I thought it was going to be. I thought they were definitely decided on the ideas, of a booklet, and wanted ideas to spark ideas off, really, rather than being given an activity to do. I thought they'd y'know, chosen a theme and thought they'd just come up with ideas themselves around that theme. So that workshop obviously wasn't quite what they were expecting. By the second session, they'd gone away and thought about it and come up with ideas of their own and so they were a bit more ...a bit more enthusiastic I suppose, they just knew what was happening a bit more. So perhaps the seed was then planted that they could make up activities of their own, they didn't always have to be told they were going to make something this week, or go on a Welly Walk this week, but they could think of things, - generate ideas themselves and from each other as well. I think that's always quite useful when they realise that.

Researcher: That was what we thought was the biggest incident of the whole thing.

CLARE: They learned from each other quite a lot.

Researcher: Which things do you think worked really well that surprised you? Is there anything that you can pick out? Pause...It's hard to remember now.

CLARE: It is. It was quite interesting watching some of the imaginary play and the dads joining in – those that feel a little bit more confident doing that. And I think them modelling playing Goldilocks and the Three Bears is really good for other dads ...to see that you can be as silly as you like. You know, three year olds really love that. And coming back and the dads saying 'I didn't realise how energetic it was going to be once we started! You know, and doing the beanstalk and we had to get really big and small..

Researcher: (Laughing), That's right, really exhausting! That's right, I remember them saying that!

CLARE: You know, it was really quite active and I don't think they'd quite realised that reading a book could be quite that active, or acting out a book could be that active. So I think the ideas they generated from each other ...and form the children as well, 'cos they came up with ideas as well.

Researcher: Did anything surprise you?

CLARE: Um..

Researcher: Was there anything unexpected?

CLARE: I'm just trying to think..

Researcher: I must show you the video clips that they put together, because that was lovely. With different dads doing different things,...like A's dad for instance.

CLARE: Yes, (thoughtfully).. I suppose I'm not surprised, because you see it with any groups of parents...everybody always reacts different ways anyway, so perhaps I y'know, you get a mixture of reactions whatever you're doing. So for me that's not such a surprise....I mean, you're always a bit surprised at the resistance, I suppose, there's always an element of resistance, you know, a slight surprise there, but then perhaps it wasn't quite what they were expecting from the session. I don't know, i can't remember quite what we did, y'know, it's

funny what enthuses different people. For perhaps a small part of it, someone will be quite enthusiastic about, and something that you think is going to take forever, they'll just ignore and not do at all.

Researcher: What did you think about the paper aeroplanes?

CLARE: Yeah, that was quite good, because they could just sort of, ...they were quite proud of their own achievements weren't they? It was the sort of redesigning, I mean, mine was a very basic aeroplane, but if they redesign, then it was a super aeroplane.

Researcher: Yes, that was good, I liked that. And I liked the idea that seems to have come out that they can really take a book and do anything with it.

CLARE: Mmm, yeah.

Researcher: Because you conceptualised things, rather than giving them very specific activities. Had you planned that, or did that just happen?

CLARE: No, no, 'cos my idea was, - 'cos I sent them away for homework to sort of think about a book they use all the time and come back with ideas. So they've had to think and everybody has got to think and see the different ideas. Because I don't think it is about me saying 'well Goldilocks and the Three bears should be ...' y'know. Because everyone sees things in different ways.

Researcher: That's important. That's really helpful for me. What do you think motivated the dads to come? Could you see anything that they really wanted to get out of it, or expected?

CLARE: Well I think they genuinely like being at the centre, and I think they get the support of the other dads. I think as much as that, they came because it was a group activity and they're a group that's used to meeting and they obviously enjoy each other's company. Some of the quieter, less confident dads do learn a lot from the more confident ones.

Researcher: Did you see any examples of that? Can you remember any from when we were in the big room?

CLARE: i think M's dad, because he was quite a young, quiet one, I think he was absorbing what the others were doing and sort of following what they were doing a little bit.

Researcher: That's really useful. Did you see any reciprocal learning? Any of the little ones teaching their dads anything that you can remember?

CLARE: Oh, well the little girl that was acting out Goldilocks and the three bears was virtually running the show. So they were all learning from her. You know, the other children and the dads were learning.

Researcher: I can pick that out now, because it's on the video beautifully.
CLARE: You know, she knew what was happening there and was doing things...But the ones that came the second week, C and his dad, when they were making the castle. Because he was saying 'I need a trapdoor' and he knew what he wanted.

Researcher: His dad said he told him later that he built a castle so the three little pigs would be safe because there was no chimney for the wolf to come down. But also, he knew what a castle comprised of and he was looking for the things to put in that castle.

CLARE:Mmm, yes that was it.

Researcher: A turning point for me was when they worked 1:1, instead of in a group.

CLARE: You see, I didn't know how they worked before, so I suppose that's me coming in not knowing how they worked, as well.

Researcher: Did you decide that before you came in – that they'd work 1:1?

CLARE: Yes, well, I suppose that was my thinking, I suppose yes. I thought perhaps that they'd go away and read the book and talk or do it with their child. I didn't realise they always did exactly the same..

Researcher: That was great, that was what the staff as well said was really nice, that they worked 1:1 and that could have gone either way. If you'd said to them, 'work as a group'. I was just interested in whether you had thought that through and planned it, or if you just went with the flow. It looked to me like you'd planned it.

CLARE: Yes, I suppose so, because maybe that's ..because mothers tend to do that more.

Researcher: what, than work together in a group?

CLARE: I s'pose I've not really done much work with dads groups and all the groups I've worked with have kind of ...sometimes they'll go off, if they know another mum and child, they'll do things together, perhaps because they're a bit more confident in their own abilities...I'm not sure really.

Researcher: I think that's the key, because the ones who seemed less confident, wanted to work as a group, I felt.

CLARE: Yes.

Researcher: And it was good that you said 'let's try this'.

CLARE: I mean, the activities were all there, so they could do it as a group, I suppose, they could all work at it together..

Researcher: And you compromised with what you said, and said 'later on perhaps you can, but read the story separately, 1:1' and that was important. And could you see any links...did you deliberately set out to link home and school? Did you see anything that they brought in from home? Pause,

silence...For instance, you did a lot of references to the socks and things they could use at home.

CLARE: Oh, yes, because I often think that craft activities are all really lovely, if you've got lots of equipment, but when you go home and do them, you're not going to have all that to hand, so you know, just making junk models with ordinary everyday boxes and paper planes - you can have a lot of fun with that and you use just a piece of paper folded up. Y'know, throwing a sock and seeing how far it will go, because you've got those to hand. You'd also said to me that they wanted to know, if they had just half an hour or an hour with the children , y'know, you can make imaginary stuff, just from what you've got at home. Like Goldilocks and the Three Bears is pots and pans, well just go and get the pans and wooden spoons out of the cupboards. You know, you're not really making a mess..but you're using things at home.

Researcher: That seemed to really inspire. Because they all talked about going down to Asda and buying some spoons that are just theirs, so they're not in trouble if they take them out of the kitchen.

