

Fostering Self-Regulation:
Parental Perceptions of their Role Developing Self-Regulation with Preschoolers
Having Difficulty Complying with Social-Conventional Rules

by

Emily Turk

B.Ed., University of Victoria, 2003.

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Supervisory Committee

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this thesis is to seek to understand how parents of preschoolers having difficulty complying to social-conventional rules perceive their role in helping develop self-regulation. My work as a graduate research assistant with Dr. Boyer enabled me access to a large grounded theory study entitled, *Foundational Measures of Early Childhood Self-Regulation* from which the parents were chosen. Since I endeavoured to capture the parent's perspective, as they reflect on the development of self-regulation, this study is designed within a qualitative paradigm particularly, a multiple case study design. In keeping with the qualitative case study tradition this study employed a demographic sheet and interview questions which were used in the larger study. Themes which surfaced include: parental frustration, feelings of ineffectiveness or success, concern for their child's future, birth of siblings and their child's ongoing development. In addition, parent's perceptions of strategies they used included reasoning, staying firm, staying calm, warnings, in advance, empathy negation and removal.

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my family and particularly to the memory of my father,
Jeremy Turk.

Chapter 1 - Introduction

“Society is the sum of social relations” (Piaget, 1965, p.395). Although that phrase was coined over 40 years ago it rings just as true today as ever. In fact, socialization is one of the most imperative issues facing parenting today. Socialization is described as being “linked to the child’s experiences within close relationships, particularly to the parental handling of intimate encounters, discipline settings, and the negotiation of disputes” (Feldman & Klein, 2003, March 23-26, 2005.). Socialization is of particular concern when considering students with special needs since they are more at-risk for peer rejection. (Gottlieb, 1981; Gresham, 1988; Swanson & Malone, 1992). As Piaget notes, this social discrepancy has far reaching effects, well beyond the classroom. It is no surprise that, “inadequate or inappropriate social skills are associated with poor community adjustment and reinstitutionalisation, loss of employment, depression, and insularity” (Embregts, 2002). Lemming (2000) argues that parents and teachers feel overwhelmed, not so much with teaching, but with students who are badly behaved. This thesis endeavoured to lead to a better understanding of the parent’s perspective as they attempt to develop one aspect of socialization in their preschoolers: self-regulation. Here, we explored self-regulation with particular regard to preschoolers having difficulty following social-conventional rule requests such as ‘no running in the house.’ Self-regulation is defined by Kopp as “the ability to comply with a request, to initiate and cease activities according to situational demands, to modulate the intensity, frequency, and duration of verbal and motor acts in social and educational settings, to postpone acting upon a desired object or goal, and to generate socially approved behavior in the absence of external monitors” (Kopp, 1982, p.199-200). Social-

Conventional rules are defined as, “actions that are evaluated as contingent on the presence of rules, relative to the social context, and less serious offences” (Smetana, 1981, p. 1333).

Self-regulation has recently become a prevalent topic of discussion within the realms of educational psychological research (Paris & Paris, 2001). Why, at this time, would self-regulation become so important a topic? It may be that having come out of an era of self-discovery, as found in curriculum’s such as Whole Language, we are now appreciating the importance and impact of self-regulation. Furthermore, we are now only just beginning to understand the importance of self-regulation in the lives of children with special needs. For this thesis, I will be selecting parents of preschoolers who are displaying difficulty complying with social-conventional rules and examine parental perception’s of their role in fostering self-regulation in their children. Like many preschool children, these students have not been diagnosed as special needs although they are having difficulty learning to self-regulate at this time. My work as a graduate research assistant with Dr. Boyer enabled me access to a large grounded theory study entitled, Foundational Measures of Early Childhood Self-Regulation from which the parents will be chosen.

Statement of the Problem

The study will seek to answer the following research question: How do parents of preschoolers having difficulty complying to social-conventional rules perceive their role in helping their children develop self-regulation?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to seek to understand how parents perceive their role in helping develop self-regulation with particular regard to social-conventional rules. In this thesis, I chose parents of preschoolers having difficulty complying with social-conventional rules. Research in this area has focused primarily on the child but very little research exploring the parental perspective. Only by examining parental perceptions of this phenomenon can we then gain knowledge which areas of self-regulation are most needed to support parents and, in turn, their children. For example, we may find commonalities and trends between parent's reactions to non-compliance and be able to recommend more effective means at promoting self-regulation to parents. This thesis will therefore help contribute to connecting practice and research within the field of self-regulation.

Definition of Terms

Compliance – “refers to parent-monitored obedience with little indication of internalization” (Feldman & Klein, 2003, p. 680).

Non-compliance – “Noncompliance, by definition, means that the child is not going along with explicit rules even when adults are present” (Chamberlain & Patterson, 1995, p. 213).

Preschoolers – “children between 2 1/2 and 6 years of age...involved in out-of-home programs, including child care centers, family child care homes, or public and private full- and half-day prekindergartens and kindergartens.” (Brededamp & Copple, 1997, p. 97).

Self-regulation – “A complex construct, has been variously defined as the ability to comply with a request, to initiate and cease activities according to situational demands, to modulate the intensity, frequency, and duration of verbal and motor acts in social and educational settings, to postpone acting upon a desired object or goal, and to generate socially approved behavior in the absence of external monitors” (Kopp, 1982, p.199-200).

Social-Conventional Rules - “are evaluated as contingent on the presence of rules, relative to the social context, and less serious offences” (Smetana, 1981, p. 1333).

Socialization – “linked to the child’s experiences within close relationships, particularly to the parental handling of intimate encounters, discipline settings, and the negotiation of disputes” (Feldman & Klein, 2003, p. 680).

Delimitations

The boundaries of this study are set by the following:

1. This study drew from participants living in a mid-sized city in Western Canada.
2. Only 7 parents at the selected preschools participate in the study.
3. Only parents who agreed to partake in the 30-40 minute interview were considered.
4. Only parents who described their children as noncompliant to social-conventional rules were considered for this thesis.
5. Only parents who partook in a larger self-regulation study were considered (Boyer, 2004).

Assumptions

Throughout this study, the following assumptions preside:

1. The participants provided honest responses.
2. The participants were able to reflect on their parenting skills and their child's actions.
3. The participants were required to answer all the interview and demographic questions.

Summary

In this chapter the central topics of this thesis were briefly introduced and defined. This thesis examines a topic which is currently not researched extensively, the parental perspective of developing self-regulation in their preschoolers. Therefore, the purpose of this thesis is to understand how parents of preschoolers having difficulty complying with social-conventional rules perceive their role in helping their preschoolers develop self-regulation. Exploring this topic will help researchers and practitioners inform parents more effectively as well as help us empathize with parents in this most important task. Additionally in this chapter key terms used throughout this thesis were defined. Finally, any assumptions and delimitations of this thesis were outlined. In the following chapter, we examine the literature pertaining to self-regulation, social-conventional rules and parental perspectives of their role as parents. Chapter three will outline the qualitative paradigm and case study approach for this study.

Chapter 2 - Review of the Literature

Introduction

This chapter will review literature regarding children's development of self-regulation as well as research investigating the parental perspective of their role as parent. To better understand the normal developmental trajectory of preschoolers I will begin with a brief description of preschooler's developmental trajectory in relation to their social capabilities will be outlined. Secondly, a review of the theoretical literature in self-regulation will be considered. This will provide a basis for understanding the cognitive capabilities of the preschooler within a developmental trajectory as well as providing context to understand the pertaining research. Thirdly, a review of research for self-regulation will be explored. Fourthly, a review of research pertaining to social-conventional rules and preschoolers is explored. Finally, research investigating parents perceptions of their role as parents will be presented.

Development of Socialization Within Preschoolers

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC 1997) outlines the social development for three, four and five year olds (p.117). These descriptors help to gain a greater understanding and image of how a typical preschooler looks and thinks. I will briefly provide a description of the child at each of these ages with regard to their social development.

Three year olds, are described by the NAEYC (1997) as often engaged in parallel play. They find sharing of toys and solving conflicts challenging therefore, often needing adult assistance to help resolve these issues. However, three year olds are

now displaying an increased ability to play cooperatively compared to toddlers. At this age, they also begin to want to please their caregivers and express feelings such as fear or affection intensely in saying such things as, 'I'm scared. Stay with me.'

Although only a year older, four year olds are remarkably different. Here, they begin to display less parallel play and more cooperative play. Although this age group still finds sharing a challenge more and more they are able to understanding the notion of give and take. Likewise, they are more apt and willing to try and resolve conflicts with peers on their own. Whereas, three year olds wish to please caregivers we see four year olds more interested in pleasing friends. Four year olds have also learnt that negative outbursts will bring consequences and therefore have also learnt to justify their actions with explanations such as 'he started it.' Likewise, the four year old has become more aware of what self-regulation is and what is expected of them even though they may or may not be successful at meeting these expectations. For example they may know that they shouldn't fight but are unable to regulate entirely on their own.

The five year old is described as enjoying more dramatic and cooperative play. Here, they may now form groups but these may also be to the exclusion of others. The five year old "understands the power of rejecting others" (Brededamp & Copple, 1997, p. 117). Therefore, ending a friendship may be used as a threatening device during an argument by saying such things as 'I won't be your friend anymore!' At this age the preschooler is more able to follow requests from caregivers and emotions turn easily from encouraged, as shown in jumping and smiling, to discouragement as shown in actions such as sulking.

In addition, Kopp (1994) portrays the growth of self-regulation in response to the social-conventional request of cleaning up toys by sharing the verbal responses of a boy at two and a half, three, three and a half and four to this request. They nicely illustrate the growing transition from external to internal control as we see the preschooler more able to self-regulate on their own. The two and half year olds response displaying a preschooler complaining in response to the request whereas the three year old is moving into more complex forms of non-compliance by questioning the request. The three and half year old parrots the parent by voicing why they request has been made, since it might break. Finally, the four-year-old shows compliance to the task as he thinks out loud the actions needed to comply.

at 30 months – Okay, You help me.... I don't want to

at 36 months – Why? I never play with that.....What?

at 42 months – Then we'll play with that? Put this away
cause it's gonna break...

at 48 months – Okay, but first I'm gonna need the
machine. Oh, I have to go to school.... All the toys are
together

Kopp (1994) reflects that here we see the progression of socialization within the child through their response. She suggests that, “at 2 to 3 years, many children argue and often resist parent requests but by 4 years they know what is expected of them” (C. Kopp & Wyr, 1994, p. 31). By the age of four the child expects to be requested to clean up after playing and is more likely to be compliant to this request.

Kopp's Theoretical Framework

Self-regulation means different things at different ages. Here, a literature review concerning preschoolers and self-regulation will be undertaken. This period of development is “critical for the emergence of self-regulatory capacities” (Kochanska, Coy, & Murray, 2001, p. 1106). Therefore, for this study we will be referring to Kopp’s definition of self-regulation as it is most appropriate for this age group. Kopp’s (1982) definition is as follows:

A complex construct, has been variously defined as the ability to comply with a request, to initiate and cease activities according to situational demands, to modulate the intensity, frequency, and duration of verbal and motor acts in social and educational settings, to postpone acting upon a desired object or goal, and to generate socially approved behaviour in the absence of external monitors. (p. 199-200)

Within this definition three main abilities are prominent: the ability to initiate, that is to consider how one starts an activity; the ability to modulate, this would include how one changes their behaviour during an activity with skills such as verbal and motor activities; and thirdly, the ability to cease or stop an activity. This definition highlights how the ability to self-regulate affects many areas of our lives including academic as we learn to study, take notes and read assignments as well as personal effects such as working with co-workers. For preschoolers it would include activities such as being asked to start getting ready for school (initiating), listen and participate during circle

time (modulating) or, being asked to stop playing to come for dinner (ceasing). The life of the preschooler is full of self-regulating challenges as the child tests the limits of their emerging independence.

In the area of self-regulation this study will use Kopp's stages of development as the theoretical framework. Kopp's (1982) stages (p.202), as outlined in table one, stem from the cognitive developmental tradition. This means in developing the stages, Kopp (1987) links the developmental trends with the emergence of self-regulation to children's growing cognitive skills. Therefore, in keeping with the cognitive developmental tradition Kopp's stages are "discontinuous developmental phases, each successive one signifying a qualitative change indicating higher levels of behavior" (C. B. Kopp, 1982, p. 201).

