Parents Interpret How They Socialize Their
Pre-School-Aged Children To Learn Fundamental Motor Skills

by

Jamie A. Covey

University of Victoria, 2005

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

In the Faculty of Human and Social Development

We accept this thesis as conforming
to the required standard

© Jamie Alison Covey, 2005
University of Victoria

All rights reserved. This thesis may not be reproduced in whole or in part, by photocopy
or other means, without the written permission of the author.
Abstract

The purpose of this case study was to focus on how a mother and a father interpreted their selection and guidance of their pre-school-aged children in learning fundamental motor skills. Through interviews and two play sessions, this study explored one family and identified themes for the mother, father, and two children. The pre-session and teaching sessions for the children and parents were compared. In the pre-session, the parents demonstrated skills of nurturing, organizing, and guiding/facilitation. In the teaching session, they demonstrated skills of nurturing, facilitating, organization, and instruction. The children in the pre-session showed levels of frustration, mastery of selected activities, exploration and cooperation, whereas, in the teaching session, they played longer, showed less frustration, and had success at activities taught. Follow-up interviews with the parents explored their stories of sports involvement, characteristics of mom and dad as parents, and, awareness of their parental influence on motor development. The findings indicated that it takes a whole structure or community to raise a child.
# Table of Contents

Abstract......................................................................................................................... ii
Table of Contents........................................................................................................ iii
List of Tables................................................................................................................ v
Acknowledgments....................................................................................................... vi
Dedication..................................................................................................................... vii

**Chapter 1: Introduction**............................................................................................. 1
  - Personal and Practice Reflections......................................................................... 1
  - Scope of the Problem............................................................................................. 3
  - The Research Purpose........................................................................................... 4
  - Research Questions................................................................................................. 4

**Chapter 2: Review of Literature**............................................................................... 6
  - Definitions............................................................................................................... 6
  - Conceptual Framework........................................................................................... 7
  - Review of Literature............................................................................................... 8

Research Comparing Boys and Girls
  - Psychomotor Development................................................................................... 9
  - Biological................................................................................................................ 12
  - Societal/Institutional Influences............................................................................ 14
  - Mother and Father Influences.............................................................................. 17
  - Schools................................................................................................................... 22
  - Birth Order............................................................................................................ 22
  - Research Summary................................................................................................. 23
Chapter 3: Research Design

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Research Question</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Assumptions</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Feminist and Critical Theory Perspective</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case Study Method</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demographic Information</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Collection</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detailed Data Collection Itinerary</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Analysis</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethical Considerations</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trustworthiness of Study</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credibility</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dependability and Confirmability</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limitations</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chapter 4: Findings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Video Session—mom/dad/son/daughter</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audio Interviews With Parents</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mom’s Story</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dad’s Story</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How Mom and Dad’s Past Experiences Have Influenced Each Other...........................55
Characteristics of Mom and Dad..............................................................................57
Liberal Attitude With Throw Backs.................................................................57
Fostering Children’s Choices............................................................................58
Awareness of Their Part as Parent....................................................................60
Purposeful Strategies.......................................................................................60
Own Preferences and Prompting....................................................................60
Grandparents..................................................................................................61
A Final Observation..........................................................................................62
Chapter 5: Discussion.......................................................................................63
Significance of the Study..................................................................................63
Parent Education...............................................................................................64
Implications for Educators..............................................................................68
Researcher’s Impact on the Participants.........................................................69
Recommendations for Further Research..........................................................70
Final Reflections...............................................................................................71
References........................................................................................................74
Tables................................................................................................................82
Appendixes........................................................................................................88
Appendix A: Informed Consent.......................................................................89
Appendix B: Project Poster...............................................................................91
Appendix C: Fundamental Motor-Skill Task Sheets.........................................92
Appendix D: Case Study Checklist....................................................................98
Afterward: January 31/2005.............................................................................99
List of Tables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Table 1</td>
<td>Pre-Testing – Parents</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 2</td>
<td>Motor-Skill Teaching – Parents</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 3</td>
<td>Pre-Testing Session – Children</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4</td>
<td>Motor-Skill Lesson – Children</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Acknowledgments

This journey has been a long and rewarding step in my life experiences. I wish to thank my advisor Dr. Frances Ricks, for her determination to see me through this process. A special thank you to the following people for their support and nurturing of my endeavors and spirit because I wasn't sure if I could do it.

A huge thank you to my research family for their commitment and openness to let me into their family life.

Dr. S. Artz and Dr. T. Hopper for your enthusiasm around my project and for reviewing my work.

Josephine, for believing in me from childhood and beyond.

Eileen, for encouraging me to come to the coast and letting me be a part of your family.

Tracy, my big brother, who always did the worrying for me... now it is my turn as you embark on a new segment of your life.

My sister Deb, who has always been a mentor in my life. Her commitment to the journey of life is so powerful.

Grandpa Scharf, who always understood how hard I worked to get where I wanted to be and believed so fully in me.

Gramma Scharf for always knowing what was going on in my life and for her unconditional love.

Gram and Tilly Covey, for keeping me honest and always giving me a laugh or a hug when I needed it most.

The entire Mellor Clan for giving me a life of friendships, lessons, and furry, four-legged companions.

Vicki, for helping me to realize that each day is a precious "present."

The children and staff and the School for the Blind at Pattaya Orphanage in Pattaya, Thailand, for teaching me the meaninglessness of material things and the importance of touch and love. A special hug to Boot!
Dedication

To Gramma C., Tilly, Gramp S. and Momi

Keep Smilin' ☺

xoxo
Chapter 1: Introduction

*Personal and Practice Reflections in Regards to Gender and Physical Activity*

Have you ever wondered why you might see a group of guys playing pick-up baseball or basketball with a group of girls watching on the sidelines? Could it be that the girls just came from an intense workout themselves? Is it that they do not feel that their skill performance is at the same level as that of the boys? Have they been socialized to think that they should be sitting on the sidelines?

Motor skills have always come easily to me. I was always accepted as a participant in both boys’ and girls’ sports because I could perform the skills proficiently, and contribute to the team regardless of whether I was playing with boys or girls. For me, motor skills are natural and logical, and with proper guidance, can be nurtured to their full potential. But, reflections on my passions, strengths, failures, and achievements have led me to question the lack of choices and expectations afforded various groups, particularly girls.

I was taught fundamental motor skills, and was expected to reach a mature stage of development in them, by some of my physical education teachers. However, I was taught for the most part by my parents. When I think back to the girls who went through the same education with me, I wonder why I reached a mature stage in fundamental motor skills and some of them did not. What was the difference that enabled me to achieve mature motor-skill development?

As a child and youth-care worker, teacher, athlete, and coach, my passion has been to engage in movement-education experiences with children, youth, and adults. This
interest has me carefully planning out lessons that engage the learners by including gender styles and individual differences.

In my own life, I have had role models, both male and female, who have raised concerns about how children are taught, or not taught, fundamental motor skills. I have been touched by these mentors’ concerns, and also frustrated by educational and recreational systems and parents who have failed to “teach” these skills well. These concerns have led me to observe motor-skill environments more carefully, and to examine the expectations for the genders in regard to learning fundamental motor skills. From my observations, it seems that in some instances there are great discrepancies and myths about the development of motor skills for boys and girls.

In my experience, young girls and women often shy away from performing motor skills and sports because they do not want others to see that they cannot do the task or that they “look like a girl” when doing it. Why is it that as parents, teachers, and coaches we let a potential opportunity go by? Would it be different if it were a boy who was throwing a ball at an immature stage of motor development? Is it that we do not know what a “mature” form of this skill looks like, and therefore cannot assist learners? What are the stories that parents tell about how they teach their children to learn motor skills? How do the parents adapt or not adapt to these life lessons once they become aware of their teachings? What are the gender-based differences, underlying themes, covert behaviors, and subtle actions that mothers and fathers use to promote the development of motor skills in their children? Through my research I hope to answer these questions regarding parents, gender, and fundamental motor-skill development.
Scope of the Problem

Many research camps tend to focus more on the comparisons between boys and girls, the adult influences and biological differences, rather than getting down to the underlying layers of gender socialization. Little research seems to focus on what lies beneath all of the findings about “how” children are actually socialized to learn fundamental motor skills. People generally tend to believe that children will develop motor skills naturally with little or no added support (Pica, 2003).

I have always been concerned that we often take the domain of physical learning lightly, assuming that children will simply develop physically by growing. Statistics show an alarming increase in the number of overweight, pre-school-aged children and a large percentage of school-aged children who cannot perform basic fundamental motor skills in the mature form (Gallahue, 1993). Despite this evidence, the role of physical activity in many environments and societies does not seem valued.

Based on my own experience and on my examination of the literature on the subject (see Chapter 2), it is my opinion that there has not been a substantial amount of attention focused on who is essentially responsible for promoting motor-skill development in children. Who is ensuring that children are taught the appropriate actions in order to successfully reach the mature phase of motor-skill development, regardless of gender, and how do they do it?

We know that parents have the most influence on their children (Lindsey, Mize, & Pettit, 1997). Keeping this in mind, I wonder whether parents are aware of how they teach motor skills to their pre-school-aged children? Documenting awareness in this area
may prompt parent awareness and influence and assist parents and others in helping children to develop and function more optimally with regard to motor skills.

*The Research Purpose*

The purpose of this study is to explore how mothers and fathers approach teaching their pre-school-aged children motor skills based on gender, and to pay attention to the subtle concepts that parents consciously or subconsciously apply when interacting with their pre-school-aged children. Given the overall purpose of the study, the aims and objectives are as follows:

1. To develop an understanding of what parents do in using language, role-playing, being active with their children, teaching specific sport skill components, making choices about equipment, incorporating their personal past experiences, current trends, literature, television, and verbal language choices to teach their son and daughter fundamental motor skills.

2. To situate the understanding of these subtle dynamics in the lived experiences of the parents in relation to their son and daughter.

3. To communicate the understanding of those relationships to the educators and families in the community through discussion and publication of the results of this study.

*Research Questions*

The primary research question was:

1. How do mothers and fathers interpret their selection and guidance of their pre-school aged children learning fundamental motor skills based on gender?
Additional research questions that supplemented the primary research question were:

(a) What factors or events do mothers and fathers hold as meaningful in the development of their teaching of fundamental motor skills to their pre-school-aged son and daughter?

(b) How have the parents’ past and present experiences influenced how and what their children do in regards to motor skills and physical activity?

(c) What do parents believe is important in their relationship to their children regarding fundamental motor-skill development?

In order to ground my research in previous research on the subject of motor-skill development, I examined a mother and a father to determine their interpretations of how they socialize gender in their pre-school-aged son and daughter when exposing them to learning motor skills.
Chapter 2: Review of Literature

This chapter will review literature that focuses on the existing research done pertaining to or related to parents’ involvement and influences in the teaching of motor skills to their children. Below is a description of key terms used to clearly define fundamental motor skills and the three stages of motor-skill development.

Definitions

Fundamental Motor Skills

These enable children to participate in kinds of movement that contribute to their physical and cognitive growth (Pica, 2003). As a child develops he or she develops motor control, precision, and accuracy in the performance of both fundamental and specialized motor skills (Gallahue, 1996). If exposed to a variety of experiences, children should progress through the stages of development (initial, elementary, and mature) until they are sufficiently proficient so that they can apply these mature motor forms to sport skill learning (Gallahue, 1996).

Initial Stage of Development

This “represents the stage at which a child is unable to either consciously control or intentionally replicate a movement” (Pica, p. 105, 2003).

Elementary Stage of Development

This is the stage at which the “movement is much closer to the actual intentions, although a good deal of concentration is required” (Pica, p. 105, 2003). At this level, the child does not have to think as much about how to do the skill and is able to use the skill in different game contexts.
**Mature Stage of Development**

This is the advanced stage and "represents the level at which a movement appears effortless and an individual is able to use it in changing environments and repeat it with ever-increasing degrees of quality" (Pica, p. 105, 2003).

**Conceptual Framework**

In developing the conceptual framework for this research, I explored those areas of literature that could be used to inform and illuminate this topic. As I investigated the various areas so as to build a conceptual framework for this inquiry, I asked two fundamental questions:

1. What professional and/or organizational perspectives are embedded in the research question?
2. What are the key concepts or ideas that support the research question?

The literature in physical education, education, psychology, child and youth care, and sociology seemed to be the professional perspectives most related to this inquiry; consequently, they were the source of most of the articles discussed in the literature review.

The major themes, which emerged from the literature, were:

1. Fundamental Motor Skills
2. Research Comparing Boys and Girls
   (a) Psychomotor development
   (b) Biological
   (c) Societal/institutional influences
   (d) Mother and father influences
A summarized and critical presentation of the information contained within these literature areas served the purpose of binding and strengthening the argument for this study, which investigated how a mother and a father interpret their selection and guidance of their pre-school children learning fundamental motor skills based on gender.