CLARE: (Laughing) But that is such a shame! Why do they need special spoons!? We never had special spoons! We just used the stuff out of the cupboard!

Researcher: It is, I think they've grasped it now. They're coming in with a tremendous amount of confidence in it. So nothing really surprised you?

CLARE: The only one was the dad who just said his daughter was so used to playing with other children...he didn't really er, get down to her level.

Researcher: He found it really difficult didn't he?

CLARE: Yeah, well, all the others, y'know, at some point, the kids went off, came back, the dads went off to find them, worked with them, ...but he didn't really, he just sat.

Researcher: Could you see any progression? Did you build any in?

CLARE: He tried a little bit, to do it, I mean, she did keep wandering off, but whether that was because she wasn't used to him doing things with her, or maybe she is very independent and stuff, but whether he'll gradually take it on board, because of what the other dads are doing...'cos he was the exception to the rule, really, I think.

Researcher: definitely, yes, I thought so too. Brilliant! Is there anything with hindsight that you would look at, or do differently, or like to carry forward to another project?

CLARE: I don't know, maybe I should have known a bit more about the group before..whether I would have then done it differently, the first workshop..
Researcher: See, I think it worked really well, the way you did it.

CLARE: Yeah, I s'pose, coming away from the first one, thinking 'I'm not sure what they got out of that, because they didn't really know what to expect, ...but they all got slightly different things out of it and they did come back, I s'pose!

Researcher: From the feedback we're getting, it was very positive.

CLARE: Perhaps it was just so different to what they were used to, but maybe that was a good thing, because it's a different approach and therefore it's not what they expected and they've got to adapt really and try something different.

Researcher: For what it's worth, on the last day, when I was showing them the film and checking that they had seen the bit that they were in, they were happy with it. We obviously had to take people out 1:1 to look at that. The rest of the group, i wasn't sure what to do with them, so I just put all the spare dinosaur packs we had , with the bigger, smaller, instructions etc.

CLARE: Oh yeah, I know.

Researcher: I just left them on a table and apparently, everybody was using them in different ways, which was fantastic. The staff said that had we had a tutor in there saying, 'right, this is what you're going to do'..they'd have just gone the other way, but because it was like it was, they accessed it. So I think that reflects on how you'd run the two sessions before.

CLARE: Mmm, and the other thing about doing it in the children's centre, is there is so much other stuff to play with that it's quite hard if you did want to focus on another topic or activity because there's other things that are more interesting really.

Researcher: So you've got those distractions..that's worth thinking about next time.

CLARE: But it depends how structured and formal you want the session to be.
Researcher: In a way, it worked so well, do you remember the eldest lad, with the horses, that he lined up?

CLARE: Yes, 'cos he put them in size order – he demonstrated the fact that they'd been talking about!

Researcher: So things like that were rather nice, that you had the extra resources, that they could just go and find, in a way, a bit like being at home and being able to go and find something .

CLARE: Mmm, but I s'pose not knowing the ages of the children. I mean, I had no idea – I just knew they were pre-school.

Researcher: Mmm, very difficult..

CLARE: But some were just babies and some were at school, actually.

Researcher: it was a real range, which I suppose is why we got so many different things going on.

Coded transcript of CC Staff Interview 4/3/2011

Purpose:

To select relevant statements on the impact of Family Learning on the culture of parent/professional relations and categorise under how initiated:

 CODE: parent initiated –red   professional initiated - blue

MRS BROWN: * came to see me after you'd done the workshops and everything and told me if the idea of a book was one he wanted to take forward, how would he go about it. Y'know, could I support him to do it and then somebody said about involving you because you'd kind of headlined and started all this and I kind of didn't have any idea about where he wanted to go, what he wanted to do, but he'd already completed 6 pages, which was mainly based around stories and just how to bring them to life. Like you were saying about puppets...junk modelling – they loved, just using everyday stuff, not actually going out to buy stuff he said. Because he was saying that, y'know, the emphasis was on last minute activities to keep the children entertained. As well as things that weren't going to cost a lot of money, because that would put people off.

RESEARCHER: Well, that's just what we wanted!

MRS BROWN: And I was like 'no, that's fantastic, so I just wanted to kind of have a variety of things to back up the stories, so it's all about making paper aeroplanes – they had designs for the paper aeroplanes, um, I can't remember what else was in there, but there was just er, loads of different kind of stuff – just using play dough, the measuring games, using everyday things for measuring,...

RESEARCHER: Fantastic!

MRS BROWN: But he wanted that in a very pictorial, but very easy to read way, in a book, um...and wanted to get it published. He wanted it just to be a whole Dads group book, for Dads, by dads, entertaining their children.

RESEARCHER: That's excellent! So, he'd done these 6 pages?...

MRS BROWN: Yeah, but it's very rough, it's kind of, he knows...he's got it in his head, its just...thats what I'm struggling with now, it's just to sort of making his ideas reality. So yeah, he's got it in his head, he's just literally got lots of ..um..doodles on a page really...so he just wants lots of pictures, followed by very short sentences, to back up the picture, in terms of this is what you do, this is what you need. He was saying about having a box, because he had the toolbox idea, which was what you said..

RESEARCHER: Oh right, yes...

MRS BROWN: And he was saying about having a box 'cos its just for them, that can go in the cupboard under the stairs or whatever and it will be full of things like junk modelling, that they can keep topping up....

RESEARCHER: See that's a really good idea.

MRS BROWN: Yeah, and he was saying like wooden spoons, you can go to Asda and things like that, and buy a cheap value spoon for about 10p and put faces on and that becomes a puppet...

RESEARCHER: Simple, simple stuff...

MRS BROWN: Really simple stuff.

RESEARCHER: And I love the way that he's translated that idea of a toolkit... Because we'd probably think of it as something completely different, but he's turned it into a practical, real thing.

MRS BROWN: Yeah, so, um and he was saying, y'know, it doesn't matter, it physically could be a toolbox, um, but it could equally be a cardboard box. Whatever you want it to be.

RESEARCHER: Great!

MRS BROWN: So I just like the fact that it was very flexible, it was very simple,

RESEARCHER: And it's come from them.

MRS BROWN: Absolutely come from them. I mean, he's kind of generated the start, and I can see in here (points to evaluation sheet) one of the others had put 'Looking forward to * publishing his book. I think it was a joke, ...it started off as a joke, but actually, um ...would like to see a book...(reading from her notes of meeting with Dad) I've got down here, 'would like to see a book of ideas for other Dads'. So telling Dads ...they've always been conscious that a lot of dads can't make this group, so saying that still, they can still share what they do at the group with dads that can't come.

RESEARCHER: So it's opening it up, isn't it, and making it very much more inclusive. I love the idea that that was a common sort of thread that, like you said, actually did start as a joke, in the Dads briefing part of the session...

MRS BROWN: Yeah, absolutely..

RESEARCHER: That they were all...and he was saying, 'I've got another job now, haven't I, and when they went back in with the children, it seemed like it was forgotten about, so I wasn't aware that the staff were aware of it! Because it was just something that the tutor sort of joked about and they joked back at her...

