

AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE INCLUSION OF CHILD
DEVELOPMENT IN EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS

by

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I declare that

AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE INCLUSION OF CHILD
DEVELOPMENT IN EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS

is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

SIGNATURE

(ME W BÖHMER)

DATE

Summary of research study

The research study was determined by the fact that child development is important and that teachers/caregivers must acknowledge every child's level of development, age, individuality, social and cultural background when planning a program. Children are complex beings and therefore the literature study focused on pre-schooler, three to five years, child development during this stage and domains and principles of development. Semi-structured interviews were based on literature study and used to guide the interviews. After analyzing the data themes and sub-themes was identified and verified with literature. The teachers/caregivers were able to share knowledge, experiences, needs and concerns. To conclude recommendations were made to help teacher/caregivers to plan how to include child development in their daily program.

Key concepts

early childhood, early childhood programs, child development, domains of development, cognitive development, physical development, emotional development, social development, teachers, caregivers.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

All around the wonder of children growing up and developing from infancy to adulthood can be noticed. Children come into the world as tiny and helpless little babies who cannot do anything for themselves, but in a few months they are crawling about, feeding themselves and exploring everything in sight. Day-to-day changes are not always noticed although some milestones are a cause for celebration like when they take their first step, say their first words and wave good-bye on their first day of school (Cook & Cook, 2005: 2). Therefore, the importance of acknowledging, knowing and understanding children's early development cannot be emphasised enough.

According to the Department of Social Development (2005: 18), "Research in South Africa and internationally indicates that the early years are critical for development. From birth to seven years is a period of rapid physical, mental, emotional, social and moral growth and development. The early years of a child's life are a time when they acquire concepts, skills and attitudes that lay the foundation for lifelong learning. Included is the acquisition of language, perceptual-motor concepts and skills, problem-solving skills, a love for learning and the establishment and maintenance of relationships."

Realising that children are complex and integrated human beings, leads to a better understanding of child development. For academic purposes, the child's development is divided into different domains of development. These domains of development play a vital role during the first seven years of a child's life and development. The child integrates all the different, newly acquired skills and from an academic perspective, forming the foundation for later learning. These domains include cognitive, emotional, social and physical development (Louw, Van Ede & Louw, 1998: 13).

According to Keenan (2002: 2), development refers to change over time which begins at conception and continues throughout the life span. Child development is multifaceted. According to Cook and Cook (2005: 3-4), physical development is the most obvious

component. This relates to growth in size, strength and muscle coordination. Cognitive or mental development relates to changes in the way children think, remember and communicate, while social development relates to changes in the way children interact with other people. For this reason, children attend Pre- and Primary Schools to help them in this process of developing all the necessary skills and concepts needed for learning. Along the way, there are different milestones children reach at different ages in order to help them become more independent, socialised and more active, and most of all preparing them for the future and later learning. These milestones make teachers, caregivers and parents aware of the child's developmental stage, the possible potential of that specific child as well as any possible shortfalls. The researcher is of the opinion that in most cases, childcare centres do not inform parents and/or caregivers about the domains of development and milestones a child should reach, and at what age. According to Kirpal (in Young, 2002: 5), parents and family members are integral in a child's daily life and by building up their knowledge and skills, these individuals can effectively support a child's development.

The aim of this study is to investigate the current situation in early childhood practices on the way the teachers/caregivers include child development from three to five years in their early childhood programs. This study will form the basis for the researcher's doctoral studies later.

1.2 RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

Child development is one of the researcher's passions and through studying Pre- and Primary School Education, the researcher became aware of the fact that the class teacher/caregiver usually plans most of the early childhood programs or activities from three to five years themselves. Currently there is no standard early childhood development program for children from three to five years and the way in which program planners (teachers/caregivers) incorporate the different domains of development, differ from one school to the other. This implies that children attending preschool, nursery or day-care centres may not receive equal developmental opportunities, which may further lead to a non-holistic growth and development of the child. The implication of the above is that children attending formal education (Grade R) are not all on the same developmental level. Therefore the researcher did not only have interviews with

the teachers/caregivers about the domains of early child development but also on the information, curriculum or program they base their own program on.

The need for this research subject was determined by the following two reasons. Firstly, it serves as the foundation for early childhood development. Although many schools design their own programs, there are no standard/formal programs for all (Department of Education, 2005: 6). The Educational Department of South Africa (October, 2005) developed a document entitled "Curriculum Guidelines from birth to four", still to be finalised, in which they excluded most of the domains of development from birth to four years in the draft document. Therefore, the question may arise as to the ways in which children are supposed to be stimulated in the appropriate age of their current developmental stage. The programs schools design themselves are sometimes too formal, do not include all the domains of early childhood development, are not individually or age appropriate and do not provide appropriate activities to help the children achieve their milestones. On the other hand, schools might employ 'teachers' to teach in their schools according to their willingness and not based on their qualification.

Secondly, it serves as a frame of reference. The researcher is a schoolteacher and had the privilege to teach in South Africa and England. Although the different countries are continents apart, the same problems were visible: the children struggle at about the same age (nine and ten years) with reading, writing and mathematic problems. In South Africa the researcher was faced each day with classes of up to 40 pupils. To make one-on-one contact with pupils in these classes was merely impossible. According to Bredekamp and Copple (1997: 4), preparing children, with the inclusion of all the facets of child development from three to five years, there should be a different approach in their preparation for school and learning. The researcher is of the opinion that acknowledging multiple facets is important especially in a multicultural society like South Africa. The last mentioned contributed to further motivation of the subject.

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) in the United States of America, established a high-quality early childhood program, based on consensus of thousands of early childhood professionals. NAEYC (Gordon & Brown, 2000: 41-42) defines "high quality" as a program that "meets the needs of and promotes the physical, social, emotional and cognitive development of the children and adults – parents, staff and administrators – who are involved in the program". The

Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs Serving Children from Birth through Age Eight (NAEYC, in Gordon & Brown, 2000: 43) cites three criteria on which teachers/caregivers should base their decisions about young children's growth and development:

1. *Knowledge about child development and learning* – knowledge of age-related characteristics that permit general predictions within an age range about what activities, materials, interactions or experience will be safe, healthy, interesting, achievable and challenging to children.
2. *Knowledge about the strengths, interests and needs of each individual child* – to be able to adapt and respond to individual variation.
3. *Knowledge of the social and cultural contexts in which children live* – to ensure that learning experiences are meaningful, relevant and respectful for the children and their families.

It is therefore, important that early childhood professionals (teachers/caregivers) "... should address all three of these principles when designing good programs for young children, keeping in mind that each is connected to the other two in significant ways. Together, they influence the way teachers and caregivers plan and prepare high-quality experiences for young children" (Gordon & Brown, 2000: 43). The researcher does believe that the above criteria are essential for any program planner, regarding the inclusion of all the different domains of child development.

Furthermore, Keenan (2002: 3) describes development as multidimensional and multidirectional. Multidimensionality refers to the fact that development cannot be described by a single criterion such as increases or decreases in behaviour. Although the principle of multidirectionality maintains that, there is no single, normal path that development must or should take. In other words, healthy developmental outcomes are achieved in a wide variety of ways. So many aspects of development are not necessarily always included in preschool programs, because development is multidirectional and multidimensional. By acknowledging the multicultural societies of South Africa, the researcher realises the implication of the diverse need for childcare services programs which includes all the aspects of development.

According to Young (2002: 3) economists, behavioural scientists, educators, neuroscientists and biologists have noted the importance of child development. Much research is done on early childhood development and the influences upon it, and all these aspects have an influence in the process of preparing the child for future and lifelong learning. Fogal (1999: 3), winner of the 1993 Nobel prize in economics, states that the quality of early child development has a significant effect on the quality of populations and also influences health outcomes in adult life. Childhood is a critical and vulnerable state in which poor socio-economic circumstances have lasting effects. During childhood, patterns of behaviour, competency and learning are initiated and established; social environmental factors begin to modify genetic inheritance, brain cells grow in abundance and biological pathways for handling of stress arise.

How early childhood programs include the domains of development has, according to the researcher's knowledge, not yet been significantly investigated or described. Because there is no standardised program for children from three to five years which includes all the domains of early childhood development, it is important to include these developmental domains to help the child reach his potential as well as the different milestones, but most of all approaching the child as a holistic being. Implications of not having a standardised program are that the child is not approached holistically and therefore the child does not develop holistically. This can lead to learning problems later in life, especially with reading, writing and mathematics.

1.2.1 Aim and objectives

The aim can be defined as the direction of the study, in other words the end towards which effort is directed. The researcher would therefore like to clarify that although the aim of this study is to learn more about the inclusion of child development in programs, the researcher can only reach this aim through specifically focusing on the domains of child development. To facilitate easy reading during the study, reference will only be made to "domains of development" when referred to child development. The objectives therefore indicate the more concrete, measurable and more speedily attainable conception. Steps were followed to achieve this aim (Fouché & De Vos, 2005: 104). The aim and objectives held before the research will subsequently be discussed. The aim of

this study was to determine how teachers/caregivers include all the different domains of child development in their daily program.

The following objectives were identified to reach the above aim:

- To provide an overview of the literature study, describing child development in the early years (from three to five years), with specific focus on domains of child development, to gain a theoretical basis for the study.
- To conduct an empirical study by means of semi-structured interviews, in order to determine the inclusion of the different domains of development into their daily programs, from teachers/caregivers in the Sinoville, Doornpoort and Montana area (Pretoria).
- To draw up a conclusion and provide recommendations for teachers/caregivers in order to make them aware of the importance of knowledge about child development, including the domains of development.

The next section of the discussion will be focused on the research question, for a better understanding of the research study.

1.2.2 Research question

The researcher focused on investigating if and how the domains of development are included in early childhood programs. This study was of a descriptive nature and no testing were involved, therefore the researcher made use of a research question instead of a hypothesis (Fouché & De Vos, 2005: 103). The question will start with 'what' and 'how', in contrast with the quantitative study where the question starts with 'why' (Creswell, 1998: 17).

The research question was formulated as follows: "How do teachers/caregivers acknowledge and include the different domains of early childhood development into their daily programs for children from three to five years?" Inclusion was seen as the

act of including, in this case it was on how teachers/caregivers include the different domains of development in a practical way in their daily programs/activities.

1.3 RESEARCH APPROACH

For the purpose of this study the qualitative approach were used. The qualitative approach is based on inductive reasoning and does not intend to generalise, but will follow the research wherever it leads (Graziano & Raulin, 2000: 38).

Creswell (1998: 15) defines the qualitative approach as an investigation process of concepts, based on the description and exploration of social and human problems. The aim of this research was to determine how teachers/caregivers include the domains of child development in their early childhood programs or activities. As far as possible, the study took place in a natural and informal environment. According to Fouché (2005a: 116) one of the purposes of the qualitative method is to discover important questions, processes and relationships, and not to test them. Creswell (1998: 17-18) further explains that corresponding to the qualitative approach does not intend to identify variables, explain behaviour through change or create new theories, but to describe the experience of participants in detail. Being faithful to the aim of this study, the researcher's role was to be active through learning from the individual's experience.

This enabled the researcher to gain insight in all the different domains of child development from three to five years. This also helped the researcher to investigate how childcare centres include these different domains of development. Interviews with teachers/caregivers gave them the opportunity to share their points of view as well as their experiences of the different domains of development. These descriptions included personal beliefs and thoughts, which are central to the qualitative approach (Creswell, 1998: 18).

1.3.1 Type of research

The study was based on applied research of an exploratory and descriptive nature. Applied research can be seen as a practical problem-solving endeavour (Delpont & De Vos, 2005: 45) and can further be defined as the scientific planning of induced change in a troublesome situation (Fouché & De Vos, 2005: 105). This was an applied study,

since in the empirical study the researcher focused on the practice (early childhood centres), to see how teachers/caregivers acknowledged and included the different domains of child development.

Exploratory research can be defined as a study with a 'what'-question. The basic research purpose attempts to create a general picture of the situation (Fouché & De Vos, 2005: 106). In this study the researcher wanted to know more about child development, the different domains of development and how these domains of development (with the principles of child development) are included in the childcare centre's early childhood program, approaching the child from three to five years as a holistic being.

Descriptive research attempts to take a well-defined subject and observe and investigate the study in order to describe it accurately. According to Rubin and Babbie (2001: 125) the description is more likely to refer to a more intensive examination of the study, its deeper meaning and thicker description of the subject under investigation. For this reason, descriptive research was ideal for describing the experiences of teachers/caregivers working with children, acknowledging child development, the different domains of development and how they include these domains of development in their programs, or adapt the programs to include these domains of development.

1.3.2 Research strategy

The research approach has already been mentioned, namely qualitative approach, therefore reference was being made to a research strategy rather than a research design as in the case of the quantitative approach. The strategy followed in this study, was an instrumental case study (Fouché, 2005b: 272).

According to Fouché (2005b: 272) a case study is defined as an observation of a process, activity, event, program or individual within a certain time or place. In conformity, an instrumental case study is defined as follows: to gain a better understanding of a social issue – in this case the social issue was about the way in which child development and the different domains of development were included in early childhood development programs. Fouché (2005b: 272) is further of the opinion that this case study merely serves the purpose of facilitating the researcher's gaining of

knowledge about the social issue. This implicated that the researcher gained a better understanding of all the different domains of development and the ways in which these domains are included in early childhood programs.

Case studies include different concepts, namely detailed descriptions of the case, interviews and/or documents. Afterwards an in-depth canalisation of data followed, where important themes arised (Creswell, 1998: 36). The case study provided the researcher with the freedom to shift/move attention according to what occurs during the collection of data (Graziano & Raulin, 2000: 50).

1.4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The researcher applied the qualitative research method to this study. According to Fouché (2005a: 268) "... the qualitative researcher almost always develops their own designs as they go along using one or more of the available strategies or tools as an aid or guideline". Creswell (1998: 2) defines design in the qualitative context as "the entire process of research from conceptualising a problem, to writing the narrative". According to Fouché (2005a: 116) the qualitative methods usually do not have a precisely delimited problem or hypothesis and the purpose of the method or design is to discover important questions, processes and relationships, and not to test them. Usually the problem statements develop logically from the review of the literature. A tentative problem should be formulated, but can change according to the progress of the research.

The research procedure rested on the qualitative approach as explained by Fouché and Delport (2005: 79-85) and was the detailed path taken in this study. The procedure that was followed was according to LeCompte's model (2000: 148-151) of qualitative data-analysis, which will be discussed in 1.5.

1.4.1 Literature study

Firstly, the researcher did collect data from literature, articles and interviews with lecturers from institutions like UNISA about child development and the different domains of development of children from three to five years. This helped create the literature study for this study. Interviews always took place against the background of a broad

perspective gained from the literature study. For the purpose of interviews with experts was to bring unknown perspectives to the foreground or to confirm or reject the researcher's own views. Afterwards the empirical data was collected through semi-structured interviews with teachers/caregivers.

The literature study was important in the research, considering that findings were compared with the literature. For the purpose of this study, the researcher consulted the following literature: books, journal articles and electronic sources about child development, developmental theories and appropriate developmental practices. Due to the nature of this study some of the sources used, were older than ten years. These sources, by Piaget and Vygotsky, were seen as classic work. The literature consisted primarily of the field of study, education and psychology. The researcher was of the opinion that the biggest part of the literature study would occur in Chapters two and three, in order to have enough information when approaching the field, without contaminating the research. According to Creswell (1998: 36-37) literature could be used beforehand to direct the study or to compare and bring into accordance the data compiled through the literature study. In the case of this study, the literature did fulfill both functions.

There is a variety of methods to collect information and to describe the experience of the individuals (Fouché, 2005b: 272). For the purpose of this study, interviews were used and the next section of discussion will be focused on this. Interviews were held with teachers/caregivers to gather data on how they acknowledge and include child development and all the different domains of development from three to five years.

1.4.2 Universe, population and sampling

The researcher realised that through semi-structured interviews the researcher might be overwhelmed by all the data. Therefore it was important to ensure that all the participants' backgrounds, experiences and educational backgrounds were relatively similar. Arkava and Lane (in Strydom, 2005a: 193-194) makes a clear distinction between universe and population. Universe refers to all the potential participants, who comprehend all the necessary characteristics the researcher is interested in. Population on the other hand, sets boundaries on the participants and refers to the individuals in

the universe who possess specific characteristics. The individuals which were included were limited by the identification of the population.

The universe of this study included teachers/caregivers in early childhood centers in Pretoria who teaches children from three to five years. The population includes teachers/caregivers in early childhood centers who teach children from three to five years in the biographical area of Doornpoort, Montana and Sinoville. A total of 13 interviews were held with participants in this biographical area.

Interviews were seen as a number of steps in a process, which includes the following: to identify participants by snowball sampling, establishing what type of interview is suitable for the study, what kind of information would be brought to the foreground, suitable recording processes (voice recorder) and suitable places for interviews (Creswell, 1998: 123-125). Snowball sampling, interviews and data analysis would be discussed in the following sections.

1.4.3 Snowball sampling

Creswell (1998: 119) defines snowball sampling as the identification of cases in the interest of people who know individuals who can contribute to the field of study. The snowball sampling was of great value to the qualitative study, because the focus was on identifying available participants, although these participants was purposefully being interviewed by including only teachers/caregivers teaching children from three to five years. The researcher received information about participants for the study, who enabled her to locate other possible members in the population. According to Strydom and Delport (2005: 330), there would usually only be one or two participants at commencement of the study, because very little knowledge were available.

Considering the choice of the study according to the snowball sampling, it was impossible to predict how many participants would be needed in this study. The snowball sampling worked very effectively and helped the researcher in the process to answer the research question and to reach the aim of the study. The researcher kept on approaching participants until she began to hear the same thing over and over again, when a saturation point was reached (Greeff, 2005: 294). The aim of the qualitative

study was not to generalise ideas and experiences, thus immense quantities of participants were not of cardinal interest (Creswell, 1998: 63).

The following criteria were used to select participants:

- Teachers/caregivers who teach children from three to five years.
- They had to teach in Doornpoort, Montana and Sinoville.
- They had to be prepared to participate in the study.
- Participants from any culture group were approached.

Considering the study describing the inclusion of domains of development in early childhood daily programs of childcare centres, the researcher felt that teachers/caregivers should be the participants, because no other individual, such as the parents or children, can explain the inclusion of child development or the domains of development as well as the teachers/caregivers. They can only make assumptions about how teachers/caregivers include child development and domains of development in early childhood programs from three to five years.

1.4.4 Interviews

Before commencing the interview, it was important for the researcher that there was a relationship/understanding between the participant and the researcher about what the interview included. The researcher was able to handle unforeseen problems and opportunities, as well as to handle mass information/data (Greeff, 2005: 287) and therefore restricted answers and advice to participants during the interview (Creswell, 1998: 123-125).

The researcher made use of one-on-one semi-structured interviews, which was based on the literature study. The semi-structured interviews were used to gain a detailed picture of the participant's beliefs about, or perceptions or accounts of the particular topic (Greeff, 2005: 296). For this study the focus was on the way teachers/caregivers included the domains of child development in the daily programs/activities. The interview gave participants the opportunity to discuss their early childhood programs, experiences and needs. The interviews took place without the researcher bringing any

prior information, experiences or opinions about this specific subject to the table, which led to bigger insight. Although, according to Greeff (2005: 292) it could be and was extremely difficult for the researcher to approach the interviews completely neutral.

The semi-structured interview consists out of the following: a time and place that was acceptable for all the participants, and the interview schedule (Appendix 3) that was used to guide interviews. The interview was scheduled through discussing a time and place with the participant and providing the participant with a written confirmation, as well as a consent form (Appendix 1) and a biographical questionnaire (Appendix 2). The interview took place at a specific place that suited both parties and where interruptions were restricted (Greeff, 2005: 294).

1.5 THE PROCESS OF ANALYZING AND INTERPRETING DATA

1.5.1 Introduction

McMillan and Schumacher (1997: 502) sees the process of data analyzing as a continued process which consists of phases, namely identifying of tentative pattern, the categorizing and ordering of data, the qualitative assessment of validity of data, refinement of patterns and lastly the synthesis of concepts and/or themes. Wiersma (in Davin, 2003: 252) explains that in qualitative research the data analyzing starts as soon as the data-collecting takes place. The reason for this is that the researcher works from a preliminary acceptance.

The next section of discussion will focus on the process that was used to analyse the data.

1.5.2 LeCompte's model of qualitative data-analysis

Davin (2003: 252) and LeCompte (2000: 148) distinguish five steps in the analyzing of qualitative data, which was followed in the study.

Step 1: Ordering

According to LeCompte (2000: 148) the first step of analyzing data is the ordering of collected data. Therefore during this step all the collected data where being ordered. Also called "tidying up".

The research problem was being re-evaluated and compared with the collected data to determine if the collected data answers the research problem and if there are any shortcomings. According to LeCompte (2000: 148) this step helps the researcher with the temporary assessment of the collected data.

