

**THE PERCEPTIONS OF PARENTS FROM DISADVANTAGED BACKGROUNDS OF  
THEIR ROLE IN PREPARING THEIR CHILDREN FOR SCHOOL**

**by**

**ROTHEA KEUN**

**Submitted in accordance with the requirements for the degree**

**MASTER OF EDUCATION WITH SPECIALISATION IN GUIDANCE AND  
COUNSELLING**

**at the**

**UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA**

**DR S KROG**

**NOVEMBER 2013**

## DECLARATION

**Student number: 49058479**

I declare that **THE PERCEPTIONS OF PARENTS FROM DISADVANTAGED BACKGROUNDS OF THEIR ROLE IN PREPARING THEIR CHILDREN FOR SCHOOL** is my own work and all the sources that I have used or quoted, have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.



14 April 2014

---

**SIGNATURE**

---

**DATE**

**(Rothea Keun)**

# ETHICS CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE



## Research Ethics Clearance Certificate

This is to certify that the application for ethical clearance submitted by

**R Keun [490 58479]**

for a M Ed Study

**The perceptions of parents from disadvantaged backgrounds of  
their role in preparing their children for school**

has met the ethical requirements as specified by the University of South Africa  
College of Education Research Ethics Committee. This certificate is valid for two  
years from the date of issue.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'CS le Roux'.

Prof CS le Roux  
CEDU REC (Chairperson)  
[lrouxcs@unisa.ac.za](mailto:lrouxcs@unisa.ac.za)

16 August 2013

Reference number: 2013 Aug/490 58479/CSLR

## SUMMARY

A child's early years are vital for development. The first few years of life is a period of rapid physical, mental, emotional, social and moral growth and development. This is a time when young children acquire concepts, skills and attitudes that lay the foundation for lifelong learning. During this time, parents are the primary influence on a child's development and learning. The more parents are involved with their children, the more positive learning and general life outcomes occur. Different factors have been linked to children's readiness to learn as they enter school. These include family characteristics such as the income level of the child's household, parent education, and family structure. Other experiences in the home and community also linked to children's readiness to learn include the quality of their relationships with parents, educational activities at home, and opportunities to participate in recreational or educational activities.

Research has shown that poverty in early childhood can prove to be a handicap for life. Studies have revealed that many children under the age of five, living in poverty, annually fail to reach their full cognitive and social potential and do not have the necessary knowledge, skills and attitude to engage effectively in formal schooling once entering Grade 1. In the light of this, parents are in a key position to establish a suitable environment and to provide experiences during the early childhood years, whereby their young children can grow and develop to reach their fullest potential.

This study is aimed to determine the way parents from disadvantaged backgrounds perceive their role, in their children's early development and preparation for school. A selected group of parents of preschool children from disadvantaged communities in an area northeast of Tshwane participated in focus group discussions. Through the information obtained from the study, crucial limitations and needs regarding parenting and school preparation were identified. Based on these findings, the necessity for an effective and helpful parental guidance and intervention programme for these disadvantaged communities were recognized. If parents become more knowledgeable about early childhood development and school readiness, by expanding and improving their parenting skills, they might largely improve the development and learning abilities of their preschool children. It is therefore recommended that this study forms the foundation in the development of an intervention programme, which addresses the needs of these parents and provides support to equip them in their roles, in preparing their preschool children for school.

**Key words:** Early childhood development, Preschool children, School preparation, School readiness, Disadvantaged communities, Parental influences, Environmental influences.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This study is dedicated to every parent in South –Africa, desperate to provide, struggling to survive...

*Anyone who has ever struggled with poverty knows how extremely expensive it is to be poor.*

*James A. Baldwin*

I wish to express my sincere gratitude and appreciation towards the following people who supported and contributed to the completion of this study:

- My precious husband, Andries and our children, Mikhe, Luca and Andru, for their unfailing love, their sacrifices, patience and support throughout.
- My family and friends for their constant prayers and encouragement.
- My supervisor, Dr Krog for her professional guidance and support.
- My fellow student- colleagues for their motivation and encouragement.
- All participants in the study who voluntarily gave their time.
- My Heavenly Father for vision and wings like an eagle!

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

*Page*

<b>CHAPTER 1</b>	<b>INTRODUCTORY ORIENTATION, STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM, AIM OF THE STUDY AND CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPTS .....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1	INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.2	BACKGROUND TO AND INCENTIVES FOR THIS RESEARCH .....	2
1.2.1	Initial awareness .....	2
1.2.2	Exploration of the problem.....	3
1.3	THE RESEARCH PROBLEM.....	6
1.4	THE AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION.....	6
1.4.1	General aim.....	6
1.4.2	Specific aims .....	7
1.5	THE NATURE, APPROACH AND METHOD OF THIS RESEARCH .....	7
1.5.1	The research approach and method.....	7
1.5.2	Data collections.....	7
1.5.3	Selection of participants .....	8
1.5.4	Analysis of data.....	9
1.6	CLARIFICATION OF TERMINOLOGY .....	9
1.6.1	Perception.....	9
1.6.2	School readiness.....	9
1.6.3	Disadvantaged backgrounds .....	9
1.6.4	Parental involvement.....	10
1.6.5	Low socio-economic status .....	10
1.7	STRUCTURE OF THE RESEARCH .....	10
1.8	DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY .....	11
1.9	CONCLUSION.....	11

<b>CHAPTER 2</b>	<b>PREPARING CHILDREN FOR SCHOOL</b>	<b>12</b>
2.1	INTRODUCTION	12
2.2	EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT	12
2.2.1	Neurological Development	14
2.2.2	Sensory Development	16
2.2.3	Physical and Motor Development	19
2.2.4	Cognitive Development	21
2.2.5	Speech and Language Development	22
2.2.6	Social and Emotional Development	24
2.2.7	Conclusion	26
2.3	EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT AND SCHOOL READINESS	26
2.4	THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES AND THEORIES OF CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT	27
2.4.1	Attachment Theory	28
2.4.2	Social Learning Theory	29
2.4.3	Socio Ecological Theory	31
2.5	PARENTAL INFLUENCE ON CHILDREN'S EARLY DEVELOPMENT, EDUCATION AND SCHOOL READINESS	32
2.5.1	Parental health	33
2.5.2	Parent's own level of education and attitude towards learning	34
2.5.3	Knowledge and experience regarding parenting	35
2.5.4	Family structure	36
2.5.5	Parenting styles and behaviour	37
2.6	ENVIRONMENTAL INFLUENCES ON CHILDREN'S EARLY DEVELOPMENT, EDUCATION AND SCHOOL READINESS	39
2.6.1	Poverty	39
2.6.2	Health and nutrition	41
2.6.3	Trauma and stress	42
2.6.4	Culture	43
2.6.5	Stimulation and resources	43
2.7	CONCLUSION	46

<b>CHAPTER 3</b>	<b>RESEARCH DESIGN</b>	<b>47</b>
3.1	INTRODUCTION	47
3.2	PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH	47
3.3	RESEARCH METHOD	47
3.4	RESEARCH DESIGN	48
3.4.1	Selection of the sample	48
3.4.2	Data collection	49
3.4.2.1	Focus group interviews	50
3.4.2.2	Observation during focus groups	51
3.4.3	Procedures	51
3.4.4	Data interpretation	52
3.5	ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS	53
3.5.1	Informed consent	53
3.5.2	Confidentiality of the group and individual participants	54
3.6	CONCLUSION	54
<b>CHAPTER 4</b>	<b>RESULTS OF THE EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION AND INTERPRETATION</b>	<b>55</b>
4.1	INTRODUCTION	55
4.2	DESCRIPTION OF PARTICIPANTS	55
4.3	FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS	57
4.3.1.	First focus group interview	58
4.3.2	Second focus group interview	65
4.3.3	Third focus groups interview	75
4.4	DISCUSSION OF THE RESEARCH RESULTS	83
4.4.1	How parents define and understand the concepts of <i>early childhood development</i> and <i>school readiness</i> and the significance thereof.	83
4.4.2	How parents from disadvantaged backgrounds perceive their role and contributions in their children's early development and preparation for school.	85



4.4.3	How parents from disadvantaged backgrounds describe and assess a secure, loving and nurturing environment.....	87
4.4.4	The extent to what parents realize the importance of nutrition, and basic health care .....	88
4.4.5	The extent to what parents recognize the value linguistic, motor and cognitive exposure and stimulation have on their children’s early development and school readiness .....	90
4.5	CONCLUSION .....	94
<b>CHAPTER 5 FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION .....</b>		<b>95</b>
5.1	INTRODUCTION.....	95
5.2	PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH .....	95
5.3	SUMMARY OF LITERATURE AND EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION .....	95
5.3.1	Findings from the literature.....	95
5.3.2	Findings from the empirical study .....	97
5.4	LIMITATIONS OF THIS STUDY .....	99
5.5	RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY .....	100
5.6	CONCLUSION .....	101
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY .....</b>		<b>103</b>

## LIST OF ADDENDUMS

Addendum A:	Developmental milestones chart: infants & toddlers .....	117
Addendum B:	Developmental milestones chart: pre-school .....	118
Addendum C:	Consent form .....	119
Addendum D:	Agreement to uphold confidentiality by participants in the focus group.....	121
Addendum E:	Interview sheet: semi-structured focus group .....	122
Addendum F:	Observation checklist: semi-structured focus group .....	124
Addendum G:	Transcriptions focus groups .....	127

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2.1	Synapse formations in the developing brain during sensitive periods of development .....	14
Figure 2.2	The five sensory systems structure .....	17
Figure 2.3	The hierarchical structure of the sensory systems.....	18
Figure 2.4	The Attachment Theory .....	29
Figure 2.5	The three-way reciprocal relationship of the Social Learning Theory....	30
Figure 2.6	An adapted illustrated model of a Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Theory.....	31
Figure 2.7	Average percentile rank on Peabody’s individual achievement test – Math score by age and income. . .....	44

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 2.1	Piaget’s Theory .....	22
Table 2.2	Parental styles and child outcomes. ....	38
Table 4.1	Demographic Information of Focus Group 1: participants 1-5.....	56
Table 4.2	Demographic Information of Focus Group 2: participants 6-13.....	56
Table 4.3	Demographic Information of Focus Group 3: participants 14-20.....	57

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTORY ORIENTATION, STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM, AIM OF THE STUDY AND CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPTS

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

Preparing children for school means much more than packing their schoolbags and assuring they get there on time. In fact, the task of helping children to succeed in school already begins before the day they are born. According to the World Health Organization (2009), early childhood is the most significant stage for overall development throughout a person's lifespan. Experiences in this early stage of life can largely determine the future health, education and economic participation of an individual.

Neurological and biological development during the first years of life is greatly influenced by an infant's environment. According to McCain, Mustard and Shanker (2007:13-19) every experience and sensory stimulus in an infant's environment contributes to brain development. In this regard McCain et al (2007:13) remarks:

*Children's early experience has far-reaching and solidifying effects on the development of their brain and behaviour. Diverse experiences affect the architecture i.e. of the brain, the expression of genes and the biochemistry and physiology of the human body - all of which mediate our cognitive, emotional and social behaviours.*

The parent is a child's primary caregiver and is also often referred to as "the child's first teacher". The parent is usually also the only consistent, continuous force in a child's life from birth to adulthood. Besides supplying nutrition, shelter, clothing, health care, and a safe environment, parents typically provide the child's first experiences with language, numeracy, social interaction, and problem solving, which help to build the child's foundation of skills and knowledge that he or she will need for school (Mendoza, Katz, Robertson & Rothenberg, 2003:11). Critical to a child's survival, growth and development is the quality of care and the way it is performed in terms of affection and emotional responses (Gerhardt, 2004:3-6).

Unfortunately, there are numerous factors, which influence this early parental care and involvement, which are so vital for the development of the child. One of the most significant factors seems to be socio-economic status. Annually more than 200 million children under the age of five, fail to reach their full cognitive and social potential (World Health Organisation, 2009). According to the Multi-dimensional Poverty Index, most of these children live in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, which are the two poorest regions in the world (Alkire, Roche & Seth, 2013:2).

The issue surfacing now is whether parents from low socio-economic status are aware of the current situation and the importance of early childhood development and parental involvement. This leads to the key question for this study: Are parents from disadvantaged backgrounds aware of the significant role they play in their children's preparation for school?

## **1.2 BACKGROUND TO AND INCENTIVES FOR THIS RESEARCH**

### **1.2.1 Initial awareness**

Four years ago, I became involved at a primary school where the majority of the learners come from disadvantaged communities. I was struck by the huge difference in developmental status and the discrepancy there seemed to be between these learners and the learners from my immediate circle of reference, particularly regarding cognitive, linguistic and motor development. During my interaction with the teachers, I became aware of the negative feelings they experienced from the parents, which included unconstructive attitudes towards their children's education and schooling. I experienced a similar situation at another school where the children from disadvantaged backgrounds and low social economic status seemed to show similar delays regarding their early linguistic, perceptual and motor development, as well as, in their later cognitive and scholastic performance. At both schools I observed that many of the Grade 1 learners were not ready for the demands of formal schooling. After further enquiries I also discovered that many of these learners did not attend any formal preschool programme or Grade R.

According to Statistics South Africa (2012:6-8), one of the most recent educational priorities in South Africa has been to reach children of the age group 0–4 years and although the proportion of children attending pre-school programmes has increased since 2006, almost 52,2% of families still indicated that their only primary exposure to early childhood development, was the home environment. In addition to above mentioned survey, the summary report for Macro Indicator Trends in Schooling of the Department of Basic Education (2011) indicated that the percentage of learners enrolled in Grade 1 had previously attended a pre-school programme, has increased from 61% in 2006 to 71% in 2009. These statistics clearly show that attendance

in early childhood programmes is increasing. Yet, in the light of my personal experience I felt a growing concern towards these children from disadvantaged communities, as many of them rely exclusively on their parents' stimulation and possible limited knowledge of providing enriching experiences during this highly crucial developmental phase. During my own reading, I became intensely aware of the vital role these parents play and I realized that the majority of them probably did not comprehend the importance of early learning experiences, from birth until entering school, and the impact these experiences have on the development and learning of their children. I therefore wished to explore whether they realized the significance of these early months and years in their children's lives and the dramatic consequences this holds for their future school readiness and entire school careers.

### **1.2.2 Exploration of the problem**

According to the Western Cape Education Department (2006:6), research in many countries demonstrates that learners entering Grade 1 do not have the necessary knowledge, skills and attitude to engage effectively in formal schooling. They argue that factors such as poverty, television, lack of motor development, lack of opportunities to play, poor language usage by role-models, substance abuse by pregnant women, malnutrition, single-parent families, illiterate parents, lack of parent involvement in children's lives and lack of engagement with books before school entrance, attribute to this situation. The result of the above is that most of the learners are not ready for formal schooling when they enter Grade 1. Paton (2011:1) claims that up to half of the five-year-olds in the United Kingdom, are not ready for school, as working parents increasingly abandon traditional games, nursery rhymes, bedtime stories and lullabies. Children are failing to develop vital physical and communication skills, because of the lack of sufficient interaction with mothers and fathers during the early years.

Strydom (2011:25) comments that the Annual National Assessment (ANA) results released by the Department of Basic Education (DBE) revealed low results across all primary schools, but highlighted a close correlation between poor levels of achievement and low socio-economic status. Paul Colditz, CEO of the Federation of Governing Bodies of South African schools, argues that the starting point of a good quality education is parental support at home, not just assistance with homework, but parents also being good role models for their children. Learners need parental involvement, especially when they come from backgrounds where their parents have not completed Grade 12 and can only support them morally (Davids, 2010:4).

Reid, Stoolmiller & Webster-Stratton (2008:471) point out that exposure to multiple poverty-related risks, unfortunately increases the odds that children will display increased emotional challenges, fewer social skills, less teacher/parent involvement and more behavioural problems.

As a result, intervention offered to socio-economically disadvantaged populations, includes a social and emotional school curriculum. This programme trains teachers in 'effective classroom management skills' and in the promotion of parent—school involvement, which is an effective strategy for improving young children's school readiness, leading up to later academic success and the prevention of the development of conduct disorders.

As seen in the above, current observations seem to focus mainly on children already attending school and only include parents and families already involved in the school system. The questions now are whether these programmes and interventions need to wait until a child starts school, or whether parents can act as facilitators for earlier intervention, within the home environment.

Young children experience their world as an environment of relationships which affect virtually all aspects of their development - intellectual, social, emotional, physical, behavioural and moral (National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, 2007). The quality and stability of a child's human relationships in the early years, lays the foundation for a wide range of important future developmental outcomes. These include self-confidence, mental and emotional health, motivation to learn, achievement in school and later in life, social skills and ultimately to be successful and healthy (Tarlov and Debbink, 2008:29).

Feinstein, Duckworth and Sebates (2008:73-80) found that parental cognitions which includes beliefs, values and attitudes are crucial in shaping the family environment and can have a direct effect on children's development and achievement. Parents communicate their perceptions of the child's abilities and their expectations for performance, which can directly impact upon children's success and achievement outcomes. Parents may equally influence their children's development by modelling involvement in valued activities, which may also affect the children's outcomes, by influencing their own cognitions. For example, parents who place great value on education may expose their children to various educational opportunities in their communities. Children may then internalize the importance of these activities and so integrate them into their self-concepts and value systems.

Selbie and Wickett (2010:75) agrees with the above and argues that the environment makes a significant contribution to the process of learning and when the conditions are less than supportive, the quality of the process, if not the process itself, is threatened. Children are very capable and competent learners, should they be given the correct linguistic and social environment. The life of a child before he enters school is full of learning opportunities that takes place mainly through exploration and experience. Wherever and whenever play is encouraged, babies and young children will be learning through exploration of their environment and self-discovery. According to Smartt (2008) self-discovery is the ability of an individual to learn

through personal experience and natural exploration, often motivated by curiosity. In most cases during these early years this self-discovery and learning is encouraged by parental involvement. Learning takes place through the active use of the senses, and the ability to make mental connections. Encouraging young children to explore, to be persistent, and to show initiative and curiosity, not only increases learning but also supports a healthy self-esteem.

According to Dillon and Huggens (2010:153-155) a child's well-being is largely affected by the family's assets, the political, social and environmental context in which they grow up and the strategies their families and communities can employ to achieve sustainable livelihoods. They are of the opinion that the well-being of children is significantly affected by the parenting they receive. Maternal health including multiple pregnancies, together with frequent stillbirths and deaths in particular, place severe strain on a mother's physical and emotional health and has an impact upon her parenting. Another factor that holds significant implications for the development of children is the health of the family. HIV/AIDS has a particular impact on the well-being, development and opportunities of children in terms of human, financial and social resources and the emotional cost is immeasurable. A key aspect of improving levels of education and skills will therefore also lie in the improvement of health and nourishment.

Feinstein et al (2008:107) recognises that family income is an important determinant of child development and provides families with the means to offer their children nutrition, health and care, which are essential features of the home environment. It can also affect the outcome of development and learning through a lack of material needs that aids educational success, for example: a learning environment with adequate housing, books, clothing and educational games. The 2006 report of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) on early childhood education indicates that children at risk of educational failure are the object of a variety of policies and programmes that seek to address the challenge through early educational interventions, and increasingly through a comprehensive service approach focusing on the home and community environments (Fleer, 2010:5).

Children from low socio-economic status (SES) families are, statistically, less likely to develop the same level of skills and intellectual capital as children from high SES backgrounds. Feinstein (2003) is quoted in Fleer (2010:5) to have found, for example, that a 13% difference in cognitive development exists in British children at 22 months of age, between those from high and low SES backgrounds. By the age of 10 years an average gap of 28% in cognitive development is recorded.

Taylor and Van der Berg (2011:1) point out that it is well known that the outcomes of the Grade 12 examination in South Africa are still characterised by substantial inequalities along racial and

socio-economic lines. It is however important to realize that the development of these current educational inequalities can be traced all the way back to earlier phases of schooling including the early learning phase before the child even started formal schooling.

### **1.3 THE RESEARCH PROBLEM**

Insight into the interrelated, complex challenges and the hardships regarding education, health and safety that school beginners and parents from low socio-economic backgrounds face, clearly emphasizes the relevancy and value of this study. The significant contribution and the key roles which parents and families play in the development as well as the learning experiences and achievements of their children, is clear from previous literature. The question arising, however, is whether parents and caregivers from disadvantaged communities realize and have insight into the vital role they can play in the development and education of their children, specifically concerning school readiness. This brings to the fore the following research question:

What are the perceptions of parents from disadvantaged backgrounds of their role in preparing their children for school?

For the purposes of this study, the research question can be further divided into subcategories in order to fully explore parents' from disadvantaged backgrounds understanding of the role they play in preparing their children for school. These subcategories will include parents' perceptions regarding:

- The importance of early childhood development and learning in preparing a child for school.
- School readiness.
- Their own influence on the early development and learning of their children.
- The influence of environmental factors on the development and learning of children.

### **1.4 THE AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION**

#### **1.4.1 General aim**

The primary aim is to gain a comprehensive understanding of how parents from disadvantaged backgrounds perceive their role in preparing their children for school. From the literature investigation, it is prevalent that the involvement of parents in the development and learning process of their children, from preschool and through to secondary school, plays a significant role in their scholastic achievement. What needs to be established through this research is the extent to which parents from disadvantaged backgrounds realize that they can play an important



role and make a valuable contribution to the learning experiences of their children specifically concerning school readiness.

#### **1.4.2 Specific aims**

In order to achieve the general aim, and based on the subcategories, the research needs to address the following specific aims:

- To determine how parents perceive their role and contribution in their children's early development and learning.
- To establish the perception how parents understand the concept of school readiness.
- To determine to what extent parents realize the importance of an emotionally secure, loving and nurturing environment.
- To establish to what extent parents realize the importance of nutrition, and basic health care.
- To determine to what extent parents realize the importance of linguistic, motor and cognitive exposure and stimulation.

### **1.5 THE NATURE, APPROACH AND METHOD OF THIS RESEARCH**

#### **1.5.1 The research approach and method**

A qualitative research design will be followed, where emphasis will be on gathering data on naturally occurring phenomena. The study seeks to understand the phenomena in context or real world setting. Focus groups interviews will be used to search and explore until a deeper understanding is achieved. The study will be conducted from a phenomenological point of view. McMillan and Schumacher (2010:346) points out that a phenomenological study aims to describe and interpret the experiences and perceptions of participants regarding a specific event or concept in order to understand the experience as perceived by the participants. The parents' perceptions of their role will be assessed and interpreted in the light of their experiences and their environment. To gain a deeper understanding of these perceptions, Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Model of Child Development (Nel, Nel & Hugo, 2013:11-13) will be incorporated. According to this model, a child learns and develops under the influence of a multi-layered social system (Yau, Parekh & Luo, 2012:1). The parent's perception of the interaction and relationships between the child and his or her immediate environment, as well as the influence and impact the different systems have on each other, will be explored.

#### **1.5.2 Data collections**

To compile the theoretical foundation for this research and to complement the primary data collection, a detailed literature review will be undertaken to explore various aspects of early

childhood development, school readiness and parental involvement. Information will be obtained from available international and local literature such as books, research reports, internet websites, educational indexes, academic articles, and other relevant literature.

Focus group interviews and participant observations will be implemented to collect data for this research study. Roughly twenty parents will be included in focus groups. According to Nieuwenhuis (2007:90-91) the focus group strategy is based on the hypothesis that group interaction will be productive in broadening the range of responses from participants. Focus group interviews can also produce data, which is rich in detail and this could be difficult to achieve with other research methods. Data will also be gathered through observation during these focus group interviews.

### **1.5.3 Selection of participants**

Mc Millan and Schumacher (2010:367) describe qualitative sampling strategies as the process where information-rich cases for in-depth studies are selected, when one wants to understand something about those cases without needing to generalize to all similar cases.

For this study, specific sites that are prone to serve the purpose of the study were identified. As the researcher had a specific group in mind, the participants for this research were selected from informal settlements in a particular area northeast of Tshwane. The first is a diverse community of informal settlements consisting of residents from different cultures and backgrounds. The community does not have access to running water or electricity. A limited number of the adults from this community are employed on a full time basis. The second community (Group B) consists of several small informal settlements of families living in small rooms or shacks. These settlements do not have access to clean drinking water, but they do have limited access to electricity. Most of the people living here are Afrikaans speaking. Some of the parents are employed but the majority relies heavily on the support and donations from the surrounding community. The third community is similar to the first community consisting of residents from different cultures and backgrounds. The community does not have access to electricity or running water and only a limited number of residents are employed on a full time basis.

Purposive sampling will be employed to identify and select group members who represent the target population. The primary considerations in identifying and selecting participants for this study will be to find parents within these disadvantaged communities with preschool children, currently aged between four and six, who are able to communicate in either English or Afrikaans and who will be willing to participate in focus group interviews. One of the residents of each community, known to me, will assist in the identification and selection of participants.

#### **1.5.4 Analysis of data**

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010:367), qualitative data analysis is mainly a process of organizing data into categories and identifying patterns and relationships among these categories. The analysis will already start during data collection when the verbal responses and the reaction of the participants will be recorded and transcribed. Through observation the non-verbal communication and cues will also be obtained and captured to ensure a more accurate analysis. For this study, a semi-structured interview guide approach will be used. A set of open-ended questions, planned in advance, will be used to direct the analysis. Other questions emerging from the dialogue between interviewer and interviewees will also be included in the analysis. The transcriptions and observations will be organized into relevant themes. Meaningful patterns and concepts observed will be used to assist in the interpretation.

### **1.6 CLARIFICATION OF TERMINOLOGY**

To guarantee that misunderstanding does not occur, the following important concepts have been defined for the purpose of this study:

#### **1.6.1 Perception**

According to the Oxford Dictionary (2012) 'perception' is the way in which something is regarded, understood, or interpreted. It refers to intuitive understanding and insight.

#### **1.6.2 School readiness**

The concept of school readiness refers to the child's attainment of a certain emotional, behavioral, and cognitive skills needed to learn, work, and function successfully in school. Research has suggested that many aspects of children's lives influence their preparation for formal school learning, including cognitive, social, emotional, and motor development, and, most importantly, early home, parental, and preschool experiences. Consideration of school readiness, must take into account the range and quality of children's early life experiences (Rafoth, Buchenauer, Kolb Crissman & Halko. 2004:1).

#### **1.6.3 Disadvantaged backgrounds**

Disadvantaged background refers to communities "denied access to the tools needed for self-sufficiency." People are disadvantaged to the extent they are denied access to and use of the same tools, which are found useful by the majority of society. This implies the presence of "barriers to self-sufficiency." These barriers are the ways in which people are denied access to needed tools, and include unavailability of resources, inaccessibility to resources, the society's

regard for a group, government and corporate practices and certain conditions of the group itself (Mayer, 2003:2).

#### **1.6.4 Parental involvement**

Parental involvement can be defined as direct effort, provided by the parent, in order to increase educational outcomes of their children (Avvisati, Besbas & Guyon, 2010:4). Bouffard and Weiss (2008:2) add that involvement is broader, most authentic and effective when it is intentionally “linked to learning.”

#### **1.6.5 Low socio-economic status**

Socio-economic status (SES) is the measure of the influence that the social environment has on individuals, families, communities, and schools. SES is related to the concept of social class as both have financial stability as a foundation for classification. SES refers to the “standing in society based on income, power, background and prestige”. There are mainly three levels of SES, namely: low, moderate, and high. The factors that are usually considered in establishing SES are income, occupation, education, neighbourhood, and political power. Low socio-economic status could therefore include an incapability of meeting financial responsibilities, parents obtaining a low level of education, living in an unsafe and badly maintained neighbourhood, or the head of the household holding an occupation that is regarded as minor and unimportant. Because most problems associated with low SES are related to poverty, poverty level is sometimes used as a similar concept to low SES (Brogan, 2009).

### **1.7 STRUCTURE OF THE RESEARCH**

The following chapters coincide with the content of the research.

- **Chapter 1** consist of the introduction, incentives, and statement of the problem, aim of the research, the clarifications of concepts and the course of the research.
- **Chapter 2** contains an extensive literature study that explores the existing theories, findings and paradigms regarding the research question.
- **Chapter 3** explains the research design that will be used to investigate the problem. This gives a detailed description of the research approach, sample selection, data collection and analysis, as well as the ethical considerations.
- **Chapter 4** is devoted to a comprehensive discussion of the empirical findings.
- **Chapter 5** includes a summary and the conclusions that include limitations of the study and recommendations for further research resulting from this study.

## **1.8 DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

The focus of this research is on the perception parents have of their contribution in preparing their children for school. The study is limited to parents from disadvantaged communities and focuses on early childhood development and school readiness. The study has been narrowed down to the parents of a selected group of preschool learners, from different informal settlements in the northeastern outskirts of Tshwane.

## **1.9 CONCLUSION**

The significance of early childhood development is undeniable. The role parents as well as the home environment play in the learning experience of children are indisputable. Literature is clear about the fact that every early experience contributes to an individual's development and learning and forms part of the process of preparing a child for school. The literature gathered so far has revealed the unfortunate influence poverty and a disadvantaged background may have on the development and learning of children.

Currently there seems to be an insufficient understanding and a lack of parental involvement in the disadvantaged communities, regarding learning and education in South Africa. This research may indicate as to what extent parents are involved and it may also shed light on some of the reasons why parents do or do not get involved. The answer to the research question (cf 1.3) may be the beginning of an initiative to create awareness for- and to equip parents in their role as facilitators towards the learning of their children, specifically concerning school readiness.

It is essential to gain further insight into the process of preparing a child for school and the significant role of the parent and environment, by using an extensive and comprehensive literature study. The importance of early childhood development, school readiness and the multiple poverty-related risks will be covered in Chapter Two.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **PREPARING CHILDREN FOR SCHOOL**

#### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

Starting school is a huge milestone in a child's life and all parents want their children to do well in school. Sadly however, in developing countries, over 200 million children under the age of five are not achieving their full potential, resulting in children who are less prepared for school and are less able to profit from the schooling (Engle, Grantham-McGregor, Black, Walker & Wachs, 2007: 70). It is for this reason that a literature study is required to understand the preparation process and the importance of the early childhood developmental phase. This chapter will therefore be dedicated to a literature study on the topic of the preparation of children for school. The secondary research questions that will be addressed include: What do early childhood development and school readiness entail and what influence do parents and the environment have on the early development and learning of children?

#### **2.2 EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT**

According to the Department of Education (2001:5-8), early childhood development is defined as the processes by which children from birth to nine years grow and thrive, physically, mentally, emotionally, spiritually, morally and socially. Early childhood development suggests a comprehensive approach with the active participation of parents and caregivers. This is a time of remarkable growth across all areas of development. The dependent infant grows and develops into a person who can largely take care of his or her own body and interact effectively with others. The early years are critical for developing concepts, skills and attitudes that lay the foundation for lifelong learning. These skills and attitudes include the acquisition of language, perception-motor skills required for learning to read and write, basic numeracy concepts and skills, problem-solving skills as well as a positive attitude and love for learning. Qadiri and Manhas (2009:23) also emphasized the significance this developmental phase plays in developing the character of a young child.

Early childhood is usually divided into approximate age categories, which broadly outline key periods in the human development timeline (Charlesworth, 2008:3).

The following categories are frequently identified:

- infants (birth to one year),
- toddlers (one to three years),
- preschooler (three to six years) and
- primary school children (six to nine years).

During each stage, growth and development occur in the primary developmental domains including sensory, physical and motor, intellectual, language and social-emotional. Though these developmental domains are distinct from each other, they are also very much dependant on each other (Charlesworth, 2008:3; Department of Education, 2001:8).

According to Heckman (2006:1900), a landmark study concluded that virtually every aspect of early human development, from the brain's developing circuitry to the child's capacity for empathy, is affected by the environments and experiences that are encountered throughout the early childhood years. This principle stems from two characteristics that are intrinsic to the nature of learning:

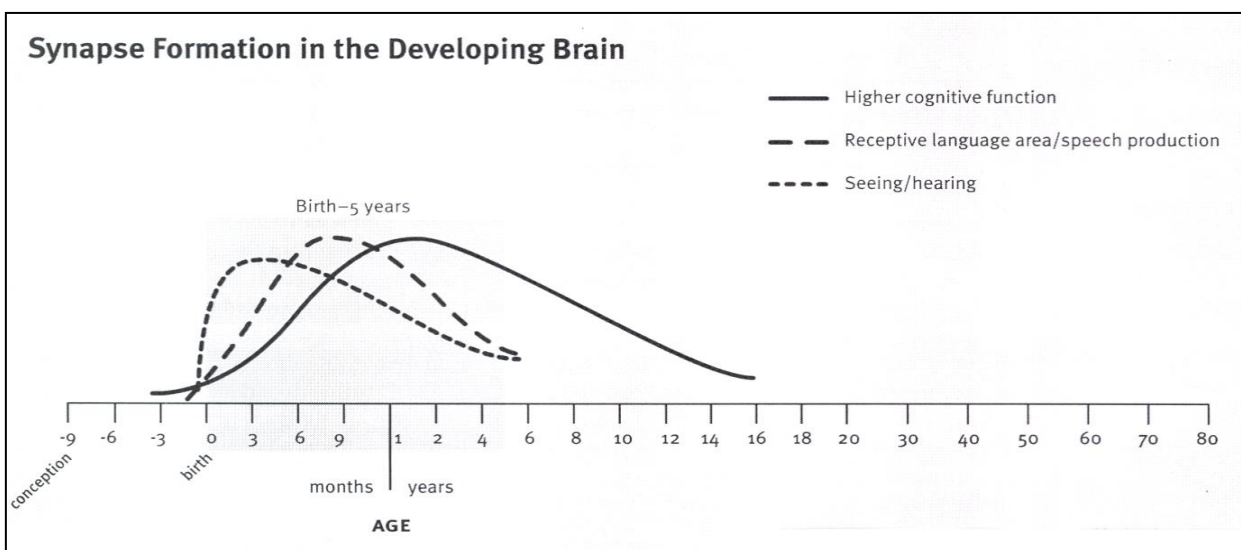
- early learning confers value on acquired skills, which leads to self-reinforcing motivation to learn more, and
- early mastery of a range of cognitive, social, and emotional competencies makes learning at later ages more efficient, therefore easier, and more likely to continue.

This early period of development therefore lays the foundation for subsequent learning and development and affects all the future stages of human development. Although it is never too late for children to recover from poor health, to improve and learn new skills, to overcome fears or reflect on personal growth and development - the absence of a firm foundation in the early years often leads to many challenges causing them to never catch up or reach their full potential (Mustard, 2010:1; Berry, Biersteker, Dawes, Lake & Smith, 2013:7).

Insight and knowledge of development within the different developmental areas are necessary in order to truly understand the above-mentioned early foundation. The following discussions on the different developmental domains emphasize the significance of early experiences and contributions and clearly demonstrate the influence parents, as primary educators, as well as the environment can have on the overall early development and school preparation of a child.

## 2.2.1 Neurological Development

Brain development starts within a couple of weeks of conception. According to Mustard (2010:1) the basic architecture and function of the brain is already established during the early years of human development. Neurologists estimate that between 50,000 and 100,000 new brain cells are formed each second between the fifth and twentieth weeks of life. The brain will grow to about 80 percent of the adult size by the age of three and 90 percent by the age of five. Although a newborn child is born with most of the brain cells he or she will need to function, it is the experiences that the child has or does not have that help to finish the brain's development. Children's early experiences have extensive and solidifying effects on the development of their brains and behaviours. These various early experiences affect the architecture of the brain, including the expression of genes and the biochemistry and physiology of the human body. These experiences are gathered through the senses by hearing, touching, tasting, seeing and sensing whereby they become the building blocks of the brain. Most of an infant and young child's experiences are dependent on the involvement and contributions of their parents or primary caregivers (Jensen, 2005:20-29; Mustard 2010:1).



**Figure 2.1 Synapse formations in the developing brain during sensitive periods of development**

**Source: National Scientific Council on the developing Child (2007:3)**

The brain is sculpted by these early experiences that determine the development of the neural circuits, known as synapses. The National Scientific Council on the Developing Child (2007:1-4) states that mental capacities mature at different stages in a child's development and highlights the significance of 'sensitive periods' - the period of exceptional sensitivity to the effects of the environment and experience for specific circuits (cf Figure 2.1). The significance of experiences during these sensitive periods plays a vital role in shaping the capacities of the brain, as it is far



more difficult to substantially adjust neural circuits after their sensitive periods have ended. Recent findings in developmental neuroscience revealed how these early experiences promote the development of a child's core abilities. This research also reveals the challenge and difficulty of altering a child's developmental path for once formed, the neural connections that underpin a child's competencies can be very hard to modify. Therefore, although neuro-development appears to be adaptive during early experiences, it seems that if the brain does not receive appropriate stimulation during these critical window periods early in time, it is very difficult to re-wire itself at a later stage. This implies that the neural wiring that takes place in the early years of life, strongly influences the child's capacity to learn when he or she enters school (McCain, Mustard & Shanker 2007:13; UNICEF, 2012:1).

The brain's architecture and a child's skills are built from the bottom up. Foundations are therefore important as higher-level neural circuits are built on lower level circuits. Circuits that process basic information are wired before those that process information that is more complex. Low-level circuits whose architecture was shaped by healthy experiences early in life, provide high-level circuits with accurate, high-quality information. High-quality information, combined with sophisticated experiences later in life stimulate new axonal projections, directs synaptic pruning and encourages synapse consolidation allowing the architecture of circuits involved in higher functions to take full advantage of their genetic potential. The sequence is similar for all children but the rate of development and variety of pathways vary, illustrating the wide range of human possibilities (Oberklaid, 2007:8; Denburg & Daneman, 2010:235-236; The National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, 2007:1-4).

McCain et al (2007:13) points out that the connections that are formed between neurons and between neural networks play a very significant role in a variety of school-related skills. These skills include the child's ability to attend to a lesson; the speed at which he or she can process and retain information; the ability to recognize patterns; to absorb new information; to understand what others are thinking or feeling, or simply, to grasp and conform to the norms of classroom behaviour. The greater the synchrony between the sub-cortical and prefrontal systems in the child's brain, the more he or she will thrive in a school environment. However, when a child enters school with constrictions in these local and long-range interconnections, it can significantly impair his or her ability to rise to the challenges that he or she is exposed to in the school environment.

The impact early childhood experiences have on brain development is clearly realized throughout research. The development of the brain is the result of complex, dynamic transactions between 'nature and nurture' indicating the importance of both biology and the environment. Genes provide the foundation for the development of the brain, but after birth,

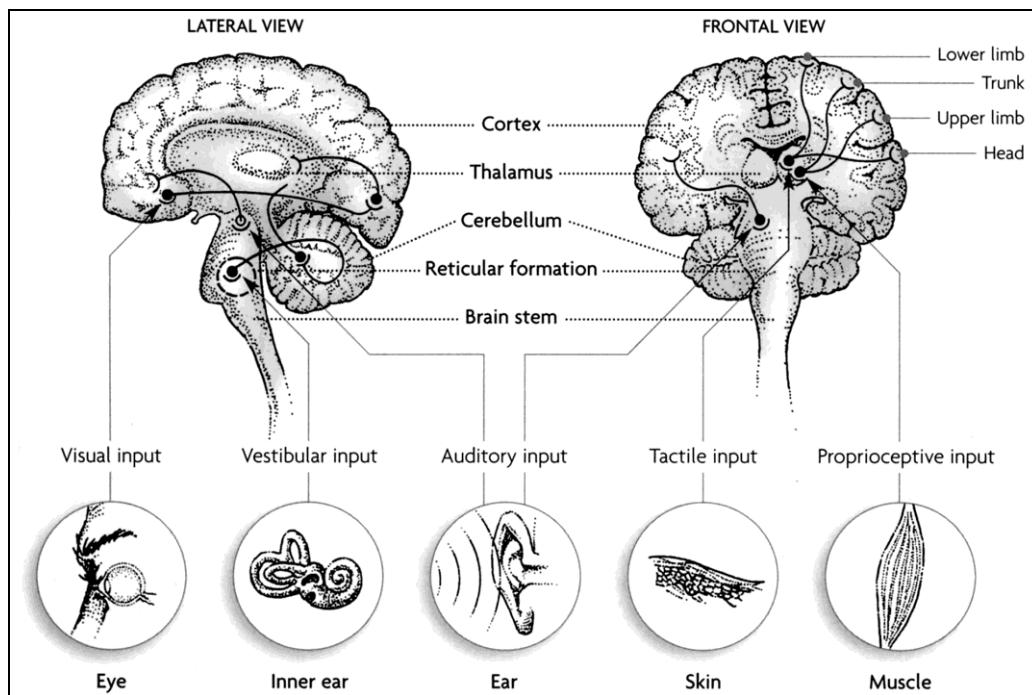
nurture is the critical force that determines how the brain develops. Optimal brain development is dependent upon a positive environment, incorporating factors such as: good nutrition, good health, a nourishing and stimulating environment as well as positive relationships which all play a significant role in the development of the brain's social-emotional function (Jensen, 2005:20-29; Mustard, 2010:1; Oberklaid, 2007:8).

### **2.2.2 Sensory Development**

According to the Family Childcare Academy (2012), sensory development generally refers to the maturing of the five basic senses: taste (gustatory), touch (tactile), hearing (auditory), sight (visual), smell (olfactory) and the two movement-based senses, proprioception (feedback from the muscles and the joints) and vestibular system (balance or equilibrium).

Children explore and discover the world through their senses. The child collects sensations and information through the senses to enhance the way they perceive the world. The development of the sensory system (Figure 2.2) is hierarchical in nature. Development of the senses already begins during gestation, and some are nearly completely developed by birth. The first system to develop is the earlier-maturing sensory system that comprise of the vestibular, proprioceptive, and tactile systems. At birth, these cited systems are almost completely established and functional while the visual and auditory systems (later-maturing systems) are not as mature. The later-maturing systems are interdependent on the earlier-maturing systems (Seaman, DePauw, Morton & Omoto, 2003: 50; Christianson, 2010).

Krog (2010:52) points out that learning takes place through the various senses and the more the senses are involved, the better the degree of learning. The Family Childcare Academy (2012) therefore stresses the importance of sensory experiences to a child's development. The value of the growth of healthy sensory systems cannot be emphasized enough as it is vital to the development of learning readiness and future learning. If input is nonexistent, limited, or confused, the sensory pathways will not develop correctly. Children who experience difficulty with their sensory systems often display one or more developmental problem or delay which may impact their learning and academic achievements (Krog, 2010:22-23).