MRS BROWN: Well, we kind of heard little bits about it, but always in that very jokey way and i think he's obviously, cos I've asked him and they've been back a couple of times since the last workshop, but um..we asked them, y'know, were they doing anything and they were kind of saying yes, but not really giving us any indication, so then for * to email me and say 'I have been doing it, I want to now put this into a book ...see we only meet fortnightly, so it must have been a good month since you last came..

RESEARCHER: Yes, it was the end of...21st of January I think, so over a month..

MRS BROWN: see he's held that all that time...

RESEARCHER: Mmm, kept it going...

MRS BROWN: And has now come back after this time, ...

RESEARCHER: And you've got an email about it? That's even better! It's not like he's just talking about it...

MRS BROWN: Yep. I've got an email and it's like no, no, no, he wants to do it. He's just asking though, y'know, it's the basic thing about costs, publications...

RESEARCHER: My line manager said, what are we looking at basically, and I said I'd come and find out. She said we can do practical stuff, so long as they don't mind us...it's not about having ownership of it, but can we use it like at our Open Days or something – can we say 'this is what the dads group did or something like that?' And all I could see is maybe if we can put it together, its only about the resources of printing it off and things ..

MRS BROWN: Oh yes, that's it, that's all the cost is and they want to own it, they want to literally put the book together, they want to get the photographs and do the writing...

RESEARCHER: That's what makes me think it will run...so if we're looking at a100, or a couple of hundred, then that's fine, that's no problem at all. We can do that, because, my argument to them was it would cost me that to put on another workshop and if they feel they can do those bits, which are the bits I'd have to get a tutor to do, then all the cost is really just the resources.

MRS BROWN: No, that would give them ownership, I mean they can literally, take the activity they most enjoyed and they form that page.

RESEARCHER: That's it! And I thought like, a photo, if they didn't mind that, of their child doing that activity, so even more ownership of it. This is what * thought, and this is what we did, all different ones. I think it could really work...

MRS BROWN: I think it could really work, it's just kind of having the people who know how to get this kind of thing done..

RESEARCHER: Yes, and the resources and funding and..

MRS BROWN: Yeah, its just more brains are better than one I think.

RESEARCHER: I'll talk to the tutor again, because she may well come down and we can pay for her time, just to help, because I think she was actually ...she didn't...she surprised herself, she didn't feel comfortable, she was out of her comfort zone at the beginning...

MRS BROWN: Really? I didn't notice.

RESEARCHER: She felt she bombarded them with too many ideas on the first session, 'cos she hadn't met them and she wasn't sure how..

MRS BROWN: OK

RESEARCHER: But by the second session she really felt better and I wanted to write the evaluations out to send her to show her. She'd planned it all out on a session plan and everything, done it the way we have to do it, but actually, she loved the way the dads took it and just ran with it. So I think she'd be much better now at looking at things and saying 'that's a good idea' and moving it on for them.

MRS BROWN: Yeah. I think that's what they need. They have the ideas, they don't actually know how to make those happen or to extend them.

RESEARCHER: She'd probably be the best one, because although she's not literacy or craft activities or anything, she's very numeracy based, she does know them now and I think they probably wouldn't mind her coming back and

saying 'come on then you can do it'!

MRS BROWN: No, absolutely, and I think the other thing is that she's got stuck in with them and that's what you've got to be like with the dads.

RESEARCHER: That's brilliant, it wouldn't be anything formal like the workshops, it would be in there, y'know, let's flesh out these ideas and let's get them written down and then maybe they can go home and word process them, or whoever can,..maybe someone could...

MRS BROWN: Yeah, no we said we're happy to do that...rather than just write it, we'll get it done. I don't want to pull them away from their children either...if you see what I mean.

RESEARCHER: No, that's the balance isn't it..

MRS BROWN: We did say, do you want to come in on a separate and actually put this together yourselves and they were all like...(shrugs)...

RESEARCHER: It's hard isn't it?

MRS BROWN: I know, and that's what's gonna stop them actually getting it going, so I was like, no, let's keep to what you do, we're just evidencing what you do really, so it was just a case of them putting it in their words, making it fun, cos I don't want it to come across as like professional speak, I want it to be...'cos that's how it's gonna be'..

RESEARCHER: No, I agree, I think that's really important. And also, just maybe even a scribe, somebody writing down as they say, rather than them having to sit and think, 'how do I do this in terms of instructions?'

MRS BROWN: Yeah, absolutely.

RESEARCHER: Yep, that's how we work with anyone who's struggling at IT say, and can't follow something easily. They do it and then we get them to tell

us what they did, or how they did it.

MRS BROWN: Sure.

RESEARCHER: Then we write that down, so then it's in their words.

MRS BROWN: Mmm, something as simple as a paper aeroplane, you don't actually need any words. A picture of a paper aeroplane and the word, and then different pictures of the paper plane, in stages, that is enough.

RESEARCHER: That's it! And maybe 'cos the tutor didn't give them the instructions that she had for making paper aeroplanes that day cos she felt she'd just ...she'd done them ready, but...

MRS BROWN: Oh right, so that could go in...

RESEARCHER: Either that, or if she showed them and they said 'oh, we could make that simpler or something'...we can probably adapt it, so it's theirs, rather than ours... So I could get her to start with that 'cos then she'd know, and if they've got their activities, they've all got an idea, y'know, ...and we've got 6 pages already!

MRS BROWN: (Laughing) I know, I couldn't believe it! I was so shocked! I was like going, 'OK, so how d'you wannna do this?' And he was like, 'well, I've done 6 pages...' and I was like 'You what...you're way ahead of me, I just need to catch up!' Cos I've been away, I was like, is this what you've been doing, since I've been away? * was like 'no, no, no, this is just what I've been doing at home' and I was like 'oh my gosh!' I've just got to run with it for him I think.

RESEARCHER: I think he will do it – I mean, he was the one who came back with his dads group homework that he was really worried the others would laugh at him.

MRS BROWN: Really!?

RESEARCHER: And he had done it and nobody else had written it and that told me that that is his way of working...that he enjoys working like that. He was worried because the tutor had jokingly drawn up 2 sides to the piece of paper and said 'all come with 2 stories and he thought he'd forget his, so that's why he wrote it down, in case he was made to feel daft by the others . In the end he was the only one who'd done it. Of course they gave him a bit of stick for that y'know.

MRS BROWN: (Smiling) Of course, of course!

RESEARCHER: But the tutor encouraged him, so that's come out lovely on the actual data. It's great evidence, then he went to stuff it back in his pocket and I said 'look, y'know, if you don't want it ...' and he said 'oh yeah, you can have it'.

MRS BROWN: Oh wow, can I get a copy of that to put in their folder?

RESEARCHER: Course you can! Maybe, just having to put it down has helped him to feel 'I can do this in the booklet'.

E Yes, absolutely.

RESEARCHER: We had to adapt it obviously, because they didn't do all the formal stuff that we have to do.

MRS BROWN: (nodding) Yeah, sure.