Step 2: Item finding

According to Davin (2003: 253) and LeCompte (2000: 148) items is the specific aspect in the data that the researcher use in combining and decoding research results. This is also known as research units. For the purpose of this study items will be referred to as “themes”. The collected data had been worked through throughout, through repeated reading of the data and relevant items that were identified by the research problem. During this step the focus was on the following three types of data:

- (1) *Frequency of data.* These are themes that have been identified through repeated occurrence.
- (2) *Omission.* These are themes that never occur, although the researcher anticipated that it would possibly appear.
- (3) *Findings.* This theme was indicated by participants as existing or occurring, but this was not necessarily the case. Thus the data had to be verified further. According to the research findings, practical situations was not always verifiable. The aim of the interviews was to indicate if teacher/caregivers knew how to include child development in their daily programs.

Step 3: Development of steady themes

Eight themes had been identified and responses of participants were quoted under each theme.

Step 4: Pattern development

After these eight themes were identified, sub themes significant to the specific theme were identified under each theme. These sub themes were then verified with literature captured in Chapters two and three.

Step 5: Structuring

The themes were consequently joined and united to give a total description of the study. According to LeCompte (2000: 151) the following will happen:

“If the data are good and the analysis skillfully done, such descriptions can help participants see more clearly how to solve problems, improve programs, assess their effectiveness or develop theories explaining what happened.”

The last three steps mentioned were carried out on the collected data and the results were discussed according to the empirical study. During the discussion of the results theoretical verification was indicated.

1.6 ETHICAL ASPECTS

Strydom (2005b: 56) states that ethics guide the researcher in what is proper in research and what not. Ethics is described as a set of accepted morals, whereby the rules and expectations related to desired behaviour as well as the most appropriate conduct towards others involved in the research, is guided. The following ethical aspects guided the research process:

- Integrity guided the entire process of the study. The researcher ensured that no deception of respondents occurred and that facts were not deliberately misrepresented. The researcher is aware that withholding of information also implies deception and therefore the researcher was truthful in deliberation with all subjects. The real goal of the study, the real functions of the participants in the research and the possible experiences the respondents may be exposed to, were discussed with them (Strydom, 2005b: 60). In terms of the literature study, all sources utilised were acknowledged.
- Sieber (in Strydom, 2005b: 61) defines privacy or confidentiality as information that is generally not intended for the knowledge of others. For the purpose of this research, the confidentiality of the content of data collected as well as the privacy of participants, were managed to protect the identities of all participants. Information was handled anonymously by utilising symbols to refer to participants in the drafting of the research report.

- The principle of informed consent was followed to ensure that all teachers/caregivers who took part in the study and completed the form, were informed regarding the aim and procedures of the research. Strydom (2005b: 59) states that informed consent implies that participants are informed of the goal of the investigation, the procedures to be followed, the possible advantages, disadvantages and dangers respondents may be exposed to, as well as the credibility of the researcher. For the purpose of this study written consent was obtained from the teachers/caregivers. Participation in the research was voluntary and all questions asked by participants were answered truthfully. The participants were informed that they could withdraw from the study at any point (Appendix 1).
- Strydom (2005b: 63) states that researchers are ethically bound to ensure competency to undertake research. The researcher ensured that the research was conducted in a well-planned and ethically correct manner. Where required, supervision was sought from the study leader. Objectivity was maintained and the boundaries between being a researcher and not a teacher in this research were maintained. According to Strydom, objectivity is a prerequisite to ensure that research is conducted in an ethical manner and to refrain from making value judgments.
- The findings of the study will be made available and therefore required that a report be compiled as accurately and objectively as possible. Strydom (2005b: 65) states that a researcher is ethically required to ensure that the research is conducted correctly and that the results are not deceiving. The final written report must be accurate and objective, must contain all the information and should not include any form of bias. The researcher avoided plagiarism at all cost and endeavoured to acknowledge all references in the appropriate manner.
- Subjects who took part in the research have the right to be informed of the outcome of the research without breaching privacy and confidentiality. Depending on the type of research it was foreseen that the researcher might have to debrief participants, especially if emotionally charged subjects were raised during interviews. Debriefing would have followed straight after the sessions. The results of the research would be made available by means of recommendations (Strydom, 2005b: 67). It was not foreseen that debriefing of all participants would have been

required, but the researcher was prepared to refer those participants should the requirement arise. Individual appointments will be made with teachers/caregivers to inform them of the results of the study.

To create a uniform understanding of the contents of the terminology used in the research, key elements will be explained in the following paragraph.

1.7 DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS

In order to ensure an understanding of the key concepts of the thesis, the following terminology needs to be explained:

1.7.1 Early childhood

Early childhood is a field of study where researchers from many disciplines devote and work to understand the important changes that take place from conception through to adolescence (Berk, 2003: 4; Cook & Cook, 2005: 3). Myers (2002: 258) defines early childhood as that it "... encompasses the period from conception until entry into school at about age 6 or 7. Early childhood is the period when the brain develops almost to its fullest and when humans learn to walk, talk and establish moral foundations, gain self-confidence and develop a general worldview. This early period provides the foundation for later living and learning". According to Cook and Cook (2005: 3), the aim is to understand the fundamental principles of development as well as the various ways that development can be disrupted or affected. It also helps the reader, parent, counsellor, psychologist or any other professional to understand the child's own progression into adulthood. The Government Gazette (2001: 14), White Paper 1 on Education and Training (1995) and our Interim Policy for Early Childhood Development (1996), defines early childhood development as "... an umbrella term that applies to the processes by which children from birth to nine years grow and thrive physically, mentally, emotionally, spiritually, morally and socially".

For the purpose of this study early childhood was defined as the changes that took place from three to five years, which include all the different domains and principles of development: the cognitive, physical, social and emotional development of the child. It is important to emphasise that the aim of this study was to investigate the way this

knowledge of child development as well as the domains and principles of development were included in early childhood programs. The researcher therefore focused on making a definite distinction between cognitive, physical, social and emotional development.

1.7.2 Early childhood programs

Bredekamp (2000: 3) defines an early childhood program as any group program in a centre, school or other facility that serves children from birth through to age eight. Early childhood programs include childcare centres, family childcare homes, private and public preschools, kindergartens and primary-grade schools. Gordon and Brown (2000: 9) defines programs as the education of young children including formal and informal group settings regardless of their initial purpose. For instance, after-school programs for kindergarten and first-graders are included, as are their formal academic sessions. Although the Government Gazette (2001: 1) refers to the above as early childhood development and refers to early childhood development "... as a comprehensive approach to policies and programs for children from birth to nine years of age with the participation of their parents and caregivers. Its purpose is to protect the child's rights to develop his or her full cognitive, emotional, social and physical potential."

For the purpose of this study the researcher defined early childhood programs as the programs followed daily for children between three to five years, including the different domains of development and the way teachers/caregivers include these domains of child development in their daily programs, including the education, experience and additional training of teachers/caregivers.

1.7.3 Child development

Child development is a field of study where researchers from many disciplines devote their work to understand the important changes that takes place from conception through to adolescence (Berk, 2003: 4; Cook & Cook, 2005: 3). The aim is to understand the fundamental principles of development as well as the various ways in which development can be disrupted or affected; it also helps the reader, parent, counsellor, psychologist or any other profession to understand their own progression into adulthood (Cook & Cook, 2005: 3).

For the purpose of this study child development was defined as the changes that take place from three to five years (early childhood), which includes all the different domains of development and the cognitive, physical, social and emotional development of the child.

1.7.4 Domains of development

Early childhood development consists of different domains of development from three to five years. The following domains of development will be discussed: cognitive, physical, emotional and social development.

1.7.4.1 Cognitive development/cognition

According to Berk (2003: 5) cognitive development is the development of a wide variety of thought processes and intellectual abilities, including memory, attention, general knowledge, problem solving, imagination, creativity and the uniquely human capacity to represent the world through language. Compared to Cook and Cook (2005: 4) cognitive development consists of numerous changes in the way children think, process information, store and retrieve memories, solve problems and communicate with language, while Gordon and Brown (2000: 444) refers to cognitive development as the mental process of faculty that children use to acquire knowledge.

For this study, cognitive development was defined as the process which relates to changes in the way children think, remember and communicate.

1.7.4.2 Physical development

Berk (2003: 5) defines physical development as changes in the body size, proportions, appearance and the functioning of various systems, brain development, perceptual and motor capacities and physical health. De Witt and Booyen (1994: 9) refers to physical development as the process where most of the big changes in development take place as the child progresses from a baby to a toddler and from a toddler to an infant. According to Cook and Cook (2005: 3), physical development relates to children's growth in size, while their muscles become stronger and more coordinated.

For the purpose of this study, physical development was defined as the changes in size, strength and coordination, perceptual and motor capacity that takes place in a child from three to five years.

1.7.4.3 Emotional development

According to Gordon and Brown (2000: 506) emotions are the feelings a person has – joy and sorrow, love and hate, confidence and fear, loneliness and belonging, anger and contentment, frustration and satisfaction. These are reactions or responses to people, events and circumstances. While compared to De Witt and Booyesen (1994: 20) emotions is a complex condition of an organism which is characterised by the activation of the central and autonomic nervous system, intestinal reaction and feelings such as fear, anger, joy, rage, dislike and sympathy.

For the purpose of this study, emotional development was clarified as the internal emotions a person feels as well as the influences of external situations on the person.

1.7.4.4 Social development

According to Cook and Cook (2005: 4) social development is the component of development related to changes in the way children interact with other people, e.g. family members, peers and playmates. Compared to Berk's (2003: 5) view on social and emotional development, social development is one domain that implies emotional communication, self-understanding, as well as the ability to manage one's feelings, knowledge about other people, interpersonal skills, friendships, intimate relationships and moral reasoning and behaviour.

For the purpose of the study, social development was defined as the ability of the individual to communicate, form relationships and friendships as well as having the ability to behave in a morally accepted way.

1.7.5 Teachers and caregivers

According to the Free Online Dictionary (2007), Dictionary (2007) and Webster's Revised Unabridged Dictionary (2007), a teacher can be defined as someone who teaches or instructs. Furthermore, a teacher can be defined as someone whose occupation or business is to teach. While according to Word Reference (2007), Free Online Dictionary (2007) and Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary (2007) a caregiver can be defined as someone who is responsible for attending to the needs of a child.

For the purpose of this study a teacher and/or caregiver was defined as someone who teaches children and addresses the needs of the child in all domains of the child's development: cognitively, physically, emotionally and socially.

1.8 RESEARCH REPORT LAYOUT

The research report is presented in five chapters, as follows:

- Chapter one contains the introduction to the research. This includes the introduction, motivation for the choice of topic, problem formulation, aim and objectives, research question, research methodology, the process of data-analyzing, ethical aspects and definition of main concepts.
- Chapter two provides information found in existing literature on child development, the preschooler and domains of development.
- Chapter three provides further information found in existing literature on the principles of child development.
- Chapter four contains the analysis and interpretation of information collected during the execution of the empirical research, as well as the findings. Findings were then compared with literature in Chapters 2 and 3.
- Chapter five, the final chapter, contains the conclusions made, based on the findings of the research as well as the recommendations in the form of guidelines

for teachers/caregivers to create awareness of how to include child development (domains of child development) into their daily programs.

1.9 CONCLUSION

The first chapter formed the theoretical basis and defined the direction of the research that followed. This chapter explained the need for the research and the aim it wished to achieve. The chapter also directed the research in that it guided the research by means of the ethical guidelines.

In the next chapter a description of the preschool child, including the different domains of development, will be provided. The chapter explains the importance of knowledge of child development.

CHAPTER 2

CHILD DEVELOPMENT IN THE EARLY YEARS

2.1 INTRODUCTION

According to Papalia, Olds and Feldman (2006: 7) the process of development starts at conception. Children grow, develop and learn throughout their lives from birth and infancy to adulthood. A child's development can be measured through social, cognitive, physical and emotional developmental milestones. Berk (2003: 5) further of opinion that as children grow, all these different domains of development: social, cognitive, physical and emotional development is interrelated and the one domain has an influence on the other. An example would be that the physical mobility of a three to five year old helps him explore more and becoming familiar with his environment.

2.2 CHILD DEVELOPMENT

Papalia, *et al.* (2006: 9-10) and Trawick-Smith (2006: 2-4) explains that from the start each child is unlike anybody else in the world, he is an individual. Some children are shy (introverts) and others outgoing (extroverts). Individual development, some of which is inborn, can also be influenced by experiences. Most of the time these two influences work together. Family characteristics, ethnicity, social class, gender, emotional disability, physical and mental presence or absence will all affect the way a child develops. Influences can be seen as bidirectional. This implies that a child from the start, through the responses he evokes in others, moulds his environment and then respond to the environment. Then again each and every child develops within a specific environment, and is bound by place and time, even culture. We can therefore assume that historical and cultural context strongly influence development. A child born in South Africa is likely to have different experiences from a child born in Africa. Early experiences should be taken into consideration when looking at child development. Any form of trauma, poverty, violence, abuse, accidents or deprived childhood will have an emotional impact on the child, which will furthermore influence all other domains of development. Development in childhood is connected to development throughout the

rest of the life span. Development does not end at adolescence. It goes on through life, until we die.

The researcher is of the opinion that if a child fails to develop properly, the child might be unable to reach his full potential. It is therefore important for teachers/caregivers to see the child as a holistic being, because as children grow, they master different milestones in every developmental domain at different times. According to Gordon and Brown (2000: 105) the child is often discussed separately, although the domains of development (cognitive, physical, emotional and social) can not be isolated from one another. They each make a contribution to the whole child as a holistic being. Lindon (2006: 10) defines holistic or whole child approach by "... stressing the importance of thinking about and behaving towards children as entire individuals, that all their skills are important and support their whole development". It is therefore important to focus on all aspects of child development in the early years. To focus on all aspects of development teachers/caregivers must know the child's level of development. The child as a holistic being includes the following: the age of the child, the child as an individual, and his level of development in each domain as well as the influences of his /her environment (culture, environment, community, broader society and educational settings) on him/her, which will be discussed in Chapter three.

For teachers/caregivers to acknowledge and know the level of the child's development they must have knowledge about how children grow, develop and learn. According to Gestwicki (1999: 6) "Everything that has been learned through research and formulated into theory about how children develop and learn at various ages and stages and in particular contexts, is used to create learning environments that match their abilities and developmental tasks." This means or even implies that a program should be based on what is presently known and understood of the child. Understanding of the way children develop will make teachers/caregivers and parents aware of what to expect. Although different domains of development (physical, cognitive, social and emotional) should be considered, the goal is to treat a child as a holistic being who needs to develop in all the domains of development. For the purpose of this study the preschooler (three to five years old), and the general characteristics of the three to five year old will be discussed, followed by the domains of development.

2.3 THE PRESCHOOLER

Three to five year old children are often called preschoolers. This is when children make the transition from toddlerhood to childhood (Louw, *et al.*, 1998: 238; Papalia, *et al.*, 2006: 237). Preschool children make developmental strides and express an interest in the world around them. They want to touch, taste, smell, feel and hear things for themselves. Preschoolers are eager learners. They learn, experience and explore things through play. They are no longer babies but sturdy adventurers; they explore possibilities and develop capabilities of their own body and mind. They are busy developing skills, using language and struggling to gain inner control (Malley, [sa]).

During these preschool years, preschoolers want to establish themselves as separate from their parents. They want to and become more independent than toddlers, they become part of a broader world outside the family (Rathus, 2006: 262). Their language is more established and they become more verbal, expressing their needs. According to Algate, Jones, Rose and Jeffery (2006: 189), two year olds produce multiword sentences and by the age of five years children are proficient speakers. The preschool child moves away from Erikson's second stage of development, from autonomy versus shame to initiative versus guilt. During these years children move from being much attached to parents/caregivers to being more independent. This can lead to unrealistic fears.

The preschool child will test boundaries repeatedly. They will sometimes act very silly and use forbidden words. It is therefore important to have clear and simple boundaries so that they will know what the acceptable behaviour is and what is expected of them. At the age of three, children will have troubles getting along with other children and sharing is very difficult for them, although by the age of five they are more willing to share, cooperate and take turns. The five year olds also are friendlier towards friends and get along very well with them. Because of their developing imagination and rich fantasy lives, the three and four year olds have trouble telling fantasy from reality. The preschool child may also talk about having imaginary friends (Hughes, 1995: 36-40; Malley, [sa]).

Only when teachers/caregivers have knowledge and understanding of the preschooler's growth and development, will they be able to guide preschoolers successfully through this stage and help them reach their full potential. Realizing the importance of childhood development in the early childhood years, the researcher will in the next section firstly focus on characteristics of the three, four and five year old and then on the domains of development. The reason for this is to emphasise the importance of each child as an individual, considering his age, and also to respect and acknowledge the child's culture and social background when planning a program, because this has an influence on each child's development, learning and reaching his potential.

2.3.1 Characteristics of development from three to five years

As indicated earlier the preschooler makes the transition from toddlerhood to childhood during these years (Louw, *et al.*, 1998: 238; Papalia, *et al.*, 2006: 237). The child is no longer a baby but a sturdy adventurer; he/she explores possibilities and develops capabilities of their own body and mind. According to Papalia, *et al.* (2006: 237) the child's body becomes slimmer, his/her motor and mental abilities sharper and personalities and relationships more complex.

As children grow, they master different developmental stages. Each stage provides building blocks for emotional health, morality and intelligence, learning and academic skills. It is therefore important to approach the child as a holistic being, including all the domains of development. According to Berk (2003: 5) all aspects of development influence one another. It is therefore important to focus on all aspects of child development in the early years, which will include the influence of family, environment and culture on the developing child, when planning a program. The rest of this section will briefly summarize the general characteristics of the three, four and five year old.

2.3.1.1 General characteristics of the three year old

The average three year old is highly imaginative. There is an expansion in their fantasy lives, which sets the stage for great strides in imaginative play. On the negative side the three year old show unrealistic fears for monsters, the dark and loud noises. They express intense feelings (such as fear and affection), but they also show delight and

have a silly sense of humor. There is a clear indication that they begin to identify strongly with adults, in what the adults do and to imagine themselves doing it. This leads to dramatic play, where they have the opportunity to act out the roles of different things. For the three year old it would especially be the adult. Because the success of dramatic play or role-playing games depends on the cooperation of the players, each child must act out his or her part. This reflects on the social maturity of the child. If the child do not participate in the game, the role play will not work (Hughes, 1995: 77).

The three year old is still very stubborn and negative, although they are more willing to conform to the expectations of others. Although the three year old shows difficulty in sharing objects and taking turns, they become more willing to share, take turns, await their turn and to cooperate with peers and adults. It is therefore obvious that the three year old is moving into a world of increasing social interaction. They still lack the ability to solve problems among peers and they usually need help to resolve conflict in a social situation. Finally, the three year old is more interested in the effects of his behaviour on the surroundings, in other words they begin to move from the process to the product, from actions to their end results. They therefore draw satisfaction from making things that they can show others (Hughes, 1995: 77; Bredekamp & Copple, 1997: 97-99).

2.3.1.2 General characteristics of the four year old

The four year old appears to be more secure and self-confident than the three year old, although they are still in the pre-operational phase, they cannot think logically and take things literally. They also are still in Erickson's stage of initiative versus guilt, where they have the ability to initiate an activity and enjoy following it through. Their bodies are more efficient than a year ago, they can balance themselves by standing on one foot, ride a small bike with training wheels and they can roller skate. Their fine motor control is more sophisticated; they can tie their shoelaces and button large buttons. Being a four year old gives them the freedom to explore activities that a year ago was frustrating and difficult. They love and enjoy drawing, colouring, painting, cutting pictures or things out of paper, woodworking and imaginative block building with blocks (big and small) of various shapes. They are more product oriented, the products are unintentional and evolve as the project develops. In other words they are more likely to plan a project but

will change it continuously as the play material changes in appearance (Hughes, 1995: 77).

2.3.1.3 General characteristics of the five year old

Hughes (1995: 78) indicates that “from an intellectual standpoint, the five year olds are already showing signs of logical thinking as they begin the transformation to what cognitive psychologist Jean Piaget referred to as the concrete operations. Their thinking is better organized than before; as a result they tend to see the world as being a rational and orderly place”.

A five year old child is less self-centred and more stable, reliable and predictable. When they play with friends they are friendly and more relaxed. They show a willingness to share, cooperate and take turns. These children show the same spirit at home, they love and are willing to take on new responsibilities in caring for themselves and their belongings. They often are also willing to help in caring for the younger siblings (Hughes, 1995: 78). They take pride in talking about their little brothers and sisters because they are able to help care for them, but also because they are becoming more protective of their siblings.