Table 1 Kopp's Phases of Control

Phases	Age	Features	Cognition
Neurophysiological	Birth to two - three months	Modulate arousal, organized patterns of behaviour	None described
Sensorimotor	Three months to months +	Change behaviour in response to events in environment	None described
Control	Twelve to eighteen months +	Awareness of social demands of a situation and initiate, maintain, cease physical acts, communication, etc. accordingly; compliance, self-initiated monitoring	Intentionality, goal-directed behaviour, conscious awareness of action.
Self-Control	Twenty-four months +	Ability to behave in a socially acceptable manner without external monitors	Representational thinking and Recall memory.
Self-Regulation	Thirty-six months +	Ability to meet increasingly difficult situations	Strategy production, consciousness

Adapted from "Antecedents of Self-Regulation: A developmental Perspective," by C. Kopp, 1982, *Developmental Psychology*, 18, p. 202.

The growth of self-regulation is portrayed in five phases beginning from birth and continuing through to three year olds and beyond. From birth to 3 months children are labelled in Kopp's (1982) model as exhibiting Neurophysiological modulation. This phase is defined as children able to modulate arousal and activate patterns of behaviour such as sleeping and waking. The second phase includes children between the ages of about 3 to 9 months and is known as the Sensorimotor modulation phase. This phase is defined by the ability to alter ones behaviour in response to an external stimulus. This may involve events such as reaching for an object. The third phase, Control, develops between 12 and 18 months. Here, the child becomes aware of the social requests of caregivers and is able to initiate, maintain and cease in response to them. Therefore, in this phase the child is able to respond to social requests such as sit down with the aid of caregivers. However, by 24 months in phase four the child is able to behave in accordance with social norms, such as saying please, on their own without the presence of caregivers. This forth phase known as self-control. The fifth and final phase, occurring during the preschool years, is self-regulation. It is defined here as the ability to control with greater flexibility in increasingly demanding situations. Therefore, self-control and self-regulation are differentiated only by degree of difficulty, not by variety. For example, the request of no fighting might be attainable without supervision with one other child for an hour of play in phase four (self-control) is now expected over longer periods of time with more children in phase five (self-regulation).

Together, Kopp's (1982) phases illustrate the transition from external control to internal control. Kopp's (1982) stages describe the emergence of self-regulation and therefore end where self-regulation begins, during the preschool years. Since Kopp's (1982) theoretical work is concerned with this young age group so too is her research. In the next section, we will review some of her research for preschool children among others. This research will help us understand our parents situation as they try to develop self-regulation in their preschoolers.

Self-Regulation and Preschoolers

To understand self-regulation it is necessary to explore the inception of these skills occurring in the preschool years. When reviewing research concerning preschoolers and self-regulation, we soon realize that compliance and conversely, noncompliance becomes the focus of our attention since, "this is what caregivers initially demand" (C. B. Kopp, 1987, p. 35). Compliance is defined as a, "parent-monitored obedience with little indication of internalization" (Feldman & Klein, 2003, p. 680). On the other hand, noncompliance is described as a child who "is not going along with explicit rules even when adults are present" (Chamberlain & Patterson, 1995, p. 213).

Additionally, we realize at this age, particularly one must consider the interaction between caregiver and child in order to understand the subsequent reactions of the child. Therefore, the following researchers investigate interactions between caregiver and child and subsequent compliance or noncompliance of the preschooler as they relate to the development of self-regulation during the preschool years.

The ways in which children express noncompliance develops throughout the preschool years (Kuczynski & Kochanska, 1990; Kuczynski, 1987). Kuczynski & Kochanska's article *Development of Children's Noncompliance Strategies From Toddlerhood to Age 5* was "designed to explore the nature, sources, and consequences of maternal demands upon toddlers" (L. Kuczynski & G. Kochanska, 1990, p. 617). To this end, they observed mother and child interacting in two five to six hours sessions within an apartment supplied with a two-way mirror to allow for videotaping. Each session included various natural activities such as free play, lunch and clean up. These observations were then coded to analyze the function of requests and the child's reaction to these requests. Kuczynski & Kochanska's (1990) found that although the child's goal of non-compliance, to assert one's independence, does not change throughout the preschool years the means in which it is expressed does. They also discovered that "direct defiance, the most obtrusive way of saying *no*, was found to decrease in frequency throughout the toddler and early preschool period, but relatively more skilful forms of expressing resistance, simple refusals, and negotiation, increased with age"(Kalpidou & Rothbaum, 1998; L. Kuczynski & G. Kochanska, 1990, p. 405). Furthermore, they found that they could predict children's behaviour at age five by the quality of the mother's demands she made on her preschool child. Demands which focused on 'do' behaviours and demands which promoted competent behaviours such as chores or helping others predicted greater compliance in the children at the age of five.

This article displays the importance of considering maternal interactions on children's self-regulating skills. However, one could criticize its exclusion of paternal

influences and therefore we are unable to conclude how gender might affect requests of preschoolers. Furthermore, this article also fails to draw from a variety of cultures as only eight of the seventy mothers were of African American descent. Finally, the participant's social economic status is not mentioned and therefore we are unaware how generalizable the findings are.

Gralinski & Kopp (1993) likewise studied the form and function of the rules mothers enforce. The study included seventy-one mothers who filled in a questionnaire in their homes and the laboratory at six-month intervals. The questionnaire contained two parts. The first was two open-ended questions: "what are the things that you insist your child must *not* do and What are the things you insist on or encourage your child to try" (Gralinski & Kopp, 1993, p. 575)? The second part of the questionnaire was a checklist of behaviours for which the parents were asked to tick any items they prohibit or encourage their children to do. This list included items such as not playing with their food and saying please. Both these items are good examples of social-conventional rule requests as they are rules which may vary across settings. Additionally, the parents were asked to rate how their children responded to these requests on a 4-part scale. Gralinski & Kopp (1993) found that preschoolers most often agree to comply when the situation involves safety or peoples' possessions. Gralinski and Kopp (1993) also charted rates of compliance in regards to age and found that "an increase in compliance without reminders from 47% at 30 months to 55% at 48 months. At the same time, their reliance on maternal interventions went down 16% at 30 months to 14% at 48 months" (Gralinski & Kopp, 1993, p. 582). By exploring what rules mothers enforce and why

the study is able to show “overall mothers’ rule behaviours impressively dovetail with young children’s developmental advances” (Gralinski & Kopp, 1993, p. 582).

Unfortunately, both these articles suffer from many of the same shortcomings. For instance, both restricted their study to mothers. Similarly, both drew from a small segment of the population. Gralinski & Kopp (1993) note that their “sample was primarily white and came from middle- to upper- middle-class families” (Gralinski & Kopp, 1993, p. 575). Unfortunately, the high education and personal wealth of these families seriously restrict the generalizability of the entire study. Therefore, studies in the future should involve more diverse participant sampling.

Together, the above research helps us to form a distinction between what would be considered typical noncompliance and atypical noncompliance. A certain level of noncompliance is a healthy indicator of a preschooler asserting their independence (Kuczynski & Kochanska, 1990; Kuczynski, 1987). However, there is a frequency and quality of noncompliance which is expected at certain ages. Kuczynski and Kochanska (1990) found that typically rates of direct defiance decreased throughout early childhood as more skilful forms of resistance increased. (p. 405). Similarly, Gralinski and Kopp (1993) found an increase in compliance and decrease in maternal intervention throughout the preschool years. However, Whiting and Edwards (1988) offer the most concrete perception of what would be considered normal noncompliance during the preschool years citing compliance at 72% for two to three year olds and 79% for four to five year olds studied across twelve cultures (Whiting & Edwards, 1988). All of these studies coincide nicely with Kopp’s (1982) description of self-regulation in

phase five as she describes preschoolers as increasingly able to manage difficult situations (p. 202).

This research illustrates preschoolers as a dynamic group; developing greater self-regulation skills to accommodate their growing desire for autonomy. Similarly, parents seem to be instinctively aware of these changes by delicately requesting more of their children as the year's progress. We see in the preschoolers a "gradual age-related movement from external control to internally mediated compliance" (Gralinski & Kopp, 1993, p. 573). In other words, one of the most important tasks in socialization occurs here, the development of self-regulation.

Social-Conventional Rules

As noted previously, initially in the development of self-regulation caregivers require compliance from preschool children. In this thesis I examined compliance to social-conventional rules. Social-conventional rules are defined as, "actions that are evaluated as contingent on the presence of rules, relative to the social context, and less serious offences" (Smetana, 1981, p. 1333). Therefore, these are rules which, since they are less severe in nature, may differ from setting to setting. Some parents may request that their children not jump on the bed or shout indoors while others may not. In order to provide a framework for understanding the parental perspective and the children they are discussing, a review of the research investigating preschoolers and social-conventional rules is described below.

Several studies have shown children's ability to differentiate between moral rules and social-conventional rules. (Killen, McGlothlin, & Lee-Kim, 2002; Smetana, 1981, 1995). Smetana's (1981) study presented, orally and visually, forty-four

preschoolers with various moral and social-conventional transgressions. They then asked the preschoolers to judge the severity of the transgression by choosing one of four frowning faces. Additionally, they were asked a series of yes or no questions such as, “Would it [the depicted event] be OK if there was no rule about it here? andwhether or not the teacher should punish [the transgressor]” (Smetana, 1981, p. 1334)? In this way, Smetana was not only identifying if preschoolers could differentiate between moral and social-conventional transgressions but also how they felt authority figures should react. Results showed that preschool children were able to discriminate between moral and social-conventional transgressions. Furthermore, when analysing responses regarding punishment she found that, “all conventional items were evaluated as less deserving of punishment than all moral items were” (Smetana, 1981, p. 1335). Therefore, Smetana (1981) shows us that even at preschool’s tender age children can consistently identify between what is moral transgression and what is a social-conventional transgression.

Parental Perspectives

The vast majority of research in the field of self-regulation concerns itself with either the child’s or parent’s behaviour. Little research investigates parental perspectives of their role, and even fewer concerning preschool children and or special needs children (Lichter, 2003; Sperling, 2003). This thesis investigated parental perspectives of their role in developing self-regulation with children having difficulty following social-conventional rule requests. To this end, a brief review of the research considering parental perspectives of their role is outlined below.

The Quebec Longitudinal Study of Child Development (2002) has been studying almost 2,000 families analyzing the parent's perspectives of their role as the child grows from five months to four years of age. Currently, they are able to provide data from the first three rounds of data collection. This would reveal perspectives of parenting at five, seventeen and twenty-nine months. The research investigated four dimensions of parenting perspectives namely: self-efficacy, perception of parental impact, parental coercive behaviours, and parental overprotection. The first two dimensions refer to perceptions of themselves in their role while the last two refer to perceptions of parental actions. Their findings indicate that between the ages of five to twenty-nine months mothers perceived an increase of coercive behaviours but a decrease in overprotective behaviours but they also felt less effective as a parent. However, in contrast, fathers "did not demonstrate a significant change in parental self-efficacy during the period from five to twenty-nine months" (Boivin et al., 2002, p.26).

Magill-Evans (2001) investigated mothers of prenatal children with language deficits which were unrelated to their prenatal status. To unravel the cause of these language problems she studied the social environment of these children considering such factors as: parent-child interaction, perceptions of parenting stress and spousal relationship. She began this research with the expectation of finding the strongest link with parent-child interactions but, the results were to show otherwise. Instead, Magill-Evan's research found parental perceptions of stress to be the most predictive of language development. She speculates that mothers of children with language problems may experience more stress or "mothers who perceive the child to be distractible may provide less frequent conversational interactions that are the basis for language

development” (Magill-Evans, 2001, p.145). These findings are important as they show that investigation into parental perspectives of their role can reveal important links such as parental stress and possible improvement of language development in childhood. However this research, like many in this area, often focused on maternal perceptions to the exclusion of paternal role interpretation. Below is research which investigates the similarities and differences between these groups.

Research examining both maternal and paternal perspectives of their role draws our attention to a few important elements to consider. Halberstadt, Parke, Cassidy, Stifter and Fox’s (1995) research into parental perspectives of expression indicates that mothers “positive expressiveness was associated with greater marital satisfaction and less loneliness, and men’s negative expressiveness was associated with less marital satisfaction and more loneliness” (Halberstadt, Parke, Cassidy, Stifter, & Fox, 1995, p. 100). Therefore, happily married women reported more positive expression toward their family while happily married men reported a decrease in negative expressions. This research again shows the importance of further study in this area as parent’s stress levels were shown to directly effect parental perspectives of positive expressiveness toward the child in their care.

Maurer and Pleck’s (2001) research linked perceptions of parental identity and behaviour. They found that maternal education level had a significantly negative effect their caregiving identity and “mothers’ caregiving identity was significantly predicted by perceived reflected-appraisal” (Maurer & Pleck, 2001). From this study we can begin to understand and appreciate the intricate nature of parental role identity and

perception as we learn that mediating factors such as education and perceived appraisal of their spouse greatly effect their identity as a mother.