**Review of Literature**

In our society, children learn at a very early age what it means to be a boy or girl (Dowling, 2000). Through myriad activities, opportunities, encouragement, discouragement, suggestions, overt behaviors, covert behaviors, and various forms of guidance, children experience the process of gender-role socialization (Witt, 2000). Health and physical educators around the world acknowledge the importance of physical skill development in the primary years for both genders. The literature stresses the importance of physical skill development as necessary for children to achieve their potential and participate fully in society (Coles, 1975; Greendorfer, 1992; Gallahue, 1993).

Fundamental motor skills as defined by Gallahue (1993) are the fundamental movement abilities of early childhood, which are an outgrowth of the rudimentary movement phase of infancy. This phase of motor development represents a time in which young children are actively involved in exploring and experimenting with the movement capabilities of their bodies. It is a time for discovering how to perform a variety of stabilizing, loco-motor, and manipulative movements, first in isolation and then in combination with one another (Gallahue, 1993). Children who are developing
fundamental patterns of movement are learning how to respond with motor control and movement competence to a variety of stimuli. They are gaining increased control in the performance of discrete, serial, and continuous movements as evidenced by their ability to accept changes in task requirements. Fundamental motor patterns such as running, jumping, and skipping; manipulative activities such as throwing and catching; and stability activities such as beam walking and one-foot balance are examples of fundamental motor skills that are generally promoted during the early childhood years (Gallahue, 1993).

According to Gallahue (1993), if children develop immature movement patterns, these patterns become a permanent part of their skill pattern to the detriment of developing the mature movement form. Immature movement forms may lead to children dropping out of physical activity because they cannot achieve success in the chosen sport or leisure activity (Schack & Brown, 1990). Understanding children's motor development is key to children learning, refining, and combining fundamental motor skills. These skills do not reach the mature stage automatically. Without proper instruction, it would be a matter of chance and/or other learning experiences that the quality of the child's motor development and skills would improve (Gallahue, 1993).

Research Comparing Boys and Girls

Psychomotor development.

The acquisition of competency in movement is an extensive process beginning with the early reflexive movements of the newborn and which continue through life. The process by which an individual progresses from the reflexive movement phase, the
rudimentary phase, and the fundamental phase to the specialized phase is a result of the
interactions between the individual, the task, and the environment (Gallahue, 1993).

Gallahue (1993) states that reflexes and rudimentary abilities are largely based on
maturation. They appear and disappear in a fairly rigid sequence, deviating only in the
rate of their appearance. These abilities are an important base upon which other motor
abilities are developed. Fundamental motor abilities are basic motor patterns that begin
developing around the same time that a child begins to walk and move about his or her
environment. These basic loco-motor, manipulative, and stability abilities go through a
definite, observable process from immaturity to maturity (Gallahue, 1993). Attainment of
the mature stage is influenced greatly by opportunities to practice and by encouragement
and instruction in an environment that promotes learning. Under proper circumstances,
children are capable of performing at the mature stage in most fundamental motor skills
by the age of six (Gallahue, 1993).

Research suggests that the fundamental motor skills of children entering school
are too often incompletely developed (Gallahue, 1993). Research by Greendorfer (1992)
and Gabbard (1992) demonstrates that there are discrepancies based on gender in some of
the fundamental motor skills by age two. If these discrepancies occur at such an early
stage, the importance of early, age-appropriate opportunities that enable the toddler to
explore and refine the basic fundamental motor skills is crucial. After all, practice makes
permanent. Quality practice will make permanent quality movements that can then be
further refined and combined with other movement skills to produce more complex motor
skills.
Many adults, especially women, do not throw with a mature form (arm preparation, throw elbow is horizontal while moving, forearm rotates, thumb points downward, rotation of hips, legs, spine and shoulders, shifting of weight). This is likely occurring because they were never taught to throw properly, rather than because they didn’t have enough throwing practice (Graham & Holt/Hale & Parker, 1986). According to Graham & Holt/Hale & Parker (1986), children learning to read are taught to recognize letters, and then parts of words, and then complete sentences. Children who are learning math learn to solve problems after they have grasped the basic functions of numbers and signs. Children learning to play a musical instrument study scales and chords before attempting a melody. In physical education, however, children are frequently taught games, dance, or complex gymnastic stunts before they are able to perform the necessary and primary fundamental motor skills. Too often, children know the rules of the games or the formation of the dance, but do not have the skills needed for successful and enjoyable participation. An effective and logical way to teach children how to participate effectively in various activities is to focus on the development of the necessary skill (Graham & Holt/Hale & Parker, 1986).

Sanders & Kidman (1998) reported through performance testing that none of the 212 students (ranging between the ages of 10 years to 10 years and 9 months) had a mature form in all of the skills tested (strike/stationary ball bounce/catch/kick/over-arm throw/underarm throw/run/gallop/skip/slide). The authors found that less than 50% of the girls had developed a mature form in 9 of the 12 skills being tested; less than 50% of the boys had developed a mature form in 6 of the 12 skills being tested. In summary, it was
found that less than 50% of the children might not have the mature form for fundamental motor skills that are the basic building blocks for more advanced movement skills.

McKenzie et al. (1998) found through skill testing that fourth and fifth grade boys are more skilled and improved more than girls in all the skills being tested. Total skill scores of the girls were 43% lower than that of the boys. They concluded that the practising of skills using correct technique was more important and valuable than the overall number of practice attempts.

O’Reilly, E., Romanow, S., Rutledge, M., Mandigo, J., & Covey, J. (1999) found that the way girls assess their competence in discrete skills might have more to do with the social situation than with mechanics or techniques. It is believed through self-evaluation questionnaires that the girls have trouble visualizing their skill performance as adequate for game participation with boys. This results in girls participating as minimally as possible or not at all.

Bale (1982) found, through a review of literature, that girls performed skills of coordination and balance, such as jumping, hopping, and skipping, better than boys. Boys were found to perform skills involving strength, such as catching and throwing, more proficiently than girls. In short, it was found that the socialized practice made permanent the performance of the skills emphasized.

_Biological._

Gabbard (1992) stated that girls are more mature biologically than boys throughout childhood by an estimated two months at one year of age to two years at ten years of age. Additionally, they have relatively longer legs in terms of total body length.
One could assume then, that on certain motor performance tasks, girls should outperform boys of a similar age (Haubenstricker & Sapp, 1980).

Tan (1985) observed four-year-olds and suggested that earlier maturation could lead to earlier hand preference; he found that four-year-old boys were significantly less likely than four-year-old girls to have established hand preference.

Haubenstricker & Sapp (1980) did a longitudinal study on the physical growth and motor performance of elementary and middle school children. This study found that almost 25% of the variance in motor skill performance during early childhood could be attributed to differences in body size and structure. These differences are growth differences rather than gender differences. In the early childhood years, boys already have less fat and greater lean body mass than girls. Their slight superiority in weight, height, shoulder width, and total arm length could provide a performance advantage over girls in tasks using the over-arm pattern when throwing for velocity. Throwing for velocity and throwing for form are different variables. Form could still be achieved regardless of body size and structure.

Toole & Kretzschmar (1993) reviewed empirical studies comparing the development of motor skills for boys and girls in the early childhood years and stated that in terms of physical characteristics, boys and girls are quite similar--but not identical--during the pre-school years. Although these differences may only be slight, they may be large enough to have a significant effect on the performance of certain skills. The earlier that gender differences appear, the more likely it is to have a biological base. Unless the gender differences are large during the early years, the anatomical and physiological differences cannot be accepted as the sole cause, or even the major cause, of the
performance differences seen during the childhood years. With the exception of the reasonably strong biological basis for throwing for velocity, environmental influences were further suggested by Thomas & French (1985) as the primary contributors to gender differences in performance prior to puberty on the following tasks: balance, catch, dash, grip strength, long jump, pursuit rotor tracking, shuttle run, sit-ups, tapping, and vertical jump.

Three different studies (Malina, 1986; Thomas & French, 1985; and Nelson, Thomas, Nelson, & Abraham, 1986) reported that pre-pubescent boys and girls demonstrated biological differences in how they throw. It was found that boys have a larger joint diameter, smaller triceps skin fold, more estimated arm muscle, and greater hip/shoulder ratio. This may account for a part of the gender differences in throwing.

Hall (1993) stated that throwing shows the greatest discrepancy between genders when looking at all motor skills. He also found that parents and teachers emphasize the development of gross motor behavior more in boys than in girls. Hall (1993) emphasized that environment and culture may be key in girls’ psychological reasoning for being able to throw a ball.

*Societal/institutional influences.*

As McPherson (1978, p. 5) states, “Socialization is the process whereby an individual acquires the knowledge, social and technical skills, attitudes, values, norms and motivations that enable them to learn a social role (sport participant) and to strive for excellence and success.”

Much learning takes place via imitation and modeling of significant others within the social systems to which the individual is exposed throughout the life cycle. Success in
motor-skill development is partially influenced by sociological parameters at the individual, group and societal levels of analysis. Therefore, it is crucial that we look at the various systems that directly or indirectly influence the pre-school-aged child (McPherson, 1978).

Garcia (1994) examined how young children interact in the context of learning fundamental motor skills through participant observations. He found that the social interaction style of girls could become a limiting factor in the learning of fundamental motor skills. When competition or individualization are introduced, the learning of motor skills decreases. Less teacher attention is placed on girls because of their compliance to rules and quiet manners. Girls will not practice when they feel intimidated by boys. Their cooperative style and willingness to help others may contribute to them getting fewer repetitions.

Wellhousen and Yin (1997) investigated gender bias through observation in a kindergarten classroom and found that kindergarten teachers interacted more with boys than with girls. Boys were given more praise and acceptance and were shown more often that a response was appropriate. Girls were given praise more for their appearance than for their academics.

According to Toole & Kretzschmar (1993), boys demonstrated greater proficiency in motor performance as early as two and a half years in the long jump and three years in throwing. It was found that boys are approximately one year in advance of girls in their quality of performance (pattern development) and show greater ability to move with integrated body patterns during throwing, catching, kicking, and striking. No difference in form was found; it was just that the girls’ seemed to take longer to develop “good”
form. When pre-school girls’ throwing performances were assessed with the integration of possible biological variables, it was found that their motor performances were only slightly better than their original performance.

Toole & Kretzschmar (1993) identified that, beginning in infancy, parents elicit gross motor skills more from boys than from girls. Boys are quick to learn and engage in activities, which are “sex appropriate,” and know the ones they should avoid very early (two years). Girls’ avoidance factor is less prevalent because they are permitted, with encouragement, to try a variety of activities.

Tiainen (1983) studied children aged 9 to 11 months and assessed their motor-skill development through a checklist and linked these findings to theories on sensory-motor development and ecological perspectives. They reported that motor development was clearly linked with the child’s level of verbal mastery. Tiainen (1983) further reported that taller children demonstrated greater motor capacities, especially during the first year. Lastly, it was reported that the immediate environment had the greatest impact on motor development.

Toole & Kretzschmar (1993) found, through the review of empirical studies regarding the development of motor skills for boys and girls in the early childhood years, that pre-school boys were more active than girls during school and non-school time. Pre-school girls demonstrated greater proficiency in coordination activities such as skipping and hopping when compared to boys. Pre-school boys were superior to girls in power-dependent, force-production tasks such as kicking, batting, running, jumping, and throwing.
Mother and father influences.

In examining the impact of parental influence on the socialization of pre-school-aged children learning fundamental motor skills, it was found in much of the literature that "significant others" (particularly mothers and fathers) act as role models, thereby having a major influence on the socializing of children into sports (Godin, Shephard, & Colantonio, 1986).

Research by Greendorfer (1977, 1983) and Kenyon & McPherson (1973, 1974) found that regardless of gender, the strongest predictor of adult involvement in sport activities was positive childhood involvement. Whether an individual becomes involved in sport, and whether he or she becomes a successful amateur or professional athlete, is greatly influenced by the opportunities provided by the early socialization experiences in that child's family, neighborhood, and school (Kenyon & McPherson, 1973, 1974). Unless children are exposed early to sport and receive encouragement from significant others, they are unlikely to adopt sport as part of their lifestyle.

Greendorfer & Lewko (1973) found, through the administration of questionnaires, that the father was the significant socializing agent in the family and was the most important predictor of sport participation for both boys and girls.

Jaffee & Rex (2000) questioned teenage girls regarding parental encouragement and found that any form of parental encouragement was associated with higher levels of physical activity amongst girls. They found that playing and practising with their daughters was one area of difference between mothers' and fathers' encouragement. Over half of the girls who were regularly active reported that their fathers played, practiced, and taught them sport skills. Only 33.6% of the girls reported that their mother played or
practised with them and 27% reported that their mothers taught them sport skills (Jaffee and Rex, 2000, p. 18).

Lindsey, Mize, & Pettit (1997) examined the extent of mothers’ and fathers’ play with pre-school children through observations and interviews. They found that children from families in which fathers held lower status jobs demonstrated high levels of physical play (rough-housing) in the presence of their fathers when compared to fathers of higher status jobs. Boys and girls were more likely to engage in pretense play (role-playing) in the presence of their mothers than in the presence of their fathers. Parents who had girls were found to engage their children in more pretense (dramatic play) than parents who had boys. It was also found that children vary their own behavior based on the sex of the parent with whom they are interacting. Further inquiry into this study in a qualitative manner may unpeel the layers to find the meanings behind their initial findings.