The five year old is more realistic than he or she was at three when fantasy played a huge role. Their fears are now based on reality and not fantasy, like fear for accidents, illness, war, death and physical danger. The realism of the five year old can be seen in role play. They want the entire costume with all the props and not just only one part of it (Hughes, 1995: 77; Bredekamp & Copple, 1997: 109-110).

Due to the nature of this study the developmental progression of the three, four and five year old was summarized in table form (consult Appendix 4: Developmental progression: Indication of expected changes and growth of the three to five year old).

2.4 DOMAINS OF DEVELOPMENT

As explained in 1.7.4 child development consists of different developmental domains namely, physical, cognitive, social and emotional development. Knowledge of child

development is important when teaching children, because every child is an individual and his/her developmental level will differ from the child next to him due to influences of the environment. In the following section the different domains of development will be discussed.

2.4.1 Physical development

As defined in 1.7.4.2, physical development is the change that takes place in size, strengths and coordination, perceptual and motor capacities. It is also important to remember that brain development plays an important role in the physical changes that takes place.

2.4.1.1 Bodily growth and change

Physical growth varies widely between the ages of three and five years. Papalia, *et al.* (2006: 237) explains that the preschooler's body becomes slimmer, their motor and mental abilities sharper, and their personalities and relationships more complex. According to Bredekamp (2000: 99), Papalia, *et al.* (2006: 241), and Rathus (2006: 262) the preschooler's body goes through certain changes in physical growth such as the increase in height and weight, some children might grow as much as six inches over the three year period and others grow a few inches, but all children develop a less-toddler-like trunk and become less top-heavy. This is due to development of the abdominal muscles. There is a profound difference in children's weight and height between children in developing countries and economically developed countries (Feldman, 1999: 143). Louw, *et al.* (1998: 239) and Feldman (1999: 143) further emphasise that better health care and nutrition received by children in developing countries has a significant influence on children's growth and therefore poverty and families with financial burdens will have an influence on children's growth and weight.

Papalia, *et al.* (2006: 241) explains that due to muscular and skeletal growth the child becomes stronger, which leads to changes in body shape and appearance. Physical activities like running, jumping, picking things up and carrying around toys and things have an influence on the bodily strength of the child. Further more Papalia, *et al.* (2006: 241-242) explains that the children's cartilage turns to bone at a faster rate, the bones

become harder, giving the child a firmer shape, which protects the internal organs and permanent teeth starts to appear.

2.4.1.2 Perceptual development

Children use all their sensory capacities as they engage with the environment, explore, move, or handle objects. Perceptual development can be defined as the capability of the child to interpret information received from the senses (Louw, *et al.*, 1998: 240). Children learn from birth through their senses, they learn about the world around them through touching, smelling, hearing, tasting and seeing things. According to Beckett (2002: 77-78) babies are in the sensori-motor phase from birth, which indicates that, from birth, children learn through their senses. Touch is, at birth, one of the most developed senses, while postnatal experiences shape the visual centres of the brain. Depth perception, colour vision, fine acuity and well controlled eye movements are in place at six months. The sense of smell is completely developed at birth, hearing begins at about 12 weeks before birth and at birth the baby has a definite preference for mom's voice. Copan (2005) states that "... the amount of touch, whether it is cuddling, carrying, or massaging is clearly important to a baby's emotional and cognitive development. That children of all ages love music and it provides cognitive growth, bonding with care-providers and emotional comfort".

Children use their sensory capacities as they engage with the environment, move, handle or explore objects. When speaking about perceptual-motor development, professionals usually refer to movement activities that lead to academic or cognitive outcomes. Children use their sensory skills every day in every movement they make. Movement in return is part of children's social and communication events, mutual activities, gestures and approach. The only way to improve perceptual processes is through practice during early childhood (preschool). We need to realize that all modes of receiving sensation are involved in the environment, touch, scent, hearing, sight and taste. Although, most of the time, multiple modes of sensation come from one source, which requires sensory integration. For example, if a cat approach a child, the child is likely to see (demeanor, colour, size and conformation), hear (footsteps or panting), and possibly smell (fur or breath) the cat. These senses are sent to the brain through the nervous system. The brain takes new information, organizes it and integrates it into

previously learnt experiences or learned concepts. After a decision is made about the course of action, the brain transmits the signals through the nervous system to initiate and indicate desired movement (Kostelnik, Soderman & Whiren, 2007: 324).

The perceptual process is rapid, ongoing and continuous. Every child might experience the same event differently and integrate these events differently. There are five aspects of perceptual-motor development that are important: balance, figure-ground perception, temporal awareness, spatial awareness and body and directional awareness.

- Balance

There are two types of balance, namely static and dynamic balance. Static balance is the ability to maintain a posture while standing still, for example standing on one foot. Dynamic balance is the ability to remain in a desired posture while moving, for example walking or running. Although balance is an important component of any movement, it is very important when it comes to more complex movements (Kostelnik, *et al.*, 2007: 324). Younger children require ongoing practice due to the change in the child's gravity centre as they grow.

- Figure-ground perception

Louw, *et al.* (1998: 240) is of the opinion that children's *figure foreground* improves during the age of four to six years. Figure-ground can be defined as determining what is foreground and what is in the background using visual or auditory skills. An example would be looking at a specific animal in a container. It is just as difficult for children to distinguish where certain sounds come from, especially if there are a lot of noises. Although, according to Kostelnik, *et al.* (2007: 325) these skills, figure and ground perceptions develop in time.

- Temporal awareness

Temporal awareness is where children struggle with estimating the speed of a ball, although they can dance joyfully and rhythmically to music, a steady beat is more felt than heard; they are able to clap complex patterns. In time children learn that they can go faster or slower; they learn to assess their speed. For preschoolers to move rapidly through space is exciting, although putting them too

early in competitive sports may lead to discouragement (Kostelnik, *et al.*, 2007: 325).

- **Spatial awareness**

Spatial awareness is where objects seem smaller or larger than they really are. Children are aware of their surroundings, but cannot necessarily describe their location at first, but later on if they are more mature and experienced they are able to do it. During the preschool years youngsters are still bumping into one another and other things because they struggle to judge the distance between them (Kostelnik, *et al.*, 2007: 324 -325).

- **Body and directional awareness**

Children that can name their body parts and tell the function of the parts are aware of their bodies. Most preschoolers are able to do it before they go to Primary School. Directional awareness is a combination of understanding concepts such as down and up, front and back. A child that struggles with body and directional awareness may still get confused with letters of the same perceptual criterion, like the m and w, as well as three (3) and seven (7) (Kostelnik, *et al.*, 2007: 324). These shortcomings will disappear over time with practice.

Through acknowledging child development, teachers/caregivers should be aware of the importance of perceptual development. Programs should provide opportunities for perceptual development in every activity for the child to reach his/her potential as a holistic being. Motor development goes hand-in-hand with perceptual development, because as children grow they become more active. They explore, experience and learn about their environment through their senses. The next section explains motor development.

2.4.1.3 Motor development

Children between three and six years make great advances in motor skills. This includes both gross motor and fine motor skills. In a way you could say that in the preschool years we will witness an explosion of motor skills, as children's nervous

systems mature and their movements become more precise and coordinated (Rathus, 2006: 265).

(i) Gross motor development

Gross motor development can be defined as the large muscle use in locomotion like running and jumping (Papalia, *et al.*, 2006: 246; Rathus, 2006: 265). In the preschool years children make great strides in the development of gross motor skills. According to Papalia, *et al.* (2006: 246-247) and Trawik-Smith (2006: 201) motor skills do not develop in isolation. The skills that are achieved in the preschool years are built on achievements in infancy and toddlerhood. The development of the motor and sensory area of the cerebral cortex permits better coordination between what children want to do and what they can do. Preschoolers' lung capacity is greater and their muscles and bones are stronger, which makes jumping, climbing and running possible. New and previous skills are acquired into systems of actions. Due to the fact that their bodies change, their body permits them to do more. Papalia, *et al.* (2006: 246-247) and Trawik-Smith (2006: 201) explained further that the systems of actions mean increasingly complex combinations of skills that permit a wider or more precise range of movement and more control of the environment. Teachers/caregivers need to remember that children learn from within their bodies outwards, in other words they learn about their bodies first of all through big movements, before they can do smaller and more accurate fine motor movements.

In Appendix 5, the researcher acknowledged the different stages/phases of the gross motor skills of the three, four and five year old child, including the progression that takes place during these years.

(ii) Fine motor development

Fine motor development can be defined as the small muscles used in manipulative skills involving eye-hand coordination, such as buttoning and drawing (Papalia, *et al.*, 2006: 247; Rathus, 2006: 268). Fine motor skills lag gross motor skills and develop gradually. Gross motor skills must be acquired before fine motor skills develop. Acquiring fine motor skills like tying shoelaces and cutting with scissors help young

children to take responsibility for their personal care. This is a very frustrating scene or period for children between steadfastly refusing to allow parents to help or intervene and requesting their parents' help (Rathus, 2006: 268). During the preschool years the evidence of the preference of one hand over the other is visible at age three, also known as handedness. Handedness is the preference use of a particular hand (Papalia, *et al.*, 2006: 247). This happens because the left hemisphere of the brain which controls the right side of the body is usually dominant.

In Appendix 6, the researcher acknowledged the different stages/phases of fine motor skills of the three, four and five year old child including the progression that takes place during these years.

2.4.2 Cognitive development

Piaget was one of the world's most exiting research theorists in child development. He identified four major stages of cognitive development, sensori-motor stage: zero to two years, pre-operational stage; two to six/seven years, concrete operational stage; six to twelve years and formal operational stage, twelve years to adulthood. According to Piaget, not only did the quantity of information increase in each stage, but the quality of knowledge and understanding changed as well. Piaget took an organismic perspective, viewing cognitive development as the product of a child's effort to understand and act on their environment and the world around them (Papalia, *et al.*, 2006: 33). For this reason the child's cognitive development between two to seven years will be discussed in depth and the characteristics of the pre-operational phase will be used as theoretical framework.

Piaget describes and explains cognitive development through the following concepts: organization, schemes, adaptation, assimilation, accommodation and equilibrium (Rathus, 2006: 19). *Organization* is the tendency to create increasingly complex cognitive structures: ways of thinking or systems of knowledge that incorporate more and more accurate images of reality. Piaget defines (in Berk, 2003: 219) *schemes* as a specific structure or organized way of making sense of experience, which changes with age. Thus, according to Gordon and Brown (2000: 135) regardless of age, all people develop schemes, or mental concepts, as a general way of thinking about, or interacting

with, objects and or ideas in the environment. An example would be that babies learn about the world from birth through their sensori-motor schemes, such as sucking and grasping. Papalia, *et al.* (2006: 33) further explains that as children acquire more and more information, their schemes become more and more complex.

Rathus (2006: 19) defines *adaptation* as the interaction between the organism and the environment and it consists of two processes, namely *assimilation* and *accommodation*. *Adaptation* can be referred to as the way children handle new information in the light of previous knowledge. Piaget further states that it is a biological tendency for all organisms to adapt to their environment. According to Feldman (1999: 23), during *assimilation*, children or adults use their current knowledge (*schemes*) to interpret the external world. It is the process in which people understand an experience in terms of their current stage of cognitive development and their way of thinking. According to Berk (2003: 219) and Papalia, *et al.* (2006: 19) *accommodation*, in contrast, is the modification of existing schemes to permit the incorporation of new events or knowledge, adjusting old schemes and create new ones to produce a better fit with the environment.

According to Rathus (2006: 20) equilibrium can be defined as the creation of a balance (equilibrium), between assimilation and accommodation as a way of incorporating new events or knowledge. In other words, when children can assimilate new events to existing schemes, they are in a state of equilibrium or cognitive harmony. If children come into a situation where they cannot handle the new experiences within their existing cognitive structure, disequilibrium are experienced, although they may try to accommodate the new experience. According to Berk (2003: 220), when this happens children realize that the new information does not match their current schemes (knowledge), so they shift from assimilation towards accommodation. Once they have modified the new schemes they move back toward assimilation, practicing and exercising their newly changed structure. Feldman (1999: 23) explains that assimilation and accommodation work in tandem to bring about cognitive development.

Piaget further described the thinking and cognitive functioning of children between the ages of two and seven as the pre-operational stage, indicating the conclusion of the previous stage, sensori-motor and the time before children are able to make truly logical

connections in their thinking (Gestwicki, 1999: 246; Beckett, 2002: 78). Van Hoorn, Nourot, Scales and Alward (in Gestwicki, 1999: 246) explains that during this stage, "... children are incapable of formulating or understanding true concepts, concepts that are reliable and stable, not in constant risk of contradiction". According to Piaget (1959: 116-117), this is so because children are still egocentric. They reason from particular to particular, rather than by understanding how particular cases relates to the whole set of possible cases.

The characteristic of change that takes place during the second major stage, the pre-operational stage of cognitive development, is a great expansion or increase in symbolic thought, and/or representational ability, using mental symbols, words or objects to represent something that is not physically present (Feldman, 1999: 192; Berk, 2003: 229; Papalia, *et al.*, 2006: 265). During this period or stage arguments are not yet logic thinking, but is only judged on what they can physically see, which means that the child has not developed abstract thinking or thoughts.

Piaget (in Trawick-Smith, 2006: 229) provides excellent descriptions of preschoolers' thinking or pre-operational thoughts. According to Algate, *et al.* (2006: 188) and Trawick-Smith (2006: 229) pre-operational thoughts is a kind of thinking used by most young children in whom there is still great reliance on perception and physical cues in the environment to learn and solve problems. Piaget identifies several fundamental ways in which children of this age think differently from adults.

(i) Symbolic thought

Symbolic thought is characterized by the use of mental symbols, words or pictures which the child uses to represent something which is not physically present; the mental representation of actions, events and objects (Gestwicki, 1999: 247; Papalia, *et al.*, 2006: 265). The universal mark of the human culture is the use of symbols. Without symbols people would not be able to communicate verbally, read maps or make changes. Having symbols help children remember things and think about them without having them physically present. We need to realize that the symbolic function is at the heart of one of the major advances that occurs in the pre-operational period, namely the increasingly sophisticated use of language (Feldman, 1999: 192).

Children make use of symbolic play through pretend play, for example a doll represents a person, “scolding” someone by using words the parent uses when he/she is cross with the children, and of language, a system of symbols to communicate (words or signs) (Feldman, 1999: 192; Papalia, *et al.*, 2006: 265). This ability is readily seen in the increased language used by preschoolers, allowing them to think ahead, solve problems and anticipating consequences, without tying these activities to actions. Symbolic thought become more focused, goal orientated, and purposeful (Gestwicki, 1999: 247).

(ii) Centration

Centration is characterized by the child’s focus or attention on only one aspect of a situation of stimuli. This concept leads to the confusion of appearances with reality, because the concept is limited by one outstanding perception or appearance, excluding the true understanding considering the total picture (Gestwicki, 1999: 246). For example, in pouring a quantity of liquid from a narrow beaker into a shallow dish, a preschool child might judge the quantity of liquid to have decreased, because it is “lower”. That is, the child attends to the height of the water, but not to the compensating increase in the diameter of the container.

Due to the above, preschoolers come to illogical conclusions because they cannot de-centre. According to Gestwicki (1999: 246) de-centring is needed for preschoolers to be able to focus on detail, while keeping the whole in mind. This is a skill that is important for learning to read, realizing that an individual letter is part of a word, as well as mathematics which requires an understanding of transformation. The mental characteristic of centration suggests that to begin reading and mathematic work in the preschool years, as some teachers or caregivers do, is not appropriate for their developmental stage.

(iii) Egocentrism

Egocentrism is a version of centration. This donates a tendency of a child to only think from one point of view. It is when children assume that every one thinks, feels and perceives the way they do. This makes it impossible to understand others’ points of view or feelings (Feldman, 1999: 193; Gestwicki, 1999: 247;

Papalia, *et al.*, 2006: 269; Rathus, 2006: 294). Egocentrism, in Piaget's term, does not mean that pre-operational children are selfish. It just indicates that they do not understand that other people have opinions as well. According to Gestwicki (1999: 247), "Egocentrism also leads preschoolers to believe in animism, assuming all objects have the same lifelike characteristics they have experienced." Helping a child through this stage by providing a multitude of experiences and encounters with persons and objects, the child will slowly become de-centred, and thus gain a wider understanding of the world around him.

(iv) Reasoning

Reasoning during the preschool years appears faulty in one way or the other, because children do not use deductive or inductive reasoning; instead they jump from one particular to another and see causes where none exist (Papalia, *et al.*, 2006: 266). An example would be: Anna was mean to her sister. Then her sister got sick. Anna concluded that she made her sister sick, because she was mean to her. The preschool child tends to make connections between things that are actually superficial.

(v) Irreversibility

Irreversibility is when children fail to understand that some operations or actions can be reversed, restoring the original situation (Papalia, *et al.*, 2006: 266). Piaget (in Trawick-Smith, 2006: 231) noted that children have difficulty reversing the direction of their thinking. An example would be to take a group of preschoolers to the playground, stopping at eight different spots and at the end ask the children to take you back the exact way you came. Preschoolers would not be able to do it, because they can only focus on the beginning or end of things and don't understand what happened in between.

2.4.3 Social and emotional development

The preschooler's emotional and social interactions are more visible during the preschool years than during the infant years. To understand and acknowledge the child's social and emotional development, the researcher made use of Erikson's stages of Human Development (Feldman, 1999: 19; Beckett, 2002: 43; Berk, 2003: 18;

Papalia, *et al.*, 2006: 30; Rathus, 2006: 10-11). According to Erikson's stages of Human Development the preschooler moves away from the stage of autonomy versus doubt, to the stage of initiative versus guilt. Gestwicki (1999: 164) is of the opinion that: "As the preschooler emerges from the isolated cocoon of the attachment relationship and the insistent separateness of autonomy, interest in the world of people blossoms". For many children this is the first separation from their parents, moving into a phase where they play together in groups and social interaction between children takes place. According to Gestwicki (1999: 164) and Trawick-Smith (2006: 295), during the preschool years children become more independent, social and self-assured; they acquire the desire and ability to interact with other children and adults. They gain the ability to resolve conflict, make friends and enter play activities already in progress. The researcher is of the opinion that children with good, developed social skills would be more liked by peers and that these relationships with peers would establish positive social development.

Along with the social experience of learning, preschoolers also learn to cope with their emotions and learn acceptable expressions of feelings from adults. During the next section the researcher will describe the preschooler's social behaviours that emerge and will highlight the emotional characteristics of the preschooler.

Fabes, Leonard, Kupanoff and Martin (1999: 907-920) describes early childhood (preschool years) as a crucial period for forming the foundation of positive feelings of oneself, others and the larger environment (world). Children from homes where they were nurtured, accepted and encouraged by adults and peers, adjust emotionally better than children who are rejected, abused and neglected. These children are in danger of suffering mental and social health difficulties. To enter into healthy relations with parents, peers, teachers and caregivers, children will have to be emotionally healthy. Although the social and emotional development of the young child will be discussed as an integrated basis that can not be separated, the focus will be on Erikson's stage of initiative versus guilt.

2.4.3.1 Erikson's stages of human development

According to the psychologist Erikson, each individual passes through eight developmental stages, called “psychosocial stages”. Each stage is characterized by a different psychological “crisis”, which must be resolved before the individual can move on to the next stage. If the person copes with a particular crisis in a maladaptive manner, the outcome will influence the child’s mechanism of coping with that specific issue later in life. To Erikson, the sequences of the stages are set by nature. It is within the set limits that nurture works its way (Trawick-Smith, 2006: 298; Papalia, *et al.*, 2006: 298.)

The preschool child is in Erikson’s third stage of Human Development. This stage is initiative versus guilt (two to six years). Children have newfound power at this stage as they have developed motor skills and become more and more engaged in social interaction with people around them. They now must learn to achieve a balance between eagerness for more adventure and more responsibility, and learning to control impulses and childish fantasies (Beckett, 2002: 42-44; Trawick-Smith, 2006: 298). The positive outcome of this stage if parents are encouraging, but consistent in discipline, is that children will learn to accept without guilt that certain things are not allowed, but at the same time will not feel shame when using their imagination and engaging in make-believe role plays. On the negative side, if parents aren’t consistent and predictable, children may develop a sense of guilt and may come to believe that it is wrong to be independent (Beckett, 2002: 43; Papalia, *et al.*, 2006: 298; Rathus, 2006: 10-11).

The researcher is of the opinion that a very important concept to grasp is that there is a positive and negative side for each and every stage of Erikson’s stages of Human Development. If a child integrates the positive side he will most certainly integrate all the positive sides of each stage, except if any form of trauma occurs. Conversely if a child is neglected, abused or rejected and has no attachment or nurturing from the parents or caregivers, the child will integrate the negative side in every stage, unless intervention occurs and the child is taken back to the previous stages by resolving unfinished business. Only then the child can integrate the positive side of the stage. In Table 2.1 Erikson’s stages of Human Development is explained, including the positive and negative sides.