Boyer (2005) explored the perceptions of 12 parents and 3 educators of 3-5 year olds. She found that (1) there is a developmental trajectory for the acquisition of self-regulatory skills for children as well as their parents, educators and other adults, (2) synchronous adult-child affect has significant impact on a child's ability to self-regulate, (3) parents and educators clearly articulated child centered and developmentally appropriate guidelines for nurturing self-regulation in preschool children but were still worried. These findings indicate that parents and educators are developmentally growing in their own self-regulating skills as they guide preschool children and that this growth can promote more synchronous adult-child affect. However, educators and parental self-efficacy is still a concern when caring for 3-5 year olds (Boyer, 2005).

Holloway, Suzuki, Yamamoto and, Behrens (2005) continue our understanding of the complex nature of maternal role perception as they investigated Japanese mothers' self-efficacy in relation to their role as parents. They discovered that "mothers with higher self-efficacy were more likely to report positive childhood memories, $r = .35, p < .001$. They also felt more satisfied with the support received from their husbands, $r = .26, p < .01$, and other relatives $r = .26, p < .01$ " (Holloway, Suzuki, Yamamoto, & Behrens, 2005, p. 67). This research shows the link between maternal self-efficacy and social relations, past and present. This study like many, investigate parents with normally developed children however, research with parents of special needs children may advance these findings.

Lichter's work (2003) investigated mothers' perspectives concerning their role raising preschool children with developmental disabilities. Through in depth interviews with these mothers, she found themes emerging of "adjustment of expectations, views on uncertainty, control, blame, attachment, relational self-construal, relationships, values, sense of purpose, empowerment, needs and the future" (Lichter, 2003, p. viii). Lichter's work provides us with a look inside the heart and mind of the parent, beyond their actions. Here, we begin to realise the emotional weight of raising children with special needs and the importance of being aware and reactive to the parents well being. Sperling's (2003) work also investigated parental perspectives with special needs children but she then compared these views to parents of normally developed children. She found "parents of special needs children rate parenting behaviors associated with general welfare and protection and sensitivity as most important, whereas parents of typical children deem education the most important characteristic" (Sperling, 2003, p. vii). Additionally, parents raising children with special needs rated 'responsively' and 'sensitivity' as more important than parents of typical children. This research shows us there are clear differences in the emotional response to parenting children with special needs than parent of normally developed children.

Summary

In this chapter, research investigating children's self-regulatory behaviour and parental perspectives of their role as parent was presented. We learn that as the child learns to self-regulate their growing skills contribute to the development of autonomy and internalization. Self-regulation is seen in the behaviour children display as they react to social-conventional rule requests as outlined in Kopp's (1982) five phases of

control. In phase four, and increasingly in phase five, children are able to behave in accordance with social norms on their own. Social norms are the social-conventional requests caregivers are requesting children to follow. Additionally, a review was undertaken to investigate research into the parental perspective of their role. Here, we discover some of the many factors which influence how parents perceive their role as parent. This thesis, unlike the previous studies, will help provide research connecting self-regulation and social-conventional rules from a parental perspective.

Chapter three will discuss the methodology which will be utilized for this research. Following this will be a relation of the results of this research in chapter four and a discussion of those results in chapter five.

Chapter 3 - Methodology

Introduction

This study investigates how parents of preschoolers perceive their role in supporting the development of self-regulation. Particularly, parents of preschoolers having difficulty following social-conventional rules were examined in this thesis. In this chapter, I articulate the research approach which was implemented contributing to the study of self-regulation. Additionally, I explain how the larger research study, from which my data was derived, was carried out in order to ensure academic rigor. An examination of the general approach, research design, sampling of participants, data instrumentation, data collection, and finally, data analysis is presented below.

Qualitative Approach

Since I endeavour to capture the parent's perspective, as they reflect on the development of self-regulation, this study is designed within a qualitative paradigm. In line with qualitative research this data has been conducted, "...in natural settings using mostly verbal descriptions, resulting in stories and case studies rather than statistical reports" (McMillan & Wergin, 2002, p. 4). As a result, the use of instruments such as interviews and observations enable the researcher to disclose a social reality of the participants. This is done in the belief "...that individuals construct social reality in the form of meanings and interpretations, and that these constructions are transitory and situational..." (Gay, 2000, p. 555). As result, qualitative research is able explore

perceptions of the participants in a way which is simply not possible in quantitative research.

Research Design

Considering the nature of this thesis a case study research design is the most apt choice for this topic. A case study can be defined as, "... an in-depth analysis of one or more 'bounded systems,' such as events, programs, communities, settings, schools, individuals, and social groups" (McMillan & Wergin, 2002, p. 6). In this thesis, the 'bounded systems' are parents of preschool children having trouble following social-conventional rules. Case studies endeavour to "... understand the one phenomenon: the entity or process" (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001, p. 398). In this thesis the phenomenon under investigation is parental perceptions of their role in supporting self-regulation with reference to children having difficulty following social-conventional rules. Case studies can either be single case or collective. Stake (1995) and Creswell (1998) describe collective case studies as the study of multiple cases therefore increasing generalizability and allowing analysis of patterns across a variety of participants. Anderson (2000) refers to this generalizability as external validity and internal validity as "relates to issues of truthfulness of responses, accuracy of records, or the authenticity of historical artifacts" (Anderson, 2000, p.13). Here, I examine "groups of individuals who have had a similar experience but may not be interacting with each other" (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001, p. 398). Furthermore, Stake (1995) and Creswell (1998) define studying participants from a variety of locations, in this case a variety of preschools, as a multi-site case study. Case studies provide detailed descriptions of the setting or settings using multiple data sets. This information

provides the reader with a portrait of the cases while still maintaining participant anonymity. In order to create this context interviews, field notes and preschool information pamphlets will be utilized.

Sampling of Participants

For this study, the self-regulation team began by recruiting a total of seven preschools in a mid-sized city western Canada to partake in the study and then I sought the approval of each individual parent. The initial step was calling the preschools to provide brief explanation of the study. For this task a phone script, shown in appendix A, was developed for the study. At this time, we asked if the graduate research assistants could arrange a brief explanatory meeting with either the director or the preschool teacher and drop off an letter of introduction (seen in appendix B). Some preschools instead arranged a presentation of the study to be given to their parents and directors at their general meeting. To increase validity, preschools across a wide range of socio-economic statuses, parent co-operative and parent non co-operative as well as religious and non-religious preschools were chosen in rural and urban settings. The preschools were located in churches, community centres, or elementary schools. They were a combination of full and half-day programs, mixed and separate age groups although similarly, all the preschools were co-ed. For my thesis, I chose seven participants from seven preschools in order to increase generalizability and help maintain confidentiality.

Once the preschool agreed to participate in the study arrangements were made to come to the school and approach the parents individually to sign the consent form, shown in appendix C. The graduate research assistants visited the preschools during

pick up and drop off time to explain and answer questions to each parent about the study. At this time, they were asked to sign a consent form or to take it home to review before signing. Since the consent form was two pages in length, parents were asked to initial the first page and sign the second. Both pages were carbon copies so that the parent would be able to keep a copy. Mothers or fathers were welcome to participate in the interviews. Demographic sheets were administered prior to the interview, and can be found in appendix D.

Purposeful sampling was used to select participants from this larger study. Purposeful sampling is a, “strategy to choose small groups or individuals likely to be knowledgeable and informative about the phenomenon of interest; selection of cases without needing or desiring to generalize to all such cases” (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001, p.598). To select parents a purposeful citation based sampling selection model was used. Seven parents will be selected using the following criterion:

1. The parent was a member of one of the seven preschools which agreed to partake in the study.
2. The parent agreed to participate in the study and signed an informed consent.
3. The parent described their child during the interview as having trouble following social-conventional rules. This will be identified with reference to questions three, five, seven, nine, and eleven since they ask the parent to consider how the child reacts to social-conventional rules requests. Using Whiting and Edwards (1988) as a guide for what is considered normal compliance levels in preschoolers, parents who described their child as

compliant 40 percent or less will be considered for this thesis. This translates to a maximum of level of compliancy described at two out of the five questions.

Instrumentation

Pilot Study

Before the parent interviews were carried out a pilot interview was conducted to ensure reliability and validity. Here, the questions and probes were read to the parent but rather than answering the questions the parent was asked the following: are the questions clear, can you answer them, are they possible to answer within 30 to 60 min and, are the probes helpful? Parent feedback from the pilot interview helped us to refine the questions. For example, the word 'holistic' in question number seven was removed and replaced with 'with its whole body' to increase clarity. The pilot study and the literature support the need for multiple data sources to ensure trustworthiness and authenticity. Therefore, sources such as interviews, school documentation and field notes were utilized.

Interviews

In keeping with the qualitative case study tradition, this study employed a demographic sheet and interview questions (please see appendix E) in its use of instrumentation. The open ended questions, developed by Dr. Boyer (2005), were designed so that the participants could "answer freely in their own terms rather than selecting from a fixed set of responses" (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2005) Additionally, open ended questions creates a "conversational manner" while still "following a certain set of questions derived from the case study protocol." (Yin, 2003) The questions were

formulated around Kopp's (1982) definition of self-regulation and were accompanied with probes such as 'what does the child say?' in order to capture the complete experience. Questions 1, 2, 13, 14, 15 and 16 will not be used for this thesis, as they do not deal directly with the compliance of social-conventional rules or parental perspectives. Therefore, of the twelve questions being used for this thesis, five questions will be used for identification of preschoolers having difficulty following social-conventional rules and seven will be used to analyze parental perceptions of their role supporting self-regulation.

Additionally, the interview questions were formulated to be supportive of internal consistency. For example, question nine asks 'how does the child behave when you tell her or him to stop an inappropriate behaviour?' The question is then rephrased slightly in order to check for internal consistency as well as to gain more information from the participant by asking in number eleven 'how does the child behave when you tell her or him to stop an activity in which they have been told before not to engage?'

School Documentation

Collecting documents helps to gain a greater understanding of the case as well as position the case within its natural setting (Creswell, 1998). In this thesis, preschool pamphlets will be used to help describe the setting(s). These documents help the researcher understand the schools' "official perspectives on programs, the administrative structure, and other aspects of the organization" (Bogdan R. & Biklen, 1992, p. 128). This included information such as parenting workshops provided by the preschool, the preschool's educational philosophy and, a description of the preschool

setting. This knowledge in turn helped me to reveal and describe more information regarding my participating parents.

Field Notes

Field notes help the researcher fill in the missing gaps since, “the tape recorder misses the sights, smells, impressions, and extra remarks said before and after the interview” (Bogdan R. & Biklen, 1992, p. 111). Bogdan and Biklen (1992) divide the content of field notes into two distinct parts: descriptive and reflective (p. 112).

Descriptive fields are a record of “what has occurred in the field” (Bogdan R. & Biklen, 1992). This would include details such as descriptions of participants and activities taking place in the field. Reflective field notes on the other hand are a researcher’s reflection of the experience. Therefore, reflective field notes are far more subjective as opposed to the objective nature of descriptive field notes. Both reflective and subjective field notes will be used in this thesis.

Data Collection

This thesis will use multiple methods of data collection taken from the larger study of seven preschools including: interviews, field notes, demographic sheets and school documentation. This process of data collection included four steps. Firstly, we recruited preschools to partake in the study by calling and dropping off information packages to interested preschools. Secondly, we sought the consent of each parent by talking to the parents at drop off and pick up time. Thirdly, scheduled each parent for an interview and at this time they filled out a demographic sheet.

In each school, interviews were completed randomly through the class list in order to accommodate the participant's schedule. For confidentiality and anonymity reasons, each parent and child was assigned a number which was recorded on all data. Most of the interviews took place during preschool hours, in a separate room close to the preschool arranged by the early childhood directors but also home and places of work were areas the graduate research assistants travelled to in order to interview the participant. Except in extraordinary circumstances, the child was not present during the interview although siblings often were provided with toys nearby. On average, the interviews were thirty minutes to forty minutes. Before each interview the graduate research assistants read to the participant the disclaimer which appeared at the beginning of the demographic sheet (see Appendix D).

The interviews were used in two ways. Firstly, to identify parent's who describe their child as having trouble following social-conventional rules and secondly, to analyse parental perception's of their role in supporting self-regulation. To identify parents of children having difficulty following social-conventional rule requests I considered the parents answers to questions three, five, seven, nine, and eleven. These questions ask parents how the child reacts to five various social-conventional rules requests. For example, question number three asks the parent how their child reacts while doing an activity they do not want to do? Whiting and Edwards (1988) indicate that atypical noncompliance is identified by the frequency of the child's response to social-conventional requests. They consider compliance rates of 72% for two to three year olds and 79% for four to five year olds normal. Since this thesis used only five social-conventional scenarios I considered parents who describe their children as

compliant to the five different social-conventional scenarios at 40 percent or less translating to a maximum of 2 out of the 5 questions. Since parents were asked to describe their child's typical reaction to these scenarios, it produced a fairly accurate description of the child.