RESEARCHER: So she just said, 'well, why don't you just go home, think of a story, and put the things in it that you did...to make that story come to life' y'know, we just did it like that...and of course, none of the others,...when she asked, they were all just sitting there and he pulls this out of his back pocket and then realised and went to put it back..That was so good – a lovely moment. And that kind of moves me on to those sort of questions about what do you think motivates the dads to come, y'know, the sort of things that got them here? (STAFF looks a bit blank, so I continue) Have you seen anything we can take and learn from for the future, in the things that they've done?

MRS BROWN: (Hesitantly) Yeah...(stops).

RESEARCHER: Has there been anything that you've thought 'oh, this is fantastic, or this?' Any comments, or anything you've seen dads have done differently, or anybody who has said anything?

MRS BROWN: (Slowly) Mmm, I think, just ... (thoughtfully).. Well, Dads Group is known for being a fun place to come, and...(hesitates)... I don't think they saw the educational side and the benefits for their children. I think it was always a case of 'is it more for the dads, or is it more for the children?' I think, I can just see that they now have got... yes, they've got it! In terms of, 'yes, we come to the Dads Group for fun, but the benefits that come out of that fun for the children are...y'know, .. it's all educational. (speeds up) I think they finally get that a story is not just a bedtime story to wind a child down, to send them to sleep. It's now learning language, it's learning how you put all that into a context, how you put that into a story, how you build a story. For a lot of them, I mean, I know one dad particularly, he really struggles, a young dad, left school with no kind of formal education, but has now got the confidence to sit and read a book knowing he doesn't need to know those words. So he has got the confidence if his child came to him in 5 years' time with a Harry potter book, just as she would come to him with the 3 Pigs now, he can still read that by the skills that he's learnt from y'know, just looking at pictures. What will Harry Potter eat, what would Harry Potter do..and it's just, I think, for me, that's quite a huge thing, because we've always said.. Everyone looks at Dads Group and says 'yes they're a great bunch, they have loads of fun, ...(pauses) ...has it got any worth to it? I think this has just completely grounded that. I think the dads get it - they think you can have fun, it can be a real laugh-y jokey thing, but at the end of the day, the children are still the focus.

RESEARCHER: And they're still learning from it. That's a really good lesson for us to carry forward in any other thing that we do. Y'know, this way did work, 'cos it was a risk I think. Going out on a limb, and especially that feeling – you can pick up the tension on the video. I ought to have shown you clips, but it was just the only way of doing this and trying to remember what went on ...the first session, - it was so quiet...nobody knew what to expect, I suppose, and they

were sort of not quite getting it, when we were just talking through what we were going to do ...and yet, when they went in there...

MRS BROWN: I know!

RESEARCHER: It was like a switch was turned!

MRS BROWN: (Excitedly) But we were like – we couldn't believe it, 'cos we were like, ...they were literally, ...we were pushing them out of the crèche door to go, I could just see you and the tutor going 'We're ready, we're ready!' and ...I was like 'Go and make a cup of tea and take that with you...' bribery! 'Go out of the door' it took them forever. Yet when they came back in I kind of looked at them, and I was like 'so what d'you need to do?' and they were, like, they couldn't verbalise it and it was just, like, umm, ok...but then all of a sudden, you looked around and you've got one doing this and you've got one doing that and without actually knowing what they were supposed to do, they were doing it...I was just like that's what learning is supposed to be and it's supposed to be natural, it's not supposed to be about writing it and outcome planning it, because there's your outcomes, there, seeing them do it.

I've never seen a dad kind of... (struggles for the words) ...just kind of being , oh, so kind of...involved . She was just making porridge for Goldilocks, yet he was then going 'How many have we got?' I was just (gestures amazed stare)...she was going '1,2,3!' and I was going 'oh my gosh' it was just...(shrugs, speechless). And that was it, so for me, that was just huge , because, they do play, but I think there's a lot of alongside playing, but now he knew how he could extend what she was doing in that Home Corner...

RESEARCHER: That's excellent

MRS BROWN: I can remember, on the carpet, I really think ...it's the vivid ones I can see...I remember one child doing massive big jumps and counting how far he and the paper plane was going. I remember the beds and making y'know, one for mummy, one for daddy, one for baby bear..

RESEARCHER: Wonderful, they're all the critical incidents that I've pulled out as well, so that's really helpful, cos when I speak to my supervisor, y'know, I say well I think something was going on there, but if I hear it from you as well, y'know, the staff thought so as well!

MRS BROWN: Oh no, absolutely, and I went over and they didn't, they just couldn't explain what they were doing, ...but I think it had just suddenly given them some, I don't know, some worth to it. It wasn't just play, it was ...

RESEARCHER: They could value it. I thought there was a lovely moment when they came in, you were all saying 'this is really strange, 'cos **we** don't know what's happening...'

MRS BROWN: Yeah, I know! We had no idea!

RESEARCHER: But they knew. They didn't come and tell you 'this is what we've got to do' or anything, they were just focused – this is our task, if you like, our mission, and off they went.

MRS BROWN: I know one dad was really, really nervous about it, I think it was the pressure of not really 'getting it' for him. He came in and he looked really nervous and I could see his stress yet all of a sudden, he kind of sat down on a chair, and I think because usually he's so engrossed with his mate, yet he knew he had to kinda do something, and she just naturally came and jumped on his lap and sat there, and I was just like...

RESEARCHER: Oh I think we caught that! I'll find that bit!

MRS BROWN: (Struggles to explain) It was, I mean, it wasn't like before, he wasn't just looking around, he was suddenly like 'she wants to do this, I can be part of this ' and so he did and he was just fantastic!

RESEARCHER: I think the turning point was at the end of the talking bit that the tutor did with them, when one of the dads said 'do we do this in a group, or do

we do this individually?'

MRS BROWN: Oh, er ok...

RESEARCHER: I thought this could go either way now, 'cos lots of them had still not said anything and they were just still listening and waiting, and I thought –'easiest option here, just let them all go in there and just work as a group. The tutor actually said, 'I think it would be better if you do it individually, work as a group if you want, but I think it would be better.' And the dads said 'ok that's fine'. It was as if they were given their instructions and they would do it then, y'know, but I thought that was a really interesting point because they did all do it in different ways.

MRS BROWN: Yep, absolutely, and I think that's what we were all like – they all came back in and it just like naturally started to happen, like they were just 'right, let's go for it'. Some kind of hung back and watched. You could definitely see they were watching what others were doing, some went in there with a clear thing they were gonna do, and what was nice is that none of it was forced, it was just where their children were playing, at that time, which is why I think we had so many varieties.

RESEARCHER: Ahh, I never thought of that! The different stages?

MRS BROWN: Yeah, you saw their children, I mean, one of the older ones who was doing the jumping, y'know, and the walking ..thats naturally a thing that he does. So his dad just naturally went over, and followed what he was doing and made it happen. We had one that was clearly playing in the home corner, and he clearly went over, so that naturally happened. The saucepans and the porridge naturally happened because it was in the home corner. We had one in the book corner with the pillows making the beds, so I think, they didn't go 'right, you must come over here and we'll do that.

RESEARCHER: And the reciprocal learning that is going on there, when dads are seeing the level that the children are at and the stage they're at, playing at

that level.