**Figure 2.2: The five sensory systems structure Source: Seaman et al. (2003:50)**

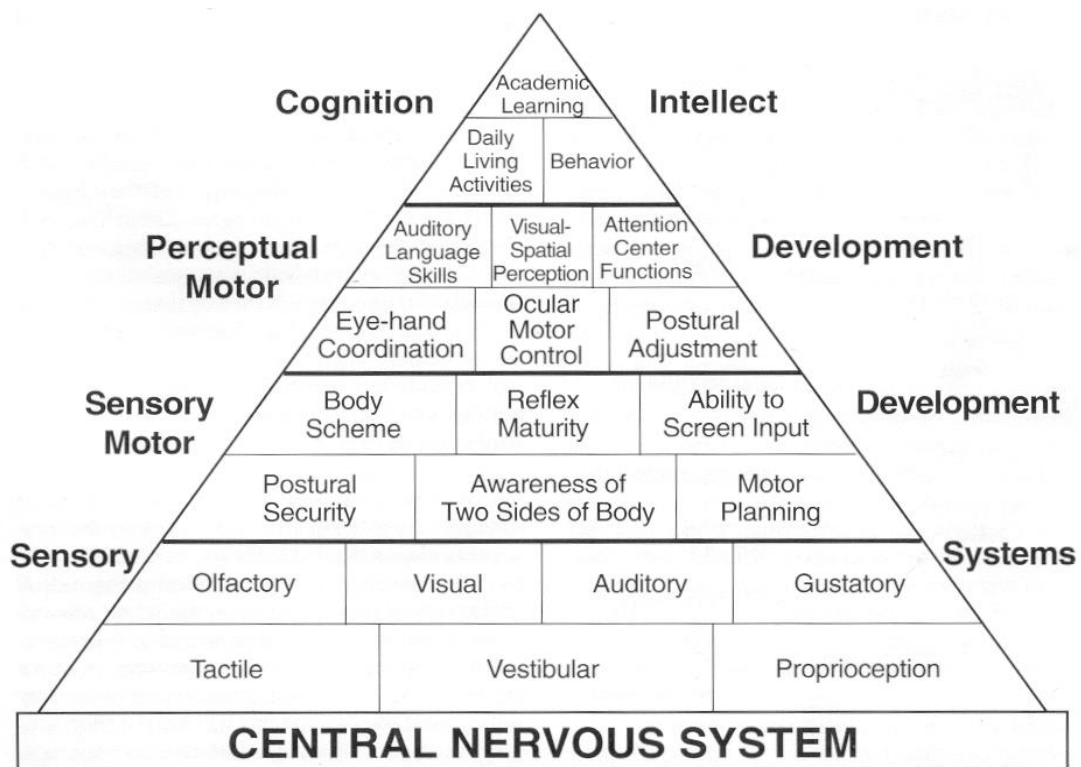
Learning is a sensory process that must be reinforced by motor functioning. Thus, it involves the way a child's nervous system receives input from these senses and then forms an appropriate motor or behavioural response. This is known as sensory processing or sensory integration. Sensory integration can be defined as 'the organization of sensations for use'. Our senses give us information about the physical conditions of our body and the environment around us (Ayers, 2005:5).

The body can therefore be seen as a sensory-motor response system, as it causes the brain to learn and thus to organise itself. We constantly receive and process sensory input, and respond by producing desirable "outcome" behaviours. Besides organizing the input from the five basic senses, sensory processing also focuses on the sensation of movement from the proprioceptive and vestibular systems. *Proprioception* refers to an umbrella term for the sense of body position and body awareness in space, the planning and co-ordination of movements, including how our body parts relate to one another, how much and how quickly our muscles are stretching, how fast our body is moving through space and how much force our muscles put forth. Proprioceptive input is sent to the brain through receptors in the muscles, joints, tendons and ligaments (Krog, 2010:52; Merrilee, 2009).

The *vestibular system* is comprised of sense receptors in the inner ear. Projections from the vestibular system to other parts of the brain and sensory organs serve as communication channels. It is the unifying system in our brain that adjusts and synchronizes information

received from other systems. It also communicates positional changes to the ocular muscles and to other parts of the brain controlling movement. The vestibular system is related to the regulation of muscle tone, balance, motor control, postural stability, visual space perception, visual motor control, auditory language skills and attention. The vestibular system has a critical role in the modulation of all other sensory systems (Ayres, 2005:61-72; Brown, 2009: 87; Merrilee, 2009).

According to the Family Child Care Academy (2012), sensations of movement and gravity help to organize the brain and to develop postural security and motor planning. A young child learns to integrate the sensation of gravity, sensations from the muscles and joints and sensations received through his hands and knees, nose, mouth, and ears. Information from his joints and muscles help him develop an awareness of both sides of his body and reflex maturity. Visual, olfactory, gustatory, auditory and tactile experiences encourage his ability to monitor input. All of these sensations and experiences allow him to develop a body scheme.



**Figure 2.3: The hierarchical structure of the sensory systems**  
**Source: Williams & Shellenberger (1996)**

Perceptual motor development is defined as one’s ability to receive, interpret and respond successfully to sensory information. After developing the sensory motor skills needed to learn about and to start controlling their bodies, children gather more sensory information from their environment, and practice skills to develop small motor development and co-ordination. With

these new experiences, they develop more complex body schemes, eye-hand co-ordination, visual spatial perception and auditory language skills. Eventually, the child will use these sensory integrations for speech and language, play and learning, and to master motor skills. This growth and development of the sensory systems will therefore lay the foundation for further development including cognitive development as illustrated in figure 2.3. If the vestibular, proprioceptive, and other sensory systems are malfunctioning, they will not be able to support the child's attempt to learn academic work, sit still, pay attention, complete tasks or learn appropriate social behaviours which will eventually have a crucial impact on the child's future development and learning (Ayres, 2005:61-72; Brown, 2009: 87; Fredericks, Kokot & Krog, 2006; Merrilee, 2009; Family Child Care Academy, 2012).

### **2.2.3 Physical and Motor Development**

Physical and motor development is all about movement, awareness of the body, gaining a sense of space and understanding health and what the body needs. Oswalt (2013:3) is of the opinion that physical development provides children with the abilities they need to explore and interact with the world around them. Early childhood is a time of remarkable physical change and growth. A child's physical development depends on genetics, nutrition, and the environment. Children's healthy growth is supported by healthy lifestyles. Proper nutrition, sleep, and exercise are very important in order to continue to develop strong muscles and bones and to maintain a healthy body.

Brotherson (2006:1-3) defines the motor development as physical growth, or growth in the ability of children to use their bodies and physical skills. Motor development can be defined as the process by which a child obtains movement patterns and skills. Genetics, size at birth, body build and composition, rearing and birth order, nutrition, social class, temperament, ethnicity and culture all have an influence on motor development.

Oswalt (2013:3) describes fine and gross motor skills as the actions involved when a person uses his or her muscles. Gross motor development refers to physical skills that use large muscles for large body movements that normally involve the entire body. Fine motor skills are necessary to engage in smaller, more precise movements, normally using the small muscles of the hands and fingers.

During the early years the essential motor skills need to be developed in order to serve as a foundation for more specialized motor skills. These skills include loco motor skills such as running, jumping and skipping, as well as object control such as throwing, catching and kicking (Charlesworth, 2008:350). Gross motor skills develop through obtaining control over the head,

trunk and limbs. These skills are essential because a child's body develops from large movements with arms and legs to smaller, more refined movements of the hands and fingers. This implies that fine motor development requires a stable "base", which means children need a strong set of abdominal, back and side muscles, neck muscles and shoulders to support the development of refined skills in the hands and fingers. Gross motor control therefore enables children to develop the fine motor movements that are essential for success in the school years. Muscle strength, co-ordination and flexibility all affect a child's ability to perform motor skills. Low muscle tone or poor balance can affect skills like throwing or catching a ball, riding a bike or climbing on a jungle gym (Clement, 2010).

Like any other skill, babies and children need to practice movements regularly to succeed. For this reason it is important to provide children from a very early age with opportunities for gross motor activities and active play. Playground equipment provides opportunities for more complex movements such as climbing and swinging. These playground activities not only have physical benefits but it also provides neurological benefits that include the growth of the sensor motor cortex in the brain that is dependent upon large-scale physical movement (Charlesworth, 2008:352-353).

Patterson (2009:264) further emphasizes the value of exercise, when he states that most motor skills improve with practice and that children who have more opportunities to apply these skills will probably become more skilled than children who do not practice. A recent study conducted by Ratey and Hagerman (2009:5) has proven that when a person is involved in physical activities, chemical changes take place in the brain that enhances the learning potential of the person. The muscle movement produces proteins that pass through the bloodstream into the brain, where it plays an essential role in the mechanisms of the highest thought processes. They describe the neuron connections in the brain through "leaves" on treelike branches, and add that physical activity causes the branches to grow and bloom with new buds, thus enhancing brain function at a fundamental level. Exercise is seen to boost a number of brain cells in the hippocampus that plays a significant part in long-term memory and spatial navigation. Ratey and Hagerman (2009:5) are therefore of the opinion, that in order to keep the brain at peak performance, the body needs to exercise and work hard.

Krog (2010:54) points out that physical development provides children with the skills and abilities they need to explore and interact with their environment. A young child's physical growth begins when the muscles gain strength through use, where after he or she gradually develops co-ordination. The development of muscular control is the first step in this process. Physical development includes many different tasks and abilities, involving activities such as crawling, running, jumping, grasping an object, plus using a pencil to draw or write. It is important to know



where these tasks all fit in the world of physical growth and development. The most fundamental reason why children should be allowed to move is to develop and improve movement skills necessary for learning. Howard (2013:3) concludes that motor development is crucial as an early foundation skill for future academic and higher brain functions.

#### **2.2.4 Cognitive Development**

The Oxford Dictionary (2013) defines cognition as the mental action or process of acquiring knowledge and understanding through thought, experience, and the senses that leads to the awareness of the world around us. It refers to what is in the mind (what the child knows) and how the mind works (how the child thinks).

One of the most influential theorists in the study of cognitive development was Jean Piaget. Piaget believed that extensive interaction with the environment is crucial for each person's cognitive development. Though Piaget recognized that biological maturation sets the general limits within which cognitive development occurs, he gave much more prominence to the role the environment plays in cognitive development. This point of view leads to the conclusion, that children who have severely restricted interactions with their environments, or who grow up in an environment with insufficient exposure and stimulation, might not have adequate opportunities to develop and rearrange their cognitive structures. Children may also experience challenges in achieving mature ways of thinking (Littlefield Cook & Cook, 2005:56-57).

Piaget cultured the idea that as we grow, we gradually add new skills to our cognitive repertoire. He argued that cognition develops as a series of stages. His theory proposes that there are four distinct, increasingly sophisticated stages of mental representation that children pass through on their way to an adult level of intelligence (Littlefield Cook & Cook, 2005:56-57). These stages are summarized in Table 2.1 below.

Piaget's theory is frequently described as **constructivism**. According to a constructivist view, people interpret and give meaning to new environments and experiences in the light of their existing personal knowledge, exposure and experiences. People do not simply capture an external reality and develop an exact mental reproduction thereof but instead, they will construct their own personalized conception and knowledge. As children therefore interact with their environment, complex customized cognitive structures are developed. These cognitive structures organize existing knowledge and also serve as filters to assess, sort and interpret all new experiences. The constructivists therefore further acknowledge that no two cognitive structures are ever exactly the same, and though two people might have the same experiences,

no-one ever interpret events in precisely the same way as someone else (Littlefield Cook & Cook, 2005:56).

**Table 2.1 Piaget's Theory**

Stage	Age Range	Description
Sensory motor	0-2 years	Co-ordination of senses with motor response, sensory curiosity about the world. Language used for demands and cataloguing. Object permanence developed.
Preoperational	2-7 years	Symbolic thinking, use of proper syntax and grammar to express full concepts. Imagination and intuition are strong, but complex abstract thought still difficult. Conversation developed.
Concrete Operational	7-11 years	Concepts attached to concrete situations. Time, space and quantity are understood and can be applied, but not as independent concepts.
Formal Operations	11+	Theoretical, hypothetical and counterfactual thinking. Abstract logic and reasoning. Strategy and planning become possible. Concepts learned in one context can be applied to another.

**Source: Psychology Notes Headquarters (2012)**

### 2.2.5 Speech and Language Development

The foundation of language development including future speech and language skills, are already concrete long before a child starts talking (Yeh, 2012). Researchers have found that language development begins in the womb before a child is even born. A fetus is able to recognize the vocalizations and sound patterns of its mother's voice and a four-month-old infant is able to discriminate between sounds (Cherry, 2013:4). Schirmer, Fontoura and Nunes (2004:95-100) identify two distinct phases of language development. Firstly the pre-linguistic phase, with vocalization of sounds but no words, which persists relatively up to one year; and secondly the linguistic phase, when infants start to utter single but meaningful words and later on, use more complex language expressions.

Children learn to communicate during everyday activities and conversations with the important people in their lives that are mainly their parents. Research has found that children's



communication improve when parents interact with them frequently and respond to their attempts to communicate. This may include emphasizing important words and expanding on what a child says. The use of child directed speech also seems to improve communication and language development (Lauwry, 2011). Child- or infant directed speech implies talking about what the child is focused on or interested in, using simplified and melodic speech. When talking to an infant this speech may be characterized by higher pitched intonation, shortened or simplified vocabulary and sentences with exaggerated vocalizations or expressions. Cherry (2013:4) believes that this form of speech helps infants and babies learn words faster and easier.

Rhyner (2009:1) further proposed that there has been an increasing recognition of the relationship between the acquisition of early oral language and developing literacy knowledge and skills. Studies revealed that children's literacy development began even before they were exposed to formal reading instruction in school. Early experience with language promotes fluency in understanding and growth in vocabulary, which forms the foundation for future literacy and learning. Speech directed to a young child in an engaging manner is not only essential for optimal development of vocabulary, but infants who hear more and richer language from an early age also develop stronger processing skills, which enable them to learn more language quickly (Neuman & Dickinson, 2011:3).

According to Denburg and Daneman (2010:236), influential work by researchers revealed vast differences in language development between social strata in American society: by the age of four, children of professional parents heard cumulatively 30 million more words than those in families on welfare. The researchers were able to follow most of the kids from infancy to the Third Grade, establishing a clear connection between early talk and later achievement. The vocabulary at age three, proved a prediction of higher language skills at age ten. Kids who heard more words as infants used more words when they were tested at age three and when these kids were tested again in the Third Grade, they performed better on tests of vocabulary and reading.

In a recently-published study, Dickinson and Porche (2011: 870-886) found that children from low income households exposed to more sophisticated language during preschool had better emerging literacy skills. When they were tested in the Fourth Grade, they also scored higher on tests of reading comprehension.

## 2.2.6 Social and Emotional Development

According to the Children's Therapy and Family Resource Centre (2011), social and emotional development involves learning to interact with other people and to appreciate and control your own emotions. From birth, babies already start to develop relationships with the people around them. The process of learning to communicate, share, and interact with others however, takes many years to develop. Developing the ability to recognize and control one's emotions and behaviour is also an extensive process.

Berger (2013:1) highlights the significance of social emotional development and argues that it is frequently overlooked because of the current prominence given to academic outcomes and achievements. There is however, a strong correlation between young children's socio-emotional competence and their early school accomplishments. Studies found that social emotional-skills and insight play a crucial role in improving children's academic performance and lifelong learning. It also revealed that children who demonstrate insight and awareness of their emotions and show good planning skills by the time they enter school have a lower risk for problems such as aggression and anxiety disorders.

Many influences and complex processes need to be taken into account when looking at social and emotional development. Children's emotions, cognition and behaviour are constantly in interaction, co-ordinating with the child's abilities, biological predispositions, immediate environment and transactions within this environment as well as the broader social and political context of the child's world. All of these factors play an influential role in the mastery of the child's social and emotional developmental tasks (Denham & Weissberg, 2004:14-15).

Research conducted by Berger (2013:1) identified the following key dimensions of social emotional development. These dimensions were further emphasized and expanded by Reinsberg (2009) as well as Parlakian and Lerner (2009) as follows:

- **A caring and affectionate environment:** Refers to warm, trusting relationships with responsive caregivers. Providing children with love and affection conveys to them that they are important and special. This type of environment includes physical touch and comfort which make them feel safe and comforted. These relationships are crucial in early childhood settings because they provide the child with an internal model of reference for positive social relationships. As children receive love and affection from their parents and caregivers, they also learn important aspects of how they can express their love and affection to others. Within this nurturing environment, responsive and consistent care giving routines are important. Infants and young children benefit greatly when they feel that their needs are being met in a consistent, respectful, and responsive

manner. This will require a sensitive parental atonement to the needs of the child that contributes to his or her feeling of being understood and valued. This, in turn, promotes self-esteem and trust (Denham & Weissberg, 2004:14-15).

- **Emotional knowledge and emotional regulation:** The ability to recognize and appreciate emotions in one-self and others is fundamental in the process of self-knowledge and understanding. Young children often struggle with how to express their intense emotions. They need assistance to know how to appropriately manage and express their feelings. Using language to identify, label, and respect young children's feelings, not only allows them to feel respected and understood, but it can also help them to calm down and manage their emotions better. Assessing, postponing and managing emotions while channelling these feelings into socially acceptable age appropriate behaviours is fundamental to social competency (Berger, 2013:1).
- **Exploration and emerging skills:** Young children are continually exposed to new situations and experiences. They are constantly learning and developing new skills through exploration that often causes feelings of uncertainty, anxiety and even fear. Through parental support and availability, the child experiences a sense of safety and learns to trust in himself and others, which increases his confidence and leads to further exploration. Mastering new skills and abilities creates feelings of competence and self-assurance. Emerging skills should therefore be nurtured and encouraged. Children need opportunities to try to do things on their own with the support and encouragement of their caregivers. An internal sense of worth and confidence is essential for positive emotional strength (Reinsberg, 2009).
- **Social Understanding:** Around the age of four, children begin to acknowledge and understand that others also have internal worlds where they keep their own thoughts and feelings, which may be different from theirs, and that certain events or actions are reasons for certain emotional responses. This major developmental stage leads to the ability to empathize. Understanding and showing empathy is the result of many social-emotional skills that developed throughout the first years of life. A secure, strong and loving relationship with the parents during these early years, ensure that children feel accepted and understood, which help them to learn how to accept and understand others as they grow (Parlakian & Lerner, 2009).
- **Relationship management:** The ways children approach each other often depend on the social knowledge they have acquired about social norms, e.g. how to express

emotions effectively or to respond to problems in a problem-solving manner (Berger, 2013:1).

- **Social responsibility:** The aim of social emotional development and education is for children to be internally motivated to act compassionately. A child needs to develop a system of ethical values to guide their behaviour and concern for the welfare of others. These social responsibilities may include accepting some responsibility for others, and taking action against social injustice, thus meeting the needs of others in various ways (Berger, 2013:1).

### **2.2.7 Conclusion**

The early years of life present an exceptional opportunity to lay the foundation for healthy development. It is a time of great growth and vulnerability. Looking at the research findings in the literature discussed above, great emphasis is placed on the impact that the first five years of a child's life has on his or her overall development. Negative early experiences can damage children's mental health and effect their cognitive, behavioural and social-emotional development. Educators and parents can refer to *developmental milestones* to identify steps in the development of a child that should be reflected at different ages, such as during the birth to 6-month period or between 2 and 6 years (cf Addendum A and B). There is a strong connection between the development a child undergoes early in life and the level of success that the child will experience later in life. When young children are therefore provided an environment rich in nurture, support and stimulation, opportunities and exposure for constructive interactions and language use, future success is almost guaranteed.

## **2.3 EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT AND SCHOOL READINESS**

School readiness refers to the cognitive, social, emotional and behavioural skills needed to learn, work, and function successfully in a school environment. Readiness is a stage in a child's development when he or she can learn easily and effectively and without emotional disturbances. School readiness therefore means that a child is ready to enter a social environment that is mainly focused on education (Rafoth, Buchenauer, Crissman & Halko, 2004:1; Kriek & Botha, 2012:5).

The National Education Goals Panel (NEGP) identifies five significant domains of children's development and learning in order to achieve school readiness and success:

- physical well-being and motor development,
- social and emotional development,
- approaches toward learning,

- language development and
- cognition and general knowledge (Maxwell & Clifford, 2004:2).

A child who is ready for school has a combination of positive characteristics: he or she is socially and emotionally healthy, confident, and friendly; has good peer relationships; tackles challenging tasks and persists with them; has good language skills and communicates well; listens to instructions and is attentive. Evidence from a number of studies suggests that educational readiness at the time of entry into the formal school system is an important indicator of how well children will ultimately perform in school (Luo, Zhang, Liu, Zhao, Shi, Scott & Sharbono, 2012:55).

Current education policy guidelines in South Africa (Department of Education, 1998) state that children are required by law to enter into Grade 1 during the year in which they turn seven. As a result formal school readiness assessments are not required. This leads to thousands of children entering school, experiencing difficulties due to developmental challenges that were not earlier identified. According to Smartcape (2013) several schools throughout the country, however, still conduct school-readiness tests to determine if a later admission would be in the child's best interests.

Factors in the family environment of children that contribute to readiness to learn, include the nature of parent-child interactions and the degree of cognitive stimulation in the home. Children, who experience positive interactions with a nurturing, involved parent, have been found to have better school and social outcomes than others. Studies found measures of parental warmth and positive involvement were linked positively with academic performance and social skills in the Reception Year (Thomas, 2006:17).

## **2.4 THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES AND THEORIES OF CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT**

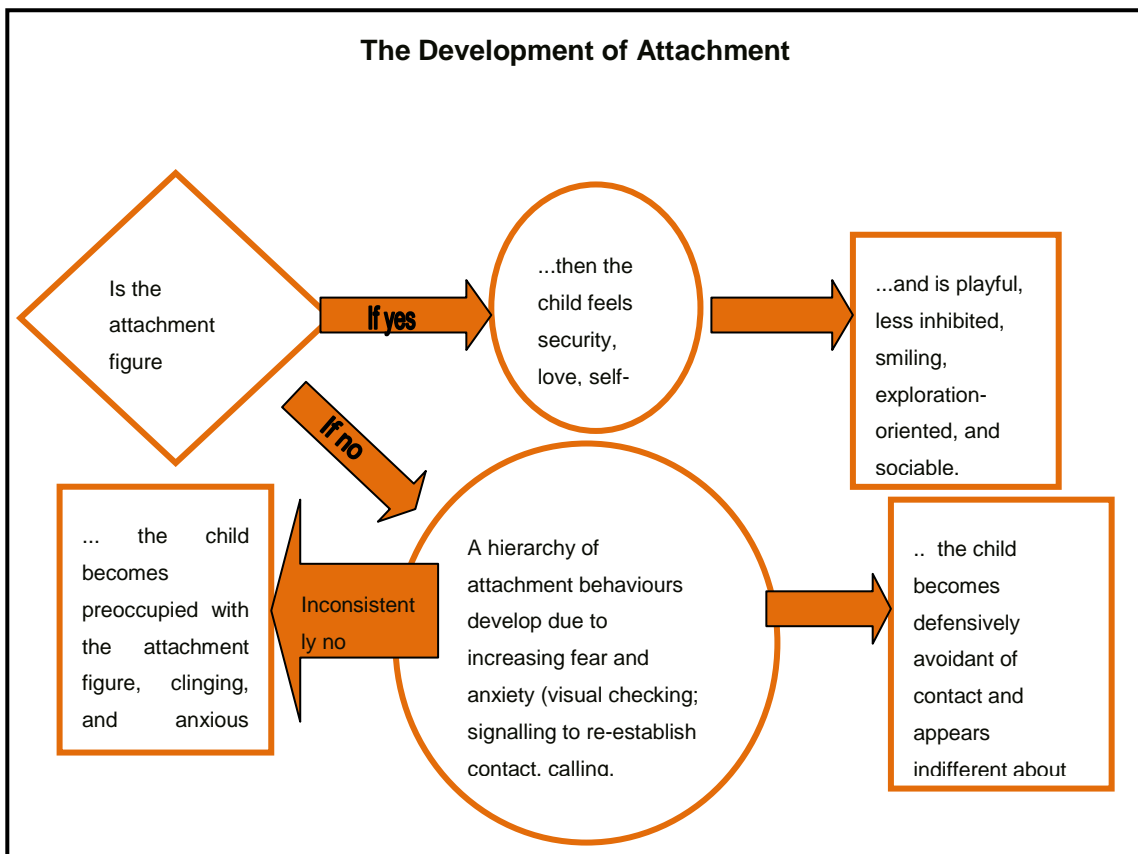
Throughout the years many rich and significant theories relating to human development and learning have been captured. As the main focus of this study is on parenting and the quality of the early learning environment and experiences, three of these theories thought to be relevant were selected to give further insight into the key role parents and the environment play in the development of a child during the early years.

### 2.4.1 Attachment Theory

The theory of attachment was originally developed by John Bowlby. Bowlby (1977:203) explained the definition of attachment as “any form of behaviour that results in a person attaining or retaining proximity to some other differentiated and preferred individual, who is usually conceived as stronger and/or wiser”. His focus was specific on the mother-child or parent-child bond. The Attachment Theory is concerned primarily with the need for safety and protection; in psychological terms, it focuses on the extent to which the relationship provides the child with protection against harm and with a sense of emotional security (O'Connor & Scott, 2007:6). Attachment is an important sign for social emotional development. Poor attachment, *especially* maternal attachment, can negatively impact children’s social-emotional health and their development (Cooper, Masi & Vick, 2009:4). Figure 2.4 illustrates the development of attachment and the impact it can have on the child.

According to the Family and Parenting Institute (2013), the home is the single most significant environmental factor in enabling children to develop the trust, attitude and skills that will help them to learn and engage positively with the world. A learning environment should provide the love, security, stimulation, encouragement and opportunities that help children to flourish. The quality of the parent-child relationship is fundamental to children’s long-term development. Warmth, encouragement and an absence of hostility are key elements in a positive home environment.

The immense effect that heredity and environmental forces, including attachment, can have on an individual can also be reflected in physical development and abnormal growth patterns. A striking illustration of this effect is the *‘failure to thrive syndrome’* in which children suffering from prolonged neglect or abuse simply stop growing. In these children, psychological stress created by the social environments causes the pituitary gland to stop secreting growth hormones. When the environmental stress is alleviated and the child receives care, affection and stimulation, their growth resumes often at a rate that enables them to catch-up-development (Landers, 2013).



**Figure 2.4: The Attachment Theory** Source: Harryman (2007)

The quality of early relations with parents influences development and growth throughout life. A positive correlation exists between parental warmth and children’s positive social development, their ability to sympathize and empathize with others and overall appropriate behaviour and development. A lack of parental warmth and affection in early childhood has been linked to numerous problems in later years. Insufficient parental affection can lead to low self-esteem, antisocial behaviours, low academic achievement and impaired physical health among children (Child Trends and Centre for Child Health Research, 2004:44). Research also revealed that parents in lower income families who experience higher levels of stress, have been found to be less warm and nurturing in their parenting activities than others (Thomas, 2006:17). It is therefore crucial for parents to understand child development and the importance of early relationships, and warm and responsive care in order to promote positive attachment (Berry et al, 2013: 63).

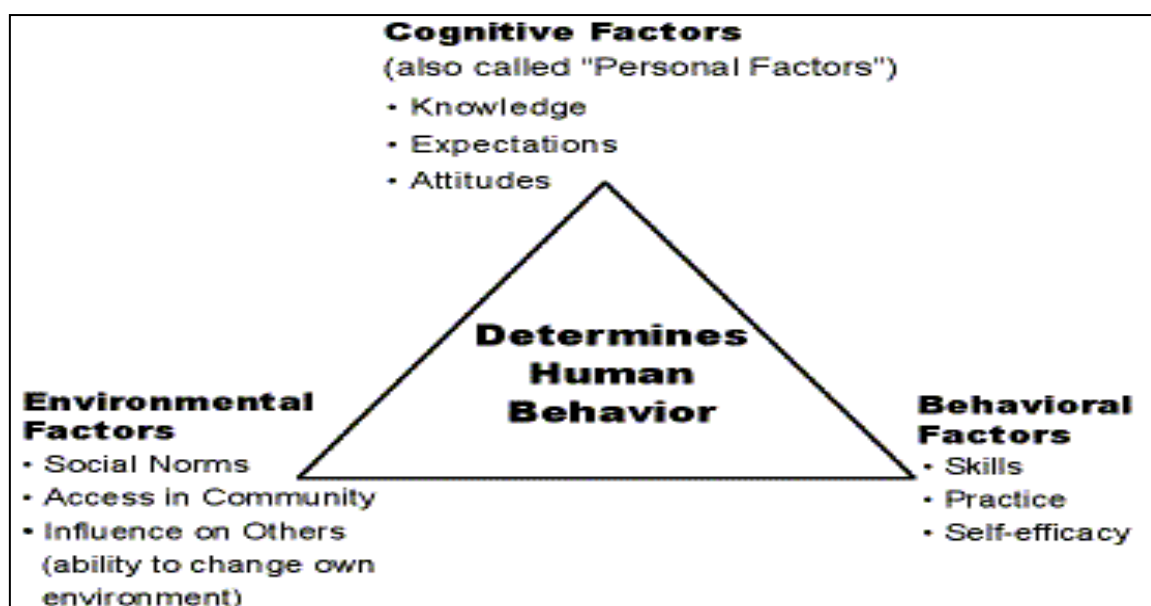
### 2.4.2 Social Learning Theory

The Social Learning Theory emphasizes the importance of observing and modelling the behaviours, attitudes, and emotional reactions of others. The theory explains how both environmental and cognitive factors interact, within a social context, to influence human learning and behaviour. It focuses on learning from one another through observation, imitation and



modelling (McLeod, 2011). Figure 2.5 presents an illustration of the three-way mutual relationship.

The Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1971:3) states that real-life experiences and exposures, as well as observing the behaviour of others, directly or indirectly shape the behaviour of children, focus being on traditional behavioural principles of reinforcement and conditioning. The model suggests that children learn strategies about managing their emotions, resolving disputes and engaging with others not only from their experiences, but also from the way their own reactions were responded to in terms of rewards, attention, punishment etc. In the case of especially younger children, the primary source of these experiences is in the context of the parent–child relationship and the family environment.



**Figure 2.5: The three-way reciprocal relationship of the Social Learning Theory**  
**Source: Resource Centre for Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention (2009)**

Historically models of parenting based on social learning theory focused on altering negative behaviour through parental conflict, intimidation and consistent discipline. Theorists more recently however, altered this focus to also incorporate more positive dimensions of parenting as a way of encouraging the child's positive behaviour and affect, improving the pleasant nature of parents' and children's interactions with one another (O'Connor & Scott, 2007:6).

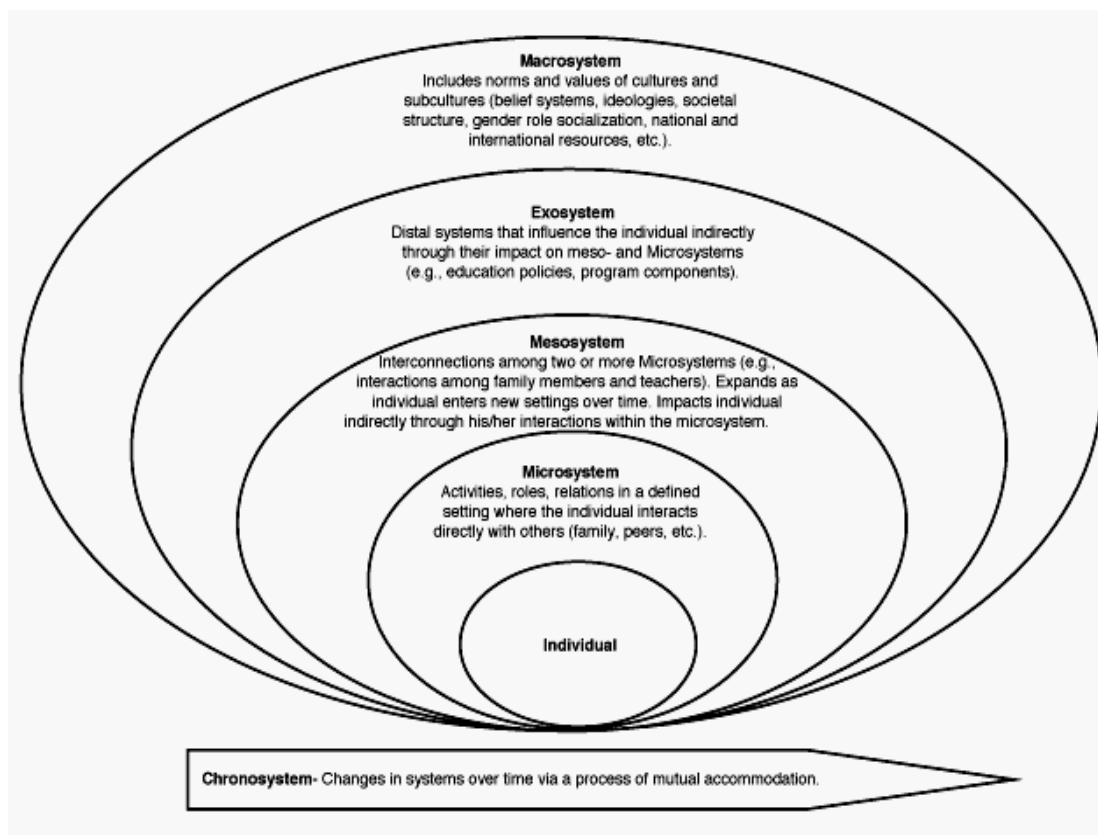
Young children model the behaviour they see. The level of violence and various other social values, that a person is exposed to during childhood, will have an impact on their development and their learning experiences. For example, if a child lives in a home where violence between the parents is common, the child may accept this behaviour as normal. On the other hand,



children of parents who showed warmth and affection report feeling a greater sense of security as adults (Child Trends and Centre for Child Health Research, 2004:44).

### 2.4.3 Socio Ecological Theory

Bronfenbrenner (1993:37-38) argues that in order to understand human development, the entire ecological system in which growth occurs needs to be taken into account. He added that human development takes place through processes of mutual interaction between the human and the persons, objects and symbols in his immediate environment or system. This system is composed of five socially organized subsystems that support and guide human development. These systems range from the micro system that refers to the relationship between a person and the immediate environment, such as school and family, to the macro system that refers to institutional patterns of culture, such as the economy, customs and bodies of knowledge. Within and between each system, are bi-directional influences that imply that relationships have an impact in two directions, both away from the individual and towards the individual. Just like sprouting seeds, the development of children depends on their environment, but more specifically, their growth and learning is shaped through their closest relationships. Figure 2.6 below, gives an illustration of the different systems and their interrelatedness.



**Figure 2.6:** An adapted illustrated model of a Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Theory  
**Source:** Research and Training Centre on Community Living (2011)

Research has demonstrated beyond doubt that child and adult health, security and achievement are formed from the moment life begins. The developing child is highly dependent on their environment and adapts to it, establishing patterns of response that become ingrained as righteous cycles of health and potential or ferocious cycles of vulnerability (Berry et al, 2013: 7).

## **2.5 PARENTAL INFLUENCE ON CHILDREN'S EARLY DEVELOPMENT, EDUCATION AND SCHOOL READINESS**

According to Wheeler and Conor (2009:9-12), parents and families are the most important people in children's lives. Parents are a child's first and most long-lasting educators. The role of parents during a child's earliest years is the single biggest influence on their development. What parents do with their babies and young children has not only a major impact on their social and emotional development but also on their intellectual development. Parental involvement in children's learning is a key factor in improving children's academic attainment and achievements, as well as their overall behaviour. Good quality home learning contributes more to children's intellectual and social development than parental occupation, education or income.

Parents further play an important role in helping to prepare their children for formal schooling. Mayike (2012:595) points out that it is now generally recognized that the effects of what happens during the pre-natal period and during the earliest months and years of a child's life could last a lifetime. This is because the early care a child receives from parents and caregivers lays the foundation for the way in which a child learns and relates in school and life in general. It is during early care that a child develops all the key elements of emotional intelligence, namely confidence, curiosity, purposefulness, self-control, connectedness, capacity to communicate and co-cooperativeness.

Wheeler and Conor (2009:9-12) states that when parents have the knowledge, skills and confidence to provide the kind of relationships and experiences that children need to learn and develop, it makes a significant difference to children's future learning and achievements. Early home learning is not just about pre-educational activities. It is about a much wider range of experiences that provide the love, security, stimulation, encouragement and opportunities that help children flourish and grow to achieve their full potential (Berry et al, 2013: 62).

Parents and caregivers play an important role in supporting children's healthy development. Research shows that family risk factors, particularly maternal risk factors such as substance use, mental health conditions and domestic violence exposure, can influence parents' ability to support children's development, and may contribute to behavioural problems among young

children as early as age three. Young children with these family risks factors have been found to be two to three times more likely, than children without these family risk factors, to experience problems with aggression, anxiety, depression and hyperactivity. Cooper et al (2009:4) highlights research which suggest that although low family income was found to be a risk factor impacting young children's development, up to 50 percent of the impact of family income on children's development can be mediated by interventions focusing on parental guidance.

Looking at the research findings in the literature discussed the vital role of the parents during the early years of a child's development and learning is obvious. Unfortunately, there are some factors that can inhibit the parents' influence significantly and the impact of these needs to be considered. Social class, living conditions, parental health, family structure and parent's own education levels are all aspects that are related to a child's development outcomes. These and other factors within the family environment are very important in shaping children's early development and school readiness. Several of these factors will subsequently be discussed in the section that follows.

### **2.5.1 Parental health**

Between 30 and 50 percent of children with parents who are mentally ill, show a psychiatric diagnosis; compared to 20 percent of children in the general population. Children of parents with a mental illness may also show higher rates of difficulty with regulating their emotions, relationship problems and developmental delays (Cooper et al, 2009: 4).

Maternal health during pregnancy is crucial for child development. Both the antenatal and postnatal phases are very significant for the mother and her child. There are a host of psychosocial risk factors that can be associated with distress during pregnancy. Past history of depression, domestic violence, stressful life events, marital disharmony and lack of social support appeared to be the main risk factors. Studies from low-income countries in South Asia have indicated that maternal depression in the postnatal period interferes with infant growth and failure to thrive. Further, common consequences of prenatal maternal depression identified, included elevated fetal activity, delayed prenatal growth, prematurity and low birth weight. Psychological disturbances during pregnancy are also associated with inadequate antenatal care, low birth weight and preterm delivery, while in the postpartum; it is associated with diminished emotional involvement, neglect and hostility towards the newborn (Veena, Satyanarayana, Lukose & Srinivasan, 2011:351-361).

Numerous studies have indicated that children with parents suffering from chronic medical conditions appear to be at an increased risk of problem behaviour including depression, anxiety,

withdrawn behaviour and psychosomatic symptoms such as headaches, cramps and weakened immune responses. There may also be an increased level of behaviour problems referring to a combination of externalizing, internalizing, social, identity and thought problems. Children may also act out displaying aggressive and delinquent behaviour. The occurrences of acute emotional problems among children with parental chronic medical condition are shown to be as high as 55% and frequently persist into adulthood. Children often feel overwhelmed by the demand or responsibility to care for an ill parent and may lack knowledge and information about the condition. They may also experience constant fear of negative health outcomes or death of parents. Studies conclude that children's behaviour problems are determined by the amount of daily disturbances and the perception of stressfulness rather than by the severity of illness (Sieh, Meijer, Oort, Visser-Meily & Van der Leij, 2010:384-397).

### **2.5.2 Parent's own level of education and attitude towards learning**

Cooter (2006:698) define *intergenerational illiteracy* as a socio-cultural phenomenon whereby illiterate parents unintentionally create home conditions that may seriously hamper their children's reading and writing development, thus continuing a cycle of illiteracy. Intergenerational illiteracy often exists in high-poverty urban and rural settings where it is common to find that three or more generations of a family have low literacy skills. Contributing factors in many homes are a lack of strong language examples, little child-parent interaction, and lack of quality printed materials. This phenomenon is not surprising, given the realities of the semiliterate and working poor. These realities include minimum-wage jobs that cause time pressure, cultural beliefs and customs about leaving school to support families, lack of financial resources and insufficient access to services such as quality preschools and efficient transport. Research informs us that children of parents living at the poverty level typically have fewer words spoken to them in their homes. Specifically, less educated, lower income parents talk even less and use fewer differentiated words than do those in other socio-economic classes.

Research performed by Weinberg (2009:6) showed that minority- and lower-SES parents are more likely than upper-SES parents to express both the lowest and highest educational expectations for their children, throughout elementary school. Minority and lower-SES parents reported the most polarized views, some predicting their children will not finish high school while many others predict an elite qualification or a post-graduate degree. Another key allegation from literature is that lower SES and minority parents' expectations are less coordinated with formal institutional feedback and that their expectations are less stable over time, than are the expectations of parents with more advantaged socio-economic statuses.

In a new study conducted by Ben-Gurion University of the Negev (Kantrowitz, 2011), researchers found that if parents had a more positive, supportive attitude and communicated the

learning value as motivation, rather than focusing on completing assignments or getting higher grades, then the child's attitude and motivation would improve. The study also showed that parents should investigate their own motivations, attitudes and competence before trying to influence children (Kantrowitz, 2011). This concludes that the attitude and behaviour of parents towards learning are essential in the attitude and motivation of their children towards school and schoolwork.

### **2.5.3 Knowledge and experience regarding parenting**

The topic of parenting is very wide and diverse and no parent can be expected to know everything about children and parenting. However, a basic understanding of parenting strategies and child development helps parents understand what to expect and how to provide what children need during each developmental phase. According to the Centre for the Study of Social Policy (2013) all parents can benefit from increasing their knowledge and understanding of child development. This may help them to recognise signs of developmental delays, the need for special help, factors that promote or inhibit healthy child outcomes and how to positively impact child development and behaviour. What parents do and how they treat children is often a reflection of the way they were parented.

According to Harju (2013:12), obtaining new knowledge about parenting skills and child development enables parents to critically evaluate the impact of their experiences on their own development and their existing parenting practices, and to consider that there may be more effective ways of guiding and responding to their children. Valuable knowledge about the nature and importance of early childhood development especially early brain development enables parents to know what young children need most in order to flourish: nurturing, responsive, reliable and trusting relationships; regular, predictable and consistent routines; interactive language experiences; a physically and emotionally safe environment; and opportunities to explore and to learn by doing. UNICEF (2013) adds that optimal conditions at home greatly affect a child's wellbeing. Responsible parenting further includes the close monitoring of children's activities, supervision of their behaviour, encouraging their socio-emotional and cognitive competencies and providing directions and guidance in daily life. Providing a safe and stimulating home environment, which allows children to play, explore and discover, forms a critical piece of this growth process and can increase a child's chances of thriving and attaining an optimal level of development, to later become a dependable and productive adult.

Knowledge about healthy lifestyles which includes best possible nutrition and health are necessary to support healthy and optimal growth. Exercise, sleep, and a balanced diet are

crucial for children in order to develop strong muscles and bones and to maintain a healthy weight. Physical difficulties like obesity or malnutrition may not only cause health problems but may also sometimes lead to social challenges for children which may include bullying, teasing or being ignored, which can set the stage for later problems with self-esteem, depression, and other mental illnesses (Oswalt, 2013:1). From this, it is clear that the more knowledgeable and experienced a parent is, the more the child will benefit and experience positive development and growth.

#### **2.5.4 Family structure**

Family structure plays an essential role in children's educational performance at every level, from preschool to college. Parents' marital status is closely tied to their child's educational achievement. Research has consistently shown that family structure can support or limit the ways in which parents are able to positively influence the future outcomes of their children (Schneider, Atteberry and Owens, 2005:1).

School readiness begins early in a child's life and includes not only engaging one's child in cognitive activities but also providing an environment that promotes appropriate social skills and physical development (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2003). Children from stable two-parent homes tend to have stronger school readiness than children from one-parent homes and from homes where caregivers change frequently (Rafoth et al, 2004:2). As early as age three, children's ability to adapt to classroom routines appears to be influenced to some degree by the marital situation of their parents. Research has shown that three- and four-year-old children with two biological parents are three times less likely than those in any other type of family to have emotional or behavioural problems, such as attention deficit disorder or autism (Schneider et al, 2005:10).