All the interviews from the larger study have been transcribed with the use of a transcription machine. Each interview was transcribed word for word. The transcriptions were set up to increase usability and clarity. Therefore, each page was double-spaced and the speaker was identified in bold type by either RA (Research Assistant) or Parent. Each page was numbered, as was every line to ease referencing. Each transcription contained a header with the information: parent number, tape number, school number, date of interview. Therefore, if a page were to be separated it can be easily traced through page number and header and returned to its rightful place.

Fourthly, throughout the above, field notes and preschool documentation were collected. In order to remember the details of an interview or field experience field notes were written soon after the experience. These are recorded on a word-processed document and accompanied with the date, school and participant number. Upon entering a school, documents such as codes of conduct were collected by the graduate research assistants. Using multiple data sources helped to enhance validity as well as provide rich descriptions of the settings.

In order to address the issue of stability of comments over time numerous steps were taken. Firstly, the interview questions and probes were standardized, ten hours of training was completed, rapport with participants was established before the interview, field notes were utilized to ensure stability of comments and, member checking was

completed by my supervisor comparing the interview transcripts with the focus groups transcripts.

Data Analysis

To analyze the interview questions Bogdan and Biklen's (2003) model will be used. Bogdan and Biklen's model contains the following procedures. After transcriptions are complete, the researcher ceases to continue for a short period of time to reflect on the global impressions of the data. During this time the researcher will record their thoughts in a research analysis journal. The researcher will then read transcripts without coding to create a deeper appreciation of data and once again write in their journal. Next, the researcher identifies the preliminary coding categories within the data. These are noted directly onto photocopies of the transcripts. The researcher then cuts out these categories and sorts them into the code folder. To accommodate for multiple categories multiple photocopies of the transcripts were made. Every piece was be labelled with participant number, page number and question number. The researcher then examines the coding families for potential themes. If a topic appears in at least three participants, it will be considered a theme. These themes are recorded on cue cards which are accompanied by quotes and participant number. The final step is to create sub-categories by analyzing the identified themes within each of the broader categories developed by Bogdan and Biklin. Once this is complete the categories, themes, and codes are presented in tables for easy viewing. In order to help evaluate consistency my supervisor member checked the interview content with corresponding information provided in the focus groups.

Summary

In this chapter we explored through what methodological means the research would be answered. In order to gain insight into the perceptions of the parents, this study is constructed around a qualitative research design. Furthermore, under the umbrella of the qualitative framework a case study has been selected since all selected parents have children who have trouble following social-conventional rules. This chapter also discussed the particulars of the study including a review of the sampling of participants, data instrumentation, data collection and data analysis. Here we learned that interviews, school documentation and fieldnotes will be used in the data analysis which follow Bogdan and Biklin's analysis procedure. Chapter four will relay the results of this study while chapter five will discuss the results.

Chapter 4 – Results

Introduction

In chapter four I will relate the results which have transpired in the data analysis. The interviews for the seven participants have been analyzed using Bogdan and Biklen's (1992) approach. The participants' real names have been replaced with pseudonyms in order to protect their identity. The chapter will begin with a brief overview of participant's profiles. Following this, categories, clusters and themes which have arisen from the interviews will be reviewed. The chapter will end with a summary of the findings found within the data analysis.

Participant Profiles

Jackie is a thirty-seven year old mental health professional. She has two children; the preschooler is four years old and an older girl. Jackie is separated from her spouse and identified her children as a bi-racial. Jackie's children go to a preschool servicing a district of low social-economic status. This is a religious school containing childcare for a range of ages.

Cynthia's child attended the same preschool as Jackie. Cynthia was a married mother of a three year old. She was forty and working as an administrative assistant. She identified herself as Caucasian. My field-notes for this interview note that the mother had spoken to the Early Childhood Educator concerning her child's behaviour.

Betty had three young boys. The preschooler was the middle child at three years and two months. Betty identified her family as Caucasian. She was a married thirty-seven-year old stay at home mother. Her husband worked in geology. The following

field-notes were recorded shortly after the interview. "A younger sibling was in the room at the time of interview." Betty's child attended a high social-economic, co-op preschool for which Betty was required to help out at on a regular basis.

Ruby is a former mental health professional who now stays at home looking after her children. She has two children. Her preschooler is four year old boy and the sibling is a younger girl. She is thirty-five, married and her husband is in broadcasting. She identified the family as Caucasian. Her children attended a parent co-op preschool where the parents are required to take turns helping out as well as attend monthly parenting workshops. The preschool ran half-day programs in the morning and afternoon with both boys and girls.

Lisa is the mother of two children, the preschooler was five years old at the time of interview. Lisa was a married thirty-eight year old and worked in the dental health profession while her husband worked in the auto industry. She identified her family as Caucasian. Lisa's child attended a high social-economic, co-op preschool. As a co-op, Lisa was required to help out at the preschool on a regular basis.

Michelle was a stay at home mother of three children. The preschooler was four years and eleven months, while the other children were in their teens. She was married and her husband worked as a freelance consultant. She identified her family as Caucasian and particularly of Scottish and English descent. Michelle's child attended a high social-economic, co-op preschool where Michelle helped out at regular intervals.

Rose was a married stay at home mother of two children. Her preschooler was three years old; her second child was older. Rose was thirty-seven years old at the

time of the interview. She identified her family as Caucasian and her husband was a health care provider. She too sent her children to a co-op preschool where the parents are required to take turns helping out at the preschool and attend a workshop on parenting issues monthly. As well, it ran half-day programs in the morning and afternoon with both boys and girls. The school had classes for three years or four and five year olds.

Categories, Clusters and Themes

This thesis seeks to find out how parents perceive their role in developing self-regulation with particular regard to social-conventional rules. The participating parents have preschoolers who are having difficulty following social-conventional rules. In answering this question, I have followed Bogdan and Biklen's (1992) analysis process of interviews and broken them down into categories. These categories were then broken down further into clusters and finally within each of these clusters are themes. The data revealed three main categories from the seven participants: Attitude and Outlook, Instructing and Approach to Role. Each category has two to three clusters containing multiple themes. A theme was considered valid if three out of the seven participants commented on the same theme. This translates into about 43% of the participants. In this way, I was able to strike a balance between themes that were salient to the participants well as fairly prominent across the participants. The table below displays the categories in this thesis as well as the clusters found within each.

Table 2 Categories and Clusters

Categories	Attitude and Outlook	Instructing	Approach to Role
Clusters	Uncertainties	Enforcing Rules	Changing Role
	Positive Emotions	Prevention Techniques	Power to Influence
		Reprimands	

Category One: Attitude and Outlook

Category one was labelled Attitude and Outlook. Within this category there are two clusters: (a) Uncertainties and (b) Positive Emotions. Within the cluster of 'Uncertainties' are two themes. Within 'Positive Emotions' is only one. However, since this theme seems to fit best within its own cluster and no other theme emerged in this cluster it stands alone. Below, in table three, are all of the clusters and themes within this category one.

Table 3 Category One: Attitude and Outlook

Category		Attitude and Outlook
Clusters	Uncertainties	Positive Emotions
Themes	Frustration	Successful
	Ineffectiveness	
	Concern for Future	

Cluster One: Uncertainties

In the interviews parents voiced both positive and negative attitudes and outlooks with regard to their parental role developing self-regulation in their preschool child who had difficulty following social-conventional rule requests. Here, in cluster one, parents voiced frustration, ineffectiveness and concern for the future with regard to their role in developing self-regulation.

Frustration

In this theme parents shared their emotional frustrations in trying to enforce social-conventional rules with their preschoolers. Four out of the seven participants expressed frustration in some form or another. When Rose was asked how she helps her child learn to self-regulate she stated simply, "I tend to get frustrated.....you know that's so hard." As Ruby described how she tried to get her child to dress himself every morning she stated, "he'll deliberately fall over so that's even harder." Jackie described how she tried to get her preschooler to stay close to her as she did her shopping explaining, "sometimes he'll run... especially when we're out in public I find, which is

definitely frustrating.” Jackie also expressed frustration as she insisted on table manners saying, “he sometimes he just laughs at me, he does that, starts getting deviant and it bothers me especially if it is at the dinner table or something like that.” Betty expressed frustration six times throughout her interview. For example, she describes the scene as she tries to get her preschooler to stop an activity as,

because I’ve got the three, it is at times challenging and I think that is part of the problem is that with all the chaos going on and me trying to cook and the phone ringing and the other two kids probably being part of the problem, it’s hard....”

In this quote Betty speaks how frustrating it is to try and develop self-regulation in the mist of life’s daily challenges. Later she explains how her role can be overwhelming sometimes. “I don’t get a break – ever. I think that sometimes my own frustration level, not necessarily with the kids but sometimes in reaction to stuff the kids are doing uh gets a little high.”

Ineffectiveness

Another experience frequently expressed by the participants was struggling with their preschooler to enforce a social-conventional rule. This perception of ineffectiveness in their role was expressed by five of the seven participants. As Jackie spoke about her frustration trying to get her son to stay close to her during shopping she then went on to speak of her inability to get him to stay. “I can’t really do anything right, I’m not going to run after him in the store.” Cynthia shared this concern of not being able to enforce a rule as she spoke of trying to get her preschooler to watch

television only after she had eaten breakfast. “Well, uh, sometimes I’ll try and hold out and say, ‘no your not gonna get your Dora show until you eat.’ But I don’t always, can’t always do it because she whines so much I give in.” The parents in this theme expressed a desire to enforce the rule but could not find effective means to do so. Betty concurred when explaining how she tried to get her preschooler to stop an activity.

He completely ignores me. It is like he doesn’t hear me at all and you know like I could be right beside him whispering in his ear and he won’t hear me uhm.....you know if I come in and say we need to turn this computer off or you need to turn off your video...he’ll go ‘no, I’m want to watch bla, bla, bla.

Betty’s story illustrates how even though she is directly instructing her preschooler to stop an activity, her preschooler defers her outright. Similarly, Ruby expressed times when her role became difficult and ineffective. “Even if I’ve said to him ‘well, unless you, you know, when we finish cleaning this up then you can do this,’ he’ll still be slow to do it and there’ll be lots of throwing the toys into the box, fairly forcefully.” Ruby, like the other mothers in this theme, share how they sometimes feel ineffective in their role due to their inability to successfully enforce a social-conventional rule.

Concern for the Future

The third cluster in category one is concern for the future. Here, parents spoke hopefully that in the future their children’s ability to comply with social-conventional rules would improve over time. They expressed a desire that in their parental role they

would be able to guide them to this success. With regard to this theme Rose describes how she hopes that a particular strategy she uses will work with repetition. "I feel, if I keep removing her from a situation where her behaviour is, is not okay, I'm hoping that she's gonna figure that out that when she behaves that way something is not right."

While describing how she requires her preschooler to practise holding and using the crayon in preparation for school Michelle voices some concerns about his attitude.

"He's not very good at compromising, which is something that I would like to help him with because it's pretty hard to go through life like that." Finally, Betty also mentioned anticipating improved self-regulation in her preschooler in the coming years. "So I'm hoping one of these days we see all these seeds come to something, start growing."

Betty continued by explaining how she hopes that through repetition her child will grow in his ability to self-regulate in the future.

Yeah, so like I think I mentioned to you I'm hoping that the whole repetition....will also become part of the everyday routine. He'll just know oh I shouldn't do this without having to stand on top of him and saying 'stop that.'

All these mothers share their hope for their child's success in the future. Here, Betty reveals the knowledge that self-regulation is the ability regulate behaviour individually and the concern which then occurs knowing that her son currently is unable to do this.

Cluster Two: Positive Emotions

Just as parents had been open in revealing moments of frustration and difficulties they also discussed moments where they felt successful in their role developing self-regulation to social-conventional rules. In stark contrast to cluster one here, parents expressed the joys of parenting.

Success

Three out of the seven participants discussed moments of pure delight, when they felt successful in their parental role. Here, the participants voiced success in their role developing compliance to social-conventional rules. In this case she wanted her child to hang up his own coat when he entered the house. Finally, her child was able to self-regulate himself regarding this task and, consequently, Betty felt successful in her role as a parent.

I tell him to hang up his own coat which is for – I mean it seems like it is an easy task but I think it is tricky for kids at that age cause we don't have hooks we have hangers. You have to put you coat on a hanger and put the hanger in and he's maybe attempt in the last few days – so even though it is a fairly easy task it makes me excited. Wow, one less coat I don't have to do.....I'm still doing cart wheels and jumping jacks every time I see him do it.