Melcher & Sage (1978) found through Kenyon’s ATPA Inventory (Attitude Towards Physical Activity), completed separately by teenage girls and by their parents, that the girls demonstrated positive attitudes towards physical activity when they demonstrated motor competence scores that were in the upper 31% of the group being tested. This demonstrates and supports the need for high-quality, fundamental, motor-skill instruction so that the learners can positively rise to their potential.

Karraker, Vogel, & Lake (1995) interviewed parents immediately after the birth of their child and reported that parents “rated their newborn girls as finer, less strong and more delicate than their newborn boys” (p. 687). When freely giving verbal descriptions of their newborns, however, they did not distinguish between boys and girls.
Perry, White, & Perry (1984) administered stimuli tests to pre-school-aged children and found that sex typing begins as early as two years of age. Boys’ preferences for sex-typed activities were identified at two and a half years and far exceeded their knowledge of sex-role stereotypes. Girls did not show sex-typed preferences before they displayed knowledge of sex-role stereotypes; they established both at age three. Greendorfer (1992) found that expectations based on gender begin early and depend on children’s associations with the parent of the same sex. Gender identity was firmly and irreversibly established by both sexes by the age of three.

Coles (1975) reviewed perspectives on mothers’ and fathers’ nursery patterns and found mothers treated boys with a high respect for the babies’ autonomy. Moms’ attitude of “come and get it” tended to build in the first six months, which formulated an expectation that the infant become autonomous. This may provide a foundation for later freedom to be active in a masculine way. Coles (1975) observed that baby girls were hovered over more with mothers taking on a “mother knows best” attitude. This imposes a pattern on the baby girl, leading her to believe that she is expected to conform, to follow and to fit in. Girls were treated more gently than boys and were more restricted in the choices of activities in which they could engage.

Studies by Aguero, Bloch, & Byrne (1984); Armesto & Weisman (2001); and Whitley (1990) examined general attitudes towards homosexuality. The researchers found that even though participants believed that it would be healthier for children to be reared by heterosexual parents, they still described gay fathers more favorably than heterosexual fathers. Specifically, gay fathers were characterized as being more loving,
nurturing, responsible, and likely to spend more quality time with their son. In contrast, according to Aguero, Bloch, & Byrne (1984); Armesto & Weisman (2001); and Whitley (1990), heterosexual fathers were characterized as being more impulsive, promiscuous, and inclined towards sexually abusing their child. Even though these positive evaluations of gay fathers were documented, gay fatherhood was perceived as detrimental for a child’s well-being.

According to McLeod, Crawford, & Zechmeister (1999), the most predictive of this belief was the perception that effeminacy in gay fathers interferes with the children’s healthy gender identity development. In other words, perceptions of gay men as effeminate may be significantly associated with the maintenance of heterosexist attitudes towards a gay family unit. In particular, “gay fathers may be appreciated as having adept parenting skills or traits; however, their perceived effeminacy may represent a violation of a social order and is subsequently viewed as hazardous to the child’s development” McLeod, Crawford, & Zechmeister (1999, p. 58). That is, the positive qualities that participants ascribed to gay fathers are commonly used to describe mothers in our society. Unfortunately, gay fathers’ willingness to honor and express their feminine side is viewed as a threat rather than an asset to parenting because it violates traditional notions of fatherhood (e.g, authoritarian, disciplinarian). This threat translates into an equation that gay fathering is faulty parenting.

Few studies have actually focused on parenting behaviors of gays and homosexuals, but a study done by Bigner & Jacobsen (1992) found that children raised by lesbian and gay parents do not differ from their heterosexual counterparts. As well, research completed by Kite & Deaux (1987), Patterson (1997), and Golombok & Tasker
(1996), found that children reared by gay and lesbian parents do not differ from children of heterosexual parents in terms of gender identity and gender role behavior, social and psychological adjustments, or sexual orientation.

Flaks, Ficher, Masterpasqua, & Joseph (1995) compared a group of 15 White lesbian couples living together with their three-to nine-year-old children born to them through artificial insemination with a matched sample of heterosexual parents of children. A variety of assessment measures including the Child Behavior Checklist, Teacher's Report Form, the Spanier Dyadic Adjustment Scale, the Parent Awareness Skills Survey, and either the WPPSI-R or WISC-R were used to measure the children's cognitive functioning and behavioral adjustment as well as the parents' relationship and parenting skills. Results revealed no significant difference between the two groups of children. Both groups of parents showed similar dyadic adjustment. However, the lesbian couples exhibited more parenting awareness skills than did the heterosexual couples.

According to Ricks (1989), "awareness, understanding and knowledge of self insures awareness of functioning which in turn allows for intention toward functioning" (p. 34). Therefore, by being aware, parents will be able to reflect and integrate their knowledge of self into how they parent their children. According to Hoghughi & Long (2004), parents' own history and experiences in the context of parent and child and other close relationships influence their parenting. Child-rearing patterns tend to remain consistent across generations. This intergenerational transmission of parenting may in part reflect common genetic forces that shape interpersonal behavior. However, Hoghughi & Long (2004) go on to say that early experiences within interpersonal relationships may play a crucial role in forming the basis of beliefs, emotional
experience, and ways of interacting with future relationships. Parents’ experience, within their family of origin has been found to be one of the strongest contributors to parenting (Cox et al., 1985).

**Schools.**

Since the 1980s, educators in Denmark and other Nordic countries have been organizing single-sex settings inside co-educational pre-school, kindergarten, and elementary schools to enhance the physical competence of both boys and girls, as well as to empower them personally (Mette-Kruse, 1996). Through this unique initiative for socializing children, it is anticipated that they will develop a strong, well-founded self-awareness and gender identity that is equal in all aspects, thereby enabling them with a sense of empowerment in their life challenges. Mette-Kruse (1996) further states that they could possibly be holding each other back. Therefore, sex segregation could enable the students to emerge with greater capabilities.

**Birth order.**

Landers (1979) stated that in highly differentiated societies, the family, school, and peer group are the socializing agents having the greatest impact on the development of the individual. Influence of siblings is also an important variable for sport participation, since siblings close in age interact in some of the same playgroups throughout the socialization process. Children of the same family are not born into the same environment. The first-born is born into a different social and psychological situation than the second-born. It is therefore not the actual order of birth that is of any consequence. Instead, it is the psychological position that is the important factor that mediates and determines the type of environment and the kinds of experiences that the
child undergoes. One generalization emerging from the literature was that first-born children are often over-represented among superior athletes and as long as a specific task is not fear-provoking, perform better than second-born children on basic motor skills (Landers, 1979).

Research Summary

Children in our society learn at a very early age what it means to be a boy or girl. In the learning of fundamental motor skills, as defined by Gallahue (1993), skills such as throwing, kicking, skipping, running, jumping and balancing should be developed during early childhood. If children develop immature movement patterns, these patterns could become a permanent part of the skill pattern. This could become detrimental to the child in developing the mature movement form. Therefore, some children drop out of physical activity because they cannot achieve success in the chosen sport or leisure activity (Schack & Browning, 1990). Understanding children’s motor development is key to children learning, refining, and combining fundamental motor skills. These skills do not reach the mature stage automatically. Under proper circumstances, children are capable of performing at the mature stage in most fundamental motor skills by the age of six.

The literature reveals that there is consistent evidence showing that gender differences do exist when examining how proficiently children perform fundamental motor skills in the pre-school years. Even though research in this area began over 30 years ago, current studies show that boys and girls are still treated differently. Gender bias has become so pervasive and ingrained in society that parents, teachers, and coaches simply do not realize that they are behaving in a way that favors one gender over the other (Thevenin, 1993).
Research on the relationship between the subtle undertones used by parents and the gender of child(ren) may be what is needed. Such research may offer solutions towards the effective teaching of fundamental motor skills to pre-school children regardless of gender, so that they can participate in a variety of physical activities with competence and confidence. After identifying these behaviors, parents, teachers, and coaches can work to make, or continue to make, changes in their own behaviors in order to facilitate boys and girls to reach their full potential.
Chapter 3: Research Design

Most researchers are as concerned with the research process as with its outcome, and, in most cases, they are highly in tune with the phenomenon they chose to study (Becker, 1986). As I began the study, I was highly aware of my personal and professional views and assumptions that I held about parents teaching motor skills to their children. These views came from a cross-validation of the many experiences that I had as a woman, friend, teammate, educator, aunt, child care worker, researcher, and participant. Making the researcher’s perspective explicit is extremely important in qualitative research (Guba and Lincoln, 1985). What follows is my attempt to clearly state my mind.

One belief that I brought into this study was that, regardless of gender, children should be given every opportunity to achieve a mature form in fundamental motor skills so that they can then engage in a variety of physical activities throughout their lives, thereby enabling them to live active and healthy lives. As a physical educator who has worked with children, youth, and adults in many different settings, I have seen struggles and failures with basic motor-skill development at all ages, which I know is preventable.

It is my assumption that most people believe that children automatically acquire motor skills as their bodies develop, that it is a natural process, which occurs along with maturation. However, I believe that maturation only takes care of part of the process, the part that enables children to perform fundamental motor skills at an initial stage of development. I have seen this stage in overhand throwing with women, which is often linked to the phrase, “you throw like a girl.” That statement is actually the initial stage in the throwing action, but unfortunately for them and many other individuals, both male and female, no other steps have been taken to move them on to a more mature stage of
the fundamental motor skill of throwing. This belief in the progression of the stages of motor-skill development has followed me through all of my life experiences. I wanted to look specifically at parents because I saw them as the key influence on my childhood experiences. I have wondered who in a child’s immediate environment enables motor-skill development to happen, why it happens, who is responsible for enabling the learners to further their growth, and how does our culture around us enable, influence, or hinder this process?

These beliefs have followed and guided me through my education history and have led me to my work today in the health-promotion field. All of these beliefs have been expressed in my research question.

One of the assumptions that I made in doing this study was that it would be useful for parents, educators, physical education teachers, administrators, schools, and community organizations to understand the importance of fundamental motor-skill development regardless of gender. Another assumption that I made was that the subtle ways that parents may or may not socialize gender in motor-skill development has many layers, which need to be examined with great care and extreme thoroughness in order to gain the essence of what is involved in the socializing of gender in motor-skill development.

I acknowledge that the method I used to develop this understanding was limited to only one family. I felt that it was of the utmost importance to study one family in great depth to reveal the multiple layers of the research question.

I also believe that parents’ past experiences and the interpretations that they have regarding these past experiences influence how they parent their children. There may be
some experiences that they feel are worth repeating, some that are not worth repeating, some that they may still be working through, or some that they have chosen not to explore. Their present experiences as parents working together for the best interest of their children also influences how they may possibly parent.

*Project Assumptions*

Aside from acknowledging my own perspective, I also acknowledge that this inquiry was based on some additional assumptions. The data collected, the manner of collection, and, to a certain extent, even the questions that were framed reflected my personal, practical knowledge. These factors colored the interpretations that I made. A second assumption was that parents in some way or another try to incorporate play experiences with "teaching moments" in their children's daily activity times. Third, it was assumed that parents as individuals and partners contribute a unique perspective on parenting and promoting the development of their children. Parents can reflect different perspectives on what is happening daily and progressively in the lives of their children. Therefore, it was with these perspectives in mind that the meaning of the data collected and the framing of the questions were clarified during the process of inquiry. Since this research was interactive, the themes, categories, and the meanings that emerged and are described came through a process of talking, observing, working together, sharing, and asking questions. The knowledge and experiences of the parents provided a rich description of the experience.

*A Feminist and Critical Theory Perspective*

Being a female athlete, educator, and coach and seeing the gender bias in the physical domain and how society reacts to women in sport, especially to women who
engage in a predominantly male sport, has caused me to question some of the underlying socializing components that influence how each gender is expected to behave. I believe, based on my review of the literature, that through the reduction of gender-related contrasts into the promotion of equal opportunities, children may be enabled to reach their individual potential in an optimal number of experiences regardless of gender (Whyte, Deem, Kant, & Cruickshank, 1985; Dowling, 2000). As critical theory looks at social structure and power, Carsparken (1996) states that because certain groups in any society are privileged over others, and although the reasons for this privileging may vary widely, the oppression, which characterizes contemporary societies, is most forcefully reproduced when subordinates accept their social status as natural. This particular statement further exemplifies the need, according to Dowling (2000), for a study that looks at the subtle, underlying tones and actions that parents exhibit when guiding their children to learn fundamental motor skills and how might it be different for each gender. Today, researchers are beginning to see that these differences are not “natural” effects of some biologically determined, hierarchical structure. They are beginning to see that gender bias actually affects girls’ motor-skill development.

Van Manen (1990) identifies inquiry that has a critical theory thrust to be one that “aims at promoting critical consciousness, and struggles to break down the institutional structures and arrangements, which reproduce oppressive ideologies and the social inequalities that are sustained and produced by these social structures and ideologies” (p. 176).
Sample

Volunteers were the sample for this study and consisted of the members of one family. My initial step in identifying participants involved hanging up posters at the local public health unit (with permission from the administrator of the Margaret Moss Health Centre in Duncan). Once contacted by the families, I phoned them back and explained the purpose of the study and the time commitment required by the participants. Two families contacted me and, after discussing the project with both families, I chose one of the families for my study.