Some of the significant reasons why family structural changes may be linked to educational achievement include:

- Families experience a decline in resources following a divorce or other loss of a parent or guardian;
- Parents may be able to devote less time and attention to each child due to the absence of one (biological) parent or the additional step parent and/or step children;
- Parental conflict both before and after a family alteration causes emotional distress or division;
- Family transition can trigger increased residential mobility that interferes with school progress and socialization. Residential moves can disrupt peer and student teacher relationships resulting in poor educational outcomes. Instability can disrupt a child's

schooling success in a number of ways, including the causing of emotional distress (Cid & Stokes, 2011:35).

### **2.5.5 Parenting styles and behaviour**

Psychologist Diana Baumrind (Kopko, 2007:1-3) introduced the popular classification system for parenting styles that are commonly used in research on parenting practices. This system is based upon two aspects of parental influence and behaviour namely the level of expectation or control / demand upon the child and the level of responsiveness, or warmth, to the child as an individual. Parental control refers to the degree to which parents direct their children's behaviour - from being very controlling to setting few rules and demands. Parental responsiveness or warmth refers to the degree to which parents are tolerant and responsive of their children's behaviour, as opposed to being indifferent and rejecting.

When these two aspects of parenting behaviour are combined in different ways, four primary parenting styles appear:

- Authoritative Parents: have high expectations and are responsive to their children.
- Authoritarian Parents: have high expectations but are not responsive.
- Permissive Parents: have low expectations and are not responsive.
- Passive /uninvolved Parents: are low in both dimensions and are considered neglectful.

Authoritative parenting is typically considered the most effective parenting style for producing healthy, well-adjusted children, whereas authoritarian and permissive parenting have been seen as having the tendency to hinder social and moral development. Passive parenting is generally considered to be an absence of parenting rather than an implemented "parenting style" (Gillis, Berry, Douglas & Evans, 2006:34; Kopko, 2007: 1-3). Table 2.2 illustrates the different parenting styles and the possible child outcomes thereof.

Culture, environment and parental belief systems frequently influence parenting styles. Kopko (2007:5) and Gillis et al (2006:39) believe that in the United States many families of ethnic minority families may live in dangerous neighbourhoods, where safety is often a concern. Authoritarian parenting, which emphasizes parental control and obedience to parental authority, can therefore be beneficial, potentially less harmful, and more favourable when the context of concerns about unsafe neighbourhoods prompts this parental behaviour. Authoritative parenting may on the other hand be more common among different religious groups because this type of parenting style is consistent with the religious beliefs of that faith.



**Table 2.2 Parental Styles and child outcomes**

<p><b>THE AUTHORITATIVE PARENT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Affectionate and engaged</li> <li>• Sets limits and enforces consequences</li> <li>• Uses reason, logic and appropriate negotiation</li> <li>• Empowers a child's decision making</li> </ul>	<p><b>HIS OR HER CHILD IS LIKELY TO BE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Happy, responsible and kind</li> <li>• Good at problem-solving</li> <li>• Self-motivated and confident</li> <li>• Cooperative</li> <li>• An excellent student</li> <li>• A leader</li> </ul>
<p><b>THE AUTHORITARIAN PARENT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emotionally aloof</li> <li>• Bossy- likely to say; "Because I said so"</li> <li>• Uses physical punishment or verbal insults</li> <li>• Dismisses a child's feelings</li> </ul>	<p><b>HIS OR HER CHILD IS LIKELY TO BE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Moody and anxious</li> <li>• Well behaved</li> <li>• An average to good student</li> <li>• A follower</li> </ul>
<p><b>THE PERMISSIVE PARENT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Affectionate</li> <li>• Anxious to please, ends every sentence by asking "Ok?"</li> <li>• Indulgent</li> <li>• Can't say no and stick to it</li> <li>• Easily manipulated</li> </ul>	<p><b>HIS OR HER CHILD IS LIKELY TO BE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demanding and whiny</li> <li>• Easily frustrated</li> <li>• Lacking kindness and affection</li> <li>• A poor to average student</li> <li>• A follower</li> </ul>
<p><b>The PASSIVE PARENT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emotionally removed or indifferent</li> <li>• Uninvolved</li> <li>• Abdicates discipline</li> <li>• Inconsistent and unpredictable</li> </ul>	<p><b>HIS OR HER CHILD IS LIKELY TO BE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clingy and needy</li> <li>• Inappropriate and rude</li> <li>• Likely to get into trouble</li> <li>• A poor student</li> <li>• A follower</li> </ul>

**Source: Wentzel & Russell (2009)**



## **2.6 ENVIRONMENTAL INFLUENCES ON CHILDREN'S EARLY DEVELOPMENT, EDUCATION AND SCHOOL READINESS**

Contemporary psychological theories see the child in organic terms. The child grows like a stalk of corn. The strength of the stalk is a function of its environment. If that environment is healthy, if the plant is properly cared for, a suitable product will be produced. This as a container theory of development: 'What you put in, determines what comes out' (Denzin, 2010:194).

According to Shonkoff (2009:1), science explains the type of environment children need in order to promote healthy development: Stable, responsive, nurturing relationships and rich learning experiences within a healthy environment in the earliest years will provide lifelong benefits for learning, behaviour and both physical and mental health. It also emphasizes the risks factors endangering this constructive setting. In contrast, McCain, Mustard and Shanker (2007:13) points out that research on the biology of stress in early childhood shows how chronic stress caused by major hardships within this environment, such as extreme poverty, abuse or neglect can weaken developing brain architecture and permanently set the body's stress response system on high alert, thereby increasing the risk for a range of chronic diseases and other developmental difficulties.

Many environmental factors can influence early childhood development. The exponential growth in new knowledge from research in the neurosciences and biological sciences is providing evidence of how the social environment of early life shapes learning, behaviour, and health throughout the life cycle.

### **2.6.1 Poverty**

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (2012) defines poverty in either relative or absolute terms. Absolute poverty measures poverty in relation to the amount of money necessary to meet basic needs such as food, clothing, and shelter. The concept of absolute poverty is not concerned with broader quality of life issues or with the overall level of inequality in society. The concept therefore does not consider important social and cultural needs. This in turn led to the development of the concept of relative poverty. Relative poverty defines poverty in relation to the economic status of other members of the society: people are poor if they fall below prevailing standards of living in a given societal context.

Poverty can therefore be defined as the lack of basic necessities like food, clothes and shelter. It can also indicate being different, standing apart and feeling self-conscious about what one has or does not have, about what one can or cannot do. As a result, poverty affects the lives of families in different ways. Each individual experiences poverty in his or her own way, which

means that the effect of poverty is unique for each person (Montgomery, Burr & Woodhead, 2003:46-47). Looking at these definitions, poverty can be expected to have a significant influence on all the areas of early childhood development and school readiness.

Children are generally expected to act in a well-regulated and goal-directed manner when entering school. This includes constant behavioural inhibition and control, compliance with rules, and the ability to initiate and maintain positive interpersonal relationships with teachers and peers. Children growing up in poverty are particularly likely to enter school with major deficits in social-emotional readiness. Of these children, over 40% demonstrate delays in social competencies and communication abilities at school entry and over 20% display high rates of disruptive behaviour problems that undermine school adjustment. These insufficiencies in skills accentuate the noteworthy negative impact of poverty and factors associated with it, such as maternal depression and exposure to violence and stress on parenting practices (Bierman, Domitrovich, Nix, Gest, Welsh, Greenberg, Blair, Nelson & Gil, 2008:1803).

Daily, Burkhauser and Halle (2010:1) points out that research in the United States has shown that socio-economic factors appear to contribute significantly to a school readiness divide. It was found that a significant achievement gap already exists between low-income children and their more wealthy peers at kindergarten entry. Researchers have identified gaps in a number of significant areas, including cognitive development, social-emotional development, and health status. One study found that the average cognitive scores of the wealthiest children are 60 percent higher than those of the poorest children before they enter kindergarten. Further studies found that the achievement gap between children living in poverty and their socio-economically advantaged peers widens over time, such that children living in poverty experience elevated rates of serious learning problems and underachievement as they move through the educational system, and many drop out prior to completing high school (Bierman, Torres, Domitrovich, Welsh & Gest, 2009:305).

It is important to acknowledge that while poverty has an impact on these children individually, it also effects whole families and communities and is usually linked to many other forms of hardships. In general, these children and families have worse health, worse educational opportunities and worse access to services than wealthier children (Montgomery, Burr and Woodhead, 2003:56).

A report by the SA Human Rights Commission in collaboration with the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) (2011) explained that 64%, of South- Africa's children, live in poverty, and four out of 10 children live in households in which none of the adults work. About 1.7million children live in shacks, 1.4million rely on rivers or streams as their main source of water, and 1.5million had no

toilet in their home. The report further stated that, in education, one in six pupils aged 14-18 was still in primary school because of a late start or failure to gain promotion. Failure rates were extremely high, with almost one in five pupils repeating Grade 10 or Grade 11. These alarming statistics highlight the realities and risks, like infant death, low birth-weight, stunted growth, poor adjustment to school, increased repetition and school dropout rates faced by children brought up in poverty (Du Plessis, 2011).

### **2.6.2 Health and nutrition**

A child's health plays a significant role in ensuring that he or she starts school ready to succeed. Children absent from school due to chronic health conditions, risk falling behind in their schoolwork. Various health conditions influence children's development and ability to learn. Children with untreated vision problems can experience challenges tracking printed letters or words that can inhibit reading progress. In the United States, oral disease is responsible for more than 51 million lost school hours each year. Health and the early identification of developmental, environmental and biological conditions that affect children's ability to learn, is therefore extremely important to ensure school success (Bruner, 2009:1).

The Ohio Department of Health (2012) states that exercise and healthy eating is very important for healthy growth and development of children. A nutritious meal can stabilize children's energy sharpen their minds and even out their moods. Eating a healthy breakfast is often associated with improved energy levels. It may also improve memory, mood, cognitive functioning and behaviour.

Another vital component of nutrition and health is the intake of water. Water is essential for the existence, development and maintenance of all human life. Pure water helps digestion, washes away toxins, assists the lungs, heart and blood vessels and energizes the brain and body. Adequate water is an important aspect of brain functioning (Lee, 2006:1; Hearn, 2012:1-2). According to Hearn (2012:1), water gives the brain the electrical energy for all brain functions, including thought and memory processes. Water is also needed for the brain's production of hormones and neurotransmitters. When the brain is functioning with sufficient water, it will result in fast and more focused thinking, better concentration and greater clarity, creativity and mental alertness. On the other hand, dehydration in children can lead to weariness and impaired learning. Dehydration causes the brain to shut down and not run at full speed. Some of the mental symptoms of dehydration may include brain confusion, focus issues, depression, anger, emotional instability, exhaustion, headaches, sleep issues, stress, and a lack of mental clarity and sharpness. Nearly one billion people in the world lack access to clean water, mainly those living in developing countries. According to the United Nations Human Development Report

(2006:1-3), the water and sanitation crisis claims more lives through disease than any war claims through weapons. Every year, approximately 1.8 million children die because of unclean drinking water and poor sanitation.

According to Sapolsky (2005:648), a well-established link exists between poor health and low socio-economic status. For many health outcomes, there is a steady SES-health gradient, with each step down the SES ladder associated with poorer health, including a variety of physical health conditions such as hypertension, heart disease, cancer and shorter life expectancy, as well as a wide range of mental health problems from depression to schizophrenia. The gradient is not small — some diseases increase ten-fold when comparing the highest rung of the socio-economic ladder to the lowest. Compared to their more affluent peers, poor children are less likely to find educational or economic success and are at greater risk for developing internalizing and externalizing disorders and physical health problems (Wadsworth & Rienks, 2012).

Millions of children in less developed countries suffer from poor health and nutrition that has a crucial impact on their overall growth and development. Children in these countries complete far fewer years of schooling than children in developed countries. Recent research has shown that poor health and nutrition among children reduces their time in school and their learning during that time. Poor health may reduce learning for a variety of reasons, including fewer years enrolled, lower daily attendance, and less efficient learning per day spent in school (Glewwe & Miguel, 2008:3562-3566).

### **2.6.3 Trauma and stress**

Stress is a normal and important part of healthy development. A moderate and brief stress response resulting in mild increases of stress hormone levels and short-lived increases in heart rate may be positive. This positive stress may occur because of challenging experiences like encountering new people and situations or frustrations. When children experience stress without the protection of protective nurturing relationships, their stress hormones can increase to high levels. This type of stress impairs cell growth and interferes with the formation of healthy neural circuits. While some stress is normal and an important aspect of development, high and ongoing levels of stress lead to negative outcomes. Trauma or toxic stress responses can be triggered by traumatic events or factors like extreme poverty, physical or emotional abuse, substance misuse or abuse, chronic neglect, severe maternal depression or family violence. Toxic stress disrupts brain architecture and increases the risk of stress related physical and mental illness. This stress can lead to several problems in childhood including child abuse and neglect, vulnerable school readiness, poor literacy and school achievement, mental health problems which can include Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD), conduct disorders,

aggressive and antisocial behaviours, problems with communication and social interaction and obesity (Oberklaid, 2007:9).

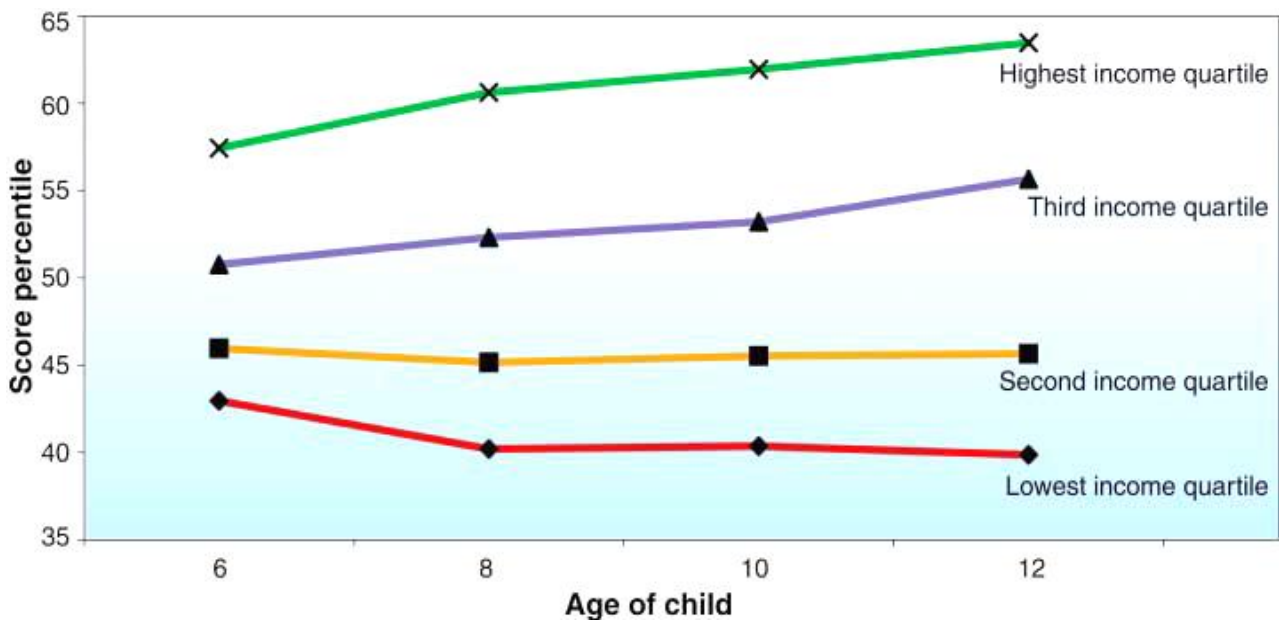
#### **2.6.4 Culture**

Culture is defined as the traditions, norms, values and practices which influence the manner in which a person interacts with others and their environment. According to Farver, Narang and Bhadha (2002) culture occurs on two levels. The first level is the 'micro culture'. This is where the individual operates on an unconscious level, guided by cultural beliefs, norms and values. This includes daily care giving practices done within the family. The second level is referred to as the 'macro culture' of a family or group. This level incorporates a wider concept of culture. This is the ritualistic, symbolic behaviour that ties belonging to a cultural group, ethnic labelling or religion. Identification with a particular group produces feelings of belonging, which contributes to assimilation of the attitudes and practices of that group.

Research has shown that there are major cultural differences in infant care giving practices amongst different ethnic groups, which relates to micro and macro cultural influences. Culture and society are strong determinants in the development of the individual, particularly because of the affect it has on child-rearing practices (De Gioia, 2009:9-17). Differing cultural and social contexts, including the quality of stimulation, availability of resources and favoured patterns of connections within communities, interact with each child's potential for development (Greenspan & Shanker, 2005:200).

#### **2.6.5 Stimulation and resources**

Early family environments are major predictors of cognitive and non-cognitive abilities. Heckman (2006:1900) has documented the early (by age four to six) appearance and persistence of gaps in cognitive and non-cognitive skills as demonstrated in Figure 2.7. He argues that environments that do not stimulate the young and fail to cultivate these skills at early ages place children at an early disadvantage. This disadvantage is associated more with poor parenting practices and lack of positive cognitive and non-cognitive stimulation given to young children, than simply from the lack of financial resources. A child who falls behind may never catch up.



**Figure 2.7** Average percentile rank on Peabody individual achievement Test-Math score by age and income. Income quartiles are computed from average family income between the ages of six and ten.

**Source: Heckman (2006:1900)**

According to Wardle (2008), environments for young children should provide multiple sources of stimulation to encourage the development of physical, cognitive, emotional, and social skills. Children need opportunities to move and play. They need to explore, experiment, and learn basic knowledge through direct experience. Play provides a way for children to integrate all the new experiences into their fast developing minds, bodies, emotions, and social skills.

Young children need concrete, hands-on activities like playing in water, building mud pies, making things out of wood, putting a doll to bed, swinging, etc. They also need many ways to practice and integrate new experiences into existing mental structures. Because children seek out a constant change of stimuli it is important to expose them to a variety of scenery, textures, colours, social groups, activities, environments, sounds, and smells.

Sufficient stimulation is also needed for proper sensory integration. As seen earlier in section 2.2.2 of this study, sensory integration is “the organization of sensory information for use.” It is a neurological process that enables us to make sense of our world by receiving, registering, modulating, organizing, and interpreting information that comes to our brains from our senses (Pollock, 2009:6). Play and exploration that includes the opportunity to manipulate materials is how a child collects sensory information. Perceptual motor development occurs when he can make sense of and interpret the information and experiences.

Ayers (2005:5-6) refers to the young child's brain as a "sensory processing machine" because, rather than having thoughts or ideas about things, a child, until he is about seven, is busy taking in sensations while moving, talking and playing, and processing those sensations. This information amplifies the value of play and opportunities for gross motor activities during the early years. Ayres further describes sensory information as food for the brain similar to the food which nourishes our physical bodies. Difficulty in processing and organizing sensory information can however cause dysfunction which can be compared to indigestion which occurs when the digestive tract malfunctions.

Research has shown that physical activity helps children perform better in school. It helps them focus better in the classroom and it leads overall to better behaviour (Kerr, 2013:1). Children who participate in group activities like sports, physical activities, and other learning activities are more likely to be ready for school than less active children are. Unfortunately, children living in lower income, higher risk neighbourhoods that have fewer community resources, are less likely to be involved in early group recreational and learning activities and tend to have poorer cognitive outcomes.

Thomas (2006:17) added the importance of books and language stimulation. Studies found that children who are read to and otherwise receive cognitive stimulation in the home tend to succeed in the early school years. Regrettably, again, reports showed that children in higher risk households (lower income, low parent education levels) are less likely to be read to on a regular basis than others.

The Family and Parenting Institute (2013) states that the amount that parents talk to babies and young children and the way they talk to them, have been shown to have a direct positive impact on children's linguistic and intellectual ability at age three and ten. Through stimulation and support, parents can provide the building blocks for literacy and cognitive development by:

- Chatting as much as possible during normal daily life,
- Using a wide vocabulary,
- Praising rather than criticising,
- Talking to children about things,
- Using language with a high information content,
- Giving children choices rather than simply directing them and
- Showing genuine interest by listening and responding to what children say.

According to Cooter (2006:698), teenage parents have well-known difficulties helping their children gain language and literacy skills. Studies have discovered that teenage mothers as a group tend to provide less oral language stimulation than older mothers, and their children are at greater risk of school failure.



An enriched home environment where parents talk with their children, engage them in conversation, play with them, read to them, and take on forms of discipline such as time-out, encourages self-discipline which leads to stronger readiness skills (Rafoth et al, 2004:2).

## **2.7 CONCLUSION**

Considering the literature study undertaken in this chapter, it is clear that early school success has been linked to the abilities, behaviours and attitudes that children bring with them as they enter school for the first time. Knowledge and insight into the significance and impact of the early childhood phase and the role parents and the environment play, is therefore vital for the optimal development of a child and their preparation for school. Ignorance or the lack thereof could easily cause major difficulties for children and their families. As research has demonstrated children from disadvantaged communities may be predisposed to have fewer resources, opportunities and skills to buffer the negative impact of damaging influences and traumatic experiences, which in turn may contribute to a range of challenges. Parents have not only the first but also the most enduring effect on children. Parents and the family environment are therefore vital in shaping children's early development and preparation for school.

Chapter Three presents the empirical research design.



## **CHAPTER 3**

### **RESEARCH DESIGN**

#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

In this chapter the adopted research approach, the research design, the methods of data collection, and the data analysis techniques used will be discussed.

The Oxford Dictionary (2012) defines *research* as a systematic investigation into and a study of materials and sources in order to establish facts and reach new conclusions.

#### **3.2 PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH**

The primary aim of the study was to gain a comprehensive understanding of how parents from disadvantaged backgrounds perceive their role in preparing their children for school. The following questions were formulated to direct the study:

- What was the current knowledge parents from disadvantaged backgrounds had regarding early childhood development and school readiness?
- To what extent did parents from disadvantaged backgrounds understand the vital role they play in preparing their children for school?
- Did parents realize the significant part a nurturing and emotionally safe environment played in preparing their children for school?
- To what degree did parents realize the importance of nutrition and basic health care in their children's early development and preparation for school?
- To what extent did parents recognize the value that linguistic, motor and cognitive exposure and stimulation had on their children's early development and school readiness?

#### **3.3 RESEARCH METHOD**

A qualitative research approach was followed, where emphasis was placed on gathering data on naturally occurring phenomena. Methods were used to capture essential perceptions and aspects of the phenomenon from the perspective of the study participants. These methods were also utilized to uncover beliefs, values, and motivations that underlie individual behaviours and perceptions (Curry, Nembhard & Bradley, 2009:1442).

Nieuwenhuis (2007:51) added that qualitative research is concerned with understanding and interpreting the process and the social and cultural context that underlie various behavioural patterns. It is most concerned with understanding the 'why' questions of research. It typically studies people or systems by interacting with and observing the participant in their natural environment and focusing on their meanings and interpretations. The emphasis is on the quality and depth of information. The rationale of using a qualitative approach in this research was to explore knowledge and perceptions parents of preschoolers from disadvantaged backgrounds had regarding early childhood development and school preparation.

### **3.4 RESEARCH DESIGN**

The research design refers to the strategy followed to integrate the different components of the study in a logical way: it forms the outline for the collection and analysis of data. The function of a research design is to ensure that the evidence obtained effectively addresses the research problem and provides answers for the research objectives (USC Libraries, 2013).

An interpretive phenomenological design was selected to obtain data with specific reference to understanding the phenomenon through the various meanings that people assign to it. The study is aimed at describing and interpreting the experiences and perceptions of the participants, regarding a specific event or concept in order to understand the experience as perceived by them. The parents' perceptions of their role was assessed and interpreted in the light of their experiences and their environment (Nieuwenhuis, 2007:59; McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:346).

#### **3.4.1 Selection of the sample**

Sampling refers to the process used to select a portion of the population for a particular study. The participants in this study were selected through purposive sampling, which means they were selected because of some defining characteristic that makes them the holders of the data needed for the study (Nieuwenhuis, 2007:79).

The aim of the study was to determine the perceptions parents from a disadvantaged background hold, regarding their role in their children's preparation for school. For this reason, specific research sites that are prone to serve the purpose of the study were identified.

As the researcher had a specific group in mind, the participants for this research were selected from different informal settlements in an area northeast of Tshwane.

In order to gain insight from a representative group of participants the researcher needed to consider 'Scoping for diversity'. According to Morse and Richards (2013:90), scoping for diversity involves considering the scale of the research question and attention to representation.

The researcher had to ask questions such as: “What is it that I want to make statements about?” and “Whose experiences will I include or exclude?” Diversity also requires attention to the areas to be covered: “Is there more than one perspective on this issue?” With diversity in mind, the researcher therefore decided to select parents from different cultural backgrounds that subsequently led to different perspectives and a broader representation within the focused field of the study.

The participants from the first group came from a diverse community consisting of residents from a variety of cultures and backgrounds. These residents do not have access to running water or electricity. A limited number of the adults from these communities are employed full time. The second community (community B) consists of informal settlements where the majority of the residents are Afrikaans-speaking. Neither of these settlements have access to clean drinking water, but they do have limited access to electricity. Some of the adults are employed full time, but the majority relies heavily on the support and donations from the surrounding community. The third community is similar to the first community consisting of residents from different cultures and backgrounds. The community does not have access to electricity or running water and only a limited number of residents are employed on a full time basis.

Purposive sampling was employed to identify and select group members who represent the target population. The primary considerations in identifying and selecting participants for this study was to find roughly twenty parents living within the two selected disadvantaged communities, who have preschool children currently aged between four and six years of age, who are able to communicate in either English or Afrikaans and who were willing to participate in focus group interviews.

The purposive sampling method of word of mouth was utilized. Word of mouth required the support of other people to participate in the recruitment process by approaching potential participants on behalf of the researcher. One of the residents of each of these communities, known to the researcher, assisted in the identification and selection of participants. Potential participants were selected on grounds of meeting the criteria of the study. Interested volunteers were requested to give permission for the researcher to initiate contact and provide further details about the study (Gledhill, Abbey & Schweitzer, 2008:84-94).

### **3.4.2 Data collection**

In qualitative research, interviews are among the most familiar strategies for collecting data. When research seeks to explore meaning and perceptions to gain a better understanding of a phenomena or to generate hypotheses it generally requires some form of qualitative interviewing. This form of interviewing encourages the interviewees to share rich descriptions of

a phenomenon while leaving the interpretation or analysis to the researcher (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:346).

The purpose of the qualitative research interview is to contribute to a theoretical body of knowledge that is based on the meanings that life experiences hold for the interviewees (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree.2006: 314). For this research study, a qualitative interviewing method was useful as the researcher was interested in the views and perceptions of the participants. Although individual in-depth interviews allow a researcher to gain deep understanding of social and personal matters, the researcher decided that the focus group interview would be more beneficial for this study, as it allows a wider range of experiences and perceptions because of the public nature of the process.

#### **3.4.2.1 Focus group interviews**

For this study, the focus group interview was chosen as the strategy to best gain access to information needed to answer the research question: *What are the perceptions of parents from disadvantaged backgrounds of their role in preparing their children for school?*

The rationale of using focus group interviews was to explore the perceptions of multiple participants sharing their knowledge and experience about this specific topic. The focus group interview strategy is based on the assumption that group interaction will be dynamic in broadening the range of responses, stimulating the development of ideas and releasing inhibitions that may otherwise discourage participation (Nieuwenhuis, 2007:90).

According to DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree (2006:315), each focus group represents a single entity within a sample of groups and should therefore not be seen as an interview with distinct individuals. Data also include observer descriptions of group dynamics and analyses integrate the interaction dynamics within each group.

The researcher conducted three focus group interviews with parents to gain comprehensive insight into their perceptions and perspectives concerning the role they play and the contribution they make towards their children's development and learning processes, with specific reference to school preparation and -readiness. An introductory question was asked in order to create a comfortable and relaxed atmosphere. Thereafter, a variety of questions were asked to encourage involvement and conversation. The main objective of the focus groups was to seek information in the form of attitudes, beliefs, opinions and perspectives in order to answer the research questions.

For this study, the researcher made use of a semi-structured interview guide approach. DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree (2006:315) point out that semi-structured interviews are often used as the sole data source for a qualitative research project. The interviews are usually scheduled in advance at a designated time and location outside of everyday events. They are generally organised around a set of predetermined open-ended questions, with other questions emerging from the dialogue between interviewer and interviewees.

A semi-structured interview guide with identified themes was formulated in advance for use with all three focus groups (cf Addendum E). The questions explored different aspects of early childhood development and school preparation. Although the questions were formulated beforehand, the researcher adapted, simplified and repeated questions and language to ensure clear comprehension for all the participants.

The themes of discussions were as follows:

- Concepts of early childhood development and school readiness
- Parental contribution to school preparation
- Perceptions of a secure and loving environment
- Views on nutrition and health care
- Ways and means of linguistic, movement and cognitive stimulation

#### **3.4.2.2 Observation during focus groups**

According to Nieuwenhuis (2007:92), one of the distinguishing characteristics of focus groups is the combination of oral data and observation as data gathering techniques. Observation plays an important role, capturing non-verbal cues and attitudes, to ensure a much richer data analysis. An additional individual was introduced as an observer in order to mark the observation checklist and write explanatory remarks during the interview (cf Addendum F). The involvement of another researcher contributed to the trustworthiness of the study.

#### **3.4.3 Procedures**

Data collection has to follow a specific procedure. The procedure followed to collect the data for this study included the following:

- Initial identification of potential participants. People known to the researcher and familiar with the identified communities, approached potential participants on behalf of the researcher. Interested volunteers were requested to grant permission for the researcher to initiate contact.

- The potential participants were informed about the nature and the aim of the research project, the ethical requirements, as well as information regarding focus group interviews, voluntary withdrawal, confidentiality, anonymity, safe keeping of the results and consent to record the interviews. Participants were given the opportunity to ask questions to gain clarity on all the issues they queried.
- For those willing to take part another opportunity was given to allow further questions before providing their consent. No participants were forced to sign the documentation unless they were comfortable with their voluntary participation (cf Addendum C).
- The participants signed a declaration of anonymity and confidentiality prior to the focus group interview (cf Addendum D).
- Focus group interviews were conducted in the non-threatening environment of the participant's community with the parents, who agreed to participate in the study and who signed the consent forms (Gledhill, Abbey & Schweitzer, 2008:84-94).
- A debriefing session was conducted after the focus group interviews where all the concerns of the participants were addressed.

#### **3.4.4 Data interpretation**

To establish trustworthiness in qualitative research Lietz, Langer and Furman (2006:444) point out that the researcher must engage in a variety of strategies in order to describe research findings in a way that closely reflects the meaning as described by the participants. The aim of analysing qualitative data is to authentically summarise what was seen or heard in common words, phrases, themes or patterns that would assist in the understanding and interpretation of the phenomenon. The aim of qualitative data is to interpret and make sense of what is in the data. The research questions were constantly utilized to guide the study (Nieuwenhuis, 2007: 99).

A semi-structured interview guide with identified themes was formulated in advance for use with all the focus groups. The interview guide approach involves using a structure or predetermined framework to analyse data. Essentially, the researcher imposes their own structure or theories on the data and then uses these to analyse the interview transcripts. Newton (2010:5) however warns against some drawbacks of the interview guide approach. He points out that significant topics might unintentionally be missed and that the comparability between groups might be reduced due to differences in the sequencing and wording of each interview. These differences can however also potentially allow interviews to develop their own coherence, which itself can be analysed.

The most common analyses of focus group results involve a transcript of the discussion and a summary of the conclusions that can be drawn. The first step in the interpretation of the data was therefore to have the entire interview transcribed verbatim. Transcription established a permanent written record of the group discussion and served as the basis for further analysis. The transcript cannot reflect the entire character of the discussion, it is therefore necessary that the interviewer supplement the transcript with some additional observational data that was obtained during the interview. Nonverbal communication, gestures, and behavioural responses that radically influence the interpretation of a statement were obtained via observation and were included as important sources of information (Stewart, Shamdasani & Rook, 2007:109-133).

Analysis already started during data collection. The verbal responses, reactions and interactions of the participants were analysed and organised according to the different themes. Alternative themes that arose from the interviews were incorporated. The observations were analysed and added to the identified themes. Interpretation of the analyzed data included the identification of emerging patterns, associations, concepts and explanations. After interpretation, and conveying of meaning, it was brought into context with existing theory and revealed how it supported existing knowledge, or brought new understanding to the body of knowledge. The content and themes were further reflected upon in order to identify important elements to consider for potential future involvement.

### **3.5 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

The application for ethical clearance for this study has met the requirements as specified by the University of South Africa and was approved by the ethical committee of the college of education (It has been added to the front of the study). Mouton (2006:239) states that the ethics of science concerns what is right and what is wrong in the conduct of research. Ethical codes ensure that the rights and interests of all participants are protected. In virtually all studies with human participants ethical issues and risks occur. The researcher therefore had to consider all potential risks and ethical conflicts in the design and conducting of the research. The participants' rights were closely considered at all times during this research. Although there were no foreseeable risks involved in this study, measures were taken to support minor discomforts and potential challenging, emotional responses. The following ethical measures were taken:

#### **3.5.1 Informed consent**

All participants in research have to be protected from possible harm. In this research, the researcher obtained informed consent from all the participants (cf Addendum C). The participants each received a letter providing them with comprehensive information on the research study. Every potential participant was also verbally informed about the content and

aim of the study, the ethical requirements, as well as information regarding focus groups, length of the interviews, voluntary withdrawal, confidentiality, anonymity, safe keeping of the results and permission to record the interviews. They were provided with ample opportunity to ask questions, raise concerns and to make independent and informed decisions whether to participate in the study. All participants recognized that their contributions and the disclosures of information were voluntary and that they could withdraw from the research at any time. No participants were forced to sign any documentation unless they were comfortable with their voluntary participation.

### **3.5.2 Confidentiality of the group and individual participants**

The confidentiality of all group participants has to be maintained. Records may not be linked with names and everything learned from participants must be held in the strictest of confidentiality (Salkind, 2009:80-82). The group was informed and reassured about the confidentiality and anonymity of the interviews. To assure anonymity and confidentiality no names were identified in printable format. The participants were also asked to sign a declaration of confidentiality prior to the interview confirming that they would maintain confidentiality of all focus group discussions (cf Addendum D).

## **3.6 CONCLUSION**

In this chapter, report was given of the empirical investigation. The research design, research methods and techniques, as well as the ethical considerations were discussed.

Chapter Four will deal with the processing and interpretation of the data.



## **CHAPTER 4**

### **RESULTS OF THE EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION AND INTERPRETATION**

#### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter provides a discussion of the empirical study and the results thereof. The researcher will describe, summarise and interpret the results of the focus group interviews and participant observations based on the research questions in Chapter 1. Only parts of the focus group transcriptions were selected and translated to use as representations of the data within this chapter. Completed transcriptions of the focus groups can be found in Addendum G.

#### **4.2 DESCRIPTION OF PARTICIPANTS**

The participants in this study were selected through purposive sampling, which means they were selected because of the knowledge and experience they held, and which was required for this study. The participants came from informal settlements and disadvantaged communities within an area northeast of Tshwane. They were all parents of preschool children between the ages of four and six. All the participants were willing to partake and gave consent to participate in the research study. They all indicated that they were able to communicate in either English or Afrikaans. Below are the demographical tables (Table 4.1- 4.3) on the profiles of the study participants.

The participants from the selected communities were involved in three different focus groups to ascertain their views, perspectives and insights regarding their role as parents of preschool children.

<b>FOCUS GROUP 1 : Conducted in English</b>					
<b>Participant</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Cultural Background</b>	<b>Number of children</b>	<b>Age of preschool child/ren</b>	<b>Attending preschool</b>
P1	F	Zulu	1	6	Yes
P2	F	Tswana	5	6	Yes
P3	F	Sepedi	3	4	No
P4	F	Tswana	1	4	No
P5	F	Tsonga	3	4	No

**Table 4.1 Demographic Information of Focus Group 1: Participants 1-5**

<b>FOCUS GROUP 2: Conducted in Afrikaans.</b>					
<b>Participant</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Cultural Background</b>	<b>Number of children</b>	<b>Age of preschool child/ren</b>	<b>Attending preschool</b>
P6	F	Afrikaans	4	4,2, 5 months	Yes No
P7	F	Afrikaans	2	6	Yes
P8	F	Afrikaans	2	5	Yes
P9	F	Afrikaans	1	6	Yes
P10	F	Afrikaans	3	6	Yes
P11	F	Afrikaans	1	5	Yes
P12	F	Afrikaans	3	6	Yes
P13	M	Afrikaans	4	6	Yes

**Table 4.2 Demographic Information of Focus Group 2: Participants 6-13**

<b>FOCUS GROUP 3: Conducted in English</b>					
<b>Participant</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Cultural Background</b>	<b>Number of children</b>	<b>Age of preschool child/ren</b>	<b>Attending preschool</b>
<b>P14</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Tswana</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>P15</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Zulu</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>P16</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Tswana</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>P17</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Sepedi</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>6 , 3, 3</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>P18</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Zulu</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>P19</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Zulu</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>P20</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Sepedi</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4, 5</b>	<b>Yes</b>

**Table 4.3 Demographic Information of Focus Group 3: Participants 14-20**

### **4.3 FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS**

The focus group interview strategy was implemented where parents participated in different focus group discussions. Three different focus groups were conducted. The main objective of the focus groups was to seek information in the form of attitudes, beliefs, opinions and perspectives in order to answer the research questions.

The focus group sessions were held in non-threatening settings within the participant's communities and were recorded using two digital recorders to ensure that data was captured accurately. The interviews were transcribed verbatim (cf Addendum G) in preparation for analysis and interpretation. To ensure accurate analysis one of the group members assisted the researcher in translating parts of the recorded interviews that were communicated in Sepedi during the sessions. The participants signed a declaration of confidentiality prior to the focus group interviews (cf Addendum D). Through the interviews the participants were called by their names, however, to ensure confidentiality, they were labelled numerically in the transcriptions. An observer was present taking additional notes and observations.

A semi-structured interview guide with identified themes was formulated in advance for all the focus groups (cf Addendum E). The questions explored different aspects of early childhood development and school preparation. Although the questions were formulated beforehand, the researcher adapted and simplified the language and repeated questions to ensure clear comprehension for all the participants. The questions often led to open discussions where diverse perceptions of participants were accessed.

The themes of discussions were as follows:

- Concepts of early childhood development and school readiness
- Parental contribution to school preparation
- Perceptions of a secure and loving environment
- Views on nutrition and health care
- Ways and means of linguistic, movement and cognitive stimulation

The following are descriptions, abstracts and highlights of each focus group interview. The reader can refer to Addendum G for the complete verbatim transcriptions. Abbreviations used in the transcriptions: R- Researcher and P - Participants by chronological numbers.

#### **4.3.1. First focus group interview**

The participants came from a diverse community consisting of residents from different cultures and backgrounds. Five mothers participated and the interview was conducted in English. The discussion lasted an hour. The participants initially seemed very nervous and tense. They were hesitant and reluctant to answer questions and the early session was marked by long silences. Very early within the session the researcher realised the language and cultural barrier was much bigger than expected. The questions had to be rephrased and repeated several times. The participants were encouraged to help each other with the language difficulty. This led to several mini- discussions in Sepedi that resulted in valuable contributions. As the interview progressed, they became more relaxed and willing to participate in English or Afrikaans. Afterwards one of the group members supported the researcher in translating these Sepedi discussions into English. The complete transcriptions of the focus group can be found in Addendum G.

#### 4.3.1.1 Concepts of early childhood development and school readiness

R: How do you understand early childhood development? Early (*pause*) childhood (*pause*) development.

P1: When a child is growing up they grow step-by-step. They start by sitting, crawling and then walking.

R: What do you understand under school readiness?

P4: Ok... ok you have to prepare your child best. Like maybe he or she is four years, you have to prepare him before.

P1: Maybe you have to teach him how to talk? Maybe, how to pronounce his name?

P4: And to tell him it is the time to go to school: 'You will wake up earlier in the morning to go to school.

R: So that he knows what is going on?

*Nods from several participants.*

P4: You have to prepare financially.

P2: So you can support financially.

R: Do you think early childhood development and school readiness have an influence on school achievement?

P2: Yes, early childhood development will affect your child at a school age. Cause your child will be a slow learner because he started talking late. And as the other children learn at school, he is going to struggle, because he won't be able to understand, because he is a slow learner. For example, if they ask a question, he will need to think for a long time before he can answer, because he is not like the other learners. Because he is late with his speech.

*Discussion in Sepedi*

R: Can you try to explain to me what you just said in English or Afrikaans?

P1: She's saying that, yes, early development will affect your child at a school age, cause if your child is talking late...maybe if we know our children start talking maybe in two years, yours will maybe be talking in three years seven months, so that when he is going to

school his friends will be talking and then he'll be slow because he won't be talking the same....eish

P2: the same time as others in the class because he is going to be a slow learner.

P1: He can't communicate with the other children because he is very slow.

P4 *agrees by nodding.*

R: Do I hear you correctly- if they are slow when they are little, they will be slow in school?

*Participants all agree.*

#### **4.3.1.2 Parental contribution to school preparation**

R: How can a parent help to prepare a child for school?

P2: I'll buy him a uniform, school bag, lunch box...

P1: I will sit with him; explain to him that now he is going to school. That maybe:" You have come to the next level, a stage, where you are going to meet other children and that you must behave, always listen to your teacher. You are going to get a teacher. And if you want something you talk to your teacher and explain to him how it is going to go at school."

R: Explain to him how school works?

P1: Yes.

R: Do you need knowledge about some things to prepare your child for school? Do you need some toys or equipment like swings, books or skills (like to be able to read and write yourself) to prepare your child for school?

P1: Yes, I think you need some equipment. At school they use a colour book; you can buy a book and crayons, so he can practise at home as he does at school.

R: So you feel when they are small and they are not going to school yet, you can give them those things to practice for when they go to school.

*All participants agree.*

R: Anything else?

P1: and toys.

P2: ...and counting 1 to 5 or 10

R: So counting. OK, what else?

P5: Also, you can teach him yourself ...how to write and to read.

R: Do you think it is necessary? Do you think a parent needs to teach these things to a child before he goes to school?

*Everyone agrees that it is important.*

R: And do you do it?

P5: Yes.

R: So what type of things do you do?

P1: My child is in Grade R. Every day when he comes from school he say:"Mommy we have done 1..2..3..5" and I say :”No, it’s not 1..2..3..5..it’s.. 4...5.” And I ask how was school today and he’d say this and this and maybe his pronouncing is wrong, then I help him. I correct him.

R: How do you experience your life as parent of a preschool child?

P1: Oh, mine is hectic because my son is very stubborn. When you talk to him sometimes, he does not listen. When I talk to him, he does not answer. Ai- it is difficult to raise him.

*Group laughs and agrees on stubbornness of their children.*

R: OK, so she experiences it is difficult to have a small child.

P4: And for me it is difficult. My child is a boy. He is three years and something. He is naughty... stubborn. O, I don’t know how to explain this? But eish...

P5: O, my boy is very naughty...naughty, naughty, naughty. Au..That one ... He does everything. He takes condoms and do balloons

#### **4.3.1.3 Perceptions of a secure and loving environment**

R: What do you think a small child needs to feel safe and secure?

P1: I think attention.

P5: Attention and love.

R: Love and attention from whom?

P5: From both parents

R: Do you all agree on that?

*All participants indicate that they agree.*

R: What are different ways in which parents will show love to their preschool children?

P2: I think take him out to the movie or Spur.

P1: Entertainment.

P2: Ja, or buying him toys or clothes...

P3: Or you can play ball with them outside for about 30 minutes (*In Sepedi*)

P2: Or buy him a Ben Ten t-shirt.

P2: Or playing with him, helping with schoolwork and to watch TV.

P5: And giving him attention and don't be rude...

P1: When you talk to him, you must always be calm. So that he can understand, because if you talk to him angry then he started to be scared. Don't shout.

P3: If you call a child, you cannot shout. No, you must call nicely.

R: P5, how would you show love to your child?

P5: Always talk to him nicely, watch what he is doing every day and take care of him.

R: If you say, take care of him, what do you mean by that?

P5: Look at him wherever he plays.

P1: And make sure when it is cold that he wears warm clothes that's always clean

P3: At our place, we live in a small house. My child loves to play outside, so you can't keep him indoors, all the time. You might give him a book, but when you look again, he's gone. He went to play in the street. That's my problem.

R: So there is no safe place to play? Is that what you are saying? The children want to play but there is no place to play? Why is it not safe outside?

P3: They are always in the street.

R: Can I just ask- is it a busy road? What are your concerns when the children play outside?

P1: Maybe sometimes there can come a car... speeding cars.

P5: Going outside on the street is not safe.

R: And if you are playing with him outside?



P3: *(explains on behalf of P5)* Her children is not safe because they live in a small house. So if her children see someone in the street doing funny inappropriate things, they copy this behaviour.

P1: *(explains on behalf of P2)* There was a time that her son was playing soccer outside and then he fell and got hurt, so that's why she thinks outside is not safe. It's dangerous.

#### **4.3.1.4 Views on nutrition and health care**

R: If you can choose any food for your child, what would you give him or her?

P2: Milk, juice, fruit, jungle oats.

R: Now you have to give me a reason you say all these things.

P2: Ok, because it's healthy. It's not junk food. I don't give him junk food.

R: What do you consider a healthy lifestyle during pregnancy?

P5: When I'm pregnant I eat everything. As long as it does not come out it is fine.

*Everybody laughs.*

P3: I like walking when I'm pregnant.

P2: Me too.

R: How do you feel about alcohol & smoking while pregnant?

P5: Those are not healthy.

P1: They are not healthy you know, but... eish if you are addicted to smoking whether pregnant or not, you are addicted.

P4: Smoking is dangerous!

P1: It's dangerous but ... eish...

P4: No, you must control yourself, smoking is dangerous!

P1: It's dangerous but ... eish...

R: And alcohol?

P2: Alcohol is not safe. It's dangerous because it can harm your baby.

#### 4.3.1.5 Ways and means of linguistic, movement and cognitive stimulation

- **Linguistic**

R: What can you do to help your child develop his or her language skills?

P1: Talk to him more often and maybe also read books of the language that you are talking.

- **Movement**

R: What can you do to help your child develop his or her movement skills ?

P1: Movement - how they are walking, running? (*Very puzzled, almost sceptical*)

R: Yes.

*No response.*

R: Do you think it is important?

P1: No, I don't think it's important. I don't think it's important.

P4: He will teach himself. This is the 'new generation'! "Let me show you how to walk" (*jokingly / sarcastically*) Hey, he teaches himself.

R: Do you think movement like walking, running, jumping and skipping is important?

*All agree.*

R: Why do you say that?

P1: Because it's part of exercise.

P2: Always active.

R: Why is it good for a child to exercise and to be active?

P2: To be healthy.

*Everyone agrees.*

- **Cognitive**

R: What can you do to help your child develop his or her thinking skills ?

P1: By asking him questions to see if he understands...

P4: What I am saying?

#### **4.3.2 Second focus group interview**

The participants came from the different informal settlements consisting mainly of Afrikaans residents. Seven mothers and one father participated. The interview was conducted in Afrikaans and lasted 90 minutes. The participants seemed very comfortable and relaxed. The complete Afrikaans transcription of the focus group can be found in Addendum G.

##### **4.3.2.1 Concepts of early childhood development and school readiness**

R: How do you understand early childhood development?

P8: I should say it's a child that.....how can I say it now? (*Laughs somewhat uneasy*) It's a child that's clever early. How do you say that?

P12: Developed further than his age.

*P13: Indicates that he agrees.*

P9: From birth, the attention you as parent give to your child helps him to develop. The more attention you give, the better the child will be developed by the time he starts school.

R: What do you understand under school readiness?

P7: Whether he can write? At least his name ... and his speech.

P8: He can count to 10.

P7: Shapes, objects...

P12: He must be able to function independent from his parents.

P13: He must remember your cell phone number. (*Laughs*)

R: So, when I ask you what is school readiness? When is a child school ready? Then you are referring to all these things you've just mentioned?

P9: When he has reached those milestones, like my daughter who was born premature. The doctor advised me to keep her back a year. I did not do it. There she is now - she does very well at school. She can write her name, she can do everything the rest of the

class does. So I believe it is that what you as parent put in., that made her to be ready. It's not about whether they are clever or slow.

R: Do you think early childhood development and school readiness has an influence on school achievement?

P8: I don't think so...he already knows what's happening and that what he does is right. Why will it hinder him when he's older?

R: ...or benefit him? Influence him. So do you feel that school and early childhood development are separated? Do I hear you correctly?

P8: Ask the question again so that I can just hear again?

*Everybody laughs.*

R: Do you think early childhood development can influence school performance later on? Do you think it will have an effect on how he will perform later in school?

P7, 9, 6: Yes

*Affirmative gestures from the rest.*

P8: Do you think so? (*Still does not sound convinced, seems unsure*)

P7: Yes, if you as parent don't give attention to your child now, to leave him when he gets homework and you don't care. He must know, he must get into that routine. You must know. Leave him- then he will, one day when he is working, think he doesn't need to go to work. He must know he must get up, he must go to school. He must perform. That's how he is going to do in life someday.

P11: That's also how he disciplines himself from early on. So that when he reaches high school, he has that discipline. And apply it himself.

P11: That's also how he disciplines himself from early on. So that when he reaches high school, he has that discipline. And apply it himself.

P12: It builds on it, when he falls behind the others, then he will dropout. He will not progress with them.

P13: You need to show him the right way from childhood, otherwise he would take a wrong turn and he won't be able to look after himself. So he needs to be trained cognitively correct. He needs to know the dos and don'ts from early on.

P7: The example of the parents also has an influence on the child. If I do my routines and chores every day, eventually he will join in. I see it with my son, when I start cleaning,

he will make his bed. He understands. Therefore, I think the influence of the parent is the biggest.

#### **4.3.2.2 Parental contribution to school preparation**

R: Who do you see as the most important people in a preschool child's early development and learning?

P7, P8, P11: The mother.

P9: But the father also plays an important part.

P6: I would say both parents together.

P9: The father is important. We saw it when my husband worked away from home. The school called me to say my child is becoming shy and timid- she missed her daddy. So we moved closer to his work.

P7: Every boy needs a father to play rough with. I'm not going to play rough with him. That's a father's job!

*Everybody laughs.*

R: How can a parent help to prepare a child for school?

P12: Read a lot of books.

P8: Give him shapes, colours; show the colours with pencils till he can tell you the correct colours. Teach him to write his name and surname. Teach him to count and those types of things.

P6: Concentration.

P12: Memorize.

P9: Try to make it fun, that it doesn't feel like punishment.

P8: Yes, it shouldn't get boring.

*Everyone agrees.*

P11: I spy with my little eyes...

R: Do I hear you correctly- you can do a lot, but it should be fun and enjoyable.

*Everybody agrees and gestures confirmative.*

P7: From preschool to formal schooling, I would say – to make a child understand there is a difference. Now you are really going to the big school. So now, you must basically understand you are going to do real work. Now your future is starting. Now you must pull up your socks, starting from Grade 1. *(Laughs)*

R: So now it is serious?

P7: Yes.

P9: If he brings something positive home, reward him, so that he feels encouraged to do well and better. Then he will keep that routine till Grade Twelve.

P11: Teaching them the right values.

P7: Expose them to everything, so that they can know and make their own decisions at the end of the day. Tell them now what is right and wrong so that when they walk into high school they can know.

R: So from preschool you want to give them information so that they can learn?

*Everybody agrees.*

P6: They pick up the funniest things. There are youngsters on the plot who don't work and they walk and drink. Now my son does not want to go to school, because they are not going. They see the smallest things and ask questions.

R: And that makes things difficult for you as mother?

P6: Yes, cause now you have to explain to your child why he has to go to school and they don't.

P8: Yes, I think it's good to show a child what is wrong, otherwise tomorrow he will take the beer bottle, because he wants to try. Feel how it feels. Why it looks so nice... So teach him from childhood: It's wrong, those things make your head so and so and he will know. Otherwise they do it all in secret ('skelm').

R: So where you live – your kids get exposed to a lot of these things?

*Most participants agree.*

P6: Yes, especially cannabis and alcohol.

P7: And swearing and shouting.

P9: That's why we moved. Where we used to live the men abused the women physically. Our daughter cried, she did not want to stay there. So those circumstances is good to teach them, but not for them to see.

R: What do parents of preschool children need to help prepare them for school in terms of skills, resources or equipment?

P2: Patience

*Everybody agrees wholeheartedly.*

P7: Discipline, routine.

P11: A text book.

*Everybody laughs.*

P8: I would say patience, routine and objects, those types of things.

P6: To be strict. Yes must be yes and no is no.

P7: Blocks, paint and clay.

P9: Improvise with things in the house. Learn colours while doing the dishes. "Put the yellow cup on the right hand side of the table." Make it a game, so she will learn. Play 'dumb', then she will need to help you with the colours.

P6: We buy all-in-one packages with everything included (*laughs*) then we work from it. It's very easy for us.

R: Play?

P6: Only with cars (*laughs*). If you ask, that's all they want to play.

P9: Mud, that's a big one – if you're looking for pots and pans or spoons. Go and look outside in the mud. She made mud cakes.

*P12 & 13 agree.*

R: If you think about equipment and apparatus for play, what do children need?

P8: Ball-play. It teaches them hand eye co-ordination. How to catch and be quick.

P6: Rope jump.

P8: Cricket, rugby, throw the ball at them.

P13: Climbing a tree.

P12: For balance.

P11: If you have big cement blocks you can draw shapes for hop scotch. They can jump and learn shapes.

P12: ...and a climbing frame.

#### 4.3.2.3 Perceptions of a secure and loving environment

R: What do you think a small child needs to feel safe and secure?

P7: Love and attention.

P9: That security of: I can come to you if a friend hurt me. I can talk to you, you will help me.

R: Are you ever concerned about physical safety?

P6: I am scared of the crime in South Africa. Murders, molestation and rape. Oh, yes, I'm very scared of that. Very, very, so if my children turn, I turn with them.

P8: I will say crime yes, but at your house, no. It's your responsibility as parent to constantly check up on your child. And you need to teach your child that if he feels uncomfortable with somebody or someone does something that bothers him, he must tell you. He will come and say: "Mommy this friend is hurting me", or "that man is touching me", because he feels confident to talk to you as mother. You should not always shout at a child, because if a child runs to you and you tell him: "Just go and play!" then he might feel he is not going to talk to you, because you always push him away. Rather talk to him and explain things so that he feel secure talking to you. So about physical safety I feel: No, they will come to you if something bothers them or scares them.

P6, P11, P9: (*simultaneously*) Attention!

P9: To spend time with them.

P6: The best way to show love to your kids is as everybody goes to bed - We've got a rhyme: "Love you, see you tomorrow, sleep well." And we cannot sleep if everyone didn't say it. And we kiss and hug each other and go to sleep. And like if you bake pancakes, let them sit on the tables, lick the bowls. This one throws sugar and that one flip the pancake.

*Everybody agrees.*

P11: If they are sad, you are the one they will come to and you can comfort them.

P9: And to make them understand that you understand what is happening to them, because you were a child and also went through similar situations. They don't have to feel bad about it.



P6: Bath them, dress them and buy them sweets (*laughs*). My kids love sweets. They think I love them very much if I give them sweets.

P9: And if they want to do something, give them the chance - like my daughter wanted to play tag- rugby. This mother was very against it, because it's a girl. In the end, we attended all the practices every week and the games on Saturdays.

P8: Support!

P13: They want that support.

P12: You must also be lenient, not only strict.

P6: Take them out. I took my kids to the zoo. Oh, I regretted that afterwards! (*Laughs*)

P7: A child will feel loved if he knows he has a place in the house. So, do not push him to the side. He must feel part of the family; for example, help himself with things in fridge. It's not like:" you are a child you will do as I tell you".

P11: You also get those parents who overdo things.

P6: Ok, I think I overdo things a little.

*Everybody laughs.*

P11: They don't give them space, they cling to them, give too much love.

P7: That is when they want to break away and becomes rebellious.

P11: So, I think you must show love but you must have 'boundaries' when showing that love.

P7: So that they can be themselves and know their own identities. You should not force yourself on them by saying you should be like this or this. You must give them the gap to be themselves.

#### **4.3.2.4 Views on nutrition and health care**

R: If you can choose any food for your child, what would you give him or her?

P9: Vegetables. My child loves vegetables!

P10: Vegetables, fruit and juice.

P7: As healthy as possible. Something that will nourish him the whole day long.

P9: If mine can eat vegetables and pasta, she's happy.

P11: Something I've learnt is that too much of a good thing is not always good. So you have to spoil them somewhat.

P7: Yes, like a sweet once a week. That's what we do; my children don't get sweets every day. My son knows on a Saturday he can have an ice cream or a sweet. He can choose one.

R: Why would you give your children this food?

P12: It builds their minds.

P9: Brain development.

P7: Concentration, definitely.

P6: Like we say if you eat carrots, you don't have to wear spectacles.

P8: It's healthy.

P11: Helps them fight bacteria and infections.

P13: Like my son says he eats beetroot because it gives him new blood.

*Everybody laughs.*

P6: Spinach has iron, Popeye-food!

P8: Helps to build bones.

P7: Little ones are very active. So, as long as they are 'hydrated' – I'm happy. My son knows there is the fridge. If he wants milk or yoghurt, I don't limit him with things like that and cold drink. But I limit him with anything that is sweet.

P13: Otherwise they get hyperactive.

P7: And not only that...their teeth.

R: How would you describe a healthy lifestyle while pregnant?

P7: Hygiene.

P8: Yes.

P11: Try to keep everything as clean as possible.

P7: After hygiene, then follows the other things, like eating healthy etc, but hygiene is at the top of the list.

P9: And mommy starts breastfeeding from birth. It helps with your child's brain development and yes, we are not allowed to compare children but my daughter and her cousin differs 5 months and my daughter was 3 months premature, now she does much better as her cousin at the same age, doing similar work at school. Cousin was a bottle baby, mine was breastfed.

*P11 and 8 agree: It does help...immunity.*

P7: I also think routine, like you mustn't only eat vegetables every day, there must also be protein, calcium, everything must be in the child's daily intake.

*P8 nods affirmatively.*

P12: A balanced diet.

R: And do you think that what a pregnant woman does has an influence on the baby?

*Affirmative reaction from all.*

P7: It starts at the pregnancy. The development of the baby. I mean the child develops in the tummy. If you smoke and drink, it will influence your child's brain there and then. So if you do not live right and do exercise it will affect the baby.

#### **4.3.2.5 Ways and means of linguistic, movement and cognitive stimulation**

- **Linguistic**

R: What can you do to help your child develop his or her language skills?

P9: We are bilingual - daddy is English and I am Afrikaans. Since birth, our daughter has learnt there are two languages. At us, it's only Afrikaans. Daddy also talks Afrikaans since it is the language she daily hears at school. At his parents it's English and if she makes mistakes, we help her; we explain and correct her. It takes patience. Also, storybooks. We have a bilingual bible with one page Afrikaans and one English. We read both to her so that she can understand both.

P8: I also say storybooks. Get English and Afrikaans. Teach them, so that when they are big, they can read themselves.

P6: *(laughs)* I don't need to teach my children, they teach me. They can speak 3 languages: Afrikaans, English and an African language.

P11: I think to help them to pronounce words.

P6: Maybe yes?

- P9: If they have black friends at school, let them learn his language. Let him explain words and she can explain it in Afrikaans. In that way, they learn each other's languages
- P12: To read books develop them intellectually and improve their speech because they pick up new words.
- P13: Through watching television they learn another language. Like these English stories, if they don't understand something they come and ask. And then they learn another language.

- **Movement**

- R: What can you do to help your child develop his or her motor -and movement skills?
- P9: We live on a big plot. Take your child and go walk in the veldt. Look for flowers and insects. Switch off the TV.
- P13: Yes, if they walk in nature they learn a lot from nature.
- P11: I think to play games like lie on your tummy, stand up, jump, and all those type of things. Yes, body exercises. Make it fun!
- P8: Play outside, it teaches him physically and eye- coordination.
- P7: Play ball with friends, it teaches hand eye co-ordination: kick and play.

- **Cognitive**

- R: Is there anything you can do to help your child to develop his/her brain; how he thinks, learns?
- P12: Many, many books. *(Laughs)*
- P9: To be positive. Not always be negative if he comes to you and to say what you saw was ugly and wrong. Rather explain in a nice manner. Be positive then they will be more willing to learn.
- P13: Was in agreement.
- P11: I think when they cut out a picture to explain the picture and sit with them and build their concentration.
- P9: Yes, and like today's technology. Kids love computers and cell phones. If you have a phone, ask me, there are educational games. If my daughter can, she will sit and play on my phone and simultaneously learn about technology. They don't fall behind...

P7: Watch TV: news, they must know what is going on... the weather.

P6: laughs loudly almost a bit nervously.

P11: But there are educational children's programs.

P8: On TV.

P11: You cannot say TV is bad, because there are ...

P7: Even movies, like Shrek and so. My son sings with, and I mean singing is good.

*(Almost defensive)*

P11: Yes, they learn lessons from it.

P7: To remember, like rhymes.

P11: And there are computer games which helps your brainpower. So, I wouldn't say technology is totally bad for your child; it depends on how you use it. TV and computers are not babysitters and has boundaries.

#### **4.3.3 Third focus groups interview**

Seven mothers of preschool children participated in this focus group. They came from a community consisting of residents from diverse cultures and backgrounds. The discussion lasted an hour. The discussion was in English but because two of the participants were more comfortable in Afrikaans, the questions were also asked in Afrikaans. The complete transcriptions of the focus groups can be found in Addendum G.

##### **4.3.3.1 Concepts of early childhood development and school readiness**

R: How do you understand early childhood development? Early *(pause)* childhood development?

P15: I think early childhood development; they are referring to the young kids that are not yet at school. Like a program developing those young kids.

P19: Yes, I agree, I think it's how to take care of children, and ...when a child must also attend crèche, the child must play, must do something...

R: What is school readiness?

P17: I think if the child gets a bit bigger, you must let him go to school.

R: So, he is big enough to go to school?

- P17: Yes.
- R: Do I understand you correctly, school readiness is about how old the child is? If he is old or big enough, then he must go to school.
- P17: Like the thing of childhood. When he is a bit bigger, then he must go to school, so that he can learn and so that I can help him like a mother. That he can learn right.
- P15: I just want to hear your question. You said with school readiness a child is ready to go to school? What are you referring to?
- R: I am asking the question to you? What is school readiness? When I say a child is school ready what does that mean?
- P15: I think what we are saying is now a child is ready to school now let me say you have taken a child to foundation phase maybe a crèche, then from crèche his now to preschool and then from preschool I think the child will be ready for school, because he or she has already followed the steps from crèche to Grade R and then to school
- R: Ok, so going to a crèche is important and going through the steps. Would you like to add, P19?
- P19: When the child is attending the preschool, and also at me at home I'm suppose to help him. I'm suppose to tell him next year you are going to school. You're going to wear the uniform; you will attend school from the morning till afternoon. I will teach him something like that.
- R: Do you think the early development and learning of a little child and school readiness will influence how a child does later in school?
- P15: Yes, I think it has an influence. Example: – like maybe a child is at early stage, bunking school, not going to school, playing with rough kids, he will think it is the right thing. And usually when he or she is going to other grades it will affect him as he or she will think these things are the right thing. So, I think maybe as parents we should look at what our kids are doing now while they're in a early age, cause it will influence them when they grow up.
- R: What do you think, P14?
- P14: P15 is right, you must sit down with your kids and you must tell them not to play with ...rough things, they go to school and read (*avoiding eye contact*).
- R: Ok, so am I hearing you right- when they are still little you must tell them not to play with rough friends and they must read because you feel that will have an effect on them when they are bigger?

P17: Yes, you must learn your kids. The world is not as nice as always. You must teach your kids. So if they come from school and tell you this happened. You can say; “My child, you mustn’t do that. That’s wrong. You must do this and this.” Then they grow up and they know.

R: So when you teach them something when they are little, they will do that when they are big. P16, what do you think?

P16: I think maybe as parent, I must teach my boy to do this... eish... (*laughs- seems like she’s struggling with communicating in English*) not to do drugs, smoking.

R: So when you tell them when they are little not to do drugs they won’t do it when they are big?

*All agree by nodding*

#### **4.3.3.2 Parental contribution to school preparation**

R: How can a parent help to prepare a child for school?

P16: Maybe I take the book first then I give to her and I’m writing the name first and then she’s writing. Maybe I’m drawing then she’s drawing again. I teach her to do homework each day and when she goes to Grade R.

R: So you will help her with reading and writing?

P16: Yes.

P15: For a child to see the importance of going to school, you must tell her how important the school is , like show her examples - you know you will be a doctor and this and this. To have that interest in school and helping her to write, showing her some words to write especially her name – how to write her name.

P17: I think if a child goes to school you must teach him a little, tell him to listen to the teacher and everything he tells them he must take to heart. He should not be rude to the other children. There are many things that you can teach him so that he understands what he is going to do there.

P15: I want to share this - When I was in school, my mom would say if you pass this grade, I will buy clothes for you, so usually when I’m at school I was so excited: December I’m going to get clothes so it’s that thing-encouragement. So it’s so great that if I go to school you’ll have a gift for me. So a child needs encouragement. They are getting to like school.

R: We talked about encouragement, what do you think?

P14: Help her to go to school. I will tell her that if she doesn't, she maybe will end up being a... tsotsi, maybe smoking drinking, not having respect.

R: So do you think education, being in school will help you to not do those things but if you do not go to school and you're not educated you can end up like that?

P14: Yes

R: What do parents need to help their little child for school – skills, things like toys, equipment? Do you feel that you need something specific to help a child to become ready for school?

P15: I think you have to be original. Being you is more important to your kid than to buy toys, because you can't afford some things, but usually they will understand. Some playing things they do need, but it's not like to be educated I have to buy this or this. It's like you must be original, you can just play with her, showing - like running with her, and playing ball with her - a child becomes very happy. She will feel like my mother likes me, because she can spend time with me, share stories, long stories.

P19: I agree but when you buy some toys, check the kind of toy, add something like crayons or stationary that help her to write her name, to teach her something. So when she's playing then you must say write your name here.

R: So would you get a child to write and draw rather than play?

P19: Yes.

P16: Maybe I'm teaching my children. When I'm finished teaching her then she plays with a friend and when she's finished, then she comes back again and I teach her again.

R: What do you mean by teaching her?

P16: Maybe I'm teaching drawing.

R: So you also feel that's very important.

P17: My children I teach them, because you see the boys like balls. If I take them to the preschool, they take their ball and my daughter she wants to take the ball. She grabs it and runs, and then I leave them to play. When they play in the house, I take the crayon and tell them to make a doll or man or car or anything.

R: So do I hear you correctly that writing, -drawing and using stationary is the most important way that you can help your child to get ready for school?

*All agree.*



P19: Yes, because if they go to school they will remember that last time my mother taught me how to write my name, and if they continue to play every day, and the school say write you name he's not writing, he will take that paper and do something else because he always wants to play. (*demonstrates by folding the paper*)

*Everybody laughs.*

#### **4.3.3.3 Perceptions of a secure and loving environment**

R: What do you think a small child needs to feel safe and loved?

P17: (*Laugh loudly*) You must take him, massage him so that he feels my mother likes me. Talk to him, hold him, give him hugs and kiss him so that he sees mommy loves me

P17: When they come from crèche, they run and jump in my arms (*demonstrates with open arms*) they kiss me. Then I give them a hug and they say they like it SO much!

P19: When maybe she does something wrong, don't say "hey voertsek" (*P17 nods in agreement*) don't be aggressive, then you must say sorry my son or maybe if you beat her, afterwards say sorry my son and hug him.

P15: Another thing that makes them feel loved: Encouraging them – maybe after dressing her say Joe! 'You look beautiful', telling how beautiful she is, after doing the right thing-tell her: Joe, you have done good!

P16: Buying presents makes them happy. When they go to school, I'll buy a present and when she sees it she's happy.

P14: Take them with you to go shopping with you.

P15: Preparing the best meal they love.

#### **4.3.3.4 Views on nutrition and health care**

R: How important is eating habits for a child?

P15: It is important to look what they eat because sometimes they do not eat healthy things. Usually like my daughter, she is so sensitive she doesn't like food like sweets that are sticky. She likes snacks and sometimes she would want to eat a lot of snacks, and it's not healthy for her.

R: So you prefer that she doesn't eat snacks?

P15: No, she can eat them, but not a lot.

R: What would you prefer that she eat?

P15: I prefer her to eat fruits.

P19: My child likes fruit. Fruits like banana, pear, he does not like juice he prefers cool drink, but it's not good for a baby.

R: What do you think is good for a baby?

P19: Juice.

R: And food?

P16: Marog.

P19: Vegetables

P20: (*very soft*) Potatoes, pumpkin, carrots.

R: If someone is pregnant, what would you tell her about a healthy lifestyle?

P19: Eat fruit and vegetables, drink water, always water. Then she must not drink beer or smoke. It can damage a baby. Fruit and vegetables make a baby healthy.

P15: Fruit and vegetables, but not too much orange & mango. It can affect the child through jaundice.

P16: And juice and pills from clinic.

R: Why would you tell her that?

P16: The baby must be fit and healthy.

#### **4.3.3.5 Ways and means of linguistic, movement and cognitive stimulation**

- **Linguistic**

R: What can you do to help your child develop his or her language skills?

P19: Mother Language or others?

R: Mother Language.

*Short Sepedi discussion with P18.*

P18: It is good for a child to know language, we must always write for the child and they must write.

R: So you will write for your child, and then they must write?

*They all agree by nodding.*

R: And this is your preschool child?

P18: Yes.

R: You are going to teach them to write and that will help them with their language?

P15, P18, P 19: Yes (*several participants agree, by nodding*).

P15: Usually our kids don't find our language difficult. We communicate with them through our languages. So usually, when we try to improve language we try to improve English so that they could be able to write at school. So like when I am teaching her how to speak English, I would first show her everything in the house. When I'm cooking I tell her with my language and I explain in English, it's cooking.

R: So you give her the English words while you are cooking, like pot, spoon?

P15: Yes. (*Many participants agree by nodding*)

P19 Because mother language is simple, so stepping-stepping you start with my language.

R: Do you think it is important to help them with mother language?

All: Yes. (*Everybody agrees*)

P15: It is, because at school they do two languages. They do the mother language and English and if they fail the mother language they fail everything. She doesn't know who she is. So he or she must know both of them, you must balance them. But usually it becomes easy for us to teach them the mother language because it's what we are talking. We communicate with it.

R: Is there anything else that you can do to help them with language, except talk and write?

P15: Maybe you give them a book to cut letters -create words through cutting and pasting.

- **Movement**

R: What can you do to help your child develop his or her motor -and movement skills?

P15: At preschool, because there will be some graduations they will teach them how to model. When she's showing you: ok it's cool, -doing that and you see she's not moving very well, you show her or if she's doing it well you then say: "Wow, you are doing it very good." So that she knows this thing is well. It's good.

R: Anything else? Do you think moving is important for a little child?

*Little response- some nods.*

R: Exercise-do you think it is important and how can you help your child with that?

P17: It's good for children to exercise and they like to dance. They will say: look, Mommy I dance like this and the other one is jumping. The child feels stronger, because I hear them say look at my muscles- strong!

R: So what can you do to help them?

P17: I help them; I can stand and *jive* with them. (*She demonstrates*) Say to them: come *jive* and jump! Teach them how to jump.

P16: Maybe my child goes to swim in the dam. Someone else will teach them.

R: Why swimming-do you think it's good?

P16: Swimming is good.

P15: Movements like swimming, dancing, soccer, exercising, to allow them to do that, it will help them. If she is a slow learner, she or he is not good in writing but maybe that can be a talent, he will be a soccer player or a great swimmer.

- **Cognitive**

R: Is there anything you can do to help your child to develop his or her brain? How he thinks or learns?

P15: I think you should be a role model to your child. Usually, doing good things in front of your child is encouraging a child. It shows ok my mom is living this life, this life is good. Also again help her by giving her guidance, telling her examples of more people that are out there showing her that when you do this and this and this maybe you will be like so and so. And they can be a role model to her.

P19: I don't understand exactly but I think if you can teach her a song and the stories, and then tomorrow again you ask: Ok, count for me, yesterday I teach you:1..2..3..4..5 and then again tomorrow I ask her you count for me. The brain is coming...or we can sing that song we sang yesterday. I think that.

P16: Maybe a child is a slow learner, then you can teach her, like your mother...slow and maybe you come back in ten minutes and then you teach again. Maybe she can try it - small steps.

R: What do you mean with teach?

P16: Maybe I'll take the crayon and I'll draw something. Then she comes to draw it again. Then after 10 minutes I call her and then we can draw that things - make the drawings again, cause she's a slow learner.

R: So drawing and repeating it over and over again?

P16: Yes maybe tomorrow again...

P14: I can teach her time. I can say to her at this time you are going to school, at this time I'm going to clean, at this time it is time to wash.

#### **4.4 DISCUSSION OF THE RESEARCH RESULTS**

From the outcome of the focus group interviews and the participants' observations, the researcher now attempts to address the research questions presented in chapter 1. The researcher made use of cross-case analysis and "quote-research" - a technique where quotes from the transcribed interviews were used as illustrative and confirming examples for interpretations and results (Folkestad, 2008:4).

##### **4.4.1 How parents define and understand the concepts of *early childhood development* and *school readiness* and the significance thereof.**

In an attempt to ascertain how parents from disadvantaged backgrounds perceive their role in their children's early development and learning, the researcher first tried to determine what their understanding is, of both early childhood development and school readiness. Overall the researcher got the idea that they had limited insight and comprehension of the concept of early childhood development. Many of the participants seemed reluctant to participate in the discussion. Observations included gestures of avoidance and hesitation.

Participants 8 and 12 (cf paragraph 4.3.2.1) thought early childhood to be when a child has developed early and is ahead of his or her peers, while others stated that it is like a formal programme developing children that are not yet in school including 'how to take care of children' (Participant 19; cf paragraph 4.3.3.1).

A few participants however seemed to understand the concept and indicated that it implied the development and growth, including the challenges, occurring when a child grows up. Participant 1 (cf paragraph 4.3.1.1) provided the example of sitting up, crawling and walking as part of the hierarchical process of physical and motor development.

Again limited insight was shown into the concept of school readiness. According to Participant 15 (cf paragraph 4.3.3.1), a child will be ready for school when he or she has followed the steps

through crèche and Grade R. Participant 17 argued that school readiness refers to a child reaching a specific age when he must go to school. Participant 4 and 19 mentioned that parents must prepare children by telling them “You are going to school. You will wear the uniform, and will attend school from the morning until afternoon. You will have to wake up earlier in the mornings to be ready for school.” Participant 4 also referred to being ‘financially prepared’ when children go to school (cf paragraph 4.3.1.1)

Although not one of the participants gave an accountable definition of school readiness many acknowledged the different developmental milestones often related to school readiness including counting up to ten, identifying of shapes, the writing of his or her name, knowing parents’ phone number and the independent functioning from parents.

The literature study (cf chapter 2) already showed the significance of early childhood development and highlighted the fact that every early experience contributes to a person’s later development and learning. Most of the participants agreed that experiences during the early years have an effect on later learning and development. Interesting to note however, the emphasis was almost exclusively placed on social development and behaviour. The parent’s example and teachings were stressed to be crucial to keep children on track and prevent them from making wrong decisions later in life. Participant 7 (cf paragraph 4.3.2.1) very passionately, highlighted the importance of early routine and attitude towards school as an indicator of how a child will one day function as adult- at home and in his job. She expressed how crucial it is to establish a positive attitude, a healthy routine and gave an appropriate example of when a child is still small. Participant 11 (cf paragraph 4.3.2.1) added that it also contributes to self-discipline and independence. Paul Colditz, CEO of the Federation of Governing Bodies of South African schools, supported this when he argued that the starting point of a good quality education is parental support at home, not just assistance with homework, but also parents being good role models for their children (Davids, 2010:4; cf paragraph 1.2.2).

Participant 15 said: “I think maybe as parents we should look at what our kids are doing now while they’re in an early age, because it will influence them when they grow up” (cf paragraph 4.3.3.1). Regarding school performance Participant 12 (cf paragraph 4.3.2.1) stated that children build on their early experiences and explained that when a child falls behind; he or she will fall out and will not be able to progress with the group. Participant 1 further added that developmental delays during the early years would influence later learning and school performance. She gave the example of a child starting to walk or talk late who will struggle to understand and communicate in school, ‘*because he is a slow learner*’ (cf paragraph 4.3.1.1).

#### **4.4.2 How parents from disadvantaged backgrounds perceive their role and contributions in their children's early development and preparation for school.**

All the participants viewed parents as the most influential people in a preschool child's development and learning. The researcher was convinced that while they do recognize the significant contribution other role-players add in the lives of preschoolers, they thoroughly realized the key role and responsibility they hold as parents. This is in line with the report of Wheeler and Connor (2009:9-12; cf paragraph 2.5) where they state that the role parents play during a child's earliest years is the single biggest influence on their development.

Though some of the participants elevated the role of the mother as the primary caretaker, a few emphasized the different roles held by both the mother and the father. Participant 7 pointed out that every boy needs a father to play with 'roughly,' - at which Participant 9 reacted by stating that, -not only boys but also girls need the love and attention of their father, -as they witnessed the negative effect her husband's temporary absence had on their daughter (cf paragraph 4.3.2.2).

Feinstein, Duckworth and Sebates (2008:73-80; cf paragraph 1.2.2) found that parental cognitions which includes beliefs, values and attitudes can have a direct effect on children's development and achievement. Parents communicate their expectations for performance and the value they place on education which can directly impact upon their children's success and achievement. Participant 15 (cf paragraph 4.3.3.2) acknowledged that, when she emphasized the importance of motivation and support and shared how her mother had encouraged her when she was little by using rewards as incentives. She believes that through encouragement children will start to like school and realize the value of education. She pointed out that motivation like: "you know you will be a doctor", could inspire a child to become interested in school. She also added: "I think you should be a role model to your child. Usually, doing good things in front of your child is encouraging to a child." Participant 14 (cf paragraph 4.3.3.2) said that a child might also gain understanding through communicating the opposite: "If she doesn't go to school, she maybe will end up being a tsotsi, maybe smoking, drinking, not have respect".

This coincides with the Social Learning Theory (cf paragraph 2.4.2) where the focus is on the significance of observing and modelling of behaviours, attitudes and emotional reactions of others. The theory suggests that children learn strategies not only from their experiences, but also from the response to their own reactions in terms of rewards, attention, punishment etc.

The quality and stability of a child's human relationships in the early years lays the foundation for a wide range of important future developmental outcomes that include self-confidence, mental and emotional health, motivation to learn, achievement in school and later in life and social skills

(Tarlov and Debbink, 2008:29). As mentioned before, the researcher found it noteworthy to see the emphasis many participants placed on social emotional responsibility and development throughout the study. Several participants mentioned the significance of the way you talk to your child. Participant 1 (cf paragraph 4.3.1.3) pointed out that you must always be calm when talking to your child, because if you talk to him or her angrily or shout they might become scared. Participant 7 added that when you shout at a child they switch off, she suggested talking on their level. Participant 14 expressed how she will listen and talk to her child even though she is stressed and doesn't feel like talking because "my child doesn't know that I'm stressed." Participant 19 added that she just puts on a 'happy face, even when she's not happy inside' (cf Addendum G, Focus group 3). Participant 8 (cf Addendum G, Focus group 2) emphasized her desire to be a friend to her daughter and creates an open relationship where she can express her thoughts and feelings with confidence. Several participants also highlighted the responsibility of teaching your child norms and values and helping them to distinguish between right and wrong. In this regard, some participants also felt that exposing your child to different influences when they are little, like alcohol- and drug abuse, will help them to make informed decisions later in life.

Although most parents valued their role as a key responsibility in the development and learning of their children, they acknowledged and admitted to many difficulties and challenges they experience within this role. Many commented on the busyness of their lives, always trying to attend to the needs of their children. Participant 8 (cf Addendum G, Focus group 2) described this busyness in more detail by explaining how a child constantly needs feeding, assistance with something like dressing, or a watchful eye while playing. Many participants mentioned the immense patience needed when raising a preschool child and that, they really find it difficult.

Several participants also highlighted the challenge of disciplining their preschoolers. Participant 1 and Participant 4 (cf paragraph 4.3.1.2) expressed that they find it difficult to raise their preschool children as they are naughty and stubborn and they do not know how to control them. The researcher sensed feelings of inadequacy regarding discipline and limited insight in defining naughtiness when Participant 5 (cf paragraph 4.3.1.2) repeatedly mentioned how naughty her four year old son is for using a condom as a balloon.

When asked how a parent can help to prepare a child for school a variety of things was listed. Many participants felt a child needs to know what to expect when starting school. Participant 1 (cf paragraph 4.3.1.2) said she would explain to her child about friends, teachers and appropriate school behaviour. Others mentioned the physical things they would buy their children including a uniform, school bag and a lunch box.



According to Wheeler and Conor (2009:9-12; cf paragraph 2.5) what parents do with their babies and young children has not only a major impact on their social and emotional development but also on their intellectual development. The involvement of parents in their children's learning is a key component in improving academic attainment and achievements, as well as overall behaviour. The participants listed several activities they engage in with their children to assist in their development and preparation for school. These included teaching them colours, shapes, counting, how to draw and write their names. They also added that various resources and school equipment could be used like stationary, colouring books, blocks, clay, paint, jumping ropes and balls for hand eye co-ordination. Participants 12 (cf paragraph 4.3.2.2) and 13 (cf paragraph 4.3.2.2) also noted that climbing trees and climbing frames are good for balance. In listing all these things, the researcher noted, that no one offered any explanations or motivations why these things were important for school preparation except for the obvious 'school activities'.

Participant 9 pointed out that the more attention you give a child the better the child will be developed once he reaches school. Participant 15 (cf paragraph 4.3.3.2) felt that to prepare your child for school entails: "Being you, is more important to your kid than to buy toys, cause you can't afford some things, but usually they will understand. Some playing things they do need, but it's not like to be educated I have to buy this or this. It's as if you must be original, you can just play with her, showing- like running with her, and playing ball with her - a child becomes very happy. She will feel like my mother likes me, because she can spend time with me, share stories, long stories."

#### **4.4.3 How parents from disadvantaged backgrounds describe and assess a secure, loving and nurturing environment.**

Throughout the study, participants expressed a variety of ways children experience love, nurturance and safety. They described ways in which negative exposure can influence a child's identity and social emotional development that revealed insight and understanding of the importance of a secure and loving environment.

The researcher found it noteworthy to recognise the insight most participants had in the significance of a secure and loving environment. This corresponds with the Attachment Theory (cf paragraph 2.4.1) where the key focus is on providing a sense of emotional security through positive early relationships including warm and responsive care in order to promote positive future attachments (Berry et al, 2013: 63).

Most participants agreed that a child needs love and attention mainly from the parents to feel secure and cherished. Participants 8 and 9 (cf paragraph 4.3.2.3) pointed out that a parent must create a relationship where the child always feels welcome, comfortable and safe. A relationship

where they can talk, without being afraid, constantly assured that the parent will help him or her. A number of participants agreed that the way a parent reacts and talks to their child, will cause the child to either experience frankness to approach the parent or detachment. A warm, loving and calm reaction will create a safe and inviting environment for children to communicate their fears, anxieties and concerns while a rude or impatient remark or an uncontrolled, aggressive shout might cause distance and aloofness.

Participant 17 (cf paragraph 4.3.3.3) emphasized the importance of physical touch through hugs and kisses. She feels that is how children see that they are loved. Participant 6 (cf paragraph 4.3.2.3) added that expressing love verbally, also ensures that children know they are loved. This coincides with Berger (2013:1) when he states that providing children with love and affection through physical touch and comfort suggests to them that they are important and special and makes them feel safe and comforted.

Numerous participants also highlighted the value of gifts like sweets, clothes and toys as expression of love and affection. Participant 2 (cf paragraph 4.3.1.3) also added entertainment like going to the movies or Spur. According to Participant 3, spending time with your children and playing with them communicates love and fondness. Various participants felt that addressing physical needs like bathing, watching them when they play or dressing up in warm clothes when it is cold also creates a sense of security and nurturance.

Participant 15 (cf paragraph 4.3.3.3) stated that encouragement and compliments also make a child feel valued and special. Participant 11 commented that some parents sometimes take 'love' too far. She explains that they overprotect their children, not allowing them to go out because they are afraid they might get hurt. Others agreed and added that if a parent constantly wants to control and contain a child it can prevent the child from developing his own identity and children need space to develop their own identities (cf paragraph 4.3.2.3).

Participant 7 (cf paragraph 4.3.2.3) felt very strong about a child being and feeling part of the family and house and not being excluded for being 'a child'. Participant 9 agreed, adding that to involve children in house chores and activities also make them feel part of the family. She also commented that supporting a child in their interests like sports could also make them feel loved.

#### **4.4.4 The extent to what parents realize the importance of nutrition, and basic health care**

According to Kim and Chang (2011:236), balanced nutrition is very important during childhood, which is a period of vigorous growth, increased activity, development of body functions and social cognitive ability. In general, it seemed as if most of the participants realized the value of

nutritious food in the development of children. They named fruits, vegetables and juices as healthy foods, and added that food should nourish and fill a child. A number of participants pointed out that wholesome foods are essential for brain development, attention and concentration, fighting off infections and the strengthening of bones.

Participant 13 (cf paragraph 4.3.2.4) stated that too much sugar can make children hyperactive. This argument is supported by Kim And Chang (2011:236) where they noted that elevated sugar intake may cause hyperactivity, given that snacks containing high sugar content cause massive secretion of insulin from the pancreas, resulting in hypoglycaemia (low blood sugar). This stimulates an increase in adrenaline, which can lead to activation of nervous reactions or hyperactivity.

Many participants communicated their serious attempts to limit their children's sugar intake by controlling the consumption of sweets and treats. While discussing the limitation of treats, some of them however argued the educational value of making a child understand that there is not always enough money for treats which led the researcher to question the motivation behind the restriction.

Participant 7 (cf paragraph 4.3.2.4) argued the importance of hydration and the restriction of sugars to prevent tooth decay, but in the same voice identified those as the two reasons why she does not limit her child with regards to milk, yoghurt and cold drinks. This made the researcher query the eating habits and principal of sugar restrictions even more.

Most of the participants showed clear comprehension of the fact that health care already starts before birth. They expressed understanding in the lifestyle and diet of a mother-to-be and the effect it has on her unborn baby. Participant 7 (cf paragraph 4.3.2.4) defined a balanced diet by stressing the intake of different vitamins and minerals, while Participant 9 assertively argued the value of breastfeeding highlighting the health and financial benefits. Even though most participants agreed with the principals above, some admitted that while pregnant they ate everything, as long as it did not make them nauseous. Participant 16 (cf paragraph 4.3.3.4) mentioned taking pills provided by a clinic during her pregnancy, because 'the baby must be fit and healthy'. Several participants also noted the importance of hygiene as part of a healthy lifestyle especially while pregnant and having small babies.

The majority of the participants realized the effect an unhealthy lifestyle can have on an unborn child. Smoking and drinking alcohol was listed as habits that can harm an unborn child. Participant 1 (cf paragraph 4.3.1.4) however argued defensively "when you take those things the child will still grow."

While Participant 19 (cf paragraph 4.3.3.4) highlighted the significance of water for a pregnant woman, the researcher found it strange that nobody mentioned the value of water for children, as water is a vital component of nutrition and health, as established in Chapter 2 (cf paragraph 2.6.2). Participant 15 did express her concern about some dangers to their children's health and safety when she said "we are living in an informal settlement; you find that there is dirty water; children want to play there and eat dirty things. We should prevent our kids from eating such things and also maybe there are broken bottles and they will cut themselves".

Exercise was also mentioned several times throughout the interviews, as a healthy habit for children with the focus often on bodily strength.

#### **4.4.5 The extent to which parents recognize the value linguistic, motor and cognitive exposure and stimulation have on their children's early development and school readiness**

In an attempt to determine how parents feel about linguistic-, motor- and cognitive stimulation and exposure, the researcher also investigated their understanding thereof and different ways in which they stimulate their children. Overall, the participants seemed to expose their children to quite a range of valuable and stimulating activities without always realizing the true significance thereof. They tend to engage in activities mainly because it is enjoyable for their children or themselves. It seemed in many cases, when the moment development and stimulation was under discussion, they tended to divert and focus mainly on 'school based activities' like drawing and writing. They did not seem to comprehend the vast variety of activities valued as foundation for linguistic, motor and cognitive development.

##### **4.4.5.1 Linguistic**

Participant 12 (cf paragraph 4.3.2.5) pointed out that reading books broadens a child's vocabulary, improves their speech and stimulates their creativity. Participant 1 agreed and added that not only reading but also talking and communicating to your children can stimulate and enhance language development. This coincides with Dickinson, Griffith, Golinkoff, and Hirsh-Pasek (2012:1) when they stated that reading a book to a young child had repeatedly been recognized to play a special role in advancing language growth and development. Participant 9 also emphasized the joy of reading when she told how her daughter would repetitively retell the story in her own words. While several other participants throughout the study expressed their love and interest in reading books with their children, they rarely tied it to language stimulation as such. They focused instead on the pleasure and creativity of reading with their children.

Neuman and Dickinson (2011:3) noted that speech directed to a young child in an appealing and interesting way, is essential for optimal development of vocabulary and those children who hear more and are exposed to richer use of language from an early age, also develop stronger processing skills, which enable them to learn language more quickly. Participant 6 (cf Addendum G, Focus group 2) explained passionately how she and her children enjoy reading books. She explained how they would each become a character in the book and how she would colour her voice to meet the nature of “the big bad wolf and how the voices of her children would sound minuscule against her strong deep voice. Here again the researcher noted that Participant 6’s incentive for reading to her children related more to enjoyment and creativity than to language stimulation.

The researcher found it very interesting to note the focus on English and other languages instead of home language development when language stimulation was mentioned. Participant 15 (cf paragraph 4.3.3.5) argued that home language is important because at school ‘if they fail the mother language they fail everything, but she added, “Usually our kids don’t find our language difficult. We communicate with them through our languages so usually when we try to improve language we try to improve English so that they could be able to write at school”. She therefore feels it is more important to focus on English and that is why she teaches her child English vocabulary at home while cooking and working in the house. Participant 13 (cf paragraph 4.3.2.5) explained the valuable exposure to English children get through watching television, while Participant 9 mentioned the important experience her daughter derived from contact with an English family and the fact that her daughter knows the different languages.

A few participants highlighted the value of having friends from different cultures and pointed out that friends at school can learn and teach one another their different languages. Participant 6 (cf paragraph 4.3.2.5) laughed, saying repeatedly that she does not need to teach her children about languages because they teach her, ‘for they can speak three languages!’ Other activities mentioned for language stimulation included school based activities like practicing writing where the parent writes words for the child to copy and also cutting and pasting activities with words.

#### **4.4.5.2 Motor development**

Brotherson (2006:1-3) defines motor development as growth in the ability of children to use their bodies and physical skills, the process by which they obtain movement patterns and skills.

When asked whether they think movement is important most participants agreed that it was important. The motivations they gave focused mainly on exercise, health and strengthening of the muscles. This is supported in Charlesworth (2008:350; cf paragraph 2.2.3) where he pointed out that muscle strength, co-ordination and flexibility are all important skills affecting a child’s

ability to perform motor skills. It also coincides with the basic principle that a child's healthy growth is supported by a healthy lifestyle that includes physical exercise.

Participant 17 (cf paragraph 4.3.3.5) argued the value of movement and stated that exercise, like dancing and jumping are good for children because they enjoy it and they get excited when they see how their bodies grow stronger: "Mommy, see how strong my muscles look!" She also added that she 'jives' with them and shows them how to jump. Several other participants pointed out that children must be active and noted the importance of ball games like soccer, rugby and cricket, as well as loco motor skills like jumping and dancing. They recognized the significance for enhancing co-ordination. Participant 12 and 13 (cf paragraph 4.3.2.2) added the value of climbing trees or climbing frames for balance.

Charlesworth (2008:350) explains that essential motor skills including loco motor skills such as running, jumping and skipping, as well as object control such as throwing, catching and kicking, which develop during the early years, serve as a foundation for more specialized motor skills. Throughout the interview only limited gestures of linking movement with physical- and motor skills needed for future learning was identified. There seemed to be restricted insight into the concept, subject and value of movement and motor development as foundations for learning.

According to the Western Cape Education Department (2006:6, cf paragraph 1.2), research in many countries demonstrated that learners entering Grade 1 do not have the necessary knowledge, skills and attitude to engage effectively in formal schooling. They added factors such as lack of motor development and lack of opportunities to play, to the list that attribute to this situation.

Although most participants felt movement is important, Participant 1 and 4 felt strongly that stimulation of movement is not important since children 'teach themselves' (cf paragraph 4.3.1.5). Participant 4 remarked mockingly "He will teach himself - this is the new generation." Although they were referring to skills like walking, running and jumping which usually develop naturally, they did not seem to think of including any other forms of motor skills. Many participants also communicated their fear of letting their children play outside as they feel it is dangerous. Participant 2 shared how her son was injured after playing outside and now she is afraid of letting him play outside. The others supported her and added that the little children are also exposed to inappropriate behaviour, from older children while playing outside. These fears and limitations can have a significant impact on the physical and motor development of these children. Throughout the interview, it became clear to the researcher that most participants do not seem to make a connection between fine motor skills and movement.



Several participants also experienced stimulation of movement and motor skills, as motivation for potential achievement in sport as Participant 1 explained, “I think it is important because if I play soccer with my son, he will know how to play soccer and maybe soccer will become a career for him”. Participant 15 added, “if she is a slow learner, she or he is not good in writing but maybe that can be a talent, he will be a soccer player or a great swimmer” (cf paragraph 4.3.3.5).

Although lots of valuable information regarding movement was obtained throughout the interviews, the researcher experienced very little understanding from the direct question on movement stimulation. Observations obtained during this question included gestures of avoidance and hesitation. The researcher suspected that the participants could not see the relevance and significance of the question because they did not fully comprehend the scope and significance of movement. Answers were vague and limited.

#### **4.4.5.3 Cognitive development**

As stated in chapter 2 (cf paragraph 2.2.4) cognition is the mental process of gaining knowledge and understanding through thought, experience, and the senses that lead to the awareness of the world around us. It refers to what the child knows and how the child thinks.

The specific aim of this question was to gain insight into the perceptions of parents regarding cognitive development, exposure and stimulation. The researcher tried to make the concept clear without leading the participants: terms like brain, mind, thinking skills and learning were used. The participants seemed hesitant and cautious to participate. It looked like they realized the importance of cognitive stimulation but they did not understand exactly what it entails. Although this led to limited participation, many valuable contributions were still made.

Participant 12 (cf paragraph 4.3.2.5) emphasized the importance of books, while Participant 19 explained the importance of repetition. She illustrated it by using the example of teaching songs, stories and counting the one day and then asking the child to repeat it the following day. According to Participant 11, sitting with a child while he or she is cutting a picture, and talking to the child and explaining various aspects about the picture, will not only teach them a lot, but will also help with their concentration. Participant 9 emphasized the importance of creating a positive learning environment by guarding against constant negativity. She stated that positivity would result in a child being more willing to learn. Participant 1 also pointed out that by questioning the child, one might assess their understanding and insight.

Many participants agreed that technology could also play a valuable role in children’s learning processes and brain stimulation. They added that the educational programmes on television

and computer games, often contribute to learning. They were motivated further by saying that, through social media children learn what is happening in the world around them. They can also learn songs and lessons from some movies. Participant 11 (cf paragraph 4.3.2.5) warned however, that even though movies might have great value, it needs to be limited, as “it is not a babysitter”. Participant 16 (cf paragraph 4.3.3.5) also mentioned teaching a child by drawing with crayons repetitively with breaks in between, and then repeating it the next day, especially with a slow learner, can help with learning and brain stimulation.

#### **4.5 CONCLUSION**

In this chapter, the empirical investigation was discussed. The empirical research exploration including the data analysis procedure and interpretation were described. The different identified themes and categories were used to reflect on the knowledge, personal views, and perceptions of the various participants. The group interactions and observations were incorporated to gain further insight and understanding. Thereafter, the results were used to address the specific questions raised to gain an in- depth understanding of the perceptions parents from disadvantaged backgrounds have regarding their role in preparing their children for school.

In Chapter Five a summary of the literature and empirical investigation will be discussed. Additionally limitations and recommendations for further studies will be examined.



## **CHAPTER 5**

### **FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION**

#### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents a summary of the research study and explores the significance of the findings. The shortcomings are acknowledged and recommendations are made for future research.

#### **5.2 PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH**

The main objective of this study was to gain a comprehensive understanding of how parents from disadvantaged backgrounds perceive their role in preparing their children for school, specifically with regards to school readiness.

The specific aim was to find possible answers for the following secondary questions:

- What is the current knowledge parents have regarding early childhood development, school readiness and the importance thereof?
- How do parents see their role and contribution in their children's early development and learning?
- To what extent do parents realize the importance of an emotionally secure, loving and nurturing environment?
- To what degree do parents realize the importance of nutrition and basic health care in their children's early development and preparation for school?
- To what degree do parents recognize the value of linguistic, motor and cognitive exposure and stimulation and the impact it has on their children's early development and school readiness?

#### **5.3 SUMMARY OF LITERATURE AND EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION**

##### **5.3.1 Findings from the literature**

A literature study was undertaken to explore:

- The different areas of early childhood development as well as school readiness.
- The different theoretical perspectives and theories of childhood development
- Parental influence on children's early development, education and school readiness
- Environmental influences on children's early development, education and school readiness

The literature study (cf chapter 2) showed the significance of early childhood development and the important role parents and the environment play in the learning experience of children during these early years. The literature further emphasized the fact that every early experience contributes to a person's development and learning, which forms part of the process of preparing a child for school. It also revealed the regrettable influence a disadvantaged background may have on the development and learning of children.

The literature shed light on the complex nature and challenges of early childhood development. It explained the growth, significance and challenges of the primary developmental domains namely the sensory, physical and motor, cognitive, language and social-emotional domains. It highlighted the distinct character of each domain but also emphasized their noteworthy dependence on each other. The literature findings propose that this early period of development lays the foundation for future learning and development and affects all the subsequent stages of human development. Heckman (2006:1900) pointed out that the environments and experiences that are encountered throughout the early childhood years affect practically every aspect of early human development, from the brain's developing circuitry to the child's capacity for empathy.

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Model of Child Development (cf paragraph 2.4.3) was integrated where the influence and interaction of the multi-layered social system was explored and investigated. According to this model, a child learns and develops under the influence of this multi-layered social system. The emphasis during this study was primarily to investigate the interactions and influences the different systems have on the early development of the child. The ecological paradigm suggests that rather than only focusing on the family, changes and challenges in any part of the system may have a significant impact on the individual. Through the literature study, it became clear that, even though the main focus was on the micro system that includes interaction with the immediate environment, the larger social, economical and political realities clearly have a noteworthy influence on the early development of the child.

Consequently, the literature study investigated the parental role and influence on children's development and learning during the early years. The findings suggest that the parents are a child's main and most long-lasting educator. Colditz (Davids, 2010:4) emphasized that the starting point of a good quality education is parental support at home (cf paragraph 1.2.2).

Several factors influencing parental contribution to development and learning were discussed throughout the study.

*Intergenerational illiteracy* was introduced as a socio-cultural phenomenon whereby illiterate parents unintentionally create home conditions that may seriously hinder their children's learning and development (cf paragraph 2.5.2). Parental health and parenting styles were also identified as key factors in the development of preschool children.

Furthermore, the literature review explored a number of environmental factors which potentially might have an influence on the development and learning of children during the early years. Shonkoff (2009:1;cf 2.6) explained that children need stable, responsive, nurturing relationships and rich learning experiences within a healthy environment, in the earliest years to provide lifelong benefits for learning, behaviour and both physical and mental health. The literature study explored different risk factors within the environment endangering this constructive setting.

Poverty was found to have a major effect on cognitive and social potential including school readiness (Alkire, Roche & Seth, 2013:2). Many other poverty related factors such as lack of good role models, health and nutrition risks, lack of opportunities to play, insufficient stimulation, poor language usage by role-models and family structure also attribute to this situation. The result of the above is that many learners from disadvantaged backgrounds are not ready for formal schooling when they enter Grade 1.

The literature study led to an empirical investigation. The empirical investigation was carried out in order to answer the research questions mentioned in paragraph 5.2.

### **5.3.2 Findings from the empirical study**

The empirical design was presented in Chapter Three and the findings offered in Chapter Four. Three focus group interviews with 20 parents from disadvantaged backgrounds were conducted. The researcher made use of a semi-structured interview guide where identified themes were formulated in advance. Participant observations were obtained during the interviews, thereafter the data was analysed and interpreted.

The empirical study was planned to define and describe the perceptions of the participants by answering the secondary research questions mentioned in section 5.2. A comprehensive discussion of these secondary research questions and other significant results are shown in Chapter 4 (cf paragraph 4.4).

The empirical study was designed to answer the main research question: *What are the perceptions of parents from disadvantaged backgrounds of their role in preparing their children for school?*

- There seems to be limited insight and comprehension of the concepts, early childhood development and school readiness. Although most of the participants could not clearly define these concepts, they showed some understanding about the importance of this developmental stage. The majority seemed to realize that early childhood development could influence further development and learning.
- All the participants acknowledged the fact that parents are the most influential people in preschool children's development, learning and preparation for school. Their perception of the preparation process is however very restricted and focuses mainly on the practising of school based activities like drawing and writing, including verbal explanations about school.
- A recurrent theme throughout the study was the social emotional wellbeing of preschool children. The participants emphasized the value of a secure, loving and open relationship all through the study. The majority showed insight into the role they play in offering a secure environment through encouragement, emotional support and open communication.
- Although the participants expressed some knowledge and comprehension regarding healthy eating habits and a healthy lifestyle, some very basic facts were either left unsaid or communicated in ambiguous ways, which caused the researcher to doubt the true insight in the matter.
- Overall, the participants seemed to expose their children to quite a range of valuable and stimulating activities. It became clear however that the majority of the participants did not realize the true significance thereof. On the subject of linguistic, motor and cognitive stimulation, the majority of participants did not seem to realize the broad variety of activities and actions linked to these skills, or the correlation these skills have with school preparation and future scholastic performance.

The study aimed to explore 'scope for diversity,' whereby participants from different cultures were included to gain different perspectives regarding the topic. This subsequently led to a much broader representation of the phenomena. Within this 'scope for diversity' the researcher however noted significant differences between the perceptions and experiences from participants from different cultural backgrounds regarding specific themes. For example, Group 2, exclusively Afrikaans speaking parents, showed a much broader knowledge and awareness of a variety of valuable activities to use for stimulation with preschool children, while it was significant to notice the emphasis Groups 1 and 3 placed on the practicing of school-related activities like drawing and writing. Overall, however, very few participants seemed to grasp the

value of a vast variety of activities as a foundation for linguistic, motor and cognitive development or the worth of these activities, for school preparation and further development and learning.

The findings of the empirical study revealed that although there are many similarities and shared experiences and perceptions, not all parents from disadvantaged backgrounds with preschool children perceive their role in their children's preparation for school in the same way. Unique variables of knowledge, experiences and insight shed light on the perceptions the participating parents held regarding their role in the preparation of their children for school.

In conclusion, the findings of this study demonstrated that there are quite a few areas where parents have limited knowledge and restricted perceptions regarding early childhood development and their role within this phase. These limitations and restrictions may lead to insufficient stimulation, lack of support and inadequate development regarding children's preparation for school. It may also contribute to future challenges regarding learning and education.

#### **5.4 LIMITATIONS OF THIS STUDY**

In the light of the research problem, the principal aim of this study was to gain a comprehensive understanding of how parents from disadvantaged backgrounds perceive their role in preparing their children for school specifically with regards to school readiness. Although this research, as part of a dissertation of limited scope, brought noteworthy insight and achieved a great deal, several limitations were identified which will require further attention.

- The first limitation was the fact that generalizations about the perceptions of parents of preschool children from disadvantaged communities cannot be made from this study, as it was a qualitative study where the focus was on the comprehensive views and perceptions of a limited number of participating parents.
- Secondly, consideration needs to be given to the fact that although an insightful analysis was produced which answered specific research questions; thematic analysis in general has limited interpretative power beyond mere description. The most serious and central difficulty in the use of qualitative data, is that methods of analysis are not well formulated which can easily lead to unreliable or invalid conclusions.
- A third aspect of limitation was the absence of fathers. Although the researcher put in extra effort to invite and get fathers involved, the reaction was very poor and only one father participated in the study. The study can therefore not be a reliable outcome of the perceptions of both parents as the outcome was mainly determined by mothers.

- A fourth unforeseen limitation was the huge language and cultural barriers which could have had an influence on the empirical results. The researcher did not foresee the significance of this difficulty and realised early on during the first focus group that many of the participants experienced considerable challenges in participating confidently and spontaneously in the discussions. This barrier inhibited participation and hampered the understanding and interpretation of questions, as well as the answers and responses.
- Another limitation of this study was that relying mainly on the focus group technique of gathering data, might have restricted the study in a sense and may produce homogeneous data, which is unlikely to provide enough sources of understanding and ways of looking at a situation or a problem. The focus group might also have prevented delving deeply into individual perceptions. Additional methods of data collection for example, individual interviews or questionnaires could have been enlightening.
- Focus group discussion with people knowing each other often feature exciting interactions and exchanges between participants including interruptions, cross-talk or loose conversational style. These exchanges were repeatedly present in all three of the sessions. Some of these conversations were in Sepedi or Zulu, languages unknown to the researcher, which made transcriptions difficult. Although one of the participants assisted in translations afterwards it is likely that the analysis process, observations and interpretations were influenced hereby. A further reality of cross cultural research is that not all ideas and concepts are universal and therefore not everything is translatable.

## **5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY**

The following recommendations can be made for further studies towards a more comprehensive understanding of parental involvement in the early childhood development and school readiness of preschoolers from disadvantaged backgrounds in South Africa.

- The views of children, caregivers-, teachers and other role-players from the community may provide insight into alternative factors which may also influence parental involvement in early childhood development and school preparation.
- When doing cross cultural studies the researcher needs to be fully prepared and knowledgeable about the different cultural backgrounds including customs, beliefs and behaviours. The ideal will be to work with an assistant researcher familiar with the culture and language of the participants. This will ensure accurate and valid data processing which will also include authentic observations during informal conversations and cross-talk.
- The recognition of early educational needs in disadvantaged communities allows and inspires researchers to incorporate the client's voice and to carry out studies in partnership with them - in this scenario, the client may refer to the parents, caregivers

and educators of babies and preschool learners. Continuous research and conversations should, therefore be carried out to gain relevant information in order to identify and address these needs and barriers in a practical and effective manner.

- Design, implementation and constant monitoring of effective parental guidance, intervention and support programmes in the South African context, is required, in order to address the challenges and difficulties families from disadvantaged backgrounds experience regarding early childhood development.

## **5.6 CONCLUSION**

The study aimed to gain an in-depth understanding of how parents from disadvantaged backgrounds perceive their role in preparing their children for school specifically with regards to school readiness. This comprehensive understanding was obtained through a thorough literature review, as well as an investigation of parents' awareness and views through the interpretation of data collected using focus group interviews.

According to the literature review (cf paragraph 1.2.2) children from low socio-economic status (SES) families are statistically less likely to develop the same level of skills and intellectual capital as children from higher SES backgrounds, causing most of these learners not to be ready for formal schooling at the required time.

Parental involvement and the environment play a significant role in the early development of a child. Therefore, one had to successfully address the challenges of early childhood development with specific reference to families from disadvantaged backgrounds, which made it necessary to firstly establish the perceptions and the involvement parents hold as the key role players for their children. The majority of parents from disadvantaged backgrounds interviewed in this study showed limited insight and understanding of what early childhood development fully entails. Although they fully understood the importance of their role and responsibility, they revealed restricted insight in this role with regards to stimulation and support.

Despite the limitations of this study it nonetheless produced valuable information and recognized specific areas where parental guidance and support are desperately needed.

The answer to the research question may therefore be the beginning of an initiative to create awareness for- and to equip parents in their role as facilitators towards the education of their children, This research can play a valuable role in the education of parents, by equipping them in their role as primary facilitators in the basic education, school readiness and improving the overall attitude towards the education of their children. The researcher therefore feels that the

original goal was met and that this study could lay the foundation for future research, as well as the development of an effective parental guidance and intervention programme for the selected disadvantaged communities in the area northeast of Tshwane.

*If poverty is a disease that infects the entire community in the form of unemployment and violence, failing schools and broken homes, then we cannot just treat those symptoms in isolation. We have to heal that entire community.*

*Barack Obama*



## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Alkire, S, Roche, JM, & Seth, S. 2013. *Identifying the 'Bottom Billion': Beyond National Averages*. Available at: <http://www.ophi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Bottom-Billion-Brief-v5-clean.pdf/-/cda6c1> . Accessed: 15/03/ 2013.
- Avvisati, F, Besbas, B, & Guyon, N. 2010. *Parental Involvement in School: A Literature Review*. Paris: Paris School of Economics.
- Ayers, J. 2005. *Sensory Integration and the Child*, 25 Anniversary Edition. Los Angeles: Western Psychological Services.
- Bandura, A. 1971. *Social Learning Theory*. New York: General Learning Press.
- Barbour, RS. 2005. Making sense of focus groups. *Medical Education* (39):742–50.
- Berger, I. 2013. Research into Practice: The Importance of Fostering Social & Emotional Development in the Early Years. *Research into Practice* 3:1.
- Berry L, Biersteker L, Dawes A, Lake L & Smith C. 2013. *South African Child Gauge*. Cape Town: Children's Institute, University of Cape Town.
- Bierman, K, Domitrovich, C, Nix, R, Gest, S, Welsh, J, Greenberg, M, Blair, C, Nelson, K, & Gil, S. 2008. Promoting Academic and Social-Emotional School Readiness: The Head Start REDI Program. *Child Development* 79(6):1802-1817.
- Bierman, K, Torres, M, Domitrovich, C, Welsh, J, & Gest, S. 2009. Behavioural and Cognitive Readiness for School: Cross-domain Associations for Children Attending Head Start. *Social Development* 18 (2): 305-323.
- Bouffard, S, & Weiss, H. 2008. Thinking Big: A New Framework for Family Involvement Policy, Practice, and Research. *The Evaluation Exchange* XIV (1 & 2): 2–5.
- Bowlby, J. 1977. The making and breaking of affectional bonds. Aetiology and psychopathology in the light of attachment theory. *British Journal of Psychiatry* 130: 201–210.

- Brogan, R. 2009. *Socioeconomic Status*. Available at: <http://www.education.com/reference/article/socioeconomic-status/>. Accessed: 20/08 2013.
- Bronfenbrenner, U. 1993. Ecological models of human development, in Gauvain, M & Cole, M (Eds). *Readings on the development of children*, New York: Freeman.
- Brotherson, S. 2006. *Understanding physical development of young children*. Available at: [www.ag.ndsu.edu](http://www.ag.ndsu.edu). Accessed: 24/05/2013.
- Brown, J. 2009. *An Introduction to Identification & Intervention for Children with Sensory Processing Difficulties*. Alaska: Early Childhood Mental Health Institute.
- Bruner, C. 2009. *Connecting Child Health and School Readiness*. Available at: [http://www.coloradotrust.org/attachments/0000/9356/IssueBrief\\_Bruner\\_Feb09\\_Final.pdf](http://www.coloradotrust.org/attachments/0000/9356/IssueBrief_Bruner_Feb09_Final.pdf). Accessed: 10/06/2013.
- Centre for the Study of Social Policy. 2013. *Knowledge of parenting and child development*. Available at: [http://www.cssp.org/reform/strengthening-families/2013/SF\\_Knowledge-of-Parenting-and-Child-Development.pdf](http://www.cssp.org/reform/strengthening-families/2013/SF_Knowledge-of-Parenting-and-Child-Development.pdf). Accessed: 05/05/2013.
- Charlesworth, R. 2008. *Understanding child development*. New York: Thompson Corporation.
- Cherry, K. 2013. *An overview of early childhood Development: Language development in early childhood*. Available at: [psychology.about.com/od/developmentalpsychology/ss/early-childhood-development\\_4.htm](http://psychology.about.com/od/developmentalpsychology/ss/early-childhood-development_4.htm)). Accessed: 20/04/2013.
- Chesebrough, E, King, P, Gullotta, T, & Bloom, M. 2004. *A Blueprint for the Promotion of Pro-social Behavior in Early Childhood*. New York: Kluwer Academic/ Plenum Publishers.
- Child Development Institute. 2013. *Ages and Stages-Child development info and tips on parenting kids from infants to teenagers*. Available at: <http://childdevelopmentinfo.com/ages-stages.shtml>. Accessed: 02/05/2013.
- Children's Therapy and Family Resource Centre. 2011. *Preschool Developmental Milestones: Social & Emotional Development*. Available at: <http://www.kamloopschildrenstherapy.org/social-emotional-preschool-milestones>. Accessed: 15/05/2013.

Child Trends and Centre for Child Health Research. 2004. *Early Child Development in Social Context*. Available at:

[http://www.commonwealthfund.org/usr\\_doc/ChildDevChartbk.pdf#page=20](http://www.commonwealthfund.org/usr_doc/ChildDevChartbk.pdf#page=20).

Accessed : 15/05/2013.

Christianson, C. 2010. How Your Child's Sensory System Develops. Available at:

<http://www.abilitypath.org/areas-of-development/physical-development/sensory/articles/how-your-childs-sensory-system-develops.html>.

Accessed:16/08/2013.

Cid, A, & Stokes, C. 2011. Family Structural Influences on Children's Education Attainment: Evidence from Uruguay. Available at: [www.um.edu.uy/docs/familystructuralinfluences](http://www.um.edu.uy/docs/familystructuralinfluences).

Accessed on 25/05/2013.

Clement, .S. 2010. *Why is it important to develop gross motor skills in preschool children?*

Available at: <http://www.livestrong.com> Accessed 15/05/2013.

Cognition. Available at: <http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/cognition>. Accessed: 15/04/2013.

College of Health Professions. 2013. *Definition of Environmentally and Economically Disadvantaged*. Georgia: Amstrong Atlantic State University.

Coolahan, K, Fantuzzo, J, Mendez, J, & McDermott, P. 2000. Preschool peer interactions and readiness to learn: Relationships between classroom peer play and learning behaviors and conduct. *Journal of Educational Psychology* 92:458–465.

Cooper, J, Masi, R, & Vick, J. 2009. *Social-emotional Development in Early Childhood What Every Policymaker Should Know*. Colombia: National Center for Children in Poverty .

Cooter, K. 2006. When mama can't read: Counteracting intergenerational illiteracy. *The Reading Teacher* 59(7):698-701.

Curry, LA, Nembhard, IM, & Bradley, EH. 2009. Qualitative and Mixed Methods Provide Unique Contributions to Outcomes Research. *Circulation* 119:1442-1452.

Daily, S, Burkhauser, M, & Halle, T. 2010. A Review of School Readiness Practices in the States: Early Learning Guidelines and Assessments. *Early Childhood Highlights* 1(3):1-12.

Davids, B. 2010. The state of Education in South Africa. *The New Negotiator Sunday Times* 3(3):4.

De Gioia, K. 2009. Parent and staff expectations for continuity of home practices in the child care setting for families with diverse cultural backgrounds. *Australasian Journal of Early Childhood* 34(3): 9–17.

Denburg, A, & Daneman, D. 2010. Pascal's wager: From science to policy on early childhood development. *Canadian Journal of Public Health* 101(3): 235-236.

Denham, S, & Weissberg, R. 2004. Social-emotional learning in early childhood: What we know and where to go from here, in Chesebrough, E, King, P, Gullotta, T, & Bloom, M (Eds). *A blueprint for the promotion of pro-social behaviour in early childhood*. New York: Kluwer Academic/ Plenum Publishers.

Denzin, NK. 2010. *Childhood Socialization*. New Jersey: Transaction Publishers.

Department of Basic Education. 2011. *Macro Indicator Trends in Schooling: Summary Report*. Available at: <<http://www.education.gov.za> . Accessed: 15/03/ 2013.

Department of Education. 1998. Notice 2433 of 1998, South African School Act, 1996 (Act no 84 of 1996) and National Education. Age requirements for the admission to an ordinary public school. *Government Gazette*, 19377:9-10.

Department of Education. 2001. *Education White Paper 5 on Early Childhood Education: Meeting the challenge of early childhood development in South Africa*. Pretoria: Department of Education.

Dickinson, DK, & Porche, MV. 2011. Relation Between Language Experiences in Preschool Classrooms and Children's Kindergarten and Fourth-Grade Language and Reading Abilities. *Child Development* 82(3):870-886.

DiCicco-Bloom, B, & Crabtree, BF. 2006. The qualitative research interview. *Medical Education* (40): 314–321.

Dillon, R, Huggens, V. 2010. Children's well being in the developing world, in Leeson, C, Parker-Rees, R, Willan, J, & Savage, J. *Early Childhood Studies*. Exeter: Learning Matters Ltd.

Disadvantaged Backgrounds. Available at:

<http://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/geneticmedicine/residency/Disadvantaged.html> . Accessed: 05/2012.

Du Plessis, C. 2011. Apartheid-style neglect of kids continues. Available at:

<http://www.timeslive.co.za/local/article986417.ece/Apartheid-style-neglect-of-kids-continues>. Accessed: 16/08/2013.

Engle, P, Grantham-McGregor, S, Black, Walker, S, & Wachs, T. 2007. How to avoid the loss of potential in over 200 million young children in the developing world. *Child Health and Education* 1(2): 68-87.

Family and Childcare Trust. 2013. *The importance of parents in children's learning*. Available at:

<http://www.daycaretrust.org.uk/pages/the-importance-of-parents-in-childrens-learning.html> . Accessed: 05/12/2012.

Family and Parenting Institute. 2013. *What is a Good Early Home Learning Environment?*

Available at: <http://www.familyandparenting.org>. Accessed :29/05/2013.

Family Child Care Academy. 2012. *Sensory Integration*. Available at:

<http://familychildcareacademy.com/sensory-development/>. Accessed: 16/08 /2013.

Feinstein, L, Duckworth, K, & Sebates, R. 2008. *Education and the Family, Passing success across the generations*. Cornwall: TJ International.

Fernald, LC, Kariger, H, Engle, P, & Raikes, A. 2009. Examining Early Child Development in

Low-Income Countries: A Toolkit for the Assessment of Children in the First Five Years of Life.

Washington: International Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

Fleer, M. 2010. *Early learning and Development. Cultural-historical concepts in play*. New York:

Cambridge University Press.

Fredericks, CR, Kokot, SJ, & Krog, S. 2006. Using a development movement programme to

enhance academic skills in grade 1 learners. *South African Journal for Research in Sport,*

*Physical Education and Recreation*, 28 (1): 29-42.

Gauvain, M, & Cole, M. 1993. *Readings on the development of children*. New York: Freeman:

37-43.

Gerhardt,S. 2004. *Why love matters: How affection shapes a baby's brain*. Brighton: Brunner - Routledge.

Gillis, J, Berry, J, Douglas, J, & Evans, E. 2006. The influence of perceived parenting styles on the degree of adult children's allocation of punishment. *BYU Undergraduate Journal of Psychology*, 2: 33–42.

Gledhill, SE, Abbey, JA, & Schweitzer, R. 2008. Sampling methods: Methodological issues involved in the recruitment of older people into a study of sexuality. *The Australian Journal of Advanced Nursing* 26(1):84-94.

Glewwe, P, & Miguel, E. 2008. The impact of child health and nutrition on education in less developed countries in: Schultz, T.P, & Strauss, M.J. *Handbook of Development Economics*. Amsterdam: Elsevier.

Greenspan, S, & Shanker, S. 2005. National Scientific Council on the Developing Child.

Available at:

[http://www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/English/topics/earlychildhood/early\\_learning\\_for\\_every\\_child\\_today.aspx](http://www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/English/topics/earlychildhood/early_learning_for_every_child_today.aspx) 4). Accessed: 30/05/2013.

Harju,TK. 2013. *Towards a socially sustainable society: Preventing intergenerational transmission of violence and malaise through an ecological approach to health and wellness promotion*. Otaniemi: Laurea University of Applied Sciences.

Harryman, W. 2011. Attachment theory in clinical supervision: Past, present, and future.

Available at: <http://integral-options.blogspot.com/2011/02/attachment-theory-in-clinical.html>.

Accessed: 20/05/2013.

Hearn, M. 2012. *Water and Brain Function: How to Improve Memory and Focus*. Available at:

<http://www.waterbenefitshealth.com/water-and-brain.html> . Accessed: 20/05/2013.

Heckman, JJ. 2006. Skill Formation and the Economics of Investing in Disadvantaged Children. *Science*, 312: 1900 -1902.

Howard, A. 2013. Therapy Foundations for Education. Available at:

<http://www.therapyfoundationsforeducation.co.uk/Documents/Gross%20Motor%20Skills.pdf>. –

Accessed: 20/05/2013.

Human Development Report. 2006. *Beyond scarcity: Power, poverty and the global water crisis*. New York: United Nations Development Programme.

Institute for Human Services for the Ohio Child Welfare Training Program. 2007.

Developmental Milestone Charts. Available at:

[http://uppua.org/pdfs/CW%20II%20Handouts/Effects%20of%20Abuse%20and%20Neglect%20on%20Child%20Development/Development\\_Chart\\_for\\_Booklet.pdf](http://uppua.org/pdfs/CW%20II%20Handouts/Effects%20of%20Abuse%20and%20Neglect%20on%20Child%20Development/Development_Chart_for_Booklet.pdf) . Accessed: 14/06/2013.

Jensen, E. 2005. *Teaching with the brain in mind*. USA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Kantrowitz, J. 2011. Parents Need an Attitude Adjustment to Improve Their Children's Homework Motivation, Experts Say. Available at:

<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2011/08/110831160042.htm>. Accessed: 25/05/2013.

Kerr, J. 2013. Institute of Medicine: Kids need daily hour of physical activity, PE should be core subject. Available at: <http://www.startribune.com/lifestyle/kids-health/208647641.html>. Accessed: 15/05/2013.

Konold, TR, & Pianta, RC. 2005. Empirically-derived, person-oriented patterns of school readiness in typically-developing children: Description and prediction to first-grade achievement. *Applied Developmental Science*, 9: 174–187.

Kopko, K. 2007. *Parenting Styles and Adolescents*. Washington: Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service.

Kriek, T, & Botha, E. 2012. The application of the aptitude test for school beginners: Administration and interpretation. Pretoria: Mindmuzik Media.

Landers, C. 2013. *Early childhood development from two to six years of age*. Available at: [www.talkingpage.org/artic012.html](http://www.talkingpage.org/artic012.html) . Accessed: 15/05/2013.

Lauwry, L. 2011. Parents as 'speech therapists': What a new study shows. Available at: [www.hanen.org](http://www.hanen.org).

Accessed: 25/04/2013.

- Lee, S. 2006. Food For Thought: The Importance of Water. Available at: <http://www.braintraincenter.org/Links/importanceofwater.html>. Accessed: 25/05/2013.
- Lietz, CA, Langer, CL, Furman, R. 2006. Establishing trustworthiness in qualitative research in social work: Implications from a study regarding spirituality. *Qualitative Social work* 5: 444.
- Littlefield Cook, J, & Cook, G. 2005. *Child development Principles and Perspectives*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Luo, R, Zhang, L, Liu, C, Zhao, Q, Shi, Y, Scott, R, & Sharbono, B. 2012. Behind before they begin: the challenge of early childhood education in rural China. *Australasian Journal of Early Childhood* 37(1):55-64.
- Maree, K. 2007. *First Steps in Research*. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.
- Mayer, SE. 2003. *What is a "Disadvantaged Group"?* Minneapolis: Effective Communities Project.
- Mayike, TV. 2012. Assessment of the Norms and Standards for Day Care Centres for Preschool Children in South Africa. *Anthropologist*, 14(6): 593-595.
- Maxwell, K, & Clifford, R. 2004. School Readiness Assessment. Beyond the journal - Young Children on the web. Available at : [www.naeyc.org/resources/journal](http://www.naeyc.org/resources/journal) . Accessed: 02/05/2013.
- McCain, MN, Mustard, JF, & Shanker, S. 2007. *The Early Years Study 2: Putting Science into Action*. Toronto, ON: Council for Early Childhood Development.
- McLeod, SA. 2011. Bandura - Social Learning Theory. Available at: <http://www.simplypsychology.org/bandura.html>. Accessed: 30/11/2013
- McMillan, JH, & Schumacher, S. 2010. *Research in Education Evidence –based Inquiry*. New Jersey: Pearson Education.
- Mendoza, J, Katz, L, Robertson, A, Rothenberg, D. 2003. Connecting with Parents in the Early Years. Illinois: University of Illinois.
- Merrilee, A. 2009. Definition of Sensory Integration. Available at: <http://www.disabled-world.com/definitions/sensory-integration.php>. Accessed: 16/08/2013



Montgomery, H, Burr, R, & Woodhead, M. 2003. *Changing Childhoods local and global*. UK: John Wiley & Sons.

Morse, JM, Richards, L. 2013. *Read Me First for a user's guide to qualitative methods. Third edition*. LA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Mouton, J. 2006. How to succeed in your Master's & Doctoral Studies. A South African Guide and Resource Book. Pretoria: Van Schaik.

Mustard, JF. 2010. Early brain development and human development. *Encyclopedia on Early Childhood Development*. Montreal: Centre of Excellence for Early Childhood.

National Scientific Council on the Developing Child. 2007. *The timing and quality of early experiences combine to shape brain structure. Working Paper 5*. Available at: <http://www.developingchild.net> . Accessed: 20/08/2013.

Nel, NM, Nel, M, & Hugo, A. 2013. Learner support in a diverse classroom. A guide for Foundation, Intermediate and Senior Phase teachers of language and mathematics. Pretoria: Van Schaiks.

Neuman, SB, & Dickinson, DK. 2011. *Handbook of early literacy research*. New York: Guildford Press.

Nieuwenhuis, J. 2007. Introducing Qualitative research, in Maree, K. *First steps in research*. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.

Nieuwenhuis, J. 2007. Qualitative Research Designs and Data Gathering Techniques, in Maree, K. *First steps in research*. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.

Oberklaid, F. 2007. Brain development and the life course - the importance of the early caretaking environment. *Putting Children First*, 24:8-11.

O'Connor, T, & Scott, S. 2007. *Parenting and outcomes for children*. London: York Publishing Services Ltd.

Ohio Department of Health. 2012. *Healthy eating for families*. Available at: <http://www.healthyohioprogram.org/healthylife/healthyeating/families.aspx>. Accessed: 25/04/13.

Oswalt, A. 2013. Development during early Childhood. Available at: <http://www.amhc.org/462-child-development-and-parenting-early-childhood>. Accessed: 25/05/2013.

Oxford Dictionary. 2012. Available at: <http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/perception>. Accessed: 29/11/2012.

Parker-Rees, R, Leeson, C, Willan, J, & Savage, J. 2010. *Early Childhood Studies*. Exeter: Learning Matters Ltd.

Parlakian, R, & Lerner, C. 2009. Tips on Helping Your Child Develop Empathy. Available at: <http://www.zerotothree.org/child-development/social-emotional-development.html>. Accessed: 16/08/2013.

Paton, G. 2011. *Thousands of children 'not ready for school' at five*. Available at: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/education/educationnews/8550707/Thousands-of-children-not-ready-for-school-at-five.html> . Accessed: 05/12/2012.

Patterson, C. 2009. *Infancy and Childhood*. New York: McGraw-Hill Companies.

Pollock, N. 2009. Sensory integration: A review of the current state of the evidence. *Occupational Therapy Now*, 11(5):6.

Psychology Notes Headquarter. 2012. *Piaget's Theory of Cognitive Development*. Available at: <http://www.psychologynoteshq.com/piagetstheory/>. Accessed: 05/05/2013.

Qadiri, F, & Manhas, S. 2009. Parental Perception Towards Preschool Education Imparted at Early Childhood Education Centers. *Studies on Home and Community Science*, 3(1): 19-24.

Rafoth, MA, Buchenauer, EL, Kolb Crissman, K, & Halko, JL. 2004. School and home: School Readiness—Preparing Children for Kindergarten and Beyond. Available at: <http://www.nasponline.org/resources/handouts/schoolreadiness>. Accessed: 30/11/2012.

Ratey, JJ, & Hagerman, E. 2009. *Spark! How exercise will improve the performance of your brain*. London: Quercus.

Reid, MJ, Stoolmiller, M, & Webster-Stratton, C. 2008. Preventing conduct problems and improving school readiness: evaluation of the incredible years teacher and child training programs in high-risk schools. *Journal of Child Psychology & Psychiatry*, 49(5): 471–488.

Reinsberg, K. 2009. How to Support Your Child's social-Emotional Development. Available at: <http://www.abilitypath.org/areas-of-development/social--emotional/supporting-social-emotional-development.html>. Accessed: 16/08/2013.

Research and Training Center on Community Living. 2011. *Policy brief*, 21(1):6.

Resource Center for Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention. 2009. *Theories & Approaches: Social Learning Theory*. Available at: <http://recapp.etr.org/recapp/index.cfm?fuseaction=pages.TheoriesDetail&PageID=380>. Accessed: 10/06/2013.

Rhyner, P. 2009. *Emergent Literacy and language development*. New York: The Guildford Press.

Salkind, NJ. 2009. *Exploring Research*, 7<sup>th</sup> Edition. London: Pearson.

Sapolsky, RM. 2005. The influence of social hierarchy on primate health. *Science*, 308: 648-652.

Schirmer, C, Fontoura, D, & Nunes, M.2004. Language and learning disorders. *Jornal de Pediatria* 80 (2): 95-102. Translation available at: [http://www.scielo.br/scielo.php?pid=S0021-75572004000300012&script=sci\\_arttext&tlng=en](http://www.scielo.br/scielo.php?pid=S0021-75572004000300012&script=sci_arttext&tlng=en) . Accessed: 15/05/2013.

Schneider, B, Atteberry, A, & Owens, A. 2005. *Family Matters: Family Structure and Child Outcomes*. Alabama: Alabama Policy Institute.

Schultz, TP, & Strausm, J. 2008. *Handbook of Development Economics*. Amsterdam: Elsevier B.V.

Seaman, JA, DePauw, KP, Morton, KB, & Omoto, K. 2003. *Making connections. From theory to practice in adapted physical education*. Arizona: Holcomb Hathaway Publishers.

Selbie, P, & Wickett, K. 2010. Providing an enabling environment in Parker-Rees, R, Leeson, C, Willan, J & Savage, J. *Early Childhood Studies*. Exeter: Learning Matters Ltd.

Shonkoff, JP. 2009. Investment in early childhood development lays the foundation for a prosperous and sustainable society. *Encyclopedia on Early Childhood Development*. Available at: <http://www.child-encyclopedia.com/documents/ShonkoffANGxp.pdf> . Accessed: 12/4/2013.

Sieh, D, Meijer, A, Oort, F, Visser-Meily, J, & Van der Leij, D. 2010. Problem behaviour in children of chronically ill parents: a meta-analysis. *Clinical Child and Family Psychology Review* 13(4): 384–397.

Smartcape. 2013. Registering your child for school in 2014. Available at: <http://www.smartcape.org.za/learner-support/general-learner-support/school-registration-in-sa.html>. Accessed: 16/08/2013

Smartt,E. 2008. Self-discovery key to educational success: Teach a child to teach himself. Available at: <http://www.helium.com/items/1133869-self-discovery-key-to-educational-success-teach-a-child-to-teach-himself>. Accessed: 20/08/2013.

Statistics South Africa. 2012. *General Household Survey*. Pretoria: Statistics South Africa.

Stewart, DW, Shamdasani, PN, & Rook, DW. 2007. *Focus Groups: Theory and Practice*. California: Sage Publications Inc.

Strydom, A. 2011. Poverty damns SA's children to ignorance. *Mail & Guardian* (17): 25.

Tarlov, AR, Debbink, M. 2008. *Investing in Early Childhood Development: Evidence to Support a Movement for Educational Change*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Taylor, SG, & Van der Berg, S. 2011. How well do South African schools convert grade 8 achievements into matric outcomes? Stellenbosch: Stellenbosch University, Department of Economics.

Thomas, E. 2006. *Readiness to learn at school among five-year-old children in Canada*. Ottawa: Statistics Canada Special Surveys Division.

UNICEF. 2012. *Early Childhood Development: The key to a full and productive life*. Available at: <http://www.unicef.org/dprk/ecd.pdf> . Accessed: 20/08/2013.

UNICEF. 2013. Parents, Families, and Home-based Early Child Development. Available at: [http://www.unicef.org/earlychildhood/index\\_69849.html](http://www.unicef.org/earlychildhood/index_69849.html). Accessed: 16/08/2013.

United Nations, 2006. *Human Development Report*. New York: United Nations.

United Nations. 2008. *The Millennium Development Goals Report*. New York: United Nations.

United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization. 2012. *Early Childhood Care and Education*. Available at: <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/education/themes/strengthening-education-systems/early-childhood/>. Accessed: 14/04/2013.

United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization. 2012. *Poverty*. Available at: <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/social-and-human-sciences/themes/international-migration/glossary/poverty/>. Accessed: 14/04/2013.

USC Libraries. 2013. Organizing your social sciences research paper. Available at: <http://libguides.usc.edu/content.php?pid=83009&sid=818072> . Accessed: 10/10/2013.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. 2003. *Strengthening Head Start: What the evidence Shows*. Washington: Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation.

Veena, A, Satyanarayana, V, Lukose, A, & Srinivasan, K. 2011. Maternal mental health in pregnancy and child behaviour. *Indian Journal of Psychiatry* 53(4): 351–361.

Wadsworth, ME, & Rienks, SL. 2012. Stress as a mechanism of poverty's ill effects on children: Making a case for family strengthening interventions that counteract poverty-related stress. Available at: <http://www.apa.org/pi/families/resources/newsletter/2012/07/stress-mechanism.aspx> . Accessed : 28/05/2013.

Wardle, F. 2008. Creating Indoor Environments for Young Children. Available at: [http://www.earlychildhoodnews.com/earlychildhood/article\\_view.aspx?ArticleID=294](http://www.earlychildhoodnews.com/earlychildhood/article_view.aspx?ArticleID=294). Accessed: 08/ 06/ 2013.

Weinberg, LM. 2009. Parents' educational expectations for their young children: SES, race/ethnicity and school feedback. Michigan: UMI Dissertation Publishing.

Wentzel, K, & Russell, S. 2009. *Parenting Styles*. Available at:  
<http://www.education.com/reference/article/parenting-styles1/>.  
Accessed: 10/06/2013.

Western Cape Education Department (WCED). 2006. *Literacy and Numeracy Strategy 2006 – 2016. A strengthened, co-ordinated and sustainable approach*. Available at:  
<[http://wced.pgwc.gov.za/documents/literacy\\_numeracy\\_strategy/e-LitNumStrat.pdf](http://wced.pgwc.gov.za/documents/literacy_numeracy_strategy/e-LitNumStrat.pdf).  
Accessed: 01/08/ 2012.

Wheeler, H, & Conor, J. 2009. Parents, early years and learning: Parents as partners in the early years foundation stage - principles into practice. London: National Children’s Bureau.

Williams, MS, & Shellenberger, S. 1996. “*How Does Your Engine Run?*”® A leader’s guide to the Alert Program® for self-regulation. Albuquerque, NM: Therapy Works, Inc.

Winicki, J, & Jemison, K. 2003. Food Insecurity and Hunger in the Kindergarten Classroom: It’s Effect on Learning and Growth. *Contemporary Economic Policy*, 21(2): 145-157.

World Health Organisation. 2009. *Early Child Development Fact sheet 332*. Available at:  
<http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs332/en/index.html> . Accessed: 12/03/2013.

Yau, M, Parekh, G, & Luo, Y. 2012. Parenting and Family Literacy Centres: Engaging Children, Empowering Parents. *Research Today*, 8(1):1-4.

Yeh, K. 2012. Your Child’s Speech & Language Development: Birth to 5. *Playing With Words 365*. Available at: <http://www.playingwithwords365.com/2012/09/your-childs-speech-language-birth-to-6-months>. Accessed: 06/04/2013.

## ADDENDUM A: DEVELOPMENTAL MILESTONES CHART: INFANTS & TODDLERS

PHYSICAL	COGNITIVE & LANGUAGE	SOCIAL	EMOTIONAL	POSSIBLE EFFECTS OF MALTREATMENT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Newborn: rough, random, uncoordinated, reflexive movement</li> <li>3 months: head at 90 degree angle, uses arms to prop; visually track through midline</li> <li>5 months: purposeful grasp; roll over; head lag disappears; reaches for objects; transfer objects from hand to hand; plays with feet; exercises body by stretching, moving; touch genitals, rock on stomach for pleasure.</li> <li>7 months: sits in "tripod"; push head and torso up off the floor; support weight on legs; "raking" with hands</li> <li>9 months: gets to and from sitting; crawls, pulls to standing; stooping and recovering; finger thumb opposition; eye-hand co-ordination, but no hand preference</li> <li>12 months: walking</li> <li>15 months: more complex motor skills</li> <li>2 yrs: learns to climb up stairs first, then down</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sensory-motor: physically explores environment to learn about it; repeats movements to master them, which also stimulates brain cell development.</li> <li>4-5 months: coos, curious and interested in environment</li> <li>6 months: babbles and imitates sounds</li> <li>9 months: discriminates between parents and others; trial and error problem solving</li> <li>12 months: beginning of symbolic thinking; points to pictures in books in response to verbal cue; object permanence; some may use single words; receptive language more advanced than expressive language</li> <li>15 months: learns through imitating complex behaviours; knows objects are used for specific purposes</li> <li>2 yrs: 2 word phrases; uses more complex toys and understands sequence of putting toys, puzzles together</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attachment: baby settles when parent comforts; toddler seeks comfort from parent, safe-base exploration.</li> <li>5 months: responsive to social stimuli; facial expressions of emotion</li> <li>9 months: socially interactive; plays games (i.e., patty cake) with caretakers</li> <li>11 months: stranger anxiety; separation anxiety; solitary play</li> <li>2 yr: imitation, parallel and symbolic, play</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Birth-1 yr: learns fundamental trust in self, caretakers, environment</li> <li>1-3 yr: mastery of body and rudimentary mastery of environment (can get other's to take care of him)</li> <li>12-18 months: "terrible twos" may begin; wilful, stubborn, tantrums</li> <li>18-36 months: feel pride when they are "good" and embarrassment when they are "bad"</li> <li>18-36 months: Can recognize distress in others – beginning of empathy</li> <li>18-36 months: are emotionally attached to toys or objects for security</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chronic malnutrition: growth retardation, brain damage, possibly mental retardation</li> <li>Head injury and shaking: skull fracture, mental retardation, cerebral palsy, paralysis, coma, death, blindness, deafness</li> <li>Internal organ injuries</li> <li>Chronic illness from medical neglect</li> <li>Delays in gross and fine motor skills, poor muscle tone</li> <li>Language and speech delays; may not use language to communicate</li> <li>Insecure or disorganized attachment: overly clingy, lack of discrimination of significant people, can't use parent as source of comfort</li> <li>Passive, withdrawn, apathetic, unresponsive to others</li> <li>"Frozen watchfulness", fearful, anxious</li> <li>Depressed</li> <li>Feel they are "bad"</li> <li>Immature play – cannot be involved in reciprocal, interactive play</li> </ul>

**Source: The Institute for Human Services for the Ohio Child Welfare Training Program (2007)**

## ADDENDUM B: DEVELOPMENTAL MILESTONES CHART: PRE SCHOOL

PHYSICAL	COGNITIVE & LANGUAGE	SOCIAL	EMOTIONAL	POSSIBLE EFFECTS OF MALTREATMENT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physically active</li> <li>• Rule of Three: 3 yrs, 3 ft, 33 lbs.</li> <li>• Weight gain: 4-5 lbs per year</li> <li>• Growth: 3-4 inches per year</li> <li>• Physically active, can't sit still for long</li> <li>• Clumsy throwing balls</li> <li>• Refines complex skills: hopping, jumping, climbing, running, ride "bigwheels" and tricycles</li> <li>• Improving fine motor skills and eye-hand coordination: cut with scissors, draw shapes</li> <li>• 3- 3.5 .yr: most toilet trained</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ego-centric, illogical, magical thinking</li> <li>• Explosion of vocabulary; learning syntax, grammar; understood by 75% of people by age 3</li> <li>• Poor understanding of time, value, sequence of events</li> <li>• Vivid imaginations; some difficulty separating fantasy from reality</li> <li>• Accurate memory, but more suggestible than older children</li> <li>• Primitive drawing, can't represent themselves in drawing till age 4</li> <li>• Don't realize others have different perspective</li> <li>• Leave out important facts</li> <li>• May misinterpret visual cues of emotions</li> <li>• Receptive language better than expressive till age 4</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Play</li> <li>• Co-operative, imaginative, may involve fantasy and imaginary friends, takes turns in games</li> <li>• Develops gross and fine motor skills; social skills; experiment with social roles; reduces fears</li> <li>• Wants to please adults</li> <li>• Development of conscience: incorporates parental prohibitions; feels guilty when disobedient; simplistic idea of "good and bad"</li> <li>• Behaviour</li> <li>• Curious about his and other's bodies, may masturbate</li> <li>• No sense of privacy</li> <li>• Primitive, stereotypic understanding of gender roles</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-esteem based on what others tell him or her</li> <li>• Increasing ability to control emotions; less emotional outbursts</li> <li>• Increased frustration tolerance</li> <li>• Better delay gratification</li> <li>• Rudimentary sense of self</li> <li>• Understands concepts of right and wrong</li> <li>• Self-esteem reflects opinions of significant others</li> <li>• Curious</li> <li>• Self-directed in many activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poor muscle tone, motor co-ordination</li> <li>• Poor pronunciation, incomplete sentences</li> <li>• Cognitive delays; inability to concentrate</li> <li>• Cannot play cooperatively; lack curiosity, absent imaginative and fantasy play</li> <li>• Social immaturity: unable to share or negotiate with peers; overly bossy, aggressive, competitive</li> <li>• Attachment problems: overly clingy, superficial attachments, show little distress or over-react when separated from caregiver</li> <li>• Underweight from malnourishment; small stature</li> <li>• Excessively fearful, anxious, night terrors</li> <li>• Reminders of traumatic experience may trigger severe anxiety, aggression, preoccupation</li> <li>• Lack impulse control, little ability to delay gratification</li> <li>• Exaggerated response (tantrums, aggression) to even mild stressors</li> <li>• Poor self esteem, confidence; absence of initiative</li> <li>• Blame self for abuse, placement</li> <li>• Physical injuries; sickly, untreated illnesses</li> <li>• Enuresis, encopresis, self stimulating behaviour –rocking, head-banging</li> </ul>

Source: The Institute for Human Services for the Ohio Child Welfare Training Program (2007)



## ADDENDUM C – INFORMED CONSENT LETTER TO PARENTS

### RE: INFORMED CONSENT

Dear Parent

I, Rothea Keun, am currently registered for the Master in Education (Specialising in Guidance and Counselling) at the University of South- Africa. I am in the process of writing a dissertation under the supervision of Dr Soezin Krog. The title of my research is: *The perceptions of parents from disadvantaged backgrounds –for their role in preparing their children for school*. The study aims to obtain an in-depth understanding of how parents from disadvantaged backgrounds see their role in the early development and school preparation of their children. The possible outcome of the study is the development of an intervention programme for parents from these communities to support and prepare their children for formal schooling.

I am asking for your willingness to take part in the research study in order to help me with information that is needed for the successful completion thereof. There are no costs involved and no compensation will be given to participating parents in this research study. Your participation in the study is at all times voluntary. Should you at any point during the study, experience an emergency as a result of the study or require any further information regarding the study, feel free to contact me on the number listed below.

You have been selected to participate in this study as you have a child who is currently a preschooler between the ages of four and six years old. You will be a part of a focus group discussion together with about four or five other parents of preschool children.

- The interview session will roughly be one hour and will be tape-recorded. The recording will be treated confidentially and will only be accessible to the researcher and the supervisor, Dr S Krog.
- I do not expect any risks or discomfort associated with this study. However should you wish to withdraw you may withdraw at any stage during the research process.

The interview questions will look into your experiences as a parent of a preschool child concerning early childhood development and school preparation. You are encouraged to answer questions but you do not need to answer particular questions if you do not wish to and you can withdraw from the interview at any time. The researcher will ensure that all your personal information will remain confidential. All material will be safely stored and only accessible to - my supervisor and me.

After the focus group interview there will be a debriefing session where all your concerns will be addressed. However, feel free to raise any concerns during the interview. The final report of the study will be made available to those participants who wish to read it.

.....  
Researcher:  
Rothea Keun (Unisa student number: 49058479)  
Contact Number: 072 9981522  
Email: [rothea@keuns.com](mailto:rothea@keuns.com)

## PARENT PERMISSION AND ACCEPTANCE

This is to confirm that I (name and surname) .....  
give consent to participate in this study. I hereby confirm that this research study has been  
explained to me. I also understand that I can withdraw from the study at any time.

Signature of participant: .....

Date: .....

.....

Signature of Researcher:

Rothea Keun (Unisa student number: 49058479)

Contact Number: 0729981522

Email: [rothea@keuns.com](mailto:rothea@keuns.com)

# **ADDENDUM D: AGREEMENT TO UPHOLD CONFIDENTIALITY BY PARTICIPANTS IN THE FOCUS GROUP**

Subject: RE: Focus group confidentiality form

Research Title: THE PERCEPTIONS OF PARENTS FROM DISADVANTAGED BACKGROUNDS -FOR THEIR ROLE IN PREPARING THEIR CHILDREN FOR SCHOOL.

I hereby undertake to keep any information discussed in the focus group for this research, confidential and I undertake not to reveal any such information to any person outside the group.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Print Your Name Here)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Researcher: Rothea Keun

Tel: 0729981522

## ADDENDUM E: INTERVIEW SHEET: SEMI-STRUCTURED FOCUS GROUP

**Research Study:** The perceptions of parents from disadvantaged backgrounds of their role in preparing their children for school.

Researcher: R Keun      Date: .....      Time: .....

Place: .....Duration of interview: .....

QUESTION	RESEARCHER'S NOTES	REFLECTIVE NOTES
1. What is your understanding of Early Childhood Development?		
2. What is your understanding of school <i>readiness</i> ?		
3. Do you think early childhood development and school readiness can influence school achievement? Explain.		
4. Who do you see as the most important people in a preschooler's development and education? Explain.		
5. How would you describe the everyday life of a parent of a preschooler?		
6. How can a parent help to prepare a preschooler for school?		
7. What do parents need in order to prepare their preschooler for school (skills/resources/ equipment)?		
8. What are the greatest problems that you as a parent from a preschooler experience?		
9. What do you think a small child needs to feel secure and safe?		
10. Discuss different ways in which parents show love to their children.		
11. If you could choose any food and drink for your child? What would you choose and why?		
12. What extra measures did you take during your pregnancy		
13. Choose one of the following activities to do with your child and explain why you chose that option: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read a book</li> <li>• Watch TV</li> <li>• Play outside</li> <li>• Build a puzzle/car/house</li> <li>• Visit friends.</li> </ul>		

<p>14. What do you think - you can do or should one do to give your preschool child:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Language stimulation?</li><li>• Stimulation of movement?</li><li>• Stimulation of their mind?</li></ul>		
--	--	--

## ADDENDUM F: OBSERVATION CHECKLIST: SEMI-STRUCTURED FOCUS GROUP

**Research Study:** The perceptions of parents from disadvantaged backgrounds –for their role in preparing their children for school.

Researcher: R Keun

Date: .....

Time: .....

Place: .....

Duration of interview: .....

QUESTION	TONE OF VOICE, ATTITUDE & BODY LANGUAGE	REMARKS
1. How do you understand early childhood development?	Relaxed, thoughtful, friendly, engaged, animated, aggressive, defensive, uninvolved, reserved, anxious, inquisitive, gesturing, uncomfortable, defensive positioning, arms/legs crossed, avoidance, , plenty of eye contact, lack of eye contact, change in skin colour Other:	
2. How do you understand school readiness?	Relaxed, thoughtful, friendly, engaged, animated, aggressive, defensive, uninvolved, reserved, anxious, inquisitive, gesturing, uncomfortable, defensive positioning, arms/legs crossed, avoidance, - plenty of eye contact, lack of eye contact, change in skin colour Other:	
3. Do you think early childhood development and school readiness can influence school achievement? Explain.	Relaxed, thoughtful, friendly, engaged, animated, aggressive, defensive, uninvolved, reserved, anxious, inquisitive, gesturing, uncomfortable, defensive positioning, arms/legs crossed, avoidance, , plenty of eye contact, lack of eye contact, change in skin colour Other:	
4. Who do you see as the most important people in a preschool child's development and learning? Explain.	Relaxed, thoughtful, friendly, engaged, animated, aggressive, defensive, uninvolved, reserved, anxious, inquisitive, gesturing, uncomfortable, defensive positioning, arms/legs crossed, avoidance, , plenty of eye contact, lack of eye contact, change in skin colour Other:	
5. How would you describe the everyday life of a parent of a preschooler?	Relaxed, thoughtful, friendly, engaged, animated, aggressive, defensive, uninvolved, reserved, anxious, inquisitive, gesturing, uncomfortable, defensive positioning, arms/legs crossed, avoidance, , plenty of eye contact, lack of eye contact, change in skin colour Other:	
6. How can a parent help to prepare a preschooler for school?	Relaxed, thoughtful, friendly, engaged, animated, aggressive, defensive, uninvolved, reserved, anxious, inquisitive, gesturing, uncomfortable, defensive positioning, arms/legs crossed, avoidance, , plenty of eye contact, lack of eye contact, change in skin colour Other	

7. What do parents need to prepare their preschooler for school (skills/resources/equipment)?	Relaxed, thoughtful, friendly, engaged, animated, aggressive, defensive, uninvolved, reserved, anxious, inquisitive, gesturing, uncomfortable, defensive positioning, arms/legs crossed, avoidance, , plenty of eye contact, lack of eye contact, change in skin colour Other:	
8. What are the greatest problems that you as a parent from a preschooler experience?	Relaxed, thoughtful, friendly, engaged, animated, aggressive, defensive, uninvolved, reserved, anxious, inquisitive, gesturing, uncomfortable, defensive positioning, arms/legs crossed, avoidance, , plenty of eye contact, lack of eye contact, change in skin colour Other:	
9. What do you think a small child needs to feel secure and safe?	Relaxed, thoughtful, friendly, engaged, animated, aggressive, defensive, uninvolved, reserved, anxious, inquisitive, gesturing, uncomfortable, defensive positioning, arms/legs crossed, avoidance, , plenty of eye contact, lack of eye contact, change in skin colour Other:	
10. Discuss different ways in which parents show love to their children.	Relaxed, thoughtful, friendly, engaged, animated, aggressive, defensive, uninvolved, reserved, anxious, inquisitive, gesturing, uncomfortable, defensive positioning, arms/legs crossed, avoidance, , plenty of eye contact, lack of eye contact, change in skin colour Other:	
11. If you could choose any food and drink for your child? What would you choose? Give a reason.	Relaxed, thoughtful, friendly, engaged, animated, aggressive, defensive, uninvolved, reserved, anxious, inquisitive, gesturing, uncomfortable, defensive positioning, arms/legs crossed, avoidance, , plenty of eye contact, lack of eye contact, change in skin colour Other:	
12. What guidance about a healthy living would you as a parent of a preschooler give to a couple who is pregnant with their first born?	Relaxed, thoughtful, friendly, engaged, animated, aggressive, defensive, uninvolved, reserved, anxious, inquisitive, gesturing, uncomfortable, defensive positioning, arms/legs crossed, avoidance, , plenty of eye contact, lack of eye contact, change in skin colour Other:	
13. Choose one of the following activities to do with your child and explain why you chose that option: Read a book / Watch TV/ Play outside / Build a puzzle /car/ house /Visit friends.	Relaxed, thoughtful, friendly, engaged, animated, aggressive, defensive, uninvolved, reserved, anxious, inquisitive, gesturing, uncomfortable, defensive positioning, arms/legs crossed, avoidance, , plenty of eye contact, lack of eye contact, change in skin colour Other:	

<p>14. What do you think can you do or should one do to give your preschool child:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Language stimulation?</li> <li>* Stimulation of movement?</li> <li>* Stimulation of their mind?</li> </ul>	<p>Relaxed, thoughtful, friendly, engaged, animated, aggressive, defensive, uninvolved, reserved, anxious, inquisitive, gesturing, uncomfortable, defensive positioning, arms/legs crossed, avoidance, , plenty of eye contact, lack of eye contact, change in skin colour Other:</p>	
--	---	--



## ADDENDUM G: TRANSCRIPTIONS OF FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS

- Abbreviations used in the transcriptions:
  - R: Researcher
  - P: Participants in numerical order
- Translated Sepedi and Zulu discussions are included
- During all three focus groups, the researcher first established rapport by describing the research study, explaining the purpose of the study, the audio recordings, taking of notes and the approximate duration of the interviews. Confidentiality, ethical considerations and voluntary participation were highlighted. Time was given for questions; consent forms were read and signed.

### FOCUS GROUP 1

**September 2013      Duration: 1 hour      Language: English & Afrikaans**

R: Are you all comfortable? I am going to ask you a few questions and I want you to discuss it. Talk to me about how you are feeling and what you are honestly experiencing and what your views are. Ok? If you are not sure about how to say something in English or you struggle you can maybe ask one of the others and so you can help one another to say it or to express it. Ok?

R: **Ok, the first thing I want to know is: What is your understanding of early childhood development? What do you understand if I say early childhood development?**

*Long pause. No response. Participants look baffled and unsure. It seems as if they do not understand the question.*

R: Do you know what it means, early childhood development?

*Silence. Some subtle Sepedi cross-talk occurred.*

R: If you do not understand, you can also say: "I don't understand".

*Sepedi remarks stating that they do not understand the question.*

P3: Vra weer?

*Silence. Participants exchange hesitant and uncertain looks - some uncomfortable laughing.*

R: So does anyone like to try? What is your understanding of early childhood development?

*No response. Silence.*

R: What do you think? What does it mean if we talk about early childhood development?

P1: *Let's discuss it.*

*Discussion in Sepedi- to try to assess amongst themselves as to what it means. They seem very unsure.*

P1: I understand the question but I'm not sure if the answer is correct. When a child start to walk and stand up, but how can I say it- Maybe as a child starts to grow up?

P2: It's when you talk about when the child is starting to grow and get older, all the challenges that the child must do.

P4: What is early child development?

R: If you think carefully: ...early...childhood...development?

*After the discussion in Sepedi they asked the researcher to repeat the question.*

R: What do you think it means: Early childhood development? What do you understand under early childhood development?

*Another discussion in Sepedi follows.*

P4: Early childhood development means what is happening when a child grows up.

P1: When a child grows, they first learn to talk, and then when he wants to sit he's first going to fall and then he will sit nicely.

P4: I wanted to say all of those things you just said.

P1: Yes, so it's when the child first starts talking, when he stands up, and then when he starts walking.

P1 & 4: You must now say it in Afrikaans, P3. *(Everybody laughs).*

P3: No, I don't know.

P4: Sometimes you say something, but you are unsure. Maybe it's wrong?

R: Can you try to tell me in English what you are saying?

*Discussion continued in Sepedi (lots of laughter; seems uncertain and insecure)*

P2: *P3, now you explain it in Afrikaans.*

P4: *It's the steps when a child starts growing.*

*Everybody agreed that it would have been better if they had a pen and paper to write. It's difficult to talk.*

R: Do you know what it is?

*Everybody laugh uncomfortable, a little bit nervously.*

P4: Let me write it for you.

R: Do you want me to repeat the question again?

All: Yes.

R: How do you understand early childhood development? Early childhood.! When a child is...small?

P1: When a child is growing up they grow step-by-step. They start by sitting, crawling...

R: Ok, so how they grow?

R: Yes. So that was what you were thinking about? The progress made and the growth of a child?

P4: Yes.

R: **Ok, and what do you understand about school readiness? If I talk about a child needs to be school ready when they go to school, how do you understand that?**

P4: Ok, ok you have to prepare your child best. Like maybe he or she is four years, you have to prepare him before.

P1: Maybe you have to teach him how to talk, maybe how to pronounce his name.

P4: And to tell him it is the time to go to school you will wake up earlier in the morning to go to school.

R: So that he knows what is going on?

*(Nods from several participants)*

P4: You have to prepare financially...

P2: So you can support financially.

R: **Do you think early childhood development and school readiness has an influence on how a child performs in school? Do you think this period before school (early childhood development); as well as school readiness will influence how your children will perform in school?**

P1: Yes, I think it does because if maybe sometimes your child has started talking at a late stage he won't be able to communicate at school because he won't be able to talk.

R: Ok, someone else who would like to add something?

*Silence, insecure laughter...everybody seems cautious.*

R: Is there somebody else who wants to add to that? If you prepare your child for school, if he is school ready do you think that will influence how he will do in school? How he will perform?

*Silence. Everyone seems hesitant and uncertain.*

R: Will it have an influence – yes or no?

*Discussion in Sepedi follows:*

P1: Ok, when a child starts talking late, then he will be slow at school. It will be difficult for him because he started talking late.

P1: P3 & 4 - you must help me to say that in Afrikaans.

P3: I'm listening. I don't have a problem saying it, but you must tell me what to say.

P1: P3, you must say what I've said.

P3: Say it again

P1: Aow, P3, you're not listening. You must say something that will affect your child when he is at school. For example, if your child started walking late and he is now four years old, when he goes to school the other children will run faster than him because he started walking late.

P5: You must first teach him, before he goes to school.

P4: You must listen to the question - when a child starts walking late; he is going to be slow at school. If he maybe starts walking or talking late, will it have an effect? So is the answer yes or no? We now have to explain yes or no.

R: Ok, so can you say that to me in English?

P3: I don't really understand. *(Everybody laughs)*

P4: Let me explain. *Sepedi discussion continues.*

P4: This is your child and this is her child (shows to participant next to her); they are both one year and nine months. And then her child started walking early and yours cannot walk.

Now maybe when they go to school hers will start talking and yours not. Hers talks well, and yours not.

P1: How are you going to feel?

P4: This is the question then - will it have an effect? Now you must explain- it will have an effect on yours because he started walking and talking late. Now say it in Afrikaans.

P3: It's too much. You say it in English.

*(Laughter filled with frustration)*

P2: If he starts walking or talking late, it will affect him.

P2: We are now saying the child will be a slow learner because he started talking late. And as the other children learn at school, he is going to struggle, because he won't be able to understand, because he is a slow learner. For example, if they ask a question, he will need to think for a long time before he can answer, because he is not like the other learners. Because he is late with his speech. P3, now say that in Afr.

P3: It's too much to say.

P2: I will say it in English.

*Everybody added they would help if she struggles.*

P2: *laughs uncomfortably.*

P2: I don't know how to say it. You must help me.

P4: We can speak well in Sepedi, but we cannot say it in English. Somebody needs to explain in Sepedi and then they must say it in English.

P3: It's difficult in English or Afrikaans.

R: Can you try to explain to me what you just said in English or Afrikaans?

P1: She's saying that, yes, early development will affect your child at a school age, cause if your child is talking late maybe if we know our children start talking maybe in two years, yours will maybe be talking in three years seven months, so that when he is going to school his friends will be talking and then he'll be slow because he won't be talking the same...eish.

P2: the same time as others in the class because he is going to be a slow learner.

P1: He can't communicate with the other children because he is very slow.

*P4 nods in agreement.*

P1: A child who starts to talk later will be slow in school.

R: And is it about language skills or that he cannot physically talk?

P1: Maybe language because it takes a long time to understand. Maybe like a slow mind.

R: Do I hear you correctly - if they are slow when they are little, they will be slow in school?

*All the participants agree.*

R: **Who do you see as the most important people in the preschool child's development and education? Who do you think are the most important people in the life of a little child concerning education?**

P4: Parents.

P1: Yes, the parents, because they know the child.

P4: Because I'm the one who's taking care.

*All the participants agree.*

R: So you all agree that the parents are the most important people in the small child's life concerning education?

*General agreement in group.*

R: **How would you describe your life as the parent of a preschool child? How would you say is your life?**

P1: Oh, mine is hectic because my son is very stubborn (*Group laughs and agrees on stubbornness of their children*) When you talk to him sometimes he doesn't listen. When I talk to him, he doesn't answer. Ai- it's difficult to raise him.

R: Ok, so she experiences it's difficult to have a small child?

P4: And for me it's also difficult. My child is a boy. He is three years something. He is naughty...stubborn. O, I don't know how to explain this? But, eish...

R: Ok, so what does he do if you say he is naughty? Explain to me, what does that mean to you?

P4: Sometimes when I say something, maybe I shout at him, oh... he throws something at me.

P1: And if he wants something, he just wants it, whether it's right or wrong.

P4: He doesn't want to know.

R: And how do you handle this? What do you do?

P4: Sometimes it's difficult to control him. I just keep quiet.

P5: Sometimes it feels like you just want to grab him.

P4: beat him

*Everybody laughs.*

P5: Frustration.

P2: For me, I just sit down with him. He's a boy, my child. I sit down and talk to him: "Don't do that, if you do that I won't go with you to, maybe McDonalds, and buy you an ice-cream" (*Everybody laughs*) and "if you continue to do naughty things you'll stay at home and will not get ice cream. You will stay at home and we will go to the McDonald to eat ice-cream-". And then he can come and understand.

R: And if you give him the reward, he will behave?

*Everybody joined with an affirmative 'yes'.*

P1: I must always promise him something so that he will listen.

*Some Sepedi remarks.*

R: What are you saying, P3?

P3: Ek sê vir hulle ons kinders, hulle groei nie mooi nie. Soos byvoorbeeld die plek waar ons bly, hulle sien iemand se kind maak so- so ek gaan ook so maak. So, ons kinders groei nie mooi nie.

R: Die kleintjies? The little ones?

*Everybody agrees.*

R: So they copy the bigger ones? So you experience that it is difficult? P5, what do you think?

P5: O, my boy is very naughty...naughty, naughty, naughty.

R: Ok, how old is your child?

P5: He is four now.

R: Ok, so what does naughty mean to you? What does he do?

P5: Au...That one ... He does everything. He takes condoms and does balloons (*Everybody laughs*). And I don't want to hit him.

P2 & P4: Is it not yours? (*Everybody laughs*).

P5: Then he comes to me: "Mama I've got a balloon".

R: Do you think he knows what it is?

P5 (*together with P 2 and P 4*): No!

R: Or does he do that because he really thinks it's a balloon?

P5: Yes, he really thinks it is a balloon.

R: But you still think he is naughty?

P4: Eish, I don't think he is naughty.

P5: He is not naughty.

R: Maybe he is just small? He does not understand?

R: So all of you agree that you feel it's difficult to have a little one at home. (*Everyone nods, and says yes*) And that it takes a lot to control yourself sometimes? P4, did you mention that you hit your child when he's naughty, but you try not to?

P4: No, I don't beat him.

R: Ok.

R: **How do you think can you help your child to prepare for school? What can you as a parent do to prepare your child to go to school?**

P2: I'll buy him a uniform, school bag, lunch box...

P1: I will sit with him, explain to him that now he is going to school. That maybe, you have come to the next level, a stage, where you are going to meet other children and that you must behave, always listen to your teacher. You are going to get a teacher and if you want something, you talk to your teacher. And explain to him how it is going to go at school.

R: Explain to him how school works?

P1: Yes.

R: So you think all the physical things he will need when he goes to school and also explain what is school about?

P4: I know they like new clothes, so if he sees the clothes and school bag he'll ask:" When are we going to school, tomorrow?" Then he'll be very happy to go to school.



R: Do you think he wants to go to school because of the physical things, the excitement of having a new schoolbag and things?

*All participants agree wholeheartedly.*

R: OK and you all want to provide and help to prepare them with those things?

**R: What do you think parents need in terms of skills, knowledge, resources and equipment, to prepare children for school? Other than the things we just said, are there any other things like skills that you feel you need to prepare your children for school?**

*Discussion in Sepedi.*

P1: Skills?

P2: To know something.

R: Is there anything that you think you as a parent need in terms of knowledge, skills or resources - like books and toys and things, to prepare your child for school?

*Discussion in Sepedi*

P4: I don't understand.

P1: They ask what do you need to know to prepare your child before he goes to school example, maybe a schoolbag or pencils.

P4: Ok, it's not difficult?

P1: You must buy the crayons and colouring book to show your child what he's going to do at school. He cannot buy a toy gun you must buy school equipment. You can also buy a book and show him how to write 1...2...3.

P3: The Grade R's, you can buy a lot of toys, they are not Grade 1 or 2. They can still play.

P4: Say in Afrikaans, P3! (Everybody laughs.) I wish I could talk Afrikaans.

R: Het jy enige iets nodig itv iets wat jy kan doen, iets wat jy het of moet jy van sekere goed weet, as ouer om jou kind voor te berei? Maw wat het jy nodig by die huis om hulle voor te berei? Het jy kennis nodig oor sekere goed? Do you need knowledge about some things to prepare your child for school? Do you need some toys or equipment like swings, books, skills (to be able to read and write yourself etc) to prepare child for school? What do you think?

*All nod affirmative.*

P1: Yes, I think you need some equipment. At school, they use a colour book; you can buy a book and crayons, so he can practise at home, as he does at school.

R: So you feel when they are small and are not going to school yet, you can give him those things to practise for when he goes to school.

*All participants agree.*

R: Anything else?

P1. and toys

R: What type of toys?

P2 ...and counting one to five or ten.

R: So counting, ok, what else? P2?

P2: Also, you can teach him yourself ...how to write and to read.

R: Do you think it is necessary? Do you think a parent needs to teach these things to a child before he goes to school?

*Everyone agrees that it is important.*

R : And do you do it?

P2: Ja.

R: So what type of things do you do?

P1: My child is in Grade R. Every day when he comes from school he say mommy we have done 1..2..3..5 I and I say no it's not 1..2..3..5..it's..4...5. And I ask how was school-today and he'd say this and this and maybe he's pronouncing is wrong then I help him. I correct him.

R: The others of you, your children are not yet attending -Grade R what would you do?

P2: My boy in is Grade 1, every time he's back to school he shows me what he has done at school, I can correct him, where he doesn't do well. I encourage him to know and understand what he is writing and reading in homework or schoolwork.

R: **What are the greatest problems that you experience as parents of a preschooler? You've already mentioned that you experience that your children are naughty. Is there anything else?**

P2: Come again.

R: What are the greatest problems and challenges that you have as parents of little children in the situation and area you are in?

*Discussion in Sepedi*

P3: She asks what the problems at the place where we live are.

P3: It's not a place for little children.

P1: My children love it very much to play in the street. You give her something, she puts it down and go and play with friends in the street. I am afraid now and I wonder whether my child does work at school or does she play that much as well?

P3: Now explain it in English, P1.

*P1 laughs.*

P3: *You must speak.*

*Several participants laugh.*

P1: You must speak! Say that is the problem, the kids that want to play.

P3: You cannot make your child stay at home at that place. It is too small; therefore, the children are always in the streets.

P1: We must say she must repeat the question in English. Everybody agrees.

P4: Let me explain how I understand: She wants to know something that's challenging in our situation.

R: *Wat is die grootste probleem wat julle ervaar in julle situasie as mamas van klein kindertjies?*

P3: By ons plek, ons bly mos in 'n klein huisie, my kind like baie om te speel. So, as jy hom by die huis hou, jy weet jy kan hom nie altyd in die huis hou nie en as jy miskien 'n boekie gee om te lees, as jy kyk hy's weer weg. Hy't by die straat gaan speel. Dis my probleem daai ene.

R: She says the fact that the child is always going out into the street to play. So there is no safe place to play, is that what you are saying? The children want to play but there is no place to play. Why is it not safe outside?

P3: So, hulle is altyd by die pad.

R: Someone else? Another problem? Can I just ask - is it a busy road? Why is it not safe outside, what are your concerns when the children play outside?

P1: Maybe sometimes there can come a car ... speeding cars...

P1: That's the biggest problem.

*Everyone agrees.*

R: **What do you think a small child needs to feel safe and secure?**

P1: I think attention.

P5: Attention and love.

R: Love and attention, from whom?

P1, P3, P5: From both parents

R: Do you all agree on that?

*All seem to agree.*

R: **What are different ways in which parents will show love?**

P2: I think take him out to the movie or Spur.

P1: Entertainment.

P2: Ja, or buying him toys or clothes...

P3: Or you can play ball with them outside for about 30minutes.

P2: Or buy him a Ben ten t-shirt.

P2: Or playing with him, helping with schoolwork and to watch TV.

P5 ...and giving him attention and don't be rude.

P1: When you talk to him, you must always be calm, so that he can understand, because if you talk to him angry then he will be scared. Don't shout.

P3: If you call a child you cannot shout, no you must call nicely.

R: P5, how would you show love to your child?

P5: Always talk to him nicely, watch what he is doing every day and take care of him.

R: If you say, take care of him, what do you mean by that?

P5: Look at him wherever he plays.

P1: And make sure when it is cold that he wears warm clothes that's always clean.

R: **If you could choose food and drink for your child, what would you choose?**

P2: Milk, juice, fruit, jungle oats

*Sepedi remark. Everybody laughs.*

P2: She's complaining I've given all the answers.

R (laughing): Now you have to give me a reason why you say all these things, P2?

P2: Ok, because it is healthy, it's not junk food. I don't give him junk food.

P1: I prefer to give my son mealie pap & meat, because he likes meat too much. Maybe juice? Cause he likes meat. When there is not meat he will ask: "Hi momma, where is the meat?" (*Laughter from all*)

R: So sometimes you prefer to give him what he likes, just to make him happy?

*P1 and several others nod affirmative.*

R: **Did you do anything special about what you eat, how exercise and what you do when you were pregnant? Was there anything that you looked at regarding food, drinks exercise?**

*No response.*

R: Did you just do everything as normal when you were pregnant?

P1: No, cause sometimes when I feel like eating chocolates, I eat chocolates. So, I can't say I ate chocolates every day cause maybe today I feel like eating a pie, and tomorrow I feel like eating pork, you know it's just a feeling. You can't eat one thing every day. Like exercising, I was always sleeping.

*Everybody laughs.*

P3: I like walking when I'm pregnant

P2: Me too.

P5: I don't sleep. I sleep only for two hours. I wake up. Do something, walk, wash dishes, clean. I didn't sleep a lot.

R: So when you found out that you were pregnant, was there anything that you thought I should eat this or I shouldn't eat this or I should drink this or not?

P5: When I'm pregnant, I eat everything. As long as it doesn't come out it's fine.

*Everybody laughs.*

R: How do you feel about alcohol & smoking while pregnant?

P5: Those are not healthy.

*P3 agrees.*

P1: They are not healthy you know but, eish, if you are addicted to smoking whether pregnant or not, you are addicted. I know it's dangerous but if you smoke, you smoke. I am pregnant but I smoke every day. If you're addicted, you're addicted. You may get sick if you don't have 'cigarette.'

P4: Smoking is dangerous!

P1: It's dangerous but ... eish...it's ok.

P4: No, you must control yourself, smoking is dangerous! (*Very forceful*)

P1: It's dangerous but ... eish...

R: And alcohol?

P2: Alcohol is not safe. It's dangerous because it can harm your baby.

P1: Alcohol is dangerous for those who don't drink. They can say it's dangerous but for those who drink it's for entertainment not everyday maybe but sometimes.

R: While pregnant?

P1: Ja.

P2: But is not healthy!

P1: But it is difficult to let it go, nobody does 100%. You know, but you ...also everybody do wrong things – you know you do it as well! You know that you don't do perfect!

P2: One sip can harm your baby...One sip. If you drink and your baby ...the little you drink the baby also drink, everything you eat and drink he eats and drinks too.

P1: Yes, it is right, but he will also grow up. (*Laughs*)

R: **If you can choose one activity to do with your child, what would you choose? Read a book, watch TV, play outside, visit friends or build a puzzle?**

P1: For me playing outside. My son loves playing soccer. So I have experienced that this is something that he loves. So I always want to support him.

P3: I like playing puzzles.

P5: Me too

P3: Om 'n boek te lees en 'n puzzle te bou.

R: Why would you choose that?

P3: Vir my dis baie lekker as ek met my kind so sit en speel, of as ek langs haar in die bed sit en boek lees.

P1 & 3: P4, explain what you will choose.

*P4 laughs embarrassed while others explain to her in Sepedi.*

P3: You can choose outside play because your husband always plays outside with your children (laughs)

P4: I don't like it. I will choose toys. I think playing with him in the house with toys.

R: And why would you do that?

P2: It's safe, because we play it in the house, not outside. And maybe he can learn how to build a house and puzzles. *(She is struggling to express herself in English)* Maybe I can show him how to build something with puzzles. I think it's safe to me and I like to be in the house, not outside.

R: And your child... as well?

P2: Yeah.

P4: Maybe reading books,

R: Why would you say that?

P4: Eish *(hesitant)* I love reading books. So I want my child to be like me.

P5: *(long silence)* Building puzzles & reading books.

R: Why do you choose that?

P3: *(laughingly)* You know your child always play outside with the little cars?

P5: It can be more safe.

R: Two of you mentioned safety. Is that the reason why you don't want to play outside?

*All in agreement. Affirmative nods and yes.*

R: What do you experience is not safe outside?

P5: If children play with her in the house, it is ok, but if they play with other children in the streets, they fight and my child cries. It's safe if my child plays by my side.

P1: No, you don't understand. She says you are with your child, how come it's still not safe then?

P2: My child played outside the other day. He fell and got injured. That's why I don't like it.

P1 (*on behalf of P2*): There was a time that her son was playing soccer outside and then he fell and got injured. So that's why she thinks outside is not safe. It's dangerous.

R: And what is your reason, P5?

P5: Going outside on the street is not safe.

R: And if you are playing with your child?.

P4: Why is it still dangerous when you are with your child?

P1: Tell her there is no fence around the house. It's just the house.

P3: I like a place that is fenced, because there are many people that do funny things. So, if you pass them and they swear, then your child hears it and think it is ok even if it is not nice. Our children grow up and see funny things.

P1 & 4 agree.

P3: P5 feels her children are not safe because they live in a small house. So if her children see someone in the street doing funny things, they copy the behaviour.

R: They do not think?

P3: Ja.

R: Even when you are with them they do not think, they will just run?

**R: What do you think can you do to develop your child's language-talking and listening skills?**

P1: Talk to him more often and maybe also read books of the language that you are talking.

**R: What do you think you can do to help their movement skills?**

P1: Movement; how they are walking, running?

R: Yes.

*No response.*

R: Do you think it is important?

P1: No, I don't think it's important. I don't think it's important.



P4: He will teach himself "this is the new generation" (*Laughs*) Let me show you how to walk... (Jokingly). Hey, he teaches himself...

R: Do you think movement like walking, running, jumping, skipping etc is important?

All: Yes

R: Why do you say that?

P1: Because it's part of exercise,

P2: Always active.

R: Why is it good for a child to exercise and to be active?

P2: To be healthy.

*Everyone agree.*

R: What should you do to help your child to develop his brain / mind, stimulate his thinking skills?

P1: By asking him questions to see if he understands...

P4: ... what I'm saying?

R: Are there any games you can play? And do you think games are important?

P1: Yes.

R: Why would you say games are important, or playing is important?

P1: I think it is important because if I play soccer with my son, he will know how to play soccer and maybe soccer will become a career for him. Maybe if he is good at soccer I would see

R: So he will learn the rules?

P1: Nods affirmative.

## FOCUS GROUP 2

September 2013

Duration: 1 hour 30 minutes

Language: Afrikaans

R: Ek dink voor ons begin gaan ons net gou vir mekaar sê hoe oud jou voorskoolse kind is.

P7: Ses. 'n Seuntjie en hy's graad R.

P8: Seuntjie, vyf, graad RR.

P9: Dogtertjie, ses, graad R.

P11: Seuntjie, vyf, graad RR.

P6: Seuntjie van vier en 'n dogtertjie van twee en hulle is nou eers in die kleuterskool.

P11: Myne is ook in die kleuterskooltjie hier.

P10: Ses jaar oud, dogtertjie, Gr R.

P12: Seuntjie, graad R.

P13: Ja, 'n seuntjie, graad R.

R: Ok. so meeste is graad R. Is daar nog enige iemand wat 'n kleiner kindjie het behalwe P6?

P7: O ja, 'n dogtertjie! Sy's twee.

*Almal lag.*

R: Ek gaan nou vir julle vrae vra en dan gaan ons oor hierdie vrae gesels. Gee asseblief eerlike antwoorde: wat jy weet, jou idees en jy kan ook sê as jy nie weet nie.

R: **Wat verstaan jy onder die term vroeë kinderontwikkeling?**

P8: Ek sou sê dis 'n kind wat... hoe gaan ek dit nou sê? (*lag*) Dis 'n kind wat vinning slim is. Hoe stel jy dit nou?

P12: Verder gevorderd as daai ouderdom.

*P13 beaam.*

P9: Van geboorte af, die aandag wat jy as ouer vir 'n kind gee, help hom om te ontwikkel.

R: Nog iemand wat iets wil sê? Stem jy saam met P9? Gaan dit met ander woorde oor die tydperk, van geboorte af?

P9: Hoe meer aandag jy gee, hoe beter gaan kind ontwikkel wees teen die tyd wat hy skool toe gaan.

R: **Wat verstaan jy onder skoolgereedheid?**

P7: Of hy al kan skryf? *At least* sy naam... en sy spraak.

P8: Hy kan al tel tot tien.

P7: Vorms, voorwerpe....

P12: Hy moet onafhanklik kan aangaan sonder die ouers.

P13: Hy moet jou selfoon nommer onthou. *(P12 en 13 lag)*

R: So, as ek vir jou vra wat is skoolgereedheid, wanneer is 'n kind skoolgereed -dan is dit al hierdie goed wat julle nou genoem het? Verstaan ek reg?

P9: Wanneer hy daai mylpale bereik het. Soos my dogtertjie wat prematuur gebore is. Die dokter het my aangeraai om haar 'n jaar terug te hou. Ek het dit nie gedoen nie. Daar is sy – sy doen baie goed op skool. Sy kan klaar haar naam skryf, sy kan alles doen wat die ander kinders in die klas doen. So, ek glo dis daai wat jy as ouer insit, dit het gemaak dat sy gereed is. Dit gaan nie oor of hulle dom of slim is nie.

R: Nog iemand wat iets wil byvoeg?

*Sommige skud hul koppe. Geen verdere respons*

R: **Dink julle dat vroeë kinderontwikkeling en skoolgereedheid sal latere skoolprestasie beïnvloed?**

P8: Ek glo nie, want.... Nee, hy weet mos nou al wat aangaan en wat hy doen is reg? Hoekom gaan dit hom benadeel as hy ouer is?

R: Of bevoordeel? Beïnvloed. So jy voel skool is iets apart van voorskool- hoor ek jou reg?

P8: Vra die vraag eers weer dat ek eers weer verstaan....

*Almal lag.*

R: Dink jy vroeë kinderontwikkeling kan latere skoolprestasie beïnvloed? Dink jy dit het 'n effek op hoe hy later op skool gaan presteer?

*P7, P9 en P 6 mompel saggies onderlangs dat dit het.*

P8: Dink julle so?

P7: Ja, as jy as ouer nie nou aandag aan jou kind gee nie en jou kind los... as hy huiswerk kry en jy *worry* nie en jy los hom dat hy rondhardloop. Hy gaan laterhand daai selfvertroue hê, soos huiswerk doen. Hy moet mos weet hy moet in daai roetine kom - jy moet weet. Los hom, dan gaan hy eendag as hy werk, gaan hy dink hy kan ook nou maar slaap, hy hoef nie werk toe te gaan nie. Hy moet weet: Hy moet opstaan, hy moet skool toe gaan, hy moet presteer. Dis hoe hy eendag in die lewe gaan doen.

P11: Dis ook 'n manier wat hy homself dissiplineer van kleins af. Sodat as hy in die hoërskool is, dat hy daai dissipline het en self kan toepas.

P12: Bou daarop. As hy agter die ander is, dan gaan hy uitsak. Hy gaan nie meer saam met hulle vorder nie.

P13: Van kleins af moet mens vir hom die regte pad wys, anders gaan hy die pad byster raak en hy sal dan nie homself kan onderhou nie. So, hy moet verstandelik reg geleer word. *Moets* en *moenies* moet hy van kleintyd af weet.

P7: Ek dink die ouer se voorbeeld het ook 'n invloed op die kind, want as my kind byvoorbeeld sien ek staan elke oggend sesuur op en borsel my tande en kam my hare, *eventually* gaan hy dieselfde roetine inval. En as ek my huiswerk begin doen, skoonmaak en dit. Hy doen nou al. As hy sien ek begin skoonmaak, dan maak al sy bed op - hy verstaan. So, ek dink 'n ouer se invloed is die grootste.

P8: Ja, dit is.

R: **Ok, jy het nou al die volgende vraag begin antwoord. Wie sien jy as die belangrikste persone in kind se vroeë ontwikkeling?**

P7, P11 en P8: Die ma.

P9: Maar die pa speel ook 'n belangrike rol.

P6: Ek sou sê albei ouers saam, nie net die ma nie. Want die pa het net soveel pligte as die ma en as die kind nou net aandag gaan kry van die ma af, dan wat gaan hy nou dink van sy pa? Ek sou sê die ouers saam.

*Bevestigende ja's van almal.*

P7: Kyk die mamma gee liefde, pappa dissiplineer.

*Almal lag.*

P6: Maar hulle moet dit saam doen.

P7: Mamma praat een keer, miskien twee keer en 'n derde keer sal sy nog 'n kansie gee, maar pappa, as hy daai eenkeer gesê het: 'Seun!' Dan weet hy- kyk ek moet nou stilsit...

P6: Dis nou genoeg!

*Almal lag lekker.*

P11: Ek dink....

P9: Die pa is belangrik, ek het dit opgetel met my dogtertjie. Pa het weg gewerk van die huis af vir 'n jaar en 'n half. Die kleuterskool het my ingeroep en gesê jou kind raak teruggetrokke. Sy raak skaam. Sy't pappa begin mis. Toe trek ons agter pappa aan. Dadelik het sy weer opgetel by die nuwe skool en aangepas. Toe sê ons, nooit ooit weer werk hy weg nie. Hulle het die pa ook nodig, hulle soek liefde en aandag van pappa ook.

P7: Enige seun het pa nodig. Maar ek gaan nie rof wees saam hom nie, en 'n bal skop en in die gras rondskuur nie. Dis die pa se *job*.

*Almal lag.*

P11: Ek sou sê, behalwe die ouers, enige iemand met wie jou kind daagliks in aanraking kom, het 'n groot invloed op die kind se lewe en hulle moet ook hom leer dat... die lewe nie altyd maklik is nie. (*laaste sin word sag en onseker geuiter*)

R: En dink jy aan 'n spesifieke iemand?

P10: Onderwysers.

P11: Party mense lewe nog saam met hulle ouers. Hulle ouers het ook 'n invloed op die kind se lewe. Oupa, ouma, pleegouers, kleuterskoolonderwysers.

P12: Ek stem saam.

P13: Dan raak die kind bederwe.

P11: En baie kinders het pleegouers waarnatoe hulle gaan ... en ek dink dit is nie net die ouers se verantwoordelikheid om die kind se lewe te beïnvloed nie, maar die met wie hy daagliks in aanraking kom. ...selfs die kleuterskoolonderwysers en so.

P10: Ja.

R: So al die volwassenes?

P8: Met wie hulle in kontak is elke dag.

R: **Hoe sal jy gewone dag in die lewe van 'n ouer met 'n voorskoolse kind beskryf?**

*Oorweldigende reaksie. Almal lag eers bietjie onseker en verbouereerd en praat toe gelyk en deurmekaar.*

P7 (*laggend*): Rof!

P12: Besig.

P13: Baie besig!

P8: Besig, bedrywig, frustrasie partykeer.

P7: Frustrerend, partykeer.

P6: Jou huis is altyd deurmekaar (*lag*).

P12: Partykeer moedeloos... geduldig.

P13: Heeltyd geduld beoefen ... baie!

R: Ok, julle het nou 'n klomp goed genoem. Kan julle vir my verduidelik waarom julle so sê?

P8: Ek sou sê hulle hou jou besig- heeldag besig, want as jou kind by die huis is vir die dag: dis opstaan, dis pap gee, teetjies gee, aantrek, skoonmaak. Terwyl jy besig is wil hy speel. Jy moet kort-kort uitgaan en 'n ogie hou oor die kind. Kyk waar's hy, wat doen hulle, anders doen hulle iets wat hulle nie moet doen nie. ..

P7: Soos klim op die dak.

P8: Dis nou-nou: hy soek dit, hy soek dat, hy wil tyd saam met jou spandeer. Sê, mamma is gou-gou besig om skoon te maak en hy soek daai aandag. So, nou moet jy jou werk los, bietjie aandag aan jou kind gee, weer begin werk en dit gaan maar heeldag so. Want dan soek hy 'n broodjie en dan soek hy dit en ja... so dis 'n besige tyd.

P11: Ek sou sê dis frustrerend as jou kind siek is. Jy gee medisyne en alles, en dan's dit steeds: hy voel nie lekker nie en jy weet nie hoe om hom gemakliker te maak nie. En ek dink partykeer as dit te erg raak, raak jy gefrustreerd, want jy weet nie meer watter kant toe nie. Veral as jy 'n ouer is met jou eerste kind, en daar's niks om op terug te slaan nie: o, ek onthou daai een en daai een. So ek dink frustrasie kom baie voor.

P9: Ons het roetine in die huis. Ons glo daarin. My kind weet, oggende: pappa gaan werk toe, sy gaan skool toe. Dis my plig om te sorg dat die huis skoon is, kos gemaak is, alles, want as sy vanmiddag terug is, is dit haar tyd. As sy daar instap wil sy hê

mamma moet huiswerk doen, mamma moet dit en dat. Ons sorg dat die middag is haar tyd. As pappa van die werk af kom, is dit daai uur voor sy moet gaan bad en slap. Dit is haar tyd met pappa. So vir ons is dit al normaal, want van geboorte af is dit ons roetine wat ons volg.

R: Ok, P12, jy het gesê geduld of ongeduld?

P12: Geduld. (*Lag*)

P13: Hulle is hiperaktief...

P12: Ja, hy en ouer boetie is altyd bymekaar en hulle doen onmoontlikste goed. En dan moet jy vir hulle verduidelik: Hoor hier, dit wat jy nou gedoen het, is verkeerd en dit vat nogal baie van 'n mens se tyd om hulle op die regte pad te hou. (*Lag weer*)

R: So om hulle hele tyd te bestuur?

P13: Ja, dan haal ons *puzzles* uit en sê gaan bou nou die *puzzles*. Hulle hou hulself besig, maar net vir 'n halfuur en dan's hulle weer uit.

P12: En dan's hulle weer besig met iets anders, boek lees, dan weer buite.

*P13 beaam .*

R: So jy moet hulle die heelryd stuur om weer iets anders te doen?

P12: Ja, hulle raak gou vervelig. Ja, jy moet die heelryd iets anderster doen.

*P8 beaam.*

R: **Hoe kan jy help om jou kind voor te berei vir formele skool/ vir graad een?**

P12: Baie boek lees.

P8: Gee vormpies, kleure. Jy wys hom. Jy vat potlode en wys hom elke kleur. Hy moet vir jou naderhand kan sê watter kleure dit is. Gee vir hom vormpies en leer hom om sy naam en van te skryf. Leer hom om te tel en daai tipe goeters.

P6: Konsentreer.

P8: Ja, konsentreer.

P12: Memoriseer.

P9: Probeer dit 'n speletjie maak, dat dit nie vir hom soos 'n straf voel nie.

P8: Ja, dit moenie vir hom vervelig raak nie.

*Almal beaam*

P11: Verskillende aandag wat jy saam met hom kan doen.

R: Jy't gesê aandag, om te kan konsentreer?

P6: Wat het ek gesê? (*almal lag*) O ja, daar's baie kinders wat, as jy vir hulle sê hulle moet konsentreer op iets, dan kan hulle nie. Of hulle moet beweeg. Hulle moet leer om te kan stilsit en fokus en hoe gaan jy fokus as jy soontoe kyk en jy moet hier skryf?

P8: As jy jou kind vat en sit hom neer en jy sê vir hom hierdie is nou rooi en hierdie is geel. Jy kan nie net met 'n kind so sit nie, hy raak gou vervelig. So, jy moet dit 'n speletjie maak om te sê, kom ons gaan 'n speletjie speel. Dit moet vir hom interessant wees om te leer, want anders gaan hy daar opstaan en hy gaan sê nou's hy vervelig. Dis nou nie meer lekker nie.

P11: Ek sien met my klein ogies...

R: So, hoor ek julle reg dat julle sê jy kan baie dinge doen, maar dit moet vir hulle lekker wees.

*Almal beaam.*

P6: Van voorskool na 'n formele skool toe sou ek sê om kind te laat verstaan daar's 'n verskil. Dit is voorskool en nou gaan jy regtig na 'n groot skool toe. So, nou moet jy *basically* verstaan: Jy gaan nou begin regte werkies doen. Nou begin jou toekoms. Nou moet jy jou sokkies optrek. (*Lag*) Sommer nou al van graad een af. (*Lag weer*)

R: So dit raak ernstiger?

P6: Ja.

P9: Ek sou as hy met iets positiefs by die huis aankom hom beloon daarvoor, dat hy voel more gaan ek terug skool toe en ek gaan dit weer beter doen. Dan gaan hy tot matriek daai roetine hou.

P7: Maar dan moet jy ook weet in die hoërskool kry hulle vriende en die vriende is verkeerde invloed. So, jy moet hom op die regte pad hou.

P6: (*onderlangs*) My kinders sal nie vriende hê nie... ook nie meisies nie!

*Almal lag.*

R: En hoe dink jy kan jy dit doen as mamma van 'n voorskoolse kind?

P6: Ek dink rêrig dalk in die toekoms... sjoe, veral my *lalties*. Nee, ek sluit hulle toe in 'n hok (*almal lag*) om glad nie te meng met verkeerde maatjies nie en dis dalk wat ek sal doen. Maar ek sal dit nie rêrig doen nie! (*laggend en dan weer ernstig*). Dalk met hulle sit en



- praat en sê: “Luister hier,” want ek glo daaraan jy skree nie rêrig op ‘n kind nie. Vat hom, kyk hom in die oë en sê vir hom: “Luister hier; nou staan dinge so, ou perd. “
- P7: *Anyway*, as jy begin skree sluit hy af... so groot soos wat hy is, kom eerder af en praat na sy *level* - dis wanneer hy luister. So ...
- P6: Hy konsentreer nie. Ja... sê: “Kyk eers wat daai maat se doen en late is, dan kom jy terug na my toe en sê vir my is dit reg of is dit verkeerd. “ Dis wat ek basies sal doen.
- P13: Ja, sy oë vang ‘n ding en dan konsentreer hy op daai ding en hy luister nie.
- P8: Ek sal sê as ‘n kind in die hoërskool is, moet jy meer, as dit nou ‘n meisiekind is, soos vriendin as ‘n ma wees vir jou dogter. Sy gaan meer vrywilliger wees (*vrymoedigheid hê?*) om met jou te praat, by die skool as sy nou verkeerde maatjies het of so en sy sien dit wat hulle doen is nou verkeerd gaan sy na jou toe kom en vir my sê: “ Mamma, ek het die maatjie, maar hulle doen dit en dit en ek hou nie daarvan nie.” Dan moet jy vir haar raad gee en *explain*: “Sussie, maar dinge gaan so en so en ek dink dis beter as jy maar eerder vir jou ander maatjies kry.” Moenie lelik en sarkasties wees nie, want dadelik gaan sy dink: Hoekom is jy as ouer nou lelik? Wat maak van daai mense beter of slegter as wat sy self is?
- P7: Dan’s hulle te bang om vir jou iets te sê.
- P8: Soos: “As ek sien jy loop saam met daai kinders gaan ek jou toesluit of slaan of wat ookal.” Wees ‘n vriendin. Sy gaan baie openliker met jou wees, baie meer met jou gesels. En daai tyd begin hulle vir outjies te kyk en daai tipe goeters. Ek meen, hulle raak groot, en sy moet voel as sy van iemand hou moet sy vir jou kan sê, want jy moet regtig weet wat in daai kind van jou se brein aangaan, om te weet more loop sy toilet toe en ‘n outjie kom nou saam met haar. Jy weet nooit wat gebeur nie, want jy’s nie by die skool nie. So, sy moet verstaan jy is soos ‘n vriendin. Sy moet openlik met jou kan praat daarvoor. Sy moet vir jou kan sê sy hou van die outjie en jy moet kan verduidelik: “Sussie, jy word nou groot en groot meisies mag nie dit en dit nie. Handjies vashou, ja, maar verder as dit, sulke dinge gaan nie aan nie.” Jy moet haar die grootmens-wêreld leer.
- R: Dis nou as ‘n kind in die hoërskool is. Wat kan jy as mamma NOU doen met jou voorskoolse kind?
- P11: Die regte beginsels vir hulle leer.
- P6: Sê nou vir jou kind wat is reg en verkeerd. Hoe lyk jy as jy slegte dinge doen. Ek het nou die dag gepraat met ‘n tannie. Ek het gedink my kinders is nog te jonk, want daar’s sekere situasies waarby my kinders betrokke is byvoorbeeld hulle sal vra hoekom lyk die oom so. Dan sal ek weet hy’t dalk dagga gerook of gedrink en ek weet nie of ek dit nou al

vir my kind wil sê nie, want ek's bang my kind gaan toets dit uit. Toe sê sy, nee, jy sê vir jou kind dis verkeerd. As jy dagga rook lyk jy so. Ek sou sê jy moet hulle dalk van die begin af leer hoe lyk jy as jy dinge doen.

P7: Hulle blootstel aan alles, sodat hulle kan weet. Dat hulle op die einde van die dag hulle eie besluite kan neem. Hulle nou al vertel wat reg en verkeerd is, sodat as hulle in die hoërskool instap, hulle kan weet.

*P6 en P8 beaam.*

P6: Maar dit gaan snaaks klink as 'n vierjarige *laaitie* by jou kom en sê hy lyk so, want hy't dagga gerook. Jy gaan wil weet hoe weet hy van dagga? (*Lag*) Dis hoe ek dit sien. Maar dis om hulle te leer, soos om klinieke toe te gaan. Klinieke het 'n klomp goed op wat wys wat is verkeerd. Wys vir hulle hoe lyk die goed en wat doen dit. Ek glo hulle sal dit *print*.

R: So van voorskool af wil jy vir hulle inligting gee sodat hulle kan leer?

*Almal beaam gelyk*

P7: Soos die meisies wat groot word. Hoekom leer hulle, hulle eers van graad sewe af sulke goeters? Nou al, ek leer nou al my seuntjie van alles en as iemand daar wil vat kom sê vir mamma. Jy wag nie. Nou al, nie eers as jy dertien is nie.

P11: Kinders van die tyd is slimmer as toe ons klein was...

*Almal beaam.*

P6: Hulle word slim gebore, basies.

P11: Hulle weet meer as wat ons as volwassenes moes geweet het, as wat ons teen daai tyd geweet het. So, om hulle alles te leer en te wys en hulle bloot te stel en te sê dis hoe dinge... van kleins af. Ek dink dit sal hulle baie beïnvloed. Alles.

P8: Kinders nou is baie *talkative*, hulle praat vinnig. As hulle 'n dronk oom sien, sal hulle se daai oom is alweer dronk. (*P6 en P7 lag en beaam*) So, hulle weet wat dronk is en hoekom is die oom dronk: die oom het te veel bier gedrink. Hoekom val die oom? Hulle sien dit en dit wys hulle, 'ek wil nie so wees nie'.

P11: En tegnologie van vandag ook.

P6: Vir ons baie moeilik, ek en my man drink nie, ons rook wel, maar ons drink nie en gebruik nie drugs nie. So, vir ons is dit baie moeilik om ons kinders bloot te stel daaraan, as ons sien ander doen dit. So ons het nie altyd dieselfde manier om dit aan die kinders te verduidelik nie.

R: Waar jull bly- word julle kinders baie blootgestel aan hierdie goed?

*Meeste knik bevestigend.*

P6: Ja, baie. Veral aan dagga en drank.

P7: En 'n gevloek en 'n geskel.

P6: En in dieselfde asem hoor hulle daai mense sê: ons het nie kos in ons huis nie. Maar daai oom lyk dronk. Hoekom is daar nie kos nie, maar hy kan drink? En vir ons wat nie drink nie, is dit moeilik om aan ons kinders te verduidelik wat gaan aan. So, ons sukkel nog met dit.

P13: Ja, soos die werkloosheid het ook 'n groot rol daarin.

R: Ja, daar's baie pappas wat by die huis is en nie 'n werk het nie?

P13: Dan volg hy maar een manier en dit is na die drankbottel toe. Dan drink hy, slaan die vrou en kinders en dis nie reg nie. (*Lag amper verleë*)

R: En as ek julle nou reg gehoor het, sê julle, julle moet van kleins af die kinders leer.? Hulle sien dit. Dis hoe die oom en tannie mekaar hanteer en ons doen dit nie.

P9: Dis hoekom ons verhuis het, want daar waar ons gebly het... ek was baie geskok. Ek het net twee maande daar gebly. Dit was op pastoor se perseel. Die mans slaan vrouens en toe my man wil ingryp en sê dit gaan nie voor my kind gebeur nie, toe word ons weggejaag. Toe kom hulle terug en sê ons moet bly. Toe sê ek: My kind is ses jaar oud. Sy huil. Sy wil nie hier bly nie. So, daai omstandighede is goed om dit vir hulle te leer, maar nie dat hulle dit sien nie.

P6: En hulle tel die snaakste goed op. Die kleinste ding waaraan jy nie kan dink nie, tel hulle op. (*P13 knik instemmend*) Daar's groot *laaities* op die plot wat nie werk nie, byvoorbeeld, gister word daar geloop en drink. My *laaitie* wil nie skool toe gaan nie. Toe vra ek hom hoekom wil jy nie skool toe gaan nie: Hulle gaan nie skool toe nie. Hoekom moet ek skool toe gaan? Hulle sien die kleinste goedjies en vra vrae.

R: En dit maak dit moeilik vir jou as ma?

P6: Ja, want jy moet nou aan jou kind verduidelik waarom hy moet skool toe gaan. Want hoekom gaan hulle nie óf werk hulle nie?

P8: En ek dink dis goed om 'n kind te wys wat is verkeerd, want anderster as jy hom nie leer nie- more, oormore gaan hy die bierbottel vat, want hy wil probeer. Voel hoe voel dit? Dit lyk dan lekker. So, leer hom van kleins af dis verkeerd. Daai goeters maak jou kop so en so. En hy gaan weet, want anders doen hulle alles skelm.

R: Wat het ouers van voorskoolse kinders nodig om hulle voor te berei vir skool in terme van vaardighede, hulpmiddels en apparate? Wat dink julle het mens nodig?

P10: Geduld.

*P9, P11, P12 en P13 knik instemmend.*

P7: Dissipline, roetine.

P11: 'n Handboek.

*Almal lag.*

P6: Ja, jy werk net uit boeke uit.

P8: Ek sou sê geduld, roetine, voorwerpe...daai tipe goed.

P6: Streng wees. Ja is ja en nee is nee!

P7: Blokkies, verf en klei.

P9: Dit wat jy in die huis het. *Improvise!*

P12: Ja, jy kan mos jou eie klei maak.

P7: Ek het *getry*, toe moes ek die pot weggooi.

R: P9, vertel my, wat bedoel jy met '*improvise*'?

P9: *Improvise* met goed in die huis. Soos, leer kleure as ons die skottelgoed wegpak: sit die geel beker aan die regterkant van die tafel. So, maak 'n speletjie daarvan, so leer sy. As ons inkleur dan is 'mamma dom' en sy bring die kleure en sê hoe moet die prent ingekleur word.

P8: En dis vir haar lekker!

P9: Dan leer sy jou en sy voel slim.

P6: Ons koop sommer pakkette wat alles in een is. (*Lag*) Dan werk ons uit die pakket uit. Dis vir ons baie maklik.

R: En speel?

P6: Net karretjies! (*Lag*) As jy vra wat wil hulle speel...net karretjies!

P9: Modder, daai is 'n groot een. As jy potte,panne en lepels soek. Gaan kyk buite, dit lê iewers in die modder. Sy't gaan modderkoekies bak.

*P12 en 13 beaam.*

- R: As ons dink aan apparate; Watter tipe spel het kinders nodig?
- P8: Ek sal sê balspele. Dit leer hulle oog-koördinasie en al daai tipe goed. Hoe om te vang hoe om vinnig te wees.
- P6: Touspring.
- P8: Krieket, rugby... gooi vir hulle 'n bal.
- P13: Boomklim.
- P12: Vir balans
- P11: As jy groot sementblokke het waarop jy kan vorms teken. Hulle kan leer spring. Selfs dan leer hulle die vorms ook - hop-scotch.
- P13: Ons het altyd die hasie geteken.
- R: En julle het gesê boomklim? Is dit goed?
- P13: Hy wil net boomklim.
- P12: Balans.
- P13: Ja, vir die balans is dit goed.
- P12: Klimraam. (*P13 beaam*)
- P9: Mamma en pappa se klere.
- R: Wat is die grootste uitdagings wat julle ervaar?**
- P8: Om geduld te hê.
- R: In watter situasies spesifiek?
- P8: Omdat hulle baie *hyperactive* is, as hulle so klein is. So, hou jou baie besig deur die dag omdat jy so baie aktiwiteite met hulle moet doen.

*Meeste beaam.*

- P11: My seuntjie vra en vra en vra, na mekaar en jy moet net antwoord en antwoord. En naderhand voel jy 'wanner hou jy op?' So ek dink geduld is 'n baie goeie een.
- P6: Ek dink dis maar iets waarmee almal sukkell, met geduld. Ek glo nie daar's 'n vrou wat van die oggend tot die aand net geduld het nie.
- P7: Ek het tien minute van die dag geduld. As ek net wakker geword het en besig is om koffie te drink.

*Almal lag.*

P6: Veral deur die week wil my kinders glad nie opstaan vir skool nie, maar naweke is hulle sesuur op en dan wil hulle speel. Maar deur die week sukkel ek!

*Almal beaam entoesiasties. Hulle lag en praat gelyk.*

P7: Jis, dit maak my ook kwaad.

P6: Ek kon dit nog nooit verstaan?

P12: Ek het vir my seun nog net twee keer die jaar wakker gemaak. Hy staan self op.

P13: Of dit Saterdag of Dinsdag is. Vyfuur is hy wakker en dan moet almal wakker.

R: P10, wat is jou grootste uitdaging?

P6: Nee, sy't nogal geduld.

P11: Ja, geduld vir Afrika.

**R: Wat het kinders nodig om veilig te voel?**

P7: Liefde en aandag.

P9: Daai sekuriteit van- ek kan na jou toe kom as die maatjie my seergemaak het. Ek kan met jou kom praat. Jy sal my help. Ek hoef nie bang te wees vir die volwassene wat in beheer is op daai stadium nie.

P6: Liefde en aandag sou ek sê.

*P10 verlaat die groep. Dit lyk asof sy huil.*

P13: As hy vertrou kan herwin. Hy moet selfvertroue ook hê.

R: Fisiese veiligheid? Is julle ooit bekommerd daarvoor ?

P6: Ek is dalk bang vir *crime* in SA: moord en die molestering en die *rape*. Oe!! Ja, ek is verskriklik bang daarvoor, baie baie. So, as my kinders draai, draai ek ook.

P8: Ek sou sê met dit wat sy nou sê ,met *crime* en goed ja, maar by jou huis, nee. Jy as ouer, dis net in jou. Dis jou plig as ouer om kort-kort te gaan kyk waar is jou kind. En omdat hulle so baie vinnig kan skinder en goed, as hy voel, hy voel ongemaklik saam met die persoon of iets en as jy met jou kind kan praat en sê jy moet vir mamma sê as iemand jou pla of iets of daai tipe goed- hy gaan. Hy gaan na jou toe kom en sê: Mamma, hierdie maatjie maak my seer of daai oom vat aan my, of mamma so of so, want hy voel vrywillig om met jou as ma te praat. Omdat jy hom nie, jy moet 'n kind nie net altyd skel en daai tipe goed nie, want as die kind nou na jou toe aanhardloop en jy

sê: Ag hoor hier, gaan speel net! Dan voel hy, hy gaan nie meer met jou kan praat nie, want jy stoot hom elke keer weg.' My *lovie*, wat's fout? Hoekom het hy jou seergemaak? Wat het jy gedoen?' Dan sê hy: 'Mamma, ek het hom eerste geklap, toe klap hy my terug.' Dan verduidelik jy: 'Maar my skat, jy kan nie aan 'n maatjie slaan nie, want hy gaan jou terugslaan.' Verduidelik aan hom, want hy moet vrywillig voel om met jou te praat. So, ek voel fisiese veiligheid –nee, hulle sal na jou toe kom as hulle voel iets pla of bedreig hulle.

P7: Dan kom jy agter wat is die storie.

*Vat 'n vyf minute breuk waar P10 ondersteuning ontvang en ouers kan rook.*

**R: Kom ons praat bietjie oor maniere waarop ouers liefde vir hulle kinders wys.**

P7, P11 en P12: Aandag

P9: Tyd saam met hulle spandeer.

P6: Die grootste liefde wat jy vir jou kind kan wys is, as almal in die bed klim - ons het 'n rympie: 'love you, sien jou more, lekker slaap. Ons het daai rympie en ons kan nie slaap as almal dit nie gesê het nie. En ons soen mekaar en ons druk mekaar en ons gaan slaap. En soos as jy pannekoek bak, sit hulle op die tafels, lek die bak uit. Die een gooi suiker die ander een *flip* hom.

*Meeste beaam.*

P11: As hulle hartseer is, is jy die persoon na wie hulle toe kom. En jy kan hulle troos. Ek meen, dis deel van liefde toon.

P9: En hulle laat verstaan: Ek verstaan wat met jou gebeur; ek was ook 'n kind en dit het met my ook gebeur, jy hoef nie sleg te voel nie. Ek is ook daardeur.

P6: Bad hulle, trek hulle aan, koop vir hulle *sweeties*, my kinders *love sweets*. (*Lag*) Hulle dink ek is baie lief vir hulle as ek *sweets* gee.

P9: As hulle iets wil doen, gee hulle kans om iets te doen. Soos my dogtertjie wou bulletjie-rugby speel. Hierdie mamma was baie daarteen, want dis 'n dogtertjie. Op die ou end, het ons 'n oefening gaan bywoon en sy't dit geniet. So, ter wille van haar wat dit geniet, het ek elke week die oefeninge bygewoon en Saterdag die wedstryde.

P8: *Support.*

P13: Hulle soek daai ondersteuning.

P12: Jy moet ook toegeeflik wees. Jy moenie net streng wees nie!

P6: Vat hulle bietjie uit. Ek het my kinders dieretuin toe gevat. Oe, ek was so spyt agterna! (*Lag*)

P7: 'n Kind sal liefde voel as hy weet hy't 'n plek in die huis. So, moenie hom eenkant toe skuif nie. As hy voel hy is deel van die gesin, hy kan sê: 'Mamma, ek wil weer 'n broodjie hê?' nadat ons geëet het. Hy kan opstaan en die yskas oopmaak. Hy is deel van die huis, dis nie net van: Jy is 'n kind, jy sal doen wat ek jou sê nie.

P8: Of ek dink jy't nou genoeg gehad. Nee, dit werk nie so nie, as jy honger is, is jy honger.

P6: En hulle vra ontydig. Net as jy so lekker sit en rus: Mamma, ek soek water? Dan gaan jy noodgedwonge opstaan en vir hom water gee. Nie: 'Hoor hier, jy kan nou-nou kry nie!'

P7: Of, gaan help jousef, nie, want dis goed as hulle jou vra, want dan voel hulle jy help.

P10: En wat jou altyd so skaam maak, as hulle nou by die huis eet en dan gaan julle na mense toe. Moet asseblief nie vra nie: dan vra hy 'n broodjie!

*Almal lag en praat gelyk. Hulle stem heelhartig saam en lyk asof hul kan identifiseer hiermee.*

P8: Dan voel jy, jis, hierdie kind het jou nou verneder. Mense dink jy gee nie vir hulle kos nie, want oral waar julle gaan, dan sien hulle iets lekkers. Nou soek hulle dit, hulle is nou honger. Dan dink jy: Ag!

P7: Soos P8 se ma is my kinders se aangenome ouma, en sy kyk party naweke na my kinders. Dan eet hulle by die huis, dan kom ons daar, dan sê hulle: 'Mamma, vra vir die tannie ek soek *noodles*'. Jy't nou net geëet! Hoekom wil jy weer eet?' Maar Mamma, daar's tamatiesous.' Ek sê: 'My hel, hoor!'

P11: Dis *amazing!* Ja, ek het nou die dag vetkoeke gemaak en ons het geëet en ons gaan gee toe vir P6 en sy's besig om op te skep en toe sê my kind: 'Ek is honger!'

P10: Een keer toe ek ook vir haar vra om slap *chips* vir kinders te maak: 'Nou waar's myne, Tannie?'

P9: En as jy oor naweke huistakies doen, moenie jou kind eenkant toe skuif en sê mamma maak nou skoon nie. Betrek hulle, die klein goedjies wat hulle kan doen. Laat hulle jou help, dan voel hulle hulle is betrokke.

P11: Ek voel my seuntjie is nou oud genoeg om takies te doen.

P9: Maar ons moet hulle ook nie ons ousies maak nie. Dis bietjie en dan's dit klaar.

P11: Hy't sy takies en dan beloon ek hom.



P7: My seun kry sakgeld. Maar hy moet takies doen. En as ek hom vra en hy doen dit nie en Donderdag kom en dis snoepie en hy kry nie sy vyf rand nie, dan moet hy nou vir homself vra hoekom nie? Dis nie asof ek hom 'n ousie maak nie, maar hy moet ook leer jy moet werk vir jou geld.

P6: Maar ek dink jy moet sê jy is lief vir hulle. Ek doen dit so 50-60 keer per dag. Ek loop tot by kleuterskool om vir hulle te sê ek is lief vir hulle. (*Lag*) Jy moet dit deurbring aan hulle, maar kyk my ma is lief vir my.

P11: Mens kry ook daai ouers wat dit bietjie oordoen.

P6: Ok, ek dink ek oordoen dit bietjie.

*Almal lag.*

P11: Wat hulle nie ruimte gee nie. Hulle klou aan hulle. Hulle gee te veel liefde.

P7: En dis wanneer hulle wil wegbreek en wanneer hulle rebels uitdraai.

P11: So, ek dink jy moet hulle liefde toon, maar jy moet 'n perk hê van liefde toon.

P7: Sodat hulle hulself kan wees en hulle eie identiteit kan leer. Jy moenie jouself af forseer op hulle en sê jy moet nou so en so wees nie. Hulle moet hulle eie identiteit..., want ses jaar is wanneer hulle eintlik hulle eie identiteit ontwikkel. So jy moet hulle daai *gap* gee om hulleself te wees.

P11: Ek het nou al gesien daar's ouers wat so aan hulle kinders ... so vir hulle kinders is, laat hulle hulle nie toelaat om uit te gaan nie.

P6: Of die foute raaksien nie? Hulle kyk die foute vry...

P11: Of foute raaksien nie, (*P13 en P6 beaam*) want hulle is te in hulle kind se lewe *involved*. Jou kind is daar om te leer en om te groei, en nou bind jy hom toe. 'n Kind moet leer, jy wil hom veilig hou die heel tyd. Jy's te bang hy kom iets oor, maar 'n kind moet seerkry, hy moet leer....

P8: Jy leer uit jou foute uit.

P11: So, ek dink om hom lief te hê, om hom liefde te toon, het sy perk.

P9: Ons moet ook vir hulle leer dat as ons in die winkel instap en daar is nie geld vir *sweetie* nie, ek is nie lelik vir jou nie. Ek is lief vir jou en ek sê nee want daar is nie nou geld nie. Koop ek die *sweetie*, kan ek nie vir jou 'n broodjie koop nie. So, kies jy nou wat jy wil hê? Besluit jy nou: gaan jy die broodjie of 'n *sweetie* vat?

P7: (*lag onderlangs*) Myne sal die *sweetie* kies...ek het dit al gedoen.

P9: Myne weet nou al en sal na my toe kom en sê: 'Mamma as pappa *pay* kry?' Dan sê ek: 'Ja, as pappa *pay* kry'. 'Mamma, kan ek dan 'n *sweetie* kry?' Anders as ons dan in die winkel instap, vra sy glad nie. Dan weet sy, die Donderdag as hy *pay* kry, as ons by die bank stop: 'Mamma het pappa *gepay*? Dan sê ek ja. 'Kan ek nou maar 'n *sweetie* kry?' Anders weet sy 'nee' is omdat ons lief is vir haar en omgee vir haar en eerder vir haar kos wil gee as om heeltyd *sweets* te gee.

P11: En ook om hulle te laat verstaan as jy met hulle raas, jy raas nie omdat jy lelik wil wees nie, jy raas omdat jy lief is vir hulle. Jy wil vir hulle wys dis verkeerd.

P7: En as jy nie lief was vir hulle nie, sou jy hulle nie gedissiplineer het nie. As jy vir my seuntjie vra waar bly Liewe Jesus sê hy: 'In my hartjie' en dan sê ek Hy is ook in my hartjie as mamma. Dan sê ek vir hom Jesus sê in die bybel 'tugtig die wat jy liefhet' dws Jesus sê mamma moet jou straf as jy nie luister nie. So dit is wat Liewe Jesus sal doen en dit is waar ek dink liefde ook inkom.

**R: Om aan te sluit by wat P9 gesê het oor kos, as jy enige kos of drinkgoed vir jou kind kan kies, wat sal jy kies en hoekom?**

P9: Groente. My kind vrek oor groente.

P10: Groente, vrugte, sappe.

P7: So gesond as moontlik. iets wat hom sal voed en sal hou vir die hele dag.

P9: As sy groente en pasta kan eet is sy gelukkig.

P8: My kinders is ook lief vir pasta.

P11: iets wat ek nou al geleer het, is te veel van goeie ding, is nie altyd goed nie. So, jy moet hulle so effe ook bederf.

P7: Ja, soos een keer per week 'n *sweetie* gee. Dis wat ek doen. My kinders kry nie elke dag *sweets* nie. Ons kan elke dag winkel toe gaan, hulle kry nie. My seuntjie weet hy kry op Saterdag of 'n roomys of hy kan net een *sweet* kies. Hy kry nie roomys en *choklits* en Smarties en chips en koeldrank nie. Hy kies 'n *sweet* en dis dit. As dit klaar is, is dit klaar.

P8: Ek voel ook as jy vir jou kind te veel lekkernye gee, verwag hulle dit van jou basies elke dag. So jy't nie elke dag daai geld om vir hulle te gee vir *sweets* nie. Dit raak naderhand vir hulle soos 'n roetine, hulle verwag net dat jy moet uithaal en wys en as jy nie het nie, voel hulle....hoe kan ek nou sê?

P13: Teleurgesteld?

P8: Teleurgesteld, want hoekom het mamma dan nou nie vandag vir my nie? So, jy moet hulle leer wanneer daar is, is daar, wanneer nie, is daar nie. Dis nou maar hoe dit werk.

P6: Ek sou sê groente.

R: Hoekom sou julle vir julle kinders hierdie kos gee?

P12: Bou verstandelik.

P9: Brein ontwikkeling.

P7: Konsentrasie, definitief!

P6: Soos ons sê, as jy wortels eet dan hoef jy nie brille te dra nie.

P8: Dis gesond.

P11: Dit help hulle om te baklei teen bakterieë en infeksies.

P13: Soos my seun sê, hy eet beet omdat die beet vir hom nuwe bloed gee.

*Almal lag.*

P6: Spinasie het yster. Popeye- kos!

P8: Dit help vir been bou.

P7: Kleintjies is baie aktief. So, ek sou sê solank hulle *ge'hydrate'* bly, is ek *happy*. My seuntjie weet, daar's die yskas, as jy wil melk of youghurt hê, ek beperk hom glad nie met sulke goeters en koeldrank nie, maar ek beperk hom wel met enige iets wat soet is.

P8: Anders raak hulle *hyperactive*.

P7: En nie net dit nie...sy tande.

P13: Ja, die tandemuis raak bankrot.

**R: Watter raad oor 'n gesonde leefstyl sal jy, as ouer van 'n voorskoolse kind vir 'n paartjie gee wat swanger is met hul eerste kindjie?**

P7: Higiëne.

P8: Ja.

P11: Probeer alles so skoon as moontlik te hou.

P7: Na higiëne kom die ander goeters, soos gesond eet en so aan, maar higiëne is heel bo-aan.

P6: Geduld hê.

P9: En mamma begin van geboorte af borsvoed en moenie vir my vertel jy het nie melk nie- *it's all in the mind*. Vra my, ek het dit *getry* en die professor by Kalafong het vir my gesê dis '*all in the mind*': jy gaan borsvoed. Dit help met jou kind se breinontwikkeling en ja, ons mag nie kinders teen mekaar kompeteer nie ,maar my dogtertjie en haar niggie verskil vyf maande en my dogtertjie was drie maande *prem*. So, sy doen baie beter as niggie wat op dieselfde ouderdomsvlak is en dieselfde tipe werk by die skool doen. Niggie was 'n bottelbaba, sy was geborsvoed.

P11 & P8: Dit doen, immuniteit...

P9: Dis goedkoop ook...

P7: En ek dink ook roetine. Soos jy moenie net groente gee elke dag nie, daar moet ook proteïene, kalsium... daar moet alles in die kind se daaglikse inname wees.

*P8 knik bevestigend.*

P12: 'n Gebalanseerde dieet.

P7: Want so rukkie terug het my seuntjie 'n yster-tekort gehad en moes ons met hom hospitaal toe jaag. Hy slat sulke kolle uit en hy is spierwit. Toe't ek agtergekom yster is eintlik... hy wil nie dit eet nie, of hy wil nie dit eet nie. Dan sê ek: 'Ok luister, as jy nie wil kos nie, wil jy ook nie *sweets* nie. So, dis *allraait* kom ek vat dit, dan bêre ek dit'. Dan sê hy, maar mamma ek is honger. Dan haal ek sy kos uit en sê, 'nou eet dit.' Daar's nie dan van ek is versadig nie. Nee, hy wil dit nie hê nie. Nee, hy eet wat ek vir hom gee.

P9: 'n Swanger mamma moet ook onthou sy moenie sê maar ek gaan 'n slegte mamma wees nie. As die Here gedink het jy kan nie daai kind grootmaak nie, sou Hy hom nie vir jou gegee het nie. Dis 'n geskenk wat vir jou gegee is. Hy weet jy sal kan sorg vir daai kind, dis hoekom Hy hom vir jou gegee het.

R: So wat sal julle nog sê vir 'n swanger vrou, ons het gepraat oor kos, wat nog?

P8: Om daai babatjie liefde en aandag te gee. Om hom groot te maak na die beste van haar vermoë.

P7: Ek voel ek kan nie vir jou sê hoe moet jy jou kind grootmaak nie.

P8: Want nie almal vat daai raad nie. Hulle dink, jis, dis my kind.

P7: Want ek sal nou dit en dit doen. En jy dink dalk, nee. Ek sou sê, volg jou eie intuïsie. Jy is 'n mamma. Enige mamma kan 'n kind grootmaak.

P8: Doen wat jy dink goed is.

P11: Ek sou sê almal se raad is 'n riglyn. Dis wat jy gebruik, wat die verskil maak.

- P7: Ek kan na almal se raad luister en net joune vat. Dis my besluit wie s'n ek vat.
- P11: Dis altyd jou besluit op die ou einde.
- R: En dink julle dit wat 'n swanger vrou doen het 'n invloed op haar baba?
- Almal: Ja, definitief.
- P7: Dit begin by die swangerskap. Die kind se ontwikkeling. Ek meen die kind ontwikkel in die maag. As jy rook en drink, dit beïnvloed die kind se brein daar en dan. So, as jy nie reg lewe en oefeninge doen...
- P8: 'n goeie leefstyl het nie.
- P7: Die dag as die kind gebore word, ek meen as jy klaar in die *environment* is waar daar gevloek en geskel word. As daai die eerste drie maande is, is die kind baie onrustig en skree en ...so, verstaan, jy moet van... as jy vandag uitgevind het jy is swanger, moet jy ..
- P11: Jou lewe verander.
- P6: Ek sou sê die eerste drie maande is die gevaarlike stadium. Jou kind vorm dan binne in jou.
- P7: Ja, hy hoor klaar wat aangaan.
- P6: En hulle het bewys dat as die kind klaar gevorm is en in jou baarmoeder is en jy skree, dan weerwalm dit in jou baarmoeder vir die kind. So, daai kind gaan gewoon raak om te skree elke dag. Nee, dit doen regtig.
- P7: Soos my dogtertjie, toe ek swanger was met haar, het ek by 'n *bar* gewerk en ek was tot op ses maande swanger dat ek daar gewerk het. Soos met die musiek in die aande, as ek instap dan begin sy skop en in die dag ,ek kan doen wat ek wil, ek het al hospitaal toe gegaan, want ek het gedink die kind is dood, wat die kind nie wil beweeg nie. Maar laat ek by daai plek instap en daai musiek is so. So, ek dink die kind hoor wat om jou aangaan.
- P9: Ja, hulle doen.
- P7: Hulle raak gewoon aan die *environment*.
- P9: Die roetine waarin hulle is vir daai nege maande.
- P6: Ja, dit het baie invloed op hulle.

**R: Kies een van die volgende aktiwiteite om saam met jou kind te doen en dan gee jy 'n rede hoekom jy dit besluit het.**

P8: Buite speel, want jy gee vir jou kind daai aandag, dat hy voel tyd, dit is tyd wat jy saam met hom spandeer. So, hy voel spesiaal en dit leer hom fisies: sy oog-koördinasie. So, alles is met buite speel. Hy kry aandag, liefde, dit wys jy gee om, dit leer hom sy wat-ookal?

P11: Sy liggamsbou.

P7: Saam vriende, want terselfde tyd wat hy hand-oog koördinasie leer om saam met hulle bal te skop en te speel, leer hy sy eie identiteit en ek dink jou eie identiteit het 'n groot impak op jou toekoms.

P9: Boek lees. My dogtertjie is baie lief vir boeke. Ek sal vir haar die storie lees en dan sal sy nou die boek vat en op haar manier die storie vir jou teruglees. Sy sal vir jou die prentjie wys en vir jou vertel wat beteken die prentjie. Buite-spel is iets wat hulle alleen kan doen, maar op so jong ouderdom, boeklees het hulle vir mamma of pappa nodig om te help. En terselfdertyd, as hulle graad een toe gaan, dan verstaan hulle al klaar, ek gaan 'n handboek kry en ek gaan 'n storieboek kry. Ek moet daai tyd insit om te kan verstaan en te kan leer. So, hulle kom in daai roetine om te kan sit en boek te kan lees.

P11: Ek stem saam met hulle met al daai goed, maar omdat my seun een spesifieke aktiwiteit baie van hou is legkaart bou, sal ek dit kies omdat hy dit juis geniet. En as ek saam met hom dit sit en doen, geniet hy dit om vir my te wys hoe hy dit insit. So, ek voel omdat hy van legkaart bou hou, sal ek sê legkaart bou.

P6: Ek sê ook boek lees. Ons lewe daarin. (*lag*) Ek het my eie karakter, my kinders het elkeen hul eie karakter en dis net *nice*. Dis lekker! (*Lag weer*)

P9: Veral as hulle die storie op hulle manier vir jou terug vertel. Dis so oulik. Jy kan ure na dieselfde storie oor en oor luister.

P6: Ek is gewoonlik wolf. (*Lag*) Dan kom die klein stemmetjie en dan kom WOLF. (*Met dik stem*) Ons *laaik* dit!

R: P10?

P10: Alles.

P6: Ek hou nie regtig daarvan om saam met vriende te kuier nie. Dis nie vir my 'n in-ding daai nie. Ek sal alleen saam met my kinders kuier. Nee, ek's nie 'n vriende mens nie.

P12: Vir my is dit boek lees. Ja, hulle ontwikkel verstandelik, hulle spraak verbeter, want hulle tel nuwe woorde open. Dan die stories, hulle ontwikkel hulle verbeelding. Ja, dit is vir my nogal belangrik.

P13: Ek sal sê TV kyk, want ek raak vinnig aan die slaap daar. (*Almal lag*) Nee, dan leer hulle 'n ander taal ook, soos hierdie Engelse stories. As hulle nie iets verstaan daar nie, dan kom vra hulle vrae en hoekom is dit so? (*praat mompelend*) en dan leer hulle sommer 'n ander taal, verstaan wat daar aangaan.

R: En hulle is al oulik in Engels?

P13: Ja, hulle kan al vertel wat daar aangaan.

**R: Wat dink julle kan jy doen om jou kind se taal te stimuleer?**

P9: Ons is tweetalig – pa Engels, ek is Afrikaans. Ons het al geleer oupa en ouma aan sy kant is *granny* en *granddad* en hulle praat ook Engels met haar. My ma is nou weer ouma en praat Afrikaans met haar. Van geboorte af het sy geleer daar's die twee tale. By ons is dit net Afrikaans, pappa praat ook Afrikaans, want hy sê dis die taal wat sy daaglik by die skool hoor. By oupa en ouma, praat sy nou weer Engels en as sy nie reg praat nie, help ons haar reg en verduidelik daai woord wat jy gesê het, is nie die regte een nie, jy sê dit so en so en so. Dis baie geduld. En ook weer storieboeke. Kry 'n storie boek, soos ons het vir haar 'n tweetalige bybel wat Afrikaans en Engels is. Die een bladsy is Afrikaans en die een is Engels en ons lees altwee vir haar sodat sy altwee kan verstaan.

P8: Ek sê ook storieboeke. Kry 'n Engels en Afrikaans. Leer hulle, ek meen soos as hulle nou al groot is en hulle kan lees, ja.

P6: Ek het nie eers nodig om my kinders te leer nie. Hulle leer my sommer, hulle kan al drie tale praat: Afrikaans, Engels en 'n swart taal: 'Ke tla beta wena.' (*lag*) Nee, hulle leer my sommer, ek het nie nodig om hulle te leer nie.

P11: Ek dink om hulle te help wanneer hulle woorde uitspreek.

P6: Dalk ja?

P9: As hulle ook nou 'n nie-blanke maatjie by die skool het, 'n swart maatjie by die skool. Laat hulle sy taal aanleer, laat hy vir hulle verduidelik, hierdie woordjies wat ek sê, beteken dit. Dat sy nou weer vir hom die Afrikaans sê. So leer hulle mekaar se taal.

P6: Dis goed.

P8: Ja, maar hulle leer maar so by die skool onder mekaar.

**R: Beweging? Wat kan jy as ouer doen om jou kind te stimuleer tov beweging?**

P9: Soos ons wat op 'n groot plot bly, vat haar en gaan stap met haar in die veld. Soek blommetjies of soek vir 'n gogga. Sy't ons Sondagaand daar beet gekry en na aandete die beeskraal gaan wys. Daar gaan niks aan nie, maar ons het saam met haar gestap. Stap saam, doen oefeninge saam, speel bal saam met hulle, spring tou. Moenie op bank sit en sê daar's die bal en rol hom vir hulle nie. Sit jou TV af. Daar het my boetie nou die aand vir my gevra, kyk julle nooit televisie nie? En ek sê, nee. My dogtertjie het haar kinder dvd's soos Lolloos. Ek is bly die dvd-speler is ingepak ,want dis Lolloos van die oggend tot die aand as sy haar sin kan kry, maar dis opvoedkundig. Maar ons is buite mense, vang vis, kamp.

P13: Ja, hulle het my gisteraand gevra wanneer gaan ons visvang?

R: Nog iemand wat iets wil sê oor beweging?

P13: Ja, as hulle in veld loop, mens leer baie uit die natuur. Ek meen ons seun het in Botswana geleer van die olifante en krokodille en al weggekruip vir die hyena. *(lag)*

P11: Ek dink om speletjies met hulle te speel soos LO- speletjies: lê op maag, lê op jou rug, staan op, spring, en al daai goeters. Ja, liggaamsoefeninge, maak dit lekker.

**R: Wat kan jy doen om jou kind te stimuleer tov breinontwikkeling en denke?**

P12: Boeke. Baie boeke. *(lag)*

P9: Positief te wees. As hy na jou toe kom, nie altyd negatief te wees en te sê maar daai wat jy nou gesien het is lelik. Verduidelik hom eerder op 'n mooi manier. Wees positief, dan is hulle meer bereidwillig om te leer.

*P13 beaam deur instemmend te knik.*

P7: Sy swing my hier aan die slaap. Laat ek regop sit. *(P7 is baie moeg. Sy het gisteraand nagskof gewerk)*

P11: Ek dink om hulle te help as hulle prentjies uitknip. Leer, om hulle te verduidelik waaroor gaan die prentjie wat hulle knip. En hulle te leer, om by hulle te sit en om hulle konsentrasie te bou.

P9: Ja en soos vandag se tegnologie, kinders is lief vir rekenaars en 'n selfoon, en as jy 'n foon het, vra my , daar's *educational games* op die foon. As my dogtertjie kan, sit sy met mamma se foon. Hulle speel dit en terselfde tyd leer hulle oor die tegnologie, hulle kry nie daai agterstand nie.

P7: TV kyk – nuus, hulle moet weet wat aangaan, die weer. ....



*P6 lag uitbundig, amper verskonend.*

P11: Maar daar is opvoedkundige kinderstories.

P8: Op TV.

P11: Jy kan nie sê TV is sleg nie, want daar is....

P7: Even movies, soos Shrek en so. My seuntjie sing saam, maar ek bedoel sing is goed.

P11: Ja, hulle leer lessies daaruit.

P7: Om te onthou, soos rympies

P11: En daar's rekenaarspeletjies wat jy hulle breinkrag ook help. So, ek sal nie sê tegnologie is heeltemal sleg vir jou kind nie, dit hang af hoe jy dit gebruik. TV en rekenaar is nie jou 'babysitter' nie, maar het hulle perke.

R: Ons is klaar. Is daar iemand wat nog enige iets wil sê?

P7: Ja, jy as mamma moet net onthou jy is 'n goeie mamma maak nie saak wat wie sê nie, al is jou kind hoe stout en al voel jy hoe moedeloos. Jy as ma moet net weet, jy is daai kind se ma en as jy goed voel oor jouself, gaan die kind goed voel oor jou en oor homself

P9: En ons moenie ons kinders druk nie. En as jou kind sukkel in die klas, Liewe Jesus het 'n plan met hom. Los hom, dalk is hy nie akademies georiënteerd nie, maar eerder met sy hande georiënteerd. Soos my kind se pa. Hy kan glad nie so voor 'n boek sit nie, maar gee hom iets met sy hande. Dis hoekom hy konstruksiewerk doen en hy is baie gelukkig.

P8: En moet nooit 'n kind afkraak nie, want dan kraak jy hom basies....

P9: Ja, al kom hy met 'n slegte punt by die huis, sê vir hom dis baie mooi. Wys hom dit wat verkeerd is, help hom om dit volgende keer reg te kry. Maar moenie vir hom sê hy's dom nie of ja, ek weet ek het 'n dom kind nie.

P8: Jy breek sy hele selfbeeld af en dan gaan hy voel, jis maar jy worry nie oor my nie, ek is nou maar dom, so ek gaan nou maar dom bly.

P9: Hy glo dit naderhand. Hy gaan nie meer positief wees om 'n ding te vat en te leer nie, want hy is dan nou dom.

P11: Ondersteun jou kind.

P9: Leer om nie dom maatjies by skool te spot nie. Gee liefde, aandag en erkenning.

P11: Hou in gedagte hulle is mensies, eie persoonlikhede, eie idees. Kinders nie stout nie, net hiper-aktief.

- P9: Kinders soek aandag, wees stout om pappa se aandag te kry.
- R: Wat dink julle van konsekwente dissipline?
- P6: Baie belangrik, maar moet kind gap gee om kind te kan wees.
- P8: Hulle wil dit doen, omdat dit vir hulle lekker is. Moenie hulle te vinnig groot maak nie, te groot vir skoene, poppetjie...
- P6: Moet kinders verlede kan gee, moet kan terugkyk op kinderjare.
- P7: As jy op kind skree, gaan nie hy luister nie.
- P6: Mens skree nie op kind nie. Dit werk nie.
- P7: Later begin hy op jou skree, hy het dit by jou geleer. Ek sê altyd vir kinders ek wil hê hulle moet beter lewe hê as ek. Hulle moenie by Teazers werk nie, hulle moet 'n dokter word of in die army, moet beter wees...
- R: Watter rol dink julle speel dissipline om 'n kind gereed te maak vir skool?
- P9: Baie belangrik.
- P6: Roetine is belangrik.
- P8: Respek is belangrik.

### FOCUS GROUP 3

September 2013  
Afrikaans

Duration: 1 hour

Language: English &

**R: How do you understand early childhood development? What do you understand under that?**

P15: I think early childhood development, they are referring to the young kids that are not yet at school. Like a programme developing those young kids.

R: Anyone who would like to add to that? I'm just going to explain it in Afrikaans. P15 het gesê vroeë kinderontwikkeling gaan oor 'n kleintjie se ontwikkeling. Sy't gesê sy dink dis as 'n kind nog nie in die skool is nie en as hulle dan 'n program het wat hulle doen sodat hulle kan ontwikkel en groei. Would anyone like to add something? Wil julle iets by sê?

R: What do you think is early childhood development - do you agree with P15?

P19: Yes, I agree, I think it's how to take care of children- and ...when a child must also attend crèche, the child must play, must do something...

R: Would you like to add something P18? *(P18 looks down, laughs, uncertain. Seems embarrassed)* Looked like you wanted to say something, sorry!

*P17 starts speaking Zulu to P19.*

P19: You can tell me in Sepedi what you think and I will say it in English. Sê julle dit in Sotho vir my ek sal dit in Engels sê .

P17: Ek sal Afrikaans praat.

R: Can you translate what she is saying?

P19: P17 doesn't understand. You can praat Afrikaans en praat stadig, sy sal verstaan jou, want nou sy verstaan nie.

R: P17, verstaan jy die woord : vroeë kinderontwikkeling? Wat dink jy is dit?

*P17 starts talking Zulu. Conversation follows between P17 and P19.*

P17: They talk about how to raise a child.

P19: Yes, it is to raise a child.

P19: What do you understand about raising a child?

P17: Do you talk about children between four and seven years? How they must grow?

R: Verstaan jy?

R: I just want to know what was said ? Did you explain to her what was said?

P19: Yes.

R: Wil jy nog iets sê? (*Addresses P17*)

*No response.*

R: I just want to follow what you are saying. I want her to understand the question, so that she can answer, because I want to know what each one of you are thinking, and how you feel about it.

R: **What do you understand about School Readiness? Wat verstaan jy van skoolgereedheid? If I say 'school readiness'- what do you understand? As ek sê 'n kind is skoolgereed- wat verstaan jy? Wat beteken dit? What do you think? P14?**

P14: I'm still thinking.

R: Ok.

P17: Ek dink by die kind van skool - as die kind word bietjie groot, jy moet laat hy skool toe gaan.

R: So hy is groot genoeg om skool toe te gaan?

P17; Ja.

R: Verstaan ek jou reg - skoolgereedheid gaan oor hoe groot hy is? As hy groot genoeg is, moet hy skool toe gaan?

P17: Soos die ding van kindwees, soos hy gaan bietjie groot wees soos Standaard 3 of so dan moet hy skool toe gaan dat hy kan leer en dat ek hom kan help soos n ma. Dat hy kan reg leer.

P15: I just want to hear your question. You said with school readiness a child is ready to go to school. What are you referring to?

R: I am asking the question to you. What is school readiness? When I say a child is school ready what does that mean?

P15: I think what we are saying is now a child is ready to school now let me say you have taken a child to foundation phase, maybe a crèche, then from crèche his now to

preschool and then from preschool I think the child will be ready for school, because he or she has already followed the steps from crèche to Grade R and then to school.

R: Ok, so going to a crèche is important and going through the steps? Would you like to add P19?

P19: When the child is attending the preschool, and at me at home I'm suppose to help him. I'm supposed to tell him next year you are going to school. You're going to wear the uniform; you will attend school from the morning until afternoon. I will teach him something like that.

R: **Do you think early childhood development and school readiness has an influence on overall school achievement? Do you think the early development and learning of a little child and school readiness will influence how a child does later in school? Dink julle die tyd voorskool, 'n kleintjie se leer en ontwikkeling voor skool en skoolgereedheid gaan 'n invloed hê op hom as hy skool toe gaan? Ek gaan net weer verduidelik. Do you think what happens before school, when a child is small, will have any influence on his later school achievement or performance or how he does in school whether he will do good or bad?**

P15: Yes, I think it has an influence. For example, like maybe a child is at early stage, bunking school, not going to school, playing with rough kids, he will think it is the right thing. And usually when he or she is going to other Grades, it will affect him as he or she will think these things are the right thing. So, I think maybe as parents we should look at what our kids are doing now while they're in a early age cause, it will influence them when they grow up.

R: P18, did you hear what she was saying and did you understand?

*P18 nods*

R: And what do you think?

*P18 murmurs something in Sepedi. She giggles and seems nervous.*

R: What do you think, P14?

P14: P15 is right, you must sit down with your kids and you must tell them not to play with rough things, they go to school and read. *(Signs of avoidance, no eye contact)*

R: Ok, so am I hearing you right - when they are still little you must tell them not to play with rough friends and they must read because you feel that will have an effect on them when they are bigger? P17, het jy gevolg? Hulle sê as hulle klein is, as jy hulle leer van die

regte maatjies, goeie en slegte maatjies, of om te lees, alles wat hulle leer as hulle klein is, sal hulle help as hulle later skool toe gaan.

P17: Ja, dis goed dat jy jou kinders leer. Die wêreld is nie meer lekker soos altyd nie. Jy moet jou kinders leer. Soos as hulle kom van die kleuterskool en vir jou sê mamma dit het gebeur en dit het gebeur dan kan jy vir hulle sê dis verkeerd: "My kind, julle mag nie so doen nie, julle moet so doen en so doen." Dan word hulle groot en hulle weet. Ook by die huis voor hulle skool toe gaan, jy moet hulle leer hoe om te maak...alles.

R: As jy sê 'hoe hulle moet maak,'- wat bedoel jy? Met maatjies?

P17: Ja, maatjies. Hulle moet sien daar's baie mense wat maak kwaai met die ander kinders. Jy moet hulle leer dat hulle kan weet dis ander mense wat kwaai is. Ek speel saam met die maatjies en kan luister by die skool en dan as enige ding wat hulle geleer het by die skool as hulle groter is, sal hulle weet wat om te doen.

R: So when you teach them something when they are little, they will do that when they are big. P16, what do you think?

P16: I think maybe as parent, I must teach my boy to do this... eish... *(laughs- seems like she's struggling communicating in English)* not to do drugs, smoking.

R: So when you tell them when they are little not to do drugs they won't do it when they are big?

*All agree by nodding.*

**R: Who do you see as the most important people in a preschoolers development and learning? Who do you think are the people who are the most important, when it comes to learning and development of a little child? Wie's die belangrikste mense in 'n kleintjie se lewe as ons praat van hulle leer, ontwikkeling en groei? (no response) P20, who do you think?**

*(P20 seems shy, she looks down and does not want to respond)*

R: P18, and you.....who do you think? Wie dink jy?

*(P18 seems very hesitant and shy, look s down, shakes head, does not want to respond.)*

R: And you P14?

P14: Please repeat question. *(Seems she was not listening. Seems distracted or disinterested. R repeats question)*

P14: Me, as a parent, so I can help my kids to be with a good life and to have respect, and learn many things.

R: Anyone else?

P15: I agree with P14. We as parents, teachers, church members, also people like carers who spend a lot of time with them.

R: P17, het jy vraag verstaan? Wie is die belangrikste mense wat kind help om te leer, te groei en te ontwikkel?

P17: Ja, sien, Mamma, ek leer hom. Nou ek is nie daar nie, dan die mense by die kleuterskool hulle kan hom bietjie help. Sien, nou my kinders is nog bietjie klein om hier by die kleuterskool te kom. Dan ek kan hulle help by die huis en later hulle kan hulle help by die kleuterskool.

R: So what do you think, P16?

P16: So maybe children at school and teachers. And then maybe 2'o clock she goes and teaches children after school. And maybe when she finishes matric she will become an afternoon carer. *(It seems as if she did not understand the question fully.)*

R: Do- the little ones also go to afternoon club?

P16: Yes.

R: Ok, so afternoon carers are also involved in children's' development and learning?

R: **How would you describe the everyday life of a parent of a preschooler? How do you experience being a mother of a preschool child every day? How do you feel about it? Hoe voel dit om 'n mamma van 'n kleintjie te wees –elke dag by die huis?**

P17: Dit voel oraait. Dit voel lekker, kan saam met kinders iets maak, speletjies alles. Dis lekker.

P15: She will tell you what happened at school, what she likes and dislikes, you get to understand her better, know her better. See she likes this she don't like this.

R: So your life as a mother of a preschool child is positive? Do you enjoy it?

*All agree.*

R: Do you have any challenges? What is difficult being the mother of a small child? Wat's moeilik om die mamma van 'n voorskoolse kleintjie te wees?

*No response. Many participants look down to avoid answering the question.*

P17: Dis te lekker, hy kom van die kleuterskool en dan kan hy jou vertel wat hy gedoen. Dan verstaan jy hom hy soek nou daai ding, hy soek nie daai ding nie. Hy sê wat het hy

gedoen en sê wat mam vir hulle geleer het en dan kan hy sê mamma hulle het gesê jy moet ons met daai ding help en sien julle speel lekker.

R: Any challenges?

P15: I think because they are still young, they enjoy playing and- they lose clothes, forget things at school, shoes are left at school.

R: That is difficult. They're still small and they like playing and they forget a lot?

P19 They are also fighting with chommies at crèche, saying momma one of my chommies bit me at crèche. They are always crying when coming from crèche. He wants water and if you give him water, he does not want the water. They just want your hand. Always you must play with him even when there's no time, just want to play with you even when they always play at crèche even over weekends, they just want to play.

R: And do you feel that's a bit difficult - to always play with your child?

P19: Yes (Laughs - *many laughs and nods in agreement*)

R: That's difficult - so you feel they need a lot of your time and attention?

*All agree wholeheartedly.*

R: What do you think, P14? Anything you enjoy or something you find difficult?

P14: I spend the whole day with my child, so she will say: 'Mommy, I want to eat.' And when I give her the food, she doesn't want to eat the food I give her. They like to play and talk.

R: Do you enjoy that or is it difficult for you?

P14: Sometimes she wants to talk and I don't feel like it. I'm stressed.

*Others laugh and agree.*

R: How do you handle that? What do you do if she wants to talk and you don't want to?

P14: I'm just talking to her, cause she doesn't know that I'm stressed.

R: Anyone that feels the same? Looks like it, P19? So what do you do if your child wants to talk and you don't want to play or talk to your child?

P19: I just play, just want to be there for him. Always be happy on the face, even if you are not happy inside your face must be happy.

R: Do you all agree that you want to show your children that you are happy even if you don't feel happy?



*Everyone nods in agreement.*

**R: How can a parent help to prepare a little child for school? Hoe kan 'n ouer jou kind help om reg te wees as hy Graad 1 toe gaan? How can you help your child to be ready when he is going to Grade 1?**

*Silence. No response*

R: P16?

P16: Maybe I take the book first then I give to her and I'm writing the name first and then she's writing. Maybe I'm drawing then she's drawing again. I teach her to do homework each day and when she goes to Grade R.

R: So you will help her with reading and writing?

P16: Yes.

P15: A child to see the importance of going to school, you must tell her how important the school is, -like show her examples - you know you will be a doctor and this and this. To have that interest in school and- helping her to write, showing her some words to write especially her name – how to write her name.

R: P17, did you follow that? Het jy verstaan?

P17: Ja, ek het verstaan.

R How do you feel - How important is school for children? Hoe belangrik is skool vir kinders?

*Silence. No response.*

R: Is it important for a child to go to school?

*Overwhelming affirmative response.*

R: Why do you say so?

P15: You want your child to be educated, have a successful life, when you tell her the importance of going to school it becomes like very easy for them to understand; ok - I'll have a luxury car, beautiful home, and when you tell her that ...but before you get that you will have to go to school first to get that. But if you are not going to school you won't get that.

P19: I agree, because a child is supposed to attend school. You must encourage her, educate her about respect, you must have that hope that if you go to school, you will get that

thing. And you must respect the teacher because if you do not respect the teacher you can't be educated, you can't do anything.

R: So discipline and respect are important? P20, do you want to add?

*P20 doesn't want to respond. She looks away, avoiding eye contact.*

R: P17 ,het jy verstaan? Wat dink jy?

P17: Ek dink as die kind skool toe gaan, jy moet bietjie vir hom leer, sê hy moet vir die teacher luister. Enige iets wat hy vertel moet hy vir hom vat. Hy mag nie kwaai wees met ander kinders nie, daar's baie goed wat jy vir hom kan leer dat hy kan verstaan wat hy daar gaan doen.

P15: I want to share this -When I was in school, my mom would say if you pass this Grade, I will buy clothes for you, so usually when I'm at school I was so excited. December I'm going to get clothes so it's that thing - encouragement. So it's so great that if I go to school you'll have a gift for me. So a child needs encouragement. They are getting to like school.

R: Am I hearing you correctly - he is working for something, it's motivation.

*All in agreement.*

R: What do you think P14 - we said a lot about encouragement, what do you think?

P14: Help her to go to school. I will tell her that if she doesn't, she maybe will end up being a... tsotsi, maybe smoking drinking, not have respect.

R: So do you think education, being in school, will help you to not do those things, but if you do not go to school and you're not educated you can end up like that?

P14: Yes

R: **What do you think parents need to help their little child for school – skills, things like toys and other equipment? Do you feel that you need something specific to help a child to become ready for school in terms of skills what you can do, what you have like a swing? Is there anything in particular that you think you need?**

P15: I think you have to be original. Being you is more important to your kid than to buy toys, cause you can't afford some things, but usually they will understand. Some playing things they do need, but it's not like to be educated I have to buy this or this. It's like you must be original, you can just play with her, showing - like running with her- and playing ball with her - a child becomes very happy. She will feel like my mother likes me, because she can spend time with me, share stories, long stories.

R: What else? P19?

P19: I agree but when you buy some toys, check the kind of toy, add something like crayons, stationary which help her to write her name, teach her something. So when she's playing then you must say write your name here.

R: So you would get a child to write and draw rather than play?

P19: Yes

R: Do you think it's more important to write and draw than playing? Someone else, P16? What do you think, what do you need to help child?

P16: Maybe I'm teaching my children, when I'm finished teaching her then she plays with a friend and when she's finished, - then she comes back again and I teach her again

R: What do you mean by teaching her?

P16: Maybe I'm teaching drawing.

R: So you also feel that's very important.

R: Wat dink jy - het jy iets nodig - soos speelgoed of ander goed soos swaaie & fietsies om kind reg te kry vir skool?

P17: Ek jy sien, my kinders ek 'teach' hom, want die seuntjies hulle 'like die ball.' Altyd as ek vat hom by die kleuterskool, hulle vat die bal en sê mamma ons het so 'ge'shoot' en ook my meisiekind, sy wil saam met hulle daai 'ball' vat. Sy gryp hom en hardloop en sien ek los hulle dat hulle lekker kan speel, dan hulle speel by die huis, ek vat crayon as hy moeg is en sê, maak 'n poppie, mannetjie, karretjie of enige iets.

R: So, do I hear you correctly that writing, drawing and using stationary is the most important way that you can help your child to get ready for school?

*All agree.*

P19: Yes, because if they go to school they will remember that last time my mother taught me how to write my name, and if they continue to play every day- and the school say write your name he's not writing, he will take that paper and do something else because he always wants to play. (Folds paper – everybody laughs)

R: Do you agree, P20?

*P20 doesn't want to respond P17 responds on her behalf.*

P17: Ja ons stem maar saam hierso. Jy moenie skaam wees nie.

R: **What is the greatest / biggest problem that you experience as the mother of a small child? Wat's die grootste probleem?**

P19: When the child is sick, or maybe when he's playing he gets hurt.

R: Do they get sick a lot? And hurt themselves a lot?

P19 : Ja (*and may others agree*)

R: When does it happen? When they play outside?

P19 Ja.

R: What do you do to keep that from happening? To prevent them from getting sick or hurting themselves?

P19: Take him to clinic, for checkups. But it's a problem when child is sick, he's sleeping, he doesn't eat anything and doesn't want to play...

R: So that is your biggest problem?

P15: Yes, it's the biggest problem. Another problem – preschool kids like to experience, see what you are doing and they want to do it also, so when you are lighting matches and maybe you want to cook, they will come back after you and want to do the same thing. Especially in the house, so we need to look after them.

R: P16, do you agree?

*No response*

R: P14?

P14: I'm still thinking (*giggles*)

P17: As hy siek is, die probleem is as hy huil, jy weet nie wat om vir hom te gee of wat om te maak nie, want hy kan nie praat nie. Jy moet jou kinders vat kliniek toe dat hulle hom gaan check. Dis 'n probleem.

P15: Another thing that becomes a problem is when my preschool child goes to school and maybe the other kids are beating him, taking money from him at school, so the child does not feel comfortable going to school. You find that when you say go to school, he's afraid to tell you they are taking my money, they are hitting me, eating her lunch box. So the child does not feel good to go to school.

R: Is it bullying? You find that a problem with the little ones?

P19: The big children with the little ones.

R: How do you feel about safety? P15 mentioned that they copy what you do. Anything else you want to mention about safety? Veiligheid?

P15: We are living in an informal settlement, you find that there is dirty water; children want to play there, eat dirty things. That's what we should prevent our kids from eating such things that, maybe there are broken bottles, they will cut themselves.

R: Does that happen a lot that children get sick from water? And hurt themselves with broken bottles?

*All agree wholeheartedly.*

P17: Ons moet hulle leer om nie by die 'dustbin' te speel nie, want hulle vat daai goed en eet enige iets. Jy moet vir hulle leer om nie daarso te speel nie.

R: Do you teach them, or do you keep them away from it? Or do you give them rules?

P19: We teach them.

R: Do they listen to you?

P19: Yes.

P15: Sometimes not.

**R: What do you think a small child needs to feel loved? Wat het kleintjie nodig om veilig en geliefd te voel ?**

P17: *(Laughs out loud)* Jy moet hom vat, lekker message dat hy voel mamma like vir my. Praat met hom, hou hom vas, gee drukkies, soen hom dat hy sien mamma is lief vir my.

R: P18 do you want to add?

*P18 shows little response. Nods head, Giggles.*

P17: As hulle kom van kleuterskool hulle hardloop net so ( *demonstrates with open arms*) hulle jump vir my, hulle soen vir my. Dan ek gee vir hulle n drukkies. Die ander een kom en dis te lekker vir hulle

P19: When maybe she does something wrong, don't say "hey voertsek"

*P17 (agrees): Ja, jy mag nie*

P19: ...be aggressive, then you must say sorry my son or maybe if you beat her, afterwards say sorry my son and hug him.

*P16 nods in agreement*

P15: Another thing that makes them feel loved: Encouraging them – maybe after dressing her say Joe! ‘You look beautiful telling how beautiful she is, after doing the right thing tell her: Joe, you’ve done good!

R: P14 and P16?

P14: I agree with P15.

*P16 shakes her head. She has nothing to add.*

R: **Are there any other ways that parents will show love for their children?**

P16: Buying presents makes them happy. When they go to school, I’ll buy a present and when she sees it, she’s happy.

P14: Take them with you to go shopping with you.

P15: Preparing the best meal they love.

R: **If you can choose any food or drinks that you will give your child, what will it be and tell us why. As jy enige iets vir jou kind kan gee om te eet of te drink, wat sal jy vir jou kind gee en waarom juis dit?**

R: P18?

*No response*

P17: As hulle kleuterskool toe gaan, -ek koop vir hulle Juice (Danone). Die kind is baie opgewonde, hulle weet as mamma gaan shopping doen, gaan hulle vanaand juice kry. Hy like hom so baie, maar ek sê, ek koop nie vir julle elke dag, want ek het nie money nie. Dan hulle sê by mam: ‘Mam, vandag gaan mamma shopping doen en ons gaan dit en dit kry by die huis.’ Jy kom daar en hulle sê jou kinders het klaar vir ons vertel wat hulle gaan kry by die huis. Hulle was gelukkig! Ook ek is baie bly hulle is so ‘friendly.’

R: So gee jy dit vir hulle want jy weet hulle hou daarvan?

P17: Ja ... ja.

P14: Macaroni and milk. She doesn’t like juice.

R: Do you think it’s important what they eat and drink? Dink julle dis belangrik wat hulle eet en drink?

P15: Yes, it is important to look what they eat because sometimes they do not eat healthy things. Usually, like my daughter, she is so sensitive. She doesn’t like food like sweets that are sticky. She likes snacks and sometimes she would want to eat a lot of snacks and it’s not healthy for her.

R: So you prefer that she doesn't eat snacks?

P15: No, she can eat them, but not a lot.

R: What would you prefer she eat?

P15: I prefer her to eat fruit.

P19: My child likes fruit. Fruits like banana, pear. He does not like juice, he prefers cool drink, but it's not good for a baby.

R: What do you think is good for a baby?

P19: Juice.

R: And food?

P16: Marog.

P19: Vegetables.

P20: (*very timid and softly*) Potatoes, pumpkin, carrots.

R: **If someone is pregnant, what would you tell her about a healthy lifestyle? Wat sal jy vir swanger vrou sê is gesond?**

P19: Eat fruit and vegetables, drink water, always water. And then she must not drink beer. Smoking, can damage the baby. Fruit and vegetables make baby healthy.

P15: Fruit & vegetables. Not too much orange and mango, it can affect the child through jaundice.

P16: (*eagerly*) Juice and pills from clinic.

R: Why would you tell her that?

P16: The baby must be fit and healthy.

R: **If you can choose one activity to do with your child – book, TV, play outside, puzzle, drawing, a visit with friends - what will you choose and why? Wat sal jy kies om saam met jou kind te doen?**

P14: Read and write, because they must know how to write her name and read.

P15: I'll choose telling stories, cause when I'm reading a book she will feel like I want to be like this one in the story. Sharing stories with her.

P16: Writing and drawing, because every day she is learning. She wants to draw all the time even when I'm tired and I want to sleep, she's drawing. Also early in the mornings.

R: She enjoys it?

P16: Yes, even writing up the money.

P17: Ek kies om puzzle pak, kry tyd om bietjie te leer wat is hierdie goed dat ek kan pak. Hy leer bietjie. Ek 'like' nie daarvan dat hy TV kyk nie.

R: P18?

*(P18 giggles. Very hesitant. Speaks to others in Sepedi.)*

R: You can tell them in Sepedi and they can tell us?

P18: Playing outside. Child should be active always.

P19 I'm stuck, because all of these things are important. Child is supposed to do all of those things, must share the time between all of them. We can play outside, because child must be active, exercise the body.

P20: Same as P19.

R: What type of games do you play?

P20: Ball.

**R: What do you think you as a mother can do to help your child develop language?  
To help your child with language?**

P19: Mother language or others?

R: Mother language.

*(Short Sepedi discussion with P18)*

R: What is she saying?

P18: *(says in Sepedi while P19 translates)* Good for a child to know language. Must always write for child and they must write.

R: So, you will write for your child...and then they must write?

*All agree by nodding.*

R: And this is your preschool child?

P18: Yes

R: You are going to teach them to write and that will help them with their language?

*Several participants agree.*



P15: Usually our kids don't find our language difficult. We communicate with them through our languages. So, usually when we try to improve language, we try to improve English so that they could be able to write at school. So like when I am teaching her how to speak English, I would first show her everything in the house. When I'm cooking, I tell her with my language and I explain in English - it's cooking.

R: So you give her the English words while you are cooking, like pot, spoon?

P15: Yes,

*Many participants agree by nodding.*

P19: Because mother language is simple. So, stepping - stepping you starting with my language.

R: Do you think it is important to help them with mother language?

*Everybody agrees.*

P15: It is, because at school they do two languages. They do the mother language and English and if they fail the mother language they fail everything. She doesn't know who she is. So he or she must know both of them, you must balance them. But usually it becomes easy for us to teach them the mother language because it's what we are talking. We communicate with it.

R: Is there anything else that you can do to help them with language, except speak and write? Is daar nog iets wat julle kan doen om hulle te help met hulle taal?

*No response*

P15: Maybe you give them a book to cut words, create them through cutting and pasting.

R: **Is there anything that you can do to help your child to develop movement? Is there anything you can do to help your child with movement? Wat dink jy is belangrik om te doe nom 'n kind se beweging te ontwikkel?**

P15: At preschool, because there will be some graduations they will teach them how to model. When she's showing you: ok, it's cool doing that and you see she's not moving very well, you show her, or if she's doing it well, you then say: "Wow, you are doing it very good." So that she knows this thing is well, it's good.

R: Anything else? P18, you can say in Sepedi and they can tell me what you said?

*No reaction from P18.*

R: Do you think moving is important for a little child?

*Little response- some nods.*

R: Do you think exercise is important and how can you help your child with that?

P17: Dis goed dat kinders kan 'exercise' en hulle 'like' om te dans. Dis mooi, kyk mamma ek dans so. En een sê mamma, ek kan so maak en ander een is 'jumping.' Hulle wys wat hulle kan doen: spring. 'Dis baie mooi. Die kind voel sterker, want ek hoor hulle sê: 'Mamma, vandag, kyk hoe lyk my muscles, strong.' Ek sê: "Ja my kind, jy's strong en dis te lekker!"

R: So, wat kan jy doen om hulle te help?

P17: Ek help hulle. Ek kan staan en saam met hulle jive (*She demonstrates, everybody laughs.*) Sê: 'Kom jive en jump. ' Leer hulle om te jump. Dis 'n seuntjie, altyd hulle is net so.

R: P16 what do you think?

P16: Maybe my child goes to swim in Roodeplaat, someone else will teach them.

R: Why swimming?

P16: Swimming is good.

P15: Movements like swimming, dancing, soccer, exercising to allow them to do that. It will help them if she is a slow learner, she or he is not good in writing but maybe that can be a talent, he will be a soccer player or a great swimmer.

R: **Is there anything you can do as mother to help your child to develop his/her brain? Dink jy, jy kan iets doen om jou kind se brein te ontwikkel? The way he thinks, learns and studies?**

P15: I think you should be a role model to your child. Usually, doing good things in front of your child is encouraging a child. It shows, ok, my mom is living this life, this life is good. And also again help her by giving her guidance, telling her examples of more people that are out there. Showing her that when you do this and this and this, maybe you will be like so and so. And they can be a role model to her.

R: P19 do you think you can do something to develop your child's brain? To stimulate the brain?

P19: I don't understand exactly but I think if you can teach her a song and the stories, and then tomorrow again. You ask ok, count for me, yesterday I teach you:1..2..3..4..5 and then again tomorrow I ask her you count for me. The brain is coming, or we can sing that song we sang yesterday. I think that.

P17: Stem saam met P19.

P16: Maybe a child is a slow learner, then you can teach her, like your mother, slow and maybe you come back in ten minutes and then you teach again. Maybe she can try it - small small steps.

R: What do you mean with teach?

P16: Maybe I'll take the crayon and I'll draw something, then she come to draw it again. Then after ten minutes, I call her and then we can draw that things, make the drawings again, cause she's a slow learner.

R: So drawing and repeating it over and over again?

P16: Yes, maybe tomorrow again.

P14: I can teach her time. I can say to her at this time you are going to school, at this time I'm going to clean, at this time it is time to wash. Tell her when you wake up in the morning, you must open your windows and say hello to your parents.