In this story Betty explains to us what success *feels* like as a parent. She empathized with her preschooler at the physical difficulty of the task and celebrated his success, as

well as her own. Ruby also discussed moments of success in having her child dress himself in the morning saying, “When he wishes to do something, all those things get done, with out even any request on my part and so that’s great.” Cynthia also shared her excitement as she overcomes a problem she and her preschooler were struggling with. While grocery shopping she wanted her preschooler not to choose items which were not on the shopping list and felt a previous experience where her child didn’t get what she wanted helped her to enforce the rule of sticking to the shopping list.

But the other day, she was at Thirfty’s with me
and she was doing something again - doing a
whirl or something and I said to her put that down
now, or it’s gonna be like the Barney tooth paste.
Whoop, she just dropped it right. She remember
now, I can use the Barney tooth paste.

Cynthia’s story illustrates a moment of learning for both the child and the parent. The child has learned she will not get what she wants at the grocery store if she doesn’t follow instructions. The mothers has learned that although punishing her child during the last visit to the store was difficult she know has the power to successfully implement this social-conventional rule.

Category Two: Instructing

In category one parents expressed how they felt in their role as they tried to enforce social-conventional rules with their preschoolers. Category two however explores what methods parents perceived as important as they tried to enforce social-conventional rules. Within this category we find three clusters: enforcing, prevention

techniques and, reprimands. The clusters and themes for category two are listed below in table four.

Table 4 Category Two: Instructing

Category		Instructing	
Clusters	Enforcing Rules	Prevention Techniques	Reprimands
Themes	Reasoning	Warnings	Negation
	Staying Firm	In Advance	Removal
		Empathy	

Cluster One: Enforcing Rules

Enforcing Rules is the first cluster in category one. In this cluster parents spoke of the ways in which they attempted to enforce the social-conventional rules set out in their home. There are two themes which appeared under this cluster: Reasoning and Staying Firm.

Reasoning

Five out of the seven participants mentioned reasoning at least once as a method to enforcing social-conventional rules. Rose states this as a method she often uses in her role developing self-regulation. She saw reasoning as an important method to use with her preschooler.

So I always try to do that, I always try....to give them a reason why instead of just saying no. They don't respond, my kids anyways, to 'no, stop doing that.' I have to say 'you can't do that because it's not safe or because we need to go or whatever.'

Here, Rose explained how she found reasoning to be a more effective means of enforcing social-conventional rules than simple saying 'no.' In Lisa's example of reasoning she notes the kind of things she would include in her reasoning beginning with a rationale for the child and continuing with her expectations.

I will first explain why we're doing the activity.
Then I'll explain my expectations, that I realize she doesn't want to do it but I still expect her to try and help me with whatever it might be.....the circumstances, the other people that are involved, or just basically giving a description of why she's being asked to stop.

Lisa's example explains not only how she enforcing social-conventional rules, by reasoning, but also what form and function the reasoning would take has she talks to her preschooler. Michelle states that reasoning is her first line of defence when trying to enforce social-conventional rules. "I think you try reasoning first." When asked if she

could provide an example she responded by explaining how she requires her preschooler to practice reading every night and how she uses reasoning to encourage her child to comply with this social-conventional task.

Okay, lets say... well I'm trying to get him to finish....to learn to read a little bit. So we read a page or two every night, out of....out of a progressive system of readers from England. And so.....you know, I just say 'I know you're really tired (child's name), but you know, if you can go through this page....then you know, it will really help. You'll be able to read all those books you want to read, or the Batman comic.....And then I'll try and get him to realize that if he can read to Mummy then he can read to (ECE's name) and that might be really cool.

Unlike, Lisa's description of reasoning Michelle's reasoning takes on the form of motivating her child by explaining the happiness and pride she will get out of completing this social-conventional task. Likewise, Betty also stated that she too used reasoning first with her preschooler. "Well, I always start with a reason uhm yeah I always try to start with reason, I try to explain why we need to do it if he is resisting." Jackie said simply, "I explain, explain, explain, explain." However, she did go further

into how she would approach reasoning with her preschooler. Like Lisa, Jackie includes her expectations and rationale for the rule request but unlike Lisa Jackie explains her feelings regarding the task to her preschooler.

Sometimes and now more and more what's happening is that I'll, it depends on what it is and sometimes I will explain it all and give my reasons and my feelings and everything about what he's done and what needs to be done, our responsibilities in the family and that kind of thing and then I'll leave it and sometimes he'll do it, sometimes he won't.

Jackie's example stands out in that she ends by admitting that reasoning does not always work to help her enforce the social-conventional rule. However, she also states the quote by stating it is a strategy she is using more and more.

Staying Firm

Three of the seven participants mentioned the importance of standing their ground with a noncompliant preschooler. "You know, if it's really an essential thing for him to do for some reason, you know, I just won't back down, like brushing his teeth" stated Michelle. Cynthia told of a story with her preschooler in the supermarket in which she stood her ground even in the face of a distressed preschooler. Here, the social-conventional rule request would be manners, particularly waiting patiently for her mother.

So I had the Barney tooth paste in my hand I'm looking at the package and she said what are you doing, what are you doing. I said just a minute mummy needs to look at this she said, 'No!' Really mean like that, and I just looked at her and said oh, I was gonna buy you this Barney tooth paste but you said no so it's going back. I put it back. She just screamed her head off – just screamed – about 10 minutes.

Cynthia's story portrays not only an example of 'staying firm' but also provides us with the atmosphere of emotions parents experience when they decide to stay firm in their rule requests. Interestingly, Ruby switched the term non-compliance to describe herself rather than her preschooler when describing how she stands her ground against requests to bend the rules. "I think he.... well, there's times when he'll try to convince me that he should be able to watch more television, or be able to play with the toys longer, or not get dressed because he doesn't feel like getting dressed. But I think it actually just comes down to my non-compliance with what he wants."

Cluster Two: Prevention Techniques

Within this cluster parents spoke about how they tried to prepare their preschooler to follow social-conventional rules before the need to follow them had arisen. The various types of prevention techniques used by the parents fell into three themes: Warnings, In Advance and, Empathy.

Warnings

Four of the seven participants mentioned warnings as a prevention technique they used. Here, parents were attempting to prepare their children to stop a behaviour. The parents in this theme explained how they used this method to help developing compliance to social-conventional rules. Michelle stated this is often a technique she begins with when enforcing social-conventional rules. "You then maybe start with a warning." Betty recalled she felt when she used this type of instruction she was fairly successful. "Most of the time when I come in and say 'I gave you the warning and now it is time and can you turn off the TV for me.' Uhm, most of the time he's pretty good about following through." Rose concurred explaining that giving her preschooler a warning allowed her child time to decide how to respond to the request.

Well, I would probably say that I would have to give her, in other words, in some cases I just give her another warning. I'll give her another minute to decide to put whatever she is doing away. To move on I'll just counting down the time.

Rose's example explains how she uses counting down as a method of warning her child. By counting down the preschooler knows the task must be complete by the time her mother reaches zero. Lisa was able to identify transitions as particularly difficult for her preschooler. Particularly she found her preschooler had difficulty when asked to

stop playing at a play date. Therefore, she has discovered that giving her child a warning ahead of time helped.

With her problem with transition, play-dates have been a big issue in the past where she doesn't want to leave. She's having a lot of fun, and I come in and say, 'time to go,' and she'll flip. She doesn't want to leave. So, before that play-date, I'll explain, 'I'll be back at such and such a time. At that time, we'll have to go because we have other things to do. And I want you to try to understand that, you know, it will be time to go.'

In Advance

In this theme parents talked about how they tried to prevent non-compliance from occurring in the first place by laying out the ground rules ahead of time. This was used to prepare children to *do* an activity in a particular way in contrast to 'Warnings' where parents were preparing children to stop an activity. Three of the seven participants reflected that they used this practice. Jackie explained that as a mother she tried hard to foresee situations which may generate non-compliance. "I try to anticipate when situations will be difficult, when we go to a store or or stuff like that - what he needs to do. I try to lay things out for him." Therefore, Jackie would explain to her child before going on an outing how she was to behave. Betty agreed explaining how she would prepare her child to comply with social-conventional rules in advance of the situation occurring.

So we talk about it before we go somewhere, we talk about you know, I ask him what are the rules....So you know, I try to, you know, cause I know how he is in these situations I try to forestall some of the issues by talking about them before hand, which sometimes works. Yeah, at least he knows.

This type of preparation was also mentioned in regard to safety. Michelle explained how when helping her preschooler ride her bike she was enforcing social-conventional rules.

So riding his bicycle, you know, I have to talk to him about when people are approaching that 'Do you remember (child's name), what might happen? You should get off your bike and be very careful with people there.'I think it's really important to help them anticipate because their judgment is not very good.

Michelle, like the other mothers in this theme, share how this strategy relies on foresight and planning. The mother must be able to anticipate potential problems the child might encounter as well as how she would recommend her child to handle these situations. Additionally, the mother must take time out of her busy schedule to prepare her child 'in advance of the situation.

Empathy

Five of the seven participants perceived empathy as an important part of their role in developing self-regulation to social-conventional rules. The parents in this groups explained how they felt either teaching or showing empathy towards their child was a preventative measure for increasing compliance to a social-conventional rule request. In this way, they felt that a more empathic child would be instinctually more compliant.

For example, Ruby explained she wanted her preschooler to understand, “that, you know, how would you feel if someone was to do something you didn’t like, how does that feel?” Betty explained her motive for teaching empathy and why she felt it was an important aspect of her role. “If nobody has ever told you to be careful of other peoples feelings then how would you know, why would you know if you’re, if you’re not a really intuitive person. I think it needs to be taught.” Lisa agreed saying, “I try to explain the other person’s perspective, and try to have her understand how the other person may feel. And yeah, in a lot of cases, it’s her brother.” When asked to provide an example Lisa responded that used this tactic when trying to get her preschooler to help her out at home.

Well, I would ask her....how would she feel if I said, ‘no I don’t want to do that,’ or ‘no, I’m bored or tired – I’m not going to help you.’ I think I spend a lot of time trying to have her understand my perspective and where I’m coming from. So

it's basically how I approach it – trying to explain to her how I feel, and why I want the help.

Cleaning up around the house is a good example of a social-conventional rule as not all homes would require their preschooler to do so. Above, Lisa explained how she used empathy to encourage her preschooler to comply with the rule request by explaining how she felt to her preschooler. Jackie and Rose spoke about how they showed empathy toward their preschooler by identifying their child's emotions as they worked together to try and be compliant to a social-conventional rule.

I talk to them so I let him know that I see when he's getting under control whenever I see you're getting very excited and it's hard for you to concentrate, it is hard for you to listen when you're excited, it is hard for you to listen when you are tired.

Jackie's quote helps us to understand how she speaks to her preschooler and what kinds of emotions she might identify to her preschooler in order to help her complete the task required. Similarly, Rose explained how she too identified her preschooler's emotions while trying to enforce a social-conventional rule. Again, below Rose uses the example of trying to get her preschooler to practice holding and using crayons in preparation for school.

Yeah, well for that example that I used with colouring it happens almost on a daily basis but I like to get her to keep doing that just so that she knows how to use the crayon and hold those objects in her hand. But I would just say 'it looks like you're frustrated with colouring, why don't we do something else like doing a puzzle.

Therefore, mothers in this theme used empathy in two different ways to encourage compliance. One way empathy was used was to identify their emotions to the preschooler as Lisa did. The other method was to identify the child's emotions to the preschooler. However, both tactics help the preschooler understand the emotional affect of their actions.

Cluster Three: Reprimands

In this cluster parents spoke of how they responded to a preschooler who was noncompliant to a social-conventional rule with various forms of reprimands. Their responses lead to the formation of two distinct themes: Negation and removal.

Negation

Here, parents explained how they perceived negation as important in their role developing self-regulation. Particularly, parents discussed how they tried to get their child to stop being non-compliant by either verbally or physically nullifying their child's behaviour. Four of the seven participants mentioned this tactic. For example, Cynthia simply told her child. "Stop banging that sock of money on the wall." Or, as

Rose reacted to her child saying, "I would just look her in the eye and say you have got to stop doing this." Betty explained that this simple and direct means of instruction helped her child focus on her. "This guy I really physically need to get in there and pick him up and you know and make him focus on my face and say, stop it." Similarly, Jackie explains how she would use this approach with her child while trying to enforce the amount of television viewing time.

Well, okay for example, if its.... we have to turn the TV off, because there's no more TV, we're going to do something else. If he's completely not complying, I'll just go turn the television off and turn the converter off so you can't actually watch anything. An there's been times where I've unplugged the television, just because he's you know, clever enough to start turning....pushing buttons to make the television go back on again.

Jackie explains how she uses negation as a last resort when, 'he's completely not complying.' Unlike the other mothers Jackie physically negates the activity by unplugging the television rather than verbally stating 'no.'