Table 2.1 Erikson’s stages of Human Development

	Positive outcome	Negative outcome
<p>Stage 1: Infancy – Age 0 to 1 <i>Trust versus mistrust</i> Infants depend on others for food, warmth, and affection. The child needs consistent and stable care in order to develop feelings of security.</p>	<p>If needs are met consistently and responsively by the parents, infants will not only develop a secure attachment with parents but will also learn that their environment can be trusted.</p>	<p>If not, infants will develop mistrust towards people and things in their environment, even towards themselves.</p>
<p>Stage 2: Toddlers – Age 1 to 2 <i>Autonomy versus shame and doubt</i> Toddlers learn to walk, talk, use the toilets and do things for themselves. Their self-control and self-confidence begin to develop at this stage.</p>	<p>If parents encourage their child’s use of initiative and reassure her when she makes mistakes, the child will develop the confidence needed to cope with future situations that requires choice, control and independence.</p>	<p>If parents are overprotective, or disapproving of the child’s acts of independence, she may begin to feel ashamed of her behaviour, or have too much doubt of her abilities. Integrate feelings of shame and doubt about one’s own capacity for self-control.</p>
<p>Stage 3: Early Childhood – Age 2 to 6 <i>Initiative versus guilt</i> Children have newfound power at this stage as they have developed motor skills and become more and more engaged in social interaction with people around them. They now must learn to achieve a balance between eagerness for more adventure and more respon-</p>	<p>Parents are encouraging, but consistent in discipline. Children will learn to accept without guilt, that certain things are not allowed, but at the same time will not feel shame when using their imagination and engaging in make-believe role plays. During this stage children develop the ability to initiate activities and enjoy following it through.</p>	<p>If not, children may develop a sense of guilt and may come to believe that it is wrong to be independent. Develop fear of punishment and guilt about one’s own personal feelings.</p>

<p>sibility, and learning to control impulses and childish fantasies.</p> <p>Stage 4: Elementary and Middle School Years – Age 6 to 12 <i>Competence (Industry) versus Inferiority</i></p> <p>School is the important event at this stage. Children learn to make things, use tools and acquire the skills to be a worker and a potential provider. And they do all these while making the transition from the world of home to the world of peers.</p> <p>Stage 5: Adolescence – Age 12 to 18 <i>Identity versus Role Confusion</i></p> <p>This is the time when we ask the question: “Who am I?” To successfully answer the question, Erikson suggests, the adolescent must integrate the healthy resolution of all earlier conflicts. Did we develop the basic sense of trust? Do we have a strong sense of independence and competence and feel in control of our lives? Adolescents who have successfully dealt with earlier conflicts are ready for the “Identity Crisis”, which is</p>	<p>If children can discover pleasure in intellectual stimulation, being productive, seeking success, they will develop a sense of competence. In other words children develop a sense of competence and achievement. Confidence in his own ability to make and do things.</p> <p>The ability to see oneself as a consistent and integrated person. If the adolescent solves this conflict successfully, he will come out of this stage with a strong identity and ready to plan for the future.</p>	<p>Unfavourable reaction from others may cause feelings or a sense of inadequacy and inferiority.</p> <p>If not, the adolescent will sink into confusion, unable to make decisions and choices, especially about vocation, sexual orientation and his role in life in general. Confusion over who and what one is.</p>
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<p>considered by Erikson as the single most significant conflict a person must face. Young persons search for a coherent personal and vocational identity.</p>		
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(Feldman, 1999: 19; Beckett, 2002: 43; Berk, 2003: 18; Papalia, *et al.*, 2006: 30; Rathus, 2006: 10-11).

2.5 CONCLUSION

From this chapter it is evident that knowledge of child development is important for teachers/caregivers when working with children, especially the preschoolers. Knowledge of child development assists teachers/caregivers in planning programs for children in the preschool years. The researcher strived to make the reader aware of the importance of child development during the preschool years, because these years form the foundation from which children start learning.

In Chapter three principles of child development will be discussed. There are 12 principles and each one plays an important role in helping the child reach his potential. The principles of child development as well as the domains of development will form the basis of the semi-structured interviews.

CHAPTER 3

PRINCIPLES OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Realizing the importance of child development during the early years, the researcher will focus in this chapter on the principles of child development in early childhood programs. The reason for this chapter is to emphasise the importance of making decisions related to children's daily programs based on knowledge of child development (Gestwicki, 1999: 8). Kostelnik, *et al.* (2007: 37) explains that knowledge about child development and learning is important to being an effective teacher/caregiver, and to be an effective teacher/caregiver is central to helping each and every child develop and learn, reaching his/her full potential. It is therefore critical for teachers/caregivers to know how to connect theory and practice to help children achieve their full potential.

It is therefore important for teachers/caregivers to acknowledge each child as an individual, considering his age, respecting and acknowledging the child's culture and social background, when planning a program. Teachers/caregivers need to be aware that all these things have an influence on one another. Every child's development and way of learning is different and teachers/caregivers must therefore acknowledge the differences to help each child reach his/her potential.

3.2 PRINCIPLES OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT

According to the National Association for the Education of Young Children (2007), child development is based on knowledge about how children develop and learn. It is therefore important to focus on knowledge about child development when working with children, because there is a variation of influences that needs to be taken into consideration before planning a daily program/activity, for example the child's age, the child as an individual, and the social and cultural background of the child, the child's level of development combined with the principles of child development.

For children to move from one stage of development to another, teachers/caregivers not only have to have knowledge about child development but also about how children learn and the interaction that occurs between learning and development. They also have to provide nurturing and empathetic interaction. Learning to read social and logical thinking, requires that they join with the child in interactive play and negotiations. Creative and logical thinking requires that teachers/caregivers become partners in pretend play, opinion-orientated discussions and debates. Therefore, for teachers/caregivers to hurry children, who develop at their own individual pace through the developmental stages, can actually lead to slowing the child down (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997: 37-38; Cooper, 2005: 286-302).

The researcher is of the opinion that for content and teaching strategies to be developmentally appropriate, the program must both be age and individually appropriate and the attitudes of the teachers/caregivers must respect the child's social and cultural background. Developmentally Appropriate Practices (2007) refers to the concept of developmental appropriateness as providing an environment and offering content, materials, activities and methodologies that are coordinated with a child's level of development and for which the individual child is ready. Developmentally Appropriate Practices (2007) further distinguishes between three dimensions of appropriateness that must be considered: age appropriateness, individual appropriateness and appropriateness for the cultural and social context of the child.

(i) Age appropriateness

According to Kostelnik, Soderman and Whiren (1999: 18), age is not an absolute measure of a child's understanding and capabilities, although it does help establish reasonable expectations of what might be interesting, achievable, challenging and safe for children to do. When addressing age appropriateness we first need to think about what children are like within a general age-range. Secondly, we need to develop routines, activities and expectations that compliment and accommodate those characteristics.

Age appropriate can be defined as predictable sequences of growth and change that occur in children during the first nine years of life according to human development research. These predictable changes occur in all domains of development –

physical, cognitive, emotional and social. Knowledge of typical development of children within the age span served by the program provides a framework from which teachers/caregivers prepare the learning environment and plan appropriate experiences (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997: 2; Gestwicki 1999: 6; Developmentally Appropriate Practices, 2007).

Taking into account everything we know about the way children develop and learn and matching that to strategies, planning and content for their early childhood programs, we need to realize that specialized knowledge about child development and learning is the cornerstone of professionalism in early childhood education. Such knowledge encompasses common recognized developmental threads among all children and leads to the significant understanding of the variations across cultures. To better engage in developmentally appropriate practices, teachers/caregivers with child development knowledge are more equipped to plan early childhood programs. They are more likely to accurately recognize potential problems that may require specialized intervention, accept typical variations among children and more likely to understand the degree of developmental readiness children need to achieve their potential and particular goals (Eric Development Team, 2007). It is therefore important that teachers/caregivers have knowledge of typical child development for the age span served by the program. This knowledge provides a framework from which the teacher/caregivers prepare the learning environment and plan appropriate experiences.

(ii) Individual appropriateness

All children within a given age group are not exactly alike. Some or certain children are more verbal and outgoing than others, some children are skilful readers at five years of age, and others may achieve proficiency two years later. Some enjoy solitude, and others crave company. All of these variations must be considered in the planning, designing, application and assessment of activities, expectations and interaction (Kostelnik, *et al.*, 1999: 18).

Individual appropriateness can be defined as each child is a unique person with individual patterns, rates of growth and potential. Together with individual personality, learning style, past experiences and family background, these individual differences should be reflected in adult-child relationships and interactions in a

responsive curriculum or program. Learning in young children is a result of the active interaction that occurs between the child and the environment, ideas, materials and people with which the child comes into contact. Experiences should match the child's developing and emerging abilities, while at the same time provide some challenges for continuing growth, expansion of interests and helping the child reach his or her own potential (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997: 2; Gestwicki 1999: 6; Developmentally Appropriate Practices, 2007).

The researcher is of the opinion that when planning a curriculum or program it is important to remember that both the program and adult interactions with children should be responsive to individual differences. Each child is a unique person with an individual pattern and timing for growth. Experiences should match the child's developing abilities while challenging their interest and understanding.

(iii) Social and cultural context appropriateness

Kostelnik, *et al.* (2007: 16) is of the opinion that to understand cultural and social contexts, requires early childhood professionals to recognize differences among children as well as characteristics children have in common with others in a cultural group. Cultures are different groups of people developing common bonds based on their ethnic or linguistic heritage, geography, custom, social class, income, lifestyle or particular life event.

Children grow up as a member of a family or community; they learn the rules of their culture, through direct teaching and implicitly through the behaviour of those around them, children do not grow up in isolated little rooms. It is important that an adult working with children have some knowledge of the social and cultural contexts in which the children live in order to ensure that learning experiences are meaningful, respectful and relevant for the participating children and their families (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997: 42; Kostelnik, *et al.*, 2007:16).

The first step seems to be for each of us to acknowledge that we are all influenced by our cultural experiences, as well as how to show respect, how to organize time and personal space, how to interact with people we know as compared to those we just met, what and how to eat, how to dress, how to respond to major life transitions

or celebrations, how to worship and countless other behaviours that humans perform every day, with little apparent thought. Teachers/caregivers need to remember that just as they are largely products of their experience, children's development and learning is also influenced by the context within which they live. This recognition is the beginning of increased awareness, responsiveness and sensitivity to other cultures and their points of view (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997: 42-43).

It is therefore important to remember that every child is unique and that a child's unique personality is developed as a result of their own personal history and the experiences they have within the cultural group they belong to. Among the rules they learn are to show respect, how to organize time and personal space, how to interact with people they know well and those they just met. Therefore, decisions about how to care for and educate young children cannot be made without knowledge of the child's cultural and social context and respect from the teacher/caregivers and others (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997: 42; Kostelnik, *et al.*, 2007:16).

Bredekamp and Copple (1997:9) explain that: "Principles are generalizations that are sufficiently reliable that they should be taken into account when making decisions ..." about the planning of learning for young children, whether it's in a curriculum, program of daily activity. Experiences for children, at whatever age, should be designed around the child's developmental needs and abilities. Support for this position comes from international literature on how children develop and learn.

The 12 principles discussed below have been derived from theories of child development and learning (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997: 10-15; Gestwicki, 1999: 8-9; Kostelnik, *et al.*, 2007: 32-38; The Consultative Group on Early Childhood Care and Development, 2007).

3.1.1 Principle 1

- **The different domains of development are interrelated (physical, social, emotional and cognitive) and one developmental domain influence development in other domains.**

This means that the child's development cannot be compartmentalized into health, nutrition, education, social, emotional and spiritual variables. All are interwoven in a child's life and develop simultaneously. The progress in one domain effects progress in others. Similarly, when something goes wrong in any one of those domains, it has an impact on all the other domains (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997: 10-15; Gestwicki, 1999: 8-9; Kostelnik, *et al.*, 2007: 32-38).

Child development encompasses several domains: cognitive, physical, social and emotional. These domains are closely related in that they overlap and influence each other. It is important to remember that the domains are interwoven within the child; while we may and did discuss each domain as a separate entity for the sake of clarity, in reality they are interlocking facets of a whole. It is therefore important to refer to this orientation as focusing on the whole child, seeing a child as a holistic being. In support of the whole-child philosophy, researchers have found that serious problems arise when one facet of development is emphasized to the exclusion of *all* others. For example, children participating in a classroom where only academic achievement is a priority the children may suffer from the lack of attention to social and emotional development. This may lead to the rejection of children with poor social skills, by their peers, which is devastating (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997: 10-15; Cooper, 2005: 287; Kostelnik, *et al.*, 2007: 32-38).

Because developmental domains are interrelated, teachers/caregivers should be aware of and use these interrelationships to organize children's learning experiences in ways that help children develop optimally in all domains and make meaningful connections across domains. Recognition of the connections across developmental domains is also useful for curriculum planning with the various age groups represented in the early childhood period (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997: 10-15; Gestwicki, 1999: 8-9; Kostelnik, *et al.*, 2007: 32-38).

3.1.2 Principle 2

- **Early experiences have both cumulative and delayed effects on individual children's development and behaviour. Optimal periods exist for certain types of development and learning.**

This means that a child's early experiences, either positive or negative, are cumulative in the sense that if an experience occurs occasionally, it may have a minimal effect if they occur occasionally but may have a long-lasting effect if they do occur often. From birth, children accumulate the history of repeated, frequent experiences that may have a positive or negative effect on their development depending on the circumstances (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997: 10-15). "How does this happen?", may be asked. When looking at children whose basic needs are met compared to Maslow's viewpoints on the needs of people (Louw, *et al.*, 1998:17) and Erikson's theory on emotional development, the first stage is trust and mistrust (Beckett, 2002: 42-43). Children will then have positive experiences in other domains of development; they will learn that the world is a safe place and that you can trust it, while youngsters whose needs are often ignored develop mistrust.

These are also optimal periods of development or windows of opportunities when learning occurs more easily. According to Kostelnik, *et al.* (1999: 56), who says that throughout early childhood there are opportune times during which significant changes occur in children's development. These changes are related to complex interactions between children's internal structures of brain and body and their experience with the social and physical environment. During these optimal periods, children are more receptive to environmental influences than at other times. If they are denied the kinds of experiences that enhance development when such window of opportunity appears, they may be demotivated or unable to reach their potential later in life.

3.1.3 Principle 3

- **Development occurs in a relatively orderly sequence, with later abilities, skills and knowledge building on those already acquired.**

Bredekamp and Copple (1997: 10) state that: “Human development research indicates that relatively stable, predictable sequences of growth and change occur in children during the first nine years of life. Predictable changes occur in all domains of development; cognitive, physical, social and emotional, although the ways that these changes manifest and the meanings attached to them may vary in different cultural contexts. Knowledge of typical development of children within the age span served by the program provides a general framework to guide the way teachers prepare the learning environment and plan realistic curriculum goals and objectives and appropriate experiences”. Each child has a pattern and pace of development unique to the individual, with factors such as health, heredity, individual temperament and personality, experiences, learning style and family background creating an enormous difference between individual children. Given the enormous variation among children of the same chronological age, a child’s age must be recognized as only a crude index of developmental maturity. Teachers/caregivers should also remember that the sequence remain predictable, with the increments for each one emerging in the same order.

To further simplify it Davin, Orr, Marais and Meier (2007: 190), explain that development occurs in an orderly and predictable sequence, and proceeds:

- from simple to complex – an example of this is the progression of language from babbling to cooing to intricate speech;
- from general to specific – this is shown by the palmer hand grasp of the baby being replaced later by the more precise pincer grip or the thumb and forefinger;
- cephalocaudally (from head-to-toe) occurring as a result of the myelinization of the nerves. This means the child first gains head and neck control, then control of the back muscles as the child learns to sit, crawl, stand and finally walk and run;

- prosimodistally (from the midline of the body towards the extremities or outer parts of the body). This can be illustrated by the child who first learns to coordinate the muscles of the trunk and arms and later only those of the hands and fingers.

Such changes that take place are often uneven rather than smooth. Children individually spend more or less time on each step, they move a bit forward, a little back, then forward again. Some children even may skip some phases that are less relevant to them. Teachers and caregivers should therefore remember that the sequence remain predictable, with the increments for each one emerging in the same order, although at the child's own pace (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997: 2; Gestwicki, 1999: 6).

3.1.4 Principle 4

- **Development proceeds at varying rates from child to child as well as unevenly within different areas of each child's functioning.**

According to Sroufe, Cooper and DeHart (in Bredekamp & Copple, 1997:10) individual variation has at least two dimensions: the uniqueness of each person as an individual and the inevitable variability around the normative and average of development. Each child is a unique person with an individual timing and pattern of growth, as well as individual temperament, personality, experiential and family background and learning style. Every child has his own strengths, interests and needs. For some children special learning and development abilities and needs are identified.

No two children are the same or exactly alike. According to Kostelnik, *et al.* (1999: 53) "The differences in development manifest themselves in two ways: intrapersonally and interpersonally". Within every child or individual, a variety of facets of development is dominant at different times throughout childhood. For example, infancy is a time of rapid physical growth; although at a relatively slow pace language development is progressing. It is reversed when children enter the preschool, reception year and Gr 1. Now their physical growth slows down, while their use of language makes spectacular strides. These are examples of intrapersonal variations in development. This explains way the same child may be moved to tears, climb nimbly to the highest part of the

jungle gym, have moderate success cutting with scissors, have difficulty with verbal expression and recite the alphabet backwards. Such unevenness is to be expected in development.

It is important to recognize that the individual variation is not only to be expected but also valued. This requires that decisions about programs and adult interactions with children be as individualized as possible. The emphasis is on the individual appropriateness and differs from “individualism”. What is meant by this, is that this recognition requires that children be considered not solely as members of an age group, expected to perform to a predetermined norm and without adaptation to individual variation of any kind. Having high expectations for all children is important, but rigid expectations of group norms do not reflect what is known about real differences in individual development and learning during the early years. It must be emphasized that group-norm expectations can be especially harmful for children with special development and learning needs. It is impossible and dangerous to compare individuals of similar chronological ages. Each child has unique needs and characteristics at any particular stage. When activities provide for differences and choices, this principle is supported (Kostelnik, *et al.*, 1999: 54; Gestwicki, 1999: 9).

3.1.5 Principle 5

- **Development proceeds in predictable directions towards greater complexity, organization and internalization.**

Learning during the early childhood years proceeds from behavioural, sensory understanding to symbolic knowledge (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997: 11; Gestwicki, 1999: 9). For instance, long before children can understand the words left and right or read a map of a house, children learn to navigate their homes and other familiar settings. Therefore, developmentally appropriate programs must and do provide opportunities for children to broaden and deepen their behavioural knowledge by providing a variety of firsthand experiences and by helping children acquire symbolic knowledge through representing their experiences in a variety of media, such as painting, construction of models, drawing, clay work, verbal and written descriptions, dramatic and fantasy play (Gestwicki, 1999: 9).

3.1.6 Principle 6

- **Development and learning results from interaction of biological maturation and the environment, which includes both the physical and social worlds those children live in.**

Bredenkamp and Copple (1997: 13-14) explains that the simplest way to describe or express this principle is that human beings are products of both environment and heredity and that these forces are interrelated. A prerequisite for learning is biological maturation, although the child's interrelationship with his environment determines just what learning will take place. Factors in the child's physical and social world are shaped by inherited tendencies.

Therefore, development and learning are effected by both biological and environmental influences and development is a result of the interaction between the two (Gestwicki, 1999: 10). Environmental influences include those that are physical and those that are socio-cultural. For example at a certain developmental level a child's fine motor abilities will enable him or her to manipulate building blocks by using their fingers to pick up the blocks and building a construction. Difficulty with this action may be due to immaturity of muscles needed in fine motor coordination. A child also may have trouble with reading due to a biological issue; cognitively the child cannot yet relate the abstract symbols to sounds and concepts, or it may be because of an environmental issue – no one has taught the child to read (Cooper, 2005: 290-291).

Vygotsky (1978: 131-133) explains that our culture not only provides us with information but teaches us how to understand that information. The link between concept and signifier, with words or icon, is arbitrary and governed by community choice. According to Cooper (2005: 290) "... a child brought up in an environment that is rich in the use of printed language and/or graphics will be more facile with these at an earlier age than a child who does not have these experiences". It is in fact a biological factor that is a prerequisite to readiness for learning. The environment determines just what direction development will take. It is therefore important to include the child's biological and

environmental experiences and background when planning and conducting a developmentally appropriate program or practice.