MRS BROWN: Yeah, but they also got confidence from it because the children had already chosen to play with that, so the children's play was then...

RESEARCHER: That's true, yeah, I hadn't thought of that...

MRS BROWN: D'you know what I mean, it was extended, so the dads almost got something back. Whereas before, the children may have then have left, and if the dad had tried to interrupt and do something that wasn't part of what they were doing, it would have broken their play, but because the dads had naturally gone to where they were, and just tried to make it what it was, it just worked, so they got something. They were kind of stuck for what to do, but then naturally, there was 3 pillows. 3 pillows can naturally be a bed, so it just became.

RESEARCHER: Children can do that can't they, and they think like that. You saw that from the children's angle, I was looking at it from the Dads'.

MRS BROWN: Yeah, 'cos what we preach all the time is 'follow the childrens' needs, you must follow. There's no point trying to get them engrossed in puzzles if they wanna' paint. Because that not what's important to them at the time. So you've got to go to the paint and make the paint exciting. I think that's what worked. So they equally got something back, so rather than this activity...considering the childrens' age, their attention span is going to be really short. But I saw play going on for 5, 10 minutes...

RESEARCHER: Which is quite going some for that age..
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MRS BROWN: Yeah. Well you think about all the language, if I was to sit there and write down all the words during that time, ...it would be huge! Absolutely huge. So, I just couldn't believe it!

RESEARCHER: All credit to them! The one last question that I want to ask is 'what happened whilst I was in here, on the last session? Do you remember, we did dinosaurs, and I just put things out to get people going, 'cos I imagined

they'd be more wanting to see their bit of the video. So I left things in that other room and I wasn't in there to see. I'd be very interested to know if there was any difference. If you'd done that a couple of sessions before, it wasn't like a test or anything, it was just to keep people busy, it was something we had in the cupboard, but were you in there, or were any of the other staff?

MRS BROWN: You mean when the dads were in there as well?

RESEARCHER: Did they access it?

MRS BROWN: Oh absolutely, some just happened to be sat there, but masks came out of it...I'm not sure if there was supposed to be masks, or they were just templates for faces, but we definitely had masks come out of it. We had one little boy whose just obsessed with dinosaurs so that was just his thing. They found the words to do the bigger, biggest… all that came out of it.

RESEARCHER: Oh great, so they were actually having a go? Because that's quite a structured, educational activity.

MRS BROWN: Oh, yeah, huge.

RESEARCHER: You didn't want somebody in there, saying like this is what you must do with this.

MRS BROWN: But I think that again is why...if you'd gone in there and done that with the dads, they would have left it. They would have just sat, completely as far away as possible. But it was just looking like it can be whatever you want it to be. So they just went over, and the children that were ready for words, played with the words, the children that were just playing with crayons that was fine as well. Then some children wanted to name their dinosaurs, so that came out.

RESEARCHER: So possibly, from what had happened in the earlier sessions they were happy to make anything of the activity?

MRS BROWN: Yeah, absolutely, I think that's their confidence, because before it's just always been you provide them with something and it's 'What do we need to do with it?' If I'd have said to them before, it can be what you want it to be, but they wouldn't have it. But if you go in there and say 'you're making this, this is what it'll need to look like, you can guarantee that's what would happen.

RESEARCHER: There was enough confidence?

MRS BROWN: Enough confidence to make it what it was going to be and then the children play with it for longer.

RESEARCHER: And so, can you see that, going forward? Did you see any links between what goes on at home and what goes on here then? A couple of them said to me 'Oh, we've taken the junk models home and we're going to use them.'

MRS BROWN: Oh yes! Absolutely, and they've asked to collect junk modelling, so they're a lot more forward thinking in their ideas now. What can be used etc.

RESEARCHER: Great stuff!

MRS BROWN: And the everyday. The everyday stuff is huge. It's not new, 'cos its always been that we're quite lucky to have really amazing resources, good quality stuff, but for them that doesn't mean anything, because at home they haven't got that equipment. So now, a pack of paper, and some scissors and all that can become something. Junk modelling can become something.

RESEARCHER: So that's a big thing.

MRS BROWN: Huge, yeah. But I think the main thing for me was just the confidence. The bedtime story doesn't need to be about mum doing it, or whoever doing it, or y'know about the favourite story, because even a princess story can have a cave in it and then go exploring and they can do this and they can do that...so it just goes off the rails!

RESEARCHER: I was amazed how much that happened! Y'know, how one triggered another, triggered another...

MRS BROWN: Oh it was just perfect, it was just amazing.   Yeah!

RESEARCHER: One very final question...do you see any potential impact from this work in terms of the participants' lifelong learning?

MRS BROWN: Y'know, you still hear, Dad comes home, Mum's just got them into this routine, and they've got to...they come home and kind of, wind the kids up and kinda go a bit crazy, it's because they don't see that being their role. But I think the childrens' lifelong learning now is that dads have got some power and some knowledge to know that they can impact on the children as well. So even when that half an hour of play time, it might be really crazy play, but they might be acting out something, there might be a story behind it, that just gives the dads some kind of confidence to say that they matter as well.

RESEARCHER: That's really important, isn't it?

MRS BROWN: So it might be half an hour before bedtime, but if that's half an hour of when mum's just like had enough, and they're really excited...

RESEARCHER: Is it about building that relationship to show that education is cool, and that learning is ok?

MRS BROWN: Yeah, and if they see that they are their children's first teacher, then that's going to give the children a huge kind of, well the benefits for that child is huge, but then, that can also have a knock-on effect with the Dads then, because it gives them the confidence that they've got the skills, even if they educationally haven't got those skills, they have got the skills in themselves to become their children's teacher and well, for me, that's just huge, so powerful.

RESEARCHER: Such a huge key to so many things. It opens so many doors, there's so much evidence in the research about that.

MRS BROWN: Yeah, absolutely. Because for me, in Early Years, you always hear it referred to as 'oh they don't do nothing until they get to five, because that's when the schooling properly starts'. We're always saying, 'education starts from day dot really'. So for dads to kind of, some of theirs are 13, 14 months, some of the youngest ones. So they're already, at 13, 14 months, realising the power of their knowledge and how that's going to help their children.

RESEARCHER: And the impact they can actually make.

MRS BROWN: Yeah, and the learning for that child, that's going to happen before 5, is going to increase hugely.

RESEARCHER: It has got to, hasn't it? It's a win, win, hopefully, on a very simple level. The challenge for us was getting the level right I think. You could see how easily it could go either way. And like W said at the advisory board, it's very difficult, you don't want to say to mums, 'no, you're not welcome,' but at the same time, it is a different ethos, the Dads Group, it really is.

MRS BROWN: Absolutely. I mean, did you hear that conversation at the end, I don't know if you were present when they were saying about the next one being the Forest Fun trip, and how they straight away went 'The Gruffalo! That fits in with that - can we do the Gruffalo?' And we're thinking 'Oh my gosh, absolutely!' So now our trip to the forest is not going to be about going bug hunting, but it's going to be the Gruffalo. We'll read the Gruffalo in the woods and they can go on a Gruffalo hunt and all this malarkey ...