Removal

Six out of the seven participants mentioned removal of the child as a method of instructing a non-compliant child. However, the parents had various reasons why they used time-outs in response to social-conventional rule requests. Ruby felt her child "needs time to sit by himself and think about it." Michelle, also wanted her child to be

able to think about her actions. “ ‘I don’t think we want to be around you now, (name of child). I think you should go and think about this.’ ”

In contrast Lisa and Rose used time-out as a way to get the child to calm down after a becoming noncompliant and temperamental toward a social-conventional rule request. Lisa explained that, “If she’s going to flip out, I’ll take her to her room, she can have some quiet time in her room.” Rose described her child as going,

from one extreme to another quite quickly so I would, I would just pick her up and she would probably be kicking and screaming and I would pick her up and take her somewhere quiet and she she would respond because I would, I would be holding her tight and just letting her get her frustrations.

Rose helps us understand the intensity of the moment as she tries to enforce a social-conventional rule. In contrast, whereas Rose describes how she physically removes to help her child calm down and ‘get her frustrations’ others, like Jackie and Betty explained they used time-out as a way of removing their child from the excitement surrounding them. Jackie said, “I’ll take him out of the situation and separate them and try and separate him from, try and separate him from the other kids.” Betty mentioned time outs seven times during the course of her interview. In particular, she mentioned how she used time outs as a means to get her son away from the

distractions of the home front and to focus on her and the rules she was trying to set out.

I have to get him away from distraction because he has got two brothers and they always at him, especially if there is a battle in the home right. There is all this yelling going on. He can't focus like his brothers yelling in my ear, you've got to take him for a time out or uhhhhhhh, and he did this and he called me pooppy twenty-two times. All this stuff, so I've got to take him away from that to see what, you know, this is what I saw and this is what I think was happening and what do you think is happening and but he has got to get out of that situation.

Removals were used by the parents in this group for a variety of reasons. Some used removals to give the child time to think about their actions, others used them to help the child calm down and finally some, like Jackie and Betty used removals to separate the child from the excitement in the surroundings. Particularly, Betty notes above the need to separate her preschooler from the other siblings so that her child can focus on her.

Category Three: Roles

The participants spoke about their roles generally as a parent. We have already looked at how they felt in their role, both positive and negative as well as what types of methods parents viewed as important in their role. Here, in category three, parents

talked about how they perceive changes within their role supporting self-regulation and how their parental role is a powerful and influential force. The two clusters within category three are: Changing and Power to Influence. Below are the clusters and themes within category three.

Table 5 Category Three: Roles

Category		Roles	
Clusters	Changing	Power to Influence	
Themes	Siblings	Role Model	
	Development	Staying Calm	

Cluster One: Changing

Siblings

Four out the seven participants reflected that the role as parent is very different with each of their children. This is particularly interesting since this was not directly addressed in any of the questions. Betty, for example, felt she had to enforce rules differently with each of her children due to their difference personalities.

His older brother, if I caught him doing something bad he knew it and would just be like uhh and stop. This guy, it's just like whose that strange woman you know I hear

voices but I don't know where they're coming from, what is she speaking, Chinese you know. Completely opposite, this is a whole new ballgame.

Ruby elaborated on this thought considering the various personalities in her family as well as how she as a mother has been at various stages of development with each of her children. She explains how not only the different personalities of her children effect how she enforces the social-conventional rules but how she as a parent changes with them.

I guess, I think it's for myself it's been watching how my daughter self-regulated at that age, and how my son does. It's very different. It's all down to personality.

And I think the parenting. I might have been a lot more stressed out when I was with my first child as opposed to my second, which happens like a lot.

Therefore, Ruby believes that not only do the different personalities of her children affect her role but that her personality has changed over time. Particularly, she notes that her stress level was higher with her first child. Lisa and Michelle likewise reflected on the various personalities of their children and how this changed their interactions with their children. Lisa commented how figuring out the best way to interact with each of her children helped her enforce social-conventional rules more effectively.

And temperament is huge. Temperament is unbelievable. And my son, who is older, was a very sensitive boy – physically sensitive- so his... a lot of his time from the age of three to about six, was spent fussing and worrying about his clothes. If he got too hot, he couldn't handle things. If he got hungry, he would be a puddle on the floor, in a mess kind of thing. So temperament is huge, and trying to get a pulse on your child's temperament can help you definitely figure out ways around certain situations.

Lisa, reflects back on her older child and realizes that her was very different from her preschool and believed that understand the differences in her children helped her in her role developing self-regulation. Like Lisa, Michelle also used the term 'temperament' to describe the differences in interacting with her children.

I would say that (child's name) has a, for the most part, a fairly even temperament. But if he gets upset about something, he has a hard time getting back down to level ground again. And he knows that himself, you can see it sort of going through his mind, but he can let a situation for him, escalate until....where he gets completely out of control,

which I find is probably a little more extreme than my other son, as far as I remember anyway.

Michele's quote shows that she too is able to identify the temperamental qualities in her preschooler and contrast them against her other child. Betty, like many of the parents, seems to believe that, "self-regulation and discipline and so on uhm lately of course I have come to the conclusion that it is tailored to each child and their personality."

Development

In keeping with the concept of changing roles parents also mentioned how childhood development had changed their parental role. Three out of the seven parents discussed this topic in their interview. Lisa expressed that as the years passed she became more aware of the influence of childhood development on her role as a parent. "I'm finding more and more, that she understands why I'm asking and I don't necessarily have to explain myself." Jackie agreed that as her child aged she felt the parenting role was becoming easier. "I talk to him a lot and as he is getting older it is kind of easier because he's becoming more verbal." In contrast, Ruby spoke of some things which become more difficult as her child aged. "Well, I used to be able to pick him up and sit with him and talk with him. But now, he's a bit too big for me and he's strong." Ruby continued commenting on how she felt it was important for parents to be aware of children's developmental stages in order to react suitably. "I guess, I think it's about education too, for parents- like, what's appropriate in certain occasions, developmentally, what a child can do and what they can't do. And so that you encourage them but not expect too much."

Cluster Two: Power to Influence

Parents, in addition to discussing how their role in developing self-regulation was ever- evolving, also recalled how they had found important ways in which they became influential. Here, in cluster two are the themes of role model and staying calm.

Role Model

Ruby, Cynthia and Betty used themselves as examples when trying to convince a preschooler to abide by a social-conventional rule. Ruby discussed how she explained to her preschooler that cleaning up before television was important. “Mommy and Daddy have dishes to wash, we wash them together and look we can...and then watch TV, or you know, whatever happens after we wash dishes in the evening.” When Cynthia’s preschooler argued that she didn’t want to go to preschool she too used herself as an example to her child. “Well, if it was like didn’t want to go to day-care I say well sometimes I don’t want to go to work either but we have to go to day-care.” Betty explained how she too didn’t want to do some of the tasks she did during her day. “You know sometimes Mummy has to do things she doesn’t want to either you know before I got to do fun stuff.” Betty then continued to reflect that as she observed her preschooler she saw how he reacted like herself. “And so sometimes I’m wondering when I watch him,.....I wonder if he is just mimicking what he sees me doing.” Lisa consciously tried to model appropriate behaviour in front of her child believing in the impact that would have on her child. “I try my best to model the kind of behaviour that I’d like to see her sort of doing, in any sort of circumstance.”

Staying Calm

In this theme parents identified staying calm as a powerfully influential factor in enforcing social-conventional rules. Jackie explained how she emotionally tries to enforce rules. “I just repeat myself it is I... uhmm it’s easier for me to stay calm – stay calm and relaxed and so that’s what I do in that scenario uhmm in different scenario’s where he’s just acting up.” Jackie continued later in her interview reflecting how her emotional state impacts her preschooler.

I try to, I try to be calm because I realized my my levels high is it – it you know facilitates him.interactions tend to be very uhmm full tend, tend to have a lot of emotion in them with him so I try to be, I try to be as calm as possible you know.

Jackie explains above how she believes her emotions have a powerful effect on those around her, particularly that of her preschooler. Consequently, she explains how she tries to remain calm and composed when trying to enforce a social-conventional rule. Lisa concurred by expressing how staying calm while interacting with her emotional preschooler is very important. “ But I think, just trying to stay calm myself, because she is fairly emotional, and can be over to the top at times. So I try to stay calm myself.” Michelle agreed, stating that levelling her emotions had a great positive influence on her preschooler.

I think that sometimes if you don't get too cross about it, and you just sort of casually just talk about it in a reasonable way, they often don't get too wound up. Sometimes they are already wound up and that's difficult. But if you really, really get sort of cross, they often are cross in return. So, stay calm.

In this quote Michelle points out that not only do agitated emotions negatively affect her preschooler by making her more agitated but similarly, calm emotions have a positive effect on her preschooler by helping her calm down.

Summary

In chapter four each participant was introduced with a brief profile of their demographic information. Following this the categories, clusters and themes were reviewed and supported with parental quotes from their interview. Across the three categories the themes which surfaced are: frustration, ineffectiveness, successful, concern for the future, reasoning, staying firm, warnings, in advance, empathy, negation, removal, siblings, development, role model and, staying calm. Chapter five will discuss the results and show how they support existing research. As well, suggestions for future research and practice will be discussed.

Chapter 5 – Discussion

Introduction

This thesis explored the following research question: How do parents of preschoolers having difficulty complying with social-conventional rules perceive their role in helping their children develop self-regulation? Through the analysis of open-ended interview questions three categories arose: Attitude and Outlook, Instructing and Roles. Within these categories many themes surfaced including: frustration, ineffectiveness, successful, concern for the future, reasoning, staying firm, warnings, in advance, empathy, negation, removal, siblings, development, role model and, staying calm.

In this chapter, results found in this thesis will be discussed in many ways. Firstly, the limitations of this thesis are acknowledged and discussed. Secondly, I will outline how this study contributes to research in this field. Thirdly, implications for future research and practice will be presented. Finally, the chapter will end with a summary of the study.

Limitation of Study

It must be noted that this study was limited by many factors. Firstly, although the criterion outlined in the sampling of participants did not exclude paternal participation in this research study the participants were made up entirely of mothers. Although due to this limit, the thesis has been able to isolate and examine this maternal segment of the population.

Secondly, this study is limited by a minimal representation (one parent) of low social economic status (SES) families. It was found during the data collection process that high SES schools provided a much higher rate of participation than low SES schools. I imagine this is due to many factors including: lack of familiarity and comfort with universities and researchers, lack of time due to a higher rate of single parents working many hours outside the home and, more emotional turmoil due to their SES status which made finding the energy for research very limited. In fact, the low SES preschool some of the parents attended required they be in either an emotional or financial crisis to attend. Therefore, I am extremely grateful to those parents and hold them in great admiration for participating despite difficult circumstances.

Thirdly, this study was limited to the questions set out in the larger study. More questions directly inquiring about social-conventional rules and parental perceptions about how they felt developing self-regulation in their preschoolers would have contributed to the study. However, as a researcher I was surprised that regardless of this fact the participants supplied many comments concerning their emotional state in this role. I believe this just corroborates the notion that their emotional state was important to the participants and they wanted and or needed to share this with the researcher. More research in this area would be both fascinating and beneficial to the field of self-regulation.

Finally, this thesis was limited by location. All of the participants came from the same mid – sized city in Western Canada. Participants from other communities, rural and urban may have provided different perceptions due to community influences and programs that may have provide different experiences in their parental role.

*Research Contributions**Understanding Parental Perspectives of their Role*

This thesis contributed to research linking parental perceptions of their role and stress. Within category one: Attitude and Outlook, the parents reflected on their emotional state while trying to enforce social-conventional rules. Here, parents expressed many aspects of stress within the themes Frustration, Ineffectiveness and Concern for the Future as they tried to develop self-regulation within their preschoolers. Comments such as “sometimes he’ll run...especially when we’re out in public I find, which is definitely frustrating” or “I can’t really do anything right, I’m not going to run after him in the store.” These comments from Jackie signal perceptions of frustration and ineffectiveness in her role. Additionally, perceived stress in their role was indicated in parent’s concern about their children’s ability (or inability) to self-regulate in the future. Here, stress was implied in their concern for their child’s future behaviour. Taken together these themes indicate a stress perceived in their role. Therefore, these themes suggest that parents felt their children’s self-regulation skills impacted their own emotional well-being and perception of their role to that of stressful. In the literature review we looked at a couple of studies investigating parental perceptions of stress and how this then effects their interactions with their children (Halberstadt et al., 1995; Magill-Evans, 2001).