The parents were selected because they have a philosophy that physical activity is important for their children, although they may or may not be involved in physical activity themselves. The family I chose seemed comfortable and open to the process. Next, I met with the parents to explain the consent form (see Appendix A). A meeting time for my first visit was then set up and the research process began.

My research family was a middle-class family, with both a mom and dad present in the home. They have four children under the age of six years, but only two of them were used for the study (the second-born and third-born). During the data-collection sessions, all of the children were present and playing activities, but only Myles’s and Tess’s (boy and girl) actions were analysed. It did not seem appropriate for me to ask them to get a baby sitter for the other two children, considering that they were volunteering their family time to enable me to complete my research. At certain times during my interview sessions, Hank and Peggy (mom and dad) referred to all of their children, but I feel that it would be hard to separate them all for the purpose of the study because their relationships with each other as a family are so complexly intertwined.
Peggy is a public health nurse who works four days a week at a local health unit. She, like her husband, is very committed to the well-being of her family. Hank works five days a week for a local logging company. He coaches his two oldest sons’ hockey teams and is active in sport himself.

At the time of the study the boy, Myles, was 4.9 years of age and the girl, Tess, was 3.4 years of age. Myles is a curious and happy boy and this was demonstrated when I went to the family home, as he as always wanting to know what I had and what was going to happen. He seemed extremely interested in the video camera and was quite eager to chat about his daily events. Myles enjoyed playing alone and would often wander around exploring in his backyard. He also played with his siblings. He seemed willing to try activities, but was at time discouraged if he could not get it right away. Myles was assertive in that he knew what he wanted, whether it be a turn at a game or something to drink; he had no problem speaking his thoughts. Myles shares a room with his older brother and seems to enjoy that. His older brother would help Myles to get his hockey equipment off when he returned from a practice or game.

Tess has her own room that was decorated in pink and with a white bed veil, which seemed to bring a smile to her face when she showed it to me. Tess seems to enjoy playing with all of her siblings, and like her brother Myles, really seems engaged when mom or dad were playing with her. Tess seemed eager, as well, to try new things and was always on the go trying to keep up with her older siblings or figuring out ways to enable her younger brother to play.

They also have a family dog that looks to be of the Newfoundland breed. He is very excited when the children are playing games or activities in their yard, and one gets
the sense that he does not miss out on any play time with the children. He even tried running back and forth through the skipping rope when Peggy and Tess were turning the rope for Myles, but he was soon removed into the shop until the skipping was over.

Case Study Method

In designing the inquiry, I chose a Critical Case Study approach because I believe that this methodology would enable me to get the in-depth answers that I was looking for in my research questions. I added a feminist lens to my design and analysis because I felt that it would enable me to clearly identify the issues and the purposes required for the method of study. As issues were identified through these methods, an understanding of the common realities of a family’s daily experiences regarding the intentional or unintentional teaching of motor skills, to both their male and female children, may enable parents and professionals to better understand how we prepare our children to perform proficient motor skills (Davies, 1989).

This inquiry may reinforce positively, enable change, or raise awareness in the socialization of children in developing motor skills. It identifies those aspects or elements of the existing ideology that the mother and father resist or promote knowingly or unknowingly within their parenting journey.

Demographic Information

The research study took place in Duncan, British Columbia, which is located 60 kilometres north of Victoria on Vancouver Island. Duncan covers approximately one square mile, with a population of approximately 4,735. Most of its activities and services are centred within four city blocks. Duncan is known as the City of Totems. Its main industries are fishing, farming, forestry, and tourism. Duncan is located in the Cowichan
Valley, which has a population of approximately 70,000 people. The climate has the highest mean temperature in Canada.

**Setting**

Participants in this study allowed me to come to their family home, where I was able to observe, videotape, and interview them. They live about seven kilometres outside of Duncan in a residential area. They rent a large home that has a long, gravel driveway, a parking/play area, and a covered carport with a cement base. Their home is located at the end of a cul-de-sac, and when the children want to ride their bikes, they can go to the end of their driveway into the paved cul-de-sac, which has minimal traffic. Both the participants and I felt that this would be the best location, as it is where they usually engage in family play. The family also spends time at the local ice arena, where Myles plays hockey, and at the community soccer field where he plays soccer. Tess is not registered in hockey or soccer yet, but attends most of the games, as they usually go as a whole family.

**Data Collection**

Data for this project were collected using a variety of methods. There were formal interviews with the parents, which included open-ended questions that applied directly to the participants' cultural scene. The interviews were audiotaped then transcribed with the participants' permission. I brought a video camera to record the session as well as a variety of sport equipment (balls, beanbags, hoops, skipping ropes, quoits, air-flow balls) that could be used in the pre-session and in the motor-skill teaching session if needed. Observations and field notes by the researcher focused on representing and capturing the observed reality. The initial stage of data collection involved the researcher as an
observer in the family’s physical activity experiences. After each session, detailed notes were taken.

The method of inquiry was videotaping the family while they were engaged in physical activity times. The tapes were analyzed by time coding them. I looked at the tape for one minute and wrote down what each participant was saying and doing for that entire one minute. The tape was then run for three minutes and then the one-minute process was repeated. The process continued until the videotapes were analyzed in their entirety. After the one-minute components were documented on charts, sub-themes were identified and then collapsed into meta-themes. Van Manen (1990, p. 93) states that the task of identifying a theme is to lift or capture phrases or singular statements that describe the main thrust of the experience.

Lastly, audio interviews with the parents were completed. Peggy and Hank were asked questions about their upbringing in sport, their current views regarding Tess’s and Myles’s involvement in sport, and their views on how they support each other to parent their children to engage in physical activity. The audiotapes were transcribed, and clarification on their content was verified by Peggy and Hank. From the transcribed data, capture phrases or singular phrases were pulled, and then categorized into like themes separately for both Peggy and Hank. From this, the like theme phrases were written down into a story format to enable the reader to see a picture of the lived experiences of Hank and Peggy.

**Detailed Data-Collection Itinerary**

Data was collected in the family’s physical activity environment during a number of sessions, which are described as follows.
**Sessions 1 and 2.**

During the initial session, I was an observer. Videotaping of the sessions started immediately so that the participants became accustomed to it being a part of their environment. The camera was placed so that it spanned the entire play area, allowing me to document the entire session. During the first two sessions, I stayed by the camera in order to follow the family around their large yard and also to supervise the camera, as the children were very interested in its abilities. A variety of play equipment was brought to each session that the children and parents could use. They could choose to use the equipment provided or to use equipment that they already had in their environment.

Sessions 1 and 2 were utilized to enable the participants to be desensitized to the camera and observer. Sessions 1 and 2 included me observing the family in a variety of play experiences. Experiences included soccer games, hockey shooting, skipping, ball games, and bike riding. These activities took place in many forms, including playing by oneself, with another sibling, with a parent or both parents, and all together as a family. Sessions were scheduled according to the family’s play time, which varied from week to week, and depended on the family’s health, family events, and the weather. I made myself as available as possible for any spontaneous outing to which they chose to invite me.

**Session 3.**

The parents were given a list of physical play skills from which they were to choose three to teach their daughter and three to teach their son at our next session. The sheets were given to the parents one week before we were scheduled to meet. The possible fundamental motor-skills choices included: skipping, hopping, jumping,
climbing, striking, kicking, throwing, and catching. The parents were provided with a variety of equipment that they could choose or not chose in order to teach the skill(s) to each of their children. They also had the option of using any equipment from their home. The parents were given the choice of teaching the skills to the child together (mother and father) or individually, or having only one parent teach all the skills. The session was videotaped and comprehensive notes were taken after the session (see Appendix C). The parents decided to teach the skills together as a partnership.

Session 4.

As observer, I met with the parents individually (because of work schedules) to ask the following questions that had arisen from the filmed activity sessions.

Open-Ended Questions

- What three skills did you choose to teach Tess and what three skills did you choose to teach to Myles? Why did you select each of these activities for your child(ren)?
- Please explain how you decided which parent would teach each child and what would be taught?
- Do you have reasons for which parent teaches physical activity skills to one or both children?

As I discovered themes or felt a more in-depth look at their answers was needed, I asked further questions to clarify their answers in order to get as much detailed information as possible.
Session 5.

This at-home interview was scheduled because after the first interview, clarification was needed in an attempt to gain further insight into their lived experiences. Questions were asked to both parents unless specified at the beginning of the question. Questions asked in this audio interview included:

1. What three skills did you pick to teach your daughter and what three skills did you pick to teach your son? Why did you choose those particular skills for each of them? Explain.

2. How is their play the same/different when you are participating? Explain.

3. Do you have a sports background? Explain.

4. What sort of physical activities or sports do the children do outside of the home? Explain.

5. How do you decide what sports they do? Do you decide together, or one of you decides, or do you let the kids decide? Explain.

6. What expectations do you have on them when they are playing in a sport or activity? Explain.

7. Do your children watch you play sports? What do they think?

8. Do they see one sport or activity as a boy sport or a girl sport? Explain.

9. (Dad) What expectations do you have for the girls that you coach on your son’s hockey team?

10. If your children were playing soccer or a game outside would they request one of you over the other to play? Explain.
How does your being an active participant in their activity experiences affect your children?

Do you have certain gender expectations in other things that your children do? Explain.

The data was then transcribed and looked at once again in order to gain an in-depth understanding of the parents' lived experiences. From this information, more questions were needed and clarification of the data was required, so another interview session with the parents was set up. This thorough examination of the parents' lived experiences was needed to gain possible insight into the research question.

Sessions 6.

This was an at-home interview with both parents. This interview took place in order to confirm and clarify data that was collected during Session 5, and also to ask new questions that had arisen from the interview session. The questions were as follows:

- Why do you think you were involved in sport when you were growing up?
  Who or what motivated you to participate in sport? Explain.

- Who were your main influences in sport? Explain.

- How do you divide you time amongst your four children?

- Are either of you competitive? Explain.

- How would you feel if your son decided to learn ballet? Explain.

- (Dad) When you coach hockey, what expectations do you have for your athletes? Are they same/different depending on the gender? Explain.

- (Mom) Why do you think your mom did not stay to watch you play baseball? Explain.
(Mom) Was your dad around for your sport activities? Explain.

(Dad) What did it mean to you to have both of your parents present at your sport events? Explain.

Do you have gender expectations for other things that your children do outside of sports? Explain.

How do your past experiences in sport affect how you promote sport for your children? Explain.

Has this research project impacted you in any way? Explain.

Each session was approximately one hour to two hours in length, depending on the availability of the participants. Time was also allotted by what was working best for the children.

Data Analysis

For the purposes of my research, the sessions were videotaped and the interviews were audiotaped. Notes were taken after each videotaped session and the audiotaped interviews were transcribed. Using this ongoing, comparative method, the transcripts were then analyzed.

Cultural domains, possible unidentified domains, and a field note sketch map completed the cultural inventory (Spradley, 1979). Stake (1995) and Merriam (1988) advocate four forms of data analysis: categorical aggregation (a collection of instances in the data that may lead to issue-relevant meanings); direct interpretation (the researcher looks at a single instance and takes meaning from it without looking for multiple instances); patterns (the researcher finds patterns and then looks for like patterns between two or more categories); and naturalistic generalizations (generalizations that people can...
learn from the case or themselves or for a certain population) (Stake, 1995; Merriam, 1988). Information was submitted to the informants for review in order to clear up or fill in any missing information. This process proved to be effective in enabling me to assess the data proficiently. Large flow charts were developed so that the data could be looked at as a whole, as individual instances, or sorted into like themes.

When analyzing case study evidence, Gillham (2000) states that the following approach should be used as an analytical technique. The researcher puts the information into different ordered arrangements. A matrix of categories is determined and the evidence is placed within such categories. Flow charts and other devices are then created to examine the data. A tabulation of event frequency is then documented. The researcher then examines the relationships of the frequencies from which information is put into a detailed view of the aspects of the case Gillham (2000). This technique was utilized for my research and enabled me to examine the data effectively through the creation of large flow charts.

The next chapter presents the findings of the three video sessions and three audio sessions held with the family between October 2003 and July 2004. The following process was used for all participants to determine the similarities, differences, and gender influences in the sessions. The parents’ (Hank and Peggy) actions were analyzed from the videotaping of the pre-testing session, the motor-skill session, and the audio interviews. The children’s’ (Myles and Tess) actions were analyzed from the videotaping of the pre-testing session and the motor-skill session.

An analysis of the three audio sessions with Hank and Peggy was explored by determining meaningful instances, and then, next, figuring out what the meaning of each
experience was. These meaningful instances were then categorized within sub-themes, which were grouped according to meta-themes. After the initial interview, it was necessary to go back to Hank and Peggy to gain further insight into their experiences in selecting and guiding their pre-school-aged children in learning fundamental motor skills based on gender.