3.1.7 Principle 7

- **Development and learning occur in and are influenced by multiple social and cultural contexts.**

Bronfenbrenner (2006: 55-58) provides an ecological model for understanding human development. He explains that children's development within the socio-cultural context of the family, community, broader society and the educational setting. All have an impact on the developing child, because all the various contexts are interrelated. For example, even a child in a supportive, loving family within a healthy, strong community is affected by the biases of the larger society, such as racism, sexism or violence, and may show the effects of negative discrimination and stereotyping. Bronfenbrenner's (2006: 55-58) ecological context of child development and learning can be depicted as a series of concentric rings as shown in Figure 3.1, with each system influencing and being influenced by the others.

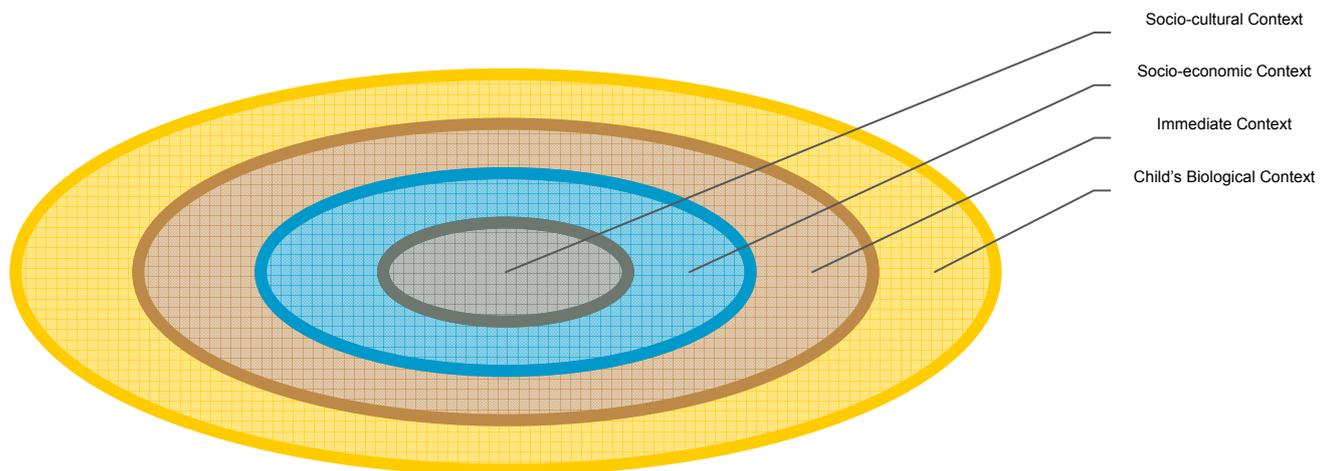


FIGURE 3.1

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Context of Child Development and Learning

(Bronfenbrenner, 2006: 56).

Bredekamp and Copple (1997: 12) defines culture as the customary beliefs and patterns of behaviour, both explicit and implicit that are passed on to future generations by the society they live in and/or by a social, ethnic or religious group within it. People fail to recognize the powerful role that culture plays in influencing the development of all children, because culture is often discussed in the context of multiculturalism or diversity. Due to the diversity of the cultures in South Africa, every culture structures and interprets children's behaviour and development. The researcher is of the opinion that every early childhood teacher/caregiver needs to understand the influence of socio-cultural contexts on every child's learning. They must be able to recognize children's developing competence, level of development and acceptance, and accept and respect that children will express their developmental achievements in a variety of ways.

The researcher is of the opinion that it is important for teachers/caregivers to learn about the culture of the majority of the children they serve if that culture differs from their own. Recognizing that learning and development are influenced by cultural and social context, it would be an impossible task to expect teachers/caregivers to understand all the nuances of every cultural group they may encounter in their practice. It is more important for teachers/caregivers to become sensitive to the knowledge of how their own cultural experience shapes their perspective and to realize that multiple perspectives must be considered in decisions about children's learning and development, in addition to their own.

Children have the learning ability and capability to function simultaneously in more than one cultural context. However, if teachers/caregivers set too low or too high expectations for children based on their home language and culture, children cannot learn and develop optimally and reach their full potential. The ideal would be for example, that children whose primary language is not English should be able to learn English without forcing them to give up their home language and to get a teacher/caregiver to translate or teach in both languages. Likewise, children who speak only English benefit from learning another language. The goal is that all children learn to function well in the society or even community as a whole and move comfortably among groups of people who come from both the same and different backgrounds (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997: 13).

Furthermore, Gestwicki (1999: 10) explains that children's development is best understood within the context of the family, then their community and later the larger community. According to the researcher, this seems to indicate that children are capable of learning to function simultaneously in more than one cultural context, when supported respectfully. According to NAEYC (in Bredekamp & Copple, 1997: 13), "Education should be an additive process."

3.1.8 Principle 8

- **Play is an important vehicle for children's social, emotional and cognitive development, as well as a reflection of their development.**

Children need opportunities to interact with peers, adults and objects in a safe environment that provides the child with security and acceptance. Learning and development can be fostered by creating a healthy environment and providing materials, space and opportunities to help children learn through play, whether at home or elsewhere. Children play at home, at school and everywhere in between. They play with people, things and ideas. When children's fundamental needs are met, when they are not sleeping, eating or seeking emotional support from others, children choose to play and can remain occupied in this way for hours at a time (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997: 13-14).

It is therefore important to remember and understand that children are active constructors of knowledge and that development and learning are the result of interactive processes. Early childhood teachers/caregivers should recognize that children's play is a highly supportive context for these developing processes (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997: 13-14). The domains of development are enhanced through children's activities. Play is the fundamental means by which children gather and process information, practice old skills and learn new skills. Therefore, play gives children the opportunity to interact with others in social ways, they explore social relationships and they learn to understand the world, develop their symbolic capabilities, express and control emotions. They learn to come to understand, manipulate and create symbols as they take on roles and transform objects into something else (fantasy play) within the context of their play. Through children's play adults get insight into

children's development and opportunities to support the development of new strategies (Principles of Child Development and Learning that Inform Developmentally Appropriate Practice, 2007). Vygotsky (in Thomas, 2000: 126-127) believed that play leads development; with written language growing out of oral language through the vehicle of symbolic play that promotes the development of symbolic representation abilities.

According to Fromberg (1999: 64) "... play enables children to extend their physical skills, language and literature capabilities and creative imaginations". Santrock (in Kostelnik, *et al.*, 2007: 37) states that the safe place or haven that plays provides for the release of tension, exploration of anxiety-producing situations and expression of emotions has been well documented. It is therefore important and an essential component that child-initiated, teacher-supported play are incorporated daily in a developmentally appropriate practice.

The researcher is of the opinion that teachers/caregivers who fail to provide a rich background of experiences as a foundation for play, who tend to neglect rotation of props, ask too many questions, or provide information periodically to enlarge children's perceptions, are depriving children of valuable opportunities to develop and extend their play. Play is important because it enables children to become familiar with materials and concepts. Play becomes more valuable when it offers feedback that children can interpret.

3.1.9 Principle 9

- **Children are active learners, drawing on direct physical and social experiences as well as culturally transmitted knowledge to construct their own understandings of the world around them.**

According to NAEYC (2007) the principles of child development view children as active learners and participants in his or her individual level of development. Reflection is therefore important because it deepens knowledge and understanding. As new experiences and knowledge become available to the child, the child scaffolds the new to the old in order to deepen and broaden his or her knowledge base. Children use their

own physical and social experiences together with the knowledge transmitted to them by their culture to construct their personal understanding of the world.

According to Davin, *et al.* (2007: 191), children learn through active interaction with their social and physical environment as they try to make sense of the world around them. Children contribute to their own development and learning as they strive to make meaning out of their daily experiences in the home, the early childhood program and the community. By doing this they form their own hypotheses and opinions by trying these out and amending them through observation and personal experiences.

The researcher is of the opinion that learning involves the child's construction of knowledge, not an adult's imposition of information. It is therefore important for children to have opportunities to construct their own knowledge through exploration, interaction with materials and imitation of role models. Children need opportunities to learn by doing, to be engaged in problem-solving and to develop language and communication skills. Opportunities for active involvement should abound, whether at home, in everyday chores or in more organized settings outside the home. Emphasis should be on how to learn, for example, positive attitudes towards learning and thinking skills, rather than on what to learn.

3.1.10 Principle 10

- **Children demonstrate different modes of knowing and learning and different ways of representing what they know.**

For some time, learning theorists and developmental psychologists have recognized that human beings come to understand the world in many ways and that individuals tend to have preferred or stronger modes of learning (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997: 15; *Developmentally Appropriate Practices*, 2007). Studies of differences in learning modalities have contrasted auditory, visual or tactile/kinesthetic learners through which people perceive the world. Youngsters who rely on hearing and talking as their primary means of learning are referred to as auditory learners, for them sound is the message. These youngsters sometimes move their lips or talk themselves through tasks. Some people are primarily visual learners, for example, they respond best to things they see.

They often envision things in their mind as a way to recall information. A tactile/kinesthetic learner is children who must move and touch things constantly to grasp concepts. They also sometimes have to touch themselves in one way or the other to help them remember or to process information. People function more effectively in the context of their preferred modality, although all people do make use of all the modalities to learn (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997: 15; *Developmentally Appropriate Practices*, 2007).

Bredekamp and Copple (1997: 15), describes it like this: "... the principle of diverse modalities implies that teachers should provide not only opportunities for individual children to use their preferred modes of learning to capitalize on their strength but also opportunities to help children develop in the intelligences or modes in which they may not be as strong". It is therefore important for teachers/caregivers to set challenges to explore by providing a wide variety of activities where they use different modalities to understand, learn and expand their knowledge.

3.1.11 Principle 11

- **Children develop and learn best in the context of a community where they are safe and valued, their physical needs are met and they feel psychologically secure.**

The child's well-being is closely linked to the well-being of the family, specifically to the well-being of the primary caregiver(s). Therefore, support to the family and community can help children; similarly support to children can help the family and community. Since the environment has an impact on children's development, it is also possible to develop interventions that make changes in the child's environment.

Maslow (in Bredekamp & Copple, 1997: 15) conceptualized a hierarchy of needs in which learning was not considered possible unless physical and psychological needs for safety and security were first met. Because children's physical health and safety is often threatened today, programs for young children must not only provide adequate health, nutrition and safety but also ensure more comprehensive services, such as dental, mental and physical health and social services. In addition, children's

development in all domains is influenced by their ability to establish and maintain a limited number of positive, consistent primary relationships with adults and other children. According to Bredekamp and Copple (1997: 15) primary relationships begins in a family set-up and extends over time to include the child's teacher/caregiver and members of the community. Therefore practices that acknowledge developmental appropriateness should address children's social, emotional and physical needs as well as their intellectual, cognitive development.

3.1.12 Principle 12

- **Development advances when children have opportunities to practice newly acquired skills as well as when they experience a challenge just beyond the level of their present mastery.**

Learning is a building process; children need a previously existing knowledge and experiential base on which to scaffold new information if it is to have meaning for them. According to research children need to be able to achieve successes in negotiating tasks to maintain motivation and persistence (Cooper, 2005: 289). Children confronted by repeated failure, will at some point just stop trying. Most of the time teachers/caregivers should give children tasks that with effort they can accomplish and present them with content that is accessible at their level of understanding. Teachers/caregivers or any adult should remember that children crave situations and stimuli that give them the chance to work at their "growing edge" (Bredekamp & Copple 1997: 14; *Developmentally Appropriate Practices*, 2007). Moreover, in a task just beyond the child's independent reach, the adult and more competent peers contribute significantly to development by providing the supportive "scaffolding" that allows the child to take the next step.

Children need to broaden and deepen the knowledge they already have, and they need the opportunity to relate this new information to something in their experience that they already understand (NAEYC, 1997). They need both the challenge of new experience and the opportunity to practice skills they already possess. According to Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal (Vygotsky, 1978: 86), development is "... the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level

of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers”.

Development and learning are dynamic processes requiring that adults understand the continuum, observe children closely to match curriculum and teaching to emerge children’s interest, needs and competencies, and then help children move forward by targeting educational experiences to the edge of children’s changing capacities so as to challenge but not frustrate them. The principle of learning is that children can do things first in a supportive context and then later independently and in a variety of contexts. Because of the above, play is an important part of a child’s social, emotional, physical and cognitive development. It gives the child an opportunity to practice new skills and construct meaning without risk (NAEYC, 1997).

3.2 CONCLUSION

From this chapter it is evident that knowledge of the principles of child development is important for teachers/caregivers when working with children. Knowledge of child development forms the foundation for helping children reach their potential, as individuals, while the principles help teachers/caregivers applying them in their planning. If teachers/caregivers are passionate about the developing child, they should broaden their horizons through the understanding of child development and on how to apply these principles, on how to bring theory and practice together. This implies the practical inclusion of theory in daily programs. This will enable teachers/caregivers to plan a program or daily activity that is appropriate according to the child’s individuality, including acknowledging and respecting each child’s social and cultural background, which will lead to optimal development and the child reaching his potential.

In Chapter four the empirical research was documented by providing the interview schedule, transcriptions of the interviews as well as the findings made, based on Chapter two and Chapter three, which served as literature control for the information collected.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND LITERATURE CONTROL

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In Chapter two a description of the preschooler was provided, along with the general characteristics of the three, four and five year old. The different domains of development, physical, cognitive, social and emotional development were also described. The 12 principles of child development were described in Chapter three. The literature study done in Chapters two and three served as basis for the empirical study.

The focus of this study is to determine how teachers/caregivers include the different domains of development into their daily program in Doornpoort, Montana and Sinnoville. The importance of child development during the early years of development and the researcher's frame of reference served as motivation to undertake this research. In this chapter an overview of the research process will follow before the results of the empirical study will be given. This will then be associated with the literature.

4.2 RESEARCH PROCESS

The following section will focus on the research process which has been followed for this study looking at the universe, sample and sampling techniques, method of collecting data, interview structure, analysis of data and validating the accuracy and trustworthiness of the data. It is important for the researcher to explain the research process in short, before interpreting the empirical data.

4.2.1 Description of universe, sample and sampling techniques

The universe of this study includes the teachers/caregivers in early childhood centers in Pretoria who teaches children from three to five years. The population of this study includes teachers/caregivers in early childhood centers who teach children from three to five years in the geographical area of Doornpoort, Montana and Sinoville. Not all early

childhood centers were approached. The researcher made use of snowball sampling which is defined in 1.4.3, as the identification of cases in the interest of people who know individuals who can contribute to the field of study. The snowball sampling was of great value to the qualitative study, because the focus was on identifying obtainable participants, although these participants were purposefully interviewed by including only teachers/caregivers teaching children between three and five years. Snowball sampling was done and the respondents were drawn from the population on the grounds of the following criteria:

- The teacher/caregiver must teach children from three to five years.
- The teacher/caregiver must teach in Doornpoort, Montana and Sinoville.
- The teacher/caregiver must be prepared to participate in the study.
- No specific cultural or racial preferences were applicable.

For the purpose of this study, the teachers/caregivers were the participants. Thirteen participants were selected, from five different schools in the above-mentioned areas. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with these participants.

4.2.2 Method of data collecting

Empirical data was mainly collected from the 13 teachers/caregivers who were interviewed. The teachers/caregivers completed consent forms prior to the interviews and the participants were informed of and verbally agreed to the recording of the interviews (Appendix 1). For the purpose of transcribing the data, a voice recorder was used. As part of the data collection process, the teachers/caregivers were requested to complete a biographical questionnaire providing some formal as well as in-school training information, experience and information about the area of the school (Appendix 2).

Semi-structured interviews were conducted over a period of three mornings to accommodate every school's program and activities. Each participant was interviewed once and every interview took approximately thirty to forty-five minutes. The interviews

were conducted in an empty room at the school and distractions were limited. The researcher and participants sat at a table in the room, which contributed to the relaxed atmosphere.

The semi-structured interviews were held with 13 teachers/caregivers, until saturation point was reached. Although all the questions were grouped together, it instantly seemed like that the participants were not necessarily restricted to one question, but that the response was wider. This was a very positive characteristic of the participants because it indicates that the participants felt free to give their own relevant meaning, which at the end was not bound to one specific question. This led to a richer and deeper answer.

The aim of the semi-structured interviews was to investigate how teachers/caregivers acknowledge child development and include the different domains of development in their daily program. Therefore the questions for the semi-structured interviews were based on the description in existing literature about child development and the different domains of development, as captured in Chapters two and three.

As the interviews were conducted with teachers/caregivers, it was at times necessary to simplify some of the questions, because some of the participants did not understand certain terms such as cognitive development. The questions were focused on directing the interview and served as a guide only. Although the researcher raised clarifying questions related to the response of participants, the questions were applicable. See Appendix 3 for the question schedule.

Semi-structured interviews were more applicable than structured interviews, because the purpose of the questions was to guide the interview. The questions focused on child development and the inclusion of the domains of child development in the daily program. Semi-structured interviews allowed for flexibility in scope and depth. Rich data was collected and saturation was reached. On completion of the interviews and after collection of all biographical forms, the data analysis commenced.

4.2.3 The process of analyzing and interpreting data

As explained in Chapter one, the process of data analyzing was a continued process which consisted of different phases. Analyzing the data started as soon as the data-collecting process took place. The reason for this was that the researcher worked from a preliminary acceptance. This implied that the research problem could change throughout the data-collection and data-analysis.

The researcher made use of LeCompte's model of qualitative data-analyzing, see 1.5.1.2. The following steps were followed:

Step 1: Ordering

The research problem was being re-evaluated and compared with the collected data to determine if the collected data answers the research problem and if there were any shortcomings.

Step 2: Item finding

To find specific themes the data was worked through by repeated reading of the data. During this process themes were identified. The researcher focused on the following types of data, as explained in 1.5.1.2.

- a. *Frequency of data.*
- b. *Omission.*
- c. *Findings.*

Step 3: Development of steady item

Eight themes were identified and verified with quotes of responses from participants.

Step 4: Pattern development

After the eight themes were identified, sub-themes were identified and verified with literature in Chapters two and three.

Step 5: Structuring

To give a total description to the study the themes was consequently jointed and united. The last mentioned three steps were carried out on the collected data and the results were discussed according to the empirical study. During the discussion of the results theoretical verification were indicated.

It is, however, important to mention that no representative tendency was being searched for while interpreting the results. A variety in practice was explored. Even though a single participant indicated a problem of tendency; it was seen as meaningful because it represents a context that would indicate how teachers/caregivers include child development in daily programs.

The writing of the report, which is the aim of this chapter, followed on completion of the steps of analysis. To ensure that participants remain anonymous, letters from the alphabet was used to identify the participants. The responses of each of the participants will be quoted under each theme (eight themes), where after the sub-themes will be described and the data collected will be elucidated, by referring to existing literature. As most of the participants were speaking Afrikaans, the responses will be captured in Afrikaans to ensure that no data is lost or interpreted during translation.

4.2.4 Biographical data

Biographical data that was important to the researcher is as follows: All participants are teachers/caregivers. The researcher interviewed 13 participants during the interviews, four participants where in Doornpoort, three in Montana and six in Sinoville. The above participants' qualifications differed from in-school training (five participants) to formal

training (ten participants). During the interview the researcher approached all the participants in the same way until saturation was reached.

In the following section of the chapter, the empirical data and research findings will be described, analyzed and compared with existing literature.

4.3 EMPIRICAL DATA

The research report was structured by first listing all the main themes. The data that was found to be relevant to the various main themes were then provided in transcribed form. Eight main themes were identified. All eight themes were supported with verbal quotes from transcribed data. To put the eight main themes in perspective the aim of this research study will be mentioned next:

“How do teachers/caregivers acknowledge and include the different domains of early childhood development into their daily program?”

Sub theme(s) was then identified under each theme. The sub themes were furthermore verified with literature from Chapters two and three. Because the aim of the study is to explore the way teachers/caregivers include domains of development, this includes the principles of child development. Therefore the 12 principles of child development were also used as part of the literature control.

In the next section of the chapter the main themes, along with the sub themes will be discussed.

4.4 MAIN THEMES OF THE STUDY

The main themes were identified by analyzing and coding the data. The interviews were conducted to elicit specific information regarding the inclusion of child development as well as the different domains of development. The main themes were based on questions related to the inclusion of child development, including the different domains of development in daily programs. The main themes are listed below:

- Acknowledging the importance of knowledge of child development.
- Approaching the child as a holistic being.
- Providing child appropriate programs or activities.
- Planning child appropriate activities, child development is included.
- Changing the focus of every program or activity.
- Including play the child's development enhances.
- Acknowledging the powerful influence of the environment.
- Clarifying the role of the teacher/caregiver.

The above-mentioned eight main themes came clearly to the foreground but it seemed that the teachers/caregivers did not always acknowledge and adapt these themes in a practical way in their daily program. Every theme will be discussed in the next section. The themes are not discussed in order of priority or importance. The verbal responses will be provided first after which the sub themes are described and compared with literature in Chapters two and three.

