

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY: AN EMPIRICAL PERSPECTIVE AND INTEGRATION OF THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the study thus far was to give a theoretical perspective of domestic violence and middle-childhood from a Gestalt approach. It is reflected through the literature research in the previous chapters as well as in the empirical study. The information and knowledge around violence and domestic violence thus far have been useful in understanding the middle-childhood child that has been exposed to domestic violence, with its abilities, needs and special competencies.

In order to complete the research process of this chapter it will be an explanation of the research methodology that was used. The Gestalt theoretical perspective aim to bring about awareness from external to internal support, enhancing contact and that the view of human nature is positive in that people are viewed as capable of becoming self-regulating beings, who can achieve a sense of unity and integration in their lives. With this in mind the middle-childhood child can work on unfinished business in order to form his configuration, his Gestalt. The middle-childhood child living with domestic violence will be looked at from a Gestalt theoretical perspective. The necessary research will provide the theoretical perspective for further study with the aim of service delivery. Therefor, for the purpose of this research, it will be argued that the correct route to follow would be play therapy as a theoretical base from a Gestalt perspective.

It is expected that with the triangulation process the literature study and semi-structured interviews with the children as respondents will serve as an integrated method of collecting data for the empirical interview for the child as respondent in describing his specific competencies, abilities and needs. The context in which it will be described and

explored will be that of domestic violence. From a Gestalt approach the different forms of play and play techniques will be used for assessment purposes during semi-structured interviews through self-designed questionnaire.

2. RESEARCH PROCESS FOR THE IMPERICAL PROCESS

Within this chapter the researcher would like to give an overview of the research methodology that was utilised for this empirical study. This research would then want to indicate how the goals and objectives have been met.

The process of the research Leedy (in Fouche and Delport, 2002:78) argues is largely circular in configuration. This means that it starts with a problem and it ends with that problem resolved. He also talks of research being rarely conclusive and that research begets more research. Fouche and Delport (2002:78) therefore agree with Babie and Mouton (2001:72) that all empirical research conforms to a standard of logic, which they call the ProDEC meaning the research problem (Pro), research design (D), empirical evidence (E) and conclusions (C). The process is completed with the integration of the findings (Fouche and Delport, 2002:85-92). See below the **research process**.

The researcher would like to give an overview of the four phases of the process that was followed in this research.

Figure 2: The research process

2.1 PROBLEM FORMULATION AND PLANNING THE RESEARCH	2.2 GATHERING OF DATA (TRIANGULATION)	2.3 PROCESSING OF DATA AND FINDINGS	2.4 FINDINGS: FOR ASSESSMENT PURPOSES
<p>2.1.1 Consultation with the experts</p> <p>2.1.2 Determining the aim and objectives of the research</p> <p>2.1.3 Pilot study: semi-structured interviews with two children for assessment purpose</p>	<p>2.2.1 Literature study</p> <p>2.2.2 Semi-structured interviews with six children (for assessment)</p>	<p>2.3.1 Coding of qualitative research</p> <p>2.3.2 Graphical Representation: Text and table of graphical form</p> <p>2.3.3 Integration of literature and practise</p>	<p>2.4.1 A compact overview of the play forms and techniques that was used for assessment purposes and the response from the children</p> <p>2.4.2 Additional information that is suggested for assessment</p>

The adjusted outline is suggested by Fouche & Delport (2002:85-92)

2.1 PROBLEM FORMULATION AND PLANNING THE RESEARCH

The **research problem** for this study is that domestic violence in middle-childhood has never to the knowledge of the researcher, from a Gestalt theoretical perspective, been described and explored. Triangulation was used to bridge the problem by firstly, a

literature study was done with regard to domestic violence in middle-childhood from a Gestalt perspective. This process continued secondly with these children through self-developed questionnaires where semi-structured interviews with the help of play forms and techniques were used as means of communication. In so doing two data gathering methods as resource information were used to assess their experiences, special abilities and needs to provide a guideline for future research.

2.1.1 Consultation with the experts

Various **experts** and educators were consulted. From this **consultations** it was clear that most of these children comes from homes where they are exposed to domestic violence. These experts are all in the field of childhood behaviour and child abuse. It was valuable consulting them in this regard because the feedback reinforced the need for the research. The theoretical information focussed on the themes of domestic violence, the total development of the child in the middle-childhood developmental phase from a Gestalt perspective. The concepts were refine and discussed through the semi-structured interviews with the respondents. In working with the child, the child is seen as the expert with his experiences.

2.1.2 Determining the aims and objectives of the research

In order to obtain **the aim** for this study is to explore and describe domestic violence in middle-childhood from a Gestalt theoretical perspective.

The **objectives** for the study are:

- Firstly through triangulation from a literature study to explore and describe domestic violence, the total development of the middle-childhood child's developmental phase and Gestalt theory with regard to play therapy;
- Secondly to continue the triangulation process through gathering of information by means of semi-structured interviews for assessment purposes with six respondents from the middle-childhood development phase that are exposed to domestic violence; and

- Thirdly to complete triangulation as data gathering method and to use this information as a theoretical perspective to provide and suggest guidelines for play therapists.

For the purpose of this study the research was **qualitative** in nature because of the semi-structured interviews that was used to bring about the experiences and perceptions of the respondents. The focus is therefore on the understanding of the child with specific competencies in domestic violence. The respondents were involved as experts in the field.

In the light of the above aim and objectives that was utilised for this study it is clear **applied research** with an **explorative** and **descriptive** nature was done. It is explorative in nature because it is exploring through the literature and the semi-structured interviews where play therapy methods were utilised to obtain information. According to Bless & Higson-Smith (in De Vos, 2002:109) the function is to explore and develop insight into a situation and phenomenon of the individual. The implementation thereof will be in the form of guidelines and suggestions that could be used for the middle-childhood child that is exposed to domestic violence. The description of the study was the utilization of triangulation with the literature study and gathering information from the children as respondents to present a picture of the specific details.

2.1.3 Pilot Study

According to Strydom (in De Vos, 2002:210) the pilot study is one way in which the prospective researcher can orientate him to the project he has in mind. The pilot study forms an integral part of the research process. Its function is the exact formulation of the research problem, and a tentative planning of the modus operandi and range of the investigation.

With the pilot study two children were involved. The children were referred, because of aggressive and violent behaviour, as well domestic problems at home. Play as relaxation for assessment was used because the children were anxious and nervous and they could not write certain words. The purpose was to increase the

effectiveness according to De Vos (2002:365) of the abilities and needs during domestic violence not only from the literature study but to understand the child's personal experiences. The researcher, for the effectiveness of the research, took on the active role of controlling and guiding the semi-structured interview. The importance of relaxation play to establish and build a relationship was confirmed in the pilot study and will be addressed in the empirical study.

- **Semi-structured interviews used during the pilot study**

- The researcher started off by wanting to get information directly and realised that caused resistances to really communicate.
- Due to the above the researcher took longer to obtain information.
- The researcher assumed that the children would be comfortable with completing the "incomplete sentences" questionnaire that formed part of the way in which information was gathered.

To improve the effectiveness of the study the following is recommended:

- The researcher started the session with relaxation play, about what they were busy with before they came to the semi-structured interview, likes and dislikes. Information and other activities would then go smoother and quicker.
- The only writing that they were asked to do was to write their name on the drawing sheet.

2.2 GATHERING OF INFORMATION

The author De Vos (2002:363) express the opinion that data collection with regard to qualitative approach takes place less structured and that various data collection methods could be used. For the purpose of this research study the triangulation process will include literature study as indicated in chapter two and three and semi-structured interviews with the children as respondents. According to De Vos (2002:365) the researcher can test the validity of the study by using multiple methods of gathering information.