Stake (1995) suggests for final verification of data that the researcher complete a 20-question “critique checklist” that shares criteria for assessing a good case study report (see Appendix D). This verification sheet was used at the end of the data analysis.

Ethical Considerations

Participants in the study were informed, both verbally and in written form prior to their participation, that the study was about how they socialize their children to learn motor skills (see Appendix A). The issues of informed consent, right to privacy, and protection from harm were addressed throughout the study. These were addressed in my research proposal and in my application to the Human Subjects Committee at UVic. Participants signed a letter of consent that explained the purpose of the research project.

Using pseudonyms in the research write-up will protect participants’ anonymity. Mom was either referred to as “mom” or “Peggy”; dad was referred to as “dad” or “Hank”; and the children were either “boy,” “son,” or “Myles”; and the girl was either “Tess,” “girl,” or “daughter.” Participants were told that the data would be collected in the form of interviews, observations, videotaping, and audiotaping. The collected data is being stored in a locked cabinet for only the researcher’s and participants’ viewing.
As researcher, my paramount responsibility was to the participants. One must protect their physical, emotional and cognitive well-being and honor their dignity and privacy (Spradley, 1979; Creswell, 1996).

Trustworthiness of the Study

A. Credibility

In this feminist critical case study, the researcher took great care in observing, recording, and analyzing the data. Bringing evidence to bear from several sources, triangulation enabled me to make use of a variety of evidenced sources, which bring light to the discovered themes or perspectives (Creswell, 1996). Having participants verify information from the report brought color to whether the evidence was accurate and the concepts were productive.

The questions addressed through credibility are: What is the truth quotient of the study? What are the social implications of the findings and how did the researcher present them? The first question relates to the need for the researcher to be reflective about how her values and ideologies influence her work so that she does not inadvertently exclude counter-examples (Creswell, 1996). The second addresses whether the study effectively challenged injustices and calls for change. The third question focuses on the researcher’s ability to most effectively represent the participants in the most proficient manner possible (Creswell, 1996). I feel that in my research project I have been reflective in my values, that my study points out the need for further research, and that I have most effectively represented the lived experiences of my participants.

Fetterman (1986) and Stake (1995) discuss the importance of using participant feedback, personal reflection, and attending to the social implications of a study. Through
this research process, I made decisions about what is salient to the study and relevant to
the study’s purpose through continuous participant feedback and personal reflections.

B. Dependability and Confirmability.

Dependability, according to Guba & Lincoln (1985), cannot exist without
credibility just as there is no validity without reliability. Confirmability is developed
through the evaluation of determining dependability through process evaluation and
product assessment. The techniques of triangulation and verification by the informants
provided me with dependable validation.

Triangulation enabled me to show that the study has quality. Inquiry audit enabled
me to examine the “process by which the accounts were kept, to satisfy the stakeholders
that they are not the victims of what is sometimes called “creative accounting,” (Guba &
Lincoln, 1985, p. 317). The product was then examined to determine accuracy. As
researcher, I am satisfied that every entry can be justified. Through the examination of
the process, I determined dependability and through the examination of the product, I
established confirmability.

C. Limitations

One of the dangers of conducting a case study is that of the time commitment
required by the family. As the family was busy, it was important for me to be well
organized and flexible in trying to fit into their schedule. There are four children in the
family, but only two were subjects of the study. All four were present during the data
collection because it would have been costly to hire a baby sitter. This seemed to make
the collection of data chaotic at times. The fact that only one family was used for the
study also seemed to limit it. I feel that utilizing two families would have provided an
opportunity to compare and contract the family’s lived experiences because one cannot
genralize that all other parents would feel the same way.
Chapter 4: Findings

Video Pre-Test Session and Motor Skills Sessions-- Peggy/Hank/Myles/Tess

The pre-test session consisted of Hank (dad), Peggy (mom), Tess (daughter), and Myles (son) playing outside with the sport equipment that I brought. The equipment was purposefully chosen by me and it was equipment that Peggy and Myles could later choose to use for the motor-skill teaching session. From the video-recorded, pre-test session and motor-skill teaching session, “instances” (meaningful moments) were pulled from the data and then put into “like” categories, which were then given a theme title. The themes are an overall view of the “like” instances. Hank and Peggy picked three skills to teach to Myles (throwing, catching, and riding a bike) and three skills to teach to Tess (skipping, throwing, and catching) for the motor-skill teaching session.

Parents (Hank and Peggy) (See Tables 1 and 2, pp. 82-83).

There were three emerging themes (see Table 1), which included nurturing; organizing, and guiding/facilitating that surfaced from the analysis of the videotaped, pre-test session. In the pre-test session, mom demonstrated six nurturing instances compared to dad who demonstrated two. In the organization theme, mom again outperformed dad. However, in the guiding and facilitating theme, dad appeared to do more teaching than mom.

In Table 2, the motor-skill session, four themes emerged from the analysis. They were: nurturing, facilitating, organization, and instruction. Again, mom demonstrated nurturing instances more often than dad, whereas dad seemed to exhibit facilitating and mom did not. In the organization theme, mom showed three instances of organization and...
dad showed two. The instruction component was almost equal, with mom demonstrating slightly more than dad.

Comparing Table 1 and Table 2 (Pre-test Session and Motor Skill Session)--Parents.

In both the pre-test and the motor-skill teaching sessions, Peggy and Hank were involved in nurturing and organizing behaviors. It is interesting to note that there was twice as much nurturing behavior in the pre-test session than in the motor-skill teaching session. Mom had a higher frequency of nurturing instances in both the pre-testing and motor-skill teaching sessions than dad. For Peggy and Hank, the frequency of organization was slightly higher during the motor-skill teaching session when compared to the pre-test session. As well, Peggy was observed organizing substantially more than Hank in the pre-test session and slightly more in the motor-skill teaching session. Hank did all of the facilitating in the motor-skill session.

Children (Tess and Myles) (Table 3 and 4, pp. 85-86).

There were four emerging themes from the pre-test session, which included frustration, mastery on selected activities, exploration, and cooperation. Tess demonstrated two instances of frustration whereas Myles demonstrated three times as many instances. In terms of mastery on selected activities, Tess showed one instance and Myles demonstrated three. In exploration, Tess and Myles were almost equal, with Tess exhibiting four and three, respectively. However, in the cooperation theme, Tess showed five instances of cooperation and Myles demonstrated one.

In the motor-skill teaching session, there were four emerging themes, including children playing longer, frustration, having skill success at the activity taught, and less frustration present. In the theme of children playing longer, Tess showed one instance of
this. Frustration was equal, with both demonstrating one instance of frustration. Both demonstrated skill success at the activity being taught. The less frustration present theme showed one instance for Myles and none for Tess.

Comparing Tables 3 and Table 4 (Pre-test Session and Motor-Skill Session) -- Children

A comparison of Tables 3 and 4 was then made and the following conclusions were reached. Both Myles and Tess experienced frustration in the pre-test and motor-skill sessions. Myles experienced frustration in more instances that Tess did in the pre-test session; he had six and Tess two. In the motor-skill session, the general frequency of frustration was substantially lower than in the initial pre-test session and occurred in equal amounts for Myles and for Tess. Therefore, the frustration levels for Myles clearly decreased from the pre-test session to the motor-skill session. Frustration in the pre-test session seemed to revolve around uncertainty in expectations or attention seeking, whereas in the motor skill session, the frustration seemed due to unsuccessful skill execution.

In both the pre-test session and the motor-skill session, another common theme was the mastery or success at certain activities or skills. During the pre-test session, the mastered skills were evidenced while the children were playing alone, whereas the mastered skills in the motor-skill session were in relation to others.

Audio Interviews With Parents

The data collected from the audio interviews in sessions three, four, and five reflected great insight into the parents' gender views, past experiences, and current parenting agendas. As the data from each session was assessed, new questions arose and further insight was required in terms of research questions. Therefore, subsequent
interview sessions were planned with a new approach to obtain the quality of data needed to answer the revised research questions. A series of questions were asked pertaining to their own personal experiences as parents, their own present and past experiences in sport, and their views on how their parents brought them up. These questions enabled the parents to talk about why they did what they did and what influenced what they did.

Below are the stories of the two parents in terms of their history and experiences. Hank’s story is substantially longer, as he seemed, according to Peggy, to get “verbal diarrhea” when asked questions. Hank seemed very comfortable with answering any questions and often had multiple stories from a vast amount of sport experiences that he had as a child, youth, and adult. Although Peggy’s story is shorter than Hank’s, her answers were rich in content and she seemed to really think about what she was going to say before she answered and she, at times, fed off Hank’s stories as they triggered stories of her own past experiences. Lastly, a look at their awareness of self, and how it affects their parenting will be discussed.

Mom’s Story (Peggy)

Peggy is a full-time public health nurse and a mother of four children under the age of six. Peggy grew up having her mom as the primary caregiver as her parents were divorced when she was three. Peggy’s dad lived in a different community, and she saw him every second weekend. Peggy’s mom did a large amount of volunteer work, and whenever an opportunity arose to volunteer, she would do it. Peggy thought that “it was odd that my mom would drop me off and say,
‘See ya later,’ yet all of the other kids’ parents stayed to
watch, but I still knew Mom cared and valued me
as a person because she was involved in other capacities.”
Peggy was interested in sports purely because she “wanted to
Be,” and also because “some of my buddies were involved.”
Peggy’s mom did not like or value sport, did not enjoy
watching sport, but found that if she dropped Peggy off
at baseball, she would have an opportunity to get some
of her own things done. “I knew she was interested in
me, but she did not like watching sport”; therefore, her
mom “Took a back seat when it came to the idea of
putting me into sports.” Peggy stated that “I would never
not watch my kids, because it shows them I care
and want to be involved, but on the flip side, I
did not take it that way from my mom.”

Peggy feels no bitterness towards her mom but
she feels that it “was just how it was.” According to Peggy,
her mom was not athletic, which could account for her
feelings about sports. Peggy believed that her mom knew
that sport was “something that I did,” but Peggy’s mom
did not seem to understand the value of it for her
daughter, “Although, she did take the initiative to put
me in ballet at the age of three.”
Peggy was enrolled in figure skating, "A sport that I enjoyed immensely and showed considerable skill." Peggy felt “That if there was one sport that I could have been competitive in it would have been figure skating.” Unfortunately, to Peggy’s dismay, the cost of figure skating was more money than her mom could or wanted to afford, so Peggy had to quit. Peggy truly believes that “If I had told my mom how important and wonderful skating was that my mom would have come up with the money to pay for the lessons.” Peggy states that it does not bother her that her mom did not place value in her sporting desires, but Peggy feels that as a mother, she “Thinks that it is important for me to be involved in my kids’ sports and activities.” Had sport been encouraged more by Peggy’s mom, Peggy feels that she would have “done it more and seen the value in it” and that she would feel “more competent” when performing sport skills now. Peggy enjoys being active, but states that she is “not at all competitive.” She has always just wanted everyone playing to be having fun. Peggy stated that “When I play sports with someone that is at the same skill level or lower, I will always find a way to cooperate so we can have a long rally.” She firmly stated that “I do not care about winning
or losing, I just want a sport to be great fun.” Sometimes, Peggy finds “it embarrassing if you are not good,” but although Peggy cannot perform some skills very well, she has decided that she does not want that for Myles and Tess. When living in Germany, Peggy noticed that there were no soccer teams for girls, and found that unusual. She believes “That they have more gender stereotypes than in Canada.” She remembers an American girl who played on the men’s soccer team, which caused some surprise. Everyone thought the girl was a “freak,” so there was “a lot of chatter” about the event. Ultimately, Peggy that “If you know something is fun and Great, you want them [the children] to try it too!”

*Dad’s Story (Hank)*

Hank works full time at a local logging company. Like Peggy, he is very busy with their four children. Hank grew up with a very active lifestyle involving sports. His dad felt that if Hank stayed involved in sport that “It would be a good way to keep him on the straight and narrow.” Hank, too, felt that one of his sports, rugby, gave him “something to do with my energy as a teenager.” Hank is sympathetic towards Peggy’s experiences as a child, and from their discussions about her past sporting experiences, he feels
for Peggy’s “disappointment” in not being able to figure skate. Because her mom did not “see the value of sport” for Peggy, Peggy’s disappointment as a child in not being able to participate in something that she loved “pulls” at Hank’s heart strings because “I got to do whatever I wanted.”

Hank remembers being a two-year-old child in northern Ontario. “On Saturdays we would have CBC on the television and I would watch, via satellite, three or four games of hockey with my Dad, who was an avid hockey fan. I remember being able to point to the puck and the stick on the screen to identify what they were, even at only two years old.”

By four years of age, Hank was going with his dad to his hockey games. “I remember being in the locker room with my Dad’s team at 11:30 at night. I was surrounded by strong men drinking beer and swearing. I thought it was the coolest thing to be with all of these grown men as they showered and spat.” Hank thought that it was “the norm” and became immersed in that culture. There was never a question in Hank’s mind as to “whether I would play hockey, but rather, it was when I would play.” Hank always knew that he would play hockey. When he finally did, Hank was a “wobbly kid on blades,” but his determination to improve enabled him
to “play high-level hockey.”