4.4.1 Main theme 1: Acknowledging the importance of knowledge of child development

The verbal responses related to knowledge about child development were as follows:

- **Participant A**

“Jy moet alles rondom die kind self beplan, veral op die ouderdomsgroep en sy belangstelling moet daarin wees. As jy vir hom goeters gee wat moeilik is sal hy tou opgooi en eerder wil gaan speel.”

- **Participant B**

“Ons kyk na die ontwikkelingsvlak van die kind, dan beplan ons volgens die standaard wat hulle moet kan handhaaf.”

- **Participant C**

“I think it is imperative that you have a very good knowledge of the children in your class and the specific age group so you don't challenge the children above what they are actually able to do.”

- **Participant D**

“Jy werk volgens hulle ouderdomme en wat hulle kan doen, werk jy in jou program in.”

- **Participant E**

“So you basically just keep their normal development in mind and what they are supposed to do.”

- **Participant F**

This participant did not make reference to knowledge of child development.

- **Participant G**

“Jy kyk op watter vlak jou kinders in jou klas klaar ontwikkel het.”

- **Participant H**

“Ek dink jy leer die kinders in jou klas, jy weet watse dinge om hoe lank te doen.”

- **Participant I**

“Om te weet wat hy weet, wat se kennis het hy reeds in. Partykeer het kinders op die ouderdomsvlak nie genoeg kennis dan moet jy weer terug gaan, van die begin af gaan.”

- **Participant J**

This participant did not make reference to knowledge of child development.

- **Participant K**

“Ons fokus baie op die ontwikkeling van die kind.”

- **Participant L**

This participant did not make reference to knowledge of child development.

- **Participant M**

“When children give you feedback then you kind of know what level they are on or what level of thinking they’re operating on.”

From the responses above it was clear that acknowledgement and knowledge of child development is important, although some responses referred to knowledge as theoretical knowledge of child development and some responses referred to knowledge as experience gained over the years. From the responses two sub themes were identified, namely the development level of the child and knowledge of the children in the class.

4.4.1.1 Sub theme 1: Level of child development is important

Information throughout the semi-structured interviews indicated that the participants perceived the importance of knowledge of the level of child development. According to 2.3 and 3.2 it is important for teachers/caregivers to have knowledge of child development because it helps children move from one stage of development to another. Furthermore, according to Principle 3 (3.1.3), developments occur in a relatively orderly sequence. If teachers/caregivers do not have knowledge of child development they can miss windows of opportunities for learning (Principle 2, 3.1.2).

The researcher is of the opinion, based on the information provided in the empirical study that the participants still perceive the importance of knowledge of child development, although they tend to generalize the developmental levels of the children, which are in contradiction with Principle 4 (3.1.4) which indicates that children are individuals and develop in a unique way, with individual timing and pattern of growth.

4.4.1.2 Sub theme 2: Knowledge of the children in your class

These responses in terms of the participants' knowledge of children are based on how the participants experience the children in the class and not necessarily on knowledge (theory), but on practical insight. All the participants, except H and M, indicated that knowledge of child development is important. Participant H indicated that you need to know the children in your class, in what they can and can not do, regardless of their developmental level (Principle 3, 3.1.3), while participant M indicated that you base an activity on what the child understands, based on their feedback (Principle 4, 3.1.4). The researcher is of the opinion that practical experience go hand in hand with theoretical

knowledge and teachers/caregivers should be made aware of how to link theory with practice.

4.4.2 Main theme 2: Approaching the child as a holistic being

The second main theme that was identified, was about approaching the child as a holistic being and therefore all the different domains of development should be included in a daily program.

- **Participant A**

“Dis so moeilik met hulle. Hulle beskryf goed met kleure, vorms en smaak. Kommunikasie tussen almal. Dis net te moeilik om dit te beantwoord.”

- **Participant B**

“They like to make up a lot of stories. I do not know. They must interact with a person freely without being scared of anybody. For me they are emotional.”

- **Participant C**

“As ek vir hom, dit maak dit nou ‘n bietjie moeilik. Ons doen nogal baie balvaardighede. Eintlik maar deur speel, denkbeeldig. Kinders is baie emosioneel, veral met geskeide ouers.”

- **Participant D**

“Kognitiewe ontwikkeling bedoel jy spraak? Ons skep geleentheid vir hulle met vryspel om te hardloop ensovoorts. Hy moet met sy maatjie kan gesels en met groter mense kan gesels. Ek dink veral, ek praat nou van my klas, daar is so baie geskeide ouers, enkelouers en ouers wat besig is om te skei, dat my kinders emosionele wrakke is.”

- **Participant E**

“I think a lot of the skills they are applying now and the levels of their development is on the one side in the baby world and on the other side in the bigger world. Physically they are very busy. This is a big challenge as they come from a group where they play a long time with each other but in context of sharing, it's still very new to them and here they have to learn, I have to wait my turn. A lot of them are still attached to their moms.”

- **Participant F**

“Ek kan nie regtig nie, ek weet nie nou nie. Hulle is sterker veral met balans en so aan as wat hulle was aan die begin van die jaar. Op hierdie ouderdom is die meisies baie katterig. Hulle is nie meer so huilerig in die oggend nie en raak meer selfstandig.”

- **Participant G**

“Jong soos ek sê hulle hou daarvan, van ‘n uitdaging, hulle begin nou ‘n bietjie self dink en goeters, te redeneer en hulle wiskunde vaardighede begin nou tot by tien, hulle begin getalbegrip kry. Hulle kan meer goeters beter doen soos balvaardighede, balansvaardighede, koördinasie en al daai goeters. Dis maar hoe hy met sy maatjies oor die weg kom. Hulle huil nie meer in die oggende as hulle ma’s hulle kom aflaai en hulle is selfstandig en gaan aan en hulle is half onafhanklik.”

- **Participant H**

“Daar is van hulle wat baie gou goed opvang wat regtig moeite doen met al hulle werk en goed. Ek dink op hierdie ouderdom hou hulle van buite speel en aktief wees. Soos sosiaal speel tussen die maatjies? Hulle kan nie so maklik deel nie.”

- **Participant I**

“Definitief nie regtig vir vierjarige ouderdom nie, nie wat akademies aan betref nie. Eintlik is hulle nie op standaard nie. Hulle kan nie ophou praat nie en vertel baie stories. As hy huil moet hy vir jou kan sê hoekom hy huil.”

- **Participant J**

“Kognitief die kinders het ongelooflike kennis, maar ek dink nie altyd dis in hulle belang nie. Fisies, hulle wil kontak met mekaar hê. Sosiaal baie aktief. Hulle wil net gesels en gesels.”

- **Participant K**

“Kan jy dalk verduidelik. Jy het nou net gesê van balans en goed. Jong ek weet nie. Baie moeilik, wil vir mamma en pappa hê.”

- **Participant L**

“Weet jy ek sal sê, hulle verstaan definitief wat is reg en verkeerd op daardie ouderdom. Weet jy wat vir my belangrik is, is hulle postuur. Weet jy sosiaal is ook moeilik. Hulle emosies is onder beheer, hulle kan afskeid neem van pappa en mamma.”

- **Participant M**

“Ja, they are very inquisitive. More active children. Chatterboxes. It depends on emotional support at home.”

From the above data it was concluded that teachers/caregivers do not always have knowledge of the different domains of development only and therefore do not approach the child as a holistic being. Their responses were based on personal experience. The main theme was divided into two sub themes: knowledge of domains of development and lack of knowledge of the domains of development.

4.4.2.1 Sub theme 1: Knowledge of domains of development

According to 2.4 child development consists out of different domains of development and it is important to have knowledge about the different domains because every child is different. Not all the participants did acknowledge the importance of including the domains of development into their daily program. Further more 3.1.1 explains that domains of development are interrelated. These domains are closely related; they influence and overlap each other (Principle 1, 3.1.1). In other words the one domain has an influence on the other. Therefore the researcher is of the opinion that knowledge of domains of development is important because it makes teachers/caregivers aware of the level of child development. Teachers/caregivers can therefore help children accomplish milestones and move from one level of development to the next.

4.4.2.2 Sub theme 2: Lack of knowledge of the domains of development

From the empirical study the participants clearly indicated that they did not have a good understanding of the different domains of development, due to the lack of knowledge. However, it came to the researcher's attention that the participants did try to acknowledge and include the different domains of development, although they struggle

to link theory and practice. According to 3.1 and 3.1.1 (Principle 1) knowledge of child development is important if teachers/caregivers want to approach any child as a holistic being, because domains of development are interrelated. The researcher is of the opinion that lack of knowledge can negatively influence a child's optimal development, because teachers/caregivers are unable to include all the domains of development due to the lack of knowledge of child development.

4.4.3 Main theme 3: Providing child appropriate programs or activities

The third main theme that was identified, is whether the program or activities is child appropriate. Three sub themes were identified, namely activities should be enjoyed and vary from each other, the child's background and individuality should also be taken into consideration, although the activities are not always child appropriate.

- **Participant A**

“Die kind se belangstelling. Die kind moet kan, dit wat hy doen, moet hy geniet anders gaan hy dit nie doen nie.”

- **Participant B**

“What I like to do is they must enjoy everything they do, they must enjoy.”

- **Participant C**

“Kyk met hierdie aktiwiteit moet ek een vir een met hulle werk. Elkeen het my aandag.”

- **Participant D**

“Elke maatjie is 'n individu op sy eie en nie een van hulle is dieselfde nie.”

- **Participant E**

“I try and alternate activities so that there is quietness and business.”

- **Participant F**

“Veral kinders wat 'support' nodig het. Ek het so drie van hulle in my klas. Ek probeer maar om hulle ook te akkommodeer en dan die uitstekende kinders wat baie sterk is, sal ek ekstra goed voor uitwerk.”

- **Participant G**

“Ons het spesiale lesse vir die leerder wat ondersteuning nodig het, dis nou die leerder wat bietjie agter die res is en wat sukkel met ietsie. Dan kry jy vir hom ietsie makliker om te doen waar hy nog selfvertroue het en ‘boost’ eers sy selfvertroue.”

- **Participant H**

“Elke dag moet jy iets anders doen, hulle raak gou verveeld.”

- **Participant I**

“Jy besluit maar op watse standaard jou kinders is, op watter vlak hulle die werk kan doen.”

- **Participant J**

“As meerderheid van die kinders dit kan doen sal ek die een wat sukkel fisies gaan help en as daar ‘n meerderheid is wat sukkel sal ek dit makliker maak.”

- **Participant K**

“Elke maatjie se prentjie lyk op die einde nie dieselfde nie. Hulle doen dit soos hulle wou.”

- **Participant L**

“As jy al ‘n rukkie vir jou kinders klas gegee het, besef jy en jy ken die kinders se agtergrond dan kan jy sien wie het watse probleem en fokus dan daarop, om sekere dingetjies vir die kind makliker te maak.”

- **Participant M**

“Ek wil net weer sê, ‘n kind bly ‘n individu.”

The importance of a child’s social and cultural background were further explored and the following responses was gained:

- **Participant A**

“Ja, ons doen al die beplanning rondom dit.”

- **Participant B**

“Every child is different, they all try and experiment.”

- **Participant C**

“Ja in ‘n mate maar nie regtig nie.”

- **Participant D**

“Vir my is die aktiwiteite te lank, hulle speel te min.”

- **Participant E**

“The children in my class comes from very diverse cultures and it is important to recognize all of those cultures.”

- **Participant F**

“As ek vat toe my kinders in die kleuterskool was, hulle het nie die goed gedoen nie. Hulle het met klei gespeel en sand gespeel. Hulle het glad nie hierdie werk gedoen wat ons kinders vandag doen nie.”

- **Participant G**

“Dit is vir my belangrik dat ‘n kind alles moet kan reg doen om daar te kan wees. Dis die grootste probleem, want al die vlakke is nie daar nie. Al die fases is nie ten volle ontwikkel nie.”

- **Participant H**

“Kultuur is nie regtig ‘n probleem nie. Hier is nie baie kinders van verskillende culture nie.”

- **Participant I**

“Ek dink nie agtergrond het baie met mense te doen nie. Jy kom nie regtig met dit in aanraking nie.”

- **Participant J**

“Ek dink tog dit word in ag geneem.”

- **Participant K**

“Ek weet nie. Nie noodwendig sy agtergrond nie.”

- **Participant L**

“Ons program is baie uitgewerk volgens dit.”

- **Participant M**

“Ja, in ‘n mate maar nie heeltemal nie want soos ek sê hulle werk te lank. Hulle moet meer speel veral op hulle ouderdom.”

From the above responses it was clear that even though a child’s individuality, social and cultural background is important, the social and cultural background of children is not always necessarily taken into consideration. It can therefore be concluded that participants’ experience or lack of contact with different cultures plays a role in the way teachers/caregivers approach programs including child development, which includes the child’s social and cultural background.

4.4.3.1 Sub theme 1: Activities should be enjoyed and should vary from each other

According to Principle 9 (3.1.9) children are active learners and children needs new knowledge to scaffold the new to the old in order to broaden and deepen their knowledge. It is therefore important that activities should be enjoyable and that the activities differ from each other, otherwise children will get bored and learning will not take place. The researcher is of the opinion that the participants purposefully try to make activities interesting and creative so that the children will enjoy the activity and learn new skills.

4.4.3.2 Sub theme 2: Individuality and background is important

To approach children as holistic beings, and include child development in daily programs, the children’s individuality, age, social and cultural background should be taken into consideration (3.1). This is important because every child is a unique human

being and therefore has his own timing and patterns of growth (Principle 4, 3.1.4) and children have different ways of representing what they know (Principle 10, 3.1.10). It is therefore important to remember that a child's social and cultural background has an impact on the child's development (Principle 7, 3.1.7). The researcher is of the opinion, according to the responses, that every child is an individual and the teachers/caregivers do try to accommodate their backgrounds and make activities fun and enjoyable.

4.4.3.3 Sub theme 3: Activities is not child appropriate

As indicated in the above sub theme, activities should approach the child as a holistic being, especially acknowledging his/her social and cultural background, although not all participants' programs or activities were child appropriate. According to 3.1, children's social and cultural background is very important and plays a huge role in the child's development and it is therefore important to have knowledge about children's backgrounds. The researcher is of the opinion that if teachers/caregivers do not acknowledge the different social and cultural background of every child, children will lose interest and new skills learned in the different domains might not be acquired.

The researcher would propose that the teachers/caregivers be made aware that social and cultural backgrounds play an important role in the development of the child and teachers/caregivers should not minimize the impact of a child's background on the child's development.

4.4.4 Main theme 4: Planning child appropriate activities, child development is included

The fourth main theme concerns the way teachers/caregivers plan their themes and activities. One sub theme was identified that themes are chosen for them but teachers/caregivers can plan their own activities. Although no explicit question was asked concerning the themes, information provided throughout the semi-structured interviews indicated that participants did not have a choice in the theme but that they could choose the activity that would be child appropriate for their class.

- **Participant A**

“Ons het nie regtig ‘n keuse nie, maar die aktiwiteite kan jy nogal self besluit wat jy wil doen.”

- **Participant B**

“We work from a program the headteacher planned, although we can decide on what kind of activities we would like to do.”

- **Participant C**

“Elke week doen ons almal dieselfde tema, wat vir ons gegee is. Die juffrou besluit self op die aktiwiteit.”

- **Participant D**

“Ons werk van ‘n kurrikulum af en op die kurrikulum werk ons volgens elke ouderdomsgroep en wat hulle op daardie ouderdomsgroep kan doen.”

- **Participant E**

“We work according to the curriculum of the school.”

- **Participant F**

“Die tema is vir ons besluit. Ek kies aktiwiteite wat kinders geniet en wat ek weet is ‘n treffer.”

- **Participant G**

“Die kurrikulum is al vir ons uitgewerk.”

- **Participant H**

“Ons het nie regtig ‘n keuse daarvoor nie. Ons het wel keuse in aktiwiteite.”

- **Participant I**

“Die tema word gegee en van daar brei jy dit uit volgens die ouderdomsgroep wat jy het.”

- **Participant J**

“Ek is die oorhoofse beplanner en werk die temas vir die jaar uit. Die onderwysers pas aktiwiteite toe op die tema.”

- **Participant K**

“Die tema is vooraf gesê vir ons.”

- **Participant L**

“Ons het ‘n dame of ons ander juffrou en dis haar werk om elke jaar vir ons die temas uit te werk.”

- **Participant M**

“Ons kan self die aktiwiteite kies, alhoewel die tema elke termyn vir ons gegee word.

4.4.4.1 Sub theme 1: Themes are given, activities can be chosen

From the empirical study the participants clearly indicated that they do not have a choice in the theme, only in the activity and that they try to adapt it according to the needs and level of development of their classes and make it interesting and appropriate (Principle 4, 3.1.4; Principle 5, 3.1.5). The participants’ responses are verified with practical experience. The researcher is of the opinion that if teachers/caregivers do not know how to include domains of child development in their daily programs, teachers/caregivers would not know if their activity is child appropriate. This could lead to boredom in the class and a child not giving attention to what the teacher/caregiver is saying. Teachers/caregivers do try and accommodate child development according to their knowledge of child development, presenting activities that are in the best interest of the child. Teachers/caregivers should be made aware of how to include child development (linking theory with practice) in their daily activities.

4.4.5 Main theme 5: Changing the focus of every program or activity

The fifth theme is that every focus of every program or activity should differ from each other. The sub theme that became apparent confirmed that the focus are different,

although it does not always focus on the child, in other words it is not always child appropriate.

- **Participant A**

“Dis die fokuspunt waarop ek konsentreer. Om die fynere motoriese goedjies reg te kry.”

- **Participant B**

“Well, we have lessons that we progress and each lesson there is a specific outcome. You plan your lesson in such away that we achieve or try to achieve those outcomes by using the lesson.”

- **Participant C**

“Ons werk van ‘n kurrikulum af en op die kurrikulum werk ons volgens elke groep en wat hulle moet kan bereik.”

- **Participant D**

“Wanneer jy beplanning doen fokus jy nie op dit nie, maar regtig op wat die kind se ontwikkeling is.”

- **Participant E**

“It depends which lesson you are doing and which outcome one can achieve.”

- **Participant F**

“Ek het teksture by die tema ingebring so dit gaan oor grof en fyn teksture.”

- **Participant G**

“Ek sou sê die fokuspunt is maar die uitkomst wat ons daarmee wou bereik het.”

- **Participant H**

“Om dit te geniet. Speel.”

- **Participant I**

“Meestal dat hulle verstaan waaroor die les op daardie dag of week gaan. Alles moet basies gaan oor die les wat jy hierdie week behandel.”

- **Participant J**

“Vandag se fokus is maar basies die skeur en plak. Hulle sukkel nog baie daarmee en word gou verveeld daarmee.”

- **Participant K**

“Dit hang af van die aktiwiteit en wat jy beplan, wat wou jy eintlik met die les doen.”

- **Participant L**

“Ons fokus meer op skeur en knip en plak werk. Dit gaan meestal daaromtrent.”

- **Participant M**

“Die tema hierdie tyd van die jaar is winter, so ons sal goeters inbring soos sitrus. Ons sal 'n sitrus oopsny en hulle laat sien hoe dit lyk en dan wys ons hoe die segment lyk.”

4.4.5.1 Sub theme 1: Focus differs from activities, although not always child appropriate

From the responses it was clear that there are a variety of focus points that came to the foreground; it seems that every teacher/caregiver can decide what they are going to focus on. Teachers/caregivers do focus on the child considering the child's understanding of the theme, that the child needs to experience the theme, and that the theme and activities make sense to the child, which is important for future learning, although they are not always age-appropriate. Learning is like building blocks, there must be a foundation first before the next block is put on top. It seems that teachers/caregivers acknowledge the importance of milestones and try a variety of activities to help children integrate newly acquired skills and therefore the focus shifts daily as the activities rotates (Principle 12, 3.1.12).

Although on the other hand it is important for certain teachers/caregivers that the outcomes are reached, that the child will be able to do what is expected. The researcher

is of the opinion that the problem with this is that if a teacher/caregiver does not use discretion they might lead the child to discouragement and the child will/might experience failure. The only way to solve the above problem is through knowledge of child development and acknowledging that each and every child grows at his/her own rate, and that each child is an individual (3.1, Principle 2, 3.1.2; Principle 10, 3.1.10).

4.4.6 Main theme 6: Including play the child's development enhances

The sixth main theme is the importance of play. All the participants replied that play is important in daily programs although that does not happen all the time. All the respondents replied "Spel is belangrik, maar kinders speel nie meer nie" or "Play is important for children but they do not play so much anymore", the researcher therefore did not regard it as practical to transcribe the same response for each respondent. From the empirical study it was concluded that none of the programs focused on play or including play into their programs, although it is important.