Magill-Evan’s (2001) work found parental perceptions of stress to be predictive of poor language development in their children. She speculated that mothers of children with language problems may experience more stress or they may use less language when interacting with their children. Further research must be done to discern whether

mothers of children having difficulty self-regulating are more stressed and if this stress is linked to childhood language development. It seems quite possible that mothers of children having difficulty self-regulating would be more likely to be stressed. Furthermore, it seems plausible when mothers interact with a non-compliant child they would use less complicated language structure than mothers of children who are compliant more often. In this study only one mother mentioned using less language as a tactic in her interview. However, further investigation into the link between parental stress and language development is needed.

Halberstadt et al. (1995) study examining both maternal and paternal perspectives of their role draws our attention to a few important elements to consider. Halberstadt's et al. (1995) research into parental perspectives of expression indicates that mothers' "positive expressiveness was associated with greater marital satisfaction and less loneliness, and men's negative expressiveness was associated with less marital satisfaction and more loneliness" (Halberstadt et al., 1995, p. 100). Therefore, happily married women reported more positive expression toward their family while happily married men reported a decrease in negative expressions. This research again shows the importance of further study in this area as parents' stress levels were shown directly to effect expressiveness toward the child in their care. These studies show how important it is to identify stress in the parental role and it has important implications for childcare and development.

Boyer, Blodgett and Turk (2006) research investigated 150 families across seven preschools, varied social economic and ethnic groups. The children in these families represented a wide range of self-regulating abilities. They found similar

themes to this study including the care-giver as role model and the importance of setting an example for children. Also, Boyer et al. found parents reflected that they needed to know themselves and their own limits when helping their preschoolers self-regulate. In their capacity as role models they felt that they needed to be a purveyor of a set tools or strategies to monitor the behaviours of their children. In this study, parents identified some aspects of self-awareness in the themes Staying Calm and Staying Firm where parents voiced their perceptions of how important it is to set limits for their children and for themselves. Additionally, Boyer et. al. discovered that in order to support self-regulation children needed opportunities to practice empathy as did this study. Finally, links between Boyer et. al. and this study appeared in parents perceptions that non-compliance and the support of self-regulating behaviours should involve parental guidance and experiences with natural consequences.

Additionally, this thesis contributes to research by investigating parental perceptions of parents of children having difficulty self-regulating. The results from this thesis are consistent with other literature investigating parental perceptions of their role with regard to special needs children. These themes corroborate with themes found in Licheter's (2003) work. Here, she investigated mothers' perspectives concerning their role raising preschool children with developmental disabilities. Among these mothers Licheter found themes of uncertainty, control, empowerment, values, and the future. In this thesis, uncertainty was revealed particularly in comments made by parents in ineffectiveness in which parents spoke opening of how they were unsure how to react to noncompliance. Control was discussed in two themes namely, staying calm and staying firm where mothers noted the importance of emotional and disciplinary

control. Empowerment was uncovered in this thesis within the theme successful where mothers spoke about the joy of success in their role. Additionally, values was indicated by these mothers in the theme 'role model.' Finally, the future was well discussed in the theme 'concern for the future.' Therefore, this thesis revealed many of the same themes found in Licheter's work investigating mother's perceptions of their role parenting children with special needs. This indicates that mothers of children with developmental disabilities may be experiencing some of the same perceptions of their role as parents of children with behavioural problems.

Furthermore, these themes also coincide with Sperling's (2003). Her research investigated parental perspectives of their role raising children with special needs and comparing these views to parents of normally developed children. She found parents of children with special needs rated general welfare, protection and, sensitivity as most important. Likewise, in this thesis, themes such as empathy toward others and concern for the future regarding their children's behaviour and attitude surfaced. In these themes parents commented on their own concerns surrounding their children's well being. Therefore, both studies share concerns regarding sensitivity and concern for the children's wellbeing. Throughout this thesis, an understanding of the emotional well being of mothers raising children having difficulty self-regulating begins to transpire. However, more work is needed in this area fully to understand the experience of these parents.

Development of Self-Regulation with Respect to Social-Conventional Rules

This study identified many themes concerning not only how parents perceive themselves in their role but also their perception of the best way to react to a

noncompliant child and what factors effected this reaction. In this way, this thesis was able to look at parental perception through a much broader lens. Although the interviews did not directly ask participants to reflect upon their child's development many of the mothers mentioned how childhood development altered their role as the years progressed. Within category three, cluster one mothers reflected on how childhood development, and the varying development trends of their other children, played an important mediating factor towards their role as a parent in the themes 'development' and 'siblings.' From the research we learn that "direct defiance, the most obtrusive way of saying *no*, was found to decrease in frequency throughout the toddler and early preschool period, but relatively more skilful forms of expressing resistance, simple refusals, and negotiation, increased with age" (Kalpidou & Rothbaum, 1998; L. Kuczynski & G. Kochanska, 1990, p. 405). Interestingly, the parents too seem to follow this developmental trend as Boyer (2005) suggests. In this thesis, parents remarked on how they used simpler forms of discipline in the themes Negation and Removal and Warnings as well as more sophisticated forms such as Reasoning. The parents seemed to be using various methods of control depending on their child's development. It seems that mothers are keenly aware of their children's development. This is also corroborated by Gralinski and Kopp's (1993) study. Here, the study investigated what rules mothers enforced and why. They were able to relate these findings with children's developmental trajectory and found mother's rules complimented developmental literature. It seems mother's react instinctively to their child's developmental patterns.

In addition, Kuczynski & Kochanska's (1990) study found that they could predict children's behaviour at five by the quality of the mother's demands. Demands that focused on 'do' behaviours and demands which promoted competent behaviours such as chores or helping others predicted greater compliance in the children at the age of five. Likewise, Gralinski & Kopp (1993)'s research investigated the form and function of the rules mothers enforce. They found that preschoolers most often agree to comply when the situation involves safety or peoples' possessions. In this thesis, mothers also seemed to be aware of these issues, particularly within the theme 'In Advance.' Here, mothers helped the child focus on behaviours that they should 'do' in the future as well as safety issues. In this way, parents were potentially avoiding having to ask the child to stop an incorrect behaviour by setting the child up for success in advance of the situation.

Implications for Future Research

Although this study had no intention of limiting itself to mothers, it came to pass that only mothers were to make up the participants for this thesis. Therefore, an investigation of paternal perceptions of their role in developing self-regulation would be needed in order to fully understanding parental perceptions. Furthermore, a comparison between maternal and paternal perceptions of their role would be very interesting and potentially useful in recommending practical improvements in the field. For example, differences in the way men and women perceive stress in developing children's self-regulation skills may be different, particularly if the mother is the prime caregiver. Also perceived differences in how or if their role changes with regard to development and siblings may not be as evident if the father is not the prime caregiver.

In this thesis the participants expressed some form of stress across the themes Frustration, Ineffectiveness and, Concern for Future. Since this was a prevalent topic across the participants I recommend two areas of further research to investigate this trend. Firstly, within the literature review we learnt that parental perceptions of stress affect the child in their care. However, these studies did not relate to children displaying some level of behaviour difficulties, as this study did. Therefore, I recommend that future studies explore how various forms of stress found in parents of children with self-regulation difficulties effect parent –child interactions and childhood development. We know from previous work that there is some evidence that mothers of children with behaviour difficulty may restrict language in the way mothers of children with language deficits do. Furthermore, we know that material stress effects positive emotions toward their children. These and other findings may also be relevant to parents of child having difficulty self-regulating. Secondly, an investigation into the stress levels of children having difficulty self-regulating is necessary since it seems highly likely they would be as stressed as the parents in these situations.

As research continues to investigate this field of study it is necessary to compare parents of normally compliant children with parents of children who are having difficulty at this time. This kind of research will help establish what is or isn't unique about this group of parents. From here, Early Childhood Educators, social workers, and other practitioners who may be associated with this group can then work in ways that focus on areas of weakness and need. This thesis found themes relating to stress and self-efficacy as our participants explained how they perceived their role enforcing social-conventional rules with their preschoolers. Themes that I would think

likely to be less prominent in parents of normally self-regulating preschoolers are areas such as: frustration, ineffectiveness, concern for the future, empathy, and staying calm. In this way, I believe researchers may discover an overall calmer and happier parent. How this then relates to childhood interactions, childhood development and marital relations is for future research to discover. Then workers in this field will have some concrete areas for which to serve this segment of the population better.

Implications for Future Practice

Parents

In this study parents expressed how their role enforcing social-conventional rules changed in various ways due to childhood development and differences between siblings. In order to prepare themselves for these changes parents may find it helpful to gain information concerning issues from such sources as parenting books and or websites. Additionally, obtaining this knowledge may help to decrease stress in their parenting role.

This thesis explored considerable information regarding parental stress within their role developing self-regulation to social-conventional rules. This may be due to numerous factors such as raising a child who is having difficulty self-regulating, and or lack of support from community or family members. In order for parents to reduce their perceived levels of stress parents must reach out to early childhood educators, family members and other parents to help them express and effectively deal with these emotions and mutually to support each other as they travel through this experience. (Boyer, 2005; Boyer, Blodgett & Turk 2006).

Practitioners

Research suggests that parent's perceptions of their role are affected by numerous mediating factors that then affect child rearing (Halberstadt et al., 1995; Magill-Evans, 2001; Maurer & Pleck, 2001). Therefore, in order fully to address parenting in all of its intricacies parent's emotional wellbeing must be addressed. Interestingly, two of the seven participants underwent parenting classes as part of their preschool program yet, these workshops focus on parenting strategies, not parents emotional state. Practitioners working in this field must find new and innovative ways of reducing parental stress. These may be found in such ideas as developing more opportunities for parents to support each other within their community, preschool or family.

Parents in this study felt that knowledge of childhood development was a valuable asset to be effective in their role. Making this information more accessible to parents of preschool children is therefore highly recommended. Some of the participants were members of a preschool that informed parents of issues pertaining to childhood development. These parents in particular may have been positively influenced by their experiences.

Finally, this thesis suggests parents and children would benefit from diagnosis and intervention at the preschool age since signs of stress are already appearing. I suggest the following intervention strategies for parents of preschool children who are having difficulty self-regulating to social-conventional rule requests. Practitioners could recommend ways for parents to release stress and help gain composure to be more effective when helping their children self-regulate. Additionally, practitioners

could help parents develop a wider range of strategies to add in compliance, educate parents on particular social-conventional rule requests which research has shown to produce higher rates of compliance. These would include 'do' requests and requests which involve safety and possessions (Kalpidou & Rothbaum, 1998; L. Kuczynski & G. Kochanska, 1990; Morrish, 2000).

Conclusion

This thesis explored an area of self-regulation that at this point has received little attention: parental perspectives of their role developing self-regulation in their preschoolers. Particularly, this thesis looked at preschoolers having difficulty following social-conventional rules. From this work, important perceptions such as parental stress and childhood development have come to our attention.

From the shared experiences of the participants, we can learn a few important lessons to take into our future endeavours of both research and practice. Practitioners and parents must become more cognizant of their stress levels and find more and better ways in which to deal with them. Particularly, parents who are raising children having difficulty learning to self-regulate seem to be at greater risk for higher levels of stress as seen in my participants in areas such as: future concerns, frustrations and perceived ineffectiveness of enforcing social-conventional rules. Furthermore, both practitioners and parents should seek out information regarding childhood development to help them deal effectively with their changing role as parent.

This study produced many themes concerning not only how parents perceive themselves in their role but also their perception of the best way to react to a noncompliant child. By acknowledging and analyzing the emotional component in

parenting this thesis was able to look at parenting in a more holistic and truer light.

Through this thesis, an understanding of the emotional well being of mothers raising children having difficulty self-regulating has begun to transpire. More work is needed in this area fully to understand the experience of these parents and how these experiences effect child–parent interactions and childhood development.

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Appendix A: Phone Script

Good afternoon/ evening. My name is (research assistant) and I am affiliated with the University of Victoria and Dr. Wanda Boyer's research study entitled "Foundational Measure of Early Childhood Development of Self-Regulation." We are working with the preschool that your child attends. Have you had a chance to learn about our study?

Participation in this study will involve your time in thinking and talking about your child. Our study is all about listening to your voices. Listening to the voices of parents and early childhood educators as they reflect, share, and discuss how, when, and why children self-regulate.

Your voluntary participation will include sharing background information (such as your age and job), one individual audio-taped interview, the natural video-taping of normal preschool interactions, and your involvement in an audio-taped focus group. Do you have any questions about this process?

Either (name of research assistant), or I hope to be meeting you at the

preschool for drop-off in the morning one day this week. We will have the consent forms available for you to read and sign.

Please feel free to contact Dr. Wanda Boyer if you do have any further questions. Her phone number is 721-7814 and her email address is .