Hank also played rugby and football and enjoyed them both. Rugby was an outlet during “my energy-filled teenage years.” Hank started to play rugby when he was 12 and was playing with boys who were 16 years of age. Those kids saw him as a “tenacious little bugger who never quit.” Hank feels he “is a great competitor and a sore loser,” “Being competitive is a part of my character and demeanor.” He feels that because he engaged in so many different sports, he had “ample opportunities to build character and a competitive drive.” Hank feels that he “does not see any reason to play a game unless you are competing. If one is trying hard and giving 100% in a sport or activity, then that person for sure is having fun.”

Hank believes that his parents sacrificed a lot to enable him to be active in sports. He said that he “was the worst-dressed kid in school, with his GWG jeans from Value Village.” Instead, money was put towards his sports. Hank’s parents allowed him to play in any sport he wanted, “even if they had no clue what it was.” Both of Hank’s parents were active spectators at his games. Although they were absent for a while when their
relationship with Hank was strained, he “noticed their absence and missed having them there.” Even now, at thirty, Hank’s dad will come to watch him play a sport. That “feels good too” and is important to Hank. He does feel pressure knowing that his dad is watching and feels that he “has to play better and work harder.” Hank’s dad does not like the rough play or fighting, but those are sometimes “part of my game.” Hank can always see his “dad shaking his hand at him” whenever he engages in a fight on the ice, but Hank still thinks “it is fun” having him present.

Hank remembers playing on a hockey team when a pair of girls showed up from the mainland to play on the team. In his mind he was thinking, “What is going on?” Those two girls turned out to be great competitors and made quite an impact on Hank’s way of thinking from that point on. Another critical incident in Hank’s upbringing was when his dad told his sister as a teen that she had two choices; she could either “be a nurse or be a teacher.” Hank thought that that “type of thinking was so demeaning,” in that she was not allowed the choices that he was and that has always stuck out in his mind. Again, it impacted Hank. As a parent, he wants his “children to do whatever
sport or activity that they want to do.”

Hank has recently become a coach of both of his sons’ hockey teams, so he has been adding more experiences to his “agenda around parenting and the influencing of other people’s children.” Hank coaches both sons because he “could not imagine choosing to coach one over the other.”

By being a coach/dad, Hank has had to learn, at times, “to take a back seat to attending to his child’s needs” (depending on what the needs are) “by allowing another parent/coach to deal with his child.” Hank “loves the idea of young children playing and having fun together.” At times, Hank feels pressured by the “expectations that parents put on their children and on me as a coach.” Hank knows that the “children want to win and score goals.” So, being a competitor himself, Hank has learned to “turn his competitive drive into a positive and constructive component of his coaching.” Hank stated that “I don’t yell or scream as a coach, but inside I am competitive.”

Both Tess and Myles have always played activities with both genders, so Hank’s expectations of both genders are the same. Regardless of gender, he “loves to see girls playing hockey and has witnessed the same satisfaction and happiness in
girls who play hockey as in boys.” Hank states that “It must be a great feeling for a child to see one of their buddies at school from hockey and she is a girl.”

“How great, that everyone is friends.” Hank wonders why more girls don’t participate in hockey, and theorizes that it may be the gender stereotype that the ones playing are the “manly” type, especially in the teenage years. He wonders if this could this be what deters young girls from playing such a great sport.

_How Mom’s and Dad’s Past Experiences Have Influenced Each Other_

When one compares the stories of Peggy and Hank, they are very different. Peggy’s beliefs around sport are centred on the social or fun aspect, whereas Hank loves the competition component and the development of skills. Hank’s and Peggy’s parents had different ideas about sport, and therefore the experiences for Hank and Peggy were dissimilar. Peggy grew up in an environment where sport was valued in a minimal capacity, whereas Hank grew up in an environment where sport was part of his everyday socialization. The meaning of sport in Peggy’s upbringing was that of something her mom could enroll her in, but not something that her mom felt she had to do, whereas, for Hank, his parents enrolled him in any sport he wanted to play.

Although sport may not have been a large part of Peggy’s childhood, she was still brought up with family values such as the ability to socialize with others in a caring manner and to be able to deal with the challenges that life presents. These came across as important values that Peggy wishes to instill in her children. Hank learned at a young age
“that sport was something that kept him on the straight and narrow” and Peggy felt that she “enjoyed sport because I could be with my friends.” Both of these positive outcomes were something that Peggy and Hank felt are what they want for Tess and Myles.

Sport for Peggy meant “something to build your self-esteem with,” whereas for Hank it was something that “you got self-esteem from and that would then enable you to try something new and exciting.” They have both shared their past experiences in sport with each other and have decided as a parenting team to take the positive, pro-active concepts and utilize them in the upbringing of their children.

Although Peggy’s mom was not present at her sporting activities, she understands from Hank the connection that he felt with his parents being present at most of his sporting endeavors. Peggy believes that by being as present as she can in Tess’s and Myles’s sporting experiences, she can “establish a solid, life-long relationship.” Hank wants to build this relationship as well, but he does it “by being Myles’s team coach” most of the time and a spectator some of the time.

Peggy strongly believes that steering Tess and Myles towards “sport provides them with positive self-esteem, strong social opportunities, and acceptance by peers.” Being involved in sport, she also believes, “will give them a better chance at life.” Hank wants Myles and Tess to “have as many opportunities as he had as a child.” He wants them to be able to “achieve their goals by having fun and to learn skills just as he does in his sport.”

They have together created an “agenda” by which they parent their children with a great amount of enthusiasm and care. By being involved the children’s sport, Peggy feels it will let Myles and Tess “know that she cares and she truly is involved.” Peggy
believes it is a “way of preventing them from getting in trouble,” and feels that if this relationship is created early on, it will “hopefully carry on into the teen years.” Hank feels that because they both work full time it is vitally “important that they spend as much time with their children as they can to make up for the time that they are away from them.”

When Peggy or Hank want to have some one-to-one time with any of their children, they achieve it by taking that child to the store or to run an errand. Hank states that you “can then talk one-to-one but if they are all in the van together, you are competing for attention and that gets frustrating as a parent.” Peggy finds that she can get one-to-one time when they “take one child each while the other two younger ones nap.”

Although Peggy and Hank have had different past experiences, they seem to consciously try to provide positive experiences for their children by being pro-active in what sports they play, by “letting the children decide what they want to do, whether it be figure skating, ballet, or hockey.” If they support each other as they work through their own past experiences, both positive and negative, they will continue to find ways to parent in positive, pro-active manner.

Characteristics of Mom and Dad

Liberal Attitude With Throwbacks

Mom and dad seemed to demonstrate liberal views towards rearing their children, but also demonstrated some views that were contradictory. They both seem to value the idea of having Tess and Myles involved in sport for social, emotional, and preventative reasons. They want their children to “engage in all sorts of sports in environments that have both girls and boys involved,” so that Tess and Myles see that “sports are for
everyone.” On the one hand, Peggy wants to have the children engage in their own sport choice, but she does not want them to participate if she feels that it could be “an activity that may make their child feel socially rejected.” This fear is genuine, but mom would “ultimately live with her fear” and support Myles and Tess if either decided to participate in something she felt could alter their self-esteem.

As Peggy and Hank work towards promoting a positive agenda for their children’s upbringing, they assess what they have seen happen in terms of gender stereotyping in their own pasts. They then try to pull from those experiences what they should do with their children and what they feel should be different. For example, Hank felt that his sister was left with a very stereotypical option when choosing her career, and he decided that he wants his children to be able to “decide what they feel is best for them, regardless of the gender stereotypes that may be attached to it.” Both Peggy and Hank want what is best for Tess and Myles and they try to promote positive experiences. They allow their children to “fail with hopes that by having great relationships” they can empower their children to learn from their failures and “grow to be healthy, happy individuals.”

Fostering Children’s Choice

Peggy and Hank make a conscious effort to allow their children to make choices regarding sports. Hank believes in the “nudge not push” concept. This means that if Myles or Tess say they “don’t want to go to soccer because they want to watch television,” he will nudge them to go because he “knows that it is good for them even though maybe they just don’t feel up to going that day.” If Tess or Myles say that they “don’t want to go because it is not fun,” then Hank “does not shove them into going.”
Peggy expects them to “play when they are at their sport event.” Sometimes, the children go to the playground instead of playing soccer. Since there is usually “lots of preparation for them to get to the field with four children,” Peggy feels “frustrated when they do not participate.” She finds it hard when they get to the playing field and Tess or Myles does not want to participate. She has learned to change her expectations to encompass that of her children. In the end, Peggy believes that her “children will make the final decision.”

Peggy feels that at times her desire to have Tess participate in skating or ballet is her “own sort of warped wishes that she could do skating because I could not.” Hank was in full agreement with this comment, and felt that “many parents want their children to succeed where they failed because they can identify with it.” He believes that “at times parents live vicariously through their children’s life story.” Ultimately, he feels that “many parents want their children to take up where they left off.” Hank, too, has done some definite prompting to get his children interested in certain sports.

Hank and Peggy are in agreement that if Myles, Tess, or any of their children decided to participate in ballet, they would support it. Peggy is aware that she is “gender-biased towards Myles engaging in ballet.” It seems to be the only thing that she feels so strongly about regarding gender. Peggy would “support Myles doing ballet, but would still wish for him not to do it.” She would find it “odd” for him to do it, and felt that if he chose that direction, “he might not be socially accepted.” Hank, on the other hand, would “embrace the idea of Myles having enough self-esteem to choose a sport that was more thought of as a girl sport.” If Myles decided to take ballet, he would be “thrilled that a child of his tough nature would believe enough in his own character to engage in
something that could potentially go against him socially in the eyes of his peers.” Hank also felt that the “girls would find it neat.” He remembers that “it can get lonely at the end of high school,” and such an opportunity could enable his son to make friends where he did not.

_Awareness of Their Part as Parents_

_Purposeful Strategies_

Both Hank and Peggy are aware of their role as parents in the lives of their children. They want to promote skills in their children while teaching them to achieve their goals by “having fun and giving 100%.” They want Tess and Myles to “engage in sport, regardless of who is playing and they want them to be able to play the sport or activity of their choice.” By steering them into sport, both parents hope to develop “positive relationships with their children that will carry over into their teen years.” Lastly, by enabling them to participate in sports, they are hoping that these skills provide “social acceptance for their children and opportunities for them to engage in sport into their adult lives.’

_Own Preferences and Prompting_

Although both parents have their own preferences about what sports they want Tess and Myles to engage in, they are still both allowing the children to make the final decision. Hank loves hockey and wants it to be a part of Tess’s and Myles’s lives, but “if they were to choose to figure skate instead I would support that.” Hank realizes that Peggy has “given prompts to Tess towards figure skating,” but he did the same with Myles around hockey. He “had an agenda.” He was “working an angle to get them involved early.” He was “providing that nudge to get them interested.”
Peggy started “prompting Tess for figure skating at the same time that Hank started prompting Myles to play hockey.” Although they both have their preferences, they will still let their children “make the final decision.”

The motor-skill teaching session required Myles and Tess to pick three specific skills to teach to each of the children. Together, they decided on the following motor skills to teach to their children. For Myles they chose throwing, catching, and riding a bike. Throwing and catching were purposefully picked because they felt that it would be a great opportunity for Myles to socialize with others and that baseball was something that one can do “as an adult.” Riding a bicycle was chosen for Myles because he had been seeing his older brother riding and had hinted to mom that it was something that he was interested in. For Tess, Myles and Peggy chose throwing, catching, and skipping. Throwing and catching were picked for the same reasons as they were for Myles and skipping was picked because mom thought that it would be “fun.”

**Grandparents**

Having a family of four children under the age of six makes for a busy life for Peggy and Hank. They started their family before they had done their post-secondary education. At one point, they were both going to school and trying to raise their children. Both Hank and Peggy “feel very honored, even though sometimes they take it for granted that they have both sets of grandparents involved in their children’s lives.” Having the grandparents take “one or two of the children at a time” allows Hank and Peggy to have “one-to-one time with the other two children.” They feel that in order for them to “work as a unit, we need the grandparents’ involvement.”
A Final Observation

Considering the busyness of their lives, Peggy and Hank still find time to communicate with each other, which is illustrated in their purposeful parenting strategies and common goals to keep involved in Tess's and Myles's lives as much as possible. They both take their children to their sports and both enjoy watching them participate, as this too, is part of their goal towards building a quality relationship with their children.
Chapter 5: Discussion

A case study approach grounded in a critical feminist perspective was used as the framework to conduct qualitative interviews with a family. A mother and father of two pre-school-aged children (boy and girl) were the participants. To explore how gender differences come into play and how a mother and a father interpret their selection and guidance of their pre-school-aged children in learning fundamental motor skills based on gender, given that cases studies can be useful in uncovering patterns and concepts, this study can be useful as a basis for exploring further gender and motor-skill acquisition. This final chapter is a discussion of the findings of this investigation and the implications of the findings in relation to the literature on parents’ influence on their children in learning fundamental movement skills, and for future research in this area.