It is mentioned in Principle 8 (3.1.8) and Principle 12 (3.1.12) that play is the vehicle for development. Through play children develop optimally, they use all the different domains of development to learn and achieve milestones. Play helps children to acquire new skills. Because children are active learners (Principle 9, 3.1.9) they learn better through interaction with each other, they communicate, socialize and make plans, do problem solving which leads to a better understanding of the world. The researcher is of the opinion that play is very important and should be incorporated in every activity planned, because through play, which is a medium children love to do, they will learn more and understand better, because play makes sense of the world around them.

4.4.7 Main theme 7: Acknowledging the powerful influence of the environment

The seventh main theme is that a child's environment plays an important role in his/her development. Themes that were identified indicated that teachers/caregivers are aware of the influences of the environment although they were unsure of how to support children whose environment has a negative influence on them. The responses provided the following information regarding the environment:

- **Participant A**

“Emosioneel, weet jy ... Baie van die ouers in hierdie leeftyd gaan deur egskeidings en jy kry dit baie in die klas en baie wat jy ook kry is kindermolestering en verwaarlosing en so aan.”

- **Participant B**

“We do have difficult times where a child, you can see for example if something happens at home and the child is unhappy they let it out on the picture that they are doing. So, then you try and ask, we don't like to interfere.”

- **Participant C**

“Dis meestal dinge wat van die huis af kom waar die ouers nie beseft hoeveel impak dit op die kinders het nie.”

- **Participant D**

“Ek meen daar is 'n seuntjie in my klas wat by ander ouers bly, want sy regte ouers kan hom nie versorg nie. En hy is emosioneel stukkend, geknak en die res se ouers gaan deur egskeiding of die ma wat nooit getroud is nie. Dis soos die hele samelewing. Dis asof my klas die hele samelewing reflekteer.”

- **Participant E**

“Then you have kids whose parents work from six in the morning until twelve at night. They don't see their parents at all. The parent doesn't have time to play with their kids anymore.”

- **Participant F**

“Vandag se kinders speel nie meer nie. Vandag se kinders, om besig te bly, as hy by die huis kom gaan sit hy voor die televisie en bly daar. Ouers het nie meer tyd om met hulle kinders te speel nie.”

- **Participant G**

“Ouers het nie tyd om te sit en speletjies te speel met hulle kinders nie, veral nie buitekant om bal te speel nie, hulle koop ‘n DVD, pop dit in en sê daar, hou jouself besig.”

- **Participant H**

“Dis iets wat ouers nie kan help nie, maar kinders word vroeg afgelaai en dan is mamma moeg as sy van die werk af kom en naweke werk hulle ook. Wanneer het sy dan tyd om aan haar kind te spandeer. En jy sal nie glo hoe baie egskeidings is in hierdie klasse nie. Dis skokkend om te hoor.”

- **Participant I**

“Ek dink veral die ouers spandeer nie regtig kwaliteit tyd met kinders nie. Die ouers is altyd besig om te jaag.”

- **Participant J**

“Kinders is baie emosioneel veral met geskeide ouers. Jy behandel hulle maar soos jy goed dink, maar partykeer dink jy jy doen meer goed maar dan doen jy meer skade.”

- **Participant K**

“‘n Mens hoor mos hoe die ouers praat van watse Play Station hulle gekry het. En dis alles aggressiewe goed.”

- **Participant L**

“Kyk na die kinders in my klas, baie van hulle lê en werk, hulle kan nie sit nie, hulle is heeldag gewoond om voor die televisie te lê.”

- **Participant M**

“Problems at home and where you have to correct the child at school because there are parents who do not believe in child development. You get parents who never play with the child, never play games with the child.”

4.4.7.1 Sub theme 1: Environment has a negative influence on emotional development

From the empirical study it became apparent that the environment has a negative influence on the emotional development of the child. Due to divorce and parents being too busy, children's postures are not healthy and children tend to become less active. Principle 6 (3.1.6) indicates that the environment, including the physical and social world of the child, has an influence on the child's development. Furthermore, according to Bronfenbrenner's ecological model (Principle 7, 3.1.7) a child can be affected positively or negatively through his environment. It is therefore important for teachers/caregivers to become more sensitive to the child's environment if they intend to support the child. The researcher is of the opinion that the home environment is the one place a child should feel safe, protected and heard, although nowadays only a few children have the privilege of parents spending quality time with them and creating a healthy environment to grow up in. Teachers/caregivers and parents should be made aware of the important role they play in a child's development – physically, cognitively, socially and emotionally.

4.4.7.2 Sub theme 2: Teachers/caregivers do not feel adequate to help children

Although no explicit questions were raised concerning supporting children emotionally, information provided throughout the semi-structured interviews indicated that participants indicated that they want to support children but are not sure on how to do so. One of the biggest concerns teachers/caregivers have, is regarding the home environment and that when there is trouble at home, children lack emotional support (2.2; Principle 6, 3.1.6). Teachers/caregivers try their best but are not always sure of what to do. Is it the 'right' way or are they doing more damage than good? Teachers/caregivers are also concerned about the part parents play in the child's development. Parents seem to become more and more absent (Principle 7, 3.1.7).

The researcher is of the opinion that child development is important in the early years but without any support from parents, who become less and less involved in their child's development, teachers/caregivers have a bigger task at hand. The question that comes to mind for the researcher is the following: Are teachers/caregivers qualified to fulfil the role of parent, therapist and teacher? If not, what then? One way to help

teachers/caregivers over this bridge is to give them training in how to support children in certain situations, for example not asking “Why?” questions but rather “What made you do this or that?” It seems that teachers/caregivers will need extra training to overcome this challenge.

4.4.8 Main theme 8: Clarifying the role of the teacher/caregiver

The eighth main theme that was identified was the role of the teacher/caregiver. Although no explicit questions were raised concerning the role of the teacher/caregiver, information provided throughout the semi-structured interviews indicated that participants were unsure of their role as a teacher/caregiver (educator).

- **Participant A**

“Om ‘n kind reg groot te maak voor hy Graad 1 toe gaan.”

- **Participant B**

“I think to bring these little persons to a place where they can fit into society.”

- **Participant C**

“Ek dink tog ‘n mens moet hulle voorberei vir dit wat in Graad 1 wag.”

- **Participant D**

“As die juffrou in die kleuterskool nie haar werk goed gedoen het nie en laat klim en klouter het nie, en sy vorms geleer het nie, sal hy probleme later op skool kry.”

- **Participant E**

“To make a child more independent.”

- **Participant F**

“Om die grondslag te lê voor Graad 1.”

- **Participant G**

“Om die meeste te maak van daardie eerste paar jaar van die kind se lewe.”

- **Participant H**

“Om te leer kommunikeer en om selfstanding te word.”

- **Participant I**

“Om ‘n kleuter reg te maak vir Graad 1.”

- **Participant J**

“Ek voel die kleinkind onderwyser moet regtig die kind geleentheid gee om dinge te doen.”

- **Participant K**

“Ek dink om kinders te laat speel en vaardighede aan te leer.”

- **Participant L**

“Om ‘n kind ‘n voorsprong te gee en hom voor te berei vir wat vir hom voorlê.”

- **Participant M**

“Nie net om hom emosioneel sterk te maak nie, maar om hom selfstandig te maak, om op sy eie aan te gaan.”

4.4.8.1 Sub theme 1: Teachers/caregivers are uncertain of their role as educators

From the responses the following summary can be made: that teachers/caregivers take their role as an early childhood teacher/caregiver seriously and that they do see themselves as pioneers, building a foundation for later learning. Although from the data deduced the participant’s point of view differs from one to the other, it seems like teachers/caregivers are uncertain of their role as educators. The teachers/caregivers do see themselves as providing opportunities for the child to develop, socialize and interact with friends and becoming more independent (2.3; 2.4.3).

The researcher is of the opinion that it seems from the above analysis that many teachers/caregivers moved away from acknowledging their role as a teacher/caregiver, as if the teachers/caregivers are uncertain of the important role they play in a child’s

education. Teachers/caregivers should be made aware of the important role they play in a child's life according to knowledge about child development and how to include the different domains of development. In this way teachers/caregivers will be able to approach a child as a holistic being, being an individual, developing on his/her own pace, and through acknowledging the child's social and cultural background teachers/caregivers can help children achieve their milestones and reach their full potential.

4.5 OBTAINING VALIDITY AND TRUSTWORTHINESS

When compiling data from interviews or any other medium, it was important to keep the data accurate and trustworthy. In quantitative research, determining validity and trustworthiness of research results is not the same as in quantitative research which focus on measuring, but in the manner of data collection and the validity and trustworthiness of the total research approach (Goodwin & Goodwin, 1996: 138). According to Mouton and Marais (1992: 81) trustworthiness is determined through the researcher, the individual(s) being studied, and at the end determined by the measurement and research context.

Cresswell and Miller (2000: 124) describe validity in qualitative research as the accurate and reliable way in which the participants' social phenomenon is being described. In other words, validity is not determined through the data but through the interpretation thereof. According to Lincoln and Cuba (in De Vos, 2005: 346) and Cresswell and Miller (2000: 126-127) there are four criteria that must be applied in order to determine the validity and trustworthiness of the research.

- **Credibility**

This demonstrates that the goal of the research was that the inquiry was conducted in such a manner as to ensure that the phenomenon was accurately identified and described.

To establish credibility, the empirical findings were being verified with literature findings. Furthermore the findings of the participants' different responses on different questions were verified. The researcher consequentially made use of more

than one method to identify and verify themes. During the empirical study meanings about practical inclusion of child development, which could not be verified, was also acknowledged in the analysis of the response.

- **Transferability**

This indicates the enforceability of the findings on other settings. Transferability provides the greatest possible range of information and thick descriptive data.

Through the questions about the practical inclusion of child development the researcher tried to gain information over a variety of practical context. An affirmation can be made that the final conclusions of child development in daily programs was the same over the majority of contexts, and can be applied.

- **Dependability**

This refers to the obtaining of the findings with the same participants or in a similar setting by other, independent researchers. This also leads to the indication on the internal validity of the research.

Considering that all participants approached were from the same background and environment (province), it can be stated with reasonable certainty that the results would be dependable and that other independent researchers would get the same results.

- **Conformability**

This demonstrates if the result findings are restricted to the information provided by the participants and if the researcher was biased.

Through verifying the findings with theory any possible biased ideas has been addressed. Throughout the analysis of the responses the researcher purposefully tried to decrease prejudice.

4.6 CONCLUSION

From the empirical data it can be deduced that the respondents did not always know how to include child development into their daily program or activity. Although teachers/caregivers did acknowledge the importance of child development, they did not always approach the child as a holistic being, the programs were not always child appropriate and child development was not always included. Although teachers/caregivers acknowledged the importance of rotating the focus of the program or activity it did not always seem to be the case. All participants acknowledged the importance of play, although play was not really the focus of the activity. Achieving outcomes became more important.

Participants were also concerned about how to support a child emotionally when the child's environment is in turmoil. Teachers/caregivers seem to have good intentions but lack the knowledge on how to meet all the emotional needs of the children. From the data it was apparent that these children needed emotional support due to the influence of their environment and the lack of a good support system, although the teachers/caregivers were unsure of how to support these children effectively.

Indications are that teachers/caregivers need to be made aware of child development, the different domains of development and on how to include it in their daily program, linking theory with practice. Teachers/caregivers should also be made aware of the important role they play as educators in the development of the child.

Chapter five will be devoted to conclusions on the findings and will provide guidelines for teachers/caregivers on how to become more aware of child development and the domains as well as on how to supporting the children emotional needs.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The result of the empirical study, captured in Chapter four, indicates that teachers/caregivers do acknowledge the importance of child development, although they sometimes lack the inclusion of all the domains of child development. The literature study pointed out the importance of child development as well as the domains of child development, which makes it quite challenging for the teachers/caregivers to meet.

The aim of this chapter is to determine whether the research question has been answered and to make conclusions and give recommendations. Every chapter of this research paper will then be summarized in the research report after which the conclusions and guidelines of the study will follow. The outcome will create an understanding of the importance of knowledge about child development and how to include the domains of child development in daily programs/activities. The teachers/caregivers will be empowered with recommendations on how to include child developmental in their daily program or activity.

5.2 RESEARCH APPROACH

The nature of the research required that qualitative research be done as semi-structured interviews were used to collect information in narrative form. This necessitated that the research question had to be formulated prior to the commencement of the empirical research phase in order to guide the research. A research question was formulated regarding the subject of research, to guide the nature and the scope of the research, with the aim to meet the objectives of this study. The question was formulated as follows:

“How do teachers/caregivers acknowledge and include the different domains of early childhood development into their daily programs for children from three to five years?”

Applied research was the appropriate type of research as applied research concerns the scientific planning of induced change in a troublesome situation, which was applicable in this study. In the case of this study, the way teachers/caregivers acknowledge and include child development into their programs was of importance. This request made applied research applicable as this approach aims to provide information about some form of social interaction with the aim to provide information to facilitate decision-making and to answer a practical question related to planning programs.

From the empirical data collected, it was evident that the research question was answered. This statement is based on the fact that the results of the empirical data, collected by means of semi-structured interviews and biographical questionnaires, indicated that teachers/caregivers try to include child development in their daily program or activity but was not always sure on how to include child development effectively.

5.3 EVALUATION OF MEETING THE AIM AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of this study was described in Chapter one. To ensure that the study achieved the aim, it was required to re-examine the aim and objectives of this study.

5.3.1 Aim

The aim of this study was to determine how teachers/caregivers acknowledge and include child development into their daily program in order to provide guidelines to create awareness among teachers/caregivers.

The aim was achieved as existing literature was utilised to form the background on which informed semi-structured interviews could be conducted with 13 participants from Doornpoort, Montana and Sinoville. These semi-structured interviews, which included interviews with participants and biographical questionnaires, were completed by the respondents. On completion of the semi-structured interviews the transcribed data,

including the eight main themes and sub themes which were quoted in the research report and captured in Chapter four, was brought into context by relating the data to existing literature. This process culminated in a clear perspective on how teachers/caregivers acknowledged and included the different domains of development, in the Doornpoort, Montana and Sinoville area.

5.3.2 Objectives

To be able to achieve the aim of this study the following objectives must have been reached. The objectives will be listed and a description will be given of how the objectives were met.

5.3.2.1 Objective 1

To provide an overview of the literature study describing child development in the early years from three to five years with specific focus on the domains of child development and the principles of child development to gain a theoretical basis for the study.

Chapters two and three captured the literature study, which satisfied the meeting of this objective. These chapters described the preschooler, different domains of child development, including physical, cognitive, social and emotional development, and provided information on the ideal developmental levels. The literature study further provided a description of the principles of child development, with specific emphasis on the 12 principles of child development. The above information obtained from existing literature, guided the attainment of the following objective, namely to conduct an empirical study.

5.3.2.2 Objective 2

To conduct an empirical study by means of semi-structured interviews to determine how teachers/caregivers include child development and the different domains of development into their daily programs, from teachers/caregivers in the Doornpoort, Montana and Sinoville area.

The empirical study (Chapter four) was successfully concluded and the objective reached. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 13 teachers/caregivers from Doornpoort, Montana and Sinoville area (Pretoria). An interview schedule with questions based on child development and the inclusion of the different domains of development in daily programs/activities was utilized during interviews. Eight main themes and twelve sub themes were identified from the data collected. The themes were as follows:

- Acknowledging the importance of knowledge of child development.
 - Sub theme 1: Level of child development is important.
 - Sub theme 2: Knowledge of the children in your class.
- Approaching the child as a holistic being.
 - Sub theme 1: Knowledge of domains of development.
 - Sub theme 2: Lack of knowledge of the domains of development.
- Providing child appropriate programs or activities.
 - Sub theme 1: Activities should be enjoyed and vary from each other.
 - Sub theme 2: Individual and background is important.
 - Sub theme 3: Activities are not child appropriate.
- Planning child appropriate activities, child development is included.
 - Sub theme 1: Themes are given, activities are chosen.
- Changing the focus of every program or activity.
 - Sub theme 1: Focus differs from activities, although not always child centred.
- Including play the child's development enhances.

- Acknowledging the powerful influence of the environment.
 - Sub theme 1: Environment has a negative influence on the child's development.
 - Sub theme 2: Teachers/caregivers do not feel adequate to help children.
- Clarifying the role of the teacher/caregiver.
 - Sub theme 1: Teachers/caregivers are uncertain of their role as educators.

It is confirmed that the objective was reached as the data collected during the empirical study provided evidence on the importance of the development of the child, including the different domains of development and, added to that, highlighted the needs of the teachers/caregivers to help children emotionally.

5.3.2.3 Objective 3

To draw conclusions and make recommendations to provide to teachers/caregivers, making them aware of the importance of knowledge about child development and the inclusion of the different domains of development.

These recommendations will be provided to teachers/caregivers at separate appointments held at the school. The last objective were being reached in this chapter were the conclusion and recommendations in the form of guidelines will create awareness amongst the teachers/caregivers about child development, how to include domains of development into their daily programs, and on how to meet the emotional needs of the children. It can therefore be validated that the aim and objectives of this study was reached.

5.4 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTERS OF THIS RESEARCH

In the next section a summary of the chapters of the research will be provided.

5.4.1 Chapter 1: The research process

The choice of the research topic, based on the rationale of the research, was motivated in Chapter one. This resulted in the formulation of the research problem and the research question. The aim of the research and objectives were then determined. The nature of the research determined that the qualitative approach would be followed, as a social problem, namely the inclusion of domains of child development, was the focus of the study.

Applied research was done, as a solution was to be found in the form of recommendations to create awareness amongst the teachers/caregivers on how to include child development and the domains of development into their daily programs.

5.4.2 Chapter two: Child development in the early years

Chapter two provided an overview of child development in the early childhood years from three to five. The chapter provided information on the preschooler and also described the different domains of child development, physical, cognitive, social and emotional development. The focus was on describing the importance of child development, including the different domains of development, to create a better understanding of why child development is of importance.

The study focused on the child in the preschool years (three to five years) and therefore the development of the child was highlighted. The literature study formed the framework for the interview schedule, which was compiled based on the development of children in the early years.

5.4.3 Chapter three: Principles of child development

Chapter three provided an overview on the principles of child development, describing the 12 principles of child development. It was evident that knowledge of the principles of child development is of importance for teachers/caregivers when working with children. Knowledge of child development and the principles of child development forms part of the foundation for helping children reach their potential and helping teachers/caregivers apply their theoretical knowledge into practical activities or programs.

Acknowledging every child's age, the child being an individual, and the different social and cultural background of every child, implies that teachers/caregivers respect learners. This will lead to optimal development of each child and reaching their potential.

5.4.4 Chapter four: Empirical study and research findings

Eight main themes were identified during the analysis of the data. For each main theme, sub themes were identified and described. The research findings were compared to existing literature and will be discussed in the next section, where after the recommendations will follow in the form of guidelines. The guidelines were developed with the aim to create awareness among teachers/caregivers of the importance of including the different domains of development in the children's daily program/activity.

5.5 CONCLUSIONS

The following conclusions were made regarding the participants' inclusion of child development in the Doornpoort, Montana and Sinoville area (Pretoria). Conclusions will be made on each main theme identified.

- Main theme 1: By acknowledging the importance of child development in daily programs or activities. All the participants (teachers/caregivers) realized the importance of knowledge of child development and that knowledge would lead to the inclusion of child development into their daily programs or activities.

- Main theme 2: By approaching the child as a holistic being. The participants are aware that every child is an individual and should be treated and approached as an individual. By doing so, they acknowledge the child for who he or she is including his or her age, individuality, social and cultural background, although the latter is not always taken into consideration when planning a program. In most of the responses it appeared that all the teachers/caregivers provided in the needs of the children, approaching them holistically. Children need to enjoy activities and activities should therefore differ from one another, otherwise children might get bored. Although after exploring in depth, it came to the foreground that in not all cases the activity focused on the child as a holistic being, in other words the activities was not child appropriate. This aspect needs to be addressed in the guidelines that would be provided in the next section.
- Main theme 3: By acknowledging the importance of providing child appropriate programs or activities. Participants tried to include all the domains of development, although they often struggle to link theory with practice. This can be related to the fact that some of the participants had no idea what some of the domains meant and that they needed clarification of the question.
- Main theme 4: By planning activities that are child appropriate. Although themes are chosen for participants, participants could choose appropriate activities that were applicable to the theme, that focused on different aspects of child development as the activities rotate.
- Main theme 5: By changing the focus of daily programs or activities. All the participants agreed that the focus of each and every activity should differ from one another, although the focus of the activity was not always child centred. Some participants focused on the outcomes children need to achieve, some worked from a curriculum and what children need to achieve according to the curriculum, others focused on what the children struggle with and some on children having fun and enjoying the activity. This aspect needs to be addressed in the guidelines that would be provided in the next section.

