

**AN INVESTIGATION OF PARENTS' CONCEPTUAL  
DEVELOPMENT IN THE CONTEXT  
OF DIALOGUE WITH A COMMUNITY TEACHER**

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH PROJECT

This chapter introduces the research questions and brings together the perspectives that are explored in the process of the research. The research methodology is described briefly and there then follows a discussion of the implications of the current research in a wider context. The chapter ends with a study guide for the research.

The research took place in inner city communities located on the west side of Newcastle upon Tyne. The researcher was employed as a community teacher which involved home visiting families with preschool children who had been introduced to her as being particularly vulnerable in the community. This service for families had been in existence for several years and it had been left up to individual teachers to interpret the role as they saw fit. The research was conceived as an attempt by the researcher to achieve a deeper understanding of her professional activity. The research data was collected in the period September 1987 to July 1990 and the research was concluded in September 1991.

#### Research Questions and Perspectives

The research initially asked: Is it possible to apply a model of conceptual development to the parents' thinking in relationship to their child's development?

During the process of the research this question was extended and elaborated to ask whether the learning process applied to the process of parenting. The learning process was

defined as the formation of concepts from first hand experience, the generalisation of concepts to new situations resulting in perspective changes and the development of new behaviour in the light of newly formed concepts.

In the research, the process of parents' conceptual development takes place through their observations of first hand experience of the child's behaviour and reflection on the observations within the partnership relationship with the researcher.

Focusing on and reflecting on the direct experience of the child's behaviour leads parents to the extension and modification of their existing concepts and the formation of new concepts.

Discourse within the partnership relationship assists the parents' process of consciousization of experience whereby their existing concepts are brought into conscious awareness through the use of language. The consciousization process appears to lead potentially to the extension and modification of concepts.

However, it becomes clear that parents' interpretations of the child's behaviour contain not only thoughts but also emotional attitudes. The concept of projection from a psycho-analytic perspective is introduced into the research in an attempt to link parents' concepts and emotional attitudes.

An additional question is asked: Do parents' interpretations of the child's behaviour contain the defence mechanism of projection?

Projection is a process whereby inner emotional experience such as powerlessness, fear, aggression etc. overwhelms the individual and results in a fragmentation of consciousness. In this way, fragments of positive or negative emotional experience

may become split from conscious awareness and unconsciously projected onto others.

Projection accounts for the parents' emotional attitudes associated with their interpretations of the child's behaviour. The concept of fragmentation appears to account for the multiple perspectives parents have for interpreting the child's behaviour. If consciousness can be fragmented into multiple perspectives then this accounts for the seemingly contradictory interpretations of the child's behaviour given by parents at times.

A further major question arose from the process of the research. What, if any, is the link between the parents' intellectual and emotional development?

The research attempts to link psycho-analytic emotional interpretations and the intellectual interpretations of developmental psychology.

The research introduces the schema that projection and concept formation may be linked. Parents' concepts appear to link their thoughts and emotional attitudes. The concept appears to be a psychic structure incorporating intellectual and emotional content. Each concept, perhaps, has an associated thought pattern and an associated emotional attitude.

During the process of concept formation, parents' thoughts and emotional attitudes come into their conscious awareness. At times, parents project the emotional attitude of mastery onto the child's behaviour. This enhances their process of concept formation.

In addition, there is a process by which the parent experiences the anxiety of his/her inner world that is evoked by the child's behaviour and brought into conscious awareness

within the containing relationship of the partnership. The containment of parents' anxiety links with the potential for their extension and development of concepts. Containment of anxiety transforms emotional experience and concept formation.

Inner transformation takes place when parents develop concepts and generalise these concepts to new situations. This process appears to lead to perspective changes in the way in which the parent views the child's behaviour.

In addition, perspective changes lead to new forms in the parents' behaviour towards the child that are supportive of the child's development. Meanings with which parents interpret the child's behaviour change and develop creating new opportunities for interactions. The meanings the parent attributes to the child's behaviour and language are significant for the child's subsequent development.

The meanings created between the parent and children appear to link to the parents' unconscious material through the process of projection. The parent projects an emotional attitude onto the child through her behaviour patterns or schemas. Parents' projections appear to become internalised by the child and acted out in his/her behaviour. Projection is a process by which the parent projects onto the child and the child in turn projects onto the parent.

The research also generated theory specifically connected with child development, although there are obvious links between the parent's and the child's developmental processes.

The child forms symbols from the projection of inner subjective experience onto outer external reality. The symbol forms a link between inner and outer experience. Symbolism

refers to the process by which one thing can stand for another and manifests in the child in gestures, object representation and language.

There appears to be a process by which the child's symbols form into mental structures or schemas as they become linked and generalised to new situations. The assimilation of symbols into schemas perhaps forms the basis of conceptual development and a vehicle for the projection of emotional experience.

The child projects inner emotional experience onto objects in addition to projecting onto his parents. Acting on objects is also the basis for the formation of schemas.

In this way, schemas and projection appear to be linked. This process is initially apparent from the child's development of a concept of his/her self, others and objects onto which aspects of self can be projected. It appears that the child's emotional as well as intellectual experience is organised into schemas. The child's formation of symbols creates a link between emotional and intellectual development.

Perhaps schemas become the symbolic vehicles for the expression of the child's emotional and intellectual development. The child is not, however, consciously aware of this process. Indeed, it is possible that this process is the foundation of the formation of the unconscious mind.

The child's spontaneous behaviour is used as a vehicle for expressing her unconscious emotional experience in addition to the development of her thought processes. This process is apparent in the child's fantasy play that, in the early years, appears to be an enactment of the child's schemas.

In this way, there is no dichotomy between feeling and



thought in the child's behaviour. Every act of the child's spontaneous behaviour is perhaps an expression of her emotional and intellectual development.

Recognition of the child's schemas appears to give the parent and teacher access to the child's emotional experience in addition to her intellectual development.

### The Research Methodology

In the current research, action research methodology was used with the aim of the discovery of theory from the data. It followed two recommendations of Laurence Stenhouse, an early pioneer in teacher action research. Firstly, Stenhouse suggested that learning outcomes should not be specified before learning experiences and secondly, that the teacher should cast herself in the role of learner.

The research sample was small, therefore the theory generated was intended to be exploratory and no attempt was made to evolve generalizable theoretical conclusions.

Data were collected by means of progressive focusing on the child's behaviour as observed by the parents and the researcher. Reflection on the child's behaviour brought the parents' and researcher's meanings, through which they interpreted the behaviour, into focus.

The research focused on a joint exploration of the meaning perspectives of the researcher and parents. There was interaction between the researcher's framework for interpreting the child's behaviour and the meanings with which parents interpreted the behaviour. The researcher and parents all stood to gain in awareness and understanding from their input into the research.

The research data was drawn together and there was an ongoing search for commonalities with which to form interpretative schemas for the research. The interpretative schemas that were formed were therefore readily applicable to and indicated by the data. The technique of progressive focusing was used to focus on different schemas that evolved during the process of the research. There was, therefore, a gradual emergence of interpretative schemas that were developed and transformed as the research progressed. At a stage approximately half way through the research period, interpretative schemas were linked to form a conceptual framework for the research of parents' concept formation, projection, perspective change and the development of new behaviour. In addition, the research also generated further theory that was elaborated in the discussion of the results.

The process of developing interpretative schemas for the research involved the integration of a wide selection of alternative viewpoints, in particular, the alternative perspectives of developmental psychology and psycho-analysis.

A joint evaluation of the research data was carried out in the final year of the research period to establish categories from the data with parents that accurately described their conceptual processes. The categories were to be used to support the validity of the conceptual framework for the research. However, although a democratic evaluation of the research was attempted, the theory generated of the parents' learning processes and unconscious motivation was taken beyond the understanding of the parents. This brought up issues of inequalities in power and knowledge between the parents and the researcher.

### Implications of the Current Research for Professional Practice

The Children Act [1989] was introduced to safeguard and promote the welfare of children who are in need and to promote the upbringing of children in need by the family wherever possible.

The current research has wide implications for work with vulnerable families and children in need. The learning process explored in the research, through which parents can become conscious of and develop their thoughts and emotional attitudes associated with their child's behaviour, will perhaps have a central role to play in work with vulnerable families in the future.

Powerlessness is a key concept in the current research. There appears to be a process by which powerlessness is projected onto children. Becoming conscious of the meanings that are associated with experience is an empowering process for parents. Extending and developing such meanings appears to lead to inner transformation.

Concept formation empowers parents in their relationship with their child through recognising the value and importance of the child's spontaneous behaviour and providing containment for the child's emotional expression. Opportunities for the extension and development of symbol formation and the elaboration of schemas appear to be an empowering experience for the child.

The Children Act also recommends advice, training and counselling for parents. It seems important to develop effective ways of working with parents that support the process of empowerment. This research focuses on individual work with parents but the process of supporting the parents' learning

process could be transposed to group work situations.

In addition, there appeared to be many contributory factors to parents' powerlessness that can be addressed in multiprofessional teamwork with vulnerable families. The preschool community teacher perhaps can make a contribution to this teamwork through the work described in the research.

### Study Guide for the Research

This chapter introduces the research questions and gives an overview of the perspectives that evolved during the process of the research. It also gives an overview of the research methodology. It discusses the implications of the current research for professional practice. The remainder of the chapter provides study guidance for the research.

Chapter 2, the review of literature, provides a theoretical framework for understanding the main concepts introduced into the research. It is divided into four sections; the concept of 'partnership', the concept of 'schema' and 'concept', psycho-analytic concepts that are relevant to the research, and the concept of vulnerable families.

The concept of partnership is explored concerning recommendations in Government reports ranging from the Plowden Report (1967) to the Children Act (1989). Literature describing working with parents is discussed which involves two main models; the 'deficit' model of intervention and the 'partner' relationship, each of which is based on different assumptions and philosophies. A discussion follows on the manifestation of the concept of partnership in several main research projects including, the Lothian Home Visiting Scheme, the Ypsilanti

Carnegie Infant Project and the Froebel Educational Institute Project. The section ends with discussion of the implications of the concept of partnership.

The concept of 'schema' and 'concept' are discussed in the second section in the review of literature. The section defines the terms 'schema' and 'concept' as described by Piaget, Vygotsky and other theoretical writings. The learning process is discussed, linking concept formation with the observation of direct experience and the development of new behaviour. The research projects highlighted in the first section of this chapter are analysed for the application of the learning process to parents' learning about their child's development. The application of the learning process to parenting in the current research is then highlighted.

Section 3 looks at possible links between the emotional and intellectual processes. The section then discusses several major psycho-analytic concepts that are relevant to the interpretation of the research data. The psycho-analytic concept of separation anxiety is explored concerning the infant's developing awareness of self, others and objects. The concept of symbolism is explored in relationship to the merging of the child's inner world and external reality. The theory of repressed emotions motivating behaviour is discussed with reference to the concept of unconscious motivation. Projection of unconscious material onto others and the concept of transference where there is a reliving of early emotional relationships in the present situation is then explored. The section ends with an exploration of the concept of containment whereby the individual's anxieties are contained by a significant other person.

The last section of Chapter 2 discusses the complex concept of vulnerable families. This concept is seen to include other concepts such as conflict and violence, power and powerlessness and sexual exploitation. The section ends with a summary of aspects of the Children Act (1989) which are relevant to the current research.

Chapter 3 discusses the design of the study. It begins by introducing the conceptual framework of the research. That is, the parents' formation of concepts in the process of observation of and reflection on the child's behaviour, the generalisation of concepts resulting in perspective changes, the development of new behaviour towards the child and the process of projection onto the child.

The justification for the use of the action research methodology in the research is then discussed followed by an exploration of the strengths and weaknesses of this approach. The research sample is described and the data collection methods for the research are then highlighted. The methods of analysis and evaluation of the research are discussed and the chapter ends with a section on possible bias and attempts to handle it in the research.

The fieldwork findings are discussed in Chapter 4. It is divided into four sections that discuss the case studies for four of the six families involved in the research. The data for each section is divided into categories that evolved as a result of the joint evaluations. The categories reflect the parents' and researcher's interpretations of the data.

Section 1 involves the family, Sandra and Geoff and their son, Alan. It is divided into four parts. The first part explores a concept Sandra developed, 'He doesn't understand, he's only a bairn'. The second part, 'You learn by watching bairns' explores Sandra's developing understanding of Alan's behaviour. The third part is entitled 'He works himself' and explores Alan's aggressive behaviour. The final part, 'Dream symbolism / You've got to protect your bairns', discusses the symbolic meaning of a dream which Sandra recalled.

Section 2 introduces the family Sally and William and their son, Peter. Two categories were selected from the data to present in this section. The first part is entitled 'Trial and Error / Schematic Development' and discusses Sally and William's interpretations of several of Peter's behaviour patterns. The second category, 'When something you've got disappears / Omnipotence and Separation Anxiety' discusses the theme of William's interpretations of Peter's behaviour that possibly contained a projection of anxiety associated with loss.

The third section of Chapter 4 introduces the family, Alice and Tim and their daughter Wendy. Alice and Tim's particular interests in Wendy's literacy and numerary are reflected in the two categories selected for inclusion, 'Wendy's Interest in Books' and 'Wendy's Interest in Number'.

Section 4 introduces Judy, and her son, Joe. The data is divided into two categories. The first category is entitled, 'He's a right 'git' / Judy's projections onto Joe's behaviour,' which describes details of Judy's interpretations of Joe's developing behaviour patterns. The second part is entitled, "Looks' and 'Speak' are Part of the Same Pattern / Non-Verbal

Communication, Fantasy Play and the Acknowledgement of Feeling'. It describes the development of a transference relationship between Judy and the researcher and attempts to communicate through fantasy and acknowledging emotional attitudes.

Chapter 5 summarises and discusses the fieldwork findings for the research. It is divided into four sections. The first section discusses supporting the process of parenting through partnership. The current research is reviewed concerning the criteria set out in the review of literature for creating a democratic evaluation in action research. Partnership in practice in the research is then discussed with reference to concepts of 'equality, power' and 'knowledge'.

Section 2 of Chapter 5 discusses the learning process in relationship to the process of parenting. The conceptual framework for the research is reviewed which includes discussions on the parents' developmental process of observation and the process of reflection leading to the consciousization of parents' meanings associated with the child's behaviour. The parent's formation of concepts of child development is discussed concerning an example of a parent's concept of the child constructing her learning through her behaviour patterns. The possibility of parents' consciousness being fragmented into multiple perspectives is explored. The section then discusses the generalisation of concepts and the resulting perspective changes and parents' development of new behaviour based on concepts of the child's development. The section ends with a discussion of possible linkages between concepts.

The third section of Chapter 5 begins by exploring parents'



projections onto their child's behaviour that formed an aspect of the conceptual framework for the research. The process by which the child may internalise and act out the parents' projections is then discussed. Fundamental links between the psycho-analytic concept of projection and the developmental psychology concept of schema are then discussed, creating links between emotional and intellectual development that are further developed in the next section on symbolism. The section ends with a discussion of transference.

The final section of Chapter 5 summarises the process of parenting which seems essentially to be a process of projection and concept formation. The foundations of links between emotional and intellectual development are reviewed and the section ends with a summary of the process by which the parents' consciousness of the child's behaviour has the potential to transform their inner life.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE**

This chapter surveys the literature relevant to the research. The research draws on a very wide range of philosophies and perspectives and this review could not be an exhaustive analysis of each of them. The intention was to study the main concepts that underpinned the research. It is divided into four main sections exploring the concepts of 'partnership'; 'conceptual development'; psycho-analytic concepts of 'containment', 'projection' and 'symbolism' and the concept of 'vulnerable' families.

The first section examines the concept of partnership and its manifestation in several major research projects. This concept is explored concerning 'Head Start' and other early intervention models, the Lothian Region Home Visiting scheme, the High/Scope Ypsilanti Carnegie Infant Programme and the Froebel Educational Institute Project. It concludes with a discussion of the implications of the research reviewed for establishing a partnership with parents in the current research.

The second section explores the concept of 'conceptual development'. Theoretical works focusing on the development of an understanding of the terms 'schema' and 'concept' are highlighted followed by an analysis of the concepts of 'schema' and 'concept' concerning the research projects quoted above. This section concludes with a section on the implications of 'conceptual development' for the current research.

The third section looks at the possible links between emotional and intellectual processes, that is, the links between the learning process and the therapeutic process. The section then attempts to explore selectively several major psycho-analytic concepts that became relevant to the interpretation of aspects of the research as it progressed.

The last section introduces the difficult concept of 'vulnerable' families. It includes an analysis of the concepts of conflict and violence in the family and a brief exploration of the concept of sexual exploitation. The 'partnership' and the 'deficit' models of intervention are explored in the context of work with vulnerable families. The section ends with a summary of the recommendations in the Children Act (1989) which are relevant to the current research.

## **SECTION 1: CONCEPT OF PARTNERSHIP**

This section begins with recommendations for partnership between parents and teachers in several Government reports and is followed by the National Children's Bureau recommendations on implementing partnership. The 'deficit model' approach in early intervention programmes is discussed. This is followed by a discussion of the partnership relationship in several examples of more recent research. The section ends with a summary of the implications of these findings for the current research.

The belief in the importance of parental involvement in the educative process is virtually unchallenged in the caring professions. It gets its legitimacy from a number of sources, for

example, Government reports and various research projects highlighted below.

Several Government reports on children's services have contained key recommendations for closer working relationships between parents and professionals. For example the Plowden Report in 1967 recommended, "By involving the parents, the children may be helped," and suggested, "... a closer partnership between the two parties to every child's education." p.37. The Court Report (1976) commented that:

'... we have found no better way to raise a child than to reinforce the ability of his parent(s) whether natural or substitute to do so.' (p.2)

The Warnock Report (1978) recognised that:

"Parents can be effective partners only if professionals take notice of what they say and how they express their needs, and treat their contributions as intrinsically important."  
(p. 4)

The Children Act (1989) also indicated a need for partnership with vulnerable families. It stated that there is a connected duty to take reasonable steps to reduce the need to bring proceedings that may result in care or supervision orders being made in respect of children.

The Children Act is further discussed in the final section of this chapter.

Support for partnership between parents and teachers came from a different source in the form of 'partnership papers' published by the National Children's Bureau. Pugh (1984) elaborated the concept of partnership and defined a true partnership with parents as one that involved:

"... acceptance of equal skills and expertise, of an open minded sharing of knowledge, skills and experience, and a sense that each partner brings something different but of

equal value to the relationship." (p.4)

Davie (1985) refined the concept of partnership and emphasised the importance of becoming aware of the other person's perceptions in a partnership relationship. He stated that the other person's perception or practice was not necessarily valid in an objective or absolute sense but the fact of that perception or practice and its relevance in the situation had to be accepted.

Poulton (1985) listed contributions parents could make to a partnership relationship as including providing an emotional climate in which the child grows and develops, and having an intimate knowledge of their children. She concluded that parents were also able to provide individual learning opportunities for their child. She defined the teacher's main contributions as reinforcing the role of parents as an important source of knowledge in children's learning and in sharing knowledge of child development and related information with parents to support and extend their child-rearing skills.

Pugh and DeAth (1984) studied various methods of parent education throughout the British Isles and reported that there is a need to reinforce the role of parents as educators of their own children. This could be done through discussions on the behaviour and learning of young children. They concluded that the relationship between professional and parent was found to be most effective when it built on partnership and mutual respect, with an emphasis on reciprocity that allowed people to give as well as take. There was a need to build on parents' skills, experience, competence and self-confidence, rather than provide 'expert' advice on how to bring up children.

Wolfendale (1983B) reported that the Plowden, Court and

Warnock reports had a common theme, "... optimisation of children's developmental and learning potential is a realistic goal only if parents are involved in the formal processes of education..." p.7 She compared and contrasted the concept of client with the partnership concept. She concluded that in the client concept parents are dependent on experts' opinions and are perceived as 'inadequate' and 'deficient'. There is an underlying assumption of inappropriate or inadequate handling of children. In the partnership concept, she suggested parents are perceived as having equal strengths and equivalent expertise and are able to contribute to as well as receive services.

The nature of relationship of parent and professional seemed to vary a great deal in parental involvement programmes. There appeared to be two main types or models of working with parents the 'client' relationship and the 'partner' relationship, each of which was based on different assumptions and philosophies.

The client concept or deficit model of parental involvement motivated the early intervention programmes in the United States and later in this country. All programmes responded to the fact that children of low income families frequently underachieved at school compared with middle class children. The initial programme, Head Start, aimed to provide educational 'advantages' to 'disadvantaged' preschool children in to overcome their 'learning deficits' and give them a 'head start' when they entered school [Van Der Eyken (1974)]. Other programmes [Gray and Klaus (1970), Karnes et al, (1970), Gordon, (1971), and Levenstein, (1972)] operated on the same deficit model. In the Levenstein (1972) programme, teachers were encouraged to:

"Share your verbal stimulation techniques with her (the mother) by demonstrating them in play with her child: then draw her into the play, and take a secondary role as soon as you can, while she repeats and elaborates what she has seen you do." p.429

From these studies, Bronfenbrenner (1974) concluded that children benefited from early intervention programmes. He suggested that strategies that included parents in early childhood education seemed to be more effective in terms of long term gains than those which did not. This supported the concept of involving parents in preschool programmes.

The underlying assumption of these programmes was that parents needed the benefit of experts to act as a model for their own interaction with their child. This assumption was also a feature of the Lothian Home Visiting project outlined below.

Raven (1980) evaluated a home visiting scheme involving six teachers in the Lothian region of Scotland. The objective of the scheme was to encourage the mother to play a more active role in promoting the educational development of her children.

Raven explained the philosophy underlying the scheme:

"... the scheme was set up in the context of a general climate of professional opinion which asserted that experts know better than did some mothers about how to bring up children." p.91

He concluded that most mothers developed more confidence in their children's ability and most were better able to entertain their children at the end of the scheme. However, he maintained that the approach may have led some mothers to lose confidence in their relationship with their child:

"... some mothers have been unable to do the things which the educational home visitors led them to think that they should do - and this seems to have accentuated their already considerable feelings of guilt at not being able to do the things which they know that they should be doing with

their children." p.85

He also concluded that educational home visitors had reinforced their clients' notion that teaching means telling rather than "Creating an environment conducive to natural growth." p.131 He went on to say that educational home visitors had more difficulty in leading parents to be sensitively responsive to child initiated activities and that, "... the Home Visitors have had relatively little impact on the parents' actual behaviour with their children." p.145

Raven criticised the 'deficit' approach that had been adopted by the scheme and suggested that the role of professional as expert was not conducive to the development of the mother's perceptions of the child. He recommended finding alternative approaches for infant programmes and suggested that further action-research programmes should be carried out with a view to evaluating a wide range of alternative strategies for tackling the extremely important problems in this area and to providing a better understanding of the process involved.

Raven criticised the 'deficit' model in the context of an actual intervention programme. Others have made further criticisms of this approach for example, the concept of 'learned helplessness' suggested by Seligman (1975).

As a challenge to the view of the professional as the expert in interacting with children, the importance of parents' expertise in interactions with their children was highlighted by two major research projects.

One project examining the source of expertise in parents and teachers was carried out by Tizard and Hughes (1984) to determine the quality of interactions between adults and children



at home and school. The research involved the analysis of recordings of conversations of 30 four year old girls at nursery school and at home with their mothers.

They concluded that everyday events in family life could involve important learning experiences for children and that parents played an important teaching role because they shared the child's world, extending from the past into the future. They found no single context to be especially valuable as the learning potential depended on the parent's desire to teach and clarify the child's curiosity.

They found more cognitive demands to be made of children at home by parents than at school by teachers. The myth that the teacher compensated in school for the language deficit at home was exposed.

A second major research project, the 'Bristol Longitudinal Language Development Research Programme' set out to describe how children learn to talk and the environmental factors that affect the rate and success of their development. The research involved analysing the language of 128 children, half aged 15 months and half aged 39 months, over a 2 1/2 year period.

Wells (1981) concluded from this study that mother and child negotiate a shared meaning as the basis of conversation and that the development of 'mutual relevance' in conversation was the most important factor in the child's language development.

Wells (1986) reached similar conclusions to Tizard and Hughes about the use of language in home and school:

"... what we have found is that, compared with homes, schools are not providing an environment that fosters language development. For no child was the language experience of the classroom richer than that of the home - not even for those believed to be 'linguistically deprived'.p.87

Evidently parents had more to offer, in the way of interacting with their child, supporting language and cognitive development, than had been previously recognised. The evidence from these two research projects supported criticisms of the 'deficit' model where the source of expertise was seen as the professional who had the role of making up a shortfall in parents' interactions with their children.

In contrast to the 'deficit' model, the partnership model of working with parents was based on the assumption of positive child focused exchange between parent and teacher with both partners contributing their own different expertise to the partnership. It involved the active participation of both partners and was based on a constructivist model of learning.

One such project based on a partnership model was the Ypsilanti Carnegie Infant Project that evolved a home teaching programme, "... to involve mothers more fully as teachers of their infants and to increase their effectiveness in this role." (Weikart et al (1974) p.45) An experimental group of 22 families was visited every week for 16 months. A contrast group was set up where 21 families were regularly visited but with no curriculum goal or specific activities for the children and a control group was also set up consisting of only developmental testing for the children. This was to be a non-deficit model of intervention:

"... the Infant Project chose to facilitate change by supporting the mother's own exploration and discovery, rather than implement change through programmed instruction." p.126

The Infant Project clearly stated that there was to be an equal partnership between teacher and parent:

"... parents and educators are considered resources for

each other, working as equals in determining the goals and practices for effective child-rearing. Expert knowledge may be utilised to help educators be responsive to and supportive of the individual needs of parents and children. The objective is not to retrain parents but to facilitate self-determined behaviour." p.20

This philosophy differed markedly from the deficit model intervention approaches. Rather than directing parents, the teacher's role was to support parents' self-determined behaviour. Parents were encouraged to develop, "... an open, problem solving approach to child-rearing." p.20.

Equal partnership between parent and teacher would therefore be reinforced by this approach. The relationship between parent and teacher in the partnership was later described in more detail:

"The educational process which typifies this assumption about parents is interactive between parent(s) and the educator. The educator does not assume the dominant role in the educational process, nor are the parents the only active agents in the programme ... The role is difficult for the educator, because any tendency to subtly dominate the relationship must be strictly avoided if the programme is to be successful." p.20

It appeared that the child's behaviour and needs were central to the partnership between parent and teacher. For example;

"... teachers and mothers should see themselves as equal resources, each with something valuable to contribute and with the visually apparent behaviour of the child as the common resource." p.49

In conclusion, the philosophy of the concept of partnership in the Ypsilanti Carnegie Infant Project was that parent and teacher each had something different but equal to offer the relationship. It was thought to be important that there was a balance of power with neither party being dominant or submissive

in the relationship. The child's observable behaviour was to be the focus of discussion between parent and teacher in the partnership.

However, random observation was ruled out as a way to assess initially the child's development and the developmental perspective of the mothers in the Infant Project. Instead, the administration of Bayley Scales of Infant Development was used for initial assessments.

"It was felt that the type of formal observation about the child's development that was possible during the administration of the Bayley test was more immediately useful to the teacher and the mother than many observations of random behaviour. It also facilitated the teacher's planning for the first few sessions which are by nature very difficult." p.51

It is possible that the test situation introduced a degree of professionalism into the partnership which could have had the potential for undermining the parent's own expertise, perhaps introducing an element of inequality into the relationship. The question could be asked: was it not possible initially to gain a significant amount of useful information about the child's development from the parent herself?

The justification for testing included the teacher's need to plan. Initial planning appeared to be the responsibility of the teacher. It could be suggested that the teacher's planning could result in her dominating the partnership to some extent.

Further evidence for the teacher taking responsibility for setting initial agendas is given in the following statement:

"Each teacher had to learn how to replace the personal joy of seeing the child respond to her with the joy of seeing the child respond to the mother as she learned more about supporting her child's development. Of several things done to help the teachers with this behavioural transition, one of the first was to construct a report form for each session in

such a way that the teacher had to state the goal for the mother during each activity adjacent to the goal of the child." p.49

In this statement, the teacher seemed to be taking on a dominant role of deciding goals for the mother. There was an implicit assumption that the teacher had the knowledge to direct the parent's activity. The relationship between parent and teacher was perhaps moving away from an equal partnership. Like the test, the report form could be another subtle form of control. It is interesting to note that tests and reports are also traditional methods of control in education.

However, teachers did see it as important to make their contributions appropriate to mothers:

"Mothers should not be bored by being shown things they already know nor should they be expected to deal with difficult, unfamiliar, and/or irrelevant concepts simply because staff members value them ... Mothers need many different things at different times and in a home teaching project it is the responsibility of the teacher to help provide these in a manner that is interactive, reciprocal, caring, and mutually rewarding." p.45

The concepts of child development shared with parents were in a framework of Piaget's theories of infant development. There is evidence that this approach was very successful for many parents.

Weikart et al (1974) also stated a developmental view that underlay the Infant Programme, forming objectives for the mothers taking part. For example:

"Infants need to try out new concepts and activities in a variety of situations; *mothers ought to be aware* of this and be able to recognise and support this behaviour when it occurs. Infants also need to experience new facets of their environments; *mothers ought to understand* this and be able to facilitate new learning." p.119

"Ideally, mothers *should not only tolerate* these activities but enter into them with their children as co-participants."

p.119

"Mothers *should be aware* that language abilities are developing long before children begin to express themselves in conventional speech." p.120 (my italics)

The educational objectives appear to be acceptable as they support the child's development but underlying these statements there is perhaps a subtle attempt to dominate and control the mother. There was an expectation for mothers to change in a particular direction. Can a relationship be equal when there is an underlying expectation on the part of the teacher of what the parent ought to do?

Parents seemed to have been seen as lacking in certain qualities which they were expected to gain during the process of the Infant Project. As the objectives were decided for all parents beforehand by the teacher, it appeared that the work was making up a shortfall and therefore the Infant Project could be seen as a deficit model of intervention. The Infant Project appeared to be creating the sort of intervention model it sought to avoid.

In the evaluation, the difficulties in establishing an equal partnership were discussed. There appeared to be two different sets of reasons for the problems of establishing equality in the parent / teacher relationship. Firstly, in connection with societal expectations, the evaluation stated;

"It was difficult for teachers not to assume roles of 'authority,' particularly when mothers seem to insist that they do so. Similarly, it was difficult for some mothers to view themselves as coequal in relationships with teachers when the larger society clearly defined 'teachers' as 'experts'." p.118

Secondly, the working practice of the professionals could have created difficulties in establishing an equal partnership, although this possibility was not identified by the project. For

example;

1. A power relationship may have been established with the initial testing procedures.
2. The objectives that mothers were expected to reach may have introduced an underlying dynamic of control into the relationship.
3. The teacher's agendas may have indicated to the parent that the teacher was the expert in the partnership. This may also apply to the Froebel Project outlined later in this section.

Attempts were made throughout the Infant Project to establish an equal partnership with parents despite the difficulties that arose. The evaluation explained:

"Nevertheless, the goal was continuously reiterated and worked toward by continuously engaging mothers in the communication process as the persons responsible for and most knowledgeable about their own children." p.118

There appeared to be a mismatch between the philosophy of partnership and the teaching procedures in the Infant Programme. The teacher initially appeared to be much more powerful in the partnership and later made attempts at power sharing. However, it seemed to be difficult to change the relationship once it was established.

The attainment of objectives for mothers was also discussed in the evaluation:

"Whether or not these objectives for mothers could be realised in this educational programme depended upon the degree to which mothers perceived the programme's way of viewing and interacting with the child to be an effective and personally acceptable approach to child-rearing," p121.

The attainment of objectives for the mothers in the Infant Project was seen to be based upon the extent to which the mother

assimilated the programme's teaching strategies. The Project made huge assumptions about where the expertise was located in the partnership. There seemed to be an implication that the mother needed to adapt to the programme in order for development to take place.

However, it seemed that it was not always possible for the mother to adapt in this way: "Most mothers found it rewarding to be a key factor in the child's environment; a few did not." p.49 The explanation given was that those parents who did not respond to the programme were 'more likely' to spend a major part of the day away from the child. However, other factors might have been involved as not all the parents who were sharing the upbringing of a child did not take part in the project. This explanation was also inconsistent as some parents were at home with their children all the time and still did not respond.

An alternative explanation could be that perhaps the teaching strategies that were offered in the programme may not have been appropriate to the intellectual and emotional needs of all the mothers. Alternative teaching strategies may have proved to be more appropriate in some cases.

An aim stated in the Infant Project for a non-deficit model of partnership was that if an approach was not working, "... responsibility for change is placed directly upon educational institutions." p.15. If mothers did not appear to find it rewarding to be a key factor in their child's development, this could have signalled a starting point for the teacher to change her teaching strategy to something more appropriate for the parent. The Infant Project model was based on a Piagetian model of child development. This approach at times appeared to have captured



the imagination and interest of most of the mothers, but not all of them. There seemed to be an expectation that the parent was at a stage in her development where it was appropriate for her to assimilate this model.

The partnership interactive model was also aimed at in a project directed by Chris Athey at the Froebel Educational Institute (1973-78). The project involved an investigation into the behaviour and learning of twenty preschool children who attended the Institute with their parents. These children made outstanding gains in all areas of functioning tested by standardised tests. Athey explained the results as follows:

"The most likely explanation for the gains is that the parents were centrally involved in finding out about their own children." (1981, p.359)

The project aimed:

"To provide an effective enrichment programme for children from a disadvantaged section of the community. The programme was based on a new kind of collaboration between parents and professionals. The professionals did not deny their own specialised knowledge but made it freely available to parents without fear of loss of status." (Athey 1990, p.49)

Athey talked of a collaboration between parents and professionals where professionals would freely articulate their knowledge of child development. It appeared that the partnership would involve professionals taking on the role of expert, and leading the partnership through the status of this knowledge.

In similarity with the Ypsilanti Carnegie Infant Programme, the Froebel Institute Project was based on a Piagetian model of child development. The Froebel project was, however, more specific in its aim to identify and extend the schematic behaviour of young children. Athey explained the

relationship between parents and teachers:

"When a pattern of behaviour is discovered it has an obviousness which generates excitement which, in turn, sustains the search and reinforces the partnership between teacher and parent." (1981, p.364)

Athey explained the procedure in the partnership:

"The professionals identified schemas but, once identified, parents were able to give examples ..." (1990, p.207)

The professionals appeared to have decided upon the agenda of the child's schemas and the parents then collaborated by adding their own observations and reports. The partnership was based on a sharing of expertise between parents and professionals but with the professionals dominating the partnership through deciding the agenda.

Throughout the research Athey maintained a dialogue with parents on what their children were doing and the possible significance of behaviour. The parents were centrally involved in finding out about their own children by observing them and reporting on their behaviour. Parents became increasingly interested in their child's schematic development. The contribution of parents to the partnership was acknowledged and respected.

"The parents were genuinely respected and recognised as experts on their own children in that they had them full time from birth and therefore knew them better as individuals than anyone else ... The search for commonalities of behaviour necessarily relied on highly specific instances of behaviour." (1990, p.61)

Parents were able to use their expertise to provide specific examples of the child's behaviour to illustrate their developing schemas. Parents' understanding of their child's schemas in this project is further discussed in the next section.

The involvement of parents led Athey to conclude that,

"... the amount, level and commitment of project parents is an indication of the great source of untapped ability and energy that exists in working-class, multiracial communities." (1990, p.62)

The motivation and commitment of parents in this project link to similar findings in the Ypsilanti project. However, the question must be asked: was it always appropriate for all parents to introduce into the partnership the agenda of the child's schematic development? Athey gave some indication that it was not:

"It must be admitted that, as far as parents are concerned, to recognise a schema is not necessarily to embrace it." (1990, p.142)

Perhaps this statement indicated that this knowledge was not always appropriate and relevant to parents. Obviously, at times, this emphasis was extremely interesting and useful to parents but at other times it is possible that it was not. At these times perhaps other interpretations or models may have proved to be more relevant and interesting to parents. In reality, it seems probable that on occasions parents may have had other agendas of what they considered a priority in their relationships with their child, other than the child's operating schemas as defined by the teachers.

There appeared to be a gap between the rhetoric and the reality of creating partnership relationships between professionals and parents. The Ypsilanti project had cultural expectations for the mothers underlying their philosophy of creating an equal partnership. In addition, there was implicit control in the specific working practices of the project, including testing, objective setting and agenda setting. The Ypsilanti project

aimed for an equal partnership but the strength of the teacher's interpretations dominated the relationship.

The Froebel project aimed at a partnership that was based on the parents contributing their knowledge to the teacher's framework of interpretation. The teachers introduced the organising concepts for specific examples of the child's behaviour, observed by teacher and/or parent. It could perhaps be questioned whether this constituted a true partnership with parents.

In both projects the status of the teacher's knowledge controlled the relationship and there did not seem to be a question whether the professionals' interpretations were correct. In fact, Piagetian models have been challenged as a model for interpreting child development. Walkerdine and Lucey (1988) suggested that the primary influence on development was the discursive practices in which parents and children created meanings to interpret their experiences, rather than an unfolding of Piagetian stages of development. However, the discursive practices in parenting may or may not include a recognition and development of the child's schemas.

There appeared to be several implications of the philosophy and practice of partnership in the above projects for the current research. Firstly, it was thought that a true partnership was very difficult to create. Was it possible to create a partnership where each partner listened to and respected the other's concepts for interpreting the child's behaviour? Would an imbalance in knowledge and power make a true partnership impossible? Would the teacher deny the status of her knowledge by not taking on the role of dominating the partnership and without this would there be any learning? Could, in fact, a partnership be created

based on the extension and elaboration of each partner's existing concepts?

The teaching strategy in the current research would be based on shared observation of and reflection on the child's behaviour. It was thought to be important that interpretations introduced into the partnership should be flexible and adaptable. The Piagetian model of child development was thought to be a useful model but not always appropriate to introduce to all parents. An attempt would be made to share alternative interpretations when thought to be more appropriate. A lack of response to teacher's interpretations and teaching strategies would be taken as an indication that these needed to be reviewed and perhaps modified. In addition, the current research would focus on fathers as well as mothers, when this was possible, as focusing on mothers introduced the hidden implication that children are women's work.

## SECTION 2: CONCEPT OF 'SCHEMA' AND 'CONCEPT'

This section begins with a brief description of the term 'schema' as described by Piaget. It then further elaborates the concepts of 'concept' and 'schema' concerning other theoretical writings. There then follows a description of the exploration of parents' conceptual development and the terms 'concept' and 'schema' in the research projects described in the last section. The section concludes with the implications of this material for the current research.

It is beyond the scope of this section to describe in detail Piaget's use of the term schema in relationship to the cognitive development of children. This theory does, however, underpin an aspect of the researcher's contribution to the partnership. Piaget's description of the development of children's schemas is outlined in a brief description below.

Piaget (1936,1954,1966) defined a 'schema' in his description of child development. He used the term 'schema' to describe the infant's developing behaviour patterns and systematic explorations. He described early schemas, such as sucking, pulling and throwing as sensori-motor schemas, because their operation was dependent upon the actions of the infant on the immediate environment.

He described the infant as having at any one time a set of schemas for acting on the environment that, of course, they were not consciously aware of. This raises the question how do schemas change and develop? Piaget described the modification and change in schemas as a process whereby, if a situation demonstrated that the schema was inadequate to deal with a new

situation the infant would be thrown into disequilibrium. She would then adapt her schema to the new situation at which time equilibrium would be restored. He explained that schemas are adapted by the two processes of assimilation and accommodation. New information from experience is assimilated, or taken in, to the individual's existing schemas that, through the process of accommodation, change in structure as a result of the new experience.

Piaget described the progression from sensori-motor intelligence to a stage he called pre-operational thinking whereby the child developed the ability to be able to represent the sensori-motor schemas by means of gestures, symbols and language. He described the development of thought as internalised action. [For further discussions on children's cognitive development, see also, Isaacs (1929), Gesell, (1965,1966), Bruner (1966, 1980), Turner (1975), Donaldson (1978), Ginsberg & Opper (1979), Weikart et al (1979), Sylva et al. (1980), Bruce (1987)]

Egan (1988) emphasised emotional concepts as also being fundamental to the learning process. He stated:

"Before children can walk or talk ... they know joy and fear, love and hate, power and powerlessness, and the rhythms of expectation and satisfaction, of hope and disappointment ... So the knowledge which comes first to people and which remains most deeply ingrained is not knowledge of 'how to do'; it is the fundamental categories upon which we learn increasingly to make sense of anything in the universe and in human experience." p.28

Egan seemed to suggest that basic emotional concepts are initially formed and environmental evidence is assimilated to these structures whereas Piaget focused on the initial development of the child's intellectual schemas. This raises the question what, if any, is the link between intellectual and

emotional development? This theme will be elaborated further in the next section, exploring psycho-analytic concepts, and in Chapter 5.

The question is also raised as to the relationship between a 'concept' and a 'schema'. The terms 'schema' and 'concept' do not appear to have clearly defined or universally agreed upon meanings and the terms appear to be interchangeable to some extent. For example, Vygotsky (1962) used the term 'concept' in his description of cognitive development. He described the process of concept formation when stating that for concept development to begin a problem must arise that cannot be solved otherwise than through the formation of new concepts. This process described by Vygotsky is similar to Piaget's theory of the modification of schemas when existing structures are inadequate to deal with a situation.

The relationship between concept and language is also fundamental. Vygotsky described the importance of language in concept formation. "Learning to direct one's own mental process with the aid of words or signs is an integral part of the process of concept formation." p.59

The relationship between word and concept was explored in the Bristol Language Research Project. Wells (1981) concluded that a child has to learn how a word relates to the appropriate conceptual category. He stated that existing concepts provided a clue to the meaning of the words heard and that words heard lead to a modification of existing concepts.

Wells' (1986) conclusions can, at times, be applied equally to child and adult learners. He described the process by which new information is incorporated into an individual's existing schema.



He stated:

"Knowledge had to be constructed afresh by each individual knower, through an interaction between the evidence (which is obtained through observation, listening, reading, and the use of reference materials of all kinds) and what the learner can bring to bear on it." p.116

There have been various theoretical descriptions of the formations of concepts and schemas. Howard (1987) described the two processes of generalisation and discrimination that are necessary for concept formation.

"A concept is a mental representation of a category, which allows one to place stimuli in a category on the basis of some similarities between them. Lumping stimuli together by using a concept allows new stimuli encountered to be responded to as class members rather than as unique." p.2

However, he explained, that concept formation does not necessarily rely on generalisation in the first instance.

Discrimination is also a factor in concept formation:

"A concept may be acquired from a single instance ... To learn a concept this way, a person only needs to discriminate the instance from other stimuli and remember it." p.113

Howard attempted to define the difference between a concept and a schema and to answer the question how they are linked. He suggested that: "One distinction is that a schema is a cluster of related concepts ... By one definition, the component concepts must be related by space or time for the structures to be a schema." p.51

Howard's definition of a schema is different from Piaget's definition as Piaget referred to the initial cognitive structures as schemas, whereas Howard referred to a schema as a cluster of concepts.

However, Howard's theory of the method of activation of

schema is similar to Piaget and Vygotsky. He stated that "Faced with a problem, we need to select a schema that applies to it and suggests what we do in this situation." p.37 He described the process of the selection of a schema:

"... schemata are activated in 'bottom-up' or 'top down' fashion. The 'top' refers to the mind and the 'bottom' to stimuli from the environment. In 'bottom - up' activation, data suggest an appropriate schema ... In top - down activation, we have a schema in mind and we search the environment for evidence consistent with it ... Most cases of schemata selection probably involve both bottom - up and top - down activation. Thus, data may suggest a schema, which we can use to hunt for further evidence." p.37

Like Piaget, Howard highlighted the importance of evidence from the environment in the selection of a schema. In teaching schemas to others, Howard highlighted the importance of introducing appropriate schemas into the teaching situation:

"... the teacher must present material consistent with the students' schemata, or teach them a schema that they can understand material with. However, students often hold existing schemata that greatly resist change and actually interfere with instruction." p.42

Howard pointed to the problems that may be incurred in teaching schemas. He later criticised discovery learning by suggesting that there are few concepts that are not already known. He did not, however, link the possible motivation in this type of learning with the potential to overcome the problems he stated were connected with more direct teaching. He seemed to hold an assumption that the teacher was more aware of the schemas that the learner needed to be taught than the learner herself. However, the learner may at times have other schemas that they value and wish to extend and develop, and may resist the domination of the teacher's imposition on their learning.

Other factors may affect the acquisition of concepts. Archer

(1966) quoted Dominowski (1965) in stating that;

"Performance is generally improved by increasing the availability of previous stimulus information. The degree to which instances of the same concept occur contiguously directly affects acquisition of the concept." p.41

This statement perhaps has implications for parents developing concepts of child development, in that, perhaps, the more often a behaviour pattern of a child is observed, the more likely a concept of it is likely to be formed.

Archer (1966) quoted Bruner et al (1956) in listing the use of concepts including reducing the complexity of environment, providing a direction for activity, and permitting an opportunity for ordering or relating classes of events. He stated that:

"The list of achievements also makes some assumptions, it seems, about the basic inquisitiveness of the organism which may, in fact, be characteristic of the more intelligent members of our society, but I think some of the achievements would be regarded as having little utility for many people. I have in mind in particular the ... achievement of 'the opportunity it permits for ordering and relating classes of events.'" p.46

Archer made this statement which denied the basic human right of thinking to sections of society. In fact, even in the earliest stages, children can be seen to order and relate classes of events as described by Piaget's sensori-motor stage of development which involves the infant ordering actions into schemas.

Another characteristic of the concept is its relationship to perception. Hamlyn (1978) explored the process of perception as an interaction between sense experience and existing concepts. He reached the conclusion that:

"Sense perception requires the having of sense experiences or sensations as its causal condition, but it goes beyond these in involving also consciousness of an independent object and consciousness of it as a such and such." p.71

Hamlyn appeared to be saying that perception involves the activation of a concept. He developed this theme and explored further conceptual development through a link between existing concepts and perception. He stated that:

"Perception and experience thus logically imply understanding in the sense that they presuppose understanding of some kind ... At the same time they may provide the foundation for the growth of further understanding. The development of understanding on the basis of prior understanding may come about through the connection of one concept with others in various ways, and through a kind of interplay between concepts and instances or cases that perception and its conditions make possible."  
p.72

The connection between conceptual development and experience is emphasised, which was the feature of Piaget's explanation of the initial development of schema. Hamlyn also explored the nature and possible inadequacies of concepts:

"... to have the concept of X is to know what it is for something to be X, and that this can be a matter of degree since one can have knowledge of some aspects of X without necessarily knowing others. To have a concept of X is to believe something about what it is for something to be X, and this belief may or may not be right." p.74

This statement shows the personal nature of concept formation. Hamlyn also explored the possibility of change in perspective caused by conceptual development.

"There are also those experiences when the look of a thing may be changed completely by the sudden recognition of what it is or of what sort of thing it is." p.73

Again the link between concept and observation is described and it is suggested that the development of a concept can lead to a perspective change.

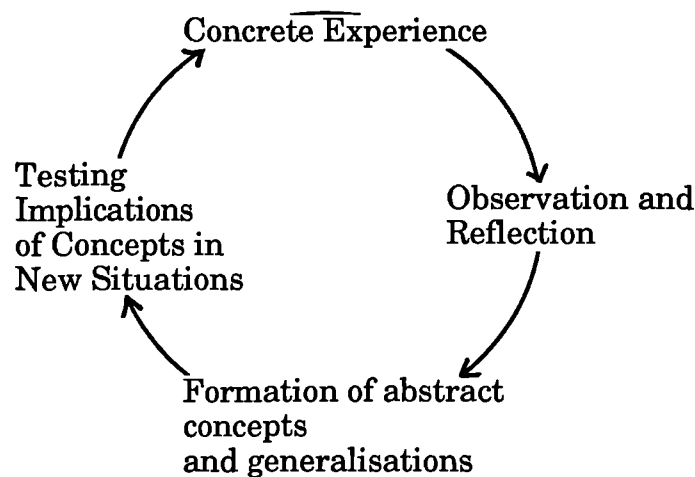
Kolb & Fry (1974) summed up the relationship between conceptual development and concrete experience:

"The underlying insight of experiential learning is

deceptively simple, namely that learning, change and growth are best facilitated by an integrated process that begins with 1) here - and - now experience followed by (2) collection of data and observations about that experience. The data are then (3) analysed and the conclusions of this analysis are fed back to the actors in the experience for their use in the (4) modification of their behaviour and choice of new experiences." (Intro. No page ref.)

They explained the cyclic process by which observation and reflection lead to the formation of concepts that are then generalised to new situations creating an opportunity for further observation.

Kolb & Fry (p.2): **Experiential Learning Model**



Kolb & Fry linked emotional and intellectual development in this model of learning:

"The experiential learning model ... emphasises that learning and change result from the integration of concrete emotional experiences with cognitive processes: conceptual analysis and understanding. Thus learning involves the labelling or relabelling of immediate existential experience. To understand the learning process we must understand not only the factors which enable the person to gain contact with his own experience but also the cognitive processes which enable him to make sense of his experience." p.3

Possible links between emotional and intellectual development are elaborated in Chapter 5. Kolb and Fry

emphasised the need to recognise the factors associated with experiencing. It was suggested that direct experience was an emotional as well as intellectual experience. This will be explored in the next section on the concept of the 'unconscious' mind.

A fundamental question to the current research is how do parents develop concepts of child development? Montessori (1956) maintained, when she discussed adult learning about child development, that comprehension of the process of development must be founded in the certainty that there is always something there to observe. She had a basic underlying assumption that learning concepts of child development should be based on observation. She described the key to pedagogy as learning to recognise precious moments of concentration in the child to utilise them, and sustaining in the child the deepest interest and a lively and consistent attention.

She encouraged adults to learn to recognise when learning was taking place in children through observation and concept formation. She stated:

"... respect all the reasonable forms of activity in which the child engages and try to understand them." p.117

Her method of adult learning suggested problem solving based on observing the child's behaviour and trying to understand it, similar to Vygotsky's theory of concept formation through problem solving.

### Exploration of the Concepts of 'Schema' and 'Concept' in Research Projects

Atkin and Bastiani (1988) studied parental perspectives in 'The Development of Effective Home School Programmes Project'.

They studied not only what parents do but what they think about children's education. They isolated different dimensions of parents' concepts of teaching and stressed the range and diversity of parental viewpoints and contrasted this finding with the assumption that all parents think the same that appeared to underlie other research projects. They suggested that knowledge of parents' concepts offered information that is of potential value in the development of more effective communication, contact and involvement between families and schools. They concluded that:

"... parental attitudes and behaviour will be responsive to, and influenced by, their actual experience of schools and teachers ..." p.31

The question how parents develop concepts of child development was explored in relationship to the Lothian Home Visiting Scheme. In his evaluation of the scheme, Raven (1980) pointed to changes in the parents' understanding of their child's development. He concluded that, "They (the parents) are much more likely to think that intelligence is to be fostered by talking to, and reading to, children." p.169 He stated that;

"The Educational Home Visitors seem to have had a dramatic effect on parents' attitudes and expectations, but much less effect on their reported behaviour." p.168

He referred to a mismatch between the parents' stated beliefs and their actual behaviour. He also referred to the parents as if all their attitudes were the same as Atkin and Bastiani had suggested.

More specifically Raven explained that Educational Home Visitors had apparently no impact in developing parents' perceptions of the importance of autonomous learning, that is, the importance of treating the child as an individual with their

own interests and ideas. However, he concluded that parents were better able to entertain their children.

Raven pointed to evidence that the parent's thinking had changed but the parent's behaviour towards their child, excepting the skills taught by the programme, did not appear to have significantly changed. The links in the learning process between conceptual development and observation of direct experience, described in Kolb and Fry's theory of conceptual development, did not appear to have been made in this project.

Raven suggested reasons for the apparent lack of change in parent's behaviour towards their children: "... parents may have a relatively simplistic view of development because they are incapable of more complex reasoning." (p.206) He appeared to have put the responsibility for the lack of change and development with the parents, perhaps with a similar underlying assumption that Archer (1966) held in this section.

Evidently, the Lothian Home Visiting Scheme had little to offer in the way of understanding parents' development of concepts of child development that lead to perspective change and new behaviour towards the child.

The Ypsilanti Carnegie Infant Programme was analysed for its view of the learning process and its exploration of parents' acquisition of concepts of child development. Weikart et al. (1974) described a view of the child's learning process based on Piaget's theory of learning: "... education is not the cumulative acquisition of 'skills' but of concepts that derive from actions performed by the child himself." p.18 This theory of conceptual development underpinned the research.

"Learning was defined as change in cognitive structures and generalisation of existing cognitive structures to new



situations, and it was assumed to be a product of active engagement by the child with his environment." p.23

The Project's view of the child's learning process was clear and explicit. Less clear was the learning process for the parent that could potentially have been described as a similar process. However, the parent's viewpoint was described as follows;

"Effective teaching depends upon the teacher having an adequate framework-some view or model of learning processes and the course of development-for interpreting the learner's behaviour and for formulating coherent, appropriate responses. Thus conceived, the teaching role is identical for both mothers and home visitors." p.26

An existing framework for the parent and teacher was identified as underpinning their interpretations and responses to the child's behaviour. Some progression in this framework was hinted at in the following statement:

"... the programme sought to help mothers achieve a better understanding of child development ... and in the light of this understanding ... formulate their own strategies for effectively facilitating development in their infants." p.117

Perhaps it would be correct to say that the parent's learning depended on the acquisition and generalisation of concepts of child development. However, the project stated that;

"... the teacher concentrated on facilitating the mother's role and provided an atmosphere for optimal growth of her skills." p.49

It is interesting that the Project talked in terms of facilitating the development of the mother's 'skills' in view of their earlier affirmation that children's learning was not an accumulation of skills but of concepts. In fact, there was evidence of conceptual learning taking place for the parents in the project. For example;

"As mothers became more aware of developmental behaviours they could see the similarities between such

things as pulling the string to get a toy and pulling the table mat to get a cup. What the child did in the session was associated with other everyday occurrences. Teacher talked about some of the things a child was likely to do, asking the mother to note this kind of performance to facilitate planning activities interesting to the child." p.49

This example of parents' learning could perhaps be described as the development of a concept about the child's development and the generalisation of the concept to new situations. This learning process was evidently based on observation of direct experience, reflection, concept formation and generalisation. The teacher reinforced the parent's learning process in the following way;

"... teachers involved mothers in the processes of (1) thinking through what they had done and observed, and (2) 'thinking up' means of supporting their infants' development that were consonant both with what they knew about the child and with what was possible or appropriate within the context of a particular home." p.118

Evidently concepts were formed through the processes of observation and reflection and then the concepts were put into practice or generalised to new situations.

There were also expectations of the sort of concepts that mothers would develop. Examples of this were given in the last section on the concept of partnership when describing the Project's objectives for the mothers. There were also other expectations, for example;

"... it was hoped that mothers would view developmental behaviours as a natural result of the child's learning rather than naughtiness, and would provide appropriate opportunities for the child to exercise them ... Whenever learning and naughtiness were confounded (the most obvious example being the schemata commonly known by all mothers as 'throwing things'), the teachers tried to help the mothers provide reasonable chances for the child to experiment." p.50

There was an implicit expectation that the parent's conceptual framework for interpreting the child's behaviour would become modified and would result in a change in perspective in the way the child's behaviour was perceived. The realisation of objectives was discussed:

"Mothers seemed to become more observant of their infants and better able to understand the developmental significance of their activities. For many mothers the change was dramatic - from having few observations and opinions, if any, to spontaneously deluging the teacher with information, interpretation, and specific questions regarding their children's development. Such changes were particularly evident when mothers initiated discussions about what their children had done between visits. In short, many mothers seemed to view their infants in a new light and to be excited by what they saw." p.122

Unlike the Lothian Home Visiting Scheme, the Ypsilanti Carnegie Infant Programme had evidently had an effect on the parent's behaviour in response to the child's autonomous behaviour, for example,

"Mothers more frequently took advantage of naturally occurring situations to support and extend child-initiated activities or to introduce 'learning games.' Their definitions of 'learning' incorporated more and more activities; their definitions of 'learning materials,' more and more of the environment." p.123

The concepts that the parents had learned seemed to be grounded in observations that they made of their child and became generalised to include new situations. There was also evidence of perspective change in the parents. For example;

"On the whole, mothers became more able to assume the child's point of view and were less likely to attribute their children's undesirable or aggravating behaviour to 'malicious intent.' Their child-rearing strategies relied increasingly upon providing opportunities for their children to actively explore and master their environments and less upon negative controlling behaviour." p.123

Most parents developed new behaviour based on their developing concepts. Evidently, development had taken place for most of the parents in their understanding of their child. But the learning process for the parent, of observation of first hand experience, conceptual development and the generalisation of concepts leading to perspective change and new behaviour, was not made explicit in the programme. Also, it is not clear whether there were differences between the parents and what these might have been, other than that some parents appeared not to benefit from the Project, as recorded in the previous section on the partnership concept.

The Froebel Project was also analysed for its definition of 'schema' and for its contribution to the question of how parents develop concepts of child development. Athey (1981, 1990) also used a Piagetian model of development to interpret the child's behaviour. She described a schema as " ... a pattern of repeatable and generalizable actions which can be applied to object and events." (1981, p.361) She quoted Neisser (1976) in stating that: "A general feature of 'plans of action' or 'schematic action' is that schemas are dynamic, active, information seeking structures." (1990, p.36) Athey quoted Piaget and Inhelder (1973) in stating that:

"The function of a schema is to enable generalisations to be made about objects and events in the environment to which a schema is applied." (1990, p.37)

She extended the work of Piaget who had made systematic observations of infants in the first two years to include children in the age range 2-5 years. She found that the development of schemas through systematic exploration was central to the young

child's cognitive development. She concluded that:

"The Froebel study provides evidence that curriculum content offered to children is selectively assimilated by them to developing forms of thought. Project children found their own 'match' between their current cognitive concerns and aspects of environment ... spontaneous 'forms of thought' are 'fed' by experiences provided in home and school." (1990, p.7)

Athey explained the adults' formation and generalisation of concepts of child development in the following statement:

"... it was only when a schema had been conceptualised that particular behaviours were recognised to be instances of that schema. It is fairly clear that earlier instances were overlooked because they were not recognised." (1990, p.51)

She gave examples of parents contributing to the process and the elaboration and extension of the teacher's concepts of the child's development. For example;

"If the teacher, or playgroup leader, observes that a child seems to be interested in different kinds of locomotion and discusses this with the parents, the parents, in most cases, will help to extend what the teacher has already provided on this theme." (1981 p.363)

Athey discussed the learning process concerning parents.

"As knowledge increased, the capacity of parents and professionals to extend the children's learning also increased. It was by this process that involvement increased. Not only did the children's symbolic life flourish but the parent's attributed new significance to much of their children's behaviour ... The parents had no difficulty in broadening their concept of parenthood to include knowledge of their children's cognitive functioning as this functioning became illuminated during the project." (1990, p.207)

She explained, "The parents became skilled at recognising and extending schematic behaviour once a schema had been identified." (1981, p.361)

Parents in the project evidently developed concepts of their child's schemas and generalised their concepts to new situations

and appeared to have undergone perspective changes in the way in which they viewed aspects of the child's behaviour. Athey recognised that the parents assimilated knowledge to their concept of parenthood but, apart from this, the parents' learning process is not made explicit in the study. It is also not clear whether this was the case with all parents and to what degree or extent this happened.

In similarity to Weikart et al, Athey found that conceptual development led parents to look at possible different interpretations of the child's spontaneous behaviour. She stated that, "... the parents found schematic explanations more acceptable, and much more interesting than explanations based on 'the wicked will.'" (1981, p.363)

The processes of observation of and reflection on the child's behaviour and concept formation were implicit but fundamental to the Ypsilanti and Froebel projects. These processes perhaps underlay the perspective changes indicated by these projects. Where these processes were not present there was an absence of parental perspective change, for example, in the Lothian project.

Athey quoted Bruner in perhaps implicitly suggesting a fundamental link between observation, conceptual development and perspective change. "Learning to observe what children are doing ... it is only when research helps one to see with one's own eyes that it gets beneath the skin." (1981 p.366)

In conclusion to this section, there is a generic body of knowledge on the concepts of 'schema' and 'concept' that has been explored in various psychological and philosophical writings. There has also been specific exploration of the acquisition of concepts and schema in child development, for example, Piaget,

Vygotsky, Weikart et al and Athey. However, parents' development of concepts of child development appears to have not been explicitly explored. Parents' thinking has been seen as all the same, denying their intellectual and conceptual development. It has also been seen, in the Ypsilanti Project, in terms of improving understanding and skills, lacking the clarity of the illumination of the learning process. In addition, the Froebel Project described parents' thinking in the general terms of broadening the concept of parenthood.

#### Implications for current research

It was thought that explicitly exploring the parents' learning process, in the current research, in relationship to understanding the child's behaviour, could be a major contribution to the existing research on the subject.

The learning process would be explored in the research. It was thought to consist of direct experience of the child's behaviour, shared reflection between parent and researcher on their observations of the child's behaviour, and the formation of concepts as a result of the reflection process. The research would explore the possibility that the generalisation of concepts to new situations would lead to perspective changes in the way in which the child's behaviour was perceived by the parents

The current research would also explore the potential for parents' perspective changes to lead to new patterns in their behaviour towards the child, supporting the child's development.

### SECTION 3: PSYCHOLOGICAL CONCEPTS

This section begins by discussing possible links between intellectual and emotional processes. Major psycho-analytic concepts that are relevant to this study are then highlighted beginning with the concepts of separation anxiety and symbolism that are linked with Piaget's theories of development. The concepts of unconscious motivation in behaviour, the defence mechanism 'projection' and transference are then briefly discussed. The section ends by discussing the psychoanalytic concepts of 'containment' and 'integration'.

#### Links Between Emotional and Intellectual Processes

Maslow (1954) suggested a hierarchy of needs that, he maintained, motivated behaviour. He viewed human nature as positive and moving towards self-actualization:

"We have desires not only to be safe and to be loved, but also to know more and more, to be curious ... we have to reckon also with our basically philosophical impulses to structure the world, to understand it deeply, and to have it make sense." p.249

If safety and emotional needs were met, Maslow suggested that needs then began to be motivated from higher up the hierarchy. He therefore linked emotional and intellectual processes in his theory of development in a hierarchical way. Maslow maintained that emotional development would take place in an individual by:

"... making consciously available to him his unconscious desires, impulses, inhibitions, and thoughts." (p.259), and that this could be achieved through; "... dream interpretation, (and) interpretation of the meaning behind everyday behaviour." p.259



He suggested that through observation of and reflection on direct experience the process of consciousness would take place. In other words, Maslow suggested that development would take place through the exploration of, and making sense of, the subjective experience of feelings, actions and thoughts.

There appeared to be links with this process of emotional development and the learning process of observation of and reflection on experience and concept formation, discussed in the last section. The importance of the emotional content of first hand experience in the learning process was highlighted by Kolb and Fry in the last section.

Rogers (1961), founder of Client Centred therapy, suggested conditions for psychological growth. He suggested attitudes that were primarily responsible for therapeutic change, including an empathic understanding in which the inner world of the client was perceived and the understanding communicated with the client.

This attitude was also a necessary factor to promote intellectual growth. To reflect on the parents' direct experience, it would be necessary for the researcher to perceive the inner world of the parent.

Perls (1969), founder of Gestalt Therapy, maintained that progression in adult self understanding would take place through an inquiry into the process and structure of experience. Exploring the process and structure of experience involved focusing on and observing feelings and reflecting on them. The process of change in Gestalt therapy also appeared to be essentially similar to the process of intellectual change and development discussed in the last section of this chapter in that it

involved re-experiencing and organising first hand experiences.

It was suggested in the last section that the learning process involved the formation of schemas into which incoming experience was assimilated. Nelson Jones (1984) referred to Beck's cognitive theory and described schemas as stable cognitive patterns that formed the basis of how an individual would interpret or structure different experiences. Beck's cognitive theory suggested that concepts built up around emotional experiences. Emotions became interpreted by the individual and these interpretations formed increasingly complex schemas.

Beck maintained that schemas could be brought into action by experiences causing emotions that were similar to those that originally contributed towards the development of the emotional schema. He suggested that early experiences and the interpretation of such experiences provided people with the basis for forming emotional schemas. This theory is similar to the theory suggested by Egan in the last section of the development of emotional concepts.

Bennett (1972) made connections between emotional and intellectual development and hinted at the existence of emotional schemas. She suggested that a child's feelings connected with early attempts at exploration may be equated with feelings about learning anything and that all kinds of explorations may be equated with pain. In this way the child may hesitate to learn and talk. Sensori-motor schemas, as described by Piaget, are perhaps linked with specific feelings associated with the schemas.

There appeared to be a connection between the thinking and feeling processes. Perhaps emotional as well as intellectual experiences are organised into schemas. The individual may, of

course, not be consciously aware of such schemas.

In addition, in discussing adult development, Bennett maintained that attitudes originated in unconscious sources. She suggested that a major goal in helping parents was to lessen the gap between intellectual knowledge of what should be done and the ability to carry it out.

She suggested that in focusing on the way things appeared to the individual parent there was always the implied possibility of another way of looking. Here lay the possibility of change in parent's attitudes, and resulting changes in behaviour. Bennett implied that the processes of observation of and reflection on a child's behaviour could lead to a change in a parent's emotional attitudes towards the child's behaviour. This theory forms a link with the theory of change in the learning process described in the last section.

There was some evidence of a change in parent's attitudes and behaviour towards their children in the Ypsilanti and Froebel research projects that were analysed in the first two sections of this chapter.

Weikart et al (1974) stated as an objective for the Ypsilanti project: "... his mother should realise that his behaviour, albeit disconcerting and aggravating at times, is not malicious." p.120

In evaluating the project, it was stated that for some mothers a change in attitude towards their child's behaviour did take place. Observation of and reflection on intellectual issues appeared also to shift emotional attitudes, indicating that there was a possible link between them. Focusing on the first hand experience of the child's behaviour and discussing possible interpretations of this behaviour appeared to open up the

possibility for parents to change their attitudes towards the behaviour. Perhaps parents' emotional concepts were developing in addition to intellectual concepts in the learning process. Weikart also stated that:

"It is extremely important that the controlling behaviour of mothers not be predominantly negative." p.120 and "... the infant's needs for strong affective ties should be recognised and accommodated." p.121

However, parent's controlling behaviour perhaps involved unconscious issues that could not always be reached through intellectual discussion of the child's schemas. Weikart, himself, said that not all mothers responded to this method. Athey (1981) also hinted at this when she stated that, for parents, to recognise a schema was not necessarily to embrace it.

In addition to discussing the child's schemas with parents, the literature points to the potential of also discussing the parents' emotional attitude associated with the child's behaviour. The literature describes the importance of focusing on emotion in addition to thoughts and actions in the change process.

It seems important to introduce caution concerning the possible introduction of emotional interpretations into the developmental process. Maslow described the individual's delicate and subtle inner nature as being vulnerable to wrong attitudes towards it. One wrong attitude appears to be the inappropriate use of theory for the interpretation of behaviour.

Winnicott (1971), a psycho-analyst, stated that: "... premature interpretation ... annihilates the creativity of the patient and is traumatic in the sense of being against the maturational process." p.117

Milner (1969) also a psycho-analyst, described her relationship

with a client:

"... the recurrent phase of 'not knowing' in the rhythm of all creative activity: ... Thus I came to see that many of my interpretations at that time were defences against my own 'not knowing' and therefore were felt by her as presumptuous attacks on her own creative processes, attacks which only strengthened the impregnability of her psychic armour." p.43

This process of inappropriate interpretation also applies to intellectual development, e.g. the inappropriate introduction of Piaget's theories of child development to parents, as described in the last section. Creativity perhaps links the emotional and intellectual developmental processes as it contains components of both. This is further discussed later in this section in connection with symbol formation.

To sum up, the process of development and change in therapy appeared to be similar to the process of development and change in education as described in the last section. Observation of and reflection on first hand experience and the potential to become conscious of schemas appears to apply to education and therapy. The processes could combine in focusing on observing emotional attitudes in addition to actions and thoughts and reflecting on the thinking and feeling aspects of experience.

Education and therapy have traditionally been seen as very different processes and have been separated into different academic disciplines. The above discussion points to there being strong and important connections between them. Melanie Klein (1921) an early pioneer of psycho-analytic child therapy stated that:

"... it is impossible to combine in the person of the analyst analytic and educational work ... I may sum up my arguments by saying that the one activity in effect cancels the other. If the analyst, even only temporarily becomes the

representative of the educative agencies ... at that point he blocks the way of the instinctual impulses to consciousness: he becomes the representative of the repressing faculties." p.182

Klein viewed education as a controlling repressive process. However, the argument of this section shows that the underlying process of emotional and intellectual development may be essentially the same. It could be suggested that it is necessary to put restrictions on children's, or indeed adults, emotional expression in education. In fact, therapy also controls the child with restrictions, such as, the prevention of attacks to the therapist and other such repressions of instinctual impulses.

The question must be asked: Are education and therapy necessarily in conflict? Is it possible to have a holistic view of development that includes the consciousization of emotion, thought and action. A brief look at the developmental processes of the infant may further help to illuminate this point.

## **PSYCHO-ANALYTIC CONCEPTS**

### Concept of Separation Anxiety

Psycho-analytic theory describes the feeling world of an infant as appearing to be dominated by a gradual realisation of separation from others, in particular the mother. The theory states that anxiety develops as a result of the infant's painful realisation that she is not omnipotent and that others do not always respond to her needs and wishes.

Bowlby (1973) maintained that separation anxiety resulted in three phases of response in the infant, protest in the form of rage and anger, despair and grief and then detachment.

Daws (1989) further described the emotions associated with the infant's awareness of separation from her carer. She referred to Joyce McDougall in stating that the anxieties to which this primal separation gave rise are usually qualified by terms such as annihilation and disintegration.

Psycho-analytic theory suggests that there is an early confusion between what constitutes the self and others. Salzberger-Wittenberg (1970) explained this process:

"Loving feelings attach themselves to the mother who provides satisfaction and relief and at first the infant tends to feel that this good mother is himself. Hating feelings tend to attach themselves to the mother who is felt to be responsible for frustrations and pain. The wish to dissociate himself from this bad object, onto whom he also projects his own destructiveness, leads to the need for and so promotes recognition of someone other than self, of separateness, of me and not me, inside me and outside."  
pp.60-61

These early feelings surrounding separation may be significant for the infant in developing an awareness of self. They also appear to be the origin of the defence mechanism of projection described later in this section. Mahler (1975) further explained:

"The separation-individuation phase is characterised by a steady increase in awareness of the separateness of the self and the 'other' which coincides with the origins of a sense of self, of true object relationship, and of awareness of a reality in the outside world." p.48

Piaget also described the process of the infant's gradual intellectual development of a concept of self as independent and distinct from his surroundings and a schema of the permanent existence of objects. Freud described the formation of concepts, in the first instance, of self, others and objects, as defences against this early separation anxiety described above.

There appears to be an intermediary stage before the

development of the concepts of self, others and objects, where these ideas of separation are first experienced and later played with, e.g., the peek-a-boo game [see Kleeman (1967), Daws (1989)]. Transitional objects are also formed in this intermediary stage.

Winnicott (1953) described the importance of transitional objects:

"... there may emerge something or some phenomena ... which becomes vitally important to the infant for use at the time of going to sleep, and it is a defence against anxiety."  
p.91

The transitional object becomes a defence against the overwhelmingly powerless feelings that an infant experience. It also represents a transition intellectually at a time when the infant begins to form an object concept.

Daws (1989) stated that this is achieved by the object in some way standing for, or representing, the carer:

"This is what the essential nature of the transitional object involves; it is to do with an idea and memory of being with the mother that then enables the baby to be apart from the mother." p.31

Daws described the relationship between the transitional object and symbol formation: "The use of a transitional object then allows the process of internalisation to gather speed, as the baby has a symbol to use in place of the mother." p.209

The transitional object becomes a first symbol as it represents the carer. Symbols appear to be formed from the anxiety of disintegration and annihilation of separation to contain this anxiety. Symbols become, in Freud's terms, a defence against anxiety. Symbolism is gradually extended, emotions become projected onto other people and objects and external reality begin to form for the child.



Tustin (1977) explained the development of the process:

"... the sense of lack which comes with awareness of bodily separateness can then become a fountain of psychological possibilities. It is where children's play and adult creative activities have their starting place. If tolerated, it will stimulate the development of skills, techniques and the pursuit of knowledge and understanding." p.249

Symbolism appears to be a link between the internal emotional world and external reality and forms the essential core of emotional and intellectual development. This is further explored in the next section.

### Concept of Symbolism

Winnicott (1971) explained the developing use of symbols.

"... in the potential space between the baby and the mother there appears the creative playing that arises naturally out of the relaxed state; it is here that there develops a use of symbols that stand at one and the same time for external world phenomena and for phenomena of the individual person who is being looked at." p.109

Winnicott further described how the use of symbols merged inner subjective states with outer reality. Werner and Kaplan (1964) explained the link between emotional or expressive states and symbols in the complicated statement below:

"It is this transcendence of expressive qualities, that is, their amenability to materialisation in disparate things and happenings, that makes it possible for one to feel and see equations and similarities ... Such transcendence prompts the formation of similes, metaphors, analogies etc., or at least provides the basis for such formations. It also provides the basis for the manifestation of similar expressive qualities in entities otherwise as unrelated as a sound-pattern and a perceptual or conceptual object." p.21

Werner explained how subjective expressive states could be symbolised. Piaget also explored the process of symbolism and suggested that a gesture, object or word could be used to denote an

aspect of experience. Once symbolism is in progress and development moves from the sensori-motor period to the pre-operational period at about 18 months, the inner world of emotion and the outer world of objects appear to be linked through the increasingly complex use of symbols. Werner further described this process:

"... in our view, symbolising enters directly into the construction of the 'cognitive objects', determining how events are organised and what they mean." p.15

Symbols may form into mental structures or concepts as they become linked and generalised to new situations [see last section on conceptual development]. Perhaps emotional and intellectual development is integrated in this way.

Vygotsky (1962) suggested that an idea contained an affective attitude towards the bit of reality to which it refers, indicating that an idea has a thought and an associated emotional attitude. He maintained (1978) that a very young child plays without separating the imaginary situation from the real one. He emphasised the symbolic nature of play. "In play thought is separated from objects and action arises from ideas rather than from things." p. 97 He also observed that:

"In play a child always behaves beyond his average age, above his daily behaviour; in play it is as though he were a head taller than himself ... play contains all developmental tendencies in a condensed form and is itself a major form of development." p.102

He seemed to suggest that play, or symbolism, is the most fertile ground for intellectual as well as emotional development. [See also Paley (1986, 1988) and Egan (1988)]. Miller (1983) explained that play and learning are often in conflict in education;

"... when he really got a sense of himself in 'play'- feeling creative in Winnicott's sense - he would be asked to do

something 'more sensible,' to achieve something, and his world, which was just beginning to unfold, would be overthrown." p.71

The recognition of the importance of symbolism for a child's emotional and intellectual development could have far reaching consequences in education.

In psycho-analysis, play has for a long time been recognised as symbolising a child's inner emotional world. Klein (1926) described children's play: "... all this medley of factors, which so often seems confused and meaningless, is seen to be consistent and full of meaning." p.147

Anna Freud (1981) discussed the child's use of symbols in play.

"... the brick, the little figure, the car, not only represent things which interest the child in themselves, but in his play with them they always have a variety of symbolic meanings as well which are bound up with his phantasies, wishes and experiences ... but we have to consider each child's use of symbols in connection with his particular emotions and anxieties and in relation to the whole situation which is presented ..."p.20

Erikson (1951) emphasised that "... if the first use of the thing world is successful and is guided properly, the pleasure of mastering toy things becomes associated with the mastery of the traumata which were projected on them ..." p.194

Children's unconscious feelings are explored in child psycho-analysis in their play. For example, Freud (1948) described an observation of a child making an object disappear and re-appear in play. He explained:

"The flinging away of the object so that it is gone might be the gratification of an impulse of revenge suppressed in real life but directed against the mother for going away."  
p.14

Freud interpreted the child's feelings underlying his

behaviour. In Piagetian theory the same behaviour could be interpreted as the child's throwing schema and the child's exploration of a horizontal trajectory schema. The possible links between psycho-analytic, emotional interpretations and Piagetian, intellectual interpretations are discussed in Chapter 5. In addition, Mahler (1975) described a child's behaviour:

"... she would lie flat against the surface of the floor, or on the mattress on the floor, or would squeeze herself into a narrow space; it was as if she wanted to be enclosed (held together) in this way." p.94

Mahler suggested that the child's behaviour indicated a need to be psychologically held together. In Piagetian theory this behaviour could be described as the child developing an enclosing schema and defining her body boundaries as part of a developing self concept. Guthrie (1977) made observations of a child's behaviour that also emphasised his internal emotional state:

"... how much empty spaces were expressive of the quality of his contact with me at the time ... I put into words how he was again afraid of being close to me. The arches of his rainbows were like the anxious, frightened baby Martin who was afraid to be in close touch with me and with his mother in case he would damage or be damaged by his anger." p.196

Athey (1990) interpreted similar examples of children's behaviour with the intellectual interpretation of the child developing a semi-circular graphic schema. The following example mostly defies a Piagetian intellectual interpretation. Perhaps the child's behaviour was used as a defence against the anxiety he was experiencing. Hoxter (1977) stated:

"He behaved as though he were surrounded by meaningless bits and pieces which he could only pick up, throw about and attack. These activities seemed to be an expression, or rather at first an evacuation, of his own inner feeling of everything being chaotic, senseless and fragmented ... a process which resulted in his environment becoming a

chaotic mess undifferentiated from his internal state."  
p.229

When emotion is symbolised it is perhaps externalised or defended against. Rosenfeld (1977) suggested that:

"... in order to understand these children, we must in some measure follow the children into their world of psychic chaos and accept its reality. We find this world so frightening that we attempt to impose order to it." p.283

Perhaps education has traditionally attempted to defend against the reality of the child's inner subjective world by imposing symbolism on the child, rather than allowing it to grow through play. The implications of this for the current research are included at the end of the section.

There appeared to be content in the above examples of children's play and activity, of which they were not consciously aware but was nevertheless motivating their behaviour. The concept of unconscious motivation is discussed below.

### Concept of Unconscious Motivation

Psycho-analytic theory suggested that an individual's behaviour is motivated by unconscious issues of which they are unaware. Freud (1915) explained the concept of unconscious motivation:

"... mental acts are often in process which can be explained only by presupposing other acts, of which consciousness yields no evidence." p.99

Freud emphasised that most of conscious knowledge must at any one time be psychically unconscious but in the process of reaching consciousness some ideas are repressed and some are not. Freud (1912) explained the process of repression.

"... we learn that the unconscious idea is excluded from consciousness by living forces which oppose themselves to

its reception, while they do not object to other ideas, the foreconscious ones. Psycho-analysis leaves no room for doubt that the repulsion of unconscious ideas is only provoked by the tendencies embodied in their contents ..." p.264

Initially Freud suggested that it was repressed traumas such as parental sexual exploitation of the child that remained unconscious and later manifested unconsciously in behaviour. However, he later maintained that unconscious ideas likely to meet with resistance were essentially the child's sexual ideas directed towards one parent, usually of the opposite sex, and aggressive ideas directed at the other parent with associated feelings of guilt, a process that he termed the Oedipus complex.

Freud (1915) maintained that the emotional impulse from a repressed idea could become attached to another idea and in this way one idea could symbolise another. He suggested that unconscious motivation operated in this way.

Miller (1984) resurrected Freud's earlier interpretations of unconscious motivation when discussing the concept of unconscious motivation in relationship to parenting. She stated that:

"The ramifications of Freud's recognition that early childhood suffering is preserved in the adult's unconscious have by no means been fully explored." p.115

She went on to describe:

"The only way infants can defend themselves against all that is ascribed to them is with violent feelings or, if these are forbidden, with depression and other symptoms. But these are reactions to parental feelings and not manifestations of innate drives ... "p.217

She challenged Freud who saw a child's emotions as manifestations of his/her sexual and aggressive fantasies and guilt and saw instead the child's emotions resulting from a

reaction to their parent's behaviour towards them. However, having abandoned the theory of the Oedipus complex, the roots of the emotions of attachment and jealousy are relatively unexplored in Miller's theories. Miller also criticised Klein for failing to recognise the effects of the parent's unconscious on the child's feelings:

"In her descriptions of the early stages of the child's emotional life, Klein presents us with the portrait of a wicked infant in which she fails to show the connections between the infant's violent feelings (such as hate, envy, and greed) and the unconscious of the parents, as well as the humiliation, mistreatment, and narcissistic wounds the latter inflict on the child." p.60

She maintained that the 'drive' theory made a child responsible for her emotions without the parent's contribution being taken into account and suggested that the child's reactions resulted instead from, "The impossibility of articulating his or her strong feelings caused by traumatic experiences." p.303 She suggested that these feelings then became symbolised in a child's, and later an adult's, behaviour and formed the unconscious motivation underlying this behaviour.

Reeves (1977) suggested that the parent's contribution to the child's feelings had been considered in psycho-analysis:

"Was it appropriate to consider the pathology of any child exclusively in terms of his instinctual drives and unconscious phantasies, without reference to external factors? Could a child ever be treated successfully in isolation? What might the parent's unconscious wishes and impulses have contributed to the child's disturbance in the first place, and how would these be mobilised at the prospect of the child's possible recovery? Neither Anna Freud or Melanie Klein had ignored such factors. They faced difficulties however, in providing a satisfactory way of combining the necessary conditions for successful treatment of the child with simultaneous provision of support and guidance for the parents ... The most common solution to this difficulty was to provide the parents with concurrent treatment or support, usually by a psycho-

analytically trained colleague or skilled social worker."  
p.270

Therapy for children has traditionally been separated from the process of parenting. There are several factors emerging which suggest that it may be advantageous to work with parents and children together which are discussed in the implications for the current research at the end of the section.

### Concept of Projection

Psycho-analysis described projection as a major way in which the individual defended against unconscious material that, because of its content, was too overwhelming to allow into conscious awareness. Freud (1948) described the process:

"... a shaping of behaviour towards such inner excitations, as bring with them an overplus of 'pain'. There will be a tendency to treat them as though they were acting not from within but from without, in order for it to be possible to apply against them the defensive measures of the barrier against stimuli. This is the origin of projection ..." p.33

Salzberger-Wittenberg (1970) explained that "Splitting makes it possible to maintain one kind of attitude and feeling at a time, leaving whatever contradicts it out of our conscious mind, and projecting it onto someone else." p.62 She further explained that this was an unconscious process:

"The more the destructive feelings are pushed out the more the outside (and others) come to be felt as a place filled with them. Not that there is any awareness that such projection has taken place - it is an unconscious phantasy 'action' of which only the result comes into consciousness." p.53

Psycho-analysis traditionally focused on the child's projections onto the mother. Klein maintained that this process began at birth at which time the boundaries of self and others were unclear. She claimed that the infant would experience



certain uncomfortable feelings as originating externally. Bion (1962) maintained that:

"The patient, even at the outset of life, has contact with reality sufficient to enable him to act in a way that engenders in the mother feelings that he does not want, or which he wants the mother to have." p.31

Hoxter (1977) suggested that:

"If the baby is alarmed or distressed, what he does about this is to arouse alarm or distress in the mother. He causes the mother to experience in her own feelings what he cannot yet bear to keep inside himself. And the mother has to cope with these feelings of alarm and distress in herself, before she is able to respond appropriately and give relief to the baby." p.215

However, these feelings may also be overwhelming to the adult and may be projected, in turn, onto the child. This manifestation is a need to be parented, to have someone constantly available to project feelings onto. This need to be parented can unconsciously motivate a parent's behaviour towards the child.

Daws (1989) referred to Frailberg (1980) and explained that it is the parent who cannot remember his childhood feelings of pain and anxiety who will need to inflict his pain upon his child (p.182)

This process of parental projection does not appear to occur always in response to a child's feelings of alarm and distress. Miller (1987) maintained that projections could be made onto the child's everyday behaviour:

"Even when the needs a child expresses are quite harmless and normal, she can be perceived by her parents as demanding, tyrannical, and threatening if the parents have suffered under a tyrannical father, for example, without being able to defend themselves against him." p.269

She seemed to be suggesting that unexpressed, unconscious feelings manifest in parent's behaviour towards their children.

She also suggested that cultural child rearing practices had their origin in the parent's need to defend themselves with the defence mechanism of projection.

"The pedagogical conviction that one must bring a child into line from the outset has its origin in the need to split off the disquieting parts of the inner self and project them onto an available object. The child's great plasticity, flexibility, defencelessness, and availability makes it the ideal object for this projection." p.91

Miller (1984) maintained that projections were made onto those weaker and more vulnerable, especially children, but she suggested that client and worker relationships were also vulnerable to this type of exploitation.

"If we have never lived through this despair and the resulting narcissistic rage, and have therefore never been able to work through it, we can be in danger of transferring this situation, which would have remained unconscious, onto our patients. It would not be surprising if our unconscious anger should find no better way than once more to make use of a weaker person ..." p.39

She suggested that clients could become vulnerable, not only as a result of their own unconscious processes, but also because of the need of the worker to disown parts of herself and make someone else responsible for them.

### Concept of Transference

Freud formulated the concept of transference to explain the process whereby feelings associated with past relationships with a significant person, usually a parent, are transferred into the present situation. The individual then relates to others as if they were this parent. Freud (1914) connected this process of transference with unconscious motivation. He stated:

"We soon perceive that the transference is itself only a piece of repetition, and that the repetition is a transference of the forgotten past ... onto all other aspects of the current

situation. p.151

Hoxter (1977) further explained this process:

"Gradually it was recognised that the 'transference relationship' was also not just a recovered memory of how matters had been between the child and his parents in the past. It was rather a dynamic and current reliving of feelings and phantasies, which in early childhood may never have been demonstrated or acknowledged ... "p.206

Boston (1983) described the transference relationship in practice:

"In those sessions, a state of mind was being forcefully communicated by being shown, acted out and repeated, not just talked about, so that I could know through experience what it felt like to be on the receiving end." p.65

Freud (1914) maintained that the analysis of the transference was the most fertile ground for therapy:

"The main instrument, however, for curbing the patient's compulsion to repeat and for turning it into a motive for remembering lies in the handling of the transference. We render the compulsion harmless, and indeed useful, by giving it the right to assert itself in a definite field." p.154

It appeared that by focusing on emotions associated with the transference, emotions connected with experiences could be brought into conscious awareness leading to a possible change in behaviour.

Boston suggested that "The therapist has to be prepared to accept the degree of pain projected and to resist the pull to react to the hostility in a retaliatory or defensive way." p.61

Psycho-analysis highlighted a process of counter-transference whereby the worker's emotional attitude towards the client linked back to his/her own early experiences with significant adults. Psycho-analytic theory suggested that the unconscious motivation of the worker would then influence the

therapeutic relationship. Boston (1983) described how the transference relationship could be used therapeutically:

"She had tested my capacities to the full in the months before; she had made me experience what it felt like to be dropped, kept out and treated as an object of scorn. I had survived her attack and I think this had enabled her to let me begin to share the pain with her, and so perhaps to begin to bear an acknowledgement of it inside herself." p.17

Containing the emotions associated with the transference appeared to lead to therapeutic change. The concept of containment is discussed in the next section.

### Concepts of Containment and Integration

The concept of containment is described by Boston (1983):

"Following the thinking of Wilfred Bion (1962) we could see this function of the therapist as being like that of a mother who can be receptive to the anxieties communicated to her by her infant, 'the nameless dreads', and by her understanding of 'reverie' and response, can make these unthinkable anxieties more meaningful and bearable to the baby. This important mental function of the mother Bion calls 'containing' ..." p.9

Salzberger-Wittenberg (1970) suggested that: "What the client takes back into himself is the possibility of a difficult, despairing, anxious part of himself being held by the worker. This is the role that the good mother provides for her child." p.143  
Containment forms a 'parenting' function whereby the client could project anxiety onto the worker without the worker becoming overwhelmed by this anxiety. Salzberger-Wittenberg also pointed to conceptual development as an important aspect of containment:

"... additional to containment of mental pain there may be a second factor. That is the parental capacity, not only to care and worry, but to think about, to clarify, differentiate, give a vague feeling a name and link it to what is meaningful, and so modulate pain." p.145

This aspect of containment perhaps described the defence mechanism of intellectualisation and the links between emotional and intellectual processes that were discussed at the beginning of this section. The containing relationship can provide an opportunity for emotion associated with early experiences to be explored. Miller (1984) stated:

"If ... feelings associated with the child's first attachment figures can be experienced, they will no longer need to be abreacted in the repetition compulsion with substitute objects ... if the impotent hatred of early childhood can be experienced, destructive and self destructive behaviour will come to an end." p.177

Daws (1989) suggested:

"Parents with deprived backgrounds have a good chance of doing better with their own children, if they can remember their childhood clearly. They need to be able to recall the feelings about what happened, not just the factual circumstances. Those that may be doomed to reproduce the behaviour of their own parents are those who have no memory of their childhood and those who idealise it." p.177

Gestalt therapy also discussed integration and containment. Perls (1973) suggested that, "In a neurosis, the parts of the personality are all alienated. If you identify with these alienated parts, we can now get ready to assimilate disowned parts and grow again and become more whole." p.187 He described split-off parts of the personality that potentially would become projected onto others. He suggested that dream interpretation was the most effective way to become re-united with fragmented aspects of the self: "every bit of the dream, every other person, everything, every mood is part of our fractionalized self." p.178

He recommended that the individual could re-identify with alienated parts of themselves by identifying with each symbol in

the dream and reconnecting with the feelings associated with it.

"Even if you take a dream and reidentify with a few of the items, each time you assimilate one item you grow - you increase your potential. You begin to change." p.180

In conclusion, the processes of education and therapy appeared to be in essence of a similar nature. The process of change and development in both appeared to depend on the conscientization of experience based on a process of the observation of and reflection on the first hand experiences of emotional attitudes, thoughts and actions. The developmental processes of the infant were briefly explored to look for links between emotional and intellectual development.

The child's initial feeling experience seems to be centred around the anxiety of separation that leads to an intellectual awareness of self, others and objects. The child's inner world and external reality merge in the formation of symbols, which perhaps link and form concepts.

Inner experience may become repressed from conscious awareness and come unconsciously to motivate of behaviour. The nature of repressed emotions and thoughts according to Freud is connected with ideas associated with the Oedipus complex. Other theories suggest that it is the thoughts and emotions associated with childhood trauma that become repressed. This inner experience, if it is too painful and overwhelming becomes split from conscious awareness and may be projected onto others. Children and other relatively powerless people are especially vulnerable to the projections of others.

Experiencing the anxiety of this inner world within a containing relationship may enable integration to take place in

the individual.

### Implications for Current Research

The process of development appears to depend on observation of and reflection on the first hand experiences of emotional attitudes, thoughts and actions. It was decided to base the current research on joint working with parents and children rather than with either in isolation as has traditionally been the case in therapy. Joint working would perhaps give a context for this type of development to take place.

Educational intervention programmes have involved both parents and children but have isolated the child's intellectual development from her emotional development. The current research aimed to integrate the understanding of parents' emotional and intellectual processes.

The child's development appears to be dependent on the process of symbol formation. The current research aimed to enable the parents and researcher to focus on the child's symbol formation in the process of observation of and reflection on the child's behaviour. This process would perhaps result in parents developing heightened awareness of the importance of the child's formation of symbols to her development.

In addition, the researcher aimed to recognise the parents' and child's inner world of unconscious motivation and its manifestation in their behaviour. The defence mechanism of projection would perhaps become apparent in the behaviour of parents and children. The researcher would attempt to provide containment for parents' and children' anxieties expressed through unconscious motivation. It was thought that parents

may wish to observe, reflect on and form concepts concerning the content of their inner world and its manifestation in their first hand experience.

The development of transference relationships was also a possibility in the current research where the parent would actively relive emotions associated with her early relationships, within the context of the partnership relationship with the researcher. There would be an opportunity for the observation of and reflection on the emotional relationship between parent and researcher if transference became a reality in the partnership between parent and researcher.



#### **SECTION 4: CONCEPT OF VULNERABLE FAMILIES**

This section discusses the concept of vulnerable families and begins by briefly reviewing the literature on conflict and violence in the family. The concept of conflict is then discussed in more depth. There follows a short summary on the analysis and the prevention of sexual exploitation. The section ends with a description of aspects of the Children Act (1989) which are relevant to this study.

The concept of 'vulnerable families' includes the concepts of conflict and violence. Kellmer Pringle (1975) suggested: "A child from a discordant home is liable himself to become emotionally disturbed or antisocial ... "p.86 She went on to state:

"Parental hostility has a particularly harmful effect on a child's later development, especially on his ability to give, as an adult, unselfish loving care to his own children. Thus parental hostility perpetuates itself from one generation to another in what is literally an extremely vicious circle."  
p.152

The NSPCC (1976) suggested a link between conflict, violence and child abuse: "We cannot say with any certainty how child abuse differs from the more generalised harsh treatment of children which is a feature of our cultural pattern, except by degree." (p.210) Jones et al (1982) elaborated this point:

"There is no doubt that our society, more than most other European societies and other cultures, places a high premium on the infliction of pain as necessary or inevitable in the rearing of children. It seems probable that this creates a context in which child abuse is more likely." p.27

He quoted Gil (1973) "So long as we condone corporal punishment of children, we must admit we are willing to place

some children in danger of being badly hurt." p.26

In looking for the causes of conflict between parents and children where children had been badly hurt, Kempe & Kempe (1978) found that:

"Most often during the first three years it is the normal developmental milestones, poorly understood and accepted by the parents, that account for most of the trigger crises in battering. Crying seems to be by far the most upsetting behaviour, even though it is just the normal way the baby signals his need for attention. For many abusive parents, crying arouses intolerable anxiety and must be stopped ... Toilet training accidents are probably the second highest immediate cause of abusive attacks and ... seem to produce the greatest frustration in the parent who feels he can't maintain control." p.42-43

These comments link with the psycho-analytic concept of projection and the parent's need to be parented, discussed in the last section. Kempe and Kempe suggested that: "One of the most promising ways of working with parents of children in their first three years is by directly observing and changing interactions between parent and child." p.103 However, it was not clear from their account what 'changing interactions' meant in practice.

In looking at which families may be vulnerable to conflict and violence, Okell Jones (1982) suggested that: "... families who face high levels of frustration and stress and have fewer resources with which to cope may be particularly prone to conflict and violence." p.17

Okell Jones appeared to be referring to working-class families, a proportion of who are seen to be especially vulnerable, and who have traditionally been the subject of intervention by the 'caring' professions.

Walkerdine and Lucey (1989) explored the concepts of conflict and discipline in working- and middle-class families.

They re-examined the transcripts of the research project carried out by Tizard and Hughes that was mentioned in the first section of this chapter.

They explained the philosophy behind Tizard and Hughes' research:

"Over many years, a body of work condemning working-class child-rearing practices has grown up, but now Tizard and Hughes, through their study, were seeking an alternative explanation of what had previously been seen as 'alien' and 'unnatural' practices." p.21

Tizard and Hughes sought to challenge the deficit perception of working-class child-rearing practices which suggested that working-class child-rearing practices were 'equal but different' from middle-class practices.

However, Walkerdine and Lucey criticised this statement and asserted that: "We want to insist that middle- and working-class families are not 'equal but different'. They are grossly unequal." p.9 The way in which they suggested that inequality manifested in child-rearing practices is discussed later in this section.

Walkerdine and Lucey also challenged the concept of parental involvement in intervention programmes:

"The whole discourse of parental involvement assumes that teachers must teach parents (almost always mothers) how to prepare and help their children in the right ways. The target is almost always black and white working-class parents. There is no sense of listening to and learning from the parents - for they are already defined as wrong and reactionary." p.181

Walkerdine and Lucey criticised the deficit model of intervention in which working-class child-rearing practices were seen as inadequate and deficient, not least because of their management of conflict. They suggested that the concept of the

'sensitive mother' underlay the intervention programmes and maintained that this concept was developed through the assertions of various scientific research programmes. "Some studies claimed that some mothers did a good job but that others, notably working-class ones, were not so sensitive." p.59 Walkerdine and Lucey discussed the development of meaning in defining the concept of the sensitive mother:

"She is sensitive to ... the child's primitive attempts to communicate, by cries, gestures and so forth. She interprets these and shapes them into language. Meaning is therefore said to be produced 'intersubjectively,' that is, between the mother and the child." p.99

However, Walkerdine and Lucey suggested that meanings come from other sources in addition to the 'here and now' of everyday experience.

"... the mother does not make 'meanings' for her daughter. Meaning adheres in the discourses, historically defined ... in which mothers and daughters find themselves and try to make some sense of their situation." p.170

They discussed concepts of control and discipline in further defining the concept of the sensitive mother:

"The second feature of the sensitive mother is the way she regulates her children. Essentially there should be no overt regulation; regulation should go underground: no power battles, no insensitive sanctions as these would interfere with the child's illusion that she is the source of her wishes ... "p.24

They elaborated this point and explained how this thinking could lead to the working-class mother becoming pathologised:

"This creates a fantasy scenario lived out because the mother must appear to meet her daughter's needs and the daughter must maintain a fantasy of omnipotent power to control the mother. If then the daughter expresses powerlessness and aggression towards her mother it is because power has become visible. This ... is interpreted as pathology, with the view that harmony is both possible and realisable." p.147

They suggested that the middle-class mother attempted to do away with separation anxiety by creating an illusion that the child controlled the mother. They further suggested:

"There is no way that ... power conflicts will not arise, that they will be absent. The secret of their apparent disappearance, however, lies in how that conflict is dealt with; how particular strategies for dealing with power and conflict make it seem as if they had simply gone away. One of these strategies we have called 'intellectualisation,' a phenomenon we noted particularly in, the middle-class transcripts." p.105

In the last section, intellectualisation, or concept formation was described as a defence against separation anxiety. Walkerdine and Lucey suggested that the middle-class parents in the Tizard and Hughes research project intellectualised conflicts and suppressed the pain of the realisation of powerlessness and created an apparent democratic relationship. Walkerdine and Lucey continued:

"... we claim that many working-class mothers do not regulate their daughters in the 'democratic' mode. They make power and conflict visible and painful. For this they are pathologised ... Secondly, power and conflict are not dispersed or eliminated in the democratic kitchen, they are suppressed. Harmony is on the surface - beneath reasonableness lie the passions." p.103

Walkerdine and Lucey outlined how they saw the manifestation of concepts of powerlessness and inequality in the relationship of working-class mothers and children. They suggested that working-class mothers had a different set of meanings to pass onto their children from middle class mothers.

"... the working-class mother who 'lacks' also knows a lot ... She prepares her (daughter) for the world as she sees it, but this is a frightening lesson and not a cosy reassurance." p.181

Walkerdine and Lucey suggested that the reality of

powerlessness and inequality were lessons taught by working-class mothers. They further suggested that:

"... these working-class mothers ... know that you cannot have what you want. They do not believe that they are free or have access to plenty. They are poor, often live in bad housing, they work hard, the world is hard. They must teach this to their daughters and they do so often, by making their power visible. They stop, they say no, they regulate overtly." p.138

Walkerdine and Lucey maintained that working-class mothers passed on the reality of powerlessness and inequality to their children. Perhaps the high degree of powerlessness in the lives of most working-class mothers is projected onto their children, who become containers for these overwhelming feelings, as described in the last section. The concept of powerlessness appears to be much more far reaching than the deficit model of the insensitive mother allows for. Highlighting working-class mothers' child-rearing practices as pathological could possibly perpetuate powerlessness and ultimately accentuate the projection of powerlessness onto their children. Physical abuse could be a manifestation, or perhaps projection, of extreme powerlessness.

In addition, the suppressed anxiety of middle-class professional carers could possibly find an outlet in projection onto the child rearing practices of the working classes as suggested in the last section.

The partnership model of intervention could offer the possibility for an alternative to the deficit model that is challenged in the work of Walkerdine and Lucey. Empowerment of working-class mothers through exploration of aspects of their lives and the lives of their children that they see as a priority, could perhaps

offer an alternative in addressing these very complex issues connected with the concept of vulnerable families. Walkerdine and Lucey described potential areas for exploration:

"... the problems of what people remember and how they interpret situations, mixing fact and fantasy, the defences against pain, the push of wishing, hoping, desiring ... "p.45

Walkerdine and Lucey asserted that working- and middle-class women were not equal but different, they were grossly unequal, the differences between them being the inequality of their power and knowledge. Perhaps this is the paradox of parental involvement schemes. The only approach which seems to be effective is the partnership approach but there appears to be a huge tension between the concepts of 'partnership' and 'inequality'.

The concept of vulnerable families therefore incorporates the concepts of power and powerlessness which may also be a feature of sexual exploitation.

Anna Freud (1981) emphasised the devastation of sexual exploitation to the child:

"Where the chances of harming a child's normal developmental growth are concerned, it ranks higher than abandonment, neglect, physical maltreatment or any other form of abuse." p.34

Porter (1990) highlighted the importance of the early recognition of sexual exploitation:

"... professionals are encouraged to recognise the sexual abuse of children, and to respond to the minimal signs, in a way that will ensure the safety of the child and initiate therapeutic work with the family." p.(xix)

Minimal signs could include evidence from a child's symbolic play, conversation or behaviour. Porter indicated the emotional trauma that can result from sexual exploitation: "Even

when cases are reported the consequences can still be devastating for the victim and family." p.76, and emphasised the importance of reassuring the child. "It is vital to convey to the child that she or he is believed, that the child has done nothing wrong and is not responsible for what has happened." p.69

Porter suggested that most children do not have sufficient knowledge to resist sexual exploitation: "... uncertainty about normal behaviour is a factor in a child's victimisation." p.109

Some theories adopt a Freudian view of sexual development and interpret sexual exploitation as an exploitation of the child's early sexual interest connected with the Oedipus complex. For example, Mrazek (1981) emphasised the importance of how a family subsequently handles this phase of sexual interest.

Nelson (1987) criticised the Oedipal complex as an interpretation of children's early attachment behaviour. She maintained that Oedipal theories do not take account of the gap in power and authority between parent and child and the gap in knowledge and understanding about sex. She suggested that Freudians had imposed a language of adult sexual experience on the behaviour of children. She also pointed out the origins of the Freudian theory of childhood sexuality undermined its authenticity:

"... it is quite possible that Freud was simply wrong about childhood sexual fantasies ... especially when we recall the highly dubious starting point for the theory, his refusal to believe patients' accounts of childhood abuse." p.43

She suggested that sexual exploitation was an; "... exploitation of children's trust and obedience by irresponsible adults. Incest is the abuse of power." She elaborated the concept



of power in sexual exploitation: "Power in most families is unequal: where a father is authoritarian or physically abusing his wife and children, it may be grossly so." p.83

Forward and Buck (1981) also described the relationship of sexual exploitation to the concept of power: "... they use sex with their young daughters as a vain attempt to satisfy a variety of emotional needs ... Sometimes to defend against feelings of inadequacy, a father commits incest as an exercise of power ... "p.27

Nelson suggested the prevention of sexual exploitation would best be achieved in the following way:

"Encouraging conditions where men would be deterred from committing incest in the first place, through fear of instant exposure. This means creating an atmosphere where survivors and their mothers feel safe to seek professional help quickly without fear, embarrassment or shame." p.95

She further suggested that:

"The greatest priority is prevention and deterrence ... we must help create a climate where sexual abuse meets instant exposure and universal social condemnation." p.97 and, "We must help create a climate where incestuous abuse will not be worth the risk ... "p.109

The Children Act (1989) seeks to address the issues discussed so far in this section. The tension between the need to protect children and the damage that can be caused in this process is addressed in the Act.

"The act seeks to protect children both from the harm which can arise from failures or abuse within the family and from the harm which can be caused by unwarranted intervention in their family life. There is a tension between those objectives which the Act seeks to regulate so as to optimise the overall protection provided for children in general." [HMSO (1989A) p.5]

The most significant statement in the Children Act for this

research involves the emphasis on the provision of services to prevent the need to obtain care or supervision orders in respect of children in need. The Children Act states:

"It shall be the general duty of every local authority ...

(a) to safeguard and promote the welfare of children within their area who are in need, and

(b) so far as is consistent with that duty, to promote the upbringing of such children by their families,

by providing a range and level of services appropriate to those children's needs." [HMSO (1989B) Part 111, 17 (1)]

The Children Act introduced a new concept of children in need.

"For the purpose of this Part a child shall be taken to be in need if:

- a he is unlikely to achieve or maintain, or to have the opportunity of achieving or maintaining, a reasonable standard of health or development without the provision for him of services by a local authority under this part of the act
- b his health or development is likely to be significantly impaired, or further impaired, without the provision for him of such services
- c he is disabled

"development" means physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development;

"health" means physical or mental health. "[HMSO (1989B) Part 111, 17 (10)]

The Children Act stipulates the double duty of local authorities to promote the welfare of children in need and to promote the upbringing of such children in need by their families wherever possible. A key provision is the duty to reduce the likelihood for children in need to be in care or brought before the courts. The Children Act states:

"Every local authority shall take reasonable steps designed to reduce the need to bring proceedings for care or supervision orders with respect to children within the area." [HMSO (1989B) Schedule 2 7(a)]

The Children Act contains comprehensive legislation concerning the implementation of care orders and supervision orders for children.

"... to make an order, the court must be satisfied that the child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm which is attributable to the care he is receiving from his parents ... The definition of harm includes sexual abuse and forms of ill treatment which are not physical." [NCB (1989) p.2]

Issues of powerlessness, conflict and violence, and sexual exploitation will need to be addressed in connection with vulnerable families to ensure that the Children Act recommendations are followed and the need is reduced to bring children before the courts.

The Children Act states that local authorities will have a duty to provide services to respond to the needs of children in need and their families:

"... the local authority have a duty to provide for children in need and a power to provide more generally, with help by way of training and advice to those caring for the children." [NCB (1989) p.2]

The Children Act also suggests that services should be available in the form of 'guidance' and 'counselling' for families of children in need. The Act recommends that family centres should be provided for the day care of children and support for parents and carers of children in need.

The Children Act further stipulates that, "Inter-agency co-operation will be required both in providing services to children in need and in the protection of children." [NCB (1989) p.1]

A multidisciplinary approach will be required by local authorities to meet the needs of children in need and their

families according to the Children Act.

In conclusion, the concept of vulnerable families is a multi-faceted, extremely complex concept, incorporating other concepts such as conflict and violence, power and powerlessness, and sexual exploitation. Attempts to define inadequacies or deficits in vulnerable families may further compound the factors creating vulnerability. The partnership model may provide opportunities for the joint exploration of these factors. The Children Act (1989) creates a new definition of children in need and makes recommendations for services to attempt to meet such needs.

The concept of vulnerable families underpinned the selection of families for the current research. The research aimed to focus teaching resources on powerless and vulnerable families in the community, in line with recommendations in the Children Act (1989). This was to promote the development of children in need and to reduce the need to bring proceedings for care or supervision orders.

The next chapter describes the methodology of the current research.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **DESIGN OF THE STUDY**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The previous chapter reviewing the literature provided a theoretical basis on which the conceptual framework for the research that is introduced in this chapter is based. It should be noted that there was development in the researcher's own thinking concerning interpretations of the data. The data was initially interpreted with the schema of parents' conceptual development. The schemas of parents' perspective changes and the development of new behaviour supporting the child's development were then added. The schema of parents' projection onto the child was later added to interpret data that did not appear to fit with existing schemas. Other psycho-analytic concepts and concepts of powerlessness and inequality were finally introduced and combined with the data to form additional theory generated by the research.

This chapter begins by describing the development of the conceptual framework that evolved from the research. It describes the research sample and explains the data collection methods of joint observations of the child by the parents and researcher. Methods of analysis and evaluation of the research are described, taking the observations as units of analysis on which the main conceptual framework is built. The chapter concludes with a section on possible bias in the research and describes attempts to handle this through reflexivity and triangulation.

The main conceptual framework which was initially used to analyse the research evolved from the research data, the review of the literature and through consultation with other professionals, and is introduced below;

## **CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE RESEARCH**

The data collected in the research was examined closely and organised into a conceptual framework that is outlined below.

### **1. Formation of Concepts of Child Development**

The research aimed to investigate the process and pace of parents' conscientization of the child's behaviour and development, which the data and literature suggested could be a process of concept formation.

This interpretative schema suggested that parents could extend and develop their mental structures or concepts. This could be achieved through an interplay between the perceptual data received in the process of observation of the child and reflection on the data in partnership with the researcher.

Observation of and reflection on the child's behaviour may or may not have challenged a parent's previously held interpretation about the child's behaviour. Their existing interpretation may have been modified to be consistent with the child's observable behaviour. The research study explored the process by which parents' conceptual structures concerning the child's development could be extended and/or modified during the period of study.

A subsidiary schema emerged from the main conceptual framework. This was that perceptual development was an

essential aspect of the development of parents' concepts.

The research investigated the interpretative schema that parents' observation skills developed over the research period. There was an assumption that parents extended and developed observation skills and went through a process of perceptual development in the process of the research.

## 2. Perspective Changes

The second main interpretative schema suggested that perspective changes occurred in the process of the extension and/or modification of parents' concepts. There appeared to be an interplay between the reworking of perceptual data and the potential for seeing the child's behaviour differently. Perspective change appeared to take place when a concept was generalised to new situations.

## 3. Development of New Behaviour

The third interpretative schema stated that parents' conceptual development, the generalisation of concepts and resulting perspective change perhaps created new forms of behaviour towards the child, which were supportive of the child's development. The research explored the schema that parents' concepts underlay and directed their behaviour towards the child.

## 4. Projection

The fourth interpretative schema was that the parent's interpretation of the child's behaviour also contained the defence mechanism of projection, whereby the parent projected fragmented aspects of his/her self onto the child. Projection is a

psycho-analytic concept describing the defence against overwhelming anxiety whereby this anxiety is split from the conscious self and be unconsciously projected onto others.

Work undertaken in the study enabled the parent to articulate projections and use the researcher as a container for the anxiety expressed in projection. Boston (1977) explained the containment process as one in which anxieties are contained in the same way in which they would normally be by a parent responding to the child's anxiety.

Emotional development was seen to be inseparable from the process of containment of projected anxiety. It formed a subsidiary schema. Emotional development in the parent perhaps occurred through a process of the researcher holding and containing the anxiety expressed in projection.

The four main interpretative schemas became the theoretical framework initially developed to interpret the research data. That is, the development of mental structures, the formation of new perspectives and new forms of behaviour towards the child, and the defence mechanism of projection.

To sum up, the interpretative framework underpinning the research suggested that, within the partnership relationship between parent and preschool teacher, new concepts were formed which created new motives for action. Parents' interpretations may have contained the defence mechanism of projection. Partnership facilitated the containment of the anxiety expressed in projection that may have resulted in emotional development.

However, it was not the intention of the researcher to assert that this conceptual framework was a conclusion on the understanding and organisation of the research material, only



that it seemed an appropriate framework for establishing the most plausible account that might be offered at the time of writing. Indeed, theory continued to be generated throughout the research and new interpretative concepts were introduced, in particular in the writing up of the results and discussion chapters of the study.

This section described the main conceptual framework for interpreting the research data and described the process by which further theory was generated from the research. The next section describes the action research methods used in the design, data collection and evaluation of the research.

## **METHODOLOGY - JUSTIFICATION AND DESIGN**

This section begins with a justification for the action research methods of the research and then reviews the action research literature. The nature of action research is defined, followed by an explanation of the build up of an interpretative framework in action research. The weakness and strengths of the approach are discussed concerning the evaluation of action research and issues of knowledge, power and confidentiality.

A range of methodologies may have been possible for this type of research study. Techniques, for example, attitude measurement and tests for perceptual gains, could have been used. However, the social and domestic circumstances of the families involved in the research made these methods inappropriate. It was decided that the research methods should be within the range of understanding of the participants and that they should not participate in procedures of such complexity to make them incomprehensible to them. Also, it was not the

researcher's intention to test or measure the parents' understanding and interpretations of the child's behaviour at any fixed time. Rather, the aim of the research was to record and analyse the processes of development.

The action research model was described by Stenhouse (1984). Although this research differed in many respects from the action research of the professional teacher in the classroom, the main ingredients of Stenhouse's analysis were present in this research. He stated:

"... curriculum research is concerned with understanding the interplay of conceptions of knowledge, attempts to express them in the art of teaching and the social and physical contexts of those attempts." p.78

The social context of the current research was the parents' homes. The teaching methods used were observation of and discussion of the child's behaviour with knowledge from literature and consultation with professionals introduced when appropriate.

Glaser and Strauss (1967) pointed to the essence of action research as the discovery of theory from data or 'grounded theory'. They suggested "... as the best approach an initial, systematic discovery of the theory from the data of social research." p.3

Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) described this further: "The task becomes cultural description; anything more is rejected as imposing the researcher's own arbitrary and simplistic categories on a complex reality." p.9 They went on to suggest that:

"... all social research takes the form of participant observation: it involves participating in the social world, in whatever role, and reflecting on the products of that participation." p.16

The current research aimed to generate theory about the developmental process of parenting from data collected during participant observation.

Cohen and Manion (1980) highlighted the observation, discussion, data collection and evaluation aspects of action research. He stated that:

"Action research relies chiefly on observations and behavioural data ... This implies that over the period of a project information is collected, shared, discussed, recorded in some way, evaluated and acted upon, and that from time to time, this sequence of events forms the basis of reviews of progress." p.225

His emphasis on review of progress brought in the importance of collaboration with others in the action research process that is discussed in the last section of this chapter.

The data collected in action research is drawn together and there is a search for commonalities that are tentatively put together to form an interpretative framework. In the action research model of the current research study, the conceptual framework, described in the last section, evolved in this way.

Hopkins (1985) described action research as an approach in which: "... one attempts to understand a social situation and to derive hypotheses from that effort of appreciation." (p.31)

Stenhouse (1983) supported this method of concept formation. He stressed that it is impractical to specify learning outcomes before learning experiences. He suggested that the teacher should 'cast himself in the role of learner'.

Burgess (1985) also suggested that interpretations could be formulated and reformulated. Concepts were modified as the collection and analysis of data proceeded. In the formulation and reformulation of categories Glaser and Strauss (1967) suggested

that:

"... categories must be readily (not forcibly) applicable to and indicated by the data under study ... they must be meaningfully relevant to and be able to explain the behaviour under study." p.3

Cohen and Manion (1980) also supported the view that the interpretative framework should evolve during the process of the research. He stated that:

"Successful handling of individual accounts therefore requires the researcher to know the ... content extremely well and to work towards the gradual emergence of tentative interpretative schemata which he then modifies, confirms or falsifies as the research continues." p.248

Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) described the use of interpretative schemas:

"...theoretical ideas begin to give us much more knowledge about how a particular aspect of social process is organised and perhaps even why events occur in the patterned ways that they do." p.177

The technique of progressive focusing is used in Action Research to highlight important issues as they arise during the research. Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) described the process:

"Progressive focusing has two analytically distinct components. First, over time the research problem is developed and transformed, and eventually its scope is clarified and delimited and its internal structure explored." p.175

Progressive focusing was used in this research to focus on the different categories that evolved from the data.

Another aspect of action research is a joint exploration of the meaning perspectives of the researcher and participants. This involves the collection of and discussion of data that is both meaningful and relevant to the researcher and participants.

Stenhouse (1984) explained that action research requires a

creative grasp of the subject or object of the teaching. Cohen and Manion (1980) had a similar view on the importance of meaning perspectives in action research. He stated that action research concentrates upon the meaning system.

Burgess (1985) also stated that the researcher attempted to obtain the participant's account of the situation to see the way they attribute meanings in social situations. He saw action research as having a view to understanding the way in which participants perceive situations. Hustler (1986) stated the importance of creating:

"...learning situations in which adults and children can go about exploring one another's meanings and making mutual sense of what is going on." (p.8)

The aim of this research project was for teacher and parents to share meaning perspectives and to gain insights, through observations and reflection, into the meaning perspectives of the child.

A strength in the action research approach is the formation of an understanding of the processes of development. Rowland (1986) explained that observation of children enables us to begin to understand their activity. He stated "... we can see children as thinkers, with ideas they want to explore and as having purposes and intentions that underlie their activity." (p.25)

Action research has the potential of facilitating the development of awareness of those concerned with the care of children. The researcher viewed this as an important ethical consideration of the research, that the participants stand to gain in awareness and understanding from their input into the research, as well as the researcher.

Action research literature stated that understanding a child's perspective is a complicated process. Rowland (1986) pointed out:

"It takes a considerable effort of the imagination to empathise with young children sufficiently to begin to understand their perspective on the world as expressed by their activity ..." (p.26)

This can be seen as a difficulty in the action research approach. A difficulty in communicating this understanding also arises. Anning (1986) pointed to communication as a major issue that the action research movement must confront. She stated:

"I perceive ... major issues that the action research movement must confront ... (one is) the formulation of a pedagogic language for meaningful discussions about the process of teaching and learning." (p.65)

Action research focuses on relationships that brings with it problems of understanding other's perspectives and the communication of these perspectives. Elliott (1984) pointed out that action research methodology expresses an ethical relationship between 'outsider' and 'insider,' the researcher and the participants.

Initially, participants involved in the current research had control over the data offered to the researcher but it was unlikely that they had a clear idea of the process they were participating in. Ball (1985) highlighted this problem. Joint evaluation of the research data, between parent and researcher was introduced to involve the parents in forming interpretations of the data with a view to increasing their understanding of the research process.

How much control the research study participants should have over the use made of their words and actions is an issue under examination in the action research literature.

Adelman (1984) pointed out the importance of reporting "... in a way that the evaluated understand and realise as pertinent to their practices." (p.4)

Collaboration with parents was central to the joint evaluation process in the current research. Attempts were made to establish categories with participants that accurately described their thinking processes. This indicated that the evaluation was relevant to the parents in terms of their own meaning perspectives. Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) pointed out the importance of the participants' own meanings:

"Situated vocabularies and folk taxonomies incorporate the typification and recipes for action that constitute the stock of knowledge and practical reasoning of the members of any given culture." p.153

The categories formulated from this research data became a collaborative effort between researcher and parents, where possible. Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) pointed out that "... observers' analytic categories and members' categories are normally interwoven." p.225 This view of the importance of the relevance of interpretations to participants was further stated in action research literature.

Rudduck (1985) quoted Stenhouse in asking whether it was legitimate to express interpretations of data in terms of theories not in the consciousness of the participants.

However, Cohen and Manion (1980) quoted Menzel in arguing that if participants' meanings were used exclusively in formulating interpretations and hypotheses, then a whole range of potential explanations would be ignored. Most behaviour could be assigned various meanings that may be equally valid. Interpretations must respect the meanings of participants and

researchers. However, a power relationship evolves when a researcher imposes his/her interpretations upon participants' behaviour.

Adelman (1984) stated that at some point in the evaluation, contradictions become patterned and the unequal distribution of knowledge and power becomes clear. Analysing and evaluating the data of the current research clearly brought up issues of the balance of power between researcher and parents and the unequal distribution of knowledge.

Regarding knowledge, Stenhouse (1984) stated that action research required: "... a profound curiosity or spirit of enquiry into the problems of making the cultural resources of our society available to people..." (p.84)

Throughout the data collection process in the current research an attempt was made to understand the meaning perspectives of the participants. Attempts were also made to introduce knowledge of child development by providing an intellectual scaffolding which parents could use to structure and understand their observations, if they chose to do so.

Regarding power, Pring (1984) argued that the evaluator has entered into a position of trust with the participants that put considerable constraints upon the interpretations that were made. Respect for the other person was very important, a recognition was essential that the participant is a centre of conscious life and feeling and there must be a determination to protect and support that life in the evaluation process.

Studying and understanding parents' unconscious motivation in their interpretations of the child's behaviour and respect for parents' confidentiality about their own lives are issues



that cannot be seen outside a context in which power and influences are exercised over people.

An important criticism of action research is that it is apolitical. The power situation that the families are involved in is ignored. The research centres around the individual families as if they were unaffected by the social factors dominating their lives. This factor may introduce considerable bias into the research and is further explored in the section on handling the possible bias of external factors, in the research.

Elliott (1984) stated that in democratic evaluation participants own the facts about their lives and stressed the difference between negotiating with participants what data could be released as opposed to sharing the process of evaluation with participants. He suggested that participants should have the opportunity to decide whether interpretations are a fair representation of their lives.

Simons (1984) suggested that individuals be given the right to:

"... decide what to share, to reflect on what they have shared, to edit or comment upon their information in context; to control in other words, the use of their own information." (p.88)

She suggested that there should be no:

"... reports of information about individuals of which they were not aware and which had not been negotiated for fairness, accuracy and relevance." p.89

The issue of confidentiality was also raised by Adelman (1984). He stated that "... case study used in evaluation is not merely a means of reporting but raises very sharply those central issues of access and confidentiality." p.3 This and further problems with the action research method are discussed in the

section on the evaluation of data and the section on possible bias in the research.

In the current research, the extent to which psychoanalytic interpretations were included caused tension in attempts to make the evaluation democratic. The problem was whether to remain within the meaning perspective of the participants or to draw from the researcher's meaning perspective in formulating psychological interpretative schemas in the evaluation, in particular in relation to the unconscious motivation of projection. Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) explained:

"Much social action operates at a subconscious level, leaving no memory traces. Thus ... we cannot assume that they are consciously aware of the decision rules they use, or even that, infallibly, they can recognise them when someone documents them." p.196

In the current research, if the observations were recorded of parents' projections and formed into schemas by the researcher, power was very much in the hands of the researcher and the participants would remain unconscious of these processes. If this meaning perspective was allowed to come into the evaluation and attempts were made to share this knowledge with parents, making what was unconscious, conscious, there was a risk of introducing these meanings inappropriately. This concept of consciousization was central to the research. The researcher, at times, attempted to introduce material of which parents may have been unconscious in meaningful, appropriate ways in the evaluation. However, the tension from this dilemma remained to a large extent unresolved and could possibly become the subject for further research.

An action research approach seemed most appropriate for

the purposes of the current research because the methodology of observation, discussion, and evaluation was understandable by the participants. Participants also stood to gain in awareness and understanding as a result of taking part in the research. In addition, this approach actively encouraged learning to take place in participants and researcher and facilitated the growth in understanding of the processes of development.

Issues concerning the imbalance between the knowledge and power of the researcher and parents were an important consideration in the choice of research methods, as was the issue of confidentiality. The decision of whether to include parents' unconscious motivation in the research analysis caused a conflict that was resolved to some extent by a decision to share this meaning perspective where possible, in joint evaluation. This was in line with a central aim of the research of supporting the parents' conscientization of knowledge.

A sample was selected for case studies upon which the study was to be based and is discussed in the next section.

## **SAMPLE**

In September 1987, six families were invited to take part in this research on a weekly basis. The sample for the research consisted of these six families and involved thirteen children. It included all children at home during the period of study, excluding older children of school age. It included both parents if this was applicable.

The children in the sample were within the age range 0 - 3 years. The youngest child in the sample was born three months after the start of the data collection and the 3 oldest children

started infant school after the first year of data collection.

The families all lived in the inner city areas of Scotswood or Cowgate in the west area of Newcastle upon Tyne. The parents involved in the study were all unemployed and had limited resources available to them, materially and in terms of their own previous education.

The sampling procedure consisted of opportunity sampling. The families were selected for the sample on the basis of the researcher's involvement with them in her role as 'Preschool Community Teacher'. The case load from this post consisted of from 12 - 15 families.

Families were selected for educational home visiting when a particular need for this type of intervention was identified. The underlying reasons for this need were individual and varied. Referrals of families to the 'Educational Home Visiting Scheme' were made by health visitors, doctors, social workers and schools. The six families taking part in the research were selected on the basis that access was unlikely to be a problem.

All six families in the sample lived in highly stressful circumstances. There were individual factors that contributed to the stressful circumstances in which the families were living. All the families were also receiving social work intervention.

During the first year of data collection, five of the families were visited on a regular basis each week for one or two hours. The research data for two of the families covered only this one year period from Sept. 1987 to July 1988, until the children in the sample started Nursery School. With the other 3 families in the sample, research data was collected over 2 years in the period Sept. 1987 to July 1989.

During this period it was difficult to maintain contact with the remaining family in the sample, where circumstances led the researcher to more infrequent contact, due to several changes of address and other disruptions to family life. The situation became more settled in September 1989 and the researcher was able to collect data from this time to July 1990.

In conclusion, the sample on which the study is based consists of six families, including 13 children, ranging in age from 0 - 3 years.

The next section describes the process by which the data were collected. It begins with an introduction and brief description of the method of data collection and goes on to describe the process of data collection and how this evolved over the two year period of research.

## **DATA COLLECTION IN THE RESEARCH**

This section describes the observation and discussion methods of data collection in the current research. A framework of the researcher's meaning perspective is given followed by a description of how the data collection methods evolved over the research period.

The research is an ethnographic study and the methods of data collection are consistent with this approach. The researcher had a dual role of teacher and researcher in the research that created tension to some extent. This is discussed at the end of the chapter, in the section on possible bias in the research. The researcher was therefore an observer and participant in the data collection process. Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) described the negotiation that is required to establish such a relationship:

"... the term negotiation also refers to the ... wide ranging and subtle process of manoeuvring oneself into a position from which the necessary data can be collected." p.76

The researcher was accepted into the different situations and relationships of trust were established. Data were collected in the sample families' own homes through the methods of observation, non-directive interview and diary keeping. This data were used to construct longitudinal case studies.

Notes were recorded soon after the observation as suggested by Cohen and Manion (1980). He highlighted the point that the quality of information forgotten is very slight over a short period but accelerates quickly as more time passes.

Joint observations of the child and discussion between parent and researcher formed the primary data of the research. Unstructured observations were made of the child to identify

patterns of behaviour. Parent and researcher discussed observations of the child to gain a knowledge of and an understanding of the child's behaviour. Written notes were made by the researcher of the joint observations of the child and interaction between parent and child.

Reports were also made by the parent about the child's behaviour in the times between visits. Reporting became important as an indication that parents had been watching children with interest during the week. These observations needed to be validated and supported as part of the process of the parent's developing consciousness of their own knowledge about their child. The researcher was collecting data as a listener when the mother or father reported. This process encouraged the parents to articulate their observations, assisting the consciousness process. There could be no independent check of the reports parents made on the child's behaviour. However, these observations were usually very specific and could be confirmed by the researcher as age appropriate and consistent with the child's overall development. The advantages of encouraging independent observation were felt to override any fear of falsification of results.

In addition, reports gave important information as to the perspectives of the parents concerning the child's behaviour. Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) quoted Dean and Whyte in arguing that:

"... rather than asking, for example, 'how do I know if the informant is telling the truth?' we should consider what the informants' perspectives reveal about his or her feelings and perceptions, and what inferences can be made from these about the actual environment or events that he or she has experienced." p.112

The parents were necessarily reflecting on the child's behaviour and making interpretations on some occasions rather than always accurately reporting what the child did or said. This data was nevertheless valid to the research as it indicates the parent's meaning perspectives. Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) went on to state: "Data in themselves cannot be valid or invalid; what is at issue are the inferences drawn from them." p.191

Reports and observations made by parents often indicated that they were being assimilated into a schema in the process of their development. Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) described this process:

"... the interpretation of information available to a person is likely to be selected and slanted in line with his or her prevailing interests and concerns." p.194

The data collected consisted of observations jointly made when the researcher was present and reports of parent's observations, written up soon after collection in the form of a diary, kept over the data collection period of the research.

The parent and the researcher observed the child's spontaneous behaviour, in weekly sessions. Each session lasted for one to two hours and the sessions took place over a period of one year with some families, and two years with others. The aim was to elevate the child's behaviour to the conscious awareness of the parent and researcher. On some occasions the parent pointed out the child's behaviour and at other times the researcher.

The next stage was to create a discussion around the child's behaviour. Constraints were there in the researcher's skill in articulating the meaning behind the child's behaviour and in the ability of researcher and parent to maintain awareness of the



child's behaviour. In the professional experience of the researcher it has been found that closely observing children can be difficult. It requires creating a space in which the child's actions and speech are the central focus of the adults' attention. To create this space, the defence mechanism of projection is set aside, which can result in feelings of vulnerability and insecurity.

In the first year of data collection, the parent discussed the observations with the teacher. Data collection took the form of written notes, in diary form, made of these interactions and reports of the children's behaviour made by parents.

Throughout the process of the data collection the following questions were continually asked to facilitate the observation and reflection processes.

What is the child doing? What might that mean?

These questions were central to developing an understanding of the child. To answer these questions it was necessary to involve parents in ongoing discussions about the possible significance of the child's behaviour. The researcher's meaning perspective was introduced when this was appropriate as determined by the researcher. The researcher introduced her meaning perspective through the discussion of observations of the child's patterns of behaviour. The child's patterns of behaviour related to areas of physical, emotional, social and intellectual development.

The data collected represented the parent's developing consciousness of the child's physical, emotional, social and intellectual development underlying his/her behaviour. The researcher also became increasingly aware that parents' interpretations included projections made onto the child's

behaviour.

The research method of progressive focusing was used. Progressive focusing is a method by which different aspects of a situation are focused on at different times as determined by the interest and attention of parent and/or researcher. Glaser and Strauss (1967) described the process of progressive focusing whereby as the research progresses concepts are formed which not only come from the data but are systematically worked out in relation to the data. The source of certain ideas may come from sources other than the data but such insights must be brought into relation with the data.

The parents focused attention on different aspects of the child's development, observed in the child's spontaneous behaviour, as the research progressed. Parents formed concepts from the observations that were made of the child's spontaneous behaviour, and used the concepts to inform and interpret subsequent observations. Alternative ideas and insights were available to parents through sharing the meaning perspective of the researcher. The researcher's meaning perspective included knowledge in areas of children's physical, emotional and intellectual development. The researcher attempted to introduce this knowledge creatively when there was a shared interest and when parents had a desire to know rather than to attempt to teach it in a more formal sense. The researcher's knowledge was based to large extent on a Piagetian developmental model and during the research began also to take on a Freudian psycho-analytic perspective.

Stenhouse (1983) stressed the importance in action research of having a structure or framework that should be developed from

the teacher's own understanding of the principles to be taught.

The researcher's framework is outlined below.

i) Physical Development of the Child

E.g. the development of gross motor skills, crawling, walking, running, etc.

ii) Emotional and Social Development of the Child

E.g., Patterns of behaviour of crying, attachment, affection, aggression. The child's self image, developing independence and patterns of behaviour related to self expression through art, music and symbolic play.

iii) Intellectual Development of the Child

E.g., the development of schemas such as pushing, pulling, tipping, enclosing, positioning, transferring, transporting, assembly and transformation. The development of gestural representation and the emergence of thinking and problem solving. The development of concepts such as size, shape, weight, colour, balance, number, distance, direction, volume and capacity, area and locality. The development of the object concept, classification and language.

Observation and discussion of the child's behaviour took the form of progressive focusing on different aspects of the child's development as they became apparent from the child's behaviour patterns and were recognised through observation of the child. The data collected included examples of the parent's perceptions of the child in these areas and included projection onto the child.

Data was also collected of the parent's interaction with the child. During the process of progressive focusing written observations were made of parent and child interaction in different areas of the child's development.

During the first year, the research data was recorded in diary form after the weekly sessions and the researcher kept the research data isolated from the research situation, so parents had no opportunity for access to the written information.

The research data observations were loosely analysed into case record material by linking observations into categories when the parent seemed to be forming a central concept. Aspects of the child's behaviour and development were discussed with the parents and research data built up from discussion and observation week by week.

Lack of opportunities at this stage for sharing the written data and case records with participants meant that there was no respondent validation. The case record material was judged independently as to the validity of the categories during triangulation of analysis, which is discussed in the last section of this chapter.

The research methods evolved over the 2 year period of the research. During the second year, observation and discussion continued as in the first year and a deeper analysis of the research data observations was shared with the parents, which enabled them to participate more fully in the research.

Pring (1984) suggested that the researcher has an obligation to show the data collected throughout the research. It became apparent to the researcher that the sharing of research data needed to occur in this research.

At this time the parents became more closely involved in the research data collection as the researcher made written notes of their observations of the child, and reports on the child, in the research setting, in the parent's home. The researcher returned

each week with the research data notes and took opportunities to discuss previous observations and interpretations they had made. This created an opportunity for respondent validation.

This approach added a new dimension to the research. Observations and discussions were freed from the 'here and now' situation. Parents had the opportunity to discuss their observations and interpretations retrospectively. Continuity was provided where parents could see more clearly the progression in the child's development and an opportunity was provided for seeing behaviour patterns develop in the child over time.

The recording and the forming of case records of the research data observations became more of a shared process. Parents made it clear, by showing most interest, when the data collected was most relevant to their understanding of their child. This was most often when the data they had given the researcher was discussed with them. The parent's meaning perspective became clearer to the researcher as a result of this process. There was an increase in observations made by the parent and an increase in reporting from the parent.

The process of bringing together isolated research data observations into a framework that illuminated the child's development, was shared with the parent.

In the second year a process was introduced of sorting research data observations into categories with parents. The method that was used was to type observations on separate slips of paper and sort through them with parents and encourage them to look for relationships and patterns in the child's recorded behaviour.

This method was found to be suitable for using with some

parents taking part in the research. Parents used this method in individual ways, for example, sorting out examples of behaviour patterns or sorting out examples of activities in which the child was involved. One parent encouraged me to read the observations out to her that she elaborated and commented on. One parent taking part in the research, Judy, said that she could not sort them as they were all the same.

To sum up, the emphasis of each weekly session with the parents was observation of the child's behaviour and the sharing of interpretations of observations plus the discussion of parents' reports of the child's behaviour. The observations and reports were recorded as research data for analysis in the study. The research method evolved to include the parent in the process of collection and analysis of the data.

Additional data in the form of joint evaluation material were collected in the fourth year of the research project. The technique used for the collection of evaluation data was semi-structured interviews that were audio-recorded.

A semi-structured interview consists of specific statements and questions that are introduced by the interviewer, but also allows for the interviewee to introduce and discuss areas of particular interest or concern to them.

The statements and questions in the semi-structured interviews were based on the data contained in each of the case records. Specific areas were selected for exploration and elaboration and there was also an opportunity for parents to extend the conversations into areas of interest to them.

The interview was selected as an evaluation technique because other evaluation methods seemed inappropriate; for

example, further observation of the parent and child relationship seemed inappropriate because of the time factor. An evaluation questionnaire also seemed inappropriate because of the uniqueness of each case record.

The technique of semi-structured interview was chosen rather than any other form of interview. It was thought that this format would facilitate the recall of parent's memories from the data collection period, which could then be reflected upon in the interview. Without reference to the initial research data, it was thought that this material could have been forgotten. It was thought that unstructured interviews may not have given access to a discussion of the original research data and therefore this method was not selected. Highly structured interviews were also felt to be inappropriate as it is unlikely that parents would have then had the opportunity to explore their own understanding of the original research data.

The joint evaluation process was carried out by the researcher returning to the parents' homes with the case record and conducting semi-structured interviews. The interviews focused on parents' interpretations of the research data and allowed for the exploration of the parents' meaning perspective. On conducting 'unstructured, in depth' interviews, Measor (1985) suggested:

"... the researcher does need a set of thematic areas which he or she wants to cover. Inevitably the interviewee will 'ramble' and move away from the designated areas in the researcher's mind ... the interviewee in 'rambling' is moving into areas which most interest him or her ... the pay-off is that the researcher reaches the data that is central to the client." p.67

Although Measor described a different type of interview

technique, unstructured rather than semi-structured, there were similarities between the technique she suggested and the technique used in the current research evaluation. The research interview schedule contained thematic areas to cover, in this case in the form of statements and questions from the case record and the parents were also free to explore other areas of interest to them. The possibility of bias in the joint evaluations is discussed in the last section of this chapter.

Using the semi-structured evaluation technique, it was found that the thinking of the parents and the researcher was to some extent parallel. This was due to the partnership with the researcher in the construction and elaboration of meanings of the child's behaviour and development in the initial data. This led to some agreement between parents and researcher in the evaluation data. However, it was found that parents were quick to disagree with statements that they considered did not reflect their own thinking.

The process of analysis and evaluation of the research data is discussed in the next section. The joint evaluation process is also further discussed in the next section. Possible bias in the joint evaluations is discussed in the last section of this chapter.



## **ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION OF DATA**

This section explains how schemas to interpret the data were formulated and modified to accommodate 'negative case' data. The formation of the conceptual framework for the research is then discussed. The process by which observations of the child, and reports from parents about the child's behaviour, were used to form categories to support the conceptual framework is then discussed. The modification of categories in the joint evaluation process is then explored. The section ends with a discussion of the conflict that arose between validating the existing conceptual framework and using the research data to generate further theory.

An initial interpretative schema was used to analyse the research data, which suggested that the parents, in the process of observation of the child and discussion with the researcher, extended and developed their concepts concerning the child's behaviour and development. In addition, there appeared to be a process by which parents' perceptions of their child's behaviour were transformed through conceptual development. This process was introduced into the research as an interpretative schema of perspective change. Parents also appeared to develop new behaviour towards their child that was introduced as a third interpretative schema into the research.

The data collected for the research were sorted and loosely ordered to form 'case records'. The case records consisted of joint parent and researcher observations of the child and reports from parents about the child, loosely organised into categories of concepts that the parents appeared to be developing concerning the child's behaviour and development.

There was a systematic search for falsifying evidence that led to a refinement of the interpretative framework. Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) suggested that:

"... cases that are crucial for a theory - those where it seems most likely to be proved false - may be examined through ethnography ..." p.24

In the current research it was found that not all observations that a parent made of a child's behaviour or reports on the child's behaviour could be classified according to the schema of parents' extension and development of concepts. This indicated that this interpretative schema needed to be reworked and expanded to include schemas that would adequately represent the negative cases. Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) quoted Bensman and Vidich in suggesting that:

"When one set of theories does not exhaust the potentialities of the data, other sets can be employed to point to and explain the facts which remain unexplained." p.181

The negative cases in the research were examined carefully and discussion within the triangulation process resulted in a new conceptual schema from a psychoanalytic perspective being included in the analysis. The triangulation process whereby the new interpretation was introduced into the analysis is described in the last section of this chapter. The schema of 'projection onto the child' seemed to most accurately represent the negative case data and became used in analysis. Other psycho-analytic schemas began to be introduced and included in the analysis such as, the containment of anxiety expressed in projection.

However, the initial categories of the parents' conceptual development were still appropriate to use for some of the data collected. Glaser and Strauss (1967) explained that:

"Theory based on data can usually not be completely refuted

by more data or replaced by another theory. Since it is too intimately linked to data, it is destined to last despite its inevitable modification and reformulation." p.4

The categories which were used to analyse the case studies were then linked together into a four part conceptual framework, which is described at the beginning of the chapter. Observations and reports of the child's development and behaviour were analysed using the interpretative schemas of, conceptual development, perspective change, new behaviour towards the child and projection onto the child. Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) stressed the importance in formulating a conceptual framework:

"Having acquired one or two analytic categories, whether members' or observers' types, the next task is to begin to develop these into a theoretical scheme: finding links between the concepts and adding new ones." p.180

Each observation and report on the child's behaviour formed a 'unit of analysis' which contributed towards the conceptual framework described above. Atkins (1984) suggested that in small scale action research the unit of analysis could be used to build up categories of participant responses. She explained that the unit of analysis could be formed from one sentence, or part of a sentence or sometimes more than one sentence.

However there was a problem in breaking down the data into units of analysis.

The data in the current research was broken down to form units of analysis and several observations or 'units of analysis' appeared to have a relationship to one another and were linked to form categories. For example, one of the parents involved in the research, Sandra, made several observations of her son, Alan

trying to solve problems. Each observation formed a unit of analysis. They were linked and included in the concept Sandra was forming of: "You learn what bairns are trying to do by watching them."

However, each unit of analysis also had significance in the parent's meaning perspective as a whole. A unit of analysis could therefore be used to support more than one interpretative schema.

There was a difficulty in determining what constituted a unit of analysis that was to be used to build up the interpretative schemas. The type of activity in which the child was involved on different occasions varied considerably and the adults had a limited influence on this activity. The observation time of the unit of analysis varied from an observation collected over a few minutes to longer observations of a half to one hour. The interest of the parents in the observations and the ability of parents to articulate their observations also varied considerably and therefore the unit of analysis could not have a precise linguistic definition. The unit of analysis therefore became either a coherent observation or a statement or a set of linked statements made by the parent.

The units of analysis constituted evidence for the interpretative schemas that formed the conceptual framework of the research. In some cases there may have been many examples, or units of analysis to support an interpretative schema, in others there may have been a few. An interpretative schema was not necessarily invalidated because of limited evidence.

Cohen and Manion (1980) stated that practical certainty of the existence of a hypothesis may be attained after a small

number of cases had been examined. Glaser and Strauss (1967) explained that:

"A concept may be generated from one fact, which then becomes only one of a universe of many possible diverse indicators for, and data on, the concept." p.23

Each unit of analysis was an example taken from the parent's meaning perspective and could be used as evidence to support the validity of the conceptual framework for the research. Glaser and Strauss (1967) explained that: "... grounded theory is derived from data and then illustrated by characteristic examples of data." p.5

Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) described the process by which data was formed into categories and then was used to validate the categories that it has formed. They explained:

"... what is involved is not simply a matter of finding indicators for a concept. Rather, there is an interplay between finding indicators and conceptualising the analytic categories. This derives from the inductive, reflexive character of ethnography where the process of analysis involves the simultaneous development of constructs and indicators to produce a 'fit' between the two. It is only when the analysis is written up that the relationship between concept and indicator becomes an asymmetrical one, with the later serving as evidence that the concepts are valid." p.185

Interpretative schemas were built up from the units of analysis drawn from the research data. In the evaluation process the validity of the interpretative schemas was examined. The validation of interpretative schema became the central research questions:

Does conceptual development take place in the parents?

Do perspective changes occur?

Is there evidence of new behaviour towards the child?

Do parents' interpretations contain projections onto the child?

Units of analysis indicating parents had formed and developed concepts of child development supported the first interpretative schema introduced at the beginning of the chapter. Units of analysis showing the development of observation skills in the parent supported the subsidiary interpretative schema of perceptual development. Evidence of the parent undergoing perspective changes resulting in new forms of behaviour supported the second and third interpretative schemata suggested by the research.

Examples of the parent articulating projected aspects of self onto the child's behaviour supported the fourth interpretative schema. Examples of the containment of projections by the researcher were used to support the interpretative schema of the process of the parents' emotional development.

The researcher assessed the validation of interpretative schemas by the process of examining the units of analysis for evidence. Parents also provided additional evidence for validation, in the form of retrospective generalisations of concepts of child development, which were made during the joint evaluation described below. If an interpretative schema was applied to new material by the parent, this gave an additional indication of its validity.

An attempt was made to take the case records back to the participants with a view to achieving a joint evaluation of the material. The case records consisted of research data loosely organised into categories. The joint evaluation process often resulted in the categories of the case records being reformulated.

Participants taking part in the research had an opportunity to comment on and edit the data in the case record. Most parents

took the opportunity to do this. One parent, Geoff, did not agree at first because he said that people would not listen to what he had to say. However, he later agreed to have his comments recorded in writing. It was also not possible for another parent, Judy to comment on and edit the data in the case record because of her family circumstances but she did make more general comments about the research.

Categories, individual to participants, were formulated, and reformulated where necessary as a result of the joint evaluation and have been used to support the main conceptual framework of the research. For example, with one parent, Sandra, the interpretation, "He doesn't understand, he's only a bairn" was a more accurate interpretation of her developing conceptual framework than the original interpretation, "Concept of Alan's intellectual development." This concept was used to support the main interpretative schemas of; parents develop concepts of child development which result in perspective changes and lead to new behaviour towards the child.

Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) described the importance of participant categories:

"Concepts sometimes arise spontaneously, being used by participants themselves. And, indeed, unusual participant terms are always worth following up since they may mark theoretically important or interesting phenomena ... Their use will be examined as evidence of knowledge, beliefs, and actions that are located within more general analytic frameworks." p.178

The categories formulated in the joint evaluation were used to support the main conceptual framework of the study. At this time, a conflict arose between the two strands of enquiry which had been present in the collection of the original research data,

that of validating theory and generating theory. A question arose as to which would receive the main emphasis in the research evaluation. Throughout the research there had been an interplay between the interpretation of data within an existing conceptual framework and the generation of new research questions. At this stage the evaluation had the possibility of continuing this cycle.

Glaser and Strauss (1967) explained that conflict between verifying and generalising theory arise when choice is not made as to which will receive relative emphasis in research.

Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) explained that:

"... if it is a valid theory of wide scope it will be able to predict phenomena quite different from those in relation to which it was originally developed ... What is required is that the theory be explicit in its predictions of what will occur under given conditions. The question of whether and when those conditions hold can, and indeed must, be a matter for subsequent investigation." p.186

The further generation of theory enabled further predictions to be made. It was decided to look for evidence to support the conceptual framework and central research questions but to leave more rigorous testing of the conceptual framework for further research.

It was then possible for the data to generate further theory. The potential to develop the theory further was highlighted when presenting the results and is explored further in the discussion of the fieldwork findings.

The generation of theory from research data was an ongoing process throughout the research, resulting in the formation of a conceptual framework for the data. Theory was generated beyond the interpretative schemas described at the beginning of the chapter. For example development did not



appear to occur in a straight line. Parents' consciousness could perhaps be fragmented into multiple perspectives. For example, one of the parents involved in the research, Judy interpreted Joe's reaching and grasping schema on different occasions as nipping and learning to reach out.

This section described the action research processes by which the research data was analysed and evaluated. It described the initial schemas used for analysis of the data and the need to modify and extend these schemas through the discovery of negative cases. The formation of a conceptual framework for the research was discussed along with the use of units of analysis for supporting the validation of the categories.

The process of joint evaluation was further discussed and the consequence of this for the modification of categories was discussed. The section ended with a discussion of the conflict that arose between the use of research data to validate the proposed conceptual framework for the research and the potential of the data to generate further insights and theory.

The next section goes on to describe possible bias in the research and attempts to handle it.

## **POSSIBLE BIAS AND ATTEMPTS TO HANDLE IT IN THE RESEARCH**

The action research methods used in the research raised the following issues of reliability and validity.

### **1. Participant and Observer Tension**

As researcher it was necessary to develop an overview of the dual role as participant and observer in the research and any tension that may have arisen from this. The research situation needed to be continuously monitored to make sure that the joint observations were based on what the child was doing and to make sure that parents' reports were recorded without inferences from the researcher. Hustler et al (1986) highlighted this problem:

"A key methodological problem in 'action research' is how to achieve apparently contradictory aims, viz, how to research a situation and how to act on it." (p.10)

Cohen and Manion (1980) pointed out that the observer's judgement may be affected by his close involvement with the group. This raised questions as to the internal validity of the research.

The relationship between researcher and participants was necessarily a close one with the dynamic of transference entering into at least one of the relationships. Where this occurred it will be discussed in Chapter 5 on the interpretation of the fieldwork findings. Transference is a psycho-analytic concept explaining the processes by which emotions associated with early relationships within the family are transferred onto another person, in this case the researcher.

## 2. Appraisal of Researcher's Position

The evidence to support the conceptual framework collected by the researcher is subjective in that another researcher would be likely to collect different evidence. Another researcher could have formed a quality of relationship with parents which promoted development that did not occur in this research. The limitations of the researcher are a source of bias. Measor (1985) stated:

"... the quality of data is dependent on the quality of the relationship you build with the people being interviewed. This raises enormous questions of data validation, bias and 'scientific standpoints.'" p57

The presence of the researcher is also a source of bias in that she is likely to influence the research setting. Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) pointed out that:

"Even in the case of unsolicited accounts we can never be sure that the presence of the researcher has not an important influence. Even where the researcher is not a party to the interaction but simply within earshot, knowledge of his or her presence may have a significant effect." p.111

However, the presence of the researcher on the research situation as a participant observer is central to the process of development which is under study. A change in the research situation is actively promoted.

Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) explained these phenomena.

"The fact that behaviour and attitudes are often not stable across contexts and that the researcher may play an important part in shaping the context becomes central to the analysis. Indeed, its exploited for all its worth." p.18

In addition, the researcher made weekly visits to the families over one or two years and became more likely as time

went by to obtain a realistic view of the family relationships. This also influenced the potential bias of the parent behaving differently at different times.

There is also potential bias in the subjective view of the researcher when collecting data. Rowland (1986) stated that when enquiry is based on experience it is necessarily subjective and two observers will quite obviously observe different things.

However, observations taken from a shared and collaborated meaning perspective are likely to yield somewhat similar research data. Joint observations of a child made by parent and teacher in this research often revealed that a similar meaning perspective was used for interpretation. For example, Wendy, one of the children taking part in the research, handed objects over one by one to her father, Tim. He counted them for her as she did so. He was interpreting her behaviour from a meaning perspective that Wendy was operating a number schema that was a similar meaning perspective to that which the researcher used to interpret the observation.

### 3. Potential Biasing of Background, Gender etc.

The kind of data collected depends to some extent on the age, gender, and class of the researcher. The researcher comes from a middle class background whereas all the participants are from working class backgrounds.

Elliott (1984) pointed to the opinion that one social group can never really understand another and is likely to misrepresent them. Eraut (1984) stated that if values are only shared by one section of the community, and the teacher is not aware of this, there would be a problem. The values of the researcher and the

imbalance of power in the form of knowledge are likely to be a source of potential bias in the research.

There is an example in the study of the researcher inadvertently bringing her own values into the research to try to convince one of the parents involved in the research, Judy, that her son's behaviour was not all bad. This situation appeared to be a factor in precipitating the transference relationship mentioned earlier.

Rowland (1986) asked how we can be sure that our interpretations will not merely reflect our prejudices and our personal framework of values. He pointed out that understanding gained could serve to confirm our position rather than challenge it.

The researcher attempted to keep the meanings generated in the research within a shared framework of understanding as an attempt to handle bias from this source.

#### 4. External Validity

The results obtained in the research may not be applicable to other situations, as the research is situational and specific in its application. The sample is restricted and may be unrepresentative. It may not be possible to generalise the hypotheses that are formed outside the restricted environment in which the research was carried out.

These limitations are recognised by the researcher. However the interpretative schemas from the research may be transferable to other contexts where the reader finds this appropriate. The analysis may trigger reflection, further analysis and contribute to the process of illuminating the readers' own

similar experience.

Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) also made the point that there may be advantages in researching a natural setting. They stated:

"... what is lost in terms of the control of variables may be compensated by reduced risk of ecological invalidity. Since it investigates social processes in everyday settings rather than those set up for the purposes of research, the danger that the findings will apply only to the research situation is generally lessened." p.24

## 5. External Factors

There are many factors influencing the lives and experiences of the participants, which are not included within the scope of the research, for example; housing conditions, health issues, unemployment, stress in relationships, political issues, etc. The fact of their non - inclusion may result in considerable bias in the research. Cohen and Manion (1980) stated:

"Too often, the phenomena that ought to be the focus of attention are taken as given, that is, they are treated as the starting point of the research rather than becoming the centre of the researcher's interest and effort to discover how the phenomena arose or came to be important in the first place." p.266

The researcher acknowledged that by focusing on the parent and child relationship; this may in itself be a source of bias. Walkerdine and Lucey (1989) summed this up as "... a knowledge which suppresses and silences other knowledges in producing its own vision." p.34

It is inevitable that in focusing on one aspect of human life others will be left out. The research was not intended to stand as a definitive statement on parent and child relationships but to inform and enrich other perspectives.

Attempts to handle bias was made in the following ways:

A. Reflexivity

As an active participant and observer in the research, the researcher went through a process of continuous monitoring and reflection upon her role in it. The role became increasingly one of assisting the observation and reflection process by centring attention on the child and the parent's discussion of the child's activity. The role of watching and listening became increasingly important.

The monitoring of this dual role and the attempts to make contributions appropriate and useful to parents, resulted in much self-reflection in the form of conscious thinking.

For example, in the second year of the research, a need to share the data collected with the participants was recognised. The conscious thinking behind this decision involved the ethical considerations of access and confidentiality and a need to develop a method of discussing the observations retrospectively to free discussions with the parents from the immediate past and present. As a result of reflexivity a process was therefore developed of sharing this information with participants.

Reflexivity also took the form of critical discussion of the research with a psychologist within a psycho-analytic framework, to explore the unconscious motivation that underpinned the behaviour of the researcher. This type of reflexive thinking was used extensively in supervision, for example, in developing the critical awareness necessary to appreciate the meaning perspectives of the research participants.

## B. Triangulation

Triangulation was another method used to attempt to handle bias from the research. Cohen<sup>and Manion</sup> (1980) explained:

"... triangular techniques ... attempt to map out, or explain more fully, the richness and complexity of human behaviour by studying it from more than one standpoint ..."  
p. 269.

It was not possible to involve others directly in the research setting because of the sensitive nature of it. However triangulation occurred on several levels.

### i) Triangulation of Analysis

The data and interpretations of the data were discussed with independent experts. Extensive method triangulation was used within supervision as a way of establishing effective ways of carrying out the research. Method triangulation was also used to discuss the tentative categories that the researcher was building from the data. This served as a form of validation for the categories.

Analysis of the data was also sought from the alternative perspectives of developmental psychology and psychoanalysis, when the discovery of negative cases in the data forced the categories to be re-evaluated. Cohen and Manion (1980) stated:

"Theoretical triangulation: this type draws upon alternative or competing theories in preference to utilising one viewpoint only." p.272

This type of theoretical triangulation enriched the researcher's perspective and aimed towards a more balanced viewpoint than drawing from one particular theory would give. This was an attempt to handle another potential source of bias. Cohen and Manion (1980) pointed to this potential bias. He stated



that:

"Researchers are sometimes taken to task for their rigid adherence to one particular theory or theoretical orientation to the exclusion of competing theories." p.274

However, method triangulation also caused some tension as the attribution of meanings in the alternative interpretative perspectives of developmental psychology and psycho-analysis was very different. These different perspectives did not seem to be intellectually compatible with one another. The main difference in interpretation seemed to be that developmental psychology is based on a sequence of logical thinking whereas psycho-analytic interpretations are often rooted in a type of symbolic thinking that is based on metaphor and obscure connections. The psycho-analytic interpretations explore the unconscious mind where thinking is symbolic rather than logical, whereas the developmental psychology interpretations explore the logical progressions in the development of thinking in the conscious mind. These alternative perspectives then, offered not only different ways of understanding and explaining phenomena, but fundamentally different rules about the nature of 'evidence' and its use. In other words, both the potential explanations and the procedures through which these explanations were derived were in marked contrast. However, the aim was for the overall enrichment of the research through attempts to explore different styles of interpretation.

It was felt that the ability to develop an awareness of the learning process and communicate meaning was also enriched by method triangulation. Rowland (1986) explained this process in terms of the experience of the classroom teacher:

"Our classroom enquiry then is not only an individual's

reflective analysis of what has taken place, but it must also invite the reflections of others ... it aims to produce intersubjective understanding of the complexities of the learning mind and a more articulate language with which to share such understanding." p. 31

Looking at alternative perspectives also had a potentially destabilising effect on the interpretations made of the data.

Desforges et al (1986) explained that: "Interpretations are best exposed when thrown into juxtaposition with alternative interpretations of the same events." p.70

Shifts in the researcher's perspective took place as a result of collaboration with others in the research period. David Hustler (1986) pointed to the importance of collaboration:

"One strand we see as central: collaboration by the action researcher with some other person who does not share the same set of relevancies, who in short is not doing precisely the same job." (p. 210)

#### ii).Triangulation with other Professionals Involved with the Families

Case conferences and case conference notes were seen a source of triangulation as they consciously or unconsciously affected the researcher's interpretations. In five of the case studies, the research data was used as a basis for presentation at case conferences.

With one family, there was a multi-professional supervision group that met every fortnight, consisting of a social worker, child and family guidance social worker, a psychologist and family aide and the researcher. The interpretations of this group proved to be particularly influential both for interpreting the data of the family involved and for interpreting data from other case studies. This group initiated the introduction of the alternative perspective of

psycho-analysis into the research.

In addition, there was liaison with other professionals; social workers, health visitors, teachers and community doctors.

iii). Triangulation within the Context of Visits

There was also triangulation at the point of data collection. For example, one of the parents involved in the research, Judy, had appeared to move on in her conceptual thinking. However, the way she interacted with her child showed that this conceptual thinking was not present and therefore the interpretation was not secure. The confidence of the interpretation was therefore affected by negative data.

Negative cases such as these caused the researcher to consider alternative perspectives for interpreting the research data. The psycho-analytical interpretation of 'projection' appeared to be a more reliable interpretation of some of the data, than previous categories had been. When more interpretations seemed to fit with this interpretation it was elevated to the point of being an interpretative schema for the research.

iv). Respondent Validation

The joint evaluation between participants and researcher was also a form of triangulation as the overlap in meaning perspectives of participants and researcher formed categories for the research data. The parents also validated the research in the joint evaluation through elaborating and developing the existing research data.

Cohen (1980) quoted the work of McCormick and James and stated that:

"In view of the apparently subjective nature of much qualitative interpretation, validation is achieved when others, particularly the subjects of the research, recognise its authenticity ... This is known as respondent validation."  
p.278

However, there was a difficulty in interpreting the semi-structured interview responses whilst being aware of bias that might have arisen from any one of or combination of the interview schedule, the interviewer, the respondent or the situation.

Potential situational causes of bias were dealt with by the interviews taking place in the parent's home. In evaluations with two families both the husband and wife were present. In both cases the husband tended to assume the role of spokesperson and do most of the talking, despite efforts being made to talk to both parents. This was a potential cause of bias in the evaluation data. Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) stressed:

"... the interview represents a distinct setting and the participant understandings that are elicited there may not be those that underlie the social interaction observed elsewhere." p.118

The parent may have given an idealised view in their interpretations of the child's behaviour during the interview. The evaluation may therefore be biased. However, the data produced by the two different techniques of participant observation and interviewing could be compared in the research to obtain a more accurate view of the parent's meaning perspective than either method could individually. Both methods revealed important data describing the parents' meaning perspectives.

Respondent bias may also have arisen from antagonism to being interviewed which was the case with one of the parents, Geoff. However, he agreed to have his thoughts recorded at a later

stage.

Potential bias caused by the interview schedule was dealt with by using the case record that was based on shared experiences of the respondent and the researcher and by audio-recording for subsequent analysis in detail.

Also, potential interview bias may have arisen from a number of subtle factors, one of which could be whether the respondent was being 'led' by the interview schedule or the interviewer. Becker (1958) discussed the validity of volunteered versus directed statements given by informants in action research and suggested that:

"The volunteered statement seems likely to reflect the observer's biases less than one which is made in response to some action of the observer." (p.653)

In the current research, the nature of the data combined with the circumstances of the informants meant that at times the transcripts of the interviews read as if some statements were directed rather than volunteered. One of the limitations of such transcripts is that it fails to convey the shared sense of meaning and the subtle nuances of the social context within which statements were made.

The choice of the semi-structured interview as a technique for the research evaluation was made with an awareness of these sources of possible bias.

This chapter introduced and discussed the process of the formation of a conceptual framework to interpret the research. The justification and design of the methodology of the research were discussed concerning the appropriateness of action research methods for understanding the processes of developmental

change and included a discussion of the ethics of evaluation. The sample selected for the study was described followed by a description of the observation and discussion methods of data collection. The framework of the researcher's meaning perspective was given and a description followed of how the data collection method evolved over the period of research.

The section on the analysis and evaluation of data further described the process by which the conceptual framework for the research evolved. It explained the need for the modification of categories through the discovery of negative cases and as a result of joint evaluation. The joint evaluation process was described followed by a description of the conflict between the validation of the theoretical framework and the generation of further theory that became an issue in the research.

The chapter concluded with a section on possible bias in the research and attempts to handle it through reflexivity and triangulation.

The next chapter forms a summary of the results. The data is presented in the categories formulated from the research data by parents and researcher, as described in this chapter. The categories give examples of the parent's conceptual development, perspective changes, new behaviour towards the child and projections onto the child, which support the conceptual framework introduced at the beginning of this chapter. In the process of presenting the data, new theory was also generated which is highlighted as such and carried forward to the discussion in Chapter 5.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **FIELDWORK FINDINGS**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter is divided into four sections, one section for each of four families in the research sample. It was not possible to present all six case studies because of the quantity of data collected. It was also not possible to present all the data for the four case studies for the same reason. The categories selected to organise the data for each family illustrated different aspects of the process of parenting. It seemed to be appropriate to obtain as wide a perspective of parenting as possible from the data. This created a tension as much of the overlap in perspectives in the families is not obvious from the data presented. However, there was some overlap in the results presented which is indicated in the text. This method of interpretation may also appear to exaggerate some aspects of parenting in some families and to repress others. For example, the case study of Judy serves to illustrate mostly the concept of projection and many examples of Judy's conceptual development are not included.

The decision to highlight selective schemas for each family may give the reader an unbalanced view. However, an attempt was made to select categories that highlighted issues of fundamental importance to the parents and to the researcher.

It was decided to present the results of the research family by family, as any other method, for example, by concept formation, would have fragmented the data and lost sense of the cultural description of the family relationships.

The original data was loosely organised into categories and shared with the parents, except Judy whose home circumstances made this impossible. As a result of the joint evaluation the categories were at times rearranged to portray more accurately the relevant issues. This occurred when the joint evaluation gave the researcher a clearer insight into the parent's thinking, which resulted in the formulation of new, more appropriate categories.

The conceptual framework for the research, described at the beginning of the methodology chapter, was elaborated and explored within each of the case studies, if this was appropriate to the data presented. The interpretative schemas of conceptual development, perspective change, new behaviour and projection, were thought to be linked and so no attempt was made to try to separate the data that supported each individually.

In addition, the interpretation of the data generated further theory that was considered an important aspect of the research. This theory was highlighted in the text with an explanation given that the issue would be further discussed in Chapter 5.

The categories in some instances have a double title. This is to emphasise the different meaning perspectives of the parent and researcher. Each section is an attempt to construct shared meanings through the processes of observation of and reflection on the behaviour of the child.

Much of the original language is preserved to maintain the authenticity. It should be noted that a 'bairn' is a child, 'hoy' is to throw, 'works himself' is to behave badly and 'owt' means anything.

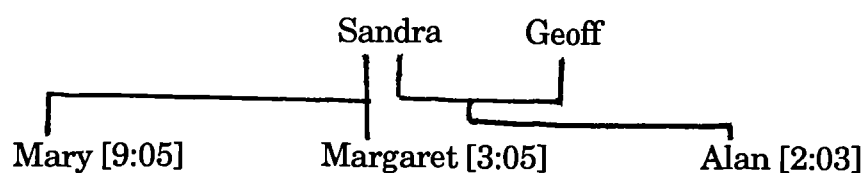


## SECTION 1 SANDRA AND GEOFF

The main body of the data for this family was collected on Sandra and Geoff's observations of and reflections on their son, Alan's, behaviour and development over a 9 month period. There is also reference to Sandra and Geoff's relationship with their daughter, Margaret. She had a place in nursery school but was sometimes at home during the visits. There are also references to the baby, Elaine, who was three months old at the time of the evaluation, two years later.

The family history is complicated. An outline at the time of the beginning of data collection is given below:

Family Structure:



The categories selected from the data to include in this presentation reflect to a large extent the possible links between emotional and intellectual development. The formation of concepts appeared to influence Sandra's emotional attitude to Alan's behaviour. In addition, Sandra's exploration of her anxieties concerning Alan's behaviour appeared to result in a conceptualisation of her emotional responses.

The section initially introduces two categories that explored the fundamental concepts that Sandra used to interpret Alan's behaviour. Firstly, Sandra used the concept, 'He doesn't understand, he's only a bairn,' to explore Alan's mental constructs. Secondly, the category, 'You learn by watching

bairns,' explored Sandra's own developing understanding of Alan's behaviour. In addition this category describes situations of shared meaning that promoted Alan's emotional and intellectual development.

A category is then introduced, 'He works himself,' which explored Alan's aggressive behaviour and Sandra and Geoff's own emotional development. The schema of 'projection' from the conceptual framework of the research is explored.

The section ends with a category 'Dream symbolism / You've Got to Protect Your Bairns,' that looked at the exploration of the underlying meanings behind the symbols in a dream which Sandra recalled.

### **HE DOESN'T UNDERSTAND, HE'S ONLY A BAIRN**

This category introduces the first concept that was fundamental to Sandra's interpretations of Alan's behaviour, that is, "He doesn't understand, he's only a bairn." The generalisation of this concept is explored in relationship to Alan's schematic development. The schema Sandra used of; 'You've just got to tell them' in attempts to contain Alan's behaviour is discussed. Sandra then generalises her conceptual framework to predict the behaviour of Elaine, her baby.

### **He Just Usually 'Hoy's' Things / Concept of Throwing Schema**

The following observation is related to Alan's behaviour pattern of throwing:

Alan [2:06] had been throwing the bean bag at Geoff who had caught it and thrown it back. Alan then picked up a brick and threw it at him, hitting him on the head. Geoff swore at him and smacked him. I asked if Alan knew the difference between throwing the bean bag or throwing a

brick. Sandra said that, 'he didn't understand; he's only a bairn'.

Through the processes of observation and reflection, Sandra seemed to elaborate and generalise a concept that 'Alan doesn't understand,' supporting the interpretative schema of the research, of the parents' conceptual development. However, Geoff's reaction proved to be a negative case to this interpretation as factors other than conceptual development appeared to be involved in his reaction to Alan's behaviour.

Alan's behaviour seemed innocent enough but Geoff reacted as if Alan had deliberately tried to hurt him. This incident could be interpreted as Geoff projecting his own unconscious anxiety onto Alan's behaviour.

In the evaluation, Geoff began to describe the abuse he was subjected to as a child. It is possible that the intensity of anxiety evoked from these experiences had become split from Geoff's conscious awareness. A possible mechanism for its expression was through projection onto Alan's behaviour as in the above example.

Sandra interpreted Alan's motivation behind his behaviour as Alan 'Doesn't understand, he's only a bairn' and she also seemed to be developing a concept that he 'throws things without knowing what he's doing'. Sandra's concept that Alan 'throws things indiscriminately' can be seen in the next observation.

Sandra said that Alan [2:07] had thrown a cup of tea at his uncle. I asked Sandra if he often threw water and Sandra said that he just usually 'hoys' things.

Alan's behaviour in this example may have been an innocent example of his throwing schema in action. Alternatively, there may be a process whereby the parents'

projections become internalised by the child and are acted out in his behaviour. This possibility is further discussed in chapter 5.

Through observing Alan, Sandra had formed a concept that, "Alan usually 'hoys' things" that she used to interpret this observation. Underlying this interpretation seemed to be the concept that 'he doesn't understand; he's just a bairn'. An interpretation could be made that this concept had resulted in a perspective change in Sandra that led to its generalisation to other examples of Alan's behaviour.

### He Smashes Things / Transformation Schema

Sandra continuously gave reports of Alan's spontaneous behaviour. For example,

Sandra said that Alan [2:03] had picked up a bottle during the week and said 'Ma, smash it' and smashed it off the table. He had also smashed a specimen bottle and glass Christmas decorations by throwing them downstairs, saying the same thing. I asked Sandra if she thought that he knew he shouldn't be doing this. She said she didn't know.

Sandra seemed to be in limbo between two interpretations of Alan's behaviour, or in other words, between two alternative perspectives in her own consciousness. One perspective was the concept that she held that 'Alan doesn't understand; he's only a bairn'. The other perspective could have been an interpretation that Alan's behaviour was deliberately destructive.

In retrospect in the evaluation, Sandra chose the former interpretation.

J.S. Alan picked up a bottle during the week and said 'ma, smash it' and smashed it off the table and he'd also smashed a Christmas decoration and another little bottle that same week. We talked about it and we had this conversation - does he know that he shouldn't be doing it ...

S.T. He didn't understand. He was just a bairn; he didn't know what was what.

J.S. Yeah, because he was only about 2 1/2 then. We could be looking at it one way, he could be learning about transforming something. Here's a solid shape and here it's in bits and some things smash when you throw them and other things don't and let's try this and let's try that to find out which is which.

S.T. There is that in it like ... learning at the same time that things break and you can't always put them back together.

The next observation also gives reported examples of Alan smashing things.

Geoff said that Alan [2:06] had smashed a glass tin and a cup at his uncles. He had also broken a glass during the week by throwing it down the stairs. He said that Alan had smashed a window with a hammer a few weeks ago and thrown clothes outside. I asked if Alan knew what would smash and what would not. Geoff said that he did. I said that if that was the case he only knew because he had learned through practice.

The interpretation discussed at the time was of Alan's transforming schema. In psycho-analytic theory this observation could perhaps be interpreted as Alan representing a fragmentation in his consciousness and acting this out in his play by breaking glass. Alan's behaviour of smashing objects perhaps became a vehicle for expressing anxiety, taking its meaning beyond a transformation schema. It is possible that this behaviour became linked to Alan's early frustrations resulting from his initial awareness of separation from his parents. It seems from these observations that Alan could have been using this behaviour as a vehicle for expressing his own unconscious anxiety and the fragmentation in his consciousness that resulted from this. This possibility is further discussed in chapter 5.

Alan's behaviour may have resulted in Geoff projecting his

own unintegrated feelings onto Alan's behaviour when Alan smashed objects. It might be further suggested that Alan had internalised his parents' projection and acted out their anxieties in his behaviour. Alan's behaviour could therefore have become a container for his parents' as well as his own anxiety. Attempts were made to discuss this alternative interpretation in the evaluation process:

In evaluation, Geoff said that the kids' behaviour 'got to him'. Exploring the feelings a bit deeper, he said that when he had done 'owt' when he was a 'bairn,' he was locked in his room and if he tried to come out he was 'brayed' and sent back. I suggested that these feelings were coming up when things happened with his own 'bairns' and that he'd never really worked through them. He acknowledged these feelings as being present when he 'checked the bairns.

Clearly multiple interpretations are possible for the same act of behaviour. Children's schemas appear to have an intellectual and emotional content in addition to becoming a vehicle for the intellectual and emotional interpretations of their parents.

#### Dab Schema or is he Trying to Break the Table?

A similar dual interpretation is possible from the next observation:

Alan [2:08] scribbled with the crayon and then started to make dots. Sandra shouted at him to stop. I said, 'Are you making dots?' 'Make them with the chalk instead'. Sandra started to draw on the other side of the paper. She drew a tree and flowers. I commented that Alan was drawing in a round scribble using his whole arm to do it. He then started to make dots again. Sandra told him to stop or he would break the glass.

Alan appeared to be operating a 'dab' graphic schema. Sandra seemed initially to interpret this behaviour as Alan trying

to break the glass of the coffee table. It is possible that Sandra projected anxiety onto his behaviour. The alternative explanation given may have supported Sandra in modifying her concept of his behaviour. Her concept that 'he doesn't understand' appeared then to be brought into operation and lead to the new behaviour of explaining to him why he must not behave in this way. His second attempt at a dab schema was met by an inhibition with an explanation. Through the observation and discussion following Alan's behaviour, Sandra's interpretation appeared to have become modified. We discussed Alan's dab schema in the evaluation process:

J.S. So take another example of Alan drawing, right. He was on the glass top table, I don't know whether it was this one or whether it was another one that you had and he was drawing round and round in a circle and then he started to make dots like this and again here, you could say - What's he doing that for? Why's he doing that? Is he being naughty or is there more to it; is there some reason for it? Which do you think it would be?

S.T. He's wanting to make different patterns and that.

On reflection, Sandra interpreted Alan's behaviour as making different patterns. It is possible that there is a relationship between the formation of concepts with which to interpret a child's behaviour and projection onto the child's behaviour. This is further discussed in Chapter 5.

### Concept of Enclosing Schema

The following observation relates to Alan's developing enclosing schema:

Alan [2:03] helped Sandra put wool back in a bag. I related this activity to his 'taking things out and putting things back behaviour pattern'. Sandra encouraged him to put it all back. She said that there was some more behind him, representing the spatial concept 'behind' to him. He turned

around and found it.

Sandra recognised the schema that 'Alan takes things out and puts them back,' and provided an opportunity for him to operate this behaviour pattern. This concept was reinforced by observations of, and reflections on, Alan's behaviour. Sandra further observed and discussed this behaviour pattern in the following observation.

Sandra said that Alan [2:04] spends hours putting things in and taking them out of his toy teapot house. She had found this toy with which he could operate this behaviour pattern at the local tip.

Sandra generalised the concept that, 'he takes things out and puts them back' to another context. This concept led to further observations and reflections on his behaviour indicating that a perspective change had possibly taken place. In evaluation, Sandra gave further examples of Alan's enclosing schema:

J.S. ... putting things inside other things.

S.T. Aye, like hiding the hairbrush from my father and putting it in the welly. Couldn't find it for months until he came to put a welly on and there was his hairbrush.

J.S. Right.

S.T. I remember that. We couldn't find it for months, all of a sudden he finds it when he puts his foot in.

J.S. I've got some examples of him doing just that sort of thing really. Here, putting things inside other things. You got him that big toy teapot. Now he did play with that, remember that one you got off the tip.

S.T. Aye.

J.S. Because that was something he could put things inside and take them out. Yeah, so a lot of things like hairbrushes or toilet rolls or whatever he would play with by putting in and out of other things. Yeah?

S.T. He liked handbags - putting things in handbags.



J.S. So he liked to play with your handbag?

S.T. Anyone who came into the house. He was into them. Health visitors' handbag he was in, taking her stuff out.

J.S. Yeah.

Sandra generalised the concept to include other examples of Alan's enclosing schema. This supported the interpretative schema for the research; that observation of and reflection on the child's behaviour can lead the parent to the formation of concepts concerning the child's development and learning. Sandra generalised the concept to different situations.

### You've Just Got to Tell Them

At times, Alan operated his enclosing schema with things that he was not allowed to have. For example;

Alan [2:07] picked up three cups and put them in the baby bath. Sandra shouted at him to 'get them out now'. I said that he had picked up all the cups and was putting them in the bath.

During evaluation, Sandra explained the problems that she found with examples like this:

S.T. When you're a bairn you don't really understand do you?

J.S. So he didn't understand, if you say to Alan, ... 'leave that alone'. He doesn't really understand why you're saying it.

S.T. You've got to tell them and let them know it's naughty and not to play with it anymore and they don't take any notice of you.

I attempted to extend the interpretation from 'he doesn't understand what he's doing' to 'he doesn't understand why you're telling him not to do it'. Sandra brought in a concept that 'you've got to tell them'. She also explained that he didn't take any

notice of her. This statement may have symbolised the lack of containment for Sandra's own anxiety that may therefore have become unconscious and fragmented and may have been projected onto Alan's behaviour. The interpretation perhaps contained the projection of some degree of inner chaos onto Alan's behaviour. This assumption is perhaps supported by the next section of the evaluation. Sandra went on to explain other things that Alan played with, when she explained, he didn't know what he was doing.

S.T. He messed on with pens and paint and all that all over the walls and make up. He liked playing with talcum powder and perfume and pouring it around. Making a mess with shampoo and stuff. He's gone through all that.

J.S. So he was not only interested in boxes and ..

S.T. Oh no, he played in the food cupboard.

J.S. What was in the food cupboard?

S.T. The flour and the eggs and everything. He 'hoyed' it all over the place. He got the baby bath, got the box of oxos, got the bottle of milk, got a bag of flour, eggs, box of soap powder and bread, the lot. He put it all in this baby bath. He had jam all over the chair.

...  
S.T. Aye, and he liked putting soap and everything on the wall and all and writing with make up.

J.S. Writing with makeup?

S.T. On the walls.

J.S. And tipping the shampoo and things out in the bathroom as you say.

S.T. Aye, and on the bed and all.

J.S. So why was he doing all of this?

S.T. It was just playing to the bairn. All it is to bairns is playing but to you it's a mess. They try different things out.

...  
J.S. So they don't always realise, is this what you're

saying?

S.T. They don't realise that it's wrong and that it's a mess. To them it's fun.

Sandra's reports indicated that Alan's behaviour appeared to be disordered and chaotic at times. His behaviour may have symbolised Sandra's own fragmented feelings. One interpretation could be that Sandra may have projected chaotic feelings onto Alan's behaviour and at times felt unable to contain it. A tentative explanation could be that her anxiety had become split from consciousness and projected onto Alan and her projection had been internalised and acted out in Alan's chaotic behaviour. This possibility is further discussed in Chapter 5.

Articulating and bringing Alan's behaviour into conscious awareness may have resulted in Sandra's anxiety also coming into consciousness to some extent that was contained by the researcher in the process of reflection.

Sandra's overall concept underlying these observations is that 'Alan doesn't understand; he's only a bairn'. Her own anxieties appear to be contained to some extent by this concept. The possible capacity for conceptual understanding to contain anxiety is also explored in chapter 5.

Developing and extending this concept indicated a change in Sandra's perspective and seemed to result in a new way of interpreting much of Alan's behaviour. She generalised the concept to include many observations of his behaviour.

Sandra appeared to be becoming more consciously aware of Alan's behaviour and through this conscious awareness was perhaps beginning to be able to contain this behaviour. She again brought into the evaluation her developing concept of the

importance of explanation. She explained "You've just got to tell them, 'don't touch'. It's naughty or dangerous or whatever."

In the evaluation, Sandra went on to describe how she was not so bothered about him getting dirty and how he needed to explore if he was to learn. Becoming more consciously aware of Alan's behaviour perhaps made Sandra more tolerant of his explorations.

J.S. By watching him you got to see what he was actually doing, rather than seeing it as being naughty. So do you think your views have changed the more you've watched him?

S.T. Aye, you do. He gets dirty and then 'oh god, you shouldn't get dirty' and all that but just let him flipping go ahead and enjoy himself, it's peaceful.

J.S. You get to know their ways of learning?

S.T. Aye, you've got to let bairns do things else they're never going to learn. If you don't let them they're never going to learn what's right, what's wrong and what to do, you know. You've got to ...

Sandra appeared to have elaborated her concept that 'bairns don't understand' to include that they learn from doing things. She also brought in her concept of 'You've just got to tell them' in explaining that they have to learn what's right and what's wrong. Sandra then went on in the evaluation, to generalise these concepts and conjecture into the future behaviour of her baby daughter.

J.S. So with her do you think she's going to be doing the same things when she's a bit bigger? (Elaine 3 months)

S.T. When she's a bit older she's going to be into mischief. She's going to be into all the drawers and for the ornaments and stuff like that.

J.S. Throwing them because that seems to be a stage that they go through?

S.T. She's going to wanting to be at the records and the record player pushing buttons and switches on the walls and stuff like that she's going to go for. But as for the food cupboard, I don't think she's going to be able to reach unless she can get the chair and climb like he used to.

Sandra used her concept of 'Bairns don't understand' to imagine some observations that she might make of Elaine's behaviour in the future.

In this section Sandra can clearly be seen to extend and develop a fundamental concept in her thinking, that Alan 'Doesn't understand, he's only a bairn'. Through the processes of observation and reflection on his behaviour, it is likely that she became more consciously aware of what he was doing. She generalised this concept to other examples of his behaviour and used it to interpret his throwing schema, his transformation schema, dab graphic schema and enclosing schema.

The examples that are given for this concept in action provide support for the interpretative schema, introduced in the methodology chapter; that through observation and reflection, parents extend and develop concepts concerning their child's behaviour. The examples serve as units of analysis to support the elaboration and generalisation of this concept. The examples that are given of the concept being generalised to new situations tend to give support to the interpretative schema that Sandra started to see Alan's behaviour differently. She went through a perspective change in the way she observed and interpreted his behaviour.

The possibility that Sandra developed a new perspective on Alan's behaviour is perhaps best indicated by her becoming more tolerant of it. She seemed to be developing the potential to find new ways of dealing with it, and built a concept of, "He doesn't

understand, you've just got to tell him." One explanation could be that she had begun the process of integrating Alan's behaviour into her conscious awareness. It is possible that there may be a connection between her becoming consciously aware of his behaviour and with the containment and integration, within the partnership relationship, of her own anxiety that arose as a result of his behaviour. Emotional and intellectual development may be linked in this way. The possible connection between the parent's consciousization of the child's behaviour and the integration of the anxiety evoked by the behaviour is further discussed in Chapter 5.

In addition, examples of Geoff's interpretations of Alan throwing and breaking things tend to support the interpretative schema that parents at times project unconscious aspects of themselves into the child's behaviour.

Sandra formed concepts that 'Bairns don't understand' and 'You've just got to tell them.' These concepts appeared to be linked to the concept introduced in the next section, 'You learn what bairns are trying to do by watching them.'

## **“YOU LEARN WHAT BAIRNS ARE TRYING TO DO BY WATCHING THEM “**

This category introduces Sandra's second fundamental concept, 'You learn what bairns are trying to do by watching them,' which she used to interpret Alan's behaviour. This concept is applied to Alan's problem solving schema and in the evaluation is generalised to include other examples of his behaviour. The link between this concept and Sandra's understanding of the intention behind Alan's behaviour is explored. The section ends with examples of this concept applied to Alan's symbolic representation with an explanation how this may be central to Alan's intellectual and emotional development.

### Means / End Schema

We watched as Alan [2:04] poked the end of a thread into a bead that was on the floor. Geoff showed him how to put the beads on the thread and asked him to copy. Alan repeated 'copy,' and he pushed the thread in but had not realised that he needed to pull it through. He then pushed the thread through a bead and pulled it. We all watched him try to do this again. He pushed the thread through another bead but instead of pulling it through the other side; he pushed it. Sandra noticed what he was doing and reflected on his behaviour saying he was pushing instead of pulling. We sat and watched him again and this time he pulled the thread through and now knew how to solve the problem.

Geoff had a concept that Alan learned by copying which he generalised in the observation above. The observation skills of adults involved can be seen to be developing as they watch what he is doing with interest. Sandra developed a concept that Alan decided what he wanted to do and tried to work out how to do it and that he got things wrong but can solve problems himself. She observed and reflected upon his behaviour. Sandra also observed Alan tackling the following problem.

Sandra watched Alan [2:06] closely while he was trying to cut. She pointed out that he was holding the blades of the scissors that prevented him from cutting. She then noticed that he had put his fingers in the holes of the scissors because he had watched Margaret do this. I added that he was not sure how to open the scissors but once they were opened for him he could make a cut by closing them.

Sandra had developed a concept that 'Alan learns through watching and copying' and that he used these observations that he made to help solve problems, such as how to open a pair of scissors. Observing and reflecting upon his behaviour seemed to lead her to elaborate this concept. Watching Alan led Sandra to conclude that he learned from his experience. For example,

Alan [2:06] threaded a bead on the string as he had learned to do a few weeks ago. Sandra said that once he learned something he did not forget.

She had formed a concept that he learned through solving problems and that this knowledge stayed with him. Sandra continued to observe Alan and interpret what he was trying to do. For example,

I gave Alan and Margaret black paper and white crayons and white chalk. Sandra said to Alan [2:08] that there was no top on a crayon he wanted to use. She told me that Alan thought that there was a top on the crayon. I looked at Alan and he was pulling at the crayon.

Sandra observed Alan and assessed his problem and helped him overcome it. She reflected upon her observation. Her concept that Alan tries to solve problems became her motive for action. She observed his behaviour and expected to see meaning in what he was doing. The concept was reinforced through observation when she could see what he was trying to do. Sandra's ability to make accurate observation of Alan's behaviour was usually greater than the researcher's.

Sandra made further observations of Alan trying to solve



problems. For example,

Alan [2:08] played with the tunnel pegs. He put the round and the square ones back in the holder. Sandra encouraged him to put the others back. She asked him to look at the shapes of them and watched him in his attempts, making comments such as, 'He's turning it to fit it in,' etc. She did not fit them back for him when he could not fit these shapes in but continued to watch him. Whenever Alan came to any difficulty he said 'f...ing bastard' to himself that made Sandra laugh. He then put one shape inside the holder and then took the others out and put them all inside. Sandra and I continued to watch him. He then put the square, round and triangular pieces back in the holes. This left the oblong one stuck inside. Sandra laughed and said 'that's stuck now'. Sandra said 'lift it up' and Alan then lifted the whole thing up. Then she said 'no, take the things out' which Alan did which enabled him to get the oblong brick out, which he then fitted in the top. She said he was very clever and worked things out quickly. Alan then twice rearranged the bricks so that the oblong was stuck in the holder again in the same way and then removed the bricks to get it out and replace it. Sandra and I watched him do this and she commented that he was doing the same thing again.

Sandra observed Alan, assessed his problem and watched him trying to overcome it. This set up a shared meaning situation. She helped him solve the problem but did not solve it for him. She interacted with him in a supportive meaningful way and introduced appropriate language. She provided an intellectual 'scaffolding' to assist him in forming a mental construct. Sandra created shared meanings in what corresponded to the zone of proximal development in Alan's learning. This is further discussed in Chapter 5.

Sandra's formation of the concept that she could see what Alan was trying to do by watching him led her to a perspective change that motivated her behaviour of observing Alan and expecting to see meaning in his activity. The development of new behaviour of assessing the problem Alan was faced with and

talking him through problems supported the interpretative schema of perspective change. The concept was generalised to new situations that led Sandra to continue to watch Alan with interest and to develop her observation skills, which reinforced the process.

The processes of observation and reflection, such as the examples above seemed to assist Sandra in the development of a positive attitude towards Alan's behaviour. She contributed to the development of Alan's self image when she said he was clever and could quickly work things out. Positive attention was focused on Alan as Sandra observed him and interpreted his behaviour and talked to him about it. The link between emotional and intellectual development is further discussed in Chapter 5.

In the evaluation, Sandra clearly stated her concept that 'You learn from watching bairns';

S.T. You just learn by them by what they're doing.

J.S. You learned by watching him ...

S.T. Aye.

#### They Want to go onto Something Else

Sandra's concept that she learned through watching Alan led her to observe Alan's behaviour, to reflect on what she had observed and to become conscious of what he was doing. She explained in the evaluation:

S.T. I remember watching him when he was little and he was growing up. When he was little he did some different things I didn't always remember. He wasn't really interested in toys, it was mainly cardboard boxes and matchboxes and things like that or toilet roll holders or stuff like that. Kids seem to not want toys. They're just interested in little fiddly things around the house instead.

J.S. So when you were watching him playing you were finding that he was going for things that maybe you

wouldn't have expected him to want to play with but they were the things that he was interested in.

S.T. Matchboxes, old bobbins and things.

Through watching Alan, Sandra began to form a concept of what he was interested in at the time, or his active schemas.

S.T. They want to do different things like that anyway. They want to go on to do something else.

J.S. So he lost interest ...

S.T. Aye, kids always lose interest and they want to do different things. They only play with one thing for so long and then they go off it for a little while and then they go on to something else.

J.S. So you've noticed that about him as well. Through watching him you know what he's keen on playing with and that it lasts for a time and then that's it after that.

S.T. Yeah, aye.

These observations may seem obvious and common place but are important as they show the beginning of an awareness of Alan's active schemas that underlie his behaviour. Sandra recognised that Alan had intention in his behaviour that motivated him to change from one thing to another. These observations also reinforced her concept that 'You learn by watching bairns'.

Sandra showed in the evaluation, how she was already watching her baby daughter's behaviour and recognised her active schemas. She generalised her concept that 'You learn from watching bairns' to another context.

S.T. You learn a lot of things yourself when your watching the kids when they start to grow. Like this un's (Elaine [0:03]) starting to grow, she's blowing bubbles.

J.S. Getting the feel of the saliva on her lips.

S.T. Aye, she likes to blow bubbles.

## Concept of Symbolic Representation

The following observation involved observing Alan's symbolic play:

We watched Alan [2:03] prop the baby doll up on the chair and pretend to give it a bottle and pretend to fill the bottle beside the kitchen door. He then walked a few feet away and looked back at the doll, pointed and said 'now'. Sandra said that Alan was playing at putting the doll to bed. I asked her if she recognised this play from his own bedtime. She said she did.

This behaviour shows clearly Alan's bedtime schema in action. Sandra learned about this play through watching him and reflecting on her observations. In observing his play, Sandra developed a concept that Alan's play was meaningful. This concept led Sandra to find suitable toys for imaginative play and observe Alan playing. For example;

I took the baby things out of my bag. Sandra said that she had found a doll's potty at the tip and went to find it. She said that Alan [2:05] tried to sit on it.

Through watching Alan, Sandra developed an idea of the sort of thing he would play with. She provided this toy that enabled him to extend his toilet training schema. Sandra made further observations of Alan's spontaneous symbolic play. For example,

Sandra asked me if I had seen the mud on the window. She said Alan [2:08] had been outside the other day and had run in for about 10 glasses of water. Sandra had asked him what he was doing and he had said 'pie'. She said he had mixed all the water with the soil and then had thrown some at the windows.

The concept that Alan's play was meaningful led Sandra to observe his imaginative play with interest on her own and interpret what he was trying to represent and later discuss this with me. She generalised this concept to other contexts. The

formation of the concept that 'you learn by watching bairns' appeared to lead Sandra to this behaviour. The generalisation of this concept may indicate that Sandra went through a perspective change resulting in her making new observations and interpretations of Alan's imaginative play. This concept may also have led Sandra to make provision for Alan's imaginative play. In addition, Sandra developed a positive attitude towards this play and paid positive attention to it.

Given that Sandra made several attempts to support and encourage Alan's imaginative play, and possibly generalised the concept that this play was meaningful to many other contexts, it could be argued that she supported Alan's intellectual and emotional growth. Intellectual growth is likely to have taken place through a process of the 'fleshing out' of Alan's schemas that were operative in his imaginative play, through his interaction with adults and the incorporation of new material into his schema. An explanation of the possibility of emotional growth taking place through imaginative play situations such as this, is to be found in psychoanalytic theory, which indicates that symbolic play represents the expression of the child's feeling world. Links between emotional and intellectual development in a child's play and the adult's contribution to this development are further discussed in Chapter 5.

During evaluation Sandra gave further examples of Alan's imaginative play that she had observed, indicating that she had generalised the concept that his play was meaningful and had become consciously aware of this behaviour. This evidence that the concept was generalised lends support to the suggestion that the development of this concept supported Alan's intellectual and

emotional growth.

S.T. Aye, there was a lot of things he liked to do when he was little. The way he used to like playing with the dolls prams and sitting in them and getting all the other kids to push him around and he wouldn't get out. He'd scream the place down.

...  
S.T. Aye, he like to put wellies and that on, like a welly on and a shoe on and play like that or put little lasses clothes on.

J.S. So he went through a stage of dressing up then?

S.T. Aye.

J.S. Was that something that he did a lot of and then lost interest in?

S.T. Yeah, they always do.

Sandra recognised and provided for Alan's active schemas. Sandra appeared to have developed a concept that Alan's symbolic play was meaningful.

In this category, Sandra can be seen to elaborate and extend her concept of 'You learn by watching bairns'. She generalised this concept and it could be argued, went through a perspective change in becoming consciously aware that Alan's spontaneous play was meaningful that seemed to lead her to make further observations of Alan's behaviour. New forms of her own behaviour supporting Alan's development emerged when she helped him to solve problems and encouraged and supported his imaginative play. These examples support the interpretative schemas of the research; that parents, through a process of observation and reflection, elaborate and develop concepts which result in perspective changes, and in new forms of behaviour towards the child.

In addition, Sandra appeared to form other concepts linked

to the concept of 'learning by watching'. This concept may have lead to the concepts that 'Alan learns by copying, Alan works out how to do things, there are intentions in his behaviour' and 'Alan doesn't forget once he's learned something'.

The concept that 'You learn what bairns are trying to do from watching them' may underpin and link with many other concepts that Sandra developed. The concepts appear to be linked and related to each other in a number of different ways. This is further discussed in Chapter 5.

## **“HE WORKS HIMSELF “**

In this category, Sandra explored Alan's aggression and began to look for reasons for it. She described her own feelings towards the children in times of stress and linked these feelings with how she felt towards authority figures as a child, and how her early experiences may make her feel now. She reached the conclusion in the evaluation that 'Bairns shouldn't be smacked'. Sandra expressed concern over Geoff's behaviour, which he began to question himself in the evaluation.

Sandra gave examples of Alan's aggressive behaviour, e.g.,

She said that Alan [2:03] had tried to hit Margaret with a screwdriver during the week and would have done if she hadn't stopped him. He also lifted up Margaret's skirt and smacked her legs. I asked Sandra what she did to stop him and she said she smacked him and then added that she told him that he must not do it or he would hurt Margaret.

Sandra talked about how she behaved towards Alan (2:04) and Margaret (3:08).

She said she was very bad tempered with them, not occasionally but all the time, for silly things like standing in front of the television or making the slightest noise. She said she couldn't expect them to sit and do nothing.

Sandra had begun to reflect on her own behaviour, expressing her feelings towards her children. Her anxieties were contained by her reflections in the partnership relationship to some extent.

Sandra said that Alan [2:05] had been 'working himself'. He had pushed Margaret down the stairs and had been swinging from the curtains and had pulled them down.

Alan's behaviour continued to raise overwhelming anxieties. Discussion was one way to contain these anxieties.

Sandra said that Alan [2:07] often punches the other children. He would also give them a dig so that he couldn't be seen. Often one of the children starts crying and it's



because Alan has given them a dig.

Sandra explored some of these issues in the evaluation process:

J.S. You told me that Alan had smacked Margaret. He had a habit of smacking her.

S.T. He smacks both of them - Mary and Margaret. He thinks that the lads have to be the boss. The women, the lasses should do what the lads tell them.

Sandra searched for an explanation for why Alan should have smacked Margaret. She reflected on his behaviour, and not only reported on what he had done, but also looked for reasons why he might have done it. She was developing a concept that he does one thing because of another. She went on to discuss explicitly her reactions to her children in times of stress:

S.T. You feel like killing them.

J.S. Yeah.

S.T. You get angry ... 'you little git; I'll put you in a home' when they get you really mad.

J.S. Yeah.

S.T. But you know they're just bairns. You've got to put up with them.

J.S. You don't think at the time you just feel don't you?

S.T. Yeah. You just start thinking after you've smacked them or told them.

J.S. And you think 'what happened'.

S.T. You think 'I shouldn't have smacked him and all that'. They're just bairns. They didn't ask to be born and they're my bairns. You feel ... even though you've smacked them for a reason, you just think that you shouldn't have smacked them ...

J.S. And ultimately you're trying to protect them because if they're doing something that might harm them often when they're very young.

S.T. When you smack them you regret it afterwards. I always regret smacking mine afterwards. When I hear them cry I think 'poor little sods, come here'. 'Get away, don't want to cuddle you' that's what they say to you. I think 'ah, me bairn hates us and all that. They always come back to you after a little while.

J.S. Yeah.

S.T. They don't stay angry for very long. You can't stay angry with bairns for long - you never can.

J.S. No.

S.T. I can't stay angry with mine.

J.S. So that feeling comes and goes. It's very strong and it almost has a life of its own, doesn't it at the point when you're actually going to hit them or whatever. But it seems to me that those feelings when they're there, they have got some roots back.

S.T. Aye.

J.S. And they are those feelings that when you've got these authority figures or these people when you were young like ..

S.T. The social workers or the nuns or somebody telling you.

J.S. There was probably quite a lot that you wanted to say to those people.

S.T. I did say it to one of the nuns. I wanted to go home to be away from them and I tried to go home. I tried to run away from the home to get back to me dad and they caught us and bought us back by me lugs, pulling me lugs off us. I was put in a group with this nun, Sister ... She was a right witch and she thought she could tell us what to do and hit us with a shoe. She pulled me pants down and hit us with a shoe and I just let loose. I never fought before, hadn't shouted at any of the nuns before. I hadn't really showed any anger at any of the nuns before until that day she tried to pull my pants down. And I just swung me hand around and smacked her face, knocked her glasses off, pulled her face off and just burst out laughing at the little bit hair that she had and then I started calling her everything under the sun just bawled at her all the time. I wouldn't shut up. And that time I was swearing at her she came to hit us but

she couldn't. At the finish she gave up and wouldn't speak to us or come near us in case she got another clout. I was really angry then. I'd never shown me anger or sworn since I came.

J.S. You kept it all in until then.

S.T. Until that day.

J.S. And that was just the final straw.

S.T. I wanted to do something and they wouldn't let us.

Sandra expressed her anger and powerlessness, her emotions that were possibly contained within her projections onto her children in times of stress. She explained that they sometimes resulted in her hitting the children which she regretted. She went on further to explore these feelings:

J.S. So these are the sort of feelings that are likely to be coming up in that moment when you've just got to let them out and the times when it happens is when children bring those things up. It's not that you think back in the past and know that this is 'the feelings that I had towards my dad because he sent me away from home' or that you think at that moment but the feelings that are associated with them seem to all come bursting through.

S.T. You feel anger and hurt and all that.

J.S. Connections with the past and with what's happening now and the way it is with other people and all through something like the bairn going for something he shouldn't have

...  
S.T. I didn't have a mam. I grew up without one. I'm certainly not going to have my littleuns growing up without a mam ... I know what it's like to have a dad, but the dad doesn't still replace the mam. To me a mam is one of the important things in life for a little kiddy. I know they need a dad but they don't need a dad as much as they need a mam because a mam is there to be there. If they fall down and hurt themselves the mam can bath their little knees and look after them when they're sick. Be there for them all the time, the cuddles for their knees, just be there for them the mam. But a dad it's like 'Go off and play, go on here's your pocket money'. But he's not there when they're bad or to bath their knees or to sit them on your knee and to give

them a bit cuddle when they're feeling a bit upset. If they've had a fight and they go out and sort it out - they don't want to. It's the mother that's got to do it all.

J.S. Yeah.

S.T. It's the mother. That's what I've missed. I'm the mam so I wouldn't let my kids do without it. You just get angry when you've missed out on some things like that.

J.S. Yeah.

S.T. I know I do ...

Sandra made an active link between her experience and present behaviour. She explored some of the feelings she had towards early authority figures and then talked about the importance of having a mother, of having one's feelings contained. She then made an association between her anger at not having had a mother and her anger now.

#### Geoff's Projections onto Margaret

Margaret [3:05] started to cry because Alan had taken a toy from her. Geoff stood up and shouted at her 'Now stop that'. When she continued to cry, Geoff lifted his hand and said 'Now stop that or I'm going to bray you'. Margaret then stopped crying. Geoff said that she is always doing this. She cries for no reason; he was going to stop her and this is the only way to do it.

Geoff appeared to be projecting his own overwhelming unconscious pain onto Margaret's crying. One explanation could be that Margaret's crying raised his anxiety to such an extent that he felt he had to stop it immediately. A possible explanation is that he felt he had to repress his own pain and vulnerability. Sandra talked about her concern about Geoff's behaviour. For example,

[Alan 2:07] Sandra said that she thought that Geoff was much too hard on the girls. Margaret had taken medicine out of the bin and into the living room and Geoff had

smacked her 4 times, full force without a nappy on. She said that he shouldn't have done this as she is just a bairn and didn't know she had done wrong.

Geoff may have projected feelings of being out of control onto Margaret's behaviour. Sandra interpreted her behaviour differently, from the perspective of 'Margaret doesn't understand, she's just a bairn'. The evaluation discussed specifically Alan's aggression towards Margaret.

J.S. Just related to Alan smacking Margaret. You told me that Geoff had smacked Margaret without a nappy on once and she hadn't really done very much. She'd just taken something out of the bin and that it seemed to be quite an issue really. It did seem to be at the time.

S.T. Aye, I don't believe in babies being smacked. They're only just babies and they don't like it. I don't think babies should be smacked because they don't understand what's right and what's wrong. You've got to learn them by telling them - 'That's naughty' - but you cannot smack them, that gets you nowhere. It only leaves a red mark on the bairn and makes them cry. It's certainly not learning them is it?

J.S. ... Alan smacks Margaret - maybe that's something he's learned.

On reflection, I thought that may be it was inappropriate to introduce the harsh reality of Alan internalising the very behaviour that Sandra was rejecting. There was no come back from her and she did not appear to be ready to make the jump to this interpretation.

However, Sandra had showed that she was aware of what she was doing, and could analyse and reflect upon appropriate behaviour for disciplining her children. She made a connection between the past and the present and the possible significance of her experience. She was also able to describe vividly how she felt about both her present behaviour and her experience.

Sandra also brought in her concept that 'bairns don't understand' and used this to underpin her conclusion that there was no point in smacking them. It appears that the impact of this concept affected Sandra's emotional as well as intellectual understanding.

[Alan 2:09] Returning to the original data, communication with Geoff became less frequent. He swore at me one time when I arrived at the house. It was a difficult time when social workers were finding access to the house almost impossible. There was a case conference where grounds for removing the children were discussed. My work with the family was ending as Alan was due to take up a place at nursery school.

When I returned for the evaluation, Geoff agreed to participate but declined to have his comments audio-recorded. Below is a summary of his comments:

Geoff said that social workers were all the same, they came and tried to tell him what to do all the time. He wasn't having it. I suggested that this was like his parents and he said that it was exactly the same, they never listened to him either. The teachers were the same, they never listened to him and he'd ended up expelled for hitting one of them. I suggested that his parents were overwhelmed by their feelings towards him and in a way expected him to contain these feelings and to be a parent to them. But how could he be their parent and make everything all right for them when he was only a child?

Geoff said that he was a parent to all Sandra's bairns. He checked them if they did anything wrong and smacked them. Otherwise, he said, they wouldn't take any notice. He said he had to to smack them so that they feel it or it wouldn't bother them. Sometimes, he said, he smacked them quite hard. He said it never did him any harm. He was 'brayed' with belts and broom shanks, the lot. 'Sometimes', he said, 'I admit it, I smack them too hard. I admit it, at least I'm coming to grips with it'. He said he was beginning to see that he shouldn't hit them so hard, but at least he admitted it.

In the evaluation, Geoff had a chance to work through some

of his feelings about being a parent and to identify some of the roots of his reactions. He had the opportunity to examine his present behaviour within the partnership relationship.

To sum up, Sandra's early reflections contained the concept that Alan 'worked himself'. She generalised this concept and gave many examples of his behaviour that she found hard to deal with. She reflected on his behaviour in the evaluation and looked for a reason he should be aggressive and developed a concept, 'He thinks the lads have to be the boss'. She then further elaborated these linked concepts by reflecting on her own reactions to his behaviour, 'You feel like killing them' and her feelings that were underlying her reactions. She conceptualised these feelings; 'You feel anger and hurt from things that have happened in the past,' and 'If you don't have a mam, it makes you angry'. She then linked all these concepts to the concept 'They don't understand; they're only bairns,' and reached a new concept, 'You shouldn't smack bairns'.

The development of these concepts supported the interpretative schema of the research, that observation and reflection lead to concept formation. These concepts appeared to link to emotional and intellectual development. When Sandra reflected on Alan's behaviour, she brought into conscious awareness feelings that had perhaps been fragmented and unconscious. The link between conceptual and emotional development will be further explored in Chapter 5.

## **YOU'VE GOT TO PROTECT YOUR BAIRNS / DREAM SYMBOLISM.**

Sandra had a dream that she recalled which had far reaching consequences in the sharing of feelings that had been projected onto the dream images. This section records the dream and the discussions that followed.

I visited Sandra some months after collecting the research data. It was in the morning and she was still feeling the effects of a vivid dream she had had the night before. In the dream she had been in the corridor of a block of flats. Geoff had come through one of the doors with a thick slate in his hand and had started to bash Mary over the head until there were large gashes in her head and she fell over and died. He then started on Margaret. In her dream Sandra had hit him over the head and shouted 'no, no!' Neighbours had been standing in the corridor and went in and shut their doors.

Using the Gestalt method of interpretation, where each aspect of the dream represents a fragmented, emotional aspect of the self, projected onto the dream image, we looked at how it felt to be the different people in the dream. Sandra said, 'People had closed their doors like they didn't want to know, like they were shutting it out and like the feeling that they could not cope and had to get away.' She said, 'They could not face up to what was happening.' Her children, she said, must have felt totally helpless. She said Geoff was full of anger and hate; his angry feelings were running away with him and he was going berserk.

About two months later Sandra had strong suspicions that Geoff had sexually exploited Margaret. Her reaction was to go to the police. When I later reminded her about the dream she



reconnected with the emotions she had felt surrounding it. She talked about the people who had gone inside and shut their doors and remarked on how she had been able to face her situation and had taken action.

In the evaluation, it surprised me how vividly Sandra remembered the feelings in the dream, as she had dreamt it over 2 years ago.

J.S. ... Dreams are always significant in that the feelings in dreams are always really important issues in your own life - like things that you feel, you can see in things that happen in the dreams. I remember talking to you about it at the time and looking at how it felt to be the different people.

S.T. Aye, I remember that, nobody wanted to know ... or nought, kept to themselves ...

J.S. Do you recognise those feelings of not wanting to know. You know that feeling of wanting to shut it off to get away.

S.T. Aye, in that dream - you want to protect your kids but you can't always protect. That was something else that I realised after the dream. I realised that in the dream you try your best to protect them and you can't always protect them. There's always something or someone a lot stronger than what you are and you can't always do anything for them. You try. That was one bad dream mind you.

J.S. So the dream was almost telling you that, wasn't it - those feelings of helplessness that ..

S.T. You couldn't do 'nowt'.

J.S. The feelings were there that you wanted to protect the bairns and that was in you hitting Geoff and saying 'no no stop it' and then the other feelings were in the neighbours shutting the door - that's the other feelings in there.

S.T. They just wanted to keep themselves to themselves and not want to be involved and all that.

J.S. That feeling of not wanting to know. Wanting to keep out of it - things too overwhelming. It's like not wanting to see what's real and true.

S.T. ... block it out. You find a lot of that round here these days. Just don't want to know. Too frightened to move. Don't know what's in front of them. That's the problem.

J.S. But you did come to terms with when you called the police (referring to sexual exploitation incident) that time. You weren't like shutting the door and saying 'no I don't want to see'.

S.T. Mind you, I felt like it. I did feel like it. I didn't really want to believe. When it's your bairn and something's wrong, you've got to believe, you've got to do something. You can't just shut the door on it and say it isn't happening, it isn't true. You can't do that. It isn't an easy thing to do. It's hard. It's hard all your life to have to work out what's right and what's wrong for your kids.

J.S. To find that strength within you to protect them when they need protecting.

S.T. You've got to because nobody else is going to protect them. No one else there ... Geoff or nought. If you're their parent, you've got to protect them the best way you can. Do what you can for them.

J.S. Even if it means going to the police because its too much for you to deal with on your own.

S.T. Yeah. For some things that do happen you can't always deal with them on your own. You do have police involved or social workers or whoever. It's a lot of work on your own.

J.S. Sometimes it's too much.

S.T. Yeah.

J.S. So in that dream there seemed to be both those sides of you. The side that protects and the side that doesn't want to see.

S.T. (Emphasises) But you've got to. You've got to face up to it and see what's what. For the good of your kids and for yourself. You can't turn away from it, no way.

Sandra switched from projection onto the neighbours of feelings of denial, to her own acceptance of these feelings in her self and a recognition and acceptance of the feelings of protection

towards her children. Contained in the dream was also an underlying sense of powerlessness, probably with roots in early childhood. Sandra went on to explore this.

S.T. Like in dreams you're supposed to be able to control things that happen. You're supposed to be able to make out that you're always coming out best. Like in dreams, if you're having an argument with someone, you always come out best in the argument ... if you have a fight with someone you always come out on top - you're the best at everything. You can always control dreams. But in that dream I had, I didn't seem to be able to control any of it. I didn't come out best and I couldn't do anything about it in the dream. That's what frightened me a little bit.

J.S. Out of control - a powerlessness there.

...  
S.T. I didn't seem to be able to do really anything for to protect me bairn. Nothing really, what was a handbag. Could hit with a handbag in the dream and that was it. That was the most I could seem to do.

...  
J.S. Or you as a child feeling these feelings of powerlessness ... just taking it down to a deeper level - there's those feelings. Wanting or needing to get on top of a situation but being overwhelmed by it.

S.T. Mm. He's at the door, I'm going to kill him.

Sandra took the interpretation as far as she felt comfortable with, preferring not to explore these feelings further at this stage. In recognising the feelings in the dream that she did, she was able to reconnect with them. She felt the shame of denial and the pain of being powerless to protect and the conflict of role between feeling powerless and feeling that she needed to act. Faced with the very difficult life situation of suspected sexual exploitation in the family, she was undoubtedly faced with these feelings. Her familiarity with these feelings perhaps empowered her in the decision she made.

The process of projection is explored elsewhere in this chapter and is also apparent in the exploration of feelings

associated with the dream. In this instance the projections are made onto the dream images compared with projections made onto Alan's behaviour in previous examples, but the same process is involved. The containment and acceptance of these feelings support the interpretative schema for the research, that Sandra was going through a process of emotional development. Aspects of projection are further discussed in Chapter 5.

## SECTION 2 SALLY AND WILLIAM

This section introduces the family, Sally and William and their son Peter. The parents have two children; but the older son, John attended special school and was not usually at home during visits.

Two categories were selected from the data to present in this section. The first category is entitled, 'He learns by Trial and Error / Schematic Development'. This section follows the development of Sally and William's interest in and interpretations of several of Peter's behaviour patterns.

Peter's behaviour patterns chosen for inclusion were his pulling schema, vertical schema, flexible object schema, throwing schema and enclosing schema. Sally and William's interpretations of Peter's schema are explored and connected with the main conceptual framework of the research, which suggests that through observation of and reflection on the child's behaviour, parents form concepts of the child's development. The concepts Sally and William appeared to be forming of Peter's behaviour and development are discussed in this section.

Perspective changes that may have occurred through the generalisation of Sally and William's concepts to new situations are discussed. The development of new behaviour which may be attributed to a change in perspective is also discussed.

The second section is entitled, 'When Something You've Got Disappears / Omnipotence and Separation Anxiety.' It draws together observations of and reports on Peter's behaviour and evaluation data on the issue of Peter's awareness of his individual identity and his parent's interpretations of this process. It

includes examples of Peter 'escaping,' playing 'peek-a-boo,' using a transitional object, wanting to know where people were, and other separation issues. This section explores the theme of Peter's separation anxiety. William's response to this is explored and the section introduces the schema of projection as a possible explanation for his interpretations. This is not to say that Sally made no projections onto Peter's separation behaviour but only that the data included was selected from a mass of data that contained a wealth of possible interpretations.

## **HE LEARNS BY TRIAL AND ERROR / SCHEMATIC DEVELOPMENT**

### Pulling Schema

Joint observation of Peter's spontaneous behaviour led to a recognition that he was developing a 'pulling' schema. For example;

[0:10] We watched Peter pull his musical box string and my shoe lace.

[0:11] William said Peter pulls the records out and he's into everything now he's crawling.

William formed a concept of Peter's pulling schema and generalised it to an observation he had made of an example of Peter 'pulling'. He linked this observation with Peter's increased opportunities for operating this schema since he had started crawling.

Further discussions developed around Peter's pulling schema.

[0:11] I said that I remembered that he liked to pull on the cord of his musical box and that he mainly played with things at the moment by pulling them. He pulls out the records and pulls nappies out of the bag. William got

Peter's record player out and said that he pulls the records off. We watched as Peter got his fingers under the rim of the record and pulled it off. Each time a record was put on he pulled it off again. I asked William if he had shown him how to do it and he said, 'No, he did it himself'. I said that he probably did it accidentally at first and then realised how to do it and now he knows how to do it. I put the ring rattle on the record and William pointed out that he pulled this off first and then the record.

It is possible that William's concept of Peter's 'pulling' schema was generalised to a new situation when he recognised this behaviour in action. This concept appeared to lead to new behaviour as William provided in the example given a new opportunity for Peter to operate this schema. William made further observations that reinforced his developing concept. His observations were linked to his concept of Peter's pulling schema. Sally also observed Peter's pulling behaviour.

[1:01] Peter pulled a sock out of a carrier bag on the floor.  
Sally told him to leave the socks alone.

At times Peter's pulling schema became a bit of a nuisance as he pulled things out onto the floor. Although there was recognition by the parents of this schema this did not necessarily mean that this behaviour was always acceptable. An explanatory concept for this behaviour, however, made it understandable.

Peter's pulling schema was discussed in the evaluation:

J.S. He learned to pull things. This was when he was about 10 mths. old ... this was the stage he got to when he pulled the records out. So if you think about it there were probably other things that at this stage he used to pull out round the house.

S.R. Aye, drawers.

J.S. Things out of drawers?

W.R. Pulling the drawers out. Pulling clothes out of the wardrobes, pulling them out of the drawers. Anything that he could actually pull at, he'd pull it. Even if you had a coat

or something lying on the chair, he'd pull that.

J.S. He'd pull it off the chair?

W.R. He'd got the motion as in for pulling something.

J.S. The pulling motion ...

W.R. Trying to find out what he could do with it.

J.S. Whether things would move or not?

W.R. Uh huh.

J.S. And how quickly they'd move maybe.

W.R. I tried it with him once. I give him a truck with a rope on. I had nothing in ... and I didn't put wooden blocks in, I put a brick in, as in a proper building brick. It was really heavy and he tried for ages to pull it and pull it and eventually he got it to move and when he got it to move it wouldn't stop 'till it came right up to him. He knew when he got it to go that was it, he could pull it to himself.

J.S. So he knew he had to put quite a bit of effort into pulling that. He learned from actually doing it that it was harder to pull.

W.R. Trial and error wasn't it.

J.S. Yeah, its all new to him isn't it? And he had that record player game as well where he had learned to pull the records off.

W.R. Aye, the melody music. You put a record on. If he didn't like it he pulled the record or pulled the arm. It was either one, he pulled them off.

In the evaluation, I reminded William and Sally of the development of Peter's 'pulling' schema. They replied by fitting their observations and experiences of Peter's 'pulling' into this concept. They generalised their concept of Peter's 'pulling' schema to include examples of Peter's spontaneous behaviour they could remember when he operated this schema.

They recognised this behaviour and gave examples of him



trying it out in different situations. William described the concept that he developed of Peter's behaviour as him developing 'the pulling motion'. William had also developed a concept that Peter constructed his own learning through his behaviour as he described Peter as 'trying to find out what he could do'.

William described putting this concept into operation when he gave Peter a heavy load to pull in his truck. This behaviour appeared to be as a result of his development of two concepts. Firstly that Peter had developed the pulling motion and secondly that Peter tried to find out what he could pull.

William created a situation of shared meaning with Peter. He involved himself in his play in a way that was appropriate and meaningful to Peter's learning. He provided the intellectual scaffolding for further learning to take place. The importance of shared learning situations in the child's development is further discussed in Chapter 5.

In addition, William developed the concept that Peter learned through trial and error that further reinforced the concept that Peter constructed his own learning.

### Pulling Himself Up / Vertical Schema

In addition to pulling objects down, Peter also discovered that he could pull himself up. William and Sally made observations of this behaviour pattern.

[0:10] William said that Peter pulled himself up on his feet in his cot.

William formed a concept of this behaviour when Peter first discovered this 'vertical' schema.

[1:00] Sally said that Peter pulls himself up which sometimes leads to him falling. He had pulled himself up

on his pushchair the other day and fallen and made his nose bleed.

Sally had closely observed Peter's spontaneous behaviour and recognised that he used various objects to pull himself up to standing. She gave an example of him extending and developing his 'vertical' schema that resulted in him falling. Sally generalised the concept and used it to interpret the circumstances behind his accident.

Peter then extended and developed his vertical schema to walking holding the furniture, attempting to climb and stand on his own. William reported on this behaviour as it developed.

[1:01] William said that he was walking around the furniture now and tried to climb on the settee but could not yet manage to. I noticed Peter try to stand on his own and William says that he does this now.

William again recognised that Peter was constructing his learning through experience and that Peter's behaviour became increasingly complex. He generalised Peter's vertical schema to other observations as described above.

Peter's vertical schema was discussed in the evaluation:

J.S. He managed to pull himself up on his feet ... he learned to pull himself up.

W.R. He used to crawl round for ages and then all of a sudden he started trying to pull himself up on anything that he could, curtains, furniture. He'd pull himself up so he could get on his feet ... He knew when he wanted to get up on his feet he had to actually pull himself up on something.

J.S. Right and once he'd learned how to do that he did it all over.

W.R. Once he'd learnt how to do it, it was an automatic reaction straight away ...

J.S. He had to pull on something ... It's no good trying to pull yourself up on a coat or something.

W.R. Aye, he did that a few times, trial and error.

J.S. Learned through trial and error.

William discussed Peter's discovery that, in addition to crawling around, he could also pull himself up to the vertical position. William generalised this concept to include observations of Peter elaborating the schema using different objects in different situations. He brought in a concept of 'cause and effect' when he explained that Peter knew he needed to pull on something to get on his feet. He also brought in his concept that Peter learned through trial and error to explain his accidents.

### Flexible Object Schema

Observations of Peter's spontaneous behaviour indicated that he was developing a schema to explore and elaborate his understanding of flexible objects.

[1:00] We observed that Peter was not interested in playing with the things I had taken but was more interested in playing with the Hoover wire and plug. We then watched him play with the strap on his pushchair and a belt that he had found. I said that he seemed to be particularly interested in things that were long and flexible. Sally said he was as at a neighbour's house the other day and he had gone straight for the wires of the record player and he had pulled a wire that tipped the Christmas tree over.

Through observation of and reflection on Peter's behaviour, Sally developed a concept that Peter was interested in wires. She used this concept to interpret his behaviour that she had observed, i.e., she generalised this understanding to new situations. She used the concept to explain Peter's behaviour. William also made observations of Peter's interest in wires.

[1:00] William said that he Peter played with the wire on a remote control car during the week.

Observations such as this reinforced William's concept of Peter's interest in wires. An understanding of Peter's active schema enabled provision to be made which was relevant to Peter's learning.

[1:01] I took a telephone with me and said to William and Sally that I had brought him a wire because he liked playing with them so much. There was a bead curtain on the settee. I said that I expected that Peter liked to play with that and William said, 'Oh aye, especially when its hanging at the door'.

The bead curtain became incorporated into Peter's interest in things long and flexible. William acknowledged Peter's interest in this and went on to make further observations of Peter's interest.

[1:02] Peter grabbed the wires at the back of the television. William said that he has a fascination for wires.

William again used his concept of Peter's interest in wires to interpret his spontaneous behaviour. He appeared to have gone through a perspective change in that he viewed Peter's behaviour in terms of this concept.

This subject was further discussed in the evaluation:

J.S. I remember when he did pull something over and this seemed to be connected with ... when he had an interest in wires.

W.R. Ah yeah.

J.S. And he used to go for them all the time didn't he. I'd bring a bag full of toys but he wasn't interested. He wanted to go and play off with the Hoover wire ... he seemed to want to play with it in his hands.

W.R. Flex. See which way he could move it.

J.S. Wasn't there an accident one day when he pulled a wire?

S.R. He pulled a wire and sparks came off the Hoover.

J.S. So that happened. So it led to a bit of trouble sometimes. But to him, he was playing with the wire because he was interested in the movement of it.

W.R. I think that was because he'd seen me working with wire. Working with videos and everything else. I was always on with wires.

...  
W.R. She could have the Hoover out and be Hoovering away and behind her back he's got the cable and he's flipping it back and forwards. I don't know what was going through his mind but he used to sit there and flip the wire for ages.

J.S. ... and he also went for a wire and pulled a Christmas tree over.

S.R. Aye, at me mam's.

J.S. That was his interest in wires all over again.

W.R. She'd just finished decorating the tree, hadn't she, your mam, when it went over. He was crawling along the floor. I heard a rustling and the next thing I heard was 'bang', the tree came flying down. The ornaments were smashed and everything and there's little Peter sitting with the wire in his hand, not bothered at all about the tree. As long as he's got the wire in his hand he didn't care.

William interpreted Peter's interest in playing with wires initially by explaining that he was interested in the movements he could make with them. He again looked for an explanation when he explained Peter's interest in wires by elaborating a concept that Peter copied him and he used this concept to interpret Peter's behaviour.

William had developed a concept to isolate and describe Peter's behaviour and then searched for concepts to understand this behaviour. William then generalised the concept of Peter's interest in wires to further examples of Peter's behaviour. The generalisation of this concept appears to indicate that William had gone through a perspective change and viewed Peter's behaviour in terms of this concept.

William ended this section of the evaluation by describing an incident and contrasting the meaning perspectives of Peter and the adults.

### Throwing Schema

Close observation of and reflection on Peter's spontaneous behaviour also led Sally and William to an understanding that Peter was extending and developing a throwing schema. The following observations introduce this concept.

[1:02] I noticed that Peter occasionally threw things that were in his hand. I asked Sally if he often did this and she said he did and would throw the ornaments if he got the chance. He was sitting beside the door. I threw the foam ball over to him so it landed beside him. Sally and I watched him pick up the ball and encouraged him to throw it. He shook his arm and let go of the ball. I threw it back to him and we repeated this about 3 times. Peter let go of the ball one time and then held onto his arm and looked at it with a look of astonishment on his face.

Sally's concept of Peter's throwing schema was reinforced through the above observations. She understood that he would incorporate any available objects into *this schema including* things he should not have. We developed an insight into Peter's awareness by watching his fascination at the discovery of his 'arm that did the throwing'. Perhaps at this time he linked his internal sensation of throwing with his visual response from the act of throwing.

Sally went on to make further observations of Peter's throwing schema.

[1:02] I asked Sally if Peter had been throwing his ball during the week. She said, 'aye'. She said Peter had been sitting by the fire, playing with the ball that he had lost interest in. He had picked up an ornament from the fire surround, thrown it and broken it and had then thrown a cup and broken the handle off it.

These observations reinforced Sally's concept of Peter's throwing schema. She generalised the concept to include further observations she made of his throwing behaviour. There appears to be evidence that she had undergone a perspective change in the way in which she viewed this behaviour as she appeared to interpret examples of him breaking things in relationship to other examples of him throwing. She also provided him with new opportunities to operate this schema with appropriate objects, e.g. a ball.

Sally gave further examples of Peter throwing things. In the following examples of him throwing things down from his pushchair, she elaborated her concept of his throwing schema.

[1:02] Sally said that Peter also throws things down when he's sitting in his pushchair. Peter also dropped the dummy from the pushchair.

Peter had perhaps discovered the existence of gravity, but the opportunity to discuss this does not appear to have been taken up. William also developed a concept of Peter's throwing. In the next observation he gave an explanation for Peter's behaviour:

[1:02] Peter picked a brick and threw it. William said that Peter had got the throwing motion.

William elaborated this concept and generalised it to further observations he made of Peter's spontaneous behaviour. For example,

[1:03] William reported that Peter 'hoys' everything. I encouraged him to throw the soft bricks and left them for him to play with.

This schema was apparent in Peter's spontaneous behaviour over a long period. For example, Sally made observations of Peter's throwing behaviour several months later.

[1:08] Sally says that Peter throws cars and things about.

From an intellectual development perspective, Peter appeared to be operating a throwing schema to explore the concepts of horizontal trajectory, distance and direction. However, this behaviour may also have had a corresponding symbolic meaning from an emotional perspective.

A possible psycho-analytic interpretation could be that Peter's throwing behaviour could perhaps symbolise his feelings surrounding the awareness of the separation between himself and his parents. It is possible that through repetition of this behaviour, he was symbolically acting out and attempting to master the feelings associated with his growing realisation of his own distinct, separate identity; and his parents' relative autonomy from his behaviour. This possibility is further discussed in Chapter 5 and in the next section concerning other behaviour patterns.

The evaluation discussed aspects of Peter's throwing schema.

J.S. You said at the time that he had the throwing motion ... It would be what he did with a lot of other things. Can you remember?

W.R. When he was 'hoying' things, he couldn't really direct anything at the time. But with him learning to throw things his aim got a lot better ... He's got a lot of direction now when he wants to 'hoy' something.

J.S. So is that why he was throwing?

W.R. He was really trying things out. More likely trying to find out if you 'hoy' something, it'll hit something.

...  
J.S. What sort of things did he throw then?

W.R. Anything and everything he could get in his hands. Anything that wasn't screwed down or nailed down, it was away.



...  
S.R. Like the cups ... and darts.

J.S. You did used to have a dart board up so probably when he was very little he used to watch you throwing.

William again looked for an explanation for Peter's throwing behaviour. It appeared that he had developed a concept that there were reasons underlying Peter's spontaneous behaviour, as he attempted to give an explanation for his behaviour. William explained Peter's throwing behaviour with a concept that he was learning about direction. He also brought in another concept that he had used previously, that Peter constructed his learning through his behaviour, i.e., he learned about direction through practical experience. William linked this concept with the concept that William learned through trial and error. William and Sally both recognised that Peter 'fleshed out' this schema with whatever objects were at hand.

### Enclosing Schema

Peter's spontaneous behaviour also included examples of him putting things into and taking them out of containers. Through observation of and reflection on this behaviour, Sally and William began to form a concept of Peter's 'enclosing' schema. Examples of the development of this schema are given below:

[1:01] We watched Peter put his dummy in the tin and later put it in and take it out of another container.

[1:02] Sally laughed when we watched Peter put his car in John's boot.

Close observation of Peter's spontaneous behaviour gave examples of this schema in action. Peter elaborated this schema in his play and William and Sally gave further examples that

reinforced their concept of this behaviour.

[1:04] William said that Peter had been playing with a truck that you pushed and which had a lid and things inside which Peter took out and put back.

William's used his concept of Peter's enclosing schema to interpret the above observation. In addition to enclosing objects in others, Peter also enclosed himself in small spaces. We made an observation of this behaviour below:

[1:02] Peter climbed into the space under the television. Sally said that he climbs in there all the time. I suggested a big cardboard box for him to climb into. William said that John used to like climbing into boxes.

Sally began to develop a concept that Peter fitted himself inside spaces. I suggested extending and developing this behaviour by providing a box. William generalised this suggestion to observations he had made of his older son, John's behaviour.

Sally made the following observation:

[1:08] Peter tried to fit a car in the money box. She told him it did not fit.

Sally formed a concept that Peter was learning about size when he fitted one thing inside another. She observed him trying to fit something much too big inside a container. She interpreted what he was trying to do using the concept of size she was developing. She set up a situation of shared meaning where she communicated with Peter in a way that elaborated and developed his understanding of the situation. She provided intellectual scaffolding and appropriate language and contributed to his learning in this 'zone of proximal development'. The importance of situations of shared meaning for the child's intellectual development is further discussed in Chapter 5.

Sally went on to make further observations of Peter's enclosing schema.

[1:09] Sally said that Peter plays with empty cigarette packets. He puts things inside them.

Sally had generalised her concept that Peter learned about size by putting one thing inside another. She gave further examples of this behaviour. She appeared to have gone through a perspective change in the way she viewed this behaviour. Her concept that Peter was learning about size, about what would and would not fit, was reinforced by observation.

We discussed Peter's enclosing schema in the evaluation:

J.S. ... putting things inside others.

S.R. Aye, in boxes.

J.S. That was something he was very interested in.

S.R. Putting one box in like saying 'that's too big' or 'that's too small' or sometimes he would climb in the boxes.

J.S. He used to climb in himself to see if he fitted in. He used to climb in little spaces as well didn't he?

S.R. Oh aye, in the corners ... see what's going on, too big or too small. He used to push himself in ...

J.S. He'd have a good try first ... Putting one thing inside another, including himself. Fitting himself in.

W.R. He did that with cardboard boxes. You could give him toys to play with but if you gave him a cardboard box he would be in the land of luxury.

J.S. That was something he was really interested in?

W.R. Anything he could get inside or pull over on his back.

J.S. He used to like covering himself up as well didn't he? ... he had that little truck as well that he used to have things in. So you could lift the lid and he had things inside it.

S.R. Like little blocks, different shapes.

J.S. Did he go round the house picking up all sorts of things and putting them in the back of there then?

S.R. Oh aye.

W.R. He used to take all the ornaments and put them in the thing ... he couldn't discriminate between toys and ornaments and things he shouldn't play with. When they're babies they don't know any better anyway, you know. They're just learning. They're at the stage they have to learn.

...  
W.R. We used to do that a lot with his shape thing. Sit there with him for ages with one shape and he'd try and put it into the wrong place and he wouldn't and after a while he learnt a particular shape went into a particular place.

J.S. So once he got the idea ...

W.R. Once you'd showed him a thing a couple of times, the shape fitted into this or this one fitted into that one, then he started to pick it up ... He wouldn't do it straight away but he'd go to one shape and if it didn't fit that one, then he would go to the next shape and it would fit.

J.S. So like trial and error, he would try it in one and then another.

...

W.R. ... once he'd learned which shape went where, he'd sit and play with it for ages. It got to the point when he'd finished putting all the shapes in, he opened it up ... Once he got the idea that one shape went into one place then he started getting bored. He didn't play with it as much ... if you put it out, he wouldn't do it.

In the evaluation, Sally explored her concept that Peter had been learning about size through his enclosing schema. She generalised the concept to include, not only putting objects in others, but also putting himself in containers. She recognised that he constructed his learning through his behaviour, or in William's words, learned through 'trial and error'.

William recognised that this behaviour held more interest to him than toys at this time. He again brought in the concept that

Peter learned through experience as he explained Peter's behaviour of incorporating different things into his schema as, 'he had to learn'.

William described an activity he introduced which was appropriate for Peter's learning of concepts of size and shape. He described how close observation of Peter's behaviour had enabled a situation of shared meaning to develop where his intervention was appropriate to Peter's learning. It seemed that he provided intellectual scaffolding for Peter and elaborated and extended Peter's intellectual development.

In addition, close observation of Peter's behaviour enabled William to notice when the activity was no longer appropriate, that is, when he had nothing more to learn from it.

This section discussed William and Sally's developing understanding of Peter's schematic development in his second year. Peter's pulling schema was discussed, in connection with observations of and interpretations of Peter's behaviour. Peter's developing vertical schema was then discussed, followed by a description of his flexible object schema. This category went on to describe Peter's throwing schema and ended with a section on the elaboration and development of his enclosing schema.

## **WHEN SOMETHING YOU'VE GOT DISAPPEARS / OMNIPOTENCE AND SEPARATION ANXIETY.**

The issues of omnipotence and separation anxiety arose as main themes throughout the evaluation discussions. These themes appeared to dominate William's interpretations of Peter's behaviour on many occasions. For example, William referred to Peter's climbing behaviour pattern and highlighted the experiences of Peter getting lost. This seemed linked to the theme of separation anxiety.

For these reasons it was decided to include this category for this family, although the importance of this area was not obvious when the data was collected. The possible significance of these themes only became apparent as a result of reflection on the evaluation data.

### **Escaping**

Peter's climbing behaviour pattern became the subject of discussion as it emerged in observations of his spontaneous behaviour.

[1:02] William said that Peter had climbed half way up the stairs himself this week and that they now had to watch him all the time.

Peter's climbing behaviour pattern created a physical separation of distance between himself and his parents. William appeared to interpret this behaviour in relationship to the obvious danger that could result from it. One possible interpretation of William's unconscious motivation from a psycho-analytic perspective could be that William emphasised these observations as Peter's separating behaviour caused him much anxiety. This

tentative explanation perhaps gained meaning only in relationship to other observations with a similar theme.

William and Sally made further observations of Peter's behaviour.

[1:02] Sally said that Peter was climbing a lot now. As soon as the door was open he goes straight for it and darts up the stairs.

Sally was aware that Peter had evidently internalised the movements he needed to make to separate from his parents and explore his surroundings further. He seemed to need independence which first became apparent when he crawled out of the room up the stairs and later when he 'escaped' outside. He also became more interested in outside generally.

This need appeared to be expressed in his early language. For example;

[1:09] William said that Peter will tell you 'outside'.

Peter's behaviour could have unconsciously symbolised his anxiety at his growing awareness of being separated from his parents. Perhaps darting away from his parents represented the separation and the anticipation of being chased and held by his parents represented the unity that he was reluctant to leave behind. It is possible that he had an early ambivalence between the development of a separate identity or 'ego' and the wish to remain in a blissful state of unity with others and the world. Darting away from his parents could have provided a powerful way of representing or acting out this ambivalence. The illusion of his omnipresence, i.e., his growing realisation of the duality of 'me' and 'not me,' perhaps became increasingly obvious to him and his behaviour could have acted out the anxiety that this

caused him.

Darting up the stairs resulted in his parents chasing after him and swooping him up and carrying him back into the room. This act could perhaps represent to Peter his more infantile feelings of being undifferentiated from his parents, which may have caused him to repeat this behaviour.

Peter's emphasis on 'outside' could have been a desire to take his darting away behaviour a stage further. His initial use of the word 'outside' was discussed in the evaluation;

W.R. The first word we ever heard him say was 'outside'.

J.S. Oh yeah.

W.R. That was the first word we ever heard out of him. I thought it was rather strange for a young bairn. A big word like 'outside'.

J.S. It seems a big word ...

W.R. I think that was mainly because of John being around, because John used to say, 'I want to play outside, outside'. Peter heard it quite a lot so that was one of the first words he picked up.

William interpreted Peter's use of the word 'outside' by his concept that Peter copied others. There may have also been significance in Peter's emphasis on this word that perhaps becomes clearer in the next section of the evaluation.

Peter's climbing schema extended and developed to include him climbing over the garden fence. The significance of this behaviour to the parents became obvious in the evaluation.

J.S. And once he was up on his feet and he started taking a couple of steps ... Once he had learnt to walk, he learnt to climb as well.

W.R. That was the big bad thing. Once he got up on his feet there was no stopping him. Playing, running around, climbing up something or he'd want to be outside playing, running around the garden, climbing up on the walls and



fences. He learnt to escape.

J.S. He learnt to climb out. What happened when he learnt to escape?

W.R. He escaped out the garden ... You had to chase after him. It was like he had his little world there and once he learnt to get over the fence ... the big wide world opened up for him ... There was many a time he got out of the garden and he was away. You had to actually go and look for him. He thought it was one big game. That was going back to the peek-a-boo game. He associated it like that. Escape, he was running away and hiding. You were going looking for him.

J.S. It was like hide and seek. Did he go far then?

W.R. He used to go a couple of doors up. There was twice he got out - park. Because John used to go to the park all the time and Peter used to cry to go with him, but he couldn't, he was too little. When he learnt to escape out of the garden, he went along there a couple of times. We were hunting for ages, what, half an hour ... the next thing you know, John came toddling along the street with him. They'd been to the park.

J.S. ... there was maybe a connection between, as you say, Peter going off and you don't know where he is ... and certain (other) things that have happened, certain things that you feel you have lost ...

W.R. ... associated me going away into hospital or Sally going into hospital with going away somewhere. Something like that?

William described the behaviour of Peter 'escaping' or extending his darting away behaviour. Peter's escaping behaviour could perhaps, again, be described as representing the physical separation he had become aware of between himself and his parents. Escaping out of the garden could again be symbolising to Peter an unconscious anxiety connected with this awareness. He evoked in William the behaviour of chasing after him and bringing him back, perhaps acting out the more infantile feeling of lack of separation or integration between them.

William commented that Peter made this behaviour into a game. Repeating the behaviour in the form of a game perhaps gave Peter a feeling of mastery of these powerful feelings of loss and separation. Peter's behaviour perhaps became the vehicle for the expression of and attempts to understand these feelings.

William made a link between Peter's escaping behaviour and playing the peek-a-boo game. He saw the link that they were the same sort of hiding game. He had developed a concept that Peter formed associations and he used this concept to explain his behaviour.

In the evaluation, I provided a conscious link between the loss of Peter and the possible connection between other losses that may have been relevant, to support William in understanding the situation. This potentially put him in the position where he would be able to recognise and grasp the unconscious material that may have been present in his own or Peter's behaviour. The evaluation suggestion of a possible connection was very strong and William picked up on this and did make further links between aspects of Peter's behaviour.

He connected Peter darting away with the separations which occurred when he and Sally went into hospital. One interpretation could be that he brought an unconscious link into his conscious awareness within the framework provided in the interview.

He again brought in his concept of association to link these two experiences but this time the association was not between games. It appeared to be an association connected with the act of someone going away and perhaps the feelings involved when this happened.

It is possible that William connected his own feelings of loss at losing Peter with Peter's feelings surrounding losing his parents when they went into hospital. That is he may have projected feelings of loss onto Peter.

William was taken into care himself at an early age. He did lose his parents. William's anxiety surrounding losing Peter could have been a projection of overwhelming anxieties connected with this early experience, which became split from his conscious awareness and at this time appeared to become projected onto Peter's behaviour.

These feelings are maybe underlying William's interpretations of and reactions to Peter's climbing behaviour. It seemed that they were significant as they appeared as a main feature of his observations of and reflections on Peter's behaviour. Peter had perhaps internalised and was acting out William's projections when he repeated this behaviour. An interpretation of Peter's escaping behaviour could be that William projected anxiety onto the behaviour and therefore caused it to be significant.

The investment by parents of significance into certain acts of a child's behaviour and the child's internalisation and acting out of his parent's projections is further discussed in Chapter 5.

To explore the separation issue further, the next section elaborates Peter's earlier experiences of the peek-a-boo game.

### Peek-A-Boo

The peek-a-boo game became a prominent feature in the relationship between William and Peter. Peter was able to initiate the game even in the early stages. For example;

Peter (0:09) pushed his baby walker up to the fireplace. William pointed out that he was looking at his reflection and playing peek-a-boo.

William accurately observed Peter's behaviour and explained what he was doing. He formed a concept of Peter's behaviour, that he would play the peek-a-boo game, in this instance by looking at his reflection in the fireplace and moving. This reinforced his own behaviour of playing this game with Peter. For example;

[0:10] William hid behind the door and shouted 'Peter'. He looked around the door and Peter laughed. William said 'peek-a-boo, Peter'.

William created a situation of shared meaning where he interacted with Peter in a way that supported his learning and development. Perhaps the shared meaning in this observation had an emotional as well as intellectual content. The symbol in play of losing each other could perhaps have expressed and contained the anxiety of actual separation.

Peter appeared to be developing a concept of permanent objects, i.e., he knew that William was there although he could not see him. He was also possibly developing an awareness of the spatial position 'behind'.

At this time Peter was also able to find objects that he could no longer see. He also developed an understanding of the spatial position 'underneath'. We made observations of this behaviour, for example;

[0:10] We watched Peter move my coat to find his dummy that was under it.

[0:10] Peter lifted a tube to find the cup. We discussed that he now knows where things have gone and can find them.

Peter's development of the concept of permanent objects was

extended to objects as well as people. Further examples reinforced this concept.

William generalised the concept and adopted different ways of playing the peek-a-boo game. For example;

[0:10] William held a towel over his face and then moved it and said 'peek-a-boo'. I said that he knows you're there even when he can't see you.

[1:02] Peter was under the television and looked at William and then looked at him from a different position at the other side of the leg. William moved and said 'peek-a-boo Peter'. Peter moved back to the original position and back again.

William elaborated the game. He observed Peter's behaviour and used the knowledge gained from the observation to develop Peter's interest in looking at things from different viewpoints.

In addition to the intellectual interpretation for this behaviour, it could also be interpreted from an emotional perspective. An emotional interpretation could be that the concept of permanent objects formed a defence against the undifferentiated pain and anxiety of separation in the early months. Psycho-analytic theory describes the repeated realisation through experience that the self is not omnipotent as shattering to the young baby and that these experiences underlie the individual's anxieties to a greater or lesser degree.

The feelings perhaps become more controllable through the intellectual defence of the concept of permanent objects, as they are channelled into an anxiety 'because someone or something has gone,' rather than an undifferentiated, unspecific anxiety. An intellectual awareness that people and things come and go perhaps provides a sense of security. The development of intellectual concepts as a defence against anxiety is further

discussed in Chapter 5.

When the concept of permanent objects became well established in Peter, he was able to make a game out of appearing and disappearing in peek-a-boo. William helped Peter in his attempts to master his feelings of separation anxiety and delight in reunion that he appeared to experience in this game. William was perhaps also playing with his emotions associated with separation.

The game of peek-a-boo was discussed in the evaluation below,

J.S. You used to play the game of peek-a-boo a lot with him.

W.R. He still plays that and all. Aye he still likes to play that. When he was a baby he used to play that. You used to get loads of giggles and laughs out of him ...

J.S. You used to do it a lot, didn't you? What did you use to hide behind?

W.R. Oh blankets and then he started doing it, as in you were doing it ... and all of a sudden he'll pick up something and put it in front of him and put it down and he'd make the sound as if to go 'peek-a-boo' and it was comical.

J.S. Yeah.

W.R. We'd burst out laughing and he'd fall down in the chair or something and burst out laughing. It was comical.

J.S. So he knew there was a word to say but he wasn't quite sure how to say it but did he get to say it?

W.R. He eventually said it.

This game was evidently a very enjoyable experience for both Peter and William. The prolonged and frequent use of the game perhaps suggests that William may also have been mastering feelings associated with separation anxiety. This peek-

a-boo behaviour appeared to be invested with a large amount of energy directed into it indicating the likelihood that it became the vehicle for the projection for William's unconscious anxiety.

The evaluation went on to discuss Peter's concept of permanent objects, from an intellectual perspective, in more detail.

J.S. He lost his dummy. It was under my coat. This was when he was 10mths. old and he moved my coat away and found it underneath. It was like the peek-a-boo game.

W.R. It was the same with the bottle. He used to do the same. His bottle was somewhere and he couldn't see it. He would look for that and all. He would look for everything. He knew what he was after and he would look for it.

J.S. Again this was like what he had taken in. He had a mental picture of his dummy and bottle and whatever, so even if they weren't around him where he could see them, he knew they were ..

W.R. Somewhere.

J.S. The peek-a-boo game seemed to be playing on that idea. You were there one minute and the next minute you weren't. Then you were again.

...  
W.R. When he was 16 - 17 mths, he put his coat on and he had some sweets. You give him a sweet and say 'Will I put them in your pocket for you?', and he learnt that, he associated - one sweet put it in his mouth, the rest were in the packet so they had to go in a pocket. So he said 'pocket, pocket'. You could give him a sweet, put them away in his pocket for him, right, and he wouldn't bother with them. A few hours later, he'd say 'sweets, pocket' and go to his coat and take his sweets out, he knew they were there. I tried to trick him a few times. I put his sweets in, when he fell asleep for an afternoon nap I would take them away from him and he'd go to the pocket and say, 'sweets, sweets', 'Where are they?' 'sweets, sweets', 'Where are they?'. He'd do that for ages and then all of a sudden it clicked with him - his sweets were there when he was asleep and when he woke up they were gone. And he'd still carry on and say 'sweets, sweets' and he wouldn't give up until you give them to him.

J.S. So he knew they were there and he wasn't going to have it that they'd gone.

W.R. It was like he'd learnt - he had something, he'd put it somewhere and it had moved and he hadn't moved it and he knew that it should have been there.

In this section of the evaluation, William explored Peter's concept of permanent objects. He interpreted his level of intellectual development in this area. He generalised the concept to include other examples of Peter's behaviour, indicating that it is possible that he had gone through a perspective change in the way he viewed this activity. William developed a new game of hiding the sweets that was based on Peter's understanding of this concept. He interacted with Peter in an appropriate and meaningful way and developed a situation of shared meaning around this game.

The next section discusses Peter's use of his bottle as a possible transitional object to provide him with security against separation anxiety.

### Transitional Objects

Again, the emphasis on the importance of this category became apparent in the evaluation rather than at the point of data collection. The following observation from the original data concerns Peter's bottle that seems to have become a transitional object for him. It became the subject of one of his first words indicating the importance attached to it.

[1:09] Sally said that when Peter wants his bottle he says 'drink'.

At this stage Peter could use language to refer to his bottle when he wanted it. There was much emphasis in the evaluation below of the importance that Peter put on the bottle.

W.R. There was one particular thing he always played



with. You couldn't take it off him except when he was asleep. If you put it away somewhere and he couldn't find it there was murder on, he would hunt all over for it ... His special thing that he would play with all the time that nobody else could play with. He would go looking for it.

J.S. So in a way it could have stood for you ... something that he felt secure with. Something that it was comfortable to have there.

...  
W.R. It was murder at one time. We always had spare bottle teats for him. Like loads of spare teats for him and loads of spare bottles. He got to the stage where he only would drink out of one bottle with one particular teat.

J.S. Really.

W.R. He wouldn't even - same bottle, same teat, same manufacturers - no difference in them, but he knew the difference.

J.S. He had to have that special teat.

W.R. That was it he knew it. There was no other teat, you couldn't fool him. But once the teat got destroyed and you bought him a new one, it would take a day or two to get used to it and once he got used to that one, he was terrible. You just couldn't get it off him.

J.S. But it was always only one.

W.R. ... They were all bought at the same time, no difference, all from the same place. He could tell you the difference between the bottles. There was many a time I took the teat off the bottle he used and put it on an identical bottle and he'd tell you 'na' ... It had to be that teat and that bottle together ...

...  
W.R. The bottle teat, how could he tell the difference in them? They were the same batch.

S.R. Some of them were hard, some of them were soft, I think.

J.S. Maybe when they were used they were softer in his mouth.

S.R. That's what I think.

...  
W.R. Until the bottle teat was destroyed and then he had to get another one. Then there was a carry on.

J.S. There was a bit of a fuss was there?

W.R. It was a matter of giving him it and (him) saying 'teat, teat' and I'd say, 'It's knackered, it's gone' and he'd cry on. He'd want that teat ... It would take a little while for him to actually understand and then he would realise after a while.

William and Sally developed a concept that Peter had an emotional attachment to one particular bottle and teat and that a substitute could not be made without Peter becoming very upset. William explained that Peter would not allow one teat to be substituted for another. They recognised that he would not be separated from the bottle and that he would hunt for it if it was not immediately available. The bottle seemed to have all the characteristics of what is described in psycho-analytic terminology as a transitional object.

The bottle seemed to be an object which Peter had an emotional attachment to and which he felt secure with when he had it with him. If he felt anxious it appeared that the bottle could calm and soothe him. To Peter the bottle appeared to exist somewhere between his internal feeling world and the external world of separation where things were unpredictable and would come and go.

William seemed to be pointing towards some magical relationship between Peter and the bottle, stating that Peter could tell different bottles and teats apart even when they were exactly the same. Perhaps he was interpreting Peter's behaviour as if no separate identity existed for either Peter or the bottle. It is possible that William was projecting his very early, undifferentiated omnipotent feelings onto Peter's behaviour.

Sally, however, gave an intellectual interpretation for this

behaviour. She explained how she thought Peter could discriminate different teats by whether they were hard or soft.

Peter appeared to be soothed by the object, which at times replaced his parents. To be able to do this it is likely that he had first internalised the soothing quality of his parents in order for him to be able to project this feeling onto the object. Possibly Sally and William had provided the emotional security that he needed to relate to the bottle as a transitional object.

William and Sally recognised the importance of this object to Peter and William explained that he used language to console him and explain what had happened when the teat was changed and he was upset. He recognised and responded to Peter's emotional needs. It seems likely that William and Sally were aware that Peter used this transitional object to attempt to master feelings of loss and panic.

### Knowing Where Everyone Is

Wanting to know where people were became a prominent feature in Peter's development. This seemed to be connected with the issue of separation. The original data provides some understanding of the development of this behaviour;

[1:00] William talked to Peter when he came in and Peter replied 'mmm'. William said 'mama, where's your mama'.

In the early stages of Peter making sounds, William responded and talked back to Peter. He responded with eye contact and suggested a meaning for what he thought Peter was trying to say. He interpreted the 'mmm' sound he was making as if he was saying 'mama' in such a way that he was asking 'where she was.

The significance for a child's subsequent development of the parent attributing meaning to his behaviour and language is discussed in Chapter 5.

At a later stage in development, William often asked Peter the same question. At this stage he was able to respond with a reciprocal response to William. They had come to understand and share each other's meaning. For example;

[2:01] William asked Peter 'Where's your Mam'. Peter went to the kitchen door and said 'in there'.

[2:03] William said to Peter, 'Where's Mammy gone?' Has she gone to get John?'

William's language drew attention to the fact that Sally was not there. Perhaps William projected his feelings of loss onto Peter's behaviour connected with his own early separation anxieties. Through language he also explained to Peter the reasons for his separations from Sally.

In the evaluation William further discussed these separations.

W.R. After she had had Peter and had had her operations and that she was still not feeling very well ... He knew that his ma wasn't here, she was in hospital ... say to him, say 'Mammy in hospital' ... His mammy wasn't here and 'Where's mammy? Hospital' or 'Where's mammy? She's just gone to the shops' ...

J.S. It's very difficult ... as if you've lost ...

W.R. It's like something you've got there's disappeared.

J.S. There's a real feeling of ..

W.R. Loss, panic.

J.S. I think those feelings ... can also be there for other things as well. Those same feelings that you feel when your child's gone when you don't know where they are ...

W.R. It's like an endless circle. He wants to know where everybody is at the time.

J.S. So he's getting a bit of an anxious feeling that someone else isn't there. He doesn't know where they are ... they might be lost.

W.R. ... He wants to know where everyone is so he knows he's secure and where they are.

J.S. He feels secure when he knows where everyone is, like we feel secure when we know where our children are ... There's a whole pattern of feelings here, probably connected with him wanting his special object as well. The feeling of insecurity when it's not around.

...  
W.R. It's the same with toys or objects or food.

William described Peter asking for Sally all the time, when she was in hospital or at the shops etc. This reaction had become familiar to Peter and he generalised it to each new situation when his mother was not there. William began to explore and describe Peter's feelings of loss and panic at these separations. He began to put the anxiety into words that he perhaps projected onto Peter's behaviour in these examples and in the 'escaping' episodes. There may have been unconscious motivation in William's interpretations of Peter's behaviour.

### Further Separation Issues

Other examples of observations of and reports on Peter's behaviour appeared to be connected with this theme of separation. Peter's throwing schema introduced in the category of schematic development could be interpreted as a symbolisation of this separation from others. For example, Peter developed a behaviour pattern of handing things over.

[1:08] Peter handed Sally the car and said 'here'. Sally said he is also saying 'car' and 'mine'.

Sally encouraged Peter to hand over objects to her. Handing objects over perhaps symbolised to Peter what was 'me' and 'not

me' and adding the words 'here' and 'mine' maybe emphasised the increasing distance between himself and the object. By supporting this behaviour Sally enabled Peter to explore this relationship between himself and objects. One of Peter's first words, 'car' also appeared to be significant, which becomes obvious in the observations that follow.

[1:09] William says that Peter waves and says 'bye bye' now.

The increasing understanding of distance between himself and others also enabled Peter to acknowledge when people were leaving. William acknowledged and supported this behaviour.

The following observations are linked with Peter's internalisation of the sequence of separating from William when he went to work.

[2:00] Peter took the car jigsaw piece to Sally and said 'car' and then waved and said 'bye'.

[2:00] Sally said that Peter waves to his dad when he goes off in the car.

[2:01] Peter looked out of the window. William said that he was looking for the car that takes him to work.

Peter's early sequences in language also appeared to be connected with the separation issue. The two words that he put together represented not only the object but the whole sequence of William going to work. Through closely observing Peter, Sally was able to interpret his words and actions and understand what he was trying to communicate. Sally recognised the importance to Peter of expressing this experience in words. This was discussed in the evaluation.

J.S. He used to say 'car' a lot didn't he.

S.R. Aye, 'outside, car'.

J.S. If he saw a picture of a car, he'd point to it and say 'car' and then ..

W.R. Aye, he sat there with a little book and he'd point to things in the book like a cat. He knew what a cat was and knew what a car was and all.

...  
J.S. He used to use one word on its own and then he'd start to add another one like when he saw a car, he'd say 'car' and then he'd say 'bye bye' afterwards. Where did he get that from do you think?

W.R. That was when I was working on the outside. The van used to come for us in the morning to take us to work and I'd say 'bye bye'. He got to realise when he saw the white van pulling up at the door that I was going out in the van.

J.S. Right, so he'd see the van and he'd then expect you to be going out. So when he saw a picture of a car ..

W.R. He'd associate that with 'bye bye' as well, straight away.

J.S. So he associated it all with you going out.

W.R. Going to work.

J.S. Didn't he used to look out of the window for the van.

S.R. Oh aye, looked out of the window. If he saw a car he'd say 'bye bye' or 'outside'.

William brought in his concept of association to explain the connections which Peter made between pictures of cars and saying 'bye bye' and him going to work. Sally also explained how he connected his first words with him going to work.

Psycho-analytic theory suggests that thinking develops around the issue of separation. It is possible that Peter's first words substituted for the lost security of the presence of his father and that these words functioned like a transitional object.

William and Sally appeared to have some awareness of this, perhaps unconsciously, as they encouraged Peter's language around this separation issue.

## Graphic Schema

It is also possible that Peter's graphic schema was connected with the same issue of separation. Several observations of and reports on Peter's emerging circle schema are given below.

[2:00] We watched Peter paint round in a circle.

[2:01] We watched Peter draw with straight lines backwards and forwards and occasionally draw a circle.

[2:01] William says that Peter always uses his right hand and draws circles.

[2:03] Sally says that Peter draws circles now.

The above observations described Peter's developing ability to draw an enclosed shape. This perhaps was a graphic representation of his awareness of his own body boundary and that he was contained within that boundary. The circle may have symbolised Peter's awareness of his own separate identity.

Sally and William recognised a change in Peter's drawing and the emergence of his circle schema. They formed a concept of Peter's change in graphic representation from circular scribble to enclosed circles.

This section discussed the themes of omnipotence and separation anxiety concerning Peter's escaping behaviour, his peek-a-boo game and his formation of a transitional object. Issues of Peter wanting to know the whereabouts of his mother and separating from his father when he went to work were also discussed in relationship to separation anxiety. The section concluded with a description of the development of Peter's circle schema that may have symbolised his awareness of his own body boundary.



### SECTION 3 ALICE AND TIM

The third family consisted of Alice and Tim and their four children, Samantha, James, Tony and Wendy. The research is centred around the youngest child, Wendy over a period of one year. The three older children were in Local Authority Care and Wendy was also subject to a care order but allowed to remain at home.

A return visit to the family, after an absence of two years, for the joint evaluation, left me with an impression of a richness in Wendy's fantasy life. Although she could not remember who I was, she immediately involved me in reading stories to her and then in her small world fantasy play that she elaborated and acted out.

Wendy was found to have a learning delay towards the end of the period of the research data collection. This was taken up by the hearing impaired service and Wendy was given hearing aids. She continued to have support from this service for the two years before the evaluation but was at this time found to have minimal hearing loss.

The joint evaluation reflected the parent's interest in Wendy's literacy and numerary skills and these categories were chosen, from a mass of data, to be explored in this section.

The choice of categories does not, of course, imply that other areas of the process of parenting were not abundant in the research data. For example, there was projection onto Wendy's behaviour that may have contributed to her learning delay. However, for this section of the research, aspects of Wendy's development were chosen to study which highlighted the parent's

interest in her and showed how their understanding developed to a point where they could support her learning.

### **WENDY'S INTEREST IN BOOKS**

This section introduces the development of Tim and Alice's understanding of Wendy's interest in books. It begins with an exploration of the way in which Tim and Alice first began to look at books with Wendy, by pointing out objects in the pictures and later asking her to find objects in the pictures. This section also examines Wendy's behaviour pattern of taking books to her parents that reinforced Tim and Alice's interest in this activity. It then explores Tim and Alice's provision of books for Wendy and looks at several concepts they formed associated with this activity. The section ends with comments made by the parents on Wendy's current literacy skills.

Tim and Alice began to provide books for Wendy to look at. Alice reported on observations she made of Wendy's behaviour when she was looking at books. For example,

[1:09] Alice said that Wendy points to pictures in her books and sometimes tries to repeat the name of something if you say it a few times. She said 'quack' to Wendy a few times when looking at 'Bath Time' book. Wendy listened very carefully and then repeated it. Wendy also tried to copy Alice saying 'fish'. I discussed with Alice the observation that Wendy was repeating words that she emphasised but was not yet repeating words that I said and that this was an example of her learning more from Alice than she did from me.

Alice clearly pronounced words for Wendy to imitate when they were looking at books. She reinforced the meanings of the words by pointing to the pictures. Alice repeated words for Wendy to reinforce Wendy's learning of the words. It appeared that Alice

had formed a concept that Wendy learned language through copying words that are clearly articulated and repeated. In addition, Alice's role as Wendy's main teacher was reinforced through discussion.

Wendy's pattern of behaviour of looking at books with her parents began to become established. The next observation involved Tim looking at books with Wendy.

[1:09] Tim looked at one of Wendy's books with her. He asked her 'Where's Buggy?' and then 'Where's the dog?' He held her book open for her to look at and each time she pointed at the picture. She did the same when I showed her the 'Where's the duck?' book, finding the duck on each picture.

Tim developed a concept that Wendy would look at a book and find objects that he asked her to locate. This proved to be an appropriate way to look at books with Wendy at this stage. Wendy reinforced Tim's behaviour by the responses she made. Tim observed Wendy's behaviour when she was looking at books, for example;

[1:10] Tim said that Wendy will point to the pictures and is especially interested in baby animals.

Tim made an observation of Wendy's behaviour with books and noticed that she would point to objects in the pictures and that she appeared to be more interested in animals than other things. He formed a concept that she was selective in the attention she paid to the pictures at which she looked. Wendy also spontaneously named objects that she pointed to when she looked at books with Alice. For example;

[2:03] Wendy looked at a book with Alice and pointed to a cat and said 'cat'.

Alice and Tim appeared to have formed concepts that

Wendy pointed to and named objects in pictures and found objects when this was suggested to her. These observations support the interpretative schema for the research of conceptual development.

Alice and Tim appeared to generalise and reinforce these concepts when looking at books with Wendy on different occasions. For example:

[2:05] Wendy went over to Alice with the books. Alice said, "Show me the books." Alice opened the book. Wendy pointed at a picture and Alice also pointed. Alice named pictures, e.g., 'baby' and 'duck'.

[2:06] Alice asked Wendy, 'Where's the ball, chair, bath etc.' on the pictures and each time Wendy pointed and said 'there'.

[2:06] Tim said that when looking at books sometimes Wendy will try to say the animals' names or if you ask her to point to one she will do so. Sometimes she gets them right and sometimes not.

It is possible that the formation of concepts about Wendy's use of books, plus the reinforcement through further observations of Wendy's behaviour, led Alice and Tim to extend and develop their behaviour based on these concepts. Tim also appeared to have extended and developed Wendy's interest in pictures of animals.

In the evaluation Tim and Alice discussed the different ways in which they initially used books with Wendy.

J.S. So that first stage. Can you remember what she was like then?

T.T. She was just really looking at pictures. If there was a ball, 'There that's a ball'.

A.T. Asking her to point out something.

T.T. Then we used to ask her to point out different things.

J.S. You used to ask her to point out things?

T.T. Yeah.

J.S. And sometimes she would point to things.

T.T. Yeah.

...  
J.S. Can you remember the sort of things she was looking for?

T.T. She started to look for birds and pointing birds out. Different animals, basically animals wasn't it around that stage. Anything to do with animals at that stage. Even if they were in a tree covered by leaves and everything like that. She would find it you know. You'd probably never even noticed it but she would find it.

The evaluation confirmed that Tim and Alice had developed concepts that Wendy would spontaneously say words for objects and find objects when she was asked where they were located in pictures. Tim formed a concept of Wendy's interest in animals and her ability to discriminate them from other features in a picture.

The parent's development of these concepts appeared to reinforce their behaviour of looking at books with Wendy. They also seemed to be developing a concept that sometimes they took the initiative in the interaction of looking at books with Wendy and sometimes she did.

One interpretation could be that through observing Wendy, they found her behaviour of looking at books meaningful and created further opportunities for situations of shared meaning to develop around this activity. This supported the interpretative schema for the research of parents' development of observation skills. Tim and Alice began to discuss Wendy's behaviour pattern of initiating looking at books in more detail. For example,

[1:10] Tim said that each day when Wendy has had her breakfast she gets one of her books and sits down beside him and looks through it.

Tim explained that looking at books with Wendy became an

established daily routine. Books had become a part of Wendy's everyday experience. In addition, when Tim and Alice were given a collection of written observations of Wendy's behaviour they immediately selected all the examples that included her looking at books. They viewed this as one of her main activities.

However, Wendy began to use books for other purposes than reading. In the next example Wendy had begun to tear her books.

[2:00] There were books on the floor and I asked if Wendy had been looking at them. Alice said that she had a habit of tearing them at the moment. I said that she seemed to like to tear paper at the moment and that could be why she tore the books. Perhaps it was all paper to her and she needed to learn that she could tear paper sometimes but not at other times. Tim said that that was it. He later gave her an envelope to play with which she could tear.

From a developmental psychology perspective Wendy's paper tearing behaviour could be interpreted as a 'tearing schema' that she was operating. The initial interpretation that Alice gave appeared to contain the implication that Wendy was being 'naughty'. Tim appeared to accept the alternative explanation of Wendy's behaviour and perhaps went through a perspective change in the way in which he interpreted her behaviour. Providing the envelope seemed to suggest that Tim had begun to look at Wendy's paper tearing in a different way.

Perhaps Tim modified a concept of this being 'naughty' behaviour. He appeared to make provision for Wendy's tearing schema based on this new understanding. However, there was only one recorded example of this provision and therefore it was not possible to draw conclusions from it.

An alternative psycho-analytic interpretation for the observation could be that Wendy's paper tearing symbolically represented a splitting off or projection of a part of her

consciousness. Perhaps her feelings, to some extent, could not be contained by her parents and resulted in the need for unconscious splitting. There were examples of Tim and Alice stopping Wendy from crying at times. Perhaps Wendy was representing her repression of overwhelming anxiety in her behaviour of paper tearing. The possibility of the child's use of schemas to express unconscious emotional content is discussed in Chapter 5.

The parent's shared experience of looking at books with Wendy continued despite the tearing incidents. This perhaps gave tentative support to the suggestion that the parents developed a more positive understanding of Wendy's tearing behaviour.

Wendy continued to initiate the activity of looking at books which Tim recognised and articulated. For example,

[2:00] Tim said that Wendy let him know when she wanted to look at a book. She would put the book on his knee and then climb up.

[2:01] Tim said that her books were on the shelf and she got one when she wanted.

Tim and Alice made provision so that Wendy had access to her books. There was also evidence that the books were in frequent use. For example,

[2:02] When I arrived Wendy's books were on the floor and Alice had one on her knee. I asked if she had been reading to Wendy and she said she had.

[2:03] Her own books were under the television and on the settee and Alice said that Wendy had been looking at them with her.

Alice also reported on Wendy sharing books with another child. For example;

[2:01] Alice said that Wendy was getting on well with her friend's little girl who is one and a half years older. She said they would look at books together and the other girl would play games with her. She said that they had both enjoyed themselves when she had taken them to the park.

Tim and Alice's established behaviour of looking at books with Wendy was discussed in the evaluation.

J.S. And she got into quite a habit of bringing books to you and sitting with them. Can you remember that routine.

T.T. Ah yeah. Every day it was for months on end. Months wasn't it?

J.S. Can you remember how it used to go, what time of day?

T.T. There was no particular time. She would just suddenly come up and there was a book.

A.T. She'd throw books on your lap.

T.T. Aye, and if she saw books lying about she'd pick them up and then come to you wherever you were.

J.S. So she used to pick up a book and she used to come to you with it and hand it to you.

A.T. Throw it at us.

T.T. That was at the beginning that. That was when, that really first started when she started throwing it at us ... and she started (to) bring them to you and sit down beside you and you would have to look at the pictures with her and tell her a little story about it.

Tim described the pattern of looking at books becoming established every day. He explained the process of Wendy noticing her books that he said prompted her to want a story and to take the book to him or Alice.

Wendy's throwing schema appeared to enter into the dynamics of the situation as Alice described her throwing books at them when she wanted a story. Other interpretations parents have made in the research of their child's throwing schema are discussed elsewhere in this chapter (p.143, p.186, p.261). Tim appeared to interpret this behaviour as Wendy's way of sharing books at first before she learnt to sit down and share them.



Wendy also began to use books in a more structured way in other ways. For example;

[2:05] Wendy turned the pages of the book over herself. She turned over one page at a time.

This development was discussed in the evaluation:

J.S. And what about learning to use the book, turning the pages, holding it the right way up and things like that?

T.T. Yeah she could do that.

A.T. I can't remember when she started it.

T.T. I can't remember when she started turning the book up the right way.

J.S. Right, but at some stage she did.

T.T. Oh yeah, yeah.

J.S. And she used to turn several pages over at one time.

T.T. At one time. That's a while ago it went down to one didn't it? One page at a time.

A.T. She'd go through it two or three times with you.

Tim's concept of Wendy's developing structure in using books was that initially she turned several pages over at once and then she turned one page over at a time as she got older.

Observations of Wendy's use of books led Alice to develop the concept that Wendy liked to have her stories repeated.

The evaluation went on to discuss other aspects of Wendy's use of books.

J.S. What about holding the book the right way up or finding the front.

T.T. That was about the same time when she started turning the pages over one by one wasn't it, when she started to find the front of the book.

A.T. Ah, but she held it upside down.

T.T. Upside down and what have you.

Alice recognised through observing Wendy that she did not at this stage discriminate which was the right way up with the book. Wendy was, however, beginning to structure her use of books in other ways. In the observation that follows she began to classify objects together which Alice responds to.

[2:05] Wendy sat on Alice's knee looking at a book. Alice pointed to a picture of a girl's shoes and said 'Where's your shoes Wendy' and pointed to Wendy's shoes. Wendy looked at the book and then pointed to her shoes.

It appeared that Alice had formed a concept that Wendy classified things together as she encouraged her to do this in the above observation. It seemed that Alice was interacting with Wendy in a way that reflected Wendy's current spontaneous behaviour, i.e., she had observed Wendy and through the result of her observation she was able to interact appropriately with her. This supports the interpretative schema for the research of the development of parent's observation skills.

This concept was reinforced by the following observation where Wendy spontaneously classified the same type of objects together while looking at a book with her mother.

[2:05] Wendy was looking at the book with Alice. She pointed to the truck on one picture and then to an identical truck on the opposite picture. Alice said 'there's the truck, where's the other truck'.

This was briefly discussed in the evaluation:

J.S. When she started to look for things the same she would point out something in the picture and find another one.

T.T. Another one the same, ah yeah, finding one the same.

Tim recalled his experience of Wendy classifying objects at this stage.

In addition to looking at pictures in books, Tim explained that she found other ways of taking an interest in them. For example;

[2:00] I asked if she was mainly interested in looking at the pictures and Tim said that she was interested in listening to a story - she would really pay attention when he was reading it.

[2:06] Tim says that sometimes Wendy will sit on your knee and want you to read the words in the book to her.

From observations of Wendy, Tim developed a concept that she liked to have the whole story read to her. He seemed to be aware that she might like to listen to the flow of the story even if she could not understand it and that this was in addition to her liking to find objects and repeat words.

J.S. She went on from the stage of just wanting a single word to liking to listen to the whole story, didn't she?

...  
T.T. Even if she didn't understand it she would sit and listen ... She would tell you, well eventually she would tell you that she wanted it read ...

A.T. Once we said something, she'd copy it.

T.T. She would copy it. If we'd finished the book she would turn it back to the front again, to the beginning and make us start again. So we knew she was enjoying it, right.

J.S. She would keep coming back with books.

T.T. And would keep coming back with books.

Tim explored his concept that Wendy liked to listen to a story even if she could not understand it. He seemed to have developed this concept through observing Wendy; supporting an interpretative schema for the research that parents developed concepts of their child's behaviour and learning during the

process of the research. Tim started to explain that Wendy would tell him when she wanted a story read, and then perhaps realised that he knew when she wanted this even before she could ask.

Alice introduced her concept of Wendy learning by copying and Tim also explained how Wendy gave positive reinforcement to their behaviour by indicating that she wanted to start again and bringing her other books.

Tim and Alice reached a stage where they started to use the books in another different way with Wendy. In addition to naming the pictures and telling stories, they started to put words together about what was happening in the picture for her. For example;

[2:04] Tim looked at each of the books with Wendy, pointing at the pictures and interpreting what was happening as well as naming the objects. He missed out the 'Roshan gets dressed' book at first and then Wendy handed it to him. He opened it and pointed to a picture and said it was a hand and asked Wendy where her hand was. He turned over the page to where the boy was putting his turban on and pointed out the brush to Wendy. He turned another page and said to Wendy that the girl was getting dressed and had just got out of bed, and that there was no need for Wendy to yawn.

[2:05] Alice pointed to a picture and said "Is she getting dried." Wendy nodded and then pointed and said 'baba'

In addition to naming objects in the pictures both Alice and Tim began to make interpretations of the pictures for Wendy. She responded as if she understood, indicating that the situations of shared meaning that were developing in this new type of interaction were appropriate.

This was discussed in the evaluation:

J.S. Can you remember when she got to the stage when she was looking to see what was actually happening in the picture rather than pointing out objects.

T.T. Oh yeah, aye. She would be 18 months or nearly 2 then. When that started happening, somewhere round there.

J.S. So it was a different stage.

T.T. It was a different stage altogether.

Tim then remembered a more specific example of how they had developed their use of books with Wendy beyond the single word stage.

T.T. And there was a book called 'Bath Water Hot, Bath Water Cold,' or something wasn't there. She went through that. She would know the differences.

A.T. Making comparisons.

J.S. She would compare, would she?

T.T. If we said 'hot' she would want to know what you meant by 'hot' and we'd say 'Something that could burn you,' you know. And cold, what does that mean, well something that makes you shiver. That's how we got her to differentiate about that, didn't we?

J.S. So you remember looking at the differences between one thing and another like that?

...  
T.T. That went on for a long time that.

Alice and Tim had developed a concept of Wendy's interest in the comparison of opposites, which they explored using a book. They used books with Wendy for a different purpose. Tim discussed some of the books that they had bought for Wendy and which she enjoyed looking at. For example;

[2:06] Tim said that the books Wendy likes looking at are 'Little Red Riding Hood, The New Gold Medal Book of Words, Picture Word Book, Bath Waters Hot, When we went to the Park, Colours, Noisy, First Picture Book, Toys, Looking at Animals, Baby's First Book' and others.

Tim and Alice had bought Wendy books that reflected their developing concepts surrounding her use of books. The books

included several picture / word books where Wendy could point to and name pictures. Other books had interesting illustrations where Wendy could find and point to small detail. 'Looking at Animals' reflected their understanding of Wendy's interest in animals. Stories could also be told from several of the books reflecting the parents understanding that Wendy also liked to listen to a story as well as to point to objects.

It is possible that their choice of books could have been linked to the concepts they formed of Wendy's development, giving support to the interpretative schema for the research that new behaviour develops as a result of parent's concept formation.

The books that they provided for Wendy were discussed in the evaluation.

J.S. You also had books at home. You had quite a lot of books.

T.T. We've got a stack of books. She's got them all in her room ... She'll sit and read before she goes to sleep. Sometimes she'll go to bed and play. It depends what mood she's in.

J.S. Can you remember some of her favourites at the time? Some of the ones you got for her.

T.T. There was all kinds ...

J.S. She liked to go through all of them ...

T.T. That's right.

J.S. She used to have them on the shelf at one time so she could come and take them.

T.T. She hates having them on the shelf here but if she knows that they are a good book which she's not allowed to play with I would say because some books she can play with because they are old and ragged. She'll leave them lying about but the good ones she knows they've got to be put back away.

Tim and Alice's emphasis on the importance of Wendy's literacy skills was obvious in the evaluation. They made comments on Wendy's present levels of achievement in this area. They appeared to have kept up the shared reading with her that had become such an established feature in Wendy's early development.

T.T. Now she's starting to pick out letters and that. Saying 'That's in my name,' doesn't she? If you have letters with her name on out, you know, like what they have at school ... she spells her name out.

J.S. Right so she does that now.

A.T. She's learnt to recognise the letters.

J.S. So she's at a different stage now than she was then.

T.T. She's a lot further forward now.

Tim had formed a concept that Wendy recognised the letters in her name and had observed her doing this when looking at books. He had also elaborated this concept to encouraging her to spell her name out with individual letters. Alice also had a concept that Wendy could recognise the letters in her name. Tim could recognise the progress that Wendy had made in her literacy skills.

Tim also described other developments in Wendy's use of books, in the evaluation.

T.T. That's right. But now she's at the stage where she'll look at pictures and if there's no words to it, she'll make her own story up.

Tim had also observed Wendy retelling a story while looking at the pictures of a book. He used his observation skills to observe Wendy and learn about the stage she had reached in reading.

Tim also explained in the evaluation that Wendy's pattern

of looking at books every day was still the same as it had been in the research period, supported by her school.

T.T. She's still the same with books. She brings home different books every night from school.

This section explored Tim and Alice's developing understanding of Wendy's literacy skills. The interpretative schema for the research, that parents developed concepts of their child's behaviour and learning, was supported by examples of concepts that Tim and Alice appeared to have formed based on their observations of Wendy's behaviour. These concepts portrayed an increasingly sophisticated view of Wendy's development in her use of books.

Tim and Alice also modified their own behaviour and language to be appropriate to Wendy's stage of development, supporting the interpretative schema of the research of the development of new behaviour based on conceptual understanding.



## **WENDY'S UNDERSTANDING OF NUMBER**

Tim and Alice's developing awareness of Wendy's concept of number is explored in this section. The section begins with a discussion of Tim and Alice's developing understanding and elaboration of Wendy's counting schema. Other schemas such as Wendy's transporting schema, positioning schema and enclosing schema are then introduced. These schemas contributed in a direct or sometimes indirect way to Wendy's developing concept of number. At times Wendy was also simultaneously developing other concepts, e.g., a concept of size, with the same behaviour.

Tim and Alice's understanding of Wendy's concept of 'one' and concept of quantity is also discussed concerning Wendy's developing identification of objects. Her developing awareness of herself as a separate individual and her developing understanding of the relationship between one thing and another are also discussed in relationship to her concept of quantity.

The section also explores the parent's use of games in the development of Wendy's number concept, and ends with a link between Wendy's use of books and her concept of 'one'.

Wendy appeared to be developing a concept of number through experiences in her spontaneous play. For example;

[1:07] She handed the bricks over to Alice and me one by one.

Wendy developed a behaviour pattern of handing objects over one at a time to her parents and later to me. Alice participated in this interaction with Wendy and a situation of shared meaning was established between them. Alice took interest in and responded to Wendy's spontaneous play and appeared to have developed a concept that this behaviour was

worthwhile and valuable.

Tim also developed an interest in Wendy's behaviour pattern of handing things over. For example;

[1:11] Wendy played for a long time with the cards. She made a pile of them and then handed them to me. I asked Tim and Alice if she had watched them play cards and Tim said she had. Wendy repeated the word 'card' after Tim. Tim called out numbers while she was making a pile of cards. I asked if she sometimes repeated the numbers after him and he said she did when she felt like it. He said that she sat with him while he was playing cards and would pick one out for him. Sometimes she picked the right card and sometimes she didn't.

It appeared that Tim had developed a concept that Wendy was learning about number and counting. He linked her manipulation of objects with counting and he recognised that sometimes she repeated numbers. Like Alice, Tim also created a situation of shared meaning with Wendy in a learning situation that involved numbers. In addition he introduced appropriate language to Wendy's play. The importance of situations of shared meaning for a child's development is further discussed in Chapter 5.

Tim also reported that he encouraged Wendy to join in his activity when he was playing cards. Perhaps he had confused her level of play with his own when he said that sometimes she picked the right card for him. In the next observation Tim again introduced a number sequence into Wendy's spontaneous play.

[2:01] Wendy picked up a pile of knives, forks and spoons and sat on Tim's knee. She transferred them one at a time to his hand that he held open and as she put them down he counted them, 1,2,3 etc. They repeated this a few times.

Wendy repeated her behaviour pattern of handing things over one at a time which Tim recognised and responded to. He linked this behaviour pattern with his concept that Wendy was

learning to count and created a situation of shared learning about number. Wendy continued to create opportunities where she could hand objects over to Tim and Alice. For example;

[2:04] Wendy handed Tim the pieces of jigsaw one by one and as she did this he counted them for her. He handed the pieces back to her, one piece at a time. He helped her replace the pieces in the tray. At first he put them back for her and then he gave her the piece and pointed to where it went and let her put it back. He said she was getting very clever. I said she was thinking about how to turn the piece round before she fitted it in. I pointed out that she had spent nearly half an hour playing with the jigsaw. Tim said that when she likes something she will spend a long time playing with it and I said that she concentrates on what she is doing. Tim said that he had got a jigsaw for her but it was too hard for her as it contained pieces that she had to fix together.

Tim appeared to have generalised his concept that Wendy was learning to count to other new situations. He seemed to be aware that Wendy's learning to count was a gradual process that required much repetition in different situations. He also supported the development of her concept of one to one correspondence by helping her replace jigsaw pieces in an inset board.

Tim concentrated on this activity for half an hour and recognised that shared learning experiences with Wendy, like this one, often lasted for long periods of time. He recognised that this was linked to the degree of interest she had in the activity.

In addition, Tim was developing a concept of Wendy's level of play and the stage of development she had reached. He recognised that a puzzle that had a larger number of pieces was too complicated for her.

Wendy's counting schema continued to develop, reinforced by her parent's continued interest in this activity. For example;

[2:04] Wendy handed the bricks over to me making sounds

that could have been numbers as she did so. Alice said that she was counting. She said that she tries but gets the numbers mixed up and repeated 'five' after her when Wendy got up to five.

Alice had observed Wendy and generalised her concept that she tried to count to this new situation. She understood that Wendy tried to count in a sequence but mixed the numbers up when doing so. She repeated the number five after Wendy to reinforce her concept of five. Wendy's behaviour pattern of handing things over continued. Alice also took other opportunities to count the objects Wendy was manipulating. For example;

[2:06] Wendy handed me the sticks over one by one and made a pile of the pictures on top of one another. Alice counted them as she did this.

Alice continued to reinforce counting in a sequence with Wendy's behaviour pattern of handing things over. She generalised her concept that Wendy was learning to count in many different situations. Alice and Tim's concept that Wendy was learning to count appeared to underpin their behaviour in developing Wendy's concept of number.

In addition, when Tim and Alice were given written observations to sort, they included several observations of Wendy handing things over in their category of her learning about number. This reinforced their concept that she was learning to count.

These observations perhaps support the interpretative schema of the research that the parents developed concepts of their child's behaviour and learning through making observations of their spontaneous play. The interpretative schema for the research that the parents developed new behaviour based

on these concepts is also supported by the examples given above.

Wendy's counting behaviour was discussed in the evaluation:

J.S. Can you remember when she was learning about number she used to hand things over to you all the time?

T.T. That's right.

J.S. Can you remember sitting when she would hand one thing after another over?

T.T. That's right, counting along with her.

J.S. Yeah.

T.T. Now when she comes in, all of a sudden she'll start counting up to 15 or 20 or something.

...  
J.S. So it started with handing things over to you and then you would count them.

T.T. That's right.

J.S. Then did she start to try to count them as well?

T.T. She did yeah. She used to make a few mistakes but we used to have to go back and say 1,2,3, you know.

J.S. Right so she used to start with another number then and sometimes get them mixed up a bit.

T.T. That's right. She'd often get them mixed up. Sometimes she still does if she's in a hurry but ... She puts them in the wrong way.

J.S. So it's something she's learned gradually over time.

T.T. Oh yeah.

J.S. And did she spontaneously count things when she was playing when you were watching her?

T.T. Well she seemed to be counting them but we were not sure whether she was counting them or just moving them about, you know.

Tim had observed Wendy's behaviour and recognised that

she spontaneously handed thing over which he recalled in the evaluation. Tim and Alice had introduced a number sequence to this activity which Wendy had started to copy. Tim recognised the progression Wendy made over time and that she gradually learned the conventional ordering of numbers. He had elaborated his concept to include the understanding that she often got the numbers mixed up and he compensated for this by going back and starting again from the beginning of the number sequence for her.

Tim's concept of the development of Wendy's counting supports the interpretative schema of the research of concept formation. In addition, Tim had closely observed Wendy's behaviour giving support for the interpretative schema of the research of the development of parent's observation skills.

In the evaluation, Tim also introduced an alternative explanation for Wendy's spontaneous behaviour when she was transporting and positioning objects as if he was aware that other interpretations for this behaviour were possible.

Tim appeared to recognise that Wendy's transporting schema could be connected with her concept of number. The observations we made of Wendy's spontaneous play included many examples of her moving objects about, that is, of her transporting schema. For example;

[1:07] We watched Wendy transfer bricks from the truck to the baby walker. We then watched her transfer pens from the baby walker to the truck.

[1:07] Wendy filled the truck with bricks and continued to put more bricks in when the truck was full and they fell out each time. We watched her empty the bricks out of the truck and stand in herself.

We watched Wendy position herself where the bricks had been in the above observation. Wendy's awareness of herself as

'one' is further discussed later in this section. Wendy also seemed to be exploring how many bricks she could fit in the truck and therefore to be elaborating her concept of number.

She also attempted to put one object in relationship to another. For example;

[1:07] We watched as Wendy attempted to stand one brick on top of another. She pushed them together in her hands, vertically. She tried to balance a brick on the edge of a brick on the floor, instead of the flat surface. She tried to put a brick on top of a brick that already had a brick balanced on it. She balanced four bricks on the top of one another.

Putting objects in relationship to one another appeared to contribute significantly to Wendy's developing concept of number. Further observations were made of Wendy attempting to put one object on top of another. For example;

[1:09] Wendy put the cup and brush on top of the milk tin. We watched her do this and Tim then found some of her bricks for her with which to build.

Tim recalled observations of Wendy transporting and positioning objects in the evaluation:

T.T. You could see that she would sort of say, well so many in that pile and so many in that pile you know.

J.S. So she made piles of things?

T.T. Different piles of things, yeah.

J.S. Right.

T.T. Funnily enough there seemed to be just about the same number in each pile.

J.S. So she could have been learning about quantity.

T.T. Yeah, that's right. There was roughly the same number in each different pile. Maybe one over or one under it just depended.

...  
T.T. She (also) used to try and make different things with the pegs, put them together in different ways and what have you.

J.S. She used to join them together did she? ...

T.T. She used to put 3 or 4 pegs on one and put that to one side and put two or three on that one. Make different shapes.

Tim recalled making observations of Wendy's play, supporting the interpretative schema of the research of the development of parent's observation skills. He linked his observations of Wendy's transporting and positioning schemas with her developing concept of number. Tim's concept of Wendy's understanding of number included his observations of Wendy manipulating objects. It is very likely that Wendy's spontaneous behaviour in manipulating objects did significantly contribute to her awareness and appreciation of number. Tim appeared to recognise the significance of this behaviour.

These observations seemed to extend and elaborate Tim's concept of Wendy's awareness of number supporting the interpretative schema of the research of parent's conceptual development.

Wendy developed a behaviour pattern of putting objects into containers that also seemed to be connected with the development of her number concept. She appeared to have discovered that more than one object could be in the same place at the same time through the experience of putting one object inside one another.

Alice made observations of this behaviour. For example;

[1:07] Alice pointed out that Wendy liked to put things inside others.

Alice observed Wendy's spontaneous behaviour and recognised that she often put one object inside another supporting the interpretative schema of the research of the development of



parent's observation skills. Wendy's spontaneous behaviour often contained examples of her fitting one thing inside another. For example;

[1:09] We watched as Wendy tried to fit several things down the tube, e.g., the tambourine. She discovered that some things did not fit. Tim said, 'That's how she learns'.

Wendy tried to fit one object after another down the tube. In addition to developing a concept of size she also seemed to be developing a concept of the different configurations of 'one' object. She appeared to be extending her concept of 'one' to include objects of various shapes and sizes.

Wendy also appeared to be discovering that there was no limit to the number of things that would go into the tube. This contrasted with a container into which she could only fit a limited number of objects and in this way she developed her concept of quantity.

Tim formed a concept that Wendy learned from experience that he used to interpret this observation of Wendy's behaviour.

Wendy extended and developed her learning with these objects over a period. For example the week after;

[1:09] I asked Alice if Wendy had played with the tube. She looked very animated and told me that Wendy had been trying to put many different things down it during the week, her ball, shoes etc. She said sometimes things wouldn't fit and then Wendy tried to push them down.

Alice had observed Wendy and reported that she had repeated the behaviour of putting one object after another down the tube. She seemed to be developing a concept of Wendy's developing understanding of the different shapes and sizes that an object can be. It appeared that Wendy thought that if one object fitted in the tube, others should also as she tried to push them in.

Tim and Alice made further observations of Wendy's enclosing schema. For example;

[1:09] Wendy was putting objects in a milk tin. She tried to put a book in which did not fit. Tim handed her a cup and said 'Here Wendy that'll fit in'. Wendy took this from him and put it in. Later she tried to fit a square brick in the back of her van that did not fit. Tim again found her a brick that did fit.

A situation of shared meaning developed when Tim observed Wendy's spontaneous behaviour and interacted with her in a way that extended and developed her learning that was taking place. Tim supported Wendy's comparison of objects and helped her substitute one object for another.

Tim developed a concept that Wendy was comparing the size of one object with the size of a space to fit it into. Tim and Alice also extended and developed their concept that Wendy was learning about quantity. For example;

[1:10] Wendy was putting beads in a bag. Tim said that she fills any boxes, bags or tins that she could get her hands on. Alice agreed with him and said that she did not know when to stop filling them. She said that when they were full Wendy tries to push things down to make them fit. I suggested that she was developing a concept of 'full up' through doing this.

Wendy's behaviour when she tried to push things down when the container was full was similar to her behaviour of trying to push things down when they were too big. She appeared to be learning the difference between too many and too big and about the nature of objects; in that some could be squashed and some could not.

Alice observed that Wendy seemed to be experimenting with the number of things that would fit inside a container. Wendy appeared to be learning about quantity from filling containers

right up to the top.

Wendy also developed a behaviour pattern of pointing to objects one at a time. She appeared to be referring to individual objects. Alice observed this behaviour and reported on it.

[1:09] She said that Wendy would point to things all the time.

Alice developed a concept that Wendy pointed to particular things. She gave further observations of Wendy referring to specific objects by pointing. For example;

[1:09] Alice said that Wendy points to things when she is out things in shops, trees, babies etc.

Alice developed her understanding of this behaviour and recognised that Wendy usually pointed to things when she was outside. She recalled the things that particularly interested Wendy. She also recognised that Wendy pointed specifically to one thing at a time. Tim also observed Wendy and developed an understanding of this behaviour. For example;

[1:09] Tim said that Wendy now says 'there' when she points.

Tim developed a concept that Wendy referred to each object by the word 'there'. At this stage she appeared to differentiate between one object and another. She seemed to refer to the individual identity of the separate objects. This could have been a precursor to the stage of beginning to classify objects that could be seen to develop in the next example.

[1:09] Tim had drawn a picture of a dog. Wendy pointed to it and said 'dog' which Tim repeated. Wendy also pointed to a picture of a car in a magazine and said 'car'. Tim said that she also calls buses 'car'.

Wendy was beginning to use words to refer to each single object to which she pointed. She began to use one word to stand for

many similar objects; and she began to classify or group objects together. Tim extended and elaborated this learning by reinforcing the appropriate words. He also developed a concept that she over-extended some words as he referred to her using 'car' to refer to a group of vehicles.

Using one word to refer to many objects suggests that Wendy was elaborating her concept of quantity. At a later stage Wendy grouped objects the same together in her spontaneous play. For example;

[2:05] Wendy took the bricks out of the bag one after the other and put them together. She took out a paint brush and put it with another one. She took out a pen and put it with the other one in my hand.

[2:08] Wendy pointed to the shoes in the picture and then to her own shoes. She later pointed to a mouth in the picture and then to her mouth and then to my mouth.

She was perhaps elaborating her concepts of quantity and grouping. This was discussed in the evaluation.

J.S. Can you remember her looking at the 'twoness' of things.

T.T. I have noticed that when Helen used to come around that she used to say that Helen had the same shoes, 'same shoes me'. So she would differentiate there, wouldn't she, if it had the same pattern on or if it was the same colour, same shoes.

J.S. So she was looking for things the same.

T.T. That's right.

Tim and Alice also selected several examples of Wendy classifying objects, when looking at written observations of Wendy's behaviour. They put them in a category of her 'putting things the same together'.

Tim and Alice had developed a concept that Wendy would differentiate between objects and elaborated the concept that

Wendy looked for features of objects that were the same.

Tim's concept of Wendy grouping objects supports the interpretative schema of the research of parent's development of concepts of their child's behaviour and learning.

Alice's interpretation of Wendy's pointing behaviour took an unexpected turn in the example below;

[1:10] Alice said that Wendy has a bad habit of pointing and doesn't know why she does it. I suggested that maybe she pointed to let Alice know what she was interested in and in this way encouraged Alice to give her the names for things. Wendy pointed at many things before and after this conversation when we were out. Alice talked to her naming objects such as, 'car, dog' and 'wall'.

At this stage the expression of 'it's rude to point' perhaps came to dominate Alice's interpretation of Wendy's pointing. She had observed Wendy's behaviour and recognised her pointing schema and then developed a concept that it was a 'bad habit'. Perhaps the conversation about the possible meaning behind her behaviour modified this concept to some extent giving tentative support to the interpretative schema of the research that parents' interpretations of their child's behaviour may be modified through discussion. In the above example, Alice subsequently created a shared learning situation around Wendy's pointing behaviour pattern.

In addition to using words to refer to objects, Wendy also began to use names to refer to people. For example;

[1:09] Alice said that Wendy tries to say people's names, e.g., 'nana'.

It is not clear from Alice's report whether Wendy used the word 'nana' to refer only to her grandma or whether she over-extended it and used it for other people. In the next observation

Wendy grouped herself together with other babies.

[1:10] Wendy called herself 'baby' when she was in the cafe and wanted some food and when she was out in her buggy. Both times Alice replied that she was not a baby now. I suggested that Wendy calls herself baby as she does not yet know her own name and Alice agreed that Wendy was not yet at this stage. Alice said that Wendy also says 'me' when she wants something.

Wendy did not yet refer to herself with her own individual name but used the word 'baby' instead. Alice had developed a concept of Wendy's 'stage of development' that she used to interpret her behaviour when discussing her use of the word 'baby'. Alice had also observed that Wendy used the word 'me' to refer to herself.

Wendy had begun to develop a concept of self and used the words 'baby' and 'me' to refer to her individual identity. Wendy's concept of her own separate identity could be seen to be fully established in the next example;

[2:08] Tim said that Wendy had said her name for the first time last night.

Tim reported on Wendy using her own name for the first time, perhaps indicating that she now referred to herself as a separate person distinct from other people and therefore separate and apart from the reality outside herself. She had, perhaps, established a duality between her inner self and outer reality.

It is possible that an awareness of the 'oneness' of the self is an important stage in the development of an awareness of quantity. Alice and Tim recognised when Wendy had reached this stage of development.

At one stage Wendy appeared to develop the ability in her play to focus on more than one object at the same time. She

developed the behaviour pattern of putting one object in relationship to another in her imaginative play. For example;

[1:09] Wendy pretended to stir the pan and tip the tin. She pretended to feed herself and feed the doll. Alice said that Wendy now pretends to Hoover the carpet and Tim said that she pretends to ride his motorbike, give her doll a bottle and feed it and brush its hair.

Wendy explored the relationship between one object and another in a variety of different situations. Alice and Tim observed this behaviour, supporting the interpretative schema for the research of the development of parent's observation skills. They began to make provision for Wendy's play based on their observations. For example;

[1:10] Talking about Christmas presents Alice said that she wanted to get Wendy something that would take her play on a bit and that she would be able to play with imaginatively. In the toy shop we looked at a toy pram that they liked and I suggested that Wendy's play with her doll would be extended by being able to pretend to take the doll out. They bought this pram and a doll to put in it.

Alice developed a concept of Wendy's imaginative play, supporting the interpretative schema of the research of the parent's conceptual development. The concept appeared to lead Alice to new behaviour in the selection of appropriate toys for Wendy based on this concept. She bought two objects, a doll and pram which Wendy could play with together. Wendy's awareness of one perhaps developed into an awareness of the relationship between more than one object. Tim and Alice continued to observe Wendy's imaginative play. For example;

[2:01] Wendy had the pan in one hand and paper in the other. Tim said, 'watch what she does'. She put the paper in the pan. He asked her if she was making the dinner. Tim and Alice watched her when she sat the doll on the pan (for a potty) and laughed.

Tim had developed a concept that Wendy's play was meaningful and observed her with interest. A situation of shared meaning developed and Tim introduced appropriate language into the situation. Wendy's manipulation of objects, encouraged by her parents gave her experience in developing a concept of quantity.

Tim and Alice also played physical games with Wendy that related to her developing number concept.

[2:01] Tim played a game with Wendy. He lay on the floor and told Wendy to get down. Then he said, 'ready, steady, go,' and then jumped up and Wendy jumped up as well. They repeated this many times.

Tim introduced a sequence into this game that could be seen as a precursor to learning the counting sequence. Wendy anticipated the action at the end of the sequence. He also introduced this sequence into other games. For example;

[2:01] Tim played a game with Wendy and the bean bag. He picked up the bag and said 'ready, steady, go' and then threw it. She then picked it up and threw it and then he picked it up again and repeated 'ready, steady, go'.

Tim recalled this in the evaluation;

T.T. She learned 'ready, steady go'. That was from me basically that.

Tim also played other games with Wendy with an emphasis on number. For example;

[2:04] I started singing 'Row the Boat' to Wendy and she pointed in her hand. I asked Tim if he did 'Round and Round the Garden' with her and he said that he did.

Wendy anticipated this game that included the number sequence, 'one step, two steps'. In addition to learning the number sequence in games, Wendy also learned about number in other ways, for example;

[2:05] Alice said that Wendy jumps now. At first it was one



foot and now she can jump with two.  
[2:05] Alice said 'jump' and Wendy jumped up and down.  
Alice said that Wendy had been jumping a lot during the week.

Alice recognised that Wendy's jumping progressed from one foot to two. Perhaps Wendy became aware that she could jump with two feet together, reinforcing her concept of number. Alice observed and supported this behaviour and made it into a shared learning experience.

In the evaluation, Tim talked about other aspects of Wendy's number concept;

J.S. So you could see her understanding of number developing from quite an early stage.

T.T. I would say from a very early stage because when she used to read her books she used to turn two or three pages over at one time. You used to say 'No only one page at a time'.

J.S. So that's connected with number.

T.T. That's connected as well you see. That's all connected into one.

J.S. And once she learned about 'one' she could turn one page over.

T.T. That's right.

J.S. But before that it was just ..

T.T. A number of pages over.

Tim linked Wendy's developing understanding of 'one' with her ability to turn only one page over when looking at a book. He appeared to have developed a concept of the variety of ways in which Wendy learned about number.

Tim and Alice's understanding of how Wendy's spontaneous behaviour was related to the development of her

concept of number was explored in this section. A wide variety of activities appeared to contribute to her development of this concept.

Tim and Alice's developing observation skills are apparent from their close observation of Wendy's spontaneous behaviour, supporting the interpretative schema of the research of the parent's perceptual development.

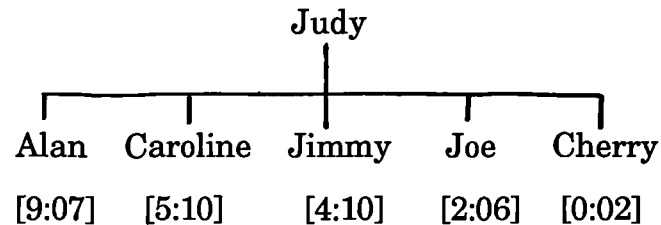
Tim and Alice appeared to develop many concepts of Wendy's behaviour and learning. For example, a concept of her gradual learning of the number sequence, a concept of her understanding of 'one' and a concept that she could differentiate between objects and group them together. The development of these concepts supported the interpretative schema for the research of parents' conceptual development.

An understanding of Wendy's stages of development appeared to lead Tim and Alice to establish shared learning situations with Wendy. They created situations of shared meaning in their interactions with her. This supported the interpretative schema of the research of the development of new behaviour based on concepts of the child's development.

## SECTION 4 JUDY

Judy was a single parent with five children. A brief sketch of her family is given below:

Family Structure:



There were many disruptions in this family's life in the first two years of the research project. During Caroline's first week at nursery school she disclosed information to me that led me to a strong suspicion that her father, who they lived with at the time, was sexually exploiting her. This information led to a case conference involving the police, health services, social services and school. There was insufficient evidence for any proceedings to take place but I was left with a feeling that the abuse could still be continuing which caused me much concern.

I continued to visit the family and discussed with them my knowledge and understanding of sexual exploitation and ways in which children often revealed their experience to others, through fantasy play etc. I intended to create an atmosphere where Caroline or Judy could ask for help quickly and without fear if necessary. However, Judy left Chris soon afterwards and went to live with her mother. Judy herself is an incest survivor and was abused from a very early age by her stepfather. This experience with Caroline was devastating for her as it seemed to bring back her own experiences very vividly. Often at this time Judy's mother looked after the children while Judy wandered from local

cafe to friends' houses. I had some contact with her but it was infrequent and hectic.

The data was mainly collected in the third year of the research project, on Joe's behaviour and development, by which time Judy had her own house. Caroline and Jimmy were often at home during the period of data collection. Some observations are included from the first two years where relevant. The research data in the third year was shared with Judy in the form of written observations.

Perhaps Joe's birth symbolises his early struggles within the family. He was born at his grandmother's house before the ambulance arrived. Judy said that he had had his cord wrapped around his neck twice which a neighbour had removed. She said that he was black in colour and his face was covered in bruises. The doctor arrived and asked Judy if someone had dropped him.

This section is divided into two categories. The first section describes projections that Judy appeared to be making onto Joe's behaviour when she described him as being a right 'git'. It discusses details of Joe's behaviour patterns and interpretations Judy made of these. The second section looks at non-verbal communication, fantasy play and the acknowledgement of feelings.

Working with this family often left me feeling disorientated and fragmented. It soon became clear that a transference relationship had established between Judy and myself, perhaps reflecting Judy's desperate need to be parented.

## **HE'S A RIGHT 'GIT' / JUDY'S PROJECTIONS ONTO JOE'S BEHAVIOUR.**

This section begins by describing Judy's interpretations of Joe's reaching and grasping schema and her concept of Joe's physical development and explorations. It explores Judy's restrictions on Joe's movements and her control over his toilet training. Judy's apparent projections of aggression and destructiveness onto Joe's behaviour are then explored in the context of Joe's biting, banging and throwing schemas.

### He's Got a Habit of Nipping / Concept of Reaching and Grasping

Judy appeared to be using the defence mechanism of projection from an early stage in Joe's development. She made the following observation:

Judy said that Joe [0:04] has a habit now of nipping. She said he gets a hand full of your skin and nips you.

Judy observed Joe's behaviour and interpreted it as if he was trying to hurt her. It is possible that Joe's early reaching and grasping behaviour became a vehicle whereby Judy projected anxiety onto his behaviour. Perhaps her feelings of powerlessness and aggression had become split from her conscious awareness and found a vehicle for expression through projection onto Joe's behaviour. Together we made a further observation:

I picked up one of Joe's [0:04] rattles and held it in his field of vision. Joe watched it for a few seconds and then he reached out for it with both his hands and grasped it.

We discussed Joe's new habit of reaching and grasping, a behaviour pattern that he used in different situations for example, reaching for his rattle, your arm or whatever is near. This discussion led to the following observation:

Judy held the string of Joe's [0:04] hat out in front of his face. We both watched him look at it for a few seconds and then reach out for it. I said that he usually waits for a few seconds and then reaches out with both hands, reinforcing the observation by verbalising what we could see.

Close observation and discussion of Joe's behaviour gave access to an alternative interpretation for Joe's behaviour. Judy appeared to become consciously aware of this behaviour and she developed a concept of Joe's 'reaching and grasping' behaviour pattern with which to interpret observations of this behaviour. The observation of Judy providing an opportunity for Joe to operate this behaviour pattern indicated that the development of this concept led Judy to develop new behaviour. It is possible that the development of this concept led Judy to generalise this concept to further contexts. However, Judy still interpreted Joe's behaviour as nipping at times as in the following observation:

Judy stood Joe [0:11] on his feet and he held onto her jumper. She said that he was nipping.

Judy's intellectual interpretation of Joe's behaviour seemed to be closely related to her emotional reaction to it. The projection that Joe was trying to hurt Judy, when he reached and grasped her arm, appeared to override her intellectual understanding that Joe had developed a 'reaching and grasping' schema.

It is possible that Judy's consciousness was acting in a fragmented way and that she interpreted his behaviour in two different ways. She appeared to have two different perspectives of the same behaviour pattern, either of which could underlie her behaviour at a specific time. This theme of multiple perspectives is further discussed in Chapter 5.

Judy came to interpret Joe's reaching and grasping for objects as a new skill whereas reaching and grasping her arm

appeared to contain the powerful projection that Joe wanted to hurt her. The feelings of aggression that appeared to be projected onto Joe's behaviour could perhaps have been an aspect of her own self. She described feelings to me of wanting to hurt her children.

[Jimmy 3:05, Joe 0:11] 'I'm a bad'un me. I have some bad thoughts. I thought of burning Jimmy by putting his hand in the fire. That would teach him not to go near it.'

Judy began to express fantasies connected with fire onto which she could have been projecting repressed feelings of aggression and sexuality.

Judy's projection of Joe hurting her by nipping could have contained her own unintegrated feelings of wanting to hurt her children. The normal developmental stage of 'reaching and grasping,' which can be seen developing between the ages of 4 - 6 months appeared to become the vehicle for a powerful projection that Joe intended to hurt her. The projection onto Joe that he deliberately hurt others could have been an aspect of Judy's own behaviour. This caused her much anxiety that she could not consciously contain causing it to become split or unconscious. Perhaps she projected these feelings onto Joe as if they were his feelings and used Joe as a container for the sort of feelings she described to me of wanting to hurt her children. In discussing these feelings and using me as a container for them she perhaps began to integrate them into her concept of self.

The above observations seem to support the interpretative schema for the research that parents' interpretations at times contained the defence mechanism of projection and that the researcher, by listening, acted as a container for these feelings.

## Concept of Physical Development and Exploring and Projection of Obsessive Control.

Judy made a number of observations connected with Joe's physical development and his developing ability to explore his surroundings. Examples are given below.

Judy said that Joe [0:02] was very advanced for a 2 month old baby as he was trying to stand on his feet. We watched him pushing up on his feet while he was on my knee.  
Judy said that Joe [0:03] could nearly sit up on his own that was very advanced for his age.  
Judy said that Joe [0:04] was trying to crawl and put him face down on his mat and asked me to watch as he moved one knee after another.  
Judy observed that Joe [0:10] would stand up and hold onto the furniture now.

Judy made observations of the progression in Joe's physical development and shared these observations with me. Some observations we made together as we watched what he was doing. Joe was at a stage where he was just about ready to crawl and was learning to make movements that would enable him to achieve this. For example;

We watched Joe [1:00] get up onto his knees. He put one knee behind himself and swayed backwards and forwards. Judy said that this was the first time he had got up on his knees.

Soon after this he was mobile and able to crawl around the room and explore his surroundings in a much more active way. Judy commented that:

'Joe [1:02] gets into everything now that he can crawl about.'

Judy's concept that Joe was learning to crawl led to her encouraging his behaviour when he first managed to get up onto his knees. This developing concept led her to make accurate



observations of movements he was making to achieve this process that, in turn, informed and developed her concept.

These observations supported the interpretative schema for the research of conceptual development. Discussing her knowledge of Joe's physical development supported Judy in making further observations.

Joe progressed physically and at 18 months took his first steps.

Judy said that Joe [1:06] forgot himself yesterday and took four steps towards a 20 pence piece. She held up 2 pence and said 'Watch, he'll not give us it back. Stand up or you'll not get it. Stand up, up, up.'

Judy encouraged Joe to practise his new skill of walking. There also seemed to be contained within this observation, the interpretation that Joe wanted to take money from Judy. It is possible that Judy was projecting her own unintegrated feelings of not having enough, that is, not having her needs met, onto Joe's behaviour and interpreting this as Joe 'wanting'.

Joe's mobility increased dramatically when he became a confident walker.

Judy made the following interpretation of Joe's behaviour.

'Joe (1:07) gets everywhere you've got to strap him in'.

This interpretation resulted in Joe being strapped in his pushchair on many occasions over the next few months, resulting in his restricted movement. For example:

Judy shouted that Joe [1:07] had better stop that when he was strapped in his pushchair and started to cry.

Joe [1:09] was strapped in his pushchair. Judy said that if she let him out he would draw all over himself.

Judy appeared to have a need to control Joe's movements. It is possible that restricting his movements in this way

symbolised her own inner restrictions on the movement of her own feelings.

Judy later talked to me about Joe's development. She said:

Joe [1:11] 'Bairns have to be able to play'.

Judy came to a realisation that Joe had a need to play which at times dominated her consciousness and she gave Joe the freedom to move and play in the house and garden. At other times another fragment of consciousness appeared to dominate Judy's behaviour and Joe's movements were again restricted. On reflection about the toys that Judy had around for Joe to play with, she said:

Joe [2:05] had everything that she had not had when she was a child. She said that she'd been expected to sit in an empty room and play with nothing.

Judy recalled her own experience where restrictions were put on her play. She became more conscious of her own background of inner restriction, perhaps recognising her own feelings from this time.

We watched Joe [2:05] playing with a shovel. I *commented* that children play with all sorts of things round the house and not just their toys. Judy said that she didn't care what they played with as long as they didn't hurt themselves.

She appeared to link this observation with her concept that 'Bairns need to be able to play'.

Judy recognised and stated the need for Joe's exploratory play. There appeared again to be a fundamental fragmentation in her thinking. A fragment of Judy's consciousness seemed to encourage Joe's movements and explorations and allowed for this need.

Another fragment of her consciousness demanded that Joe's explorations must be severely restricted. She appeared not

to be able to tolerate the feelings of loss of control that his explorations evoked. It may have been to contain these feelings that she attempted to control rigidly his movements.

Judy started to toilet train Joe. For example;

Judy asked Caroline to get Joe's [2:06] potty. She put it down in front of him and he screamed and threw it back where it had been. Judy got it back and sat him on it and told him not to move. Joe sat there for while and then he tried to get up. Judy made him sit down again. He did and then shuffled along the floor taking his potty with him to where the jigsaws were. He then got off again and Judy said that if he 'weed' he knew what he would get.

Judy's feelings appeared to manifest in her need to control obsessively Joe's potty training. It is possible that his non-compliance evoked such feelings of powerlessness and lack of control that resulted in yet more control. Strapping Joe in his buggy and insisting that he sat on his potty appeared to be linked. They also seemed to be a link with the denial of movement and change in Joe's development described below.

Judy's dominant thoughts about Joe's development often centred on all his behaviour being the same with no apparent differentiation. For example:

When looking at observations of Joe (1:11) Judy remarked that 'bairns do all the same things'. When talking about Joe's behaviour in particular, she stated that 'Joe does all the same things every day'.

When I discussed Joe repeating the same behaviour patterns, Judy said:

'Joe [2:01] does different things all the time, too many to remember.'

Judy seemed to deny any change and development in Joe's behaviour with these two concepts, which appear to be mutually exclusive. One being 'all Joe's behaviour is the same' and the

other being 'Joe does different things all the time'.

These concepts may have served to deny any behaviour that allowed the possibility of overwhelming anxiety into Judy's consciousness. It could be linked with restricting Joe's movements to symbolise her own inner restrictions on her feelings. The denial that his behaviour changed in anyway could have been seen as a restriction in the movement of development. It could be that learning to Judy represented a movement of feeling that was potentially destabilising and a threat to her security.

#### Concept of Sucking / Biting with Associated Projection of Aggression

Many observations were collected of Joe's developing sucking schema. For example;

Judy pointed out that Joe [0:09] likes to suck his bottle even when it is empty.

With the arrival of his teeth, Joe's sucking schema became differentiated into a biting schema. Judy made observations of Joe biting. For example;

Judy said that Joe [1:00] likes biting now, not softly but really biting.

Judy said that Joe [1:01] doesn't just suck your finger, he bites right down with his front teeth.

The strength of feeling with which Judy related these observations indicated that she could have been projecting aggressive feelings onto Joe's developmental stage of biting. Perhaps she interpreted his behaviour as if he was biting to hurt her. It is possible that Joe had internalised her projection and was acting it out in an aggressive way.

An alternative interpretation could be that Joe could have been projecting his own aggressive feelings onto Judy. It is possible that he used this behaviour to evoke an aggressive response in Judy onto who he could then project his aggression. This possibility is further discussed in Chapter 5.

However, not all of Judy's observations of Joe biting contained a possible projection. She also observed this behaviour and formed a concept of 'behaviour pattern'. With excitement she told me of his latest development:

Judy said that Joe [1:01] had a new way of picking things up. He bent over picked the thing up in his mouth with his teeth, shook it backwards and forwards and then let go of it so it dropped. She said that he had done this with a soft ball and a toothbrush the night before. We both watched as Joe [1:01] picked up his bottle in his mouth. He shook it backwards and forwards and then dropped it.

Judy interpreted this behaviour as being a 'repeated behaviour pattern'. She recognised and gave positive reinforcement to Joe's achievement of co-ordinating schemas of biting, shaking and letting go.

Judy developed a concept that 'Joe repeated a behaviour pattern' and gave me the above example of this. She watched him repeat this behaviour pattern in different situations with different objects. These observations give support to the interpretative schema of the research that the parent forms concepts of the child's behaviour and development. This concept appeared to lead to a perspective change that enabled Judy to recognise, see the significance of and respond to the behaviour when it was repeated.

## Projection of Self Destruction

Joe appeared to be developing a behaviour pattern of trying to see if his hand fitted in a variety of containers. Judy interpreted one such observation;

Judy said that Joe [1:07] tried to stick his hand in boiling hot cups of coffee, not warm cups.

She again seemed to be projecting her anxiety onto Joe's behaviour and appeared to interpret this behaviour as Joe trying to hurt himself by choosing boiling hot cups to put his hand in. The projection appeared to be of self destruction. Joe tried out this behaviour pattern of putting his hand in things in a variety of situations. For example:

We watched Joe [1:07] put slippers on his hands.

Judy made other observations of Joe's 'putting his hand in things' behaviour. For example she said:

'Joe [1:09] always puts his hand in the water in the mop bucket, every chance he gets practically.'

When Judy read other written observations of examples of this behaviour pattern she said Joe [1:11] always put his hands in shoes.

Judy looked at many written observations of Joe putting his hand in other things in addition to cups. She sorted written observations and put these together as being the same behaviour. She also gave examples of him putting his hand in other things. She stopped giving any examples of this behaviour pattern containing the projection of self destruction. It is possible that the concept of Joe 'putting his hands in different things' became an alternative explanation to and substituted for the projection, that 'Joe tries to hurt himself by putting his hand into boiling hot cups'. Developing the concept may have resulted in a perspective

change underlying the new behaviour of observing Joe putting his hand in different things on different occasions.

### Concept of Banging

A 'banging' schema emerged in Joe's spontaneous behaviour. There is evidence of him banging on many occasions. For example:

Joe [0:09] banged the caterpillar piece against the table.  
Joe [0:10] banged a brick against the door.

Joe also banged with parts of his body as well as with objects. For example:

Judy said that Joe [1:01] likes to stick the nut on you.

Linked to Judy's interpretations of Joe biting, Judy also appeared to be projecting onto Joe's behaviour of banging with his head that he was trying to hurt her. Judy also appeared to be projecting onto other examples of Joe's banging behaviour. For example;

Joe [1:07] banged his head back against the buggy a few times. Judy shouted at him to stop banging back. Joe talked 'jargon' back with a similar tone of voice. Judy shouted at him for answering back. Joe banged his head again. Judy shouted that if he broke it he'd not get another.

Joe's developmental stage of banging at times seemed to become an intensely emotional experience for Judy. One interpretation could be that it evoked powerful feelings of loss of control and powerlessness for her. Judy appeared to be projecting onto this behaviour and interpreting it as Joe being destructive. It is possible that Judy had a need for control over Joe's movements. In the above observation he <sup>was</sup> again strapped in his pushchair and banging was the only movement he could make.

Judy made further observations about Joe banging.

With increasing strength of feeling she described what a 'git' Joe [2:00] was. When asked for details she described, 'What do you think of this. He bangs his spoon and the other things hard off the glass top table'.

I showed Judy a written observation of Joe banging 2 pieces of wood together. I asked Judy if he was being a 'git'. She said she supposed he was just playing. I made a heading in Joe's records of 'Banging behaviour pattern' and asked her about him banging on the table, where should I put that? She said 'bad bastard' at first and then said 'No it was just one of the things that he does every day' which is the heading that I used.

Judy was put in the situation where I questioned her interpretation of Joe's behaviour. She agreed that Joe was not being a 'git' on this occasion. She appeared to have shifted her interpretation of his banging behaviour to a concept that he was only playing.

However, on reflection I felt that Judy was attempting to describe to me how desperate she felt at Joe's behaviour and the anxiety that this behaviour evoked. I was preoccupied with shifting her perception of Joe's behaviour. Perhaps I was looking for some way to control the situation that I was finding increasingly demanding and disturbing.

### Concept of Throwing and Associated Projection of Aggression

The link between throwing and aggression was apparent in early observations of Joe's brother, Jimmy in the first two years of data collection, for example;

Judy said that she had lost her temper with Jimmy (3:04) the night before and was worried in case she went too far with him. She talked about his wicked temper. I suggested watching him and writing down what happened when he lost his temper. Examples of this follow:



Jimmy (3:04) went over to touch the paint. Judy shouted 'Get off!' Jimmy picked up a pen and held it up to throw. Judy shouted 'Go on'. Jimmy shouted 'I don't like you no more. It's not your house now'. Judy shouted 'Whose is it then?' and Jimmy shouted 'It's Caroline's and Alan's and Joe's'. Judy shouted 'I'll leave you four in here and Alan can cook for you and take you to school'. Jimmy shouted 'No!' and lifted the pen again to throw. Judy shouted 'Go on, you dare'. Jimmy swung the pen backwards and forwards but did not throw it.

Jimmy [3:05] decided he was going to reach a fly on the ceiling with a stick. He decided to stand on the buggy. When he went over to do this Joe was holding onto it and when he pushed it Joe fell over. Joe started to cry and Judy smacked Jimmy. He held up a stick to throw and said he was going to tell his dad. Judy said he could tell him and that he could go and stop down there.

Jimmy often repeated a similar behaviour pattern. On each occasion there would be a confrontation with Judy and Jimmy would hold something up to throw which precipitated further confrontation with his mother that often ended with her threatening to leave him. Judy read these written observations and said there was something coming through quite clearly in them and that was her temper that she was losing on each one of them.

Judy used me to contain her anxieties about her behaviour towards Jimmy. I observed the strength of her feelings that she seemed to project onto Jimmy as if they were his. Judy later recognised her own feelings contained in the observations. Through the process of reflection on the observations she began to develop self awareness and to see that these feelings were partly her own. Perhaps she began to integrate these fragmented feelings into her own self concept. These observations could be seen to support the interpretative schema for the research of

emotional development.

Judy's first interpretation of Joe's throwing behaviour pattern contained within it the projection of 'throwing through temper,' which had become so firmly established in Jimmy's behaviour.

Judy said that Joe [0:04] had had her keys yesterday and had thrown them down in temper. She said that he knows how to throw all right and he's got a temper on him.

It is likely that Joe could only have accidentally let go of the keys at this stage. However, Joe's throwing appeared to evoke strong feelings in Judy from this early stage. It is possible that she had begun to project her own feelings onto his throwing behaviour pattern.

In the evaluation Judy recalled an experience of being thrown across the room as a child by her step father for no reason that she knew about. She said that I would actually have had to live with her to know what sort of life she had had. She said it was in the past and nothing could be done about it now. I said that it was how it affected her in the present that was the main thing now.

It is possible that this experience retold by Judy was connected in some way with her unconscious feelings that gained expression through projection onto her children's throwing schema. For certain, she was forbidden to express her feelings at the time. It is likely that she had a range of experiences around this theme, although this assumption is supported by only one example. Perhaps this explained to some extent why she strongly cathected the throwing schema in particular. She was perhaps acting out her early trauma from these experiences in a coded way when she projected onto her children's throwing schemas. An interpretation could be that she had internalised her step father's behaviour and was symbolically acting it out in some

other way as she had never been able to express directly her feelings surrounding it appropriately. Perhaps she became defended from her own feelings when Joe took on her projection and unconsciously she was using him in this defensive way. Indeed, it is possible that the compulsive urge to have a child is rooted in a need for such projection. This process is further discussed in Chapter 5.

To return to the original data, Joe's early behaviour showed few examples of a throwing schema. However, it was essential for Joe to go through this stage to develop concepts of direction and distance. For example:

We watched as Joe [1:06] spontaneously threw a brick in the air and watched where it landed.  
Judy later explained that Joe [1:09] throws things while he's playing. She said that he had always done it and that 'All bairns throw things.'

This observation appeared to be linked to her concept that 'bairns need to be able to play'. Through observation, Judy developed a concept of Joe 'throwing while he is playing,' in addition to her projection that Joe threw through temper. She generalised this concept to include other children's behaviour.

I showed Judy other written observations of Joe throwing and she told me that Joe [1:11] tried to hoy cups at times but she stopped him.

Judy appeared to make a link between Joe throwing when he was playing and when he was throwing something which he should not have. She seemed to incorporate both these behaviours into the same concept of Joe throwing.

Judy's concept of Joe's throwing appeared to be generalised to new situations. She had possibly gone through a perspective change and to be interpreting his throwing as playing. However,

Judy explained to me soon after that:

"All of Joe's [2:00] behaviour is the same. He's a right 'git.'" I decided to talk to her in more detail about Joe's throwing. Judy told me that Joe [2:00] was a 'git' when he threw things down the stairs and when he played with the case ball inside and he could smash the fish tank. He had also 'stotted' a ball off her head. I asked Judy if sometimes Joe played at throwing and she said he did. I asked her if he was being a 'git' then and she said 'not if he's playing'.

Judy again appeared to have multiple perspectives underlying her interpretations of Joe's behaviour. Judy's interpretation of his behaviour appeared to contain a projection that he was being deliberately destructive if his throwing could cause damage or injury. Otherwise she said he 'hoyed things for hoying's sake half the time'.

I wrote a heading on a piece of paper that said, 'Throwing behaviour pattern' and asked Judy to separate the observations into when he was being bad and when he was not. Most of them she said he was except the one that said it was a game. 'Hoying for hoying's sake' she said was in between.

I was trying to emphasis the similarities between examples of his throwing behaviour in this exercise.

I asked Judy what Joe learned from throwing. She said to be a good aim. She said that they broke windows when they got older and Jimmy could throw a car straight at a window. Judy said Joe had learned to throw with direction by doing it all the time. Judy said that Joe [2:00] hoyes things when he loses his temper just as Jimmy had done. We watched Joe throw jigsaw pieces. I asked Judy if it was temper and she said it was 'hoying for hoying's sake'.

The last observation served to reinforce Judy's concept that Joe throwing was sometimes 'hoying for hoying's sake'.

Judy began to describe her feelings and anxiety associated with her children throwing. She needed to express these feelings and to have them contained. However, I appeared to be preoccupied with encouraging her to see that Joe's throwing

behaviour was not bad all the time. At this time Judy appeared to displace her feelings connected with not being listened to as a child onto me. It is possible that what is referred to in psycho-analytic literature as a transference relationship was established at this stage, where Judy's early emotional responses within her family became a feature of her relationship with me.

Over the next few weeks she also asserted her projections onto Joe and gave examples of his bad behaviour. For example;

Judy said 'Joe's [2:01] a right bastard, hoying things at the others. He's getting worse not better. He threw a toy at Jimmy and it hit him on the head.'

Judy's unconscious material associated with the throwing schema perhaps became manifested through humour in the next example.

Judy picked up a cup and held it up as if to throw at Joe [2:03]. Joe picked another one up and did the same. They both laughed.

It seemed that Judy's unconscious material was also expressed through humour. Psycho-analytic theory describes this process whereby unconscious anxieties can find a vehicle for expression in this way.

Judy adopted a very strong defensive position where she burst out with descriptions of how bad Joe had been and refused talk about or listen to any other examples of his behaviour. For example;

There was some talk with a neighbour of Joe's [2:03] throwing and I appeared to have said something like 'He's often just playing when he does that'. Judy shouted 'You think he's playing I tell you he's not. We know he's not. He's an 'evil bastard' and he hoys things right at you and there's two girls that he does it to all the time.'

Judy asserted that it was Joe who was aggressive,

especially when he 'hoyed' things. Judy and I appeared to be locked in a conflict whether Joe was a 'git' or not which I was destined to lose.

Joe began to pick things up to throw as an expression of aggression in the same way as Jimmy had done, which was described at the beginning of this section. For example;

Judy threatened to throw something at Joe [2:06] if he didn't get down from looking into Cherry's carrycot. Joe picked up something and held it to throw at her. She said 'You dare and you know what you'll get'. Joe made some frustrated screams and put it down.

It appeared that the throwing schema had become a way of expressing aggression for Joe as well as Jimmy. Perhaps he was symbolically acting out his emotions associated with this schema. It is possible that unconscious emotions become linked to a child's developing schemas. This is further discussed in Chapter 5.

It was at this time that alternative interpretations were sought in an attempt to understand Judy's relationship with Joe and her increasingly difficult and complex relationship with myself. I sought a psycho-analytic interpretation to the impasse in my relationship with Judy that seemed to be that I was overwhelmed by Judy's pain and unconsciously refused to listen to her anymore. I had begun to attempt to educate her superego and needed to talk to her further about her thoughts and impulses surrounding Joe's bad behaviour rather than try to convince her that he was not bad. Evidently, Judy had found out what would paralyse me on an unconscious level and was making it obvious that she resented the fact that I had put up barriers to listening to the depth of her pain. Also, my own reaction to Judy was a counter-transference that was blocking my ability to work with

her feelings in a therapeutic way.

I described to Judy that it was difficult for me to listen to her when she described the intensity of her feelings surrounding Joe's behaviour. There was some easing of the relationship after these conversations and Judy continued to share the depth of her feelings with me, mostly non-verbally, within the transference relationship.

Her displacement of feelings onto me appeared to link with her assertion that 'you don't have to speak to let someone know what you're on about,' which is described in the next section. She had found a way of expressing her feelings through non-verbal communication and at times verbally.

Meanwhile Joe was also developing his understanding of the physical world and his relationship to it through his throwing behaviour pattern.

He [2:06] picked up the tissue paper and tried to throw it. We watched his attempts to try to throw it and his puzzled expression when he could not.

Incidentally, at the time of the evaluation Joe showed no indication of expressing his anxiety through the behaviour pattern of throwing either at home or in the nursery class he was attending.

This section described how Judy appeared to make projections onto Joe's ordinary developmental stages, such as reaching and grasping, banging and throwing. Each of these behaviour patterns seemed to become a vehicle for the projection of aspects of Judy's consciousness that she could not contain because of the intensity of the anxiety involved. Joe appeared to

become a container for this anxiety.

Joe appeared to have accommodated Judy's projections and have assimilated them into his behaviour. It seemed as if he had internalised the projections and acted them out in his behaviour. Projecting onto Joe's behaviour was perhaps one way in which the damage to Judy's inner life manifested itself. It seems likely that another way was her need to control his behaviour.



## **LOOKS AND SPEAK ARE PART OF THE SAME PATTERN / NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION, FANTASY PLAY AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF FEELING.**

This section begins with an exploration of the concept of non-verbal communication which Judy was developing and describes how this became a vehicle for the expression of her own feelings within the transference relationship that developed with the researcher. The section then follows with a description of Joe and Judy's fantasy play and attempts made to access and verbalise the unconscious motivation that it possibly symbolised. The section ends with a short summary of Judy's acknowledgement and integration of feeling.

### Concept of Joe's Non-Verbal Communication

Joe's non-verbal communication appeared to become a vehicle with which Judy was later able to identify. Non-verbal communication became a way of self expression that became increasingly important to her. Her recognition of Joe's non-verbal communication started at an early stage when he started to use gestures to communicate. For example;

Joe [0:11] pointed down at his shoe when he dropped it down from his pushchair and wanted it back. Judy said that Joe [1:00] points to something he wants and has been doing this for a while.

Judy recognised that Joe could make himself understood without using language. She made further observations of this. For example:

When I attempted to discuss Joe's language at a later stage, she said that he said 'nowt'. She said, "Joe (2:01) doesn't have to speak half the time because, 'looks and speak' are part of the same pattern. You can tell just by looking at him

what he wants. Say I was reaching out for these tabs, you'd know what I was doing, wouldn't you, without me speaking. It's the same for him."

She went on to give further examples of how he could make himself understood without having to talk, through non-verbal communication;

She said that Joe (2:01) won't tell you what he wants when he's outside the shop. He waits till you go in and then will point to what he wants or you ask him and he nods if he wants it.

At this time, Judy appeared to generalise this concept to include other observations of Joe communicating without having to speak. Judy recognised Joe's use of non-verbal communication and saw it as a substitute for him needing to speak at all. She then seemed to generalise this concept to her own experience and feelings.

Judy described to me how these 'vibes' come straight down from the brain and let you know just what someone is thinking about without them speaking.

When Judy discussed this concept she seemed to come to a realisation that it was possible to make yourself understood non-verbally and this appeared to affect her own behaviour. After she had had this realisation, she communicated to me each week very powerful feelings of anger, hate and resentment; and was reluctant to talk at all. One interpretation could be that these feelings, that had possibly previously been split from her conscious awareness, were beginning to enter into her consciousness.

A transference relationship appeared to be established between us at this time when these feelings became the dominant feature in our relationship. This is further discussed in Chapter

5. For example:

I met Judy at the bus stop on my way up to her house one week. I was met with such negative feelings that I asked her if I should stop calling and made it clear to her that it was her choice whether I did. She said that she just had a funny way of going on, that was all.

Her non-verbal communication to me at this stage indicated to me that it was likely that these feelings originated in her early childhood experience. This strength of feeling that I had only previously seen in her projections onto the children's behaviour seemed to become an important part of our relationship. I tried to create a dialogue around these feelings that was immensely difficult. However, I thought that Judy was going through a huge amount of inner movement at this time.

In the evaluation, Judy described to me how difficult it had been for her to put her feelings into words as a child. This was reflected in her relationship with me and others. She said she had been called a 'divvy' and all sorts of other names because she couldn't explain herself. But, she explained, how could she have told anyone about being sexually abused as nobody would listen if she tried to. She had not been allowed to speak or even show how she felt when she was a child. I said that I thought she was right when she said that you did not have to talk to make yourself understood. I had thought when she was coming out with some very deep feelings and it was hard to talk about them. She nodded in recognition to this.

Non-verbal communication became an effective way in which Judy could describe her feelings. Fantasy play also became used as a way of communication as described in the next section.

### Fantasy Play and Symbolism

Fantasy play appeared to form an important link, for Joe and Judy, between feeling and expression. Joe made symbolic representations in his play which Judy began to recognise and

comment on. In the following example he represented 'going out'.

Joe [2:03] had been putting the big cup on his head and saying 'bye'. I asked Judy if Joe had his hat on to go out and she said 'I should think so'. I said that I was working out where he was getting that from. Joe went over to Gemma and put the cup on her head. Judy watched him and said she was amazed at that as usually he would have belted her with it.

Observation of and understanding about Joe's fantasy play caused Judy to modify her concept that all Joe's behaviour was bad, which had led her to expect to see this bad behaviour all the time. The observation of him pretending to put a hat on the little girl resulted in her developing a concept of Joe's pretend play, which she extended and developed in further observations. For example;

Judy made a symbolic representation of a hat out of clay and put it on Joe's [2:06] head.

Judy made a tissue paper hat and put it on Joe's [2:06] head and he knocked it off. They repeated this a few times.

Judy's pretend play with Joe developed around this theme of putting a hat on. In psycho-analytic theory each act of behaviour is symbolically significant and is used to express an aspect of the unconscious mind. Fantasy play is seen as a communication of the unconscious mind and is often a child's only way of communicating fundamental unconscious issues.

Perhaps the hat symbolised to Joe, and later to Judy, the repression of feelings. Coded in this behaviour could have been the unconscious acting out of keeping feelings under control. The act of putting a hat on seemed to symbolise covering up feelings that could not be openly expressed. The hat could have been a symbol for repression of emotion. Joe could also have been

symbolising in 'going out' the separation between himself and his mother when there was no communication between them.

Although these possible interpretations were not discussed with Judy, the play did provide an opportunity for the shared inner movement of feeling to develop between them and created a situation of shared meaning through which further development could take place.

Judy began to use play fantasy as a way of expressing her own feelings. For example;

Judy joined in a play session with Joe [2:06], Jimmy [4:10] and Caroline [6:01]. Caroline had made three puppets, a ghost, one eyed Jack and a cat with a long piece of string for its tail. Caroline made them kiss and then banged them together for a big kiss. Caroline and Jimmy repeated this repeatedly saying, 'a big kiss and then a little kiss' and smacking them together. Judy joined in, dodging so Jimmy's puppet couldn't kiss hers. Jimmy screamed in frustration.

Caroline was perhaps representing the ambivalent feelings in her relationship with her mother as the puppet could smack and kiss at the same time. It is also possible that she was symbolising the sexual exploitation she had described in her early experience.

On the same occasion, Caroline nearly burnt herself on Judy's cigarette. She said that she wanted her to burn the cat puppet's tail because it was too long. Judy gleefully burnt through the cat's tail with her cigarette.

One interpretation could be that Judy perhaps symbolically represented and acted out the thoughts she had had to abuse her children by burning them. Caroline gave her the opportunity to do this and gave her a safe outlet for these feelings to manifest. One interpretation could be that, by saying that the tail was too

long Caroline enabled the symbolic abuse to take place under the defence of logical reason.

There seemed to be a number of factors that enabled Judy and Caroline's psychic content to manifest in this way. Earlier on in the session Caroline told me that their kitten had died during the week. She said it had fallen down from the ceiling. Judy said that she was daft to say that it had died in this way but would not talk any further about it. I told them a story of a friend's cat who had been in an accident that week and had to have his tail amputated.

Perhaps the cat appeared in Caroline's symbolic play representing the overwhelming anxiety associated with her cat's death. It came in the form of a cat needing its tail shortened perhaps because of <sup>the</sup> story I had told Caroline provided containment for her feelings. Caroline's invitation to Judy to burn the tail could have represented her overwhelming anxiety connected with Judy's obsession with fire. Judy was perhaps provided with a vehicle for the expression of unconscious anxiety in symbolic play.

In the next session Judy picked up a piece of clay and dug her finger nails into it. I said that it stood for digging her finger nails into someone when she felt like doing that. I said, in the same way burning the cat's tail in the last session could stand for wanting to burn someone.

Perhaps Judy's strongly repressed anxiety gained a vehicle for expression through symbolic play and her energy was diverted away from its most usual method of expression, through projection.

In this way, Judy's unconscious motivation became verbalised and articulated, and psycho-analytic theory suggests,

made her fantasies much less likely to be carried out. She explained the difference between fantasy and reality in the next observations:

Judy said that she had thought of leaving the kids. She then said that there was a difference between your thoughts and what you do. She said that you can think some things but that doesn't necessarily mean you're going to do them. She lit a cigarette. She held it up to Joe [2:06] and said 'shall I burn you'. Joe said 'no' and they laughed.

Judy's unconscious material again appeared to be coming through in humour in addition to manifesting in fantasy play. Symbolism also seemed to be contained in other situations that arose. For example;

Judy's house was locked when I went to visit. She shouted out of the window that the bairns had lost the keys. One of the neighbours invited me in next door while another climbed in through the window in an attempt to search for the keys. They found the keys and I went in. I said that losing her keys and being stuck in the house was a bit like being shut inside yourself and not being able to say what you want to. Being locked in seemed to be symbolic of the separation between us and our inability, at times, to discuss the feelings she was expressing non-verbally.

Fantasy play also became a feature of the evaluation. The following sequence could be interpreted as symbolising my relationship with Judy.

In the evaluation Judy built the bricks up in a triangular shape with gaps in between the bricks. She put people, trees and sheep on the steps up. I said that the sheep were going up the stairs and she laughed. I looked around and she'd taken them all off. I said that the life had gone out of the building. She pushed all the bricks together in the triangle and then took a few bricks out which left big holes.

Building with the bricks could have represented the formation of our relationship with the gaps between the bricks representing areas where the relationship had not touched upon. Nevertheless there was varied life and movement in the

relationship symbolised by the people, trees and sheep. This life and movement, however, disappeared at times, when my interests and behaviour did not coincide with hers and this may have been symbolised by her taking the life away. When she pushed all the bricks together in the building she could have been representing the change in our relationship that came with my attempts to bring the pieces of the relationship together through understanding her unconscious motivation. The large gaps that then appeared in the building could have represented the lack of parenting in her life and my inability to compensate for this and the large gaps in our ability to communicate with each other.

I said to Judy that the gaps stood for what she had been telling me about what was missing in her life, about what was left out. She said it was just what she had made. I said that ideas come through the mind when you're doing things like that, that perhaps you don't realise at the time.

'Gaps' became a useful metaphor for talking to Judy. We talked about gaps in our ability to talk and gaps when she was never able to express what she felt. We also talked about 'gaps' when your children need you and you've got something else on your mind and cannot be there for them. Gaps in getting things done in the house also seemed to be relevant.

Judy had developed the inner movement to be able to play and was able to discuss issues in her life that connected with her play experience. The connection between fantasy play and the unconscious is further discussed in Chapter 5.

### Acknowledgement and Integration of Feelings



Judy began to reflect on her own behaviour. When describing her self concept, Judy expressed the same quality of 'badness' which had been so common in her interpretations of Joe's behaviour. For example,

[Joe 2:05] Judy said that she was a nasty bitch and was worse than she'd ever been. She said that she was stubborn. That that's the way she was but that it doesn't always get her what she wants. I said that she recognised that she was stubborn but that she didn't always think this was the way to be to get what she wanted. She said that she just is that way.

Judy used me as a container for some of the uncomfortable feelings that she has about herself. She began to articulate her negative feelings about herself and integrate them into her concept of self. She described her feelings to me, free at this time from projection onto her children. She gave further examples of her own behaviour, for example,

Judy said many people said that she was bad tempered and she is just like that, very bad tempered with the kids a lot of the time. I said she was getting to know herself.

Judy seemed to be going through a process of allowing these feelings into her consciousness and maybe beginning to integrate her feelings of aggression into her self concept. She compared her present behaviour with her behaviour as a child. For example,

[Joe 2:06] Judy said she was a self centred bitch and she always had been and always would be. I should ask her mother she would tell me. What she used to do when she was at home was to always blame one of the others for everything even when they hadn't done it and then they would get punished and she didn't care. I suggested maybe she had been a bit scared to admit to anything and she said that she was never scared, not her, she was hard.

To be sure, she had denied her feelings behind a defence of being hard. For example;

[Joe 2:06] Judy talked about the children and explained that there was always something that they were doing which

they got into trouble for. I asked her how she felt about that and she said 'nowt, I'm telling you I'm hard. I'm hard and a pure self centred bitch.'

She gave other examples of being hard and denying pain, even physical pain. For example;

She talked about catching her earring and that it did not hurt her. She said that you could always choose not to feel pain if that was what you wanted. She said that even if you burnt yourself you didn't necessarily feel pain.

She said that when you have been sexually abused you think a lot of bad things about yourself. You cannot help thinking that you're something rotten.

In the evaluation she talked about the effects of the abuse on her life. She said she had had to stick up for herself otherwise she would not be alive now and she had to be hard and not feel anything to survive. But she had been really hurt by her family who she said had never cared about her.

She acknowledged her need for defences and acknowledged the pain that was behind them. This acknowledgement seemed to be an enormous step forward in the integration of these feelings into her consciousness.

This section described Judy's developing ability to communicate her deeper feelings that were explored in relationship to projections onto Joe's behaviour in the first section. The section described Judy's awareness that 'looks and speak are part of the same pattern'. It described the effect that this seemed to have had on her ability to express some of her feelings that had previously appeared to be unconscious and acted out through the unconscious motivation of projection. Judy's unconscious anxiety became expressed in the transference relationship that developed between Judy and the researcher.

Other ways of attempting to access this unconscious material was explored, for example, in fantasy play. The possible

symbolism in Joe and Judy's fantasy play was discussed and attempts were made to communicate the possible significance this. Judy appeared to be going through a process of emotional development perhaps due to some extent to the containment of her anxiety by the researcher.

This chapter presented a selection of the data collected for four of the families involved in the research. The next chapter summarises the findings from the research data and explores the learning process and defensive processes. It begins with a discussion of the partnership relationship between parents and researcher.

## **CHAPTER 5:**

### **DISCUSSION OF THE FIELDWORK FINDINGS**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter is divided into four sections. The first section discusses supporting the process of parenting through partnership. It reviews the criteria set out in the methodology chapter for creating a democratic evaluation of research and reviews the data collection and evaluation methods in the current research in the light of this. Section 1 also discusses the partnership between researcher and parents in the practice of the research and highlights three aspects of the partnership that were thought to be particularly relevant. That is; the containment of parents' anxieties surrounding the child's behaviour, the consciousness of parent's meanings and the introduction of organising concepts into the partnership.

Section 2 discusses the parents' learning process in relationship to the conceptual framework for the research that was set out in the methodology chapter. The processes of parents' observation of and reflections on the child's behaviour are discussed which formed the basis for the parents' conceptual development. The process of parents' generalisation of concepts resulting in perspective changes and new behaviour towards the child is also explored. The section ends with a discussion of the linkages between concepts.

Section 3 explores the parents' unconscious processes and

the contribution of unconscious material to their interpretations of the child's behaviour. Parents' projection onto the child's behaviour is discussed followed by a discussion of the child's internalisation and acting out of the parents' projections. Possible links between the parent's and child's projection processes are discussed. The relationship between projection and the development of schemas is discussed, in the child and in the parent. The formation of symbols is then explored and the relationship of the symbol to projection and the schema is discussed concerning the integration of emotional and intellectual development. The section ends with a discussion of transference.

The last section summarises the process of parenting in the light of the tentative conclusions that had been suggested in the discussions in the previous sections. The section attempts to link the learning process with the process of projection and discusses the links between the parents' interpretations of the child's behaviour and their own unconscious processes. This section explores the process by which the parents' consciousization of the child's behaviour involves an exploration of their thoughts and associated emotional attitudes. Parents' concept formation is linked with their developing ability to defend against the anxiety that the child's behaviour evokes and to provide containment for the child's behaviour.

## SECTION 1: SUPPORTING PARENTING THROUGH PARTNERSHIP

This section initially explores supporting the process of parenting through partnership. The criteria required to achieve a democratic evaluation in action research are discussed in relationship to the research methodology.

The second part of this section discusses partnership in practice in the research. The concept of equality in partnership is discussed followed by a discussion of the three aspects that were found to be central to the partnership in the current research. That is, firstly, the containment of parent's anxieties; secondly, the parent's consciousization of meanings connected with their experience of their child's behaviour, and lastly, the introduction of organising concepts, by the researcher, into the partnership.

### Partnership in the Methodology of the Research

In Chapter 3, the methodology for the research, the change and development in the research methods was described. During the first year of data collection, the data were recorded outside the research setting, the parents' homes. During the second year of data collection, the parent's reports, observations of and reflections on the child's behaviour were recorded directly as they were discussed. The change in research methods coincided with Pring's (1984) assertion that the researcher had an obligation to show the data collected.

Additional data in the form of joint evaluation material were collected in the fourth year of the research project. The researcher returned to the families with the research data in an

attempt to develop categories that were relevant and meaningful to the parents, for the interpretation of data.

This fulfilled Hammersley and Atkinson's (1983) recommendations for action research, that observers' analytic categories and members' categories were normally interwoven. The formation of categories to interpret the data of the research was partly democratic. However, interpretations were made which were based on describing the parents' learning process and the unconscious motivation underlying their behaviour, of which the parents were unlikely to have been consciously aware.

The use of interpretations to explain data was discussed in the review of literature. Stenhouse (1978) questioned whether it was legitimate to express interpretations of data in terms of theories not in the consciousness of the participants in action research. Cohen and Manion<sup>(1980)</sup> quoted Menzel who argued that if participants' meanings were used exclusively in formulating interpretations and hypotheses, then a whole range of potential explanations would be ignored and recommended that interpretations must respect the meanings of participants and researchers. He stressed, however, that a power relationship evolved when a researcher imposed his/her interpretations upon participants' behaviour.

The researcher was aware that the introduction of interpretations, of which the parents were not aware, introduced inequality and a power relationship into the partnership with parents.

Adelman (1984) stated that at some point in the evaluation, contradictions become patterned and the unequal distribution of knowledge and power becomes clear. Walkerdine and Lucey

(1989) suggested that the relationship between the middle class professional and working class parent was not equal, but grossly unequal because of the unequal distribution of power and knowledge.

In the current research, the introduction of the concepts of learning process and unconscious motivation into the research clearly brought up issues of the unequal distribution of power and knowledge between researcher and parents.

Pring (1984) argued that the evaluator has entered into a position of trust with the participants that put considerable constraints upon the interpretations that were made. Respect for the other person was very important and a recognition was essential that the participant is a centre of conscious life and feeling.

The development of an awareness of parents' learning process and unconscious motivation did have the effect of developing the researcher's ability to share the parent's inner world in the research. Rogers (1961) suggested that in order for development to take place the worker must perceive the inner world of the individual with whom she is working.

However, it was understood by the researcher that studying and understanding parents' unconscious motivation and their learning process was an issue that could not be seen outside a context of power and privilege.

Other criticisms could be made of the research methodology. For example, Elliott (1984) pointed to the opinion that one social group can never really understand another and is likely to misrepresent them. In the current research, the researcher may have misrepresented the parents' lives, in the



evaluation, through the interpretations of the data collected. In addition, Eraut (1984) stated that if values are only shared by one section of the community, and the teacher is not aware of this, there would be a problem. The researcher attempted not to introduce her values into the research but on at least one occasion efforts were made to try to persuade a parent to take on the values of the researcher.

To establish democratic action research, Simons (1984) maintained that individuals should control the use of their own information. Elliott (1984) stressed that there was a difference between negotiating with parents what data could be released as opposed to sharing the process of evaluation with participants. The latter, only, constituted democratic evaluation.

To sum up, the interpretations in the evaluation of the research were taken far beyond parents' consciousness and understanding of the data. The research therefore did not meet the criteria for democratic evaluation set out in the methodology chapter. Perhaps this was inevitable as the purpose of the research was for submission for a higher degree. Alternatively, to meet the criteria for democratic evaluation, the research would have had to have been written exclusively in the style and language of the parents. This, almost certainly, would have been more useful and interesting from their point of view but would have probably been unacceptable for the purpose for which it was written.

### Partnership in Practice in the Research

The research of Tizard and Hughes (1984) was discussed in the review of literature. Their study of working- and middle class

mothers and their daughters concluded that the child-rearing practices of the mothers were 'equal but different'. The concept of 'equal but different' was also a feature in other literature concerning the contributions of professionals and parents in the partnership relationship. For example:

Wolfendale (1983A) described partnership as a relationship in which parents and professionals worked together on a basis of equality. She stated that parents had equal strengths and equivalent expertise to professionals.

Pugh (1984) suggested that in a partnership between professional and parent that each partner brings something different but of equal value to the relationship.

In the Ypsilanti project, Weikart (1974) stated that parents and teachers worked together as equals in determining the goals and practices of effective child rearing.

In the review of literature, Walkerdine and Lucey (1989) maintained the only dialogue that questioned the concept of 'equal but different.' They stated that working- and middle-class child-rearing strategies, and the status of the contributions of middle-class professionals and working-class mothers in partnership was not 'equal but different,' but grossly unequal. They maintained that this discourse denied the reality of working-class parent's pain and oppression. They stated:

"The idea of 'difference' frees us from one trap only to ensnare us in another, and that trap is to remove any idea of exploitation and oppression, to end up with a liberal pluralism of difference." p.21

The concept 'equal but different' perhaps idealises the parent's contribution to the partnership. The relationship between parent and child includes manifestations of unconscious

motivation, reflecting deeply repressed emotions of powerlessness and fear. The concept 'equal but different,' in effect, denies the reality of parents' unconscious pain, whereas the acknowledgement of inequality and the acknowledgement of pain underlying parents' defences attempts to address these issues.

The deficit model of intervention recognised the inequalities between parent and professional and attempted to direct the parents' learning through instruction and demonstration. However, in the review of literature, Raven (1980) suggested that the deficit model that tried to make up the shortfall of inequality made parents more powerless. By controlling the relationship, the power of the professionals appeared to perpetuate itself.

Inequalities between professionals and parents centred around differences in their power and knowledge. In the current research, the issue of power manifested in the data that suggested that parents' interpretations of their child's behaviour contained projections of powerlessness onto the child. Inequalities in knowledge were perhaps apparent in the researcher's and parents' different conceptual understanding of child development. However, although inequalities in knowledge were present, parents' interpretations at times appeared more accurate than the researcher's interpretations.

The issue of partnership included three important aspects. These are the containment of parents' anxiety that manifested in projection onto the child, the consciousization of parents' meanings in the learning process and the introduction of organising concepts, by the researcher, into the partnership.

The sharing of meanings between researcher and parent involved the sharing of unconscious as well as conscious

material. An important feature in the partnership relationship between parents and researcher became the containment of parents' anxieties that were expressed through the defence mechanism of projection.

The containment of parents' anxieties formed an interpretative schema in the conceptual framework for the research. The data included several units of analysis to support this schema. For example, (p.165) Sandra described her feelings surrounding the projections she made onto Alan's aggressive behaviour. She described examples of his behaviour, how he had tried to hit Margaret with a screwdriver and had pushed her down the stairs and how he often smacked and punched the other children. She reflected on his behaviour and in this process she also reflected on her own feelings surrounding it. She explained that she was very bad tempered with the children for little things but could not expect them to sit and do nothing. In the partnership, the researcher provided a containment for the anxiety Sandra expressed, firstly, about Alan's behaviour and then about her own.

Sandra's articulation of her projections and her use of the researcher as a container for the anxieties expressed in projection led Sandra to the modification of her anxiety and to emotional development. Boston (1977) explained the containment process as one in which anxieties were contained in much the same way that they normally would be by the mother responding appropriately to her infant's anxieties and uncertainties. She further explained that the process of containment helped modify fears and make them more bearable.

In addition, other units of analysis in the data showed that

opportunities for parents to articulate their emotional attitude associated with their child's behaviour held the potential for the containment of their anxiety. Section 3 of this chapter will explore the defensive processes in detail.

Closely linked with the containment of parent's anxieties was the second feature of the partnership relationship in the current research. This was that parents gained conscious awareness of the meanings with which they interpreted their first hand experience of the child's behaviour.

The researcher attempted to understand the meaning perspectives of the parents and to gain an awareness of the parent's developing learning process. The parents' learning process is described in detail in Section 2 of this Chapter.

The learning process involved parents reflecting on their thoughts and emotional attitudes surrounding the child's behaviour and was based on the processes of observation and reflection and concept formation that are described in detail in the next section.

Parents had the opportunity to explore their own meanings and introduce their own agenda. In this way, the researcher, on most occasions, did not dominate the relationship but entered into the process of reflection with parents. Parents mainly made use of the researcher to reflect on and develop their own meanings, using language in the context of a relationship with a significant other to bring their meanings into their conscious awareness.

Through the process of reflection parents became conscious of their thoughts and feelings and had an opportunity to extend and develop their existing thinking, that is, to develop and generalise their concepts. The formation and generalisation of

parent's concepts are discussed in detail later in the next section on the Learning Process.

Parents' communication with the child was seen as central to the child's development and the research data showed that parents could communicate with their children more effectively than the researcher. In addition, the parents' ability to make detailed observations of their child was often greater than the researcher's. However, the parent's ability to observe and communicate with their child appeared to be enhanced through the articulation of and reflection on their observations of the child in the partnership relationship.

This was a process of empowerment as parents' own concepts had status and power and this process addressed the concept of inequality in the partnership. The parents' concepts were seen to direct and inform their behaviour towards the child and the parents' relationship with the child was therefore enhanced. This is further discussed in the next section. As parents became more powerful through this process, they were able to bring into consciousness issues surrounding their own fear and powerlessness and its manifestation in their relationship with their child. The consciousization of parents' thoughts and feelings appeared to link the learning and therapeutic processes. This is further discussed in Section 3 of this Chapter.

Parents had a detailed knowledge of their child's behaviour and shared an immense background of experience and culture with the child that provided a wealth of data onto which to construct and elaborate meanings. This appeared to enable the parents to feel a sense of their own power as they began to take control of their own learning process.

To sum up, the partnership model of the current research built on parent's own experience through the elaboration of their own meanings. This was a process of empowerment and contributed to the development of the parent's relationships with their child.

In the review of literature, Pugh and De'Ath (1984) concluded from studying many parental involvement schemes that relationships were most effective when built on parent's skills and experience rather than providing expert advice.

Krishnamurti (1953) stated: "... the educator and his pupil are helping each other to educate themselves." (p.111) The reflection process between parent and researcher enabled the development of the parents' meanings and the researcher's awareness of the learning process. Both appeared to be learning from the situation.

Krishnamurti also described the process of consciousness:

"By being fully aware of ourselves in all our relationships we shall begin to discover those confusions and limitations within us of which we are now ignorant; and in being aware of them, we shall understand and so dissolve them."  
p.87

In the practice of partnership, the researcher found that, without exception, the parents' main interest was in extending and elaborating their own meanings. This appeared to be where most of their learning took place. The researcher occasionally introduced organising concepts into the partnership, a process that is outlined below.

In the partnership, there were many links between the exploration and development of parent's own meanings, the

containment of their anxiety and the introduction of organising concepts by the researcher.

The introduction of organising concepts by the researcher formed the third main aspect of the partnership in the current research. The researcher occasionally introduced concepts that the parents could assimilate and use to organise their experience and modify their existing concepts.

The introduction of organising concepts attempted to provide an intellectual scaffolding which parents could use to structure and understand their observations of the child, if they chose to do so. An example of the researcher introducing an organising concept was the introduction of the concept of the child's schemas. The introduction of this concept was sometimes relevant and taken up by parents and sometimes inappropriate and ignored by them.

If parents assimilated the organising concepts then this led to their own concepts becoming modified. The modification of concepts is discussed in Section 2 of this chapter.

The introduction of organising concepts emphasised the inequality in the partnership, in the form of the different status of the parent's knowledge and the researcher's knowledge. The researcher's knowledge was in the form of organising concepts whereas the parent's knowledge was in the form of information to fit the concepts. This knowledge could not be seen as equal but different because of the hierarchy existing in knowledge.

In reality, it was found that some concepts of child development were useful to introduce to parents. However, parents mostly found the process of elaborating and developing their own meanings to be more relevant and interesting. The



predominant mode of interaction in the partnership was the parents' consciousness of their own experience through observation of and reflection on the child's behaviour. The researcher supported the parents in the development of their learning process and occasionally introduced organising concepts.

However, other research projects described in the review of literature had a somewhat different emphasis. For example, in the Froebel project, Athey (1990) explained that the teacher did not deny her expert knowledge but made it freely available to parents. The teacher dominated the partnership through the status of her expert knowledge and the parent provided examples of the child's behaviour. The teacher fitted the parent's observations to her own organising concepts of the child's schema that she articulated and shared with parents.

In the Ypsilanti project the teachers again selected the agenda of the child's schema and the parents contributed to it. Although there was an objective that the teachers should not dominate the partnership, they did through the status of their knowledge.

The Ypsilanti and Froebel projects assumed that the professional's concepts were the most valuable for use in discussions with the parents. The teachers maintained a more powerful position in the partnership as the focus of the research projects lay with their organising concepts. Parents gave specific examples to fit with the teacher's organising concepts. There was perhaps an implicit assumption that parents initially held no concepts or that their concepts were wrong.

The focus of the Ypsilanti and Froebel research projects

was on the teachers' organising concepts. Athey, however, recognised that parents did not always embrace their children's schemas.

The focus of the current research was on the parents' learning process, which is discussed in detail in the next section, rather than on any particular aspect of the child's behaviour. However, the researcher recognises that this is not the last word on the difficult concept of partnership.

Partnership in the current research recognised inequalities between the researcher and parent, of power and of the status of knowledge. The conscious acknowledgement of these issues led to the recognition of the importance of creating a partnership in which there was an opportunity for the containment of parents' anxieties and an opportunity for the parents' empowerment through exploring and developing their own meanings. The introduction of organising concepts, where appropriate, was also seen as important, to begin to redress the inequalities in the status of the knowledge of parents and researcher.

The next section discusses the parents' learning process. The conceptual framework for the research, introduced in the methodology chapter is discussed and aspects of the parents' learning process are illustrated with examples from the data.

## SECTION 2: THE LEARNING PROCESS

This section begins with a resume of the conceptual framework of the research and its relationship to the learning process. It then discusses the parents' developmental process of observation that was the foundation on which the research was based. There follows a section on the reflection process and the consciousization of experience. Concept formation is then discussed in relationship to the concepts of the child constructing his own learning and the concept of 'behaviour pattern'. The emotional attitudes associated with concepts are discussed followed by a section describing the modification of concepts. The possibility of consciousness being fragmented into multiple perspectives is then explored. The section then discusses the generalisation of concepts and the resulting perspective changes and parents' development of new behaviour based on concepts of child development. The section ends with a discussion of the linkages between concepts.

The conceptual framework for the research, that is the processes of parents' concept formation, perspective change and new behaviour were highlighted throughout the presentation of results. Although the sample size was small and therefore it was not possible to make any definitive generalisations, tentative exploratory conclusions could be drawn from the data. The process of learning about child development appeared to be a process of close observation of first hand experience of the child's behaviour. Observation was followed by reflection in the partnership that led to the formation of concepts about the child's

development. The generalisation of concepts to new situations led to perspective changes in the way in which the parent perceived the child's behaviour. Change in perspective in turn led to new behaviour towards the child when situations of shared meaning were set up between parent and child, motivated by the development of concepts of the child's development.

The conceptual framework for the research linked with the description of the learning process that was suggested by Kolb and Fry (1974) in the review of literature. Kolb and Fry maintained that there was a relationship between concrete experience and conceptual development. They described the process whereby immediate experience was labelled or relabelled leading to the formation of concepts that could then be generalised to new situations.

The current research generalised Kolb and Fry's concept of the learning process to the process of parenting. In particular, to the parent's formation of concepts of the child's behaviour and learning, the generalisation of these concepts to new situations and the establishing of situations of shared meaning based on these concepts.

The application of the model of the learning process to the process of parenting was itself a developmental process for the researcher during the current research. The following extract was taken from a progress report in the second year of the research:

"The research is leading me to the hypothesis that change in parent's understanding of the child's behaviour is a developmental process. It takes time and learning needs to be reinforced in many different situations. It is so similar to a child's schematic development that it must be the same process at a more advanced stage."

The learning process from a child development perspective was highlighted in the Ypsilanti Carnegie Infant Project reviewed in Chapter 2 of this study. It stated that a child's concepts were formed from his/her actions. Learning was said to take place in children through the generalisation of concepts to new situations. Examples were given of mothers developing an understanding of and contributing towards the child's learning process. Conceptual development, through reflections on such first hand experiences of child development, did appear to take place in the mothers taking part in the Project but the mothers' learning process was not made explicit.

Similarly, in the Froebel project the development of the child's learning process through the development of schemas was explored. The parent's contribution to and recognition of the child's learning process was emphasised. However, in similarity to the Ypsilanti Project, recognition of the parent's own learning process was also not made explicit in this study. This, perhaps, is one area in which the current research could make a contribution to an understanding of the process of parenting.

The current research sought to explore parents' development of concepts of child development and to find ways of supporting parents in the process of parenting. The learning process in relationship to the process of parenting is discussed in more detail below concerning the fieldwork findings and the literature reviewed in Chapter 2.

### The Developmental Process of Observation

The research focused on observing the child's spontaneous behaviour. For example: (p.244) Tim and Alice observed Wendy's

(2:01) imaginative play. She had a pan in one hand and paper in the other. Tim said 'Watch what she does'. Tim closely observed Wendy's spontaneous behaviour and looked for meaning in the activity. Wendy initiated a sequence of play by putting paper in the pan. Tim interpreted her play and introduced appropriate language, 'Are you making the dinner?' He continued to observe the direction of her play and was rewarded when she converted the pan into a potty. He persevered in continuing to observe Wendy and at the same time to interpret the meaning of her play without dominating it. This behaviour supported the interpretative schema for the research of the parents' development in the process of observation.

Tim and Alice made many other observations of Wendy's spontaneous behaviour. They observed Wendy's interest in looking at books and made increasingly accurate observations of her spontaneous behaviour during this activity. For example, Wendy spontaneously classified objects in pictures that were the same together. Alice began to include her awareness of this activity in her interactions with her. Alice also observed Wendy's spontaneous behaviour connected with her developing number concept. For example, she observed Wendy putting one object inside another (p.237) and reflected upon this behaviour.

The assumption that the parent's developmental process of observation was extended and developed during the period of research was supported by the units of analysis quoted above plus many others highlighted in the text. Watching the child with the recognition that there would be meaning and a purpose behind her activity appeared to be a developmental process. Partnership with the parents was also created and reinforced through this

process.

The developmental process of observation led to parents making increasingly detailed observations. Observation of the child and the realisation that there was meaning behind her behaviour generated interest and excitement in the parents and reinforced the process of observation of the child. Close observation of the child's spontaneous behaviour led the parent to look for an interpretation for what the child was doing and thinking from her non-verbal and verbal behaviour. Observation therefore led parents to a heightened awareness of the child's behaviour.

The process of observation was initially referred to in the conceptual framework of the research as the development of observation skills. It later became clear that observation was itself a process of concept formation. The process of observation in the research could be seen as the formation of a concept that there is always something to observe in the child. It was a concept formed by parents about the procedure of how to learn about child development.

An example of the development of this concept was given by Sandra (pp.156-164) who formed the concept of 'You learn by watching bairns,' which was supported by many units of analysis highlighted in the presentation of results. For example, Sandra used this concept to describe observations of Alan problem solving. She generalised this concept and the resulting perspective change led her to watch further his behaviour expecting to see meaning in it.

Through observation, Sandra developed a concept that Alan's imaginative play was meaningful that she generalised to

new situations. Sandra's new behaviour of making further observations appeared to be motivated by her concept, 'You learn by watching bairns'. This concept was linked with her process of forming other concepts about the process of child development. [See linked concepts later in this section.]

In practice the parent's developmental process of observation appeared to be a developing concept that there is always something to observe when watching children. Parents generalised this concept to new situations of observing the child's spontaneous behaviour. A change in parents' perspective appeared to motivate further observations.

In the examples above, Sandra and Tim and Alice were all aware that there was purpose in their child's activity and often watched with an inquiring mind to see what it was. In addition, these observations gave the parents enormous insight into the child's level of conceptual development.

The concept that there was always something to observe in the child appeared to motivate parents to watch their child with interest and expectation. The development of the process of observation was reinforced when they saw meaning in this behaviour. This concept also ensured that the parent made observations of the child's spontaneous behaviour that formed the raw data for reflection and the development of further concepts.

The development of the process of observation appeared to result in parents becoming more aware of child initiated activities. In the review of the literature, Raven (1980) pointed to a lack of impact in the Lothian Home Visiting Scheme in developing parents' perceptions of the child's autonomous learning.

These findings were not reproduced in the current research



in which it was found that the child's autonomous learning became an increasing focus for the parents' observations and reflections. Perhaps a reason for the discrepancy could be that teacher initiated activities were a feature of the Lothian Scheme whereas observation and reflection on the child's spontaneous behaviour were major components of the current research.

Weikart et al (1974) pointed to the child's spontaneous behaviour becoming increasingly meaningful to mothers in the Ypsilanti Carnegie Infant Programme, which supported and extended child initiated activities. This indicated that the parents' concept of observation of the child had developed. However, the analysis of the project did not explicitly link the parents' development of this concept with the formation of concepts of child development.

Athey (1990) indicated that mothers in the Froebel project became proficient in recognising the schemas in the child's spontaneous behaviour. This indicated that there was progression in the development of the parent's process of observation. In both the Ypsilanti and Froebel projects there was importance attached to observations parents made of the child's spontaneous behaviour. In the current research the development of the parent's observation process was seen as a central feature of the parent's learning process.

The importance of observation of children is well established in the history of education practice. Montessori (1956) maintained that comprehension of the process of development must be founded in the certainty that there is always something to observe. She described the importance of the utilisation of the inner powers of the child for his own instruction. She described

(1912) a child's spontaneous behaviour as an inner power and greatness that are the source of his inner life and she stated:

"The fundamental principle of scientific pedagogy must be indeed, the liberty of the pupil; such liberty as shall permit a development of individual, spontaneous manifestations of the child's nature." p.28

Isaacs (1929) described the importance of the child's spontaneous behaviour: "... as educators we have to deal with these impulses in such a way as to make the fullest use of their educational value for the child." p.11

Krishnamurti (1953) also highlighted the importance of observation in the learning process: "To help the child, one has to take the time to study and observe him, which demands patience, love and care." p.27

The statements of Montessori, Isaacs and Krishnamurti support the importance the current research placed on the observation process. The process of the development of the concept that there is always something to observe when watching a child was found to be an essential feature of the current research and is described above. The next stage in the parent's learning process was the reflection on observations of the child's spontaneous behaviour. It is described in the next section.

### The Process of Reflection

The conceptual framework for the research described the formation of concepts of child development from observation of and reflection on the child's behaviour and learning. The perceptual data obtained in the process of observation formed the basis for reflection on the child's behaviour. This section looks more closely at the process of reflection in the current research.

The presentation of results contained numerous examples of parents reflecting on the observations of the child's spontaneous behaviour. These examples support the importance the research placed on parent's reflections for the learning process.

The researcher often listened to parents formulating their own interpretations of the child's spontaneous behaviour in the reflective process. For example, (p.253) we observed the tentative movements Joe made when he was learning to crawl. Judy reflected on this behaviour and said that it was the first time that Joe had got up onto his knees. Judy's interest in Joe's physical development was reinforced through increasingly accurate observations of his behaviour and opportunities for reflection on it. In examples such as this, articulation brought the parents' existing intuitive concepts into their conscious awareness that opened up the possibility for the extension and elaboration of these concepts. Using language in the process of reflection with a significant other person appeared to be central to the process of the conscientization of experience.

In addition, the researcher sometimes attempted to introduce creatively organising concepts, such as the child's schemas, into the process of reflection. For example (p.179) the researcher introduced the 'pulling schema' to interpret several examples of Peter's behaviour. William observed Peter and fitted several other examples of his behaviour into this schema. He reflected on how Peter pulled an object out of the way to pull a record off his record player. The pulling schema was the organising concept into which William fitted examples of Peter's behaviour. In this example, the reflection process led to concept formation and ultimately supported parents' communication with

the child to be relevant and meaningful.

A particular type of reflection had helped which had explored and developed William's existing interpretations. This was a collaborative reflection that involved the labelling and relabelling of concrete experience. The reflection process probed and sometimes challenged the parents' existing interpretations. Reflection also reinforced the process of observation.

There are many examples of both types of reflection in the presentation of the results, that is, the articulation and development of parents' existing conceptual structures and the introduction of organising concepts into the reflective process. These units of analysis support the interpretative schema for the research of the importance of the articulation of and reflection on observations in the learning process.

In the review of literature, Kolb and Fry suggested that reflection on first hand experience was an important aspect of the learning process.

The Ypsilanti project encouraged the reflection process in which mothers were engaged in a process of thinking through what they had done and observed and thinking up ways of supporting the child's learning. The process of reflection was therefore an important component in the learning process for the mothers in this project.

Athey emphasised the importance, in the Froebel study, of the parents discussing instances of their child's schemas that they had observed. In this way parents' reflection on observations of the child was a central feature of the project.

The conceptual framework for the research suggested that the process of observation of the child and reflection on such

observations supported the process of concept formation that is discussed in the following section.

### Concept Formation

The interpretative schema of concept formation suggested that parents could extend and/or modify their concepts through an interplay between the perceptual data received in the process of observation, and discussion of that perceptual data within the partnership relationship.

For example, (pp. 179-194) Sally and William developed a concept that Peter constructed his own learning through his spontaneous behaviour in a process which William described as trial and error. They reflected on observations they made of him constructing his own learning; such as examples of his pulling schema mentioned in the last section. Other examples they gave of this schema, for example, his discovery of which objects he could pull himself to standing also supported the development of this concept. They also recognised that Peter constructed his learning of the concept of direction through repeating his throwing schema in many different situations with different objects. They also recognised that he constructed his learning and developed a concept of size through his spontaneous behaviour of enclosing objects and himself in containers.

The process of the researcher introducing organising concepts into the reflective process often took the form of highlighting examples or exemplars of a schema in the child's behaviour and parents may then have made observations of further exemplars. The organising concepts introduced into the research were based on observations of the child.

Schopenhauer (1970 First Pub. (1851) an early pioneer in the exploration of conceptual thinking stated:

"In accordance with the nature of our intellect, concepts ought to arise through abstraction from our perceptions, consequently perception should precede concept." p.229

In the current research this theory was adhered to as concepts were generated from observations. Concepts were formed from the raw data of observation and discussion within the partnership relationship.

Close observations of and reflections on Peter's behaviour led William and Sally to a recognition of his behaviour patterns or 'schema' that became obvious when he repeated the same behaviour in different contexts and situations. William and Sally could be seen to be developing the concept of 'behaviour pattern' from the examples they gave of Peter's behaviour. Peter's spontaneous behaviour included many examples of his developing behaviour patterns. This appeared to affect William and Sally's acquisition of the concept of behaviour pattern. In the review of literature, Dominowski quoted by Archer (1966) suggested that the number of instances affects the acquisition of concepts.

The concept that Sally and William formed from reflections on observations of Peter's behaviour patterns was that he was a self motivated learner and that he constructed knowledge in an active way that could be observed. Close observation of Peter's behaviour gave an insight into the process by which he constructed his learning. William and Sally generalised the concept that Peter was constructing his learning through the repetition of behaviour patterns or schemas to many examples of

his behaviour. Howard (1987) suggested that one of the features of a concept was that it could be generalised to different situations.

Piaget (1966) described the construction of learning from behaviour patterns. He stated: "The Psychology of the Child deals with mental growth or, what amounts to the same thing, the development of behaviour patterns ... "p.1

Piaget (1936,1954) used the term 'schema' to refer to a behaviour pattern. He described the process by which a child 'assimilated' an experience to a specific schema and 'accommodated' or changed the structure of the schema in the light of this experience. In this way behaviour gradually changed and developed and mental constructs were formed.

This process appeared to be at the basis of Peter's spontaneous behaviour. William and Sally reflected on observations of Peter's behaviour and developed an awareness that his behaviour patterns contributed to his learning process.

William and Sally's concept that Peter was learning through self initiated activity enabled them to see purpose behind his explorations that reinforced their processes of observation and concept formation. They also developed a concept that he operated his behaviour patterns with, and learned through, different aspects of the environment and not just the toys in it. William and Sally's concept that Peter constructed his own learning and the concepts of his specific behaviour patterns appeared to be linked. Linkages between concepts are discussed later in this section.

William and Sally's concepts that Peter learned through experience and constructed his learning through behaviour patterns made Peter's behaviour more understandable. In the review of literature, Bruner quoted by Archer (1966) explained that

a function of concept formation was to reduce the complexity of the environment. Bruner also suggested that another function of the concept was to order and relate classes of events. Peter's behaviour seemed to appear more structured and ordered to William and Sally as a result of the concepts they formed of his development.

Perhaps, when a parent has a concept that the child constructs his own learning, it may then be appropriate to introduce the concept of behaviour patterns or schemas. Howard emphasised that it was important to introduce schemas appropriately into the learning process.

In the presentation of results there were other examples of parents developing a concept that the child constructed his/her own learning. For example, (p.238) Tim observed Wendy trying out various objects to see if they would fit down a tube and said 'That's how she learns'.

These units of analysis in the case studies of Sally and William and Alice and Tim supported the interpretative schema of the research of parents' concept formation. Many other concepts were formed in the process of the research by the families and they are highlighted in the presentation of the results.

The development of concepts of the child's spontaneous behaviour appeared to support the parent's ability to respond to the child creatively. Concepts that were formed could be used by parents to inform their responses towards the child.

The process appeared to be one of the parent thinking about the child's thinking. The parent, recognising that the child constructed her learning through her spontaneous behaviour,



developed more specific concepts of the process of child development.

However, not all parents used the concept of the child constructing his own learning to interpret the child's spontaneous behaviour. There were other interpretations, for example, (p.260) Judy interpreted Joe's banging with the concept that he was 'a right git,' although she did at times see other instances of his behaviour as learning. Alternative interpretations such as the above example formed negative cases to the interpretative schema of conceptual development. Such examples are explored in Section 3 of this chapter on the defensive processes.

In the review of literature Atkin and Bastiani (1988) stressed the range and diversity of parental viewpoints that was also apparent in the current research.

Raven suggested that a reason for the Lothian project having no impact on the parent's responses to the child's autonomous learning may have been that the parents were incapable of the complex reasoning necessary for this awareness. The Lothian scheme appeared to view the learning process of child development as the learning of complex concepts and their application to the child's behaviour. Howard referred to this process as the top-down activation of concepts. The current research sought to promote the development of concepts from the raw data of observation. Howard referred to this process as bottom-up activation where concepts are formed to fit with observations.

Weikart described mothers in the Ypsilanti Project as having a framework of understanding of the learning process

with which to interpret the child's behaviour. He suggested that during the project mothers gained a better understanding of child development. He concluded that during the project one way in which they did this was to see similarities between examples of the child's behaviour. However, the project appeared to view this process as the mothers' acquisition of skills rather than the formation of concepts.

Athey stated that parents in the Froebel project had no problems extending their concept of parenthood to include knowledge of their child's cognitive functioning. She recognised that the parents' learning was a conceptual process but did not specifically explore the parents' learning process.

The concepts which parents formed in the current research that are explored in this section were extended and developed through the processes of observation and reflection. At times parents' existing concepts were challenged which sometimes resulted in their modification. This process is discussed in the next section.

### The Modification of Concepts

In the current research, parents' concepts of the child's behaviour were at times challenged through the processes of observation and reflection. The last section explored the development and extension of parents' concepts. During this process it appeared that parents' existing concepts at times became modified to accommodate incoming data.

There were examples of the modification of concepts in the presentation of the results. For example, (p.240) Wendy developed the behaviour pattern of pointing to refer to objects. Alice

interpreted this as a bad habit. An alternative interpretation was offered that Wendy was pointing to indicate her interest in objects. Alice appeared to modify her concept of Wendy pointing. She made further observations of this behaviour pattern and took the opportunity to talk to Wendy about things she was pointing at and was interested in.

Piaget described the modification of schemas that he said occurred through a process of disequilibrium in which an individual's schemas were modified to accommodate incoming data.

Vygotsky (1962) stated that concepts were formed when a problem occurred which could not be solved other than through the formation of new concepts.

In the above example Wendy's pointing behaviour perhaps caused a state of disequilibrium for Alice. It is possible that she solved the problem by assimilating new information and developing a concept that illuminated and explained Wendy's 'problem' behaviour. A child's 'naughty' behaviour perhaps creates a need for the modification of parent's concepts of child development.

There were further examples of the modification of concepts in the presentation of results. For example, (p.259) Judy reported that Joe tried to stick his hand in boiling hot cups of coffee. She interpreted his behaviour as if he was deliberately trying to hurt himself. We observed several other examples of Joe putting his hand in things and wrote these down. Judy sorted through a collection of written observations and put the observations of Joe putting his hand in things together, including the observation of Joe putting his hand in boiling hot cups. She appeared to have

formed a concept that he put his hand in things and to have modified her concept that he tried to hurt himself through this behaviour.

Close observation of and reflection on examples of Joe's behaviour gave access to an alternative interpretation for this behaviour. Judy's development of a concept that Joe put his hand in things seemed to be linked with her development of the broad concept of 'behaviour pattern'. The development of this concept led Judy to make further observations of specific examples of Joe putting his hand in things and to modify her interpretation for Joe's behaviour originally interpreted as self destruction. Linkage between concepts is discussed later in this section.

Joe's behaviour perhaps became more understandable as, in Bruner's terms, Judy's concept of behaviour pattern structured and ordered her observations of his behaviour. Perhaps Joe's behaviour was illuminated through Judy's concept of behaviour pattern.

The presentation of results includes many other units of analysis that also support the interpretative schema for the research of parents' modification of concepts. However, development did not always occur in a straight line. It appeared that the individual's consciousness could be fragmented into multiple perspectives. For example: (p.250) Judy interpreted Joe's reaching and grasping schema in different ways at different times. On occasions she interpreted this behaviour as Joe nipping, if he grasped her skin when he reached out. At other times she provided opportunities for him to operate this schema and seemed to interpret it as a behaviour pattern.

It initially appeared that Judy's understanding of Joe's

development of a 'reaching and grasping' behaviour pattern gave her an alternative interpretation for his behaviour than 'nipping'. It then became obvious that her concept of Joe 'nipping' still operated at times. These two interpretations may have indicated a splitting or fragmentation in Judy's consciousness with an associated projection. Fragmentation and projection are discussed in Section 3 of this chapter on the defensive processes.

The repetition of parents' interpretations in the data proved to be negative cases to the interpretative schema for the research of the extension and modification of parent's concepts. An alternative schema of projection was introduced into the conceptual framework of the research to attempt to account for the negative cases.

There were other examples of multiple perspectives in Judy's interpretations of Joe's behaviour. For example, she interpreted his throwing schema with the concepts that he was 'playing,' or 'hoying for hoying's sake' or 'being a right git'. The researcher's attempts to integrate these concepts resulted in Judy strongly maintaining her own position and could be seen as an example of the inappropriate introduction of schemas into the learning process.

In the review of literature, Howard suggested that in attempts to teach concepts, the student's own concepts may be rigidly adhered to. Weikart stated an objective for the Ypsilanti project, that is, it was hoped that mothers would view development behaviours as the child's learning rather than naughtiness. He concluded that mothers in the project were less likely to attribute the child's undesirable behaviour to malicious intent. Evidently, mothers' concepts had become modified to some

extent in the process of the research.

Athey stated that in the Froebel project mothers had found schematic explanations more acceptable and much more interesting than explanations based on the wicked will. Evidently, some modification of parents' concepts also occurred in this project. However, Athey stated that for mothers to recognise a schema is not necessarily to embrace it, indicating that perhaps mothers had multiple perspectives on the child's behaviour.

In the current research, concepts that were formed by parents and used to interpret the child's spontaneous behaviour seemed to have an associated emotional attitude. For example, William's formation of the concept that Peter constructed his learning contained an associated emotional attitude of mastery associated with his behaviour. Other concepts appeared to have other emotional attitudes associated with them; for example, Judy's concept that Joe was a 'right git' was perhaps associated with the emotional attitudes of powerlessness and fear. The emotional attitudes associated with concepts is further explored in the section below.

### The Emotional Attitude Associated with Concepts

The concepts discussed so far in relationship to the parent's learning process appeared to be associated with an emotional attitude. In the presentation of the results some concepts formed by parents had an obvious emotional content.

For example (p.175) Sandra formed a concept that, 'you have to protect your bairns'. She discussed a symbol from a dream of people going into their homes and shutting their doors. She conceptualised her feelings associated with this symbol that

she described as, 'blocking things out' and then went on to extend and develop her conceptual understanding of her feelings. For example, she added, 'you have to believe what you see, the truth is sometimes hard to bear, you can't turn away from things and you've got to protect your bairns.'

Sandra connected her feelings that were symbolised in the dream with her feelings associated with her experience of suspecting Geoff of sexually exploiting her daughter. Her feelings of fear, powerlessness and the responsibility of parenthood became conceptualised in the process of reflection on these feelings.

In the review of literature, Kolb and Fry emphasised that integration of concrete emotional experiences with cognitive processes leads to learning and change. In the above example, Sandra integrated her developing conceptual structures that appeared to lead to inner transformation.

In addition, examples of data that were interpreted as projection had an obvious associated emotional attitude. For example, at times Judy interpreted Joe's throwing behaviour with the concept that he was a 'right git'. This was highlighted in the presentation of the results as a projection onto Joe's behaviour. However, the projection also contained an associated concept of Joe's behaviour. It is possible that all the observations highlighted as projection in the research data had a corresponding conceptual content and that all observations interpreted as concept formation had an associated projection of feelings. The distinction made between concept formation and projection in the conceptual framework for the research is beginning to appear precarious.

Kolb and Fry emphasised that all first hand experience had emotional and intellectual components. The emotional and

intellectual content of schemas is further discussed in Section 3 of this chapter on the defensive processes.

### The Process of Perspective Change

The presentation of the results included many units of analysis supporting the interpretative schema for the research of the extension and development of concepts. Another main interpretative schema for the research suggested that perspective changes occurred in the process of the extension or modification of concepts. The schema suggested that there was an interplay for the parents between the reworking of perceptual data and the potential for seeing the child's behaviour differently.

For example (pp.143-155) Sandra formed a concept, 'He doesn't understand, he's just a bairn' that she used to interpret many observations of Alan's behaviour, such as, his throwing schema, his transformation schema, his dab graphic schema and his enclosing schema. She also used this concept as an explanation as to why he should not be smacked.

It became increasingly clear that the way in which Sandra perceived Alan's behaviour was undergoing subtle changes. She began to view his behaviour in a different way and not so much as 'naughty' as, 'he does it because he doesn't understand'. The possibility of Sandra having gone through a perspective change was best indicated by her becoming more tolerant of Alan's behaviour. She also seemed to have developed an understanding that Alan's reality was different from her own and to have developed an understanding that learning involved constructing increasingly complex mental models of the world.

The development of a concept explained not only how things



were but also how things might be. In this way a concept could be used to hypothesise about further events when it was generalised to new situations. Perspective change appeared to occur during this process of the generalisation of a concept. The concept then appeared to be integrated in perception and to colour the way a situation was perceived.

In the review of literature, Hamlyn (1978) recognised this when he referred to experiences where the look of something was completely altered through the realisation of what it was.

Weikart indicated that mothers underwent perspective changes in the Ypsilanti project when he stated that many mothers viewed their infants in a new light in the process of the project.

Other units of analysis in the presentation of results supported the interpretative schema of perspective change. For example Sally and William's concept that Peter constructed his learning from his behaviour and Sandra's concept 'You learn from watching bairns'.

*The research data indicated that parents involved in the research appeared to undergo perspective changes in the process of developing concepts about their child's development. What they observed in their child's behaviour perhaps underwent subtle changes.*

It is possible that the many concepts mentioned in the presentation of results, resulted in subtle perspective changes when they were generalised to new situations. The next section explores the schema that parents' perspective changes led to new behaviour towards the child that supported the child's development.

### Development of New Behaviour Towards the Child

The research also explored the interpretative schema that stated that conceptual development and perspective change resulted in new forms of the parent's behaviour towards the child, which were supportive of the child's development. Parent's behaviour towards the child appeared to develop and change as new concepts were formed about the child's development. Parent's concepts perhaps underpinned and directed their behaviour towards the child.

For example, (p.158) Sandra watched Alan in the process of problem solving. He was trying to fit different shapes back into a holder. Sandra encouraged him to look at the individual shapes first and watched his attempts to achieve his aim. He got one piece stuck inside and Sandra helped him solve the problem of working out how to retrieve it. She watched him attempt to understand this problem by twice repeating the arrangement of the bricks.

Sandra observed Alan, assessed his problem and watched him trying to overcome it. This set up a shared meaning situation. She helped him solve the problem but did not solve it for him. She interacted with him in a supportive meaningful way and introduced appropriate language. She provided an intellectual 'scaffolding' to assist him in solving problems. Sandra created shared meanings in what corresponded to the zone of proximal development in Alan's learning. Through closely observing Alan, Sandra was able to interpret his actions and understand his intentions. This understanding enabled her communication with him to be relevant and meaningful.

Sandra's response to Alan's behaviour appeared to be affected by her understanding of his behaviour.

In the review of literature, Bruner suggested that the development of concepts provided a direction for activity. Sandra's concept that Alan attempted to solve problems seemed to direct her activity of observing his actions. Wells (1986) stated:

"... when both child and adult are engaged in a shared activity, the chances are maximised that they will be attending to the same objects and events and interpreting the situation in similar ways ... "p.45

In the above example, Sandra and Alan maintained their interest in the same activity. Wells (1981A) concluded from his language research study that 'mutual relevance' in parent and child interaction was a central factor in the development of early language and intelligence. He stated that meaning was negotiated through the mother's understanding of the child's intentions. In the above example, Sandra's understanding of Alan's intentions created a situation of mutual relevance and shared meaning. Wells (1986) also stated:

"... where parents are really responsive to the particular characteristics of individual children, it is hardly an exaggeration to say that it is the children who are teaching their parents how to interact with them in ways that provide them with opportunities to learn." p.131

Alan took the lead in directing the activity in the above observation. Sandra observed his behaviour and integrated her responses with it. Wells stipulated the criteria that promoted the child's development and learning. In the above example, Sandra and Alan fulfilled such criteria.

Vygotsky (1978) described the zone of proximal development where the child's learning process depended upon the interaction

with others:

"... an essential feature of learning is that it creates the zone of proximal development; that is, learning awakens a variety of internal developmental processes that are able to operate only when the child is interacting with people in his environment ... " p.90

In the above example, Sandra interacted with Alan in the zone of proximal development of his learning.

There were many other units of analysis in the presentation of results that indicated that the parent's formation of concepts led to new behaviour towards the child that supported the child's development. Units of analysis are highlighted in the text showing the development of situations of shared meaning and the parents' new behaviour as their learning of the child's development progressed.

For example: (p.191) Sally formed a concept that Peter was learning about size when he fitted one thing inside another. She observed him trying to fit a miniature car, which was much too big, inside a money box. She interpreted what he was trying to do using her understanding of his development of the concept of size that she was developing. She set up a situation of shared meaning where she communicated with Peter in a way that elaborated and developed his understanding of the situation. She provided intellectual scaffolding and appropriate language and contributed to his learning in this 'zone of proximal development'.

The research data suggested that an understanding of the child's conceptual development led the parent to more meaningful and effective communication with the child. There was an increase in shared meaning in the interactions between parent and child as the parents' learning process of child development

progressed. In the above example, Sally's understanding of Peter's developing concept of size enabled her to interpret her observation of his behaviour and respond appropriately to it.

Luria (1976) maintained that shifts in human mental activity created new motives for action. An understanding of the child's developing concepts perhaps gave parents new motives in their interactions with the child.

Weikart stated that the mother's child rearing strategies in the Ypsilanti project relied increasingly on providing opportunities for the child to explore actively and master the environment and less upon negative controlling behaviour. It seemed as if mothers in this project had also developed new motives for action.

In addition to situations of shared meaning in which the parent focused on the first hand experience of the child's behaviour, it appeared that shared meanings also had connections with unconscious meanings.

For example: (p.208) From the time that Peter first began to make the sound 'mmm', William attached the meaning of Peter wanting to know where his mother was. William continued to introduce this meaning into his interactions with Peter. He often asked 'Where's mammy' and Peter responded by shaping the meaning of his initial language around her location.

Walkerdine and Lucey (1989) suggested that the creation of meanings between parent and child went further than a shared understanding of the immediate concrete situation. They suggested that the origin of meanings was historical and regulative and also that meanings were: "... layered in chains of associations into unconscious fears and ways of dealing with the

inevitability of loss." p.170

The meanings which William was sharing with Peter around the movements of his mother appeared to link back historically with his own issues surrounding separation anxiety. Other examples are given where William's unconscious meaning appeared to manifest in his interactions with Peter.

Meanings appeared to be defined by unconscious motivation in the example above. It is also possible that other meanings between parent and child were negotiated around unconscious meanings. Unconscious motivation in shared meanings is further elaborated in Section 3 of this chapter on the defensive processes.

### Linked Concepts

The idea that parent's concepts were linked became apparent in the organisation of the research data. The presentation of the results linked concepts into categories to form higher order concepts, that is, concepts that were superordinates to the concepts that were included. Initially, the researcher's representation of what appeared to be appropriate higher order concepts was used but later these were mostly substituted for parents' own conceptual categories.

It was found that the concepts the parents formed related to one another in a number of different ways. For example, Sandra appeared to have developed a number of procedural concepts that enabled her to understand and support Alan's development. Procedural concepts which Sandra developed included, 'You learn by watching bairns, You get involved with what they're doing' and, 'Talking to him about what he's doing helps him to

work things out'. Her formation of these concepts can be deduced from the data in the presentation of the results. Sandra also appeared to have formed a concept that it was possible to see what Alan was thinking from his non-verbal behaviour. For example, she saw him pulling at a crayon and said that he thought that it had a top on it.

Procedural concepts supported parents in the process of making further observations and obtaining the raw data for the formation of further concepts. The development of procedural concepts developed and reinforced the parent's process of the formation of declarative concepts about child development.

Howard stated: "Mental representation can be divided into procedural and declarative knowledge. The distinction is between knowing how and knowing that." p.15

Howard also stated that concepts are learned from existing ones and that an existing concept could be split into two or more concepts. Sandra formed a declarative concept of, 'He doesn't understand, he's just a bairn.' This became differentiated into other declarative concepts, such as, 'he hoys things around' which then became differentiated into, 'He finds out what breaks' and then, 'He's only playing'.

Sandra also formed a declarative concept of, 'He tries to work things out' which became differentiated into; 'He learns by copying, He doesn't forget what he's learned,' etc.

Sandra also combined aspects of these concepts to form the concept, 'You can't expect a bairn to sit and do nothing'. All the concepts that she had formed of Alan's development included examples of his active physical exploration that appeared to be the central feature of this new concept. Howard explained that

similarities between concepts could be abstracted to form new concepts. He suggested that two or more concepts could be put together to form a new one in a process of conceptual combination.

Linkages between concepts are also apparent in the research data for the other families taking part in the research. For example, Sally and William formed a declarative concept that Peter constructed his own learning from his experience or in William's words he learned through 'trial and error'. They appeared to differentiate this concept into other declarative concepts of his behaviour patterns, such as his pulling, throwing and enclosing schemas. Their concept, 'He learns by trial and error' was perhaps superordinate to the more specific concepts of the behaviour patterns that they formed.

Howard explained that concepts could be arranged in a taxonomy whereby concepts were related to one another by class inclusion. The higher order concept was superordinate in the class to other concepts. In the example given above, William and Sally's concept that Peter learned by trial and error was superordinate to the concepts they formed of his behaviour patterns. The concepts could be seen to be connected to one another in a taxonomy.

In addition, Sally and William appeared to differentiate their concepts of Peter's behaviour patterns to form concepts concerning what he may have been learning through this behaviour. For example, they formed a concept of Peter learning about distance through his throwing schema and a concept of him learning about size through his enclosing schema.

Howard suggested that in a taxonomy of concepts specific concepts could be subordinate to other concepts. In the above



example, the concepts Sally and William formed concerning Peter's learning of concepts of distance and size appeared to be subordinate to the concepts they had formed of the development of his behaviour patterns. The taxonomy that William and Sally formed therefore had 'He learns by trial and error' as the superordinate concept. This was followed by intermediate concepts of Peter's behaviour patterns and then by subordinate concepts of Peter's learning of concepts of distance and size. Chains of associations also possibly led from William's concept of Peter's behaviour patterns to his concepts surrounding the issue of separation that was discussed in the presentation of results.

Howard suggested: "All the concepts a person knows ultimately connect to each other in a maze of taxonomies ... and other structures. All this knowledge constitutes a person's cognitive structures." p.11

This section discussed the learning process in relationship to the process of parenting. The conceptual framework for the research was explored beginning with a discussion on the developmental process of observation. The process of observation of the child's behaviour was discussed with reference to specific examples from the presentation of results and was found to be a process of concept formation rather than the development of a skill. The results showed, and the literature review confirmed, that the process of observation was a central feature of the research.

The process of reflection on the child's behaviour was discussed and was found to extend the process of observation. The two processes of observation and reflection provided the foundation for concept formation that was discussed in the next

section. The formation of concepts of child development in the research was discussed with particular reference to the development of the parents' concept of the child's behaviour patterns. The modification of concepts was then introduced and the possibility of the parent holding multiple perspectives of the child's behaviour was discussed. The discovery of negative cases to the interpretative schema of the research of conceptual development was mentioned. The introduction into the research of the alternative perspective of projection was highlighted as an attempt to accommodate the negative cases.

However, in discussing the emotional attitude associated with concepts it was found that all parents' concepts appeared to have an associated emotional attitude. This emotional attitude perhaps corresponded with the process that had been described as projection. In addition, observations that had been described as projection could also be seen to have an associated concept.

The extension and development of concepts seemed to lead to the process of perspective change in the way in which parents viewed the child's behaviour. The process appeared to occur when concepts were generalised to new situations. The way in which the child's behaviour was perceived perhaps underwent subtle changes as a result of the formation and generalisation of concepts. The possibility that perspective changes led parents to develop new ways of behaving towards their child that supported the child's development was then discussed. The section ended with an exploration of possible links between concepts which parents had formed of the child's behaviour and development. The next section discusses the defensive processes in the process of parenting.

### SECTION 3: DEFENSIVE PROCESSES

This section begins by exploring the process of parents' projections onto their child's behaviour. Examples are given of this process and linked with psycho-analytic literature on unconscious motivation. The child's internalisation of his/her parents' projections is then discussed concerning possible links between the parent's projection onto the child and the child's projection onto the parent. A section then follows on links between projection and schemas from the point of view of the child's and then the parent's development. A section on symbol formation follows and the section ends with a discussion of transference.

This section attempts to bring together the theoretical perspectives of developmental psychology and psycho-analysis. The Piagetian concept of schema is juxtapositioned with the psycho-analytic concepts of projection and symbolism in an attempt to find links between emotional and intellectual development.

The section explores mostly unconscious material and although it is divided into sections, these are somewhat arbitrary with much overlap. It seems that the unconscious mind does not easily lend itself to conceptual categories.

#### Parent's Projections onto their Child

The conceptual framework for the research suggested that parents' interpretations of the child's behaviour contained the defence mechanism of projection, whereby the parent projected fragmented aspects of his/her self onto the child. Although the

sample size of the research was small, therefore it was impossible to draw definite conclusions from the results, the data did indicate that the defence mechanism of projection was present in parents' interpretations of their child's behaviour. This tentative conclusion was supported by several units of analysis in the data, for example (p.263):

When Joe was 4 months old Judy interpreted an observation of him letting go of keys to be that he was throwing them through temper. Judy also described her older son, Jimmy's wicked temper. Jimmy often repeated a behaviour pattern of losing his temper. On each occasion there would be a confrontation with Judy, Jimmy would hold something up to throw which precipitated further confrontation with her that often ended in her threatening to leave him. When reflecting on Jimmy's behaviour, Judy said that there was something coming through quite clearly in the observations and that was her losing her own temper. Judy was perhaps beginning to recognise her projection onto Jimmy's behaviour.

Later in Joe's development, Judy appeared to develop multiple perspectives on Joe's throwing behaviour. One interpretation that she gave of his throwing was that he was only playing but other examples of his behaviour appeared to contain a projection of anxiety. For example, (p.265) she appeared to project an intensity of feeling onto his behaviour when she described incidents of him throwing things down the stairs and playing with a caseball inside so that he could smash the fish tank. She said he 'hoyed' things at the others and had thrown a toy at Jimmy and had hit him on the head. Judy's feelings associated with her children's throwing schemas, which she was beginning

to describe, perhaps originated in unconscious sources.

Freud (1915) maintained that an individual's behaviour is often motivated by unconscious issues of which they are unaware. In the above examples, it is possible that Joe and Jimmy's behaviour evoked an intensity of feelings of powerlessness and fear in Judy that overwhelmed her to the extent that she projected them onto her children.

Freud (1948) explained the origin of projection as the individual treating unconscious material as if it were acting from without because the content was too overwhelming to allow into consciousness.

It appears that projection can be used as a defence against overwhelmingly painful anxiety. Consciousness perhaps becomes fragmented which causes these feelings to be split from the conscious self and be unconsciously projected onto others.

Miller (1984) maintained that it was the unexpressed feelings from a parent's own childhood that manifested in their projection onto their child.

Daws (1989) referred to Frailberg in suggesting that the parent who could not remember his childhood feelings of pain and anxiety would need to inflict his pain upon his child.

In the evaluation (p.263) Judy recalled an experience of being thrown across the room as a child, by her step father, for no apparent reason. It was suggested, in the presentation of results, that Judy's feelings associated with experiences such as this could have gained symbolic expression through projection onto Joe's behaviour pattern of throwing. Perhaps the structure of Judy's own throwing schema had assimilated such experience that was in turn brought to bear on her further experiences of

throwing. The trauma she suffered from such experiences appeared to have remained unconscious and came to motivate her behaviour. The link between projection and schemas is further discussed later in this chapter.

In the presentation of results there are other examples that support the interpretative schema of projection onto the child's behaviour. For example, Judy appeared to project onto Joe's behaviour when she interpreted his reaching and grasping behaviour pattern as nipping (p. 250) She also appeared to project onto Joe's other behaviour patterns, for example, his biting schema (p.257) and his banging schema (p.260).

Judy's projections appeared to be made onto Joe's ordinary developmental behaviour patterns, such as reaching and grasping, banging and throwing. Each of these behaviour patterns perhaps became a vehicle for the projection of aspects of Judy's consciousness that had become fragmented and unconscious. Judy's children appeared to become a container for these feelings as the most available receptacle for them.

Kempe and Kempe (1978) suggested that it was the ordinary developmental milestones that triggered crises for parents. In the above examples, Joe's behaviour onto which Judy projected appeared at times to be innocent. The research data suggested that a child's systematic schematic development often became the vehicle for parental projections. Miller (1987) suggested that:

"Even when the needs the child expresses are quite harmless and normal, she can be perceived by her parents as demanding, tyrannical, and threatening ... "p.269

During the process of the research the data began to suggest that unresolved pain and anxiety from parents'

experience were coded in their behaviour towards their child. Unconscious material manifested in the parents' interpretations of their child's behaviour which at times was normal developmental growth.

The developmental behaviour patterns of children linked with the parent's unconscious material through the process of projection. The process of reflection in the research seemed to be increasingly one of the researcher listening to the parent's unconscious mind speaking in the language of symbolism in addition to listening to their conscious rational thoughts.

The research attempted to find some way of exploring and decoding the feelings surrounding the parent's interpretations of the child's behaviour. The exploration of emotional attitudes and thoughts surrounding the child's schemas was one way of reaching this unconscious material. The schema not only gave access to the parent's and child's intellectual development but also, in chains of associations, to their emotional experience. The connection between projection and schemas is discussed later in this chapter.

In addition, a lack of acknowledgement of the child's behaviour also appeared to have its source in the unconscious mind. For example, at times Judy denied any change and development in Joe's behaviour. She often used the concept that there was no pattern in his behaviour; it was all the same.

This concept may have served to deny the very behaviour that has been described as allowing the possibility of overwhelmingly painful feelings into Judy's consciousness. Judy also controlled Joe's behaviour by frequently strapping him in his pushchair. Restricting Joe's movements perhaps symbolised her

own inner restrictions on her feelings. Her concept denying his behaviour and her control over his movements could have been linked. The denial that his behaviour changed in any way could have been seen as a restriction in the movement of development.

It could be that learning to Judy represented a movement of feeling that was potentially destabilising. Reflecting on Joe's behaviour became a vehicle for allowing unconscious material into Judy's consciousness. She appeared to defend against this when she maintained that his behaviour was all the same and when she physically restricted his movements. Judy also maintained strict control over his toilet training and insisted that he sit on his potty for long periods.

Judy perhaps manifested an obsessive need for the control of Joe's movements. She appeared to be obsessively repeating a pattern perhaps from her own childhood where her own movements had been strictly controlled and where she was subjected to control over her physical body.

In addition, Judy's potential for learning appeared to be restricted by her need for projection. Her inconceivably abusive, brutal childhood had apparently left its distinctive mark on her inner life and her capacity to parent her own children.

Psycho-analytic theory suggests that the past manifests in present circumstances. The damage to Judy's inner psychic reality perhaps manifested in the strength of her anxieties and feelings and the projections of unconscious aspects of these onto her children.

Psycho-analytic theory further suggests that a psychological feature of abuse is to attempt to undo this abuse by symbolically doing it to others and to engage obsessively in this.



Judy's feelings have left a reflected attitude that tells us about her own parenting.

Other parents in the research also appeared to project onto their child's behaviour. Examples of parent's projections are highlighted in the text. For example, (p.169) when Margaret started to cry, Geoff shouted at her to stop and threatened to smack her if she did not. He said she was crying for no reason and it was the only way to stop her. Kempe and Kempe suggested that crying could arouse intolerable anxiety and if this was the case it must be stopped. In the above example, Geoff appeared to be projecting his own pain and vulnerability onto Margaret's behaviour.

Montessori (1956) described sobs, screams, misbehaviour, shyness, disobedience, lying, egoism and destructiveness as forces and energy necessary for the child to defend himself, and not essential elements of the child's character. Isaacs (1929) suggested that we cannot command that a child will be polite, gentle, co-operative and sociable. They grow from the child's experience of our consideration and understanding.

Feelings become unconscious when there is no way left available for their expression. The defence mechanism of fragmentation is a way to remove temporarily overwhelming feelings from consciousness.

Parents appeared to unconsciously choose which behaviour should become a vehicle for projection e.g. the child's crying, the child wandering off, the child's throwing schema, etc., perhaps according to their own unconscious needs. Parents at times appeared to attach special significance to some aspects of their child's behaviour. Their choice of the particular behaviour for projection was significant. It may indicate an association with

parents' unconscious content.

The examples of parent's interpretations of their child's behaviour given above are, because of their unconscious nature, examples of the defence mechanism of splitting or fragmentation. This mechanism enables aspects of an individual's consciousness to be projected onto others, in this case the child. The defence mechanism of fragmentation could also account for the phenomena of multiple perspectives that was apparent from the research data. For example, the multiple perspectives in Judy's interpretation of Joe's throwing schema and reaching and grasping schema could indicate fragmentation.

Each interpretation that a parent made of the child's behaviour had an associated projection. In the research, the schema of projection was initially applied to negative cases when a parent appeared to give a concept of a child's behaviour that was rigid and contained an obvious emotional content. The concept of projection was included in an attempt to interpret these instances.

On reflection it was thought that other interpretations parents formed of the child's development also had an emotional content that could have been a projection. For example, William interpreted Peter's behaviour of manipulating wires as an interest in electronics. William projected feelings of mastery and control onto Peter's behaviour.

It is possible that in the process of fragmentation that each interpretation of the child's behaviour also has an emotional attitude associated with it that is projected onto the child. The child's schemas perhaps act as a trigger to the parents for their feelings associated with the behaviour.

This section looked at the interpretative schema of

projection onto the child's behaviour. The next section looks at possible outcomes of such projection in a process by which the child appears to internalise and act out parental projections.

### Child's Internalisation and Acting Out of Projection

The child's behaviour with which the parents invested significance and projected onto, also appeared to become significant to the child. For example, (p.196) Peter developed a behaviour pattern of darting away from his parents and escaping up the stairs and later over the garden fence and down the street.

William's interpretations of Peter's climbing and darting away behaviour pattern was a significant feature when he made observations of and reflections on Peter's behaviour. It was suggested in the presentation of results that William projected feelings associated with powerlessness and separation anxiety onto Peter's behaviour. Thus, William found Peter's escaping behaviour significant and he projected anxiety onto the behaviour. Peter had perhaps internalised and was acting out William's projections when he repeated this behaviour.

It appeared that William had reinforced Peter's schema of climbing and darting away by his investment of significance in the schema. The concept that Peter had internalised his parent's projection was perhaps supported by his repetition of this behaviour. Freud (1914) explained the repetition compulsion:

"The patient does not remember anything of what he has forgotten and repressed but acts it out. He reproduces it not as a memory but as an action; he repeats it, without, of course, knowing that he is repeating it." p.150

Although Freud was referring to the patient in the analytic setting, his concept of the repetition compulsion can be

generalised to the child's behaviour. In the above example, Peter appeared to repeat an action which had become significant to him because of the importance placed on it by his parents. He had perhaps internalised his parent's projection.

There were other examples in the presentation of results that supported the schema that the child internalised and acted out his parent's projections.

For example, (p.151) Sandra reported on Alan's behaviour. She said he had poured shampoo, talcum powder and perfume all around the home. He had also repeatedly gone into the food cupboard in the kitchen and mixed flour and milk and eggs in piles on the floor and over the furniture.

Sandra reported that Alan's behaviour was disordered and chaotic at times. It is possible that Sandra projected her own feelings onto Alan's behaviour. Alan's repeated behaviour of mixing and messing household materials may have symbolised Sandra's own fragmented feelings. Sandra may have projected chaotic feelings and feelings of powerlessness onto Alan's behaviour and at times felt unable to contain it. In the same way, perhaps her own feelings had not been contained by a parent that resulted in their fragmentation. Sandra's projection had been internalised by Alan and acted out through his chaotic behaviour that she described.

Freud (1948) suggested that; "... the apparent reality is always recognised as a reflection of a forgotten past." p.18 Freud maintained that the meaning of behaviour had a historical basis. Miller (1984) suggested that:

"In the beginning children are the mute receivers of our projections. Unable to defend themselves against them, unable to give them back to us or interpret them for us, they

are able only to serve as their bearers ... "p.156

Alan, of course, would have had no idea why he was repeating the action of messing up the household goods. He was certainly unable to interpret his parent's projection onto his behaviour or respond in any way to his parent's feelings other than to repeat the same behaviour, that is to act out the behaviour.

There are also other units of analysis that are highlighted in the presentation of results that support the concept that the child internalises and acts out the parent's projections.

Psycho-analytic theory traditionally stated that it was the child who projected onto the parent. Bion referred to Klein in stating that the child from very early on acted in a way so the parent would act out feelings he did not wish to have. This statement described the process of projection in reverse of the descriptions of this process outlined above in this section. Projection from this perspective is the responsibility of the child and not the parent.

In the examples given in this section, Peter and Alan appeared to have internalised their parent's projections and it was suggested that their behaviour was unconsciously motivated by the anxiety that the parents projected onto them.

In the above analysis, the children's behaviour would be interpreted as a vehicle for the projection of their own fragmented feelings onto the parent. The traditional psycho-analytic interpretation would perhaps be that they were acting in such a way as to evoke feelings in the parent that they did not wish to have themselves.

However, it is possible that the child's schemas became the focus for the projections of both the parent and child. The links

between projection and schemas are further discussed in the next section. Peter and Alan could therefore have not only internalised their parent's unconscious material and be acting it out in the schema but also be projecting their own unconscious material through the schema onto their parents.

It is likely that there is a link between the child's internalisation of the parent's projection and the child's own projections using the vehicle onto which the parent projected.

This section discussed the child's internalisation of the parent's projection and the possibility that there was a link between the parent's projection and the child's projection onto the parents. The next section discusses the links between projection and schema.

#### Links Between Projection and Schema / Concept

The theory generated by the research so far seems to suggest that the psycho-analytic concept of projection is fundamentally linked to the developmental psychology concept of schema. This section describes the child's use of schema to express unconscious emotional content and the link between parent's concepts and projections.

#### THE CHILD'S USE OF SCHEMAS / CONCEPTS TO EXPRESS UNCONSCIOUS EMOTIONAL CONTENT

The presentation of results included examples that appeared to link the child's intellectual and emotional development. For example, (p.204) Peter formed a concept of permanent objects. We watched him retrieve objects that had gone out of sight. He also began to play with this concept by

joining in with and later initiating the peek-a-boo game with William.

The formation of this concept was described by Piaget (1936) as a stage of intellectual development in which the child realised that objects still existed apart from his own identity and perception of them. This concept may also have had another function. In addition to the intellectual interpretation for this behaviour, it is possible that Peter's formation of this concept was linked to his anxiety rising from a realisation that he was not omnipotent. The review of literature described the devastation to which this realisation gives rise.

Peter's feelings became more manageable through the development of the concept of permanent objects, as they were channelled into an anxiety 'because someone or something had gone,' rather than an undifferentiated, unspecific anxiety. He then became familiar with this concept and was able to master it through playing with it as in the above example of the peek-a-boo game.

Mahler (1975) suggested that games such as the peek-a-boo game builds body self awareness. She suggested that an awareness of the self as separate coincided with an awareness of others and of objects. Winnicott (1971) stated that:

"The object represents the infant's transition from a state of being merged with the mother to a state of being in relation to the mother as something outside and separate."  
p.14

Peter's awareness of objects was connected with his awareness of his own separate existence and the existence of others.

Salzberger-Wittenberg (1970) suggested that a need to

dissociate the self from bad feelings led to a recognition of others and the self as separate. The concept of the permanent existence of others and objects could be seen as a culmination of this process. The process of individuation is perhaps incomplete as aspects of the self are projected elsewhere. In the above example, Peter's awareness of the existence of others and objects enabled him to project aspects of his inner life onto external reality.

Egan (1988) suggested that emotional concepts were fundamental to the learning process. He suggested that before children could walk and talk they had developed concepts of power and powerlessness, joy and fear, and love and hate. Perhaps these concepts are integrated with the development of basic concepts of the self and others, with a projection of disowned parts of the self onto others and objects.

Freud suggested that intellectual concepts were formed as a defence against anxiety. Perhaps Peter's concept of others and his concept of permanent objects provided a defence for him in this way. Peter formed further concepts around the issue of separation that are highlighted in the text that perhaps also formed defences against anxiety.

Projection appeared to be linked with concept formation in the discussion above. The development of the concept of the permanent existence of objects and the concept of the existence of others as separate from the self was linked with projection of aspects of the self.

In the presentation of results, there were further units of analysis that supported the concept that intellectual and emotional development was linked in the child's schemas.

For example, (p. 219) Wendy developed a behaviour pattern



of tearing her books. Athey (1990) may have interpreted this behaviour pattern as a transformation schema in which the child assimilated a variety of objects into a tearing schema to find out which materials could be transformed in this way and which could not.

An alternative psycho-analytic interpretation for the observation could be that Wendy's paper tearing symbolically represented a splitting off or projection of a part of her consciousness. Her anxiety, to some extent, could not be contained by her parents and resulted in the need for unconscious splitting. She projected her feelings onto the object, in this case the book. In this way, Wendy's transformation schema could have been linked with her projection of anxiety.

The parents' formation of a concept of Wendy's transformation schema could have provided a defence against anxiety for both themselves and Wendy. Freud described the formation of concepts as a defence against anxiety. Wendy's transformation schema could have been a defence against her anxiety that she projected onto the object. Through projecting onto the object, Wendy was perhaps seeking the containment of her anxiety. Her anxiety became externalised in the object and was fragmented and dissociated from herself. Tim's concept of Wendy's transformation schema enabled him to contain her behaviour, that is, for it not to overwhelm him. The containment of Wendy's behaviour perhaps resulted in the containment of the anxiety that she projected onto the object.

Freud (1948) described the phenomena of a child projecting feelings in his spontaneous play:

"The flinging away of the object so that it is gone might be the gratification of an impulse of revenge suppressed in

real life but directed against the mother for going away.”  
p.14

Freud interpreted the child's anxiety projected onto objects in his behaviour. In Piagetian theory the same behaviour could be interpreted as the child's throwing schema and the child's exploration of a horizontal trajectory schema. It is possible that the two interpretations could be linked and perhaps the formation of a throwing schema also contains the child's feelings projected onto the objects. The examples given at the beginning of this section on Joe's throwing schema could also support the concept that anxiety is projected onto the child's schemas.

In the child's schemas there appear to be links between emotional and intellectual development. It is possible that each intellectual stage of the development a child progresses through also represents a projection of feelings.

Wendy's interest in the books themselves also led to concept formation and projection. For example, Wendy formed object concepts and was able to find examples of these concepts in pictures. She projected feelings of mastery and control onto this activity when she confidently took books to look at to her parents. Wendy also formed a concept that the words in books formed a story. She generalised this concept to other books and again projected mastery onto the activity when she encouraged her parents to read to her. It appeared that positive feelings could also be projected onto objects and result in concept formation.

It appeared that the object could become the focus for the projection of positive and negative feelings. Perhaps, in the process of fragmentation, it is possible for any of the fragmented parts to be projected. When positive fragments are projected, as in

the above example, the process of concept formation appears to be enhanced. Perhaps this process also strengthens the defences against the disowned parts of consciousness from entering awareness.

This section gives examples of actual links between cognitive and affective structures in the emotional and intellectual content of the child's schemas. Further examples of possible links are highlighted in the text. A tentative hypothesis for the research could be that there appears to be no dichotomy between feeling and thought in the child's behaviour. Perhaps every act of a child's spontaneous behaviour has an emotional and an intellectual aspect to it.

In the review of literature, Bennett (1972) made connections between the child's emotional and intellectual development. She suggested that a child's feelings were connected with her early explorations. In addition, Kolb and Fry (1974) suggested that first hand experience had an emotional component in addition to an intellectual component.

Weikart (1974) referred to the significance of the child's spontaneous behaviour and the need for parents to view this in a positive, well informed way. However, he appeared to view the child's schemas as purely intellectual structures. The current research suggests that there are fundamental links between emotional and intellectual aspects of schemas.

Athey (1990) described the 'fleshing out' of schemas with new experiences. Perhaps it would also be true to say that the schema is fleshed out with the child's and parent's projections. The formation of schemas appears to be not only an intellectual exercise, as the Ypsilanti and Froebel projects perhaps suggest,

but to link the emotional and intellectual processes in child development.

This section described possible links between schema and projection in the child's spontaneous behaviour and development. The next section describes possible links between the parent's concepts and projections.

## THE LINK BETWEEN PARENTS' CONCEPTS AND PROJECTIONS

The last section suggested links between the development of the child's schemas and their projections. This section asks: Do parents' concepts also contain projection? Section 2 of this chapter, on the learning process, suggested that there was an emotional attitude associated with parents' concepts. The first part of this Section, discussing parents' projections onto their child, also suggested that there was a link between parents' concepts and projection. Further evidence is given below.

For example (p.147), Sandra initially interpreted Alan's behaviour, when operating a 'dab graphic schema,' that he was trying to break the glass of the table. This concept contained a projection of feelings of powerlessness and loss of control. The concept appeared to be linked to the projection supporting the theory generated from the research that parents' concepts contained an associated projection.

Sandra later interpreted this behaviour with the concept that he was making patterns that appeared to be linked with the associated projection of mastery. The formation of this concept perhaps contained Sandra's anxiety arising from this behaviour. In this way, the formation of a new concept could be viewed as a

defence against anxiety.

The learning process described in Section 2 of this chapter described a build up of defensive concepts that enabled the parents to defend against anxiety evoked by the child's behaviour. Indeed, Sandra appeared to build up a series of related concepts that enabled her to defend against anxiety to some extent. (See linked concepts, pp.323-326)

It is possible that the formation of concepts provided an intellectual defence that made the projection of overwhelming anxiety onto the child less likely. It could be suggested that Sandra's anxiety became repressed through the formation of concepts. However, becoming more conscious of Alan's behaviour also appeared to give Sandra an opportunity to explore her emotional attitudes surrounding it. Articulating and bringing Alan's behaviour into her conscious awareness may have resulted in her fragmented feelings also coming into consciousness to some extent.

Sandra had perhaps begun the process of integrating Alan's behaviour into her conscious awareness. It is possible that there may have been a connection between her becoming consciously aware of his behaviour and with the containment and integration of her own anxiety that arose as a result of his behaviour. There is a possible connection between the parent's consciousization of the child's behaviour and the integration of the anxiety evoked by their behaviour.

For example, (p.165-9) Sandra's exploration of her concept, 'You shouldn't smack bairns' perhaps conceptualised her feelings of power and powerlessness and love and fear. She began to reflect on observations she made of Alan's aggressive

behaviour. She formed a concept that, 'he thinks lads have to be the boss,' and reflected upon her feelings that became projected onto his behaviour at such times. She conceptualised her feelings of anger and powerlessness, the feelings that had perhaps been fragmented and projected onto her children at times of stress. She reflected upon her own behaviour and made an active link between her experience and present behaviour.

The conceptualisation of feelings could possibly lead to their transformation and integration with conscious awareness, making them less likely to be acted out in unconscious motivation. In this way Sandra's feelings associated with her concepts were perhaps not repressed but worked through and transformed to some extent.

Becoming conscious of the child's behaviour through observation, reflection and concept formation gave the parents access to the emotional attitudes associated with their interpretations. Changing thought patterns appeared to relate to changing patterns of feeling.

Sandra was perhaps also going through a process of differentiating her own concept of self and other. When she emphasised, 'he doesn't understand, he's only a bairn,' she was unconsciously saying, 'He doesn't understand the things I do, he's not me'. It could very tentatively be suggested that, as Sandra's interpretations of Alan's behaviour became more differentiated and elaborated, her concept of Alan as being separate from herself developed, and perhaps her thinking became less fragmented. Sandra's concept of self appeared to be developing.

Parents' concepts of child development appeared to contain

the unconscious motivation of projection. Exploring the concept potentially enabled the feelings associated with it to begin to be untangled. Reflection on the thoughts and emotional attitudes associated with a concept perhaps integrated the learning process with the therapeutic process.

Other units of analysis in the presentation of results supported the theory that emotional and intellectual development were linked through a connection between concept and projection.

It was suggested earlier in this section that William was perhaps projecting separation anxiety onto Peter's climbing and darting away behaviour. It was also suggested in Section 2 of this chapter that William created shared meanings with Peter around the whereabouts of his mother. Concepts which William formed of Peter's behaviour, such as his concept of Peter's darting away behaviour pattern and his concept of Peter's early language appeared to link with his projection of separation anxiety onto Peter's behaviour.

The meanings created between William and Peter appeared to be defined by William's unconscious motivation in these examples. It is possible that shared meanings between parent and children are negotiated around unconscious issues that perhaps become associated with the concepts the parent forms of the child's behaviour.

There were examples in the presentation of results when concepts appeared to be linked to projection and their development and modification appeared to lead to a change in attitude towards the child's behaviour. In Section 2 of this Chapter, the modification of concepts was discussed. An example was given where Judy appeared to have developed a concept that Joe put his

hand in hot cups that perhaps had an associated projection that he was trying to hurt himself. She later appeared to modify this concept to one of he put his hand in many different things perhaps with a more positive associated projection.

It is possible that Judy's feelings of powerlessness that were projected in the first instance were repressed through the development of an intellectual concept to explain Joe's behaviour. The concept that he put his hand in many different things could have formed a defence against the anxiety which was initially evoked by this behaviour. However, articulating and describing his behaviour was a conceptualisation that was one stage removed from reacting to it. It is possible that there may have been some containment of her anxiety through describing his behaviour. Reflection on his behaviour also led Judy to a stage where it was possible to form an alternative explanation for it.

In the Ypsilanti project, Weikart (1974) concluded that a change in parent's attitudes came with developing an understanding of the child's schemas. This could perhaps be understood by viewing the concept as linked to projection. A shift in the parent's attitude could possibly take place towards the child's behaviour through the development of new concepts. However, it would seem beneficial for parents' concept formation to be specifically linked with reflection on emotional attitudes, in addition to the thoughts, associated with the child's behaviour.

The current research attempted to assist parents in not only making sense of what they observed of their child's behaviour but also to make sense of what they felt about what they observed. It attempted to link emotional and intellectual development in a holistic framework.



When parents examined their attitudes and beliefs there was a possibility that they would find alternative ways of understanding their experience and positive change would be created. Rogers (1961) suggested, "We cannot move away from what we are, until we thoroughly accept what we are." p.17

Kolb and Fry suggested that learning and change result from the integration of concrete emotional experiences with cognitive processes. They also emphasised the need to recognise the factors associated with experiencing. Direct experience appears to be an emotional as well as intellectual experience with concept and projection mutually influencing each other.

Bennett maintained that parents' attitudes originated in unconscious sources. She suggested that focusing on the way things appeared to the parent could lead to a change in attitude. Perhaps focusing on the thoughts and feelings connected with their child's behaviour can lead to a parent to a transformation in their attitude towards the behaviour.

Krishnamurti (1953) suggested that: "... it is only when there is integration of the mind and heart in everyday action that there can be intelligence and inward transformation." p.46 He also described the imbalance as he saw it in the traditional education of the child:

"We have separated intellect from feelings, and have developed intellect at the expense of feeling. We are like a three legged object with one leg much longer than the others, and we have to balance." p.65

The theory generated by the research of linking emotional and intellectual aspects of development merges the disciplines of education and therapy which have traditionally been separated. Perhaps this reflects a historical, sociological defence mechanism

of fragmentation and the development of concepts to defend against rather than illuminate anxiety.

### Symbol Formation

This section discusses the link between projection and symbolism in the child's spontaneous behaviour and play and in parents' language and dreams.

The presentation of results indicated that children's spontaneous play symbolised their feelings. For example, (pp.145-6) Sandra and Geoff gave many examples of Alan smashing things, including smashing the window with a hammer and throwing clothes out. Repetition of the behaviour of smashing objects could have symbolised to Alan his feelings of fragmentation that had become split from his conscious awareness.

Alan's feelings appeared to be projected onto the objects that he smashed. He also assimilated his experiences of breaking objects into a transformation schema from which he developed an awareness of what would and would not smash. Perhaps Alan's transformation schema became the symbolic vehicle for the expression of his anxiety.

Alan's transformation schema perhaps became a way of symbolising and at the same time defending against the anxiety encoded in the behaviour. In symbolising his feelings in this way, Alan was defended from them overwhelming him. The development of intellectual schemas perhaps forms the function of the symbolism of anxiety.

The symbol appears to link emotional and intellectual development. In the review of literature, Daws (1989) suggested

that the transitional object formed the first symbol and was used to represent the mother. The child therefore developed the ability to recreate reassuring emotional experiences of the mother in fantasy.

Winnicott described symbols as part way between the inner self and the outer world. In the above example, Alan's symbol of breaking glass represented his subjective world of feeling and the outer world of objects. His symbol of the breaking glass perhaps became assimilated to other similar experiences that together formed a transformation schema. The assimilation of symbols into schemas perhaps forms the basis of conceptual development.

Piaget (1936) described the formation of schemas as an assimilation of experience based on systematic exploration. The child appears to form symbols from inner as well as outer experience. In this way, feeling is integrated into the schema and becomes an aspect of conceptual development.

Piaget suggested that there were three modes of symbolism. Firstly, he suggested that the gesture was symbolic of internalised action. He suggested that schemas were initially based on actions such as sucking, pulling, throwing, etc. He emphasised that these actions became internalised and became symbolised through gestures.

There may also be connections between gestures and feelings. In the above example, Alan's gesture of breaking objects in addition to the actual object breaking could have symbolised his feelings. Whitmore (1986) suggested that every emotion has a corresponding body experience.

The second mode of symbolism Piaget suggested was symbolic representation which Werner and Kaplan (1964)

described as one entity being taken to designate another. In the following example Alan used a doll to represent his own self.

We observed (p.161) a sequence of symbolic play in which Alan put a doll to bed, filled a bottle and gave it to the doll and then pointed to it and said 'Now'. He was using these objects to represent symbolically an experience that he had internalised. In his symbolic play, he gave the doll a symbol, the bottle, to substitute for the carer, in this case himself. He perhaps symbolised feelings of annihilation that resulted in the need for a transitional object in his act of parenting the doll. He also represented the anxiety of separation and feelings of isolation when he left the doll with a threatening, 'Now'.

Piaget suggested that thinking was internalised action. In the above sequence, Alan used symbols of objects and actions that he had internalised from his everyday experience. In addition, as described, he projected feelings onto the symbols in his play. His play showed that he was beginning to build a degree of internal cohesion, in which he made sense of internal and external experience.

Piaget suggested that the third mode of symbolism was language. In the first example, in addition to representing his feelings through actions and objects, Alan also symbolised his feelings in the words, 'ma, smash it'. Schemas and concepts become increasingly represented through language. It becomes the main means of communicating symbols to others. This was apparent in the presentation of results in the communications of parents.

For example, (p.252) Judy used language to communicate her inner subjective world. She told me she had thought of

burning Jimmy by putting his hand in the fire and that would teach him not to go near it.

Psycho-analytic theory suggested that using language to articulate and verbalise threats made them much less likely to be carried out. Symbolising fantasy in words and play perhaps channels the feelings away from other means of expression, by acting out, as described in the above example of Alan smashing objects. Feelings and fantasies that remain at the non-verbal stage are perhaps much more likely to be carried out. Judy recognised this when she said to the researcher much later that just because you think something does not mean you are going to do it.

Judy also symbolically acted out her fantasies and deeply repressed emotional material by burning the cat's tail in play. Bennett (1972) suggested that the behaviour of play communicates the individual's deepest needs and greatest fears. In addition, Judy appeared to be using a symbol in humour when she joked with Joe about burning him with a cigarette. Freud explained that jokes were connected with unconscious content. At this time Judy's house also burnt down which seemed to connect strongly with her unconscious, repressed material. Her obsession with fire perhaps connected with her fragmented feelings associated with aggression and sexuality.

Daws (1989) suggested that:

"Sharing these fears should make it easier for parents not to act them out towards their children, though as professionals we often worry about whether bringing them to consciousness might make it more likely for parents to act on them." p.136

Judy's reflection on her thoughts and feelings around the

children's behaviour caused the researcher much concern at this time. A psycho-analytic interpretation suggested that the researcher unconsciously refused to listen to the degree of her pain and to ways in which it was symbolically manifesting. Unconsciously perhaps the researcher tried to control the situation by specifically discussing the development of Joe's schemas. At this time Judy appeared to transfer her early feelings associated with her mother who also could not listen to her, towards the researcher and the transference relationship was established which is discussed in the next section.

However, the above examples did indicate that Judy had developed an inner movement and her unconscious material was finding various methods of symbolic expression through projection onto objects in play and language and then onto the researcher! These were methods of expression that provided an alternative to projection onto her children.

The process of symbolism is also apparent in the exploration of feelings associated with dreams. Projections appear to be made onto dream symbols compared with projections made onto objects and fantasy in the previous examples.

Klein (1926) explained the similarity between play and dreams. She suggested that both represented symbolically phantasies, wishes and experiences.

Whitmore (1986) stated that "... mental imagery is the language of the unconscious." (p.27) Unconscious material appeared to manifest in the formation of symbols, in language, play and dreams.

In the dream which Sandra described (p.173) she formed a symbol of neighbours standing by watching Geoff attacking the

children with a slate and then going into their flats and shutting the doors. Sandra initially explored the dream symbol. She said that people had closed their doors as if they did not want to know because they were shutting it out and had the feelings that they could not cope and had to get away.

When she later suspected Geoff of sexually exploiting Margaret, she recalled the dream symbol and the feelings surrounding it and explained that she had managed to face her situation and had taken action. In the evaluation, she again explored the dream symbol and described her conscious experience of the same feelings that were symbolised in the dream.

The dream symbol of the neighbours shutting their doors appeared to contain Sandra's fragmented feelings of not wanting to face up to reality. Recognising these feelings in the dream symbol enabled her to reconnect with them. When faced with the situation of suspecting Geoff of sexual exploitation, these fragmented feelings did not gain dominance and control over her behaviour. The conscious recognition of these feelings perhaps contributed to their integration into Sandra's awareness that left them with less power to dominate her behaviour.

Sandra conceptualised the feelings from the dream and formed concepts that came to direct her behaviour. This process was discussed in Section 2 of this Chapter on the emotional attitude associated with concepts.

Perls (1973) suggested that every part of the dream, every other person, and everything was part of our fragmented self and further stated:

"Even if you take a dream and reidentify with a few of the items, each time you assimilate one item you grow - you

increase your potential. You begin to change." p.180

In the example above, Sandra appeared to project fragmented feelings onto the dream symbols. Focusing on the symbols perhaps gave her access to the feelings encoded within them. She went through a process of identifying with the feelings and integrating them into her conscious awareness.

This section discussed the various manifestations of symbolism, in gestures, fantasy play, language, humour and dreams. The next section discusses the transference relationship between the researcher and Judy that was referred to in this section.

### Transference

Transference is a psychoanalytic concept explaining the processes by which feelings associated with early parental relationships are transferred onto another person. Freud (1914) described transference as the repetition of forgotten past onto all aspects of the current situation. A transference relationship became established between one of the parents, Judy, and the researcher, and was discussed in the presentation of the results.

There appeared to be three factors that precipitated this transference relationship. The first factor was the researcher's unconscious refusal to listen to the disturbing content of Judy's symbolic material. The second factor was the difference in opinion, between Judy and the researcher, over Joe's throwing schema in which the researcher attempted to manipulate Judy's perspective. Lastly, Judy formed a concept that 'looks and speak are part of the same pattern' that is, that she could make herself



understood through non-verbal communication.

Judy's early feelings towards her parents appeared to enter into the dynamics of the relationship with the researcher and were expressed non-verbally. Judy's concept that she could make herself understood non-verbally seemed to result in her communicating to me each week very powerful feelings of anger, hate and resentment and a reluctance to talk at all. One interpretation could be that these feelings, that were possibly split from her conscious awareness, were being projected onto the researcher.

Hoxter (1977) described the transference relationship as the dynamic and current reliving of feelings and phantasies, which in early childhood may never have been demonstrated or acknowledged.

Judy was perhaps re-experiencing the abusive relationships from her early life. The way she treated the researcher gave a clue to the way in which she had herself been treated. She perhaps expressed feelings towards the researcher that she had had towards her mother.

Boston (1983) suggested that transference in practice involved a process by which a state of mind was acted out and repeated. She suggested that the worker would experience what it is like to be on the receiving end of powerlessness and abuse. She recommended that the degree of pain projected was accepted and the worker resisted the pull to react in a defensive way.

It was a dilemma for the researcher whether to continue to visit the family. However, Judy made it clear that she did not want the visits to stop. There was still scope for working with the children and of searching for ways, such as the analysis of

symbolic representations, to engage Judy. To have not gone back would have been not to survive her attack, that is, to be overwhelmed by the feelings that had overwhelmed Judy herself, and had been fragmented and projected onto her children's behaviour. The transference relationship went beyond the stage of talking about feelings to the actual reliving of them in the current situation.

Freud (1914) stated that the main instrument for curbing the individual's compulsion to repeat and turning it into a motive for remembering lay in the handling of the transference. He suggested that there was transference in all relationships.

Miller (1984) maintained that if feelings associated with child's first attachment figures could be experienced this reduced the need for repetition compulsion with substitute objects.

Exploring the transference relationship may seem at first sight to be out of the professional area of a community teacher. However, transference appears to be an important aspect of human relationships and as such it is important to be aware of this process in the teaching role.

This section discussed the defensive processes that appeared to be a feature in the process of parenting. It explored the child's and parent's unconscious material and its manifestation in their spontaneous behaviour. The section began with a discussion of parent's projections onto the child that had been presented as an interpretative schema with which to organise the research data as part of the original conceptual framework for the research. The next section discussed the possible outcomes of parents' projections, in a process by which

the child appeared to internalise and act out the parent's projections. A possible link was discussed between parent's projections onto the child and the child's projection onto the parent.

Fundamental links between the psycho-analytic concept of projection and the developmental psychological concept of schema were then discussed from the point of view of the child's development and then the parent's development. Links were created between emotional and intellectual development that were further expanded in the next section on symbolism. Several aspects of symbolism were discussed including the link between projection and the symbol and the link between symbol and schema. Symbolism in the child's spontaneous play and imaginative play were discussed followed by an exploration of symbolism in language and dreams.

The section ended with a discussion of a transference relationship that developed between the researcher and a parent during the research. The next and final section of this chapter summarises the process of parenting.

#### SECTION 4: THE DEVELOPMENTAL PROCESS OF PARENTING - A SUMMARY

This section begins by outlining a framework of the psycho-analytic perspective on the origins of the defence mechanism of projection that appeared to be fundamental to understanding the developmental process of parenting. The process of projection and the foundations of the links between emotional and intellectual development are then reviewed.

The section reviews the process by which the parents' consciousness of the child's behaviour has the potential to transform their inner life and enhance their relationship with their child although the pace of this development may vary with individual parents.

The process of parenting seems to be essentially a process of projection and concept formation. Psycho-analytic theory suggests that the origins of projection lie in the initial devastation the child experiences associated with a realisation that she is not omnipotent. Projection is described as a process by which the internal world of anxiety associated with this realisation overwhelms the infant to the extent that it is projected onto external reality. The infant then establishes a psychic separation between herself, others and objects. The formation of this concept of separateness is an emotional and intellectual process as the concept forms intellectual defences against the initial anxiety.

The child's crying expresses the pain and anxiety that she is experiencing. Klein suggested that the child from very early on acted in a way so that the parent would act out feelings she did not wish to have. The child's behaviour becomes at times a vehicle for

the projection of fragmented anxiety onto the parent. Psychoanalytic theory suggests that the infant acts in such a way as to evoke anxiety in the parent that is too overwhelming to remain integrated within her own consciousness. If this cannot be contained by the parent, if the parent is in turn overwhelmed by the anxiety that the infant's crying evokes, this reinforces the child's projection of anxiety onto others and objects.

The parent who cannot contain the child's pain and anxiety will find his anxiety unconsciously motivating his own behaviour. The parent may in turn project anxiety onto the child.

Projection can be used as a defence by parents against the anxiety that the child's behaviour evokes. This defence mechanism reflects the fragmentation in the parent's consciousness with anxiety becoming split from their conscious awareness and unconsciously projected onto the child. Indeed the compulsive urge to have a child is likely to be rooted in need for such projection.

The research data suggested that projection did occur in the process of parenting. Unconscious anxiety manifested in the parent's behaviour towards the child and in their interpretations of the child's behaviour.

Miller (1984) suggested that the trauma of childhood came unconsciously to motivate the adult's behaviour in parenting. The anxiety from the parent's own traumatic experience of separation and of experiencing the projections of significant adults may become deeply repressed in his consciousness. In the current research, the trauma of parent's early experiences perhaps manifested in projection onto the child.

The traumas suffered by parents in early experience

appeared to have remained unconscious and came to motivate behaviour. In some cases, parents' inconceivably brutal childhood had apparently left a distinctive mark on their inner life and on their capacity to parent their own children. The parents' interpretations of their child's behaviour contained a reflected attitude that perhaps told us about their own parenting.

When the process of projection of unconscious anxiety did occur, the child could not parent the parent by containing his anxieties, however strong the parent's need for this. The projection of anxiety onto the child had the effect of compounding the child's anxiety as she internalised her parent's projection and acted it out in her own behaviour. There appeared to be many examples in the research of the child internalising the parent's anxiety and acting it out in unconscious motivation underlying her own behaviour.

The child's schemas seemed to form a vehicle for projection both for the child's unconscious material and for the unconscious material of the parent. The child's schemas perhaps formed a vehicle for the parent and child unconsciously to project onto one another.

Anxiety becomes unconscious when there is no way left available for its direct expression through which it could be contained by a parent. The defence mechanism of fragmentation is a way of temporarily removing overwhelming anxiety from consciousness. To defend against it re-entering consciousness it then becomes projected onto others and objects.

The defence mechanisms of fragmentation and projection could account for the phenomenon of parents' multiple perspectives that was apparent from the research data. Parents'

interpretations of the child's behaviour appeared at times to contain the projection of unconscious anxiety but at other times to contain the projection of other emotions such as power and mastery onto the child's behaviour.

The research data seemed to indicate that in the process of fragmentation any of the fragmented parts could be projected onto the child including the projection of positive emotions. It appeared that each interpretation the parent gave of the child's behaviour had an associated emotional attitude that was projected onto the child. The parent's concept formation resulting from reflecting on the child's behaviour seemed to be specifically linked to the process of projection.

Linkages between the emotional and intellectual aspects of concepts are perhaps to be found in the individual's formation of symbols that form a connection between the inner subjective world of feeling and the outer world of objects.

An infant's concept of objects is initially formed through the projection onto them of aspects of her inner life. The infant's relationship with objects becomes increasingly complex. She extends and develops her ability to act on objects, in Piagetian terms, and project onto them in psycho-analytic terms.

In the research data, the object appeared to come to symbolise the child's inner world. Repetition of the behaviour of acting on objects, for example, by throwing or breaking them appeared to symbolise the child's fragmented anxiety that had perhaps become split from his conscious awareness and was projected onto the object. Symbolising anxiety through projection onto objects provided the child with a defence against directly experiencing the anxiety.

In addition, the symbol of throwing or breaking an object perhaps became assimilated to other similar experiences that together formed a schema. Through acting on objects the child formed schemas such as the transformation schema and the trajectory schema through which his intelligence developed. The schema also formed the function of the symbolism of feelings. The assimilation of symbols into schemas formed the basis of conceptual development and a way for the projection of unconscious material. The symbol appeared to link emotional and intellectual development in this way.

It is possible that each intellectual stage of the development a child progressed through also represented a projection of a fragment of her inner life. A tentative hypothesis for the research could be that there appears to be no dichotomy between feeling and thought in the child's schemas. Perhaps every act of a child's spontaneous behaviour has an emotional and an intellectual aspect to it.

In addition to projecting onto real objects, and using the real object to symbolise feelings, the research data showed that the child also projected in fantasy onto a symbol that represented the real object.

The research data included examples of the child projecting onto symbols in fantasy play. For example, anxieties connected with separating were symbolised in fantasy, perhaps reducing the need for them to be directly acted out on objects. The fantasy play appeared to provide a containment for this anxiety through its indirect expression and a defence against directly experiencing the anxiety.

In addition, when through observation of the child's



behaviour, parents came to recognise and value the child's fantasy play this appeared to provide a containment for the child's anxiety by providing a safe environment for the fantasy play to continue. The projection of anxiety onto symbols in fantasy was much less likely to evoke the parent's projection of unconscious material than projection onto the parent or onto objects. A recognition of the child's fantasy play resulted in parents projecting feelings of mastery onto the child. Fantasy play provided a therapeutic and learning experience for the child.

In fantasy play, the objects became subordinate to the child's schemas. The parent and researcher were therefore given a direct experience of the child's inner life. There was therefore an opportunity to communicate meaningfully with the child and offer additional content in the form of objects or language that the child could assimilate to the schema. The child appeared to project schemas onto the objects in fantasy play. The schemas that the child projected onto the objects had an emotional and intellectual content.

There were also examples in the data of parents developing their ability to symbolise their own inner life in fantasy play. The ability to defend against anxiety and project onto objects in this way was also used by parents. Parent's unconscious material became symbolised through fantasy.

Dreaming was also a form of unconscious fantasy whereby the parent's unconscious material was projected onto dream symbols. Reflecting on the symbols in fantasy play and dreams gave parents access to their unconscious material. Reflection held the potential to bring the parent's repressed unconscious anxiety into conscious awareness, a process through which it

could be contained and transformed.

In the process of the observation of and reflection on fantasy play and dream symbols, parents' unconscious material became symbolised through language and concept formation. There was potential for the unconscious material to be transformed through conscious awareness when symbolically expressed through language. Language provided another means with which to symbolise schemas and is further discussed later in this section. Humour also provided a way of symbolising unconscious material through language.

Psycho-analytic theory suggests that using language to articulate and verbalise fantasies makes it less likely that the anxieties symbolised in fantasy will be acted out in reality. Symbolising fantasy in language perhaps channels the repressed emotion away from other means of expression.

Articulating and reflecting on the symbolic content of fantasy appeared to lessen the likelihood of the repressed material unconsciously motivating behaviour. Fantasies remaining at the non-verbal stage of play or dream symbol were perhaps more likely to be translated into unconscious motivation in behaviour.

The key to the parent's recognition of the child's spontaneous behaviour and fantasy play seemed to be with the formation of concepts with which this behaviour could be interpreted. This constituted the learning process that was discussed in detail in Section 2 of this chapter.

Observation of the child brought the child's behaviour into the parent's conscious awareness which provided opportunities for reflection on this behaviour. This gave the parent access to her own thought processes and through chains of associations to her

unconscious processes. For example, Sandra reflected on Alan's behaviour of smacking the other children, giving access to her associated thought processes and bringing into her conscious awareness anxieties that had perhaps previously been unconscious. Observation and reflection were the foundation of the parent's developmental process.

All the parents in the research appeared to be at some stage in developing a concept that there was always something to observe when watching a child although the pace of the development of the concept was individual. The concept was generalised to new situations reinforcing the process of observation. Observation of the child appeared to be linked to projection onto the child. At times, the child's behaviour generated interest and excitement in the parents indicating the projection of a positive emotional attitude. At other times, parents projected unconscious anxiety onto the child and their observations contained an emotional attitude in which this was reflected. The different emotional attitudes towards the child's observable behaviour perhaps indicated the multiple perspectives' parents held in their interpretations of the child's behaviour.

At times, the concept that there was always something to observe in the child appeared to motivate parents to watch their child with interest and expectation. Parents interpreted what the child might have been doing and thinking from her verbal and non-verbal behaviour. At such times, the parent's emotional attitude supported the extension and development of their existing meanings surrounding the child's behaviour and enhanced their conceptual development.

The research initially made a distinction in the conceptual

framework for the research between the parents' concept formation and projection as if they were separate processes. However, it later became obvious that all parents' concepts had an associated emotional attitude. This emotional attitude perhaps corresponded with the process of projection. In addition, parents' interpretations of the child's behaviour that had been interpreted as projection also could be seen to be associated with a concept.

The parents' interpretations of the child's behaviour contained a reflected emotional attitude that appeared to colour the meanings that they attached to the child's behaviour. Shared meanings created between parent and child appeared to have connections with the parent's unconscious material. For example, meanings William created around many examples of Peter's behaviour appeared to link to his unconscious separation anxiety.

The development of the child's schemas linked with the parent's unconscious material through the process of projection. Parents attached special significance to particular schemas in their child's behaviour perhaps because of a link with their unconscious content.

The parent's unconscious choice of the child's schemas for projection was perhaps very significant. Reflection on the parent's thoughts and feelings associated with the child's schemas was likely to lead to the parent's unconscious material. Parent's unconscious material appeared to link to specific schemas perhaps because of associations between the child's schema and their own previous experiences connected with this behaviour.

The exploration of feelings and thoughts surrounding the

child's schemas was perhaps one way of reaching the parent's unconscious material. The schema gave access to the parent's and child's intellectual development and in chains of associations, to their emotional experience.

The meanings the parents attached to the child's behaviour determined the child's emotional and intellectual growth. The child's act of behaviour and the parent's interpretation of it formed the core of the child's development.

Becoming conscious of the child's behaviour through observation, reflection and concept formation perhaps gave the parents access to the concepts with which they interpreted the behaviour and the emotional attitude with which it was associated. The parent's conceptualisation of the child's behaviour could have led to the integration of the associated projection into their conscious awareness, making it less likely to be acted out in unconscious motivation. The consciousization of the child's behaviour appeared to provide containment for parents' unconscious material.

The formation of concepts perhaps formed a defence for parents against being overwhelmed by the child's behaviour. The learning process perhaps described the build up of a series of defensive concepts that enabled the parents to defend against anxiety evoked by the child's behaviour. However, parents did seem to be in a process of transforming their unconscious anxiety in addition to defending against it.

The parents' formation of concepts enabled them to contain the child's anxiety rather than to be overwhelmed by it. Parents' concepts perhaps provided a defence that enabled them to contain anxiety that the child's behaviour evoked. A main feature of the

process of parenting appeared to be the parents' ability to contain the child's anxiety. This process was enhanced by the parents' concept formation.

In some instances, the parents' formation of concepts appeared to transform the meanings that they attributed to other examples of the child's behaviour. For example, Sandra developed a concept to interpret Alan's behaviour of, 'he doesn't understand, he's only a bairn,' which transformed other interpretations she made of Alan's behaviour. Her emotional attitude towards his behaviour also appeared to undergo a transformation. Sandra's changing patterns of thought connected with changes in her emotional attitude and resulted in a perspective change in the way in which she viewed Alan's behaviour.

This could perhaps be understood by viewing the concept as linked to projection. Articulating and reflecting on the child's behaviour involved the parent in focusing on their emotional attitudes in addition to their associated thoughts. When parents examined their attitudes and beliefs, there was a possibility that they would find alternative ways of understanding their experience.

The formation of concepts could be used by parents to hypothesise about future events in the process of the generalisation of the concept to new situations. Perspective changes occurred during the process of the generalisation of a concept. The concept appeared to become integrated in the parent's perception and to colour the way she perceived a situation.

The concept appeared to be a psychic structure

incorporating intellectual and emotional content. Emotional and intellectual development appeared to be linked in a holistic framework. The parent's whole self was involved in parenting the child that involved the integration of their thoughts and emotional attitudes.

The parents' concepts appeared to be a symbolic representation of their experience containing an inner emotional experience linked to external reality. Symbolising the concept through language appeared to have the potential to transform the parents' inner experience and its manifestation in their behaviour. Language gave parents an insight into their own inner life that otherwise would direct their behaviour in ways in which they may not have been consciously aware.

Through the processes of observation and reflection on the child's behaviour, parents became conscious of their associated thoughts and emotional attitudes. They had an opportunity to extend and develop their existing thinking, that is, to develop and generalise their concepts that formed the basis of their understanding of the child.

This was a process of empowerment as parents' own concepts had status and power. The parents' concepts were seen to direct and inform their behaviour towards the child. When parents' concepts of the child's development were extended and developed and generalised to new situations, the parent's relationship with the child was enhanced.

The development of concepts related to the child's spontaneous behaviour supported the parent's ability to respond to the child creatively. Concepts that were formed could be used by parents to inform their responses towards the child.

The parents developed specific concepts of the process of child development through observing the child's spontaneous play. For example, Alice and Tim developed a range of concepts associated with Wendy's behaviour of looking at books. Alice and Tim extended and developed their existing meanings surrounding Wendy's behaviour through the process of making further observations of and reflecting on Wendy's behaviour. The projection of mastery onto Wendy's behaviour was also reinforced through this process. There were many other examples of parents developing concepts of the child's behaviour that associated with the projection of mastery. An essential feature of the process of parenting appeared to be the projection of mastery onto the child's behaviour.

In addition, the parent's projection of mastery onto the child appeared to be associated with the development of the emotional attitude of mastery directed towards their own ability to parent their children. Perhaps the projection of positive emotional attitudes onto the child was connected with the parent's own developing self image.

As parents became empowered through this process, they were able to bring into consciousness issues surrounding their fear and powerlessness and its manifestation in their relationship with their child. The consciousization of parents' thoughts and feelings appeared to link the learning and therapeutic processes.

The concepts the parents formed of the child's behaviour were related in a number of different ways. In some cases, procedural concepts were formed which supported parents' understanding of their own learning process and unconscious processes, such as Sandra's concept that 'you learn by watching



bairns'. The development of procedural concepts reinforced the parent's process of the formation of declarative concepts through which an understanding of the child's learning process was developed. For example, William and Sally formed a declarative concept that Peter learned through 'trial and error' that became differentiated into concepts concerning Peter's development of specific schemas through his behaviour patterns. The development of these concepts enabled William and Sally to relate to Peter in increasingly sophisticated ways. An understanding of the child's learning process gave parents new motives in their interactions with them and provided containment for the child's anxieties expressed in their behaviour.

The current research built on parents' own experience through the elaboration of their meanings. The parents' learning process was linked to unconscious meanings that motivated their behaviour. The research data suggested that the parents' emotional and intellectual development was linked in this way. The consciousization of parents' thoughts and emotional attitudes surrounding the child's behaviour and the assimilation of appropriate organising concepts appeared to have the potential to create inner transformation. A change in parents' perspective created an increase in the quality of interactions between the parent and child as the developmental process of parenting gained momentum.

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