Significance of the Study

The significance of the study lies in its ability to unveil the deep layers underlying how a mother and father interpret their selection and guidance of their children in learning motor skills based on gender. The goodness of the findings presented is that they are real expressions of the parents’ experiences that are intertwined with their relationships with their son and daughter. Findings presented in this study support the literature in that they demonstrate the complexity and multiple layers involved in the gender socialization of motor skills by mothers and fathers (Toole and Kretzschmar, 1993), the importance of parental influences regarding sports and their children (Godin, Shepard, & Colantonio, 1986), and the interpretations that parents make in trying to understand what and how their past and present experiences effect how they parent their children (Hoghughi and Long, 2004).
After months of analyzing the data, noting the findings, and discovering the implications of this study, I find myself still pondering the depth and complexity of gender stereotyping in our society and the complexity of the roles that nature and nurture play. Through this research, I have come to understand the complexity of parenting in that I could not understand why parents find it so hard to “teach their kids motor skills,” when they know it is important. But by having an in-depth relationship with my thesis family, I came to realize that their lives are so busy with work, transporting to and from school, grocery shopping, family commitments, and other little daily events that parents come to depend on others to teach those skills by having their children enrolled in various forms of organized sport. The belief that “it takes a whole community to raise a child” makes sense to me now. Parenting encompasses one’s past experiences, present beliefs, future goals, and personal genetic make-up, which are all further influenced by society’s beliefs and values that in turn provide an ever-changing influence on one’s personal lived experience. Subsequently, these factors effect how one’s children are raised.

Parent Education

These parents, like many others, have extremely busy lives that do not always enable them to teach their children everything that they want them to learn. They know that skill development is important for their children, so they have put them in various sports, and dad actually coaches both of his boys’ hockey teams. Even with four children keeping them busy, I think that both parents utilize their understanding of game aspects by teaching the skills components as often as they can to their children, such as dad teaching the children how to hold their hands when trying to catch a football or mom telling them to how to hold a skipping rope so that it is easier for them to jump over it. I
believe that depending on their comfort level towards teaching the skills required to do the sport, their personal knowledge of the sport, and their own personal history in regards to the sport or activity, determines the role they take in promoting or teaching the skill/sport to their children. They are, depending on the circumstances, an observer, a cheerleader, a coach, or a participant.

I believe that these parents are key in enabling their children to progress from one level in motor-skill development to the next through the engagement of a variety of activities that promote or enable their children's participation in (i.e., soccer, hockey, figure skating, rugby). The parents in my research foster opportunities to provide basics for their children through organized sport because they believe that these basics will give their children the self-esteem to try different activities—regardless of what gender label the activity may or may not have. It seems that the organized sport sessions enables the children to learn the skills of soccer, hockey, and figure skating in a controlled environment, whereas the home environment allows for more free play, or child-directed activities, such as keep-away soccer, skipping games, playing catch, and chasing each other. Teachable moments seem to happen when the parents make a conscious effort to teach their children, but having four children under the age of six does not always allow teachable times to engage the children as sport skill learners.

I strongly believed before my research that there were two kinds of parents: the ones that depend on the "experts" to teach their children fundamental motor skills and the ones who just do not know that there are correct ways to perform motor skills. I believed then, and I still do now, that it is the parents' responsibility to "teach" their children the basics, but I have also come to realize through my research that time is a huge factor in
the life of a parent. I do not think that parents need to be movement experts to engage their children, but they need patience and a basic understanding of motor skills and a realistic grasp of the process involved in acquiring them. I believe that my research parents’ are a great match as dad knows many of the basic motor skills and the importance of physical activity and self-concept, whereas the mom understands and nurtures positive encouragement and dedication to being active in their children’s sporting experiences. One approach enables the children to learn the “technical” components of a skill and the other adds the “social” or “nurturing” aspect to the children’s experiences. I feel that the mixing of these qualities will be an asset in enabling Hank and Peggy to empower their children to be physically active citizens. Although Hank feels that learning skills important, I feel that the passion that he demonstrates when he talks about his children sends the message that he wants the best for his children’s whole selves. This, and the nurturing and active involvement by Peggy, is supported by research done by Brustad, 1996 and Kimiecik & Horn, 1998, as they found that parental encouragement, support and beliefs are powerful in teaching children to be active for life, more so than parents who role-model sport activities.

I found the stories from the audio interviews with Hank and Peggy to be very interesting, but I did not fully realize until the data analysis their importance in my study. Their past experiences in sports activities such as hockey, rugby, figure skating, and baseball and how they are parenting their children at the present time is highly influenced by their past. Although they came from very different backgrounds, they have both taken the positives (team camaraderie, self-discipline, success, friendships, parental involvement, having funds to participate in sports of own choice and fun) and the
negatives (not being able to participate because of lack of funding, not being able to perform skills well, parents not being present at sporting events) from their past and are trying to do what they think is best for their children. They are trying to be very liberal about what sports or physical activities that their children engage in, regardless of gender.

Tess and Myles are unique and both brought their own personalities to the study. I found it interesting that although Tess had a “typical” girl room (pink accessories, fancy bed frame, and white netting over her bed), she still loved any typical “boy” activities (cars, rugby). It seemed as if she did not place a gender value on any of the toys or play that she engaged in or played with. Myles seemed to be a rough and tough little guy who will play with dolls or would show an interest in an activity that his sister or mom were both doing, such as skipping. I found this very relieving because often in my day-care work I observed that dads would be appalled if their son played house or played with dolls. Hopefully, regardless of their gender, the children in this study will develop positive self-esteem, and that how they are parented will enable them to feel empowered to do whatever they choose to do in life.

The results of this case study reveal the experiences of a specific mother and father of two pre-school-aged children of both genders. The parents in this study were both working full time, but still managed to be extremely involved in their children’s lives. Because this study is focused on one specific family, the findings provide insight to the larger population of mothers and fathers raising their children to have opportunities to participate in physical activities of their choice, regardless of gender.
Implications for Educators

As we have seen, there is a difference between the way in which men and women parent. Both approaches are needed, because they complement each other. As educators, it is important to value each parent’s approach to raising their children and then to work to complement that approach. Children learn what they live. McPherson (1978) referred to socialization as a process where one learns attitudes, beliefs, values, norms, and motivations. These attributes enable individuals to learn a social role and to strive for success and excellence. Because much of this learning takes place via parents, siblings, coaches, teachers, and peers, it is key that as a community raising a child, we need to promote the best interests of each child.

As educators, we should try to work with parents to provide children with as many positive and nurturing experiences that we have with them. Most important, we need to listen to children, as they are quite knowledgeable in letting us know their thoughts and feelings. Children are often much wiser than we give them credit for. At times, we make decisions for them without letting them make the choice for themselves. Have you ever seen adults talking “over” children when the child is present in the room? Well, that child hears everything and understands more that we sometimes think. We need to talk to them not over them. If parents, educators, and children work as a team for the child’s best interest, we can hopefully enable them to develop positive self-esteem and a self-knowledge, which is a valuable tool that they can use to be happy and productive citizens.

I strongly believe that it is the parents’ responsibility to teach their children fundamental motor skills, but I also realize that sometimes they may feel that others are
more qualified, so may choose to enroll their children in physical activity programs. Having their child’s best interest at heart is key in the development of the “whole” child. I believe that this is what I saw in my research family, as was demonstrated by their camaraderie with their children (when they talk about their children, they do so with great passion and enthusiasm, seen by the love in their eyes and the smiles on their faces), their interactions with each other, and last, their commitment to my research.

Researchers Impact on the Participants

When asked if the research process has impacted them in any way, Peggy and Hank felt that it had in different ways. Peggy believed that it “helped us to clarify where we are coming from and what goals we have for our kids.” Peggy also stated that it enabled them to “sit down and talk about figure skating vs. ballet vs. hockey for our children.” She felt that now they have been able to “toss ideas around and talk about how they feel about things.”

Hank said that when I first began collecting data, he had just started coaching his son’s hockey team and he had all of “those kids looking up to me and I was looking for drills that were: (1) fun, (2) able to keep their attention, and (3) able to allow them to develop their skill.” Hank felt that the children looked to him to help them develop skills, but then “you also have to deal with the expectations of the parents.” Hank stated that “the concepts that you were introducing and the probing that you were doing was stimulating.” He finds himself wondering why parents videotape their children’s practices all the time. The nature of my research enabled him “to talk about and think about some of the thoughts that I was having around my coaching,” so that he could continue to challenge himself to promote a positive experience for the children, which
would be the child participating in the activity of their choice while “giving 100% and having fun.”

Recommendations for Further Research

I began this study with a great interest in the relationship between children, parents, and fundamental motor skills. I was specifically interested in how parents interpret their selection of motor skills for their children based on gender. This process was a chance for me to begin to look at the deep layers of my question and to see what related research questions arose as I carried out my research. Some of these questions related to (1) gender socialization, (2) parenting motor-skill development, (3) parents’ own experiences, and (4) some pertained to all.

At the end of my research journey, I find myself revisiting my question in more depth and discovering new possibilities for how my question could be further researched to unveil the multiple layers of its meaning. I have wondered how much knowledge and understanding that parents have or what they believe about what makes us a “boy” or a “girl,” and what the nature and nurture characteristics are that influence gender. Similarly, I question how one might begin to consciously understand the relationship between society’s views and traditions around gender socialization. I also question the parents’ personal views around gender socialization, and how one might utilize components of each other’s views to the enable their children to gain the full benefit of fundamental motor-skill development, regardless of gender.

The findings uncovered by this research have led me to believe the complexity of the underlying and unspoken belief systems regarding gender socialization in the teaching of fundamental motor skills. Specifically, I wonder what critical and not-so-
critical events have happened in our society around gender expectations and fundamental motor skills. I also wonder about the direct relationship between parents’ experiences in life and how these experiences influence how they raise their children.

Another area for possible research would be investigating the views of the children as they get older and how they react to what is expected of them when engaging in physical activity skills. It would be interesting, too, to see how society has changed regarding gender socialization and parenting over the past 20 years. What are the parents’ interpretations of society’s expectations, and how have they embraced the concepts or changed them in the parenting of their children?

**Final Reflections**

This research has been an awakening to me as an individual who has participated in team sports my whole life, and as a physical educator. I have reflected on the beliefs and values that I have around parenting, motor-skill development for children, genetics, and societal influences, and I have concluded that they are complex and very intertwined.

I had always thought it to be almost black and white with which the ease that one could teach one’s child fundamental motor skills, but now I see that there are so many daily events and happenings in a family’s life that these “teachable moments” can easily be put on hold by having to fulfill the basic needs of life (food, clothing, and shelter). I find myself less likely to place blame on the parent, the educator, or society. Instead, I find myself trying to deconstruct why this is and how it could be changed, or should it just be “what it is”? I feel that by being given the opportunity to evaluate my personal beliefs, I have come full circle, in that I look at things for their positives rather than trying to see their limitations and faults.
I strongly believe that in our society we place a high value on material items, and I find this disturbing in the fact that I see friends of mine making their lives more complex by working more and spending less time with their children so that they can get that nice car or jet ski that they hardly get to use. I still strongly believe in the importance of children learning fundamental motor skills to their full capacity, and to a mature form, because it is a wonderful building block towards personal well-being. How this should be done is still a perplexing thought for me, but I believe that we, as a society, need not only say that we value our children, but we need to act on it and place them at the top of our list so as to actively promote a support network. Such a network needs to connect around the goal of nurturing children and their ability to move with confidence.

As Pica (2003) states:

Motor skills are not only critical life skills that enable us to go about our daily lives effectively and safely; motor skills are also important determinates of our ability to participate in our culture, and develop and maintain a physically active lifestyle. Motor skills enable children to participate in the kinds of movement that contribute to their physical and cognitive growth. Competence in motor skills is important to the positive emotional development of children (p. 97).

Although I continue to be conscious of the developmental sequence of teaching fundamental motor skills, I feel more sympathetic towards the complexity of the individual and to the events that have brought him or her to the particular moment in time that I am experiencing with them. I do this by being more open to allow for individual differences and look at what the individual can do, rather than what he or she can’t do. I
then provide opportunities that enable children to refine the skills they have so that they
develop the confidence and competence to try new or different skills.

I feel that it is significant to understand and enable children, regardless of gender
to explore positive yet challenging experiences that will able them to succeed in society
in many roles (teammate, mother, father, sister, brother, friend). I have learned that
parenting requires a great deal of self-reflection and conscious effort to be the best parent
that one can be. Families need a network of people to help in the nurturing of their
children, whether it be the grandparents, the school teacher, the coach, or the community.
As a society, we need to not only say that we value our children, but we need to act on it
and to make this a top priority. I believe that it does take a whole community to raise a
child. As my supervisor stated in a conversation (Ricks, personal communication,
September 28, 2004), “When we become parents, we don’t know enough about parenting
to be a parent. It would be beneficial to be a grandparent first because we know more
then!” Therefore, when we become parents, it would not be so scary and challenging.
References


Haubenstricker, B. J., & Sapp, M. (1980). *A longitudinal look at physical growth and*
motor performance: Implications for elementary and middle school activity programs. Paper presented at the American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance, Detroit, MI.