- Main theme 6: By including play purposefully in daily programs or activities, could lead to the enhancement of child development. The participants realize the importance of play, that through play children learn but also communicate, interact and socialize with friends, they become more independent as their sense of self is formed, although it sometimes seems as if play is not essential during the early years. This aspect needs to be addressed in the guidelines that would be provided in the next section.
- Main theme 7: By acknowledging the powerful influences, positive or negative, on the development of a child. The concern the participants have is about the influence the child's environment has on the child's development, because children watch too much TV, DVD's and play PlayStation instead of playing outside. Their parents' relationship also has an influence on the child's emotional development and teachers/caregivers are uncertain of how to support these children. Additional training will enable teachers/caregivers to support children emotionally. This aspect needs to be addressed in the guidelines provided in the next section.
- Main theme 8: By clarifying the important role teachers/caregivers play as an educator in the child's development. According to the participants the goal/role of the early childhood teacher consists out of a variety of things like the following: it is to have knowledge about child development, building the foundation for further learning, providing opportunities for socialization, interaction and becoming more independent. Although nowadays there more are expected from the participants than what they were trained to do, they must first of all be a teacher/caregiver, then a parent (disciplining children) and then a therapist, helping children cope emotionally.

5.6 RECOMMENDATIONS TO TEACHERS/CAREGIVERS

In the next section the researcher wishes to make recommendations with the aim to make participants (teachers/caregivers) aware of how to include child development, including the different domains of development as well as of how to acknowledging the emotional needs children. The recommendations will be presented to the

teachers/caregivers at separate appointments at the school and the participants will be provided with the opportunity to raise questions. Recommendations will be made on each main theme identified.

- Main theme 1: Many of the participants acknowledged the importance of child development, although they do sometimes lack knowledge of child development. The participants were able to include child development practically in programs and activities, although they did not always know what child development was about. In-school training is important for teachers/caregivers to become more aware of child development, theoretical and through guidance helped them to include knowledge of child development on a practical level in activities.
- Main theme 2: Participants must be made aware of the fact that teachers/caregivers should approach children as a holistic being because the different domains of development are interrelated. There are windows of opportunities for learning where development occurs in a relatively orderly sequence and where every child develops at a different rate. Development and learning results from interaction and biological maturation in their environment. Furthermore, development and learning occur in and are influenced by multiple social and cultural contexts. Play is also very important for children's social, emotional, cognitive and physical development. Because children are active learners, they demonstrate different modes of knowing and learning in different ways of representing what they know. Children furthermore learn and develop best in the context of a community where they are safe and valued and development advances when children have opportunities to practice newly acquired skills.
- Main theme 3: Participants should provide child appropriate programs through becoming aware that all the domains of development are important and interrelated. Therefore programs should include all the domains of development in each and every activity. Teachers/caregivers will benefit from in-school training about how to link theory with practice.
- Main theme 4: By planning child appropriate programs each and every child's

development is included. Because teachers/caregivers are aware that every child is an individual and every child's background is different and should be acknowledged and treated with respect. The child's limitations should be taken into consideration and the child should be commended on work well done. Any strength the child displays should be built on, in order to enhance the child's self-esteem and to foster the idea with the child that he can achieve.

- Main theme 5: Teachers/caregivers should become part of planning themes and activities, including the different domains of development into fun filled activities. In this way it can be assured that the child stays the main focus and that his developmental level is taken into consideration when planning a program/activity. Therefore each and every program or activity will have a different focus.
- Main theme 6: Participants are aware of the importance of play in a child's development, although they do not always include play in activities and work according to a schedule. Through in-school training or attending seminars teachers/caregivers should be made aware of the importance of play in a child's development; because through play children's development is enhanced.
- Main theme 7: Although teachers/caregivers acknowledged that the environment has an influence on the child's development, they are uncertain of how to support the children. Therefore knowledge of the child's environment is of importance to support the child in all the domains of development. Teachers/caregivers and parents should work together. Parents should therefore be made aware of the role both parents play in the life of any child and the principle of co-parenting should be made known. The researcher is of the opinion that parents should be made aware of the importance of their role as parents, enforcing the same values and norms and agreeing on discipline to ensure emotional security in children.
- Main theme 8: The role of the teacher/caregiver changed a lot over the years and it is important for participants to acknowledge their role and get in touch with their role as teacher/caregiver (educator). One of the roles a teacher/caregiver needs to fulfil is the therapeutic role (counsellor), although therapy with children is specialized. Therefore participants would need guidance on how to fulfil this

role – although they were not trained to fulfil this role, it is expected of them.

5.7 DEFICIENCY IN STUDY

The researcher did not experience huge deficiencies, although one deficiency that comes to mind is that the researcher found it difficult to ask the questions in such a way that the participants would understand. At times the researcher had to explain questions, modify it and in a way ask leading questions to accommodate teachers. The researcher is of the opinion that the fact that not all the participants were formally qualified might have had an influence on this, although some qualified participants struggled with the same questions, especially on the different domains of development. This might have had an influence on the credibility of this study.

5.8 RECOMMENDATION FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

It would be useful to conduct research to determine whether change has taken place after the guidelines were made known to the participants of Doornpoort, Montana and Sinoville. Another dimension for future research could be to develop a program to enhance the developmental needs in the different domains of development in a practical way, in a step-by-step program or to focus more on the question of whether the training teachers/caregivers receive is sufficient and if the training acknowledges the importance of child development. It could also be considered to do a similar study to determine whether participants in other areas have a similar experience.

5.9 CONCLUSION

The importance of child development was mentioned in previous chapters and it cannot be emphasised enough. Realising that knowledge about the way children learn and develop is important for teachers/caregivers to present appropriate programs/activities for children's optimal learning. Teachers/caregivers must be made aware of the fact that different domains of development are interrelated, and that whatever planning they do, they must focus on every child as an individual and explore possibilities on how to fulfil the needs of the child.

The role of the teacher changed so much over the years, that teachers/caregivers are actually feeling overwhelmed by the different roles they need to fulfil. It is therefore of importance to equip teachers/caregivers in helping them to fulfil the roles expected of them, especially helping children on an emotional level.

Teachers/caregivers are challenged on a daily basis on how to provide in children's development need in all domains of development. The research described in Chapter four indicated that teachers/caregivers from Doornpoort, Montana and Sinoville are doing the best they can according to the knowledge and experience they have in planning activities according to the developmental level of each child, although it was concluded that the emotional needs of the children are not optimally met and that the activities were not always age-appropriate. It is therefore necessary to make the findings of this research known in the form of recommendations to guide teachers and caregivers to create awareness on including the different domains of development and guidance on supporting the emotional needs of children.

The conclusion above was based on the empirical study. Furthermore the researcher would like to clarify that whenever she referred to the teacher/caregiver, she referred to the participants that was included in this study and that the results would in no way be generalised.

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Appendix 1

Consent form

INFORMED CONSENT

Dear Participant

I, Wynette Böhmer a candidate in Magister Diaconologiae in Play Therapy at the University of South Africa, am conducting a research study into:

An investigation into the inclusion of child development in early childhood programs.

The aim of this study is to investigate how childcare services include all the different areas of development in early childhood programs.

For the purpose of this study consent is hereby required for:

- individual participant interviews, proximally one hour is needed for individual interviews;
- the use of a voice recorder during interviews. Copies of the data will be made to prevent any losses of data if technical problems occur and all the data will be destroyed afterwards.

To insure that all information in this study is kept and handled confidentially, the researcher will use the information under a different name (pen name) and refer to them as anonymous participants.

Participation is entirely voluntary and participants may withdraw form the study at any time, with no consequences.

If the participant has any questions or concerns the participant may contact the researcher at 083 5344 599.

I, _____ agree/refuse to participate in the study described above.

PARTICIPANT

DATE

Appendix 2

Bibliographical data

28 June 2007

Dear Participant

Please provide me with the following information. Information provided will be held confidentially and will be destroyed as soon as the empirical data has been analysed.

Name of participant:

Name of participating school:

Area of participating school:

Year group participant teaches/works with:

Training (Formal or In-school training):

Experience:

Signature of Participant: _____ Date: _____

Appendix 3

Interview Schedule

Questionnaire:

- What do you understand under child development?
- Do you think knowledge about how children develop (their level of development and individual capabilities) and how children learn is important and needs to be taken into consideration when planning a program?
- What is your understanding of social development (3/4/5 year old)?
- What is your understanding of cognitive development (3/4/5 year old)?
- What is your understanding of physical development (3/4/5 year old)?
- What is your understanding of emotional development (3/4/5 year old)?
- Can you tell me how you incorporate the different domains of development in each stage of the child's development, and why you think it is important to include the specific developmental domain in the program?
 - Social development
 - Cognitive development
 - Physical development
 - Emotional development
- Do you take age, individuality and the social and cultural context into consideration when planning the daily program?
- What made you decide on the theme of this week and how did you aim your activities?

- According to you what was your focus point when presenting the activities?
- A lot of emphasis is laid on child development. How did you include child development in today's activities?
- How did the program take the whole child (holistically) into account? (This includes the child's age, individuality, social and cultural background.)
- According to you, what is the aim of the early childhood teacher?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTRIBUTION AND TIME

Appendix 4

Developmental progression: Indications of expected changes and growth of the three to five year old

Developmental progression	Three year old	Four year old	Five year old
Physical change, posture and large/gross motor movements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walks alone upstairs with alternating feet and down-stairs with two feet to step, use handrail for balance. • Can use toilet alone. • Can walk on tiptoe. • Sits with feet crossed at ankles. • Climbs nursery apparatus with agility. • Stands momentarily on one foot when shown. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walks alone up and down-stairs, alternating feet; judges well in placing feet on climbing structures – climbs trees and ladders. • Can run on tip-toe. • Can dress him-/herself with help. • Stands on one foot 3-5 seconds or more, masters the low balance beam, but has difficulty on the two-inch-wide beam without watching 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can descend stairway un-aided, alternating feet. • Runs lightly on toes. • Child can dress self without help. • Active and skilful in climbing, swinging, digging, sliding and various 'stunts'. • Can stand on one foot for 8 to 10 seconds.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Usually jumps from bottom step. • Can turn around obstacles and corners while running and also while pushing and pulling large toys – shows improved coordination. • Rides tricycle and can turn wide corners on it. • Plays actively (trying to keep up with other children) and then needs rest – fatigues suddenly and becomes cranky if overtired. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> feet. • Hops on one foot, walks heel-to-toe, runs well and skips unevenly. • Turns sharp corners running, pulling and pushing. • Can draw designs and copy circle, cut with scissors and write recognizable letters. • Shows greater perceptual judgment and awareness of own limitations and/or the consequences of unsafe 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can hop 2 to 3 yards on each foot separately. Can hop and jump and change directions. • Coordinates movements for swimming and bike riding. • Display high levels of energy; rarely shows fatigue; finds inactivity difficult and seeks active games and environments
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<p>Vision and fine movement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Builds tower of nine cubes, also (age 3½) bridge of three from model. • Pick up pins, threads, etc., with each eye covered separately. • Cuts with scissors. • Match two or three primary 	<p>behavior; still needs supervision in crossing a street.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arranges or picks up objects from floor by bending from waist with knees extended. • Builds tower of ten or more cubes and several 'bridges' of three on request. • Picks up pins, crumbs, thread, etc., with each eye covered separately. • Matches and names four 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary teeth begin to fall out, replaced by permanent teeth. • Skips on alternative feet. • Grips strongly with each hand. • Dance to music. • Builds complex block structures that extend vertically; shows limited spatial judgment and tend to knock things over. • Picks up minute objects when each eye is covered separately. • Hits nails with hammer head; uses scissors and screw-drivers unassisted.
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	<p>colours (usually red and yellow correct, but may confuse green and blue).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copies circle (also V, H and T). Imitates cross. Can draw shapes. • Paints 'pictures' with large brush on easel. • Can close fist and wiggle thumb in imitation, right and left. • Draws man with head and usually indication of features or other part. • Eats with spoon and fork. 	<p>primary colours correctly.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copies cross (also V, H, T and O). • Uses small pegs and board, strings small beads and pours sand and liquid into small containers. • Imitates spreading of hand and bringing thumb into opposition with each finger in turn, right and left. • Draws man with head and legs, features, trunk and (often) arms. • Enjoys manipulating play objects that have fine parts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Names four primary colours and matches 10 to 12 colours. • Has basic grasp of left and right, but still mixes them up sometimes. • Draws persons (head, trunk, legs, arms and features); prints letters crudely but most are recognizable by an adult; includes a context or scene in drawings; prints first name. • Likes to disassemble and reassemble objects and dress
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<p>Hearing and speech</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shows steady increase in vocabulary, ranging from 2,000 to 4,000 words, tends to over generalize meaning and make up words to fit needs. • Uses simple sentences of at least three or four words to express needs. • Uses plurals and pronouns. • Large intelligible vocabulary but speech still shows many infantile phonetic substitutions. Gives full name and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draws very simple house. • Expands vocabulary from 4,000 to 6,000 words; more attention to abstract uses. Learns new vocabulary quickly if related to own experience. • Uses more advanced sentence structures. Usually speaks five- to six-word sentences. • Speech completely intelligible. 	<p>and undress dolls.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses computer keyboard. • Draws simple house with door, windows, roof and chimney. • Count fingers on one hand with index finger of other. • Employs a vocabulary of 5,000 to 8,000 words, with frequent plays on words; pronounce words with little difficulty, except for particular sounds, such as / and t. • Use fuller and more complex sentences. • Defines concrete nouns by use. • Speech fluent and grammatical.
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	<p>sex, and (sometimes) age.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carries simple conversations and verbalizes past experiences. • Vocabulary, grammar and syntax are improving. • Listens eagerly to stories and demands favourites over and over again. • Knows several nursery rhymes, learns words to songs that have much repetition. • Adapts speech and style of nonverbal communication to listeners in culturally accepted ways but still needs to be reminded of context. • Still talks to him-/herself in long monologues mostly concerned with the immediate present, including make-believe activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gives connected account of recent events and experiences. • Listens to and tells long stories sometimes confusing fact and fantasy. • Likes to sing simple songs; knows many rhymes and finger plays. • Can control volume of voice for periods of time if 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shares experiences verbally and knows the words to many songs. • Ask meaning of abstract words. • Loves stories and acts them out in detail later. Can tell and retell stories with practice. • Likes to act out other roles,
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<p>Social behaviour, relationships, play and emotional development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asks many questions beginning with “What?”, ‘Where?’ and ‘Who?’. • Washes hands, but needs supervision in drying. • General behaviour more amenable. • Enjoys floor play with bricks, boxes, toy trains and cars, alone or with siblings. • Joins in play with other children in- and outdoors. • Shows affection for younger siblings. 	<p>reminded.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gives name, sex, home address and (usually) age. • Eternally asking questions ‘Why?’, ‘How’ and ‘When?’ and meanings of words. • Washes and dries hands, brushes teeth. • General behaviour markedly self-willed. • Still engage in associative play but begins true give-and-take, cooperative play. • Pretend play has socio-dramatic themes. • Shows concern for younger siblings and sympathy for 	<p>shows off in front of other people or become unpredictably very shy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gives full name, age and home address and gives age and (usually) birthday. • Washes and dries face and hands, but needs help and supervision for the rest. • General behaviour more sensible, controlled and responsibly independent. • Floor games very complicated. • Domestic and dramatic play continued from day to day. • Tender and protective towards
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shows some appreciation of past and present. • Understands sharing play-things, sweets, etc. and can follow simple requests. • Can pull pants and knickers down and up, but needs help with buttons. • Affectionate and confiding. • Dry through night. • Makes effort to keep his surroundings tidy. • Like to help with adult's 	<p>playmates in distress.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Becomes angry easily if things do not go their way at times – prefers to play with others most of the time. • Appreciate past, present and future. • Begins to offer things to others spontaneously, wants to please friends; compliments others on new shoes and clothing; shows pleasure in having and being with friends. • Little explicit awareness of pride or shame. • Sibling conflicts over property are common. 	<p>younger children and pets. Comforts playmates in distress.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patterns of bullying and victimization may be established. • Co-operative with companions and understands need for rules and fair play. • Undresses and dresses alone
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<p>Understanding and intellectual capacity, cognitive development</p>	<p>activities in house and garden.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vividly realized make-believe play including invented people and objects. • Understands 'big' and 'small', 'under' and 'on'. Recognise objects by use. • Knows some nursery rhymes. • Vivid make-believe. Uses objects to represent people in play. • Child engages in pretend 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eats skilfully with spoon and fork. • Constructive out-of-doors building with any large material to hand. • Inclined to verbal impertinence when wishes crossed but can be affectionate and compliant. • Shows greater ability to control intense feelings like fear and anger (no more temper tantrums). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses knife and fork. • Chooses own friends • Negativism declines.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Models much morally relevant behaviour. • Altruism and other pro- 	<p>everyday experiences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sorts familiar objects into hierarchically organized categories. • Can make and honour an agreement. • Child shows intuitive understanding of fractional quantities. • Devises ideas about underlying characteristics that category members share. • Moral reasoning is rigid. • Shows sensitivity to intentions when making 	<p>appearance or fantasy and reality.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Automatization, encoding, generalization and strategy construction begin to become more efficient. • Development of meta-memory enables use of memory strategy. • Child can count in head, can count to ten. Memory span extends two digits. • Beginning sense of values, right versus wrong and fairness. • Improves in performance on appearance-reality problems, indicating further gain in dual representation. • Can evaluate own capabilities with some accuracy. • Moral reasoning is becoming less inflexible.
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<p>Moral development</p>	<p>social behaviour become more common; motive is to earn praise and avoid disapproval.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shows empathy-based guilt reactions to transgressions. 	<p>moral judgments.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distinguishes moral rules, social conventions and matters of personal choice. • Guilt and concern about wrongdoing peaks. • “Problem behaviour” declines among girls. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At the end of this period, displays differentiated understanding of authority figures and legitimacy and bases distributive justice on equality.
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(Sources: Bredekamp, 1997; Berk, 2003; Papalia, Olds & Feldman, 2004; Aldgate, Jones, Rose & Jeffery, 2006).

Appendix 5

Gross motor skills of the three, four and five year old

Three year old	Four year old	Five year old
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can not turn and stop suddenly and quickly • Goes around obstacles while running • Walks up stairs, one foot to a step • Can jump a distance of 15 – 24 inches • Kicks a large ball easily • Goes around obstacles while pushing and pulling toys • Catches a bounced ball, using torso and arms to form a basket • Hops on one foot, up to three hops • Climbs nursery-school apparatus • Paddles and steers tricycle • Jumps from the bottom step • Stand on one foot 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have more effective control of stopping, starting and running • Turns sharp corners while running • Can descend a long stairway alternating feet, with support • Can jump a distance of 24 – 33 inches • Throws a ball overhead • Turns sharp corners while pushing and pulling toys • Throws ball with increased body rotation and transfer of weight on feet; catches ball with both hands • Skips on one foot • Climbs ladders • Rides a tricycle well • Jumps from heights of 12 inches • Stands on one foot for 3-8 seconds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can start, turn and stop effectively in games • Runs lightly on toes • Can descend a long stairway, alternative feet • Jumps a distance of 3 feet • Catches a small ball, using hands only • Increases running speed to 12 feet per second • Display mature, whole body throwing and catching patterns • Skips on alternate feet • Climbs actively and skilfully • Rides a bicycle with training wheels • Hops 2-3 yards forward on each foot • Stand on one foot for 8-10 seconds

(Feldman, 1999: 150; Berk, 2003: 174; Papalia, *et al.*, 2006: 246; Rathus, 2006: 266 & Aldgate, Jones, Rose & Jeffery, 2006: 179-183.)

Appendix 6

Fine motor skills of the three, four and five year old

Three year old	Four year old	Five year old
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build tower of 9 cubes • Cuts paper • Copies circle, cross and letters • Pastes using finger • Building bridge with three blocks • Holds crayons with fingers, not fist • Draws 0 and + • Draws doll, man with head and usually indication of features or other parts • Strings 4 beads using a large needle • Pours liquid from pitcher without spilling • Completes a simple jigsaw puzzle • Matches 2-3 primary colours 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Builds tower of 10 or more cubes • Copies squares and X • Builds bridge with five blocks • Uses pencil with correct hand grip • Draws very simple houses • Draws man with head, legs, features, trunk and (often) arms • Strings 10 beads • Pours from various containers • Prints name and simple words • Opens and positions clothespins • Matches and names 4 different primary colours correctly • Folds papers into triangles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Builds 3 steps from 6 blocks, using a model • Copies triangle and star • Draws triangle, rectangle and circle • Draw recognizable man with head, trunk, legs, arms and features • Laces shoes • Creates clay objects • Prints first name and numbers • Name 4 primary colours and matches 10 -12 colours • Imitates folding piece of square paper into a triangle, halves and quarters

(Feldman, 1999: 150; Berk, 2003: 174; Papalia, *et al.*, 2006: 246; Rathus, 2006: 266 & Aldgate, *et al.*, 2006: 179-182.