2.2.1 Literature Study

Information from the literature study states that the child in the middle-childhood phase has the inherent abilities and life skills as well as needs where domestic violence exists. It is however clear from the literature study that awareness of such abilities is a process that can be effective through the assistance of helping aids of play therapy for both assessment and providing further intervention and assistance. Further more it is shown that the Gestalt approach is appropriate for the practise. Play therapists can also through play mediums and techniques create awareness of the child's abilities, needs and competencies in domestic violence to move the child to self-awareness and self support. In this approach play is used as communication medium that can be used both for assessment and further intervention. The triangulation process is continued with the empirical study of **semi-structured interviews** with the children as respondents. For this purpose six children were involved with the study.

2.2.2 Semi-structured interviews with the children as respondents

Interviewing is seen by Greeff (2002:292) as an effective way of gathering information during qualitative research.

According to Smith (in De Vos, 2002:302) the researcher used a list of drawn up questions from the literature during the interviews was held with the children as respondents. The schools that took part in the research were Morgenson and Sunlands Primary who situated in the Athlone area. Educators referred selected learners to the organisation displaying aggressive and violent behaviour and who are exposed to domestic violence. Six individual learners took part in the research. The criteria that were used were those children:

- should be in the middle-childhood development phase, ranging from nine years to twelve years old;
- needed to speak one language;
- could be both boys and girls; and
- could be of any religion.

Written permission was given from the learners, caregivers and the principal although this was not necessary. Semi-structured interview with six children that acted as the sample made it easy to get a holistic picture of the middle-childhood developmental

stage.

- The use of play for assessment purposes was important for this study because it was used as communication medium during semi-structured interviews. Play forms were used, mainly **creative play** where Blom (2003:233) emphasises the opportunity for the child to express his experiences through projections on an indirect manner. (See annexure 4.)
- Further on **dramatised play** was used that according to Blom (2003:232) is useful when the child is in threatening situations and can act out his behaviour to experience control.
- **Biblio-play** made it possible to provide information for assessment to understand the child's way of thinking and dreams according to Van der Merwe (1996e: 124). (See annexure 3 for self-developed questionnaire.) This medium of play is necessary to observe the child's cognitive, perceptual, emotional behavioural and motivation in the here and now (Van der Merwe 1994:13).
- **Assessment play** was also specifically used through incomplete sentences that were compiled from the literature for the semi-structured interviews. This play technique was used to bring the child's experiences, feelings and behaviour reactions to the figure ground to form the basis for the therapeutic process. The focus is according to Oaklander (1988:188) on how the child presents himself within the specific situation in the here and now.
- **Establishing relationship** and working with the here and the now is important aspects in the Gestalt process and according to Blom (2003:50) and for this reason informal conversation took place (with the pilot study). Every child as respondent was given the opportunity to draw his house and his family members.
- **Creative play** as a form of play where drawings were used which according to Blom (2003:147) provides the opportunity to project emotions. According to Gerald & Gerald (1997:120) drawings help children express their emotions and thoughts on a non-threatening way. Drawings in this way promote spontaneity in communication and self-expression. Blom (2003:147) also mentions that ventilation and self-awareness takes place where the child feels more in control. Uncertainty and fears of their situations is expressed through projections for the purpose of this study for assessment.

The researcher would ask them to draw their house with those family members that they want to be in the house inside the house and those who, if they could put outside the house, to put them outside. This would bring on a discussion as to why certain family members or people living with them are inside and why others are outside the house. This gave the researcher further an indication of the family dynamics and the type of relationships that exists between family members. (See Annexure 4.) These play activities, will help the play therapist, according to Smith (1981:19) this will help to change the child's distrust and loneliness; improves the child's co-operation; improves the child's self-esteem to help him to become aware of himself as a complete and esteemed member of the family. Schoeman (2001:64-66) is also of the opinion that the child may project his feelings by means of other characters which he has created in writing or drawing, emotional discharge takes place in a safe venue and indirect channels may be created by which he can enter the forbidden and threatening world.

- The researcher would ask the child-respondent to draw his house, and to place members inside or outside the house.
- A sheet with eight incomplete sentences questionnaire was read to every child-respondents to complete. This also allows them to make wishes, dream, think of what they want to be one day and establish who their support systems are. This also forms part of biblio-play where the child can experiment with possibilities without making himself vulnerable. (See Annexure 3.).
- In looking at what there strengths and weaknesses are, the researcher used an activity called the "Me Tree" and assisted them in completing the tree. This gave an indication on what they really think of themselves. This is also a form of biblio-play where he explores his strength and weaknesses in middle-childhood living in domestic violence. (See Annexure 5.)
- The empty chair technique was used for the purpose of assessment as known in Gestalt for the perpetrator of domestic. This formed part of dramatised play and as Schoeman (2001:64-66) defines dramatised play "it is the play which offers the

child the opportunity to play out the situation, to dramatise it.” There are different mediums that could be used, but for this research role-plays were used. (A comprehensive overview will be given as for the purpose of this study in 2.4: **The forms of play and play techniques.**)

2.3 PROCESSING OF DATA FINDINGS

With regard to the processing attention will be given to coding of information and the integration of theory and practise.

2.3.1 Coding of qualitative research

According to De Vos (2002:346) coding represents the operations by which data are broken down, conceptualised and put back together in new ways. It is the central process by which theories are built from data. There are different ways of coding. For this research open coding and writing the code notes will be utilised. With open coding, according to De Vos (2002:346) the data are broken down into discrete parts, closely examined, compared for similarities and differences, and questions are asked about the phenomena as reflected in the data. Writing the code notes, according to De Vos (2002:346) the initial names for concepts are often written straight onto the interview notes, field notes or other documents. Categories and the concepts pertaining to them and taken from the pages and written as code notes. Strauss & Corbin (in De Vos, 2002:348) says that there are different ways of doing this recording and that each person must find a way that works for himself.

The researcher will draw valuable links and conclusions to portray the child as a respondent within its developmental phase. Assessing theory and practise will be integrated in order for play therapists to benefit from the findings to use in assessing the middle-childhood child with special abilities and needs who have been exposed to domestic violence.

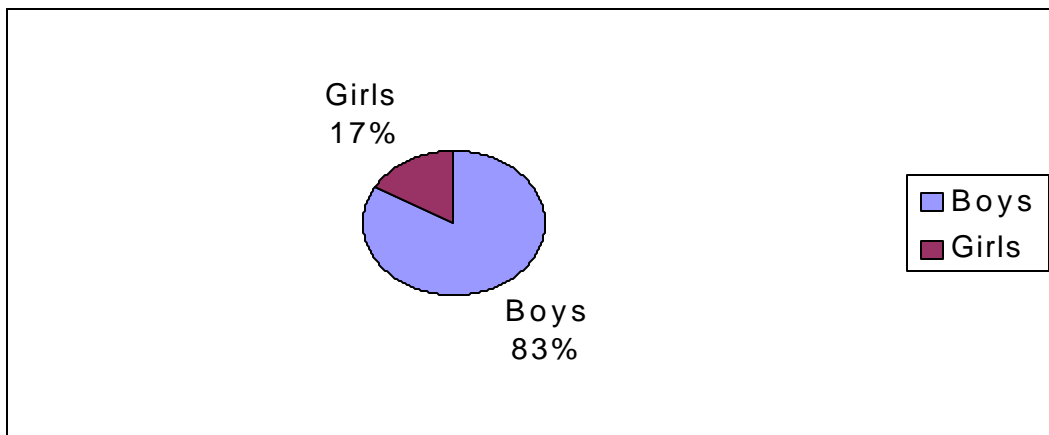
2.3.2 Overview of the data: text-, table or graphical form

Attention will be given to data gathering information that was done through triangulation. The purpose of the helping aids (attached as Annexures 3-5) was to assess the experiences, feeling and behaviour of the child-respondent.

2.3.2.1 Details of the children as respondents

For the purpose of this discussion the term child or children instead of children as respondents will be used. The researcher will not be using identifying details due to confidentiality. The details of the child will centre on their sex, age and culture that they come from. The researcher felt that this information is necessary because it gives an understanding of the developmental phase of the child, if it is a girl or a boy and very importantly the background of the child.

Figure 3: Sex of the respondents



During the research study more boys (83%) than girls (17%) were referred to the organisation from the educators. The criteria were that both sexes could be referred.

The home situation is as follows:

CAUSES OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ACCORDING TO THE CHILDREN AS RESPONDENTS

For the middle-childhood child, especially a boy, sees his father as his role model and a girl would see her mother as her role model. Considering the most important person in most of their lives is their mother and in two cases their granny's. This gives the impression that in families where violence is prevalent there is a shift in role models for boys and the role model would depend largely on who the support system is in times of violence.

According to De Witt & Booyesen (1995:17) and Read (2002:36) the family is the source of individual security, identity and a feeling of belonging for each family member and family relationships contribute to the child's feelings of security. In view of the above feedback of how the participants view their families and what they have been exposed to the researcher would like to agree with Zimmerman & Thayer (2003:39) where there is a loss of family togetherness there is a loss of security.

During the semi-structured interviews it was clear that domestic violence was prevalent and that the participants grew up in violence this ties in directly with what Boikanyo & Donnell (1997:98) says that violence in the home is the breeding-ground of violence in society. They go on by stating that violence within the wider society is related to experiences of violence in childhood and the family. It is clear now that the aggressive and violent behaviour that is being displayed at school are related to the way in which they were socialised. This however from a Gestalt perspective throws out the balance of the child and the family.

During the semi-structured interview the researcher made use of a therapeutic tool that is often used in Gestalt therapy, namely the empty chair technique where aggression could be expressed due to domestic violence. This according to Schoeman (2001:95) is often used to role-play a conflict or aggression for the

purpose of this research between people due to domestic violence. The child can sit in one chair and play his part, sitting in the other chair, the child can play out a projection of what the other person is saying or doing in response. Similarly, the child can sit in one chair and discuss the pros of making a decision and then argue the cons of the decision while sitting in the opposite chair. This technique worked very good, for assessment purposes with the respondents where the perpetrator of violence was put in one chair and played the character of a doll and the participants good speak to them and say what they felt and the other way around. The researcher found that the experience allowed them to speak about their feelings and, although not necessarily for the purpose of this research, to get rid of some of their frustrations. Other Feedback were as follows:

- Some of them started out feeling really uncomfortable but when they got use to the technique they said what was on their minds.
- They could speak to the perpetrators about the violence in the house
- They spoke about how it made them feel and that they wanted
- They spoke of what they wanted to happen
- They spoke about how the perpetrator should change
- They spoke about how they could also change
- Some also put other perpetrators in the chair like friends who bullied them

Figure 4: Naming the perpetrator of domestic violence

Respondents	Who is the perpetrator of domestic violence?
2	Father
2	Maternal uncle living with them
1	Both mother and father
1	Borders in the house

It was clear that the above exercise allowed them the opportunity to speak about their home situation. Other had other unfinished business that was brought to the here and now like bullying or violence that existed in the community. Some other relevant information that came out was the following:

Alcohol and drugs - In all the semi-structured interviews the perpetrator was either using alcohol or drugs or both. Some of the things that they wanted to change were for the substance abuse to stop. The respondents felt that if parents could stop drinking then things would be better. This ties in with what Brinegar (1992:27) says that a parent is like two different people, with and without the effects alcohol and drugs. Sober, the parent is gentle and kind; intoxicated, he may become aggressively punitive and cruel. This was exactly the response of the child-respondents that they lose their balance when this occurs. Substance abuse escalates a person's loss of control and diminishes the ability to think rationally.

Stress – The feedback during the sessions was that unemployment, financial problems, overcrowded houses, single parent families and substance abuse all contributed to stress in the families where domestic violence is present.

Figure 5: Living arrangements

Living with nuclear family but also have family living in the yard	Living with maternal granny where other families are also present	Living with two more families in one house	Living with single parent where other families or friends are also living
1	2	1	2

From the above living arrangements it is evident that none of them are currently exposed to the living arrangements of a nuclear family where only the biological mother, the biological father and siblings resides, except for the one respondent.

For those living with the nuclear family and having other families living in the yard, there always seem to be some interference from other family members and this often leads to domestic violence. For those living with maternal granny and where other families are also present, the domestic violence seems to be coming from the other families. For the one respondent living with two or more families, the conflict or domestic violence is often in his own family and interference's from the other family.

For the two respondents who live with single parents where other families or friends are also present, the domestic violence seem to start from other families.

In 1 or 2 of these families there is only one breadwinner who has the responsibility to provide food and other basic needs for the families. This is often why the basic needs of these children are not met. All of them had nothing to eat for the day. Their last meal was for three respondents the day before, for one the night before and two of them the previous afternoon.

Life cycle – It was clear that the level of functioning of the child- respondents were very low and when they were asked how long their parents were married, they did not know. Very interesting was that 50% came from single parent homes and although the other 50% came from families where both parents were present, they were still living with extended families. No one came from a home where only the respondent and the nuclear family were living. The living arrangements for most of them were very chaotic, there were lots and lots of other people, also living in the same house. In one incident the respondent was saying that there are 27 people living in the two-bedroom house. There were people sleeping in the toilet and under the kitchen table. None of the respondents had their own rooms and their own bed; they are all sharing a bed with someone. This however impacted on privacy, that becomes important for the middle-childhood child, who is suppose to be moving towards independence.

According to Brendtro & Du Toit (2005:15) child rearing customs differ based on cultural values, but the basic needs of children have always been the same. Philosopher Mortimer Adler observed that not all values are relative, for absolute values are tied to

universal needs. By this standard, the Circle of Courage is universal; for it is grounded in what Maslow called growth needs. When these needs are unmet, children cannot develop their full potential, and they display a host of pain-based behaviours. Brendtro & Du Toit (2005:14) states it simply: When growth needs are met, children have positive outcomes. When growth needs are frustrated, youth show problems. This was evident in the research where basic needs were not met and the children displayed aggressive and violent behaviour.

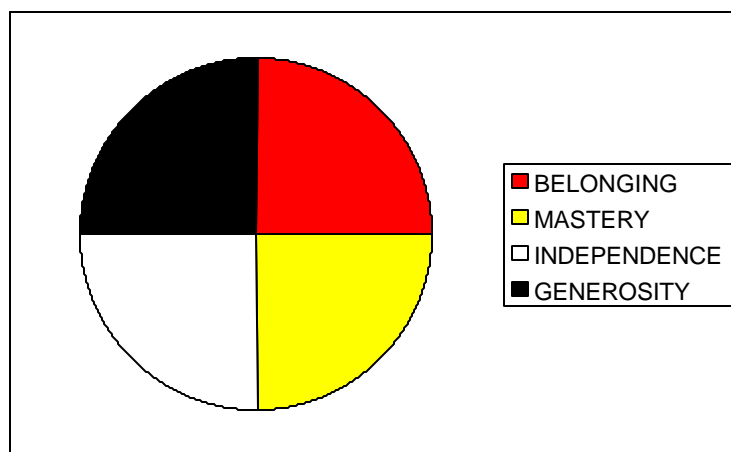
The following were things that the respondents shared in the house:

Figure 6: Things that the respondents share

Shared a room	Shared a bed	Shared clothes
All of them	All of them	All of them

They had very little things that belong to them, in fact they felt that they did not belong. Brendtro & Du Toit (2005:23) states that children connect with adults who meet there basic needs and resist those who obstruct their needs. But deprivation damages social bonds. These children have no sense of belonging if one look at the circle of courage as explained by Brendtro & Du Toit (2005:47-50).

Figure 7: Integrating Circle of Courage



- **Belonging Attachment**

They explain that an array of evidence shows that humans possess a fundamental need to belong. This is fulfilled by frequent positive interactions with at least a few persons who share mutual concerns. Belonging creates positive emotions, particularly pride; rejection produces shame, among the most painful social emotions humans can experience.

- **Mastery – Developing Achievement**

They say that a central motivation behind much human behaviour is the quest to become competent. Children can acquire a mass of knowledge, including an entire language code, without formal instruction. The talents of young persons can only crystallise with the support of adult mentors or more skilful peers. This includes developing the necessary skills.

- **Independence – Developing Autonomy**

All children desire to control their lives and influence events in their social world. Some act as pilots, setting the course toward personal goals. Others are more like robots who react automatically to events which surround them. Here the term internal and external locus of control can also be used to describe persons who feel in charge of their lives and those who feel they are pawns to others.

- **Generosity – Developing Altruism**

Humans function best when they are part of a community of mutual social support. As they fulfil obligations to others, they discover that they are valued and esteemed.

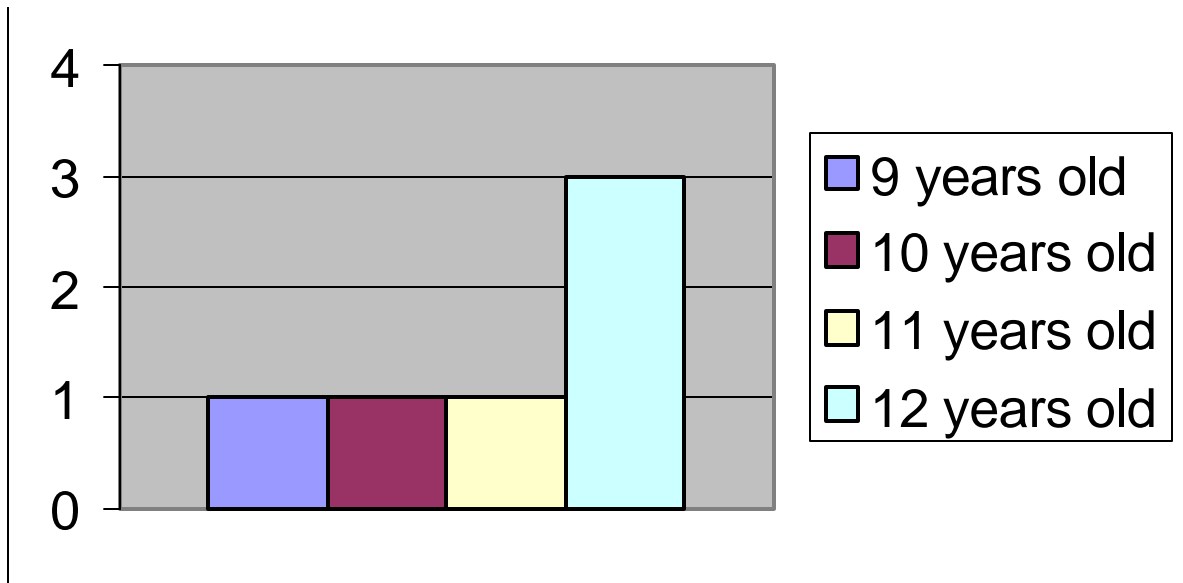
Brendtro & Du Toit also states that Kurt Hahn, founder of Outward Bound, noted that many modern youth suffer from the “misery of unimportance” and long to be used in some demanding cause. Giving to others develops higher levels of moral development and provides children a sense of purpose.

The circle of courage is important to understand where the respondents have broken down in their circle. Due to the home circumstances and the over crowding they do not have a sense of belonging and have broken down in the core part of the circle because no

other part of the circle can develop is the basis of the circle has not been formed.

In figure 6 the ages of the respondents are set out. Although some of the children came from one class there is still a difference in age.

Figure 8: Age category of the respondents



The children were selected in terms of displaying aggressive and violence behaviour in the classroom and who was exposed to domestic violence at home. The grade educators send them, to the organisation, they came from three classes: grade 3, grade 5 and grade 6 class.

Lack of parenting – In the interviews the respondents were not familiar with the education level of their parents. In some of the cases where they knew the information it was a very low primary school level. With the result no one really assist with academic stimulation at home and parents often do not have insight in how to discipline and end up hitting the children.

Milieu disabled families and culture – The cultures of the less privilege, poor families and milieu-disabled families have more or less same cultural backgrounds.

This was experience where violence existed. Where there is poverty and poor families

violence seemed to pop in as well. Violence is associated with the milieu disabled family and the middle-childhood child being academically delayed is thus due to the child coming to school already being disadvantaged due to the lack of stimulation at home. The child is then assessed by an academic system that does not meet the needs of the child. This causes the child to be isolated in class because he/she do not fulfil the requirements of assessment and the child act out. This behaviour that the child displays is seen as aggressive and violent behaviour and in fact it is the child's plea for assistance. The child is then disciplined via corporal punishment and the cycle of violence perpetuate.

Violence in the community - The respondents expressed lots of shootings, fighting, stabbing in the community, which is related to gang violence and more often amongst neighbours. Literature (<http://www.scottzman.com/Missour>) states that problems caused by family violence, crime and broken families hurt every person, family and community. Further information that was gathered through the semi-structured interviews and play therapy techniques, focussing on the developmental phases of middle-childhood, as highlighted in chapter two, will now be discussed.

2.3.2.2 The total development of the child in the middle-childhood development phase

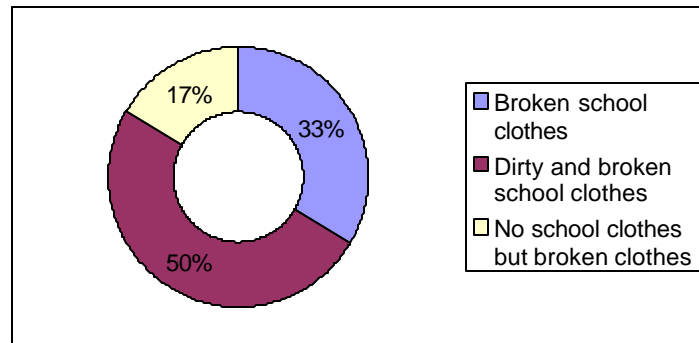
The total development of the child in the middle-childhood phase can be divided in seven different sub-areas. They are physical-, psychological-, emotional-, social-, development of self-image and religious and moral development.

Physical development

During the middle-childhood phase the growth is slower than the pre-school phase and even the adolescent phase (Shaffer, 1999:46; Sharma, Cross and Vennis, 2000:117). The physical development also stabilises in this phase as preparation for adulthood. This was evident in the research where the children have physical developed in terms of size. In the girl as respondent, for example, she has developed breasts and her body has taken the form of an adult. Physical appearance is important for the middle-childhood child comparing himself to his peers. With the research it was found that all the respondents that was interviewed were wearing broken clothes or dirty stained clothes. They were definitely not well taken care of.

The following could give an indication of the physical appearance of the children as respondents

Figure 9: Physical appearance



To add to figure 3 all of looked physically neglected because 17% had no school clothes but broken clothes, 33% had broken school clothes on and 50% and broken school clothes on and this to a large extend influenced the way in which they presented themselves. Physical appearance and strengths is for the child in the middle-childhood phase very important and if this is lacking can lead to the child not accepting himself and feelings of self worth is very low. His peer group can further more also reject him according to Ladd, Buhs & Tropp (2002:397) and Smith, Cowie & Bladers (1998:121). Physical outside appearance is directly related to unmet growth needs that ties in with pain-based behaviour according to Brendtro & Du Toit (2005:14).. Further information will now be discussed:

Type of violence that they are exposed to is the following:

Figure 10: The type of violence that they are exposed to

Physical abuse	Verbal abuse	Emotional abuse	Neglect
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hit with the belt, cane, shoe, hand, spoon, axe; • Kicked • Smacked • Pinched • Thrown against the wall 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shouted at • Screamed at • Sworn at • Name calling • Insulting them • Labelling them: naughty 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ignored • Isolated • Favouring other sibling over them • Forcing them do unnecessary chores • Forcing them into adult roles • Blackmailing • Bribing them to do something against their will 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of love, closeness, affection • Not provided with food • Not cared for, dirty, torn and stained school clothes • Not allowing them opportunity to play • Often kept from school

If one should look at the type of child abuse, it seemed that all the respondents are exposed to all types of abuse except sexual abuse.

All of the respondents have experienced all the above categories of abuse and was very sad and relieved to be speaking about the abuse. They had the expectation that something will be done about their situation at home. According to the South African Constitution and various other protocols on child abuse and neglect all children have the right to basic needs: shelter, clothing, food, education and medical care. Children also

need to be free from all types of abuse and this legislation is there to protect all children against any form of abuse. From the research of Brendtro & Du Toit (2005:47) it seemed that the sense of belonging and the need to mastery is being neglected. The above case studies will be dealt with and referred to the appropriate organisations for support.

Power – During the interviews it came out that the perpetrators of violence have lots of power of the respondents and even the other non-perpetrator parent. The power was mostly about the abuse that occurs at home and that the perpetrator is older, bigger and physically stronger than the child. These powerful perpetrators made the respondents feel powerless. Brinegar (1992:33) states that a child who feels powerless will set up power struggles with powerful behaviour. This made sense why the participants are displaying aggressive and violent behaviour.

The thoughts existed of the perpetrator of violence being the stronger person and that he provides for them and is “my father or my mother”. So doing, is the child’s ability to look past the outside appearance and the inner strengths can be determined. During the role plays for example where the perpetrator of domestic violence was put in the empty chair, the child could speak to him about his frustrations. The response was “*ek is nog altyd life vir my pa, as hy my net ophou wil slaan*” implying that he still loves the perpetrator and just wants the abuse to stop. It is clear from the research that even though the developmental phases could be separated, it cannot really be separated. From the physical appearance and the forms of violence there is a great impact on the other developmental phases.

- **Life for the middle-childhood child is often:**
 - Chaos- The feedback was that they never know what to expect at home and this ties in directly with the research
 - Fear and tension – They grow up with the daily anger and violence and often feels afraid and insecure
 - Danger – Some of the fighting put them at risk of losing their own lives

- Confusion – They often do not know what to do due to receiving mixed messages that their father love them, yet they hit them.
- Isolation – They often do not see other family members for months or even years because of the perpetrator isolating them.
- Hopeless – They are often told that they are “no good, good for nothing, stupid, a burden, never should have had you” and this is making them feel hopeless
- Love/hate relationship – They often still love the perpetrator of violence especially if it is a family member.

These children often speak of running away because things are not “nice” at home. They often as is the case display violent and aggressive behaviour. If there is no support at home, if the parents are engaging in violence as the answer to their problems a logical choice for them is to avoid school or to leave.

The respondents did not know that as children they have rights, or what the rights were. They have been speaking to educators about the home circumstances and it appears that nothing was done. One respondent’s parents were called in and the educator spoke to the parents about the need for the abuse to stop. When he went home, he was abused again for taking at school. He never informed his educator about anything again after that incident.

Psychological development

In the semi-structured interviews learners were asked how old they were and when there birthdays were. Only two of them knew when it was their birthday, the other four did not even have an idea of what month their birthday is in. This was sad to witness because a birthday is suppose to be a very special day for a person, this gave the researcher, an indication that there is no learning taking place. There are definitely barriers and it also gave an indication of the type of exposure conducive to learning is taking place from the parents at home.

The research findings of Brendtro & Du Toit (2005:47) tie in directly with the need for individual autonomy that controls personal goal achievement. With regard to the child in the middle-childhood developmental phase, this development should have taken place already.

The respondents were given the choice of completing the written incomplete sentences questionnaire, all of them chose for the researcher to complete it for them. The only written work they had to do was write their name on the drawing sheet. From the way the names were written it could clearly be seen that they struggle to write, some even wrote their name wrong. The drawings that they made during the activity of drawing a house and the family members also gave some insight into their drawings skills and cognitive development. (see Annexure 4.) Some of them initially said that they cannot draw but when hearing that they can make any symbol to describe the drawing made it easier for them. A sense of relieve was picked up by there non-verbal responses such as a frown turning into a smile and even moving more back into their chair instead of sitting up straight and forward.

Becoming independent from parents progresses, peer relationships grows these are important developmental tasks for the middle-childhood child. With the research it was picked up that at home the respondents are definitely becoming more independent from parents, not only because of interest in peers but due to the domestic violence they have cut themselves off from either one or the other parent. For example, when asked who provides for them: *“Ek sorg vir myself, ek kry by die neighbours, my vriend het vir my gegee”*. For the children to cut themselves off from their parents does not really show that they have the ability to think a situation through in terms of thinking about the consequences of cutting themselves off from their parents for example. Although there violent upbringing should be considered and the fact that they have to physically think of survival.

Cognitive development relates to egocentric attitude. Satisfaction and meeting cognitive needs reduces egocentric behaviour. According to Sharma et al. (2000:118-119) cognitive and verbal skills is definitely visible in this phase.

Emotional development

The literature study states that there are different stimuli leading to emotions and although the nature of emotional expression is verbal, their expression was non-verbal. The child in the middle-childhood phase according to Ebersohn en Eloff (2003:21) should have the ability to care, have a passion for, wisdom, adjustment, acknowledgement of feelings and supportive ability. According to Read (2002:33) emotions are more controlled. With the research it was clear that no matter how difficult it is for the child to cope with the violence at home, they become skilled and aware of emotional expression and those emotional expressions are related to different situation and experiences of violence. There was some difficulty initially to talk about emotions but generally they could say: “*Ek hou nie daarvan as hulle baklei nie*” that they do not like the fighting, hitting and they could say why they have certain family members outside the house in their drawing.

Their response were as follows:

Figure 11: Feedback of drawing their house that reflects where they have placed family members.

Play techniques: Drawings (Used for assessment)

Person they have put outside the house	Reason why the person was put outside: It was because
Father	he fights with me and my mother
My maternal uncle	he killed a man
Father	he doesn't want to work, and fights with us all the time
Mother and Father	they are drunk all the time, and then they hit, kick and swear at me all the time
My mothers friend and her husband who lives with us	when they are drunk, they fight and swear at us.
Father	he forces me to wash dead bodies with him. He also hit, kicks, swear at me all the time. My mom says I must throw me under a car then I will be rid of him.

This exercise also allowed the respondents to speak about their feelings towards family members and this gave an understanding as to why negative feelings about certain family members and positive about other family members.

The respondents had the ability to be empathic when violence occurs to family members like their mother or siblings: "*Ek kry my ma jammer juffrou*". Louw et al. (1998:352) states that the middle-childhood child develops the ability to respond empathically. They begin to understand how their circumstances influence their behaviour. From the age of six they begin to control their emotions, how to hide it and how to suppress it. More than one emotion could be experienced at the same time due to the development of the brain thinking and emotions could be addressed at the same time. If these emotions are not addressed it will be carried through as unfinished business and will affect the child's functioning. The family is seen as setting the most important foundation in the life of every person. Cohan & Ronem (1999:48) is of the opinion that the greatest impact on the spiritual well being and development is the family relationship and Read (2002:36) adds that this contributes to security and conflict and that the two compliment one another because this is where the basic patterns are structured. If this is lacking, in Gestalt it causes a disturbance in the family balance and leads to fragmentation in the family unit. This however creates the need for recognition and belonging in family members. This ties directly in with the circle of courage that emphasised the importance of belonging for every human being and if this is lacking fragmentation of the other areas in the child's life will occur. This leads to the need for mastery and control. The child start the search for his own identity and begin to make his own statement in order to define his identity.

The child's lack of ability to name emotions, experiences and limited cognitive abilities can lead to post traumatic stress with long-term effects for normal development. (Cohen & Ronem, 1999:51). Emotional problems manifest in children in the form of change in behaviour (Read, 2002:46). The decrease in emotional energy is not enough for the child to maintain relationships and to stay away from home for long periods (Read, 2002:214). This however leads to contact boundaries such as deflection where awareness of reality

should be the focus to reinforce the sense of importance for the self. This aggressive energy could be dealt with through making a projection that could assist the child in ventilating emotions and to regain control over himself. Awareness levels will increase, less fragmented functioning and there will be a move towards self-support. Emotions that will feature will be that of denial, rage, destructive, angry, helplessness, angry at the entire world, problems with authority, panic and frustrations (Fisleer, 1999:241).

The types of behaviour due to the above anger is suppressing or turning the anger towards himself, sublimation – wants to play war games, replacement – wants to hit others, replacement for ventilation like gangs, projections – it is not my fault, “so what?” and symbolic ventilation – dreams, nightmares, fantasies (Whiteman, 2001:69, Ferreira & Read, 2002:249). The child will have to ventilate his feelings. If this is being denied will result in suppressing anger and will lead to feelings of being trapped and guilt feelings. The child due to his development phase will want to support his parent but this is add to the “adult-child” with sleep disturbances, passive and fearful with negative forms of behaviour blaming himself. The most important aim of Gestalt is acceptance of emotions to regains self- confidence and awareness that will lead to normal functioning of the developmental phase and will get him involve in the family where self support would be empowered, (Whiteman, 2001:110).

Motivation

Within the middle-childhood development phase there should be an eagerness to learn, but the children in the study had no motivation in life. The one said: “*Juffrou , my ma se ek moet my onder ‘n kar gooi dan is ek ontslae van my pa wat my so slaan*”. There is very little to look forward to for some of these children. The realisation of societal expectations is there but in terms of what they have been labelled for “learner with aggressive and violent behaviour”. Very often they live up to the label because that is what everyone identifies then with.

The experiences of emotions as well as the ventilation thereof in specific circumstances, for example at home, is important aspects of the middle-childhood child’s emotional

development Denham, van Salisch, Olotohof, Kachanoff & Caerly (2002:313) as well as De Klerk & Le Roux (2003:23) is of the opinion that these children do not openly express emotions and that they allow their peer group to decide on emotions for them. During the empirical study it was experienced that the respondents instead of at but will in the peers group express negative emotions and behaviour. They will admit positive and pleasant emotions and deny what happens at home, which is mostly negative. The need to belong to the peer group according to Derham et al. (2003:313) can be a possible reason and that the child would rather avoid certain emotions instead of being confronted with the negative consequences. The possibility for the researcher is that they besides the above that they also do not have self-awareness and the ability to integrate. The Gestalt approach in play therapy would be helpful in assisting the help to move towards awareness.

According to Blom (2002:245) the child in the middle-childhood phase wants to help others. The respondents where asked through the incomplete sentences how they respond if they get angry. What were the feelings, emotions and thinking like?

Figure 12: Responding to emotions.

Respondents	Emotions	Unsure	Cry, Shout, Fight	Isolate	Ignore	Ask someone to help
1	Angry		Shout, scream	Sometimes	No	Sometimes
2	Angry		Fight back	No	No	Sometimes
3	Angry		Scream and cry	Sometimes	No	Sometimes
4	Angry	Sometimes	Fight Back	No	No	Sometimes
5	Angry		Cry and fight back	No	No	Sometimes
6	Angry		Cry and fight back	No	No	Sometimes

The child with supportive temperament would avoid conflict and would prefer to isolate itself. The above is clearly an indication of children with no supportive temperament and how they would respond to anger. It is clear that the majority would not isolate and some would sometimes consider isolating themselves. Awareness of alternative behaviours could be done through Gestalt play therapy as means to support these children.

Social development

Through the semi-structured interviews, when the drawing of the house took place the family structure was shared and this made it possible for compiling a genogram, it was

clear that the family do not play an important role in lives of the children. Three of them have asked to be removed from their homes. The others just want the violence to stop. Even where there is older sibling there are abuse from the siblings. There is no relationship between the siblings, there is lots of fighting. Whereas research shows that within this developmental phase, that the relationship between siblings often teaches loyalties, helpfulness and competition. Their ability to share should develop in this phase (Schoeman 2001:16; Smith 1981:68). However in speaking to the educators around referrals for the pilot study it came out that there is lots of theft from one another, that centred on taking of stationary, which could have been shared amongst them. Peer group is the most developmental task for the middle-child child because this is where meaningful relationships with friends are formed, also known as the gang phase. This came out very strongly within the research that within a group they understand one another and because they know each other's backgrounds, it is easier to share things.

Figure 13 : Feedback on how they view their peers

Children as Respondents	Know the background of peers or peer group they belong to	Emotions towards them
1	Yes	Felt sorry for them, showed empathy
2	Yes	Thought of ways for peers to handle certain things
3	Yes	Felt sorry for them
4	Yes	Would assist where he can. Even if it means helping to fight
5	Yes	Would assist, give support
6	Yes	Felt sorry for them

It was interesting to note that because they knew the background of their peers or peer group it made it easier to show emotional support even though the peers would not speak of their negative experiences, that is similar to Gestalt deflection, and home situations.

Peer groups play an important role because many of them had their mom as role model. Their peers become their role model. They also have no one to take care of them after school and only hang out with friends of their own age or sometimes-older friends. Most of them live close to one another and have the same friends at school and at home. They were asked: "If they should have a problem who would be the first one that they would tell, be..."

Figure 14 : The first person to tell if they should have a problem

Respondents	The first person to tell if they had a problem
1	Friend
2	Friend
3	Friend
4	Friend
5	Friend
6	Friend

The above emphasized and confirmed the importance of peer group as support system even in times of a crisis they would go to a friend instead of a family member. Although a family is seen as support systems, for them it was easier to talk to children their own age. Next to tell a friend, would be the non-violent parent, a sibling or even going to the mosque. Peer support seems to be very important and to a large extend decisions are influenced by peer groups. In answering how they made decisions they respond:

Figure 15: Decision Making

Respondents	I take my own decisions
1	Sometimes I hear what my friends have to say
2	My friends would influence my decisions
3	I will first hear what my friends have to say
4	Sometimes
5	First hear what my friends say
6	I first want to hear what my friends have to say

The above confirms that peers influence decisions and that they would want to hear what the friends say first, before making their decision. This however is an indication of limited self-confidence where they cannot make their own decisions. According to Bloem (2003:83) the child will respond as a classic introvert. It is possible that the child would in unknown situations would react in silence and withdrawn, in known situations through a form of behavior would be assertive and would communicate. This will reflect his choice. It is therefore important to look at the child in a holistic way. It is also important to create awareness around decision-making and taking ownership of the related emotions that goes with it. This needs to move over to a cognitive level where decision-making and peer pressure should be discussed.

At school most of them enjoy there educators, but did not like the “caning” that is taking place. Although corporal punishment have been abolished by the W.C.E.D (Western Cape Education Department, 2001:3), it appears that it is still alive in many schools. This however reinforces violence at schools.

Besides the violence in the house all of them have witnessed some kind of violence in the community. One of the incomplete sentences question was: “If I had a million

Rand, I would..." All of them completed by saying that they will buy a house out of the area away from the violence.

Development of self-image

The "Me tree" as helping aid was used for them to identify and assess strengths and weaknesses. This was a difficult task for all of them they off with what other people said about them and this was mainly how they needed to change. There were so many negative things contradicting what Barnette (1996:83) says that as a child grows, he develops a self-image: he has feelings about himself and how lovable he thinks he is. This also depends a great deal on the way his parents treat him. Brinegar (1999:69) agrees that feedback from the parent is important for the development of a positive self-image. Negative feedback from parents could impact negatively on the child and would result in a low self-image.

The child's physical appearance also depends on how he perceives himself. As already stated that the way in which all of them were dressed gives an indication that they are not taken care of. This impacts on a child in a negative way and influences his socialization. Physical development how big or small they are could put them at risk and it came out that their violent behavior allows them to be the bullies instead of being bullied.

All children want to be accepted and want to belong. In fact all human beings have the need to be accepted and to belong. Brendtro & Du Toit (2005:43) compares the circle of courage with research that was done of self-worth.

Figure16: Comparing the Circle of Courage with Research on Self Worth

The Circle of Courage	Research on Self Worth
Belonging is developed through opportunities to build trusting bonds of human attachment.	Significance “I am important to someone.”
Mastery requires opportunities to creatively solve problems and meet goals for achievement.	Competence “I am able to solve problems.”
Independence is fostered by opportunities to grow in responsibility and autonomy	Power “I am in charge of my life.”
Generosity is shown through opportunities to show concern in acts of kindness and altruism	Virtue “I am considerate to others.”

The circle of courage has also been described as the resilience code because it translate strength-building research into a concise and understandable format. This resilience code is more than a metaphor; it describes universal human growth needs. The key landmarks on the journey to resilient outcomes are belonging, master, independence and generosity. If children do not feel that sense of belonging, the circle is fragmented and it will then affect balance and lead to contact boundaries.

Other issues that these children are faced with are that they have also accepted that if not both parents, that one parent is unemployed. They have lived in circumstances where there is no food and little clothes and have accepted that things will never change for the “better” for that things can only get worst. The soci-economic status of the community that they live in have been part of them and some of them have wished for change in the incomplete sentences that was used during the semi-structured interviews, whereas others don’t see anything wrong with the community.

Due to the lack of academic stimulation **and** support and involvement at home from the parents most of them are academically poor and are under-achievers. They do not know their birthdays, or how to spell their names. General knowledge is lacking and this is the

child who does not know what is happening in class. The only way they get attention is by acting out in class. Even this is reinforced by more negative behavior where they are canned and this sadly reinforces the cycle of violence.

In speaking to the children about the things that they enjoy, the feedback was when they are involved by educator or when they are asked to assist the educator, because there is a positive verbal reward like “thank you”. This however very seldom happens to them and to think that they are looking forward to it.

Religious, moral development

During the semi-structured interview, the children were asked if they knew what religion that they belong to. All of them knew but very little practiced going to church or going to mosque. From those who attended church or mosque was with family members and not with their parents. Smith (1981:76) states that the religious development is apparent in the first signs of personal religious realization and that parents play an important role in the development of religion. From the feedback from the children one boy enjoy going to the mosque and would go there when things are going to hectic at home.

The middle-childhood child in this phase as already said is less egocentric and there is more moral flexibility. They make their own social rules and change it with permission of those involved. Piaget (in Louw et al. 1998:379) is of the opinion that cognitive and social development play a role in the understanding other perspectives and even to be consider other perspectives.

The following was asked to get an understanding if they can distinguish between right and wrong: “It is necessary for rules in our house to change”

Figure 17: General understanding of moral development

Respondents	Yes - No	Moral understanding of change
1	Yes	Yes
2	Yes	Yes
3	Yes	Yes
4	Yes	Yes
5	Yes	Yes
6	Yes	Yes

It appears that the respondents have the ability to distinguish between right and wrong and have an understanding of change. Change for all of them was for the domestic violence to stop, and they have an understanding that, because it is wrong and that is why they want it to stop.

DECISION MAKING

Due to the violence inside the house they felt that they did not want to live there anymore. They responded in the following way

They were asked, “If I had a choice of where I want to live, it would be.”

- By my granny
- By my maternal aunt
- By my mother alone
- By my mother alone
- In a children’s home
- Anywhere, but not at home

2.4 Findings: For assessment purposes

The findings of **the research process** as stated in figure 2 is the last phase of this process and will be reflected in the following diagrams in **2.4.1 and 2.4.2.**

2.4.1 A Compact overview of the play forms and techniques that were used for assessment purposes and the response of the children

Play forms and techniques	Aim	Objective	Respondent Nr.	Response
1. PLAY FORMS: Biblio-play – draw your house with your family PLAY TECHNIQUES – Schoeman's Model	1.1 The child to draw his house with his family;	1.1.1 This activity gives a sense of what the family looks like;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2, 4 • 1, 3 • 5 • 6 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Living with maternal granny • Living with single parent • Living with extended family • Living with nuclear family and extended family
		1.1.2 Assess how big the house is;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1, 2, 3, 5 • 4, 6 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two bedroom house • One bedroom house
		1.1.3 Assess how big the family is;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1, 2, 4 • 3, 5, 6 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7 members including parents • 6 members including parents
		1.1.4 Ages of parents, siblings (gives an indication if the child knew his own age and that of	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2, 4, 5, 6 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did not know their own birthdays

Play forms and techniques	Aim	Objective	Respondent Nr.	Response
		family members		And the age of other Family members
		1.5 Where did they sleep	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1, 3 • 1, 2, 4, 5 • 3 • 6 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knew their birthdays but not the age of family members • Shared bed with siblings • Shared a bed with parent • Shared a bed with granny
		1.6 Personal space for them	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no space for them; not only shared a bed but a cupboard and clothes
		1.7 How many people live in your house	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1, 2 • 3, 5 • 4 • 6 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9 people • 10 people • 5 people • 24 people

Play forms and techniques	Aim	Objective	Respondent Nr.	Response
	1.2 Place family members inside and could place some of them outside the house;	<p>1.1.8 Who is there support system</p> <p>1.1.9 An assessment of age appropriate drawings</p> <p>1.2.1 Why they chose to place some family members inside the house and why others were placed outside the house</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 • 2 • 3, 4 • 5, 6 • 1 • 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 • 1, 2, 3, 4 • 5, 6 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • maternal granny • maternal aunt • mother • friends • Had no problem with drawings • Said they could not draw and made “stok mannetjies” • Perpetrator of violence were placed outside the house, while others that they liked and cared for them were placed inside the house • They chose to place the perpetrator of

Play forms and techniques	Aim	Objective	Respondent Nr.	Response
				<p>violence inside the house because they still care for them</p>
	1.3 The child is asked to write his name at the back of the drawing	<p>1.2 Shared the situation around violence after sharing why they have placed family members where they were</p> <p>1.3.1 An assessment of writing skills when they had to write their name on the drawing</p> <p>1.3.2 An assessment of language abilities and the use of language that the child is exposed to could be made, assessed when there was dialogue</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 • 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 • 1 • 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They all shared who the perpetrator was and their feelings around him/her • Could write their name • Had to correct his name • All of them used an integration of Afrikaans and English to express themselves verbally

Play forms and techniques	Aim	Objective	Respondent Nr.	Response
2. PLAY FORM : Creative play – completing an activity called the “Me Tree” PLAY TECHNIQUE Schoeman’s Model	2.1 For the child to identify his strengths and weaknesses through the drawing and colouring of the tree	2.1.1 To assess if the child could identify his own strengths and weaknesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1,2,3,4,5,6 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Had difficulty in identifying strengths, they could think of one or two weaknesses
		2.1.2 Assess thinking ability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1,2,3,4,5,6 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Had difficulty in brainstorming about situations where they could bring out their strengths and weaknesses
	2.2 Assess difficulty in writing	2.2.1 Assess self-esteem (how they felt about themselves)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1,2,3,4,5,6 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-esteem is leaning more to the negative side than feeling positive about themselves

Play forms and techniques	Aim	Objective	Respondent Nr.	Response
3. PLAY FORM: Biblio-play – incomplete sentence – questionnaire PLAY TECHNIQUE Schoeman's Model	3.1 The child is given an activity sheet to complete seven sentences to assess his thinking and feelings	3.1.1 Assess the child's dreams, "Today I wish I were...."	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 • 2 • 3 • 4 • 5 • 6 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • working • get a bicycle • be a big man • be a good child • love myself • had a car
		3.1.2 To assess time frames, "Last year this time ..."	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 • 2 • 3 • 4 • 5 • 6 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I was fighting • Played in class • He hit me • Lots of shootings • Was at another school • Went to the office for fighting
		3.1.3 To assess what their needs are, "If I had a million rand, I would ..."	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 • 2 • 3 • 4 • 5 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give to my mother for food and a house • Buy food, clothes and a house • Buy a house • Give it to mom to buy a house far from dad • Bank some and

Play forms and techniques	Aim	Objective	Respondent Nr.	Response
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 	buy a house <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buy a house close to the beach
		3.1.4 Assess their vision. "Someday I would like to ..."	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1, 2 • 3, 4 • 5 • 6 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher • Police Officer • Doctor • Security guard
		3.1.5 Assess what the child likes or loves, "I love..."	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 • 2 • 3 • 4 • 5 • 6 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A ball • Playing games • My mother because she works very hard • The mountain because that is where I want to be • My maternal family that I seldom see • My teacher who never asks me to do favours for her
		3.1.6 Assess what he likes about him/herself, "What I like about myself is... "	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 • 3 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The way I draw • Writing letters

Play forms and techniques	Aim	Objective	Respondent Nr.	Response
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 • 4 • 5 • 6 	<p>my friend</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That I am good at going to Mosque • My eyes • That I greet people • When I play soccer
		3.1.7 To assess who their support system is, “The most important person in my life is... because...”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 • 2 • 3 • 4 • 5 • 6 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Granny and my mother, they look after me • Mother, works for me • Mother, gives food and clothes • Mother, she don’t hit me • Granny, gives food and cares for me • Mother, see her every day
	3.2 Needed assistance in completing the writing side of the questionnaire	3.2.1 Assist in writing skills where needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All of them needed assistance in completing the written work, the researcher wrote on their behalf

Play forms and techniques	Aim	Objective	Respondent Nr.	Response
4. PLAY FORM : Dramatized play – Empty chair or hot seat PLAY TECHNIQUE – Empty chair technique	4.1 The child is asked to put the perpetrator of domestic violence in a chair (play techniques: empty chair was used)	4.1.1 Allows the opportunity for the child to name the perpetrator and speak to him/her directly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 • 2 • 3 • 4, 5, 6 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mother and father • maternal uncle • mothers friend and her husband • father
	4.2 Role plays were done where the child is asked to have a role-play with the perpetrator of domestic violence and the other way around	4.1.2 Allow opportunity for the child to ventilate about unfinished business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unfinished business centred around violence
		4.1.3 Allow the opportunity to say how the situation is like at home and how it made them feel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not nice, made them feel sad, scared, sometimes don't want to live there

2.4.2 Additional information that is suggested for assessment

THEME	AIM	OBJECTIVE	MEDIUM OF PLAY AND TECHNIQUE
GETTING TO KNOW ONE ANOTHER AND MORE ABOUT THE CHILD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish relationship Contact through dialogue and medium of play 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain the process of play therapy Talk about boundaries, expectations Talk about likes and dislikes/getting to know one another Gather more information by using mediums of play/assessment Draw your house with your family, draw those members you want inside the house and those you do not want inside put them outside the house – give reason for placements Blow bubbles and make wishes Draw a safe place Tasting different fruit flavoured sweets and name the flavour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creative play Use Schoeman's Model as technique

THEME	AIM	OBJECTIVE	MEDIUM OF PLAY AND TECHNIQUE
ENSURING EMOTIONS ARE IN TACT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relationship building Assessing if the child can identify different emotions Assessing if the child can express his emotions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building relationships Feedback on how he/she is Work with the here and now Dialogue around emotions Expressing emotions Assess if sensory activity is needed Have different feeling faces to assess if the child is familiar with faces and feeling words and can identify with the feelings Use story telling, painting feeling faces or puppets to bring out core feeling words Let the child identify the different feelings See if the child can relate his/her own feelings to those being expressed Linking what comes out in the here and now to emotional experiences Use positive reinforcement throughout 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Biblio-play Use Schoeman' model as technique

THEME	AIM	OBJECTIVE	MEDIUM OF PLAY AND TECHNIQUE
CONTACT WITH DIFFERENT FIELDS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To strengthen the contact with the different fields, utilising and integrating emotional experiences • Increasing self-actualisation through integration of experiences with the different fields 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building relationship if necessary • Feedback on how he/she is doing • Sensory activity if necessary/different things to smell • Work with the here and now • Projection using dough • Ownership of projection if possible through dialogue • Using techniques to ventilate/speak about projection if needed • Emotions in tact • Acknowledge, validate, empower if needed • Provide alternatives if needed • Self nurturing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creative play • Using techniques (Schoeman's model) to assist

THEME	AIM	OBJECTIVE	MEDIUM OF PLAY AND TECHNIQUE
ASSESSING UNFINISHED BUSINESS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bringing the child in contact with unfinished business that was brought about during previous session 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building relationship if necessary Feedback on how he/she is doing Sensory activity if necessary Work with the here and now Recap on previous session if needed Projection – puppets, blocks, other toys, (if it is a new projection from previous session otherwise work with what the child gives) Taking ownership of projection Emotions in tact Acknowledge, validate, empower if needed Brainstorm alternatives if needed Self nurturing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creative play Use technique (empty chair) to obtain information, or clarify information

THEME	AIM	OBJECTIVE	MEDIUM OF PLAY AND TECHNIQUE
FIELDS AS SUPPORT SYSTEMS FOR THE CHILD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify support systems in the child's life • Enable the child to know who and where to go in crisis • Enabling of external support to self support and self actualisation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Together assist the child in making a shopping bag with people in the child's life that can help, with contact numbers and how they can help. Use a variety of colour papers. • Brainstorm what is meant by helping (story telling), draw a rose bush • Ownership – who is the child's support or does the child provide support to anyone • List support systems in general and then in the child's life • Brainstorm when and how to use them • Self nurturing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biblio-play • Rose-bush as drawing and as technique (Oaklander's Model)

THEME	AIM	OBJECTIVE	MEDIUM OF PLAY AND TECHNIQUE
BUILDING ON STRENGTHS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouraging positive experiences and emotions • Strengths and weakness • Focus on self-esteem 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of emotions and sensory coping • Use story telling should the child need assistance, music and me tree will also assist • Together assist the child in making a shopping bag with people in the child's life that can help with contact numbers. Make use of a variety of colour paper to make it attractive for the child • Reinforce positive things that happened in the child's life, stories with positive endings • Use the outcome as a projection • Incorporate strengths and developmental areas • Brainstorm developmental areas • Positive reinforcement • If termination, drawing of likes and dislikes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biblio-play • Schoeman's model as techniques • Drawing of likes and dislikes if termination session • End off with self nurturing

3. CONCLUSION

The aim of the study namely to provide a theoretical perspective of domestic violence in middle-childhood from a Gestalt approach as well as the research methodology that was used for the empirical part of the research, was the focus of this chapter. In this chapter, the triangulation process is presented and an integrated method of gathering information was used where a literature study and semi-structured interviews was used with the child-respondents. These interviews are presented in this chapter with the child-respondents. Domestic violence and the influence it has on the child in the middle-childhood phase from a Gestalt perspective was explored, refined and described.

For assessment purposes different forms and techniques of play was used as helping aids during the semi-structured interviews. These play mediums were also used to create an atmosphere conducive for children to experience trust and to ultimately share their life experiences.

Play therapists that works with the child in the middle-childhood that is exposed to domestic violence should be equipped with substantial knowledge with regard to the child's experiences, abilities and needs. Play therapist should also be aware of the techniques for assessment purposes considering that the Gestalt approach moves towards that direction.

For this purpose, guidelines have been compiled that highlighted the different themes. These themes were then compared to the literature that was consulted. From the feedback it was clear that the respondents would benefit from more supportive play therapy sessions.