### Table 1.

**Pre-Testing -- Parents**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nurturing</th>
<th>Organizing</th>
<th>Guiding/Facilitating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Watching her kids play</td>
<td>Helps child find toy (m)</td>
<td>Mom is the soccer goalie for the boys’ game</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comforts child who’s crying (m)</td>
<td>Mom fixes daughter’s hair</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tells child he is catching well (m)</td>
<td>Mom picks up garbage (m)</td>
<td>Tells children they don’t have to play if they don’t want to (m)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tells older child that younger child does not know how to turn the rope yet (m)</td>
<td>Tells son to let his sister have a turn on the bike (d)</td>
<td>Mom helps child get on bike</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wipes child’s nose (m)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Mom helps child ride bike</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gives child drink of juice (d)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Tells child when to jump over the rope (m)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helps child with bee sting (m, d)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Tells child to ride brother’s bike (m)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Tries to get younger child to use ball so girl can use jump rope (d)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Dad jokes with daughter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Asks child to show him how she can help (d)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Dad gets ball for child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Shows boy how to hold hands to catch ball (d)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Dad makes a wide net so boys can try to score on him</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Plays catch with son (d)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Tells son to help sister ride (d)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note (d) = dad; (m) = mom.*
Table 2.

Motor-Skill Teaching – Parents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nurturing</th>
<th>Facilitating</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Instruction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tells child not to cry (d)</td>
<td>Dad picks up dog mess (d)</td>
<td>Puts dog in shed (d)</td>
<td>Observing other parent to know what to do (m)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gives son a hug (m)</td>
<td>Dad gets ball</td>
<td>Tells son to get ball (d)</td>
<td>Helps child to turn rope (m)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watching children skip (m)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Asks child to turn skipping rope (m)</td>
<td>Tells child to back up to turn rope (m)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Tells child to take turns when skipping (m)</td>
<td>Tells children where throw line (d)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Asks dad why son is crying (m)</td>
<td>Tells child to move in so child can skip (m)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Shows children where to throw ball/beanbag to (d)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Shows daughter how to hold rope (m)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Plays on gymnastic ball with sons (d)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Dad shows how to throw ball/beanbag (d)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2. continued

**Motor-Skill Teaching-- Parents**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nurturing</th>
<th>Facilitating</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Instruction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Change rope speed so child can jump rope more easily (m)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Tells children to back up so they can turn rope better (m)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mom shows girl how to shorten rope</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note* (d) = dad; (m) = mom.
### Table 3.

**Pre-Testing Session -- Children (Myles and Tess)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mastery on Selected</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Exploration</th>
<th>Cooperation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chewing shirt not sure what to do (M)</td>
<td>Riding bike and laughing (T)</td>
<td>Playing with camera (M)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asking for approval from mom (M)</td>
<td>Riding successfully (M)</td>
<td>Playing with soccer ball (M)</td>
<td>Helping to turn so sibling can skip (T)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gives up (M)</td>
<td>Playing successfully (M)</td>
<td>Using body management cues to catch ball (M)</td>
<td>Asks to skip with sister (B)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsuccessful so leaves activity (M)</td>
<td>Asks brother to take the rope (T)</td>
<td>Plays with little brother (T)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wants to play with dad alone (M)</td>
<td>Asks to skip with younger brother (T)</td>
<td>Cooperates so she can skip with younger brother (T)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whines, wants her own ball (T)</td>
<td>Asking for help with bike (T)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wants to skip, not play with her brother (T)</td>
<td>Playing with skipping rope (T)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changes goal size so net is harder for brother to score (M)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note (M) = Myles (boy); (T) = Tess (girl).*
Table 4.

*Motor-Skill Lesson-- Children (Myles and Tess)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Children Played</th>
<th>Had Skill Success</th>
<th>Frustration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Longer</td>
<td>At Activity Taught</td>
<td>Less Present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girl wants to turn rope so brother can skip (T)</td>
<td>Cries when hits self with rope (T)</td>
<td>Playing bean bag/ ball game with brothers (T) (M)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Turns rope roughly for sister (M)</td>
<td>Watches dad throw then tries herself (T)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Enthusiasm to try beanbag game with brothers (M)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note (M) = Myles (boy); (T) = Tess (girl).*
Appendixes
Appendix A – Informed Consent

Faculty of Human and Social Development

INFORMED CONSENT

Please read this form very carefully. If you have any questions, please ask me while completing the form.

Research Project Title: What are the subtle undertones and purposeful socializing strategies that mothers and fathers use to promote their children’s learning of fundamental motor skills based on gender?

Description of Purpose
The purpose of this research project is to examine the subtle undertones and purposeful gender socializing strategies that mothers and fathers utilize in promoting their preschool-aged children in learning fundamental motor skills. Analysis will be made of the observations and interviews of the mother and father compiled by the researcher.

Understanding of Subtle Undertones and Purposeful Socializing Will Be Investigated
Observations, informal interviews, and formal interviews, will take place in the homes of the family or at various activity settings that the family frequent for their physical activity experiences (i.e., park, community centre, backyard, school field). Some sessions will be strictly observation by the researcher, some will be observation and questioning, and some will be formal interviews that address questions specifically designed by the researcher.

You, the Participant
As part of this study, I will engage in informal and formal interview sessions with the researcher in order to assist in discovering the underlying layers to the research question in view. I understand that before and during the interview process, I am free to indicate whether I permit the interview to be taped or not. I understand that a transcription of the taped interviews and field notes will be given to me for review with my permission indicated on this consent form. I will engage in videotaped sessions of my interactions with my children in the various physical-activity experiences that we do spontaneously and organized as a family and that this will be done with my permission as indicated on this consent form.

I understand that my data from the videotaped sessions, field notes, and taped interviews may be used to report this research. I understand that my consent on this form simply means that I will be invited to participate in the study, but I am free to decline without penalty. If I wish to withdraw from this study, I can at any time, and at my request all information in regards to my involvement in this study will be destroyed.
If I wish to withdraw from this study, I can at any time, and that if I chose, I could allow the researcher to use the information gathered in regards to my involvement in this study for the study analysis with my written consent.

My signature on this form indicates that I agree to permit the researcher to consider my data from the interviews, field notes, and videotaping compiled by the researcher. I know that any written data concerning me will be sent to me for review. I am aware that any information concerning me and only me will only be used with my consent and that any information that I wish not to be used will, at my request, be kept private or destroyed. I understand that all information collected in this study will be kept in a locked room.

I understand that my anonymity will be respected by the use of pseudonyms to represent my family and me in any writing resulting from this research. I understand that what I might say in interviews will be kept confidential and that only the researcher and the researcher’s advisors will have access to this information. I understand that I have the right to withdraw from this study at any time without penalty.

I consent/do not consent (please cross out) to participate in this research study.

Name of Informant             Signature             Date

Address

INVESTIGATOR

Name: Jamie Covey        Phone: (250) 701-0544

SIGNATURE: ____________________________
Family Needed for Research Project

I am looking for a family to participate in my research project for the University of Victoria. If you are a family who has:

- Mother and father
- Son under the age of 5
- Daughter under the age of 5
- Mother and father must believe that physical activity is important for their children but may not be active themselves.
- You can be available a couple hours a week for four weeks

...I need you.... To participate in this study about the socializing strategies that mother's and father's utilize in promoting pre-school children's physical skills at play contact Jamie Covey @ (250) 701-0544.

Contact: Jamie Covey
Phone: (250) 701-0544
E-mail: jamiec@uvic.ca
Appendix C – Play Skill Choices

CHOOSE THREE OF THE FOLLOWING PLAY SKILLS TO TEACH YOUR SON AND CHOOSE THREE PLAY SKILLS TO TEACH YOUR DAUGHTER.

YOU CAN TEACH THE PLAY SKILLS IN THE FOLLOWING WAYS:

➢ Both can teach all the play skills to each child together.
➢ One can teach some of the play skills and the other can teach some.
➢ One of you can teach all of the play skills to your children.
➢ You can teach some together and some individually.
➢ * = possible teaching cues that mom or dad wish to add.

★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★

(please put a check mark by the skills you are choosing for each child)

Child’s Gender =

_Aim: Game Where You Strike An Object For Distance_

Skill To Be Used: Striking

Teaching Cues For Learner: 1. stand sideways
2. feet shoulder width apart
3. watch ball all the way into catcher’s mitt or until it leaves the stand
4. *

Equipment To Be Used:

How To Score:

How To Add Challenges:
How To Simplify:

\textit{Aim: Game Where You Throw An Object At A Target}

Skill To Be Used: Overhand Throwing

Teaching Cues For Learner: 1. opposite foot forward to throwing arm
2. make “L” shape with throwing arm
3. non-throwing arm aims towards target
4. *

Equipment To Be Used:

How To Score:

How To Add Challenges:

How To Simplify:

\textit{Aim: Game Where You Throw An Object For Distance}

Skill To Be Used: Overhand Throwing

Teaching Cues For Learner: 1. opposite foot forward to throwing arm
2. make “L” shape with throwing arm
3. follow through to opposite knee
4. *

Equipment To Be Used:

How To Score:

How To Add Challenges:
How To Simplify:

Aim: Dribbling An Object With The Hands

Skill To Be Used: Hand Dribbling

Teaching Cues For Learner: 1. Stretch fingers and push ball with pads of fingers
2. keep height of dribble below waist
3. keep eyes up
4. *

Equipment To Be Used:

How To Score:

How To Add Challenges:

How To Simplify:

Aim: Dribbling A Ball With The Feet

Skill To Be Used: Dribbling With The Feet

Teaching Cues For Learner: 1. use inside of foot
2. be gentle with the ball to keep it near you and in control
3. head up
4. *

Equipment To Be Used:

How To Score:
How To Add Challenges:

How To Simplify:

Aim: Skipping With A Rope

Skill To Be Used: Jumping

Teaching Cues For Learner:
1. jump when the rope passes your face
2. keep your turns slow till you get over the rope
3. *

Equipment To Be Used:

How To Score:

How To Add Challenges:

How To Simplify:

Aim: Hopping and Jumping To Create A Pattern Sequence

Skill To Be Used: Hopping and Jumping

Teaching Cues For Learner:
1. hopping is from one foot to one foot
2. jumping is from two feet to two feet
3. *

Equipment To Be Used:
How To Score:

How To Add Challenges:

How To Simplify:

---

_Aim: A Game Where You Catch_

Skill To Be Used: Catching

Teaching Cues For Learner:
1. hold arms out to receive the ball or guide object into hands or chest
2. fingers towards sky; thumbs touch
3. catch the object with two hands
4. *

Equipment To Be Used:

---

_Aim: Riding a Bike_

Skills To Be Used: Balance

Teaching Cues For Learner:
1. spin pedals in circles
2. head up
3. elbows and knees in, back flat
4. *
Equipment To Be Used: bike, helmet

How To Score:

How To Add Challenges:

How To Simplify:

Aim: Underhand Rolling At/Through a Target

Skills To Be Used: Underhand rolling at or through a target

Teaching Cues For Learner: 1. opposite foot forward to rolling hand 2. bend knees 3. follow through to target 4. *

Equipment To Be Used:

How To Score:

How To Add Challenges:

How To Simplify:
Appendix D--Case Study Checklist

Case Study Checklist

1. Is the report easy to read?

2. Does it fit together, each sentence contributing to the whole?

3. Does the report have a conceptual structure (i.e., themes or issues)?

4. Are its issues developed in a serious and scholarly way?

5. Is the case adequately defined?

6. Is there a sense of story to the presentations?

7. Is the reader provided with some vicarious experience?

8. Have quotations been used effectively?

9. Are headings, figures, artifacts, appendixes, and indexes used effectively?

10. Was it edited well, then again with a last-minute polish?

11. Has the writer made sound assertions, neither over-nor under-interpreting?

12. Has adequate attention been paid to various contexts?

13. Were sufficient raw data presented?

14. Were data sources well chosen and in sufficient number?

15. Do observations and interpretations appear to have been triangulated?

16. Is the role and point of view of the researcher readily apparent?

17. Is the nature of the intended audience apparent?

18. Is empathy shown for all sides?

19. Are personal intentions examined?

20. Does it appear that individuals were put at risk?

(Stake, 1995, p. 131)
Afterward – January 31/2005

After taking five years to complete my thesis I have come to recognize that the work around children, parenting and the socialization of fundamental motor skills has not stood still. Thank-you, to Dr. Lara Lauzon, as she has directed me to the recent literature, pertaining to my study that shows that the area is in constant flux. Listed below are additional references regarding the research topic. Hopefully, these references will give further insight, to the reader, as it pertains to the research question.

References


Surname: Covey
Given Names: Jamie Alison

Place of Birth: Rosetown, Saskatchewan, Canada

Educational Institutions Attended:

- Grant MacEwan Community College 1985-1987
- University of Alberta 1987-1991
- University of Victoria 1999-2005

Diplomas/Degrees Awarded:

- Diploma in Early Childhood Development 1987
- Bachelor of Physical Education and Sports Studies 1991

Publications: