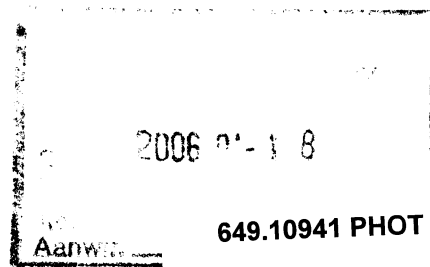


DECLARATION

I declare that **TRAINING CHILDCARE WORKERS IN THE UNITED KINGDOM – A NEEDS ASSESSMENT** is my own work and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.



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TRAINING CHILDCARE WORKERS IN THE UNITED KINGDOM - A NEEDS ASSESSMENT

by

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Submitted in part fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF DIACONIOLOGY

(Direction: Play Therapy)

at the

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

SUPERVISOR: MRS IF JACOBS

JUNE 2005

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The researcher would like to express her appreciation and gratitude to the following people and organisations for their support in the completion of this dissertation:

- Mrs. I.F. Jacobs, my supervisor, for her guidance and constant support throughout the process of conducting this investigation and during the writing of the research report. Her patience, objectivity and optimism were invaluable. I am also very grateful to her for taking care of the printing and binding of the dissertation in South-Africa while I was living in London.
- The nannies who took part in the empirical study, for setting aside time to share their thoughts and ideas with me. Without their collaboration this research would not have been possible.
- Allison Ellershaw, for all the conversations about this topic and for guiding me towards relevant literature during the initial phases of the investigation. I am also grateful to her for introducing me to Ben Black and Dr. Richard Dorrance, whose input was very helpful.
- Prof. Furstenberg, for proofreading the final manuscript.
- My family, friends and colleagues, for all their support and encouragement throughout the course of the study.
- My husband, Tony, for making it possible for me to study full-time and devote all my energy to the completion of the research. I am also grateful for his constant emotional support and unwavering faith in me.
- To my Heavenly Father, for giving me the ability and means to complete this study, and for providing me with so many people to support me.

SUMMARY

TRAINING CHILDCARE WORKERS IN THE UNITED KINGDOM – A NEEDS ASSESSMENT

This research explores the training needs of nannies in the United Kingdom in terms of the content and structure of introductory training. The research question formulated for this study is: What are the introductory training needs of nannies in the United Kingdom? The researcher approached the study qualitatively and empirical data was collected by means of a focus group discussion with a group of nannies. Empirical data indicates that nannies need training regarding:

- The professional aspect of nannying;
- the physical, emotional, and intellectual needs of children;
- the various developmental levels of children and the role of the nanny within each phase;
- working with parents;
- different religions and cultures and their childcare practices.

It was found that nannies need training that is structured in an affordable, brief, specific and practical way. The study therefore reveals that nannies have specific needs regarding both the content and structure of childcare training.

OPSOMMING

TRAINING CHILDCARE WORKERS IN THE UNITED KINGDOM – A NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Hierdie navorsing verken die opleidingsbehoefte van kinderopassers in die Verenigde Koninkryk en wel in terme van die inhoud en struktuur van inleidende opleiding. Die navorsingsvraag vir hierdie studie is as volg geformuleer: Wat is die inleidende opleidingsbehoefte van kinderopassers in die Verenigde Koninkryk? Die studie is kwalitatief benader en empiriese data is deur middel van 'n fokusgroep-bespreking met 'n aantal kinderopassers ingesamel. Die empiriese data dui aan dat kinderopassers 'n behoefte ondervind aan opleiding binne die volgende areas:

- Die professionele aspek van die beroep;
- die fisiese, emosionele, en intellektuele behoeftes van kinders;
- die verskeie ontwikkelingsstadia van kinders en die rol van die kinderopasser binne elke fase;
- samewerking met ouers;
- kindersorg-metodes binne verskillende godsdienste en kulture.

Daar is bevind dat kinderopassers 'n behoefte het aan bekostigbare opleiding wat kort, kragtig en prakties is. Hierdie navorsing het dus getoon dat kinderopassers spesifieke behoeftes ervaar rakende beide die inhoud en struktuur van kindersorg-opleiding.

KEY TERMS

CHILDCARE

TRAINING

NANNIES

HOME-BASED CHILDCARE

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT

CHILDCARE APPROVAL SCHEME

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CHAPTER 1

GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO THE FIELD OF STUDY

1.1 Introduction

This study involves an exploration of the vocational training needs of childcare workers in the United Kingdom. The research focuses on the content and structure of introductory training that would be most suited to the needs of a specific category of childcare workers employed in a residential setting. ‘Content’ refers to the topics covered in training, for example first aid and discipline, while ‘structure’ refers to the format of training, for example whether it is full-time or part-time.

Home-based childcare workers in the United Kingdom may be divided into four categories: Nannies, Au Pairs, Mother’s Helps and Childminders. Each of these groups is described briefly, though it must be noted that this study is only focusing on nannies.

- **Nannies** are home-based childcare workers taking care of children in the home of their employers. According to Breese and Gomer (2000:3), nannies in the United Kingdom are expected to speak fluent English and to be competent to look after children of any age without assistance. The *Early Years National Training Organisation* (2000:3) found that in 1999, nearly ninety per cent (90%) of nannies held some form of vocational qualification. The qualification status of nannies is discussed in more depth in Chapter 3.
- A **Mother’s Help** is a childcare worker assisting a mother in taking care of her children. A Mother’s Help will usually not have formal childcare qualifications and will not be expected to take sole charge of preschool children (Nanny Directory, 2004). In the researcher’s experience in the field of childcare, this is, however, not always the case and Mother’s Helps often have the same responsibilities as nannies by taking care of young children

without assistance. The researcher is therefore of the opinion that the difference between nannies and Mother's Helps is almost negligible in practice.

- An **Au Pair** is an overseas childcare worker visiting the UK on a cultural exchange programme with the aim of learning to speak English. According to the *Nanny Directory* (2004) an Au Pair will almost certainly not have any childcare qualifications and will not be expected to take sole charge of any preschool child. From experience the researcher is aware that in practice Au Pairs do take care of young children without supervision and is of the opinion that the real difference between a nanny and an Au Pair lies in the fact that nannies are fluent English speakers and, as opposed to Au Pairs, usually do not live in the home of their employers.
- **Childminders** are residential childcare workers taking care of children in the childminder's home. Childminders are not required to hold a childcare qualification, but are subject to inspections from their Local Authority, and have to be registered with the *National Childminding Association* (Breese & Gomer, 2000:257). As discussed in Chapter 3, many similarities between the work of nannies and childminders exist, though significant differences are also present.

It was anticipated that each category would present with unique training needs. The researcher was therefore of the opinion that each category should be studied individually and in this research focused only on **nannies** and their training needs.

1.2 Motivation

The number of nannies in the UK is estimated to be between 70 000 and 100 000. In a national survey, it has been found that almost a quarter of nannies consider that they need further training to help them do their current job. It was also found that more than a tenth (11.1%) of nannies do not hold any vocational qualifications (Early Years National Training Organisation, 2000:3 & 19). This means that there are almost 25 000 nannies experiencing a need for further training in order to do their job and there could be more than 11 000 nannies in the UK without any training at all in childcare.

A further motivation for this study was the fact that, as from the 6th of April 2005, the Government has been offering tax benefits to parents who employ qualified nannies. (Compare HM Treasury, 2004:2.) These tax benefits and its implications for the training of nannies will be discussed in more depth in Chapter 2. Suffice it to state at this point that the training of nannies, and introductory childcare training in particular, has gained significance recently, and that the researcher identified an issue within the profession that required investigation.

The researcher's personal experience as a nanny without any childcare training provided a further motivation for this study. Over a period of two years, the researcher looked after two toddlers and experienced at first hand the problematic situations and dilemmas that can be part of a nanny's work. The researcher is convinced that many of these difficulties could have been avoided through suitable training.

In addition to this, the training needs of nannies in the UK have thus far only been investigated quantitatively (Early Years National Training Organisation, 2000:2). The findings from this qualitative study could therefore offer a valuable contribution to the knowledge basis on this subject.

1.3 Problem Formulation

Approximately one in ten nannies in the UK does not have any formal childcare qualifications. It has been found that almost a quarter of both unqualified and qualified nannies feel they need further training to help them do their job more effectively. Furthermore, three-fifths of nanny agencies find that there are too few suitably qualified nannies available (Early Years National Training Organisation, 2000:19). It should be apparent from these statistics that a clear need for vocational training exists among nannies in the UK. In this study, the nature of these needs is explored in more depth.

1.4 Aim and Objectives

Fouché (2002a:107) explains the difference between an 'aim' and an 'objective' as follows: An aim is described as the broad, abstract conception of the end toward which effort is directed. The words 'goal' and 'purpose' could be used as synonyms. An

‘objective’, on the other hand, refers to the specific steps one has to take, within a certain time-span, to realise the stated aim. According to this distinction, the aim and objectives of this study may be described as follows:

The *aim* of this study was to identify and explore the vocational training needs of nannies in the UK in terms of the content and structure that would be most desirable in an introductory training course.

The *objectives* of this study were:

- To describe nannying as a profession, with specific reference to the roles nannies play in the physical, emotional and intellectual development of children;
- to describe, by means of a literature study, the qualification status of nannies in the United Kingdom;
- to review the approved introductory training for nannies that is being offered in the United Kingdom;
- to explore the training needs of nannies by means of a focus group discussion;
- finally, to draw conclusions and make recommendations that could make a contribution to nannying as a profession and to further research in this area.

1.5 Research Question

A research question may be described as the result of the process of transforming vague thoughts about a particular topic (compare Strydom & Delpont, 2002:327) into specific elements that relate to the aim and objectives of the study. According to this definition, the primary research question in this study was: **What are the introductory training needs of nannies in the United Kingdom?**

1.6 Research Approach

As explained by Durrheim (2002:42), research may be approached in two different ways, quantitatively or qualitatively. In quantitative research, data is collected in numerical form and analysed statistically. Research begins with a series of predetermined categories that are used to make broad comparisons that can be generalised. In qualitative research, data is collected in the form of written or spoken language, or in the form of observations that are recorded in language. This approach to research allows the researcher to study the selected issue in depth, openness and detail. Information is analysed by identifying and categorising the themes that have emerged from the data. In this study, information was collected in the form of written language, spoken language and observations. A specific issue was studied in depth and information was categorised according to core themes that have been identified. The research approach in this case was therefore distinctly qualitative in nature.

1.7 Type of Research

Based on the uses to which research will be put, two types of research can be identified: Basic research and applied research. The findings derived from basic research are used to refute or support theories about how, in the case of this particular field, the social world operates. The findings derived from applied research, however, contribute towards practical issues of problem-solving, decision-making, policy analysis and community development (Durrheim, 2002:40). The information gathered from this study will indeed contribute towards a practical issue of problem-solving, in that it explores a relatively unknown area in the field of childcare work. The type of research is therefore applied research.

Different types of applied research may be identified, for example exploratory research and descriptive research. Both these types of research will be described in more detail, as they were viewed by the researcher as relevant to this study.

Exploratory research employs an open, flexible and inductive approach to the phenomenon under investigation (Durrheim, 2002:39). Relatively unknown areas of research are investigated on a preliminary basis, therefore studies tend to be small-scale

and informal in structure. The aim is to satisfy curiosity and achieve some insight into the problem (Hart, 1998:47). In this study, the relatively unknown topic of the vocational training needs of nannies was explored in a focus group. It was hoped that this small-scale, informal discussion would illuminate the problem and provide a better understanding of it. This study is therefore classified as exploratory research.

As the training needs that have been identified and explored were thereafter described in greater depth (compare Hart, 1998:47) this study is therefore also classified as descriptive research.

1.8 Research Strategy

Fouché (2002b:272-276) discusses different types of qualitative research strategies that may be followed, among them the case study. Lindegger (2002:255) defines a case study as an intensive investigation of a particular individual. Fouché (2002b:275), however, is of the opinion that the case being studied does not necessarily have to be an individual, but can be a process, activity, event, programme or multiple individuals. Where multiple individuals are involved, it is referred to as a collective case study. According to this definition, the research strategy that was followed in this study is therefore a collective case study, as information was gathered from more than one participant. This was accomplished by means of a focus group discussion, as explained in 1.9.3 below.

The case study was viewed by the researcher as the most appropriate strategy for the study, as rich, in-depth information could be gathered in this way. Lindegger (2002:255-256) views this as the major advantage of case studies, as they allow new ideas and hypotheses to emerge from careful and detailed observation. The researcher was indeed interested in generating rich and varied ideas on the training needs of nannies, which is the reason why the case study was viewed as the ideal strategy for the investigation.

1.9 Research Procedure

According to Durrheim and Wassenaar (2002:56), the term research procedure refers to the practical arrangements that will be made to give effect to the sampling requirements

of the study. The research procedure that was followed in this study consists of three steps: The literature review, preliminary investigation and main investigation.

1.9.1 Literature Review

The literature review focuses firstly on the profession of nannying and the various roles nannies play in the physical, emotional, and intellectual development of children; secondly, on the introductory childcare training that is currently available to nannies in the United Kingdom and regarded as suitable under the *Childcare Approval Scheme* as discussed in 2.5.2. The researcher was interested in establishing which topics are covered in the training, what the duration of the course is, and the qualification that may be attained. Finally, statistical information on the number of nannies in the UK, their educational level and their expressed need for training was obtained from the literature.

Relevant themes identified from the literature were used to aid in the compilation of a focus group guideline or topic guide, in other words a list of topics or issues to be pursued in the focus group. (Compare Greeff, 2002:315.)

1.9.2 Preliminary Investigation

As discussed in 1.10.2, experts in the field of childcare were consulted during the preliminary investigation. These consultations were conducted in the form of unstructured one-to-one interviews. An unstructured interview is a focused, in-depth discussion that allows researcher and participant to explore an issue (Greeff, 2002:298). The researcher was interested in the opinions of these childcare experts on the topics to be covered in the training of nannies. Information obtained from these experts was also taken into account in the compilation of the guideline for the focus group.

1.9.3 Main Investigation

The main investigation consisted of a focus group discussion, as this data-collection technique is useful when multiple viewpoints or responses are needed on a specific topic. Focus groups are group interviews with the purpose of promoting self-disclosure among participants on the issue the researcher wants to gather information on (Greeff,

2002:306). Regarding the number of focus groups to be conducted, the researcher anticipated that one would be sufficient. To ensure the maximum amount of data, no time limit was set and the focus group was allowed to continue until the information obtained reached saturation point.

Before conducting the focus group, the researcher familiarised herself with all aspects related to good practice in using this method, such as how to create a warm and friendly environment and how to take good field notes. (Compare Greeff, 2002:305-319.)

A focus group guideline (Appendix C) was used to facilitate the discussion during the empirical study. The focus group session was recorded and all dialogue transcribed afterwards to aid in data analysis. Greeff (2002:318) is of the opinion that the analysis and interpretation of focus group data can be very complex, therefore recommending the use of tape recorders and field notes. The researcher agrees that field notes could be very useful, but is of the opinion that the use of a tape recorder would have been inadequate. Not only could valuable non-verbal communication have been overlooked, but it would have been more difficult, when transcribing, to ascertain what was being said or which of the participants were speaking. Video-recording was therefore seen as a much more effective method of record-keeping and was utilised in this study.

In analysing the data, the researcher looked for trends and patterns that reappeared in the focus group. Transcripts, video-tapes, notes and memory were the tools that were used to analyse the acquired information. A coding system was used to break down data and then group them into meaningful categories (compare Greeff, 2002:318 & 346), thereby exposing the core themes that have been identified in the study.

1.10 Feasibility of Study

Before conducting any kind of research, the question of its feasibility has to be addressed. Many factors can influence the degree of feasibility of a study, such as the availability of relevant literature, the possibility of access to experts, and the availability of participants. Each of these three issues will subsequently be discussed in more detail.

1.10.1 Literature Study

Literature from three broad fields was utilised. The first of these was related to nannies in the UK, the history of the profession and the role nannies play in the development of children. Books on childcare in general and nannying in particular were consulted and, where applicable, supplemented by internet sources. Academic literature from the field of psychology was utilised, specifically those related to child development and the physical, emotional and intellectual needs of children in the formative years.

The second field that was studied was the curriculum of an approved introductory childcare course for nannies offered by the *Council for Awards in Children's Care and Education* (CACHE). This institution offers a variety of childcare qualifications, all of which are widely accepted and recognised in the UK. (Compare Early Years National Training Organisation, 2000:13.) The syllabus and structure of the approved introductory course for nannies was studied.

The third field that was studied relates to the training needs of nannies as discussed in the *Agency Nannies Training Survey 1999 Report* (Early Years National Training Organisation, 2000:1). This survey was conducted in all four countries of the UK and was commissioned to help plan workforce training and development priorities and budgets over the next few years. A total of 751 nannies took part in this study, along with 72 employment agencies specialising in the placement of nannies.

1.10.2 Consultation with Experts

One of the childcare experts consulted was Allison Ellershaw, the founder and director of *Nannies at Work*, an organisation that provides professional and educational support to nannies in the UK. Ellershaw has over twenty years experience in the childcare and management field and is affiliated with a variety of prominent organisations such as the *National Childminding Association* (NCMA) which has over 48 000 members.

The director of CACHE, Dr. Richard Dorrance, was also consulted. CACHE is an organisation that aims to develop courses and qualifications for people who work, or want to work, in childcare. The qualifications offered by CACHE are the most widely

accepted childcare qualifications in the United Kingdom (Early Years National Training Organisation, 2000:5).

The third expert consulted was Ben Black, the director of *Tinies Childcare*. *Tinies* is the UK's leading chain of childcare agents and are involved not only in placing nannies in employment, but also in their training.

Discussions with all three experts revealed enthusiasm and support for the research. All parties were of the opinion that this study was being undertaken at a very opportune time and that the findings should provide a very valuable contribution to the field of childcare. The opinions and contributions of these experts are reflected throughout the text.

1.10.3 Description of Universe, Sample and Sampling Methods

According to Strydom and Venter (2002:209), the term *universe* refers to all potential persons who possess the attributes in which the researcher is interested. In this study, the universe therefore consisted of all nannies in the United Kingdom.

Strydom and Venter (2002:209) describe a *population* as those individuals in the universe who possess specific characteristics that represent all the measurements of interest to the researcher. A population therefore differs from a universe in that the persons in it possess more specifically defined characteristics. The population in this study consisted of nannies living in London. The main reason for choosing the London area is that the researcher and all the participants were based in that location. In addition to this, London is usually considered to have the highest concentration of nannies in the country. (Compare Early Years National Training Organisation, 2000:10.)

To increase the feasibility, cost-effectiveness, accuracy and manageability of this study, a sample was drawn from the population described above. A sample may be described as a portion of a population that is considered representative of that population. (Compare Strydom & Venter, 2002:209.) As discussed by Van Vuuren and Maree (2002:276), two types of sampling methods exist; probability sampling and non-probability sampling. In probability sampling, every element in the target population

must have a known chance of being selected into the sample. This is accomplished by working from a sampling frame, which is a list of all the members of the population, and randomly selecting individuals from that list. In non-probability sampling, samples are not selected according to the principle of statistical randomness, but according to some other principle such as convenience or accessibility (Van Vuuren & Maree, 2002:279). As participants in this study were selected by the researcher according to a predetermined criterion, the sampling method applied was therefore non-probability sampling.

Different non-probability sampling techniques exist. The technique considered most applicable to this study was *purposive sampling*. This sampling method is also called judgmental sampling, as participants were selected according to the judgment of the researcher. (Compare Van Vuuren & Maree, 2002:281.) According to Greeff (2002:311) purposive sampling is relied upon in focus group research. Participants for the focus group in this study were selected on the grounds of being located in London.

Wilkinson, Joffe and Yardley (2004:48) recommend a sample size for focus groups of four to eight participants. Greeff (2002:311) is of the opinion that focus groups with as many as ten participants would still allow everyone to participate while allowing a wide range of responses. It is further stated, however, that smaller groups of four to six people are preferable when participants have a great deal to share about a topic. In this study, the researcher anticipated that participants would indeed have a great deal to share about their experiences as nannies. A sample size of four participants was therefore deemed sufficient for this specific study.

All participants were female and aged between twenty-four and thirty-nine. One was Polish, one South-African and two Czech. At the time of conducting the focus group, one participant had been a nanny for eight months, two had been nannies for four years and one had been a nanny for seven years. The children being taken care of by these nannies were aged between newborn and seven years old. One nanny looked after three children and each of the others looked after two children. Regarding the qualification status of participants, one had a teaching qualification, one a degree in home economics, while the other two had no tertiary training.

1.11 Ethical Aspects

In the natural sciences, non-human objects and occurrences such as chemical compounds or viruses are being studied. Should a virus, for example, be manipulated, altered or even killed by a scientist, these actions would carry no moral significance. In the social sciences, however, the situation is completely different. Researchers are dealing with human beings, and therefore need to adhere to a code of ethics to govern their actions. Strydom (2002:63) defines ethics in this regard as a set of moral principles that are suggested by an individual or group, are subsequently widely accepted, and offer rules and behavioural expectations about the most correct conduct towards experimental subjects and participants, employers, sponsors, other researchers, assistants and students.

These moral principles, rules and behavioural expectations should guide the researcher in conducting research in a responsible and professional manner. Specific ethical issues that were relevant to this study are subsequently discussed.

1.11.1 Harm to Participants

In the social sciences, harm to participants will mainly be of an emotional nature, although physical injury may also occur. In this investigation, participants were not exposed to activities where physical injury is likely to occur. Strydom (2002:64) is of the opinion that emotional harm may be more difficult to predict and measure than physical harm, but could have more far-reaching consequences. It follows that researchers should take all necessary measures to prevent the emotional harm of participants. In this study, nannies were encouraged to talk about experiences they have had during the course of their work. Though it could be argued that this is not a particularly sensitive topic, the possibility still existed that some participants might have been confronted by negative emotions or have become upset during the course of their recollections. The possible emotional impact of the study was addressed in two ways:

- Before the study commenced, the selected participants were made aware of the potential emotional impact of the investigation and reminded that they were free to withdraw from the study at any point.

- An opportunity for debriefing was offered after closing the focus group discussion to address any significant unfinished business or strong emotions that may have emerged during the course of the discussion. This also gave participants the opportunity to talk about what it was like for them to take part in the research.

1.11.2 Informed Consent

According to Williams, Tutty and Grinnell (1995:30), informed consent implies that all possible or adequate information on the goal of the investigation, the procedures that will be followed during the investigation, the possible advantages, disadvantages and dangers to which participants may be exposed, as well as the credibility of the researcher, be relayed to potential subjects or their legal representatives. The specific information given to participants should include the amount of their time that the study will require; the nature of the activities they will be asked to take part in, as well as the degree of disclosure of personal information the study requires (Strydom, 2002:65). In this study, information about these and other relevant aspects was relayed to participants orally and in writing (Appendix A). Before requesting the group to sign a consent form (Appendix B), adequate time was set aside to answer any questions participants may have had. In the consent form, issues regarding anonymity and confidentiality, as discussed in 1.11.4, were addressed.

1.11.3 Deception of Participants

Deception occurs when the researcher lies to participants about the true purposes of the research or how they may be affected by it (Strydom, 2002:66). The researcher did not see the need for any deliberate deception in this research, but resolved to explain any unwitting form of deception in the debriefing session. To avoid any deception, the researcher made it clear to participants from the outset that they did not stand anything to gain in a monetary sense by taking part – any gains would have been in personal growth and professional development.

1.11.4 Confidentiality and Anonymity

Strydom (2002:68) refers to the distinction between confidentiality and anonymity as made by Babbie (2001:472). Babbie believes that confidentiality implies a situation where only the researcher and possibly a small number of his / her staff are aware of the identity of participants, whereas anonymity means that no one, not even the researcher, should be able to identify any subject afterwards.

In this study, full anonymity could not have been ensured, as the researcher was already acquainted with the participants. A degree of anonymity is, however, being maintained in the research report, as the real names of participants or the people they were speaking about are not being disclosed at any point. All efforts were made to ensure confidentiality. As mentioned in 1.11.2, the consent form addressed issues surrounding confidentiality. By signing the consent form, participants agreed to treat everything that took place and was said in the focus group as strictly confidential.

1.11.5 Actions and Competence of the Researcher

When conducting any kind of study, researchers should be aware of their ethical obligation to be competent and adequately skilled to undertake the investigation. A well-equipped researcher will evaluate all possible risks and advantages of the investigation, and must take responsibility for honouring any promises made to participants (Strydom, 2002:69-70). The researcher is of the opinion that this study falls well within her capabilities and that she was able to conduct the investigation in an ethically sound manner. It should also be noted that the research was conducted under the guidance of a study leader who was involved in every aspect of the study.

1.11.6 Release or Publication of Findings

Strydom (2002:72) outlines a number of criteria that a final written report must adhere to:

- The report must contain all essential information;
- it must be accurate, objective, clear and unambiguous;

- any form of emphasis or slanting that will bias results must be avoided;
- all sources that have been consulted and people who collaborated should be given recognition;
- any shortcomings or errors must be admitted;
- participants should be informed about the findings without offering too many details or impairing confidentiality.

All these criteria were considered during the compilation of the research report and were adhered to as strictly as possible. The researcher is fully aware of her ethical responsibility not only to her participants, but to other researchers as well who may base their own research on findings reported by her.

1.11.7 Debriefing

Strydom (2002:73) states that a research project must always be a learning experience for both participant and researcher. Debriefing is one way in which the learning experience can be solidified and any possible harm be minimised. During a debriefing session, participants get the opportunity to discuss what it was like for them to take part in the research and to bring up any unfinished business they may still have. Durrheim and Wassenaar (2002:67) view debriefing as an important recognition of the autonomy and dignity of participants. For these reasons, the researcher offered participants the opportunity for debriefing after the focus group discussion had been concluded. All the participants reported that debriefing was not necessary, and that taking part in the research was a positive experience for them.

1.12 Key Concepts

Concepts that are viewed by the researcher as central to this study are defined below.

Childcare: *Childcare* is defined as ‘care for children provided by the government, an organisation or a person, while parents are at work or absent for another reason’ (Cambridge Advanced Learner’s Dictionary, 2004). The *Collins Pocket Dictionary* (2004) defines *childcare* as ‘the protection of, and taking charge of children’. *Childcare*,

as referred to in this study, specifically relates to the care that is provided by a nanny in a residential setting, and not that which is provided by institutions such as nurseries.

Training: The *Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary* (2004) defines the word *training* as 'the process of learning the skills you need to do a particular job or activity'. The *Collins Pocket Dictionary* (2004) defines it similarly as 'learning the skills to do a particular job'. In this study, the term *training* refers to the provision of education and skills to childcare workers with the aim of attaining a professional qualification.

Nannies: The *Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary* (2004) defines a *nanny* simply as 'a woman whose job is to take care of a particular family's children'. The *Collins Pocket Dictionary* (2004) provides a similar definition and describes a *nanny* as 'a woman whose job is to look after young children'. Breese and Gomer (2000:15) go beyond these simple definitions and describe a nanny as a person who ensures that the children in her care are nourished emotionally, physically and intellectually. For the purposes of this study, a *nanny* is defined as a person who is paid to take care of the emotional, physical and intellectual needs of her employer's children, in the children's own home.

1.13 Division of Research Report

In Chapter 2, the way in which nannying has evolved as a profession since the fifteenth century is described. Specific reference is made to the role of nannies in providing for the physical, emotional and intellectual needs of babies and children. The implications of recent initiatives on Government level on the future of the profession are discussed.

Chapter 3 gives a brief description of the qualification status of nannies in the United Kingdom. The syllabus of a course which has been approved for the training of nannies is discussed.

The findings from the empirical study are presented and analysed in Chapter 4, followed by the researcher's conclusions and recommendations in Chapter 5. A list of references and appendices concludes the research report.

CHAPTER 2

NANNYING AS A PROFESSION

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a survey of the profession of nannying, with specific reference to the way in which the role of the nanny has evolved over the centuries. In the first part of the chapter, the historical development of this profession is described, from its birth in the fifteenth century, to its metamorphosis in the 1970's. This is followed by a discussion on its coming of age in the twenty-first century and a description of the multiple roles that nannies today may be expected to take within the family they work for. The job description of nannies is integrated with a discussion on the developmental needs of babies and preschool children, the age groups that nannies are most likely to work with. Drawing on personal experience, the researcher will give practical examples of ways in which nannies, in the course of their working day, may provide for the physical, emotional and intellectual needs of children.

In point 2.5 below, the future of the profession is discussed. Recent initiatives on Government level are expected to have a real impact on the demand for nannies, their wages and their job description. A survey of these initiatives will be given, with specific reference to the ways in which they may lead to transformation within the profession.

2.2 History of the Profession

As described by Breese and Gomer (2000:1), the word 'nurse' was used in the fifteenth century to refer to a woman who looked after children. The term 'nurse' itself sprang from 'wet nurse', a woman who was hired to suckle a child. This was done for various reasons, including the death of a child's mother at childbirth, or because of the mother's vanity. By the eighteenth century some wet nurses had metamorphosed into nurses,

having stayed on after a child has been weaned. They were then aptly named 'dry nurses', though later in that century the term 'nanny' was becoming more commonplace. By the nineteenth century the job of a nursery nurse/nanny was established. Nannies often took on the surname of their employers, and thus became known as 'Nanny Grey', for example. By the early twentieth century the term 'nanny' had become widely accepted, though nurse, 'nursie' and 'nana' remained current until the Second World War. During the war, nursery nurses were in demand to run government nurseries so that mothers could contribute to the war effort.

Although it was customary for nannies to live in the home of their employers, they did have separate accommodation on the nursery floor. The nursery floor was the nanny's domain, shared only with the children. Parents and other staff merely visited. Nannies did not clean, cook, shop or answer the door – they had nothing else but the children to occupy them. Nannyng was a vocation, a lifetime calling. Nannies experienced life through the comings and goings of the family they worked for and derived great fulfilment from their charges' development over the years. Though nannies were never referred to as 'in service', they knew their place and little confusion existed about the master/servant relationship (Breese & Gomer, 2000:11). It should be noted that the situation as described was relevant only to people from higher social classes. Less affluent people could not afford nannies and the mother was usually the primary caregiver to her children. According to Abercrombie and Warde (1998:288), stay-at-home-mothers and working fathers were the norm for most families up until the middle of the twentieth century.

The status of nannies as the exclusive property of the upper classes changed dramatically during the 1970's. Breese and Gomer (2000:3-4) discuss the role of feminism in this decade in turning around women's, and the media's, attitude to the female's role in society. Women were no longer satisfied to be at home with the children – they wanted to have careers as well. Over the next thirty years, more and more women joined the workforce. Today, eighteen per cent (18%) of married women in the United Kingdom with dependent children under the age of five works full-time, compared with just five per cent (5%) in 1979. Furthermore, as noted by Hobart and Frankel (2001:3), eighty-one per cent (81%) of women go back to work within twenty-eight weeks of having their baby and twenty thousand women a year return to work

after less than fourteen weeks maternity leave. Abercrombie and Warde (1998: 216-217) also note that the period that women spend out of the labour force after having children has been steadily reducing. In the 1950's, women returned to paid employment after an average of ten years, whereas women in the early 1980's returned after an average of only four years. This situation has led to a sharp rise in the demand for nannies and every kind of childcare.

2.3 Present Status of the Profession

The total number of nannies working in the United Kingdom today is not known, but it is estimated to be between seventy thousand and one hundred thousand. The vast majority of nannies are female (99.8%) and most of them (87.3%) are between the ages of eighteen and thirty years (Early Years National Training Organisation, 2000:8). Nannies care for an average of two children, most of whom are up to three years of age, and usually stay with a family for just over a year (Hobart & Frankel, 2001:1).

The profession is in its heyday and employers are willing to pay nannies a competitive salary. Table 2.1 and Table 2.2 on the following page, taken from *NANNYTAX* (Professional Nanny Annual Survey of UK Nanny Wages, 2004), demonstrate how salaries have increased from 1999 to 2003 in London and the Home Counties respectively:

Table 2.1: Wages of nannies in London

LONDON			
YEAR-END	WEEKLY NET (£)	% CHANGE	ANNUAL GROSS
2003	£384	6	£ 27 320
2002	£361	5	£ 25 384
2001	£344	8.5	<i>Not given</i>
2000	£317	10	<i>Not given</i>
1999	£289	10	<i>Not given</i>

Table 2.2: Wages of nannies in the Home Counties

HOME COUNTIES			
YEAR-END	WEEKLY NET £	% CHANGE	ANNUAL GROSS
2003	£319	9	£ 22 120
2002	£293	3	£ 20 100
2001	£285	9	<i>Not given</i>
2000	£262	14	<i>Not given</i>
1999	£230	8	<i>Not given</i>

As is evident from these tables, nanny wages have been increasing yearly between 1999 and 2003, in one case with as much as fourteen per cent (14%) per annum. Interestingly, however, a more recent survey (NANNYTAX, 2005) reports only a two per cent (2%) increase in nanny wages in the Home Counties for 2004, compared to nine per cent (9%) the previous year. The survey further reveals that the average wage of nannies working in London has actually decreased by half a per cent (-0.5%) in 2004, compared to a six per cent (6%) increase the year before. The reasons for this development are speculated to be a reflection of a changing trend in the market, which is that lower-income families, who offer lower wages, are starting to employ nannies. But even though pay levels may not be as high as in the past, the demand for nannies is still very high. An overwhelming seventy-two per cent (72%) of agencies participating in this survey reported a definite increase in the total number of nanny placements during 2004, and eighty-two per cent (82%) were expecting to place even more nannies during 2005.

Another interesting change reflected in this recent survey (compare NANNYTAX, 2005) is that the extravagant fringe benefits that nannies commonly enjoyed a few years ago, such as the use of a family car outside working hours, gym membership and a Christmas bonus, are now less frequent. In exceptional cases, nannies are still offered lavish benefits such as twelve weeks paid holiday and the use of a holiday home, but the reality is that many nannies are now offered no perks at all. This change could also be explained by the possibility that a greater number of lower-income families are now employing nannies, and are not financially able to offer them any fringe benefits.

The current demand for nannies is being balanced out by an equal increase on the supply side. Ten new countries have joined the European Union, leading to a large influx of would-be nannies from those countries into the United Kingdom (NANNYTAX, 2005). The possible oversupply of nannies could be one of the factors responsible for keeping wages relatively stable, and making it less essential for families wanting to employ a nanny to offer attractive benefits.

The nanny of the past, as described in 2.2, stands in sharp contrast to the modern nanny. As discussed by Breese and Gomer (2000:3 & 11) nannies today usually do not live with their employers, they have most evenings free, spend their weekends as they choose and may well not accompany the family on holidays. They do not see their job as a lifetime calling, but will move on when they want a change. Still, the modern nanny is described by these authors as the life-support system to working parents and a linchpin in today's lifestyle, a sentiment shared by the researcher. The discussion in 2.4 on their multiple and varied responsibilities should elucidate the vital importance of nannies to the families they work for.

2.4 The Responsibilities of a Nanny

Hobart and Frankel (2001:1) make the following point regarding the responsibilities of nannies:

Being in sole charge of children is one of the most challenging jobs there is. Ask any mother! When the children are not your own, the responsibility for their development, safety, care and learning is even greater.

Based on personal experience, the researcher fully agrees with this statement – nannies carry a great deal of responsibility for every facet of children's well-being. Nannies will have different individual job descriptions, and these will vary according to the specific needs of the family they work for. Breese and Gomer (2000:15) have, however, identified three responsibilities that are universal to all nannies and wherein all their duties can be contained. These three responsibilities are:

- Taking care of the *physical* needs of babies and children;
- providing for the *emotional* needs of babies and children;
- stimulating babies and children on an *intellectual* level.

The ways in which nannies may provide care for children on a physical, emotional and intellectual level will be discussed. Though each aspect will be discussed individually, it should be noted that they are inter-related and should not be seen in isolation. A duty such as feeding a baby may be classified as physical care, but it could also be viewed as a form of nurturing and a way of providing emotional care.

2.4.1 Physical Care

A nanny will be responsible for various aspects of the physical care of babies and children. These are mostly related to issues surrounding feeding, health and safety, exercise, and sleeping routines, each of which will be discussed.

2.4.1.1 Feeding

The researcher is of the opinion that a firm understanding of the nutritional needs of babies and children is absolutely essential for nannies, as feeding them is bound to be one of their main duties. (Compare Hobart & Frankel, 2001:46.) Good nutrition is especially crucial during the first two years, as this is a period of rapid growth, requiring twenty-five per cent (25%) of the infant's total caloric intake (Berk, 2004:178). When working with children in this age group, nannies may be responsible for sterilising and preparing bottles, feeding babies and starting them on solid foods. When children are eating solid foods, the nanny will most probably also be expected to cook it for them. (Compare Breese & Gomer, 2000:124.)

During the preschool years, children are often found to be deficient in nutrients such as protein, iron, calcium, vitamin A and vitamin C (compare Berk, 2004:178 & 296), and it will be one of the main duties of the nanny to ensure that the development of these deficiencies is prevented. As noted by Einon (2001:181), children in this age group often present with eating problems and ensuring a balanced diet could be difficult. In

the researcher's experience, the nanny will be expected to work around these difficulties and find creative ways of encouraging a healthy food intake.

Cleaning up after meals, packing school lunches for older children, taking precautions if children are allergic to certain foods and ensuring that children take their vitamins or other nutritional supplements regularly are other duties related to the feeding of children that may fall within a nanny's job description.

2.4.1.2 Health and Safety

Health

Taking care of children who are not well falls within the duties of many nannies (Hobart & Frankel, 2001:79). This may include duties such as taking the child's temperature, administering medicine, encouraging children to take enough fluids, keeping parents informed about the child's condition and generally just comforting the sick child.

Disease is a major contributor to malnutrition, as it reduces appetite and limits the body's ability to absorb food. Physical growth may even be hindered by diseases during infancy and childhood (Berk, 2004:298). It follows that nannies will be expected to do as much as possible to prevent the children in their care from contracting diseases, by taking measures such as maintaining high levels of hygiene when preparing food, limiting their contact with people with infectious diseases and encouraging children to wash their hands after using the toilet.

Nannies may also be responsible for ensuring that children practice proper dental care, such as regularly brushing their teeth with fluoride toothpaste and avoiding sugary foods. Even though primary teeth are temporary, dental care is important. Diseased baby teeth can affect the health of permanent teeth, since decay in baby teeth is associated with decay in permanent teeth (Berk, 2004:289). The nanny may also be responsible for taking children to the dentist.

Other physical care duties that may be mentioned are bathing children, taking care of their skin and hair, and changing nappies.

Safety

Unintentional injuries such as those sustained from car accidents, burns, falls and swallowing foreign objects are the leading causes of childhood mortality in industrialised nations. Thousands of the children who survive these accidents suffer pain, brain damage and physical disabilities (Berk, 2004:300). These facts highlight the important role of safety in the care of babies and children. One of the very important duties of a nanny is to ensure the safety of the children in her care (Hobart & Frankel, 2001:28). Good practices such as securing children in car seats when driving with them, keeping dangerous objects out of their reach and not leaving hot drinks unattended are a few of the essential safety precautions that nannies are expected to take. Nannies are also expected to have adequate knowledge of First Aid and know how to respond in an emergency situation.

2.4.1.3 Exercise

Nannies are expected to ensure that children exercise every day (Hobart & Frankel, 2001:44). Providing opportunities for exercise could take various forms, for example taking children to the playground, helping them when using a climbing frame, running around with them, kicking a ball back and forth, playing mini-golf and taking children to special activities such as swimming lessons, ballet classes or a children's gymnasium. These activities stimulate children's gross motor development. Berk (2004:187) describes gross motor development as the control over actions that help children get around in the environment, such as crawling, walking and jumping. Fine motor development refers to smaller movements such as reaching, grasping and drawing.

Although the sequence of motor development is fairly uniform across children, significant individual differences exist in the rate of motor progress. Unlike physical growth, differences in motor development are not determined by heredity, but are profoundly affected by movement opportunities and a stimulating environment. This is very important during early childhood when an explosion of new motor skills can occur. As children's bodies become more streamlined and less top-heavy, their centre of gravity shifts down and balance improves greatly. This paves the way for new motor skills involving large muscles of the body. By the end of the preschool years, many complicated skills such as skipping, catching balls and steering tricycles will have been

mastered (Berk, 2004:204 & 304). Louw (1995:158) agrees that the level of success that children achieve in mastering motor skills is greatly dependent on opportunities to practice these skills, and on the availability of help and guidance from adults. This confirms the important role of the nanny in facilitating gross motor development.

Berk (2004:306) states that, like gross motor development, fine motor skills take a giant leap forward during the preschool years. Control of the hands and fingers improve, making activities such as cutting, drawing and writing possible. Gradually they also become more self-sufficient at dressing and feeding themselves.

In the researcher's experience, nannies have many duties that are related to the fine motor development of children, for example doing creative activities such as cutting and finger painting with them, teaching them how to use their cutlery and allowing them many opportunities to do things for themselves. Toilet training requires both gross motor and fine motor readiness, and may well fall within the responsibilities of the nanny.

2.4.1.4 Sleeping Routines

Establishing bedtime routines is one of the responsibilities of a nanny (Hobart & Frankel, 2001:43). In the researcher's experience, ensuring that children get enough sleep can be problematic if a bedtime routine has not been established. This could include having a set time that children go to bed, going through bedtime rituals such as reading stories and singing songs, providing comfort objects and making children feel happy and content before leaving the room. It will also be the nanny's responsibility to ensure that the room is adequately ventilated and at a comfortable temperature, and that lighting is at the desired level.

According to Berk (2004:176), sleep contributes to physical growth, as growth hormones are released during the child's sleeping hours. Berk also states that newborn babies take round-the clock naps that total about sixteen hours, though it could be as much as twenty hours according to Louw (1995:171). On average, total sleeping time declines in early childhood; two- and three-year-olds sleep twelve to thirteen hours, four- to six-year-olds ten to eleven hours (Berk, 2004:294-295). Ensuring that babies

and young children get enough sleep will be one of the duties of a nanny and another area where her actions may have an influence on the overall well-being of the child.

2.4.2 Emotional Care

Regarding the emotional aspect of childcare, Hobart and Frankel (2001:96) state:

You are in a unique position when you work as a nanny. The time that you spend in close contact with the children will allow you to have a special and very close relationship with them. You are responsible for their total needs when their parents are not there. The children will love and trust you and you need to be aware of the responsibility it brings. You will be an influential role model, contributing to the children's opinions and values. The way you speak and behave will often be unconsciously copied by the children.

Nannies are indeed responsible for the 'total needs' of children when their parents are not there, and this includes their emotional needs.

2.4.2.1 The Importance of Affection

Affection and stimulation are as vital to the growth and development of babies as food. Babies who do not receive love will fail to grow normally, even if they receive adequate nutrition (Berk, 2004:181). This provides a striking example of the interrelatedness of body and mind. Extreme emotional deprivation can interfere with the production of growth hormones and lead to psychosocial dwarfism. This is a growth disorder that appears between two and fifteen years of age and is characterised by very short stature, immature skeletal age and serious adjustment problems (Berk, 2004:294). Louw (1995:248) points out that the growth of children may not be negatively affected only by the absence of affection, but also by the presence of serious psychological stressors. The researcher agrees with this point and is of the opinion that shielding children from negative stimuli is an important part of childcare.

As discussed by Berk (2004:252-253), the earliest emotional life of babies consists of little more than two global arousal states: attraction to pleasant stimulation and

withdrawal from unpleasant stimulation. Over time, and through interaction with the environment, emotional expressions become well-organised and specific, revealing a great deal about the baby's emotional state. Every emotional milestone is dependent on interaction with people and the environment. Around the age of two months, babies engage in social smiling when in the presence of familiar adults, and a few months later will start laughing out loud when receiving adequate stimulation from them. As early as six months of age, babies' expression of happiness, interest, surprise, fear, anger, sadness and disgust are appropriately expressed in relation to environmental events, as are the emotions of pride, shame, guilt and embarrassment that appear around two years of age.

2.4.2.2 Attachment

The attachment of babies to their primary caregiver seems to be especially important for their future emotional development, as explained by Steiner (1997:10-11). Babies have an inborn need to be close to people and will become attached to those persons who engage in responsive interactions with them over time. This sense of being loved and valued develops gradually over the first few years of life and is seen as a key component of human development. When attachment is proceeding normally, the baby develops a sense of trust that his needs will be met, leading to a feeling of security that enables him to venture forth and explore the people and things in his world. Thus, attachment is linked to sociability and the emergence of social skills. Attachment is also important for emotional regulation, as the presence of the primary caregiver provides comfort and calming when the child is upset or overwhelmed by excessive stimulation. According to Steiner (1997:13), emotional and social development will therefore not proceed normally if the child is not securely attached to his caregiver.

As nannies are often, in the researcher's experience, the primary caregivers, they will play a very important role in the emotional well-being and development of the children in their care. Being warm, attentive, loving and accepting can therefore not be viewed as an 'optional extra', but as an essential requirement of the job.

Wicks-Nelson and Israel (1997:26) are of the opinion that virtually all infants and their caretakers seem biologically prepared to interact in ways that foster their relationship.

This may be true for biological parents and their children, but the researcher does not agree that it is applicable to all caregivers and infants as stated. The reality is that not all nannies and children will be able to bond with each other. This highlights the importance of a goodness-of-fit between a nanny and the children she cares for.

2.4.2.3 Peer Interaction

Taking care of the emotional needs of children involves not only interaction with their parents or caregivers, but is also dependent on peer interaction. As peers interact on an equal footing, they learn together how to keep a conversation going, to cooperate and set goals in play (Berk, 2004:366). When children are with their friends, they get the opportunity to identify with someone similar to them and enjoy the social support this provides. Playing with friends also helps children to practice pro-social behaviour such as sharing toys and working in a team. The simple act of playing with peers promotes emotional well-being in the child, as it is enjoyable, gives a feeling of accomplishment and allows the expression of feelings. (Compare Louw, 1995:302 & 318.) It is therefore important for nannies to ensure that the children in their care have ample opportunity to play with their friends. This can be accomplished by organising regular play dates with their friends, accompanying them to birthday parties and taking them to places where they can make contact with other children.

2.4.2.4 Managing Behaviour

Managing unwanted behaviour from children may fall within the duties of a nanny. Nannies are expected to be knowledgeable on effective ways of disciplining children, and to enforce these methods consistently (Hobart & Frankel, 2001:128). Nannies should not only punish undesirable behaviour, but also reward the good (compare Einon, 2001:187), as this could be another effective way of moulding behaviour.

The researcher is of the opinion that children's behaviour should always be viewed in the context of their developmental phase. Behaviour such as fighting over toys, for example, could be viewed as normal for toddlers, but not acceptable in an eight-year-old who should be able to share. Accordingly, Breese and Gomer (2000:127) warn parents that nannies with little practical experience sometimes, out of sheer ignorance, punish

children for behaving in a way which is entirely appropriate for their age. Situations such as these could, in the researcher's opinion, be avoided if nannies had sufficient knowledge of normal child development.

2.4.3 Intellectual Care

Nannies are expected to provide stimulating play opportunities that will encourage children's curiosity and imagination. The amount of time that nannies spend with children makes their role in encouraging play and learning crucial (Hobart & Frankel, 2001:110). By providing many stimulating activities, nannies may play a pivotal role in the intellectual development of the children in their care. Seemingly simple everyday activities such as reading to children, telling stories, playing educational games, engaging them in conversation, taking them to a museum or the zoo, and monitoring the amount and type of television they watch could be beneficial to their brain development.

Berk (2004:169 & 232) agrees that the quality of childcare for babies and toddlers has a major impact on mental development. At birth, the brain is nearer to its adult size than any other physical structure, and it continues to develop at an astounding pace throughout infancy and toddlerhood. By the time toddlerhood is complete, the brain has reached seventy per cent (70%) of its adult weight, and by age six it has grown to ninety per cent (90%) of its adult weight. Wicks-Nelson and Israel (1997:20) are of the opinion that the brain grows even faster than this and will reach ninety-five per cent (95%) of its adult weight at the age of five already. Either way, it is clear that the brain experiences a growth spurt during the first few years of life.

Berk (2004:170 & 290) further explains that the human brain has one hundred to two hundred billion neurons, or nerve cells, that store and transmit information. Neurons differentiate and establish their unique functions by extending their fibres to form connections with neighbouring cells. As neurons form connections, stimulation becomes vital to their survival. Neurons that are stimulated by input from the environment continue to establish new connections, forming increasingly elaborate systems of communication that lead to more complex abilities. Neurons that are seldom stimulated soon lose their connections. Appropriate stimulation of the child's brain is therefore vital during periods in which the formation of connections is at its peak, in

other words during the first few years of life. It should be clear that nannies could play a pivotal role in the intellectual development of the babies and young children in their care.

2.4.5 Additional Roles

In addition to the duties that have been mentioned thus far, various other responsibilities may fall within a nanny's job description:

- *Household duties:* According to the *Agency Nannies Training Survey* (Early Years National Training Organisation, 2000:25), fifty per cent (50%) of nannies are expected to perform housekeeping duties, such as doing laundry or washing dishes. Other household duties may include grocery shopping, answering the phone, taking out the garbage, accepting deliveries and taking care of pets.
- *Administration:* This may include the managing of the household petty cash, planning birthday parties and keeping records of the children's activities and achievements.
- *Baby-sitting:* Nannies may be required to take care of the children outside of their normal working hours when parents go out. The average amount of time that nannies baby-sit per week is 5.1 hours (Early Years National Training Organisation, 2000:24).
- *Travelling:* Nannies may be required to accompany the family when they go on holiday. Alternatively, parents might go on holiday without the children and leave them in the full-time care of the nanny.

As should be evident at this point, parents rely heavily on modern nannies to take responsibility for nearly every facet of their children's care and development when they are at work or otherwise absent. It could even be argued that, in some cases, nannies are expected to be surrogate parents and take care of the children's every need. Not only are nannies responsible for the children, but many household duties are also assigned to them. The researcher is of the opinion that nannies are indeed the life-support system to parents and that they play a pivotal role in facilitating the modern lifestyle of many families.

2.5 Future of the Profession

It is at present not compulsory for nannies to hold any specific vocational qualification or to be registered on a professional board if they want to practice. Hobart and Frankel (2001:1) for instance, noted that being a nanny is indeed the only form of childcare and education employment where qualifications and registration are not compulsory. This state of affairs is seen as unacceptable by the researcher, especially when considering the high level of responsibility and accountability of the job. It is therefore viewed as a very positive step that the Government have recently proposed a strategy to improve this situation.

In December 2004, the Government set out initiatives in their document *Choice for parents, the best start for children: a ten year strategy for childcare* (HM Treasury, 2004). This document outlines the Government's vision of making flexible, affordable and high quality childcare available to all families by the year 2014. This vision includes not only centre-based care (such as crèches), but also home-based childcare, and will therefore have an impact on the future of the nanny profession. In this section, the broad principles of the Government's childcare initiatives will be discussed, with specific focus on the way in which nannies will be affected. It should be noted that, due to the fact that this document has been released very recently, not many authors or organisations have responded to its contents as yet. In this section, the researcher will therefore lean heavily on this document as a primary source, though the small number of available responses from other sources will be included where possible.

2.5.1 The Four Pillars of the Government's Vision

The Government has long recognised the collective interest in ensuring that children get a good start in life. The value of close parental contact during the first year, as well as the quality of the home learning environment are strongly emphasised, as the promotion of these issues is seen as in the nation's social and economic interests. Children are the citizens, workers, parents and leaders of the future who deserve the opportunity to fulfil their potential. To this effect, the Government have created their ten year strategy for childcare, which is built on the following four pillars (HM Treasury, 2004:1, 7 & 71):

- Choice and flexibility
- Availability
- Quality
- Affordability

Each of these pillars will be discussed briefly.

2.5.1.1 Choice and Flexibility

The Government is committed to creating more choice for parents about how they balance work and time spent with children. To enable parents to take longer leave during the first year after the birth of their child, the Government is setting a goal to extend paid maternity leave from six months to twelve months by the end of the next session of Parliament. In addition to this, they are putting forward proposals to give mothers the right to transfer a proportion of their maternity pay and leave to the father (HM Treasury, 2004:29).

This extension of paid maternity leave could result in more mothers choosing to stay home with their babies for a full year, which in turn could influence the number of nannies working with children under the age of one year. The researcher is of the opinion that this number will probably decrease over the next few years.

2.5.1.2 Availability

To increase the availability of all forms of childcare, the Government (HM Treasury, 2004:34 & 37) are proposing to provide more centre-based care and to invest in home-based care. The specific way in which the Government are planning to invest in home-based care will be explained under 2.5.1.4.

2.5.1.3 Quality

In order to improve the quality of childcare, it is believed that the false distinction being made between 'early education' and 'care' should be removed (HM Treasury, 2004:44

& 46). It is argued that children need a safe and stimulating environment at all times, whether this is provided in their own home, a school or a childminder's home.

The researcher agrees that a distinction between 'early education' and 'care' of children is a false one. As discussed under 2.4, children learn a multitude of things just in their daily interactions with parents, carers, peers and the whole of their environment. Learning is a natural part of the child's life and can occur in any setting, not just early education settings such as preschools. Similarly, an element of caring is also part of early education, as preschool teachers are not just responsible for teaching children, but also for things such as assisting them during mealtimes, helping them unbutton their coats and attending to injuries. In the United Kingdom, children start attending preschool as early as age three, so helping children take care of their toileting needs and even dealing with the occasional nappy is not unusual for these teachers. Though nannies may focus more on one aspect than the other, and vice versa for preschool teachers, the concepts of 'early education' and 'care' are viewed as inseparable by the researcher. It would seem that in future, nannies will be expected to focus more on the educational aspect of care than they have in the past.

2.5.1.4 Affordability

In order to make home-based childcare more affordable, the Government are offering parents certain tax benefits. This means that parents do not have to pay their nanny or other home-based carer from their already taxed income as has been the case before the 6th of April 2005, but that a certain portion of it is now tax-deductible. These tax benefits are, however, only applicable if the nanny is an Approved Home-based Carer (HM Treasury, 2004:7). The criteria for an Approved Home-based Carer will be explained under 2.5.2.

The Government (HM Treasury, 2004:53) predicts that around twenty thousand working families will benefit straight away from these childcare tax credits, and many more over time. Families with preschool children, those with several children, families needing full-time care and those living in London and the South East are among those most likely to benefit from extra help, because they especially can face high costs.

To clarify how these tax credits will benefit parents financially, two examples are given in Table 2.3 and Table 2.4 on the following page. In both examples it is shown how reforms will provide increased support for families with two young children and high childcare costs, for full-time and part-time care. As will be seen, Government support decreases as parental income increases.

Table 2.3: Families with two young children, full-time childcare

Total childcare cost (per week)	£320		£320	
	Maximum support (income up to £24 000 per annum)		Partial support (Income of £37 500 per annum)	
Per week	Current system	Reformed system	Current system	Reformed system
Early years entitlement (3s and 4s for 12.5 hours)	£50	-	£50	-
Early years entitlement (3s and 4s for 15 hours)	-	£60	-	£60
Childcare element	£140	£208	£44	£112
Total government contribution	£190	£268	£94	£172
Parental contribution (% of total costs)	£130 (41%)	£52 (16%)	£225 (70%)	£148 (46%)

(HM Treasury, 2004:55)

As should be evident from these tables, parents stand to benefit significantly from this increase in Government support. Indeed, families who qualify for maximum support will pay only sixteen per cent (16%) of their childcare costs from their already taxed income if they use full-time childcare and only thirteen per cent (13%) if they use part-time childcare. This compares very favourably to the forty-one per cent (41%) they were responsible for before the 6th of April 2005. Importantly, however, parents will only be eligible for this support if they are employing an Approved Home-based Carer as described in the Childcare Approval Scheme.

Table 2.4: Families with two young children, part-time childcare

Total childcare costs (per week)	£160		£160	
	Maximum support (income up to £24 000)		Partial support (income of £37 500)	
Per week	Current system	Reformed system	Current system	Reformed system
Early years entitlement (3s and 4s for 12.5 hours)	£50	-	£50	-
Early years entitlement (3s and 4s for 15 hours)	-	£60	-	£60
Childcare element	£77	£80	£0	£0
Total government contribution	£127	£140	£50	£60
Parental contribution (% of total costs)	£33 (41%)	£20 (13%)	£110 (69%)	£100 (63%)

(HM Treasury, 2004:56)

2.5.2 The Childcare Approval Scheme

The Childcare Approval Scheme came into effect on the 6th of April 2005. This is a voluntary scheme for approving childcare providers and enabling parents and employers to check if a carer is approved (Surestart, 2004). To be registered as an Approved Home-based Carer, applicants will have to meet the following criteria:

- **First Aid:** Applicants must have completed a relevant paediatric First Aid course within the three years prior to the date of application. The training must be suitable to the care of babies and children and include dealing with emergencies; resuscitation; shock; choking and anaphylactic shock (Surestart, 2004). Given the fact that accidental injury is the leading cause of death in children over the age of one in the UK (Child Accident Prevention Trust, 2003), the researcher is of the opinion that the emphasis on First Aid training for nannies is completely justified.
- **Qualifications:** Applicants must have an approved childcare qualification. A list of recognised qualifications has been made available and applicants with one of the listed qualifications only need to present proof of the qualification in order to be approved. Those childcare workers who do not have a childcare qualification

will be required to do an approved induction course. At present only one course has been approved for induction training, namely *Introducing Childminding Practice* being offered by the *Council for Awards in Children's Care and Education* also known as CACHE (Surestart, 2004). This course will be discussed in more depth in Chapter 3.

- **Police Checks:** Applicants will be required to undergo a check from the Criminal Records Bureau to ascertain whether they have anything on their record that makes them unsuitable to work with children. Those who have lived outside Great Britain in the five-year period prior to their application must produce evidence of a criminal record check covering the whole period of their stay abroad. This evidence should be verifiable and from an official source (Surestart, 2004). Over the past few years there have been several high-profile cases of child abuse involving nannies (Hobart & Frankel, 2001:10), a fact that emphasises the importance of screening procedures such as this.

The researcher views the approval scheme as a very positive step towards improving the quality of the childcare workforce. *NANNYTAX* (2005) also views the scheme positively and is predicting that it could mean more jobs for nannies in the future. Larger families who are currently using a nursery or a childminder may instead consider employing a nanny, who, with the help of tax credits, becomes a more cost-effective option than nurseries and childminders who charge on a per-child basis. The researcher agrees that this will indeed be the case and foresees that many more families will opt for this type of childcare in the future.

The researcher is of the opinion that the Childcare Approval Scheme will benefit all parties concerned: Parents will have a way of ensuring that they get the best care for their children, nannies will benefit from the increased demand from their services and children will benefit from being cared for by qualified early years professionals.

The *National Childminding Association* (NCMA), the co-ordinating body for home-based carers, has welcomed the Childcare Approval Scheme. It is viewed as a chance for nannies to demonstrate the quality and professionalism of their care through independent checks and approval. In response to the Scheme, the NCMA has introduced

a new membership package for nannies that will assist them in meeting all the criteria for approval (NCMA, 2004). At a total annual cost of £120, the package includes:

- An enhanced disclosure from the Criminal Records Bureau;
- tailored insurance packages, including public liability insurance;
- support and advice on seeking childcare training;
- two handbooks with useful information;
- a free legal advice service;
- a risk assessment checklist;
- the support and expertise of a national organisation.

At first glance, this membership package seems to provide a good all-inclusive service, especially for those nannies that would like to be approved under the new system but are not exactly sure how to go about it. The researcher, however, is concerned about the rather expensive membership fee of £120 per year, especially if one considers that nannies would have to pay for their First Aid training and childcare induction course on top of this. It is possible that some employers would be willing to sponsor their nannies, but it is expected that many would have to meet these expenses from their own income.

2.6 Summary

In this chapter, nannying as a profession was discussed, with specific reference to the role of nannies in the physical, emotional and intellectual development of children. The way in which the introduction of the Childcare Approval Scheme is affecting this group of childcare workers was also discussed. Considering the incentives that parents are being offered to employ only approved carers, it would be expected that the market for non-approved carers will become smaller over the next few years. Even though the Childcare Approval Scheme is voluntary, nannies who still want to be in demand in future would be well advised to ensure that they acquire Approved Home-based Carer status. This would mean, among other things, that they will have to ensure that they have the appropriate qualifications.

CHAPTER 3

CHILDCARE TRAINING

3.1 Introduction

In Chapter 2, the Childcare Approval Scheme and its implications for the profession of nannying were discussed. The main implication for nannies has been that, as of the 6th of April 2005, they have been required to present proof of a relevant childcare qualification in order to register as Approved Home-based Carers. Nannies not in possession of an approved childcare qualification may, to this end, complete an introductory course in childcare. The course that has been approved as suitable introductory childcare training for nannies will be discussed under 3.3 below.

The discussion of the details of the above-mentioned course will be preceded by an overview of the qualification status and training needs of nannies as expressed in the most recent survey on the subject.

3.2 The Qualification Status and Training Needs of Nannies

In 1999, the *Early Years National Training Organisation* conducted the first ever survey of the qualification status and training needs of nannies in the United Kingdom. The survey involved seven hundred and fifty-one (751) nannies and seventy-two (72) employment agencies specialising in the placement of nannies. The findings of the survey were published in the *Agency Nannies Training Survey 1999 Report* (Early Years National Training Organisation, 2000:1).

This survey has not been repeated since, and as such provides the most recent figures available on the subject. It is not known whether the Childcare Approval Scheme and its focus on the training of nannies will lead to another nationwide survey in the near future, but at this point the information given is the most up to date available.

3.2.1 Qualification Status

The *Agency Nannies Training Survey 1999 Report* (Early Years National Training Organisation, 2000:13 & 19) revealed that the majority of nannies (88.9%) hold some form of vocational qualification. This high percentage is spread across fourteen different qualifications, the most prominent of these being the certificates offered by the *Council for Awards in Children's Care and Education* (CACHE). These qualifications are held by almost two thirds (58.2%) of nannies in the UK.

CACHE is the leading provider of nationally recognised qualifications in early years care and education. Its courses and awards aim to provide knowledge and practical training for childcare and education practitioners who work with children and families in a range of settings. These include preschools, crèches, nursery schools and home-based settings (CACHE, 2004:1). The introductory childcare course that has been approved for nannies is also awarded by this prominent education body, and will be discussed in 3.3.

Some of the qualifications included in the survey as 'vocational qualifications' for nannies include teaching certificates and playwork certificates (Early Years National Training Organisation, 2000:19). A teaching qualification certifies that a person has knowledge concerning the education of children, while a playwork qualification certifies that a person is proficient in providing play activities for children of various ages. (Compare SkillsActive, 2003:2.)

While acknowledging the importance of education and play within the field of childcare, the researcher is not convinced that these qualifications will truly enable a person to work effectively with children in a caring capacity, and therefore questions whether they should have been included as vocational qualifications in the survey. Based on personal experience as a nanny, the researcher is aware of the variety of skills that are required to take care of children. Nannies are not only educators or entertainers; they are responsible for every need of the children in their care and effectively act as surrogate parents. Being a nanny requires the ability to take care of children's needs on a physical, emotional and intellectual level. The researcher is of the opinion that neither a teaching

qualification nor a playwork qualification provides the necessary knowledge and skills to take care of children on all three these levels.

3.2.2 Training Needs

Given the high level of ‘vocational’ training reported by the survey, the researcher was intrigued by the fact that almost a quarter (22.9%) of nannies expressed a need for further training to help them do their current job (Early Years National Training Organisation, 2000:20). This could suggest that some of the training currently being offered to nannies is not preparing them sufficiently for the job, or it could be a reflection of less suitable training, such as teaching and playwork being included in the survey.

The *Agency Nannies Training Survey* (Early Years National Training Organisation, 2000:21-22) further revealed that most nannies (83.7%) are prepared to undertake childcare training, but that they are in many cases prevented from doing so by unfavourable circumstances. Some of the barriers to training reported were:

- lack of time (reported by three quarters of respondents);
- lack of funding (reported by more than a third of respondents);
- lack of local training opportunities (reported by a fifth of respondents).

It was found that lack of local training opportunities was a particular barrier for nannies in London and was reported by almost a third (31.3%) of respondents in that area.

The researcher is of the opinion that it will become increasingly important over the next few years for these barriers to be overcome if the qualification status of nannies is to be improved. These survey results clearly indicate that nannies have a need for vocational training, but will only be able to undergo such training if this is:

- flexible in terms of the time commitment required;
- affordable; and
- available in their area.

Regarding the training of nannies, Breese and Gomer (2000:136-137) note that it is unlikely that nannies will be treated as professionals as long as a high proportion of them are not trained. These authors are also of the opinion that the prevalent attitude that ‘anyone can look after children’ will not change unless training and its standards are recognised, understood and seen to be excellent in practice as well as theory. The ability to commit to a course and attain a qualification is viewed as reflecting a certain dedication in a nanny, and more than a passing interest in the subject. Black (2004) expresses the strong opinion that it is ‘absolutely crazy’ that up until the 6th of April 2005 there has been no formal way of assuring that nannies are properly trained and that their skills are properly developed. The researcher agrees that more nannies receiving better training will lead to real recognition of the profession, as well as improved service provision.

3.3 Approved Introductory Childcare Training

Nannies with no vocational qualifications may complete an approved introductory course in childcare which will enable them to register as Approved Home-based Carers. The course that has been approved for this purpose is called *Introducing Childminding Practice*, offered by CACHE. (Compare Surestart, 2004.)

CACHE provides nationally recognised theoretical and practical training for childcare workers practising in a range of settings in the United Kingdom. These include preschools, play groups, crèches, nursery schools and childminder’s homes (CACHE, 2004:1). As the name suggests, *Introducing Childminding Practice* is targeted specifically at childminders. In a childminding setting, the childminder takes care of children in her own home (compare Breese & Gomer, 2000:255), as opposed to the home of the employer as is the case in nannying.

The fact that a course intended for childminders has been chosen as the only approved introductory course for nannies is viewed as noteworthy by the researcher. It demonstrates that introductory training specifically targeted at nannies is not available at present and confirms the need for research into the training needs of this group of childcare workers.

Dorrance (2004) concedes that this training is intended for childminders, but is of the opinion that other childcare workers such as nannies and foster carers may find it valuable, as they also work in a domestic setting. The applicability of this training to the work of nannies will be evaluated under 3.3.2 when the syllabus of *Introducing Childminding Practice* is discussed.

3.3.1 Course Structure

Introducing Childminding Practice forms part of a broader qualification, namely the *CACHE Level 3 Certificate in Childminding Practice*. This certificate consists of three units, each of which requires a certain number of learning hours to complete (CACHE, 2004:7):

- UNIT 1: Introducing Childminding Practice (12 Hours)
- UNIT 2: Developing Childminding Practice (60 Hours)
- UNIT 3: Extending Childminding Practice (60 Hours)

After successful completion of all three units and their respective written assignments, candidates will qualify for the *CACHE Level 3 Certificate in Childminding Practice*.

According to *My Nanny Network* (2005), nannies are only required to complete Unit 1, in other words, *Introducing Childminding Practice*, in order to be registered as Approved Home-based Carers. Upon completion of Unit 1, they will receive a letter of attendance to be presented to the Childcare Approval Body. This letter is sufficient for registration purposes and nannies are not required to complete the written assignments in order to be approved. Those that do complete the assignments will receive a certificate upon passing, which is seen as increasing the bearer's status and employability.

The course takes twelve hours to complete and is presented over a full weekend. At present, courses are only being held in London, but will be available in other locations in the near future. A distance learning version of this course is currently being prepared. This will enable overseas students to gain their induction training before arriving in the UK. Students who do the course by distance learning will, however, be required to

complete three written assignments in order to gain the qualification (My Nanny Network, 2005).

3.3.2 Course Syllabus

Introducing Childminding Practice is intended for childminders that are embarking on this career for the first time. The syllabus is divided into the following nine topics (CACHE, 2004:15):

- Keeping children safe
- Establishing routines for the childminding day
- Providing basic play and other activities for children in a home-based setting
- Helping children settle into the childminding setting
- Managing children's behaviour
- Treating children with equal concern
- Initiating relationships with parents
- Child protection
- Starting a childminding business

Throughout the following discussion of each of these topics, the relevance of the contents will be evaluated in terms of its applicability to the work of nannies.

3.3.2.1 *Keeping Children Safe*

Given the fact that accidental injury is the biggest single cause of death in UK children over the age of one (Child Accident Prevention Trust, 2003), the researcher is of the opinion that it is of great importance to address the issue of safety in the training of all childcare workers, including nannies. The following issues regarding the safety of children are addressed in this course:

- *Making the home and garden a safe environment*: The importance of assessing possible dangers in the home and garden, and taking action to reduce or remove these dangers are emphasised (CACHE, 2004:15). In practical terms, this could

include covering plug sockets with plastic guards; keeping medicines in childproof containers; installing smoke alarms; keeping gardening equipment out of children's reach; and adequately fencing and covering swimming pools. (Compare Kay, 2001:87-89.)

In the researcher's experience, nannies are indeed responsible for safety in the home and garden, but this responsibility is more limited than that of childminders. Nannies are not, for example, responsible for ensuring that poisonous plants are not planted in the garden, or that safety gates are installed at the top and bottom of stairs. The responsibility for these preventative measures lies with parents. Despite the slightly more limited responsibility of nannies, their duty to ensure the safety of children in the home and garden is still considerable. The researcher is therefore of the opinion that this topic is relevant to their work.

- *Using safe equipment:* The importance of choosing equipment which is suitable for children's size and stage of development, as well as ensuring that it is in a safe condition, is emphasised in this section (CACHE, 2004:15). Equipment that should be checked regularly may include highchairs, cots and prams. (Compare Einon, 2001:34, 43 & 45.) Although the provision of equipment and its maintenance is the responsibility of parents, awareness of the safe use of equipment is viewed by the researcher as important for nannies. Should a nanny, for example, take a baby with her to the supermarket, she should ensure that the baby seat provided in the trolley is sturdy and clean before putting the baby in it.
- *Ensuring safe work practices:* Safe work practices can be ensured by working in ways which prevent accidents to children, as well as supervising them according to their stage of development and the activities they are doing (CACHE, 2001:15). Adjusting the level of supervision according to the developmental level of the child is regarded as important by both Einon (2001:204) and Hobart and Frankel (2001:61). These authors are of the opinion that carers should find a balance between protecting children and allowing them enough freedom to explore their world independently. Kay (2001:85) agrees that children can never be made absolutely safe and efforts to eradicate all physical risks to the child

could create such a stifling environment that the child may suffer a complete lack of stimulation. The researcher agrees that balance in this regard is important. An example of ensuring safe work practices while at the same time allowing children enough freedom, would be to allow a five-year-old to climb to the top bars of a climbing frame by himself, but standing within arm's reach in case he falls. Safe work practices and the supervision of children certainly fall within the responsibilities of nannies and the researcher therefore views this topic as relevant to their work.

- *Safeguarding children outside the home:* This refers to safety when travelling by car and crossing roads (CACHE, 2004:15). According to the *Child Accident Prevention Trust* (2003), over 36 000 children were hurt in road accidents on UK roads in 2002. Of these, almost 200 were killed and a further 4 600 were injured seriously enough for them to be admitted to hospital or suffer a fracture. These statistics emphasise the importance of training in this regard for all childcare workers, including nannies. Examples of ways in which nannies can safeguard children outside the home would be to have a valid driver's license, to secure children properly in car seats and to hold their hands when crossing the street.
- *Creating a healthy environment:* A healthy environment is one in which hygiene is maintained, and smoking is not permitted (CACHE, 2004:16). Given that there is conclusive evidence that second-hand smoke causes cot death, middle-ear disease and respiratory illnesses, and may also lead to behavioural problems and impaired growth and development in children (British Medical Association, 2004:4), the researcher views it as essential that this topic must be included in the training of nannies.
- *Dealing with accidents and incidents:* This section deals with emergency plans, the recording of accidents and incidents and practising evacuation procedures with children (CACHE, 2004:16). According to the *Child Accident Prevention Trust* (2003), approximately one million children in the UK are hospitalised each year following accidents at home. Falls, burns and poisoning are the main types of accidents that children have at home. Most accidents are preventable with

careful planning (compare Kay, 2001:99), but should one occur, childcare workers need to know how to deal with it.

Dealing with accidents and incidents is seen by the researcher as a necessary topic for both childminders and nannies, as these are the childcare workers that practice in a domestic setting where accidents are most likely to occur.

- *Paediatric First Aid:* People who work with young children need to understand the importance of undertaking a specialist First Aid course (CACHE, 2004:16). Einon (2001:202) emphasises that knowing what to do in an emergency situation can literally mean the difference between life and death. Hobart and Frankel (2001:69) agree, and note that further injury can also be prevented if the appropriate measures are taken. Knowledge of First Aid is clearly essential for anyone working with children, including nannies.

3.3.2.2 Establishing Routines for the Childminding Day

According to Hobart and Frankel (2001:41), routines refer to regular events such as mealtimes and nap times that are part of childcare. These authors are of the opinion that routines should take place at the same time each day, so that the young child feels secure by knowing what to expect. The researcher agrees that a set routine increases a child's feeling of security and is of the opinion that keeping to a routine as much as possible is advisable. Three issues regarding routines are covered in the course:

- *Planning all the activities that have to fit into the childminding day:* These activities may include mealtimes; sleep and rest periods; play and activities; homework and early evening activities; and taking children to and from school or preschool (CACHE, 2004:16). From personal experience, the researcher is aware that similar activities will be part of a nanny's routine, but also that many more may take place within a day, and that good organisational skills are essential to fit everything in. Breese and Gomer (2000:107) agree that nannies need to be organised and be able to plan ahead if the day is to run smoothly.

- *The importance of ensuring that childminding routines fit in with parents' wishes for their children:* The focus in this section is on taking care of children in a way which is acceptable to parents and consistent with the care which they provide (CACHE, 2004:16). In practical terms this could mean, for example, putting children down for naps or feeding them at a time specified by parents. (Compare Einon, 2001:58.) Hobart and Frankel (2001:177) are of the opinion that providing care which is consistent with that of parents is important, as it adds to the security of a child. The researcher agrees that the importance of consistent care-giving should be understood, also by nannies, and therefore finds this topic applicable in their work.
- *The need to change routines as children develop:* Childminders have to be aware that children's needs change as they grow up, and should adjust their routines accordingly (CACHE, 2004:16). Most six- month old babies, for example, need two naps per day, while five-year-olds generally require no naps during the day. (Compare Berk, 2004:176.) It follows that childcare workers, including nannies, need to adjust their routines to the changing needs of children.

3.3.2.3 Providing Basic Play and other Activities for Children

The third topic covered in *Introducing Childminding Practice* is the provision of play opportunities and other activities in a home-based setting (CACHE, 2004:16). The following issues are addressed in the course:

- *The importance of play as a part of children's early learning:* As noted by Louw (1995:313 & 317), there are few, if any, aspects of children's development that are not in some way related to play. Play supports the development of children on a physical, cognitive, social and emotional level. These aspects were discussed in Chapter 2 and will not be repeated here, though the importance of play in children's early learning and development is acknowledged.

Given that play supports children's development on multiple levels, the researcher is of the opinion that training regarding the importance of play is essential for all childcare workers, including nannies. Nannies need to

understand the various functions of play in the development of children, and know how to provide appropriate play opportunities for children of different ages, in order to support their development on a physical, cognitive, social and emotional level.

- *Planning play activities using household items and domestic activities:* This section deals with ways in which childminders can integrate play activities into domestic routines. Children could, for example, help the childminder to prepare sandwiches for lunch, and in the process develop their fine-motor skills and learn about food hygiene. (Compare Hobart & Frankel, 2001:115.)

In the researcher's experience, children enjoy being involved in, for example, folding laundry or sweeping the floor, and take great pride in their achievements. The involvement of children in domestic activities could also be beneficial to nannies, as it allows them to complete their chores for the day while educating children at the same time.

- *The importance of finding play opportunities outside the home:* In this section, the importance of taking children to parks and playgrounds is emphasised. In a country where many people live in homes without gardens or any outside space (compare Abercrombie & Warde, 1998:324), this is especially important. Hobart and Frankel (2001:120) consider any type of outing as valuable in widening and enriching children's experience of the outside world. The researcher is of the opinion that nannies should be aware of the importance of allowing children these experiences, and therefore finds this section relevant to their work.
- *The value of using toy libraries and equipment loan schemes:* If childminders are unable to purchase all the necessary toys and equipment to set up the childminding practice, they can take advantage of toy libraries and equipment loan schemes. As the provision of toys and equipment is the responsibility of parents, the researcher is of the opinion that this section is not applicable to nannies.

3.3.2.4 *Helping Children Settle into the Childminding Setting*

The fourth topic covered in *Introducing Childminding Practice* relates to ways in which childminders can help children settle into their home. The following aspects are dealt with:

- *Helping children deal with separation from their parents:* This section deals with ways in which childminders can help children separate from their parents when they are dropped off at the childminders home (CACHE, 2004:17). According to Berk (2004:254-255), it is quite common for babies to display separation anxiety, in other words to become upset when the adult they have come to rely on leaves. It follows that knowledge regarding ways of facilitating the separation process could be useful to childminders.

In the researcher's experience, nannies are also confronted with children's separation issues, for example when the parents leave to go to work. Being equipped to deal with these situations effectively could help this process run smoother. Methods such as assuring children that parents will return or distracting them while the parents leave are examples of strategies that could be included in training courses. The researcher is therefore of the opinion that this section is applicable to the work of nannies.

- *Helping children become familiar with the childminding setting:* Various ways of familiarising children with the setting, such as preparatory visits, are dealt with in this section (CACHE, 2004:17). In the researcher's opinion, this topic is not entirely relevant to nannies. Unlike childminders, nannies look after children in a setting which is familiar to them – their home. Training in this regard is therefore not viewed as essential for nannies.

3.3.2.5 *Managing Children's Behaviour*

The management of children's behaviour is the fifth topic that is addressed in the course and it consists of the following aspects:

- *Planning a framework for children's behaviour:* Setting boundaries for children's behaviour according to their stage of development is the focus of this section (CACHE, 2004:17). Hobart and Frankel (2001:122) agree that children need boundaries to control their behaviour, but that these boundaries should be consistent with their stage of development. Ignorance of normal child development may result in a nanny punishing a child for behaviour which is entirely appropriate for his age. (Compare Breese & Gomer, 2000:127.) The researcher is therefore of the opinion that this aspect of the course is applicable to nannies.
- *Encouraging positive behaviour:* Ways of encouraging positive behaviour include praise, attention, and modelling (CACHE, 2004:17). Kay (2001:22) notes that the frequency of unwanted behaviour can be reduced if carers show children approval and give them praise. Berk (2004:373 & 375) agrees that the praising of good conduct is one of the most effective forms of discipline, but also notes that the modelling of good behaviour by significant others can have a powerful influence on children's behaviour. It follows that nannies should be knowledgeable on ways of encouraging positive behaviour, and could therefore benefit from this part of the course.
- *The requirements of the childminder's registering authority concerning the use of physical punishment:* This section outlines the policy of the National Childminding Association regarding the use of physical punishment as a means of managing behaviour (CACHE, 2004:17). The use of physical punishment in childcare settings is at present a controversial issue in the UK. Though still legal, physical punishment is under attack from campaigners who want its practice completely abolished. (Compare Kay, 2001:21-22.) Regarding physical punishment as a means for nannies to manage behaviour, Hobart and Frankel (2001:132) have firm views:

As a professional person looking after other people's children, it is never correct to administer physical punishment whether parents request it or not. A light slap is one end of the continuum of beating

a child and causing injury, and there would never be any reason why a nanny should hit a child.

Though not entirely sharing the view that a light slap is comparable to beating a child, the researcher does agree that it is inappropriate for nannies to use physical punishment and is of the opinion that they should be trained in alternative methods of managing behaviour.

3.3.2.6 Treating Children with Equal Concern

This part of *Introducing Childminding Practice* deals with ways in which childminders can ensure that all children in their childminding practice are treated equally. The following issues related to equality are addressed:

- *Adults' expectations of children:* Children's opportunities to develop their full potential may be limited by adults' limited expectations of them, especially those based on racial origins, gender and disability (CACHE, 2004:17). The researcher is of the opinion that the expectations adults have of children could have an effect on their achievements on various levels. For example, if a teacher, due to her own prejudice, has limited expectations of a child in her class, (compare Abercrombie & Warde, 1998:268), this child may live up to the teacher's low expectations and not reach his full academic potential. In the researcher's view, nannies need to be aware of how their expectations of children could affect their development. This topic is therefore viewed as relevant to their work.
- *Treating each child as an individual:* In order to achieve equality, childminders need to treat children according to their specific individual needs, in other words to treat them differently in order to treat them equally (CACHE, 2004:17). Kay (2001:28) states that equality of opportunity does not mean that all children should be treated in the same way. This author is of the opinion that it would hardly be equal to offer the same level of support to an able-bodied, advanced four-year-old and a child of the same age with profound learning disabilities.

Regarding disability, Hobart and Frankel (2001:160-161) note that up to twenty per cent (20%) of children in the UK are estimated to have a disability of some kind, including physical impairments, learning difficulties and HIV positive status. Given that approximately one in five children suffers from a disability, there is a relatively high probability that childcare workers will come across some form of it in their careers. In the researcher's opinion, awareness of the importance of treating children according to their individual needs is important for nannies and applicable in their work setting.

- *Creating an environment in which all children feel welcome and included:* The importance of creating a welcoming environment for children from different racial and family backgrounds, as well as different genders and levels of ability is emphasised (CACHE, 2004:17). In practical terms this could mean that the childminder may allow children to celebrate festivals from a wide range of cultures; offer wheelchair access; and have an equal number of boys and girls to look after. (Compare Kay, 2001:42.) The researcher is of the opinion that nannies should also have the ability to make all children feel welcome and included. When hosting a birthday party, for example, a nanny should ensure that the entertainment and games she offers are of such a nature that no child has to be excluded. If one of the children at the party has a broken leg, for instance, the nanny should ensure that a jumping castle is not the only entertainment on offer. The researcher is of the opinion that sensitivity to these issues is a topic that nannies could benefit from in training.
- *Including positive images of all groups of people in the materials used with children:* Childminders are encouraged to use materials that portray black people, women and disabled people in positive roles (CACHE, 2004:17). Kay (2001:56) is of the opinion that diversity can be promoted in childcare settings through the use of appropriate resources, for example: black dolls; musical instruments from different cultures; and books which portray images of cultural diversity in a representative and honest way.

In the researcher's experience, nannies are usually not responsible for the acquisition of play materials. Parents usually provide the toys and other materials their children play with. The researcher therefore considers this section of the course as not entirely applicable to nannies.

3.3.2.7 Initiating Relationships with Parents

In this section, the various issues related to the childminder's relationship with parents are addressed (CACHE, 2004:17 & 18):

- *Preparing for the first meeting with parents:* Childminders need to be prepared to provide information about their childminding service when meeting with parents for the first time, and also to obtain information about the parents' requirements and wishes for their child. A childminder's first meeting with parents is similar to the job interview of a nanny. In this interview, nannies will provide information about their qualifications and experience, and also explore the family's expectations. (Compare Hobart & Frankel, 2001:19-20.)

Being well prepared for an interview is important in any job application, including nanning. The researcher is of the opinion that the ability to conduct themselves well in an interview can contribute to the professional status of nannies and therefore finds this section of the course applicable to this group of childcare workers.

- *Sharing information with parents:* The importance of a two-way exchange of information between childminder and parents is emphasised. In any childcare setting, good communication and the sharing of information between parents and carers is essential (Kay, 2001:122). It follows that nannies should also be aware of the importance of keeping the lines of communication with parents open. According to Breese and Gomer (2000:98), communication is the most common word that both nannies and their employers use to capture the essence of a successful partnership.

Based on personal experience as a nanny, the researcher agrees that continuous, clear communication is essential to a successful nanny-parent relationship, and is of the opinion that training in this regard could be beneficial to nannies.

- *Negotiating and agreeing a contract with parents:* Childminders need to understand the importance of having a written contract with parents, and be aware of the aspects that should be covered in the contract. In a similar vein, Breese and Gomer (2000:298) are of the opinion that nannies should have a contract with parents, and that it should contain all their conditions of employment, for example: wages; hours of work; sick leave; paid holidays; and a list of duties.

Watt and Border (2001:87) state that all employees are entitled to an employment contract and that by law this contract should be given to employees within two months of starting work. In the researcher's experience, many nannies are not aware of their right to a contract, or their basic rights as employees. As explained by Hobart and Frankel (2001:169-170), nannies are, for example, entitled to weekly or monthly pay-slips indicating their wage and any deductions made, and to rest breaks during the working day. In addition to this, parents are required by law to make income tax contributions to Inland Revenue on behalf of their nanny, as well as National Insurance contributions. National Insurance contributions are paid to ensure that workers are entitled to unemployment benefit, maternity allowance, incapacity benefit and, eventually, basic retirement pension. In reality, many nannies are unaware of their employer's responsibility to make these contributions.

The researcher views this section of the course as relevant to nannies, but is of the opinion that the topic is not covered in sufficient depth. Nannies are employees and need to be made fully aware in training of parents' responsibilities as their employers.

3.3.2.8 Child Protection

This section of the course deals with various issues related to child abuse and the role of the childminder in protecting victims of abuse:

- *The seriousness of child abuse:* Childminders need to be aware of the fact that child abuse can affect children of all ages and backgrounds and that it can have long-lasting effects, especially on emotional development (CACHE, 2004:18). In the UK, about one hundred and fifty children die each year at the hands of their parents or carers and many more suffer physical injury and emotional damage, which in some cases can last for their lifetime (Kay, 2001:102). Given these facts, an awareness of the serious nature of all forms of child abuse is viewed by the researcher as essential to all childcare workers, including nannies.
- *The responsibility of the childminder when abuse is suspected:* If childminders suspect that a child in their care may have been abused, they have the responsibility to put what they have observed in writing and report their suspicions to their local social services department (CACHE, 2004:18). Childminders and other childcare workers may be hesitant to report suspected abuse, for fear of being wrong, causing problems for parents, fear of the child being removed into care or reprisals from parents. (Compare Kay, 2001:102.) The researcher is of the opinion that nannies would be especially disinclined to report suspected abuse, as they are essentially part of the family unit and would not want to be involved in the breakdown of that structure. In an effort to protect the family and their reputation, nannies may choose to ignore signs of abuse and not report it.

In the United Kingdom, both physical and sexual abuse are located disproportionately among poorer families, especially those on state benefits (Corby, 2001:108 & 110). This does not, however, imply that abuse does not occur in more affluent settings. As noted by Wickham and West (2002:2), abuse occurs across a broad range of social, cultural and socio-economic boundaries. It follows that nannies may come across cases of abuse regardless of the social status of the family they work for. Concerns regarding neglect are most common

for nannies, as they may feel that the children are emotionally neglected by their parents who work full-time and spend very little time with them (Hobart & Frankel, 2001:72). The possibility of abuse is always present and the researcher therefore views training regarding the appropriate handling of suspected abuse as relevant to nannies.

- *Types of abuse and common signs and symptoms of abuse:* Abuse is generally divided into four categories, namely physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect. In this section the different types of abuse are defined, along with a description of the associated signs and symptoms that childminders should be aware of (CACHE, 2004:18).

Possible signs and symptoms of abuse include: bruises, cuts and other injuries; aggression; withdrawal; regression; fear of adults; and persistent sexualised behaviour (Kay, 2001:103). In the researcher's opinion, it is important that childcare workers are able to recognise the symptoms of abuse and neglect, but their observations should be viewed in the context of normal child development. One should not, for instance, assume that a child is being physically abused just because he has bruises, as these could have been sustained by other means. Hobart and Frankel (2001:73) agree that nannies should only begin to consider the possibility of abuse when many unusual injuries are present or the child presents with a cluster of behavioural changes that cause concern.

- *The vulnerability of childminders to allegations of abuse:* Childminders need to be aware of their own vulnerability, and that of members of their family, to allegations of abuse (CACHE, 2004:18). As noted by Corby (2001:51), there has been a massive growth in concern about the abuse of children in childcare settings. These concerns are related to a spate of incidences of childminders abusing their charges, as well as nannies being taken to court for cruelty to children (Breese & Gomer, 2000:121 & 260).

The researcher is of the opinion that nannies need to be trained in ways of protecting themselves against allegations of abuse. Hobart and Frankel (2001:74-75) note that nannies are in a vulnerable position and should take

measures to prevent themselves being unjustly accused of abuse, for example: keeping a written record of all accidents and incidents involving the children; not carrying out intimate tasks that children are quite capable of doing for themselves; never shaking or hitting a child; using appropriate language in front of the children; and never forcing kisses and cuddles on children who do not wish it.

3.3.2.9 *Starting a Childminding Business*

The last topic covered in *Introducing Childminding Practice* relates to the business aspect of childminding.

This section deals with the financial side of childminding and focuses on how childminders can calculate an appropriate amount to charge for their services. The importance of keeping financial records for income tax purposes is emphasised, as well as the costs that can be deducted when completing a tax return (CACHE, 2004:18). According to Breese and Gomer (2000:258 & 260), childminders usually earn between £150 and £200 per week, and from that amount they can deduct expenses such as toys, safety equipment, food and nappies.

Other business-related aspects that are covered in this section are the importance of adequate public liability insurance cover, how to fill vacancies through advertising and where to access support and information on setting up and running the business (CACHE, 2004:18).

As nannies are not self-employed, the researcher is of the opinion that most of the above-mentioned business aspects are not relevant to them. Nannies are employees and would benefit more from information regarding their basic rights at work. As mentioned under 3.3.2.7, many nannies are not aware of the responsibilities that parents, as employers, have towards them as employees.

The researcher is of the opinion that nannies do need to be trained in the business aspect of nannying, but that this section of the course is not adequate for that purpose.

3.4 Summary

In this chapter, the introductory childcare training that has been approved for nannies wishing to register as Approved Home-based Carers was discussed. The perceived suitability for nannies of the various sections of *Introducing Childminding Practice* was commented on continuously during the discussion of the course syllabus. It was found that:

- Many of the topics covered are applicable to nannies, for example discipline and working with parents;
- certain topics are only partly relevant to them or irrelevant, for example helping children settle into the childminding setting and starting a childminding business;
- some topics that are viewed as important by the researcher are not covered, for example the rights of nannies as employees and the responsibilities of parents as employers.

In general, the researcher views this course as an adequate interim measure for the introductory childcare training of nannies. It is, however, not considered the most suitable form of training for this group of childcare workers, and the researcher is of the opinion that nannies should have access to training that has been developed according to their specific needs.

CHAPTER 4

EMPIRICAL DATA

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore the training needs of nannies in the United Kingdom. These training needs were explored in terms of two aspects: (a) **Content**, which refers to the topics that need to be addressed in training; and (b) **Structure**, which refers to the way in which the identified topics need to be presented to nannies in training.

Empirical data was collected by means of a focus group discussion with a group of nannies. Members of the focus group were selected by the researcher according to a predetermined criterion. In this chapter the empirical data regarding **Content** and **Structure** as obtained from the focus group discussion will be presented and analysed.

4.2 Identification of Main Themes and Sub-Themes regarding Content

The following main themes regarding the content of training emerged from the empirical data:

- Professionalism
- Caring
- Development
- Working with parents
- Diversity

Each of these themes is subsequently presented in table form and discussed:

Table 4.1: Main and sub-themes regarding content as identified from the empirical data: *Main Theme 1*

MAIN THEME	SUB-THEMES	ELEMENTS
Professionalism	Conditions of Employment	Employment contract Paid holidays Sick leave Wages Duties and responsibilities Overtime and time off
	Insurance and Taxes	Information on tax contributions Parents as employers Insurance for injuries Car insurance
	Support	Professional bodies Informal support networks Preventing isolation
	Boundaries	Nanny as an employee, not a mother Temporary nature of the relationship Being paid to provide a service Being a carer, not a playmate

4.2.1 Professionalism

Professionalism was the first main theme that was identified from the empirical data and is summarised in Table 4.1. The four sub-themes that were identified by the researcher are conditions of employment; insurance and taxes; support; and boundaries.

4.2.1.1 Conditions of Employment

A need for information regarding conditions of employment emerged from the empirical data. Participants expressed the opinion that nannies should be made aware of their rights as employees, and that these rights should be reflected in an employment contract. As one participant stated: 'Sign a contract, that's the first thing. If you're going to be hired as a nanny, from day one you have a contract, everything is written down and you can always refer to that. That is the business part of the job'. Watt and Border (2001:87) state that all employees are indeed entitled to an employment contract and that by law this contract should be given to employees within two months of starting work. Not only is a contract compulsory by law, but Breese and Gomer (2000:298-299) are of the opinion that it is also a useful tool for both employer and employee: It forces employers to think through the implications of having an employee in the house and helps them to behave professionally towards the nanny, while at the same time clarifying the duties the nanny has agreed to.

The need for clarifying duties and responsibilities in an employment contract was one of the elements identified from the empirical data. A need for training related to the following conditions of employment was also identified: The amount of paid holidays a nanny is entitled to; sick leave; what constitutes a fair wage and how this wage is paid; working over-time and having time off during the day.

Based on personal experience and the experiences of colleagues, the researcher is of the opinion that nannies should be made aware of their right to eleven hours rest in a 24 hour day. They should also be made aware of their right to an in-work rest break if the working day is longer than six hours. (Compare Watt & Border, 2001:54-55.) Many nannies exceed these hours and do not take the breaks they are legally entitled to. One participant described this situation as follows: 'I always run around, because you don't get a lunch break. I mean, you want to have a time when you can sit down, relax and not jump up for orange juice, ketchup or anything else. I always jump up. That's the thing that I feel... Lots of times I feel I just want to take my plate and go eat outside. Leave me alone'.

4.2.1.2 Insurance and Taxes

A need for training regarding the type of insurance nannies should have was identified from the empirical data. ‘What happens if you break something expensive in the house? And what if something happens to the child?’ one participant asked. Hobart and Frankel (2001:173-174) emphasise that nannies need to hold personal liability insurance as this will cover the costs of damaging their employer’s property in a substantial way, or causing injury to the children. If expected to use the family car, it is the responsibility of the employer to ensure that the nanny is insured to drive it.

A need for training regarding the payment of taxes was identified from the empirical data. Participants were uncertain about whether it is their own or their employer’s responsibility to pay over their Income Tax to Inland Revenue. In the researcher’s experience, nannies are often not aware of their employer’s responsibility to pay their taxes. *NANNYTAX* (2003) clearly states that parents are employers and as such are responsible for operating a pay-as-you-earn-scheme (PAYE) on the nanny’s behalf. Hobart and Frankel (2001:171) emphasise that nannies are not self-employed and that parents are liable and legally responsible for deducting tax from their wages and paying it to Inland Revenue.

4.2.1.3 Support

A need for training regarding formal and informal professional support was identified from the empirical data. ‘What if something goes wrong with the family and you don’t get what you want? Is there some authority you can get advice from?’ one participant enquired. The right to belong to a trade union and to exercise that right (compare Watt & Border, 2001:79) is one form of professional support that was identified. Hobart and Frankel (2001:38) are of the opinion that it is sensible to join a professional union, and they note that the main union joined by nannies is the *Professional Association of Nursery Nurses* (PANN). In the researcher’s experience the majority of nannies are unaware of the existence of this union, and most of them receive professional support in the form of ‘nanny networks’. These are informal support networks consisting of nannies getting together and exchanging information, giving advice and providing emotional support. As stated by one participant: ‘You have to make friends with other

nannies, you have to socialise, or else it's going to be very isolating'. The researcher is of the opinion that this is an effective way of preventing isolation and burn-out in nannies, while joining a professional body is advisable as well.

4.2.1.4 Boundaries

Keeping a professional distance and firm boundaries is a theme that emerged clearly from the empirical data. Participants were of the opinion that nannies should be made aware in training of the danger of becoming emotionally too involved with the children, as the relationship, though very close, is temporary by nature. There was a strong sense that nannies should be trained to be affectionate and aloof at the same time and always to remember that the children do not belong to them and they are being paid to provide a childcare service. As one participant stated: 'You have to get it in your head that the mother is the one they will always be going to. The parent is the parent – you are just doing your job'.

Hobart and Frankel (2001:96), as well as Breese and Gomer (2000:119), recognise the special relationship that develops between nannies and children in their care, though the dangers of becoming emotionally too involved are not mentioned. Cheal (2002:103) gives more validation to the feeling of loss that childcare workers may experience when their services become redundant or they have to leave for another reason. It is acknowledged that childcare workers sometimes develop strong personal attachments to the children in their care, similar to the feelings a mother has for her child.

From personal experience as a nanny, as well as the experiences of colleagues, the researcher can confirm that strong bonds can develop between nannies and children. Many nannies love the children in their care as if they were their own, and consequently find it hard to 'let go' when the time comes to leave the family. As one participant described it: 'You are in a way a parent. You are acting as a parent. You are prepared to take a job like this which involves feelings. You are a human and have to show some affection as well. I don't think I can work and always see just the business side of it'. It is possible that training regarding the benefits of keeping an emotional distance could prepare nannies to some degree for the inevitable separation, though the researcher is not convinced whether that will indeed be the case.

The importance of boundaries when playing with children was also identified from the empirical data. Participants were of the opinion that nannies should be warned that they can easily lose authority if they take the role of playmate too enthusiastically and don't balance that out by firm control over the children. As one participant put it: 'I think it's really important that the kids should know that you're a grown-up and respect you. I've seen nannies act like total clowns... actually in the playhouse with the kids. You're not a child. And that gives them security, because you can be really sweet to a child without being a clown'. Another participant stated: 'You're not a child to play with. They have to learn that you don't have to play along. They can approach you, but you're not their friend'.

4.2.2 Caring

The second main theme that was identified from the empirical data is caring and various aspects related to it. This information is set out in Table 4.2 on the following page. The sub-themes that were identified are physical care; nurturing; and health and safety.

4.2.2.1 Physical Care

Participants were of the opinion that nannies should be trained to take care of the physical needs of children, especially babies. Specific care routines that were mentioned were giving baths; changing nappies and clothes; preparing bottles; feeding babies; and establishing sleeping routines. These activities require some skills and practice is needed to perfect them. (Compare Stoppard, 1996:50, 90 & 124.) The importance of taking adequate care of the physical needs of children was discussed under 2.4.1.

Skills such as healthy, creative cooking and encouraging healthy eating were also identified as areas where training is needed. The researcher is of the opinion that this is especially relevant to toddlers. Green (2001:195 & 199) agrees that children in this age group can be fussy eaters and that tactics like attractive food presentation could be helpful in encouraging healthy eating. As discussed under 2.4.1.1, preschool children

Table 4.2: Main and sub-themes regarding content as identified from the empirical data: *Main theme 2*

MAIN THEME	SUB-THEMES	ELEMENTS
Caring	Physical Care	Bathing and dressing babies and small children Preparing bottles Feeding babies Cooking healthy meals How and when to introduce new foods Creative cooking and food presentation Encouraging children to eat healthy foods Establishing sleeping routines
	Nurturing	The importance of being affectionate to children Spending quality time Giving undivided attention
	Health and Safety	Administering paediatric First Aid Safety in and around the home Safety on outings and when driving Dealing with ill children

are often found to be deficient in vital nutrient, and nannies therefore need to know how to encourage a healthy food intake. One participant, for example, reported using the Humpty Dumpty nursery rhyme to encourage children to eat eggs.

Unhealthy eating habits seem to be a problem among children of all ages. As found in the year 2002, over one in five (21.8%) boys and one in four (27.5%) girls in the UK were overweight, compared to only one in twenty boys (5.4%) and one in ten girls (9.3%) in 1984. If this trend continues, it is expected that more than half of UK adults will be obese by the year 2020 (House of Commons Health Committee, 2004). These statistics clearly indicate that the nutrition of young children needs attention and that people responsible for feeding children should be knowledgeable on nutritional issues.

4.2.2.2 Nurturing

The second sub-theme identified from the empirical data regarding the care of children is nurturing. Participants were of the opinion that nannies in training should learn the importance of being affectionate to children, spending quality time with them and at times giving them undivided attention. One participant described it as follows: 'If Gilly can't sit on my lap or if I don't hug her, she's crying. Straight away she's crying, because she really needs all that'. Reading with children was mentioned as another example of ways to nurture children.

Kay (2001:19) regards the expression of warmth in childcare settings as a crucial element in promoting the welfare of children and notes that warmth in interaction with carers is linked to good levels of security and high self-esteem in children. As explained by Berk (2004:181), non-organic failure to thrive could develop if babies do not receive sufficient affection and parental love. The researcher is of the opinion that the affection and love received from their nanny could also benefit the well-being of children, especially in cases where the nanny is the primary caregiver and spends more time with the baby than the mother does.

4.2.2.3 Health and Safety

A need for training regarding health and safety issues was identified from the empirical data. Participants were of the opinion that First Aid for babies and children, as well as information about dealing with sick children should be part of a nanny's training.

Stoppard (1996:327) recognises the importance of First Aid training and emphasises that to learn it properly, one should complete a course of instruction and pass a professionally supervised examination. Hobart and Frankel (2001:69) add that nannies should update their First Aid certificates regularly and only perform procedures that they are competent to do. The researcher agrees that First Aid skills have to be kept up-to-date and that regular professional examination of these skills is essential. Nannies as single carers should give particular attention to this, as they may be the only adult around in case of a crisis (compare Kay, 2001:100) and cannot rely on anyone else to deal with the emergency.

Participants were also of the opinion that training is needed regarding diseases and dealing with children who are ill. 'When Ben is sick, I have him the whole day. I'm the one who must know how to take his temperature, give his medicine, and give the right food when he has an upset tummy... Nannies must know these things', said one participant. As actual physical growth may be affected by diseases during infancy and childhood (compare Berk, 2004:298) the researcher agrees that training in this area is vital.

Another topic that emerged from the empirical data is a need for training regarding safety in the home, in the car and when taking children on outings. One participant said: 'Even crossing the road... I'm not responsible for just my life. I'm responsible for three other lives'. Given the fact that accidental injury is the main cause of death in UK children over the age of one (Child Accident Prevention Trust, 2003), training in this area is clearly needed. Kay (2001:85) emphasises that childcare workers looking after other people's children have a solemn responsibility to ensure that the children are cared for in a way that is safe and which provides the child with a feeling of safety. Reducing risks in the environment to an acceptable level is seen as part of the role of the childcare worker (Kay, 2001:85), though the author admits that children can never be made absolutely safe. The importance of keeping children safe was discussed more in-depth under 3.3.2.1.

Table 4.3: Main and sub-themes regarding content as identified from the empirical data: *Main theme 3*

MAIN THEME	SUB-THEMES	ELEMENTS
Development	Stages of Development	Normal child development form birth onwards Average ages at which milestones are reached Awareness that significant individual differences exist Responding appropriately to children of different ages Effective ways of doing toilet training
	Play	Creating opportunities for play The importance of creativity Encouraging the use of imagination Role of the nanny
	Communication and Learning	The importance of talking to children Using appropriate language for developmental level Explaining things in a way that is understandable Being a teacher Supervising / assisting with homework
	Managing Behaviour	Rewards and punishment Laws regarding physical punishment Maintaining self-control

4.2.3 Development

The third main theme that was identified from the empirical data is related to child development and is presented in Table 4.3. Stages of development; play; communication and learning; and managing behaviour are the sub-themes that emerged.

4.2.3.1 Stages of Development

Participants expressed the opinion that nannies should be knowledgeable about normal child development and the ages at which milestones can be expected to have been reached. It was also thought that nannies should be made aware that significant individual differences exist: 'So what one child does when he is four, another child can do when he is three or when he is six, whatever. So it's just really getting ready for the things that might come up'. It was also thought that nannies should be trained to respond appropriately to children in different stages of development. Stoppard (1996:150) notes that giving the right stimulation at the right time can influence the pace of children's development, though the stages of development will occur in a strictly unchangeable sequence.

A need for information regarding toilet training emerged very clearly from the empirical data. Participants viewed toilet training as a problematic issue that should definitely be addressed in the training of nannies. As one participant complained: 'Come on! Ben is seven and he is still in nappies at night!' This led to a discussion during which it became clear that none of the participants were sure about the age at which toilet training should commence, or how it should be approached. Green (2001:124) is of the opinion that most toilet training difficulties are caused by unrealistic expectations and misleading advice and that starting too early invariably leads to problems. This view is shared by Stoppard (1996:11) and Welford (1998:1, 25), the latter noting that full bladder and bowel control depends on physical as well as emotional maturity.

The researcher is of the opinion that many toilet training difficulties could be avoided if nannies have realistic expectations of children and are trained in different methods that have been proven effective. According to Ellershaw (2004), toilet training difficulties are quite common and that this is an area where the training of nannies is certainly

needed. Also, it is very important that nannies and parents work together when toilet training a child. As one participant stated: 'I have potty-trained him for the day, but his mother is too lazy to get up at night to put him on the potty. So he is five and a half and still in nappies. If parents can be that lazy ...!'

4.2.3.2 Play

The second sub-theme regarding development that has been identified from the empirical data is play. Participants were of the opinion that nannies should be taught the value of play and the various functions it has for children. The view was also expressed that nannies should be made aware of the fact that their function is not only to entertain children, but to teach them how to play by using their imagination and creative skills: 'These kids are entertained from the moment they are born. They go to all these shows; they are drowning in their toys. But do they play with it for longer than fifteen minutes? No, then it bores them. It is really a skill to teach them how to play ... how to use their imagination'.

Stoppard (1996:181) notes that all children have some creative ability and that developing it in the preschool years is just as important as teaching letters and numbers. Hobart and Frankel (2001:110) emphasise that nannies should provide stimulating play opportunities that will encourage children's curiosity and imagination, as the amount of time they spend with children makes their role in encouraging play and learning crucial. In accordance with this, Breese and Gomer (2000:134) urge parents to make sure that their nanny encourages plenty of constructive and creative play and does not deprive the child of opportunities for messy play.

The importance of play in children's development is widely known and was discussed under 2.4. Given that play stimulates development on a physical, emotional and intellectual level, the researcher is of the opinion that no childcare training will be complete without a section on the functions of play. The researcher is therefore in agreement with the participants' view that play is a topic that should be addressed in the training of nannies.

4.2.3.3 Communication and Learning

Participants were of the opinion that nannies should be trained to use language that is understandable to children and appropriate for their developmental level. Examples given of words that are usually part of younger children's vocabulary were 'potty' and 'nappy'. Above all, the importance of talking to children was emphasised as a topic to be addressed in training.

Kay (2001:25) agrees that in their day-to-day dealings with children, caregivers should listen and talk to them, as this is an important factor in their cognitive, language, emotional and social development. Berk (2004:242) explains that early language development can be consciously supported by caregivers through the use of child-directed speech. This is a form of language that consists of short sentences with high-pitched, exaggerated expression, clear pronunciation, distinct pauses between speech segments, and repetition of new words in a variety of contexts. Stoppard (1996:198) agrees that language acquisition can be aided by theatrical emphasis on words, repeating the names of objects in view, and providing a slow, running commentary about everyday actions. The researcher recognises the value of this child-directed speech and is of the opinion that it is a skill that should be included in the training of nannies. Though nannies are by definition fluent in the English language, they could communicate more effectively if they are proficient at using child-directed speech.

The empirical data further revealed a need for training regarding the supervision of children doing homework and carrying out other educational duties that a nanny may be expected to perform. It was felt that the training of nannies should include some basic teaching skills and methods of stimulating the intellectual development of children. Kay (2001:68) mentions that the way in which young children are encouraged to learn, the activities they are presented with and the opportunities they get for first-hand experiences and exploratory play are very important. It is further stated that childcare workers have the responsibility to understand how children learn and how learning can be supported through a range of measures.

Breese and Gomer (2000:130-131) express the opinion that a nanny is as much an educator as a carer and should be particularly schooled about the importance of reading

to children. Given the fact that children who experience daily reading at home are greatly advanced in language skills compared to those that do not (compare Berk, 2004:244), the researcher agrees that it is an area that should be addressed in the training of nannies.

4.2.3.4 Managing Behaviour

Behavioural management is the fourth sub-theme regarding development that was identified from the empirical data. One participant summarised it as follows: ‘Now, you’re bringing up these children in some way, so you just have to make sure what is right and what is wrong. Reward them for good and punish them for bad’. Participants were of the opinion that nannies should be trained in appropriate ways of disciplining children, and also ways of rewarding good behaviour. Hobart and Frankel (2001:122) agree that nannies play an important part in shaping children’s behaviour and that training in this regard is essential. These authors point out that nannies should be consistent in the way they handle discipline, and that their way of managing behaviour should also be consistent with that of parents. Green (2001:60) agrees that children cannot live happily in a home where messages are inconsistent and conflicting. It is therefore not only important for nannies to have training in ways of managing behaviour, but also to know how to adapt these methods to be consistent with the way parents wish them to discipline their children.

The empirical data further revealed that training regarding laws on the physical punishment of children is needed. According to the *4Nations Child Policy Network* [sa] the physical punishment of children by parents and some other carers is currently legal in the UK under the defence of ‘reasonable chastisement’. This is, however, a very controversial issue that has been hotly debated over the past few months and some are of the opinion that ‘reasonable chastisement’ is an archaic defence that allows children to be legally hit and hurt, and the abolition of this ‘common assault’ of children is being demanded (Children are Unbeatable, 2005). Other organisations such as EPOCH (End Physical Punishment of Children) view the smacking of children as a fundamental breach of their rights as people (Kay, 2001:21). The researcher is of the opinion that nannies should be made aware of these issues in training, and become familiar with alternative ways of dealing with unwanted behaviour in children.

Table 4.4: Main and sub-themes regarding content as identified from the empirical data: *Main theme 4*

MAIN THEME	SUB-THEMES	ELEMENTS
<p>Working with Parents</p>	<p>Communication</p>	<p>Keeping the lines of communication clear Ascertaining exactly what is expected of the nanny How nannies can communicate their needs The importance of clearing up uncertainties Maintaining consistent caregiving Maintaining the professional side of the relationship Maintaining a good personal relationship</p>
	<p>Authority</p>	<p>Parents' authority over the nanny Abiding by parents' house rules Adopting parents' preferred childcare strategy</p>
	<p>Responsibility</p>	<p>Being wary of exploitation by parents Not accepting complete responsibility at all times</p>

4.2.4 Working with Parents

Working with parents is the fourth main theme that was identified from the empirical data and is summarised in Table 4.4. Communication, authority and responsibility were the three issues that were raised, each of which will be discussed.

4.2.4.1 Communication

Participants in the focus group expressed the view that effective ways of communicating with parents should be part of the training of nannies. Specifically, nannies should be enabled to communicate their needs and expectations in a way that will not adversely affect their relationship with their employers. One participant said that she would advise nannies to always talk to the mother: ‘sometimes they are just afraid to ask things... but they should always talk to the mother’. As stated by Hobart and Frankel (2001:181-182), a nanny’s relationship with her employer is crucial to the success of the arrangement and the key lies in clear and uncomplicated communication at all times.

In the researcher’s experience, the unique difficulty nannies face in communicating with parents lies in the fact that a close personal relationship often coexists with the professional relationship. Participants in the focus group confirmed that fear of jeopardizing this personal relationship sometimes prevents them from raising concerns or complaints with their employers. One participant gave the following example: ‘After babysitting, I have been walking home at like one o’clock in the morning... They don’t always get me a taxi and I’m too embarrassed to ask. It’s humiliating! What will they think of me if I just ask them?’ Effective communication is therefore a skill that could greatly benefit nannies and accordingly should be addressed in their training.

4.2.4.2 Authority

Participants were of the opinion that nannies should be made aware in training of the authority issues that may arise between themselves and their employers. Nannies should be aware of the fact that, most of the time, they have authority over the children, but that parents have authority over the children and the nanny at all times. As one participant said: ‘The mother is the one who can deal with the children the way she wants to. So

you mustn't get all cross when she says something you don't agree with'. This situation is illustrated by the following example by Breese and Gomer (2000:127):

Nannies hate having their authority undermined, justifiably, as in the classic case of when the nanny says 'no' to another sweet and mummy comes in and consoles the doleful child with one.

In the researcher's experience, situations like these do arise, sometimes quite often. Being aware of authority issues that may arise, and being able to deal with them effectively could be of benefit to nannies.

4.2.4.3 Responsibility

The empirical data revealed a need for training regarding the issue of responsibility. Participants were of the opinion that nannies should not allow parents to exploit them by expecting them to take full responsibility for the children at all times. In working with parents, nannies need to establish firm boundaries as to the circumstances under which they will take responsibility. As one participant put it: 'Yes, you are acting as a parent and you are responsible. But that doesn't give parents the right to act irresponsibly'.

Some parents do see childcare as a means of shifting responsibility completely to another adult. (Compare Kay, 2001:122.) In the researcher's experience, this could manifest in many ways, for example when parents expect the nanny who is ill to come to work nonetheless, because they have other commitments. Or, while on holiday with the family, following a full day's work the nanny is expected to get up during the night to look after a sick child, or feed a baby. The researcher is of the opinion that the exploitation of nannies could be avoided if they are made aware of it in training, and learn ways of effectively dealing with it.

4.2.5 Diversity

The final main theme that was identified from the empirical data is diversity. This information is presented in Table 4.5. The sub-themes that will be discussed are religion and multiculturalism.

Table 4.5: Main theme and sub-themes regarding content as identified from the empirical data: *Main theme 5*

MAIN THEME	SUB-THEMES	ELEMENTS
Diversity	Religion	Different religions and their beliefs How religious beliefs could affect a nanny's job Dealing with religious aspects of childrearing
	Multiculturalism	Respecting people from other countries / races / cultures Communicating this respect to children Working in a multicultural environment

4.2.5.1 Religion

The empirical data revealed a need for training with regard to different religions and their beliefs. More specifically, it was thought that the influence of religion on childcare practices should be included in the training of nannies.

British society is generally viewed as a Christian society with two dominant religious bodies, the Church of England and the Roman Catholic Church (Abercrombie & Warde, 1998:460). In the 2001 Census it was found that Christians constitute almost three-quarters (72%) of the population. Muslims were the largest religious group after Christians, comprising over half (52%) of the non-Christian religious population. Other non-Christian religious groups represented in Britain are Hindus, Sikhs, Jews and Buddhists (National Statistics, 2001a). These statistics clearly indicate that the population of the United Kingdom has a heterogeneous religious composition. Given the variety of religions that are represented, it is possible that a nanny may work for a family with a different religion to her own. This could have certain implications for childcare practices, for example the feeding of children. A nanny working for a Muslim family, for example, should take care to only buy Halal meat when

doing the grocery shopping and not serve pork to the children. In a Buddhist family, all meat and animal fats will be forbidden. (Compare Hobart & Frankel, 2001:52.) The researcher is of the opinion that knowledge regarding different religious practices would increase the professional status of nannies, and therefore believes that training regarding different belief systems and their implications for childcare practices would be of benefit to nannies.

4.2.5.1 Multiculturalism

A need for training regarding the implications of working in a multicultural society was identified from the empirical data. Participants were of the opinion that the training of nannies should include information about different cultures, thereby raising awareness of the issue. In addition, participants considered it desirable that nannies should be aware of parents' views on other cultures and that their way of approaching multiculturalism should be consistent with that of parents: 'You should know their viewpoint on other races and cultures. That's just... I think it's good to know what they feel about it, because you can't go and teach their children something else'.

As discussed under 3.3.2.6, nannies need to be able to create an environment in which all children can feel welcome and included, regardless of their cultural or racial background. This opinion is supported by Kay (2001:53) who states that childcare workers need to understand and respect the range of cultures present in Britain, as this will enable them to support children in developing and maintaining positive images of their own culture, while being tolerant to others.

In the 2001 Census it was found that the majority of the UK population (92%) were Whites. The remaining 4.6 million people belonged to other ethnic groups. Around half of the non-white population were Asians of Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi or other Asian origin. A further quarter was of Black Caribbean or Black African origin. In Great Britain the number of people who came from an ethnic group other than White grew by fifty-three per cent (53%) between 1991 and 2001, from 3 million to 4.6 million (National Statistics, 2001b). Given the growing heterogeneity of the population, the researcher is of the opinion that training with regard to multiculturalism is indeed necessary for nannies.

4.3 Identification of Needs regarding the Structure of Training

Four themes regarding the structure of nanny-training were identified from the empirical data. Participants in the focus group were of the opinion that the introductory childcare training of nannies should be:

- Affordable
- Brief
- Specific
- Practical

A brief discussion of each of these themes follows.

4.3.1 Affordability

Participants in the focus group were of the opinion that the training of nannies should be reasonably priced, as not all nannies will be able to pay high fees. It was thought that the payment of training fees could be especially problematic for foreign nannies coming to the United Kingdom for the first time, as they often have limited funds at their disposal: ‘Most people come here as foreigners. You only have a little bit of money, so you can’t afford an expensive course’, one participant said.

According to the *Agency Nannies Training Survey* (Early Years National Training Organisation, 2000:20 & 22), lack of funding is a problem for a significant proportion of nannies. In rare cases, employers are willing to pay for their nanny’s training, but most of the time nannies will be responsible for their own tuition fees. It would therefore seem that nannies will find training most accessible if it is affordable.

4.3.2 Brevity

The second theme regarding the structure of training that was identified from the empirical data is brevity. Participants expressed the opinion that the introductory training of nannies should be brief, and the suggestion was made that training over one weekend may be most

suitable. As stated by one participant: 'I would rather do a full Saturday and a Sunday morning and finish it, than have a whole week and every night an hour'.

The *Agency Nannies Training Survey* (Early Years National Training Organisation, 2000:21) found that a one-off, twenty-hour course was the most popular choice of training for nannies, especially for those in London. Those findings correspond to these of the current research.

4.3.3 Specificity

Participants in the focus group were of the opinion that the training of nannies must be tailored to their needs and address childcare and work issues that are specifically relevant to them.

Introducing Childminding Practice is at present the only course that has been approved for the introductory childcare training of nannies who want to become Approved Home-based Carers (Surestart, 2004). As explained under 3.4, this course has been designed for childminders and in the researcher's opinion does not meet the criterion of specificity regarding the training of nannies.

4.3.4 Practicality

The need for a practical component to training was identified from the empirical data. Participants expressed the view that nannying is a hands-on profession with a strong practical component, and that this should be reflected in training. It was suggested that the introductory training of nannies should include practical skills such as preparing bottles and practising the changing of nappies on dolls.

The researcher agrees that the training of nannies should not only be theoretical, but focus on practical skills as well. This is especially relevant for nannies who will be working with babies and very young children. Nannies working with this age group need to be knowledgeable regarding the needs of babies and young children, and also have to be adept at performing practical duties, such as bathing and changing them. (Compare Beaver, 2002:290.)

4.4 Summary

The focus of the research was to explore the training needs of nannies in the United Kingdom in terms of the content and structure that would be most desirable in an introductory training course. The findings demonstrate that nannies are in need of training that will address the issues of professionalism, caring, development, working with parents and diversity. The main themes and sub-themes regarding content consistently corresponded with the findings as well as the opinions expressed in the relevant literature. Furthermore, it was evident that nannies require introductory training that is affordable, brief, specific and practical. These findings were also substantiated by the relevant literature, indicating a correspondence between quantitative data on the subject of the structure of the training of nannies and the findings from the current research.

In Chapter 5 the researcher's conclusions and recommendations will be discussed in more depth.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

In Chapter 4 the findings from this study were presented and discussed. From these findings it is evident that nannies have specific needs regarding both the content and the structure of introductory childcare training.

The purpose of this chapter is (a) to evaluate whether the aim and objectives that have been set for this study have been achieved; and (b) to evaluate whether the research question has been solved. The researcher will also draw conclusions and make recommendations based on the findings of this study.

5.2 Aim of the Study

The aim of this study was:

- to identify and explore the vocational training needs of nannies in the United Kingdom in terms of the content and structure of introductory training.

This aim was achieved by:

- building a knowledge base concerning the subject by means of a literature review and consultations with experts in the field;
- developing a topic guide for the focus group based on knowledge acquired during the literature review and consultations with experts;
- conducting a focus group with the aid of the focus group guideline;

- collecting qualitative empirical data during the focus group discussion in order to identify the vocational training needs of nannies in the United Kingdom in terms of the content and structure of introductory training.

5.3 Objectives of the Study

The researcher set certain objectives for the study to guide the research. Each of these objectives will be discussed:

- To describe nannyng as a profession, with specific reference to the roles nannies play in the physical, emotional and intellectual development of children.

This objective was achieved by utilising a literature review, consultations with experts and the researcher's own experience to describe nannyng as a profession. The various roles of nannies were described in relation to the developmental needs of babies and children on a physical, emotional and intellectual level. This information was presented in Chapter 2.

- To describe, by means of a literature study, the current qualification status of nannies in the United Kingdom.

This objective was achieved, as the literature study revealed that a significant portion of nannies in the United Kingdom are not in possession of a relevant childcare qualification, and are therefore unable to be registered as Approved Home-based Carers under the Childcare Approval Scheme. This information was presented in Chapter 3.

- To review the approved introductory training for nannies that is currently being offered in the United Kingdom.

This objective was achieved by utilising a literature review to describe the approved introductory course for nannies in Chapter 3.

- To explore the introductory training needs of nannies by means of a focus group discussion.

An empirical study was conducted to explore the introductory training needs of nannies in terms of the content and structure of training that would be most desirable in a training course. Based on a literature review and consultations with experts, the researcher developed a focus group guideline which was utilised during a focus group discussion with four nannies. In order to obtain the maximum amount of data, no time limit was set and the discussion was allowed to continue until the information obtained reached saturation point. The data collected during this focus group discussion covered both the needs regarding content and those regarding the structure of training. This objective was therefore achieved, as the empirical data covered all aspects of the objective. This information was presented in Chapter 4.

- To draw conclusions and make recommendations that could make a contribution to nannying as a profession and to further research in this area.

Conclusions and recommendations regarding this objective will be presented under 5.5 in this chapter.

The aim and objectives of this study have therefore been fully achieved.

5.4 Research Question

As this study was approached qualitatively, the research question was formulated as follows:

What are the introductory training needs of nannies in the United Kingdom?

This research question was solved, as nannies expressed various needs regarding the content and structure of introductory training. Deficits in existing introductory training for nannies were also identified.

It appears that nannies experience a need for information regarding the professional aspect of nannying, for instance their conditions of employment and the support available to them. The data also indicated that nannies have a need to acquire the necessary theoretical knowledge and practical skills to take care of children's physical and emotional needs, as well as their safety. Nannies also expressed a need for information regarding normal child development and appropriate ways of responding to the behavioural challenges within different developmental stages, as well as the provision of appropriate intellectual stimulation and

support. Furthermore, it appears that nannies have a need for training regarding their relationship with parents and how to balance the personal and business aspects of this relationship. A need for information about different religions and cultures was expressed, especially with regard to different childcare practices.

From the empirical data it became apparent that nannies experience various needs regarding the structure of introductory training. It appears that training would be most suited to the needs of nannies if it is affordable, presented over a short period of time, addresses issues that are specifically relevant to nannies and includes a practical component.

5.5 Summary of the Research Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations

5.5.1 Summary of the research findings

The findings of the empirical study may be summarised as follows:

- Nannies have a need for training regarding the professional aspect of nannying;
- nannies have a need for training regarding the physical, emotional, and intellectual needs of children and the role of the nanny in providing for these needs;
- nannies have a need for training regarding the various developmental levels of children and the role of the nanny within each phase;
- nannies have a need to be trained in maintaining good personal and professional relationships with parents;
- nannies have a need for training regarding different religions and cultures and their childcare practices;
- nannies have a need for training that is structured in an affordable, brief and specific way, and that contains a practical component.

The findings of the empirical study consistently corresponded to relevant literature and were indicated as such.

5.5.2 Conclusions

The researcher concludes that the aim and objectives formulated for this study were achieved. An empirical study regarding the introductory training needs of nannies was conducted successfully by utilising a topic guide as data collection method during a focus group discussion.

The researcher is of the opinion that the research question has been solved. The empirical data that was collected revealed specific training needs of nannies, as well as deficits within existing introductory training.

Based on the empirical data as discussed in Chapter 4, the researcher draws the following conclusions:

According to the research findings, it appears that nannies have a need for training regarding the professional aspect of nannying. Nannies need information about their conditions of employment, insurance and tax contributions, the professional support available to them and effective ways of establishing firm professional boundaries with children. The researcher draws the conclusion that a significant knowledge deficit regarding the 'business' side of nannying exists among this group of childcare workers and that training in this regard is needed. Knowledge about these issues will, in the researcher's opinion, empower nannies by equipping them with the necessary knowledge to negotiate fair working conditions with their employers and minimise the possibility of exploitation. A further conclusion that may be drawn from these findings is that nannies are in need of professional and emotional support. In the researcher's experience, nannies may spend a significant amount of time in the company of children, and having very little contact with other adults, resulting in a feeling of isolation. One participant described this situation as a feeling of 'being left behind', a statement that emphasises the lack of support available to this group of childcare workers.

The research findings indicated that nannies need training regarding the caring aspect of the job. It appears that nannies would like to be trained to take care of the physical and emotional needs of infants and children, and also require training in paediatric First Aid and various other health and safety issues. The researcher concludes from this that the physical and emotional well-being of infants and children is a priority for nannies and that training in this

regard will enable them to facilitate development on both these levels. The researcher is of the opinion that the role nannies play in the lives of the children in their care should not be underestimated, as they fulfil the role of ‘surrogate mother’ to a considerable extent, thereby having a significant influence on the well-being of their charges.

From the research findings it appears that nannies have a need for knowledge regarding the development of children. A need seems to exist among nannies for training about normal child development, the different milestones within each phase of development and ways in which nannies can approach children of different ages. It appears that toilet training is an especially problematic issue for nannies and a need for training in this regard exists among this group of childcare workers. The research findings also indicated that nannies have a need for training about the value of play and ways of facilitating children’s play, effective ways of communicating with children, ways of stimulating language and intellectual development and managing behaviour. The researcher draws the conclusion that nannies have a need for knowledge that can enhance their understanding of children, and for skills to help them apply this knowledge effectively in practice. The researcher is of the opinion that nannies might play a pivotal role in all facets of children’s development and that suitable training would enhance their ability to fulfil this role.

According to the findings from this study it appears that nannies experience a need for training that addresses their relationship with parents. It seems that nannies have a need to learn how to communicate with parents effectively, clarify issues surrounding authority, and share responsibility with parents. The researcher comes to the conclusion that nannies realise the importance of maintaining a good relationship with parents and need the necessary knowledge and skills to facilitate an effective partnership with them. In the researcher’s opinion the relationship between nannies and their employers may be complicated by the fact that a close personal relationship often coexists with the business relationship. Nannies tend to become ‘part of the family’ and are not viewed strictly as employees by themselves or the parents. Being treated as a member of the family may be gratifying to some nannies, especially those that are relatively young or those coming from abroad and experiencing feelings of loneliness and isolation. It may, however, be argued that this situation exposes nannies to the possibility of exploitation by employers, as the agreed conditions of employment may be stretched to the parents’ advantage. In the researcher’s experience this is a common occurrence in the field of nannying and something that will not change unless

childminders, the researcher would like to recommend that introductory training be developed specifically for nannies. The researcher is of the opinion that the estimated 11 000 nannies in need of introductory training justifies the development of training that specifically addresses the training needs of this group of childcare workers. The researcher would further like to recommend that the development of such introductory training courses for nannies be based on sound scientific research involving the input from representatives of all groups concerned. It is hypothesised that training developed according to the input of nannies, parents, nanny agencies and training institutions will address the issues specifically relevant to the profession of nanning and will ultimately lead to more efficient service provision.

- The researcher is of the opinion that distance learning could provide a solution to some of the barriers to training experienced by nannies, and would therefore like to recommend that this form of training be developed. In this way, nannies would be able to study in their own time and at their own pace, without the need to spend valuable time travelling to and from a college every day. Such a flexible way of learning should make training accessible to a much greater number of nannies, thereby improving the professional quality of the workforce – to the benefit of parents and children alike.
- The researcher would like to recommend that the lack of professional support experienced by nannies be urgently addressed. This could be done by establishing local support groups for nannies, preferably led by a person from a caring profession or with a background in nanning. Support groups such as being proposed should provide nannies with emotional support as well as information about issues they are concerned about. The researcher is of the opinion that functional support groups will empower nannies by offering them the opportunity to discuss their concerns in a safe environment, providing them with information, and preventing professional isolation. Furthermore, the researcher would like to recommend that such local support groups be initiated and co-ordinated by nanny agencies, as they have contact information of local nannies at their disposal, and can provide a central venue where these support groups can meet. In this connection, the researcher would further recommend that an effort be made by nanny agencies to increase awareness of existing support available to nannies in the form of the *Professional Association of Nursery Nurses (PANN)* and the internet support network *Nannies At Work*.

5.6 Concluding Statement

It is evident that nannies in the United Kingdom have specific needs regarding the content and structure of childcare training, even of a mere introductory nature. It is also clear that the introductory childcare training of nannies is a relatively unexplored field of study that requires further investigation. A nanny could certainly be regarded as one of the most significant role players in the life of a child and as such deserves access to training that will facilitate optimal functioning within this important role. Ultimately, effective childcare and the well-being of children are nonnegotiable. It is the keystone of a healthy society.

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APPENDIX A

PRE-FOCUS-GROUP LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS

Dear participant

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your willingness to participate in the study *TRAINING NANNIES IN THE UNITED KINGDOM – A NEEDS ASSESSMENT*. Without your input, successful completion of the research would be impossible. Be assured that you are making a very valuable contribution and that it is much appreciated!

The purpose of this letter is to explain the nature of this study to you, and also to give you some food for thought regarding the topic we will be discussing in the focus group. The exact date, venue and time of the focus group are to be agreed on by all of us within the next week.

As the title suggests, this study has to do with nannies in the UK and their training. As you all know, at present it is not compulsory for nannies in this country to have a childcare qualification to get a job – agencies and parents seem to be more interested in the amount of actual experience with children a nanny has. Recently, however, the Government have announced their new vision for childcare and have introduced some initiatives that are bound to have an influence on the profession of nannying.

At present, parents pay nannies from their already taxed income – they get no help from the Government for this type of childcare. In April this year, however, the Government will be introducing Tax Credits to help working families to pay for nannies. This means that a proportion of childcare costs will be tax-deductible and parents will be taxed on a smaller amount than before and therefore **SAVE MONEY**. But how will this affect nannies?

These tax breaks will only be given to parents who employ a nanny with an approved childcare qualification... so parents can only save money if their nanny has had training that is seen as acceptable by the Government. Nannies that are qualified have nothing to fear, but what about the many nannies that have no childcare qualification?

They will be required to do an approved childcare introductory course. This will be short-term foundation training that covers the basics of childcare. At present, there is ONLY ONE introductory course that has been approved, not much to choose from if you consider that there are about 11 000 nannies in the UK that will need this training.

That's where you come in! A need for more introductory childcare courses has been identified, and it is up to you to tell me about the things you, as experienced nannies, think should be included in such courses. What are the important things that a nanny should know? What makes a nanny a good one? What problems have you had in your work that could have been prevented by proper training? If someone knows nothing about childcare, what are the first things they should learn? These are the types of questions we will be pondering in the focus group, so in the mean time, let your mind go and start thinking about it! Any thoughts on the subject will be welcome.

Please remember that these questions have no right or wrong answers – we will just be having an informal chat about something you all know a lot about. I really look forward to seeing you in a few weeks and hearing your ideas!

If anything is unclear or you need more information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

With much appreciation

Debbie

APPENDIX B

CONSENT FORM

Dear participant

I would like to thank you for your willingness to take part in this research. By signing this form, you declare that:

- the purpose of this study has been explained to your satisfaction
- it has been made clear that you are free to withdraw from the study at any point
- the amount of your time that will be required has been explained to you
- the degree of personal disclosure that is expected from you has been made clear
- it has been made clear that you will not receive any monetary compensation for participating in this study
- the nature of the proceedings that you will participate in has been explained to your satisfaction
- it has been explained to you that the information given by you will be reported in a research report and that findings may be published
- it has been explained to you that your contribution will be anonymous and that your name will not be cited in the research report or elsewhere – only the researcher will be aware of your full identity

By signing this form you also undertake to treat all information that is revealed during the group discussion as strictly confidential. In other words, this information may not be shared with anyone outside the group.

I, the researcher, undertake to treat the proceedings of the group discussion as confidential and will only disclose information to those persons and institutions that are involved in the research on an academic basis.

Please sign and date this form as an indication of your consent to the conditions of your participation as set out above.

SIGNED

DATE

APPENDIX C

FOCUS GROUP GUIDELINE

1. Welcome and thank you
2. Details about the focus group:
 - Purpose
 - Freedom to withdraw
 - Duration
 - Confidentiality and anonymity
 - Publication
 - Debriefing
3. Consent form
4. Refreshments and bathroom
5. No wrong answers
6. Respecting different views
7. Giving everyone a chance to have their say
8. Any questions before we start?
9. Based on your own experience, what would you say are the things that nannies should learn about when they are in training?
10. What do you think would be the best way to structure this training?
11. Have we missed anything?
12. Summary and verification
13. Thank you for participating
14. Debriefing – What was it like for you to take part in this focus group?
15. Complete field notes