RESEARCHER: There's just so much you can make with it. I wouldn't have picked that up. One of the dads thought of it didn't they and just related it?

MRS BROWN: Yep, he just suddenly said and I think it's to do with Red Nose Day or something, which I have looked at, but we don't specifically support individual charities, but for them to do that, if they want to do that now, and one of the dads put in that book; 'Forest Fun trip, related to the Gruffalo'.

RESEARCHER: Oh lovely, and of course there is the Gruffalo's child, or something, which although a lot of them have the Gruffalo, they don't necessarily know that one. In fact, the one who suggested it said he wasn't that familiar with it. So I thought that would be interesting.

MRS BROWN: Exactly.

RESEARCHER: With groups of mums we've done Gruffalo storyboxes and things, but it's all very kind of structured; 'This is what we're doing this week, next week we'll put a game in there, the next week put a counting thing in, y'know.' They seem quite happy with it, because that's what we're doing each week.

MRS BROWN: They know you've got a plan. What we struggle with, with the dads, is that you don't need to make something, you don't have to have an end product, to have some learning taking place. Do you know what I mean?

RESEARCHER: Yes, I could see that going on.

MRS BROWN: See for the dads who've seen Adult learning before, like, go home and say 'I've made this for my child, look what I've done, how good my days been today, whereas the dads group come in, and they actually had nothing to show for those 2 weeks (The Workshops) apart from what in their head. That for me is so much more powerful, because they can take that anywhere. You can't take your little box of tricks anywhere.

RESEARCHER: So when they're walking in the woods, suddenly they can think of something.

MRS BROWN: Exactly! They can just turn a typical trip to the park to feed the ducks, into a story.

RESEARCHER: I saw that on one of the evaluation sheets.

MRS BROWN: (Reading sheet): I've learned about something for when we're on pushchair trips – adapting the way we play and how to make games from stories'...

RESEARCHER: I think that's like a switch going off, I hadn't expected any of that.

MRS BROWN: No, I never expected it.

RESEARCHER: I suppose you never know what you're looking for until it happens, then suddenly, you think, gosh, that is a really critical incident in the whole of the project. But it's really interesting for me to speak to you and to check with the tutor, and maybe catch up with the other staff to see what they thought, which bits they remember and which bits stood out for them.

MRS BROWN: Yeah, 'cos I think everyone's different, everyone's got a different story in their head.

RESEARCHER: Then you'll pick up the different perspectives from that. So rather than ask the dads again, I think it's just enough. They've done their bit, which is lovely.

MRS BROWN: Oh definitely.

Interview Schedule

1. Did any of your personal views, based on any of your own experiences about paternal involvement with their children's learning, influence how you approached the workshops?

2. What do you think the fathers valued about what they learned?

3. Did you see any links between what goes on at home and what goes on here?

4. Do you think you shared any values or beliefs relating to home-school, parent / professional relations and / or Lifelong Learning with these fathers?

5. Was there a difference between how you planned the workshops and how they actually took place?

6. How did you differentiate, support individuals and ensure progression for fathers?

Analysis of Staff Interviews

The following is a summary of the key themes that emerged within the interviews around the connections between Family Learning and parent / professional relations.

Table 12: Analysis of staff interview - summary of the key themes

Data	Interpretation of data in terms of Family Learning pedagogy	Implication for parent-professional relations
They loved just using everyday stuff, not actually going out to buy stuff. The emphasis was on last minute activities to keep the children entertained. As well as things that weren't going to cost a lot of money, because that would put people off.	Discuss / share ways to create simple activities - value for money	*Consolidates links between formal and informal learning – realistic ways to apply concepts*
They wanted that in a very pictorial, easy to read way, in a book and wanted to get it published, just a whole Dads Group book, for Dads, by Dads, entertaining their children.	Using own and peers - shared skills and knowledge	*Extends support network for fathers and their children*
He was saying you can go to Asda and buy a cheap value spoon for about 10p and put faces on and that becomes a puppet...	Catalyst for practical ideas	*Encourages inclusion and engagement*
Well, we kind of heard little bits about it, but always in that very jokey way and I think he's obviously serious about	Creates informal opportunities to discuss ideas	*Assists communication between professionals and parents*

it, they've been back a couple of times since the last workshop, but we asked them were they doing anything and they were saying yes, but not really giving us any indication, so then for him to email me and say 'I have been doing it, I want to now put this into a book !		
It would give them ownership, I mean they can literally, take the activity they most enjoyed and they form that page. Its just more brains are better than one, I think that's what they need. They have the ideas, they don't actually know how to make those happen or to extend them.	Professionals offering practical support to enable fathers to achieve their chosen aims	***Develops links between informal and formal activities and extends knowledge of resources available***
The tutor got stuck in with them and that's what you've got to be like with the dads.	Staff able to model awareness of parents perspective and how to approach them	***Experienced professionals able to demonstrate positive strategies for other practitioners***
We're just evidencing what they do really, just a case of them putting it in their words, making it fun, I don't want it to come across as professional speak, I want it to be something as simple as a paper aeroplane, you don't actually need any words. A picture of a plane, the word, then different stages, that's enough.	Staff capturing learning in informal ways.	***Informal learning maintains the emphasis on enjoyment***

When they came in I looked at them, 'so what do you need to do?' and they couldn't verbalise it ...but then all of a sudden, you looked around and you've got one doing this and one doing that and without actually knowing what they were supposed to do, they were doing it...I was just like learning is supposed to be - natural not about writing it and outcome planning it, because there's your outcomes, seeing them do it. I was just like I've never seen a Dad .(struggles for the words) ...just kind of being , so involved . She was just making porridge for Goldilocks, yet he was then going 'How many have we got?' I was just amazed ...she was going '1,2,3!' And I was going 'oh my gosh! - that was it, for me, that was just huge , because, they do play, but I think there's a lot of alongside playing, but now he knew how he could extend what she was doing in that home corner.	Conceptualising activities – fathers learning how to follow and extend their children's learning Informal approach avoids over reliance on paperwork. Encourages practical involvement in child's activities	*Formal concepts help fathers to structure and develop children's play.* *Ensures learning occurs naturally at childs pace.* *Provides strategies and increased opportunities for intergenerational interactions*
I remember one child doing massive big jumps and counting how far he and the paper plane was going. I remember the beds and making y'know, one for	Places emphasis on experiential learning	*Emphasises relevance of individual discovery learning*

mummy, one for daddy, one for baby bear and I went over and they just couldn't explain what they were doing, but I think it had just suddenly given them some worth to it. It wasn't just play.		
Some hung back and watched. You could definitely see they were watching what others were doing, some went in there with a clear thing they were gonna' do, what was nice is that none of it was forced, it was just where their children were playing, at that time, which is why I think we had so many varieties.	Enables everyone to work at own pace and access activities at appropriate level for their child.	*Recognises individual abilities and offers chance to maximise potential*
One was doing the jumping, that's naturally a thing he does. So his dad just went over, and followed what he was doing and made it happen. We had one child playing in the home corner, so her dad went over there. We had one in the book corner with the pillows making the beds, so I think, they didn't go 'right , you must come over here and we'll do that'.	Encourages adults to follow childs lead and join in / support their play	*Allows children autonomy*
The children's' play was extended, so the dads almost got something back. Whereas before, the children may been playing and if the dad had tried to interrupt and do something that wasn't part of	Provided opportunities for imaginative play which enhanced adult / child interaction	*Highlighted importance of informal, creative activities, using easily available resources.*