Appendix B: Letter of Introduction



Department of Educational Psychology and Leadership Studies

UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA

PO BOX 3010 STN CSC VICTORIA BC V8W 3N4 CANADA
TELEPHONE (250) 721-7799 FAX (250) 721-6190

October 31, 2003

Dear Parents,

This study is all about listening to your voices. Listening to the voices of parents and early childhood educators as they reflect, share, and discuss how, when, and why children self-regulate. The study is entitled: **Foundational Measure of Early Childhood Development of Self-Regulation**

This study seeks to understand how, when, and under what conditions children self-regulate. In order to find this out, the researcher really wants to hear your thoughts and opinions as parents/guardians and early childhood educators about how young children learn to self-regulate during their natural preschool interactions. To support a richness of understanding about self-regulation, the parents and early childhood educators will have individual 40-60 minute audiotaped interviews, 60-70 minute audiotaped focus groups involving groups of 7-9 parents per group. (The group of 5-8 preschool educators will form a focus group on their own), and a 30 minute videotape per child of normal preschool interactions within the preschool setting. For the study to be internally and externally valid, providing rich and consistent findings, we must have a population of approximately 120 children ages 3-5 and their parents/guardians across five-eight preschools involving five early childhood educators.

The research team consists of the researcher and two trained research assistants from the University of Victoria. **The videotaping, which will be completed in two weeks per each preschool site, shows the children in normal preschool interactions and experiences where they naturally practice self-regulation. The researcher and research assistants will schedule individual interviews with parents/guardians and early childhood educators** to hear your views on when, where, and how self-regulation is developed by the young children in your care. **Following the individual interviews, the researcher and research assistants will schedule convenient times for the focus groups** where the parents/guardians and early childhood educators will have an opportunity to share knowledge through group discussion so that all your voices and thoughts can be heard about how self-regulation developmentally progresses. These three views will provide a unified and consistent guide to children's development of self-regulation. This guide will enable everyone who cares about young children to accurately identify the self-regulatory skills each child manifests and then plan, adapt and modify educational programs based on the research findings to improve young children's self-regulatory skills development for optimal readiness to learn. If I may be of further assistance regarding the proposed research and its benefits to the children in the preschool please do not hesitate to phone me at work (250-721-7814) or at home (250-721-4456) or by email wboyer@uvic.ca.

Sincerely,
Wanda A.R. Boyer, Ph.D
Associate Professor
Faculty of Education
Dept. of Educational Psychology

Appendix C: Consent Form

UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA

*OFFICE OF THE VICE-PRESIDENT, RESEARCH**HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE****Participant Consent******Form***

**Foundational Measure of Early Childhood Development of Self-
Regulation**

I would like to invite you, **the parents of young children**, to participate in a study called Foundational Measure of Early Childhood Development of Self-Regulation that is being conducted by Dr. Wanda Boyer, an associate professor in the Faculty of Education in the Department of Educational Psychology and Leadership Studies at the University of Victoria. You may contact Dr. Boyer if you have further questions by phone (250) 721-7814 or email wboyer@uvic.ca.

This research is being funded by the Human Early Learning Partnership in partnership with the B.C. Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD). The purpose of this research project is to develop an observation guide to help us understand how, when, and why children ages 3-5 learn to regulate their physical, cognitive, linguistic, social and emotional responses throughout natural preschool interactions. A specific purpose of this study is to assist and inform everyone caring for young children about ages and stages of self-regulation development. The results will strengthen educational practices.

Research of this type is important because it has the potential to contribute to our understanding of how young children initiate, cease, or modulate behaviours in accordance with caregiver and parental standards. The grounded theory model developed in this research will be used to create a guide to enable all of us who care for children to plan, adapt, and

modify programs to improve young children's self-regulatory skills development for optimal readiness to learn.

You are being asked to participate in this study because you are actively and enthusiastically involved in the education of your children as members of the Vancouver Island Cooperative Preschool Association, and you know your children very well.

What is involved? If you voluntarily agree to participate in this research, your participation will include sharing background information (i.e. age, gender, job, marital status, and number of children and their ages and genders), one individual audiotaped interview, natural videotaping of normal preschool interactions, and involvement in an audiotaped focus group. *The interviews* will consist of 40-60 minutes of audiotaping of your thoughtful reflections about your child's self-regulation. Examples of the interview questions include: How do you define self-regulation, How does your child respond when you ask your child to stop an activity, begin an activity, or do an activity they like or they do not like to do? You are also being invited to voluntarily participate in a natural *30 minute videotape* of normal preschool interactions with the children to note how, when, and why young children self-regulate their behaviours. *The focus group* will involve 60-70 minutes of your thoughtful reflections in a group of 7-9 parents about self-regulation in order to learn your thoughts on how, when, and why 3-5 year olds develop self-regulation. Examples of the focus group questions include further discussion and your thoughtful contributions to the questions introduced in the interviews including: What does it mean to self-regulate, how does a child learn to self-regulate, and why is self-regulation important?

In acknowledgement of your contribution to the research, the researcher will donate two books to each cooperative preschool library. It is important for you to know that it is unethical to provide undue compensation or inducement to research participants and, if you agree to be a participant in this study, this donation to your cooperative preschool must not be

coercive. If you would not otherwise choose to participate if the compensation was not offered, then you should decline.

Participation in this study will involve your time in thinking and talking about your child. There are no known or anticipated risks to you or your child by participating in this research. The potential benefits of your participation in this research include contributing to the knowledge and understanding of how self-regulation is developmentally supported by parents and preschool educators. Also, this research could help parents and preschool educators plan, adapt and modify programs to improve young children's self-regulatory skill development for optimal readiness to learn. In addition you may benefit from thinking about yourself in the different roles you fulfill in your particular social, family, and community contexts and how you contribute to your child's development.

Your participation in this research must be completely voluntary. If you do decide to participate you may withdraw at any time, or refuse to answer certain questions without any consequences or any explanation. If you do withdraw from the study your audiotape and videotape will be erased and the transcripts of what you said will be destroyed. In the case of the focus group your contributions on the tape and in the type-written transcript will be removed as much as possible as it is sometimes difficult to extract what a person has said totally from a group discussion particularly if other participants build upon a comment you have made.

In order to make sure that you continue to voluntarily consent to participate in this research, my research assistants or I will remind you about the terms of participation (e.g., voluntary, ability to withdraw etc.) at the beginning of your interview, the focus group, and at the beginning of the day for videotaping of normal preschool interactions.

This research will lead to a self-regulation guide and directions for its use which I will share with you and your preschool and which will also be available in the public domain.

In order to preserve your anonymity, your name will not be recorded on the transcribed data, a code or pseudonym will be assigned and used in place of your name, and the researcher and research assistants will be the only people who know your identity. Your confidentiality and the confidentiality of the data will in part be protected by storing interview audiotapes, videotapes, the transcribed data and other information, the key to the coded names and the signed consent letters in locked filing cabinets. The key to the coded names will be kept separately from the interview data, and the signed consent letters will also be stored separately from any data. Only the researcher and research assistants will have access to the data and focus group members will be reminded to hold in confidence the content of the group discussions. The audiotape from your interview, videotapes, the transcribed data, and any notes taken during the interview will be destroyed within seven years.

A copy of the research newsletter will be given to the cooperative preschool community group at the end of the research project, and the findings will be published in monographs, theses, peer-reviewed journals, and presented at professional and/or scholarly conferences.

If you have any questions please contact Dr. Wanda Boyer at (250) 721-7814 or wboyer@uvic.ca. You may also contact the Associate Vice-President, Research at the University of Victoria (250) 472-4362 for information about this research.

If you are interested in participating, please complete the bottom portion of this sheet and we will give you a copy for your files. You will be contacted by telephone or email to schedule an interview.

Respectfully,

Wanda Boyer, Ph.D.

University of Victoria

Name of Child _____ Date _____

Name of Participant (print) _____

Telephone _____

Signature _____

E-mail

Appendix D: Demographic Questions

Demographic Sheet as cited in

Boyer, Wanda (2005). Understanding the acquisition of self-regulatory skills in ages 3-5. Manuscript submitted for publication.

Your participation in this research must be completely voluntary. If you do decide to participate you may withdraw at any time, or refuse to answer certain questions without any consequences or any explanation. If you do withdraw from the study your audiotape and videotape will be erased and the transcripts of what you said will be destroyed. In the case of the focus group your contributions will not be included in the type-written transcript.

Background information for parents

Name of Parents _____

Name of Child

What is your age? _____

Gender female male

How are you employed? _____ (name of job)

Marital status married common law separated divorced
unmarried/single

How is your spouse or partner employed? _____ (name of job)

Ethnic background of children _____

Number of children _____

Age of child enrolled in the preschool ___ years __ months

gender of your preschool child female male

Siblings:

Child's age ___ years __ months female male

Child's age ___ years __ months female male

Child's age ___ years __ months female male

Child's age ___ years __ months female male

Child's age ___ years __ months female male

Child's age ___ years __ months female male

Child's age ___ years __ months female male

Child's age ___ years __ months female male

Individual Interview Questions are cited in Boyer, Wanda (2005).

Understanding the acquisition of self-regulatory skills in ages 3-5. Manuscript submitted for publication.

1) How would you describe the child in your care?

(Probe: What is the child like in terms of temperament?)

2) How do you define self-regulation?

(Probe: What does it mean to be able to self-regulate as a 3-5 year old?)

Initiation of Activities

3) How does the child in your care behave while doing an activity they do not want to do?

(Probe: How does the child in your care respond with her or his body, how does the child solve the problem of getting engaged in the activity, what does the child say, how does the child interact with others, what emotions does the child express and how does the child do what is right when told to do an activity the child did not choose? Please can you elaborate and give examples?)

- 4) And what do you do in words and actions as you interact with the child in order to help the child comply when they do not want to do an activity?

(Probe: What do you say and do after you have told the child to do an activity they do not want to do?)

- 5) How does the child respond when you have told the child to do an activity they do not want to do before the child can do another activity she or he wants to do?

(Probe: How does the child respond with her or his body, how does the child solve the problem of getting engaged in the activity, what does the child say, how does the child interact with others, what emotions does the child express and how does the child do what is right when you have told the child to do an activity the child does not want to do before they can do an activity she or he wants to do? Please can you elaborate and give examples?)

- 6) And what do you do in words and actions while interacting with the child in order to help her or him comply so they can do the first activity before they do the second activity?

(Probe: What do you say and do as the child is doing the first activity to help her or him "get on to the second activity?")

Ceasing Activities

- 7) How does the child react with its whole body when you ask her or him to stop an activity because it is clean-up time or lunch time or the end of the day?

(Probe: When you tell the child to end or stop an activity how does the child respond with her or his body, how does the child solve the problem of finishing up the activity, what does the child say, how does the child interact with others, what emotions does the child express and how does the child do what is right? Please can you elaborate and give examples?)

- 8) And what do you do and say in order to the child comply if and when she or he does not want to stop an activity?

- 9) How does the child behave when you tell her or him to stop an inappropriate behaviour?

(Probe: This is when the child has been told to "Stop that. Don't do that." When you tell the child to stop an inappropriate behaviour how does the child respond with her or his body, how does the child solve the problem of stopping an inappropriate behaviour, what does the child say, how does the child interact with others, what emotions does the child express and how does the child do what is right? Please can you elaborate and give examples?)

10) And what do you say and do in order to help the child comply when the child does not want to stop an inappropriate behaviour?

(Probe: What do you say and do to help the child stop the inappropriate behaviour)

11) How does the child behave when you tell her or him to stop an activity in which they have been told before not to engage?

(Probe: This is when the child has been told "Don't do that anymore, or Don't do that at all?" When you tell the child to stop an activity in which they have been told before not to engage how does the child respond with her or his body, how does the child solve the problem of doing what they have been told not to do many times before, what does the child say, how does the child interact with others, what emotions does the child express and how does the child do what is right? Please can you elaborate and give examples?)

12) And what do you say and do in order to help her or him comply when the child does not want to stop an activity in which she or he has been told before not to engage?

(Probe: The child has been informed that the activity represents misbehaviour but does it anyway.)

Modulating Activities

13) How does the child behave when a task is difficult for her or him?

(Probe: As the difficulty of the task becomes apparent to the child, how does the child respond with her or his body, how does the child solve the problem, what does the child say, how does the child interact with others, what emotions does the child express and how does the child do what is right when told to do an activity that is hard for her or him? Please can you elaborate and give examples?)

14) And what do you do and say as the child does this difficult activity?

15) How does the child behave when a task is easy for her or him?

(Probe: How does the child respond with her or his body, how does the child solve the task, what does the child say, how does the child interact with others, what

emotions does the child express and how does the child do what is right when told to do an activity that is easy? Please can you elaborate and give examples?)

16) And what do you do and say while the child is doing an activity that is easy for her or him?

17) How do you help the child to learn how to self-regulate?

(Probe: How do you teach the child how to begin an activity, stop an activity, and think about behaviours before they do them?)

18) Do you have any other thoughts you would like to add to this discussion?