what they were doing, it would have broken their play, but because the dads had naturally gone to where they were, and just tried to make it what it was, it worked, so they got something.		
What we preach all the time is follow the childrens needs, you must follow. There's no point trying to get them engrossed in puzzles if they want to paint. Because that not what's important to them at the time.. So you've got to go to the paint and make the paint exciting. I think that's what worked. So they equally got something back	Showed dads how following their child's lead maintained their attention	***Allowing and supporting child's choices increases concentration span***
Considering the childrens age we've got, their attention span is going to be really short, but I saw play going on for 5, 10 minutes you think about all the language, if i was to sit there and write down all the words during that time, ...it would be huge! Absolutely huge	Demonstrated ways to increase vocabulary	***Formal strategies for extending language development***
A couple of them said to me 'we've taken the junk models home and we're going to use them' and they've asked to collect junk, so they're a lot more forward thinking in their ideas now. At home they haven't got our equipment. So	Use of basic materials to demonstrate concepts	***Increased understanding of informal ways to develop resources***

now, a pack of paper, and some scissors and all that can become something.		
But I think the main thing for me was just the confidence. The bedtime story doesn't need to be about mum doing it, or about the favourite story, because even a princess story can have a cave in it and then go exploring, so it just goes on! *Dad comes home, mums just got them into this routine, and they come home, wind the kids up, go a bit crazy, its because they don't see that being their role. But I think now that dads have got some power and some knowledge to know that they can impact on the children as well. So even in that half hour of play time, it might be really crazy play, they might be acting out something, there might be a story behind it, that just gives the dads confidence to say that they matter as well*	Increases self-confidence and evidences importance of individual roles to enable adults to attempt different activities and develop own ideas	***Encourages fathers to implement own strategies and recognise their own value and place within children's learning***
If they see that they are their childrens first teacher, then the benefits for that child is huge, but that can also affect the dads then, because it gives them the confidence even if educationally haven't got those skills, they have got the skills in themselves to	Provides opportunities for parents to take initiative	***Highlights importance of parental role in early years development***

become their childrens teacher. In Early Years, you always hear ' they don't do nothing until they get to five, because that's when schooling properly starts'. We're always saying, 'education starts from day dot, so for dads with a child of 14 months, realising the power of their knowledge and how that's going to help their child, the learning that's going to happen before 5, is going to increase hugely.		
Perhaps the seed was planted that they could make up activities of their own, they didn't always have to be told, they could generate ideas themselves and from each other as well. They learned from each other quite a lot.	Encourages ownership of learning and confidence in own ideas	***Enables fathers to take responsibility***
I think the more confident ones modelling playing Goldilocks and the Three Bears was really good for other dads ...to see that you can be as silly as you like. You know, three year olds really love that.	Provides opportunities for peer mentoring	***Enables fathers to support and learn from each other***
Dads saying 'I didn't realise how energetic it was going to be once we started, doing the beanstalk and getting really big and small, it was really active and I don't think they'd realised reading or acting out	Places emphasis on practical, experiential learning. Inspired each other intergenerationally	***Links formal and informal experiences***

a book could be that active. I think they generated ideas from each other and from the children as well.		
Everybody always reacts differently whatever you're doing. You're always a bit surprised at the resistance, I suppose, there's always an element of resistance, but then perhaps it wasn't quite what they were expecting from the session. It's funny what enthuses different people. Someone will be quite enthusiastic about perhaps a small part of it then something you think is going to take forever, they'll just ignore and not do at all.	Expect the unexpected – keep it simple	*Not always formal / complex most expensive activities that are most popular*
The paper aeroplanes were good, because they were quite proud of their own achievements weren't they? It was the redesigning, mine was a very basic aeroplane, but they redesign, then it was a super aeroplane.	Take a formal idea and develop it in own way	*Link formal and informal using transferable skills for greater success*
I sent them away for homework to think about a book they use all the time and come back with ideas. So they had to think. I don't think it is about me saying; Well Goldilocks and the Three bears should be..' because everyone sees things in different ways.	Let individuals take ownership – tutors work in partnership with families	*Flattened hierarchy encourages co-operation*

I think they genuinely like being at the Centre and they get the support of the other dads. I think also, they came because it was a group activity and they obviously enjoy each other's company. Some of the quieter dads do learn a lot from the more confident ones, especially the younger ones, I think they absorbed and followed what the others were doing.	Establish and encourage ongoing mutual support structures in non-confrontational environment	*Positive experiences reinforce fathers perspective of formal learning*
One child was acting out Goldilocks and the Three bears and virtually running the show. So they were all learning from her, the other children and the dads. *One boy and his dad, making the castle, was saying 'I need a trapdoor' and he knew what he wanted. His dad said he told him later that he built a castle so the three little pigs would be safe because there was no chimney for the wolf to come down. But also, he knew what a castle comprised of and he was looking for the things to put in that castle.*	Stresses importance of letting child lead	*Informal home structure allows child to control environment and develop at own pace.*
I suppose I planned the 1:1 activities because mothers tend to do that more. I've not really done much work with dads and usually in groups, if they know another mum and child they'll do things	Encourages 1:1 reciprocal and intergenerational learning to enable each family to build on own cultural	*Highlights importance of parents in children's development*

together, but they prefer 1:1, maybe because they're a bit more confident in their own abilities...I'm not sure really, the activities were all there, so they could do it as a group, I suppose, they could all work at it together.	repertoire	
I think craft activities are lovely, if you've got lots of equipment, but when you go home and do them, you're not going to have all that to hand, so just making junk models or paper planes - you can have a lot of fun, you can make imaginary stuff, just from what you've got at home. Like for Goldilocks and the Three Bears just go and get the pans and wooden spoons out of the cupboard.. You know, you're not really making a mess, but you're using things at home.	Uses easily accessible everyday objects and inexpensive resources	***Shows how informal ideas can reinforce formal activities***
I should have known a bit more about the group before, whether I would have then done it differently, but they all got different things out of it and they did come back the second week! Perhaps it was just so different to what they were used to, but maybe that was a good thing, because it's a different approach and therefore its not what they expected and they've got to	Tutors often have to work with unknowns and unfamiliar environments, needs to create safe atmosphere to encourage parents to take risks e.g. 1:1 than in a group Groups often wide range experience and abilities, so tutor	***Familiar environment increases confidence and extends capabilities*** ***Important activities can be easily differentiated***

adapt really and try something different.	needs strong differentiating skills	
Doing it in the childrens centre, there is so much other stuff to play with that its quite hard if you want to focus on a topic or activity because there's other things that are more interesting really. But it depends how structured and formal you want the session to be.	informal environment more closely relates to families real life experiences and encourages tutor's and parents' resourcefulness.	***Formal settings increase access to resources but can have negative outcomes if distract from emphasis on informal learning and do not relate to users***

Table 13: Table summarising results of analysis of staff interviews

Family Learning theme	Benefits from Formal (Early Years) perspective	Benefits from Informal (Home) perspective
Consolidates home – school links	Structure Recognised strategies Language development	Differentiated Experiential Practical / relevant
Extends support network	Families & professionals in partnership	Boosts confidence Raises awareness
Encourages engagement	Assists two way communication	Increases inclusion and reduces isolation
Professional experienced practitioners	Opportunities for modelling best practice / staff mentoring	Breaks down barriers between staff and families
Intergenerational	Involves parents with staff for benefit of children	Encourages individual family autonomy and cultural repertoire
Safe appropriate environment	Reduces impact of negative prior learning experiences	Expands self-efficacy and resilience

Appendix 7: Outcomes Evidence

Completed Homework example

Winter Workshops

Name: [ ]

Child/children's names and ages [ ]

What are you hoping to get from these 2 workshops? *ideas*

grow from a seed. Bean drawn & sketchup the growing

Picked to climb

Throwing the beanstem of theineba - mean distro

Jack & the Beanstalk

animal noises as Jack sells cow (possible sheep, pigs, chickens, sheep make it up) + no. of animals - count

who's the giant - daddy or [ ]

measuring tall, short

Dads' evaluations completed during 3rd focus group

Liked

LOT OF ACTIVITIES AS

THE WIDENING IDEAS OF STORY TELLING

INSTR BAKE

LIKED
THE EDUCATIONAL SIDE OF THE SESSION, IE THE COUNTING AND MEASURING.

I liked the way that we were able to share ideas and were made to feel welcome to do so.

Loved the idea of expanding the stories and bringing them to life

Disliked

DISLIKES
NONE IN PARTICULAR

Like - [illegible]
Dislike - [illegible]
Use at home - [illegible]
Would like to see [illegible]

Would use at home

THINKING OF ACTIVITIES TO COMPLEMENT STUDY

RE BRINGING STORIES BACK TO LIFE

I would use the junk models to improve upon the stories at home.

We are adapting the way we play and [illegible] to make [illegible]

Any other comments/ideas

LOOKING FORWARD TO PUBLISHING HIS Book
me too!
Not Aussi!!

Session Plan page 1

Name of Activity: Dad's Winter Workshops   Activity Code:

No of sessions: 2   Venue:
Date:7.01.11   Hours per session: 1.5   n's Centre

Aim: To engage parents in fun Family Learning activities with their child with a view to progression to further adult learning

Objectives: (parent/carer)

1. Gain confidence in skills which contribute to and enhance their child's learning (especially speaking and listening to their child while doing practical activities together)
2. Try out new ideas for activities to extend a story
3. Model skills for their child to copy e.g. taking turns, fine motor skills, asking and answering questions, listening quietly
4. Find out what Family Learning can offer towards their own and their child's learning

Time	Topic	LO	Teaching methods	Learning Activities	Resources	Assessment
Before start of session	Preparation Chairs around table with material for different activities				Resources for each activity as detailed below	
5 mins	**Welcome** talk about Family Learning generally & explain theme of workshop. Very loosely linking	4	Explanation of session and Family Learning	Listening Q and A	Tutor and tables laid out with activities on them	Questions answered

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Time						
	measuring/numeracy with fairy tales					
5 mins	**Initial Assessment:** Ask learners to intro themselves, why here & what are their aims. Complete first part of paperwork.	all	Explanation	Listening Q and A Complete details	Winter workshop paperwork, pens	Q and A Final evaluation
15 mins	Create a list of ideas to link fairy tales with measure. List fairy tales; list measuring language, suggest links. Use Goldilocks as an example	1-3	Facilitate discussion	Suggesting ideas Discussing	Goldilocks story Spoons, pans	Completed spider diagram
30 mins	**Activity** **Read/tell story** Talk about size – create paw prints, fill the saucepan. Make a paper plane – measure its flight, using feet/shoes/paws	1-3	Circulate and assist. Instructions on laminated sheet	Parent/child craft activity	Paper, crayons, pencils, scissors, sellotape, photocopies of plane instructions, sellotape, gluestick, felt tip	Observation of parents & children playing together
30 mins	**Refreshments and Feedback** Clear away, have refreshments and feedback on sessions.	1-3	Circulate and talk 1-1.	Discussion Parent/child activity	Refreshments	

Only short time with Dads. NB what they're used to. So many activities for children that has not really worked. Don't think it really worked.

Appendix 8: Fathers Booklet

Front cover

Dads' Favourite Fun Activities

Written by Dads for Dads

Page 3

How many times have you thought that you have a spare hour with your children, but don't know what to do with them? We all face this challenge at some time, but rather than sitting them in front of the TV why not spend an hour in a more constructive and fun way...?

Toolkit items to have stashed away in a cardboard box for emergency entertainment!

Old magazines, scissors, bubbles, junk modelling items, crayons/ pens/pencils, cat litter tray, paints, glue.

This book was designed, written and compiled by Dads, to give some ideas of simple, quick and fun things to do with your children in a spare hour. It's not a comprehensive list, but it may give you some ideas on how to interact with your children in a different way, we hope you enjoy!

Page 11

Bringing a story to life!

We all know how reading the same favourite story again and again can be repetitive, but if your child still enjoys it stick with it as it means they are interested and learning from it.

Ideas for story fun:

Goldilocks and The Three Bears – make porridge with your child and make each bowl taste different or have three different size bowls. Or you can make three beds with pillows and blankets and put Mummy, Daddy and Baby Bear to bed.

Little Red Hen (Sly Red Fox) – creeping around like the fox as you tell the story.

Three Little Pigs –use three toy pigs and make each one a house out of junk modelling materials.

The Gingerbread Man – read the story and every time you say the line 'you can't catch me, I'm the Gingerbread man' run and get your child to catch you!

Page 19

Simple Sponge Cake

The easiest way to prepare your ingredients:

1. Put your eggs on one side of the scales (or weigh them and note what they weigh). 3 eggs will give you a good cake or loads of cupcakes.

2. On the opposite side of the scales have a similar weight of fat (butter, margarine etc.), then flour, then sugar.

3. This next bit is far from technical: lob all of the ingredients into a bowl & either mix with a wooden spoon or a hand mixer. Don't be fooled into thinking that whisking the mixture a lot will make it better, it can have the opposite effect and make it worse. This one had blueberries added to it, just because we had some.

4. Once mixed, put all the mixture into a greased/lined tin, or into cup cake cases.

5. Cook for 25 - 30 minutes at about 160C in a standard oven. Fan ovens will vary, cup cakes take less time. TIP - Check that the cake is cooked by shoving something pointy into the middle; if it comes out with stuff on it, it's not cooked so leave in the oven for five more minutes or so.

6. If it's Valentines Day, tip in some red food colouring, shape it into a heart and the brownie points will come flooding in!

7. Decorate cakes or biscuits with melted chocolate, icing or whatever you fancy.

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