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University of Sydney

The impact of interactive systems on preadolescent children in out-of-school time. Issues and answers from multiple cases and diverse contexts.

A thesis submitted for admission to the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

by

Johanna Elizabeth Johns

University of Sydney

Sydney, New South Wales  
April, 2013



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6 March, 2013

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## Abstract

*Keywords:* childcare, learner identity formation, agency, schooling, preadolescent, network, transition

This research investigates the experiences of preadolescents in School Age Care contexts (popularly known as After-school Care) in New South Wales (NSW), Australia. The study finds that children primarily form identities by exploring and pursuing their interests. They need adults to facilitate this process because they lack the experience, resources and status to do so themselves. The adult–child care relationship thus conditions the efficiency and effectiveness of children’s aspirations.

The core concern of the study is learner identity formation by children in their approach to high school transition. The study responds to two current social concerns. First, how are children of school age best looked after in the hours when they are not at school and their parents are at work. Second, how can children be guided to stay at school until they matriculate, and not to drop out of school early. It is proposed that children’s potential depends on their capacity to build resilient learner identities through the support founded in generational networks.

This study makes use of multiple cases of children’s out-of-school experiences, taken from six different kinds of School Age Care in Greater Sydney, NSW. Grounded-Theory analysis is applied to data and information sourced from multiple methods including drawings, group interactions and face-to-face conversations. Based on the self-reports of children, the study considers the barriers inhibiting children’s learner identity formation. Scholarly discourse, media, reports and interviews with adult leaders at each field site provide commentary.

An argument is made for partnering across children's networks at the interface between schooling and the worlds children inhabit outside of school. Children are theoretically conceived as being invested in the process of their own skill building to become agents for their own best interests. The adult-child care relationship facilitates this process. It is argued that School Age Care, at the interface between school and home, has the potential to mediate between the various discontinuities found among the different contexts of childhood, particularly in the approach to the transition to high school.

Based on this, existing and new School Age Care policy is reviewed to recommend practical approaches to adult-child care relationship building and program planning. This includes the recommendation of new tools to generate data and information about the engagement of children in various activities. A methodology is modelled for building program-planning skills in School Age Care settings collaboratively with children.

These tools and methodologies respond to the vision of policy directions initiated at the care 'coalface' since January 2012. They are intended to generate both 'lag' and 'lead' guidance for the development of professional standards and for enriching the benefits to children in out-of-school contexts.

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## List of Abbreviations

AASC	Active After-School Communities
ACECQA	Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority
ATSI	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
CALD	culturally and linguistically diverse
CoFA	College of Fine Arts
DoCS	Department of Community Services
FSES	Full Service Extended Schools
ICSEA	Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage
JAS	The Johns Activity Spiral
LSP	Learning Support Professionals
NAPLAN	National Assessment Program—Literacy and Numeracy
NCLB	No Child Left Behind
NSW	New South Wales
PVEST	Phenomenological Variant of Ecological Systems Theory
PWS	Preparation for Work and Study
SEdS	Supplemental Educational Services
SES	socio-economic status
SSR	Sustained Silent Reading
TFA	Teach for America
TREC	‘Think’/ ‘Relax’/ ‘Exercise’/ ‘Create’
UK	United Kingdom
UNCRC	United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child

## Chapter 1. The ‘Self-righting’ Child

### 1.1. Introduction

Rates of participation by school-age children in after-school recreation, learning and care services during the past decade have recently accelerated as families seek reliable support for female workforce participation at an affordable cost. This thesis concerns one category of such facilitation -or family of events, objects, patterns, emotions or relationships- that is, School Age Care in NSW, as defined by Cartmel (2007). School Age Care services provide care, leisure and, since 2012, education for children aged five to 12 years before and after school, and during school vacations. Such services have become a key provider of formal care, with close to 300,000 daily participants across Australia, or almost 12 per cent of all five to 12-year-olds (Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations [DEEWR], 2011).

Only 56,000 children in Australia use alternative services to School Age Care (McNamara & Cassells, 2010). Eighty-eight per cent of families seeking care services considered School Age Care their main alternative (ABS, 2009). Seventy-eight per cent of these families were users of care services so they could work (DEEWR, 2012a). Although the cost to families of childcare has decreased (Office of Early Childhood Education and Child Care, 2010) and national participant numbers are nearing 1 million (Office of Early Childhood Education and Child Care, 2012a), preadolescents’ participation is falling proportionally (McNamara & Cassells, 2010). Despite government subsidies, families of disadvantaged children may be unable to afford School Age Care attendance fees, especially if there are several siblings. Moreover, disadvantaged children may have desultory alternative access to positive social

networks. Regional preadolescents in disadvantaged communities are especially poorly served by School Age Care. Close to 80 per cent of these services are concentrated in Greater Sydney (Cassells & Cowling, 2012; DEEWR, 2012b).

Generously government-funded, School Age Care services accept children aged five to 12 years. However, once children complete primary school, they are no longer eligible. To date, this has not drawn critical attention, as the overwhelming majority of School Age Care participants are under nine years old. Less than 10 per cent are aged between 10 and 12 years. This thesis problematises this poor representation of preadolescents (children aged between 10 and 12 years) in School Age Care. Their progression into default self-care means they are managing their own time use between school and home. This thesis problematizes this poor representation of preadolescents in School Age Care, linking their progression, by default, into self-care (managing their own time use between school and home), to risk factors known to inhibit learner identity formation with negative impacts on future-connectedness. Children need to develop a sense of their future lives, and of pathways that may lead them there.

Prior knowledge, albeit overwhelmingly of a practical nature, was the catalyst for how the research questions were framed. Indeed, prior knowledge motivated the entire project. Situated as this study is in a knowledge gap, a theoretically naïve position from which to understand the data might seem worth adopting, if only to attract attention to its exploratory nature. However, a novitiate standpoint in relation to the research questions would be practically disingenuous, as the researcher is a School Age Care worker of standing. This thesis was inspired by ‘coalface’ experience, and its execution was motivated by concerns about the relative status of the sector and the impact of this status on the care affordances available to children.

Since the introduction of the National Quality Framework, which references quality outcomes, School Age Care work has been mandated to take place at sites of learning. Previously, it presented its affordances as fun through opportunities for play, which are understood in the present research context as intrinsically motivated activities undertaken by choice, for enjoyment, with profound cultural and developmental implications (Fisher, 1987). This thesis thus deconstructs what the newly framed ‘learner’ role of preadolescents in School Age Care looks like, absent the clearly articulated outcomes of learning in the National Quality Standards that in other childhood contexts, especially schooling, govern curricula and program planning.

Accordingly, this thesis responds to the contextual interrelationships that situate School Age Care as fostering children’s identities as life-long learners. Preadolescents’ time use in care contexts does not appear in Australian socio-educational scholarly discourse referencing the approach to high school transition. Only a relatively small body of such research exists worldwide. Most such literature is preoccupied with school grades, albeit often framed by socialisation referents. Broadly, educational research fails to integrate psychosocial findings across childhood contexts (see for example, Fredricks, Blumenfeld & Paris, 2004; Libbey, 2004). Some notable exceptions include Thompson, Iachan, Overpeck, Ross and Gross (2006), who included the impact of neighbourhoods in their study; Gottfried’s (2013) large study, which showed the relationship between neighbourhood attributes and school attendance; Medrich, Roizin, Rubin and Buckley (1982), who linked children’s discretionary time and the contexts in which they spend it with life-long wellbeing and achievement; and Bonny, Britto, Klostermann, Hornung and Slap (2000), who speculated that associations must exist between non-school wellbeing deficits and disconnectedness with schooling, defined here as documented exposure to education in the context of school culture. Other studies

confirm that school connectedness is a function of broad contextual influences, such as socialisation beyond the school gates (Bond et al., 2007).

The approach of this thesis frames the interpretation of preadolescent experience in Ecology Systems Theory (as exemplified in Bookchin, 2005; Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Moen, Elder & Lüscher, 1995; Spencer, 1999; Spencer, Dupree & Hartmann, 1997; Swenson & Chaffin, 2006; Ungar, 2002; Van Petegem, Beyers, Vansteenkiste & Soenens, 2012). Specifically, the Phenomenological Variant of Ecological Systems Theory (PVEST) identifies as ‘self-righting’ the acceptations children negotiate out of the largely fragmented, contradictory, discontinuous and competing meanings that they form through experiencing the many and various contexts of childhood (Spencer et al., 1997). Examples of childhood contexts are schooling, family, recreational opportunities through club memberships, and most pertinently to this thesis, childcare settings. In this frame, Spencer’s ‘self-righting’ concept refers to her theory that children innately tend towards resolving and stabilising the tensions they experience as their attributes and backgrounds, like minority or socio-economic status (SES), are experienced as contextually discordant. Spencer calls these attributes phenomenological filters of wellbeing (M. B. Spencer, Dupree, & Hartmann, 1997; M B Spencer, Fegley, & Harpalani, 2003; Swanson, Cunningham, & Spencer, 2003). Continuous adaptive work (Friedlander, Lee & Bernardi, 2013) is about learning resilience in social environments whose boundaries keep changing and whose intersections with other contexts generate unpredictable or challenging possibilities. Children know they cannot remain children.

School Age Care is here framed as a childhood context whose boundaries are shared with other childhood habituations, among which home and school are central. Indeed, School Age Care is situated between home and school, intersecting these contexts, and partnering and conflicting with them as social tensions continuously redraw their

boundaries. The key operant of these transitional phenomena is time use. It is of core interest how children choose preferred activity and what values inform their choices. Children's time use is a window on the transformative processes of self-righting that define childhood and signal its end. In this light, how preadolescents approach and experience impending and compulsory high school transition is a highly significant preoccupation in this thesis.

The logic of Spencer's model was extended to induce the following propositions:

1. School Age Care is mutually responsible with other systems, especially family and schooling, for optimising children's learner identity formation in its activity practices. The implications that flow from this concern School Age Care supporting children to make time-use choices for self-righting.
2. School Age Care is mutually responsible with other systems, especially family and schooling, for building positive social networks in communities. Social network efficacy is indicated in the social structure of individuals and groups interdependently connected to each other. This is reflected in the key quality standard that School Age Care should facilitate adult-child relationships <sup>1</sup>.

In these respects, among others, the present research breaks new ground in scholarly discourse.

## **1.2. Definition of Terms**

The nomenclature typical in NSW, 'Out-of-School Hours Care', is termed 'School Age Care' in the present study. Out-of-school contexts offer structured activities that are organised by adults for children in specific times and places. In NSW, School Age Care settings include out-of-home care and family day care. Various types of School Age Care also operate in other countries, with reference made to aspects of these when

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.acecqa.gov.au/Relationships-with-children>



relevant to issues in NSW School Age Care. In the scope of this research, field data analysis of out-of-school contexts is limited to NSW School Age Care.

‘Self-righting’ (Spencer et al., 1997) encompasses processes of self-regulation for learner identity formation. ‘Learner identity’ refers to children’s self-concept in association with the long-term learning pathways typified in schooling and non-school contexts. ‘Network’ applies to contextualised socialisation processes. See the Glossary in Appendix 2 for a broader list of terminology.

### **1.3. The Research Space**

#### **1.3.1. Importance of the general research field.**

There is ample evidence in NSW of deleterious outcomes in middle childhood from circumstances inhibiting child access to appropriate quality time-use options outside of school. The litany of deficits recorded in submissions to the NSW Parliamentary Joint Committee on Children and Young People (2009b) evidence the nature of these deficits, among which lack of social skill and disaffection with schooling are critical risk factors limiting children’s future aspirational pursuits. Their implications reach into issues of policy planning, professional quality standards and costs to the nation <sup>2</sup>.

This study intentionally approaches School Age Care from a child perspective, drawing on discourse advocating children’s agency (for example, Corsaro, 2005; James, 2010; James & James, 2004; James, Jenks & Prout, 2005; Jenks, 2000; Mayall, 1999; Prout, 2005; Qvortrup, 2000, 2005). It is a perspective that illuminates children as invested in their own identity formation (Scott, 2000, p. 98; Veale, 2005, p. 253). In developing this perspective, assumptions are adopted from childhood ecology discourses, which frame multiple social elements in relation to one another (for

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<sup>2</sup>

[http://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/prod/parlament/committee.nsf/0/854a280c28be00a8ca25762600226dae/\\$FILE/9%20to%2014%20Report%20Volume%201.pdf](http://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/prod/parlament/committee.nsf/0/854a280c28be00a8ca25762600226dae/$FILE/9%20to%2014%20Report%20Volume%201.pdf)

example, Avison, 2010; Duerden, Taniguchi & Widmer, 2012; Garbarino, Burston, Raber, Russell & Crouter, 1978; Højgaard & Søndergaard, 2011; Janssen, 2009; Perlmutter, 1988; Rappaport, 1981; Spencer, Noll, Stoltzfus & Harpalani, 2001; Ungar, 2009; Weisner, 2005; West, Lewis & Currie, 2009). From among them, the idea that children have an innate tendency to resolve interfacing tensions between themselves and the contexts they encounter is most useful to the purpose of this study. This is explicated in Spencer et al.'s (1997) conceptualisation of wellbeing as a 'self-righting' project (see Figure 2.2). Children's motivation and rationale for the choices they make are interpreted in this thesis to express their instinctive need for continuous self-correction to adjust their standing relative to changing contextual norms (see, for example, Bottrell's examples of criminal activity, in (Bottrell, 2002, 2007; France, Bottrell, & Armstrong, 2012). The cumulative outcome for wellbeing of this continuous negotiation to self-right is children's progressive control over the formation of their personal identity. It is a complex and iterative process of trial and error in experiences that are generally legitimised and imposed by adults through adult-centric rationale, signalling the potential bias of adults relating to children.

At the same time, adults are also children's key partners in self-righting, as is evidenced in documentation of 'wraparound' interventions (Smith et al., 2004). Wraparound support relies on facilitating the agency of children to guide support from adults able to respond to children's self-righting needs. In practice, this has meant forming a 'team' of professionals in service of the best interests of children as defined by children themselves. Where wraparound has been successful, children were found more resilient in solving problems (Brookes & Kelly, 2009; Caston, 2011; Foster & Spencer, 2011; McCarthy, 2012; Trucco, Colder, Bowker & Wieczorek, 2011). In a similar vein, this thesis assumes children can learn how to be effective agents for their

own wellbeing by partnering across the generational divide. Successfully self-righting children find ways to resolve the contradictions and multiple meanings that appear when education and care, friendship and autonomy and discretionary and formal time use are at odds in children's experiences of them. Finding resolution involves learning to recognise key correctional 'moments' for adaptation. In the continuous project of identity formation, children must identify with learning. Becoming a learner is prerequisite to forming a resilient identity.

Children's reflections in the field articulate to an extent how problems consequent to these tensions play out, particularly in the context of the transformative changes on the cusp of adolescence that are known to pose risks for learner identity formation. Three contextual discontinuities putting learner identity formation at risk are problematised in this thesis:

1. Low rates of participation in School Age Care beyond the age of nine years
2. Failure of School Age Care to partner with schooling
3. Transition to high school.

The theoretical proposal that children can be at the centre of their own learner identity formation is practically audacious considering how disempowered they are from the perspective of what matters most in post-industrial societies like that in NSW. The benchmarks of competitive economies are growth, an expanding workforce and innovations that create new markets. By definition and statute, the United Nations (1989) distinguishes childhoods by their unproductive dependency. In this scheme, children are not useful agents, but nascent embodiments of future prosumption. This thesis aims to persuade that the skills children acquire to facilitate their agentic identity formation comprise a future asset in which macro-objectives should be invested. It is invalid to ignore children in macro-economic priorities (Bourdillon, Levison, Myers &

White, 2010). Nevertheless, they are ignored, while macro-imperatives override and conflict with the needs of children and their families.

***1.3.1.1. Low rates of participation in School Age Care beyond the age of nine years.***

Stakeholders in NSW childhoods, such as parents, School Age Care practitioners and children in School Age Care, strongly challenged the paucity of discretionary time-use provision for preadolescents in their submissions to the NSW Parliamentary Joint Committee on Children and Young People (Barone, 2008; Fairfield City Council, 2008; Malcolm, 2008; Mukherjee, 2008; Network of Community Activities, 2008; NSW Parliamentary Joint Committee on Children and Young People, 2009b; Robinson, 2008; Voigt, 2008; Woodruff, 2008). Their reports were sufficiently concerning such that the Australian Federal Government assigned the new Commission for Children and Young People to advocate for them. Meanwhile, private-sector provisions are proliferating in the policy and knowledge gap. For example, academic coaching and tutoring is a massive, billion-dollar ‘shadow’ industry in school-age activity provision, the outcomes of which have not been rigorously researched (Australian Tutoring Association, 2011a, 2011b). Avoiding acknowledgement of entrepreneurial organisations capitalising on unmet need, the peak representative body for NSW School Age Care, Network of Community Activities has not engaged in partnerships with stakeholders supportive of schooling objectives, which new regulatory standards since 2012 specifically advocate as a quality standard. The former vision in School Age Care of providing ‘play and creativity’, was not rigorously researched. Nor are there any peer-reviewed studies known to date that compare, contrast or evaluate the quality of NSW preadolescents’ non-school time use, or that characterise their agency out of, and inside, the structures intended to scaffold it.

Moreover, no studies have been identified that inquire why Sydney School Age Care attracts proportionally fewer children to its services than do programs in Melbourne or Brisbane. It also remains unknown what NSW children's time-use needs, choices and preferences are for partnering with adults in program planning.

Currently, there are no peer-reviewed, rigorously evaluated public-access services specifically for preadolescents in NSW. Peer-reviewed investigations of the motivation and engagement dynamics of participation in School Age Care did not exist until Hurst's (2013) study linking lack of differential programming in Victorian School Age Care with preadolescents' impoverished experiences of marginalisation in services dominated by five to eight-year-old participants. In Queensland, Simoncini (Simoncini, 2010; Simoncini, Caltabiano, & Lasen, 2012) has been active in proposing associations between participation in School Age Care and behavioural problems in a large sample from non-disadvantaged families. She calls for urgent increased support of School Age Care staff so that they can build positive relationships with children. Simoncini (Simoncini & Caltabiano, 2011) has also explored the relationship between mothers' satisfaction with how they use School Age Care and children's psychosocial wellbeing. In South Australia, research involving parent perceptions of School Age Care was unsuccessful in obtaining insight into quality issues (Winefield et al., 2011). Few Australian School Age Care program initiatives are mentioned in scholarly discourse, with 'Active After-School Communities' (AASC) being an exception (AASC, 2011; Olds, Tomkinson, Ferrar & Maher, 2010).

### ***1.3.1.2. Failure of School Age Care to partner with schooling.***

The separation of schooling from care services in NSW is damaging for identity formation because it causes distortion in how places and spaces for learning are valued in childhood. Schools in NSW operate on the premise that they are the exclusive

providers of education, and to date School Age Care has boasted their provisions as respites from schooling. School Age Care is here deconstructed as a potential moderator of educational outcomes on the basis that historic cultural and political barriers, which to date have restricted its charter, can be overcome. School Age Care still maintains its insulation from school, although new national benchmarks involve forging partnerships with schools. School Age Care has never considered its role as to educate children. Recent statutory change placing learning central to quality standards and renaming workers as educators signals that School Age Care must shift its mission and adapt its values. It is a confusing transitional process for practitioners, as Hurst (2013) argues in pointing out that compliance with safety standards still overrides the requirement for innovative change to programs to render them educational.

Research shows that learning occurs wherever children and adults positively interact (den Brok, van Tartwijk, Wubbels & Veldman, 2010; Fredricks, Hackett & Bregman, 2010; Garey, 2002; Hallinan, 2008; Johansson, 2011; Mahoney, Schweder & Stattin, 2002; Reio, Marcus & Sanders-Reio, 2009; Taylor, 2005; Ungar, 2004). This study argues that School Age Care is responsible for fostering engagement with education in a proposed extended charter across its boundaries with schools and families. Interestingly, the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) website references the Western Australian and Australian Capital Territory Primary School Curricula among the frameworks that School Age Care provisions should access for program guidance (ACECQA, 2012a; Curriculum Renewal Taskforce, 2008; The School Curriculum and Standards Authority, 1998).

Cartmel (2007, 2010) has provided the most recent overview of School Age Care in Australia, drawing attention to care quality and the alienation of schooling in care services. Noting the lack of research on School Age Care, Cartmel (2010) argues, as do

Simoncini (2010) and Hurst (2013), that children's discretionary time use must be accorded intrinsic value in relation to their wellbeing to direct appropriate focus on family-school-care partnering.

Academic and developmental outcomes of structured discretionary time proliferate in the United States' (US) 'after-school' discourse (Afterschool Alliance, 2008d; Anderson-Butcher et al., 2003; Arbreton, Bradshaw, Metz, Sheldon & Pepper, 2008; Baker, 2002; Birmingham, Pechman, Russell & Mielke, 2005; Black, Doolittle, Zhu, Unterman & Grossman, 2008). Significant research also exists in the United Kingdom (UK), where, for example, the National Full Service Extended Schools (FSES) initiative is commended as a core school business of bridging schooling and care (Cummings et al., 2007).

Key studies agree that adult-child relationships, fostered across childhood contexts, are critical for children's long-term retention in learning pathways (Garey, 2002; Hallinan, 2008; Mahoney, Eccles & Larson, 2004; Mahoney et al., 2002; Montandon & Osiek, 1998; Morrow, 2005; Mayall 2005a; Reio et al., 2009; Reunamo & Nurmilaakso, 2007; Rhodes, Grossman & Resch, 2000; Tartas & Perret-Clermont, 2008; Ungar, 2004; Vandebroek & Bouverne-De-Bie, 2006; Wertsch, 2008). Very recently, the National Centre for Social and Economic Modelling began seriously to report data on the Australian School Age Care sector (Cassells & Cowling, 2012; Cassells & McNamara, 2006; Doiron & Kalb, 2005; Hand & Baxter, 2012; McNamara & Cassells, 2011). Carroll and Purdie (2007) investigated extracurricular structured activities that are not part of school curricula, but supportive of schooling objectives. They linked these with 'self-righting' children. Others have found that School Age Care promotes sport (Spittlea, O'Mearab, Garnhama & Kerrc, 2008). For example, Galaskiewicz, Mayorova and Duckles (2013) recently published their study of children's time use on Saturdays,

and Thompson, Cooper, Flanagan, Crawford and Worsley (2006) advocated School Age Care for fostering children's physical wellbeing in Victoria. Meanwhile, promising initiatives in School Age Care, such as the computer project described by Masters (2007), have failed to gain currency in NSW. This is despite recommendations such as that of Vered (2001), whose study of Internet affordances in South Australian School Age Care from an education-bridging perspective submitted that holistic approaches are critical for children's wellbeing, especially for disadvantaged children (see also Smith, Skrbis & Western, 2012 on Internet access in Queensland, and Bullock, Muschamp, Ridge & Wikeley, 2010).

This section has illustrated the consensus among researchers in the field of preadolescent childcare that there is significant need for child-centric enrichment of School Age Care services in NSW. An outline of the assumptions guiding the present research highlights its child-centric perspective on agency and the importance of intergenerational partnership, to prioritise identity formation in a learning framework. The discontinuities that exist between schools, School Age Care services, academic coaching, private arts and sports education providers have been noted. To date no studies exist on NSW School Age Care, and only a few recent Australian studies have been undertaken. The implications of failures to form partnerships between schools in NSW and School Age Care have been compared with partnership approaches in the US.

#### ***1.3.1.3. Transition to high school.***

There is a gap in knowledge about how time use relates to children's agency during the period of high school transition. The meanings of out-of-school experience, and how preadolescents value it, have not been addressed in NSW. Children's needs, choices and preferences in School Age Care have not been researched. The effects of School Age



Care program content on learning and developmental outcomes have not been rigorously evaluated. What engages preadolescents in School Age Care is unknown.

In isolating its concerns from children's school lives, School Age Care has failed to take interest in the following issues and their implications for children's discretionary time:

1. Devolution of schools' responsibility for children's non-school time (Gifford, 1992)
2. Schools' expectations that parents take responsibility for supporting their children's academic and extracurricular endeavours, and make financial and in-kind contribution to school equipment and infrastructure (Ziomek-Daigle, 2010)
3. Discontinuity of schooling with non-school learning (Skerrett & Bomer, 2011; Lingard & Mills, 2010)
4. Deleterious influences of schooling on child and family wellbeing (Forsberg, 2007; Welch & Payne, 2012).

Further, children's anticipation of negotiating high school transition has not been investigated with preadolescents. No research has explored the links between School Age Care participation and socialisation, learning, developmental outcomes or aspiration.

### **1.3.2. The need for this study.**

Submissions to the NSW Parliamentary Joint Committee on Children and Young People (2009b) provide ample evidence of the high need for research on time-use issues among the preadolescent cohort. The 'Convention on the Rights of the Child' (United Nations, 1989) sets the end of childhood at 18 years of age. Children aged between 9 and 14 years, who are traversing preadolescence into early adolescence, are widely

perceived as vulnerable, as exemplified in the following excerpts from reports on the situation of preadolescents in NSW by various agencies:

‘Boredom and lack of adequate transport and community facilities ... increasing “racial tensions”. Families of this age group need parent training’ (Voigt, 2008).

‘School, family or mental health issues are often not addressed until intensive support is required in the teenage years’ (Woodruff, 2008).

‘Parents often are overwhelmed ... often children go unsupervised. ... some of the children in this age bracket are the carers of even younger children’ (Malcolm, 2008).

‘The prevalence of overweight and obesity has increased in transition from primary school to secondary school, ... high school became hard and relationships with teachers and peers changed. Many of this group eventually leave school early’ (Mukherjee, 2008).

‘Social acceptance among their peers, lack of access to school counsellors, bullying, discrimination and an unsupportive home situation which makes study hard. ... these difficulties prove too great and they leave school. They report often they do not have keys to get in after school ... workers had 50 requests for assistance by this age group (8–11 years) during the month of November. ... The majority of the young people were either Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) or from a culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) background. ... we need to provide lunch on all the activities as often young people do not have their own or money to buy their own’ (Robinson, 2008).

‘Transition to high school is extremely challenging ... Criminal behaviour from this age group is common and is often attributed to their supposed feelings of immunity because of their age. ... Alcohol use amongst this age group is very high ... young people in this age group in some towns have stated that they have been sexually abused, many others are exposed to Domestic Violence. ... High schools are much more likely to entail more

travel (sometimes hours), larger class sizes, exposure to anti-social behaviour, drug use and anonymity. ... The school drop-off rate is particularly bad amongst Aboriginal populations, the majority of which do not make it past year 9 at the local high schools. Disadvantage is also far worse for young people who live in isolated areas. ... they do not have access to the internet' (Wilkinson, 2008).

New policy implementation by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR, 2011) constitutes a partial response to some of these broad-ranging issues in calling for a 'learning' focus in School Age Care. This study presents important theoretical and practical arguments for the mediating potential of School Age Care to support this focus, which implies a cultural shift in its service assumptions. Of key importance, this study seeks children's contributions to these arguments and illuminates the impoverished condition of School Age Care services.

#### **1.4. Aims of the Present Research and the Nature of the Research**

##### **Questions**

Although children are capable agents in the interests of their wellbeing (Seiffge-Krenke et al., 2012), most scholarly evaluations of child care outcomes use adult-centric indicators. Children's insights have not been explored in peer-reviewed School Age Care discourses in NSW, despite this perspective being potentially invaluable to implementing effective support during children's approach to school transition. Preadolescents generate new knowledge through peer networks and online technologies (So, Seow & Looi, 2009). Their choices reflect what engages them outside school and how they understand their own best functioning in relation to the complex and conflicting processes among the worlds that children negotiate; namely, schooling, social networks, play and work.

Accordingly, insight was sought from children to illuminate the following questions:

1. How do children of different ages value time use?
2. What potential quality of activity choice is achievable that may support children's needs differentially through childhood and high school transition?
3. What are the circumstances of preadolescents outside school and home?
4. How do they use their out-of-school time?
5. What implicit challenges are to be anticipated on approach to high school transition?

The early chapters in this thesis traverse theoretical and methodology issues relevant to the research aims and rationale. The methodological practices of Grounded-Theory used in analysis guide its organisation. These practices are based on an approach initiated by Strauss and Corbin (1998a) and reframed in Thornberg's (2012c) 'informed' researcher. Authority for *a priori* theoretical standpoints adopted here is claimed on these bases.

The concomitant ideation development with data generation, management and analysis distinguishes Grounded-Theory in its induction of hypotheses. In this process, the researcher has listened to and observed children's reflections on their out-of-school experiences and has made sense of these by finding relationships between children's lives and the social frameworks in which they live. Conceptualisation from children's reflections in the present process has culminated in the propositional new theoretical model. It used Grounded-Theory to construct a relationship (Charmaz, 2009) between School Age Care and the transformative work children do by 'self-righting' through transitional experience. Appropriately, facilitative support policies and practices are later deductively advocated based on this relationship. These may guide how children are best looked after when they are not at school.

Just as Grounded-Theory implies a logical induction process, this report is structured to deliberate on a diversely sourced data-driven pathway towards theoretical

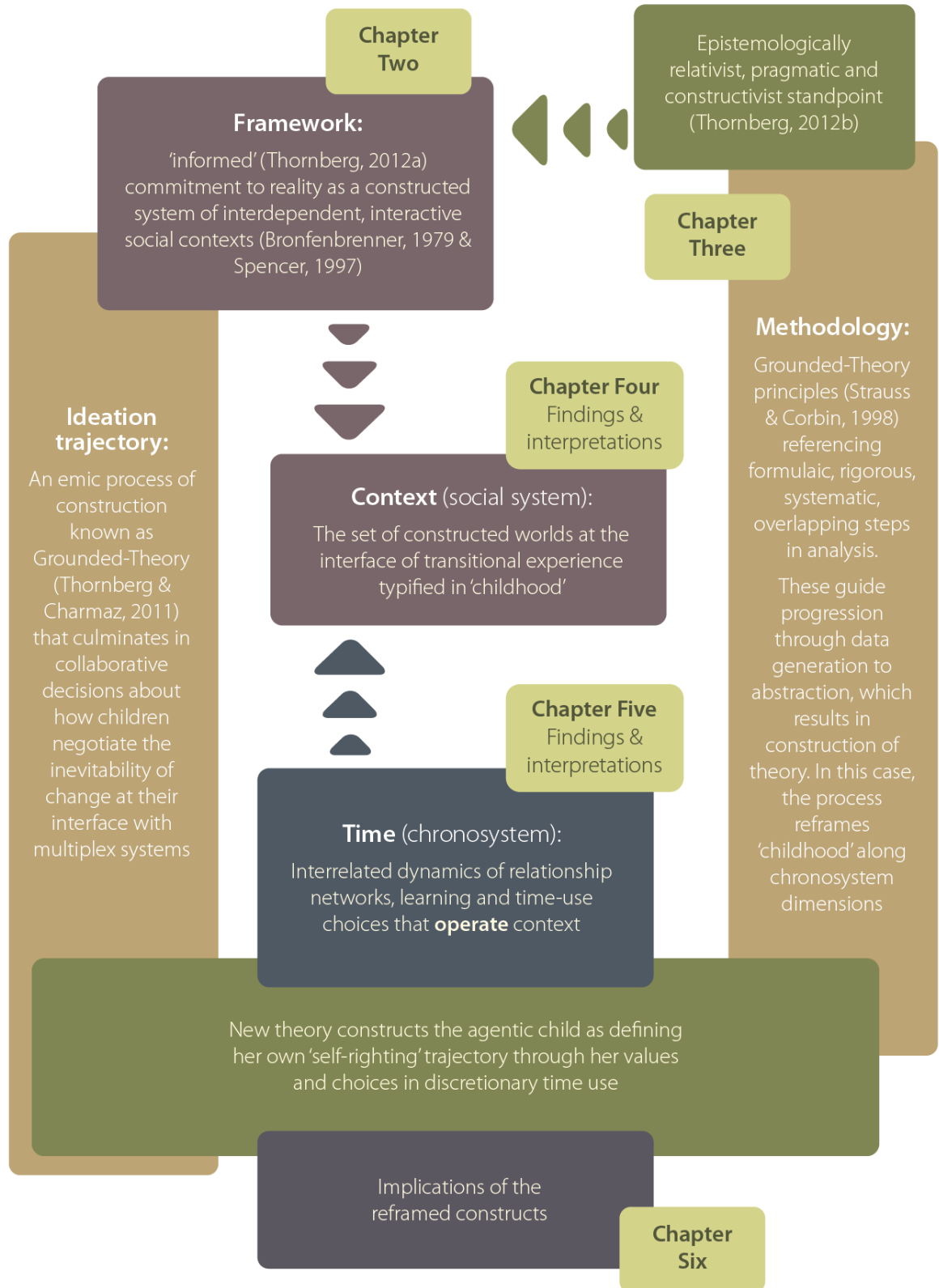
resolution (see Figure 1.1). While this can only come about by children empowering their own best interests, children are constrained in adult-centric worlds in which they are inextricably dependent on external decisions for their wellbeing. The tension inherent in realising optimal childhood outcomes is thus manifest in the reader's own contextual embeddedness in the issue, which references the extent to which the reader is interconnected with children and adults in their social networks.

Chapter 2 is an orientation to the guiding framework and describes the derivation of an ecology systems model. Chapter 3 demonstrates how theory and methodology informed each other in an evolving process of information gathering that ranked scholarly discourse at the same status as field data. Subsequent chapters are thus organised thematically to reflect the key elements of the theoretical model. Findings arise from the dual-source analysis of scholarly literature alongside field data.

Chapter 4 presents the contextual findings. They relate to macro-level policy and institutional influences on child experience and to the systems with which the child interfaces at the micro-level; namely, schooling, family and the system of child agency. In theoretical social ecologies, at the micro-level, human social interactions and agency operate on a small-scale (see Figure 2.1). Chapter 5 is about the operants of these contextual systems; that is, socialisation, learning and time-use choices.

Chapter 6 draws conclusions from the key findings, and considers their significance for further research. Also in Chapter 6, the implications of the study are discussed relative to policy, planning and practice principles in School Age Care provision. These implications are grounded in the relevance of ongoing research and evidence-based practice for application 'at the coalface' by workers engaging directly with children.

The thesis concludes by summing up its meaning in a final review of associations among transition, transformation and identity. Figure 1.1 outlines the structure of the thesis and gives a synopsis of each chapter.



*Figure 1.1.* Diagram of report structure showing findings and interpretations integrated within 'Ecology Systems'.  
 The significance accorded the operational status of the chronosystem distinguishes the present research from others using this theoretical frame.

## 2.1. Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to describe why the theoretical framework for this study was chosen, and how it evolved through the researcher's increasing exposure to the scholarly literature. The outcome is the author's theoretical model (see Figure 2.3), which guides the structure of the analytic process and how it is reported. The model 'signposts' the thesis, and is further clarified and emphasised by the use of 'key ideas' as sentry-markers in Chapters 4 and 5, correlating the thematic and theoretical dimensions of the findings. The theoretical model is therefore the conceptual cornerstone from which the entire world of school-age children is here constructed.

The standpoint of this thesis is predicated on the premise that children are competent agents for their own best interests (Spencer, 1999; Spencer et al., 1997). They are capable of identifying and achieving their interests (Benner & Graham, 2009; Gfellner & Armstrong, 2012), even as contextual conditions impact the quality of their outcomes. Children from poor backgrounds, for example, may fail to self-right if support for their development of agentic resilience is inaccessible to them due to lack of government support in disadvantaged neighbourhoods. It is for this reason that poor children potentially have most to gain from participating in state-sponsored professional provisions; and specifically, School Age Care. The wider social impact of failures of support for children's positive outcomes is significant, considering three in 20 children live in jobless families, and that 25 per cent of Australia's unemployed are 15–24 years old ("Social inclusion in Australia: How Australia is faring 2012 ", 2012). Only three per cent of participants in School Age Care are disadvantaged (Cassells & Cowling, 2012). Children who most need structured activity support in NSW do not receive the benefits that School Age Care services are funded to provide, in part because they are



unaware of their entitlements (Maiden, 2011) and how they might benefit from participating, or do not live close enough to a service, especially in regional areas.

Becoming agentic involves mastering complex skill sets such as ‘therapeutic selfhood’ (Silva, 2012). Relational principles are fundamental to building these skills. They are teachable and able to be learned. It requires skill to articulate formative and consistent identities of one’s own (Moran, Bundick, Malin & Reilly, 2013). When qualified, caring adults believe in children’s competence for agency, they empower them to value particular aspects of themselves. On this basis, children learn to respect the identities they form. The author’s theoretical model is based on respect for children’s capacities to form their own identities. It deconstructs the operants involved in doing so, to characterise the interrelated identity work children do along the dimensions of learning, network building and choices of time use. These three processes are theorised to be the self-righting operants of interdependent contextual systems. Childhood’s habitual contexts are vehicles for children to connect the relative usefulness of new knowledge they acquire to problems they are faced with in practice.

This thesis is post-structural as exemplified in Deleuze (Colebrook, 2002), Derrida (Flint, 2009) and Foucault (1982). These thinkers favour multiplex, interdependent, partial, subjective, discontinuous, local and specific meanings that proliferate outside the control of unitary consciousness (Liamputtong, 2007; Valsiner, 2006), much as Barthes first proposed in *The Death of the Author* (Barthes, 1967). In the present study, in line with semiotic ‘signifier’ ideation (Saussure & Baskin, 2011), the self is a system, not a bounded entity with a singular existence. This study is post-structural in proposing factors in identity formation as inter-subjective. Multifaceted childhoods are inclusively interpreted. Context is key to meanings (Poster, 1989). Contradictory data instances preserve the instability needed for contextualised understandings to emerge.

## 2.2. Ecology

A cluster of theoretical relational systems informs the author's theoretical model, and each of them is described briefly in this chapter. Child agency being the theorised identity-forming system (Hemming & Madge, 2011), the aim of the author's model is to guide how children are understood exercising their agency.

The model signifies continuous transition. Its intention is to designate the infinite possibilities in change as a chronosystem. Transitions occur as children progress through stages in the life span. This thesis addresses how transition affects preadolescents from the perspective of their time use between school and home.

The derivation of the author's theoretical model is outlined here. The author is indebted to Bronfenbrenner (1977), who framed childhood as a temporal negotiation between socio-cultural influence and the compelling trajectories of multiplex transitions (Bronfenbrenner, 1977; Malysiak, 1997; Parke, 1988; Spencer, 1990; Tietjen, 1989; Tudge, 2008; Ungar, 2008). The negotiation is resolved in balancing social conformity and autonomy. The author's model evolved over time, throughout the long process of reading scholarly discourse, planning and conducting field events, thinking about children's drawings, their participation and analysing seemingly unrelated ideas to make sense of them gradually by discerning patterns among them. These patterns were likely to appear at the intersection of opposite themes, like autonomy and agency, where they prompted questions about the differences between them. Themes are designations of clusters of contexts, and ideas hold latent meaning.

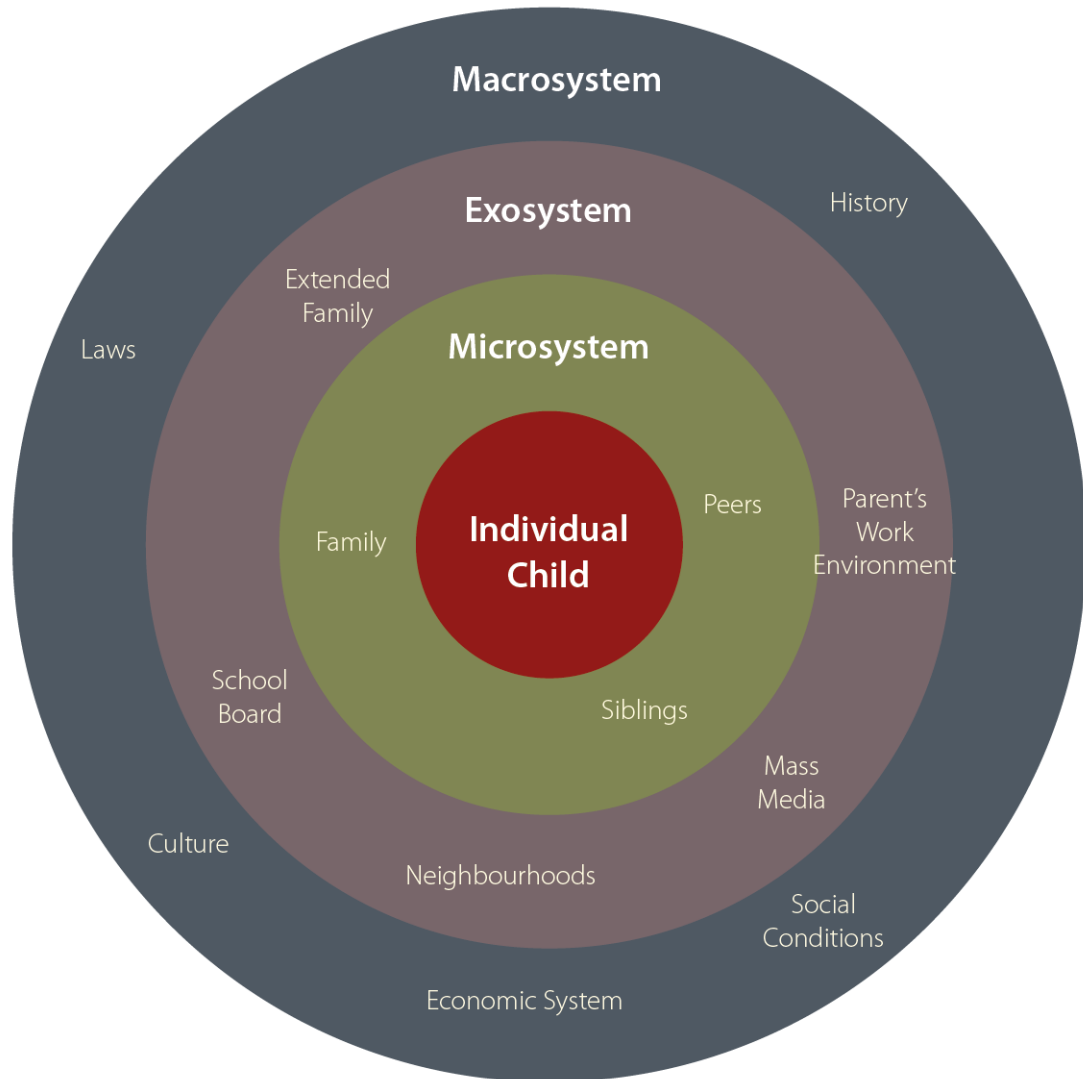
The following sub-sections discuss how assumptions developed that caused particular patterns of ideas to be characterised. These characterisations in turn invoked the particular questions these ideas implied, and influenced the choice of perspectives to answer these questions.

### **2.2.1. Relational assumptions.**

This thesis conceptualises reality in terms of interdependent contexts. For example, school and home are understood as influential on each other. Relational assumptions informing the theoretical model are grounded in constructivist thinking within a multi-perspective worldview. Constructivism involves hands-on knowledge acquisition through solving problems that reference children's prior knowledge. It is based on the assumption that the purpose of learning is for children to construct their own meanings through reflecting on experiences that enable them to form, and continuously revise, their worldviews. It means that children must be part of assessing their own learning, which contrasts with most formal testing.

The logic of this argument originates in Wittgenstein's refutation of context-free rationality (Sayers, 1987). Although he claimed that absolutist positions are symptomatic of 'craving', he validated human attachment to belief systems explicative of a particular social environment.

Eco-social theory extends from Wittgenstein, whose concepts of relatedness and relativity of systems foreshadowed Bronfenbrenner's contextualised interactivity model (see Figure 2.1). The continuum he proposed subjectively and flexibly creates and adapts relationships among systems, which in turn affects the conflicted interests of State systems in social life.



*Figure 2.1.* Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Model, describing the set of nested environmental influences on a child (Glaser, 1998).

Bronfenbrenner broke new ground when he bio-ecologically constructed context as the key developmental operative (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). Significantly, in the first instance, Bronfenbrenner introduced a bifurcation in childhood theory. He problematised macro-systems through paying attention to proximal processes of social networking at the 'micro' dimension of rationality. In Bronfenbrenner's universe, development is constructed outwards, from micro-activity to macro-policy (Bronfenbrenner, 1999; Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994; Tudge & Hogan, 2005).

Secondly, contexts are depicted to effect identity formation at the intersections of their boundaries. For example, in care settings, children construct their 'self' by interpreting qualities of convocation among School Age Care educators, parents, teachers and peers, as it is manifested in their activity practices.

Thirdly, social ecologies are defined by their endlessly changing and evolving nature. This is illustrated for example in the tensions that arise as the concept of 'family' is impacted in multiplex ways by changing workforce participation, challenging and confusing gender roles, generational hierarchies, consumption habits and leisure. These tensions arise at the intersection of human need for continuity. On the one hand, continuity is the most important factor in the formation of a personal identity. On the other, it is only through negotiating, often confronting, change that identity can manifest. This thesis argues that children require affinity with change negotiation as a way of life. Successful negotiators of change are able to identify values and practices that are core to their needs, and can shape the relevance of pursuing them through changing circumstances and across differently changing contexts. Successful negotiators are engaged in life-long reflection on understanding the evolving 'colours' of their values as the meanings of practices change. In this thesis, this process is known as learner identity formation. It is argued to be the critical factor for wellbeing.

### **2.2.2. Social networks.**

As socialisation is one of the three operants of social contextual systems alongside learning and time-use choices, it is highlighted here among several theoretical disciplines that are indebted to Bronfenbrenner's work (Wasserman & Faust, 1994). Children's social acumen is to an extent reflected in the affiliation patterns, or social networks, in which they are embedded. It is through negotiation with friends, family and professional adults that children obtain access to the instrumental and affective

resources they need. The social network as a collective operates beliefs and controls cultural processes through its power over access to information (Gifford-Smith & Brownell, 2003; McPherson, Smith-Lovin & Cook, 2001). Social networks are cultures in themselves; children's challenge in shaping them draws on cultural as much as affective imperatives. Operating networks efficaciously requires intelligence and acute social skill. Though beyond the scope of this thesis, network analysis on the field data would relativise the resource status among children, to discover the effects of activity events on their acquisition of cognitive and, implicitly, social skills (McHugh, Horner, Colditz, & Wallace, 2012).

This is important because the fundamental affordance of School Age Care is a setting in which activity events are staged. The care situation comprises a series of events that may be empirically documented. Activity practices must be inferred from events because they cannot be observed. Activity events are the core business of School Age Care.. In this thesis, activities, events and practices are distinguished. Activities comprise an important part of an event. Activity practices are the basic unit of a social theory of School Age Care environments, which links children's activities with the social structures that they influence and in which they are embedded. Activity practices are inferred from events through the activities in which children and adults participate inside the temporal locality of School Age Care.

Tietjen's (1982) work depicted activity events as temporal developmental contexts. Shared meanings in activity practices change and with them, so does the cultural life of communities (Lemke, 2000). As they become more agentic, children's social networks are transformed. Habituated affiliations weaken because the meanings of activities are no longer shared, and experiential meaning becomes individuating. Change in communal geographies exacerbates this effect. Importantly, children's susceptibility to

individuation is as agentic a choice as it is a function of network influence (Gifford-Smith & Brownell, 2003; Jackson & Watts, 2002).

Gatekeepers like School Age Care regulate activity events by framing them in enforced safety and quality standards. Their purpose is to control how the meanings of these activity events are construed. For example, Garbarino et al. (1978) used Bronfenbrenner's framework to qualify the importance of peers relative to adult-child relationships in this respect (see also Benner & Graham, 2009). Children shape their networks based on need. Furman and Buhrmester's (1985) schema of 10 relationship qualities is a tool for mapping changes in children's quest for intimacy. Adults in School Age Care settings play a mediating role in shaping children's networks, but more significantly, they are key subjects of children's profoundly meaningful affiliation choices.

### **2.2.3. The 'new sociology of childhood'.**

Interest in network affiliation, as in the other operants of childhood contexts, namely learning and time use choice, is consistently theorised in this thesis from the fundamental eco-social theoretical standpoint of the child as central actor in School Age Care (Christensen & Prout, 2005; James & Prout, 1997; Matthews, 2007; Mayall, 2005b; Miller, 2005; Shanahan, 2007). Ecology paradigms relativise childhood (Redmond, 2008) by linking children's lived experiences to the choices they are empowered to make within contextual constraints. The new sociology of childhood constructs the child as a challenge to generational hierarchy. On the basis that only children can be authentic for their own best interests, knowledge is generated in the contradictory tensions of autonomy and dependence that characterise intergenerational relationships. Majority-minority world contexts influence this tension differently, relativising typically Western childhood norms.

#### **2.2.4. Phenomenological Variant of Ecological Systems Theory: ‘Self-righting’.**

Spencer’s (1999) important theoretical contribution in her humanist extension beyond Bronfenbrenner’s work through psychosocial modelling is the inherent power she discerns in the drive children innately possess towards self-actualisation and self-invention (see Figure 2.2). Childhood and adulthood are disjunct, regardless of how contentious their theoretical constructions are (Fowler, 2013; Silva, 2012). The boundary between them is authenticated in culture, ethics and the law. Its salient distinction resides in children’s obviated social value. Fundamentally, conditions of childhood are subject to adult control over children’s livelihoods and choices. Yet the two are inexorably in each other’s thrall on the being–becoming spectrum. Self-righting sums up Spencer’s contribution to resolving this tension. She theorises that, socially and politically, children’s tendency is towards making constructive efforts to succeed in a future that his or her adult network will not outlive. Spencer’s self-righting concept profoundly touches the certainty of that implicit and impending power. Her humanism lends optimism and seriousness to respect for children’s irresistible, persistent impulse to bear the yoke of adult responsibility and to celebrate infinite possibility in doing so. The present study shares this standpoint.

PVEST’s placement of the agentic child at the acme of an ecology systems model is a radical and, from a post-industrial perspective, audacious proposition. It is theoretical because in contemporary social life the imbalance of child–adult power is inevitably resolved through subsumption to adult-centric interests. Spencer’s achievement is to inference identity formation from beyond concession to these interests. The theoretical child ‘driver’ of an entire social ecology clarifies the intent informing calls to respect children’s roles in their own development. Spencer’s work (for example, 1999) bridges the limits of developmental psychology (Burman, 2012) and of statutory challenge to



parent power (Grugel, 2012), to envisage a bolder and more imaginative vision of child agency than the protection–liberation spectrum upon which both disciplines and institutions typically deliberate.

Agency operates those parts of themselves that children hide or highlight, respondent to the culture they embrace or reject. For example, in situations like ‘the hood’ in the US,<sup>3</sup> where academic ‘smarts’ might be stigmatised, hidden identity is a strategy of resilience (Archer, 2012; Brighenti, 2011; Cunningham, Hurley, Foney & Hayes, 2002; Duke, Borowsky & Pettingell, 2012; Holligana & Deucharb, 2009; Ingram, 2011; Leonard, 2010). The repeated success of children’s particular strategic responses renders these responses identity confirming.

This variant on eco-social theory profoundly influences the present thesis that preadolescents’ use of time matters. Its approach identifies where intervention can best benefit children’s resilience. Spencer is convincing that transition to adolescence is the critical life-stage at which to intervene, because it coincides with a surge in self-awareness in the wake of broadening and subjectively dramatic experiences (Spencer, 1999, p. 48; Spencer et al., 1997, p. 831). At no other time, Spencer argues, are the frequency and variety of changes so fast and intense. This is when identity is confirmed and consolidated. At this phase, risk and resilience are both most predictive, making children vulnerable to both disaffection and optimism. Children thus need to be supported through this multiplex transition in ways that build, rather than limit, their agency.

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<sup>3</sup> the neighbourhood, slang.

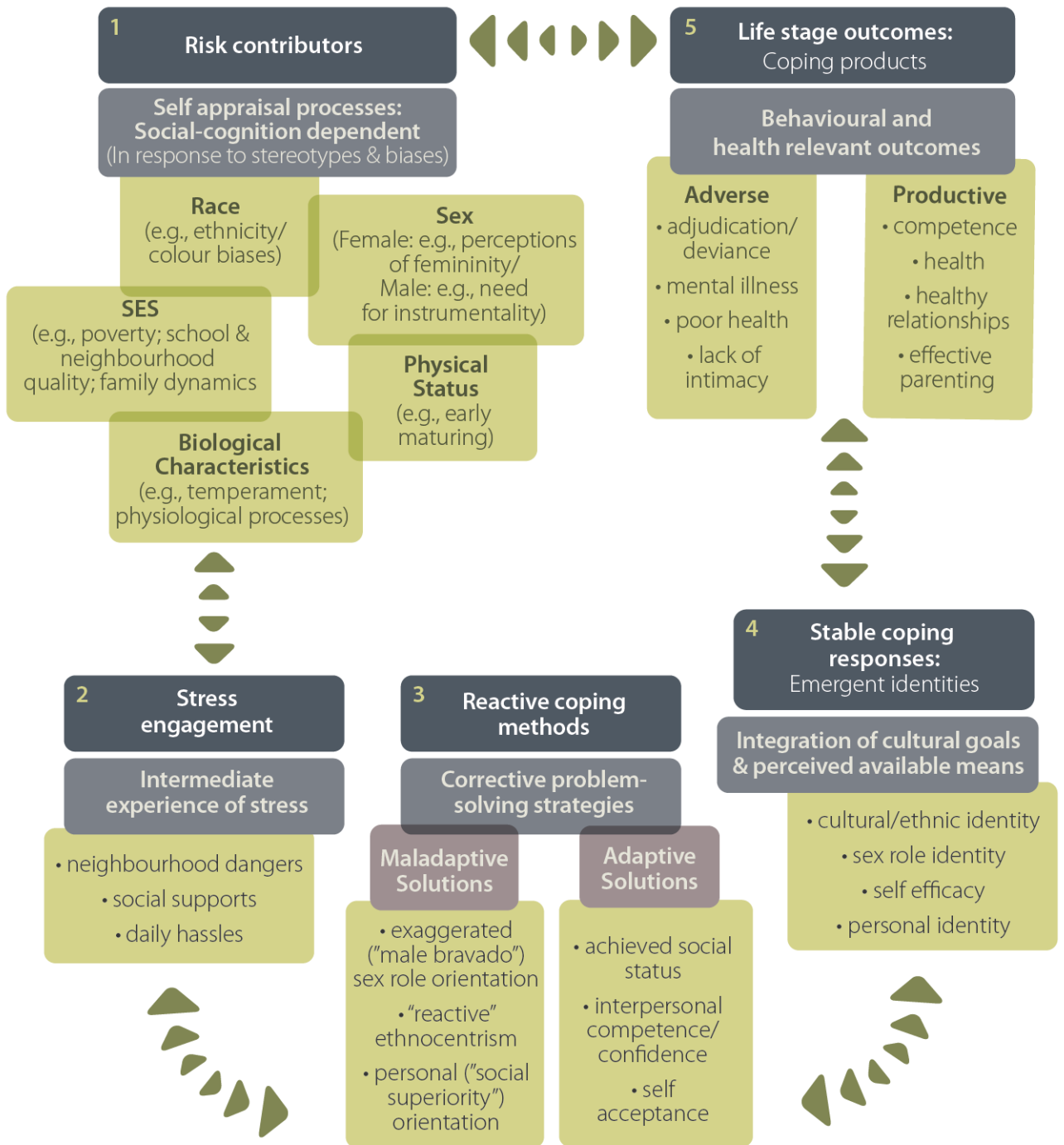


Figure 2.2. A Phenomenological Variant of Ecological Systems Theory.

Abbreviated as PVEST (Spencer, 1999, p. 46; Spencer, Cunningham & Swanson, 1995), proposes childhood as a series of transitions rather than a progression through benchmarked developmental stages (Piaget). These transitions are generated through the confluence of macro-imperatives, micro-context boundary intersections and child agency.

### **2.2.5. Wraparound process theory: An empowerment ideology.**

Wraparound processes are interventions based on ideals of holistic care. They scaffold efficacious networks of support. Although it has typically been applied in social work, to strengthen children at risk, its principles are compatible with the objectives of School Age Care, where the family, school and community to which the child belongs can be leveraged to support individual children (Bruns et al., 2004). ‘Wrapping’ at-risk children in a net of care is a strategy whose outcomes are known to achieve this support (Painter, Allen & Perry, 2011). Wraparound Process Theory (wraparound) proposes the same agentic hierarchy as shown in Bronfenbrenner’s model (see Figure 2.1), except that in wraparound the child is imagined at the apex of a cone instead of at the centre of concentric rings of influence. Moreover, in wraparound, the family system exerts most influence (McCarthy, 2012), while community, neighbourhood, local governance and the state locate their stakes both in supportive and outcome-driven priorities.

Drawing on the centrality of multiple perspectives in Ecology Systems Theory and constructivism,<sup>4</sup> two principles distinguish wraparound from the deficit assessment perspectives traditionally informing children’s services (Bickman, Smith, Lambert & Andrade, 2003; Bruns, Suter, Force & Burchard, 2005; Bruns et al., 2004; Furman & Jackson, 2007; Kamradt, 2000; Smith et al., 2004; VanDenBerg, Bruns & Burchard, 2008; Wyles, 2007). The first of these is that families are considered equal partners with professional experts in making decisions. The second is that existing strengths in the ecology of the family–community system are seminal building blocks for developing

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<sup>4</sup> Constructivism is understood as the practice of generating concepts through engagement with the environment in a relational paradigm.

and shaping adaptive plans on a ‘what works’ basis (Wigley, Preston-Shoot, McMurray & Connolly, 2012). In wraparound, the paradox exists that:

Experts turn to nonexperts ... to discover the many different, even contradictory solutions that they use to gain control, find meaning and empower their own lives (Rappaport, 1981, p. 21).

Wraparound practices are typically used with children in out-of-home care, and with disadvantaged, troubled youth. In this thesis, it is used as an exemplar of how child-centric provision in NSW School Age Care, whose participants are overwhelmingly middle class (Cassells & Cowling, 2012) and who may attend services irregularly, regularly but infrequently, or for up to 25 hours each week, can benefit from adaptation of wraparound theory modelling. Between ‘strength and need’ (Malysiak, 1998, pp. 24–25), wraparound applies a conceptually ecological process to individualise support mechanisms generated through a multiplicity of perspectives. Rappaport (1981) terms this phenomenon an ‘empowerment ideology’ because individuals’ control in their own community and family structures may be operationalised to mediate between exo-system institutions and micro-level systems (Rappaport, 1981, p. 19). This creates a strengths-based platform for intervention. Wraparound signifies community as the critical system for integrated support of children (VanDenBerg et al., 2008). Its ‘system of care’ includes a collaborative structure, coordinated implementation, a child–family team and continuous assessment of strengths-based need (Bruns, Burchard & Leverentz-Brady, 2003, p. 8; Kamradt, 2000; National Foundation for Educational Research, 2010, p. 7).

Wraparound is indicated by the situation of School Age Care between home and school from an ecology perspective, warranting its inclusion as a major player in such support.

### **2.2.6. Peer-reviewed literature influential on the author's theoretical model.**

Peer-reviewed theory studies guided the local theory framework for this study.

Literature read up to the end of the fieldwork was classified into four 'pools' of existing knowledge: qualitative studies, quantitative studies, reviews of theory and reviews of practices. The discourse categories were not derived systematically; they reflect variations of focus in reading. For example, 'Vygotsky' is a distinct category by virtue of increasing interest in generational play beyond early reading about social ecology system perspectives. Likewise, PVEST became important because of its adaptations of ecology theory towards the 'self-righting' processes that pertain to individual identity formation (Hemming & Madge, 2011, p. 3; Spencer, 1987, 1999; Spencer et al., 1997; Spencer, Fegley & Harpalani, 2003). Methodology is included for being entwined with theory. In this study's Grounded-Theory approach, they are interdependent. Several categories, especially psychology and sociology, are well represented in a reading focus on childhood, wellbeing and learning.

### **2.2.7. Early conceptual decisions.**

The author's constructed integrative model is presented in Figure 2.3. The agentic child is at the centre and the apex of this model. Martin, Anderson, Bobis, Way and Vellar (2012) demonstrate that 85 per cent of variance in their study of children's academic engagement and aspiration pertains to the individual child. Under the 'agency cone', Spencerian filters (Spencer et al., 1997) signify moderating processes that qualify children's interdependency with their habitual contexts. These moderating processes are operationalised in an adaptation of Bronfenbrenner's chronosystem, conceptualising time in learning, network and time-use dimensions.

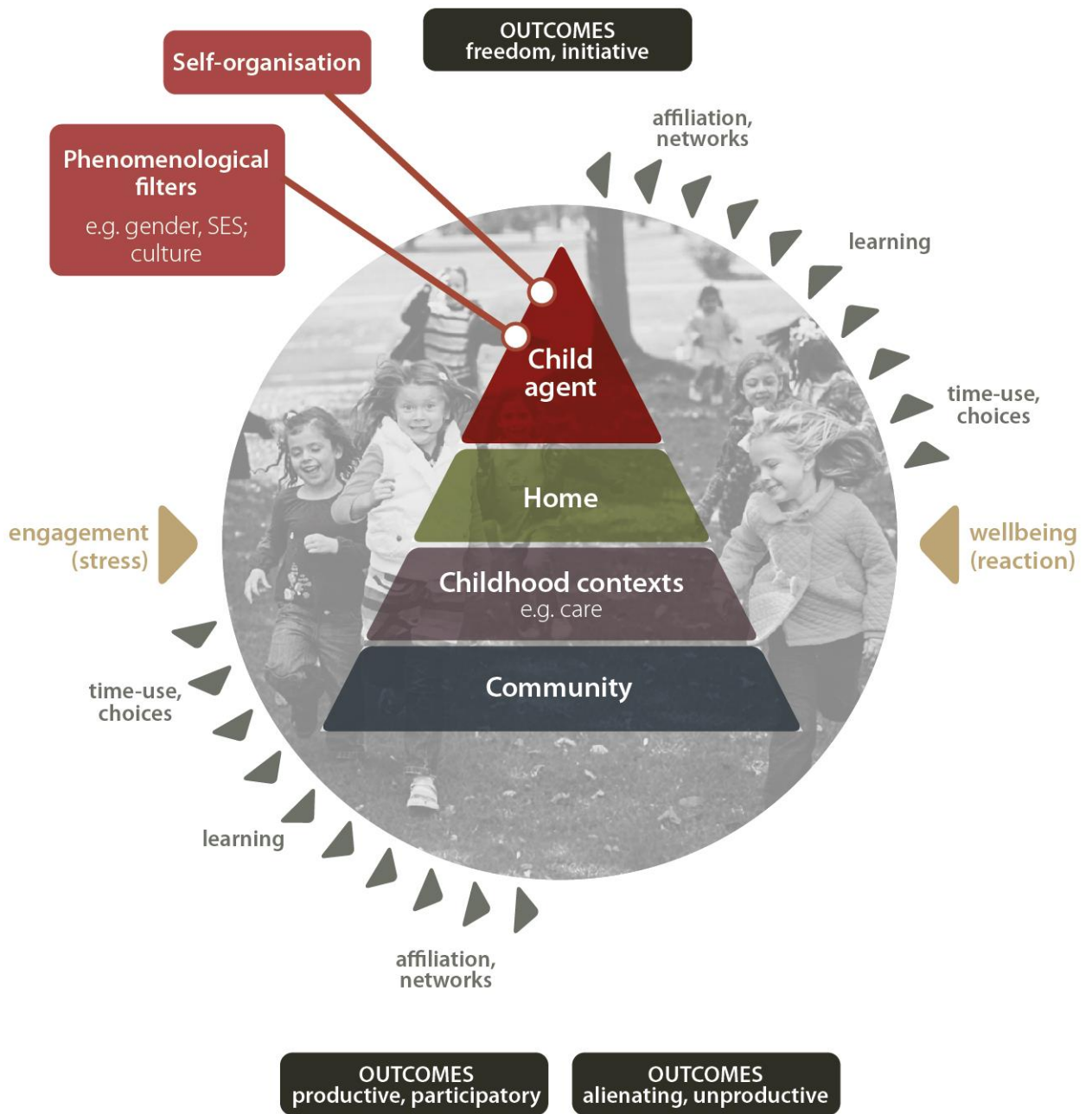


Figure 2.3. The author’s theoretical model.

Nested systems pertaining to influential factors affecting School Age Care policy and practice comprise the contextual dimension of the ecology system. The circular graphic symbolises the chronosystem as an operant of children’s cultural environment. The context pyramid is in actuality embedded in this sphere, beyond which it is logically an inert set of frameworks. The green segment of the ecology cone represents the interdependency system in which agency is nested. The purple slice, nested in community systems, signifies the out-of-school context. It also implies its converse: schooling, which is equally influential and disproportionately empowered through macro-agendas. The circular arrows, along with support or impact travel, denote contextualised conduits in the relationship between engagement and wellbeing or disengagement and dysfunction. The top and bottom of the circular shape represent opposites of freedom operating initiative, and constraints predicating social justice and fair distribution of resources. Deleterious and productive outcomes are not conceptualised as mutually exclusive. They depend on how time is spent for their relative strengths. All system levels conspire to delimit possibility at the micro-level (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Bronfenbrenner, 1977, 1986, 1992, 1994, 1999, 2000; Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994).

The terms ‘learning’, ‘education’, ‘schooling’ and ‘academic’ are typically used interchangeably in scholarly discourse. However, the model identifies schooling as a macro-system. Learning relates to a different dimension of the ecology; namely, as one of three mechanisms of its operation that are associated with identity formation. ‘Education’ applies to culturally and socio-economically constrained achievement within macro-sanctioned institutions. ‘Academic’ references learning within the formalities of compulsory and post-school engagement in macro-sanctioned pathways to accreditation for contributing to industrial, institutional, commercial and government life. Appendix 3 provides a comparative tabulation of concepts across theory, literature and data analysis, to clarify these theory-based definitions.

#### **2.2.8. Context: The core of the author’s model.**

The contexts identified in this model are nested one inside the other, with the agentic child situated at both the apex and innermost point in the concentric construction originally modelled by Bronfenbrenner (see Figure 2.1). This study is most closely concerned with the micro-level of agency in this construction, though it is consistently acknowledging of macro-level impacts. Agency comprises a person and her immediate environment. Agency is an ecology system fixture, but experience is time-bound and therefore operational. The concept of agency is used variously in the literature to reference power, process, personal and relational status. Here it references the indomitable instinct to self-right.

#### **2.2.9. Influential and influenced: The macro-level of childhood contexts.**

The macro-system in Bronfenbrenner’s theory is a design paradigm, generating patterns of culture. An example of macro-system impact may be urban geographies in Western industrialised societies, which reflect common approaches to structuring community life. ‘Western’ geographies are distinctive, but are influenced by prevailing

community preoccupations such as ‘progress’ and decipherable by culturally engaged Western individuals who relate to compatible preoccupations. The macro-framework denotes economic, social, educational, legal and political ideologies. A graphic summary of the theoretical frameworks informing the theoretical model is given in Appendix 4. Appendix 5 details the developmental stages of the author’s model.

#### **2.2.10. Chronosystem: The time machine and its mechanisms.**

Time use is conceptualised in the present project as a structuring experience, through which meanings, identity construction and social relationships can be interpreted. The terminology for the tools involved in non-school time use is adapted from literacy practices discourse (Moje, 2000). Three key terms based on this discourse are defined contextually as follows:

1. Activity practices are the basic unit of a social theory of time use, linking what children do and the social structures in which they are embedded and that they influence. They are how children and adults use bounded time in childcare.
2. The care situation comprises a series of ‘events’ that may be empirically documented. Events comprise both activity and communication. The range of communication resources available to older children in School Age Care (including, for example, speech and gesture) is vastly extended if incorporated with writing and online technologies. Activity practices must be inferred from events and cultural information because they cannot be observed. They involve processes that are internal to individuals, such as attitudes, relationships, beliefs, values and emotions. Equally, activity practices are social processes that include shared knowledge from shared ideologies and identities. Events are constrained by regulations, many of them social, which control the relationships among



children and between children and adults in School Age Care, as individuals and in groups.

3. Activities are part of events. Activity practices can be inferred from events only through the activities in which children and adults participate. Activity is culturally constructed with its roots in the past, expressing community culture. The key to making sense of the community and the individuals that comprise it is to overcome the fixation on preadolescence as a discrete experiential typology and to concentrate instead on the type of activity that participants in particular communities undertake to influence and respond to context. 'Activity', then, is correlated with agency: a person intentionally interactive with contexts, and the process of people acting together.

Agency is activated through three operatives: learning, networks and time use. This means shifting the 'time' element out of the model's structure. Time is a dimension distinctly different from the constructed forms that derive from cultural practice. Time is distinguished by its transformative impact. As the operator of human activity, time is subjective, a quality linked with engagement. It changes the shape of phenomena in response to activity practices that children and adults use within events framing activity choices. Transformational efficacy may be known from the level of children's absorption in them. The degree to which children have agency is therefore central in this idea, which resonates with fulfilment, creative freedom and constructions of happiness. Time is made existential through human dependency on structure for meaning making; it might not exist at all outside human consciousness. This subject historically occupies phenomenology. It also engages cognitive neuroscience (Varela, 1999). These are disciplines beyond the scope of the present research. However, simplification from

them—that attitude formation and children’s self-reports about activity experiences are linked—informs how this study interprets children’s valuing of time.

The core focus of this research is on the temporal dimension of the author’s model, which closely resembles that in Bronfenbrenner’s ecology model. Appendix 5 contains diagrams of the components of the chronosystem as the author has adapted it, with references to their sources. The proposed ‘transition’ indicators are illustrated as supportive and impactful on child wellbeing.

### **2.3. Summary of Chapter 2**

The purpose of this chapter was to describe the eco-social basis for the author’s theoretical model. It is used to frame how insights to be achieved from findings relate to the research questions, implications of the research and recommendations for best practice. The model guides the author’s thinking about children’s values as expressions of rationale for their time use preferences, and the implications for participation in School Age Care. Modelling these values as continuous outcomes of effortful self-righting endeavour along chronosystem dimensions focuses the connections made in this thesis between adult–child relationship building and children’s formation of identity as learners. The theoretical model also guides what quality engagement in School Age Care time use looks like, referencing these symbiotic, mutualistic processes in the context of children’s agency in making choices. The model is used to deconstruct recently mandated National Quality Standards governing the requirement of continuous improvement in the way School Age Care benefits children. It constitutes the referent for reiterative analytic processes in methodology and ideation development that leads the reader to the logic of the Johns Activity Spiral (JAS) in Figure 5.9.

None of the theoretical influences on the author's model, shown in the referenced diagrams in Appendix 5 of the components of the chronosystem as the author has adapted it, accord equal importance to the chronosystem that, in this study, is weighed with key significance and breaks new scholarly ground. As the operator of the multiplex worlds comprising childhood, it makes sense to designate the chronosystem as the locus for intervention.

The theoretical model constitutes the referent for the reiterative analytic processes in methodology and ideation development that lead the reader to the logic of the author's original Johns Activity Spiral (JAS), presented in Figure 5.9. The JAS is a tentative approach based on experience and anecdotal evidence. The research undertaken for the present thesis has provided the rigorously produced evidence and theorising needed to refine, crystallise and justify the intuitive and practically effective approaches that children and adults alike have been adapting in situ with the author's leadership. The JAS models time use on an ascending engagement/structure matrix. It provides time use awareness and motivational support to children as they locate their changing indices of engagement on the spiral matrix, fuelled by the 'play-work' cycle of activity illustrated in Figure 3.6. It is also used by the author to evaluate effectiveness in program planning through children's documentation of the degrees to which they felt engaged in activity and/or attained their goals. The potential for use of the JAS by children and as a data-generation tool is argued in Chapter 5.

## **Chapter 3. Methodology**

The interdependence of epistemology and methodology, theory and practice (Christensen & James, 2000a, 2000b) constitute the basis of trustworthiness in this thesis. This is key principle underlying the groundedness of its implications in field data and the literature.

### **3.1. Introduction and Research Questions**

The purpose of this chapter is to demonstrate how theory and methodology inform each other in an evolving process of information gathering and analysis. It is thus in part a narrative of the increasing problematisation of the scholarly literature with respect to conflicted data instances in a little-researched field. This narrative charts decisions for a constructed pathway that makes sense of multiple voices, beliefs and cases in a range of contexts.

The logic of the methodology is based on the Grounded-Theory principle of gathering data through various methods (Charmaz, 2003, 2009; Glaser & Holton, 2004). Key ideas in this mixed-source data were tagged as ‘codes’ in the texts of transcripts, in visual material and in literature in disciplines related in various ways to children and their care. These codes, grouped into categories, then inform a theory. The methodology uses evidence to generate, rather than to prove a theory. The author’s theoretical model is a key methodological component, because it forms the basis of the logic by which codes are clustered into categories.

The author’s theoretical sensitivity echoes tensions in scholarly research between developmental approaches and sociology (Ryan, 2012). In exploring intersecting social systems that interface a theoretically agentic child, as distinct from describing their impact on individuals in the field, these tensions are negotiated. In this thesis, the

assumption informing the concept of child negotiators is that childhood is an absolute, transitional path on which children are competent to shape their own transformation. Humanist assumptions implicit in PVEST psychosocial orientation are articulated as children's corrective tendencies (Spencer et al., 1997). Children are assumed to be innately prone to negotiate competing contextual tensions towards positive personal outcomes as they self-right. Accordingly, children are conceptualised as transformative learners. The research questions seek insights into how children may be supported to develop awareness and acumen for constructing themselves this way.

### **3.1.1. Two research questions.**

Two research questions guide this study, each of which informs aspects of theory building differently:

1. How do children's socio-cultural beliefs, attitudes, practices and values influence their situated time use in relation to NSW School Age Care?
2. What generational practices, or articulations of a particular transactional culture between children and adults, express children's self-righting skill as it may be scaffolded in NSW School Age Care?

These are conditional socio-cultural interrogations (Bodrova, 1997; Brown & Collins, 1989; Daniels, 2006; Holland & Valsiner, 1988). Endeavours to articulate how children spend time, and the response of School Age Care to their practices and preferences, radically deepened the purpose of this study to an interrogation of the collaborative nature of growing up.

## **3.2. Scope and Relationship to Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework (see Figure 2.3) represents continuous negotiation at the boundaries of social systems. The methodology was likewise a process of negotiation between knowledge on the one hand, and the situated conditions of those who generate

it on the other (Gough, 2007). The study's research perspectives and the real-life practices of caring for children are invariably conflicted (Creswell & Clark, 2007; Gorard & Taylor, 2004; Green, Camilli, Elmore, Skuskauskaitė & Grace, 2006; Johnson & Onweuegbuzie, 2004; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). The study illuminates partial insights on the research questions. The findings qualify what 'growing up' means at the scale of individual agency, with implications for research methodology and care practices. Child agency influences continuous change through community to macro-scale impacts. The impact of care practices on a single child's high school transition, for example, is proposed to reverberate through the social ecology to policy.

### **3.3. Exploration, Grounded-Theory and Ethnographic Influence**

The author explores School Age Care ethnographically; however, it is important to distinguish that the study seeks to abstract from the data and is ethnographic in style only. Liu (2012) explicates the difference between ethnography and a 'systems' approach as two extremes along the continuum of methodologies. From her standpoint that learning operates responses to the impacts of social systems, Liu interprets psychosocial patterns through a learning perspective. The project of accounting for and explaining this conflictedness is guided by Grounded-Theory methodology (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

The data for gaining insights were generated in non-linear, intermingled reflections obtained at six sites over 10 weeks. Neither a 'snapshot' nor longitudinal study, the design is best characterised as an extended field study. It is an exploration contextualised in scholarly discourse, leading to the proposal of key processes that operate in ecology systems logic, such as negotiation (that is, the adult-child learning partnership). This logic is moderated by a sea-swell of macro-change in the combined Education and Communities 'super ministry' in NSW (Nicholls, 2011). The new

National Quality Framework for School Age Care<sup>5</sup> and powers of independent leadership recently accorded school Principals further foreshadow change that will affect how this study's implications may be acted upon (DEEWR, 2011; Bruniges, 2012; Stevenson & Robins, 2012; The Australian Financial Review, 2012; Whitbourn, 2012).

Some quantitative analysis, although on a different basis from that in typical exemplars (such as Raybeck & Ngo, 2011), guided some of the work. A quantitative survey summary provided indicative characteristics of the research sample. Then, graphed 'snapshots' of the literature (see Appendices 7 and 8) from early systematic reviews identified gaps in knowledge and key areas of existing research interests relating to the questions occupying the present study. These helped to identify exploratory directions in an unestablished NSW research field.

### **3.3.1. Aims.**

The research reframes childhood as a chronosystem phenomenon (Shaw & Gould, 2001). The methodology is integral to this project of theory building:

Postmodern ethnography does not move towards abstraction, away from life, but back to experience. It aims not to foster growth of knowledge but to restructure experience (Harper, 1998, p. 31).

The research is not ethnographic because it uses data from the field as well as scholarly discourse to move 'towards abstraction'. The data is framed in the relational systems mapped in the author's theoretical model (see Figure 2.3). Simultaneous generation and analysis of observational and participatory data obtained in School Age Care communities (Creswell, 1994) are integral to this map. They are conditioned by the emergent child-directed themes as the researcher continuously interpreted them.

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<sup>5</sup> Based on the *Education and Care Services National Law Act*, 2010.

Descriptors that best fit the methodology decisions, then, are stylistically ethnographic, exploratory in scope and analytically grounded in data. The principles of Grounded-Theory methodology are applied with the intention of extending analysis to theory building.

Grounded-Theory is a rigorous methodological system based on continuous, systematic comparison to achieve new theory (Dey, 1999; Goulding, 2002, p. 20; Miller & Fredericks, 1996; Strauss & Corbin, 1998; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The process is distinctively inductive (Glaser & Strauss, 1978), counter-intuitively extrapolating from the 'ground' of real-life dialogic to interpret children's resolutions of their out-of-school activity as abstraction.

The Grounded-Theory principle that researchers enter the field without prior knowledge requires similar clarification (Strauss & Corbin, 1998; Thornberg, 2012c). 'Methodological immaturity' (Davis, 1998; Gallacher & Gallagher, 2008) was advisedly interpreted for this Grounded-Theory study with reference to transparency more than to prior knowledge. Prerequisite disclosure and reading to SERAP and the Department of Education Ethics standards mock claims to such conformity. Justifying dedicating time and resources to a long-term, funded project required departure from a purist Grounded-Theory approach (Glaser, 1992; Glaser, 1998), to know the issues of broad socio-political significance that surround School Age Care. Fieldwork planning decisions, proposed before thematic patterns were established, conditioned the research questions and foreshadowed their emphases (Thornberg, 2012a, b).

### **3.4. Key Considerations for the Research Approach**

#### **3.4.1. The role of the researcher.**

The author is the research instrument (Alderson, 2005; Cheney, 2011; Gallagher, Haywood, Jones & Milne, 2010; Hill, 2005; Ireland & Holloway, 1996; McNaughton &



Smith, 2005; Rees & Bailey, 2003; Wyse, 2004). Her role is one of reflexive participant-observer (Pezalla, Pettigrew & Miller-Day, 2012). The efficacy of this 'research instrument' depends on interpersonal acuity, a capacity to balance power differentials reflexively with children in the field and to interpret, rather than rationalise, researcher intrusion. The role is to facilitate children's knowledge generation. The author's theoretical sensitivities, the children and the literature are mutually influential in how this knowledge is heard, the basis for which is described in Section 2.2. The reflexive-participant and interpretive-analyst roles are different and kept transparent. The reflexive-participant researcher constructs the meanings of children's behaviours to mediate their ambiguous interrelationships and the instability of their social significance. The interpretive-analyst imposes propositions about how activity practices are theoretically beneficial to children in articulated ways. Landén (2011, p. 539) talks about this as 'embodiment', to displace typically subjective concepts of the researcher's decision making.

### **3.4.2. The role of the child.**

Children's competence has ceased to be at issue in scholarly literature (Prout & James, 2005; Qvortrup, Bardy, Sgritta & Wintersberger, 1994; Sargeant, 2010; Uprichard, 2007; Trollvik, Eriksson, Ringsberg & Hummelvoll, 2012; Wylie, Hodgen & Ferral, 2006). It is assumed children should participate in projects about children. Their participation is typically rationalised by a 'rights' agenda (e.g., Newell & Graham, 2012), by which is meant the human rights of children, which include rights to protection and care, a relationship with both biological parents, provision of basic needs (food, universal education, health care and laws) and according children status as active agents.

As is the case in this thesis, adults mostly report on children's rights (Christensen, 2004). Past research with children served adult's interests in childhood (Bak, 1996), and it still does (Holland, Renold, Ross & Hillman, 2010; Manful & Manful, 2013; Spyrou, 2011). Emancipating children from being spoken for (Alcoff, 1991) rings hollow here, too, because the researcher wrote this report (Arnot & Reay, 2007; Bernstein, 2003). The NSW Commission for Children and Young People provides recent exemplars of partnering with children in research on their website<sup>6</sup> (see also (Marsh, 2012; Newell & Graham, 2012).

Care has been taken to analyse children's evidence with respect for their intentions. 'It is a matter of seeing children as bone fide research players and decision-makers and ensuring that they are legitimized as such throughout the whole research cycle' (Farrell, 2005). Fieldwork decisions took into account children's needs and inclinations on site. For example, interviews were moved outdoors on occasion, and conversation developed organically around topic guides and artefacts within a loose time frame, with auditing and analysis processed simultaneously (see Appendix 6). This is compatible with problematising experience as partially knowable, and only then through multiplex interpretive filters (Fitch, 1963; Harper, 1998, pp. 30–31; Hart, 1979).

However, ethics of respect do not obviate the social justice issues surrounding child empowerment polemics. Children's interests in the research were unique to themselves. Although children in the sample might have benefited from field events in tangential ways, benefits from their contributions are unknowable. Despite statutory disclaimers, children may have formed impressions, potentially betrayed, of research events leading to positive outcomes for them personally (as illustrated in McDonald, 2009). Children were introduced to the field events on generalised suggestions that the project sought to

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<sup>6</sup> <http://www.kids.nsw.gov.au/kids/advocacyresearch/participation.cfm>

influence School Age Care affordances positively. It was obvious to children that adults were bypassed in core research events, yet the research aims to inform adult-centric practice. A different locus of social justice is in play than the visceral empowering of children to control processes on the ground in the field. This thesis seeks insights into strengthening children's agency, advocating for them in a broader sense than is realisable in a single setting like field research events.

Adult interpretation inevitably dominates what is heard from children, but on the other hand no child is passive, not even victims of abuse (Wainryb, 2010). Risk and felt effects of risk are not equivalents (Levison, 2000). For example, children have shown themselves capable of mediating the risk involved in mobile phone use in a majority-world context (Bond, 2010) to become responsible online technology users, without adult input (Arora, 2010). Conversely, adults giving children control in an activity event does not imply that new knowledge concerning agentic strength is being transferred or shared. The present study seeks new theory, so that facilitated empowerment, in the sense defined in intergenerational dialogue explored by Wyness (2012), can affect transformative agency long-term, as the operant of learner identity formation.

### **3.4.3. Ethics.**

The study is conditional upon the Department of Education's State Education Research Approval Process and the University of Sydney Human Research Ethics Committee. Consent protocols and voluntary participation are fundamental in research with children. Access to children was obtained through gatekeepers at the six sites selected for the study. The Care Coordinator at each site and the Principals of the co-location schools admitted access conditional upon site-specific protocol additional to statutory regulation. Specific accounts of the implementation of access are described in

the Site Profiles in Audit Trail #5.<sup>7</sup> Further to these agreements, children were voluntary signatories to their willing participation after parents' permission was formally documented. Correspondence explaining the project to professional adults, parents and children is in Appendices 16–19. Freedom to withdraw from the project at any time without notice was emphasised with assurance of nil consequences for such action. Children's anonymity was guaranteed. Children were additionally advised that mandatory reporting protocols apply where their disclosures warrant it.

Nevertheless, the children and researcher negotiated the events to which they were contractually and trustingly bound (Christensen & Prout, 2002). The extent of children's acquiescence to power relations in the field was not tested beyond the formal consent process. However, saliently, children's cognisance of inter-subjectivity processes (Huberman & Miles, 2002) is a trustworthiness indicator validating this research. Children have been shown as reactive to privacy, inclusion, justice and expectations of beneficial participation impacts (Hill, 2006). This cognisance is confirmed by children in the field:

I live in [unclear] Street and I don't want to say too much (Dorothy).

Where are you putting all this stuff? (Hoyden Workshop).

#### **3.4.4. Trustworthiness.**

Transparency, trustworthiness and the mutually influential researcher–child relationship were invested with intent throughout the fieldwork. Data straight from children that bypasses adult credibility checks (Cook-Sather, 2002; Pollard & Triggs, 2000; Thomson & Gunter, 2005) are idealised in the 'new sociology of childhood' (Fielding, 2004; James et al., 2005), but their incongruity is explicated in Warming (2011). The reciprocity of trust between researcher and child is a factor for validity, but

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<sup>7</sup> The Audit Trail is attached to this thesis in digital form.

inevitably child and adult interests diverge (Farrell, 2005; Roberts, 2000, p. 238). The parties are tacitly contracted to an interpretive process that balances mutual respect for each other's agency with respect for the academy and professional knowledge (Veale, 2005, pp. 253–255). The researcher's negotiated relationship with children is therefore about trustworthiness rather than validity. This especially applies when the age-range of the study participants suggests their competence as communicators. The 'performative' point is that, whereas field data were intergenerational (Holland et al., 2010 p. 362), analysis was not. Further, what the children said and produced during their field events is no more or less 'valid' than what was said and produced by others (Cojocaru, 2009). Even theoretical ecology modelling, originating as it does in the relativity of generational power, cannot assume, by its own logic, that child agents are making autonomous judgements. The researcher was the ultimate arbiter.

Ahead of any contact being made with the children, interviews with the Coordinators at each site were conducted in administration offices, face-to-face and straight after agreements at each site permitted access, serving as foils to the children's testimonies and reflections. These interviews elicited background information, governance and policies particular to each service. Interviewees also volunteered a great deal of other information pertinent to adult–child relationships and community perceptions of School Age Care, for example.

The questions that were asked of children illuminate the researcher's theoretical sensitivity (Graue & Walsh, 1998; Grbich, 2010). Findings are not objective. The findings reveal the researcher's beliefs about children's values as imagined from inter-subjective cultural processes (Correa-Chávez, 2012; Woodhead & Faulkner, 2000, p. 26). It is invalid to test children by these beliefs. 'Authority' applies only to the meanings experiences hold for children (Danby, 2009; O'Neill, 2005; Sternberg, 1988).

The rigour implied in respect for children's interpretations is balanced by the researcher's interpretive emphasis in relation to each data instance (Milner, 2012).

Methodological integrity is founded in the argumentative grammar of rigorous scholarly discourse, justifying fieldwork decisions and providing the rationale for how data are selected and organised for interpretation. Appendix 8 contains a summary of themes. This does not suggest that the methods are causally linked to findings.

The field events were structured to engage the trust of the intended ultimate users of this thesis cumulatively through iterative practices. The field data constitute various touchstones by which the trustworthiness of children's responses might be judged. The texts and artefacts produced by participants are in effect the boundary objects mediating the children's, site Coordinators' and researcher's contributions. Further, the mix of site activities elicited answers to essentially the same 'time use' question, with contextual differences structuring the meanings of these questions. If proof is a process of cogent convocation with the reader on plausible and persuasive propositional attitudes (McGrath, 2011),<sup>8</sup> then the outcomes of analysing reiterative questioning generate a great proportion of the indicators of trustworthiness.

### **3.5. Sites and Participants**

This study lays claim to knowledge that is constructed from interpreted fragments of child experience (see Table 3.1). These are children's insights as they were expressed in relationship with the researcher and to each other. This is knowledge that is only 'true' at particular, but disparate and discontinuous, moments, bounded by protocols and permissions granted through *in situ* gatekeepers. In this sense, its specificity and locales challenge how authentic a portrait of childhoods it can possibly be. Yet the partial nature of this fraction is also the study's strength. The entire point of differentiating the

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<sup>8</sup> The researcher uses 'propositions' in the process sense, of boundary tools mediating 'truth'.

first 12 years of a life span is to identify the intersection of the adulthood boundary at which children have knowledge of it (Mayall, 2000, pp. 120–122; Punch, 2002). In this study, each instance of identification is continuously compared, across data incidents and the scholarly discourse, with the theoretical ‘map’, to make logically consistent sense.

Table 3.1

*Balance of participant contributions*

Proportion of data processes and products generated by children			
Children directing	Children facilitated by adult(s)	Adult talking to child(ren)	Adults talking to each other
6 workshops— digital footage	72 surveys	16 interviews	7 interviews
71 charts	6 focus groups		7 journal/field notes
	6 workshops		

### 3.5.1. Rationale for the schedule and time period of the study.

It was critical to undertake fieldwork in Term 4 of the school year, because this is when transition is uppermost in the awareness of the primary school child community. Children in Grade 6 shared insights within weeks of starting high school. The entire complement of field events was confined within 10 weeks, over which period children had opportunity to progressively deepen their reflections on time use outside of school and identify the meanings they derived from their activities.

Consent and associated proforma are in Appendices 13, 15 and 20. Logistics and contingencies of site visits are described in the journal and field notes, described in tabular form in Appendix 5 and referenced in the site profiles and child stories in Audit Trail #5.

### **3.5.2. Site selection.**

All the field sites are located in the Sydney Basin, whose geography extends from Newcastle in the north to Batemans Bay in the south, and west to the Blue Mountains. All site names are fictitious. The researcher's history of professional practice in the School Age Care field and a bias towards 'wraparound' scholarly discourse that evolved during the 'proposal' stage of the present study account for the purposive site selection. All sites except one were new to the researcher. Comprehensive site descriptions and access narratives are in Audit Trail #5.

An early decision was made to widen the range of the research context beyond the set of typical School Age Care services. The three selected provisions were auspiced by, or associated with, youth services. The project thus afforded multi-site 'cases' with maximum divergence using theoretical sampling. Contextual service attributes with bearing on policy change and programming were sought, as outlined in Sharp et al. (2012). Prior investigation obtained through the researcher's inclusion on the Better Futures [Working] Committee suggested the Kentledge, Palmar and Hoyden sites, which were in receipt of short-term funding to provide pilot programs supportive of high school transition. These only partially conformed to typical School Age Care programming. The Turing site was chosen for two reasons. The first was its extreme disadvantaged SES ranking (Vinson, 2004) and the second was its 'Schools-as-Communities' status, predicating the wraparound orientation of the neighbourhood Primary School. The Dornet and Asya sites were similar in the typicality of their School Age Care service models. Both serve a middle-class demographic. Both are accommodated in primary schools. Both draw solely on their co-located school population for their clientele. Neither has a 'transition' perspective in programming.



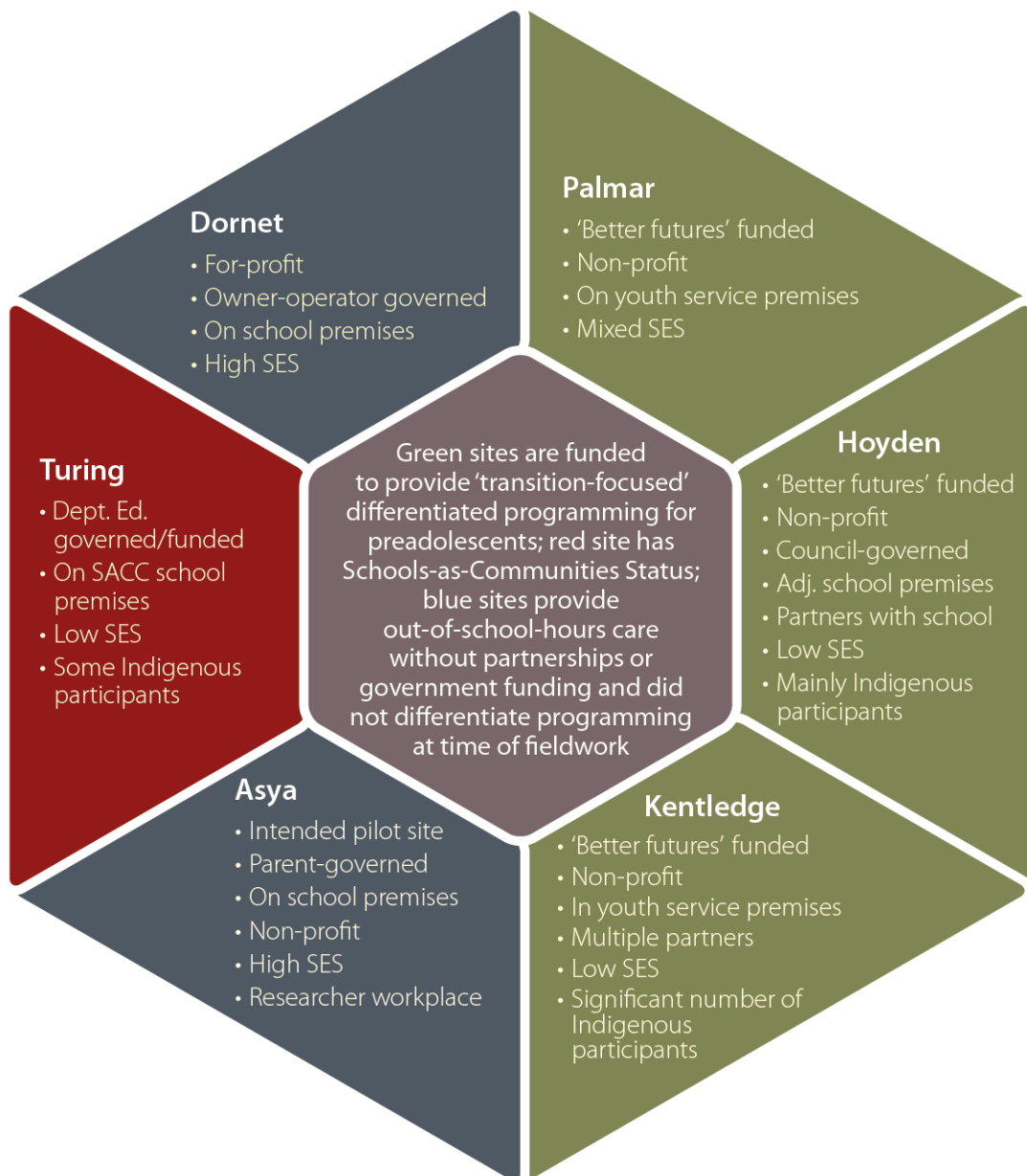
However, they are differently governed. Dornet is a private for-profit provision, while Asya is governed by family stakeholders.

Continuous development of decisions within feasible methodological practice consolidated a purposive preference in site selection. Accessibility was important. Asya was the most conveniently accessed. Asya personnel assisted with an introduction to Dornet, whose geographical location is nearby Asya. All Better Futures–funded sites are within 10km of the Sydney city centre. Each of these three services, while similarly charged with providing transition support, approached their work differently in demographically and socio-economically different neighbourhoods. Turing is far from the Central Business District, situated only just inside the Sydney Basin. However, its potential affordance for the study, of School Age Care status and a homogenous disadvantaged demographic, lent it high eligibility. A graphic summary of field sites, with further explanation, is in Figure 3.1.

Analysis was enriched by considering field sites in a typology frame. The same concepts were discussed across the six sites, but they arose in unique environments and cultures, demonstrating the influence of context. New themes emerged from each site.

#### ***3.5.2.1. Site type 1.***

The cultures of Asya and Dornet emphasise undirected and unstructured play. They co-locate with on-site feeder schools. The parent body may be generalised as middle class. The provisions constitute an optional service alongside alternative, more expensive opportunities, such as private music lessons, sport and academic tuition. Staff at both provisions were disillusioned by what they experienced as children's disrespect, but children expressed enjoyment of staff's *laissez-faire* approach and the freedom they were afforded.



*Figure 3.1. Summary of field sites.*

To achieve a comprehensive range of perspectives surrounding the care of children on the cusp of transition to adolescence and high school, various service types at six different field sites were chosen as contexts for interrogating children about how they valued their time use outside school hours. This diagram distinguishes the identifying characteristics of each service type field site, while also colour-coding the division between school-based OOSH and youth services. The Turing service is coloured red to signal its unique identity as a schools-as-community partnership auspiced by the school. The sites coloured blue are located on school premises but are not partners with schooling.

### **3.5.2.2. Site type 2.**

The sites in receipt of transition support funding (Kentledge, Palmar and Hoyden) were orientated towards social justice and personal development, with tension between the future learning pathways of children moving to private schools on scholarships and those remaining in public schools. Their participants travelled some distances to two of the three care sites; in the third, they lived and attended school within a short walking distance of the School Age Care provider. The parent body across the three sites was characterised as disadvantaged, with a large proportion of children from minority, especially Indigenous, families. These families demonstrated various degrees of connectedness with feeder schools. Each of the three School Age Care services in the Type 2 category was the sole point of contact for troubled participants. Isolated children also found their respective care provision to be their unique socialisation opportunity. All three centres provided access to the Internet, unlike Type 1 provisions, which precluded technology use by policy decision. Children in Type 2 centres were strongly attached to their relationships with staff. Children liked having input into activity programming.

### **3.5.2.3. Site type 3.**

Turing culture is communal, homogenous and completely integrated within the school campus grounds and buildings. The local high school selects its students from up and down the NSW coast for their sporting ability. However, it is compelled by its geographical proximity to accept all Turing children unscreened. To the Turing children, high school is a looming unknown, disconnected from local culture. The Turing environment affords minimal Internet access and recreation is mainly outdoors. Turing is the local community's focus, rallying as it does around the Schools-as-Community Centre (SaCC). There are 47 SaCC centres in NSW, which were

established to deliver initiatives for children aged zero to eight, by partnering with families, communities, schools and human services agencies. Children in the sample at Turing, who had continuous access to their SaCC affordances throughout their primary years, expressed strong attachment to staff and a secure sense of belonging to the site.

### **3.6. The Sample**

Relatively small numbers of disadvantaged, disabled, minority and CALD children participate in School Age Care (Cassells & Miranti, 2012; DEEWR, 2012), even though their needs are greatest (Cassells & Miranti, 2012). That a fifth of children in the field events are Indigenous is attributable to their disproportionate representation at care sites in receipt of 'Priority' funding and Better Futures funding specifically targeting high school transition support. Conditions in the field and choice of a data-based approach to analysis placed a premium on obtaining the widest possible diversity of instances over narrower detail. Theoretical sampling was used to achieve this diversity. It is validated by evidence of the theory significance of difference in context variations (Neuman, 2003).

To achieve theoretical sampling, child participants at six urban sites in NSW, representing a diverse range of cultural and SES difference, were targeted. Seventy-two children participated in at least one research event (see Table 3.2). The two youths who volunteered to draw on 'My Week' charts and participate in interviews were recommended by staff at the only two centres at which former participants were retained in the community network of services.

Table 3.2 *Sample attributes*

Participant demographics	Breakdown	
Number of children in the study	74	
from Hoyden	9	
from Dornet	16	
from Asya	10	
from Turing	14	
from Kentledge	15	
from Palmer	10	
Number of children who submitted a survey	72	
Indigenous children	17 (24%)	10 girls, 7 boys
Maori	3 (4%)	
Asian	4 (5.5%)	
Mixed Anglo/European	4 (5.5%)	
European	1	
Anglo	14 (19%)	
Australian	26 (36%)	
Gender Mix		
Boys	41 (55%)	
Girls	33 (45%)	
SES of children (% are of 72 surveyed)		
Disadvantaged	32 (19.7%)	
Blue collar	6 (8%)	
White collar	26 (36%)	
Mix of advantaged/disadvantaged	6 (8%)	
Professional/business/upper middle class	2 (3%)	
SES of youth (total of 2 youth)		
Mix of advantaged/disadvantaged	Hoyden boy, aged 13	
Disadvantaged	Turing girl, Indigenous, aged 14	
Gender of coordinators (total of 7 coordinators)		
Male	1: Hoyden)	
Female	6: Dornet, Asya, Kentledge, Palmer, Turing (2)	
SES of sites		
Extremely disadvantaged	Turing	
Middle class	Dornet, Asya and Palmer	
Mixed SES communities	Kentledge and Hoyden	

At Turing and Kentledge the staff asserted they could not represent their services fully without testimony from young people who they had known and nurtured for up to nine years and who were able to look back from early adolescence and high school on their experiences of School Age Care. Further, these youths were both current volunteers in the School Age Care activities, and were therefore very much involved in the daily events of both care provisions. One assisted in the AASC program, and the other in informal social events.

Sites were comparable as units of analysis. So were individuals, both as units of analysis within sites, and as individuals across site boundaries (see Table 3.2). Profiles of group contexts and of individuals demonstrating these units are provided in Audit Trail #5. However, as the objective of this project is theory building, cross-context thematic ideation structures the reporting.

### **3.7. Data Sources**

To obtain the thick multiplex perspectives that make Grounded-Theory so powerful a methodology, children at six sites were engaged in a series of field events, and Coordinators at each site were interviewed.

#### **3.7.1. Field work**

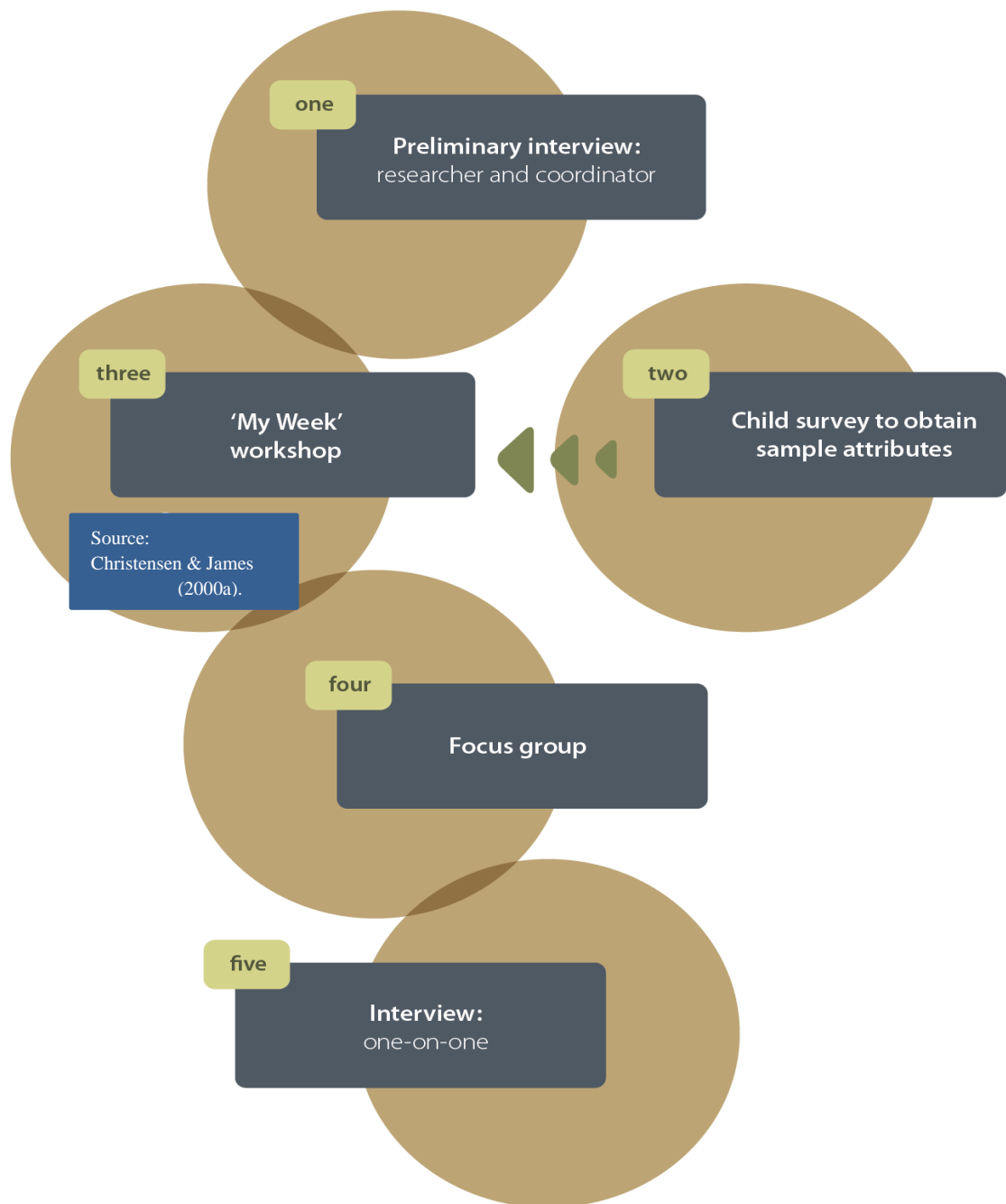
At each site, space was allocated for the research events to take place, generally in an area of the main activity room, in a spare classroom or in the school library (as was the case at Turing). Preparation for the workshops involved arranging informal seating and tables in small-group configurations, and a large central table. Except for Asya, centres afforded sufficient space for a carpeted floor area in which some children could choose to relax on cushions. The focus groups were conducted with the researcher seated, with children on chairs arranged in a circle, and a mounted camera filming these sessions. The face-to-face interviews were held in smaller spaces, as they required just

two chairs and a microphone. Some were held outside, while others were conducted in a classroom or library annex.

School Age Care staff and school Principals were notified by the services' Coordinators of the events scheduled. At least one member of School Age Care staff was present at each research event. The staff was provided with copies of the 'My Week' chart and topic guides, as well as written outlines of the length and sequencing of activities within events. The researcher provided materials; for example, stationery.

The researcher's journal logged each event with descriptions of the activities, observations of children and subjective reflections on the experience. The entries were developed from written notes at the end of each field day, recorded digitally and coded using NVivo 9. The journal informed the 'stories' of individual children and also the site profiles that were written for each centre. The stories and profiles are of interest in themselves, but were also helpful summaries for quick reference to key attributes in the writing of this report.

Topic guides prepared for the field provided consistency in interrogation. Scholarly discourse, School Age Care policy documentation and evaluations as well as media reports were examined. The field methods are not innovations. The field events were structured to enable open-ended inquiry of children's experiences. Figure 3.2 shows their sequence. The field events at each site were not completed in a single phase, but were staggered as far as possible across the 10-week fourth term of 2010, so that iterative comparison of like events could occur continuously from earliest data generation to inform the Focus Group and interview topic guides and practices in subsequent events.



*Figure 3.2.* Sequence of field events.

The field events at each site were not completed in a single phase but were staggered as far as possible across the 10-week fourth term of 2010, so that iterative comparison of like events could occur continuously from earliest data generation, to inform the topic guides and practices in subsequent events.



Workshops lasting about one hour at each site were followed with the increasingly structured forum of a Focus Group, for which some workshop participants volunteered. These consisted of a group of children and the researcher, who interactively made sense of prearranged discussion topics.

Interviews were held with children who had been in a Focus Group and subsequently volunteered to speak to the researcher one-to-one. The journey from workshop to interview over the extended research schedule was completed in its entirety by 17 children out of the 71 in the original sample. These 17 individuals had led themselves through a deepening pathway of reflection and awareness. Figure 3.4, later in this chapter, describes the scope of fieldwork and the flow of diverse data for constant comparison. Multi-source and multi-site field data were compared and balanced with scholarly discourse ‘data’ on the basis that literature is equal to field data as an analytic source in Grounded-Theory (Fassinger, 2005; Glaser & Strauss, 1978; McGhee, Marland & Atkinson, 2007). Table 3.3 summarises the field data sources. A summary of participant attributes is in Table 3.2.

Table 3.3

*Field data items*

Surveys	70 children; 2 youth	72
Charts	69 children; 2 youth	71
Transcripts	Workshop transcripts	35
	Focus group transcripts	15
	Interview transcripts	28
Digital recordings	Digital video footage	65
	Digital audio recordings	37
Notes	Field notes	6
	Journal	1
<b>Total number of field data items</b>		<b>324</b>

### 3.7.2. Workshop.

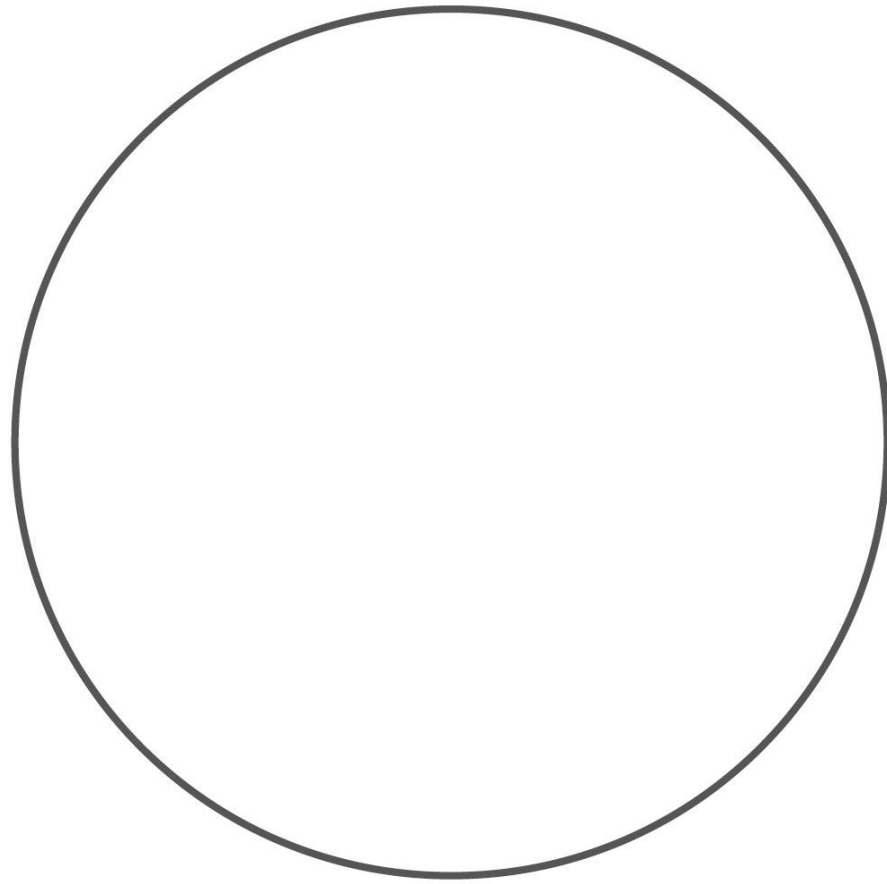
Children are not necessarily experts on their own experience. Capacity had to be built around questions of which they may never have given any prior consideration. Space was provided to enable the formation of views (Lundy & McEvoy, 2011, p. 4). A one-hour informal workshop involving between seven and 15 children at each site was the first field event. The workshops presented a low entry threshold (Mitchell, 2008). They accorded children their right to be heard (Thomson, 2008), and to start thinking about the research. Two data-generating tools were used. The survey's purpose was to obtain child attributes so that a profile of the sample could be compiled. The information obtained has been summarised in Table 3.2. The rationale for the second tool, the 'My Week' charts, was guided by the approach of 'visual sociology' (Harper, 1998), by which children create drawings for the researcher to interpret, as compared with children interpreting existing visual material. The use of charts is particularly pertinent from the perspective of the theoretical framework of this research. Individual children have more than one 'voice'; their critical capacities respond to their age and changing vulnerabilities.

In spite of the largely blank page, 'My Week' is steeped in subtext. Art-based methods are well documented in research (Boydell, Gladstone, Volpe, Allemang & Stasiulis, 2012). Eldén (2012) discusses drawing's efficacy as a research method within similar parameters. The circle and its label within the workshop time frame are suggestive. It relies on children's prior knowledge while inviting creative interpretation.

Qualitative research is dominated by language, but an image-based approach is equally empowering (Stanczak, 2007). Drawing gives children control over what they disclose (Tatlow-Golden & Guerin 2010, p. 553). Tatlow-Golden and Guerin (2010) found that 'draw-and-write' elicits children's social and active self-concepts. Eldén's

(2012) interviews with children used a similar exercise to 'My Week', finding that drawing their day provided valued complexity in a study on care practices. Drawing enabled children's complex responses by exploring ideas before talking about them, which accords with sketching concepts as part of rational processes (Goldschmidt, 1994). Further, drawing contextualised both group and individual interviews to be 'artefact-mediated' (Bahn & Barratt-Pugh, 2013).

Instructions for the 'My Week' chart (see Figure 3.3) were deliberately vague. No incentives were used to induce participation. All 71 charts were analysed using NVivo 9 visual analysis capability for coding and linking the codes to categories. The charts were interpreted as indicative of the point at which the children's ideation had been formed at the time of the workshop, and not of task performance. The constructivist approach of this research references child agency to understand time use from the point of view of the child choosing it. The informal group context generated joint meanings among peers, reflecting the subjectivity of the findings emergent from social interaction (Greig, Taylor, & MacKay, 2007, pp. 31-54). The charts were accordingly framed as social constructions.



*My week*

*Figure 3.3.* The 'My Week' chart.

This is the proforma used for an interactive activity described in Christensen & James (Stake, 2005), in which children visually represent their time use during a typical school week. Children are given a piece of paper with a circle in which to frame their responses. While they are undertaking the activity, the researcher interacts with them, makes observations and records the session. The completed charts are then used to prompt discussion in the children's focus groups, which are conducted at two locations. The data gathered from the activity session and the focus groups contribute to the database.

### **3.7.2 Focus groups and face-to-face interviews.**

Workshop participants were offered a choice to join a focus group discussion. Volunteer numbers at each site ranged from five to 12 participants. No volunteers were excluded, which explains the uneven size of the focus groups. However, only two or three participants were subsequently invited to engage in a one-on-one, face-to-face interview. These children volunteered. Where there were more than three volunteers for the interviews, children were asked to decide among themselves who would step down. This circumstance only arose at one site—Turing. There, the focus group numbers reached 12, and four children wanted to be interviewed.<sup>9</sup> Questions were constructed inter-subjectively, as were the responses (Rogers, Casey, Ekert & Holland, 2005, p. 147). Children were encouraged to ask the researcher questions too, and to choose questions they were interested in answering from the topic guide.

### **3.7.3. Field methods summary.**

The field methods were designed to elicit insights from which answers could be proposed to the research questions. Specifically, the first of these relates to finding out about how children's time use was meaningful to them, and to discover influences on its meanings. Secondly, the variation in, and number of, scheduled field events are explained by the complexities children were being asked to take into account that could not be elicited in single instances. Different approaches were applied to the same questions. Children needed time between the research events so they could reflect on, and deepen their awareness of, what the research asked of them.

The following instruments were used in the respective field events:

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<sup>9</sup> Throughout this thesis, sources from excerpts of interviews with children and adults are referenced to the name of the interviewee only.

*Face-To-Face In-Depth Interviews—Coordinators:* Preliminary to accessing children, the Coordinator(s) at each site were interviewed using the topic guide (see Appendix 11). The interviews were audio-recorded.

*Workshop:* The charts (see Figure 3.3) and surveys were completed in the workshop event. The workshops were informal events of an hour or more, in the course of which answers were produced on the survey and drawings. Children sat wherever they liked, spoke informally with peers about whatever they liked, and produced drawings to their preferred degree of completion without input from adults in the room.

*Child Survey:* The child survey generated quantitative data to inform the characteristics of the research sample.

*Chart:* ‘My Week’ (Christensen & James, 2000b) was a drawing and writing activity to elicit children’s reflections on their time use.

*Focus Group:* The focus groups are distinguished from the workshops in being formal discussions in regulated circular seating arrangements. They were moderated by the researcher, who asked prepared questions and added probes. Focus groups comprised between six and 12 self-nominated volunteers discussing a range of topics (see Appendix 10) in informal ways. The sessions were video-recorded.

*Face-To-Face In-Depth Interviews—Children:* Two or three children at each site self-nominated to engage in face-to-face, audio-taped discussions with the researcher, based on the topic guide (see Appendix 11).

### **3.8. Analysis: Coding, Categorising, Theorising**

#### **3.8.1. Auditing.**

The database of this project is large, which presents a methodological risk of researcher bias in selecting which data to use. For this reason, the data have been comprehensively accounted for through site profiles and key participant profiles (see Audit Trail #5), all the 'My Week' charts (see Figure 3.3) and the attributes of the research sample (see Table 3.2). Selections from the database for inclusion in the body of the thesis are justified in the text. These selections are based on the project's cyclical orientation towards the interdependence of theory, analysis and professional practice.

Constant data comparison (see Figure 3.4) from the inception of fieldwork rapidly suggested broad themes abstracted from the multiple data and literature sources in interpretive patterns suggestive of applicability in new situations. Nevertheless, descriptive 'profiles' were written for each field site and for each child that participated in a face-to-face interview (see Audit Trail #5). The Grounded-Theory principle of continuous data questioning (Strauss, Corbin, Denzin & Lincoln, 1998) yielded cumulative understandings from hundreds of data instances.

Interrogation of the literature was achieved in stages. Firstly, the author read extensively in disciplines related to childhood, care and welfare, education and sociology well prior to the commencement of field work. This process informed the author's developing standpoints in framing child agency and other social contexts as interrelated, mutually influential and transitional. As these standpoints became articulated, the scope of reading grew more focused on themes as they emerged, and a great deal of early, tentative coding was undertaken to test the viability of theoretically linking possible categories. This became the basis for the author's theoretical model, which was further developed in iterative cycles of analysis of the narrowing literature

focus and incremental field data. The scholarly discourse, the author's reflections on its pertinence in a theoretical model, and field data informed each other.

The justified time constraints of the fieldwork schedule affected analytic pace and sequencing affordances. Testing of the evolving model against a 'deviant' context, for example, was not possible in an ideal sequence after categories had been established. The Palmar site performs as a deviant instance to some degree in that, in some respects related to the focus of this research, deficits served to instruct best practice by reverse logic. Its activity affordances and their delivery illustrate an impoverished provision. Its impoverishment results from scant funding, poor staff skills, poor activity program planning and failure to know and address the needs of children in its care. It illustrates, too, some impacts on children of not being understood in terms of needs and the backgrounds they embody. Palmar is not introduced to the research project late in the field work time frame specifically for theory validation; rather, delays occurred for reasons related to gatekeeping and access problems in the end stages of the field schedule (see Appendix 6). However, it turned out to provide 'deviance' value by circumstance, in respect to auditing, constant comparison and coding, Palmar data were perforce analysed in the context of accumulated prior analysis (see Appendix 12). The Grounded-Theory principles that guided this study allow for this adaptation (Babbie, 2001; Charmaz, 2003; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005; Pearce, 2012; Silverman, 2006).

The survey was developed to obtain attributes of each child participant. The questions were designed so that a profile of the sample could be compiled, and so the researcher could know essential information about each child to best relate to them as they participated in the field. The survey is reproduced in Appendix 15 and its results were used to create a 'case' in NVivo Version 9 for each individual. From the catalogued information, a classification chart was generated, capturing participant



attributes. These are summarised in Table 3.2 and detailed from NVivo classification tables in the journal and field notes (excerpts may be found in the site profiles and child stories in Audit Trail #5). The rest of the data were subsequently auto-coded to each NVivo case to create a complete data set around each research participant that is both created by, and pertains to, them as individuals. Codes are the labels given to units of meaning. These data sets were valuable as complete guides to each child's attributes and responses. They illustrate, but do not reference, themes in the structural sense of their use in the thesis.

The data were imported into *Internals* in NVivo. Twenty-three interviews were transcribed. They were coded alongside other field and scholarly discourse data. Tapes were listened to immediately after the interviews, focus groups and workshops, to allow for constant and continuous comparison informing theme development. Data auditing was prioritised. Verbatim records ensured respect of wording used in the field.

Scholarly discourse and data shaped the theoretical concepts, but several conceptual influences had earlier origins, as explained above. Appendices 7 and 12 reflect links between discourse analysis and the emergent model. Findings are categorised to reference the theoretical concepts of the model. These theoretical concepts were in turn influenced by evolving understandings of how scholarly discourse perceives issues identified in the field and the data generated there. Contextual influences on concept formation are exemplified in Appendix 5. Iterative analysis using constant comparison for coding is key in Grounded-Theory. The complexities involved in 'reading' participants' perceptions requires it (see also, e.g., Skelton, Irby, Guzman, & Beech, 2012).

Workshop video footage was transcribed on the day of the event, and where possible, transcription closely followed the remaining field events. At completion, the raw data included:

- Field notes, transcripts
- Drawings
- Surveys
- Video footage
- Audio recordings
- Researcher journal entries
- Scholarly literature (data of equal status with all other data in Grounded-Theory practice).

The scholarly topics selected for review included: ‘new sociology of childhood’; tween culture/commodification; online technologies; transition issues; research with children and its methodologies; network analysis; diagrams and illustration as tools in research; developmental psychology and its adaptations in ecological frameworks; and macro-level influences, such as compulsory schooling, learning and the future workforce. Children’s future-connectedness, through responses towards coherence in eco-social systems theory, is evident in the Audit Trail in NVivo reports, the journal, field notes, site profiles and child stories.

### **3.8.2. Coding and categorising.**

Initial open coding categorised data under simple topics referencing the main idea in participants’ responses. At that stage, loosely grouped ideas pointed to concrete experiences with commonalities among participants, family configurations and schooling. Key examples of time use were social opportunity, such as Internet use and sport, attachment to family and friends, and school experience. Coding decisions referenced data already coded. New data were consistently interrogated to find their links with theoretical modelling.

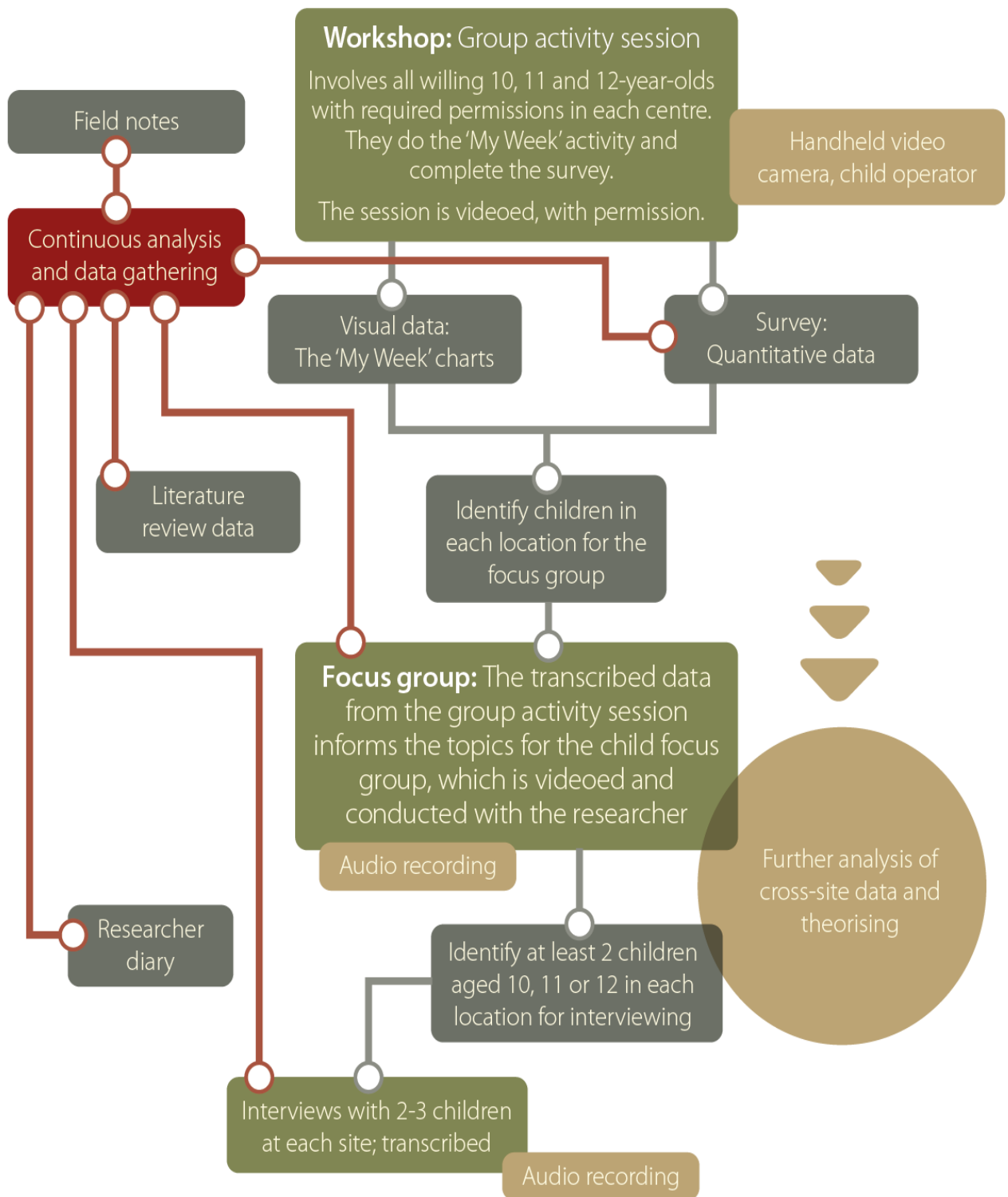


Figure 3.4. Diagram of analysis process by Grounded-Theory ‘constant comparison’ methodology of data generated from 31 site visits to six sites over 10 weeks of Term 4, 2010.

The red box signifies the researcher’s sole interpretive work. The dark green boxes signify data contributed specifically by the researcher, inclusive of her systematic and thematic selection and analysis of scholarly discourse and other, non-peer-reviewed reports. The light green boxes are indicative of collaborative data generation with children and Site Coordinators. The light green boxes signal children’s creation of new knowledge. Themes identified in the completion of the ‘My Week’ charts guided the formation of focus group topics and convergent probes. In the focus groups, children started by passing their ‘My Week’ charts around the circle. They responded to the derived topics and questions. Transcripts from the focus groups progressed through the red box. The emergent themes informed the topics in the informal conversations with individual children; that is, in the semi-structured interviews. Interview transcripts progressed through the red box.

The influence of this process on the reflexive methods used in the fieldwork affected how questions were posed, how groups were configured within the site contexts and the focus of inquiry into children's responses. Methodology evolved in response to emergent emphases in continuous analysis in the following ways:

- Configuration of workshop groups became increasingly informal and children were given progressively greater control over protocols and the order in which tasks were undertaken.
- Topic guides were used less prescriptively and probing took into account prior early analysis of products and transcripts created at other sites.
- Questioning in in-depth face-to-face interviews covered the topics in the guide, but focused on issues that reverberated with identified themes.

In this elicitation, definition was clarified in steps and stages immediately after each field event to characterise components and characteristics of time use from child perspectives. Audit Trail #1 summarises the commentary on these early codes, which are arranged in a tentative hierarchy. A mind-map method suggested connections among the characteristics and components to achieve a deep understanding of what quality in children's use of time actually meant for them.

The Literature Review and findings were generated in two simultaneous, parallel and mutually enriching continuous comparisons (Glaser, 1994, Ch. 9; Locke, 2001, p. 64; see Figure 3.4). Fragmented concomitant mapping work on scholarly discourse data resulted in a mind map alongside that from fieldwork. The two maps could be overlaid to gauge 'fit' between children's reflections and the overwhelmingly adult-centric knowledge repository that contributes to reified constructions of childhood experience as they appear in the scholarly discourse (see Appendix 8).

In the second iteration, each data instance was coded to nodes in NVivo. The node system grew in complexity as scholarly discourse and field data were coded in tandem. Incoming data determined the node hierarchies and their names. In the main, the interview coding concentrated at the following nodes:

*Codes related to identity formation*

- descriptions of activity content/task characteristics
- future narratives/aspirations
- activity preferences
- Internet use
- choice

*Codes related to care*

- peer relations
- family issues
- family relationships
- activities for and with parents
- descriptions of School Age Care experience and implications for improvement
- values of School Age Care
- school and care staff
- poverty and minority status
- choice, autonomy and freedom

*Codes related to school and transition*

- high school expectations
- schooling and homework

- learning support out of school
- bullying.

The use of scholarly discourse as data became significant at this stage. Grouped codes (categories) were tagged with key characteristics. Categories with characteristics in common were overlaid. Memos were generated to record how these categories were similar and different, as well as the weight of data instances at each characteristic. These notes of ideas about the codes that are identified in transcripts and field notes, and the relationships between them (Guba & Lincoln, 2005), comprise anything written or drawn in the process of constant comparison.

By this means, relationships were found between, for example, families who use School Age Care and schooling tensions. This relationship is basic to theorising in this study that, without intentional partnering with community stakeholders, schools create tension in families that affects children's wellbeing. Scholarly discourse, which had already influenced the researcher standpoint, was consulted to obtain other views on this idea, which in turn were suggestive of defining the differences among schooling, learning, education and care (see Appendix 3).

Early iterations across all data sources, including scholarly discourse, generated the following categories:

- problematising child agency
- tensions caused by childhood constructs
- different ways of understanding time use
  - in sessional structure; for example, scheduled within school/non-school organisations
  - as an activity
  - as a life-span marker

- in education
- in socialisation
- risk threatening time use
  - for projected future
- macro-influenced citizenship
- the gulf between teachers and carers
- the policies of School Age Care
- the tension between children's experiences and preferences
- tensions of schooling
- families who use care.

This early iteration suggested headings under which data instances were grouped.

There were as yet no themes or order of significance. Draft assemblages of data samples in thematic groups informed by the theory model were compiled in NVivo. Regrouping, using its 'coding-on' capacity, retained the history of each differently combinable iterative step. This work revolved around continuously questioning data for its meaning in the theoretical frame (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The reasonableness of analysis decisions was also periodically checked against disciplines intersecting social phenomenology, like Social Domain Theory (Houston & Mullan-Jensen, 2012) and developmental psychology. To this end, the author attempted to keep sources of influence in logical proportion by awareness that diverse interpretive possibilities depend on framing.

A new, separate set of categories was subsequently re-designated to identify 'supportive' or 'impactful' processes. Appendix 12 details the continuous questioning in this fourth iteration of analysis. Differences among sites were small at this level of comparison. Variations among them evidence how School Age Care is contextually

structured and programmed differently. For example, the Type 1 group was largely homogenous. Conceptual-level difference lay in Coordinators' leadership styles, bound up with for-profit/community governance differences. Principally, however, their geographies are the same, and so are their services and programming.

The four iterations of the data provided the researcher with a deep familiarity with them.

### **3.8.3. Theory generation.**

Proposing relationships between agency, holistic wellbeing, system boundaries, social networks and engagement is a theorising activity. This study's model evolved to a tight three-dimensional configuration distinguishing contextual systems from the forces that operate them. These are time-use operants (learning, networking and activity), which are conceptualised dynamically. This theorising works well with the evolved delimitation of the agentic core, which amounts to the will power of the child defining whatever tension accrues as she filters contextual influences.

Agency is accordingly respondent to task characteristics, or activity 'content', which ceases to be an empty category. Activity has been theorised as dynamic, characterised on a spectrum from play to work in the chronosystem (see Figure 3.6). It affects the entire micro-system, and by exponential ecological effects, it shapes the macro-system (Urie Bronfenbrenner, 1999, 2004). Wellbeing, context boundaries and networks serve self-righting (M. B. Spencer et al., 1997). A detailed account of this follows.

The processed data formed patterns making a mosaic of themes about differential values in time use. Probing in groups and with individuals sought to explore and articulate these themes in relation to ecology ideation. The voluminous and varied data rapidly revealed convergence along the thematic patterns, resonating to varying degrees



with scholarly discourse (Pidgeon & Henwood, 2004). Where patterns seemed to conform to the evolving theoretical model, note was also taken of departure from it.

Attaining saturation (Grbich, 2010) depended on effectively tagging data to accrued meaning. Some of the themes were collapsed to form mega-themes with subheadings. Continuous review of hierarchical status and attachment-points at themes generated a spreading conceptual tree. Eventually, four foundational mega-ideas crystallised, upon which a theory of sufficient robustness could be built. These are:

- ‘Context’ category
  - 1) An ecologically interdependent ‘child’ system operated by agency to negotiate continuity at the interface of contexts like home and school
- ‘Chronosystem’ category
  - Deconstructed agentic dynamics, classified as
    - 2) networking
    - 3) learning
    - 4) use of intervals of time.

These mega-ideas work well with the theoretical model. Its chronosystem is shown as a bi-directional influence of impact and support around the static ‘context’ structure. Tension and movement in this conceptualisation illuminate a stillness at the apex. The stronger her agency, the stiller and more stable a child’s social ecology is theorised to be. The best use of children’s time is construed to be agency-strengthening activity. Reference to literature about the manifestation of adult–child power relations in Western values provides critical validation for this theory. As data accumulated, themes were created to reflect abstraction on this basis. Key ideas attracting links from early themes became headings under which exemplifying data were discerned to suggest deeper conceptualisation.

Early sketches of the theoretical model confirmed the exploratory nature of this process, which at times generated a proliferation of themes, only to see them collapsed into categories, redistributed or otherwise rationalised to illuminate progressively recognisable, saturated principles of children's time use. Model deconstruction from initial coding is illustrated in Audit Trail #2. Specifically, activity content was designated an empty category to be populated with factors specific to each site, dependent on the efficacy of their support for learner identity formation in children.

Additional to the coding process, a series of site, Coordinator and child profiles were described (see Audit Trail #5). They support the concept of a meta-dynamic for thinking about abstractions like 'network', 'learning', 'activity', 'structure', 'engagement' and 'macro' forces. The meta-language helped to distinguish the values children reflected from researcher interpretation. Hence, two dimensionally different theorising activities strengthened the trustworthiness of the propositions leading to a theory that links identity formation with wellbeing outcomes. Alongside the child-voice/theory nexus, a third perspective—the gradually consolidating perspective of the interrogator—was distinguishable. The resulting hybrid of knowledge categories facilitated a distillation of found ways to understand abstractions like agency, wellbeing, boundaries, networks and engagement.

Some data elements do not fit these abstractions. For example, whether children like School Age Care and remuneration for work were ultimately irrelevant to the evolving set of categories (see Audit Trail #3). Data respondent to questions about task content in activity choices were dropped, with the firming ideation of a spectral approach to engagement. Equally, as the significance of generational difference and concomitant child autonomy trajectories fell away, the synonymy of interdependency and wellbeing became of central importance in the argument about what quality looks like in care

settings. Glaser (1994; Glaser & Holton, 2004) calls this ‘theory delimitation’. By the fourth iteration of field data analysis (using the binary qualifiers of impact or support), the delimited set of abstractions were used as meta-language referencing the key ecological ‘places’ at which children were impacted or supported in their use of time.

It became understood that intersecting boundaries and chronosystem dynamics were especially useful concepts for constructing the theoretical conditions of sufficient tension to invoke learner identity formation. Each boundary intersection shares procedural and adaptive equivalences with mutually supportive potential reflective of how boundaries between systems intersect. The key example in this study is the intersection between School Age Care and schooling. The theory that has thus been generated (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) seeds the decisions informing the discussion and implications at the end of this study.

#### **3.8.4. New and existing categories: Contextual influences on conceptualisation.**

The resulting concepts of agency, wellbeing, boundaries, networks and engagement were then compared across six field sites. For example, a generalised boundary issue was tension between parental expectations, like at Dornet, and the Coordinators’ constraining assessment of site affordances. This same theme expressed itself in the antipathy of staff at Asya towards parental demands around their children’s schooling obligations. At Turing, generational tensions were expressed in the lack of parents’ personal power and the school’s efforts to engage them on terms beneficial to their children. At Kentledge, parent-related conflicts on program planning manifested further tensions. At Hoyden, the difficulty of keeping parents close to site activity was a communication challenge, again centring on the tension between parental expectations and children’s needs. At Palmar, the same concept was reflected in initiatives to link parents into programmed events.

Differences were discerned among the six sites in relation to engagement. At the Type 1 sites, engagement was understood as the busyness of children. At Type 2 sites, it indicated the extent to which targeted programming aims had been internalised. At Turing (Type 3), it related to how fully children belonged in the school community. Type 2 and Type 3 services are exceptions to the majority of School Age Care services, which look like Dornet and Asya with respect to visions for engagement.

### **3.8.5. Key theory development: The author's Johns Activity Spiral (JAS).**

These conceptual differences both extended and delimited the theoretical thinking about engagement as a process and spectrum of attention that fitted well with the process-orientation of ecology modelling. As this idea evolved, it became clear that structured and unstructured time use do not embody binary tensions in time-use designation. Rather, they form a continuum correlative to a child's level of engagement in activity. This conceptualisation profoundly impacts core business in School Age Care, where, to date, best program planning practice has been characterised by theoretical absence of structure in the service of fun, freedom and respite from formal learning.

The JAS in Figure 5.9 was developed by the author as a tool for mapping a very different way of conceptualising the optimisation of children's free time. In the first place, it removes the negative judgement of structure that has been implied in typical program rationale. Indeed, it preferences an increasing trajectory of structure in activity participation with a child's developing interest, indicated by his or her engagement. Intersections of structure and engagement are elaborated in Sections 5.3 and 6.3.6 and summarised by Figure 3.5. They are modelled in Figure 5.9. The JAS is based on this reviewed way of understanding the difference between *occupying* time in compliance with statutory regulation, and *using* time towards the fulfilment of goals. Children's

self-described experiences are tested against the JAS in Section 6.1. The scholarly discourse reviews form the explicatory basis of these field data findings.

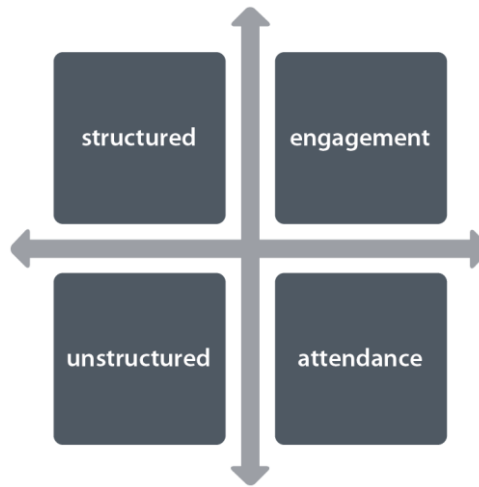


Figure 3.5. A matrix linking structure and engagement.

The author proposes that as children become more interested in what they have chosen to do, they become more engaged in activity. Goal-setting is integral to this development, as activity becomes purposeful, and an outcome is envisaged, like the production of an object. Implied in the realisation of goals is the imperative to systematise practical contingencies to serve expedience and efficiency. This systematisation is here defined as ‘structure’. It is a matter of context and child perception at which point ‘play’ becomes ‘work’. They too are not binary opposites. Examples in the findings in Chapter 5 illustrate what an engagement spectrum looks like, and are suggestive of the practical and research implications drawn from its use. Thorough discussion also unpacks the play–work continuum, to explode assumptions of their mutually exclusive characteristics.

The category of engagement and terminology around structure is now meaningful in a process sense. Analysis culminated in proposing engagement as integral in the cyclical nature of the supportive or impactful experiences that influence learner identity formation. The implicit importance of agency as a socialisation tool now has definition. Agency operates the engagement that, at some point in the play–work cycle (see Figure 3.6), requires expression through differential degrees of structure in group contexts.



Figure 3.6. The play–work cyclical spiral.

This research theorises that ‘play’ and ‘work’ are not opposites, but may be differentially located on a temporal spectrum, dependent on context and point of view. They are here shown cyclically. Activities compete for time allotted them, each temporal element having its own existence. ‘Play’ is about exploration and possibility. ‘Work’ is about production and probability. Engagement is the operant fuelling the allocation of play and work to temporal opportunities. The cyclical characterisitic of time implies continuous engagement of the entire play-work spectrum. But it also operates spirally. Time of its nature moves forward. Cyclical activity moves forward with it, combining the pace of the cycle with degrees of engagement to create

momentum towards a goal or outcome. There is increasing need for scaffolding activity by structuring it as momentum increases. This phenomenon is modelled in The Johns Activity Spiral (Figure 5.9).

### **3.9. Conclusion: Chapter 3**

This chapter has described how the methodology relates to the author's theoretical model, and how both, in turn have shaped the rationale for proposing a theoretical time use tool applicable in School Age Care. Creating a single, spare model from the 'messy' process of reiterative analysis is the goal of theory building in Grounded-Theory (Glaser, 1994). The author's proposed JAS in Figure 5.9 is the outcome of partial but multiple insights into children's lives outside of school. Children are assumed by nature and instinct to self-right their eco-social circumstances. The outcomes of self-righting are linked to identity formation, a process that is most at risk across the convergence of changes children face in preadolescence.

The field notes, site profiles and case profiles were reviewed with reference to the final iteration of the author's theoretical model. Its logic was continuously tested against the early thinking that was closest to the data. Implications drawn from findings are linked to cross-context convocation in School Age Care (McNaughton & Smith, 2005, pp. 112–113). The researcher is invested in children, researchers, teachers, policy makers and carers joining in the conversation about the meaning of quality time use.

School Age Care services have boundaries in common with school and home in an eco-social perspective. Yet School Age Care has historically positioned its mission at odds with the authoritative norm of school education. Looking after children out of school and schooling are not binary domains or incompatible content areas. Schools are complex, social places and children's non-school activity is not inevitably 'natural'. The

relationships among school, home and care operate through the multi-placed practices of networks and learning. Children behave differently from each other in these practices. Schooling is not homogeneous and care contexts respond differently to community affordances and cultures. The continuity among them is not uniform. Children identify their future selves through socio-economic resources at home that generate the meaning of school, only to relativise its value in continual, recontextualised engagement outside both.

The findings that follow in Chapters 4 and 5 are organised with intent to bring the reader along a progressive theoretical argument as summarised in the model for this study (see Figure 2.3). The structure of this pathway determines how the report of the findings is organised, and forms links with practical and research recommendations through the eco-social implications that are drawn in Chapter 6 for the quality of children's experiences. The contexts of childhood (see Chapter 4), represented in the central, pyramidal graphic of the model, are explicated first. They expand in scope and scale from individuated child agency to influencers of holistic child wellbeing; namely, facilitative community systems. Chapter 5 shifts the reader's attention to consideration of what makes 'context' work, by discussing the operants of the chronosystem (that is, networks, learning and time-use choice) in turn. By this progression, the culminating implication of the thesis—to link self-righting, identity formation and time use—is attained.



## Chapter 4. Contexts of Childhood—Findings and Discussion from Data Pertaining to the Theoretical Ecology Systems that Interface the Worlds of Children



### Key Idea:

The structural logic of the findings report is based on the theoretical model that frames this study

### 4.0. Introduction to Findings

The Literature Review, conventionally located early in a thesis to contextualise the research questions in an existing scholarly ‘conversation’ and scoped to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the field as a whole, does not appear in typical form in the present study. Here, the theoretical model serves aims more typically achieved in the Literature Review to establish the purposive direction of the inquiry. The literature was used in constant comparison on the same basis as the field data. The scope of reading in scholarly discourse was broad ranging and interdisciplinary. Like the field data itself, it was selective by a progressive narrowing of thematic directions to achieve argumentative coherence. The findings and their accompanying discussions are organised, in the first instance, to establish a view of the contexts interfacing childhood (Chapter 4), after which these contexts are used as referents for the operational processes involved in making them significant (Chapter 5). Chapters 4 and 5 directly replicate the theoretical model by walking the reader through its contextual core, progressing to its chronosystem implications and the recommendations in Chapter 6. For example, schooling as a context category becomes a highly charged conduit for arguing the corruption of time-use values related to macro-agendas, which overtly

constrain the legitimised ‘places’ of learning that individual children in the sample can access. Throughout these chapters, text is highlighted in ‘callouts’, a set of key statements that act as sentry-markers, signalling the flow of logic along this analytic process.

The ecology frame counter-intuitively situates the contextual conditions for children’s wellbeing in service of the agentic child at the apex of nested systems. It does so with the purpose of inverting the typical hierarchy of attention in social discourses to focus on perspectives of children’s needs, and the challenges implicit in meeting them, from a standpoint of respect for their capabilities and selfhood (Schirmer, Weidenstedt & Reich, 2012). Although the empowerment of children’s decisions and insights faces many difficulties owing to children’s dependency status, theorising child-centric influence creates transparency for understanding how child agency may be supported. The exemplar for exploring these system processes is high school transition (see Section 4.4). Through their use of time, children reciprocally influence macro-level imperatives like schooling and their implementation at the micro-level in community and families. The chronosystem comprises the mechanics of ‘self-righting’ affiliation, learning and choice of time use that operate transformative development.

In sum, underpinning the assumptions of the research findings is the equal prominence given to field data and scholarly discourse, both of which are classified as data and equally pertinent to implications and recommendations. On this basis, the analytic report includes all data sources, organising the findings thematically and in alternating sets of literature and field data, in a structure whose logic culminates in the following four propositions:

1. Children’s agency is dependent on their efficacy as learners in relationship with adults.

2. Conflicted tensions at the high school transition boundary express the hegemony of schooling among the totality of childhood contexts.
3. The value children accord their time use illuminates the qualities of their identities.
4. Preadolescent affordances of government-subsidised support in School Age Care are limited by historic epistemological and resource constraints, failing high-need children especially.

Chapter 4 describes and discusses instances of contexts and their supportive and stressful impacts. The four parts of this chapter correspond with the four contextual systems identified in the theoretical model: agency, family, care systems (including schooling) and the statutory community. The chapter is organised to navigate the reader through the significance of child agency, to the impacts of macro-level influence upon it and the implications for child wellbeing. The fourth section focuses on high school transition to exemplify negotiation at context boundaries. Child agency is characterised as a contextual system, because childhood is constructed along adult-centric, context-dependent dimensions. It is particularly significant that in this study childhood is conceptualised as an adult-centric construct. ‘Childhood’ does not appear in the theoretical model. Child agency does, because the standpoint from which this study perceives children resides in the tension between their acting and being acted on. It follows that all systems are the same in this respect: they both influence, and are affected by, interfacing systems.

#### **4.1. Section 1: Child Agency and Identity Formation**

In this section, experiential quality in childhood contexts is reported. Context is also discussed with reference to the research questions, focusing on the system of child agency through which self-righting is made possible. Specifically, risk threats to agentic

empowerment of children constitute the focus here. This section also relates children's agency with their identity work, to characterise it as a process of becoming a learner. In so doing, it illuminates the competencies for self-righting that frame how recommendations for best practice are conceptualised in Chapter 6.

#### **4.1.1. Introduction.**

Childhood is a process of learning how to control experience (Bandura, 2001). Children are agentic in learning how to know what is in their best interests. However, the context of their dependency status places limitations on this capability, which may be moderated in long-term supportive relationships with caring adults. Efficacious agency is characterised by competency to filter influences from the systems interfacing the world of the child, and to negotiate the meanings of family, schooling, peer, community, care and commercial systems with clarity of intent.

#### **4.1.2. Literature review: Agency.**

Children's dependency status leaves them open to exploitation and disempowerment. 'Useful' children historically brought returns in the form of paid work that offset the liability they embodied. Although contemporary childhood seems



**Key Idea:**  
Children are agents

liberated from balancing this dependency/contribution equation, in principle not much has changed, as Miller (2005) and Qvortrup (1994) effectively argue. Evolving, dominant perspectives on children reflect socio-cultural narratives that position their generational roles to best serve macro-level objectives (Ungar & Teram, 2000). 'Ritualised' childhoods (Scruton, 2005) constrain children's potentialities within adult-centric future narratives (James, 2010).

Yet children are agents. This proposition shifts the province of child ‘best interests’ to that of children’s own responsibility, presaging the support they need to pursue positive pathways that empower their decision making. The child system is conceptualised as one in which children generate their own processes to make new knowledge possible (Mattey & Diliberto, 2013). A unique identity is formed from this knowledge, as Marsh (2012) demonstrates in children’s discrimination among elements of traditional playground games that resonate with contemporary media culture. The child agent is a system that operates reciprocally through affect and achievement on the one hand (Boiger & Mesquita, 2012; (McKillip, Godfrey, & Rawls, 2012), and the development of insight and judgement on the other (Busher, 2012; Rodríguez, Rodríguez & Mojica, 2012). Its dynamic is described by Denissen, Zarrett and Eccles (2007, p. 430) as ‘intraindividual trajectories of coupling across domains’.

Constraints of such empowerment originate in externally imposed identity attributes like SES, race, character and gender, functioning as contextually conditioned barriers in inhibitive hierarchical systems. How children form an identity is knowable by understanding their manipulation of these filtering barriers (for example, as described in Baron, Bell, Corson, Kostina-Ritchey & Frederick, 2012). Like processes are modelled in this study as ‘self-righting’ (Spencer et al., 1997).

Conflicting contextual and individual interests invoke ‘self-righting’. It is about achieving control over one’s experience through negotiation, or, as framed by Causadias, Salvatore and Sroufe (2012), as the cultivation of ‘ego resiliency’. It requires mastery of complex skill sets, which are learned (see e.g., Chen & Chang, 2012). Optimal outcomes such as decision-making competency, the capacity to filter multiplex tensions, and future-narrative construction uniquely shape identity (Bühler-Niederberger & König, 2011; Huggins & Rodrigues, 2004). In ‘owning’ their capacity to be agents

for their best interests, children are empowered to conceptualise their experiences in the context of their aspirations, with knowledge of their capabilities and access to the resources they need to realise them (Fitzpatrick, 2011, p. 223).

**Key Idea:**

Social identity formation iteratively informs learner identity processes

Significantly, identity formation is a function of socialisation. It responds to the relativism of adult–child power. Jeffrey’s (2012) global orientation is persuasive in arguing that agency is expressed as much in resisting inhibitive hierarchies as in reproducing entrenched power structures. The optimally agentic child is a skilled generational negotiator in long-term, consistent, supportive relationships in preferred networks (Lopes, Mestre, Guil, Kremenitzer & Salovey, 2012).

Caring for children involves taking seriously adult responsibility to strengthen their agency. Enablement of children’s self-advocacy is a social justice issue (Bachika and Schulz, 2011; Bosisio, 2008; Honneth, 1992, 1995, 2001; Lister, 2001; Solas, 2008; Thomas, 2012). Smith (2012) proposes the ideal of the ‘Athenian’ child as an exemplar of agency. The ‘responsibilisation’ pathway is characterised by intentional partnering with adults to achieve wellbeing (K. Smith, 2011, p. 8). Evidence shows that children are capable of determining their experience (Cartmel, 2010, p. 9; NSW Commission for Children and Young People, 2009c).

**Key Idea:**

Children are competent to discern the mechanisms in ‘structured’ time use responsible for positive learner identity effects

Different experiences influence differently resourced children to create their childhoods through unique and complex responses over time (Buhler-Niederberger and

Van Krieken, 2008; Huggins and Rodrigues, 2004). If children could more consistently advocate for themselves, they would enhance their resilience (Grover, 2005). In a step towards this kind of enablement, the Gov Doc Kids Group (Adamich, Davis, Faria & Satterfield, 2012) has opened a US portal on macro-policies that is highly accessible to children. Children of all ages are encouraged by user-friendly, age and ability-appropriate entry to use the 'Children's Collection' of government information on the Internet. This idea is highly applicable in NSW.

Identity processes are continuous and develop in stages (Muschamp, Bullock, Ridge and Wikeley, 2009). They are socially and culturally influenced (McCaslin, 2009). They include loss (Lucey and Reay, 2000). Johansson's (2011) fluid conceptualisation of the 'fragility of identities ... [and] all the human and non-human agents that are involved in activities of separating, connecting, struggling and caring, thereby constructing multiple childhoods and adulthoods' (Johansson, 2011, p. 5) enriches the idea of identity formation as process, with a mutuality of influence across generational boundaries.

Papadopoulos (2008) talks about identity as constructions of relationships with a series of constructed selves. This approach is analogous to Grossen and Orvig's (2011) and Bakhtin's dialogic self-construction principles (Salgado & Clegg, 2011). This process has heightened potency through online technologies, which constitute a ubiquitous mediator between real and possible personhood (Walsh and White, 2007; Searle & Kafai, 2012). Technology use also highlights the identity power of social networks (Bond, 2011; DeAndrea & Walther, 2011; Lehdonvirt & Rsnen, 2011; Przybylski, Weinstein, Murayama, Lynch & Ryan, 2012; Schulzke, 2011; Walsh, White & Young, 2009).

Duerden et al. (2012) consider how contexts facilitate identity processes in their qualitative review of empirical findings from an adventure program. They provide

guidance on how to create optimally conducive contexts for identity work (see also Barton et al., 2012). Challenge, positive relationships, skills development and ultimately reviewed self-knowledge are facilitative factors (Duerden et al. 2012). Likewise, Mueller et al. (2011), who frame identity work in PVEST terms ('selection, optimisation and compensation', p. 1115), found relationships between 'self-righting' and access to resources that intentionally foster identity skill building over the middle school years. Girls coming from non-mainstream backgrounds are described as shifting their identity trajectories across school, out-of-school activity and home through high school transition, in cumulative projections of their future selves. These were positive where their aspirations were leveraged in generational relationships to extend engagement in specific kinds of learning (Barton et al., 2012). This work of Barton et al. is a highly salient longitudinal ethnographic study supportive of the present research premise.

#### **4.1.3. Field data findings: Agentic children.**

Melody illustrates how contradictory a challenge it is to be agentic by resisting collaboration that might defraud her identity. At the same time, she aspires to recognition:

I've designed a shoe ... I'm not letting anybody see it because they might become a fashion designer and they might steal my idea (Dornet Focus Group).

Mentoring may have mediated this conflict. Children may find mentors in various caring adults in their networks. They could be School Age Care Educators, older children, teachers, peers and family members. For example, Jane was mentored by a teacher in a reinforcing process supportive of her interest in mathematics. She demonstrates her emergent agency, transforming supported effort into a chosen pathway:



I'll be going right through to Year 12. Yep. My thinking of a job is doing teaching, ... go university ... and you study and they think your work is good, you get to go to be a maths teacher (Jane).

Conversely, Dorothy's vulnerability to risk is acute. Her only access to trusted adult mentors has been through the Schools as Community Centre at Turing. The Coordinator there is also a neighbour who has known Dorothy and her family since she started school. The staff have scaffolded her adjustment to her family's fragmentation, and provided daily counselling and care, culminating in the provision of a volunteer role for both her father and herself at the site. It has been a source of stability, health support, friendship and valued activity. All these affordances amount to quality mentorship in an adult-child network. The disadvantages she suffers from her father's unemployed status, her mother's absence from her life for 11 years and a history of abuse (see Child Story 10, Audit Trail #6) suggest Dorothy may encounter obstacles in obtaining mentoring support from an adult once her connection with School Age Care ends. She knows it will end, inevitably, as she is beyond the age-span for Turing. Her friend who is dropping out of school to set up house will not be able to meet Dorothy's needs.

M. [friend] said do you want to come and live with me when I move out? I will live in a caravan ... M.'s brother Jake lives in a caravan out the back (Dorothy).

#### **4.1.4. Literature review: Learner identity risk threats.**

Disadvantaged children stand to benefit most from adult mentors across schooling-care boundaries (Woodland, 2008). Yet only three per cent of Australian children participating in School Age Care are disadvantaged (Cassells & Miranti, 2012). Affluent children, representing 17 per cent of School Age Care users, are presumed scaffolded by family processes and afforded the socio-cultural capital (Jæger, 2011) of networks and school credentials that are likely to commend them into jobs (Cavanagh &

Fomby, 2012). That explanations of poverty oversimplify identity risk threats is noted in Bickel and McDonough's (1997) reminder that disadvantage is a multiplex socio-cultural phenomenon not solely related to material affordances. Griet, Roose and Bie (2013) argue that children's self-reported poverty contributes a normative account of a way of life, whereas adults' interpretations, typically within a social justice framework, is distorting. Authier and Lehman-Frisch (2013) illustrate this through investigating children from diverse socio-economic backgrounds playing with status ideation in a gentrified neighbourhood. Nevertheless, the private education sector has grown at a faster rate than has public education in the past decade (ABS, 2011a). Poor children have only a partial chance at long-term security and material wellbeing in this relative context, as they have to compete on an increasingly uneven playing field to succeed. Unless change occurs in funding policy to prioritise amelioration of family poverty, the probability of high test scores seeing a poor child into higher education and its opportunities is relatively low (Gonski & Panel, 2012). Most children from poor backgrounds cannot access the selective public schools that were founded on principles of equal opportunity (Brown, 2012). The skill involved in deploying agency is modelled and learned in relationships. Barriers children face do not reflect their competence, but rather originate in the imbalance of adult-child power (de Castro, 2011).

High school transition is often accompanied by a sense of academic decline (Reyes, Gillock & Kobus, 1994; Troop-Gordon, Visconti & Kuntz, 2011; Whitley, Lupart & Beran, 2007). Eccles et al. (1989) found that children felt less competent from their own perspectives in core subjects like maths and English in the new school setting, although this was not reflected in externally measured scholastic endeavour, because schools largely test transferred, rather than transformative, learning. Cremin, Mason and Busher (2010) point to the tokenism of such transfer. The transformative knowledge that

children create in identity work is knowable through long-term, holistic competency outcomes in a 'reportability continuum', as described by Halverson (2008, 2010a, 2010b).

#### **4.1.5. Field data findings: Identity formation.**

Many children are more interested in their identities as learners than in externally judged achievement:

*Participant 2:* She's trying to be creative.

*Participant 1:* My creativity. See, there's my work (Turing Workshop).

Children in the sample valued identity. The sharp rejoinder in a focus group discussion made plain that 'originality' is a key identity value worth protecting:

I want to be more original, like my friend she's not very original (Dornet Focus Group).

Children are responsive to adults' differentiation between school and non-school knowledge, expressed through how each are valued:

My mum says, well I would like to wear this but I don't know what it should go with. ... and I say, okay if you want to wear that I'll go through what you should wear. ... When she helps me I give her my respect and money, but she doesn't give me anything in return. I need credit for that (Melody).

The meaning children make of learning needs acknowledgement from network connections.

When I got 96 out of 100 I was so proud of myself ... I went around and told everyone, like down the bottom, up the top, office, library. ... I told next door, both of my next door and across the road, yeah (Edwina).

In contrast, Samantha belongs to a family that identifies as a learner community. Samantha's values are expressed through her parents' interests, their work, the tasks she and her sibling are set, and set for themselves in and out of school, and particular skill

categories they call ‘talent’. As opportunities arise that resonate with individuals in the family, others embrace the learning involved with support. Samantha articulates the connections between her family experience and her own developing identity:

We’ve been asked to ... adapt a children’s book into a play and perform it to the Kindys. ... I really love drama because I’ve been brought up with parents who have both been actors.

I’ve always wanted to do singing. I’ve been talking to my parents about it since last year ... now we’re going. It’s just—I sing all the time ... I love singing and my mum and dad think that we—[sister] and I—have beautiful voices and so we want to train our voices (Samantha).

In Indigenous contexts, family knowledge is respected as a learning pathway synonymous with respect for traditional relationship practices. It is integral in identity formation:

Pop used to go way up to the top of the mountains and shoot bow and arrows at the kangaroos. ... My uncle’s friend paints didgeridoos. ... He goes to a tree and knocks on it and if it’s really hollow, he’ll cut it—It’s really hard ... Yeah and my Pop, he does emu hunting (Mary).

Children described various contexts in which they learned. Jane breaks a family pattern of alienation from schooling through her relationship with her teachers:

Yeah, I go to school more than anyone in my family. What makes me come to school is that I like to have learning, and learning about all maths, English, reading. I’ve got so far in my writing ... because I used to repeat the same words but now I’m getting in—I’m out of that ... I’ve done five pages today ... but I don’t get tired. That’s the thing. I don’t get tired with my hand. Reading helps me because ... I learn heaps of different words like emergency and all them [sic] words (Jane).

Few children simply listed their interests, as Max did:

Science intrigues me quite a lot (Max).

Most expanded on how their interests evolved through the learning they discover in relationship with adults. Ben attributes his renewed scholastic efforts to his respect for his parents' encouragement, through working on motorbikes with his father:

he was busting with things he wanted me to know, such as his expertise on motorbikes, motocross, bush bashing and his dad (Turing Field notes).

Oliver built relationships with a couple of teachers that broke the cycle of repetitive demand, aggressive refusal, and defeat at the greater power of adults:

They're really nice to us, not I'm the teacher, I'll treat you like I'm a teacher, it's more like I'm your friend (Oliver).

By contrast, Patrick lacks guidance from caring adults, but wants to be a learner:

I'd love to make the perpetual motion machine. ... I might sell it to another company so they can build it for \$300 billion (Patrick).

Patrick cannot write, comes from a minority background and is socio-economically disadvantaged, with the suicide of his father a close memory and his mother's unpredictable moves from one city to the next a constant source of uncertainty. Patrick's struggle to make everything work out, without knowing the steps, is concerning. This thesis proposes that School Age Care is in a position to 'wrap' students like Patrick in a team of supportive people from their network. Centring on Patrick's desire to invent a machine, his School Age Care provider (Palmer) could introduce him to mentor opportunities. In this way, Patrick may find a learning path and a resilient identity built on agency. However, Palmer Coordinator Helen Marr's defensive position is:

I don't like to use the word education all the time (Coordinator Helen Marr).

The field participants differentiated teacher expectation and intrinsic values in achievement. For example:

Music is just one of the greatest things you'll ever learn ... When you see an instrument, you're like: I can play that, I'll play this piece if you want (Emily).

Children distinguish among learning outcomes that support their agency:

I do gymnastics. ... I'm really scared of heights and I go across the creek and I climb trees and I'm usually not like that, but now since I can trust myself ... I'm climbing trees now and jumping off and jumping over water—stuff I don't usually do (Turing Focus Group).

Marina's academic focus is one to which she has brought understandings about the relationship processes involved in her choice of learner identity:

my father or my mum they used to always read me stories about learning stuff, so educational (Marina).

She can also describe the convergence of cultural affinity and specifically targeted social activity within the relationships she respects for their contributions to her formative identity. By contrast, appreciated though it is as a kind gesture, a close friend's advice on obtaining high grades is not taken seriously. Marina is conscious of how and why her perceived skill level is superior in her school context, describing the conditions for her knowledge growth in detail. She engages with the processes associated with learning because they will facilitate work at future boundaries, well beyond those at the intersection of her immediate classroom/coaching-school interface. In respect to those future challenges, she situates her achievement status modestly:

Well most of them [tutors at coaching centre] come from [Asia] like China and places. But my English teacher, she's 102 or 103, I'm not sure. ... she knows lots of really high-level words that she teaches us. Once she taught us year 11 words ... my maths teacher

... my friend Sonia told me that if I eat chocolate before a test it brings me ... well it makes me feel a bit better than usual ... basically in school we learn multiplication which I'm up to a higher stage. So are you good at maths? Well I'm okay but I wouldn't say that I'm really good (Marina).

#### **4.1.6. Summary of section 4.1.**

Children demonstrated how their socio-cultural beliefs, attitudes, practices and values influenced their situated time use. It also shows them competent to advocate for their best interests, given adults' support for exercising their agency in productive ways. Agentic children were found to be aware of the identities they project in social settings. They are protective of identity, linking social and cognitive competencies with interests, talent and cultural heritage. These insights inform how the first research question may be approached.

The links found in children's testimonies between their developing interests and learning in intergenerational relationships form the premise of relationship-building for learner efficacy that justifies future research approaches discussed as implications of the findings in Chapter 6.

The findings demonstrate the high needs of Dorothy and Patrick for interactivity with adults. Without this, they were unable to access the experiential knowledge that is essential for formal instruction to become meaningful. Further, most children in the sample did not access long-term adult-child relationships supportive of their experiential learning at School Age Care.

## **4.2. Section 2: Macro-System Contingencies Relating to the Experiential Quality of Childhood**

In the context of social change, conflicts exist among state interests, workforce imperatives, family responsibilities, child care provision and education. In this section,

findings concerning the effects of these conflicts on children's self-righting are presented and discussed.

#### **4.2.1. Introduction.**

Barriers limiting child agency have their origins in post-industrial workforce contingencies reliant on economic growth. In 2005, 60 per cent of married women in Australia were employed (Abhayaratna & Lattimore, 2006). This percentage has continued to grow (ABS, 2011b). By definition and statute (United Nations, 1989), post-industrial children are not part of the workforce 'equation', and so economic considerations override children's best interests and conflict their families. Government-subsidised childcare serves macro-interests, prioritising workforce needs to stay competitive. Time-use opportunities, especially for disadvantaged children outside schooling in NSW, are desultory.

##### ***4.2.1.1. Historical roots in cultural dichotomy.***

In the accidental, dichotomised relationship that exists between schooling and care in Australia (Cartmel, 2010), the potential of non-school education support has been ignored. From its earliest instigation, governments invested in the wellbeing of European Australians in school systems, leaving the poor and Indigenous to welfare (Elliot, 1998). The casualised workforce status of School Age Care, still in the welfare sector, persists despite increasing demand for quality services, especially from the female workforce (Brennan, Hill, Pocock & Elliot, 2007). School Age Care is under-resourced, under-professionalised and undervalued (Petrie, Meijvogel & Enders-Drägässer, 1991). It has confined its charter to recreational play. In 2012, overdue policy change (DEEWR, 2011) signalled a potential shift to conconvocation of welfare with education, according with scholarly consensus that learning is the defining condition of childhood (Fredricks et al., 2010).



#### **4.2.1.2. School age care and preadolescents.**

School Age Care enrolments increased by 10.8 per cent in 2010–2011 (Office of Early Childhood Education and Child Care, 2012b), although preadolescent participation rates continued to be comparatively low. Childcare funding increased from \$1.7b to \$3.7b in 2008–2009, female workforce participation increased by 6 per cent (1999–2010) and the cost of childcare to families fell between 2004 and 2011 (Office of Early Childhood Education and Child Care, 2012b). That most preadolescents look after themselves after school is a parlous implication with respect to well-documented extreme preadolescent need (NSW Parliamentary Committee on Children and Young People, 2009b).



#### **Key Idea:**

Macro-level system priorities override children's best interests and conflict their families

#### **4.2.2. Literature review: Macro- and micro-links in childhood.**

Children in NSW spend most of their time outside school. How they spend it is a state interest, a workforce issue and a family responsibility, with social and economic implications across systems at the macro- and micro-level in an ecology framework (Talbot, 2004). Yet childcare policy focuses on generic employment issues (Gray & Stanton, 2002; Lancker & Ghysels, 2012), despite its endorsement of children's rights (A. Brennan, 2004; Redmond, 2010) in protected silence (de Castro, 2011). This thesis distinguishes the agentic child from the historically evolving ideation of victimised children that informs policy reflective of their eligibility as recipients of rights (Poretti Hanson, Darbellay & Berchtold, 2013; Stoecklin, 2012). Preadolescents are 'placed' in School Age Care, with little research to suggest there is a significant cohort among them deciding to participate of their own accord. Berry and LaVelle (2013) show that

‘placed’ children are less pro-social in care settings than are those who self-elect to participate. In this context, child rights sell children short (Aynsley-Green et al., 2000; Bosisio, 2008; United Nations, 1989, 1995; Hartas, 2008; Wells, 2009). Studies examining child-defined ‘rights’ issues are rare (Tuukkanen, Kankaanranta & Wilska, 2012). Asymmetric adult–child power structures pervade commercial-industrial law and practice (Crane & Dee, 2001) with impacts on children from their earliest years (Popkewitz & Brennan, 1997). Whereas schooling and welfare rely on parents’ assumed investment in and responsibility for children, the State’s evolved ‘workfare’ policies have increased pressure on all women to absent themselves from family to work (Chenoweth, 2008; Hand & Baxter, 2012) in ways that Roll and East (2012) argue reinforces their subordination. It is a disastrous example of ‘silo’ thinking, as Slaughter (2012) debates in her disillusionment with the credo dominating education in most Western countries (Beauvoir, 2011; Lastinger, 2012; Steinem, 1993) that universal female workforce participation is the reward of committed attitudes to emancipation (Huber, Stephens, Bradley, Moller & Nielsen, 2009).

**Key Idea:**

Processes are the enablers of macro-objectives

As Grant (2012) points out, with reminders of education’s purposes beyond preparing the workforce, the issue is one of social justice. In 2008, 74 per cent of employed Australian women required workplace flexibility to meet family care needs (ABS, 2009). The benefits of flexible and non-standard parental working hours are greatest for children approaching adolescence (Roeters, Lippe, Kluwer & Raub, 2012). Garey (2002) describes family–work tensions as a ‘collision’ (p. 769), with increasing public discontent at the unmediated discontinuities between children’s and women’s

school and work hours (Marquand, 2012). The result is that parenting is increasingly performed by paid workers (Campbell & Charlesworth, 2004; Cassells, Gong & Duncan, 2011); and, at the boundary of work and home, irregular and unpredictable care needs are met without consideration of child agency (Edwards, 2001). In 2008, most employed parents devolved at least part of their responsibility to collective care services (ABS, 2009; NSW Commission for Children and Young People and UNSW Social Policy Research Centre, 2011b). Yet such services have typically been the least similar to parent care of any other kind of care arrangement, owing to the detachment that used to define professional practice, as identified by Leung (2010) with reference to social workers. Care work is further disjunctive with parenting in that, to date, it does not collaborate with schools on children's education. Childcare is at most a semi-skilled occupation, and workers are not charged with integrative parenting (Jensen, 1991; Piper & Smith, 2002; Ward, 1998; Windebank, 1996). Indeed, UK foster children reflected that compared to their teachers, the social workers in *locus parentis* actually obstructed their education (Harker, Dobel-Ober, Lawrence, Berridge & Sinclair, 2003).

#### **4.2.3. Field data findings: Macro- and micro-links in childhood.**

Children need to be scaffolded in a net of care with a fluctuating mix of services, recreation provisions, media and particular activity networks. However, children's care needs in discretionary time conflict with family needs and the demands of schooling. Children themselves know they need significant adults to provide consistency of care:

I reckon one parent should be home or in the afternoons they should, ... organise for someone to come pick them up (Edwina).

In Marina's perspective, schooling conflicts with non-school learning in discretionary time:

I used to do kung Fu ... I was starting to get really, really busy with all the homework ...  
I kind of had to quit (Marina).

In her limited workshop effort on the 'My Week' chart (see Figure 4.1), Mary reflects her delegitimised cultural identity by omission. 'Country' has no place in the school-linked geography in which the workshop was held. Yet she elaborated on her out-of-school care experiences in an affecting account of what matters to her, greatly abridged here:

It was meant to be the rainbow serpent I think it is. The ants and the goanna and the goanna's mum and the fish ... dolphin, turtles, crabs ... My nan. She was reading Aboriginal stories to me (Mary).

Oliver's expressions of desire to help others are reflective of supports that are unobtainable to him:

I hope I'll end up rich ... I want to work for the Salvos ... to help people that aren't so rich or so lucky as in disabilities and money trouble, no house, homeless (Oliver).

Similarly, Edwina's defensive burst on behalf of difference resonates with the pain of her own isolation:

I'm like, look, ... they can't help it. So why are you 'ripping' on them? What would you do if you came out to be looking like them? (Edwina).

Barriers to inclusive care can defy macro-intent, as the systemic malaise of privilege, competition and prejudice in micro-networks demonstrates. At Palmer, employed middle-class residents of the area resist sending their children to the youth service because of perceptions that such services attract 'troubled' youth. In fact, the clientele typically come from socio-economically disadvantaged and minority communities (Karsten, 2003). Palmer works to assure the community of its broad-based mission:

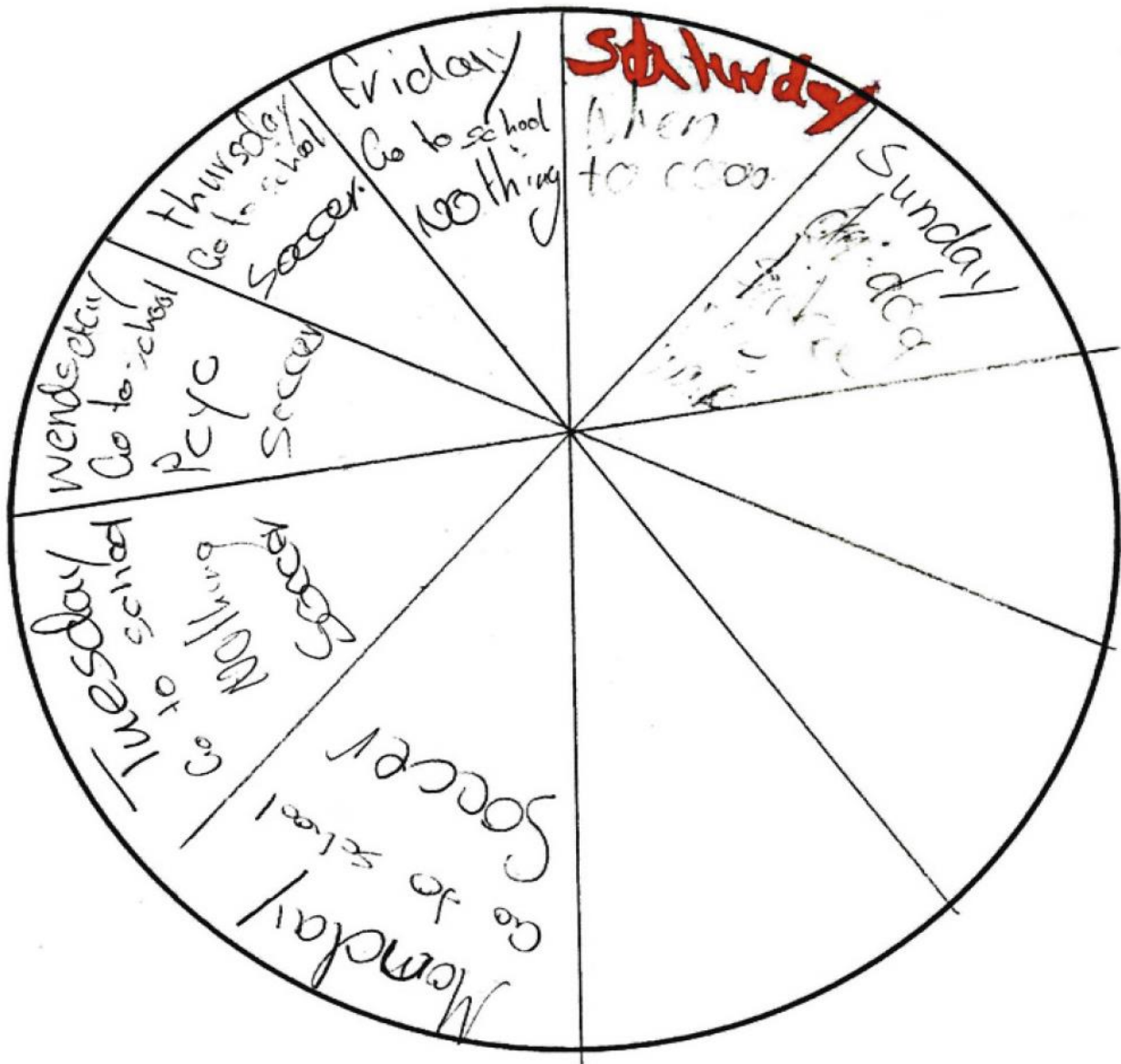


Figure 4.1. Mary's 'My Week' chart.

We're not a club, you know. ... we have free resources we need to focus on the local community ... we've got kids with access to resources and with families with high income ... and then we have the problematic kids that is difficult to engage with (Palmar).

Turing clientele, too, were unaccepting of a service orienting provision to a particular group, even though their funding partially targets Indigenous families:

All students need the supports because they are low socio-economic ... it doesn't matter whether you're black or white (Principal Tara Ling).

I was offered an Aboriginal playgroup and our Aboriginal mums went, 'but why?' (Coordinator Samantha Turner).

The Schools-as-Communities building at Turing has a hand painted sign: *Milabah*, which means place where everyone belongs.

#### **4.2.4. Summary of section 4.2.**

This section has addressed the research questions in two ways. In the first instance, it has reflected on the conflicts across contexts that arise because charters in School Age Care keeping children safe and occupied in play are discontinuous with the demands of schooling and families' struggles to meet multiplex demands. These findings are symptomatic of dysfunctional relationship between agency and the commodifying agendas of macro-level eco-social systems that inform discussion of implications for further research in Chapter 6. Discontinuities across care, school and 'Country', symbolising family and heritage, were shown in this section, influencing Mary's decisions to channel her losses outside of these contexts. In this section too, insights of research value are discussed that relate to the second research question on the transactional culture between children and adults. Mary is observed exploring how she

can self-right her shattered sense of belonging and her connections to Indigenous culture.

A number of children in the sample were found to lack the adult relationships they needed in their discretionary time. School Age Care is insufficiently resourced to fill the anchoring role associated with 'home'. In circumstances in which the only learning worth having is out of reach, children feel delegitimised in their socio-cultural identities, causing them to choose between schooling and non-education pathways, rather than to value all kinds of learning.

### **4.3. Section 3: Wellbeing**

In this section, the process of self-righting is discussed in terms of its outcomes. These outcomes are broadly characterised by degrees of wellbeing. It is argued that children are impelled to self-right as they confront the discontinuities that exist across childhood contexts. These learning moments occur when positive identity work in one context fails to transfer positively in another, threatening wellbeing. At the theoretical boundary where these contradictory impacts conflict, children cannot choose between them but must negotiate their constraints and embrace risk of loss.

#### **4.3.1. Introduction.**

Children's wellbeing is a function of 'self-righting' (Spencer et al., 1997) at discontinuous intersections of system boundaries. The concept of boundaries is not unique to Ecology Systems Theory. It is synonymous with cognitive dissonance in psychosocial disciplines (Aronson, 1997; Festinger, 1964), in which spectra of self-reinforcing environmentally conditioned responses (Skinner, 1971) are interrupted, as it were, to reconfigure their trajectories. This study makes a distinction between contrived and authentic boundaries. The child-adult boundary is here authorised as discontinuous. It is submitted that a child is not, nor can it be, an adult. Children and adults know each

other through sharing relationships, and not by identifying with interchangeable roles in them. By way of contrast, some boundaries reflect societal expediencies, driven by largely political agendas. Examples of contrived boundaries include those that compartmentalise knowledge creation into exclusively schooling pathways. The thesis of this study contends that contrived boundaries such as these need to be bridged.

Continuities across the boundaries between the child's agentic system and those it interfaces moderate transition risk (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011; Avison, 2010; Dunn & Sherrod, 1988; Frey, Ruchkin, Martin & Schwab-Stone, 2009; Meyer, 1988; Silseth & Arnseth, 2011; Spencer et al., 2003; Westa, Sweetinga & Young, 2008). A wraparound approach can bridge the tensions between education and care, network and autonomy, free time and structured time use. It makes sense to implement practical models that exist for facilitating children's joint control over their wellbeing in partnership with adults. Identity emerges from this resolution to bridge phenomenological risk and opportunity.

#### **4.3.2. Literature review: Wellbeing practices.**

Generalised and ubiquitous wellbeing ideation (Sayers, Mithen, Knight, Camm & Goldfeld, 2011) calls for contextualised meaning. In policy terms, 'wellbeing' is a generic indicator for quality of life (ACECQA, 2011; Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2009, 2011; Cass, 2007; *Education and Care Services National Law Act*, 2010; Forum of Non-Government Agencies, 2011).



#### **Key Idea:**

Agentic children are characterised by the social practices they cultivate in relationship with adults

It is a fragmented concept across discourse disciplines, including health, education and sociology. The new National Quality Framework for School Age Care associates



children's wellbeing with 'the productivity of our nation' (ACECQA, 2011, pp. 2–3). Hill (2004) takes note of the homeostatic macro-values implicit in wellbeing referents. Much like child rights (Bjerke, 2011), wellbeing benchmarks infer assurance that children will not be incapacitated by deficits. However, these benchmarks are short on vision. The purpose of investigating children's time use in an agentic frame is to acknowledge wellbeing as potential that may be developed through supporting children to make themselves 'well'. This is achievable by fostering children's engagement with their interests, competencies and capacities.

From an ecology systems viewpoint, wellbeing references multiplex transformative processes (Ben-Arieh & Frønes, 2011). The process of core interest for identity formation in this study is discretionary time use, contiguous with learning. This proposition is borne out in interviews with NSW children, who described the complexities implicit in wellbeing (NSW Commission for Children and Young People, 2007). These complexities reflect three processes. The first is strong agency, based on a secure sense of competence and self-worth. Secondly, children need access to resources, both material and geographical, and affordances of belonging, responsibility and control. Finally, children need to be intentional in their acquisition of skills for making competent 'self-righting' choices requiring moral strength and self-discipline.



**Key Idea:**  
Education and childcare are contiguous

The contiguity of care and learning is explained in the combined factors of competence and affect that operate wellness. Psychosocial and physical health (May, 2011) and a robust learner identity are interdependent (Scheff, 2011). Since Vygotsky's seminal influence, it may seem self-evident that adult-child relationship building is the

most important activity of childhood in this paradigm (Reio et al., 2009; Rhodes et al., 2000; Tietjen, 1989; Ungar, 2004; Wikeley, Bullock, Muschamp & Ridge, 2009). Yet the idea of intelligence as a process at the boundary between cognition and affect, central in Vygotsky's theory (Andreyeva, 2008; Fox & Riconscente, 2008; Gredler, 2009), does not typically underpin consideration of how children's discretionary time may be understood (Facon, 2006; Li, 2000; Spano, 2003; Winsler, Naglieri & Manfra, 2006). Research in motivation demonstrates its intrinsically emotional quality in mastery (Gottfried, Marcoulides, Gottfried, Oliver & Guerin, 2007). 'Emotional intelligence' (Bar-On & Parker, 2000; Humphrey, Kalambouka, Wigelsworth, Lendrum & Wolpert, 2011; Qualter, Whiteley, Hutchinson & Pope, 2007; Scharf & Mayseless, 2009), understood in an ecology frame, references the self-regulation processes and socialisation skill that is familiar in PVEST (Bar-On & Parker, 2000). This is the fundamental rationale of this study.

Wellbeing as hedonic thinking in education and care settings is an attempt to de-pathologise typically symptomatic emphases on barriers to wellbeing (American Psychiatric Association, 2000) and focus on conditions for growth and socio-emotional acumen (Larson, 2000; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). 'Values education' programs (Australian Curriculum Studies Association, 2004; Lovat, Toomey, Dally & Clement, 2009) are recent examples of initiatives across sectors to define core Australian values (Hill, 2004) that appeal to hedonic ideation. Politically and culturally, they reflect Western democratic values (Bachika, 2011; Bachika & Schulz, 2011).

However, the 'teachable moments' (as in for example, Nicolas, 2012) in childhood occur when values do *not* coincide with experience. Conceptually, boundaries theorise this conflict. The *raison d'être* of hedonic psychology is to call on positive emotions that generate positive personal, community and, ultimately, societal growth

(Csíkszentmihályi, 1990; McCabe, Bray, Kehle, Theodore & Gelbar, 2011; Sinnamon, Moran & O'Connell, 2012). A hedonic approach usefully motivates positive PVEST 'self-righting' work, presenting opportunities for enjoyment, thriving and expansion of personal potential in cross-context boundaries.

**Key Idea:**

Children seek growth and challenge through exposure across contexts to activity that builds and resonates with their interests

An ecology systems boundary appears when, from an agentic perspective, *conflict* presents at interfacing contexts, compelling resolution (Brighenti, 2011, p. 4). It is for this reason that the activity of *negotiation* more fully references boundary work than do hedonic processes. Boundary work is not unalloyed pleasure, because systemic forces at the macro- and micro-levels are as much constraints as they are gateways to freedom. High school transition, for example, involves loss, opportunity and risk. Children who negotiate this transition successfully can be viewed as competent negotiators across school networks (Mason, 2007). Immersion in socio-emotional and culturally positive contexts like high-achieving schools may help, but it is not enough (Cavanagh & Fomby, 2012).

Understanding change as negotiated boundary work (like 'talking' in Russell & Tyler, 2005; Sannino, 2008) makes sense of diverse research findings such as cultural discontinuities in accounts of childhood experience (Bender & Chasiotis, 2011), gender differences in bullying behaviours (Benenson, Markovits, Thompson & Wrangham, 2011; Gådin, 2012), the drop in voluntary physical activity at self-concept boundaries (Annesi, 2006) and shattered patterns of 'family life' over introduced time-use choices (Vandewater, Bickham & Lee, 2006). Children explore how they can control boundaries when they exploit flawed child constructs to their advantage (Berman, 2011) as Powell,

Danby and Farrell (2006) showed in children bypassing sanctioned talk in classrooms. Bottrell (2007), Jeffrey (2012) and Jeffrey and Mcdowell (2004) explicate the contextualised identity building that occurs when children offer resistance. Their overt behaviours belie strategic motives for protecting their agency, albeit covertly, to profound and punitive dominant-culture approbation (Parkin & Kuczynski, 2012).

Ways to wellness in recreational contexts like sport are typically propounded as worthwhile choices for children's discretionary time use (Calloway, 2004) because sport is an achievement culture that may override deleterious cultural influences and level the psychosocial playing field in approved ways (see also Watson, Newton & Kim, 2003). Bennett (2011) refers to the benefit of immersion in a 'culture of optimism', and Laursen (2005) suggests that adult-led peer-culture conditioning can strengthen agency.

What wellbeing means to poor, immigrant or Indigenous people is not well known (Adermann & Campbell, 2007b; Webber, 2002), but Australian Indigenous families are unlikely to connect with dominant-culture goals unless their own family network mores are acknowledged and respected (Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, 2010; Doecke, 2008; Her & Dunsmore, 2011). Over the past three years, a growing number of Australian Indigenous children do not even attend school, let alone engage in its culture or appear for NAPLAN testing (Council of Australian Governments' Reform Council, 2011; S. Smith, 2011). In 2012, only half of Aboriginal children in Grade 5 were literate (Tovey & Achterstraat, 2012), with no likelihood of improvement by 2020. Only a third of Indigenous youth finish Year 12 (Beresford, Partington & Gower, 2012). The record of culturally sensitive intervention to strengthen agency is poor (Adermann & Campbell, 2007a; Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2009; Purdie, Tripcony, Boulton-Lewis, Fanshawe & Gunstone,

2000 p. 56). This is a recurrent lament, accompanied by statistical updates of the kind reported in (Stevenson & Tovey, 2012), casting derision on government plans to do something about an ‘achievement gap’ that widens three times faster for Aboriginal children through primary school than for their non-Indigenous peers.

The extent of school refusal due to cultural discontinuity is not known, but Wager (2012) suggests that leveraging children’s non-schooling and cultural experiences as contexts in mathematics teaching is efficacious. Traditional Indigenous games have also been documented for use by children from all backgrounds in a remarkable effort of cultural research (AASC, 2008). While it is noted that a school-based intervention leveraging cultural philosophical elements from African American youths’ backgrounds did not succeed (Lewis et al., 2012), in Indulkana, South Australia, ‘kata wiru’ (agentic strength) is a core Indigenous value (Kruske, Belton, Wardaguga & Narjic, 2012; Winkler, 2005), which Scotch College’s Yalari boarding school seeks to leverage (Marais & Marais, 2007; McLeonard, 2011) to keep children engaged in schooling for the long term.

Claims for the positive impacts of supportive wellbeing leadership in immersive settings are ubiquitous in the literature, among which motivation is highlighted in both positive psychology and preventive frameworks (Thurber, Scanlin, Scheuler & Henderson, 2007). Outdoor programs such as Outward Bound, devised specifically for Indigenous youth,<sup>10</sup> claim positive outcomes. However, there is limited understanding in the reviewed literature about how the mechanics of this time use are effective (Hattie, Marsh, Neill & Richards, 1997).

Children develop agentic strength by internalising self-efficacy beliefs formed through empathy, responsibility, endurance and persistent choice making to achieve

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<sup>10</sup> [outwardbound.org.au](http://outwardbound.org.au)

visualised objectives, which Foster and Spencer (2011) call ‘future narrative’. Mortimer (2012) argues from findings of the Youth Development Study that strongly agentic children set diverse pathways through transitions towards goals originating in early motivation and engagement.

**Key Idea**

Care relationships are more important for identity formation than task characteristics

This capacity can be modelled (Anthony, Alter & Jenson, 2009; Brooks & Goldstein, 2006; Jekielek, Moore, Hair & Scarupa, 2002). However, in Indigenous communities, in Australia and elsewhere, viable future narratives have been obviated in schooling pathways, as the acquisition of skills and cultures, through which traditional life practices may protect agency in identity work, are compromised and negated (Butler, 1993; Glingerich, 1972, pp. 161–165; Purich, 1992, pp. 40–41). It is a seemingly overwhelming challenge, only recently being addressed, to repair this damage (AIME Indigenous Corporation, 2012; Indigenous Higher Education Advisory Council, 2011; Malin & Maidment, 2003).

Current wellbeing discourse is problematised in the present study, with the intention of illuminating how differently particular individuals conceptualise its impacts in the contexts of their own experiences. Wellbeing values are here framed in a broader human need for making meaning, without specifying what that meaning must be. It is assumed that children need to transform their experience actively, as agents, to be ‘well’.

**4.3.3. Field data findings: Wellbeing practices.**

Inclusive relationship networks are facilitative of wellbeing because they foster identity formation. Identity is formed in reflexive processes, honed through values of discernment, interpersonal skill and ethics. In this respect, children demonstrate that

their learning is as much about emotional development as it is about academic skill building. Children in the sample illustrate supportive affordances from tending proximity in their networks. Affect includes moral awareness, as exemplified in Edwina's response to an experience of discrimination:

I'm like, look, ... they can't help it. So why are you 'ripping' on them? (Edwina).

Affective qualities are also attached by some children to boundary objects like musical instruments or computers, evidenced by drawings in the 'My Week' time-use charts (see Figure 4.2). Children talk about what relationships teach them, and how they learn through mentors and friends. Positive intergenerational socialisation is integral to learning. The need to belong motivates a great deal of learning activity responsive to boundary tensions, especially through play. Affective dimensions of learning are evident in the charts. For example, Andrew drew a trumpet as his centrepiece, a signal of how much he values his music (see Figure 4.2).

Children illustrate for themselves the undeniable impacts on learning of their own relationship-building work in socially structured mentor roles. For example, Samantha obtains emotional support from teaching younger children:

You just sort of bond while you're helping other people (Samantha).

Children acknowledge the affective nature of identity work. Edwina's self-identified barrier to her aspirations exemplifies her struggle with learning that transcends skill or knowledge acquisition:

No, it's too difficult. Like yesterday, I put \$5 in the moneybox and took it out this morning and spent it. I'm not a really good saver (Edwina).

Affect is equally salient in building belonging. Children at Turing expressed their sense of belonging through their handcrafted nest. It was found nurturing a hatch of local birds. Incidental knowledge is generated through affective processes:



Figure 4.2. Andrew's 'My Week' chart.



She did that so well the birds actually nest in it. ... Yeah and it's a rainbow lorikeet ... There's three—there's four owls here. They visit. They visit. They come and leave (Turing Focus Group).

Children exercise agency in setting the environmental conditions of belonging. A failed attempt by Coordinator Donna Rein at Dornet to segregate preadolescents in its service from five to 10-year-olds meant designating 'older children' to an exclusive space where they 'belong'. This illustrates discontinuities between adult and preadolescent decisions when they are not negotiated:

We actually had what was called a stage 3 room which we renovated ... it had bean bags it had lounges it had the television the stereo it had the Nintendo it had all of those things. They never used it. They had their own fridge the whole bit and they never used it. It was not what they wanted, we spent thousands of dollars on it lasted for about 6 months and they went no don't like this anymore because it was downstairs it was away from everybody else (Coordinator Donna Rein).

**Key Idea**

Active convocation among care-workers, primary and secondary teachers, families and communities is essential in School Age Care

The outcome was a descent into an angry standoff, in which staff felt defeated by 'entitled' children, without recourse because of the service's for-profit status. The preadolescents acted on their frustration by:

colonising the main stair landing and pulling out electronic gadgets. It is a form of pressure that the technology-resistant service has capitulated to, for the sake of keeping the peace (Dornet Field Notes).

'Belonging' as a condition of agency is further illustrated in Oliver's isolation and victim status. This mutually reinforced the social conditions, attracting attention from

bullies. It was not until he was able to ‘borrow’ cultural belonging that Oliver found his problems to subside:

No one gave him trouble but he was this little like—this old man—really frail but around the area every old man got picked on by the young kids and I sort of wondered why he didn’t get picked on and then dad and mum told me what he was—like he was an Aboriginal elder. Then I told kids at school about yes, I know this person so they’ve laid off that way (Oliver).

At Asya, staff are offended by disrespectful behaviour among participants towards the affordances their parents’ fees facilitate. At this site, ‘belonging’ means acting with impunity in the chasm between children’s own and care workers’ socio-economic positions in ways that strike the staff as shrewdly intelligent. It comprises an unchallenged affront to staff values and exemplifies a contextually conditioned unwellness that presents as a community issue:

They know what they’re—they’re very savvy as to what they deserve or what they think they deserve. They have in this particular setting, these kids have a lot of stuff ... Middle class, upper middle class ... have an expectation that they deserve that stuff because of who they are ... they’ve always had that stuff. ... Kids will stand on things, jump on them and that sort of thing and I’ll say, you know that’s not how we treat the stuff ... maybe they’re just you know trying to show me they don’t care (Coordinator Alice Rintoul).

Conversely, Jane, a participant at Hoyden’s care service, has developed respect for the learning that builds her basic skills, which grows from her identification with the topics she practices. The meaning Jane obtains from the approval offered on evidence of her work establishes and reiterates that the learning itself is emotionally supportive and

is as valued as she herself is. Jane's reflections illustrate nascent steps in intentional learner identity formation:

I'm getting to—in my maths, we get sometimes clocks. I'm getting used to my clocks now. I can be getting used to saying my clocks, my time, and what else do I do? We do take-aways, times and pluses. Yeah, I'm good at it. Yeah, I sometimes—because I got this book, maths book, at home and I write down all the answers. If my brother gives it to me, then I'll write down all the answers in the book. [Teacher] goes, that is the best work I've ever seen from you, Jane, yeah. I got a reward (Jane).

These instances suggest that practical means of facilitating children's joint control over their wellbeing in partnership with adults are worth exploring in care contexts.

#### **4.3.4. Literature review: Wraparound practices.**

Fries, Carney, Blackman-Urteaga and Savas (2012) found that wraparound support had a stabilising influence sufficient to keep vulnerable youths in learning pathways. It is 'an empowerment ideology' (Rappaport, 1981, p. 19) because context shapes perceptions of children's needs in 'dynamic interactive relationships' between 'strength and need' (Malysiak, 1998, pp. 24–25).



#### **Key Idea:**

Discontinuities across system boundaries require wraparound approaches

In wraparound, community is the key mechanism for integrated support of children (VanDenBerg et al., 2008). Its 'system of care' includes a collaborative structure, coordinated implementation, a child–family team and continuous assessment of strengths-based need (Bruns et al., 2003, p. 8; Kamradt, 2000; National Foundation for Educational Research, 2010, p. 7). Wraparound team building is also developmental for the adults involved in a project.

**Key Idea:**

Wraparound practice comprises collaborative support and mutual appropriation

Wraparound closely resembles ‘mutual appropriation’ (Downing-Wilson, Lecusay & Cole, 2011), in which intervention measures accrue in consultation with participants over the life of the project. Kazlauskas and Crawford (2007) unpack the potential of a similarly conceived solution-oriented teamwork of learning, negotiation (‘knotworking’) and sharing processes in a science field. Most usefully, wraparound challenges the status quo in which parents are not agents for community, communities are conflicted, and schools find it easier to use parents and the community to supplement resources (like covering library books) rather than to engage collaboratively on class teaching (Freebody, Freebody & Maney, 2011, p. 77; Millar, 2011). A collaborative learning approach implies that knowledge can be created through sharing experiences of a common task on the assumption that learning is social in nature.

Archer et al. (Archer et al., 2012), tracking learner identity formation over five years in a large sample of 10 to 14-year-olds, demonstrate the critical value of family processes on aspiration led by interest in science peaks during the ‘middle years’. (Cremin, Mottram, Collins, Powell, & Drury, 2012) reversed the typical ‘one-way’ home/school transaction by asking teachers to investigate the knowledge afforded in children’s homes, with considerable effect on teachers’ appreciation of partnering across childhood contexts. Brown-Wright, Tyler, Graves et al. (2013) found that discontinuities at the home–school boundary account for deficits in children’s motivation to learn, and in their classroom behaviours.

Successful partnership involves knowing children’s networks across childhood contexts. Byrnes and Miller (2012) found that neighbourhood indicators typically found

in census data are not associated with social support, but that effective parenting and family communication was supported by network activity in neighbourhoods. Wood, Giles-Corti, Zubrick and Bulsara (2013) argue children in neighbourhoods catalyse social connectedness, to demonstrate how integral children are to the creation of the community capital they need.



**Key Idea:**  
Wraparound practices respond to realities in social need

This finding accords with Brattbakk and Wessel's (2012) conclusions on the relative impact of neighbourhood influences, and the influence of adults' positive perceptions of their neighbourhood on how engaged their children are in structured activity (Duke, Borowsky, & Pettingell, 2012). These studies support Lyttle-Burns' (2011) contention that the convocation of school, family and community, with children as equal decision makers, can arrest the US dropout epidemic. The case study of a disadvantaged community by Lawson and Alameda-Lawson (2012) exemplifies communities of practice in which stakeholder resources are leveraged to powerful effect for children's social and learning engagement. Vincent, Rollock, Ball and Gillborn (2012) illustrate the complexities of minority families' strategic efforts (Henderson, 2012) to both protect and advantage their children's opportunities in mainstream culture through their 'concerted cultivation' in extracurricular activity.

#### **4.3.5. Field data findings: Wraparound practices.**

The principles of wraparound were found to be working at some field sites. A wraparound solution to conflicted belonging and agency means conceptualising care provision in community terms. 'Community' references integrated support in a collaborative structure of coordinated implementation.



**Key Idea:**  
Cross-context partnerships facilitate cross-context identity work

Wraparound practices worked for Oliver. He benefited from the combined support of schools, family and Kentledge School Age Care (as well as community/neighbourhood stakeholders). These supports offered respect for Oliver's agency, to achieve, as a network, what exceeds the affordances of individual provisions. Kentledge School Age Care provision played a key role:

I had a lot of trouble at the end of Year 6 sort of going away from these friends ... I had an incident with one of the girls and [Kentledge leader] took time off work to come and sit down with me and talk to me about it (Oliver).

At Kentledge, two key staff for the boys' group know their community because they are also residents of it.

This community is fairly tough and the kids can be really rough when someone's new  
(Coordinator Gillian Kent)

Coordinator Gillian Kent defines the Kentledge service as 'prevention-early intervention' in a wraparound vision. Its program, for groups of up to 10 children, strongly references:

Issues that are actually going on in the children's lives ... like if dad's gone to gaol often no one checks in with the child ... we'll have an activity-based program which will be say swimming which is on this afternoon and two youth workers running that program they'll go down to the school they pick up the children ... might be discussion around skill building around swimming some social awareness ... might be a bit of a check-in group how's it going what went on at school today what's been going on especially if it's a big issue that's been going on at school like a child's hit a teacher or something ... we try to get a level of commitment. Children then self-assess how they feel that they

went in that day ... we make sure we keep the focus of checking in with the children finding out how things are. We also physically drop the children home yea right to the front door so we actually check in with the parents after the school so we get to actually assess what's going on in their home lives um and often that cannot be so pleasant um so we can often walk into domestic disputes to what the child is actually witnessing at home and then we can actually offer the families further supports around that stuff if that's going on ... we will actually assist with a family through dealing and going through DoCS [Department of Community Services] sometimes we'll have to physically take a family to DoCS because we need to report that there's some issues there and we'll support them through that interaction (Coordinator Gillian Kent).

At Turing, wraparound epitomises what Schools-as-Communities seek to do.

Integrated with education objectives, the work of all staff on site is framed to support individual children, in the context of their networks, to achieve sustained engagement on learning pathways. Apart from the welcome children receive at the doors of the community-liaison building from the School Age Care Coordinator to just 'hang out', children are, for example, encouraged to prepare meals in the kitchen and become 'garden gnomes' in groups that include teachers as members, tending school grounds (Coordinator Samantha Turner).

It is inappropriate to compare the wraparound orientation of Palmar with that of Turing and Kentledge, despite its aspirations to a wraparound style of supportive care. Palmar is under-resourced. The personal development activity known there as 'Circle Time' illustrates fundamental limitations and a failure to engage children:

I did my training last week ... We've only done one session and I haven't done this before (Coordinator Helen Marr).

Yeah I do circle time but it's not really fun because I just think in my head, come on, we're not here to do circle time (Chris).

Palmar was still in the ‘concept’ phase of *planning* transition support after months of special funding and two weeks before the end of Term 4, so the Year 6 children had not been able to benefit from this worthy but unrealisable idea. Decisions about the service’s objectives were still being considered well beyond the end of field events. Coordinator Helen Marr aimed to liaise with parents to involve them in activities, for example, without the support that an articulation of the purpose of such involvement might afford:

We had parents volunteer to have a role to do the barbeque for one activity.

By contrast, Hoyden wraps its Indigenous preadolescent children through school liaison and links with community partners such as the local youth service, volunteers from corporate social justice initiatives, the non-profit non-government organisation sector and a local youth service, to provide breakfast, for example, and homework help. Older children from Hoyden who were in the study sample were funded to attend a local youth service as a key component of the transition support initiative by Better Futures. At Hoyden, homework is negotiated with the school and supported in the homework club. Communication with parents is as much a challenge as it is at Palmar, but it has priority and a good chance of succeeding in a wraparound frame:

Some of the parents are hard to get contact of (Coordinator Alex McKean).

In its compartmentalised designation of care functions, children attending Dornet are not wrapped at all, but their families effectively buy their places, along with a raft of alternative paid-for professionally structured and informal time-use opportunities. Dornet’s mission responds to parental expectations that relate to safe play, but does not address their calls for schooling support. Dornet’s inward-facing boundary has its back turned to the intersection of parenting with schooling. Homework, for example, is relegated as a parent–school negotiation. However, Froiland, Peterson and Davison



(Froiland, Peterson, & Davison, 2012) found that eighth graders' marks were adversely affected by parents helping with homework.

Camilla attends Dornet a day a week, catching transport to one of her parents' houses after school on the other four days. Both her parents work full-time (Camilla). There is no holistic coordination or oversight of Camilla's activity. In such cases, children become agents for parental concern with child safety. Some children develop fears that impair their wellbeing and confine them from a community portrayed as dangerous and hostile.

I keep all the windows down and the doors locked. ... Yeah, I would also keep the doors shut also, but if someone knocked on the door, I wouldn't look out the window ... and there's a camera ... I am quite afraid of being alone ... I heard of lots of dangerous things that can happen to you. Mum and dad they said, just don't open the door at all, just pretend like, pretend as if you're away (Asya Focus Group).

Children at Turing are equally likely to find themselves outside a coordinated care framework outside school hours, despite the on-site Schools-as-Community facility:

She's [mother] either down my stepdad's or the shops so I usually just wait for her at home (Declan).

Edwina looks back on her similar preadolescent experience, to advise parents:

I would tell them to, like, organise their kid (Edwina).

Coordinator Gillian Kent concurs that:

Expectation of a level of independence where a child will actually get themselves to a centre and at 11 and 12 um I strongly believe that um children should not um that's a large level of independence for a child from [suburb] catching a bus for 25 minutes you know to come to a drop-in centre to then catch the bus 25 minutes home (Coordinator Gillian Kent).

#### **4.3.6. Literature review: Boundaries.**

Children's boundary-negotiation skills (Cresswell & Baerveldt, 2011; Fielding, 2004; Grotevant, 2001) are synonymous with their social aptitude (Scharf & Mayseless, 2009; Spencer et al., 1997). Figures 4.3 to 4.6 demonstrate degrees of children's awareness of boundaries. These skills are often characterised in the scholarly discourse as 'voice'. Lankoski (2011) talks about the mechanics of alignment and allegiance in voicing. Stets and Carter (2011) see it in terms of snapshots of context-dependent identity components in flux. Fish and Priest (2011) offer clusters of boundary 'holons', privileging a hierarchy of selves from which a qualified dominant one speaks. Alcott (1991) conceptualises negotiation of boundaries occurring in the space between speaking and being spoken for, where theoretically at least, speaking 'with' can be honed. The realisation of voice is associated with the learned capacity to listen, and accords with Her and Dunsmore's (2011) call for children to construe their identities interdependently. Uprichard (2007) argues in terms of moderating 'being' and 'becoming' in chronosystem processes towards personhood.

Boundary objects, tools, practices and spaces such as homework are the dialogic mechanisms of preadolescent identity work. They bring different meanings, uses and impacts to different environments. In this sense, boundary objects (and boundary tools) are bridging phenomena that create continuities across contextual boundaries (Star & Griesemer, 1989). They are involved when knowledge is shared and collaboration occurs, operating identification, coordination, reflection and transformation processes (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011; Russell & Tyler, 2005). Being a process of knowledge exchange (Andrews & Yee, 2006) and evolving future narrative (Barton et al., 2012; Henderson, Whitaker, Bialeschki, Scanlin & Thurber, 2007; Hogg, Terry & White, 1995; Barton et al., 2012), factors in identity formation originate in manipulated

boundary objects. Hemming and Madge (2011) provide an example of this in children's negotiation of religiosity.

The division in School Age Care between its charter and schooling leaves services ignorant of the schooling issues children negotiate. School Age Care depicts schooling as oppressive child-work and undermines schooling by contrasting its own affordances as a respite from school. Yet research is resolved that school, home and community boundaries intersect in learner identity formation. The Internet and schooling's increasingly extended mandate to support children's affective and social needs are evidence that these boundaries are already blurred. Schools are predominantly social spaces in which children play and engage in extracurricular arts and sport (Bonny et al., 2000; (Lipnevich, MacCann, Bertling, Naemi, & Roberts, 2012). It is disingenuous of School Age Care to claim the child socialised in play as its unique 'product' in this context.

Children's identity as learners, where it is supported with respect for their agency, is understood in ecology terms as a boundary tool for successful transition (Bryant, 1996). Agents are free within the constraints of adaptive change to alter expected outcomes where their evolving self-regulation (Eisenberg & Sulik, 2012) intersects with adult support (Holland & Valsiner, 1988; May, 2011; Musaeus & Brinkmann, 2011). The space created at this intersection can be mediated by schooling, as illustrated in high-risk children in Cunningham et al.'s (2002) study. Other instances of early adolescents' 'self-righting' are exemplified in Taiwanese research with 13 to 15-year-olds (Hsieh & Stright, 2012). Leung, Marsh, Craven, Yeung and Abduljabbar (2012) contribute to these findings in investigating the domain-specificity of self-regulation skills, suggesting the importance of differential support.

In ‘incompetent child’ constructs, by way of contrast in public discourse (Handsley, Mehta, Coveney & Nehmy, 2009; Kermode, 2012), self-regulating space is rarely acknowledged. Conceptually, ‘growing up’ in an ecology paradigm contradicts commodified notions of linear childhoods, to acknowledge they are conflicted and effortful (Clarke, 2004; Cook, 2004b; Cross, 2004; Faulkner, 2011a, 2011b; Jones, 2000; Kaiser & Huun, 2002; Pollock, 2005; Taylor, 2011, pp. 420–421). Sreenivas (2011) draws on children’s stories to understand how marginalised Indian children negotiate available resources and their neighbourhood networks in ways that do not resonate with populist ‘innocent child’ constructs unrelated to work and accountability. Cults of sentimentality obfuscate the dimensional range of growing up that lies at the core of identity processes (Clark, 1993). Commerce exploits ‘innocence’ paradigms (Baker, 2003; Brookes & Kelly, 2009; Conrad, 1999; Cook, 2004a; Hamilton, 2011; Kaiser & Huun, 2002; Kenway & Bullen, 2005; Kraus, 1995; Langer, 2005; Russell & Tyler, 2005; Rysst, 2010; Valkenburg & Cantor, 2001).

Social and learner identity are formed interdependently at network and learner boundaries. Vygotsky modelled learning as a dialogic process in adult–child relationships (Fox & Riconscente, 2008; Wegerif, 2008), and learners value experience through manifest relationships (Dewey, 1916). Childhood is definitively a dialogic phenomenon. Children in positive intergenerational relationships become learners (Asquith, 1996; Matthews, 2007; Reynaert, Bouverne-de Bie & Vandeveld, 2009).

In new policy, School Age Care is projected to sustain a ‘learning’ focus (DEEWR, 2011). This is a mandatory shift in which engaging children to learn is prioritised with ‘play’ objectives (Blair, 2009; Dart et al., 2000; Lee, 1998; Parpala, Lindblom-Ylänne, Komulainen, Litmanen & Hirsto, 2010; Silseth & Arnseth, 2011). Little research guides this focus. Dependence on funding streams has caused quantitative, large-scale

reporting of US School Age Care programs, for example, to use academic indicators, largely overlooking contextual influence and socialisation (NYSAN, 2010; Afterschool Alliance, 2007, 2008a, 2008b, 2008c, 2008d; Harvard Family Research Project, 2005).

Identity formation depends on how preadolescents are encouraged to conceptualise experience and how they approach learning as experiential (Carlson, 2007; Dart et al., 2000; Edwards, Watson, Farrell & Nash, 2007). At the 'boundary' at which children's attitudes, beliefs and affect intersect with knowledge cultures, it makes sense to legitimate the most diverse possible environments as learning contexts (O'Mahony, 2010).

Vandell et al. (Vandell, 2003; Vandell et al., 2004; Vandell, Reisner & Pierce, 2007) and Halpern (2005, 2006) recognise that out-of-school activity must transcend schooling parameters to support identity goals. The new *My Time, Our Place* framework (DEEWR, 2011) also orientates its learning quality standard to cross-context relevance:

Children's learning in school age care settings complements their learning at home and at school (Cartmel, 2010, p. 5).

Introducing her inquiry into African American students' mathematics achievement from 'micro- and macro-socio-historical' perspectives, Russell's (2011) argument that identity decisions are among the most significant indicators of academic promise is convincing.

#### **4.3.7. Field data findings: Boundaries.**

There are socio-cultural dimensions in making choices that grow the development of interests. This awareness may be modelled in adult-child relationships. Children need adults to co-learn with them through boundary objects and practices. Learning epitomises the essence of response that intersecting systems demand.

The field data illustrates how differently children negotiate social context boundaries, dependent on their social aptitude. Some children lack a 'voice' on one hand, while also lacking bridging support to achieve a sense of continuity across the contextual boundaries of school and home especially on the other. Examples from the field include Dorothy and Patrick, whose alienation from schooling is convergent with adolescent change and fragmented social affiliations. They are seen as increasingly isolated from positive learner identity support and are at risk of losing resources that are essential for negotiating the boundaries between home, independent living and future work choices, between primary and high school and between peer support and family needs (see Child Stories, Audit Trail #6). The desire to grow through challenge is a key theme in children's discussions in the field. Yet this does not assure a growth pathway in itself. Competent adult mentors model boundary-negotiation skills. They can potentially guide children's internalisation of broadening areas of interest in a particular learning pathway. Importantly, further resourcing allows the extent to which children can manifest the potential their felt capacities promise.

Sensing that learners make strategic choices in fields of opportunity may cause children to struggle in identifying contextual cues for where those choices lie. For example, Patrick confuses subject matter with process:

*Do you feel that primary school gave you opportunities to explore all of this? Not at all.*

*What could they have done? Do more subjects (Patrick).*

Similarly, Max overlooks the potential of club network dynamics to focus on activity content:

*Would it would be good if you had a chess club and maybe some other clubs? Not really. I think the school's good the way it is. If there were clubs in high school, would*

*you join them?* Maybe. Depending what they were. If it was a drama club, maybe.

Another type—I don't know (Max).

Children tie their development to identity goals, and ultimately to competence:

I want to be a hairdresser. I want to become an actor. And I want to get filmed. I want to either be a vet, work in the hospital, or be a jewellery or fashion designer. ... and I think that I'm good at it. I'm in three plays at the moment (Dornet Focus Group).

However, Patrick presents with material aspirations discontinuous with the paucity of his personal and family resources. Patrick wants:

My own family jet, a welding torch. I really want to be able to build a perpetual motion machine ... just to see where the ideas are (Patrick).

By comparison, Samantha's pursuit of an interest is resourceful, mentored and resource-rich:

I ... love horses. I don't know they're just so powerful ... they just command the attention because they just—I don't know—with me, they just walk in and you have to gaze at them for hours and hours. We go to New Zealand every year and my third cousins own a massive property (Samantha).

Children were found to enjoy challenge. They chose effortful pursuits, and often participated in several interests concurrently. For example, Elijah does four sports (see Figure 4.3); Sky is in a swim squad and also studies and performs on the clarinet (see Figure 4.4); and Jim competes in representative sport (see Figure 4.5). Emily's love of music has motivated her significant investment of time in mutually reinforcing skill development and performance. Samantha devotes eight hours a week to music on the same basis (see Figure 4.6). Conversely, Camilla uses School Age Care as a 'play' respite in a busy extracurricular schedule (see Figure 4.7). Focus group discussions linked interests with competencies and training. For example, a group of Indigenous

children esteemed their peer for his acumen and also directed him to a learning pathway:

He wants to be ... An artist. Yeah. What does he have to do? Get a degree ... He can draw anything. He could draw me (Hoyden Focus Group).

Indigenous children lacked the privilege exuded by affluent children.

I don't know where I was born (Hoyden Workshop).

Hoyden's Coordinator is shown mentoring literacy barriers to strengthen the agency of children in a Focus Group:

Where? How would you describe your ... In Dubbo. In Dubbo. How would you describe your ... *Oh actually, I should have looked at your brother's.* Aboriginal ... how would you describe your cultural background? *You are?* Aboriginal. *Indigenous.* Indigenous. How do you spell Indigenous? I-N-D—this is something I have to write down to make sure. I-N-D-I-G ... and that's a step-brother. Cool—cool clothes. *I think there's an O between the B and the R.* Oh yeah. Isn't there an E in Indigenous? *Yes. I-N-D-I-G-E-N-O-U-S.* Yes (Hoyden Workshop).

Children at Turing describe boundary work using play as practice:

When I play tips I play hide and go seek tips and down the creek there's a little trick that everyone does and it's called tripping over. They say it's a [lot more fun] and easier to get the person, except we don't accept that and we've got boundaries, because we've got unlimited amounts of bush we can like go down here, but we say not like past the two bridges (Turing Focus Group).



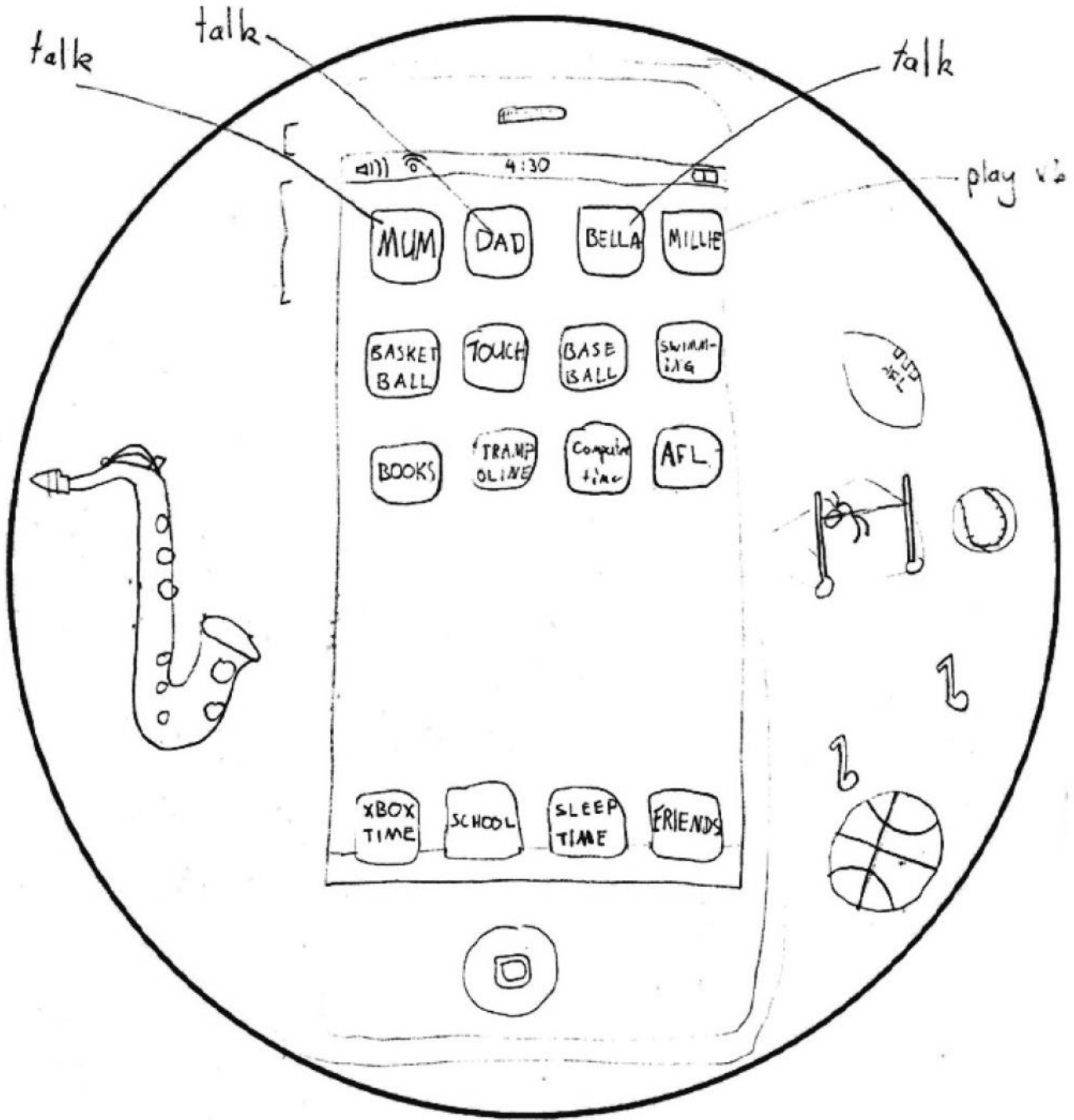


Figure 4.3. Elijah's 'My Week' Chart.

Clare

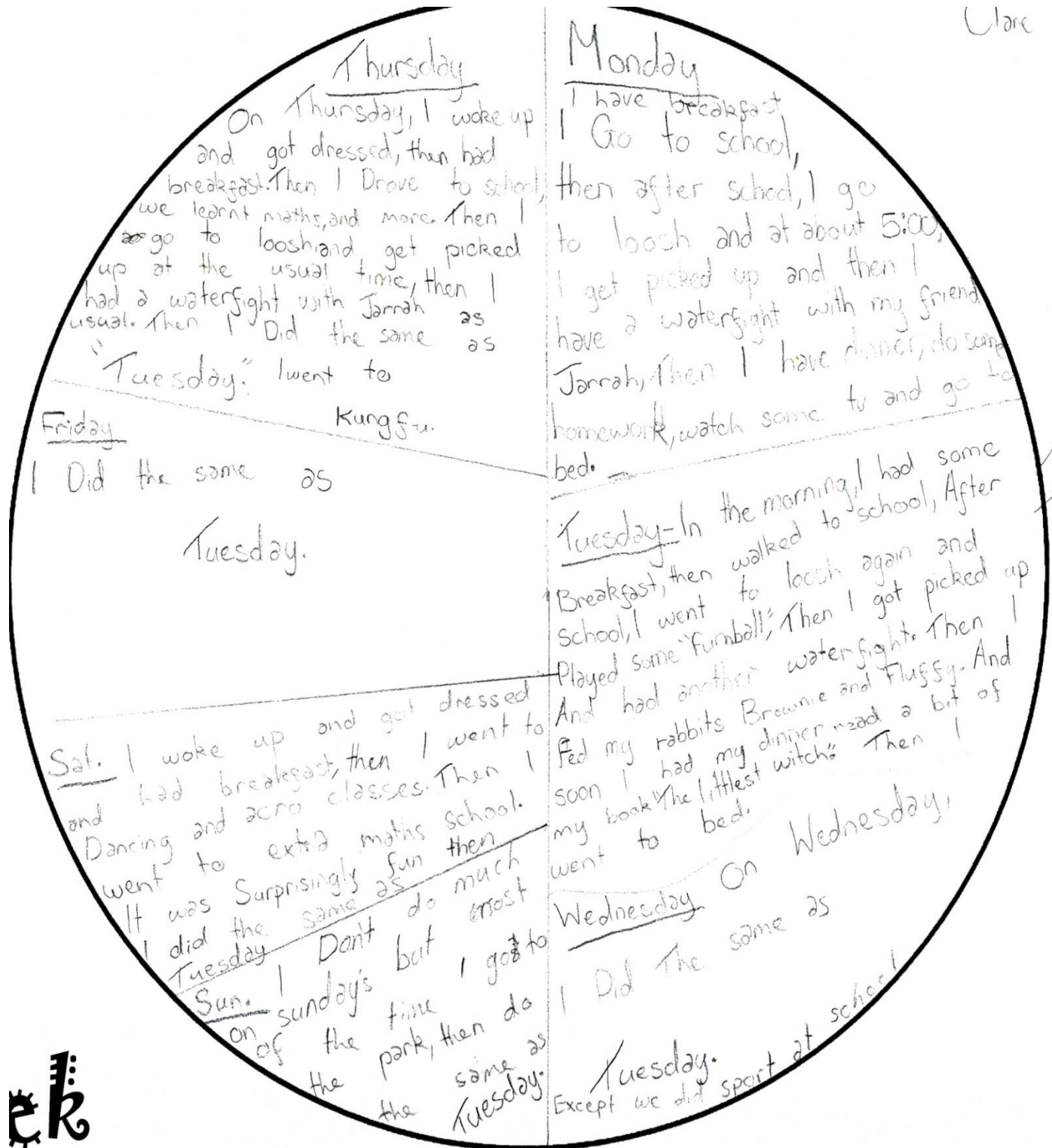


Figure 4.4. Sky's 'My Week' chart.

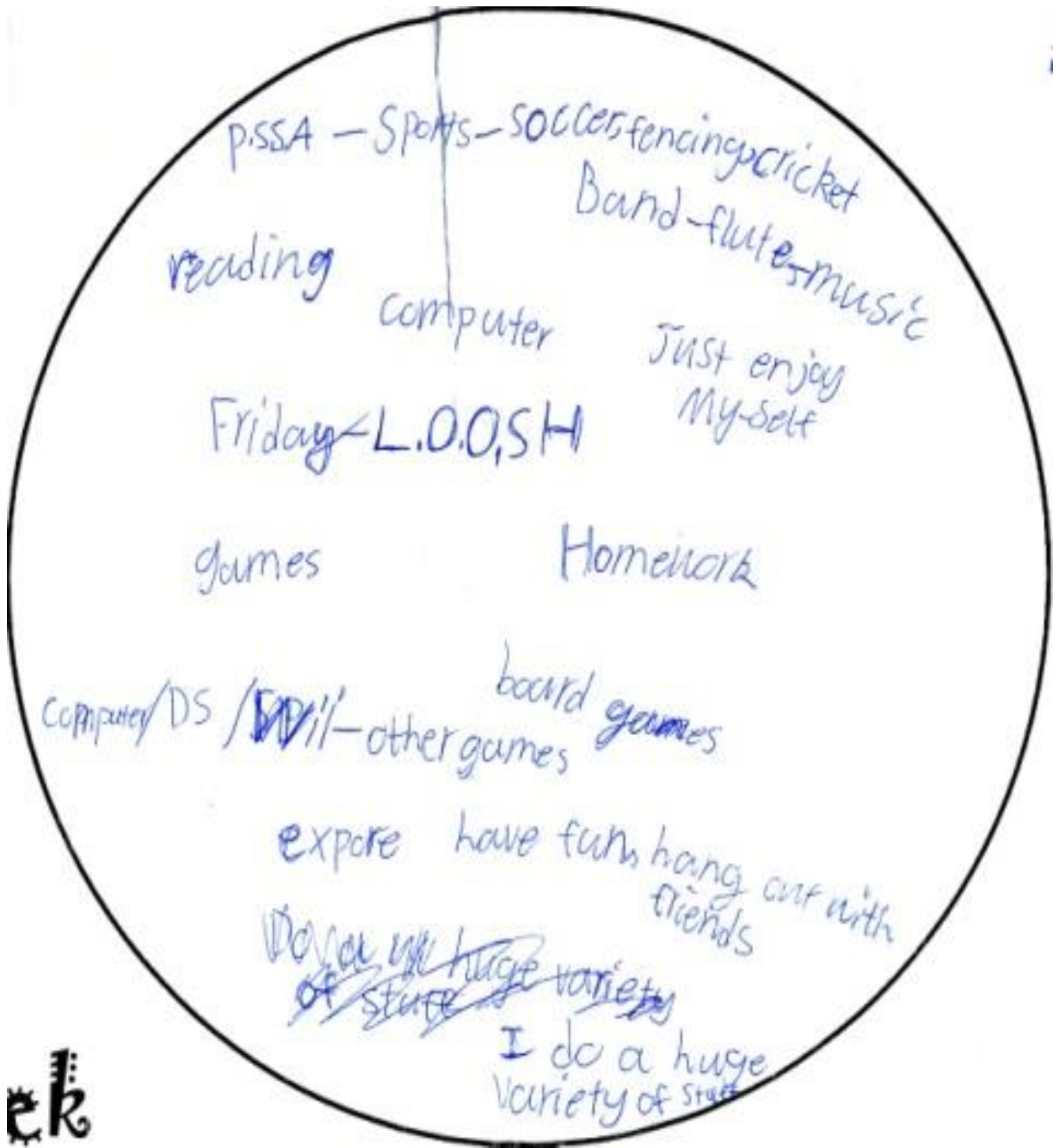


Figure 4.5. Jim's 'My Week' chart.

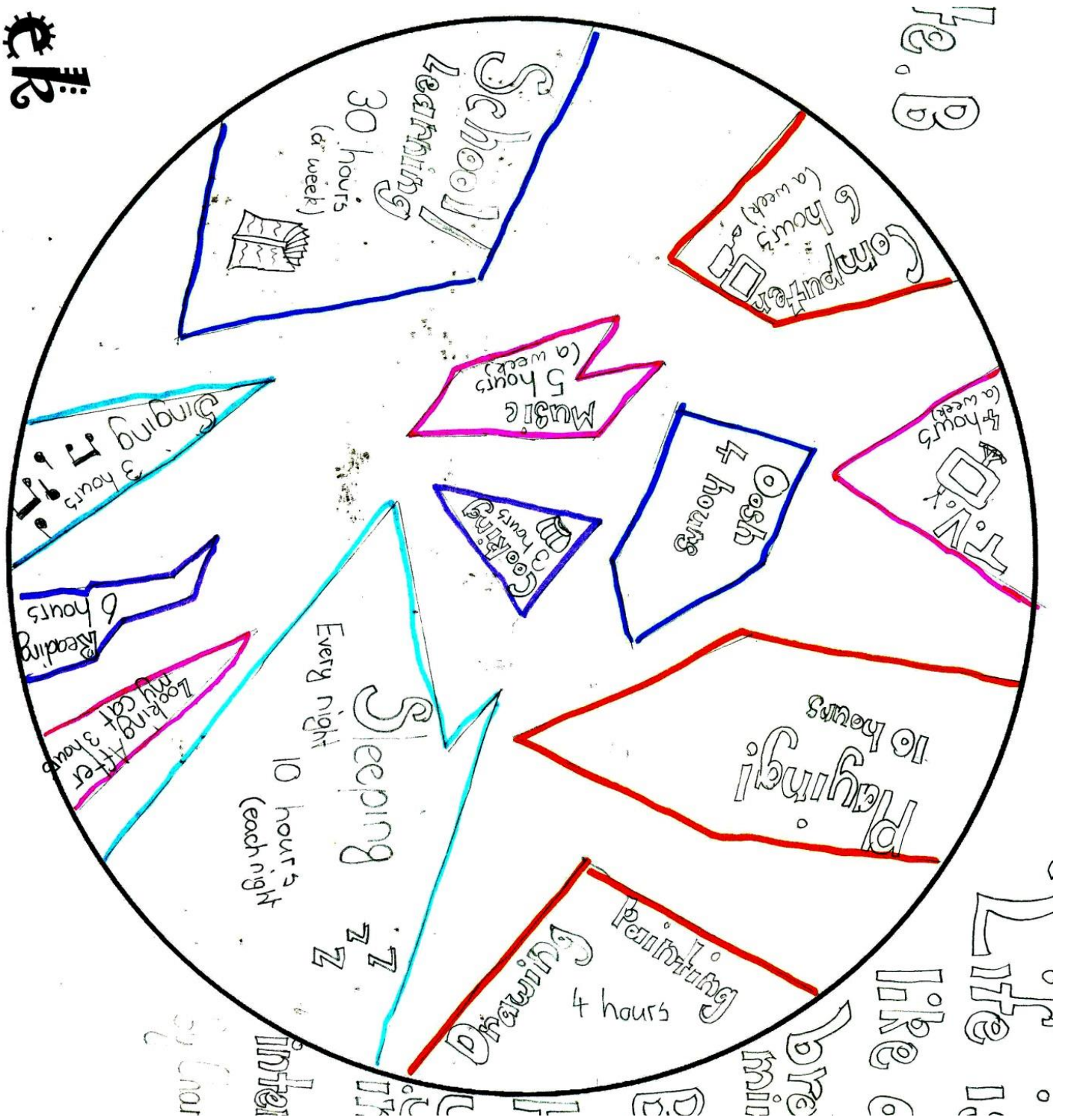


Figure 4.6. Samantha's 'My Week' chart.



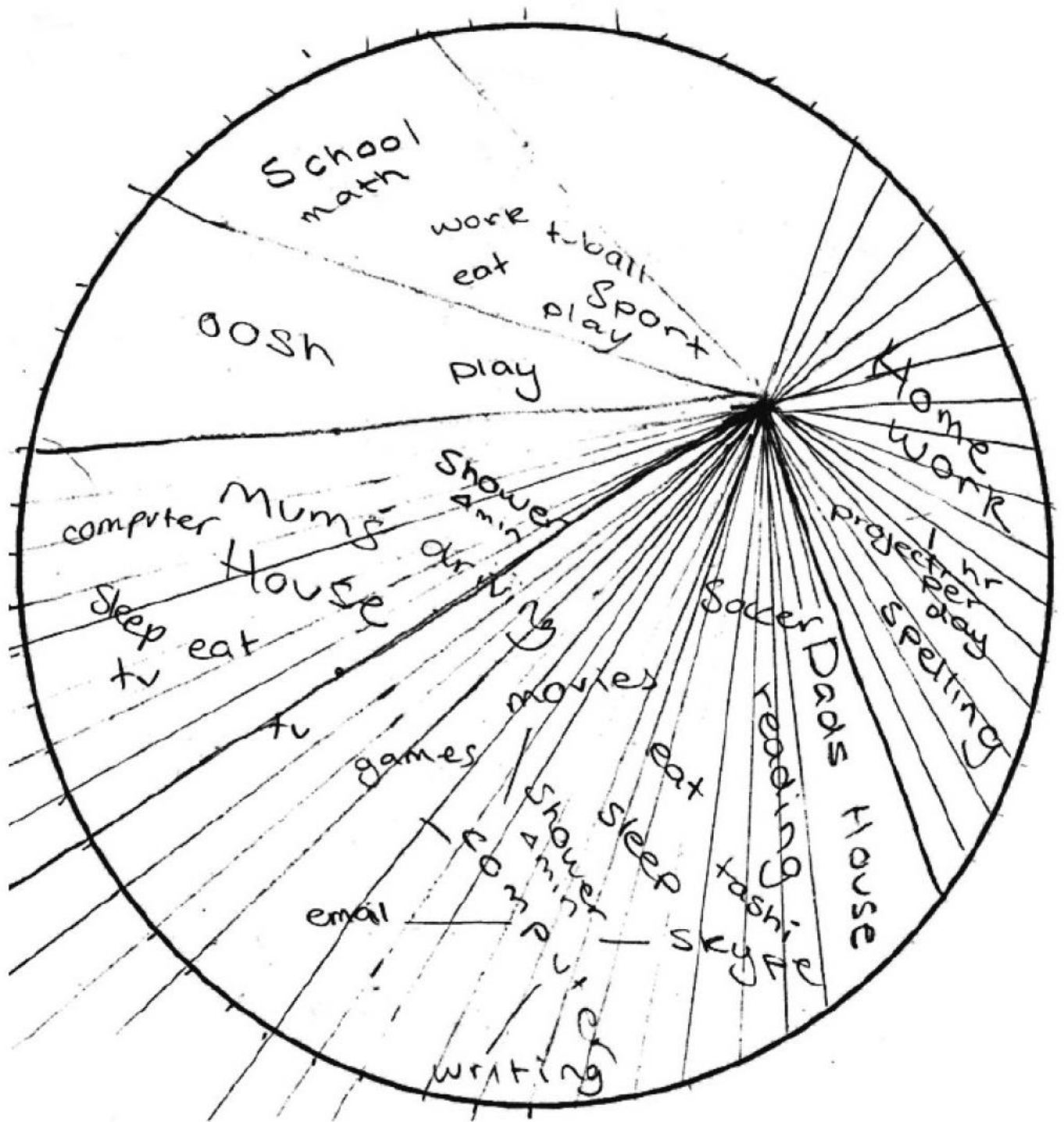


Figure 4.7. Camilla's 'My Week' chart.

They were forging constraints within their free play by making rules to structure a game of ‘tips’ that identified it with their peer group. Ownership, belonging and culture are components of this structure, whose boundaries are defined in the rules.

#### **4.3.8. Literature review: Supporting competencies for identity formation.**

If there is one area of Australian consensus on how children should be supported out of school, it is through sport. Strong claims are made for the positive influence on health of out-of-school provisions, mainly, but not exclusively, through sport (Burrows, Wright & McCormack, 2009; Cox, Schofield, Greasley & Kolt, 2006; Pill, 2006; Speroni, Earley & Atherton, 2007; Taylor et al., 2008; Thompson, Cooper et al., 2006). As opportunities for exercise diminish in children’s daily school and non-school life (Gill, MacDougall & Taylor, 2004; Salmon, Timperio, Cleland & Venn, 2005), School Age Care can make space for supplementary exercise (Cheung, 2012; Faber, Kulinna & Darst, 2007). Provisions can re-engage preadolescents in sport activity at a time when they are typically becoming less active (DeBate et al., 2009). Formal partnerships (O’Loughlin, Paradis, Kishchuk, Barnett & Renaud, 1999), for example with health and sporting organisations, referenced to indexes like the Compendium of Energy Expenditures (Ridley, Ainsworth & Olds, 2008), can deliver wide access to a range of provisions and resources beyond the established Active After School (AASC) project.

The obesity epidemic, to cite one critical health issue, calls for collaborative efforts to achieve real impacts (Eisenmann et al., 2008). Taylor et al. (2006) advocate the appointment of activity coordinators to optimise community and government resources to such ends. Children usefully identified ‘natural’ physical activity that broadens time-use choices as facilitating physical wellbeing especially in a photography research project by Beets, Banda, Erwin and Beighle (2011).

These examples of ways in which identity formation is scaffolded through community and in physical activity represent one of many pathways children can choose, which offer potential for skills development and creative competencies, dependent on their interests. Competent agents, however, typically encounter constraints in pursuit of these outcomes which may be attributable to societal malaise originating in macro-level institutions, policies and practices. Spending on childcare services has typically been leveraged to attract industry support, and has succeeded in encouraging mothers to return to employment. However, at the micro-level, the grand sweep of workforce funding assistance has hidden the impact on children (Craig, 2007; Enders-Dragässer, 1991; Gauthier & DeGusti, 2012; Huber et al., 2009; Ironmonger, 2004; Jönsson, 2010; Roeters & Treas, 2011). The affordances of their care are limited. Where children are not the focus of policy, this is inevitable. Children are losing out in care programs because of staff shortages, lack of convocation between sectors, the benchmarking of disadvantage by postcode, rapid demographic change creating new pockets of disadvantage and family poverty.

#### **4.3.9. Field data: Supporting competencies for identity formation.**

At Palmar, the ostensible ‘partnership’ between Palmar’s preadolescent service and the school community amounts to a funded School Age Care worker accompanying children to the Palmar service site, but not spending time in activity with them:

The parents pay this service [School Age Care] and they take the kids here and they’re under their duty of care so they [Palmar youth service] have to have a worker if they run out of staff the kids can’t come (Coordinator Helen Marr).

Similarly, at Dornet, there is no convocation across the key contexts in which children are accommodated. Information held by the school, critical to children’s wellbeing, was not shared with Dornet School Age Care until 2011 DoCS policy allowed it:

We're also supposed to meet with the Principal once a year to discuss things but it has never happened in 10 years ... [School Age Care provisions] are not particularly liked in schools. They're needed; they want you there but they don't necessarily like you being there ... Um the connection is not really there but you're taking up space (Coordinator Donna Rein).

Children, too, experience disconnection from the individuals upon whom their wellbeing depends. Oliver talks about failures from poor professional communication across contexts, leaving clientele out of the 'loop', and children without agency:

My parents come back at me because they're getting yelled at so they yell at me and then I take it back out on them. It goes around in a big circle ... Every think they have to believe is somebody else's fault because they're an adult. So adults are much higher in the loop ... Yes (Oliver).

At Turing, incredulity accompanies funding windfalls in an invalid system of identifying disadvantage by postcode:

We come up red light all the time—which is terrible for our stigma—but the services that it attracts ... Is fantastic (Coordinator Samantha Turner).

The poorly connected support network outside school may explain why Dorothy needs money. It is but a means to family wellbeing:

[Mother] said if she had enough money she would give me the world ... She is like no, no, no. I've got no money. Not most of the time she has no money (Dorothy).

In the neighbourhood of an affluent community, disadvantage increases as high property prices change the affordability of inner-city living for blue-collar workers and single parents. The affluent profile of a place pushes up the cost of School Age Care, despite statutory priority-funded status for marginalised, minority and disadvantaged



groups. The changes also result in the decline of informal community networks, as most parents work to support families, specifically in children's active hours:

Increasingly more and more professional families and increasingly more and more people working in the city ... in the last generation, it would have been ... more blue-collar (Coordinator Alice Rintoul).

Hoyden School Age Care prioritises disadvantaged local clientele, but its location is an area of increasing affluence, casting some uncertainty over its potential future:

We cater for a lot of special needs families ... we take care of a lot of families from the housing commission ... we have a very small group that pays full fees (Coordinator Alex McKean).

Children reflected that respectful and inclusive relationship activity fostered their interests, which in turn influenced their identities as learners. The findings indicate that children readily articulate their interests and link their goals with the need for competencies. Ecology standpoints that invalidate depictions of childhood as autonomy trajectories culminating in independence from adults are confirmed in this study's findings (Archard, 2005; Craig & Sawrikar, 2008). Children reach out for long-lasting, trusting and meaningful bonds with significant adults enabling of their agentic decision making. Symptomatic of unmet need in out-of-school time, preadolescents who are hurried towards self-care by their employed parents (Craig & Sawrikar, 2008, p. 92) may benefit from mentoring in consistent, meaningful intergenerational relationships (Allen, 2006; Bowles, 2010; DuBois, Portillo, Rhodes, Silverthorn & Valentine, 2011; Karcher, Kuperminc, Portwood & Sipe, 2006; Keating, Tomishima, Foster & Alessandri, 2002). Massive funds are raised annually in the US to support such relationship building (for example, <http://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/after-school/>). Craig and Sawrikar (2008) found many mothers worked part time,

specifically to enable them to resume care for early adolescent children perceived to have heightened need of adult support. Where generational agency is respected, children learn to operate optimally in peer networks and environments (Ashbourne & Daly, 2010; Danby, Farrell, Leiminer & Powell, 2004; Duerden et al., 2012).

#### **4.3.10. Summary of section 4.3.**

In this section, light is shed on the first research question, which queries the influence of socio-cultural values on their situated time use. The concept of wellbeing as the outcome of self-righting at the intersection of childhood context boundaries provides partial insight into this. The difference between context boundaries and the boundary between childhood and adulthood was emphasised to clarify that generational roles are not interchangeable, whereas the boundaries of social childhood contexts are negotiably blurred. This is because many of the boundaries that are used to insulate particular contexts are contrived and present barriers to self-righting. The act of bridging these boundaries is one of identity work. Wraparound practices, referenced to practices at Kentledge, Turing and Hoyden, were used to illustrate benefits of convocation across the key contexts in which children are accommodated, and influence the key argument informing best practice recommendations in Chapter 6.

In this section too, a link was made between competence and affect, which is equally important for identifying ‘teachable moments’ wherever conflict is felt at interfacing contexts, because it compels children to negotiate. This was related to the second research question concerning the generational practices that express children’s self-righting skill. It was acknowledged how difficult negotiation is for Indigenous children whose experiences of cultural discontinuity prevent them from envisaging possibilities in ‘future narratives’. Partnership with adults was assessed as critical to overcome this alienation. Contextual influence and socialisation were linked with

children's skilling in agency, to argue that learners need diverse environments in which to hone their wellbeing.

#### **4.4. Section 4: Key Example of Boundary Negotiation: High School Transition**

This section uses the logic of eco-social theory, as it is structured in the author's theoretical model, to argue for extending School Age Care beyond the boundaries of primary school. Learner identity formation is argued to be most at risk as children compulsorily traverse change between two culturally divergent school systems. This section addresses the first research question by querying how children's socio-cultural beliefs, attitudes, practices and values are impacted through their negotiation for agency in new contexts. It examines the focus of the second research question in considering the role of adult-child relationships in this process.

##### **4.4.1. Introduction.**

Typically in NSW children leave School Age Care when they leave primary school. They are still children at this time. The age identity of childhood extends to at least 15 years ("Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)," 1989; NSW Commission for Children and Young People, 2012). Childhood comprises the major developmental phases of being 'school age'. Transition into early adolescence is generally acknowledged to last until at least age 14 (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2009). As children become pubescent, they also face disruption of their social networks and the compulsory end of their association with primary education. This convergence of change is made all the more challenging because the social and learning cultures in NSW high schools are generally experienced as discordant with many children's prior schooling. This section contextualises preadolescent use of School Age Care, to problematise its potential for facilitating high school transition. School change is linked

with children's long-term educational and social outcomes (Senior, 2013). Australian School Age Care is populated by five to 12-year-olds, but only 9 per cent of these children are preadolescent. Thus, despite the universal access that government subsidy guarantees (ABS, 2009; McNamara & Cassells, 2010), the overwhelming majority of participants are aged under 10 years.

**Key Idea:**

Preadolescents are not attracted to School Age Care because it does not facilitate challenging and supportive time use

A mediating role is suggested for School Age Care to bridge the culturally discontinuous high school boundary by fostering preadolescents' relationships with caring, qualified adults (McHugh et al., 2012). Children whose family networks were strongly supportive of them, were found less likely to suffer the declines in self-esteem and academic grades that are typically associated with school change (Seidman, Lambert, Allen & Aber, 2003). Where such support is compromised in the impacts of disadvantage and/or workforce participation, School Age Care is well positioned among the worlds that children habituate to support children's anticipation of their future selves. Resources are required to increase preadolescent participant numbers, enrich professional support and staff training, and extend the mandate of School Age Care to encompass differentiated support to age 14. This would mean providing activities that target the developmental level of 10 to 12-year-olds as distinct from activities for the entire five to 12-year-old cohort.

High school transition may be accompanied by disrupted peer networks, academic decline and consequent risks for retention on learning pathways (Troop-Gordon et al. (2011). In Australia, the potential for School Age Care to moderate the convergence of competing threats to wellbeing at high school transition has long been overlooked.

Conversely, in Canada, for example, the School-Based Pathway to Care Model has been trialled (Kutcher & Wei, 2013; see also Millar, Lean, Sweet, Moraes & Nelson, 2013). Links between School Age Care participation and learning outcomes are not known to have been explored in Australia. There are no known studies investigating Australians' anticipation of high school transition in the context of their participation in School Age Care. This is extraordinary considering the existence of well-established, continuous, vigorous discourses in similar social contexts in the post-industrial West (Zeedyk et al., 2003; Jones & Deutsch, 2012).

#### **4.4.2. Literature review: High school transition.**

Just as children reach puberty, they must change schools, and School Age Care ceases to serve them (Cantin & Boivin, 2004). Discontinuities across the schooling boundary are known to be ruinous for learner identity formation (Duchesne, Ratelle & Roy, 2011). Primary school success is altruistic compared with competitive high school culture (Zanobini & Usai, 2002). Primary schools preference socialisation support for transition (Qualter et al., 2007), whereas high schools typically offer procedural introductions to new geographies (Booren, Handy & Power, 2011). These discontinuous approaches are further exacerbated by poor liaison across the high school boundary (Vinson & Harrison, 2006). Non-school systems share responsibility for mediating high school transition because they are equally places of learning, psychosocial change and physical development (Laird & Marrero, 2011; Tate, Jones, Thorne-Wallington & Hoglebe 2012; Thomas 2012; Timmerman, 2010) of equal consequence in childhood.



#### **Key Idea:**

School Age Care is powerfully situated to mediate school, home and community processes

Primary schools in this study did not regard School Age Care as a partner for bridging transition, even though most of them co-locate with schools. However, multi-strategic interventions have been engaging non-school contexts (Yeager & Walton, 2011). Typically, peer-reviewed best practice misunderstands cross-context partnering (Lampert, 2005). The US ‘Coping Power’ program (Lochman & Wells, 2002) enlists parents in service to schooling objectives, which is not the same as forming a partnership with families (Oostdam & Hooze, 2012).

#### ***4.4.2.1. Learner identity risk.***

Only within the past decade has child-generated data tested common assumptions about child experience. For example, children have reflected on how their affiliation patterns in high school have influenced their learner identity formation (Altermatt, 2011; Biggs, Vernberg & Wu, 2012). Zeedyk et al. (2003) suggest that respect for children’s agency in directing their own transition experiences is equally important. Children’s perspectives reflect the subjective nature of transition (Harrison, Vannest, Davis, Reynolds & Harrison, 2012), requiring adaptive self-actualisation (Hensley, 2009; Kingery and Erdley, 2007). In a study highly pertinent to School Age Care policy planning, Barton et al. (2012) exemplify longitudinal influences on agency by tracking minority preadolescents across the schooling boundary to assess the impact of activity practices. Critical shifts in learner identity were found where recognition, support and opportunity were facilitated through adult-mentored interests.

#### ***4.4.2.2. Autonomy or interdependence?***

Transition discourses typically assume an autonomy trajectory distancing children from adults to become increasingly like them (Falbo & Lein, 2001; Grolnick, Kurowski, Dunlap & Hevey, 2000). In contrast, the present study considers the adult–child boundary a binary one (Bjerke, 2011). That children are not adults is their strength for

exploring potential future selves, while their adult-dependence is their vulnerability. Childhood's only certainty is its transience (Hendry & Kloep, 2010), and the limits of 'self-righting' reside in its adult-centric dependency (Hipkins, 2011).



**Key Idea:**  
Transition threat is principally adaptive

NSW children lack sufficiently long-term relationship-building opportunities with adults to scaffold positive outcomes through transition (Michail, 2011). Cumulative threats to wellbeing, such as exhaustion, burnout and socio-cultural poverty, have been found unresponsive to single-dose orientation early in Year 7 (Salmela-Aro, Kiuru & Nurmi, 2008). The processes that transition sets in train require long-term adaptive support (Augustine & Crosnoe, 2010; Lunn, 2011; Rehrer et al., 2011). Re-acculturation to high schools' competitive orientation must occur to ensure children's retention on learning pathways. This adaptive process requires personal growth far beyond focus on locale (Gruenewald, 2003). Perceptions of academic decline associated with transition (Ryan, 2011) illustrate the difference between procedural adjustment and adaptive change. Cultural dissonance accounts for the drop in grades (Gillock and Reyes, 1996), yet this is usually interpreted as incompetence (Topping, 2011). Children are not incompetent if the experiential 'repertoire' in their habitual learning frameworks fails to leverage their self-righting tendency in new socio-cultural conditions (Rymes, 2011). Grade 6 children, for example, were found to mostly fear high school academic expectations, where cultures are competitive and success is standardised (Akos & Galassi, 2004).

Transition studies rarely distinguish between adaptive and procedural change, even where they focus on self-regulation (Qualter et al., 2007). Yet adaptive support

throughout the transition process, from the upper primary years to age 14, makes sense. Particular aspects of the transition experience must be differently mediated through networks and learning practices because they are problematic for different individuals at different times and in different contexts (Lehdonvirt & Rsnen, 2011). Further, differential patterns of intellectual capacity emergent in late childhood (Facon, 2006) mean that holistic, individualised and flexible support is needed (Harter, Whitesell & Kowalksi, 1992). In the US, social workers employed in primary schools as Learning Support Professionals were found to positively impact literacy outcomes (Stone, Shields, Hilinkski & Sanford, 2012). One Sydney high school retains primary school teachers to bridge conflicted teaching and learning cultures with Year 7. They seek to reconcile literacy in primary school frameworks with the knowledge hierarchies that distinguish high school culture (Whitbourn, 2012).

**Key Idea:**

Transition risk threats reside in children's capacities to form a learner identity

Children's resilience may be underestimated by professionals who select the contextual factors they consider to threaten wellbeing. Pessimism and helplessness implicit in deficit approaches increase risk (Tenenbaum et al., 2011). Children who leave school early feel helpless in a deficit context (NSW Inquiry into Children and Young People, 2007). In contrast, Hill, Duggan and Lapsley (2011) show that emotional intelligence and resilience are salient adaptive assets. Children must learn courage (Martin, 2011) to collaborate with adults. They are most at risk when they relinquish their agency in setting goals as learners (Gasper, DeLuca & Estacion, 2011; Harackiewicz, 2004; Jans, 2004; Laird and Marrero, 2011). Disadvantaged girls are especially vulnerable to disempowerment (Stevens, Morash & Park, 2011).



#### 4.4.3. Field data findings: High school transition.

Findings reflect shared and unique beliefs about pro-social behaviours. These beliefs are culturally structured (de Guzman, Brown, Carlo & Knight, 2012). Four themes characterise the discontinuous primary/high school boundary.



##### Key Idea:

Transition is subjective; learner identities are unique to individuals

##### 4.4.3.1. Issue 1: Perspectives from primary school.

Frustrated children reflected less on their future than on their impending release from a community framework they have outgrown:

being stuck with the same people for six hours a day ... just drives me mad (Samantha).

High schools may be unaware that their expansive spaces and the novelty value of science labs and computers are not important. Children took little away with them from a site visit:

We found out there's a lot of places ... like there was computers and there was computers again. Yeah, it's really really huge (Turing Focus Group).

A challenge lies in loss and the anticipated burden of unquantified academic demands:

When I go to high school I'll probably have to study a lot, so I won't be doing any after school activities, maybe (Marina).

Sanguine children are less susceptible to imagining change discontinuously:

I'd probably just walk home ... pat Rosie and do what I do now probably (Max).

Among their peers, children made light of their anxiety accompanying the multiplex convergence of impending changes:

I really don't like teenagers. They really scare me. Well I'm not going to scare myself am I? You look in the mirror and go ooh (Hoyden Focus Group).

Oliver, however, attested to this anxiety about entering high school:

Like nearly every kid when we were in Year 7 got Year 7 torture, tied to poles down the beach, stripped ... had bottles chucked at you, ... after school, in school, getting bashed, head chucked down the—flushed down the toilet. Peed on (Oliver).



**Key Idea:**  
Children value adaptive transition support

Defensive dispositions cannot but undermine early, single-dose transition support:

I'll stick with me big cousin, because if anyone bes mean to me, look out (Kentledge Focus Group).

Adaptive work is required to 'read' new high school cultures. Children who build rapport with adults they respect can more successfully bridge high school's cultural boundaries:

I was quite interested, quite impressed. I've met the Principal and talked to him for a bit (Max).

Well-aculturated children can illuminate what adaptive agency looks like, most valuably in relation to academic expectations:

We were both interested in games, so we'd both play a bit of a game. We'd also start doing a bit of his homework and I'd talk to him about it as well. He had to do something on the First World War. Also he had to do this sausage tying technique. I just thought, well you've got a lot of responsibility when you're doing that type of homework (Max).

#### ***4.4.3.2. Issue 2: Poor adult awareness.***

In the field, School Age Care was found to engage minimally, if at all, with the ‘transition’ issue. This is unsurprising considering School Age Care’s isolation from schooling (Gifford, 1992).

I don’t know really. I should know (Coordinator Marr, four weeks before the end of Sixth Grade’s Term 4).

I honestly no. Not yet. They haven’t—I haven’t heard anything any worries any—anything yet (Coordinator McKean, three weeks before the end of Sixth Grade’s Term 4).

*Positive adult support.*

At Turing, relationships are sustained with ex-students who often accept mentor roles. Coordinator Turner hopes productive links between the schools can be forged:

Last year I wouldn’t have given you tuppence for them. I had a daughter that went through there and left in year 10, just no support (Coordinator Turner).



**Key Idea:**  
Adaptive transition is operationalised intergenerationally

Turing embeds self-esteem activities in its upper grades’ program, aiming to buffer children through transition:

We’ve got a couple of different programs. Proud to be Me based on the Rock and Water program. That’s throughout the whole year. ... we have vulnerable students who are going up to the high school and they go for five weeks ... we’ve got someone coming down with the high school to work with the Year Five kids (Principal Ling).

Oliver agrees that regular visits can initiate network activity by connecting meaningfully with the new school community in an authentic way. This means he is

solving real-life problems and forming his own meanings by thinking through problems himself and using his own knowledge:

Seeing what the teachers were really like, what the students were really like ... a day a week for a period maybe (Oliver).

Emily's teacher has built on her learner status to develop her academic expectations:

In Year 5 and 6, my teacher was always saying ... this will prepare you for high school (Emily).

#### ***4.4.3.3. Issue 3: Post-transition perspectives.***

##### *Children.*

Oliver's unmediated and conflicted peer affiliations, habituated in primary school, have led to catastrophic alienation in Year 7:

Head down and try and make friends as soon as you get there. Don't be silly, don't be smart to people ... the teachers weren't that supportive (Oliver).

His concomitant academic decline combined with his isolation to make high school intolerable:

Like I was doing like Year 8 work last year in Year 6 ... I've gone to this high school, I can't do maths properly. ... it was like being back in Kindergarten again. I wasn't pushing myself more to keep my brain working and then that just dropped my grades. Like I think I failed math this year unfortunately (Oliver).

##### *Adults.*

Turing understands transition risk. Schools-as-Community Coordinator Turner laments children's loss of the wraparound support fostered in her primary school that ceases upon high school entry.

They do lose that support. ... the community kids—they are not getting a fair go up there (Coordinator Turner).

Principal Ling worries that sudden experience of an impersonal climate in high school will result in children getting ‘lost’:

Because I don’t think it’s very family orientated and I don’t think it’s very—I think it’s more of an institution (Principal Ling).

Powerless to effect productive liaison with the high school, Principal Ling attempts to help children to remain engaged with learning by fostering their aspiration:

They become disengaged. [It happens] Quickly. ... there seems to be a lot less monitoring of what they’re up to and what they’re doing. They get caught up into smoking and drinking. I’ve got one girl who’s only 16 and she’s having her second baby now. You know, a lot of underage pregnancies (Principal Ling).

#### **4.4.3.4. Issue 4: Positive boundary work.**

Kentledge, independently governed in a youth service framework, understands the threats implicit in transition. It maintains relationships with ex-participants. Karen quipped that children cannot ‘leave’ the adults at Kentledge. Instead, their roles evolve through high school in an inclusive neighbourhood context:

We bring in the year 7s year and who soon will be year 9s ... I then gave her that opportunity to say well why don’t you come down and if you are ok can you help the girls and so you can be co-facilitator (Coordinator Kent).



#### **Key Idea:**

Adaptive change is best negotiated over time, with continuous access to affordances in both primary and high school environments

Similar examples may be found in rare cases of continuous access to adults first met in primary school. Individualised transition support has paid dividends for Edwina, but hers is an expedient arrangement not extended to all former Turing students. Her father assists the Schools-as-Community hub on school premises. Edwina meets him there

daily from high school, often assisting in AASC sport. She has access to supportive counselling from Coordinator Turner. She is afforded adaptation that keeps pace with her developmental growth in a cross-sector adult–child network:

I'm leaving the school seeing all these Turing Primary School kids everywhere as I'm walking home. I'm like, wish I was still in primary school ... but on Wednesdays and Fridays I get out at 2.30. I come straight here and I see all the school students in the classroom with their pens in their hand and I'm like, suck shit. So I like it, but I don't (Edwina).

#### **4.4.4. Summary of section 4.4**

This section has mounted an argument for extension of School Age Care services beyond the end of primary school to provide children with continuous support through high school transition. In service to this argument, reference is made to the erosion that is known in the literature to occur in self-esteem and academic grades as children are impacted by the discontinuity in school cultures along with other concomitant change. This argument gathers strength from new quality standards that require a learning focus in School Age Care provision, thereby accumulating convincing evidence that childhood is characterised by open-ended series of transitions through eco-social boundaries. In Chapter 6, this idea is leveraged to recommend cross-context links in best school Age Care practice. It makes sense that children's school lives are relevant to the concerns of School Age Care providers.

Examples from the literature showing the benefits for learner identity formation of mentored support through high school transition are contrasted with findings in the field data of trauma and disaffection with schooling where support has been lacking. Field data shows primary school children unaware of the adaptive nature of challenge that they will confront. Several reported their only insight came from introductions to high

school geographies and routines. The two youths who contributed their reflections cherished the supportive relationships they built with caring and qualified adults, and despaired where they failed them. The evidence implies that adaptive support throughout the transition process, from the upper primary years to age 14, makes sense.

#### **4.5. Conclusion: Chapter 4**

In this chapter about the social contexts of childhood, the relative status of School Age Care and the impact of this status on preadolescents' access to supportive environments have been illuminated. The Literature Review was distilled by constant comparison with field data, and has been discussed alternately with it, along the principles guiding Grounded-Theory practice, to articulate a child-centric perspective on the interfacing contexts that preadolescents habituate. This chapter has interpreted the four contextual systems identified in the author's theoretical framework. The ecology frame counter-intuitively situates the contextual conditions for children's wellbeing as in service to the agentic child at the apex of nested systems. It does so with the purpose of inverting the typical hierarchy of attention in social discourses to focus on perspectives of children's needs, and the challenges implicit in meeting them, from a standpoint of respect for their capabilities and selfhood (Schirmer et al., 2012). Implications for further research and recommendations for best practice discussed in Chapter 6 are based on this hierarchical inversion. All the instances of key signposts presented in 'callouts' to signal the flow of logic along this analytic process have been compiled as a summary, below, to state how reflections on childhood contexts have contributed to the thesis so far.

The centrality of child agency in the author's theoretical model has been explicated to situate it as a contextual system rather than a statutory right. Childhood was historically constructed to serve adult-centric interests, and this is why it is absent in the

author's theoretical model. However, child agency is included, indeed central, precisely because it is not a construct but rather a process in which inevitable tensions arise as child actors are acted upon by vastly more powerful influences than they can possibly balance. This thesis has created transparency around its interpretations by theorising agency as cumulative iterations of child-centric actions, which are assumed to be corrective. Child agency's centrality in the theorised social ecology system illuminates the outcomes of its influence on contexts intersecting with self-righting agency. Logically, the outcomes of successful self-righting imply how children may be supported to develop and strengthen their agency. The key implication for this support, distilled in the present argument, proposes that children's interests can only be reliably looked after by children themselves. Best practice involves scaffolding agency, which explains the emphasis in Chapter 6 on self-efficacy practices over calls for material resources.

It is not enough for children to be convinced of their agency. Regardless of how finely it is attuned through children's awareness of what is best for them, this does not entitle them to influentality. They must practise awareness of how their best interests are continuously changing in response to the fluctuating interests that are also continuously adapting core agendas of other micro-contexts. These, too, reference the compulsions impacting them in turn from wider contextual realms. The contexts abutting agency are as dynamic as agency itself. Child agents, when they are successful, negotiate how their best interests can be accommodated in the convergence of competing and often conflicting outside interests to optimise their wellbeing. This is impossible unless they have established a stable and enduring social network. It is most productive to negotiate with caring people. Key among them are adults who have learned from their experiences and networks to be good negotiators. Their effective



network practices symptomise a positive social identity. Children with access to such adults are privileged because they can learn alongside them. This thesis argues that School Age Care is well placed to scaffold access to a helpful social identity and to facilitate children's identities as learners by modelling and mentoring generational negotiation.

Throughout Chapter 4, emphasis has been consistent on assumptions that children are competent, and that they seek growth and challenge through relationships that benefit, and resonate with, their best interests. Chapter 4 turned from agency to the second contextual focus in this thesis, on competing interests and the conflicts they cause within caring social networks. Home is no longer a viable source of care (Gauthier & DeGusti, 2012). Most mothers of preadolescents are compelled into employment. Yet children need what 'home' once provided, and they arguably need more than is within the capacity singly of a 'good home'. Families are conflicted in these competing social changes. From an eco-social perspective, they are not the only stakeholders in children's wellbeing. There are powerful stakeholders embodied in macro-level policy and institutions that assume what children's wellbeing looks like and how it should serve the sustained viability of advanced national interests. In this thesis, the institution of schooling and the micro-system of family, peers and neighbourhoods are juxtaposed. School Age Care is ecologically situated between these.

Over the period of its existence in Australia, School Age Care has been repeatedly re-situated and redefined in response to changing need and socially evolving conceptualisations of child wellbeing, as Hurst (2013) effectively narrates. Prior to the designation of School Age Care centres as site of learning with the introduction of the National Quality Standards from 2012, School Age Care has been constrained by its epistemological vision and impoverished resources from adequately serving

preadolescent and early adolescent children in NSW. Submissions to the historic NSW Parliamentary Joint Committee on Children and Young People (2009) evidenced alarming unmet need. Framed by new standards, it is hoped School Age Care will expand its affordances to offer more sport, Internet access, academic support and creative arts through its 'learning' mandate (Wager, 2012). Improvement of this nature is especially significant for disadvantaged children at heightened risk of early dropout from school, who cannot afford paid-for opportunities to complement their schooling, and who lack settings in which they can build effective networks (Zabloski & Milacci, 2012).

Finally, Chapter 4 turned attention to policy, and considered the implications of tried interventions whose outcomes have been rigorously investigated. Active convocation among care-workers, primary and secondary teachers, families and communities has been demonstrated to provide optimal support to children in wraparound programs. To date in School Age Care, co-location with schools is deceiving. There is no continuity between children's education in school and supervised time in care. Poorly qualified Australian care workers are ill attuned to their potential bridging role as partners for learning (Wigley et al., 2012), and schools do not convocate across the primary and secondary systems on extended transition support. More pertinent still, schools repudiate School Age Care on the most basic terms for best care practice, such as planning and sharing essential information.

In Chapter 4, implications of new standards in School Age Care and how they may be met provide a background for reports of School Age Care participants' anticipation of high school transition and the experiences of school change after the event by two youths. Interpretation of field data and a large body of scholarly discourse on high school transition led to the conclusion that the threats to children's wellbeing should be

addressed adaptively. Transition was found to be subjective, as individuals experienced different impacts from differently presenting challenges. The implications of this are that resolution is best negotiated over time. Field data showed it was helpful to have access to both primary and high school environments, at least during early stages in Year 7. The new policy framework 11 presages a welcome adaptive, as opposed to procedural, shift of priorities in the School Age Care 'mission'. It is argued further in Chapter 6 that transition should be problematised by School Age Care services, and that access should be extended to participants beyond primary school, to support children until they are at least 14 years old.

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<sup>11</sup> <http://acecqa.gov.au/national-quality-framework>

## **Chapter 5. Time—Findings and Discussion from Data Pertaining to the Theoretical Chronosystem that Operates Child Agency**

### **5.0. Introduction**

This study is oriented to a perspective on wellbeing that places greater value on childhood as a transformative process than on material, geographical and institutional affordances in Western childhoods. Bronfenbrenner's Ecology Systems Theory model (see Figure 2.1) includes a temporal (chronosystem) dimension. Time is modelled as operating change in how, and at which boundaries, contexts are linked (U. Bronfenbrenner, 1994, pp. 40-41).

School Age Care, the school 'day', family 'time' and 'work', framed in lineal time, acquire subjective meaning in experience. Logically, the meanings children form of their time use reflect how they value the social purposes of engaging in interests. The theorised childhood attribute of 'self-righting' implies children are motivated to develop their capacity for discerning quality engagement. It may then be expected that, as children's capacity for discernment changes, adult-structured, universally imposed time-use systems such as schooling and formal non-school activity might become increasingly responsive to children's developing evaluative reflections.

The experience of time, as distinct from its allocation in structured systems, is problematised in this study because 'self-righting' children are concomitantly beholden to the imbalance of generational power. They must negotiate their freedom to 'self-right' through the very structures and psychosocial 'filters' that constrain children's agency. The following sections explicate how relationships (affiliation in social

networks), learning and time use operate as negotiation tools for transforming this basic duality into generational partnership in a ‘self-righting’ frame.

Chapter 5 comprises three sections: relationships (5.1), learning (5.2) and time use (5.3). Unlike the headings in Chapter 4, these are conceptualised as processes. They operate the contextual systems identified in the theoretical model; that is, agency, family, care systems (including schooling) and the statutory community.

## 5.1. Section 1: Relationships

### 5.1.1. Introduction.

The value accorded time use defines its meaning. Time conditions experience. Children seek out pathways that from their perspectives will enhance the quality of their experience and predict the realisation of their aspirations. Networks comprise the capital resourcing of these ‘self-righting’ processes (Spencer et al., 1997). From an ecological point of view, the determinants of personality structures for productive outcomes are forged in relationship dynamics. Sound networks afford positive development potential in supporting stable responses to stress and challenge (Spencer et al., 1997). This inherent capital in networks is the powerful cultural generator or inhibitor of opportunity for its members (Bottero & Crossley, 2011).

**Key Idea:**

Network capital is built in adult–child relationships

Children need relationships with adults because they impact social outcomes, academic competence and school engagement (Tsai & Cheney, 2012). It is proposed that children’s peer networks also thrive through partnerships with adult stakeholders in childhood who moderate psychosocial adjustment and academic challenges, especially at periods of transition like moving to high school (Laird & Marrero, 2011). The

significance of adult–child networks has been well documented, for example in Hamre and Pianta’s (2001) study finding positive developmental outcomes extending from adult–child relationship building from early childhood through early adolescence. Equally, children mediate adults’ network building to mutual advantage (Offer & Schneider, 2007). Care contexts in which adult–child relationship building is key to planning benefit children’s social worlds as Deutsch, Wiggins, Henneberger and Lawrence (2012) illustrate in their report of a mentoring project with Year 7 girls. Adult–child network activity may take various forms; for example, the family group (Berns & Berns, 2011), adults mentoring children (Pryce, (2012), and partnerships in which children and adults interdependently meet mutual goals (see for example, the KidStory project (TaxÉN, Druin, Fast, & Kjellin, 2001).

However, such benefits are limited in settings that fail to partner across context boundaries. Quality relationship indicators reference long-term engagement with adults in activity that develops concomitantly with children’s developing interests. Identity formation is associated with network capital through the quality of choices adults and children make together in using their time, as Grossman and Davis (2012) argue in a schooling context. Adults who care for children have a responsibility to ensure that children’s activity practices enable open-ended endeavour with intrinsic meaning to children. Analysis of children’s drawings by Griffiths (2011) compared US and UK preadolescents’ time use values, to find social network practices among six key themes across the sample. These practices differ with context and change as children become increasingly skilled and capable of applying their knowledge. It is argued that children require leadership that exemplifies how to meet the growing challenges of projects that they co-create with adults. Learning relationships thus formed are the basis for

children's identity formation; they are the outcome of skill transferred in the surety of long-term partnerships in shared experience.

School Age Care is in a position to mentor children in this process and to equip them in making the sustainable affiliation choices that will frame their long-term social identity. By this logic, built networks reference existing learning pathways and open possibilities for future opportunities.



**Key Idea:**

Learning occurs at the intersection of network activity and experience

It is difficult to evaluate adult-child relationship impacts on children's learner identity formation, especially where there are multiple adults informally associating with children in care contexts. This explains the lack of known studies quantifying their impact (Ali & Heck, 2012, p. 111). Lately, Padilla-Walker, Day, Dyer and Black (2013) linked evidence of school connectedness in adolescents with consistent, long-term positive parenting practices. Isolated children are shown to be profoundly at risk as learners because they are least likely to access qualified adults who model self-actualising skills. School Age Care can potentially scaffold these children, especially through encouragement of diversity and respect for cultural difference, and by linking them with well-connected peers and mentors for relationship skill building.

**5.1.2. Field data findings: Children's family networks.**

**5.1.2.1. Children's relationships with their parents.**

Children in the sample valued their time with parents, wanting to engage with them. Stark contrast was found between these relationships as described by affluent and by comparatively disadvantaged children:

It's really fun to sort of set up little models and scenes and so my dad loves to do that with us and since we've got cameras we like to take pictures of it (Samantha).

My mum is a librarian. My father is the executive producer of [media category] ... He takes me sometimes on weekends and stuff. ... sometimes my dad plays a game with me on the computer which is very fun (Max).

In the disadvantaged community at Turing, parents were less available:

Cause my dad don't live with us no more, I just—I talk—I like sit in the lounge room. I don't really do anything with my parents. Yeah, and my parents are not really involved what I do (Turing Focus Group).

These children were found to compromise expression of their needs, compensate for their parents' limitations and, as far as possible, accept their parents' relationship terms, which included activity constraints.

Children forced by circumstance or parental need to adopt a carer role in their relationship with their parents, themselves need supportive care. Some children find themselves in the 'Bigger, Stronger, Wiser, and Kind' role (Circle of Security, 2012; Maughan, 2008) of supporting their parents' needs and compensating for their losses, as well as adjudicating in situations of stress and conflict. Their reflections signal unmet needs for a mediating net of capable adults like that identified in Johnson and Greenberg (2013). Given appropriately qualified staff in School Age Care contexts, vulnerable children could be supported there. The data reflects several 'risk' relationship dynamics calling for such support:

My mum had nine kids, yeah. ... my mum will tell my brothers and sisters to go to bed.

Me and mum sit on the lounge and talk about what happened (Jane).

*So you like to help your mum?* Yeah, because she just can't walk with bub (Declan).



**Key Idea:**

Some children in the research sample support their parents' needs, compensate for their losses and adjudicate in situations of stress and conflict

For Dorothy, the relationship she experiences with her father is operated almost exclusively through the boundary tools and practices of his affinity with fishing. She reaches out to him as his agent:

I go over to the jetty and fish and I go for a swim and everything when it's really hot ... He is usually watching me from the thing. But when I come back, mostly he's asleep because he has to get up at 5:00 am in the morning. ... I've even got an ugly boy hat (Dorothy).

Children across the sample rarely describe both parents engaging together with their children in a family group. For example, when Camilla is at her father's house, she has her tashi books and watches soccer. She spends a lot of her time at her dad's on the computer. Conversely, at her mum's place, there is more informal chatting, eating, sleeping and relaxing (see Figure 4.7).

She sometimes takes me up to the—to do some shopping, yeah. My dad, he gives me money (Jane).

Jane favours the socio-emotional quality of time with her mother.

**5.1.2.2. Working parents.**

As more parents are entering the workforce, demand for School Age Care has risen. At Dornet, waiting lists are so long that families only qualify for places if they can show they are employed. Casual play bookings are discouraged or unavailable in the for-profit service in the research sample (Coordinator Donna Rein). Quality of services is a greater issue (Hand & Baxter, 2012). Parents are increasingly entrusting their children's adult-child relationship activity to professionals during the hours after school when

children are most receptive to socialisation. Parents' choice of care options are limited to School Age Care because time-use arrangements other than self-care (Lawrence & Kreader, 2006) are impractical, requiring transportation within parents' working hours, lacking in statutory quality assurances, requiring parents to organise food, or presenting unaffordable expenses through private providers. These factors constitute a challenge to School Age Care's role in network practices, to which evaluations of the new National Quality Framework are being addressed <sup>12</sup>.

We've got the parents who have their own expectations about what their children should be doing and learning and how they should be spending their time. ... for example I was raising an issue where a parent was asking about homework support ... and I say, that's not something we can do. ... that's what [private maths tutoring organisation] is for. ... This is a recreation-based program (Coordinator Alice Rintoul).

Meeting this challenge partly involves schools and School Age Care acting as partners in response to key aspects of evolving demands on family life.

### ***5.1.2.3. Cross-context family roles.***

Many of the child participants in the research related to different family members across different contexts, as parents' separation led them to individual decisions for housing. Melody was one of the few children supported to an extent in bridging the divergent contexts of her parents' lives, by her grandparents. Most families were described engaging in activity related to food and conversation, as Elijah's chart (see Figure 4.3) and the following quotations show:

My mum likes to make pikelets or crepes or my dad makes smoothies (Samantha).

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<sup>12</sup> <http://acecqa.gov.au/wehearyou>

I have dinner with my grandad and my grandma and my aunty every Thursday which is tonight, which I'm very excited about because ... He makes homemade tomato sauce which is really nice he puts peas and stuff in it (Melody).

Some child participants were not living with parents. At Turing, the staff replaced the word 'parent' in the questionnaire with 'carer', as so many children were in non-parent care. Moreover, 38 per cent of the school population turns over each year, eroding the viability of a consistent parent body. At Kentledge, a quarter of the children are raised by grandparents, and in many cases:

Parents have actually ceased education at very young age so I don't think the parents are often able to assist the kids (Coordinator Gillian Kent).

Dinner at Matt's place is a speedy activity rather than a socialising opportunity, and contradicts idealised stereotypes typifying family life (see Figure 5.1).

Others in the sample also reported a lack of opportunity for socialising with parents:

When they pick you up, that's the only time when you can like communicate with them (Dornet Focus Group).

Few children in the sample reflected their parents engaging with schooling obligations. Samantha's story (see Audit Trail #6) illustrates an exception. The former standpoint in School Age Care that parents and schools are exclusively obliged to support their children's education has been reviewed with the introduction of new quality standards. For Anna, social life, school and family are mixed. She gives this grouping 30 per cent (see Figure 5.2).

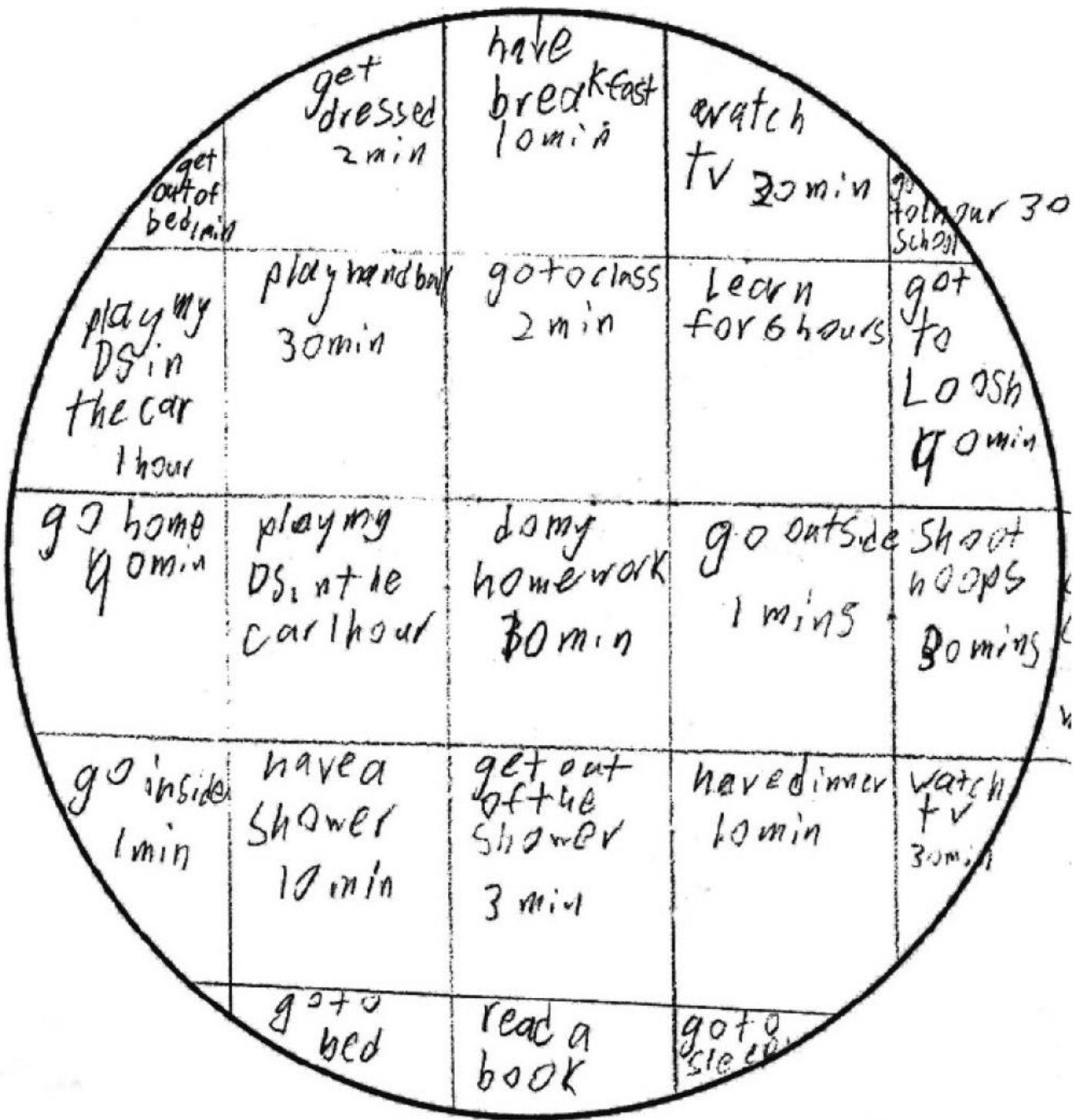


Figure 5.1. Matt's 'My Week' chart.

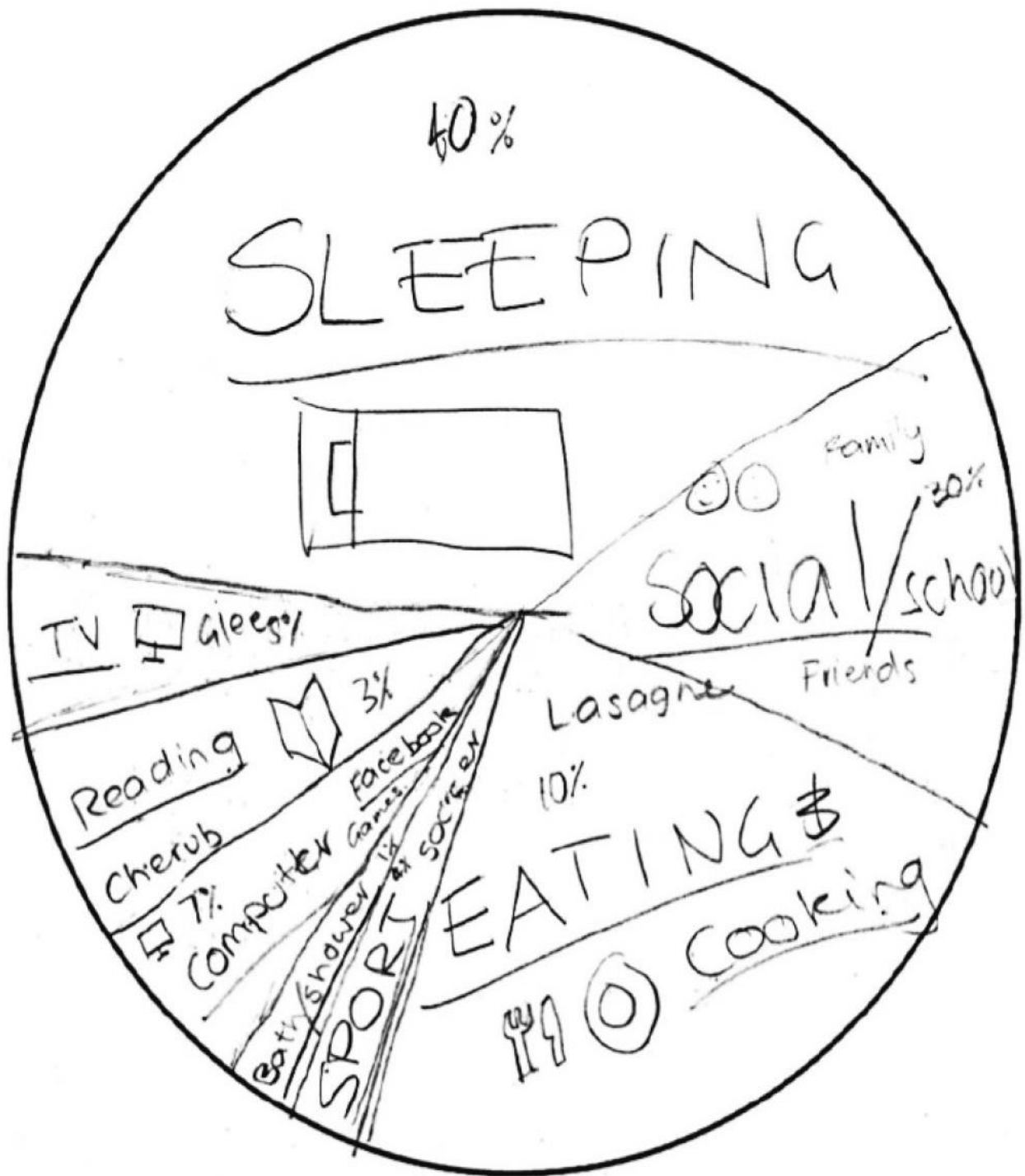


Figure 5.2. Anna's 'My Week' chart.

At Hoyden, where the school and School Age Care provision do partner to a significant degree, parents are shocked into ensuring their children perform well socially and academically through transition:

Being blunt with the parents does work. Like, they're not going to have fun in high school. They're going to be picked on in high school. They're not going to have friends in high school. Yep, we talk to the parents about it if we find that what we're doing isn't enough (Coordinator Alex McKean).

**Key Idea:**

Family processes are expected to serve schooling, and are perceived as conditioned by schooling

Further, children identify the schooling job their parents do in ways that schools might not intend:

Well, I think parents do a pretty good job through transition ... They pay a lot of money for me (Emily).

The Dornet focus group made light of the family processes that intersect with their responsibilities. They can afford to. Most of their parents are in professions, and after hours meet the schooling expectations that School Age Care resiles from in its charter (Brannelly & Miller, 2009; City of Sydney, 2008; Elliot, 1998; Network of Community Activities, 2008, 2011a, 2011b). For example, Melody's conscientious mother is so foundational a certainty in her life that her daughter can afford to complain about her mother's success with staff liaison:

So teachers I don't really like them inviting my mum in for a teacher's conference 'cause like she ends up joking around with the teacher which really embarrasses me (Melody).

By contrast, although Dorothy's vulnerable, disadvantaged mother is well intentioned towards her daughter's education, she lacks resources:

I would get my mum a job, because she hasn't had a job yet. I don't know if she wants a job (Dorothy).

Declan looks after the parenting work in his family much of the time and it has little to do with schooling:

Yeah. I usually, when my mum's in bed and she doesn't wake up for a little while, I just chop up a couple of potatoes and make some more chips (Declan).

Oliver's father does not even perceive there is a schooling job required of him. He stops his son practising the trumpet for School Band:

because we've got really, really fussy neighbours (Oliver).

Parents of children in shift-worker families can also be unavailable to them through the responsibilities they assume for the family income:

I know a few kids, their parents go to work six, seven days a week and come home at 10 o'clock at night and leave for work at like four o'clock in the morning, ... say they've got a problem with a kid, they can't go home and talk to their parents (Oliver).

In the circumstance that parents are not universally engaged with the obligations schooling expects them to embrace, School Age Care may be in a position to fulfil the mediating and supportive role typically assigned to parents:

[Coordinator Gillian Kent] and the other workers from here because if, like, say I was having a fight on one of the programs, they are always there to sort it out and everything (Toni).

the staff are embedded in the community and know the children and know the families ... Like so many of [the staff] are doing child minding [for families whose children attend the service] ... It makes sense for parents because these are people that they already trust and know have been vetted and trained and the kids already have a relationship with them (Coordinator Alice Rintoul).

on our old enrolment form ... it says on there, do you have any skills or multi-cultural aspects that you can give but it's catch-22 because they are working parents, that's the reason why they're here (Coordinator Alex McKean).

A sense of loss surrounds families' time-poor networks as families relocate, fragment, focus on employment and make plays for children's time and loyalty:

I don't really know what it's like to have a mum and a dad together, as in one house (Camilla).

My Mum was a bit of an idiot when I was born. She tried to get me, my brother and my sister taken off my dad (Oliver).

Apparently my dad used to be very kind of stubborn, I guess. I didn't really get to know him though. ... he died (Patrick).

Me and my dad usually just go out the back and have a game of football or something, like pass the ball around. Then after that, we just sit down and play with our dogs ... I used to have six dogs. These are at my dad's house. I don't live with my dad anymore (Declan).

Dorothy invents stories that symbolically restore her family to her:

When we were in the story I said which their mum was dead, they would know how she died. So in a way it symbols their loss of their mother. Yeah. They've still got their dad though. But they don't see their dad. They've got step-parents. ... They bring their mum back to life ... there's a lady called Dianne and she's trying to take me off my mum and—she is one of the friends of my dad, but my dad doesn't like her anymore (Dorothy).

There is evidence that School Age Care can mediate parents' roles. Coordinator Helen Marr finds her liaison work supportive of parenting among the most satisfying in her role:



If you involve the parents you're going to improve better the parents who are somehow triggering these difficulties in them [their children] as well and suddenly they see their kids improving. Their attitude towards their kids changes (Coordinator Helen Marr).

At Turing, fixtures in which parents take on leadership roles are community highlights, and serve children's happiness. These include:

Mothers and father's day they come up and spend the day at the mini fete with the kids ... A couple of parents come in and do the home reading swaps ... they spend the time to have a lunch ... one of the parents does the signing choir with the kids. ... They love their parents coming up (Principal Tara Ling).

It seems logical to infer from children's testimonies that School Age Care has a potentially significant role to play in building continuities across the intersection of home and school life.

### **5.1.3. Literature review: Peer affiliation.**

That peer relations overtake the importance of family influences as children enter their teens (Gillies, 2000) is convincingly contested by Wyn, Lantz and Harris (2012), who demonstrate Australian youths' embeddedness in family system interdependencies as the most important source of factors for sound future-narrative formation. Granot and Maysel (2012) also link the quality of family attachments with facility for pro-social peer affiliation, as do Rubin, Bukowski and Parker (2007). Acknowledging the role of life history in these factors, Chen and Chang (2012) link attachment with control over resources to predict degrees of pro-social attainments in children.

The peer group is popularly synonymous with school culture, and its impacts are associated with academic outcomes (Crosnoe, 2011) and difficult transitions, especially to high school (Kingery & Erdley, 2007). Resilient children can sustain friendships through transitions (Güroğlu, Cillessen, Haselager & van Lieshout, 2012; Weller, 2007),

though Moustakim (2011), arguing that peers influence disaffection with schooling, suggests transition success is primarily due to positive adult–child relationships.



**Key Idea:**  
Peer affiliation choice is a response to need

Children form affiliations with both positive and negative impacts on them. Affiliation may appear in some circumstances to be driven by resistance and peer pressure (Vargas, 2011), but it has been shown as originating in affect in individuals (Ojanen, Stratman, Card & Little, 2013). Clear links have been found between peer affiliation and school connectedness. On that basis, affiliation can be leveraged for engagement in learning, as Kindermann (1993) demonstrates in his study linking affiliation with motivation in fourth grade children. Krüger, Köhler, Pfaff and Zschach (2011) also demonstrated how confirming shared academic disposition is of affiliations among 11-year-olds (see also Flashman, 2011).

The impact of high school transition on peer affiliation is known to be profound. Affiliations change most at boundaries like high school entry, as the interconnections of learning, time-use choice and networks intensify into early adolescence (Hirsch & DuBois, 1992), and established relationship patterns change with the children's needs for new kinds of support (Eccles, Wigfield, Midgley & Reuman, 1993; Feiring & Lewis, 1991). Shin and Ryan (2012) investigated children in the last year of primary school and found associations between social adjustment and positive friendships. Further, Moran et al. (2013) found adolescents to create for themselves and with intent the benefits they need for specific purposes through affiliation choice.

Affiliation choices respond to conflicted agendas and behavioural norms (Orue et al., 2011; Serbin et al., 2011) in new contexts like high school (Anderson, Jacobs,

Schramm & Splittgerber, 2000; Carlson et al., 1999). The fragmentation of friendship groups are known to impact identity formation. Friendships in Year 7 have been found to be most formative (Molloy, Gest & Rulison, 2011). Structured contexts, such as sport, provide positive scaffolding for successful affiliation decisions (Dockett, Mason & Perry, 2006). Friendships forged in the course of engagement in activity have been shown to impact positively on children's socio-emotional development (Feldman and Matjasko, 2005, pp. 179–180). These various findings point to the importance of ensuring preadolescents can access socialising activity settings and socially enriching encounters in School Age Care.

Academic disengagement after transition to high school is more typically highlighted in scholarly discourse (Cook, MacCoun, Muschkin & Vigdor, 2006; Roland, 2011; Yazzie-Mintz, 2007) than is the socio-emotional toll of network disruption at this critical juncture. Michail (2011) points to the lost intervention opportunities implicit in such oversight. School Age Care is well positioned to provide support, but in 2009, of 253,000 children using School Age Care in Australia, only 9 per cent were preadolescent (ABS, 2009); the rest were aged between five and 10 years.

Yet it is shown that network capital is a critical factor for identity formation in preadolescence, and continuity of socialisation support through high school transition leverages that capital to positive effect. Relationship issues rank high among Australian adolescent concerns (Mission Australia, 2008). Girls are especially vulnerable to the isolating impact of friendship loss (Blake, Lease, Turner & Outley, 2012; Saunders, Davis, Williams & Williams, 2004; Svahn & Evaldsson, 2011). School connectedness has been shown to mediate bullying behaviour and victimisation (Loukas & Pasch, 2012), but there are few reliable indications of where children experiencing isolation may turn for support (Lichy & Campbell, 2012; Morrison, You, Sharkey, Felix &

Griffiths, 2013). Typically, peer and family support crystallises at network boundaries at which affiliated individuals reframe the basis of supportive friendship (Harper, 2012). Those unsupported through this reiterative phenomenon may sustain lasting deleterious effects on social competence well into adulthood (Gayman, Turner, Cislo & Eliassen, 2011; Hektner & Swenson, 2012; Uusitalo-Malmivaara, 2012). Trucco et al. (2011) call for more research into the effects of friendship dissolution in Grade 6 children because the emotional toll of network discontinuities is so profoundly disempowering, and impacts cognitive functioning as well (Cole et al., 2011).

Almost a quarter of fifth grade self-reporting children are concerned for their school safety because of a spectrum of aggressive actions by peers (Jacobson, Riesch, Temkin, Kedrowski & Kluba, 2011). Children's participation in power abuse (Houghton, Nathan & Taylor, 2012), especially cyberbullying (Marées, 2012; Vanderbosch & van Cleemput, 2009), was found, significantly, to peak in Grades 6 and 7 (Wade & Beran, 2011), and specifically in Sydney in Grades 8–10 (Sakellariou, Carroll, & Houghton, 2012), impacting the dropout spiral (Dake, Price & Telljohann, 2003; Peguero, 2011; Wolke, Bloomfield & Karstadt, 2001).

Bullying (Dake et al., 2003) affects both victims and perpetrators (Nansel, Haynie & Simons-Morton, 2003), especially where adults in a child's networks are indifferent (Cassidy, Brown & Jackson, 2012; Cross et al., 2011; Hektner & Swenson, 2011). Primary school victims of bullying are likely to experience subsequent social difficulties (Yoon, Bauman, Choi & Hutchinson, 2011). Hammig and Jozkowski (2013) found school grades to be adversely affected in bullied adolescents, and conversely that academic decline predicts victim roles. Resilient, agentic children can deconstruct aggression through learned positive socialisation (Skrzypiec, Slee, Murray-Harvey & Pereira, 2011). Preadolescents are found in serially perpetrator, bystander (Choi & Cho,

2013), defender and victim roles before school transition (Vanderbosch & van Cleemput, 2009), but in high school, aggressor–victim roles stabilise. This is where the value of positive peer friendships sustained across the school/non-school boundary is most highlighted in scholarly discourse (Perkins, Craig & Perkins, 2011; Espelage, Green & Polanin, 2012). Pozzoli and Gini (2013) demonstrate the significance of contextual influence on the behaviours of children and adolescents in relation to bullying. School Age Care needs to acknowledge its role in strengthening peer networks. It can tie children’s diverse experiences to care settings and the people in them (Gruenewald, 2003).

#### **5.1.4. Field data findings: Peer affiliation.**

##### ***5.1.4.1. Social identity formation***

Peer affiliation is known to be associated with social identity formation (Adler & Adler, 1998; Crawford, 2002; Laursen, 2005; Lehtonvirt & Rsnen, 2011; Rosier, 2000; Wilson, Karimpour & Rodkin, 2011). Some children were perceptive about the difference between friendship and affiliation as it pertains to network health. For example:

I don’t know what makes a kid popular. ... they’ve made themselves popular by doing things that are either ‘cool’ or just maybe it’s something that other kids like (Max).

In Oliver’s situation, peers have been relentlessly hostile and abusive, resulting in his withdrawal from a toxic school context:

It’s been a rough year—had fights, things [inaudible], people hit me, been bashed, bullied, sworn at, called names ... It’s sort of easing off now, it’s better for me because I’m not at school all the time now—I’m not there every day for them to pick on (Oliver).

Similarly, Dorothy recalls identifying with social isolation, but grew in hope of connectedness. Mentoring in a supportive adult–child relationship affected Dorothy’s gradually honed capacity to form affiliations from which she could leverage the boundary work required for a positive social identity. She describes learning how to initiate and grow friendship, modelled on her learned approach to teachers:

Hang out with your friends, and if they’re friends with other people and they go there, you can just follow them and you can get to know them and you might hang out with them a bit more often and, yeah. ... and I communicate with the teacher, they communicate back (Dorothy).

In contrast, Edwina’s network is fragile:

From [primary] school I think there was only one [friend]. ... there’s like 20 people in my group, and they’re all from different schools. *So do you hang with them on weekends as well?* Only one (Edwina).

Opportunities supportive of children similarly challenged are exemplified in the Turing camp experience:

You had to walk around a big square and hold onto all these things like big balloons and that ... And you’ve got to run through a really dark bush. *Were you scared?* No, because everyone was there (Declan).

Network strategy is carefully cultivated in Marina, whose mother guides her towards friendships that model an academic orientation in familial contexts:

Well my mum has told me a lot and so has my mum’s friend. My god sister ... she’s in high school and she said she thought of a really good high school, good high schools. ... every day she gets her dad to read, explain, some maths questions that she doesn’t understand. ... She also goes to [tutoring service], which is the company of where I go for tutoring (Marina).

#### ***5.1.4.2. Risk threats in need of supportive network***

Peer affiliation is an undeniable need. Absent supportive network capital, Dorothy was at risk as she sought friendship in a neighbour aged over 50 living across the road. He obliged by offering to give her a part of his garden to tend as her own, creating a confusion of friendship and obligation. Absent her mother, and in respect of her father's unrealisable good intentions, Dorothy also relies on an adolescent who manipulates her to 'age up', which is likely to lead to deeper isolation:

I want to live with M, because M and me are planning to go half and half with the rent.

She reckons I'm a good singer. That's why she wants me to move in with her [laughs].

*So you will make all the money from singing? Yeah. She's a good friend (Dorothy).*

Her tentative network rests on an insecurity highlighted in its opposite, the robust confidence and optimism of a middle-class boy:

I'm really good at making friends. So I sort of made a friend, even though there's people there that I know I'm going make friends with. I just know (Peter; see also Figure 5.3).

Some children labour under blame and control in relations with their peers:

I think lots of people get peer pressure because I've seen a really bad case ... she didn't realise she was doing it bad, afterwards, she's had to deal with it ... now my mum has been saying to her, don't do this, don't do that and I kind of felt sorry for her because she knows she didn't mean to do it but she did it because everyone was like, It'll make you cool (Karen).

It is of particular risk for Edwina that she has severed friendships based on fear of peer pressure; not because the scenario she references is of no concern, but because she was left without peer support of any kind in being coerced to resolve it. There is a

significant role for School Age Care to mediate situations such as this to affect support on both sides of children's networks:

I used to be friends with them but I'm not now because they used to go home and the mum and dad wasn't home, or the brother and sister, they were out somewhere, and this girl went home and she was smoking pot and her parents walked in and found her smoking pot. The mother didn't really care because the mother is a 'drugo' too. So I'm not friends with her no more (Edwina).

Her isolation is further cemented through her acquiescence in her father's fear-driven control:

When it comes to something like going to a party or something, well then my dad takes over there because he has got to say yes or no, but if I'm allowed, it's my choice if I do want to go or if I don't want to go because if I do go, I know there's going to be a fight or something. If I don't go, well then nothing will happen because I'm at home safe (Edwina).

Her agentic abnegation contrasts with the fury and bitterness infusing Oliver's narrative of rejection and loneliness:

Been sitting on my own. I had a last incident with the kids last week where he punched me in the head three or four times and then whacked me in the ear and my ear was ringing. So me in anger chucked the chair and the table so I didn't hit him back and I got suspended for that ... I was sort of left on my own in a class of 16 kids with two people that didn't want to talk to me because they had their own groups in the class (Oliver).

#### ***5.1.4.3 . School Age Care can scaffold positive affiliation practices***

A School Age Care provision is more than a service. Like schooling, it constitutes and draws on a community. When it succeeds, it facilitates and enriches



network activity, which in turn powerfully influences time-use opportunities and the learning that operates in it. However, connectedness needs to be resourced and nurtured. For example, Palmar's flagship interactive creative online program, leveraging contributions from peers via the Internet, failed to realise the establishment of a child community because of poor quality School Age Care support:

*Do you feel like—when you're on the Internet—does it feel like you're actually connecting up with friends in other cities? No. Not really (Patrick).*

However, adult mentoring can significantly influence adaptive responses to isolation that change the dynamic of disruption:

There's a lot of people at high school that they dislike me, like they call me names and all that, but I stick up to myself. I just, like, turn and say to them, yeah whatever, and I walk away, but they still carry on about it ... I've only got one best friend ... we've only ever had one major fight about rumours, ... but I just let it be I just ignored her and said, look, you figure it out yourself because I know I'm right and you're wrong, and she finally figured it out (Edwina).

School Age Care can moderate the sociability differences among children in ways that enhance inclusive and agentic skill. For example, at Asya, thoughtful space is made for individual difference in children's social aptitude and disposition:

I think of [11-year-old male] for example who—he's got that nurturing personality. He also doesn't do as well with his peer groups so he seeks out younger children who he feels more comfortable with ... for other kids ... they want to be with their own age group (Coordinator Alice Rintoul).

School Age Care can provide mediating environments that support challenged children with social needs to develop relationships:

To Frances, 11, isolated, overweight, tall, pubescent, quiet, and self-effacing, sitting with David, labelled 'on the [autism] spectrum', mute friendship worked. David glowed when he handed up his chart on which he wrote sentences in response to Frances' gestures of encouragement (Turing Field Notes; see also David's 'My Week' chart, Figure 5.4).

Interestingly, Jed's relationships in Kentledge are such that he lists both of the youth workers on the same 'level' as his three friends (see also Figure 5.5). So does Karen. However, at Kentledge, the staff are mindful of the implicit hazards in peer-equivalence:

Yes, my friends, I could trust them with my life like I can trust [Coordinator Gillian Kent]. [She] is a worker but also, I see [her] as one of my really good friends as well (Karen).

They're part of your social life ... Being able to talk to people and people helping me out. Say in like Kentledge or with [school] where I've got the teachers and the youth workers there that support me (Oliver).

At some sites, older children forge affiliations by engaging in mentor roles. They are not peer-equivalents, but agents of adult mentorship:

The younger ones do look up to them because the fact that they're [the older children are] still here. And a lot of it is positive (Coordinator Alex McKean).

At Kentledge, deliberate planning for children to work together across age levels is a priority that reflects Indigenous cultural values. They plan opportunities for children with disabilities to make the acquaintance of client families through play. Here, mentoring is analogous to parenting:

A mothering or cousining or sistering of the younger siblings. ... and they're given that opportunity to care for and be kind to someone that they feel that they can offer

something to (Coordinator Gillian Kent) Children are quick to identify the qualities of real friendship:

Truthful ... honest, ... there for you ... make sure that you can trust them, like really (Emily).

you've always got to stand by them, always like have their back if something goes wrong. Also ... just let them have the bit of space that they need. ... sometimes you've got to understand that you can't be there ... You can never like lie. ... Because you'll break some trust (Toni).

A powerful experience for Oliver was his participation in a church community service program through which he met a fellow student—‘one of these really, really tough kids—one of the really high respected kids’—who was able to befriend Oliver in his transformative helping capacity. In the end, Oliver looks back to say:

When I was younger I had a bit of troubles with my parents as well so I've given him strategies that I used and so far they're working (Oliver).

School Age Care has a role to play in recognising the ennobling influence of friendship, evident in the special relationships that children form across difference, as the basis of a civil and humane community:

I'm quite proud of my best friend ... she's got a [medical condition] and she's struggled through that ... She's always got it but she's just really great (Samantha).

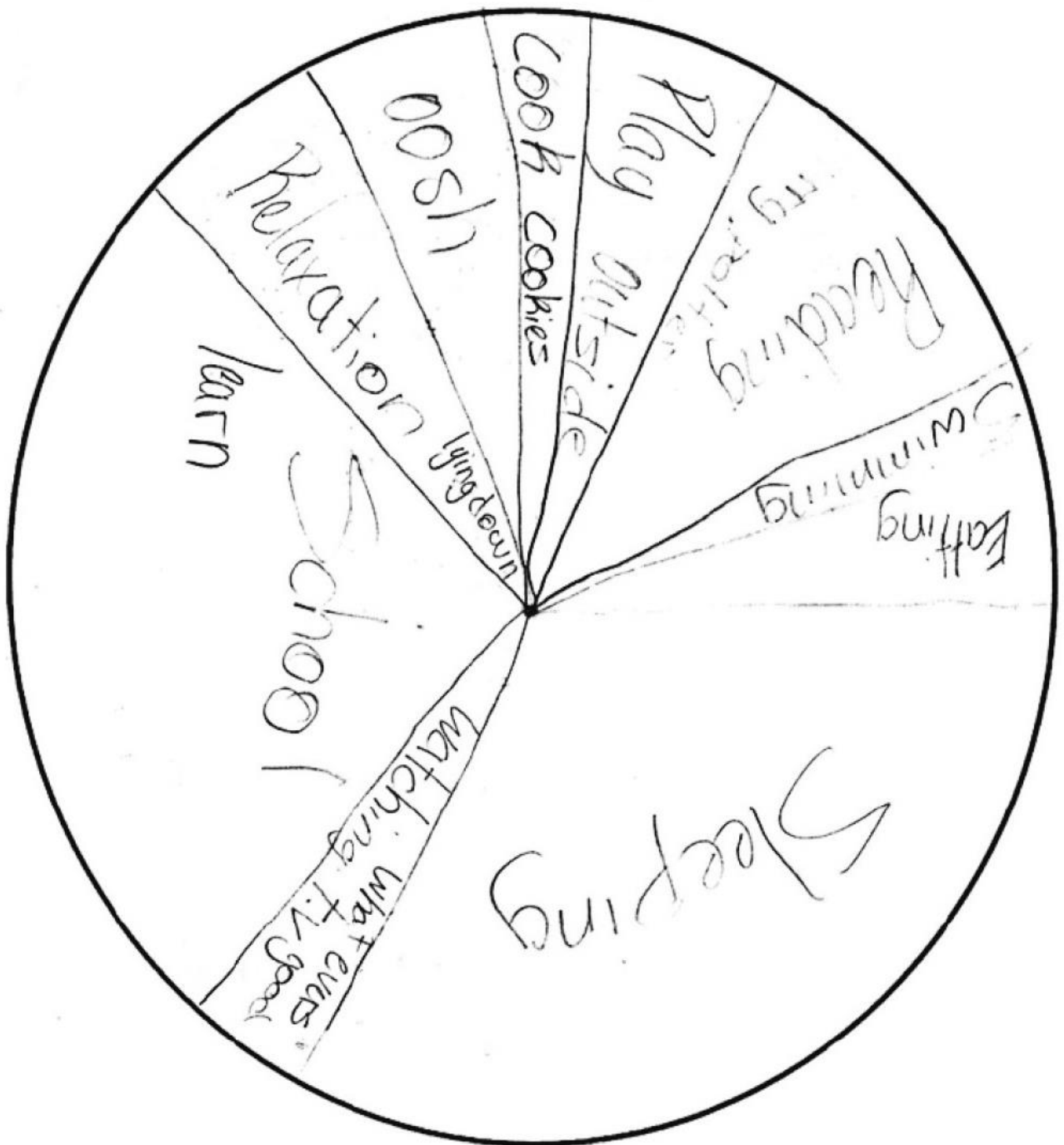


Figure 5.3. Peter's 'My Week' chart.

boys

I shower before school. After breakfast I walk to school. I love P.E. at school because P.E. keeps me fit. I also love the computer. After school I play my Playstation. My favourite game is Grand Theft Auto. Some afternoons my friends Ky and Nicholas come around and we play a gun game. At the weekend my cousins come over and we play in my room. Sometimes we go to the movies. At home I have DVD's of Family Guy and Futurama.

↓

ek

Figure 5.4. David's 'My Week' chart.

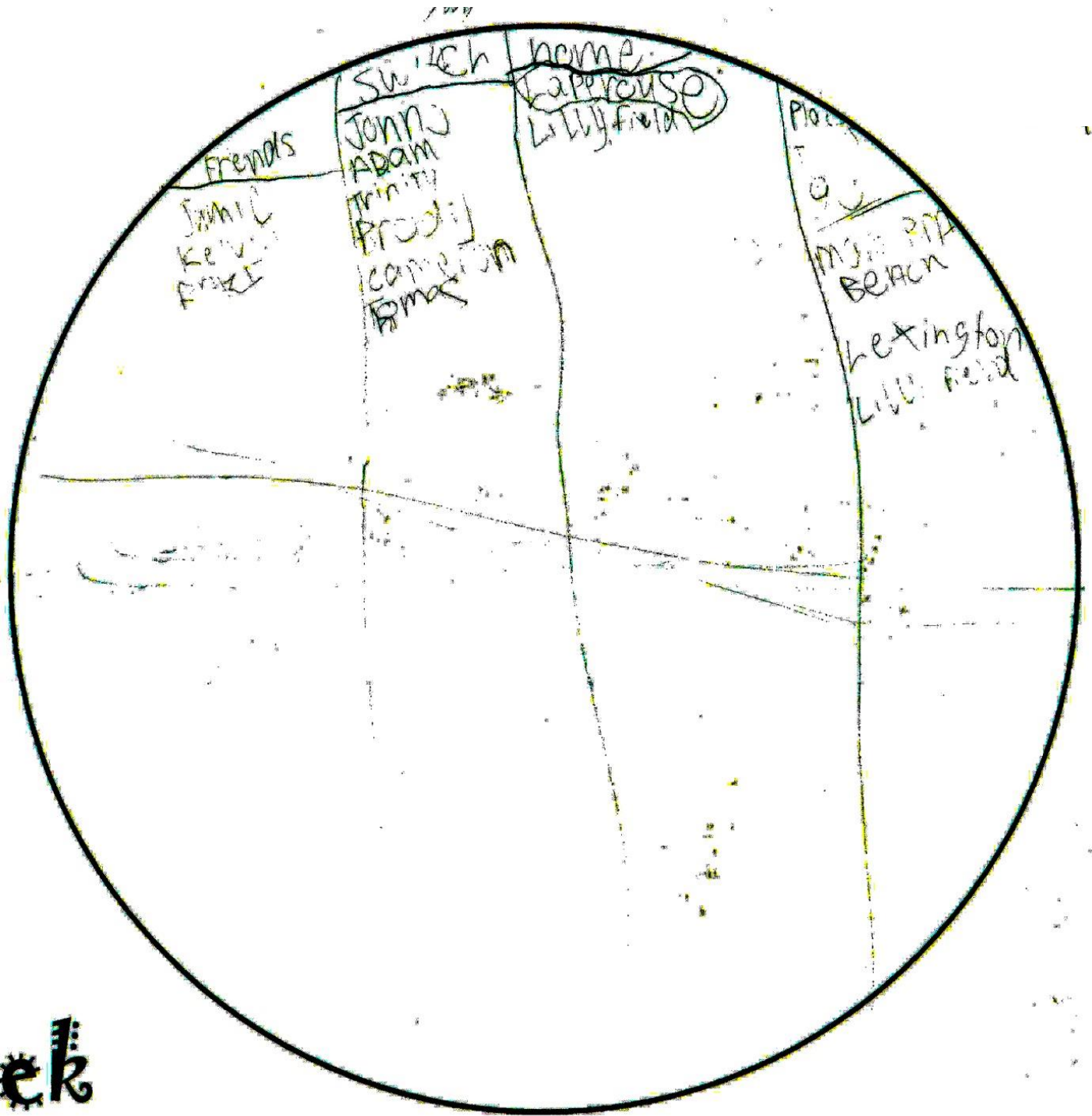


Figure 5.5. Jed's 'My Week' chart

### 5.1.5. Literature review: Children's adult networks.

Children's time use, the operator of identity formation, is a family and e issue as well as a workforce one, having social and economic implications across systems at the macro- and micro-level in an ecology framework. Children's time is typically subject to adult agendas.

**Key Idea:**

Intergenerational relationships mediate learning and socialisation

Yet agentic childhoods are possible only when there is conconvocation among stakeholders in their outcomes. Based on the theoretical position that the preadolescent comprises an agentic system, it is proposed that the competencies required to negotiate interests at intersecting context 'boundaries' are forged in 'wrapped' relationship dynamics with caring adults. This net of care is one of mutual respect, and manifests in 'self-righting', of potent and long-lived intergenerational agentic negotiation (Froiland et al., 2012), in which parents' wellbeing is also profoundly enhanced (Ashton-James, Kushlev & Dunn, 2013).

Learned capacities for boundary work are principally honed in family network activity because the family system interfaces community and works to validate macro-ideation (Sargeant, 2010; Wyn et al., 2012). Freebody et al. (2011, p. 71) caution that parent collaboration is dimensionally different from community collaboration, in that families' schooling values constrain their vision. The adult-child boundary exemplifies the symbiotic nature of agency and authority in that they are poles in contrapuntally constructed binary opposition (Silva, 2012). Adult-child networks crystallise as support, and concomitantly as control. Children are compelled by their needs and future

narratives into relationship with the indispensable power embodied in systemic adult processes. The adult–child boundary is potently threatening or enabling in inverse proportion to the strength of agency, as de Almeida, Almeida de Alves, Delicado and Carvalho (2012, p. 230) conclude from their study of Portuguese children’s Internet use. Similarly, Rolland (2012) relates teachers’ socio-emotional support to the quality of students’ academic engagement, while Farruggia, Bullen and Davidson (2013) found an association between preadolescents’ engagement with non-parental adults in non-school contexts. Shih (2012) also associates youths’ engagement in activity with their interest in obtaining help from teachers.

Adults have a custodial role that provides a ‘protective wrap’ (Theron et al., 2011, p. 813), respectful of children’s cultural traditions above all else. Ozdogru (2010) found that fourth grade children’s cultural backgrounds emotionally affect the experiences they chose in out-of-school time use and influence their social development. ‘Resilience is a complex, socio-ecological transaction’ (Theron et al., 2011, p. 813). Where adults’ and children’s respect for each other (Sorin & Galloway, 2006) is sufficient to facilitate optimal agency in quality childcare contexts (for example in Fredricks et al., 2010), children benefit at the interdependence–self-regulation boundary (Serido, Borden & Perkins, 2011). Support for children’s cross-generational capital is widely advocated in scholarly discourse, but parents may not be assumed able to afford to share it (Gauthier & DeGusti, 2012). For example, Tsai and Cheney (2012) found qualified caring adults affect academic and social behaviours in important ways. Urban youth are scaffolded in developing a boundary-crossing skill-set in programs like SAT Bronx (Cushman, 2009), and Safe Space (Hall, 2008). The Comic Book Project (Bitz, 2004b) models citizenship practices in its democratic structure, deepening the value of this initiative far beyond literacy support.



**Key Idea:**

Identity work is constrained in adult-child relationships, and therefore subject to inevitable power differentials

Children form identities in relationships through obligation and reciprocity. Their definitive dependency status negates their theoretical potential for achieving absolute autonomy. Similarly, parents' captivity to ecological forces of commercial and cultural systems shaping the care role constrains and influences their power over their children. 'Commerce, sentiment, caring and children's subjectivities interweave at the level of practice' (Cook, 2009, p. 317).

Relationship activity fluctuates with changing social affiliation across contexts, in what Lemke (2000, p. 273) calls a 'spherical' mechanism (see also Ashbourne & Daly, 2010; Fawcett, Garton & Dandy, 2008). Burgess (2006a, 2006b; Burgess, Foth & Klæbe, 2006) calls this process 'vernacular creativity'. Relationship building is the means through which children learn how to learn (Jans, 2004). 'Self-righting' in a learning framework can be taught, modelled and supported by adults in out-of-school settings for learner identity work (Ciani, Ferguson, Bergin & Hilpert, 2010). For example, adult-child relationship building is shown in this light in Abbott and Barber (2007). Fredricks and Eccles (2006b) found that children active in social skill building outside schooling showed improved learning outcomes. Psychosocial interventions can mediate the nexus between learning and beliefs about identity potential (Yeager & Walton, 2011). Alim (2011) argues that hip hop moderates learner identity processes. However, disadvantaged children have desultory access to out-of-school contexts in which learner identities may be supported (Cassells & Miranti, 2012; Rahm & Ash, 2008). Recently, Barton et al. (2012) have demonstrated how they may 'right' the projected trajectories of poor children who lack this access.

### 5.1.6. Field data findings: Children's adult networks.

Instances abound in the data of children contextualising their anticipation of the academic transition challenge in terms of support that draws on their social identity. For example, Karen's confidence in her successful transition is founded in the surety of the identity compatibilities influencing the perspectives she shares with her friends:

If the school is not going to be like I thought it would be, I know that my friends are how I think they will be (Karen).

Conversely, Dorothy identifies as an outsider, trusting one person will guarantee her support. She thinks she will be:

In the geeky kid section [in the high school social hierarchy] ... with M and her friends ... M looks after me really well. She is like a sister to me, a big sister (Dorothy).

Mary encountered expressions of Indigenous culture through art and singing and new friendships with the Gondwana Indigenous Children's Choir in Sydney. This experience afforded her perspective on the identity work her grandmother inspired in the regional town of Mary's early childhood. It facilitates her learning through transformative ways of experiencing culture:

Yeah, I do singing most of the time and then I do art when I want; like I do Aboriginal flag or just do dot painting of the Aboriginal flag and that (Mary).

By contrast, Patrick engages in out-of-school activity that neither affords a peer network nor supports his African identity. When other 12-year-olds at Palmar are led by 'cool' youth mentors in 'parcour' activity, Patrick is at a Japanese martial arts class for adults ('They're all like 20, 30-year-olds' [Patrick]) that his single mother pays for. His classes are located in the commercial centre, several kilometres away from Palmar.

For some children, opportunities to access an identity-supportive network are frustrated for lack of means. Dorothy cannot participate in dance activity because:

My nana was going to pay for it, but she had to pay for a [scooter] that broke (Dorothy).

As access to identity formation through participation in group activity narrows, Dorothy reaches for a network with an identity she can safely lay claim to:

I want to be a child carer. I want to do childcare, because I'm really good with kids, especially [cousin] T. I want to be a child carer of all ages, like up to 10. Teenagers can come with their babies (Dorothy).

Kentledge participants' non-partisanship demonstrates that academic motivation is a function of identity work, much as is the motivation implicit in competitive sport:

They say, oh I have Oztag—Oztag doesn't go for like 24 hours. After Oztag you do your work.

*But that's not fair—you're smart.*

After Oztag you're tired. You can't just go home and then ... Use your brain ...

*Okay, can I have a say in here? Okay, you say no to extra homework, okay, what's your favourite sport? Netball. Okay, if you had an extra netball training just to do, just for a round against another school, would you still do it?*

Yep.

*Well there you go, but if it's for people that's smart, the ones that do homework, it would be the same for them* (Kentledge Focus Group).

Although Kentledge's clientele is 85 per cent Aboriginal, Coordinator Gillian Kent insists the service does not exclude anyone from participation based on a given identity. The preservation of diversity in a program specifically targeting Indigenous children facilitates agentic bonding and bridging across societally imposed boundaries on terms that respond to felt needs for support:

We do pride ourselves on that our program is universal while we again are targeting children who may be at risk or disadvantaged if there is a child out there with two parents working and they own their own home and they express interest in attending our program we strongly believe not to disclude that child (Coordinator Gillian Kent).

It is interesting that in contrast to children at other sites (for example, 'My friends call me cute. I'm worryless, not worried' [Marina]), Kentledge interviewees express their identity futures in bold 'justice' terms (for example, 'I'll be a lawyer'), as contributing to and setting things to rights:

Not everyone is nice. But I think that everyone has a choice to be nice. It's just some people don't choose it (Karen).

This is a clear indication of the scaffolded relationships, trust building and courageous resolve that characterise this service, embedded as it is in a community of extreme social disadvantage:

A lot of them have learning difficulties ... that's the other place we see extreme kindness ... we'll actually ring up children who are too old or almost too old from the program we'll ask them to come ... we'll usually choose children that are quite so strong role models um to come back on ... ok they're 13, 14 they're going to school they're still surfing and they're needed and they can help us with stuff—we need help [laughs] (Coordinator Gillian Kent).

Our community is missing a lot of positive male role models for the young boys ... one of the youth workers is Aboriginal and the second youth worker has actually worked in Aboriginal communities in central Australia so um they're very well connected culturally but they're also um good at sport and surfing and they're just generally nice guys so I think that they provide very good role modelling for the young boys (Coordinator Gillian Kent).

I think a good leader is someone who shows other people the way but doesn't force them to take it. So you could say like if someone says I don't know what I want to be when I'm older. You could say, well you're really good at maths so you could be a computer, you could do computers (Karen).

#### **5.1.7. Literature review: School age care providers as partners across childhood contexts, especially school and home.**

The partner relationships of NSW School Age Care services present a confusing profile in the community. School Age Care is not part of a holistic schooling environment (McNamara & Cassells, 2010), but most of its services are co-located with schools, on school grounds. In the 1990s, the Schools Council of the National Board of Employment, Education and Training decided that schools would not take responsibility for School Age Care services, although they would be supportive of external organisations operating on their sites (Gifford, 1992; NSW Department of Education and Training, 2009). However, there is no partnership benefit to care services implicit in co-location beyond contractual rental arrangements. Co-location may appear an optimal solution in a resource-poor sector, but provisions are in frequently renegotiated commercial tenancy relationships with school administrations (Cartmel, 2010), and are in fact a major expense for services.

Working parents benefit from School Age Care on school premises because it solves the problem of transport between school and care. However, the accommodation schools provide is so insecure that it affects the accreditation, licensing and financial viability of services. More significantly, time-use quality is undermined by these rented spaces being regularly recontested. Smith and Barker (2000b) describe children's frustrations with the capricious and conflicting agendas of school and School Age Care co-located in a UK context.

The My Time, Our Place (DEEWR, 2011) reforms may focus new attention on School Age Care places. The status quo exploits an illusion that children continue their day in care under a schooling partnership umbrella. Examples of unsatisfactory arrangements are obtainable on general inquiry throughout Sydney. For example, an inner-city service was given a week's notice to vacate for school renovations; and an Eastern suburbs School Age Care service stores its entire property of equipment and materials in one cupboard, with a 10-minute interval between a school class exiting and the School Age Care service 'bumping in' (see also for example, Hohenboken, 2009; The Australian, 2009).<sup>13</sup>

As key stakeholders in School Age Care, children should also be key partners in its planning and practice (Fredricks, 2011, p. 331; Smith & Barker, 2000a). Ciani et al. (2010) advocate autonomy support for children through high school transition, but children need consistent long-term convocation, collaboration, partnership and teamwork. Habituation in various contexts for different needs and outcomes supports psychosocial wellbeing (Fredricks and Eccles, 2006a, 2008; Hull, Kenney, Marple & Forsman-Schneider, 2006).

The 'intermediate spaces' that School Age Care can form amount to partnering across system boundaries (Forum of Non-Government Agencies, 2011; T. Gill, 2011; Noam & Tillinger, 2004; Scanlon & Buckingham, 2004). Long-term community-linked partnerships are described for example in Anderson-Butcher, Stetler and Midle (2006), Williams-Boyd (2010) and Leonard (2011). Collaboration among education providers has long been found efficacious (Baker, Rieg & Clendaniel, 2006; Bouillion & Gomez, 2001; Broadbent & Boyle, 2005; Saddler & Staulters, 2008; Slaughter-Defoe &

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<sup>13</sup> This is amply illustrated in discussions conducted by the researcher with School Age Care Coordinators, including Hamilton (personal communication, 2010) and an unidentified OOSH Coordinator (personal communication, 2010).

English-Clarke, 2010). However, schools constrain the extent of their participation as community partners by the hegemonic status they occupy that justifies their government-sanctioned budgets (Power, Taylor, Rees & Jones, 2009). Assumptions implicit in community partnerships are that community stakeholders share common goals and a consensus on the purposes of schooling (Freebody et al., 2011, p. 72). Implementation in January 2012 of the National Quality Framework (DEEWR, 2011) is set to include partnerships with families and communities, and links with schooling are encouraged.

#### **5.1.8. Field data findings: School age care provisions as partners**

School Age Care should benefit from locating on school premises, but it does not.

*Do you have links with the high school?* No (Coordinator Alice Rintoul).

In the affluent neighbourhood of Dornet, overtures for partnering with the school on whose premises the provision locates its services do not attract a response:

We try and be part of the school community we send out emails for the parents on what's going on ... We tend to go to the school presentation day and the school musicals and things like that that's more for the children because they like seeing us there. Other than that the only real relationship we have is with paperwork. And we go to the P and C as part of our agreement its part of our original agreement that we go to the P and C every month and we have to give a report yes that's part of our licence agreement we have to give a report. We also supposed to meet with the Principal once a year to discuss things but it has never happened in 10 years (Coordinator Donna Rein).

The level of separation between school and care seems intentional, especially as the school routinely uses Dornet staff as casual assistants to meet its own personnel shortfalls.

At Asya, the co-locating school resists acknowledgement of the learning children do outside school hours. Marina is uncomfortable about disclosing the achievements she is proud of at her regular Saturday coaching college:

My teacher doesn't really like the things that [unclear] he kind of ... if I tell him he might just start getting really you know—so yeah. *So you're being very tactful?* Yes (Marina).

This is despite the progress being made in developing a school–School Age Care relationship at Asya. It is a slow, limited and largely one-way initiative, but there are some indications of positivity:

I would say [relationship with school] that's something that really takes time to develop through relationship building and trust over time. ... I think there's still a separation, there's still—we're part of the school community but for example, when they make a change they don't instantly think, oh we should tell [School Age Care]. ... The time that they have to have those relationships is not a lot. They're usually doing 20 other things so we recognise that (Coordinator Alice Rintoul).

Exceptionally, the co-location of care and schooling through Schools-as-Communities facilitates wraparound practices that respect the agency of families and their children to partner with adults in meaningful activity. Coordinator Samantha Turner's recruitment from the local community to head the Schools-as-Communities Centre at Turing benefited relationships with families who knew her as a neighbour. On this basis, Coordinator Samantha Turner cannot think of them as clients:

They all know—all the kids know where I am, they all have my mobile phone number. I know what is going on in the community. If kids are having a bad time there's usually a reason—something has happened at home (Coordinator Samantha Turner).



At Turing, ‘Try a Trade Day’ involved community and CareerLink personnel, as well as high school staff. It supported Turing children in goal setting:

They go to the Try a Trade, they talk to the other [trades representatives]—these are the subjects you need to really work at. This is why you have to be at school, you have to attend, you have to get good grades in this, if that’s your goal at the end of it. An electrician, garbage man (Coordinator Samantha Turner).

However, like Hoyden’s corporate-sponsored wraparound components, Turing’s homework support partnership with The Smith Family does not carry across the boundary to high school:

As the Principal of this school I’ve never received a communication from the high school. So that tells you how well they communicate. ... They have a Year 7 advisor and they’ve got a student welfare person (Principal Tara Ling).

Further, the high school is a designated Selective Sports school (NSW Department of Education and Communities, 2012):

A lot of our community kids get a little bit lost when they get to high school—to this one especially, because it was changed to a targeted sports program school—but they still have to take community. It’s not a selective school, it is an elite school, but our kids are there as well ... everything sport comes first with them (Coordinator Samantha Turner).

This transition towards greater school and School Age Care collaboration includes introduction of the Big Picture Education model at the high school in 2012. It uses community partnerships for adult–child relationship building in activity based on youths’ interests (Big Picture Education Australia, 2012). It aims to extend the Schools-as-Communities charter into a context where to date:

A lot of them get lost ... they don't seem to be concerned their attendance is particularly good because we nag at them about coming to school and making sure they're here. I've got a little girl who at the moment, has just been suspended for 20 days but her sister is up at the high school [in Year 7] and doesn't ever attend school and so this little girl also has started to follow in the footsteps of that and become very aggressive and breaking into stuff. So there's sort of effectively a default drop out really. There's a lot of them. A lot of them (Principal Tara Ling).

Coordinator Alex McKean and the Primary School's Principal consult daily at their joint premises on the children who attend School Age Care. Moreover, Hoyden uniquely receives partial funding from Hoyden Primary and they liaise on a daily basis to achieve continuity of both learning programs and care work:

Any program we've got going we can throw it in the newsletter and they'll put it out for us (Coordinator Alex McKean).

However, co-location on school premises with active partnering across school-care contexts is not enough. Frustration that the transition work of primary schools is not partnered by high schools was pronounced at Hoyden (Coordinator Alex McKean, Field Notes).

Interestingly, partnerships flourish at Kentledge, which is not located in a school, but rather conducts most of its work away from the premises of their youth service base. Using funded bus transport, this service picks children up from school and drops them home. Their mobility is an asset in that they forge practical and social ties with families and schools. Kentledge has long maintained partnership with [Local Hospital]'s child counselling services, which helps them to integrate youth development work with the Let's Go Surfing Australia initiative run at [Local] Beach, itself a partnership of

community, corporate and sporting bodies (Lets Go Surfing Australia, 2012). Specialist staff are corporately funded to run this initiative specifically with Kentledge.

However, Coordinator Gillian Kent is astonished that in education, lack of awareness on the part of high schools of upper primary children's habituations and expectations is normalised, despite rising dropout and refusal rates in public education  
Middle School:

The child hasn't been given adequate homework or expectation of completion of homework in primary school um they have this great expectation they've got this independence to take this school work take it home into a family often of chaos and bring it back which they just won't have (Coordinator Gillian Kent).

Further, there is negligible, if any, partnering to identify the high schools to which children are to be sent. Adjusting the curriculum and academic expectations to the specificity of known new contexts is then impossible. For example, many of Kentledge's clientele ('half', according to Coordinator Gillian Kent in her) move to elite private schools upon graduating from primary school, having obtained 'Aboriginal' scholarships with the support of Kentledge; for example, through written referrals. At Palmar, too, many families seek private schooling for their children beyond the age of 12 (Coordinator Helen Marr):

Those going to the private schoolings are coming back with a large amount of work which also actually um inhibits their ability to necessarily stay connected with our program. We find that those kids actually tend to drop off much more from connection with Kentledge (Coordinator Gillian Kent).

On the other hand:

The local high school of which is fairly well known as not providing adequate homework for school it's a sport high school ... but um limited take home work and yea

actually we find that in year 7 especially that they're not provided with much homework or any homework ... the kids with the local high schooling won't have homework so for us to pick them up and go out and go snorkelling and have a barbeque and drop them home at 6 or 6.30 at night is a great afternoon for them (Coordinator Gillian Kent).

Oliver's mentored return to productive mainstream schooling at age 13, with supportive activity of this nature after a tumultuous transition experience, resulted in his interest in mentoring others:

Yes, I've been back [to Primary School] a few times, I'm helping actually with their transition program. I've been talking to the students out of my own time after school. I finish early on a Thursday and I sometimes go down there and talk to a few of the kids ... they all know me, the teachers, they're all like hi, hi (Oliver).

Although a laudable activity, and a confirming one, as Coordinator Gillian Kent points out, schools and services need to create sustainably networked partnerships underwritten by substantive funding, based on mutual acknowledgement of the work each do with the same children:

Our local high school as well it doesn't have a good reputation ... we need to link heavily with the Year 7 Coordinator who we do have a relationship with at the local school but we also need to make that third link with the local youth service and I think we need to have a clearer transition on and um even I mean the [local youth service] here has a very successful tutoring program and again if the children aren't getting homework or something to stimulate them well it's just not—there's no point to them necessarily going into the tutoring (Coordinator Gillian Kent).

Convocation among primary schools, high schools, School Age Care and Palmar is acknowledged as central for the transition work that Coordinator Helen Marr foreshadows, still in 'concept' form in the second last week of the school year (Coordinator Helen Marr Field Notes).

Palmar workers should enter the high school environment themselves to explore opportunities to start a relationship. Yet they may not have to leave the premises to do so. Palmar is the site of the local public high school annex, staffed and funded through the Department of Education's partnership with the TAFE Preparation for Work and Study (PWS) program, to give disengaged middle-school students tuition and psychosocial support from 9am to 3.15pm each day (Coordinator Helen Marr). Palmar is a rare case of a school co-locating with School Age Care, rather than School Age Care using school premises. However, regardless of this, there is no partnership activity at all between Palmar and the teachers who daily occupy the site.

#### **5.1.9. Literature review: Autonomy and relationship building in School Age Care settings.**

The first proposed outcome anticipated to implement the recently mandated policy in *My Time, Our Place* (DEEWR, 2011) combines 'autonomy, interdependence, resilience and sense of agency' as a single School Age Care objective, and in doing so reiterates autonomous behaviour as the vague and undefined but absolute value it popularly conceptualises. Autonomy issues pervade justice discourses (Scruton, 2005; Swenson & Chaffin, 2006; Zanobini & Usai, 2002). However, recent scholarly interest in autonomy that draws attention to its culturally contextual relativity (Valsiner, 2009) is of heightened interest for explicating the mechanics operating children's liberty. Luciano (2010, p. 503) proposes an 'individualism' to 'collectivism' continuum in relativising independence. Van Petegem et al. (2012) usefully problematise the 'key developmental task' of autonomy expectations synonymous with adolescence, acknowledging the theory consensus of its importance in psychoanalytical reasoning and its development as a process of increasing, but parent-supported, individuation. They distinguish that the relationship between autonomous choice and psychosocial

wellbeing is operated by motives that have different functions developmentally on a continuum of self and others' control, to investigate where independence is beneficial. They conclude that acceptance of advice and support from caring adults is actually indicative of functional autonomy, without which, in fact, independence foments behavioural problems. It may be inferred from the Van Petegem et al. (2012) findings that respect for the value of relationships between adults and youth is predictive of freedom, and that laying expectations on young people to behave autonomously is controlling and potentially leads to maladjustment.

**Key Idea:**

Adult-child care relationships are more important than pre-planned, structured task characteristics

In the 'play' approach to programming in School Age Care (Network of Community Activities, 2008), a variety of time-use affordances facilitated choice of recreational activity, alongside respect for The United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) of 1989 and acknowledgement of children's autonomous potential. This approach is not ground breaking, but of poor necessity positions School Age Care in a dichotomised relationship to educationalised childhood from within a domain of professionalised parenting. It does not define an alternative way of caring for children, nor does it radicalise conceptualisations of care to a child-centric perspective.

In School Age Care, an observed emphasis on children's autonomy trajectories is subject in large part to a lack of clarity explicative of preadolescents' disaffection for participation in structured care. Autonomous preadolescence is contested in the present study through its standpoint that the worlds of childhood invoke interdependency processes (Woodhead & Faulkner, 2000), and that through them, children seek to fulfil a fundamental need for connection with adults.

**Key Idea:**

Exemplars of children's experiences in supportive adult-child relationships can provide helpful guidance for School Age Care planning

Mayall (2005a, p. 85) asserts that preadolescents do not to seek autonomy from adults. Preadolescents are so highly susceptible to parental socio-emotional behaviours that youth intervention work requires engagement with the family network to be successful (Johnson & Greenberg, 2012). Absent intervention, children's reactive suppression behaviours may develop into negative self-regulation patterns throughout adolescence (Gonzales, Dumka, Deardorff, Carter, & McCray, 2004). Survey data reflects children's self-reported quest for authentic relationships with staff (Network of Community Activities, 2011b). Indeed, Eyerman (2012) found that in situations in which adults are absent or remote, children appoint a rule-maker among peers, modelled on adult-child relationship activity, who structures their play.

Involved, educated, technology-savvy parents of fifth grade children were shown to benefit children's reading (Xu, Benson, Mudrey-Camino & Steiner, 2010). Oostdam and Hooge (2012) advocate that schools should become 'pedagogical partners' with parents and extend their curriculum in consultation and collaboration with out-of-school providers, private tutoring, sport organisations and the arts. Williams and Sánchez (2012) are equally persuaded that parent time use is efficacious where they participate in support of contextually specific schooling objectives, a process Hill and Tyson (2009) refer to as 'academic socialisation'. Forsberg (2007) illuminates Foucaultian struggles over homework between parents, their primary school-age children and absent teachers (Foucault, 1982; (Froiland et al., 2012). It is a complex negotiation of tensions in conflicting agendas that confuse time management, independent learning, 'responsible parent' attributes, control of personal and geographical space, and 'good'

and ‘bad’ childhoods. In his analysis of conversations with preadolescents and their parents, Espino (2013) distinguishes ‘present’ parenting (to protect, ensure wellbeing), from parenting for future benefit, through education. He argues these different orientations are impacting generational power relations as all families seek to support children to greatest preferred advantage, but to different objectives. The building blocks of learner identity formation operate through the perceptions children distil from these complex agendas (Fosco & Grych, 2012) of parental values towards, or averting, encouragement to academic pathways (Gniewosz & Noack, 2012).

What Tam and Chan (2010) call ‘family capital’ preoccupies their Timescapes project. Their unseen investment in homework requires parents’ values-driven motivation (Katz, Kaplan & Buzukashvily, 2011). They teach, set out structures and places for work, and mentor strategic task management (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2001). Children’s disaffection for learning can be an unintended outcome where homework is emotionally and culturally overwhelming for parents (Hutchison, 2012). Indeed, Hill and Tyson (2009) found that homework was the only schooling-related activity involving parents to negative effect. Increasing uses of technology in teaching sits uncomfortably with findings of parents’ anxiety about their children’s Internet use (Bulfin & Koutsogiannis, 2012; Lee, 2012). Yet evidence increasingly confirms that screen-based activity is beneficial in the case of positive ‘academic socialisation’ (Bittman, Rutherford, Brown & Unsworth, 2011; Hill & Tyson, 2009).

**Key Idea:**

Schools engage with parents selectively, diminishing its affordances to challenged children

A good example of the benefits brought by the flexibility afforded by screens in learning and teaching is that children in Canberra are ‘surging ahead’ following the



implementation of a reversal of homework. Students view a video-lesson, loaded onto devices like iPhones, at home. They do the related homework with teacher-mentors (Pryce & Keller, 2013) in the classroom during school hours (Tucker, 2012).

It is important that children have input on how they experience others' supportive intent (Mandigo & Sheppard, 2003; Wright, Webb, Rowland, Vialle & Wilsmore, 2000), yet they are not generally asked. There are exceptions. Hansen, Larson and Dworkin (2003) asked out-of-school program participants to reflect on the different learning patterns that various structured experiences involved. Bohnert's (2006) assemblage of discourse on structured activity includes reviews of adolescent perspectives on their time use, such as the value they place on community service, mentoring and how policy influences outcomes, especially among disadvantaged youth. The NSW Commission for Children and Young People canvassed 430 four to 19-year-old participants, in mainly regional NSW, and from a range of social backgrounds, on issues important to them. However, it failed to probe children's interest in opportunities outside school to discover what benefits they thought these would have for them (NSW Commission for Children and Young People, 2004). More recently, Delisle (2012) explored this topic with 10,000 children and adolescents, revealing their understanding that agentic skills of 'control, complexity, common bonds [and] choice' predicate engagement in relationships with caring adults.

Out-of-school programs such as Harlem RBI in New York (Berlin, Dworkin, Eames, Menconi & Perkins, 2007; Salinitri, 2011; Schorn, 2009) exploit sporting's highly socialising assets as a strategy in their youth development objectives of learning support and life skills training. They leverage the assets of sport culture to facilitate adult-child relationships in an ethos of care (Magyar et al., 2007). Similarly, evaluation of an immersive camp program found agency, social, physical, cognitive, ethical and

motivational growth in participants who were in successful mentoring relationships with adults (Thurber et al., 2007). Immersion in groups subscribing to positive behaviour typified in School Age Care visions could be influential on the development of learner values. However, such outcomes depend on School Age Care services extending and enriching their ‘missions’ holistically (Hamilton & White, 2008; Watson et al., 2003).

#### **5.1.10. Field data findings: Autonomy and relationship building in School Age Care settings.**

Interpreting field data to express an orientation in which child agency is central would involve radicalisation of the School Age Care charter. Autonomy of choice over how children use their time is not an aim, but is rather an indicator of agentic skill. This means that optimal time-use decisions are the outcome of evolving competency. Successful skill building involves scaffolded steps towards autonomy. It is proposed that an autonomous individual negotiates her positive progression on the JAS, illustrated in Figure 5.9. ‘Bigger, Stronger, Wiser, and Kind’ adults (Circle of Security, 2012) can support children, especially those whose family relationships have been disrupted, in developing their engagement. The data demonstrates the value of consistent relationships with caring adults (Circle of Security, 2012; Maughan, 2008):

One boy withdrew and hid under the table after pinching someone’s crayon; another couldn’t verbalise frustration, another expressed his resentment about a perceived injustice. It was impressive to witness how [Kentledge staff] kept everyone in the circle, affirming their worth and keeping open the choice not to participate. They have mastered an art, creating a net of care in a context of free play, fun and adventure (Kentledge Field Notes).

Children reflect they are looking for this kind of relationship with adults:

I'm free to do the things I'm allowed to do. But when I'm doing something wrong, like, I do get disciplined for it. Like and I respect that (Toni).

Dorothy cannot trust the integrity of significant adults. Therefore, she cannot undertake activity involving them, let alone negotiate engagement:

When I was three. Yeah. That was my mum's boyfriend, and she still goes out with him. That's why I'm not with my mum right now because of what happened (Dorothy).

She seeks caring and consistent respected adult-child relationship, to make a space of trust for learning through participation. Could Tom be the one?

I don't know the rules about tennis ... But it is hard to—I can chuck the ball up and hit it but I can't do—I can balance and everything, but I can't I chuck it like that. ... Tom brings a whole heap of tennis racquets and a whole heap of balls and the net. ... He is very nice. He is only 19 too (Dorothy).

Kentledge staff know how critical integrity is in relationship building with children with experience of rupture. They establish a contract guaranteeing relationship safety first, as the sound basis for any mutually negotiated decisions about the content of activities:

I made an agreement and a commitment to those girls that I wouldn't sit them in an environment of where they would become bored and stifled and I promised them that yes those activities that they brought forward is something that we could bring in and so it was an agreement (Coordinator Gillian Kent).

Significantly, despite Mary's self-reported dislocation from 'Country' that has fragmented her family connection (see Section 4.2.3), she exhibits a trusting disposition in her new life. Unlike Dorothy, she can draw on the memory of a capable adult in her sea of change:

Well when I went to the Warrumbungle's with my cousins, I got lost and I saw a kangaroo ... then I got lost, like when I was walking I was walking in circles. I didn't know where I was, and then I started crying. Then my uncle, he come out and helped me (Mary).

Children were found to seek out and cherish the bonds they formed with trusted caring adults.

#### **5.1.11. Summary of section 5.1.**

Socially isolated children lack key capital for negotiating boundary tensions, putting them at risk. This capital is expanded and strengthened through learning how to conduct trustworthy relationships. Children reported their key resource to be their peer group, which is disrupted to at least some degree in the move to high school. Negative peer influences resulted from the fulfilment of affective needs in principally unsupportive social networks in the lives of some children. Adult support is shown to help differently disposed children to be agentic in their negotiation for relationships in their wider peer groups. Through such peer relationships, children benefit in an indirect way from the influence of their friends' family values. Children were interested in children of different ages. Reciprocal contribution in cross-age relationships is transformative in its experiential 'responsibilisation' impact.

Apart from Turing, where care is embedded in the school's mission, schools in the field were not found to be respectful of School Age Care affordances, despite benefitting from School Age Care rent revenue. Overtures from co-locating School Age Care provisions towards their host schools hold some promise in situations in which associations between the sectors demonstrate a mutually adaptive approach. Such promise has increased at Asya. Services funded to target transition support were only somewhat more alert to strategies for mitigating primary to high school risk threats than

those without differentiated programming. Moreover, funded provisions often relied on opportunistic encounters with stakeholders to practise intervention.

The School Age Care services with targeted ‘transition’ funding from Better Futures demonstrated success in mentoring children to develop agentic skill, and even to go on to mentor others. They confirm the findings of Barton et al. (2012) that adult–child relationship networks are key in guided identity work. Typical School Age Care program planning emphasises entertainment in structured events to attract children. However, children’s respect is won based on relationship formation. Children want to engage, yet most preadolescents in this study did not say School Age Care was a supportive adult–child network community for them. In abrogating responsibility for school and home, School Age Care services typically miss the opportunity of being significant in children’s identity formation. This is the concern that prompts calls in Chapter 6 for a shift in research focus from workforce facilitation to perspectives on children’s experiential quality in School Age Care.

## 5.2. Section 2: Learning

### 5.2.1. Introduction.

Learning cannot be conflated with schooling if children are to build viable life-long learner identities. The schooling/welfare dichotomy originates from the time of early settlement (Elliot, 1998). Accidental cultural and historic imperatives saw the wellbeing of mainstream European Australians invested in schooling, while disadvantaged, Indigenous and minority groups were associated with the welfare system and its persistent stigma (Elliot, 1998). School Age Care is situated in the welfare system, but in the Scandinavian countries, for example, education and care are integrated (Fladmoe, 2012). Of the almost 20 per cent of students in Australia whose literacy and numeracy are below the National Minimum Standard, the overwhelming majority are either socio-economically disadvantaged and/or Indigenous (Australian National Audit Office, 2012). The care sector has developed to identify with the poor status conferred upon it and to distort conceptualisations of learning. In the process, care sites became exempt from inclusion among the legitimised geographies of learning, especially schools.

Politically entrenched discontinuities between schooling and non-school contexts are not easily transformed because the issue at stake is the relative power of community and schooling agency. This issue is irreversible, short of a radical emancipatory revolution, such as Funds of Knowledge theorises (Rodriguez, 2013). The performative point for the purposes of the present thesis is that the discontinuous boundaries distinguishing care and education pose risks for child wellbeing. School Age Care is well positioned to mediate these risks, but its policies and emphasis on child safety compliance averts attention from potentially challenging schooling's hegemony. School Age Care provides more than five hours of childcare daily. Schools operate over comparable, if slightly longer, hours on the same sites. Care workers at field sites in the

present study were resident within the neighbourhoods of their clientele, whereas NSW teachers have been recruited with reference to selected community origins only of late.<sup>14</sup> However, as long as schooling sets the benchmark of wellbeing, cross-context assets of community and family knowledge on the part of care providers will remain unexploited and undervalued within the existing macro-endorsed learning paradigm (Koretz, 2008).

### **5.2.2. Literature review: Hegemonic schooling.**

Compulsory schooling is not an exclusive learning domain (Trewin, 1999). For example, online learning is well-recognised (Clark, Logan, Luckin, Mee & Oliver, 2009; Green, Hannon & Demos, 2007, pp. 20–29). However, schooling's historical hegemony over discontinuous, unwieldy, complex and divergent systems (Elliott, 2006, p. iii) has situated it to authorise the pathway to wellbeing (NSW Commission for Children and Young People, 2009b). Schooling's position in this respect is sociologically naïve (Petrie, 2010). In effect, it denies experiential learning. Informal and cultural influences on learner identity formation exceed 'silo' boundaries, blurring them. Informal learning pathways comprise routes of progression from informal to formal learning. Informal learning is generally community-based in dedicated environments and non-educational contexts. Informal pathways are supportive of opportunities to undertake formal education, but they are also valuable in themselves.

School non-participation is high globally (Rimashevskaja & Korkhova, 2004). Absent the network capital and documented educational attainments scaffolded in schools, many Australians find their access to employment and other opportunities limited. In 2007, 526,000 Australians aged 15 to 24 were either out of work, not at school and not in job training (Dusseldorp, 2007). Schools delegitimise the 'learner'

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<sup>14</sup> <http://www.dec.nsw.gov.au/about-us/careers-centre/school-careers/focus-areas/connected-communities>

attribute in people of this category. The need for informal pathways to empowerment is palpable.

**Key Idea:**

Care services are as responsible for children's learning as are schools and families

Teachers are essential for learning. However, learning not attained through schooling must also be legitimatised (Roth, 2010). School teaching is fixated on classroom techniques to the detriment of the scholarly credentials essential to collaborative adult–student knowledge generation (Bantik, 2012). Jensen (2011) argues that schooling needs to ‘broaden its horizons’ and Medina-Jerez (2008) shows how ‘silo’ thinking causes children to discount their non-school knowledge, despite its long-standing valued position in the development of societies (Cajas, 1998). Linked skills and knowledge across contexts inform current theorising about integrated learning (Barber, 2012). Yet recently coined ‘productive pedagogies’ are still radical in hegemonic pathways (Bland & Atweh, 2006; Lingard & Mills, 2010; Skerrett & Bomer, 2011), and schools are likely to replicate their ‘rational discourses’ where they take children out of the school context (Gomes, 2012). This is despite research confirmation that children come to identify as learners through multiplex pathways (Gallagher, 2012; Rodriguez, 2013).

**Key Idea:**

Schooling is not immune to boundary pressures

The new policy document for School Age Care (DEEWR, 2011) and the Education and Communities ‘super ministry’, combining education and welfare under one



'umbrella' in the NSW O'Farrell Government,<sup>15</sup> are steps towards resolving discontinuities of care and schooling (Freebody et al., 2011; Spencer, 1999). More recently, the Local Schools, Local Decisions reform (NSW Department of Education and Communities, 2011; NSW Minister of Education, 2012) promises a shift towards wraparound approaches, especially in selected Indigenous communities (Milburn, 2012; Ryan, 2012; Stevenson, 2012). Both the education and care sectors endorse a shared vision of valuing interests based on cumulative mastery (Harackiewicz, 2004). Institutionalised division of the care and teaching professions mandated to implement new policy must therefore be political.

Schooling is not moved to compromise its immunity from boundary pressures, as its hegemony over a prescribed minimum of childhood hours and task characteristics is guaranteed by statute, largely quarantining them (Clark et al., 2009; Hayes & Chodkiewicz, 2005). Non-school learning is happening anyway (Sorensen, 2005), especially through Internet practices that invalidate knowledge-culture norms like information hierarchies (Bulfin & Koutsogiannis, 2012). Indeed, the game attribute taxonomy presented by Bedwell, Pavlas, Heyne, Lazzara and Salas (2012) responds to new knowledge norms born of technological innovation. The assault on arbitrary system boundaries is unstoppable (Leckart, 2012; Lenhart, Arafah & Smith, 2008; Stevenson, 2011). It occurs through the ubiquity of information, through globalised communication and through reactive defiance where children's access to the universe of knowledge is denied (Detzler, Liew, Dorward, Jenkins & Teslicko, 2007; Haste & Abrahams, 2008; Huggins & Rodrigues, 2004; Oforu-Kusi, 2010; Rose & Cohen, 2010; Ungar et al., 2007). Children feel their learning is empowered by their use of mobile e-devices, and the adults in their networks are positive about this impact on children (Squire &

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<sup>15</sup> <http://www.educationandcommunities.nsw.gov.au/>

Dijkers, 2012). Yet, despite public and scholarly discussion recognising these phenomena for over a decade, schooling has so insulated itself (Rosen, 1995, 2007) that the notion of children obtaining ‘permission’ to use their own preferred electronic devices in place of Department of Education e-stock in class is newsworthy (MacGibbon, 2012). Clapton, Cree and Smith (2013) argue that ‘moral panic’ is in danger of overtaking rational family concerns about Internet use. A recent Australian review of professional and community perceptions of children’s Internet use concludes that these have been so sensationalised through media that resulting concerns are distorted and illogical (Tam & Walter, 2013). Only now is teacher-mediated computer skilling being associated with essential ‘cultural capital’ for children from the early grades (Paino & Renzulli, 2013).

Confusion is caused by clinging to the illusion that moral gatekeepers can control access to the learning, experiential and knowledge pathways that constitute education. The implicit assumption is that treading the pathways is intuitive. It is not. Access requires intentional, generational, learner-oriented support for whatever attainments children qualify their selves to achieve (Smith et al., 2012). The phenomenon of the Internet challenges schools to leverage non-school knowledge, as habituated boundaries prove illusory (Bond, 2011; Edwards et al., 2007; Facer & Sandford, 2010; Griffith, 2012; Stevenson, 2011). Where this is recognised, there exists concomitant responsibility to afford children explicit, intentional guidance in their broadening experience. Fears of letting children loose has proliferated notions that they may become enslaved to all of the Web’s capacities (see for example Sorbring, 2012). However, findings show that children use technology on a needs basis (Kuby, 2012). Boonaert and Vettenburg (2011) propose a division-versus-diversity debate on Internet

use, resonant with agentic freedom, to pursue the learning pathways that are meaningful for children.

**Key Idea:**

Schooling is socio-cultural capital for reproducing advantage

Hegemonic schooling is so trenchantly the arbiter of socio-cultural capital (Jæger, 2011) that alternative pathways are still being devalued, regardless of the speed and scope of technological and societal change. Schooling's increasingly unviable political status accords it a prosumer<sup>16</sup> role (Holland, Reynolds & Weller, 2007). Families are in thrall to schools as arbiters of intergenerational cultural reproduction (Roksa & Potter, 2011). Zeijl, te Poel, du Bois-Reymond, Ravesloot and Meulman (2000) investigate how beneficial time use in affluent families advantages preadolescents, to clarify confusion regarding the premium typically placed on schooling over learning as a value in itself (Larson & Verma, 1999). Dougherty (2012) explains this phenomenon by the imperviousness of research and policy to effects at the commercial interface through the commodification of educational attainment. The unexamined assumption that the schooling children 'receive' now will sustain them beyond 2050 into a future whose nature cannot be known appears increasingly unjustifiable. In terms of the 'becoming' or 'being' discourse discussion (Alanen, 2005; James & James, 2004; James et al., 2005; Mayall, 2005b; Prout, 2005; Prout & James, 2005; Jens Qvortrup, 2000, 2005), children are not investment 'futures', influenced, regulated, structured, individualised and educationalised in linear modelling, historically typical in education policy (Reynaert et al., 2009). Despite their institutionalised potency, macro-systems in Western democracies are ultimately beholden at the micro-level to the malleability of

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<sup>16</sup> 'Prosumers' simultaneously consume and produce commodities.

constructed childhoods (K. Smith, 2012), fluctuations in identified needs (Deleuze & Guattari, 1984; Latour, 2005) and ‘messy’ complexities that complicate the formulation of real experience into policy (Hopkins, 2011). Thus, ignoring children’s technological agency jeopardises macro-systems.



**Key Idea:**  
Schooling expects a lot from families

Inadvertent strain may be placed on family resources by schools’ expectations that parents be involved with their child’s ‘education’ through donations of time and money, and by overseeing academic work outside of school hours. On the other hand, schools risk being impervious to their culpability for the impact they have on families (Flett & Hewitt, 2013). Schools subject parents to assessment of their school-supportiveness, using indicators such as parents’ attendance at meetings, and teachers’ level of pleasure with parents’ involvement in their children’s education. The Longitudinal Study of Australian Children (2011, pp. 21–22) has found that the extent to which parents are pleased or displeased with their child’s progress is only indirectly considered.

Children are required to attend school by statute. Schools colonise children’s discretionary time in setting sporting fixtures and homework, in many cases, on terms that leave the level of obligation ambiguous. Discretionary time is defined as time when children are not at school. The time children spend in School Age Care, which is defined as provision of care, leisure and now education for children aged five to 12 years before and after school and during school vacations (Hurst, 2013), is part of their discretionary time. Out-of-school contexts are settings in which children participate in activity that is structured within specific periods. Councils, youth clubs, sports clubs, the scouting movement and services affiliated with religious bodies offer opportunities

to occupy out-of-school time, and are referenced in this study where their affordances contrast or illuminate time use quality across contexts. School Age Care is not the only care provider, nor is it compulsory, but attendance is increasing among children of employed families. School Age Care is affordable for most employed families, resulting in it having become a major childhood context.

To date, School Age Care has not partnered with schools to resolve the discontinuous agendas of homework obligations as opposed to activity provision in School Age Care that facilitates children's leisure at play. Headline-grabbing claims about the pointlessness of homework relate to its effect on grade averages (Horsley and Walker, in press). This does not explain the mechanisms by which family processes conform to the 95 per cent of 10 to 12-year-olds who reportedly do 'up to 7 hours' of homework per week (Power, 2012). Garbacz and Sheridan (2011) fail to address how families manage the demands of schooling on them, despite documenting families' school involvement. Lange and Jurczyk (2010) offer a compelling perspective on insecurity in families about their children's futures, relativising their involvement in the context of rapid change, competitive cultures and longevity of dependence. Recent findings continue to emphasise the significance of consistent, motivational parenting on early adolescents' aspirations (Cansler, Updegraff & Simpkins, 2012; Falbo & Lein, 2001), making sense of the popularly judged 'helicopter' behaviours, hot-housing and 'hurrying' children (for example Malley-Morrison, 2009; McDonald, Pini, Bailey & Price, 2011). Meanings of 'involvement' are explored in Williams and Sánchez (2012, 2013).

Of key interest in this context is Levey's (2009) qualitative analysis of a group of 'involved' parents whose children attend private tutoring, and another 'involved' group whose children seek candidature in an under-eight's beauty pageant. Levey highlights

not only the stake parents hold in their children's futures, but also patterns of judgement dominated by hegemonic schooling agendas. Patterns like this are illustrated in Brantlinger (1985). Sturges (2012) would agree, judging from his lament that knowledge has become cripplingly compartmentalised and that dominant school agendas act to the detriment of both effective nation-level and micro-level functioning.

Families invest differently in the economic value of their children as 'futures'. They activate those aspects of their social capital they consider most effectively to leverage their human capital (Ren & Hu, 2013). Weiss, Bouffard, Bridglall and Gordon (2009) point out the discrepancy between the pivotal influence of family on children's psychosocial and cognitive growth, and the desultory efforts of schools to inclusively partner with parents' values agendas at the schooling interface. Weiss et al., like Reid (2012),<sup>17</sup> advocate the urgent need for wraparound approaches.

**Key Idea:**

Schools are not delivering on a knowledge economy

Loss and conflict often result from child dropout from school (Campbell, 2001). This can be viewed as an assault by schooling on family wellbeing. Schools use parents selectively, typically for fundraising (Trewin, 1999, p. 107). In determining whether to suspend or expel a child, schools neglect to consider the high chance of family suffering brought by the stigma attached to such action (Ladenson, 2011; Welch & Payne, 2012). Likewise, the resultant supervisory problems for working parents (Branley, 2012) and associated academic decline for children barred from school (Fallon, O'Keeffe, & Sugai, 2012) appear to weigh little in the decision-making process (Specht, 2013).

Children who leave school because they were pushed out are at higher risk (Hemphill et

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<sup>17</sup> Carol Reid is an associate professor in the Centre for Educational Research, University of Western Sydney. She addressed the Education Heresies Colloquia at the University of Sydney in May 2012.

al., 2012) than those who choose to leave school early (Bjerk, 2012; Hemphill, Toumbourou, Herrenkohl, McMorris & Catalano, 2006; Shealy, 2011). Links are suggested between parents labelled ‘uninvolved’ (for example in Australian Institute of Family Studies, 2011, p. 22) and diminished schooling affordances for their children (Freebody et al., 2011, p. 75; Henrich, 2006). However, universal endorsement of faith in the emancipatory, equalising and moral influences of schooling cloud this reality.



**Key Idea:**  
Learning is the outcome of multiple processes

If schooling pathways were to have delivered on promises in claims like those made in the wake of ‘the education revolution’ of the Gillard government (Ministers’ Media Centre: Education Employment and Workplace Relations Portfolio, 2011), there might be no cause for alarm. It may be laudable that the 28 per cent of professionals with a postgraduate degree (ABS, 2010) is expected to grow to 47 per cent by 2020 (Edwards, Radloff & Coates, 2009, pp. 37–46). However, more relevantly, most children will not attain jobs that require a higher degree. In Finland, after middle school, 42 per cent of students choose a vocational pathway based on their understanding that higher education will not be useful for them (Ravitch, 2012b; Sahlberg, 2011). In 2001, 44 per cent of young employed Australians did not require formal qualifications (Athanasou, 2001).



**Key Idea:**  
Children’s rights to education should be extended in a right to have all their learning acknowledged

However, sound literacy and numeracy skills, vocational training, social acumen and networks that connect them to potential employers for a regular income are essential. This is the core mandate of schooling that is not being met.

Reconciliation of the power relations that delineate education boundaries is a daunting challenge. Schooling's accountability resides in quantified evidence of transferred knowledge and basic skills mastery (Raywid, 2005) in a hierarchy of intellectual pursuit over vocational training (Salmela-Aro et al., 2008). The value of generic skills is deceptive. Environments that disadvantage children are characterised by the impoverishment of support for analysing their knowledge in the disciplined ways that result in the necessary identification, coordination, reflection and transformation required to be truly educated (Lee, 2004). Alternative measures of disadvantage explored by Homel, Mavisakalyan, Nguyen and Ryan (2012) led them to conclude that behaviours and aspiration are more salient for school retention rates<sup>18</sup> than is SES. Sheehan's commentary in the press (2012) makes the same argument, using Australian evidence from the National Assessment Program, Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) scores and the Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA).<sup>19</sup> Myers, Jahn, Gailliard and Stoltzfus (2011) identified that dialogic mechanisms, such as absorption of values, influence future science-technology pathways far more than does skilling in basic science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) practices. Transformative knowledge generation is providing our society its existential future (Acs, Braunerhjelm, Audretsch & Carlsson, 2009).

**Key Idea:**

'Non-school' experience contributes to motivation

Schooling is not prosumer-neutral (DiGisi, 2010; Tsoi-A-Fatt & Harris, 2009).

Children's right to education is confused with school attendance (Jensen, 2011).

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<sup>18</sup> **School retention rate:** measure of academic progression of children through the schooling process. The number of children in the grade is the denominator of the rate; the number of children in that grade who finish school is the numerator of the rate.

<sup>19</sup> [www.myschool.edu.au](http://www.myschool.edu.au)



Western childhood is universally ‘educationalised’ (Allen, 2013; Reynaert et al., 2009). Alternatives to a schooling pathway have all but disappeared (Aragamee, Rayagada & Das, 2011), while the illiteracy outcome of this phenomenon soars. In 2012, Australian reading levels fell below those of the year 2000 among 15-year-olds, while school spending increased by almost 50 per cent over the same interval (Grattan Institute, 2012). The dropout rate is not solely attributable to low achievement levels. It is impacted by disaffection with schooling and its culture, along with the funnel effect of schooling’s hegemony on pathway choices (Eckersley, 2008; Hayden & Ward, 1996; Roberts, 2011; Skelton, 2000). Bickerstaff’s (2010) call for research on recovery after dropout references damaged identity formation that is not amenable to ‘self-righting’. Non-school pathways can open a way back towards positive outcomes for children through their engagement with what interests them (Blanton, Menendez, Moorman & Pacifici, 2003).



**Key Idea:**  
Children in School Age Care need more than ‘more of school’

Schooling agendas dominate all of childhood (Cremin et al., 2010). The ambivalence and avoidance of schools to threats outside the schooling conduit should be a core schooling issue (Moss, Bureau, Béliveau, Zdebik & Lépine, 2009). Whatever threats schools do perceive are palliated in a dosage of ‘more of school’. Every childhood context contributes to learner identity formation (Sung & Chang, 2008), such that Verdugo (2011) questions how valid it is for schools to claim credit for academic achievement without referencing the agentic ecology of the child. The converse is that improved reading scores solely attributed to private tutoring will not translate into a reading habit (Little and Hines, 2006).

Shumow, Schmidt and Kackar (2008) found that children read more at home than at school. The in-school Sustained Silent Reading (SSR) intervention, drawing on findings that associate television viewing with lower test scores (Cooper, Valentine, Nye & Lindsay, 1999; McKool, 2007), did not divert children's interest away from television to books (Chua, 2008). This cannot be an issue, incidentally, when most reading is now screen-based (Rennie & Patterson, 2008). Moss and Petrie (2002) agree that children need more than 'more of school' to become learners. Indeed, Western industrial democracies built their competitive advantage on liberal education (Dewey, 1916), yet today, the hegemony of school education allows, for example, commercial interest groups like academic tutoring organisations on the one hand, and 'educational' entertainment providers on the other, to potentially exploit children's discretionary time.

In NSW, government-funded organisations facilitate special needs and learning support. However, participation is limited.<sup>20</sup> The Exodus Foundation's literacy support program is an example (CRED Community Planning, 2006; Johnston, 2010). In the US, No Child Left Behind legislation set in motion a spectacular misapplication of US government resources to academic coaching enterprises to whose services low-performing children were compulsorily assigned (Afterschool Alliance, 2008d; Ascher, 2006; Burch, 2011; James-Burdumy et al., 2005). Industry continues with costly formulaic solutions to academic deficit issues that are in fact qualitative, social and ecology-driven in nature (Afterschool Alliance, 2008d; Australian Tutoring Association, 2011a, 2011b; Bray, 2007; Byun & Park, 2011).

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<sup>20</sup> Learning Links (2012) reported the following participation levels for 2010/2011: 263 children assessed for academic deficits; 28 children counselled by psychologists; 38 participants in group education; 69 participants in group social skills training; 217 children participated in basic numeracy and literacy skills support; 52 children received occupational therapy and 267 children were in speech therapy.

**Key Idea:**

The devaluing of non-school time use has resulted in its exploitation

In New York, coaching discretely expands its market share under the public-awareness radar (Ravitch, 2012a). Koyama (2010) demonstrates how Supplemental Education Services reify failure and use low-paid, unqualified tutors, despite their clientele comprising largely academically challenged children in need of quality professional expertise. The very children targeted in basic-skills academic programs attend them poorly (Shann, 2001), such that efforts to counter ‘learning loss’ in vacation periods (Bassok, French, Fuller & Kagan, 2009; Smink, 2007) tend not to level the socio-education playing field (Viadero, 2007). Further, as Baker (2010) found, the learning enrichment that disadvantaged children obtain in school is obviated in their use of their free time. Baker is scathing of the persisting claims associating national economic competitiveness exclusively with school grades. Children themselves do not link grades to wellbeing (Sirsch, 2003). Rather, in a care setting, children most highly valued psychosocial outcomes of activity engagement (Hall & Dilworth, 2005).

**Key Idea:**

Children themselves do not express a direct relationship between grades and wellbeing

**5.2.3. Field data findings: Hegemonic schooling.**

Only tangential awareness of children’s school lives intrudes into care settings. Parents were not canvassed in the present study. The aspect of formal schooling that children talked about most was academic expectation. Exceptional families engage tutors to intensify their children’s acquisition of transferred knowledge:

On Saturday I have to go to extra school. I’m not sure why. ... I finish at 5.30 (Marina in Focus Group).

Implicit and explicit demands of schooling are felt and interpreted differently among families from different backgrounds:

We already have enough work to cope with

Even if we have tutoring and we still have to do our housework, in the end, for us, for us Chinese people we usually get the smack on the head (Kentledge Focus Group).

Activity prescribed by schools varies. Significantly, homework is not compulsory.

Yet there are subtexts of expectations, expressed in double messages:

*Do you have a lot of homework?* Sometimes, but our teacher always says how lucky we are since we don't have much homework—but we do—so it gets kind of annoying (Palmar Workshop).

The arbitrariness of individual schools' homework policy and its discontinuity across context boundaries was evidenced by the drastic reduction of work after Oliver moved to high school from a school that was more prescriptive:

I have a lot less. I've had about five homeworks set to me in the whole year (Oliver).

Minority and disadvantaged children in the sample most resented the intrusion of schooling into their free time:

I learnt homework is dumb. That's what I learnt (Kentledge Focus Group).

Children do not bring homework to School Age Care, so the staff are unaware of the children's obligations:

[Homework] never comes up. ... by the end of the day half of them have left their homework in the bus (laughs) ... they don't bring that to us or we don't um yea I don't see it (Coordinator Gillian Kent).

Hoyden is the only care provision in the study that routinely meets with school staff to coordinate homework support. As far as School Age Care is concerned, children's

homework is exclusively a parental responsibility. In some professional families, discretionary time is conditional on it being done:

I do my homework as soon as I get home before I'm allowed to do anything else (Max).

Although Marina wishes she could 'have some more fun' (Marina), most affluent children were not averse to completing school-set tasks:

It kind of relaxes me in a way ... When you're at school, you have a time limit to do your work but when you're at home you can do it however you like (Emily).

At Dornet, homework is project-based, open-ended and undertaken by negotiation in groups:

We've only got one project at the moment and no homework so far this term. ... I haven't had homework for two weeks. Same. Yeah, three weeks (Dornet Focus Group).

'Skill-n-drill' dominates homework tasks:

15 minutes ... spelling words and so we have to write those out like five times and then a timetable of our choice and we have to time ourselves (Samantha).

Most children were indifferent to homework:

It doesn't affect my after school life at all. ... I go to school, I get out of school, I go home, watch TV ... that's it (Chris).

Coordinator Gillian Kent's interest in children's schooling obligations is atypical of most School Age Care workers in this study. She sees the need for partnerships with Year 7 staff and the local youth service to achieve optimal support capability for children about to enter high school:

I think that's part of our responsibility of linking in (Coordinator Gillian Kent).

#### 5.2.4. Literature review: The schooling–care boundary.

Skerrett and Bomer (2011) call for investigation of children’s ‘literate power’ outside school, as compared with their ‘in-school disengagement and lack of reward’ (p. 1258). A similar study was conducted by Mahiri and Sablo (1996). Duty-of-care has typically regulated children’s safe play (de Castro, 2011, p. 3), without reference to schooling links:

We offer them lots of opportunities for free play ... so that they feel safe (Coordinator Alice Rintoul).

**Key Idea:**

The mandates of schooling and care are not mutually exclusive

Meanwhile, schools have broadened their academic agenda over past decades to foster children’s psychosocial wellbeing, with targeted intent to support learning. Symonds and Hagell (2011) show how UK schools have changed in this regard. Increased emphasis on pastoral care with shorter hours in the classroom suggests that UK schools now articulate their responsibilities holistically, to include substantial periods caring for children. It is not a new responsibility. Historically, teachers’ first duty has always been enshrined in statutory ‘*loco parentis*’ (Vogt, 2002). In other words, the same chronosystem dynamics have always been understood to serve childhood outcomes across the system boundaries of school, care and home (Dryfoos, 1999, p. 78; Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2011). School Age Care in NSW has been disingenuous in its standpoint asserting an exclusive mandate to facilitate play (Network of Community Activities, 2008, 2011a, 2011b).

**Key Idea:**

School Age Care should partner with schooling to bridge experience and formal education cultures and level the socio-economic playing field

The process of becoming educated is a negotiation among various social environments (Ainley, 2006; Henrich, 2006), through variously framed activity practices that evolve into a personal learning agenda (Henderson et al., 2007; Hogg et al., 1995). Not enough is known in the care sector about this process (Barton et al., 2012; Marriner, 2012). Australian childcare's historically evolved orientation towards relieving material need explains this knowledge gap (Cartmel, 2010, pp. 8–9). However, as the cohort of Australian students who drop out of school annually now exceeds 50,000 (Council of Australian Governments' Reform Council, 2011), the urgency of building an effective learning agenda into School Age Care provisions was never more pointedly illustrated.

The schooling boundary is bridged in The Extended Schools Childcare Pilot Programme, which accessed parents in the UK through their children's schools to offer cross-boundary care (Elniff-Larsen, Dreyling & Williams, 2006, p. 13). Similarly, Swedish School Age Care is staffed by combined teams including a majority of teachers with responsibility for children's care across schooling boundaries. For example, Milstensskolan School in Täby, Sweden<sup>21</sup> integrates its care services with schooling,<sup>22</sup> based on US research demonstrating the association between active time use and cognitive development. There, children use the school gym and computer labs for recreational and creative activity as part of care affordances accessible both during and after school hours. The care workers are in relationship with children and their networks

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<sup>21</sup> <http://www.milstensskolan.se/>

<sup>22</sup> Mandated in *Swedish Education Act of 1995*.

all day. Their professional enhancement through convocation with teachers is notable (Elniff-Larsen et al., 2006, p. 29).

**Key Idea:**

Cross-boundary collaboration between schooling and care makes sense in an ecology framework

Scholarly discourse links social network dysfunction and schooling failure (Campbell, 2001; Cesar & Santos, 2006; Viadero, 2007; Waters, Cross & Shaw, 2010; Zosky & Crawford, 2003). A significant example acknowledging this link may be found in Youth Off the Streets in Sydney. This program harnesses the combined efforts of teachers and social workers in community services to create and strengthen networks around children (Simpson, 2011). Anderson-Butcher (2010; Anderson-Butcher et al., 2010) investigated how schooling objectives are best met through resources empowered in community partnerships. They identified out-of-school services as among the key potential support influences that can help children and schooling cultures to adapt to mutual needs.

**Key Idea:**

Each setting where children work, play and learn should be linked

Lawson and Alameda-Lawson (2012) describe school and social work personnel teaming up with low-SES parent ‘communities of practice’ for learning support. Bush skills learned in group expeditions, such as those provided by Outward Bound, are valued because children are led to challenge their endurance and social acumen at the interface between school and rural life in new geographical and community contexts (Brookes, 2002). Bailey and Thompson (2008), too, talk about the moderating effect of non-school learning on the schooling experience. In some programs, undergraduate students mentor children on core school subjects in out-of-school programs, linking



three contexts: school, post-school learning and community (Baker et al., 2006; Black et al., 2012; Douglas, 1998; Saddler & Staulters, 2008). ‘Connected Science’ links children’s experiences with formal subject matter (Bouillion & Gomez, 2001).

However, these relatively isolated initiatives do not connect with mutually supportive educational traditions. Links need to be strengthened between the purposes of learning and the socio-cultural legacy of places in which learning occurs (Barone, Aguirre-Deandreis & Trickett, 1991). Eccles et al. (1993) considers these oases of opportunity in the ‘wasteland’ of need.

**Key Idea:**

Disadvantaged children stand to benefit most from the integration of schooling and care

Each setting in which children work, play and learn should be linked (Friborg, Barlaug, Martinussen, Rosenvinge & Hjemdal, 2005; Olding, 2012; Payton et al., 2000). A recent example of this principle in practice is the well-reviewed mentor scheme at Rose Bay Secondary College’s homework centre (Arlington, 2012).

Disadvantaged children stand to benefit most from the integration of schooling and care. For example, SES is interactive with other factors for literacy attainment. Mitigation of all these factors would involve giving disadvantaged children access to the necessary positive social and physical environments during and outside school to level their conditions for learning with those of their more advantaged peers. (Buckingham, Wheldall, & Beaman-Wheldall, 2013).

Disadvantaged children aged between nine and 11 years in South Australia were found lacking access to sport and exercise, compared with children from affluent families (Miletic & Carroll, 2013). School Age Care affords these poorer children the space and adult support to exercise and engage in yard games and sports. The AASC

program was founded to promote this engagement. Significantly, too, studies are pointing to high need for appropriate mentoring by adults of children's Internet use. For example, Robinson (2013) found differences in how children discern the value of information they search for online. Many poorer children have access to the Internet, but all children need skilling to be engaged evaluators of the material they encounter. School Age Care is well placed to convocate on appropriately mentored Internet activity with schools, and especially with disadvantaged families whose social and learner capital may be limited.

### **5.2.5. Field data findings: The schooling–care boundary.**

Schooling has been analogous to a child workplace in the School Age Care lexicon. The associations made between schooling, discipline, prescription and compulsion, and their impacts on children, are difficult to dispel when School Age Care and schools do not form meaningful child-centred partnerships that would readily demystify what actually takes place in both sectors. School Age Care benchmarks idealise childhoods, as they are refracted through a parental nostalgic lens, namely:

That their time was spent doing childlike things (Coordinator Alice Rintoul).

and not

Something more serious and scholastic in nature (Coordinator Alice Rintoul).



#### **Key Idea:**

School Age Care services should not resile from schooling objectives, which share caring interests in children's positive time use choices

The successful high school student is not confined in a scholastic regimen. Rather, he or she exercises agency, develops and pursues interests, manages competing attractions and obligations, and finds his or her way between preference and

responsibility (see Figures 5.4 and 5.5). Yet, School Age Care workers in the field fail to see opportunity in convocation with schools, preferring to distinguish their role:

A lot of kids they've had their fill of structure throughout the day so we offer them lots of opportunities for free play (Coordinator Alice Rintoul).

The distinction is invalid. Play infuses schooling. School and care settings are both socialisation spaces

The distinction is invalid. Play infuses schooling. School and care settings are both socialisation spaces, and children do not necessarily distinguish the functions of the two settings. Both are for learning and socialisation:

The [morning school] bell rings and ... it's just sort of did you watch this on TV last night and blah, blah (Samantha).

Similarly, School Age Care program implementation depends on the skills children hone in classrooms, like writing:

T-U-E-S-D-A-Y. Oh, right, it was meant to be Thursday, but—how do you spell Thursday? How much days are there? How do you spell Tuesday? Snorkelling S-N-O ... Oh I see what you're doing ... K-E ... What is it? S-N-O-R-K-E-L-I-N-G. How do you spell snorkelling? That's such a good idea. S-N-O-R-K-E-L-I-N-G. ... How do you spell scared? S-C-A-R-E-D (Kentledge Workshop at the Beach).

However, Coordinator Alice Rintoul brushes children's school learning aside in a comment on liaising with the co-locating school:

I'd be interested more in behavioural challenges ... we don't get that information (Coordinator Alice Rintoul).

It is of concern that School Age Care services do not know, for example, where participants will go after the Year 6 summer holidays:

I don't know to what extent that he [Principal] would even know where people are going. Like I don't know if that's something he [Principal] enquires about. ... it's certainly not something that comes up (Coordinator Alice Rintoul).

It is important they do know. High schools are different from each other, conforming to different cultural norms and traditions, most easily observable in distinctions made by private high schools of their affordances.<sup>23</sup> All schools are integrative with their sources of income, neighbourhoods, community perceptions of them and geographical configurations. School Age Care services can support children approaching high school in coming to terms with the adaptive changes they will face, and they should offer children opportunities to engage with caring educators on these changes after school transition.

The three provisions in receipt of funding to target risk threat through high school transition (Hoyden, Kentledge, Palmar) perceive the contiguities of care and education differently. School Age Care is under-resourced. There is an expectation that schools liaise. The two services with a high proportion of Indigenous children on their books (Kentledge and Hoyden) defy this tendency by partnering on learning at different professional levels with school personnel. However, despite the funding it received specifically to support high school transition, Palmar is isolated from schools:

It's very difficult to contact with them they seem to be very busy ... it's kind of difficult to get to talk to them ... it is very difficult to engage teachers or mainstream educators into afterschool activities. I think they just don't want to know about it (Coordinator Helen Marr).

Findings that NSW School Age Care services were of 'satisfactory or higher' quality in late 2010 (NSW Commission for Children and Young People and UNSW

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<sup>23</sup> See for example <http://www.tsc.nsw.edu.au/>

Social Policy Research Centre, 2011a) demonstrate the gulf between child needs and the then policy makers. National Quality Framework terminology alone suffices to signal a shift to cross-context 'education and care services' and 'educational and developmental outcomes' (ACECQA, 2011, p. 3). The new policy has serious intent, backed by legislation (Education and Care Services National Law Act, 2010).

At Dornet and Asya, children bring their schooling with them to the service in the form of test anxiety or piles of books or homework:

I do my homework, most of the time, just to kind of get it out of the way so I can do more stuff. Then maybe I'm preparing for my trumpet tutor, go through my music (Emily).

Staff at these sites view children's schooling activity as something to be tolerated, provided it does not involve them. This extends to reluctance to facilitate a study space:

This particular service is child focused ... We stick mostly to the recreational as opposed to educational (Coordinator Alice Rintoul).

#### **5.2.6. Literature review: The mediation role of School Age care.**

Children form identities collaboratively from the meanings they invest in social settings (Silseth & Arnseth, 2011) at the fluctuating boundary between social and learner identity, which intersects across the community, school and home contexts (Arnot & Reay, 2007). School Age Care is an important component (Chen & Shen, 2004) of the ecological resources that contribute to children's wellbeing (Mueller et al., 2011). The Smith Family uses cross-sector collaboration to mentor low-SES students in Learning Clubs (Field, 2012).

**Key Idea:**

School Age Care is powerfully situated to mediate school, home and community processes

School Age Care is in a position to exert like influence on children's learner identity formation (Prout, 2005; Seligson & MacPhee, 2004). Miller (2012) exemplifies a School Age Care program building future narratives with children in supportive networking activity. However, this potential is thwarted in large part by ambivalence towards the historically accidental dichotomised relationship between schooling and care.

From the time of early settlement, the poor status of the care sector has led to distorted conceptualisations of learning and has constrained care's legitimised geographies. The School Age Care agenda that held currency until 2012 distorted objectives informing regulation, policy and practice, elevating 'play' to the status of a philosophy. This has also averted unrealistic demands on School Age Care's under-resourced capacities, such as families' requests for schooling support, especially homework.

Theoretical containment of childhood within the bounds of play is now shifting, as policy implemented in January 2012 (DEEWR, 2011) situates learning at the centre of the School Age Care mandate, with play appropriately reoriented in a critical typology frame of facilitated time use.

**Key Idea:**

Current NSW School Age Care practice is incompatible with the centrality of agency support across contexts in an ecology paradigm

### **5.2.7. Field data findings: The mediation role of School Age care.**

Children want School Age Care to support their transition:

when I'm in high school so I won't be able [have access] to come here—I would still come here because I would just help out and play (Dornet Focus Group).

Teachers cross the school boundary informally when they moonlight as tutors in the lucrative shadow education industry that engages children's discretionary time (Byun & Park, 2011; Davies, 2004; Dierkes, 2010; Watson, 2008). No instance of a practising teacher in a NSW school also working in School Age Care was reported during the fieldwork for this study, perhaps because teachers can at least double their school salaries in academic coaching; a sum unattainable if working in School Age Care. However, Coordinators and their staff commented anecdotally that they value staff with teaching backgrounds the most.

Asya's isolation leaves the service outside the cross-context knowledge 'loop', in ignorance of children's broader networks and the high schools they will attend. If agentic support were central to School Age Care, then core business would involve networking to know the NSW school system and its personnel. Additionally, it would be important to know what happens to children who are eligible for selective schools, are enrolled in private schools, are awarded scholarships and, not least, are left behind to use the default local public school:

They will lose some kids to specialised schools. Not so much private as the—what are they called? The stream schools? Opportunity classes (Coordinator Alice Rintoul).

Turing leadership knows where the local non-school care and recreation provisions that children use are located, because the school and neighbourhood communities largely overlap to occupy the same geographies. There is no School Age Care service; it was closed. A local homework support service caters for children aged six and seven,

and employs a single mentor. Discretionary time-use options are available at sports facilities and clubs like Little Athletics. The only out-of-school program mediated by Turing is AASC, which operates on school grounds once or twice a week.

Coordinator Helen Marr considers that the Palmar service can fill ‘grey holes’, which in her view schools deny are there. However, she does not clarify how such mediation is managed. Disadvantaged children can have guitar lessons for \$10 an hour. It is hoped those who do will be more likely to access other programs at Palmar (Coordinator Helen Marr), but there is no procedure for understanding how music skills training can mediate the schooling boundary.

#### **5.2.8. Literature review: The School Age care agenda.**

‘Adult interpretational priority’ (Johansson, 2011, p. 2) as the key threat to agency accords with the findings of Graham and Fitzgerald (2010), who link children’s participation in activity with dialogic tension in adult–child power processes. Inclusion, the indicator of respect for children, highlights this tension (S. Smith, 2011, p. 6). On the one hand, childcare services are business enterprises attracting clientele. On the other, School Age Care policy upholds the right of children to set their own agenda.

Insight into the priorities of services is further illuminated in staff selection criteria. In 2002, staff qualifications became an issue receiving concerted government attention. Now, less than half of the approximately 15,000 School Age Care workers in Australia (representing 11.7 per cent of all childcare workers) have at least a certificate-level attainment (DEEWR, 2012a; McNamara & Cassells, 2010), and only 27 per cent of all staff have Certificate III or Certificate IV status. Thirty per cent have less than a year’s experience (McNamara & Cassells, 2010).

Disadvantaged children lack access because School Age Care is tied to community affordances. This includes infrastructure and the SES demographic of its clientele. The



flow-on effects affect the availability of volunteer workers, the viability of private services and tuition in the arts, sponsored clubs, skills-supportive sport programs and venues, and schools. These all need sufficient funding to enable equalisation of access. Poor neighbourhoods can offer safety and a degree of social mobility (Edling & Rydgren, 2012) through School Age Care participation in this context. Bennett, Lutz and Jayaram (2012, p. 21) point to research that shows preadolescents who participate in out-of-school activities are a third more likely to pursue extracurricular interests well into high school, where continuities across sectors are factors for resilience (Sykes & Musterd, 2011).

In an astounding indictment of Australian School Age Care, Cassells and Miranti (2012) found that only 3 per cent of participants are disadvantaged (Horin, 2012; Karvelas, 2012). Affluent children may be presumed scaffolded to a degree by family processes and afforded the socio-cultural capital (Jæger, 2011) of their networks and their schools' prosumer standing, all of which advantage their employment prospects (Cavanagh & Fomby, 2012). Poor children are disadvantaged by contradictory systemic change, like increasingly massive e-network affordances and a shift to individualism in the welfare sector (Youniss, Gillingham, Nowatzki & Roche, 2002). Disintegration of geographical and learning boundaries on the one hand confronts constraining change in macro-level policy on the other (Bahr, 2006; Boonaert & Vettenburg, 2011, p. 55). There is increasingly less time for 'natural' play (Evans, 2000a, 2000b), while at the same time peer socialisation online is exponentially broadening children's networked empowerment (Cobb-Moore, Danby & Farrell, 2009; Evaldsson & Corsaro, 1998). These changes should be contextualised in meaningful time use across socio-economic groups, as they are for example in Kafai and Peppler (2011).

As mothers of preadolescents increase their workforce commitments, the demand for School Age Care places must presumably exceed that for Early Childcare. However, Australian School Age Care falls short by not attracting preadolescents. Only 9 per cent of School Age Care participants are between nine and 12 years old (ABS, 2009). This imbalance has not yet been called to account, despite considerable taxpayer subsidy of this default care option for all children up to the end of Year 6.

In Bronfenbrenner's contextual models (for example, 1994), risk and protective factors are situated in fluctuating relationship to outcomes. Polatnick (2002) uses data of employed parents and their preadolescent children to report on what happens when preadolescents stop attending care services. Ten and 11-year-old Californian children reportedly slipped into self-care as families were forced to arrange fragmented and costly provisions for them after school. Significantly, communication among parents and various caregivers became desultory, with children responding by demanding 'autonomy'. In NSW too, there is ample evidence of similarly impoverished provision; for example, in Malcolm's (2008) disturbing account of care issues for preadolescents in Sydney's inner west. Preadolescent access to structured services is unavailable, unaffordable or age/ability inappropriate (Breunig, Gong & King, 2010). Parental anxiety and internal conflict about the social and behavioural impact of service deficits on their children require a School Age Care response in provision for working families. A single risk indicator, that 25 per cent of Afro-American preadolescents are 'ready for sex' (Miller et al., 2012), strikingly illustrates the over-simplification in the 'innocent childhood' focus on play that, until recently, has dominated planning in School Age Care in NSW.

**Key Idea:**

Preadolescents desert School Age Care. Older children are not appropriately served by currently available services of School Age Care.

Older children desert School Age Care as their satiety in an inappropriately education- and technology-averse framework reaches its zenith (Australian Institute of Family Studies, 2011, pp. 26–29), superseded in children’s interests through greater investment of time in socialisation, technology use and abstract ideation. Typically, to date, five to 12-year-olds are occupied in play as a single group, in single-purpose accommodation in School Age Care (Allison, 2007). Discussion is growing about the need for age-appropriate grouping in NSW School Age Care (Brannelly & Miller, 2009). Some attention is being paid to the preferences of older children in professional support activity offered by the peak representative body for School Age Care (Network of Community Activities, 2011b).

**5.2.9. Field data findings: The school age care agenda.**

In NSW, the end of Grade 6 is the cut-off point for access to School Age Care (Brown, 2005; NSW Government, 2009; Perry et al., 2007; Woollahra, Council & Warner, 2008). Of the 160 daily users at Asya in 2011, only a few were 12 years old. At Dornet, there were only 15 upper primary children out of 190 participants. This is typical of School Age Care participation in NSW (Brannelly & Miller, 2009; City of Sydney, 2008). Most of the 9 per cent of the 253,000 School Age Care participants in Australia (ABS, 2009) leave their services from Term 3. Most children look after themselves just before they enter high school.

Anecdotal comments by staff on the absence of 12-year-olds in these public-access services expressly designated for their use range from the irrelevance of the services to

their needs, to the observation that older children must have something socially wrong with them if they use School Age Care.<sup>24</sup>

Some services are trialling differentiated preadolescent programming. Asya is developing a differentiated program for preadolescents, which is now in its third year. Of the programs observed in this study, three—at the Palmar, Kentledge and Hoyden sites—were funded in the period of this study by Better Futures in response to the paucity of support available to children aged nine to 13 years.

At Kentledge, children related positively to innovative activity pitched to their needs and interests. However, generally, services were unclear about where they were situated in preadolescents' social ecologies:

*What are older children doing when they are not at [your provision]?* Honestly I'm not too sure (Coordinator Alex McKean).

There's no children's services like this kind of format. Let's say like a drop-in centre for kids, there's not much of that. I guess you have the after school care and that's it (Coordinator Helen Marr).

More affluent children access various enrichment activities through local services or private providers. Children play tennis, swim, join an athletics club or learn an instrument:

I do tennis, ballet ... Well, we used to go do Little Athletics on Fridays, so ... I actually do an instrument—I play an instrument and I actually go to my tutor on Tuesday ... I have a trumpet tutor ... I have a flute tutor ... I have a clarinet tutor (Asya Focus Group).

I go to dancing classes and acrobatic classes (Marina).

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<sup>24</sup> Hamilton, personal communication, 2010.

We just sort of lounge around and do relaxing things. Then on Monday we have to go to piano ... On Wednesday we've got singing (Samantha).

Some children care for themselves whenever they are not at school:

If I were to go home on a regular day, I'd go home, have a bit of time to myself, probably go outside and pat my dog and just sit next to her and jump on my trampoline, maybe play a couple of games on the computer (Max).

Disadvantaged children from Turing are outside a net of care after school:

They just watch telly and ride their bikes without their helmets on... There's a couple of very free roamers ... They walk a long way, yes. Some parents aren't particularly vigilant (Principal Tara Ling).

Communal play across age groups in local public space at Hoyden is popular with neighbourhood children. Most are disadvantaged. In an affluent community provision, by comparison:

The younger ones give the older ones grief. They don't want to have anything to do with them (Coordinator Donna Rein).

For some well-off preadolescents, School Age Care is only conditionally worthwhile:

If they've got to stay there 'til like 5.30 or something, then I wouldn't make them go (Dornet Focus Group).

Palmar, Kentledge and Hoyden understand 'transition' as habituation to future use of local and co-located youth services. None mentioned schooling transition as their critical focus. Poor, if any, liaison with high schools makes sense to them. For example, at Palmar:

the youth service means 11–19. The kids in that age group ... start coming to the youth centre ... Just hanging out yea ... or drop in (Coordinator Helen Marr).

Coordinator Helen Marr looked for authenticity, enthusiasm, passion and commitment in staff. Most employees are referred through the site's network. Teacher trainees are sought after (Coordinator Donna Rein), but once they are employed, they can neither attend to children's education nor liaise with the co-locating school. Dornet needs to focus on financial viability, like all privately operated services. Network of Community Activities, the peak NSW representative body for School Age Care, did not have the statistics in March 2012 on different kinds of provisions. Figures from 2006 are available (McNamara & Cassells, 2010), as follows: Community managed 73.2 per cent; Government managed 8.76 per cent; Non-Government managed, corporation 3.56 per cent; Non-Government managed, not a corporation 4.95 per cent; Private for profit, corporation 3.59 per cent; Private for profit, not a corporation 4.52 per cent; Other, corporation 0.68 per cent; Other, not a corporation 0.66 per cent. Interestingly, the field data reflects that families prefer community-based services embedded in neighbourhood systems in favour of private provisions, and recent comparative research shows that the for-profit ethos in care initiatives is moderated in social justice debate across liberal democracies like Australia (Brennan, Cass, Himmelweit, & Szebehely, 2012; Mahon, Anttonen, Bergqvist, Brennan, & Hobson, 2012). This signals that wraparound program planning in partnership with home, school and community would be well received:

There's probably been a bit of a pull back on ... the private run ones. I think people tend to go with them as a last resort if they can't get the parents to commit to being on an association. Yeah they tend to be more expensive—Camp Australia for example is \$20 a day. You lose control of it basically. Parents don't have the input they would have ... They run all the administration stuff so it tends to be a lot of things get hoisted upon on you that you don't have control over. They pay a higher rent in the schools so [unclear] fees being higher. The ratios tend to be different so they will run one staff program for 15 kids which most private centres wouldn't do. It just means that there's

only one staff on site and they ... No they get away with it by having a call back to base kind of thing if they need support ... but that's how they keep the profit margin. So I think there's a bit of a pull back on that sort of stuff (Coordinator Donna Rein).

**Key Idea:**

School Age Care planning is not based on facilitating agency

For their part, services in receipt of transition support in particular were keen to increase attendance, but could not see a connection between participation and the quality of planning. They invested in hiring 'cool' staff to attract children. At Palmar, for example, 'Parcour' coaches were valued for their ghetto youth culture image. However, the adult-child relationship work was not reciprocal:

At 5.30 it was time for parcour. There were three adults in charge, of whom one was Josh ... 'and the kids just adore him like a god' according to Coordinator Helen Marr (Coordinator Helen Marr).

The two leaders repeated several times that Parcour's motto is you can do anything you want to do. ... Once the warm-up was over they took a jog out of the pocket-park next to Palmar. Some kids were saying, can we go to the beach? Can we do parcour at the beach? No, not the beach mate, replied the god. But we haven't done the beach for ages. No, we won't do the beach right yet son, not any time soon either trust me (Palmar Field Notes).

Leadership experience is typically facilitated in schools, and at Turing, Year 5 children are tagged to pre-schoolers who they will mentor in a Seniors-to-Kindergarten relationship. Peer support is conducted by preadolescents, each running their own group for one school term. Every child at Turing is involved in peer support as a leader and/or group participant. A 'school executive' runs the assemblies, acknowledges Country and leads special events (Principal Tara Ling Interview summary). At Asya, older children's

leadership and peer support skills are rarely acknowledged, unless for behaviour management when challenging preadolescents are placed among a younger cohort for the afternoon, or more often, according to the scale of their misdemeanours. This practice may have a default impact on according agency to these selected individuals, who were observed leading activities and teaching games to younger children.

Helpfulness was rewarded with an invitation to do some filing in the office:

I tend to employ them with administrative duties because they enjoy them and I like them doing it (Coordinator Alice Rintoul).

Absent a coherent and coordinated leadership program, instances of leadership at Asya are short-lived:

Year 5 boys often will get a game of soccer which essentially they're leading. ... I might say to one of the older kids, do you want to run a game? (Coordinator Alice Rintoul).

In practice, the older children took over from and excluded younger children from games, especially basketball and soccer.

From its 'deficit' perspective, Hoyden's practices afford respite in a disadvantaged community, distinguished by youth homelessness, crime and unemployment:

A lot of what we do is provide a service for them to be anywhere but off [sic] the street (Coordinator Alex McKean).

Plans for more preadolescent participation at Hoyden were in their initial stages of discussion during the fieldwork phase of this study. Partnering with children and other services might offer a way forward from Hoyden's tentative position; however, at the time of writing, the provision is not ready to make this leap:

Next year we're looking at providing music programs, art programs and multimedia programs especially for those older children in a bid to keep them here ... I'm just trying to get them into the mindset that they got to come and but once I get that next year I'd



like to sort of branch out and the children can vote for what they want (Coordinator Alex McKean).

At Dornet, the objective is not to strengthen agency, but to please and placate older children with privileges that facilitate exclusion. The service acquiesces to majority pressures against engagement in structured activity. Its retreat into preoccupation with duty-of-care and safety compliance is escapist. Coordinator Donna Rein lacks strategies to bridge the difference between teaming up with children and leaving them alone so that they do not cause disruption. Dornet may also not be aware that the language of adult control, giving permission, might lie at the core of the communication impasse with older children:

They are allowed to sit separately from everyone else to eat. They can have their own place. On a Thursday they get to go to 711. They buy something. We walk them up there to do that. With their own money, yes. They'll get back. They listen to their iPods and things like that. Just hang out ... They don't tend to participate in the activities ... so they'll corner off areas of the room and then that's it. No one else is allowed to go to that corner of the room (Coordinator Donna Rein).

#### **5.2.10. Literature review: More than 'more of school'.**

School Age Care's potential as a powerful moderator in a system framework depends on facilitating the pursuit of children's interests. This is its pivotal role. In a museum project, basic skills were found supported in incidental ways through children's enthusiasms (Eakle, 2009). The effectiveness of partnered projects lies in the broad choice afforded by holistic, expanded learning opportunities in numerous contexts (Gewertz, 2008). The '100 Mile Radius' Manitoba project is an example of this in that it responds to complex contemporary learning needs through community interface (Giesbrecht, 2008). Smith (2002) pointed out that learners' needs are moderated through

the Internet. Schools have long valued creativity as capital for learning and citizenship (Anderson & Gibson, 2004; Holden, 2002; Jakobson & Wickman, 2008; Walsh, 2008), ranging from performance-based creative expression (Appleby, 2002) to technology projects (Betts, 2006). In Victoria, individual music lessons have been subsidised by the government since 1965 (Lierse, 2006). In addition, in out-of-school settings, programs integrating arts as ‘authentic’ embodied experience and playful cultural enrichment have long been positively evaluated (Monroe, 1995). Associations are routinely found between arts training and academic skill (Respress & Lutfi, 2006; Ritchie, Rigano & Duane, 2008; Sanford & Madill, 2007); for example, stories told in a citizenship program were linked to literacy improvements (Tannenbaum & Brown-Welty, 2007). Most recently, Bungay and Vella-Burrows (2013) found associations between creative arts and physical health and wellbeing. The potential of cross-context partnership with schools and other stakeholders is therefore considerable (Bloustien & Peters, 2003; Deasy, 2008; Densel, 2005; Ewing, 2010; Gattenhof, 2006; Gibson & Ewing, 2011; Haynes, 2004; Hopkins, 2011; James Irvine Foundation, Museum Management Consultants Inc & Williams Group, 2005; Offord, Lipman & Duku, 1998).

**Key Idea:**

School Age Care will be more effective once it can partner meaningfully with other systems to benefit childhood

There are ample exemplars of cross-context partnership with schools and other stakeholders. Drury (2006) identifies 10 principles for successful out-of-school arts programming gleaned from operating ‘The Ark’ in Ireland. Children are attracted to creative expression and the socialisation effects of the products themselves that are disseminated, displayed and performed in communities (Bitz, 2004a, 2004b; Dick,

2011; Fradella, 2005; Sydney Story Factory, 2012). A New Zealand study found associations between the enriched perceptiveness of preadolescents who engaged in arts activity, and the improved quality of their productivity (Smith & Smith, 2008). Art has ‘birthright’ status (Tannenbaum, 2008). In South Australia, a theatre ‘hub’ created in a primary school is accessed by the community, and performances extend to the Adelaide Festival (McDonald, 2006). A ‘peace’ project is another example (Taylor, 2005). The positive impacts of the arts on learning commends including them in programming in care settings (Deasy, 2008).

### **5.2.11. Field data findings: More than ‘more of school’.**

School Age Care is committed to offering activity to children based on their interests. Typically, ‘interest’ is assessed from a head count of participants. Knowing the mechanisms that make activity interesting is more useful. At Asya, programming was being planned through staffroom chat:

When they’re looking at what they’re going to do for the week, they’ll remember conversations that they had and call to them and say, I was talking to this child and they want to run an activity (Coordinator Alice Rintoul).



**Key Idea:**  
Referencing children’s interests is most helpful in activity program planning

Adult mentors can guide children to identify activity that supports interests. For example, in the field, much nominated preference was beyond School Age Care resources. Some was fanciful. Internet access and arts activity, on the other hand, are likely to be affordable:

Skateboarding. Rock climbing. Horse riding. Oh, netball and ... Oh and skiing ... Synchronised swimming ... a rock climbing centre ... a skate ramp (Dornet Focus Group).

I would like to hip hop. Dancing ... netball and dancing ... get a remote control car  
(Turing Focus Group).

Samantha reflects her interests in the broader perspective of a future narrative:

It would be really interesting to have a varied activity based life ... imagine coming to a  
centre every day where they have all that variety kind of packed in (Samantha).

At Hoyden, children favoured an emphasis on sport so that they could 'run out of all  
that naughty energy inside them' (Hoyden Focus Group). Another way of exploring  
where children's interests lie might be to ask them about their career aspirations:

I want to become a teacher ... an astronomer and maybe discover another planet ... a  
scientist or find out like something new ... to become a photographer (Asya Focus  
Group).

This can be a way of helping children to think through their activity choices:

I've always wondered about that. When I was little I used to think: I'm going to be an  
astronaut or something. But now I realise, no of course not, that's ridiculous. Now I  
don't really know what I'm going to be. Something to do with art, well the creative art  
probably (Emily).

It can also provide stimulus for exploring community processes in groups:

*Why does being a policeman appeal to you?* So I can arrest people, and I can shoot  
someone. *No you can't.* I can if I'm in a situation (Turing Focus Group).

Likewise, a child's sense of fun can suggest ways to plan creative activity such as  
writing, play making and caricature:

SpongeBob is just so funny and I love iCarly and Drake and Josh (Melody).

### 5.2.12. Literature review: The status of School Age Care.

**Key Idea:**

The status of School Age Care is undervalued

School Age Care educators are paid poorly. At the time of fieldwork, the standard hourly rate of pay for non-executive staff was \$18, which is below what most potential employees could earn elsewhere. This has resulted in community perceptions that the sector is of less value than schooling, for example. The low status of School Age Care compared with schooling may also in part be due to its poor resourcing. Further, confusion about industrial and professional issues in the work conditions of School Age Care personnel undermines its standing (Lyons, 2003, 2012). Reluctance to partner across sectors seems inevitable in this light. Despite their differences with Australian conditions, it is worthwhile considering how US, public–private partnerships configured in region-wide School Age Care networks are able to make decisions protective of investment in the sector (McCombs, Kirby & Cordes, 2012).

In NSW, not only is partnering rare, but co-locating School Age Care services may be generalised as insufficiently embedded in the school to articulate the added value these services confer on the community as a whole. At Dornet, the school cited statutory compliance to justify withholding lists of Dornet clients and their class locations. As it is mandatory for Kindergarten children to be accompanied by care staff from school to care, care workers had to search the grounds to find children in unpredictable locations. Failure of care workers to locate children immediately constitutes an ‘incident’ reportable to ACECQA ([www.acecqa.gov.au](http://www.acecqa.gov.au)) on par in seriousness with child abduction. This illustrates the extreme of dysfunction resultant from the failure of

schools to convocate with School Age Care. In 2011, Dornet was given class lists. Yet, even so:

If the child is sick or a parent is sick ... They don't have to say anything and they never really have (Coordinator Donna Rein).

Inadequate infrastructure and resources plague the sector. Care staffing is highly gendered, casualised and poorly paid, resulting in low job satisfaction (McNamara & Cassells, 2010). Similar conditions exist in the UK (Cameron, Mooney & Moss, 2002; Elniff-Larsen et al., 2006, pp. 42–43). Even in the US, where funding has been sustained, government-sponsored and massive, the challenge of meeting the needs of school-age children is great (Gill, 2012). Generally, staff are not professionally equipped to meet children's needs.

Many structured activity programs for children are fragmented. They are outsourced provisions scheduled for part of after-school sessions once a week or during vacation, and may continue for a limited period of weeks, with unstable attendance levels and uneven, small-scale preparation of content. Green's (2000) narrative description of what happened when nine to 13-year-olds categorised as 'at risk' signed up for a mentored Summer Community Dance project is salient. Attendance was sporadic and the relationships with the adult mentors and teachers deteriorated into power struggles. The program was typical of short-term projects in its poor quality planning and uncertain objectives, which Jolivette, McDaniel, Sprague, Swain-Bradway and Ennis (2012) seek to address through standardised decision making in alternative education settings.

Generously funded on a large scale by the Federal Government, the AASC program is a prominent example of an outsourced after-school program.<sup>25</sup> Problems engaging children for as little as an hour are attributed by Burke (2012) to failings of management

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<sup>25</sup> <http://www.ausport.gov.au/participating/aasc>

in the care community. The real cause may be less definitive, but the time NSW children spent exercising fell in the six years to 2011 (Robothan, 2011). High turnover of the AASC workforce is a continuous barrier for sustaining children's interest, especially from the intergenerational perspective of this study. The philosophy of free choice in a 'play' framework in School Age Care is typically interpreted *in situ* as dichotomous from the ideologies in sportsmanship, taken for granted in school sport as fundamental for participation. The AASC's providers found the structured school environment more amenable to successful program delivery because they can leverage those ideologies in a schooling frame. They have thus started transferring their partnering from School Age Care to schools (AASC, 2010; Burke, 2012). Moodie, Carter, Swinburn and Haby (2010) found that government expenditure on AASC failed to return adequate value, although the evaluation measures and methods used were acknowledged as highly contestable.

A 12-week YMCA physical activity program reported 7–28 per cent of preadolescents exercising more, and commended the program for out-of-school care (Annesi, 2006). However, its measures of motivation, capability and achievement indicators were invalid because of their instability across fragmented time use. Despite this, reports using these flawed measures are the basis for program funding.

Arts programs, too, are seldom well conceived. Petchauer (2011) argues that the increasingly common introduction of hip hop dance programs into youth development services (Benevolent Society, 2009) actually stands in the way of literacy development, notwithstanding its usefulness in raising children's awareness of social justice issues (Alim, 2011; Harkness, 2011; Callahan & Grantham, 2012; Mantie, 2008; Mitchell, 2003). It is also difficult to reliably ascertain the impact of dancing on 'community capacity-building' (Fensham & Gardner, 2005), to prove that targeting disadvantaged

youth with Shakespeare actually makes a difference (Ingram & Stanley, 2003) or to demonstrate to funding bodies the value of artist placements in schools when teachers and artists differently understand art ‘education’ (Haynes, 2004). The annual Rock Eisteddfod Challenge (2011), endorsed by the NSW Department of Education, also has critics of its values and exposure to trade-offs in its populist orientation (Green, 2003). Its funding is under threat.

Hunt (2009) advocates that arts program staff should understand the contexts to which they bring their work. They should engage in professional development to achieve sound mentor-teaching skills and attitudes, like commitment. Mentoring is ineffective where adults lack skill and long-term commitment (Wood & Mayo-Wilson, 2012). In a music project for a mixed-ethnic group of disadvantaged children, pre-service teachers developed their practices in collaboration with a university and a youth organisation (Ward-Steinman & Madura, 2006). ‘Out-of-school intermediaries’ in the US are modelling citywide and regional School Age Care partnering strategies drawing funding streams, to positive review (Donner, 2012; Wimer & Harris, 2012). This could be emulated in the Australian context.



**Key Idea:**  
School Age Care lacks the resources to fulfill its role

Staff qualifications, longevity of experience and child-to-staff ratios are the most important factors determining School Age Care quality. In Hong Kong, Shanghai and Korea, for example, school retention rates are high, commensurate with increasing professional capacities of staff for which they are rewarded, supported and mentored (Grattan Institute, 2012; Jensen, Hunter, Sonnemann & Burns, 2012; The Australian, 2012). Even the Review of Funding for Schooling Panel (Ferrari, 2012; Gonski &



Panel, 2012) predicated its recommendations on the key factor of teacher effectiveness (Editor, 2012; Lebihan, 2012).

Linking education and care (Hawker-Britton, 2009) is challenging when professional pathways do not cross these sectors. A volunteer care worker-mentor scheme, accessible through the Network of Community Activities, is a token service engaging less than a dozen personnel, with mentors not sourced from education (Network of Community Services, 2011c). There is no remunerative parity between teaching and caring. Full-time childcare workers earn 25 per cent less than do full-time employees across all industries (ABS, 2011b). Low rates of unionisation, high staff turnover rates and unsatisfactory career structures within School Age Care further reflect poor conditions. While workers may value their roles, community perceptions underrate them (Meagher, 2007; Shpancer et al., 2008).

### **5.2.13. Field data findings: The status of School Age Care.**

The low status of School Age Care, reflected in its poor resources, impacts the work educators are able to do. It is unexceptional to be told:

it was a pity because it was actually working really well when we run out of funds  
(Coordinator Helen Marr).

Low status is also conferred in lack of ownership of equipment and poor maintenance. At Palmar, a broad range of hardware and recreational equipment is shared with the youth service and the Department of Education's Year 9 special support program and its staff. During the fieldwork phase for this study, few computers were working.

Staffing in auspiced services is depleted, conveying disrespect for the time and expertise required of professionals. Coordinator Helen Marr's workload is also punishing.

Different schedules for the days see [the 9–14s funded program] go 3.30 to 5.30. It's only for 9–14s so after that it's closed. Wednesdays see 3.30 to 5.30 is 9 to 14s from 5.30 to 9 we have parcour. Thursdays we do drop in at the junction too and we do outreach as well. We go in the streets and talk about [Palmar youth service] and we do sexual health and AOD workshops. Normally in the bus interchange ... at the beach and the skate park ... with Bob, [Palmar suburb] Outreach Project, Sue—you might know her? Then hip hop lessons Fridays 6 to 7.30 and Fridays stay open to 8 and Saturdays from 2 to 7 (Coordinator Helen Marr).

At Turing, failure to respect the value that sport is adding to children through AASC is demonstrated in funds being allowed to run out:

The money has disappeared to a certain extent ... we've got a special sports shed which is just for the Active After-School Sports Program. The only trouble we have is getting volunteers and I'm not inclined to ask my staff ... it is supposed to be a community initiative (Principal Tara Ling).

When School Age Care accreditation was mandated in 2008, Coordinators' jobs required skilling and a heavier workload, unacknowledged remuneratively (Coordinator Alice Rintoul). Greater respect and resources are due to School Age Care now that reporting is more complex and has moved online. It requires staff to develop sophisticated management skills. Support for these needs was not being provided at the time of this research:

Maybe more than 50 per cent of [School Age Care] staff don't have a qualification. Coordinators would be among those too ... The new quality assurance stuff they're doing is a combination of licensing and quality assurance. ... they're very aware that [School Age Care] is under-funded compared to childcare ... and they're working with different spaces and that they're sort of second class citizens ... the parents are getting funded but the sector's not being funded ... We're one of the few centres I know that

have full-time staff, three normally. But most people have one full time (Coordinator Donna Rein).

The Palmar service has reason for the limitations of its affordances. It has an operating budget of:

A bit more than \$3,000 ... (Coordinator Helen Marr).

The low esteem in which services are held is even evidenced at sites where income has been relatively adequate. Hard work, tight money and no guarantee of continuity also constrain the best efforts of staff at Kentledge, a provision whose funding might be the envy of other like services. They obtained \$73,000 from Better Futures, \$52,000 from DoCS and they have some sponsorship. They resource seven programs a term; 240 programs (mostly very short) a year. Costs exceed \$250,000. The only full-time worker is the Coordinator. She is assisted by a social work 'prac' student who is not paid, and there is a cohort of casual staff. During the fieldwork period of this study, Kentledge had to raise funds to stay open beyond the following six months.

Even the private service of Dornet found that high rates of attendance, assisted by generous government subsidies to participants, were not reflected in net profit. This is due to various factors, not the least of which is the low regard of the collocating school for the service. At Dornet, a private School Age Care service, families were paying a fee of \$15 for an afternoon, which was then rebated. This means some parents only pay a net \$7.50, in return for which their children are provided wholesome food, an assurance of physical safety, and care. Dornet pays the school \$50,000 in rent (Community centres pay \$5,000). Happy to enlarge this income, the school suggested Dornet pay more to share use of the library. However, such is the lack of trust between the two parties that anticipation of disputes over accountability aborted this initiative. As the numbers at Dornet increase in response to pressure from working parents on a lengthening waiting

list for places, its net income has not risen, there are no profit incentives and conditions remain unworkable.

Some School Age Care services do not have a permanent space, which, according to Alice Rintoul, reflects the low esteem in which they are held:

A lot of [School Age Care provisions] are run in a hall and their stuff's in a cabinet and every day they set up and every day they pack up, just the amount of energy that must take to do that every day. It also signals to them that they're not that important and it doesn't recognise how important the physical environment is for those kids, like how different a classroom is than an [School Age Care] space (Coordinator Alice Rintoul).

The author observed logistical difficulties for services where spaces were discontinuous; not only involving movement from one level to another, but also where line-of-sight from indoors to play areas was obstructed:

The Dornet centre is on school premises in a series of unconnected spaces throughout the rabbit-warren of rooms and thoroughfares in Block X. The office is a former store room with one tiny window and patches of deteriorating black foam rubber on the walls ... they manage principally through walkie-talkies. These radios are on all the time like in taxis ... Here the repeated phrases are, 'Sending Mary and Jim to craft room over' and, 'Mary Jim at craft room over' etc. (Dornet Field Notes).

#### **5.2.14. Literature review: Impacts of School Age Care on schooling outcomes.**

School Age Care can increase children's school connectedness (Bond et al., 2007) through socialisation support for adult-child relationship building, support of schooling activity like homework projects, and by encouraging interests (Thompson & Iachan et al., 2006).

The 21st Century Community Learning Centres No Child Left Behind (NCLB) project (US) broadened its mandate after their disastrous evaluation of literacy and

numeracy in poor-performing schools (James-Burdumy et al., 2005) to implement enrichment models based on partnering with families and community (Anderson-Butcher et al., 2010; Christenson, 2004). In the UK, an informal learning model outside school hours in the Extended Schools Initiative is valued for its moderating effects on formal academic expectation (Bailey & Thompson, 2008). So are Scout programs (Bonotto, 2005) and the Home School Knowledge Exchange project (Braund & Reiss, 2006).

**Key Idea:**

School Age Care has a potential role in enriching academic endeavour

Participation outside school time in activities that link to schooling agendas is associated with academic achievement (Akos, 2006; Fredricks & Eccles, 2005, 2006a, 2006b, 2008; Simpkins, Ripke, Huston & Eccles, 2005; Sung & Chang, 2008). Deleterious impacts on motivation where the contexts of home and school are discordant are demonstrated by Brown-Wright, Tyler, Stevens-Watkins et al. (2013). Yet such is the myopic preoccupation with academic outcomes that stakeholders and researchers typically ask how and by how much certain out-of-school time use will lift ‘skill-n-drill’ test scores before—if they even get to it—exploring School Age Care outcomes more broadly (Marsh, 1992; National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2004). In their study of Latino children in middle school, Niehaus, Rudasill and Adelson (2012) found that School Age Care attendance positively affects maths grades, but they were unable to associate attendance with motivational indicators. Only recently has the technology of tracking systems enabled deep and rich findings of reliably strong relationships between out-of-school activity like debating and academic achievement (Mezuk, Bondarenko, Smith & Tucker, 2011).

**Key Idea:**

NSW School Age Care does not partner with schooling yet School Age Care discourse appeals to academic grades

Efforts in School Age Care to reach beyond a child-minding role are typified by short-burst programs with limited impact on learner identity formation. Minority and disadvantaged children are especially likely to receive this kind of programmed support (Gillock & Reyes, 1996). Interventions were once primarily behavioural (Alsbaugh, 1998a; Rudolph, Lambert, Clark & Kurlakowsky, 2001). However, more recently, better outcomes have been reported for more holistic adaptations. For example, high school transition work with small groups of at-risk young people, as in the Buffalo-area Engineering Awareness for Minorities program, have been lauded (Brandt, 2007), and interventions like the Self-Regulation Empowerment Program combine motivational and self-efficacy belief practices with negotiation skills training for resilience (Cleary & Zimmerman, 2004; Wehmeyer, Palmer, Lee, Williams-Diehm & Shogren, 2011).

Beneficial and preventive outcomes from participation in out-of-school care services have been shown (Alter, Jun & J-McKyer, 2007). Most of the international studies that have been considered in this light set out to show that School Age Care services provide schooling benefits (for example, Afterschool Alliance, 2003a and Anderson-Butcher, 2010). Summer Camps lasting only a week take credit as ‘educational institutions’ (Thurber et al., 2007). Even physical education programs find for academic benefit in their evaluations to justify a focus on health and wellbeing and to secure their funding streams (Baker & Witt, 1996; Chen & Shen, 2004).<sup>26</sup> The US School Age Care program Woodcraft Rangers, with partnerships like Public/Private Ventures and the Harvard Family Research Project among its credentials, privilege academic outcomes to sustain

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<sup>26</sup> For example, at Reddam private school in Sydney, teachers are selected on the basis of ‘demonstrated track record for producing outstanding academic results’ (Reddam House, 2012).

its standing with schools, from whose families children are recruited. The Clio Club is similarly oriented (Morris, 2005). The Investigators' Club is also typical of motivation programs targeting improved school performance. Operated at a university, this Club comprises 15 curriculum units prescribed in a manual and seeks to help disadvantaged newcomers to high school to do better in science. However, it failed to increase motivation (Grolnick, Farkas, Sohmer, Michaels & Valsiner, 2007).

Evaluators of the San Francisco Beacons centres (Walker & Arbreton, 2004) concerned themselves with the interrelationships of quality program content and participation attraction, socialisation benefits and schooling achievement. No link was found to exist between program experiences and test scores. As Verdugo (2011) points out, a single program cannot account for an outcome that, in an ecology framework, is an unfixed, emergent identity position, responsive to multiplex influences in volatile boundary-negotiation processes. By way of contrast, in a peer-reviewed qualitative study about the impact of a School Age Care academic support intervention, teachers changed the way they valued it, from caring only about school marks, to awareness of the depth of change in children's motivation (Luehmann & Markowitz, 2007). This re-orientation illuminates how School Age Care might frame the values that care services afford.

**Key Idea:**

Accountability of children's time use is not useful to children, but adults' responsibility for it is

Inadequate evaluation methods predominate in School Age Care. Current practices report poorly defined outcomes (Guillen-Woods, Kaiser & Harrington, 2008).

Accounting for children's time is not useful to children, but adults' responsibility for it is (Ravitch, 2012b). The difference is illustrated in the UK's 'all through' school

innovation, which saw its rural disadvantaged student body placed in the top 25 academic achieving groups in the country. However, the time-use mechanics responsible for this were not clarified (Harris, 2005).

With the implementation of new quality standards, ‘quality’ has become a key issue for informing how School Age Care services frame their policies. Comparison with international examples may be useful in this respect. Steinberg’s (2011) study of the Supplemental Educational Services (SEdS) provision of NCLB (2004–2008) found that US children with low school-conferred academic profiles were most likely to participate in School Age Care services, implying a mismatch between school selection criteria for potential participants and the statutory policy of SEdS to allocate resources to children from low socio-economic backgrounds. The very children who had most to gain were thus found unlikely to attend SEdS (Steinberg, 2011). Weisman and Gottfredson (2001), reporting on participation in School Age Care, agree that risk factors such as substance abuse are linked with avoidance of the very structured provisions that are funded to prevent risk and support disadvantaged children.

In an Australian context, 11 to 14-year-olds’ concerns about substance abuse increased by over 8 per cent nationally in the year to 2008 (Mission Australia, 2008). Yet policy for School Age Care (DEEWR, 2011) does not address contributing factors in this trend through its staffing, funding streams or long-term programming vision for holistic support. Steinberg (2011) illustrates a typically invalid accountability model in which funding was tied to the net schooling benefits of an extended-school provision as being greater than were those of the program that it replaced. Patall, Cooper and Allen’s (2010) review of research acknowledges consensus on the poor validity of linking heightened achievement outcomes to extended time in schooling activity, but suggests that weak research designs are largely to blame. Patall et al. thus support links made



between designated learning activity and achievement outcomes (see also Greifner, 2007). However, policy-based assertions like this, absent analysis of the operators of learning processes, are too blunt. In the opinion of Lochner and Bales (2006), revised frameworks that influence public perceptions of youth issues are overdue. School marks cannot prove that School Age Care programs are working.

#### **5.2.15. Field data findings: Impacts of School Age Care on schooling outcomes.**

The key schooling outcomes considered here are the formation of successful generational relationships, resilience through high school transition and partnerships with key stakeholders in schooling.

Sound adult–child relationship building in School Age Care helped one child feel secure in forging new affiliations across the high school boundary:

There's always one person out there you can trust. ... You have confidence going forward that you'll find the same thing when you go to high school (Max).

Being fully occupied with activity chosen from a range of options in School Age Care sessions helped Emily to feel confident she could handle the increased load of obligations at high school:

I do more activities there, so it's kind of prepared me. ... I know what it feels like if I have a full schedule (Emily).

At Hoyden, homework support that is planned jointly by the school and School Age Care results in specific kinds of learning reinforcement, consistent with the efforts of teachers. In an example of true partnering, children at Hoyden are wrapped in consistent schooling support that can only have positive outcomes:

We collaborate with the school ... find out which day they get their homework and we make sure the homework club's on that afternoon (Coordinator Alex McKean).

In contrast, a School Age Care project purporting to fill gaps left by schooling, but without consultation, prior research or convocation with school personnel or parents, and offered by untrained staff as a trial product, is bound to fail:

It's about a sustainability ... based on the fact that in the next four or five decades 80 per cent of the population is going to live in urban areas ... it's a bit abstract for them. They see these kind of complicated website ... At the moment we only have three more involved. We've only done two sessions, today is the third one. We started with six kids, we started with 10 kids saying oh yes I'm coming I'm coming and then we started with six kids and then three drop out (Coordinator Helen Marr).

It is useful to ask children if they are as closed to the idea of undertaking some school-initiated academic activity during School Age Care sessions as the assumptions underpinning School Age Care 'philosophy' suggest. One child at least imagines academic support might be beneficial:

Just a bit so then we'd at least be a little bit challenged by the work we have. We'd be more challenged. Yeah I really would not mind that (Max).

#### 5.2.16. Summary of section 5.2.



**Key Idea:**

School Age Care implicitly undermines schooling by distorting representations of children's school experience

School Age Care leverages school-acquired skills and interests in activity dependent on children's schooled literacy and numeracy for implementation. School Age Care is wont to contrast school codes of discipline with their own privileging of free choice. Ironically enough, care Coordinators spoke defensively of unstructured activity in the language of control.

Professional standards and support of School Age Care workers are historically poor. Coordinators in the field recruited staff based on their personal qualities and not

on the key child wellbeing criterion of their professional capacity to support children's agentic choice making.

School Age Care services are not mandated to know what happens to children who leave their service. Yet its default participant recruitment is through schools. Daily student handover protocols involve teacher-care worker transactions. Children come to services wearing their school uniforms and backpacks. In the field, children attribute their attendance to the presence of school peers. School Age Care also cooperates with families' provision of private tuition for their children. Children are absented from School Age Care sessions for up to an hour to attend instruction in sport or the arts, and for academic tutoring. Yet School Age Care has to date persisted in its proclaimed isolation from schooling. Its pejorative policies on children's use of technologies are expediently ignored where attendance levels need boosting or difficult behaviours need to be assuaged.

School Age Care's isolationism facilitates other exceptional quality deficits as well. Children have no statutory role in decisions that are made for their time use outside schooling. In field events, they voiced their need for continuity through transition and across the schooling boundary, and preadolescents expressed preference for leadership and choice, and enjoyed privileges that distinguished them from younger children. Despite this, at one field site, preadolescents were placed with a younger cohort as punishment. Partnership with the co-locator school could link children to successful leadership programs.

Children in the sample said they had not been consulted to confirm the perception of service staff that preadolescents want to be 'aged up' in 'teenage' activity, like 'hanging out'. Contradictory agendas are illuminated in letting preadolescents 'hang', while also offering occupations like paper craft, clay tables, fabric art and play across the 5–12

years cohort of participants. Differentiated activities for preadolescents were the same round of excursions to the same places they can transport themselves to in the holidays and on weekends. As School Age Care takes no interest in children's discretionary time use overall, it is not aware of how duplicative these budget-straining activity events are. School Age Care does not use systematic means of knowing children's interests.

School Age Care philosophy and policy has to date been middle-class in orientation. This is borne out in the two typical School Age Care services in the present study that operate without targeted government funding, which are conspicuous for their lack of CALD, minority and disadvantaged clientele. Priority funding targets children with disabilities but not children from disadvantaged and minority backgrounds to attend services. This contrasts with the support offered in the US to serve children from disadvantaged and minority backgrounds. In the US, black children, whose socio-economic and minority status puts them at disadvantage, attend School Age Care at twice the rate of whites, who are more affluent, on the whole, by comparison (Hynes & Sanders, 2011).

Most School Age Care evaluation in NSW has been limited to attendance numbers and informal employed parents' satisfaction indicators. Unpublished governance-oriented reports are made. Coordinators in the field believed that parents choose care services because they give children free choice. The findings in this section inform recommendations in Chapter 6 for researching the perspectives of all stakeholders on the appropriate use for School Age Care and the transparency essential to robust accountability.

### 5.3. Section 3: Time Use

#### 5.3.1. Introduction.

The quality of freely spent discretionary time may fluctuate on a constraints–opportunities continuum framed in adult-centric processes. The contingencies of time use can be modelled, and an index of interests, honed in negotiated activity, can be indicative of experiential quality. The development of meaningful interests is a goal-driven pursuit suited to School Age Care.



**Key Idea:**  
A system model is needed for time use

Aydin (2007) proposes a model of emergent identity formation in activity processes to capture the agentic task of defining the self within the constraints of ecology systems. His perspective draws focus to uniqueness, individuality and originality in how children forge their own ‘self-righting’ projects (Spencer et al., 1997) in creative, intentional and collaborative use of time. The efficacy of this depends on the intensity and degree of their engagement in particular activities. Busseri and Rose-Krasnor (2010) formulate a complex indicator, interpretative of relationships, based on Bollen and Lennox’s (1991) latent composite variable model. Busseri and Rose-Krasnor identify correlates of engagement to capture a ‘self-righting’ portrait unique to individuals. This indicator synthesises the following variables: an attendance/engagement dichotomy, an engagement–intensity spectrum pertaining to a single activity, an effects aggregate of engagement, and multiplex reflection on each activity’s particular effects.

Sheridan, Chamberlain and Dupuis (2011) make a strong case for time lining, which, for the purposes of identifying engagement/structure correlates, can be adapted reflexively in School Age Care contexts. Its value is in associating activity in structured

time with boundary tools that elaborate on and qualify where a child locates her time use on the author's JAS. Increasing engagement is conceived in a mutually reinforcing spiral that also includes a 'structure' spectrum. The JAS expresses the proposition that, as engagement strengthens, time use must become more tightly structured (see the description of the logic on which the JAS is based in Section 3.8.5; it is illustrated in Figure 5.9 in Section 5.3.3.3). For example, a photograph of a made object can express this location. Taken together, rich meanings of children's felt and manifested engagement can be generated. Cartmel (2010, p. 13) adds that staff quality, program-planning structures and contextualised group socialisation should be involved in such continuous reflexive evaluation. Stichter, Herzog, O'Connor and Schmidt (2012) provide a helpful social competence measure suitable for adaptation in School Age Care settings.

This section's structure is broadly consistent with the organisation of the preceding Sections 4.1–4.4 and 5.1–5.2. However, the pattern of alternating scholarly discourse and field data findings and discussions cannot be evenly continued throughout this penultimate part of the thesis. The theory building described in Section 3.8.5, culminating in the author's JAS in Figure 5.9, here takes precedence over reporting in a comprehensive critique of the theoretical framework that continues to underpin the School Age Care vision. The thesis moves rapidly to present a reframed vision for School Age Care that makes sense for the implementation of change outlined in the National Quality Framework (DEEWR, 2011).

### **5.3.2. Literature review: Subjective and socio-cultural perceptions of time use.**

Various factors influence the value children obtain from their choice of activity.

Examples include:

- changes that occur in their communities (Kleiber & Powell, 2005; Lewis, Knijn, Martin & Ostner, 2008)
- the evolving place of children in the generational order (Aitken, 2000; Alanen, 2005; Lake & Eastwood, 2004; Mayall, 2000; Parke, 1988; Ungar, 2004)
- autonomous yearnings (Bugental & Grusec, 2006)
- the formation of judgement through culture as context simultaneous with contextual differences within cultures (Turiel, 2006)
- personality change through maturation, of salient importance in transition (Bourke & Geldens, 2007; Eckersley, 2008; Lee, Kwong, Cheung, Ungar & Cheung, 2010; Lerner, Freund, De Stefanis & Habermas, 2001).

**Key Idea:**

The quality of children's time use from their perspective is of key salience for identity formation and should be the principal indicator guiding planned task characteristics

Research querying children directly about their time use has been undertaken in the US, with varying degrees of focus on after-school activity (Belle, 1999a, 1999c, 1999d; Christensen, 2002; Christensen, James & Jenks, 2000). Adolescent perspectives are investigated in studies such as that of Huebner and Mancini (2003), usefully guiding the present research on younger cohorts.

NSW children's time-use values have rarely been investigated (Australian Institute of Family Studies, 2001; Bullivant & Monash, 1975; Craig & Sawrikar, 2008; Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, 2010), but their voices (for example, [www.kids.nsw.gov.au](http://www.kids.nsw.gov.au)) are increasingly documented

(Australian Institute of Family Studies, 2009-10). Much 'time-use' research relates to the labour force (Bittman, 1991, 2000; Brown, Pfeiffer, Dowda & Pate, 2009; Budig & Folbre, 2004), compared with international interest in how children's time use has changed (Hofferth & Sandberg, 2001).

### *5.3.2.1. Experience.*

It remains contentious to suggest that adults are not the sole reliable arbiter of 'what works' in activity practices (Alcoff, 1991; Blair, 2009; Cullen & Shaldon, 2003; Hill, 2006). Children need agency to participate in the discussion and establish their competency credentials to do so. Childhood's 'present' is barely knowable in deterministic societal concern for children when, to all intents and purposes, they represent 'futures' in an adult-centric world. Freely chosen time use is the key condition children need for making the meanings that comprise identity (Abbott & Barber, 2007; Bell & Carrillo, 2007; Levinson, 2002).

Causal mechanisms of identity work are identified in 'Activity Theory'. They involve knowledge-sharing in the process of choosing activities (Feldman & Matjasko, 2005; Holzman, 2006a, 2006b). Engeström (2008) unpacks the concepts of 'project' (longitudinal strings of actions), 'practice' (repeated actions) and 'script' (strings of actions assigned to actors) that function in these processes. He defines activity as a 'working sphere' in which 'action' is synonymous with engagement. 'Working spheres' (activities) are collaborative processes of recurrent and unique presumption and exchange, generating transformative engagement (action), similar to the Vygotskian play/mind nexus in 'the Zone' (Vygotsky & Mulholland, 1966) and the way in which girls projected their future selves in (Barton et al., 2012).

The issues surrounding time use in this thesis concern the quality, rather than the content, of children's time use from their perspectives. To date these perspectives have



not been monitored in typical NSW School Age Care practice (Barnett & Gareis, 2006). Attendance has been the sole reliable measure taken. Children qualify their experience by their day-to-day relationship activity, which is shaped on a spectrum of time-use structure from formal instruction to ‘doing nothing’ (Chavez, Matias-Carrelo, Barrio & Canino, 2007; Christensen, 2002; Huebner & Mancini, 2003).

Kuby’s (2012) conversation analysis of adult–child interactive learning demonstrates in publicly observable ways how learning to ‘make sense’ is a mutual project. Long-lived supportive relationships are the single most efficacious component for engagement in Miller’s (2012) informed view. On the basis especially that the statistic of eight million unsupervised US children after school is linked with risk threats, Miller suggests that School Age Care offers an invaluable opportunity for regular and orderly but creative transactional activity with adults.

### **5.3.3. Field data findings: Children’s perspectives of time use.**

The research sought to capture if and how children perceived the transformational value of their use of time. Control over time-use choices, socialisation and learning emerged from the complete data set as the key factors in children’s valuing of time. For example, Samantha valued activity choice in School Age Care, absent authoritarian staff attitudes. The activity of drawing itself gave children agency to control their responses (Eldén, 2012; Wiles, Crow & Pain, 2011).

Marina said she would like sufficient control over her time to have ‘some more fun’. If Marina were to advise parents on raising children her age, she would tell them to facilitate a wider range of activity outside of schooling, even if only on weekends. Marina calls this academic skill an ‘advantage’. She feels she is competent, but is pressured in that excellence. Mary communicates routine. Saturday is a splash of red

font for Coogee beach. It is fun. During the week, the rhythm of school and soccer dominates. Mary's voice is undetectable on her chart.

The children whose charts are presented were aged between 10 and 12 years. Many thought schooling values were at a premium. Some children aimed for accuracy and detail, while others took a broad sweep over their lives as they saw them. Many charts do not provide a comprehensive indication of time use, possibly because children expressed mainly what they assumed to be of interest to adults (Burkitt, 2013). 'Doing nothing' pervaded responses about how children used time on their own; for example, *'nothing' and empty space dominate Mary's drawing (see Figure 4.1)*.

Fourteen of the 71 'My Week' charts analysed are reproduced here. Combining data from other field events with these drawings generated 'data through negotiation and

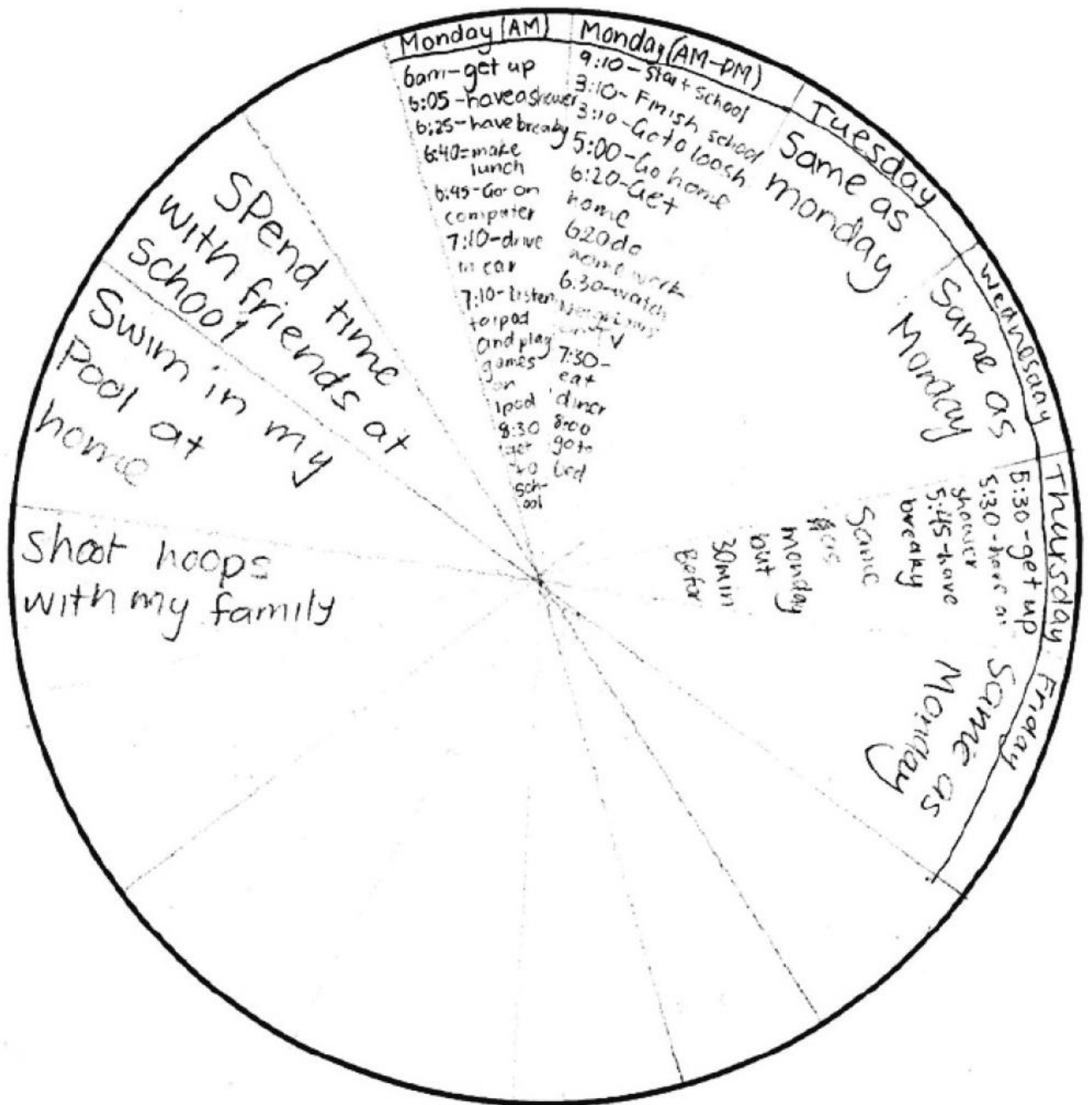


Figure 5.7. Jane's 'My Week' chart.

reflexivity' (Canal, 2004, p. 38). For example, Tom, observed hurrying through the drawing, provided scant detail. The quality and consistency of Tom's relationships and learning only became knowable by association with his other field contributions. Mary eventually elaborated the meaning of her time use in discussion, too. It is streaked with loss:

I draw like Aboriginal patterns and all that ... I go to this Gondwana choir; I'm in like the second best choir in the world and they're Indigenous. They go to the art gallery and then we have to practise and rehearsals, then lunch for 20 minutes, then rehearsal, rehearsal. Then we went once—the next day we went to an art gallery and saw these ... Aboriginal stuff and all the patterns and then that's why I wanted to get into art ... When I was in Year 1 in Country, I showed a teacher and she said that's the best drawing she's ever seen in like a Year-1-year-old before. She told us to copy this flower in a pot and we did and I was the best drawer in the classroom.

[In the mentored Country project] Yeah, we were coming up with plans like how to—what should we do on it and how should we do it and I was like, what about the galahs? There's galahs in [Country} and they did it—and they've done pink, white and blue I think. Then they do all this other stuff. You can tell when it's raining 'cause they would all scatter. Or sometimes you can just smell the rain. The birds know and they've got a kind of a ... Like sense ... the city's not that like—more culture of mine. They city—it's like brand new stuff and all that. My town is like old and burnt out and all that (Mary).

The additional themes of interest given below are illuminated in association with the 'My Week' charts in the following sub-sections:

1. children's awareness of time
2. relationship-building
3. learning and identity formation

Generally, children compliantly listed their activities in the surveys, drawings and discussion. Survey results show the scope and frequency of activities that children said occupied them (see Audit Trail #3 and 4). Many children merged their conceptualisation of time as a series of intervals with time use. For example, Jane (see Figure 5.7) allocated space to significant time uses.

She was not relating to intervals of time. Matt visualises his time use on a grid, each block of which is labelled with ‘minutes’ (see Figure 5.1). There is no relationship between the depiction of an activity and the proportion of time it takes.

### ***5.3.3.1. Field data findings: Children’s awareness of time***

For Matt, most things take half an hour or less—except for School Age Care (90 mins) and ‘learn’ (6 hours). Some activities like reading do not have a time allocated. The chart jumps from micro-activities (have a shower; get out of the shower) to macro-ideas like ‘learn’. Matt does not understand or has not given thought to proportional or relative time, nor does he evidence any concept of hierarchical value among time uses (see Figure 5.1). Further light on time awareness is shed in:

Like I take about ... an hour to walk my dog. It takes ages (Hoyden Focus Group).

It only takes me like 90 seconds to go shopping. *Ninety seconds?* Three minutes (Palmar Workshop).

Children approached the drawing activity in various ways, influenced by culture and aspiration. Samantha embraced the opportunity to draw a creative and stunning graphic (see Figure 4.6). She even added a copyright symbol to the mirror conceit, extended in the graphic. Her voice demands to be heard in the first place. By comparison, Marina’s voice is small and quiet. Her family has been through migration, separations and a struggle to obtain employment. The loss of her sister and niece has been transformative for Marina in viewing work in terms of compensatory future promise. Marina

conceptualises time as a schedule. Even a visit to the park is registered this way. For example, Saturdays are working days. They are hectic and demand effort:

I have dancing lessons in the morning at 9.30 and then it finishes at 11.15 and then I have to do gym classes which goes 'til 12 o'clock and then at one—and then I get a break—and then at 1.30 I have to go the school tutoring, and then I finish at 5.30.<sup>27</sup>

Marina works hard at tutoring school, and brings home extra work. At tutoring school, she undertakes general skills training, Maths and English. These classes are on the premises of an inner west high school. Its geographies are valued as signifiers of even greater and more important academic challenges to come. Marina does not expect tests to be difficult. The work she engages with on Saturdays is of a much higher standard than that at school. In respect of future wellbeing, Marina is looking forward to being an adult: 'I can't wait until I'm old enough to get a job'.

Peter (see Figure 5.3) gave some thought to the voice he wanted to use. He erased 'do a huge variety of stuff', only to rewrite the same text again. Peter has characterised his out-of-school time as free and unstructured. It was his amorphous 'space', punctuated by activities and interests. Peter's voices express wellbeing and selective engagement. The voices change in keeping with his decisions. Peter is not reliant on out-of-school-hours care. He does not have much to say about this at all. His mind is on the next step: high school, responsibility, demands, teenagers, work.

Samantha's chart (see Figure 4.6) too shows she is engaged and free. Samantha likes the democratic inclusion of children's input in School Age Care programming. School is happily loose in structure. Samantha had homework four days each week. Sometimes she planned her time and spread her work over the week. Engagement is everything in Samantha's household. Samantha is engaged even in her thinking about high school.

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<sup>27</sup> From the face-to-face interview, 16 November 2010.

The activities there are more varied than at out-of-school-hours care. The thought of being in a variety of different classes is irresistible. Samantha's wellbeing can be measured in direct proportion to her engagement with learning and doing. She would rather have an interesting life than a busy life.

#### **5.3.3.2. Relationship building.**

Tom's self-report of spending time on Facebook, nine hours on sport and seven on reading does not necessarily indicate that he is well socialised. Brian's chart (see Figure 5.8) reflects the values he accords his networks (eight hours of 'family and friends'). Sport and music are opportunities for relationship building, but it cannot be known from the information in his drawing how the mechanisms of learning operate for Brian.

To date, School Age Care has been framed as a play and socialisation opportunity separate from schooling. Yet in drawings, children did not necessarily distinguish the functions of different settings across the school–non-school boundary. For example, Peter's activities all involve socialisation. He seems self-reliant and engaged. 'Just enjoy myself' and 'explore ... hang out' is the voice of someone time-rich and available to new experiences and self-enrichment. School Age Care is a significant social opportunity for Samantha. A number of her friends attend. By comparison, Chris's circle is defensively split between present and future. 'Next year' at high school was an unknown; 'this year' was dominated by online technology, television and video. Chris thought about anti-bullying tactics, such as how to 'take out the ringleader, which leaves the other six bullies scared of you'. He knows how to blind people temporarily, but he cannot talk about this. Chris was never offered high school orientation and was terrified of the socialisation opportunities he saw ahead. He engaged online. Chris 'willingly' accepted he was 'only' allowed to play games that are violent and use coarse language. School did not intrude into his free time at all: 'I go to school, I get out of school, I go

home, watch TV ... that's it'. High school is intimidating: 'I have no idea what the heck's going to happen on the first day'. However, he is certain of a few days' grace before the survival game starts in earnest, and any protection for newbies falls away. Chris's voices are fearful and disengaged. He cannot see a pathway to wellbeing.

Socially, Marina was circumspect rather than fearful like Chris. To her, friendship, along with present wellbeing, is strategically secondary to a future academic and career outcome. Samantha could not be more different. She loves helping other people, like her best friend who has a debilitating medical condition.

### ***5.3.3.3. Learning and identity formation.***

All childhood contexts were reflected to afford learning and socialisation. School is included as a social, play and learning environment. Felicity clearly linked the large time use of 'school' with learning in her 'My Week' chart; and Marina, who used to take Kung Fu lessons, reported giving them up for increased effort on homework, increasing her academic optimism. Peter's focus was as forward-looking as he was fearful. He feared how cognitively demanding the work at high school would be, and worried about whether he would remember what to bring and be able to organise all his 'papers' at high school. Figures 5.8 to 5.15 demonstrate children's reflections on time-use values as they were introduced to the research.

Samantha drew time-rich leisure spaces (see Figure 4.4). They are diverse, but driven by curiosity and enthusiasm into a composed, if shattered, wholeness. She encapsulated the ideal of engagement in wellbeing, placing 'school' among other spaces. The use of colour, decorative fonts, a few graphics and a 'scattered' look belied some seriousness: 'Life is ... hard' and 'school' is also 'learning'. Playing, reading,





Figure 5.8. Brian's 'My Week' chart

computers, music, television and looking after her pet seem to float in the circle like puzzle pieces. They were resolved as ‘interesting’—a word chosen by Samantha.

For Mary, her learner identity was forged in ‘Country’. During the interview, Mary poured forth in a litany of love for Country:

There was a nice river there. There were trees all around. The city’s not that like—more culture of mine. They city—it’s like brand new stuff and all that. My town is like old and burnt out and all that.

Mary was exploring how to synchronise her Indigenous identity with becoming a learner. On a visit to the art gallery in an Indigenous group, Mary saw ‘Aboriginal stuff and all the patterns and then that’s why I wanted to get into art’. However, she notes that even when she was in Grade 1 in Country and was asked to copy a flower in a pot, her teacher considered her ability exceptional. Now she draws Aboriginal patterns. Mary’s grandmother taught her about the bush and its creatures. She knows you can smell rain before it comes. Mary was drawing what she remembers from Country days: turtles, emus, footprints of animals and patterns.

Samantha identifies as a learner through school activities that engage her creativity and social skills. School was characterised for her by breaks, free time, silent reading and the formation of changed groupings. In her view, the most engaging activity of the year was adapting a play for performance in the Kindergarten class. Samantha loves drama—it is in the family. Her learner identity is robust. If she could sum herself up in a word, it would be ‘advanced’. Other words that she uses to describe herself are ‘fun, kind, leading and lazy’. She is aware of her leadership capabilities, but thinks she does not dominate in exercising them.

Across research field events, Peter elaborates on a learner identity influenced by his research scientist father. His was an identity forged in relationship and mutual play—a sharing of experiences and interests. Peter spends a great deal of time in his father's household. He and his father's family play board games, computer games and gadgets such as Nintendo Wii and DS. Peter is involved in fencing, cricket and soccer. Significantly, in terms of learner identity, he is professionally coached in these sports. Peter also has a learner relationship with his flute teacher, and takes this seriously enough to practise five days each week. He uses his home computer every day. Most afternoons he bases himself at home. He reads prolifically. His entire, blended family goes camping together during summer. In a more defined approach than Peter's, Samantha also decides the task is about her life, holistically, and she reflects a rich variety of interests—a large proportion of which are pursued in unstructured timeframes.

By comparison, Marina's voice is subsumed in a diary style statement of her learner status and identity. Her week is routine. In fact, she does not see the need to repeat narratives where they are superficially the same. In Marina perspective, engagement exclusively with learning pathways leads directly towards effective processes of ultimate wellbeing. The links between Marina's voice and discourses concerning engagement and wellbeing are complex. Wellbeing is Marina's long-term goal—not her immediate one. Wellbeing depends on successful attainments. From this link, she constructs her learner identity. This is an identity dependent on assessment and competition. Marina measures well in both. She intends to go to the best university. To these ends, she strives to earn the respect of her teachers.

Peter, having had the privileges of choosing his own sport and of unstructured time during school hours, is glad that he has always built positive relationships with teachers.

He expects to continue his excellent record. Responsibility is no stranger to him. The links among Peter's voices, his experience of wellbeing and his engagement with developing a learner identity are mutually supportive.

Samantha's family life is a hub comprising four creative people playing games, inventing activities, undertaking long projects and entertaining friends. She lives in a richly socialising milieu. At the time of interview, dioramas and photography were all the rage for her. Samantha's parents undertook lots of play, surprise, study and cooking. Her mother occupied the table in the middle of the house, and from here did all of her communicating. She was always there, whether doing her own work or relating to the girls. Samantha's identity was tied up with socialisation, creative learning and empathy.

Children's differential awareness of time has been found linked to their engagement in activity. The author's JAS in Figure 5.9 summarises this relationship.

#### **5.3.4. Literature review: Time-use values: Wasted time.**

In the vacuum of their uselessness, perceptions flourish that children's unstructured time use in the space between school and home is wasted or open to social misuse. Unallocated and/or unregulated hours represent a resource with flexible use potential (Oldman, 2005) and a care liability (Abbott & Barber, 2007; Barnett & Gareis, 2006; Beck, 1975; Belle, 1999b, 1999e; Bittman, 1998; Duffett, Johnson, Farkas, Kung & Ott, 2004; Hofferth & Sandberg, 2001; McKee, Mauthner & Galilee, 2003b; Morrow, 2005). The idea of children's ownership of their 'free' time is culturally and politically contentious (Hoffman-Eckstein et al., 2008; Holloway & Valentine, 2003b, 2003c, 2003d; Langer, 2005; Mason, 2007; Mitchell & Reid, 2002a, 2002b; Tudge & Hogan, 2005). Adult concepts of children's waste of time are typified in Shann (2001).

Children's time is becoming more structured by adults for all the wrong reasons. Makel, Li, Putallaz and Wai (2011) comment that adults should observe how their

gifted children choose to spend their time before they can begin to understand, collaboratively with children, how engaging in structured activities outside school might be interesting. The Hyndland after-school club in Glasgow<sup>28</sup> uses such creative collaboration in uniquely successful ways (Elniff-Larsen et al., 2006, p. 46).

### **5.3.5. Literature review: Time-use values: Smorgasbord time use.**

In NSW and similar societies, the provision of physical education, academic enrichment, arts experiences and social group events constitute a robust and lucrative commercial sector. This is predicated on families' consumptive practices associated with keeping children healthily occupied, while becoming well positioned in a competitive frame of future-connectedness. Commercial exploitation of this phenomenon is inevitable. Parental respect for childhood as their own project, one they frame and on which they fear they will be judged, makes parents vulnerable to marketed commodities that purport to fill need and create children with added value. Disadvantage disqualifies participation in such consumption; the civic society ideal counts for nothing. In competitive societies, it seems not everyone can afford agency.

Such was the perceived community disapprobation of children doing 'nothing' in 2004 that extraordinarily, Chambers and Schreiber (2004) found it worthwhile to test whether 'unstructured' time use was actually deleterious to academic achievement. The hypothesis was disproven. As the speed, invasiveness and ubiquity of post-industrial communication accelerates, a corresponding anxiety among adults over children's vulnerability to networked social impacts motivates them to value a smorgasbord of adult-structured time usage on a schedule increasingly crowded with designated occupations that adults can control (Shoup, Gonyea & KuhIndiana, 2009). McTavish's (2009) case study considers how, like School Age Care workers today, teachers

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<sup>28</sup> <http://www.hyndlandasc.org.uk/>

condemned a child's Internet activity as unstructured time use, overlooking that online communication does not respect boundaries (Bahr, Garrick, Pendergast, Dole & Keogh, 2008; Turow, 2001).

### **5.3.6. Literature review: Time-use values: Labour and shame.**

Child labour casts a shaming light on families, because it is typically identified with exploitation. Levey (2009) proposes a typology of children's work, extending from Miller's (2005) and Qvortrup's (1994) research on child labour from employment in industry, employment in family enterprises, household chores and schooling, to after-school activity (Levey, 2009, p. 197). Cheap child labour is anathema in a 'rights' framework ("Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)," 1989), but not in a 'recognition' framework (Fraser, 1996; Honneth, 1992, 1995, 2001, 2007; Okyere, 2013) In straitened family circumstances, children prove useful (Morrow, 2010). However, child-work is analogous to abuse in populist post-industrial rights thinking (Nieuwenhuys, 2010). The historic shift that saw older children characterised as exclusively 'learners' (Morrow, 2010, pp. 437–439) obfuscates the reality that children still engage, unprotected, in work; many of them deriving a sense of dignity through family contribution (Estrada, 2013). The extent of domestic child workers is summarised in Wihstutz (2011, p. 449). The Commission for Children and Young People (2005) found that 42.7 per cent of 12-year-old children in NSW work, most of them in regional areas. Most of these children are Australian-born and tend not to come from extended families but, counter-intuitively perhaps and indicative of work as a resilience factor, from families that are not disadvantaged. Disadvantage thus implicitly reduces children's access to benefits from work. Manful and Manful (2013) contend that the relevance of child rights with respect to poor Ghanaian children is profoundly negated in its abstraction through institutional rhetoric of child participation.

Many Australian children work as carers (Chalmers, 2010; Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, 2010; Moore & McArthur, 2008; Moore, McArthur & Noble-Carr, 2011; Rose & Cohen, 2010; Smyth, Blaxland & Cass, 2011; Terry, 2010). Caring work requires a level of skill and responsibility typically expected of adults, with mixed impact on wellbeing and school connectedness when undertaken by children (East, Weisner & Reyes, 2006). Western child workers, particularly those in domestic labour, are hidden as much because of poverty shame as societal approbation (Aldridge & Becker, 1993; (Skattebol, Saunders, Redmond, Bedford, & Cass, 2012). Helavirta's (2011) study showed that children place considerable value in an ethic of responsibility towards their families. Howieson, McKechnie, Hobbs and Semple (2012), noting the paucity of useable UK data, argue that work is developmentally beneficial when contextualised among family, social, recreational and leisure claims on youths' non-school time.

There are no recently found studies on preadolescents in working roles. This does not contest that exploited children's lives are universally compromised, reflecting rather the post-techno-industrial revolution decline in the commercial usefulness of children (Liao & Hong, 2010). Some children need to work to access wellbeing, but the issue is confused with eradication of 'child labour', a child rights issue (Levine, 2011). Child labour persists because compensatory strategies mitigating the consequences of children's withdrawal from the workforce have not worked (Bekele, Myers, UNICEF & International Labour Office, 1995; Myers, 2001). It would take across-system change to achieve a child worker-free world (Woodhead, 1999), involving schooling systems, the profit motive, adult-child power relations, and innovative commercial and industrial adjustment (Eaton & Silva, 1998). However, rather than grouping a set of task characteristics under the shibboleth of 'work', it is more useful to think about the abuse

of power relations that fuel exploitation and to recognise that the time children spend labouring is contextually qualified (Bourdillon et al., 2010).

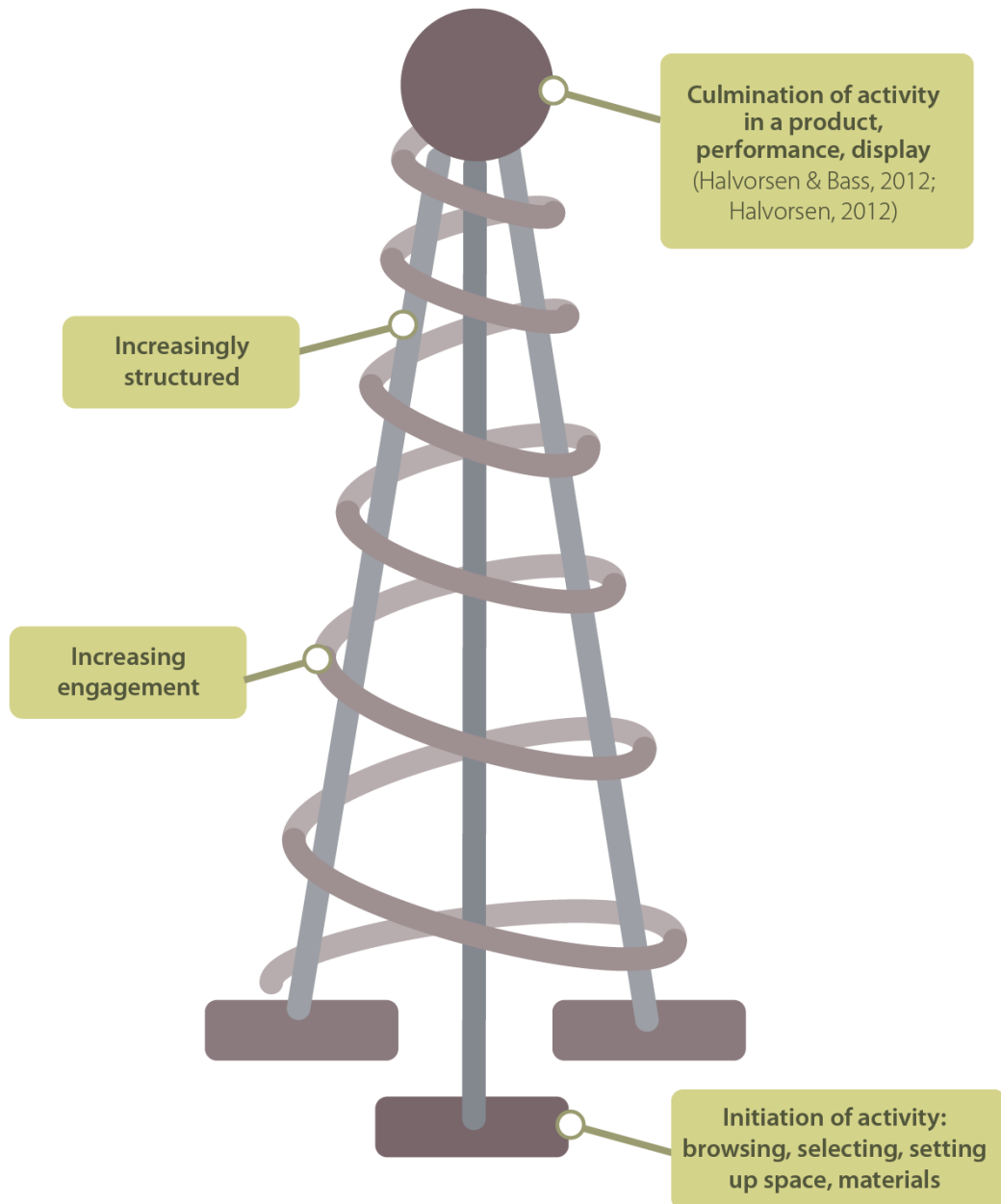


Figure 5.9. Model of the author's Johns Activity Spiral (JAS).

The author developed the JAS by deconstructing agentic, freely chosen time, to conceptualise the individual leading him or herself into increasing structure as engagement motivates production, performance and display. The JAS is a tool for generating lag data, which children can use to locate their time use relative to engagement and productivity. As children are impelled to express the meaning of their time use choice through sharing outcomes and reflecting the knowledge experience has generated. This self-locating tool can be shared with adults in School Age Care in mentor roles, helping children to fulfil their time use choices. The JAS can be used to track participants in a service, and indeed across multiple services, and can be used as lead data in evaluation for program planning.



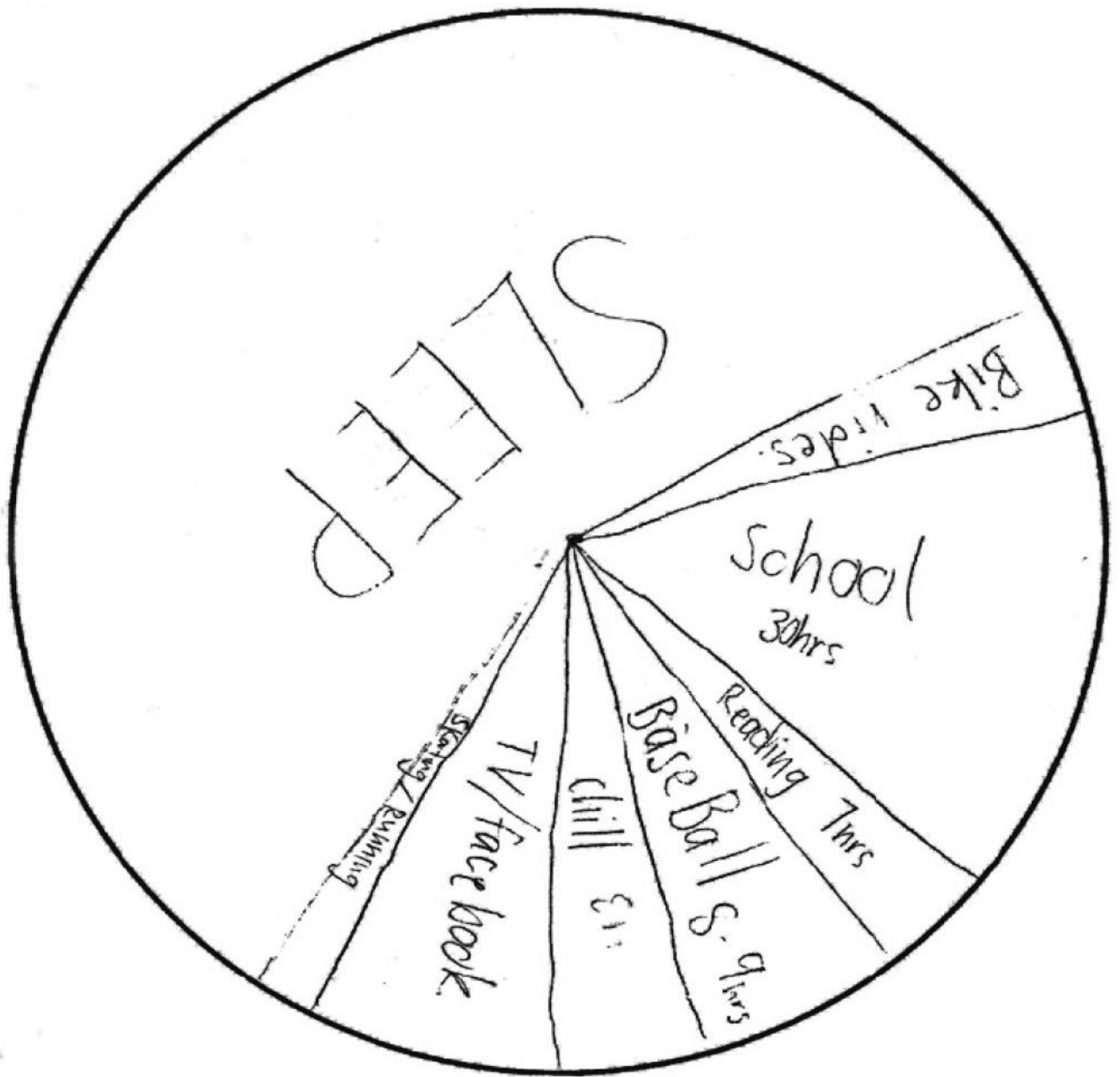


Figure 5.10. Tom's 'My Week' Chart.

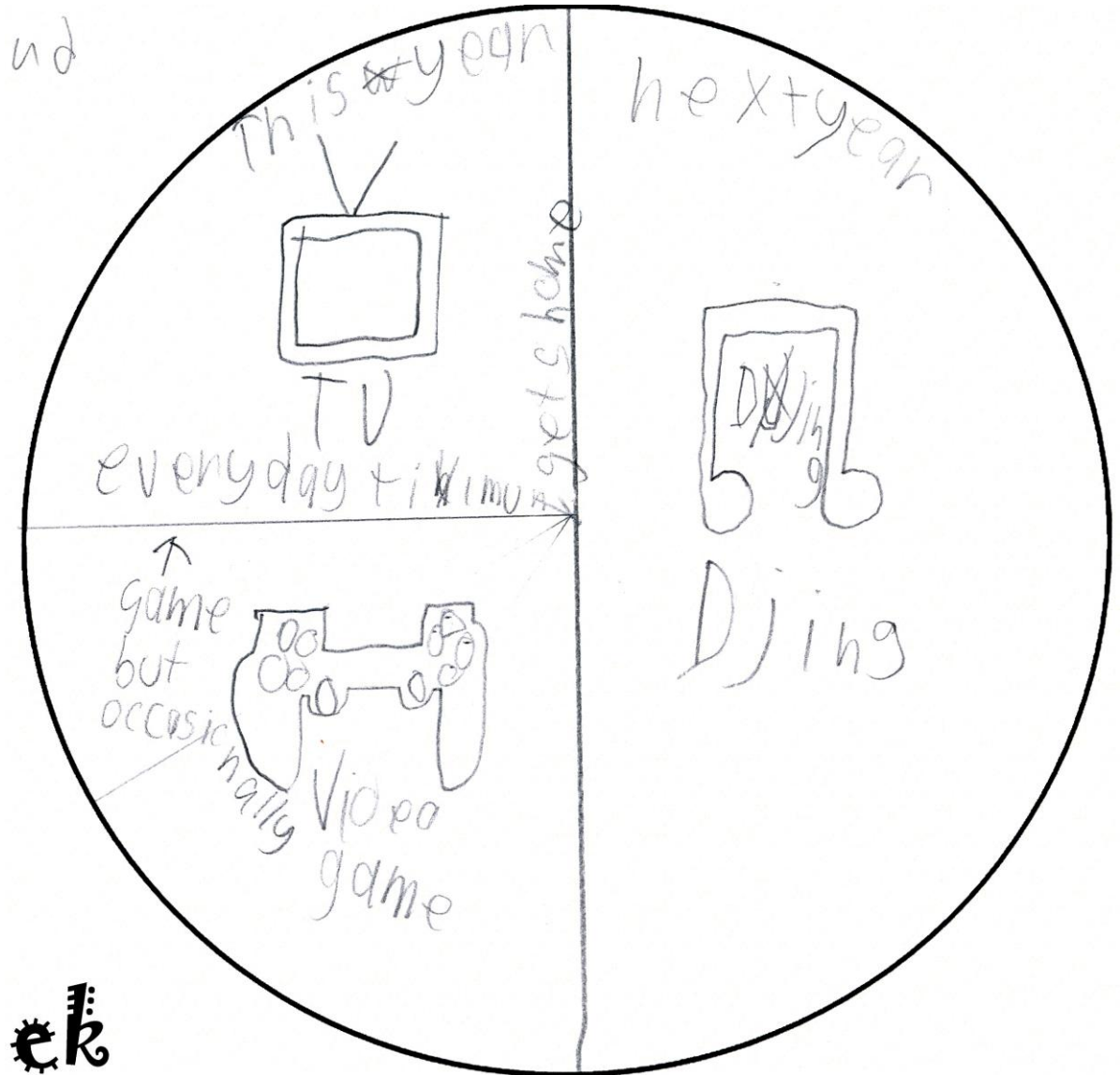


Figure 5.11. Chris's 'My Week' chart

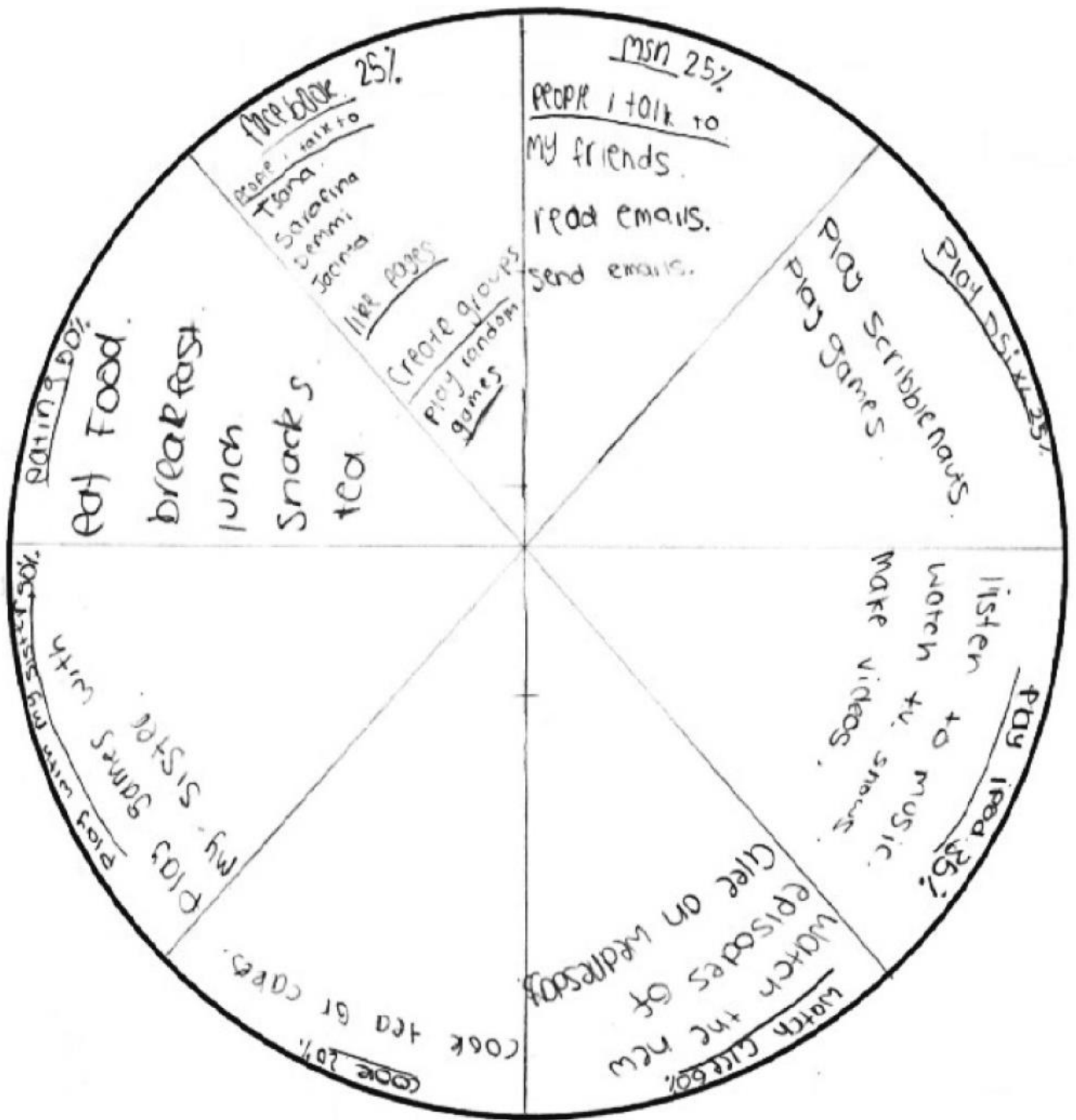


Figure 5.12. Tilly's 'My Week' chart.

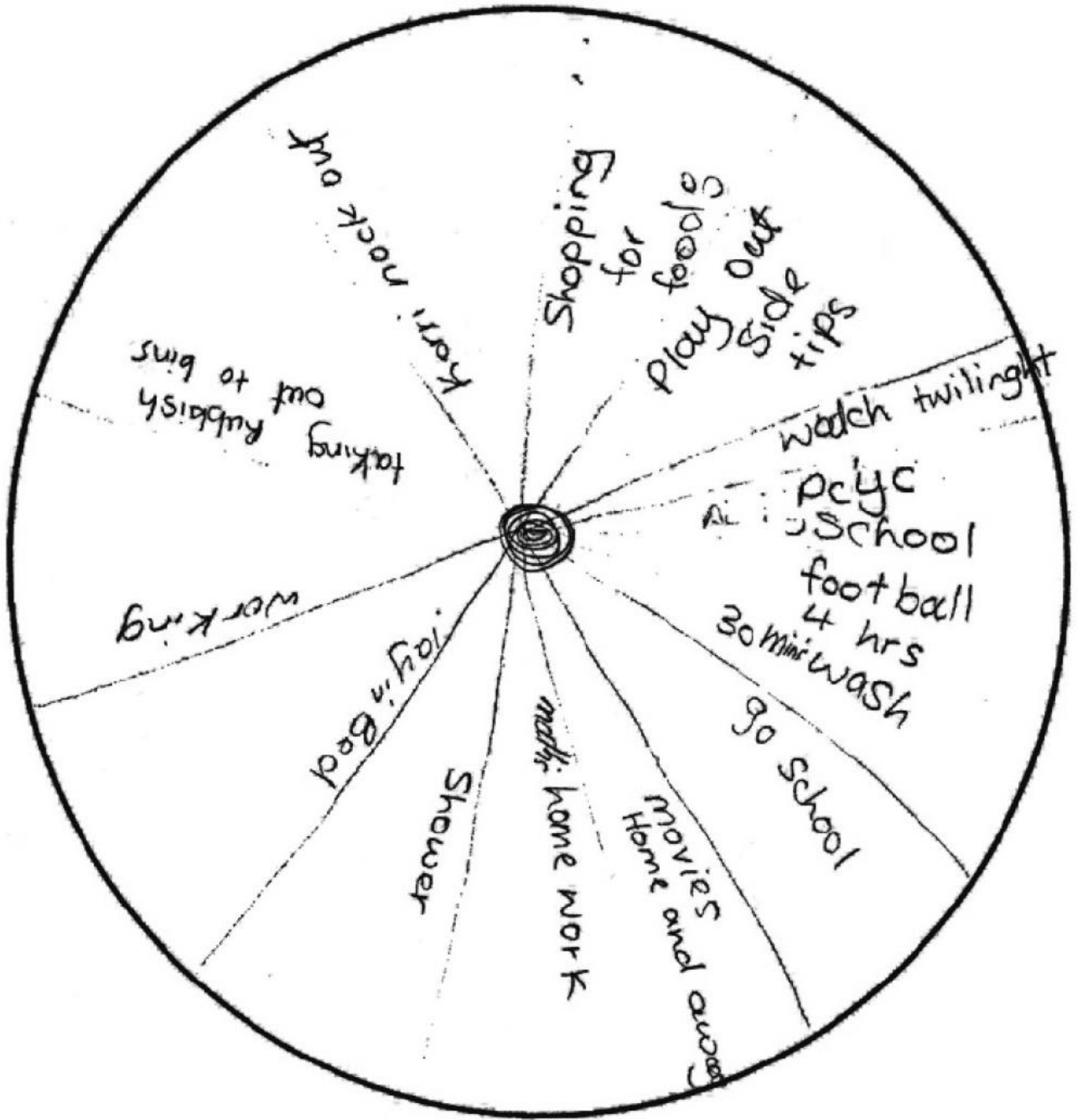


Figure 5.13. Julia's 'My Week' chart.



### 5.3.7. Literature review: The importance of play in NSW School Age Care

The vision of NSW School Age Care to date<sup>29</sup> is based on children participating in informal activities through unstructured play. In other developed societies, School Age Care provisions frame their services differently to reflect broad and holistic approaches towards children's time use. For example, some are an extension of education, while others, favour enrichment. In Hungary, sports and culture are the bill of fare in School Age Care services, which are categorised as education (Elniff-Larsen et al., 2006, p. 28). Typically in Denmark, children are offered rich choices that leverage school and community partnerships, including language tuition, homework, sport, online activity, cooking and gallery/museum programs (Elniff-Larsen et al., 2006, pp. 7–8).

**Key Idea:**

Historically School Age Care has quarantined its services within a 'play' framework to exclude acknowledgement of its role in cross-boundary learning processes

The peak representative body for NSW School Age Care, Network of Community Activities (2011a), references the UNCRC Article 31's assertion of children's right to discretionary time use in support of the limitations it has conferred on the School Age Care custodial mandate by privileging the 'play' aspect of being a child. This thesis does not dispute that children have the 'right' to play, have fun and enjoy themselves in informal settings outside of schooling.

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<sup>29</sup> [netoosh.org.au/](http://netoosh.org.au/)



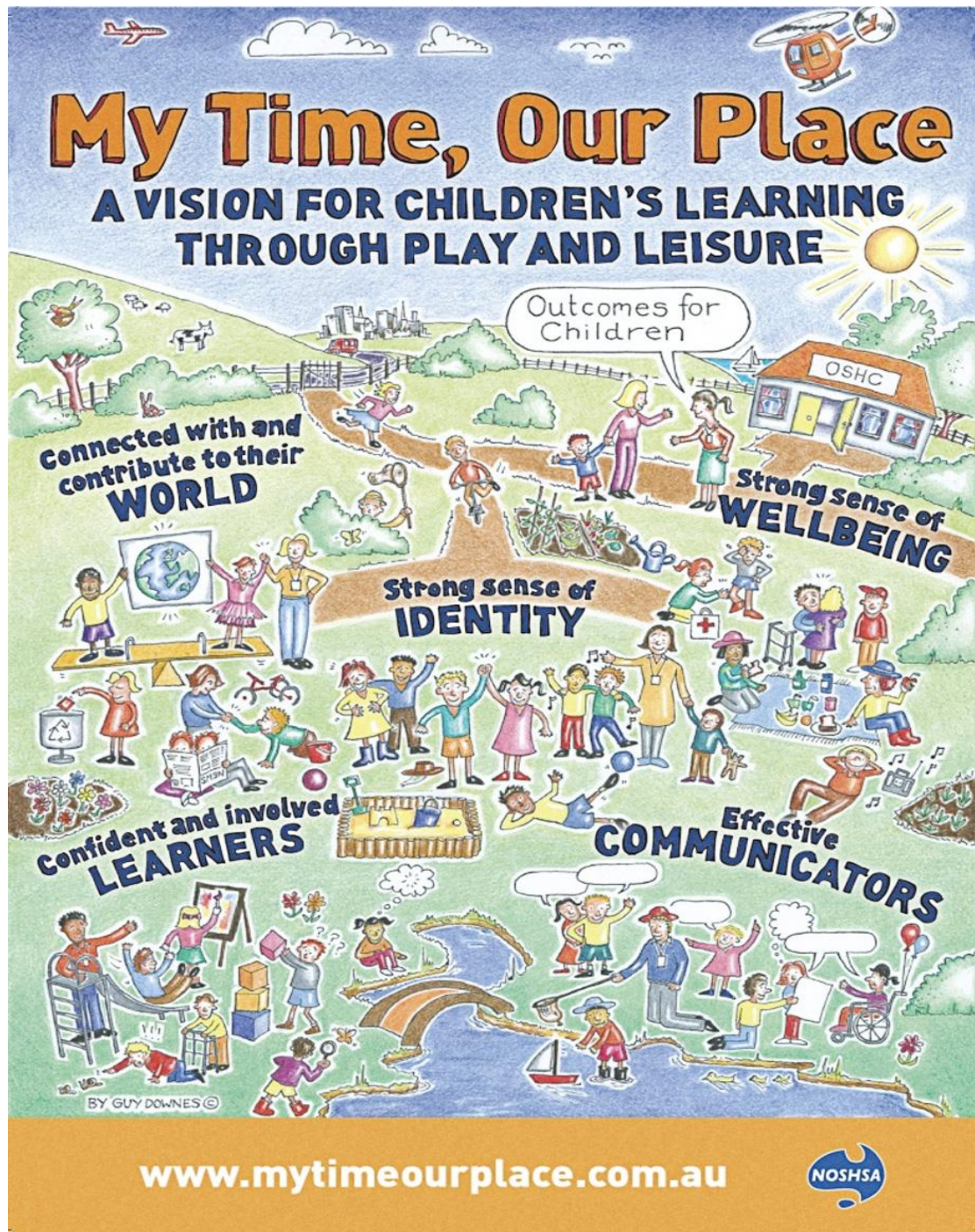


Figure 5.15. Quality Framework poster (DEEWR, 2011).

The position in NSW that ‘play’ should be the core focus in School Age Care programming was uncontested until new quality standards were introduced in 2012. This position drew on non-peer-reviewed discourse warning of ‘play deprivation’, a term associated with animal research, in the context of argument against introducing educational aims into School Age Care (Network of Community Activities, 2008). Hurst (2013) effectively summarises shifts in how School Age Care has been framed, leading to the current definition of a learning context for play among other types of activity, rather than ‘play’ ideation determining legitimated activity.

The reason for explicating School Age Care's investment in the 'play' frame at length is that this focus, in a process of changing best practice since 2012, has defined School Age Care's culture and insulation from other contexts of childhood, especially home and school. Research shows that children can create opportunities for play anywhere, with anything and with anyone, with any imaginative idea, practice, labour, emotion, discourse, thought and/or belief, though typically they constrict play within events that are adult-legitimated (Glenn, Knight, Holt & Spence, 2012) and, consequently, culturally conditioned (Chessa et al., 2013).

The scholarly discourse linking play and learning in interdependent dynamics is well established (Barab, Thomas, Dodge, Carteaux & Tuzun, 2005; Blair, 2009; Brown & Collins, 1989; Cubero, de la Mata & Cubero, 2008; Fernyhough, 2008; Fleer, 2009; Flint, 2009; Fox & Riconscente, 2008; Gan & Zhu, 2007; Gonzalez-Tejero, Parra & Llamas, 2007; Gredler, 2009; Hardcastle, 2009; Hofstetter & Schneuwly, 2009; Holzman, 1990; Jones, 2009; Kim & Baylor, 2006; Kim & Kellogg, 2007; Leather, 2004b; Maher, 2010; Mitchell & Reid, 2002b; Napier & Sharkey, 2004; Rahm & Ash, 2008; Reunamo & Nurmilaakso, 2007; Roth & Lee, 2007; Smagorinsky, 2009; Spielberg & Halpern, 2002; Squire, 2008; Traianou, 2009; Ulybina, 2008; Van der Veer, 2009; Vygotsky, 1964; Vygotsky & Mulholland, 1966; Zaretsky, 2008). The programming advocacy work of Network of Community Activities (2011a) has averted engaging with findings in the vast body of research that deconstructs children's play in learning frameworks in statements like 'play enables them to simply enjoy being':

'Children have a structured busy day ... we need to be as unstructured as we possibly can.' Jackie, care worker (quoted in text pullout, DEEWR, 2011, p. 15).

The new School Age Care policy framework consistently references play embedded in the key policy principle of children's learning:



‘We have been promoting play for a very long time and now there’s a document that says play is learning and that’s something we haven’t had recognised,’ says National Out of School Hours Services Association executive officer, Robyn Monro-Miller (Tarica, 2011).

Play is not definitively learning; it is one context in which children can learn.

### **5.3.8. Literature review: The nature of play.**

Play is also not synonymous with childhood, as Lester and Russell (2008, p. 9) argue. Singh and Gupta (2012) investigate culturally divergent influences on how parents define play and, by implication, childhoods in educationalised societies. Six-year-olds involved in making theatre considered this ‘play’ as work (Stolp, 2012). People of all ages must play for their psychosocial wellbeing, and they typically play to learn (Gronnick, 2011). Technology has changed how play is perceived and practised in ways that may change traditional conceptualisations of fantasy and imagination. However, play is strongly associated with children because it is their most easily observed learning activity.

Children teach themselves through acting beyond their age and outside quotidian patterns (Bodrova, 1997; Fox & Riconscente, 2008). Play gives children experiences they would like to have, and it creates controllable challenge (Wong, Packard, Girod & Pugh, 2000). However, children have to negotiate with adults for play space and acceptable play behaviour. Singh and Gupta (2012, p. 3) propose that adult engagement with children in play is important because it acknowledges to children that play has meanings of value in common across age/identity boundaries. This may be enriched and deepened by extension to other contexts.

Vygotsky’s conceptualisation of play operationalises the intersection of activity with tactile realities on the one hand, and thinking that is free from the constraints of real

experience on the other. Observation of children at play demonstrates the progression through role-play into the increasing structuring and constraining function of rules over the course of time within the interval of a game that creates a tension informing engagement (Kim & Kellogg, 2007). Rules are socio-culturally embedded boundary tools (Daniels, 2006; Jankowiak, Joiner & Khatib, 2011) that reverse children's relationship with reality, from interactivity with objects, to interactivity with the ideas that rules embody (Reunamo & Nurmilaakso, 2007; Vygotsky & Mulholland, 1966).

Far from denying children's enjoyment of their childhoods on which the UK government bases its play policy objective of making Britain the best place in which to grow up (Lester & Russell, 2008, pp. 9–10), Vygotsky does not commend play for the enjoyment it brings. Instead, he observes that frequently play, however enjoyable, has unpleasant and even painful outcomes that are significantly facilitative of identity work (Bryant, 1996; NSW Commission for Children and Young People, 2007). Play can be psychosocially deleterious (Anderson, 2010). Vygotsky focuses on how play changes with the transition continuum through childhood (Bryant, 1996), on which unconscious motives and incentives are endlessly transformed, ultimately to stages of un-enacted imagination in adolescence.

Play 'actions' wishes through affective and motor activity that does not look like the cognitive growth to which it leads. Children are not interested in aimless and meaningless play (Leather, 2004a, p. 8). Imaginary scenarios closely resemble real situations, illuminating their psychosocial salience (Majors, 2013), and healthy children distinguish their play from 'real' activity (Samuella, 2011; Vygotsky & Mulholland, 1966). Play is not the sole defining form of activity constituting childhood, but it is among the most innocuous from an adult perspective (Dunn, 2005, p. 91). It is performance of relationships and processes by adaptive rules, to a point of satiety in

experiential knowledge (Beisser, Gillespie & Thacker, 2013; Cobb-Moore et al., 2009; Lifter, Mason & Barton, 2011).

### **5.3.9. Literature review: Fun.**

The majority of structured out-of-school provisions rely on the ‘affective’ appeal to fun and freedom, by framing knowledge-making processes to serve micro-mediators of free play (Mansour & Martin, 2009; Seidman et al., 1995). However, knowledge-making should be situated as the core business to which supportive processes pertain, in the same way that Livock (2006) aligns her analysis of engaging services across formal/informal and discipline boundaries.

Fun is core business in *My Time, Our Place* (DEEWR, 2011). A simplistic and patronising response to children’s expressed desire for ‘fun’ can scuttle costly strategies for overcoming practical barriers to participation (Davids, 2004; Smith, 2005). Children’s declared ‘fun’ preferences are found deeply based on attraction to challenge (Wright et al., 2000, p. 10), especially in intrinsically motivated activity, when their attention is not divided (Abuhamdeh & Csikszentmihalyi, 2012). Swedish preadolescents conceptualising the ideal school referenced friendship and the play–work cycle ahead of geographies facilitating fun (Kostenius, 2011). Joint and interactive meaning of both activity content and process is necessary for learning (Zuzovsky & Harmon, 1999).

### **5.3.10. Literature review: The large international play movement.**

Populist nostalgia for a return to idealised ‘natural’ childhoods—subverted in numerous portrayals like those in *War of the Buttons* (Samuell, 2011), McCourt (1996), Waugh and Slaven (2010) and Dickens (1838, 1850, 1867)—is challenged in Taylor’s (2011, p. 421) support for new discourses that refute the child–nature equivalence. Calls for the ingenuity and wholesomeness of play on neighbourhood streets and a revival of

traditional children's lore in play find their logic in fascination with past tradition, based on accounts like those found in Matthews, Limb and Taylor (2000), Oke, Khattar, Pant and Saraswathi (1999), Opie and Opie (2005) and Ward (1990). However, such calls are contradicted by Portuguese children's reflections of violent street activity normalising anti-social behaviours (Carvalho, 2012). Concerns about contemporary children's sedentary lifestyles exert significant influence on the play movement.

Recent initiatives in play include the coining of 'play value' and creating 'natural' play areas in disadvantaged communities, with accompanying facilitation of play work through the establishment of community partnerships (Evans, 2000b; T. Gill, 2011; London Play, 2009; NSW Commission for Children and Young People, 2009a; Sport England, 2009). The Play Work movement (Newstead, 2004, 2011) is affecting School Age Care practice by repackaging well-established professional activity practices as innovations that foster spontaneity. Volunteer-operated London Play<sup>30</sup> facilitates children's free play in 80 London playgrounds. Significantly, London Play also provides spaces for academic and online activity, and some playgrounds have clubs for children associated with them. Their staff support and advisory work extends to developing care practices (Elniff-Larsen et al., 2006, p. 52).

Wood explores the limitations of policy advocating free play (Frost, Wortham & Reifel, 2012), arguing that play is best facilitated by adults whose professional practice must be reflexive and whose knowledge is grounded in the relationship between play and learning (Wood, 2007).

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<sup>30</sup> <http://www.londonplay.org.uk/index.html>

### **5.3.11. Literature review: Time-use interventions that mediate cross-context processes.**

Honneth's conceptualisation of participation in activity has moved the discourse forward significantly by re-framing time-use quality as a complex function of interdependent, dialogically negotiated needs (Fraser, 1996; Honneth, 1995; Taylor, 1997). He relates identity formation to affective, cognitive and enlightened institutional typologies of respect, thereby shifting participation into the infrastructure of social morality at the core of human agency (Honneth, 1995, p. 5). Delisle (2012) supports the validity of this shift in association based on data generated by a large cohort of children and adolescents, who identify agentic skills that predicate engagement dialogically with caring adults. Honneth's argument achieves a boundary-bridging model that explicates the dynamics of 'love, rights and solidarity' as tensions enabling of children's participation with integrity.

Honneth's 'integrity' responds to PVEST's 'self-righting' towards psychological health absent the self-crushing disrespect that accompanies loss of trust. It is interesting how Honneth approaches the phenomenon of recognition through the negatives of disrespect in contrast to hedonic discourses, in that he facilitates a conceptual trajectory from least integrity to ultimate freedom (Thomas, 2012, p. 3). This trajectory resonates with modelling in the present study of an attendance spectrum, in which children's 'struggle' (Honneth, 1995) is a metaphor for their conflicted progression towards the 'free' ideal of agentic childhood intent. Integrity, in other words, is an effortful, continuous negotiation, progressing, sustaining and manifesting the agentic child.

### **5.3.12. Field data findings: Time-use interventions that mediate cross-context processes.**

The three provisions in the present study that were funded to support transition developed broader aims than are typical in School Age Care, with long-term goals. For example, at Palmar, this meant keeping children in the youth community centre well into their teens. The impacts on school transition were not prioritised, but the service Coordinator was attuned to the paradoxical influence and transience of preadolescent experience:

They start progressively or gradually .. Just hanging out yea or drop in on Saturdays  
(Coordinator Helen Marr).

Significantly, Dornet supplied educational materials to encourage engagement:

We've done changes ... all of these books and games and stuff were all in the cupboards so we um put the um out so it's more available and accessible to them and they actually use it (Coordinator Donna Rein).

In schools too, projects are typically structured to facilitate open-ended exploration and developing interests. For example, at Turing, in a 'China' theme:

If we want to we can do projects and that and sometimes Miss just sends us with like a question ... like this time we're studying the environment and all that, and last time—we usually study like China (Turing Focus Group).

Kentledge's program is structured not unlike the school term.

What weeks is it? Week three isn't it? No, it's week four, because remember we had the pamper day—the make-over day last week? (Kentledge Workshop).

School Age Care purports to differentiate its service from schooling with reference to children's right to free choice. However, schools also build choice-making and agency support into activity. It is a perversion of child rights thinking to argue that

School Age Care should teach children agentic skills by leaving them alone to make choices in a vacuum of spontaneous play. This implies that children are no different from adults, and that they do not need guidance:

It's a lot of free choice ... that's not something that we go around to each child and say why don't you go do the craft? That's something they know is there. If they're interested, they'll sit down and do it (Coordinator Alice Rintoul).

School Age Care seems deaf to parents' misgivings on this score, ostensibly championing children's right to do what they like, as if they already have full agency:

So often parents will say something like I notice my child's inside a lot, can you get them to do more sport? We say look it's free choice. We can certainly say to them do you want to go do sport but if they say no, we're not going to force them to go do something (Coordinator Alice Rintoul).

Exceptionally, while asserting that education is the responsibility of parents and schools on the one hand, School Age Care also takes the liberty of deciding what children should learn when it suits their needs for an argument:

Because it's about them learning how they want to spend their recreational time and that's a skill they need to have into the future (Coordinator Alice Rintoul).

The suggestion that adult guidance compromises children's agency is a gross injustice to children who depend on the caring adults to which their parents entrust them. Like School Age Care's tacit association of schooling with oppression, the suggestion that School Age Care might relieve perceived deleterious parental impact from dictated regimens of obligations on children is an indictment. Rather than partnering with parents and schools, School Age Care has situated itself as a uniquely undemanding haven, in a role that damages and limits agency, rather than nurturing and supporting it. While reinforcing the political boundary between schooling and care,

School Age Care seeks to obviate the authentic boundary between childhood and adulthood:

Like we don't say to adults when you go home from work, I'd like you to have a structured hobby type activity that you do for an hour and a half and then you can do your work from earlier in the day that you didn't finish, you can do that for an hour and a half and then you can do this and then you can do that. It's not fair to structure people's recreational time (Coordinator Alice Rintoul).

Ultimately, School Age Care also loses children's respect. Children need to be safe, but to suggest it is enough to see children involved in 'something' insults their growing capacity for social and cognitive acumen:

It's about what the kids want to do and as long as they're making safe choices and they're involved in something then that's fine for us (Coordinator Alice Rintoul).

To suggest, equally, that 'just talking' is categorically different from structured activity further illustrates the distance School Age Care is travelling in processing a shift from its insulating 'philosophy' to wraparound:

It doesn't necessarily mean they need to be involved in something structured. It can be just sitting and talking to a friend, that's okay too (Coordinator Alice Rintoul).

### **5.3.13. Literature review: Dropping out.**

Research over more than two decades documents a strong trend towards disengagement in moving to high school presaging dropout (Anderson et al., 2000; Boman & Yates, 2001; Cantin & Boivin, 2004; Chung, Elias & Schneider, 1998; Crockett, Peterseny, Graberz, Schulenberg & Ebatayy, 1989; Gillock & Reyes, 1996; Isakson & Jarvis, 1999; Lord, Eccles & McCarthy, 1994; Newman, Myers, Newman, Lohman & Smith, 2000; Pellegrini & Bartini, 2000; Seidman, Aber, Allen & French, 1996; Tobbell, 2003; Wallis & Barrett, 1998; Williams & Boman, 2002; Yates, 1999;



Zanobini & Usai, 2002). Absenteeism, school resistance, refusal, truancy and dropout comprise a spiral with its origins in early schooling (Alexander, Entwisle & Horsey, 1997; Eccles, Lord & Midgley, 1991). Zabloski and Milacci (2012) argue that dropout among gifted adolescents is squarely attributable to relationship trauma from adult–child interactivity, stretching back to middle childhood. It is a cumulative process of disengagement (Shealy, 2011) that a scale like the Perceived School Experiences Scale (PSES) can identify (Anderson-Butcher, Amorose, Iachini & Ball, 2012). Key to arresting its rate of increase is the cross-boundary cultural awareness that adults can exercise (O’Connell & Freaney, 2011) and the relationship support they can afford young people (Hayes & Chodkiewicz, 2005; Leonard, 2011; Linn, Lewis, Tsuchida & Songer, 2000). The catch-all category, ‘at-riskness’, must be taken back to abstraction (Hopkins, 2011), as early warnings of dropout risk such as poor attendance patterns and basic skills acquisition are easily recognisable (Shealy, 2011). Dropping out of school has complex negative origins that must be differentially averted (Campbell, 2001; Frey et al., 2009). School dropouts must be rescued (Carter & House, 2010; Conner & McKee, 2008; Reio et al., 2009). ‘Dropouts’ impact the quality of the US workforce and cost its economy an estimated \$335 billion over their lifetimes (Lyttle-Burns, 2011).

#### **5.3.14. Literature review: Dropping in.<sup>31</sup>**

Palmar borrows from its auspice youth service its affinity with drop-in models, which themselves are preventive and conform to Choice Theory, favouring fun and freedom among basic needs (Glasser, 1998). Drop-in services seek to reverse the dropout spiral by coaxing adolescents into attendance at centres at which a mix of pop culture time-use choices, including ‘hanging out’ and ‘disco’, are offered, with the hope

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<sup>31</sup> Drop-in programming is included in this review, despite its typology’s main applicability to the 12–24 age group. This is because some children in the sample attended preadolescent services within the larger framework of a drop-in centre; for example, at Palmar, Kentledge and Hoyden.

that children will then, on the basis of positive experiences, become engaged and want to attend regularly (Mercier, Piat, Peladeau & Dagenais, 2000). From an intervention perspective, the drop-in model is a ‘last-ditch’ provision to draw in youth who are otherwise lost from the networks of services for young people. Attendance is a success indicator for drop-in, because these services aim to attract young people away from spaces conducive to risk, such as ‘the street’.

Interestingly, the Mercier et al. (2000, p. 85) study found that, whereas staff felt flexible choice was key to gaining access to youths’ self-efficacy work, adolescents themselves favoured the structured special events held at the centre for their intentionality, close adult–youth interactivity and how they fostered belonging. Whereas motivation is typically sourced to ‘enjoyment’, consensus in scholarly discourse is that challenge facilitates engagement (Abuhamdeh & Csikszentmihalyi, 2012). From an ecology approach, motivation is an agentic operator of boundary processes, compelling children into negotiated relationships. Most known measures of children’s attraction to care settings relate to time-use typologies, with varying attributes of novelty, excitement, populism and entitlement that constitute demands on adults to set increasingly attractive events. Agentic children *form* their interests.

School Age Care in NSW can facilitate informal and experiential knowledge within a learning framework. It is achievable through a ‘productive pedagogies’ approach, which includes formal, informal and experiential ‘funds’ of knowledge within a learning framework (Andrews & Yee, 2006; Rios-Aguilar, Kiyama, Gravitt & Moll, 2011). In a fascinating study of negotiation through cross-boundary tensions, Christianakis (2011) analysed language hybridity with fifth graders who included pop culture in their literacy work. She learned how children’s networks influence and are influenced by formal and rap-literacy within a schooling accountability framework, leading her to recommend

scaffolding children's 'writerly' lives in and out of school through an array of literature facility involving rap, canonical poetry, folk songs and newspapers.

Kuby (2012), too, reports on the continuities among talk and texts across online and home contexts. The sophistication of the child–adult convocation in their boundary-crossing work suggests hybridity potential for reconciling the frustrations of formal learning for children at risk of school dropout. Internet use has also consistently been shown to moderate formal schooling practices (Clark et al., 2009; Finlayson, 2004; Henderson & Honan, 2008; Huffaker, 2003; Jewett, 2011). Teacher trainees required to fulfil community placements learned how to leverage family/community partnering, and through them to engage children in meaningful literacy learning (Brayko, 2013).

Just as relationship building strengthens agency and facilitates learning, so too exclusion from relationships causes disengagement (Clarke & Boorman, 2010; Gasper et al., 2011). Exclusion from school on whatever basis, be it voluntary or the result of disciplinary action, carries more risk than socio-economic, minority or family factors put together (Bloustien & Peters, 2003; Gillock & Reyes, 1996); which is not to diminish their significance: 40 per cent of US Black/Hispanic youths do not graduate (Collins, 2011; Legters & Balfanz, 2010).

**Key Idea:**

Quality of time use can be characterised and monitored from an agency perspective, but a single definition of quality services does not exist, as indicators of quality are determined by a range of culturally based values

An example of locating engagement on the proposed engagement spectrum is in Appendix 3. Children's interpretations of schooling's expectations of them, rather than expectations *per se*, lead children to exclude themselves (Hallinan, 2008). Nationally compatible datasets are needed to illuminate:

- the extent to which children have structured their activity
- the degree to which they are engaged in activity
- the balance of work and play that they experience their activity to involve.

### 5.3.15. Literature review: Evaluating time use.

Quality of time use is a subjective agentic experiential indicator. The validity of quality indicators, based as they are on cultural values, is the perennial subject of research to inform how children are best cared for (Ishimine, Tayler & Bennett, 2010). The quality of children's time use is not systematically evaluated to the same end in this project. However, it is argued that the value distinction between structured and unstructured activity framing much of policy research is invalid. Roberts and Foehr (2004) point to the problematic issues involved in measuring time use. The 'structured' descriptor for School Age Care is simply a generic one, referencing the fixed periods over which the services operate. However, in terms of children's time-use quality, structure has schooling and discipline equivalence. NSW School Age Care philosophises that children's six daily hours of structure should be offset by unstructured play after school.



**Key Idea:**  
Activity is modelled operating in the JAS

However, children do not experience this toggle effect. When a convenience sample from just one high school was asked whether structured or unstructured activity best enhanced motivational factors for identity work, the elicited rich data overwhelmingly favoured structured activity, especially when featuring positive adult–child relationship building. In contrast, about a quarter of respondents expressed disaffection for the skill-building challenges in structured settings with associated competitive factors (Abbott &

Barber, 2007; Eccles & Barber, 1999). It is futile to enter into debate about what proportionality of structured or unstructured time use best serves children's optimal development in the present framework. This is an invalid value distinction. For example, children assessed as low performing are likely to be prescribed highly structured targeted academic skill building. However, the experience of the NCLB initiatives was that 'skill-n-drill' tutoring in non-school time fails to impact long-term learner identity formation. Muschamp et al. (2009) further reinforce why the concept of core and non-core structured activity provision is ecologically unsound.

Yet, conceptualisation of structure on a continuum makes sense. Increasing activity structure generates purposeful, impelling strings of actions with implications for meaning making in social contexts. The collaborative working sphere/engagement boundary between internal and external influences intersects with chronosystem processes to aggregate actions in linear and temporal dimensions. Engeström describes them as evolutionary 'swarms' of 'knotworking'. He defines this as the socially distributed effects of identity outcomes (Flint, 2009, p. 212). Peim's (2009) critique of Engeström's Activity Theory as onto theological in its orientation to activity is balanced in Lemke's (2000) description of interactive groups ('community') combining uniqueness and typicality in their purposes. Lemke points to the variousness of individuation and shared ownership that may be applied to knotworking processes. Similar constructivist impetus is observable in learning pathways in the 'global conversation' among Russian and South African youth that underwrote a real-life neighbourhood project (Schneider-Munoz & Politz, 2007). Braund and Reiss (2006) characterise as 'knowledge exchange' the processes through which learning in different contexts in different relationships is enriched and informed; as such, knowledge cannot be transferred but is, rather, shared as artefacts (Halverson, 2012) through structuring

processes. Engeström's work is an important contribution in a significant research gap on the collaborative character of 'structured' activities that operates engagement (Bohnert, 2006; Weiss, Little & Bouffard, 2005).

In the author's illustration of Halvorsen's concept of working goals, a clear path is indicated from individual to collaborative endeavour. The key 'moment' in this process is a statement made by the individual embedding his or her project's intention in an articulated rationale. Participation in the project may then appeal to other individuals, depending on their own intentions. As a group is formed, its collective resources are engaged in realisation of the intended outcome. The centrality of intent in Halvorsen's conceptualisation of activity as a process resonates with the learning framework that has pertained to Australian School Age Care since 2012.

#### **5.3.16. Field data findings: A spectrum preference over binary descriptors.**

The value of the JAS, developed by the author as the basis for the self-reports by children (see Section 3.8.5 and Figure 5.9), is suggested in the following examples obtained in the field for the present study:

Parents' experience of their after school time is probably very different than their children's (Coordinator Alice Rintoul).

The nostalgia among the affluent parent body in the Asya School Age Care community for childhoods in which children play hopscotch and tag on local streets can be viewed as constructed innocence. Children in the most disadvantaged group in the present study created these 'natural' experiences. However, most children are too urban or affluent to afford them in the present:

We're pretty much across the park ... or down the creek catching lizards or skinks, which is sometimes they do hurt and they bite. Well me and my friend we set up this really big slide. No, we start on our knees ... And you can do like all kind of trick stuff.

I've got out in my backyard, like a slope, and we sat this green tarp and it's like down it I've got a little lip that goes over it, and me and my friends, like we have boogie board, soap ourselves up, use as much soap as we can, soap ourselves up and we get the hose and I put the hose down so it dribbles all the way down and we have soap and we just run down there, just sliding on the soap everywhere and we go up the top and we have boogie boards and we go down there with our boogies boards, ... and we can go flying in the air and we get into this big puddle. When I go on my slide I try and surf down it (Turing Focus Group).

Setting the sentimentality of adults with recollections of such play aside, the present research sought indications from children themselves about what their 'spare' time meant. It was found to vary with context. For example:

I just sit down. Yeah and just relaxing (Camilla).

This is not 'nothing' when explicated in relation to the adjacent activity choices Camilla exercises in a schedule of after-school engagements. 'Nothing' might reference a structure as intentional as meditation or as lacking in structure as a spontaneous moment of pause.

Similarly, Declan's loitering behaviour is accompanied by a boundary object in the shape of a football, connoting socialisation and structured activity. Declan might plot this higher on the JAS (see Figure 5.9) than the idea of 'loitering' suggests because his school experience and football are closely associated. In his free time, Declan connects, if only symbolically, with structured network activity, which lends his walk its meaning:

I only live around the corner from the school, I'll just walk up here. Yeah, up to the school and sit down the bottom at the park. Just kick a footy or something. *Do you meet other people there?* No. But the football's always handy to have to take with you (Declan).

Likewise, what might be redolent of boredom is brimming with meaningful network associations and learning:

I usually take my slingshot and go outside the back and get all these like—there are green seeds and they are like that big and I shoot them out the back (Dorothy).

Engagement in such play involves contextual factors. For example, Dorothy's special toy, a slingshot, is treasured for its significance as a symbol of valued relationships. The slingshot was made for Dorothy by a neighbour Dorothy experienced as caring. Her father, no longer present, taught her how to use it. Further:

Like me and my friends normally talk like about anything. ... normally we just walk around and we just keep on talking while we walk. We just talk about—sometimes if we have sleepovers, we talk about that ... and we go down like, down to the bridge and catch some lizards for 10 minutes and we go get all our friends we can find and all that, and we organise a big game of hide and go seek (Turing Focus Group).

The cascade of activity a group of children named when asked: '*So what do you do after school?*' amply illustrates the diverse, cross-contextual, socialising, skilled, cognitively challenging, creative, recreational and obligatory mix of time uses that came to mind with reference to the typically School Age Care time frame:

I eat stuff and I do art and I play on the computer and I watch TV and I do everything. I play on the computer. I listen to music. Guitar. I go on the computer. Watch TV. Netball ... and go on my Wii. I do guitar. I do netball. I do dancing. .. play with my phone. I mostly play with my cat ... Do my job—like take out the garbage or do shopping. Play my DS. And if I'm really bored I would probably just read a book or try and sleep (Dornet Focus Group).



### **5.3.17. Literature review: An engagement spectrum.**

As children reach preadolescence, their increasing interdependence invites a broadening of time-use values (Jans, 2004; Levison, 2000; O'Brien, Jones, Sloan & Rustin, 2005). It is proposed that children resist or pursue activity on a bi-axial structure–attendance continuum. For example, unstructured ‘hanging out’ near a waterway can ultimately lead a child to seek out increasingly structured activity projects, with increasing engagement, in the gap between his or her curiosity and formal learning (Burston, 2008; Gewertz, 2008); or he or she may just be bored (Eastwood, Frischen, Fenske, & Smilek, 2012).

Lankoski (2011) models some mechanics of engagement in arguing that motivation in e-games rests on absorption of avatar/character goals, not personality or appearance factors. Fredricks’s taxonomy organises aspects of engagement in behavioural, emotional and cognitive categories. This draws on Brophy’s (2008) work on classroom practices that motivate students:

Engagement reflects a desire to move beyond characteristics that are unchangeable to contextual factors that are malleable and responsive to change (Fredricks, 2011, p. 327).

Adolescents reported the least engagement in formal schooling contexts but said they were most engaged in ‘structured’ activity to which they could subscribe voluntarily (Larson, Hansen & Moneta, 2006; Larson & Verma, 1999; Larson, 2000; Shernoff & Csikszentmihalyi, 2009; Shernoff, Csikszentmihalyi, Schneider & Shernoff, 2003). A broader range of discontinuities across school/non-school contexts should be investigated before conclusions can be drawn on the incompatibility of ‘structure’ and informality.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Note that these are not dichotomous; structure is a spectrum.

Children in alternative education benefited from collaborative activity planning with teachers in classrooms on issues that mattered to them, demonstrating that attention (Eastwood et al., 2012), rather than context and structure, is the arbiter of beneficial time use (Watson, 2011). Fredricks (2011) concedes as much, in spite of her context-centric position:

Student engagement is higher in classrooms where tasks are ... challenging. Autonomy is also critical to engagement. ... [children] need to play an active role in constructing knowledge (p. 331).

**Key Idea:**

Where a child situates herself on the attendance spectrum reflects the quality of her experience

These studies, in which discontinuities are illuminated at the schooling boundary, present an invitation to School Age Care for cross-boundary mediation of activity engagement.

The chronosystem operators of networks and learning transform attendance into engagement (Wimer et al., 2008). At-risk, disadvantaged and minority children benefit most from engagement with efficacious programs (Valladares & Ramos, 2011; Weiss et al., 2005; Weitzman, Mijanovich, Silver & Brazill, 2008). Middle school students in a US study were found less likely to engage in substance use if they attended an after-school program (Alter et al., 2007). However, the study does not identify what operations in time use were salient for this outcome. Nargiso, Friend and Florin (2013) found that Seventh Grade girls experiencing poor family relationships were at risk of initiating alcohol use. Worse, feedback from children, where it is sought, is limited to what they enjoyed. Common sense dictates that frequency and longevity of participation

in structured out-of-school activity moderates impact. Wikeley et al. (2009) focus on quality adult–child relationships that keep vulnerable children involved over time.

Mahoney, Stattin and Magnusson (2001, p. 517) found that where children attend care centres on a ‘drop-in’ model in which adult supervision is low in intentionality, activity is unstructured (for example, ‘hang out’) and children do not build their skills, children are more likely to develop anti-social behaviour and delinquent affiliation patterns. Norms of child practices should be framed to characterise factors contributing to children plotting their participation at the engagement end of the spectrum.

Fredricks’s model (2011, p. 331) of what engaging contexts look like is helpful. When agentic children encounter challenge, they may not imply an appeal to adults to intervene or rescue. However, commonplace claims of listening to children’s voices without incorporating feedback from them are much more discordant (Reynaert et al., 2009).

### **5.3.18. Literature review: A play–work cycle.**

I’m one of the few people who understands ... how producing something artistic takes real discipline (Steve Jobs, in Isaacson, 2011).

Across a range of cultures, children’s engagement in work is normative (Beers, 2005; Eaton & Silva, 1998; Larson & Verma, 1999; Libório, 2010; MacKinnon, 2003; Medforth, 2004; Meyers, 1999; Miljetieg, 2005; Morrow, 2005; Shumow, Smith & Smith, 2009; Woodhead, 1999). The definition of work adopted in this study is ‘any activity that produces transferable use value and/or produces human capital’ (Levey, 2009, p. 197). In these terms, childhood is largely about work. Lawson and Lawson (2013) are calling for research on engagement in an ecology systems framework to discover how children synchronise psychosocial constructs across childhood contexts in the process. A theoretical continuum of activity characteristics from play to work

helpfully deconstructs the tension that exists between adult-framed ‘silo’ classifications of activity (a work/play dichotomy) and how children experience imagination, experimentation, rehearsal, competence, commitment and performance in iterative cycles of play–work activity, collectively characterised as perseverance (Padilla-Walker et al., 2013).

This study proposes the use of a play–work cycle to identify and characterise task characteristics (typified as activity ‘content’). Levey (2009) argues that children’s activities in structured contexts create value that is transferable to subsequent productive undertakings. In other words, work can be play in a motivation framework, deployed to obtain and retain children’s engagement. Australian School Age Care has offered play as its key affordance to date, framed it as an end in itself, and as the antithesis of work (especially schooling). At the same time, play is formulated as an existential right and expression of evanescent ‘natural’ childhood. New links that are made with intentional learning agendas in the policy framework introduced in January 2012 are expected to affect this dystopian position (DEEWR, 2011).

Parents in Levey’s (2009) qualitative study, whether engaging their children in beauty contest preparation in one group, or in Kumon maths tutoring in another, were unanimous that they were supporting their children’s future productivity. Conceptualisations of ‘work’ are socio-culturally conditioned. For example, Wærdahl and Haldar (2013) contrast 6-year-old Chinese children’s learning styles with those of their Norwegian counterparts who learn through play. Levey (2009, p. 210) argues that the way parents talk about what their children are doing defines the work of children. Tasks are most helpfully located on a play–work cycle by children themselves to give subjectively meaningful reflections of their experience.

### 5.3.19. Literature review: The play–work cycle is operated by engagement.

**Key Idea:**

Work and play are on the activity spectrum across generation boundaries

School Age Care frames the imaginary space in which children escape from schooling, discipline, prescription and compulsion in play. This is apparent in the following example from field data:

I could say in a cooking activity, it's about measuring, it's about how we combine the ingredients, why we put yeast and things—there's all those sort of educational lessons. But if we set it up in an educational environment and educational format, then it's work for the kids. So we learn through play and that's part of why [School Age Care] is different than school (Coordinator Alice Rintoul).

The confusion is that cooking is not a school-excluding activity, and is not definitively play. It is a cycle operated by engagement—what Bronk (2012) calls commitment to a purpose—which children are capable of from a very young age. In this paradigm, there is a concomitant difference between adult and child experiences and classification along the 'structure' spectrum. In School Age Care statutory protocol, 'structure' references scheduled periods in which resources are made available to children under controlled conditions. Structure in this sense is simply a descriptor for care servicing, or a reference, for example, to formal classroom activity. However, from the standpoint of child agency, structure is an experiential function of fluctuating engagement.

The agentic child is active across the play–work cycle, adjusting the degree of activity structure relative to where he or she positions him or herself on the attendance–engagement spectrum. For example, a stimulus or artefact may inspire an initial imaginative response that evolves through participation into a level of engagement that

suggests creating a scenario, object or game. Manifesting the product of this process requires work. Children might pick up fallen plant material in a wooded place, with which they then build a model hut. That is a project requiring the work of planning, organisation, collaboration, commitment and competence. Use and exhibition of the product comprises its evaluation, and creates the conditions for a new cycle of activity (Halverson, 2008). At any stage on this trajectory, children may drop out of the process, but its potential realisation in productivity is nevertheless not obviated. Appropriate adult mentoring can guide this realisation to children's satisfaction, especially from gains in competency and relationship (Bull, 2011; Huntsdale, 2009). Children are better at digital than print literacy because technology engages them (Halverson, 2010a, 2010b; Thomson et al., 2011). This is especially so when significant adults share their tacit assumption that they are continuous (Bulfin & Koutsogiannis, 2012; de Almeida et al., 2012).

#### **5.3.20. Literature review: Using analytic methodology as a tool for working with preadolescent children.**

The 'lead' value of data obtained from the engagement spectrum resides in its applicability for activity planning or 'programming', in processes that accord with the perspective of Shafto, Goodman and Frank (2012) that the goals and activities of experienced significant adults operate knowledge generation (learning) in individuals. The new policy's focus on 'learning' omits to specify what children will learn. Learning objectives, after all, are ubiquitous in schooling agendas, and it is perhaps out of respect for schooling that objectives of non-school learning are left vague. However, learning cannot be aimless.

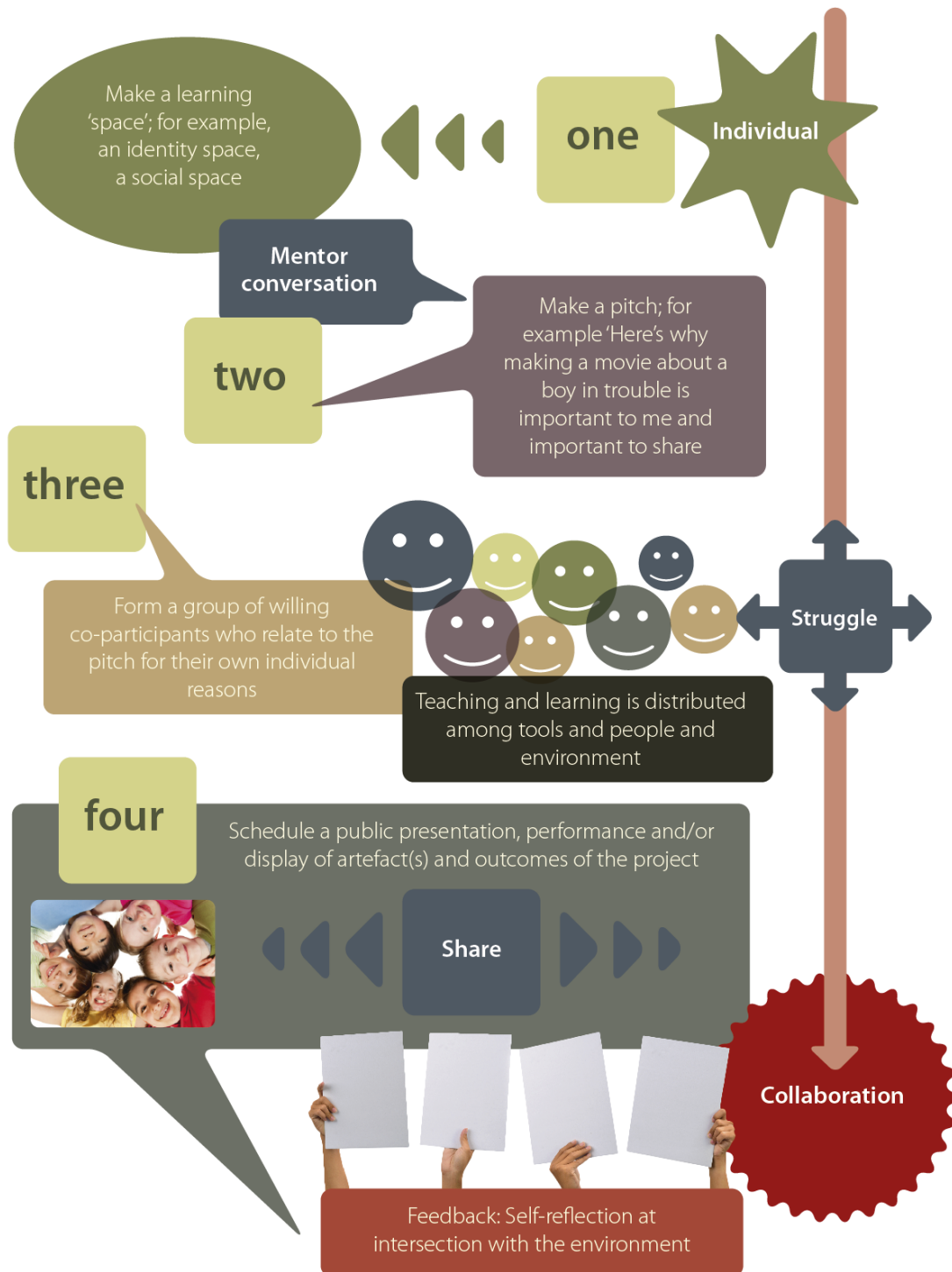


Figure 5.16. Adaptation of Halverson’s (2012) working goals, to be operationlaised in adult–child relationship building.

This study is indebted to Halverson's ground-breaking development of a multimodal tool for articulating what children choose to learn and structuring how they choose to express it (Halverson, 2012; Halverson, Bass & Woods, 2012). Her contextual frame is the participatory culture of contemporary childhoods, characterised by an easy entry threshold given adult-child mentorship, sharing and relevance to identity formation. An example of its application is in Figure 6.1. Figure 5.17 presents an adaptation of the work of Halverson, for use in adult-child relationship building.

The planning tool is characterised by exploiting key moments along a purposive trajectory that culminates in public performance and/or display. Children volunteer to engage with significant adults (mentors) to operationalise each of four sequentially dependent working goals. The first is to create a space for learning. The second requires the child to make a case to the child-adult community for the learning project. The third involves forming an 'affinity group'. The fourth is the presentation, performance and/or display of the activity processes expressed in artefacts that are meaningful to the carefully considered case that each child made for his or her project.

### **5.3.21. Summary of section 5.3**

In this section, the quality of children's time use has been problematised. Indicators of quality were proposed to be reflective of culturally based values and distinct social contexts. Prior to the introduction of new quality standards, School Age Care typically quarantined its services within a 'play' framework. The present approach does not denigrate play. On the contrary, it has reframed play in chronosystem dynamics, relativising it on a spectrum between extremes of just being (Network of Community Activities, 2011a) and the culmination of engagement in productivity. Accordingly, it has been argued that time use in School Age Care should be guided by a system model



that supports the development of meaningful interests. In Chapter 6 best practice recommendations are made to facilitate the mechanics of building meaningful time use choices. This section has also linked the data and implications to construct the rationale for modelling trajectories in activity engagement as progressive locations on the author's JAS. This is a single tool for children to use in planning, describing and evaluating time-use-quality indicators. It is also applicable for use by educators.

The JAS repositions the role of play in the informal sites of learning that now define School Age Care services. In this model, the idea of 'learning through play' is unpacked and reframed. Play is a context for engagement in activity, but so is work; the difference between them is one of socio-cultural perspective. It is undisputed that School Age Care should not deny children the right to play. It is enshrined in child rights protocols. However, the present argument extends far beyond this fundamental access, to query how play relates to learning, and how learning affects the purposes of play along trajectories of increasing engagement in chosen time use. This argument addresses the outcomes of learning through play relative to learning through other contextual dynamics, among which skill building, task completion and network affiliation are also profoundly transformational. Together, they afford rich pathways of learning how to form an identity that is framed and defined by becoming a learner. Informal School Age Care settings, situated as they are between home and school, have a degree of unrealised potential to facilitate children in learning to be life-long learners by scaffolding their identity work based on this goal.

Successful scaffolding involves building appropriately resourced adult-child communities of interests, in which the inspirations and purposes in play change with changing qualities of engagement. These trajectories can be expressed and developed through various contextual processes, including work as task completion, study, and

mentored skill building. Indeed no activity context that can be facilitated in School Age Care should be ruled out as a vehicle for building learner identity. Self-reporting is the first proposed step towards knowing the meanings children accord their time use. This knowledge must inform program planning if it is to be effective. It may guide description of planned task characteristics. Children may use the JAS to plot where they consider their activity is situated at the intersection of engagement and structure. They can mark the stages of projects, and date them to provide a record of the process involved in attaining to a product, performance or display.

The JAS is a significant outcome of the conceptual pathway pursued in this thesis. Among the operants of childhood contexts essential for self-righting, choosing how time is to be spent is the most basic and practical of judgements to make in the capacity of a learner. In their judgements, children who are effective agents for their interests allow for possibilities in uniqueness, individuality and originality in their choices as these emerge and consolidate. This is a fundamental self-righting skill. Sound judgement is predictive of the potential intensity of engagement and the potential degree of fulfilment to be gained from it. These comprise the basis of self-righting decisions.

#### **5.4. Conclusion: Chapter 5**

In this chapter about the chronosystem processes that operationalise childhood contexts, the impacts of network affiliation, learning and choice of time use have been illuminated to deconstruct their implications for 'quality' School Age Care. Scholarly discourse pertaining to learning, socialisation and activities was distilled by constant comparison with field data, and has been discussed alternately with it, guided by Grounded-Theory principles, to articulate a child-centric perspective on the key processes involved in learner identity formation. These processes are identified in the author's theoretical chronosystem, conceptualised as orbiting the collective cone-shaped

core of childhood contexts. This catalysing, dynamic system reframes the characteristics and outcomes of ‘content’ in School Age Care affordances. It does so from a standpoint of respect for children’s competence to self-right, so that the challenges implicit in child agents identifying themselves as learners are made transparent. All the key signposts presented in ‘callouts’ in this chapter have been compiled as a summary below, to state what trajectories of self-righting might look like, as applied in School Age Care.

The importance this thesis has attached to building an effective adult–child social network is in part signalled in affiliation issues being prioritised in the order of sections. Affiliation has been explicated to persuade of its foundational role in learning. The thesis argues that learning occurs at the intersection of relationship and experience. This means that learning is a response to need. The identity work involved in becoming a learner can be constrained or enabled depending on the quality of the relationships among children in peer groups and, even more critically, the quality of adult–child interactivity. Both children and the adults participating in School Age Care need to form productive communities in which the generational power differentials between them are mediated, so that interdependent relationships can flourish.

The section on learning compared how learning in different social contexts is differentially legitimated. As schooling on its own has been proven insufficient to deliver a knowledge economy, it was argued that children must have all their learning acknowledged in whichever context it was generated. Significantly for a wraparound approach, the values that children associate with non-school activity are also meaningful in schooling frameworks and echo values that schools support. The thesis proposes a third alternative between playing and formal schooling by arguing that children in School Age Care need more than ‘more of school’. Instead, ‘productive pedagogies’, which include formal, informal and experiential ‘funds’ of knowledge within a learning

framework, are advocated, and each setting in which children work, play and learn should be linked. Moreover, the currently undervalued status of School Age Care could be reversed if partnerships are formed among other systems, especially schooling.

In Section 5.3, concepts of play and the ‘natural’ child in their various forms are balanced by the argument that effectively agentic children have learned to negotiate intentionally for their interests. Effective time use is facilitated by long-term goals that can be set in such negotiation. Children need to learn to respect all their peers and the adults involved in activity events in School Age Care.

The field data findings suggest that children’s awareness of time is linked with the values they accord their experiences of activities. Busyness, flexibility in task trajectories, socialising interactions and leveraging technologies are examples. In the field, children valued activity expressive of cultural identity, as well as long-term projects in adult–child partnership in the arts. By comparison, parents’ values drew on nostalgia for lost community and regret of childhood commodification. These values are contextualised in a middle-class appreciation of traditional play over the childhoods their own children actually experience. Poor children, such as those attending Turing, may still be seen at the local creek, but the same trajectories that lift them out of poverty are accompanied by geographies and time use that ultimately draw play into broader spheres relating to the learning they afford, particularly through networks of significant adult mentors.

The field data predicts some key characteristics of activity practices that hold meaning for children. One is having long-term program goals, such as at Kentledge. Another is to understand the mechanisms operating the habituation of respect for all parties involved in events as a learned and consciously taught skill, also exemplified at Kentledge. The values-data obtained in the field is sparse and unsystematic and

demonstrates by a small set of instances the valuable potential of accumulating data about children's time-use values for future research to guide best practice.

In an adult-centric perspective, it makes sense that services cannot extend their charter beyond their skills and resources. For this reason, providing space for children's views is important. The premise of the present study is that School Age Care shares responsibility for fostering children's learner identity formation. The practice and research implications of shared goals preoccupy the conclusions derived in Chapter 6. The shift to new standards in quality care promises to meet this responsibility. Meanwhile, more than 50,000 individuals each year (NSW Government Department of Education and Communities, 2010) are taking for themselves the agentic role otherwise denied them, and are dropping out of school (Aaltonen, 2012).

## Chapter 6. Implications

The field data for this study were generated a full year before the introduction of the new policy document, *My Time, Our Place* (DEEWR, 2011). Although outcomes are not yet apparent, implementation is expected to affect School Age Care practices positively in time. The new policy presages an adaptive, as opposed to procedural, shift of priorities in the School Age Care ‘mission’. This will require process-based change to affect the difference between facilitating parents’ workforce participation and focusing services’ priorities on children’s best interests.

### 6.0. Introduction

This is the first scholarly investigation of preadolescents in School Age Care in NSW based on their testimony about their discretionary time use and their valuation of it. Its ‘theory-into-practice’ orientation addresses practical issues and problems in preadolescent care, and provides provisional solutions for those problems. These are presented in Sections 6.2 and 6.3 within the present chapter.

The outcome of this investigation amounts to a challenge of current practices in the contexts that preadolescents habituate, specifically School Age Care. The conclusions drawn are grounded in children’s knowledge, and contrasted, underscored or enhanced through adult commentary, which is also the key contextualising and trustworthiness element.

Three media through which learner identity formation is accomplished were targeted for generating knowledge of issues that pertain at the transformative intersection of the schooling boundary. The most readily observed of these was the School Age Care setting. In addition, children’s time-use values were interrogated. Thirdly, wellbeing and its disconnects were analysed in a ‘self-righting’ trajectory frame. These media are

mutually influential and of equal thematic status. The professional practice/theoretical research boundary lends complexity and contradictions to this knowledge. The outcomes of the study are evolved understandings about the socio-cultural dimensions of children's time-use values. Generational collaboration is found to be the sovereign condition of wellbeing. Sovereignty comprises the individual liberty and self-ownership of children and pursuit of their own integrity, identity and values.

The study inducts trustworthy understandings about the care needs of NSW preadolescents in the context of their imminent transition to high school. The thematically structured interpretive work is exploratory from the perspective of its situation within a dearth of research specifically on this topic, but is contextualised in a professional and practice frame. It has emancipatory intent, drawing attention to real-life deficits in School Age Care that work against the best interests of preadolescent children. It is also grounded in agentic child perspectives, reflected through multidimensional systems that condition and constrain agency.

The theory building and findings that have been drawn from this investigation point to practical strategies for looking after, and engaging, older children in non-school settings. Examples of how a number of the proposed strategies may be implemented illustrate the goals of this thesis and validate its premises. The need for rapid, widespread and systematic adoption of change in the care of preadolescents in NSW is acute (NSW Parliamentary Joint Committee on Children and Young People, 2009a; DEEWR, 2011). Children's services are currently challenged to transform the quality of preadolescents' time-use. Older children need skill to form an integrated identity.

The transition to high school and adolescence requires complex negotiation across a range of environments in the context of emergent identity. It is here suggested that differentiated programs based on children's self-reported interests facilitate these skills.

Cross-context partnership resources can be leveraged to this end. ACECQA<sup>33</sup> is mandated to analyse the problems surrounding School Age Care, form new policy and evaluate its implementation. For care services, adopting new strategies can be complex and difficult, particularly across the loose networks of care organisations in NSW. However, this thesis concludes by offering some examples of simple tools that may help children to take charge of their time use based on raised awareness about the values they place on their interests. These examples may also prompt the initiation of child-centric, universal databases with both ‘lag’ and ‘lead’ applicability.

### **6.1. Section 1: Findings**

This study aimed to obtain children’s insights relevant to School Age Care discourses in NSW. These concern how children of different ages value time use, the need for differentiated programming suited to preadolescents and the implications for time use provision of transition to high school.

Responding to these aims, the study makes four propositions as its original contribution to research. These were arrived at by analysing multi-sourced data from a child-centric perspective in a theoretical eco-social frame linking all the contexts in which children are active. Interpreting the delineations of these contexts as boundary processes rather than fixed demarcations facilitated proposals challenging ‘silo-thinking’ about each of these contexts. Their significance was accordingly reconfigured as mutually influential, implying critique of macro-contextual hierarchies, especially in relation to schooling. Finally, the thesis considered children’s competence in terms of the agency they have learned to exercise. This led to proposing links between competence and identity formation.

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<sup>33</sup> The Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA)



### **6.1.1. Statement of findings.**

The findings contribute to knowledge by eliciting children's perceptions from a perspective that situates child agency outside the rights agenda and in the domain of competency. As such, agency is reframed from an attribute into a skill and a learned process, transforming it into something teachable. Collaboration on the project of forging power relations into mutually negotiated empowerment is the facilitative generational role in trust that School Age Care embodies.

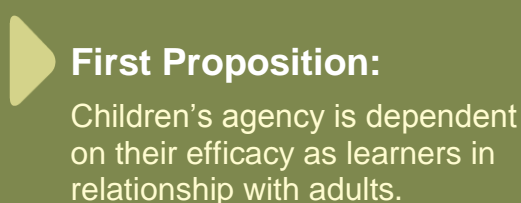
The study makes a further contribution by proposing schooling transition as a boundary process in an ecology framework that may be mediated across non-school contexts. In this relational paradigm, the argument for bridging the discontinuous cultures of primary and high schools from a wraparound perspective is persuasive. Boundary tensions are proposed resolvable by mediating education pathways modelled on the principles that founded 'productive pedagogies'.

The high needs of preadolescent children from disadvantaged, minority and Indigenous groups are shown as variously moderated in the different care settings of the present study. This contributes insight into the practical challenges that confront implementation of best-practice intent, not the least of which is resource impoverishment. Accounts by individual children of their struggles to reconcile their cultural and socio-economic circumstances with identifying as learners provides original contributions to knowledge about the mechanics in care settings that operate disadvantage and disenfranchisement. These accounts go far beyond signalling material poverty as enacting exclusion, especially because they are juxtaposed with care workers' commentaries.

Finally, the study contributes an important reinterpretation of time use as a function of the structure and engagement that define task characteristics. This inverts the

rationale typical of School Age Care program planning, in which activities are offered based on their short-term entertainment value, popularity, occupational and behaviour control value, novelty value for recruiting participants, and qualification as ‘play’. The understandings distilled from children’s reflections in the present study are that they value growth and challenge over entertainment and short-burst, goalless play. This knowledge contributes a new way for practitioners and researchers alike to approach both planning and evaluation, informed by children’s self-reports of engagement rather than by their vote on programs’ ‘fun’ ratings. Children can be taught how to derive benefit and pleasure from the uses to which they put their time when they can articulate for themselves the satisfaction correlative with the engagement, structure, work and play that comprise experience. These implications of child-generated knowledge that informs contributions to practice are presented in Sections 6.2 and 6.3, below.

In response to its aims, the study makes four propositions as its original contribution to research. These are discussed below.



**First Proposition:**  
Children’s agency is dependent on their efficacy as learners in relationship with adults.

The apical child-centred model highlights the subjectivity of transition experiences, which fits with findings that children’s internalisation of transition strategies forms the basis of their identity formation in expanded socio-geographic contexts. Loss, typically understood as achievement decline, is symptomatic of an impoverished experiential repertoire across contexts of learning. Some children fear entering a new learning culture; others anticipate continuity. Some have insight into adaptive issues; others have no concept of dimensional change. Not all children are affected by anxieties about

academic challenge. For the child unhappy in primary school who looks to transition as an escape conduit, adaptation is projected to be especially problematic, as prior conflicted identity processes have not been resolved. For these reasons, the prevention and intervention typically programmed at the beginning of Year 7 is not considered helpful. Rather, long-term, holistic, child-centred relationship support in adult–child networks across sector boundaries is recommended. Transition success inheres in the resources children build to support their own wellbeing by making efficacious choices.

Where children are empowered to exercise their agency, it is highly consequential to know how individuals seek growth and challenge, because it is this energy, and not externally imposed trajectories, that holds the key to the development of the interests upon which all learning is predicated. It is shown that in the NSW School Age Care settings in the study, professional practice is subject to conceptualisations and political priorities obstructive of child-agentic activity practices. Yet it is also evident that the children in the sample are competent to discern the mechanisms operating ‘structured’ time use that are responsible for positive learner identity effects. Reiterant emphasis on socialisation skills in children’s testimonies points to the import of relationship building in care settings over a typology approach to task characteristics in time use (Csikszentmihalyi & LeFevre, 1989). Orientation towards active convocation among care workers, primary and secondary teachers, families and communities is exemplified in the Kentledge and Hoyden School Age Care settings.

The School Age Care model is most successfully able to integrate care and education in that the community of the school effectively brokers partnerships with families and is able to leverage its welfare role to appeal to wider stakeholders, such as the local high school, with uneven success. The cultures of potential partners, especially in high schools, prejudice efficacious team efforts to overcome boundary

discontinuities. On the one hand, schools may not be habituated to systems of individualising care and learning, and they may know little about the individuals in the Year 7 intake. On the other, their response to maladaptation tends to be punitive for individuals.

On this basis, development of cross-context partnerships leverages the benefits of generational processes, supporting preadolescents to attain and sustain their learner identity across the high school boundary.

**Second Proposition:**

Conflicted tensions at the high school transition boundary express the hegemony of schooling in childhood contexts.

The historically determined education/care dichotomy accounts for NSW School Age Care having quarantined its affordances in a ‘play’ framework, leaving schooling’s hegemony unchallenged. School Age Care is ecologically situated in a mediating position, between family processes that serve, and are conditioned by, schooling and children’s time use between school and home.

School Age Care has a mediating potential for integrating the disparate systems and processes that together constitute a child’s education. Learning occurs in all the contexts that children inhabit. Schooling is hegemonic, but it does not ensure that life-paths in formal learning systems are the inevitable heritage of those who subsume their cumulative knowledge and skills to its ideals.

Peer affiliation was found as indicative of holistic wellbeing issues across these boundaries as generational network activity. School Age Care can mediate the dissolution of friendships, and it can support children in effective Internet socialisation

that benefits their learning and relationship building skill. Where there is family pressure to disassociate with friends perceived as deleterious to a child's behaviours and inclinations, School Age Care can afford the supportive agentic work to both parties that Thomas and Bowker (2013) point out is sorely needed to avert the damaging impact of exclusion. Supportive adults in children's networks facilitate peer friendships. While the concept of learner identity formation is familiar within ecology thinking, it does not enjoy currency in School Age Care contexts.

Transition involves the convergence of multiple changes, with implications for self-actualisation, evolving life-stage roles, networks and resilience. It is a process necessitating the moderation of risks. Evidence continues to mount that in NSW, nine to 14-year-olds with high levels of need are vulnerable to failure in negotiating change tensions at intersecting system boundaries. School transition involves adaptation to competitive socio-cultural environments, in which teaching and learning may become discontinuous, with negative impacts on academic self-perception.

Children who are challenged in forming networks are especially vulnerable to social isolation and bullying in high school. Yet the findings show that teachers are often not available to provide support, and that some children, already having lost the potentially supportive continuity of School Age Care connectedness six weeks before making the transition to high school, further isolate themselves; in some cases, to focus solely on achievement based on potentially unrealistic assessments of high school expectations. These strategies can be costly for learner identity formation.

Although the transition to high school is universally acknowledged at each site to be critical for continuing engagement with schooling and future life-choices, there is a perception among adults in most of these care communities that school-related issues are outside the scope of their services. Further, low participation rates among

preadolescents are attributed to factors typically inherent in pre-teen attitudes, rather than to service quality.

At Kentledge and Turing, adult mentors perform a bridging role by maintaining relationships with ex-participants. As one participant at Kentledge commented appreciatively, ‘You can’t leave [Coordinator Gillian Kent]’. Both these services are embedded in their neighbourhood context. Whereas Kentledge engages a high school student to co-facilitate dance activities, at other centres, Coordinators were out of touch with former participants and unaware of issues that might concern their sixth grade children’s anticipation of transition. Many children were fearful of bullying and anxious for peer support. Lack of wraparound convocation across schooling and care sectors is evidenced in punishment by teachers, bullying by peers, drastic decline in test scores and a curriculum at early-grade elementary level in the experience of one Year 7 preadolescent. Primary schools seem powerless to liaise productively with high schools.

Children in the sample demonstrated that their discretionary time use was influential in moderating cross-boundary learning processes through socialisation in activity practices. These processes critically affect long-term pathways beyond high school transition. It is through this logic that the study proposes high school transition risk threats as principally adaptive in nature.

**Third Proposition:**

Preadolescent affordances of government-subsidised support in School Age Care are limited by historic epistemological and resource constraints, failing high-need children.

In the universally imposed transition to high school, issues of adjustment, like behaviour problems, are foreseeable. It is a change involving adaptation to new cultures,

yet preadolescents are met with largely practical help in short-burst procedural support. At best, vulnerable children receive ‘dosages’ (Harvard Family Research Project, 2004) of developmental support, focused to prevent their making choices that adults predict are hazardous. Children’s adaptive identity challenges go unmet. Children are mostly left to bridge their discontinuous experience through non-school factors, some of which lead to disillusionment and isolation.

Many children in the sample were ready to leave primary school. However, their acculturation experiences did not promise a supported learner experience. Agentic children are less susceptible to disillusionment. Those fortunate enough to have engaged in adaptive transition support over the year or two before high school were appreciative of building on their evolving learner status to bridge discrepant learning cultures. Those without an experience of adaptive support found the academic discrepancies they encountered intolerable. High schools are often less personal than are primary schools. However, resilient children are able to articulate the complexity of their compulsions and disaffections, of growing up while being ‘dumbed down’, of fearing teenagers while confident in their own networks, and of choosing where grade point averages fit in a holistic identity process towards rewarding learner access to full participation in social life.

The study confirms that School Age Care is so undervalued, and therefore so impoverished, in NSW that it cannot fulfil its potential, and essential, mediation role with preadolescents. This paucity condemns services to alienate the preadolescent cohort, despite the statutory right of all primary school children to access government-subsidised supportive care. At Hoyden, Kentledge and Turing, convocation with school personnel was found to enhance and enrich care affordances.

Based on this evidence, it is proposed that School Age Care embodies only potential assets to preadolescents. Such provisions are of critical support value for negotiating the long-term sustainability of school retention across the high school boundary.



#### **Fourth Proposition:**

The value children accord their time use illuminates their agentic competencies for identity formation.

Where services have short-term goals and high staff turnover, quality adult–child relationships do not have a chance to develop, because the structures of activity events communicate that agreements and expectations are meaningless and unreliable. Based on the importance of networks to children’s ‘self-righting’, it is logical that care contexts should prioritise the quality of adult–child relationship building in their program planning. This implies that the novel, one-off session planning to entertain and occupy children typically observed in School Age Care may overlook the key value that children’s structured time use should afford.

Findings in the present study framework are that children’s interests are not best served by time use that is constrained within an activity typology conceptualised as ‘play’. The study concludes that engagement in activity is more usefully indicative of how children’s interests can be facilitated, whatever they may be. It was found that because children seek growth and challenge, they are motivated by their interests to incorporate play in social processes with the purpose of generating new knowledge and developing their skills. Consequently, it is proposed that play be reframed on a continuum of activity practices that culminates in the post-industrial Western conceptualisation of ‘work’.



### **6.1.2. Interpretation.**

The interpretive framework of the study, conceived as exploratory in a research ‘gap’, necessarily precludes the return of unexpected findings. There were no hypotheses, although the researcher’s prior practical knowledge and attainments in the field of education confessedly prejudice her standpoint that all contemporary children in post-industrial societies need a robust learner identity for wellbeing. No findings contradicted this standpoint. Where findings differ from previous research, they relate to discordant paradigmatic logic, especially in developmental psychology, where the relativity of interdependent systems is discontinuous with dyadic ways of interpreting childhood experience. One significant example of this may be found in transition to adolescence increasing reliance on adult–child relationships (for example Ashbourne & Daly, 2010; Fredricks, 2011; Garbarino et al., 1978), whereas developmental disciplines emphasise an autonomy trajectory (Altermatt, 2011; Baron et al., 2012; Bjarnason, Gudmundsson & Olafsson, 2011; Brown, 2004; Brownell & Gifford-Smith, 2003).

Another example is the discontinuity between wraparound support of children and less helpful prevention/intervention models, such as short-term focus on identified deficits. This involves the difference between the reflexive value of experience and a linear evaluation of time use. Duncheon and Tierney (2013) theorise that the new phenomenon of virtual time brings this dichotomous temporal reality into sharp focus.

#### *Strengths.*

The strengths of the study come from its focus on investigating discretionary time-use issues from many children’s perspectives using qualitative methodology.

Specifically, this study:

1. problematises the silo status of NSW School Age Care services to demonstrate that all childhood contexts are mutually influential, implying the need for School Age Care to partner with stakeholders in childhood;
2. observes and interrogates children about School Age Care experiences *in situ* at multiple sites in communities comprising a broad range of socio-economic wellbeing, to demonstrate how diverse their needs are and implying that differentiated planning in School Age Care is paramount;
3. incorporates a range of differently funded and governed School Age Care provisions in site selection to obtain a theoretical sample, and demonstrate different approaches in NSW School Age Care, implying the need for adaptation in best practice;
4. interrogates individual School Age Care services' philosophical interpretations of statutory policy principles to illustrate links between these principles and their interpretation, the implication being that compliance is insufficient to ensure quality;
5. mounts a discourse-supported challenge that preadolescents need adult-child relationships more than ever as they approach the school-change boundary, to demonstrate generational interdependency, implying School Age Care's potential for facilitating continuity of stable networks;
6. proposes a child-generated database of engagement indices based on the author-developed JAS (see Section 3.8.5 and Figure 5.9). The evolution of the definition of terms informing the logic of the JAS is tabulated in Appendix 3. The significance of this model and self-assessment tool resides in its resonance with the development of child-centric awareness of quality

time use, implying children's agentic right and capacity to make their own choices.

### **6.1.3. Methodology operators: Harnessing chronosystem dynamics.**

The order of field events enhanced data generation. Face-to-face interviews with Coordinators occurred ahead of children's field events, averting potential influences from reactions to children's contributions. The duration of these interviews was effectively guided by Coordinators' and the Turing Principal's interest in exhausting particular topics to saturation from their perspectives, suggesting a hierarchy of 'benchmark' issues against which children's perceptions could be elicited. Grounded-Theory should work this way.

The Workshop event at each site successfully introduced the concepts of time use in an informal group session that was experienced as fun, noisy and relaxed. Not only did this event achieve a detailed portrait of the sample from attributes elicited in the survey; the 'My Week' charts also constituted a non-threatening means of stimulating the 10-to-12 year-olds to think abstractly about time and its meaning. Much talk and busy comparison of chart design filled each session. Apart from the valuable data that they provided the study, the workshops socialised children around ideas they could later elaborate on verbally, without the whole project feeling like a classroom session.

By the time willing children were interviewed face-to-face, they had participated in a number of prior group conversations related to the contents of the topic guide, which enriched their very personal accounts. Although having so many field events across six sites was a logistical challenge, it was a successful strategy for researching with children. Not only did it facilitate the contributions of those children with limited academic skills, it also served to reiterate, emphasise and rehearse the matters of core research interest, culminating in thick data from the final interviews.

#### **6.1.4. Key methodological strength: Theoretically guided inductive discovery.**

The success of Grounded-Theory is complete where new theory is inducted from the iterative analytic process. This study's success relies on existing ecology theory to situate School Age Care at the intersection of theoretical system boundaries, with significant implications for its role in supporting wellbeing processes across childhood contexts. It also builds on ecology thinking to argue that preadolescent care issues find their resolution in generational, rather than autonomous, skill building, and that self-regulated engagement is the most useful indicator of quality time use. In these respects, the study has clarified the theoretical basis for making a case that challenges the way practitioners undertake programming. It articulates the direction of new policy initiatives currently being implemented (DEEWR, 2011), and implies a shift towards asserting the parity status of School Age Care with schooling, underlined in a wraparound ethos of childhood wellbeing.

The compatibility of Grounded-Theory analysis in an ecology framework with exploratory ethnographic style investigation vindicates the methodology decisions. The received portrait of childhood experiences, framed in issues for care settings, is as logically empowering as it is affectively compelling. It serves as a touchstone by which the practice outcomes of theory logic can be judged.

Finally, the period of the fieldwork was significant for data quality. Guided by the core chronosystem focus of the study, informing relational operants of change, the data were gathered within the discrete boundaries of the last school term of the year, which ends six weeks before Grade 6 children enter high school. This is a period in the school calendar when transition is foremost in community consciousness; a time when evaluation, reflection and celebration mark a sense of completion, apprehension and anticipation of what is to come. Children in the sample about to leave primary school in

particular entered the study in a mindset attentive to what that future might hold, and how they might own and shape it. It was judicious to capture those visions at the height of their relevance.

#### **6.1.5. Limitations.**

Discontinuity between parent and service objectives has not been explored. This omission was marked in reflections of Coordinators, who talked about conflictedness in families' use of School Age Care.

The limitations stemming from scoping the aims of the study broadly include generating an unnecessarily large and unwieldy dataset. Were it not for serious computer power and NVivo, much of the logistically overwhelming gathered information would have been set aside. As it stands, the findings reflect analysis of every data instance, including the entire body of read literature, video and audio footage and children's drawings, providing 'thick' information. There is significant potential to mine the data further for future research, although less raw data would have saved time in the current study.

A limitation of the thesis concerns complications in reporting the Literature Review. In Grounded-Theory, literature has the status of field data. Thus, once thematic patterns were established, the literature and the field data were analysed in the same way and a decision was made to dispense with the convention of separating their respective reports. Consequently, all literature reports and discussion is contained in a themed structure, rather than in a typical Literature Review chapter. Theory and methodology are presented in the context of scholarly discourse, which is also referenced throughout the text in early chapters.

Areas of research that may be deemed necessary to the research argument, like motivation, were at most tangentially referenced. They relate to developmental

discourses, mostly in Psychology. These omissions were rationalised earlier in this chapter for being outside the theory model framework focus, but their importance in childhood studies does not go unacknowledged.

Alternatives to the methodology might have simplified the problems of reporting and organisation described above. For example, in hindsight, a series of three case studies would have sufficed to meet the exploratory aims. So would an ethnographic study at a single School Age Care site, perhaps. This comes from a novice uncertainty concerning the necessary proportionality of 'weight of evidence' to findings.

The sample could have been much smaller, especially if an ethnographic or case study methodology had been chosen. Limitations in this respect are simply that not all of the children who contributed were done justice in the thesis by being given optimal space and time. The greatest limitation is that the Indigenous children, who comprised a substantial percentage of the sample, were not allocated their own chapter, although they are adequately represented in the thematic structure of the field data findings.

Finally, validity and reliability do not pertain in this study as a condition of qualitative analysis accompanying ethnographic exploratory style inquiry. The large data set, the varied care sites, the use of adults as commentators and a meticulously kept audit trail are offered instead, in return of trust.

## **6.2. Section 2: Implications for School Age Care Policy and Practice**

The following strategic plan is based on the assumption that adaptive, extensive learning empowers agency. Agentic choice extends the possibilities in activity practices for creative endeavour and intellectual discovery. In exploiting these possibilities, children attain control over 'what to do'.

### **6.2.1. Strategy 1: Elevate the status of School Age Care.**

School Age Care is in the process of reorienting its emphasis on ‘play’ to embrace activity supportive of learning. Its status must rise as a result. However, the dominant schooling model of competing interests, in which non-school environments rate weakly, must also be challenged. In the present structure, as soon as children have served their prescribed school hours on the threshold of new transitions like high school entry, the likelihood of their staying on a learning pathway is contingent on as fragile a basis as their experience of schooling (Horgan, 2007; Lin, 2010; Otis, Grouzet & Pelletier, 2005). School Age Care has a role to play in forming resilient learners. It can instigate that role by relating to the nature and conditions of children’s choices, and teaching the skills and knowledge children need to implement them. The factors influencing children’s choices should also be explored, as should how affiliation patterns develop from influence. Collaboration should be fostered.

The National Quality Framework signals a shift away from School Age Care’s stance of disassociation from schooling. School Age Care’s statutory space now intersects with the system of the agentic child. Four systems undermine each other in the present situation: schools set homework; School Age Care services do not facilitate children in doing schoolwork; parents, who are unavailable for employment reasons, do not do homework with their children in daylight hours; and workforce quality depends on graduates from education whose quality is assessed and endorsed by schools.

The services currently offered by School Age Care can be obtained by mobile and resourced preadolescents independently, with exponential benefit, through technology, commercial entertainment and sport facilities. This makes attracting children in this age group into a net of care challenging. However, due to the potential of care provisions to support vulnerable youth at this crucial age of transition, drawing children in and

ensuring their continued interest is vital. SWISH, a recently established NSW for-profit service with two outlets to date, has been attracting preadolescents by offering project-based structuring into its age-differentiated workshops, costing \$98. The demand is overwhelming (Hanson, 2012).

While School Age Care is revisiting its philosophy and adapting its charter, it should also seek to broaden its client base across the middle school age-span, and to emphasise enjoyment through mastery over hedonic experience. Inclusive adaptation is a more responsible mission than contrivance of cultural dissonance between childhood and the systems that shape it. To aid this, a matricial tool for children to use in self-reports, developed in further research (see Section 6.2.6.1), should be made universally accessible through electronic media and devices.

### **6.2.2. Strategy 2: Problematising transition.**

School Age Care should be a service spanning high school transition; it should draw the 9–14-year-old age group into age-appropriate programs (Jones & Deutsch, 2012). School Age Care should retain older children because it can mediate transition risk. For this same reason, preadolescents should be a priority group, with additional support given to Indigenous, rural, minority, low-SES and CALD children. School Age Care should be available at least to the end of Year 7. At Turing, high school ‘newbies’ are brought back to mentor younger children’s sport. School Age Care should encourage these kinds of initiatives, which have a proven record of success in bringing children into protective care settings across the high school boundary.

### **6.2.3. Strategy 3: Level the playing field.**

School Age Care has the potential to create systems that specifically target disadvantage and exclusion. Poor families lack the means to afford paid-for time-use choices such as music tuition, academic enrichment, travel, team activity and adventure



offered through private providers. Low-SES children generally avoid, or they are excluded from, higher education. Changes in funding policy to prioritise amelioration of family poverty (Gonski & Panel, 2012) should be extended to School Age Care to support its role in adult–child network support and children’s retention on learning pathways.

#### **6.2.4. Strategy 4: Partner.**

Partnering requires understanding the raft of conflicting expectations that children negotiate in particular communities. In some care provisions, a homework support segment has been implemented in response to parent demand. However, this represents a superficial response relative to the fundamental childhood issues at stake, leaving unchallenged the rationale underpinning the obligations that schools impose on children’s lives out of school. From an agency perspective, proscribing such a segment de-legitimises non-school time use and undermines the project of facilitating children’s choice-making capacities. Partnering requires shared planning, to reconcile macro-level interests in fostering a future workforce with the necessary resources, variable time frames and spaces that come from allowing for children’s uneven and gradual aspirational development. Curran, Oliver and Benjamin (2013) commend involvement of children in workforce development studies to augment reflective professional practice in the interests of creating an intergenerational culture of learning in children’s services.

School Age Care is well positioned to play a critical role in learner identity formation. New policy related to promoting an emphasis on learning exists. However, conceptual frameworks that describe how School Age Care programs will translate policy into everyday practices are nascent at best. It is critical to identify those aspects of School Age Care programs that are modifiable so that policy goals can be achieved.

These relate to staff, leadership, site characteristics and of course to what may be termed 'program content'. Further, the development of outside organisational partnerships is recommended as the key new element that must be introduced to this project. To date, School Age Care does not have a culture of bridging discontinuities. Rather, it reinforces them. Childhood boundaries interface with school, family and care (for example Abendroth & Dulk, 2011; Access Economics Pty Ltd, 2009; Afterschool Alliance, 2003b; Anderson-Butcher, 2004; Beazley, 2000; Brandon, Maher, Jutta M. Joesch & Doyle, 2002; Goodfellow, Pocock, Elliott & Hill, 2007; Harvard Family Research Project, 2004; Huebner & Mancini, 2003; Jensen, 1991; McKee, Mauthner & Galilee, 2003a; Shapiro, Ginsberg & Brown, 2003). School Age Care should thus introduce partnerships representative of the neighbourhoods children inhabit and the multiple contexts of their activities (Beets, Webster, Saunders, Huberty & Network, 2013).

School Age Care should mediate the school/non-school boundary, facilitating children in negotiating a personal agenda for identity work, as exemplified in (Barton et al., 2012). Identity health is a School Age Care responsibility. It should also be able to show a benefit additional to logistical expediency for parents from locating on school premises. Active convocation among care workers, primary and secondary teachers, families and communities is essential in School Age Care.

The leadership skills children bring with them from school to care settings could be developed in contextually various ways and leveraged to enrich peer groups in School Age Care. This would require convocation by School Age Care personnel, optimally through liaison and collaborating with schools and with community organisations that children access and in which such skills are at a premium. Further, School Age Care should facilitate safe and productive use of the Internet for learning and socialisation.

Families prefer to use community services responsive to neighbourhood networks and geographies. This suggests that the wraparound approach might constitute an even greater incentive to families appreciative of authentic team building in partnerships facilitated through School Age Care, whereby care worker, teacher and parent input is valued equally to that of children. Wraparound policies and practices can bridge the education/care dichotomy, as is amply attested to at Turing. Policy makers should incorporate wraparound in their thinking (Ainsworth, 1999; Bruns et al., 2004; Rosen, Heckman, Carro & Burchard, 1994; Smith et al., 2004). At each of the six research sites in this study, in cases that children testified to their frustrated agentic potential, they also expressed not knowing their community networks adequately, and not being fully known themselves.

Citywide and regional School Age Care partnering strategies for overcoming incoherent, inconsistent, inefficient and fragmented program models and funding streams (Donner, 2012) may be adapted in the Australian context to increase access to School Age Care, especially for disadvantaged and minority children. Such strategies are needed to optimise the scope and scale of what is currently a vast range of services for children, cobbled together under 'representative' bodies.

#### **6.2.5. Strategy 5: Teach.**

The findings show, and research has firmly established, that wherever adults and children build positive relationships in care settings, learning takes place. The relationships that Oliver was able to build with care workers at Kentledge are a key exemplar of learner identity facilitation. It is time to acknowledge this phenomenon by naming its corollary: teaching. This attribution of care work accords with the burden of responsibility in care. Effective care workers inspire the projects they negotiate to undertake in response to children's developing interests.

Professional pathways of schooling and care must therefore be contiguous. In NSW, there are no professional pathways between care and teaching (Cartmel, 2010). A consequence of schooling hegemony is that, where teachers are not involved, employment conditions in School Age Care are insufficient for high-quality holistic care and respect for childcare careers is consequently negated. Children's insights into what engages them should be a resource in care program planning (Saito, 2006). However, if children's relationship needs are to be properly met, reflexive professional development and training of care staff is critical. It is therefore of concern that TAFE students in vocational childcare training said they believed in knowledge transfer from experts, and that children's—not adults'—learning is transformative. This suggests they will unreflectively apply others' procedural expertise and their own 'gut' intuition to their work (Berthelsen, Boulton-Lewis, Brownlee, Dunbar & McGahey, 2008). However, evidence-based practice rather than institutionalised compliance should inform childcare (Ishimine, Tayler & Thorpe, 2009; Stambaugh et al., 2007).

Development of the self in a learning framework should be taught, modelled and supported. In Austria, trained teachers staff School Age Care (Elniff-Larsen et al., 2006, p. 8). This seems worth emulating. However, currently, attracting such candidates to the role is prevented by the low status of the industry, owing to its poor working conditions, pay and educational requirements. In the US, the widespread perception of care workers as having low teacher status, based on their remuneration and low academic entry point to professional practice, has led to initiatives like Teach for America (TFA) operating in the most disadvantaged places (Maier, 2012). This model has merit as an idea and it might be adaptable to serve School Age Care as an interim strategy. However, in the end, School Age Care requires career-status full-time workers. A national qualification for working in School Age Care, as yet unavailable (ACECQA, 2012b), is needed.

Values of trust, responsibility, free access to School Age Care and individualised relationship building with caring adults should be integral to a good childhood in Australia. Care worker training encompassing a rich and comprehensive education should predicate rigorous selection for the job, which once obtained should be guaranteed secure over years. This is essential considering that School Age Care is ecologically positioned to facilitate agentic children who build their networks inclusive of adults and share their knowledge with them. Quality of staff is a key factor in exploiting this potential.

#### **6.2.6. Strategy 6: Evaluate.**

Evaluation of outcomes of School Age Care practices is most useful when it can demonstrate both hindsight indications of successful implementation and, even more saliently, ‘lead’ indicators that can be used for planning *in situ* to inform best professional and programming practice, and that equally reflect responsive change on a progressive basis, back to the children who generated the data. Third- to fifth-grade children’s self and peer reports were found to comprise a highly tenable, reliable basis for evaluation of interpersonal indicators when combined with adult reports (Blas, Grassi, Luccio & Momentè, 2012). The orientation of this project towards child-agentic identity formation requires evaluation tools and programming systems informed by children. These tools and systems must also minimise the impact of the logistics of implementation on both the child and the service organisation.

The JAS, developed by the author (see Figure 5.9), comprises the conceptual outline upon which tools for children to use in self-reports can be based. It can be operationalised *in situ* at School Age Care sites as a hard-copy tool for children to use as they plan and then implement activity, to track productivity. For example, they can note dates and summarise the steps they are taking towards goals (Halverson, 2010a;

Halverson, Bass, & Woods, 2012). Self-reports avert adult filters on children's evidence. They are especially powerful where the data is entered directly into an online database by the children themselves. The efficacy of this process may be enhanced where children are issued with an application ('app') on portable devices for even greater convenience.<sup>34</sup> There are numerous exemplars of programming initiatives that care sites may draw on and from which they may adapt their own most appropriate 'data dashboard' interface (Walker, 2011, p. 53).

#### ***6.2.6.1. Conceptual outline.***

The author has used a raft of means—a 'data dashboard'—to elicit experiential quality indication from children. This is based on the concept of a spectrum of 'engagement', from attending a care service, to generating new, shared knowledge (Halverson, 2012). Increasing engagement is conceived in a mutually reinforcing spiral that also includes a 'structure' spectrum. This is named the 'Johns Activity Spiral' (JAS) by the author, who developed it. It expresses the proposition that as engagement strengthens, time use must become more tightly structured. See the description of the author's logic on which the JAS is based in Section 3.8.5. The model is illustrated in Figure 5.9.

Figure 6.1 presents a suggested kite-making activity during a School Age Care event as an exemplar for articulating how various locations on the author's proposed JAS might be expressed. Figure 6.2 shows how the same kite-making activity during a School Age Care event may be related to the time-use values coded in four activity categories of 'think', 'relax', 'exercise' and 'create' (TREC). This coding is shown intersecting with the play-work cycle that operates the JAS. Figure 6.3 presents a poster

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<sup>34</sup> This would be like the apps now available for, for example, weight loss and budgeting, in which users key in local information (in this case, locale; activity type; duration; group size; and adults in attendance, supervising and mentoring), along with responses to three Likert scale questions: How engaged? How structured? Work or play?

displaying children's brainstormed suggestions during the group meeting initiating a School Age Care activity event. This is followed up reflexively, as children write down what they had chosen to do, in TREC categories. This tool fosters children's time-use awareness and encourages constructive discussion on frequently asked questions such as 'Why are we doing this?' The information from these slips can be tabulated, graphed and displayed digitally online and on e-devices. It can be used to inform planning, to reflect group and individual interests to approved stakeholders, and to inform research.

Another way of obtaining children's feedback is illustrated in Figure 6.4. Children sign their initials on their fingerprint (from a stamp-pad), which is placed near the title of an activity that was brainstormed in a group meeting. Activities children have initiated during the session that were not on the plan have been added during the School Age Care session. Educators can plot the information on a graph (inset in Figure 6.4), which gives a cumulative indication of group and individual interests and participation. This information can be useful in providing feedback to parents, planning future programs and fostering group appreciation of the afternoon's time-use choices.

The proposed spectral engagement axis (the spiral element in the JAS in Figure 5.9) theoretically denotes children to be on a trajectory in activity events, from recruitment, attendance and participation, to engagement. The proposed spectral 'structure' indication (the cone-shaped 'axis' in the JAS in Figure 5.9) represents a spectrum from 'spontaneous' to 'highly structured' (compare Figures 3.5 and 5.9). A 'data dashboard', or group of evaluation tools based on this model, is able to:

- 1) capture a database of child evaluations of program experiences by linking progress towards goals with activity typologies;

- 2) collate and transform data graphically to apply to activity typologies, age, gender and other participant attributes, by linking these variables with goal-setting and extent of implementation;
- 3) collect feedback that can instantly be incorporated into program planning by staff, by visually presenting which activities were most engaging and/or productive;
- 4) collate an individualised record of children's progress that can be sent to parents, used in counselling children or shared with the school and other stakeholders for the benefit of wraparound support, by compiling child activity profiles in their portfolio collections;
- 5) accrue data over years and across School Age Care sites to be used in research to inform policy, and critically compare best practice by forming a large database facilitative of linking various indicators with engagement and/or productive outcomes;
- 6) serve as a professional training tool for educators listening to children's experiences and responding to them by talking to them during activity events and reflecting with them on their engagement;
- 7) teach children to reflect on their experience in a concrete way, establishing a reflexive habit for self-regulation, by providing the JAS tool to them individually and in groups; and
- 8) serve National Quality Framework objectives, by linking individual and group experience of activity engagement and/or production with quality standards of learning and relationship building.





Figure 6.1. Theory into practice: Grid.

This grid explicates the coordinates in the Johns Activity Spiral, using the example of a kite-making activity. It is an element of a 'data dashboard'. This is an example of how some of the proposed strategies could be implemented.

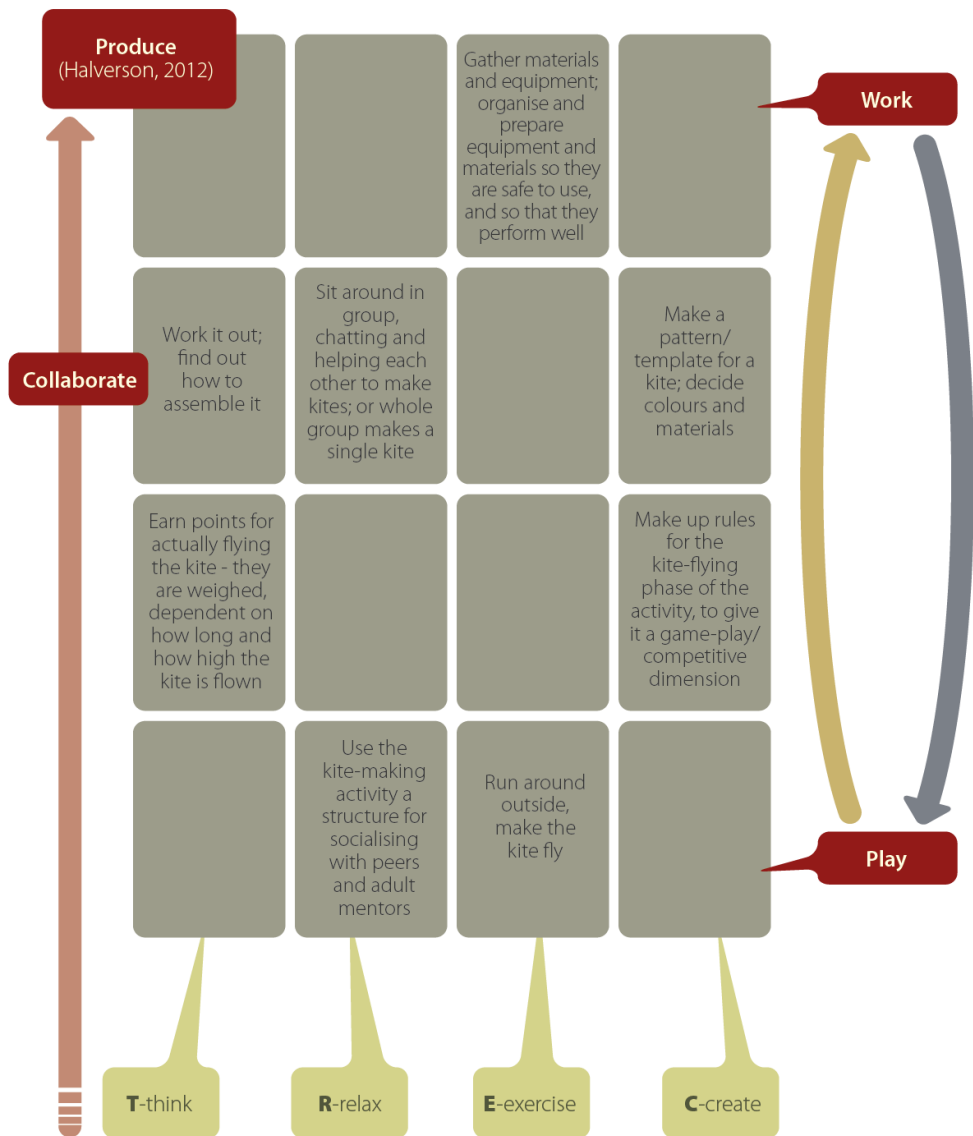
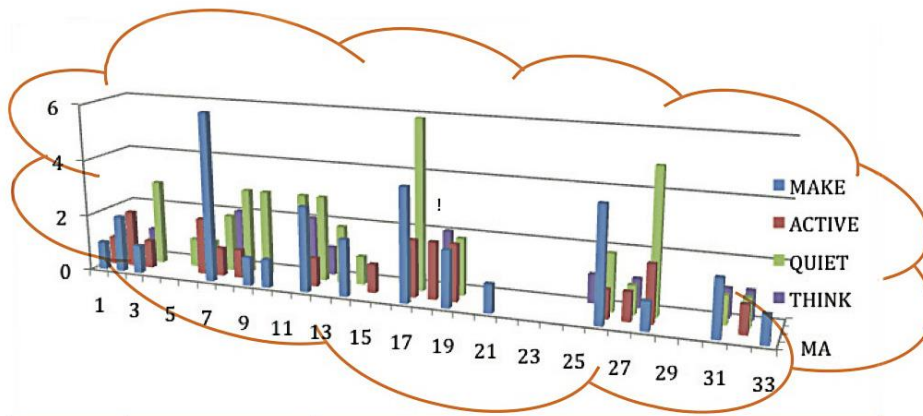
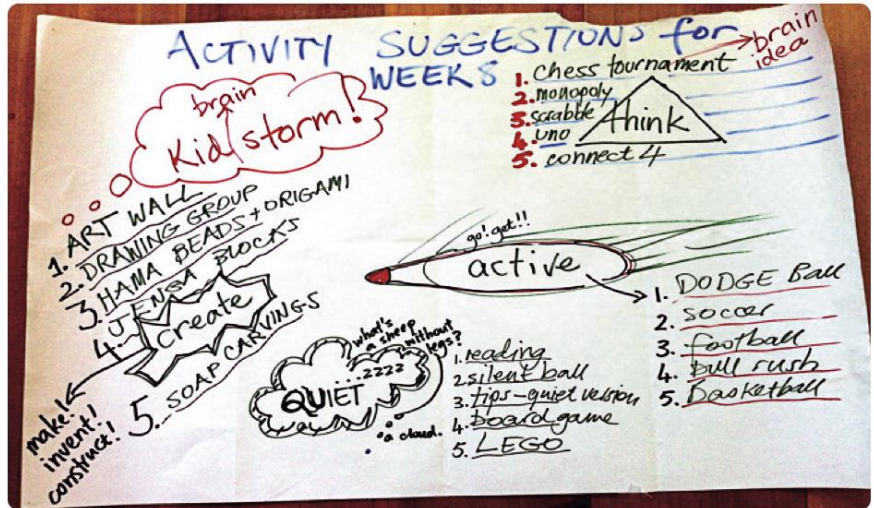


Figure 6.2. Theory into practice: Relating time-use values and the play–work cycle of the JAS.

This is an example of how some of the proposed strategies could actually be implemented. This is an element of a ‘data dashboard’. The same example as in Figure 6.1, of a suggested kite-making activity during a School Age Care event, is used to relate time-use values (‘think’/‘relax’/‘exercise’/‘create’ [TREC]) and the play–work cycle that operates the author’s Johns Activity Spiral.



TREC	name	term	week	day
	think			
	relax			
	exercise			
	create			

Figure 6.3. Theory into practice: Brainstorming and ranking the value of activities.

This is an example of how some of the proposed strategies could actually be implemented. This is an element of a ‘data dashboard’. Children brainstorm activity suggestions as a prior activity (image, top). On sign-out, preadolescents aged 9–12 write the names of the activities they engaged in, sorting them into ‘value’ categories.





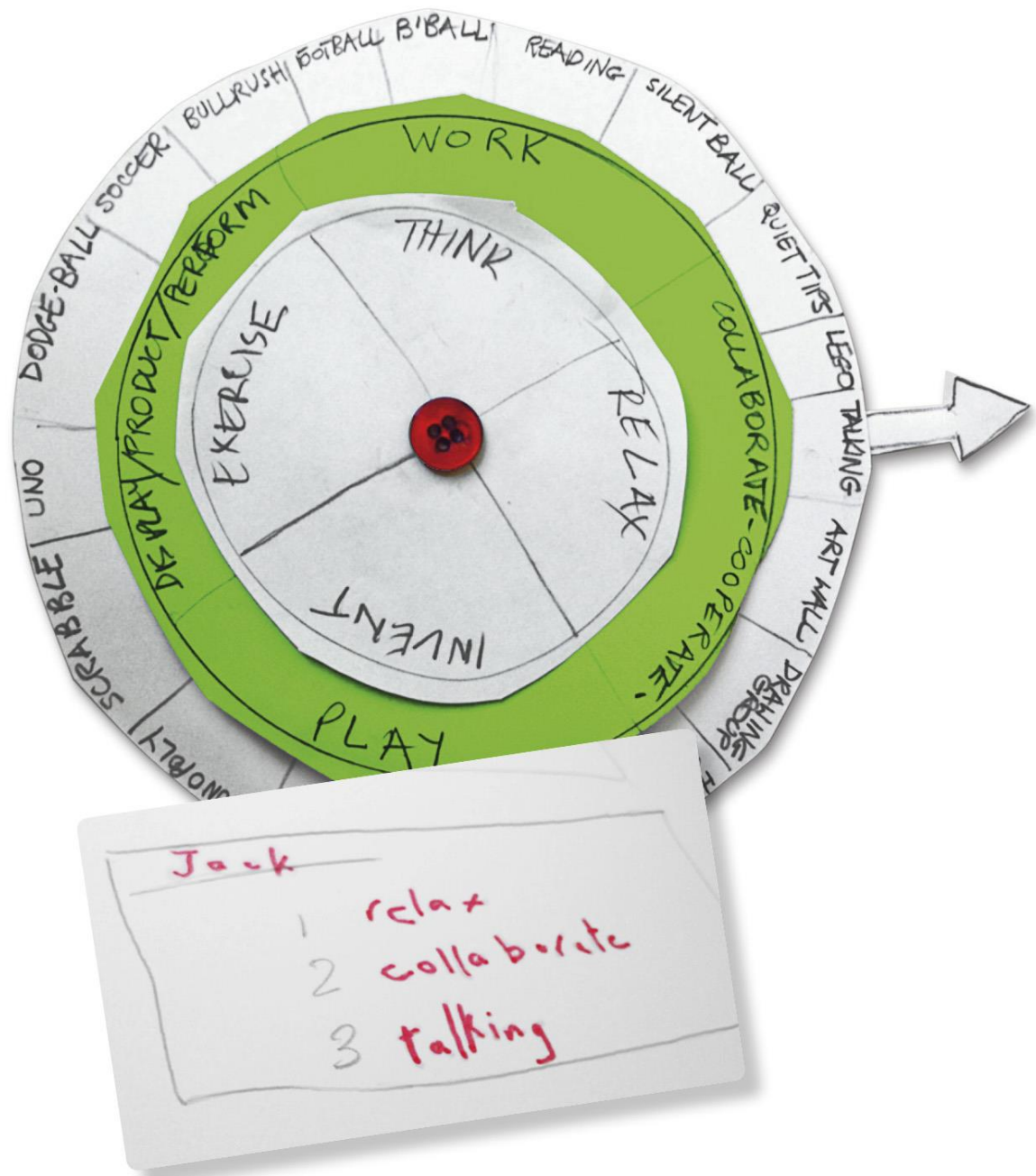


Figure 6.5. Theory-into practice: An experiential sampling tool.

This is an example of how some of the proposed strategies could actually be implemented. This is an element of a ‘data dashboard’. An example of an experiential sampling tool made by children. It is based on brainstormed session activities like those sketched in Figure 6.4. The wheels and the arrow all rotate. At a moment in the ‘middle hour’ of a School Age Care session, children may be asked to align a TREC ‘value’ with a section on a green ‘work–play’ wheel, and the arrow that rotates behind the set of activities. They then write the three labels on a slip.

It is not lost on this study that youth report greater degrees of engagement in non-school activities than in class, even after taking statutory school attendance requirements into account (Fredricks, 2011, p. 328). It would be interesting to compare matrices generated in both contexts. Lawson and Lawson (2013) suggest including families, peers and neighbourhoods in comparative assessments. The only valid response to date to the School Age Care position on children's capacities, rights and freedoms lies in listening to what children themselves have to say about what matters to them. This knowledge can be used in School Age Care as a feedback and program guidance tool.

#### **6.2.8. Strategy 7: Program.**

In this thesis, children are proposed to obtain greatest enjoyment when the 'palette' of available time-use choices is varied, reflects their interests as individuals, is properly resourced and comprises a balance of thinking, relaxing, exercising and creative endeavour (TREC). However, such quality of choice is an unrealisable ideal in view of the job requirements in typical School Age Care, where providers must meet statutory 1:15 staff-child ratios, where enrolments may exceed 200 children, as they do in the organisation employing the author of this study. These duties include cleaning, cooking, supervising, counselling, teaching and record-keeping, as well as managing resources to health and safety standards (food, equipment, stationery and materials). Policy requiring staff to obtain a professional qualification is bound to impact workers' insights into time-use planning, but very few workers at the School Age Care 'coalface' are afforded the time to coordinate age/ability-sensitive daily choice 'palettes' with a fair TREC balance and that also support individual children to extend activities or projects over many days or even weeks.

A powerful digital resource for cross-context program support (Outer School) has been devised and used by the author to plan programs in the School Age Care environment at a number of sites. It may be viewed at [www.kidsouttaschool.com](http://www.kidsouttaschool.com). This program was devised by the author with 60 graphic artists at the University of NSW, College of Fine Arts (CoFA). It is delivered on the Kindle Fire e-device and has been used daily as a programming tool by the author. Outer School can deliver thousands of prompts, ideas, tasks, templates and challenges daily at age/ability-appropriate levels to individual children (Jones & Deutsch, 2012) in the midst of service to family liaison, child safety, behaviour management and the provision of meals, snacks and materials.

Outer School comprises 800 ‘packs’ of activity choices, each of which contains six suggestions with accompanying ‘how to’ resources and lists of required materials. There are 95 of these ‘packs’ at each of the seven age ‘levels’ corresponding with ages 5–12 and compatible with skills associated with key learning areas from Early Stage 1 to Stage 3. Individualised, enriched and widely various time-use choices inform the practical concept of this resource.

Figure 6.6 provides illustrated title screens as displayed by the affordable Kindle Fire device from Amazon. The tablet comes with a large repository of free and affordable e-books for children and a cost-free ‘FreeTime’ Internet filter. If affordable, this device could be issued to children for periods during School Age Care sessions.

Children could also plan their own program at an age/ability level of their choosing. For example, a child in Grade 4 may wish to use a ‘level 6’ activity pack or, equally, to choose a game or experiment from a ‘level 2’ activity pack to enjoy with younger children. Similarly, children can decide to play team games all afternoon, or use their time in artistic endeavour, compiling unique combinations of choices to suit group, partnering and individual knowledge and experience.





Children can engage in the full range of suggested activities, or focus on developing their interests in a particular field. The content in each 6-activity ‘pack’ reflects a balance of TREC time-use values. The ‘Reflexive Account of the Study’ in Audit Trail #6 backgrounds the program’s conception, and its compatibility with National Quality Framework program-planning guidelines.

### **6.3. Section 3: Implications for Further Research**

This thesis proposes that, in the first instance, the quality of adult–child relationships predicts the strength of children’s agency. In the situation that schooling dominates the mix of transitions as children leave primary school, the conflicted tensions that accrue in early adolescence affect children’s wellbeing and long-term learning retention. These tensions are not mediated by School Age Care, which has the potential to facilitate the development of positive adult–child relationships and to foster children’s discernment in their time-use choices.

Research in schooling frameworks is grossly disproportionate with inquiry outside school, especially as children spend only 20 per cent of their time on school premises (Shortt, 2002) compared to 50 per cent of their active day outside it (Fredricks, 2011, p. 326). Western individualist (Wilson et al., 2011) and competitive structures are the basis for macro-level interests converging on the usefulness of academic outcomes for setting social benchmarks and assessing the quality of the evolving workforce to inform policy. Profits concord with school marks.

#### **6.3.1. Impacts of policy on quotidian childhoods.**

Ethnographic research is suggested to reveal how policies formed at the macro-level impact the everyday experience of children outside schooling. The child is ‘an idea and a target’, subject to the agenda of macro-level systems (Rose, 2005). The stages of

childhood are culturally and historically contextual. Governments should set their agendas in terms of how policy environments influence the construct of preadolescence at the micro-level in different social strata (Windebank, 1996, p. 147, 1999). How Australian children think about adult-centred planning for their wellbeing in School Age Care is not known, but the recent NSW Parliamentary Joint Committee on Children and Young People (2009a, 2009b) found high need among the preadolescent cohort.

### **6.3.2. Micro-processes legitimise macro-objectives.**

If these childcare macro-trajectories were unassailable, examination of children's experiences of School Age Care and the uses to which children put their time would not be universally compelling. However, the consumers of care services in post-industrial societies are also key stakeholders in education and the profitability of the workforce. From an ecology perspective, this places the present cohort of children and their networks at 'critical mass' import in relation to the formation and implementation of policy. For this reason, it should matter deeply to governance at all levels that Samantha protests that:

it's so annoying as a child when you're pushed and nagged to go off and do something that you really do not want to do (Samantha).

The question for School Age Care is how this can inform the quality of children's time use such that macro-agendas are democratically implemented. In the prevailing outcomes-driven culture of Australia, an option has long been exploited in the School Age Care sector to segregate such provisions from the kind of growth and learning objectives that characterise every other sphere of macro-interest. By its official stance in a 'play' philosophy, School Age Care has been most answerable to Workplace Health and Safety protocol, until now.

As mothers of children over age five stream into the workforce in numbers far in excess of those with more physically dependent infants and toddlers, demand for School Age Care is going unmet, and the cost of private childcare arrangements appears prohibitive. The National Quality Framework, mandated for implementation in 2012, is exceptionally timely, if not overdue. In addition to the effect it will likely have on shifting professional perspectives towards a learning orientation, it sets up new and valuable benchmarks for evaluation that must rely in large part on the strength of children's agency to make their reflections known. Development of the Student Orientation to School Questionnaire (SOS-Q) tool for measuring engagement provides an excellent illustration of how children's self-reports may be used (Burger, Nadirova, & Keefer, 2012).

### **6.3.3. Comparative experiential qualities across context boundaries.**

Compared perceptions from different social contexts can elicit new knowledge relevant to partnerships, especially involving schools. How children compare school and School Age Care is a research project that would lend clarity to the currently adult-dominated barriers to the benefits to children of attending care settings. It would contribute meaningful discussion about the relative benefits that School Age Care can offer children, based on empirical evidence.

#### ***6.3.3.1. Benefits to schooling.***

No empirical studies have been conducted to demonstrate how School Age Care serves the objectives of schooling in NSW. An interrogation of School Age Care as beneficial to schools is well overdue. Research should be conducted that engages School Age Care on the debate about homework in this framework.

#### ***6.3.3.2. Linking the contexts of childhood.***

School Age Care should be party to research identifying optimal ways of linking the many contexts of childhood. School Age Care should characterise its services as bridging systems (Moss & Petrie, 2002). Recently, the Council of Australian Governments (2009) introduced strategies that are strengthening the links between care and education and the consistency of delivery of services between jurisdictions. School Age Care can mediate the knowledge-making spectrum that spans curiosity and formal learning (Burston, 2008; Gewertz, 2008; Uitto, Juuti, Lavonen & Meisalo, 2006).

#### **6.3.3.3. *Transition.***

Policy makers have overlooked how structured activity choices in children's discretionary time might support the approach to high school transition. Until very recently, structured activity benchmarks in NSW School Age Care have come from protocols derived from psychology, recreational theory and sport, arts, ability-appropriateness concepts and various constructions of free time. This is changing, especially since dissemination of the national framework for School Age Care services (Council of Australian Governments, 2010).

The weight of scholarly discourse is persuasive of the need for high school transition support policy (Aikins, Bierman & Parker, 2005; Akos, 2006; Akos & Galassi, 2004; Alexander et al., 1997; Alspaugh, 1998a, 1998b; Anderson et al., 2000; Blyth, Simmons & Carlton-Ford, 1983; Boman & Yates, 2001; Cantin & Boivin, 2004; Carlson et al., 1999; Chung et al., 1998; Crockett et al., 1989; Evangelou et al., 2008; Feiring & Lewis, 1991; Feldlaufer, Midgley & Eccles, 1988; Fenzel, 2000; Garbarino et al., 1978; Garcia, Pender, Antonakos & Ronis, 1998; Gillock & Reyes, 1996; Glassman, Hoppers & Destefano, 2008; Gottfried et al., 2007; Graham & Hill, 2003; Groundwater-Smith, Mitchell & Mockler, 2007; Hensley, 2009; Hirsch & DuBois, 1992; Humphrey & Ainscow, 2006; Isakson & Jarvis, 1999; Johnstone, 2001; Koppang, 2004;

Longaretti, 2006; Lord et al., 1994; Lucey & Reay, 2000, 2002; Maher, 2010; Midgley, Feldlaufer & Eccles, 1989; Morrow, 2003; Pisano & Elias, 1993; Qualter et al., 2007; Ratelle, Guay, Larose & Senecal, 2004; Reddy, Rhodes & Mulhall, 2003; Reyes et al., 1994; Rudolph et al., 2001; Seidman et al., 1996; Seidman, Allen, Aber & Mitchell, 1994; Simmons & Blyth, 1987; Sirsch, 2003; Tilleczeck & Ferguson, 2007; Tobbell, 2003; Wallis & Barrett, 1998; Way, Bobis, Anderson & Martin, 2008; Westa et al., 2008; Whitley et al., 2007; Wigfield et al., 1991; Williams & Boman, 2002; Wren, 2003; Wylie et al., 2006; Yates, 1999; Zanobini & Usai, 2002). Little work has been done in over five years. School Age Care should contribute to this knowledge.

#### **6.3.4. Voices.**

##### ***6.3.4.1. Children as research participants.***

Research benefits from involving children. They have direct knowledge about experiential quality in care settings that should not be ignored. Children whose agency is supported are able to express the value of their time use as it affects their relationships, their learning and their views of how to spend their time to optimise their identity work. New research could focus on children's future narratives as illuminated through their reflections on why they like a story or situation, book or film, for example. However, the extent of children's acquiescence to an imposed researcher relationship should be tested beyond the formal consent process.

##### ***6.3.4.2. Children's conceptualisation of time.***

Further research is needed into children's understandings, awareness and classification of time. Time-use modelling from children's perspectives should be systematised. They should be asked, 'What does free time look like, and when does time cease to be free? How context-dependent is freedom or is it a quality of agency rather than conferred? When does recreation become indistinguishable from work,

challenge from ease and interests from obligations?’ Policy makers should want to know how the values children accord time use change with age (Fredricks & Eccles, 2002; Jacobs, Lanza, Osgood, Eccles & Wigfield, 2002). For example, children’s time use valuations were found to change in the approach to adolescence (Ahonen & Rajala, 2008; Belle, 1999b), alongside the constantly shifting parameters of childhood in rapidly fluctuating social systems (Qvortrup, 2005). Consequently, access and care options are also in a constant state of change (Ishimine & Wilson, 2009; Kohen, Lipps & Hertzman, 2006; Sarampote, Bassett & Winsler, 2004). The proportions of children’s ‘free’ time dedicated to different provisions and activities vary significantly, often over short periods. Equally, disadvantaged children’s after-school options are constrained (Gentleman, 2009). Services should want to know how all these dimensions of opportunity and choice are experienced by their clients. The conceptual outline of a matrical tool for children to use in self-reports could be valuable in such research.

#### ***6.3.4.3. Voices: Priority groups.***

Further research is needed on supportive strategies that meet the needs of minority youth. The vulnerabilities that minority youth bring with them to choice making (Anil, Jordan & Zahirovic-Herbert, 2011; Hart, 2010; MacKenzie & Chamberlain, 2002) make academic success outcomes of participation in School Age Care ineffective for use with them.

#### **6.3.5. Other research implications.**

Research is suggested on the following additional issues:

- a) The nature and impact of the ‘shadow’ academic coaching industry
- b) Evaluations of private and for-profit School Age Care provisions
- c) Comparisons between services that affiliate with Network of Community Activities, and those that do not

- d) Evaluation of Network of Community Activities training and advocacy from the perspective of School Age Care practitioners ‘on the ground’
- e) Exploration of School Age Care in regional areas of NSW and across rural Australia
- f) Indigenous children’s participation in School Age Care services.

#### **6.4. Section 4: A Final Word**

In this thesis, child agency is framed as a competency indicator, responsive to development through children’s innate tendency to acquire the social and creative skill they need for ‘self-righting’. Field data findings confirm that agentic skill building thrives in respectful adult–child partnering, and the thesis concludes that School Age Care is well situated among the contexts of childhood to afford quality, long-term relationship-building opportunities.

This thesis concomitantly problematises intersecting childhood contexts, to frame these opportunities in characteristics of social ecology boundary tensions invoking resolution. The findings demonstrate why the potential of School Age Care to mediate macro-policy priorities and children’s ‘self-righting’ trajectories is largely unrealised. The thesis concludes that School Age Care has an important bridging role between school and home, of greater salience than its facilitation of parent workforce participation.

School Age Care has been an outlier from a macro-level perspective, markedly insulated from the social ecology boundaries at its interface. Yet politically driven boundaries across childhood contexts are losing their potency in historically unprecedented global technological and social change. The National Quality Framework now being implemented represents a response to the resultant radical new knowledge production across diverse disciplines. It is powerfully confirming of ‘wraparound’

approaches in which individual child interests override in importance the traditional gatekeeping of institutional interests. This thesis identifies critical psychosocial boundaries that are fundamental to the transitional nature of these individual interests. They are founded in key and absolute distinctions between adults and children, and between learner identity formation and subscription to institutionalised knowledge.

This nascent change trajectory is transforming the sureties that the discordant tempos of commercial imperatives can no longer guarantee. Schooling resides in built palaces of learning, holding court over commodified childhoods. The challenge of synchronising individual and collective cultures with its dissonant chronosystem has deleterious consequences for individuals across the life span. The present study has argued that childhood's fluid loci of learning must be understood through individualised polychronic engagement. Activity events keep community members in synchrony with one another. No product of culture other than time merges personal, communal and civic preoccupations in a grid of meaning (Keating, 2013). Temporal rhythms, not institutions, form identity.

Report summaries of activity programs typically seem static and neutral, but activity is in fact a dynamic, continually reshaped system that is extremely sensitive to shifts in cultural habits. The evolutionary process for configuring time use has historically been punctuated by debate and abrupt change in societal maps of time that include instigation of the 'working' week and the invention of adolescence. The turmoil accompanying current technological change is creating new sources of division and uncertainty.

This thesis has explored the meaning of time use for children, the ideas and practices they associate with it and how activity choice governs their time. It asked how children construct their sense of their own difference and how the structures to which they are subject reflect their precarious agency. Above all, children's time use



illuminates the uneasy balance between adult-centric expectation and adult–child partnering. Awareness of the time-use values of the Other attests to culturally incontrovertible adult–child interdependency. Competent child agents know, encompass and seek instruction in adult culture, but equally they creatively distance themselves from that culture by choosing uses of time that mirror the duality of their experience. The present challenge for School Age Care is to reframe learning along polychronic dimensions, so that children can transcend built palaces of education, to habituate, fully and authentically, transformational palaces of time.

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## Appendices

### Appendix 1: Approvals and Ethics Clearance



Education  
& Training

DOC 10/147865

Ms Johanna Johns  
PO Box 1545  
DOUBLE BAY NSW 1360

Dear Ms Johns

#### SERAP NUMBER 2010123

I refer to your application to conduct a research project in NSW government schools entitled "*The Transition and After-School Study: An exploration of the interactive systems that impact preadolescent children in out-of-school time*". I am pleased to advise that it has been approved and that the approval remains valid until 7 September 2011.

You may now contact the principals of the nominated NSW government schools to seek their participation. It is recommended that you include a copy of this letter with the documents you send.

The following researchers or research assistants have fulfilled the Working with Children screening requirements to interact with or observe children for the purposes of this research for the period indicated:

Name	Approval expires
Johanna Johns	12 August 2011

The following requirements also apply:

- principals have the right to withdraw the school from the study at any time. The approval of the principal for the specific method of gathering information for the school must also be sought
- the privacy of the school and the students is to be protected
- the participation of teachers and students must be voluntary and at the school's convenience; and
- any proposal to publish the outcomes of the study should be discussed with the Research Approvals Officer before publication proceeds.

When your study is completed, please forward your report to the Manager, Schooling Research, Department of Education and Training, Student Engagement and Program Evaluation Bureau, Locked Bag 53, Darlinghurst, NSW 2010.

Yours sincerely

Dr Max Smith  
**Senior Manager,  
Student Engagement and Program Evaluation**  
27 September 2010



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**SYDNEY**

**RESEARCH INTEGRITY**  
**Human Research Ethics Committee**

Web: <http://sydney.edu.au/ethics/>  
Email: [ro.humanethics@sydney.edu.au](mailto:ro.humanethics@sydney.edu.au)

**Address for all correspondence:**  
Level 6, Jane Foss Russell Building - G02  
The University of Sydney  
NSW 2006 AUSTRALIA

Ref: IM/PR

28 September 2010

Dr Jennifer Way  
Faculty of Education and Social Work  
Education Building - A35  
The University of Sydney  
Email: [jennifer.way@sydney.edu.au](mailto:jennifer.way@sydney.edu.au)

Dear Dr Way

Thank you for your correspondence dated 16 September 2010 addressing comments made by the Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC). The Executive Committee of the HREC, at its meeting of 23 September 2010, considered this information and approved the protocol entitled "An exploration of the interactive systems that impact preadolescent children in out-of-school time".

Details of the approval are as follows:

**Protocol No.:** 13119  
**Approval Period:** September 2010 to September 2011  
**Authorised Personnel:** Dr Jennifer Way  
Ms Johanna Johns

**Documents approved:**

Participant Consent Form, Version 2 16/9/10  
Child Information Statement, Version 2 16/9/10  
Parent Information Statement, Version 2 16/9/10  
Principal Information Statement, Version 2 16/9/10  
Principal Consent Form, Version 2 16/9/10  
Preliminary Interview  
Participant Questionnaire  
Focus Group Questions  
Interview Questions  
Parent Child Consent Form  
Coordinator Information Statement  
Coordinator Consent Form

The HREC is a fully constituted Ethics Committee in accordance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans-March 2007 under Section 5.1.29.

The approval of this project is conditional upon your continuing compliance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans. NB. A report on this research must be submitted every 12 months from the date of the approval, or on completion of the project, whichever occurs first. Failure to submit reports will result in the withdrawal of consent for the project to proceed. Your report will be due on **30 September 2011**, please put this in your diary.

**Human Ethics Secretariat:**

Ms Portia Richmond T: +61 2 8627 8171 E: [portia.richmond@sydney.edu.au](mailto:portia.richmond@sydney.edu.au)  
Ms Patricia Engelmann T: +61 2 8627 8172 E: [patricia.engelmann@sydney.edu.au](mailto:patricia.engelmann@sydney.edu.au)  
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ABN 15 211 513 464  
CRICOS 00026A



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**SYDNEY**

**Special Conditions of Approval**

1. Please forward approval from the NSW Department of Education and Training when it becomes available.

**Chief Investigator / Supervisor's responsibilities to ensure that:**

1. All serious and unexpected adverse events should be reported to the HREC within 72 hours for clinical trials/interventional research.
2. All unforeseen events that might affect continued ethical conduct of the project should be reported to the HREC as soon as possible.
3. Any change to the protocol must be approved by the HREC before the research project can proceed.
4. All research participants are to be provided with a Participant Information Statement and Consent Form, unless otherwise agreed by the Committee. The following statement must appear on the bottom of the Participant Information Statement: *Any person with concerns or complaints about the conduct of a research study can contact the Manager, Research Integrity (Human Ethics), University of Sydney on +61 2 8627 8176 (Telephone); + 61 2 8627 8177 (Facsimile) or [ro.humanethics@sydney.edu.au](mailto:ro.humanethics@sydney.edu.au) (Email).*
5. Copies of all signed Consent Forms must be retained and made available to the HREC on request.
6. It is your responsibility to provide a copy of this letter to any internal/external granting agencies if requested.
7. The HREC approval is valid for four (4) years from the Approval Period stated in this letter. Investigators are requested to submit a progress report annually.
8. A report and a copy of any published material should be provided at the completion of the Project.

Please do not hesitate to contact Research Integrity (Human Ethics) should you require further information or clarification.

Yours sincerely

**Associate Professor Ian Maxwell**  
Chair  
Human Research Ethics Committee

cc: Johanna Johns, email: [jjoh7137@uni.sydney.edu.au](mailto:jjoh7137@uni.sydney.edu.au)

## Appendix 2: Glossary

**Activities:** an important part of an event. Activity practices are inferred from events only through the activities in which children and adults participate inside the temporal locality of OOSH care.

**Activity practices:** the basic unit of a social theory of OOSH care environments that link children's activities with the social structures that they influence and in which they are embedded.

**Adult-centric:** the potential bias of adults relating to children.

**Authentic activity:** children solving real-life problems and forming their own meanings by thinking through problems themselves and using their own knowledge.

**Category:** a family of events, objects, patterns, emotions or relationships.

**Childhood sovereignty:** the individual liberty and self-ownership of children; children's pursuit of their own integrity, identity and values.

**Children in self-care:** children who manage their own time use between school and home.

**Children's rights:** the human rights of children, which include rights to protection and care, a relationship with both biological parents, provision of basic needs (food, universal education, health care and laws) and according children status as active agents.

**Codes:** the labels in meaning units.

**Collaborative learning:** implies that knowledge can be created through sharing experiences of a common task on the (Vygotskian) assumption that learning is social in nature.

**Constructivism:** the processes involved in hands-on knowledge acquisition through solving problems that reference children's prior knowledge. It is based on the assumption that the purpose of learning is for children to construct their own meanings through reflecting on experiences that enable them to form, and continuously revise, their world views. It means that children must be part of assessing their own learning, which contrasts with most formal testing.

**Differentiated out-of-school programming:** providing activities that target the developmental level of 10 to 12-year-olds as distinct from activities for the entire five to 12-year-olds' cohort.

**Domains:** content areas.

**E-learning:** knowledge acquisition through online technologies, generally involving online interaction among learners and with instructors/mentors.

**Embeddedness:** the extent to which children are interconnected with peers and adults in their social networks.

**Events:** the care situation comprises a series of events that may be empirically documented. Activity practices must be inferred from events because they cannot be observed.

**Experience sampling:** participants stop their activity at randomly designated times and note their experience (for example, their emotions) in real time.

**Experiential knowledge:** knowledge gained from experience, rather than from formal instruction. Some kinds of knowledge can only be acquired by experience, such as the experience of feeling cold.

**Extracurricular activities:** structured activities that are not part of school curricula, but may support schooling objectives.

**Focus group:** a group of children, parents or care workers who interactively make sense of prearranged discussion topics.

**Future-connectedness:** the extent to which children have a sense of their future lives, and of pathways that may lead them there.

**Informal learning pathways:** routes of progression from informal to formal learning. Informal learning is generally community-based in dedicated environments and non-educational contexts. Informal pathways are supportive of opportunities to undertake formal education, but they are also valuable in themselves.

**Johns Activity Spiral:** Time use modelled on an ascending engagement/ structure matrix.

**Latent content:** the interpretation of relationships. Manifest content is the least abstract and closest to the text.

**Memoing:** notes of ideas about the codes that are identified in transcripts and field notes, and the relationships between them (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). They comprise anything written or drawn in the process of constant comparison.

**Micro-level:** human social interactions and agency on a small-scale. See Bronfenbrenner's model (Figure 1 in Section 1.4.3).

**My Week:** an interactive activity described in Christensen and James (Stake, 2005), in which children visually represent their time use during a typical school week. Children are given a piece of paper with a circle in which to frame their responses. While they are undertaking the activity, the researcher interacts with them, makes observations and records the session. The completed charts are then used to prompt discussion in the children's focus groups, which are conducted at two locations. The data gathered from the activity session and the focus groups contribute to the database.

**Narrative analysis:** the researcher listens to children's stories of their out-of-school experiences and makes sense of this by finding relationships between children's lives and the social frameworks in which these take place.

**Out-of-school contexts:** the settings in which children participate in structured activity.

**Play:** intrinsically motivated activities undertaken by choice, for enjoyment, with profound cultural and developmental implications (Fisher, 1987).

**Preadolescent:** children aged between 10 and 12 years of age.

**'Schools as Community Centres' (SaCC):** there are 47 of these centres in NSW. They deliver initiatives for children aged zero to eight, by partnering with families, communities, schools and human services agencies.

**School dropout:** a child who leaves school without a qualification.

**Schooling:** documented exposure to education in the context of school culture.

**School retention rate:** measure of academic progression of children through the schooling process. The number of children in the grade is the denominator of the rate; the number of children in that grade who finish school is the numerator of the rate.**Social ecology:** a framework in which multiple social elements are represented in relation to one another.

**Social networks:** social structure of individuals and groups interdependently connected to each other.

**Structured activities:** activities that are organised by adults for children in specific times and places.

**Theme:** a latent thread of meaning that recurs in different content areas. Themes are not mutually exclusive because codes and categories can fit in different themes.

**Themes:** ‘meaning units’—clustered words and phrases relating context and ideas.

**The new sociology of childhood:** a way in which society constructs childhood by placing the child as a social actor and by challenging the generational hierarchy.

**The unit of text analysis:** whole interviews or observational protocols.

**Transition:** the passage from one life stage (childhood) to another (adolescence); the process of becoming a high school student; and the process of developing independence in the period between school and home.

**Tween:** a child between the ages of nine and 13.

**Wraparound Process Theory:** strengths-based support services for individual children, in which families are equal to experts in making decisions.

### Appendix 3: Concepts across theory, literature and data

#### SYSTEM

<b>Schooling</b>	<b>Literature</b>	<b>Model</b>	<b>Corresponding data/analysis</b>
School	Macro-system; statutory	Meso-level; stressor; links school with out-of-school	Intrusion on free time
Enrichment/ coaching	For schooling productivity For holistic productivity	Stressor; intervention for supporting learner identity	Structured activity programming with a range of psychosocial objectives
Cognitive	Holistic academic capability	Process of increasing capability; process of developing self-efficacy	Learning capacity
Academic	Measure of schooling productivity	Homework; competition; out-of-school/schooling links	Applied learning skills; affects attitude towards transition; influences attitude towards schooling; moderates learner identity
Dropout	Key unproductive outcome	Unproductive outcome	Risk from transition
Transition	Term given to mandated move from primary to high school	Transformative self-righting process	Immanent change of geographies, peer group configuration and academic challenge at puberty
Boundary	Approach to transition; theoretical 'boundary objects'; touchstones of successful negotiation through change	Filtered agency in negotiation at the interfaces among systems and processes	Late primary school indicators of children's aspirations and schooling attitudes
<b>Out-of-school</b>	<b>Literature</b>	<b>Model</b>	<b>Corresponding data/analysis</b>
Out-of-school	Non-school time use; ideal of freedom	Flipside of schooling	Structured activity provision by care professionals; unstructured activity in time designated as 'free'
Geographies	Space of place	Infrastructure and urban/rural fabric that affects and supports activities	Homes, neighbourhoods and out-of-school settings moderate the effects and supports of wellbeing
Program	Intervention	Intervention that supports and affects wellbeing	Philosophy-based provision of alternatives to self-care
Activities	Chosen time usage	Transactional processes negotiated through network connections	Practices undertaken in out-of-school time through degrees of socialisation
Extracurricular	Linked to schooling and intervention	Schooling-linked structured activities	Out-of-school time use structured through schooling intrusion
Participation	Linked to opportunity	Stressor	Function of attitudes to services and parent employment
Engagement	Positive stress in participation	Reactive response to stressor	Immersion and 'flow' in time use choice
Online technologies	Linked with free time, risk and learning	Intervention that supports and affects wellbeing	Virtual social network activity in free time linked with risk, literacy and play
Arts	A typology of activity interventions	Intervention that supports and affects wellbeing	A typology of activity interventions that facilitate immersion and 'flow' in participants
Physical	A typology of activity interventions	Intervention that supports and affects wellbeing	A typology of activity interventions that facilitate physical fitness and, in most cases, psychosocial wellbeing
<b>Access</b>	<b>Literature</b>	<b>Model</b>	<b>Corresponding data/analysis</b>
Rights	Macro-level statutory child protection for optimal wellbeing and productivity	Control, constraint and limits on agency in Western cultural framework	The difference between freedom and abuse
Minority and ethnic and Indigenous and gender	Linked with opportunity for participation	Ethnic and cultural filter of agency; agency challenge	Both positive for agency and an agency constraint; agency challenge

Culture	Filters of self-righting	Agency filter	Both positive for agency and an agency constraint; agency challenge
Disadvantage	Filters of self-righting	Agency filter	Agency constraint
<b>Macro</b>	<b>Literature</b>	<b>Model</b>	<b>Corresponding data/analysis</b>
Macro	Western Industrial Complex ideology and power structures	Western Industrial Complex systems	Western Industrial Complex assumptions, ideals, laws and mores
Citizenship	Western Industrial Complex ideal of a productive person	Attributes of attitude and orientation in children predictive of constructive future societal participation and productivity	Positive expressions and intentionality in the context of trust in the Western Industrial Complex ideal
Goals	Building blocks for productive identity	Markers guiding processes towards wellbeing	Evidence of belief in a realisable future
Future	Children as futures	Set of indicators reflective of macro-values	Projections of post-school scenarios
Aspiration	Terms of negotiation at boundaries	Motivators driving stressor-to-wellbeing processes	Vision of quality of wellbeing
Workforce/ labour force	Worker identity, productivity within framework of macro-values, socioeconomic processes	Worker (or unemployed) parent role in adult-child relationship processes	Child-parent relationship constraint; child 'futures' objective; socioeconomic mobility; positive/negative future challenge
Working children	Constructions of acceptable time use; statutory controls on children's work; rights; inter-cultural perspectives on working children	Agency support-and-challenge filter in identity formation; micro-level connection-building; learning the pathways to workforce participation	Child labour in the home; paid child work; the difference between work and developmental processes; idle children
Work	Defines the difference between child and adult	Positive indicator of productive outcomes; ideally generated through freedom and initiative	Perspectives on what constitutes work and productivity within a range of local contexts
<b>Childhood</b>	<b>Literature</b>	<b>Model</b>	<b>Corresponding data/analysis</b>
Tween, teen, childhood and construct	Theory and history of childhood; life-stage constructs	Transformational life-stages (chronosystem)	Agency constraint; positive agency at system boundaries
Self, identity	Self-righting processes	Personality agency filter	Formation of selves and learner identity; processes of self-regulation
Commodification and working children	Imposed childhood identity serving competitive marketplace imperatives; hidden producers; erosion and support of opportunity/initiative; travesty of rights; macro constructs of productivity; support and limitation of freedom	Agency constraint in identity formation; support and limitation of freedom; stressor	Adult-centred imposition of identity; difference between adult and child perspectives on productivity; positive agency through child initiative; agency constraint through favouring productivity over freedom
Experience; street children	Productive pedagogies; ideal experience constructs; risk/resilience indicators	Iterative cycles of supports and effects predictive of risk and resilience responses	Biography affects values, beliefs and attitudes; support for resilience; range of wellbeing constructs; range of degrees of engagement
Developmental	Psychology-oriented perspectives on transformative processes	Stages of self and learner identity formations at the boundaries among systems	Awareness and values of transformative time use for forming a learner identity
Agency: control, power, choice	Child perspective, viewpoint, action, initiative, decision-making, authenticity, validity, opportunity, freedom, facilitation, rights, individualisation, intergenerational power relations and sovereignty	Centre of theoretical ecological systems, and the place from and to which all processes converge	Iterative action filtered through phenomenological challenges and constraints; measures of acumen in manipulating systems; indicators of strength of identity formation in relation to externally constructed/imposed identities; sustainability of freedom/initiative; security of productivity; knowledge-making capability, and generation of culture; generation of opportunity and participation



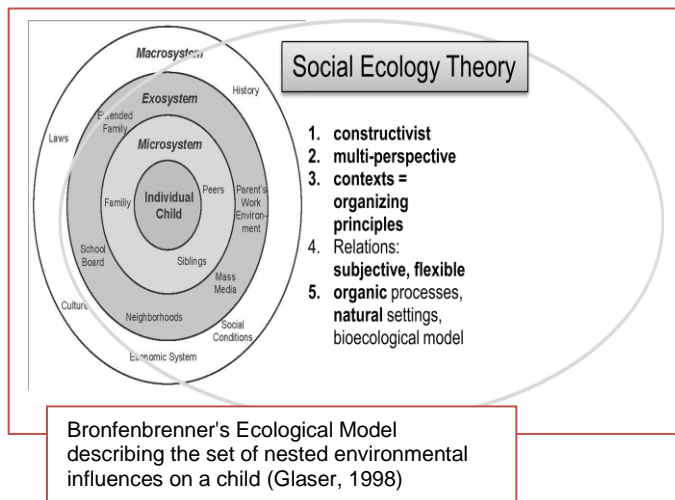
Voice	Testimony of children; child perspectives; mechanics of alignment and allegiance in voicing; snapshots of context-dependent identity components in flux; clusters of boundary 'holons' privileging a hierarchy of selves; the 'space' between speaking and being spoken for; moderators of 'being' and 'becoming' in chronosystem processes	Skills that operate mechanisms of agency	Boundary-negotiation skill for efficacy in identity formation
<b>Wellbeing</b>	<b>Literature</b>	<b>Model</b>	<b>Corresponding data/analysis</b>
Socio-emotional/ psychosocial/ moral	Psychology perspectives on wellbeing; mental health; network formation and affiliation patterns; values-based activity practices	Self-righting iterative processes in chronosystem	Indicators of reactive self-righting processes at the interface with system boundaries; moderating stressors for wellbeing
Resilience	Agent-driven choice-making for wellbeing in contexts of agency constraints	Stressors and reactions in chronosystem	Ideal of productivity and initiative with respect to phenomenological constraints of wellbeing
Intervention/ prevention	'Righting' child through imposed supportive scaffolding	Stressors in chronosystem with supportive intent for wellbeing	Structured activity processes;
Risk and substance	Causal phenomena	Stressors and reactions in chronosystem	Positive future ideation; discontinuous learning pathways (experience/time use); agency challenges through phenomenological filters
Behaviour / bullying	Affiliation patterns; peer network power relations; indicators of psychosocial wellbeing	Reactive processes in chronosystem	Indicators of risk; capability in negotiation at system boundaries; discontinuous network connectivity; discontinuous identity processes
Wellbeing	Holistically 'righted' agent	Processes reactive to stressors in the chronosystem	Indicators of productivity and freedom within Western Industrial Complex value system
Health	Physical wellbeing	Key phenomenological agency filter	Agency moderator
Collaboration	Partnerships along Wraparound principles	Supportive processes among systems	Child-centred Wraparound practices and perspectives
<b>Childcare</b>	<b>Literature</b>	<b>Model</b>	<b>Corresponding data</b>
Wraparound	Theory discourse modelling collaboration with child agent to instigate supportive intervention	Circuit-breaker in dysfunctional iterative self-righting processes in chronosystem	Context-specific exemplars of Wraparound efficacy; indicators of dysfunctional support effects
Partnership	Links among stakeholders in intervention/prevention programs	Network processes in the chronosystem	Productive connectivity among home, schooling and neighbourhood communities
Childcare/care workers	Macro-level concern for workforce efficacy; macro interests in parenting quality; micro-level processes in child protection; dynamics of paid care services	Whole-system (macro-micro) interventions for conditioning and teaching children the values and purposes of lifelong participation in Western Industrial Complex society	Adult-child relationships for support of wellbeing; philosophies of care services; care practices and care standards; indicators of effects of care on child agency

TIME

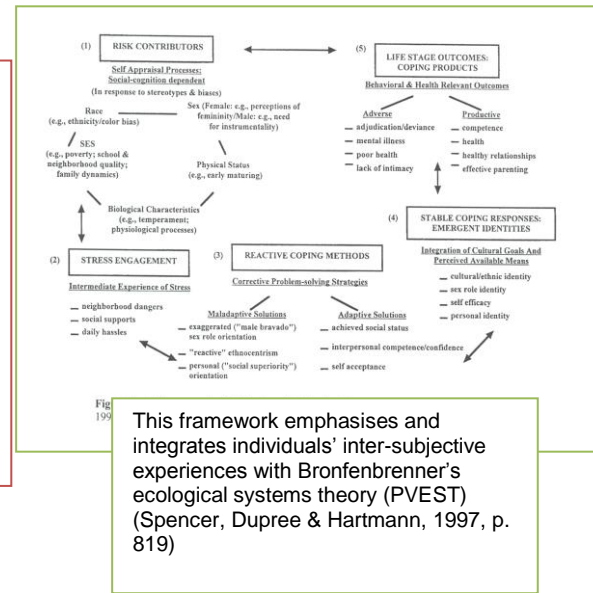
<b>Time use</b>	<b>Literature</b>	<b>Model</b>	<b>Corresponding data/analysis</b>
Free time	Time over which the state does not have mandatory power; idealised concept of the nature of childhood; philosophical consideration of whether time can be 'free'	Stressors and reactive processes in the chronosystem within out-of-school contexts at micro and meso-level systems	Unstructured activity; unmeasured activity outcomes and processes; services to constrain children in free time; child perspectives on free time

Productivity outcomes of time use	Ideal of child as ‘futures’; constructs of productivity	Mandated interventions to support children as ‘futures’	Programs that support schooling objectives; specifically academic and skills support; support for socialisation skill
Freedom/initiative outcomes of time use	Ideal of childhood experience	Elective interventions and choices to support freedom and initiative	Pathways to self-awareness and expression; specifically arts-related programs and socialisation skill support
<b>Network</b>	<b>Literature</b>	<b>Model</b>	<b>Corresponding data/analysis</b>
Social/network	Capability indicators for forging connections in networks; socialisation operates all time use	Nested inside time use in the chronosystem to denote interdependence of time use and affiliations	The social lives of children; indicators of socialisation efficacy
Micro	Mutual and iterative effects and supports of family/peer networks	Sum of family-peer connections	
Community	Social capital; services; social work; context of macro-mandated interventions	Sum of micro-meso connections	Out-of-school partnerships; links among schooling, care services and labour
Adult-child/family/mother/father/parent/peer	Dyad relationships (psychology)	Micro-system	Out-of-school program links with parents
<b>Learning</b>	<b>Literature</b>	<b>Model</b>	<b>Corresponding data/analysis</b>
Learning/play	Relationship of learning to play; differences between learning and schooling; learning is relationship; learning is a social activity	Nested inside the time use and network dynamics in the chronosystem to demonstrate the interdependency of learning and socialisation. Learning is a self-righting process in the chronosystem in which adult-child interactivity iteratively balances stressors and reactors to achieve sustainable wellbeing	Learning contexts; indications of learning across contexts; learning through play; informal and formal learning; school learning and out-of-school activity; learning relationships
Learner identity	Key identity requirement for full and lifelong participation in Western Industrial Complex society	Stressor-reactor self-righting processes in the chronosystem that lead to positive outcomes both of productivity and also freedom/initiative	Indicators of self-righting processes that predict positive participation in lifelong independent learning and work capacities
Literacy/literacies/productive pedagogies	Literacy is a key productivity indicator; knowledge-making capability; experiential and cultural knowledge	Specific codes for knowledge and skill used in negotiating identity at system boundaries; culture and identity formation	Where children obtain literacy; literacy across contexts; learner-identity literacy skill building; literacies as resources
Motivation	The tensions between opportunity and engagement	Engagement for wellbeing—a dynamic of the chronosystem	Positive agency along with learner identity predict sustainable participation in Western Industrial Complex society

**Appendix 5: Theoretical frameworks informing the theoretical model**

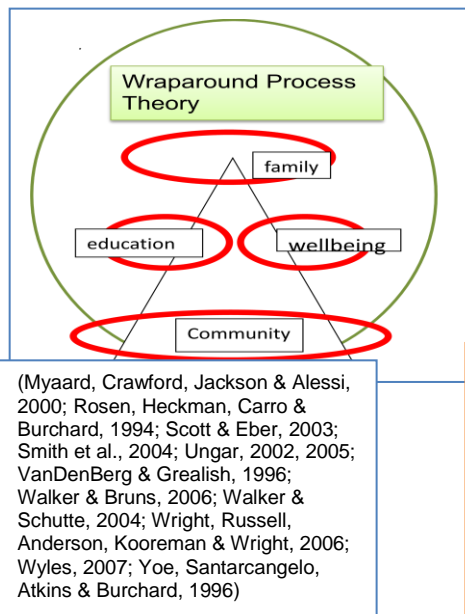


Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Model describing the set of nested environmental influences on a child (Glaser, 1998)

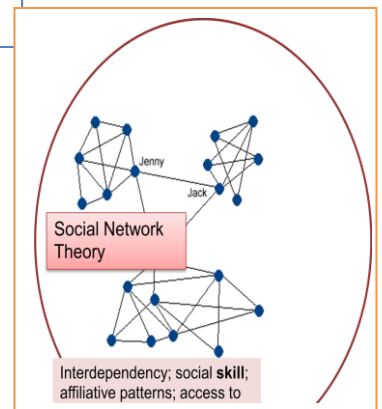


'New sociology of childhood':  
Child as actor  
Autonomy/ dependence:  
'tween' culture.  
  
Cultural relativity

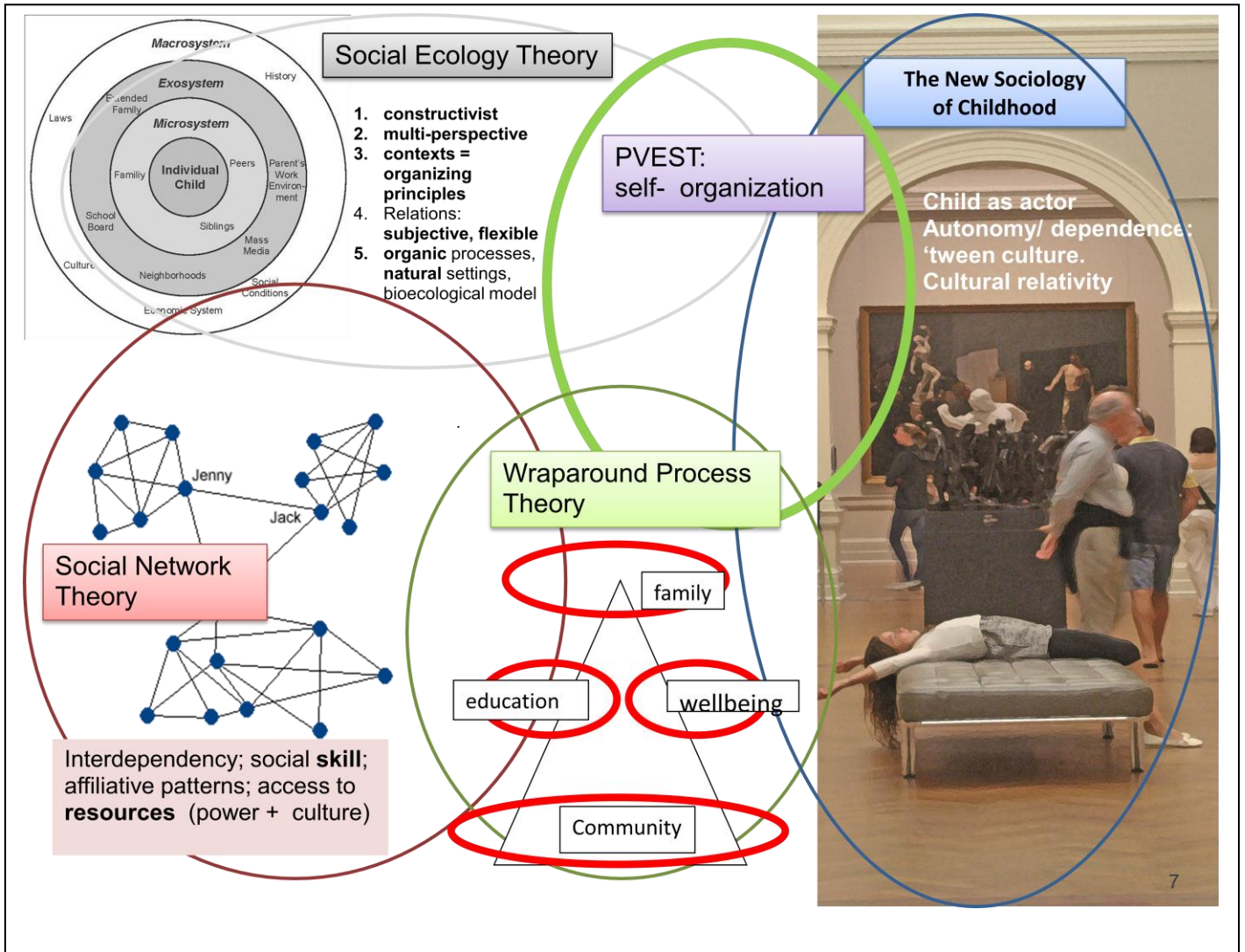
(Christensen & James, 2000; Christensen & Prout, 2005; Graham, 2007; Harden, Scott, Backett-Milburn & Jackson, 2000; Holloway & Valentine, 2000; James & Prout, 1997; King, 2007; Matthews, 2007; McDonald, 2009; Miller, 2005; Shanahan, 2007; Wyness, 2000a, 2000b)



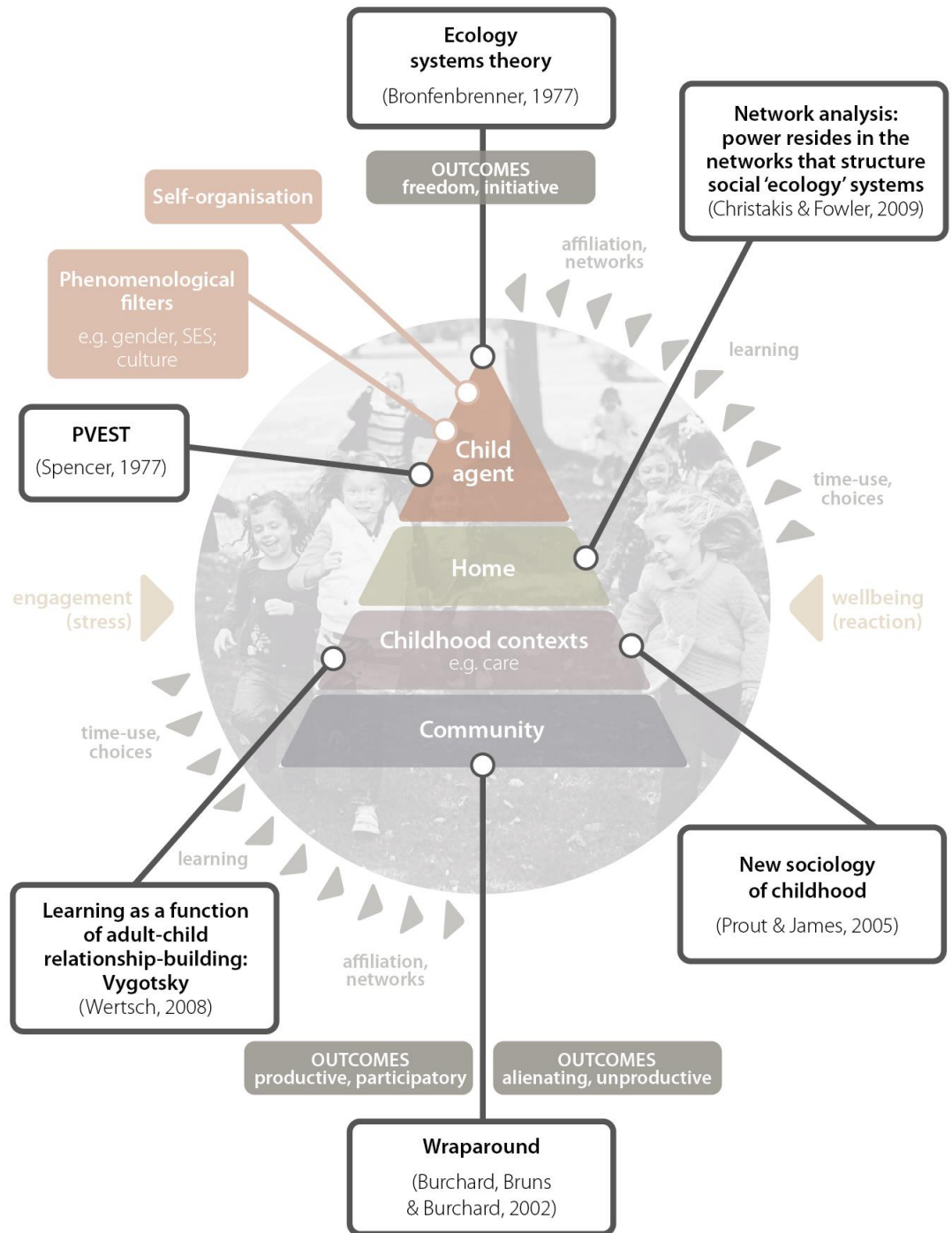
(Myaard, Crawford, Jackson & Alessi, 2000; Rosen, Heckman, Carro & Burchard, 1994; Scott & Eber, 2003; Smith et al., 2004; Ungar, 2002, 2005; VanDenBerg & Grealish, 1996; Walker & Bruns, 2006; Walker & Schutte, 2004; Wright, Russell, Anderson, Kooreman & Wright, 2006; Wyles, 2007; Yoe, Santarcangelo, Atkins & Burchard, 1996)



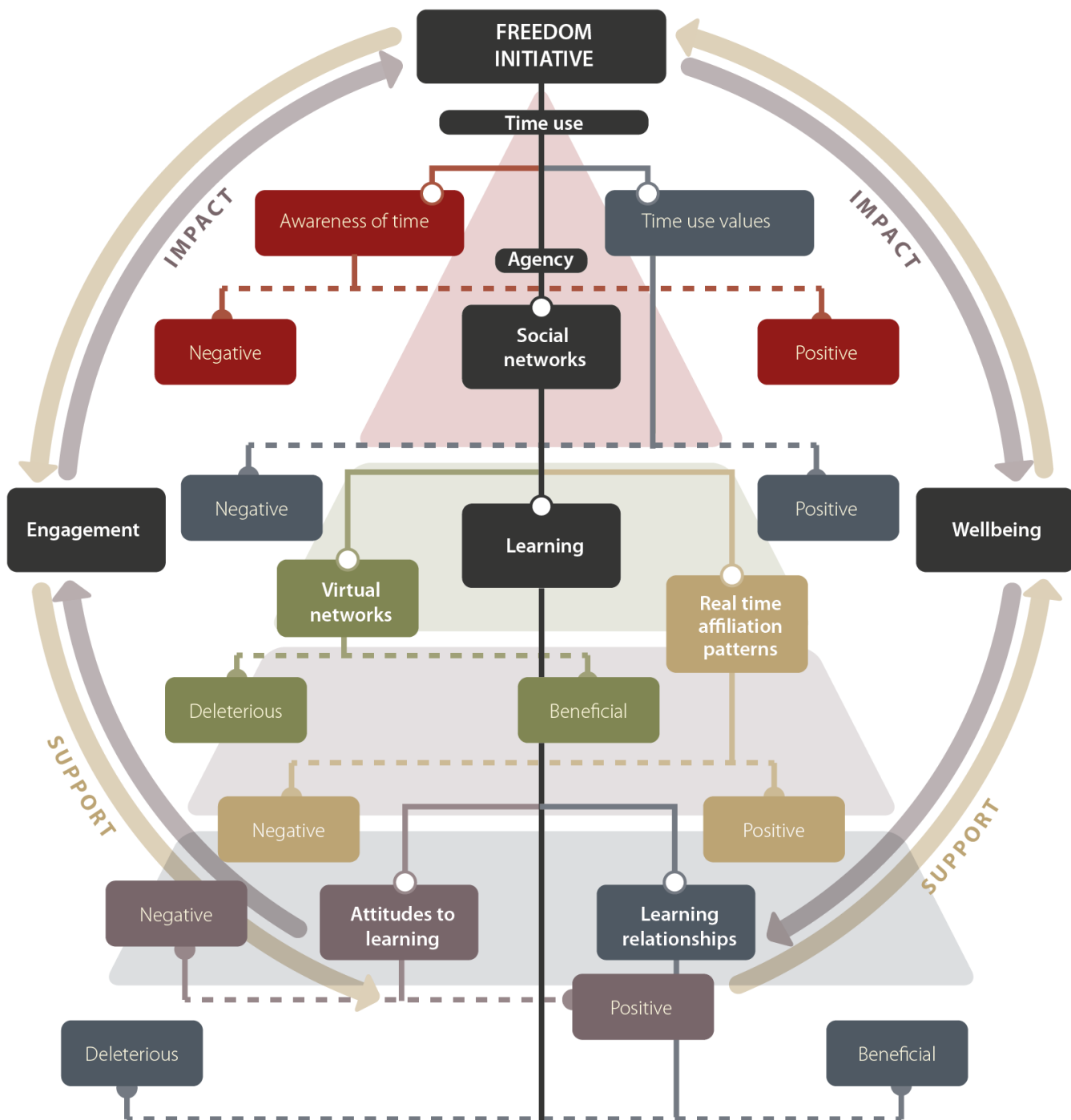
(Belle, 1999, 1989; Berndt, 1989; Bhavnagri & Parke, 1991; Black, 2008; Buckley, 2008; Burgess & Banks, 2010; Campbell, 2005; Cantin & Boivin, 2004; Carrington, Scott & Wasserman, 2005; Christakis & Fowler, 2009; Elias & Dilworth, 2003; Feiring & Lewis, 1989, 1991; Foth, 2005, 2006a, 2006b; Friedkin, 1992; Furman & Buhrmester, 1985; Garbarino, Burston, Raber, Russell & Crouter, 1978; Gifford-Smith & Brownell, 2003; Goodreau, Kitts & Morris, 2009; Guryan, Jacob, Klopfer & Groff, 2008; Hirsch & DuBois, 1989; Hirsch & DuBois, 1992; Lake & Eastwood, 2004; Lamb, 2005; Lewis, 2005; McPherson, Smith-Lovin & Cook, 2001; Pattison & Robins, 2002; Rosier, 2000; Sandler, Miller, Short & Wolchik, 1989; Sheridan, Buhs & Warnes, 2003; Tietjen, 1982, 1989; Ungar, 2000; Ungar, 2002, 2004a, 2004b; Ungar, 2008; Ungar, 2009; Ungar et al., 2007; Ungar & Liebenberg, 2009; Watts, Dodds & Newman, 2002; Wolchik, Beals & Sandler, 1989; Young Adult Library Services Association, 2008; Zelkowitz, 1989)



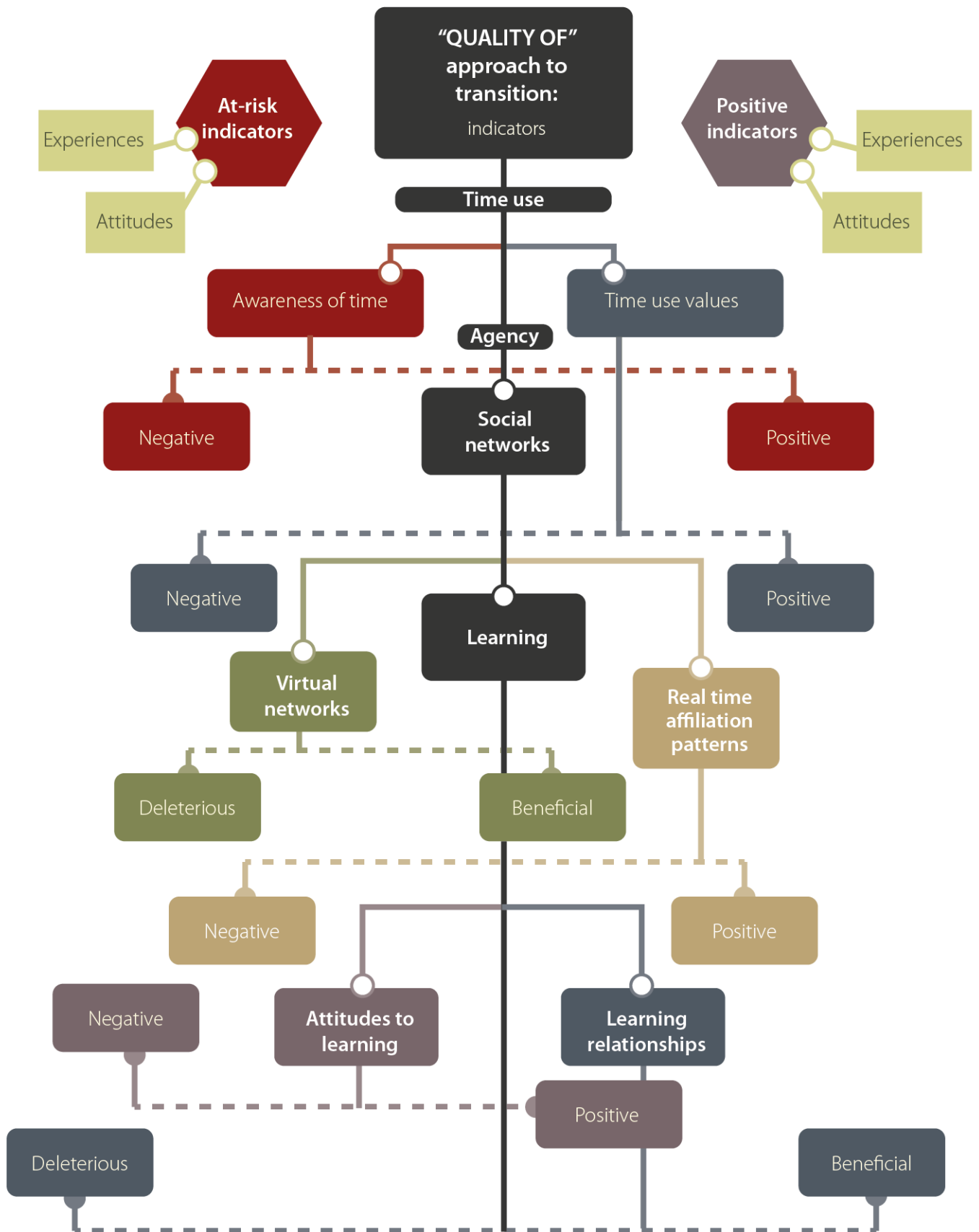
Appendix 5: Deconstruction and evolution: theoretical model development



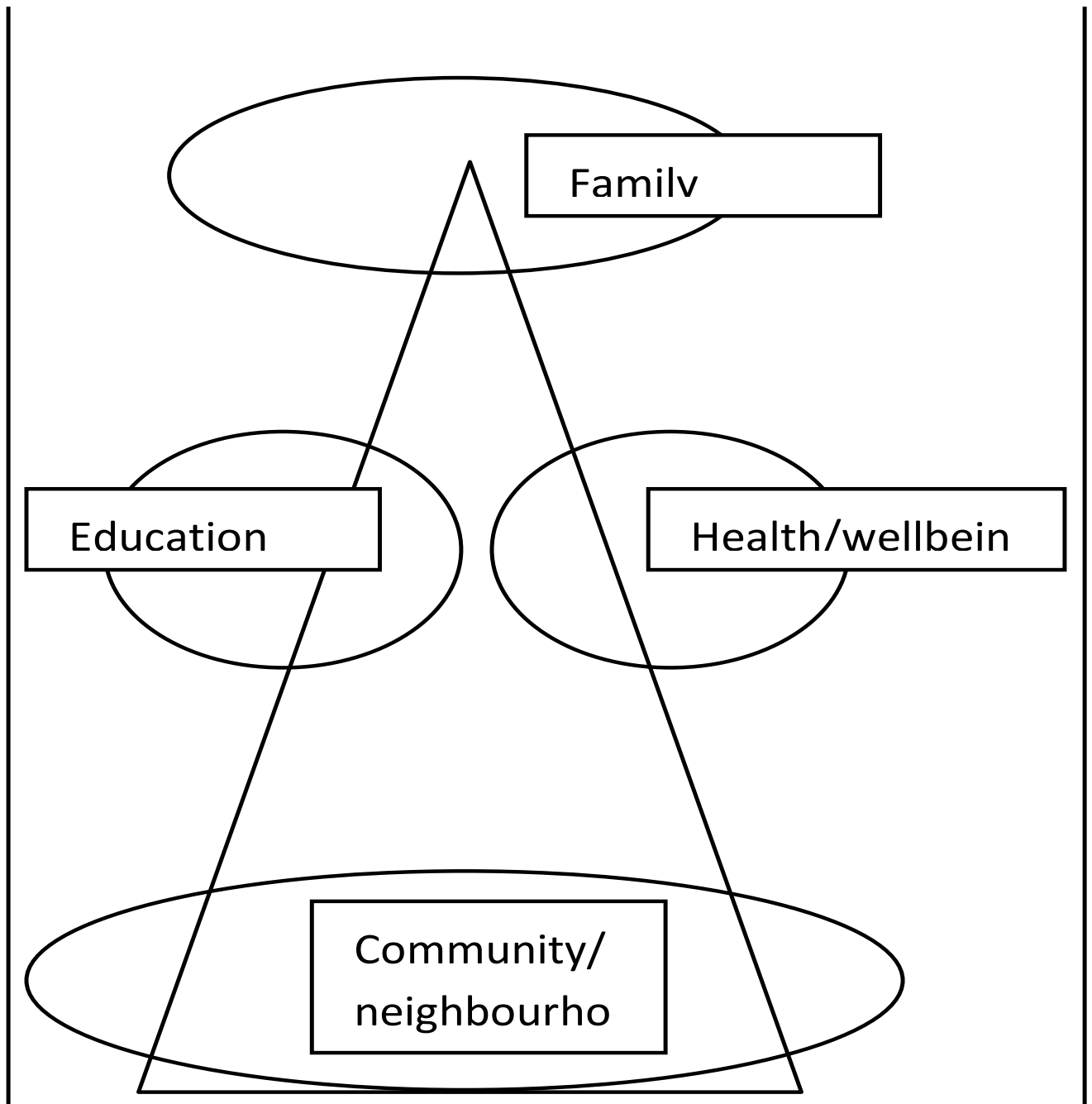
The diagram below comprises a summary of the influences on the author’s theoretical model. Each progressive element of logic informing the author’s theoretical frame is illustrated below this diagram.



The thematic components of the chronosystem in the theoretical model derived for the present study, showing the contextual core in the faded background.

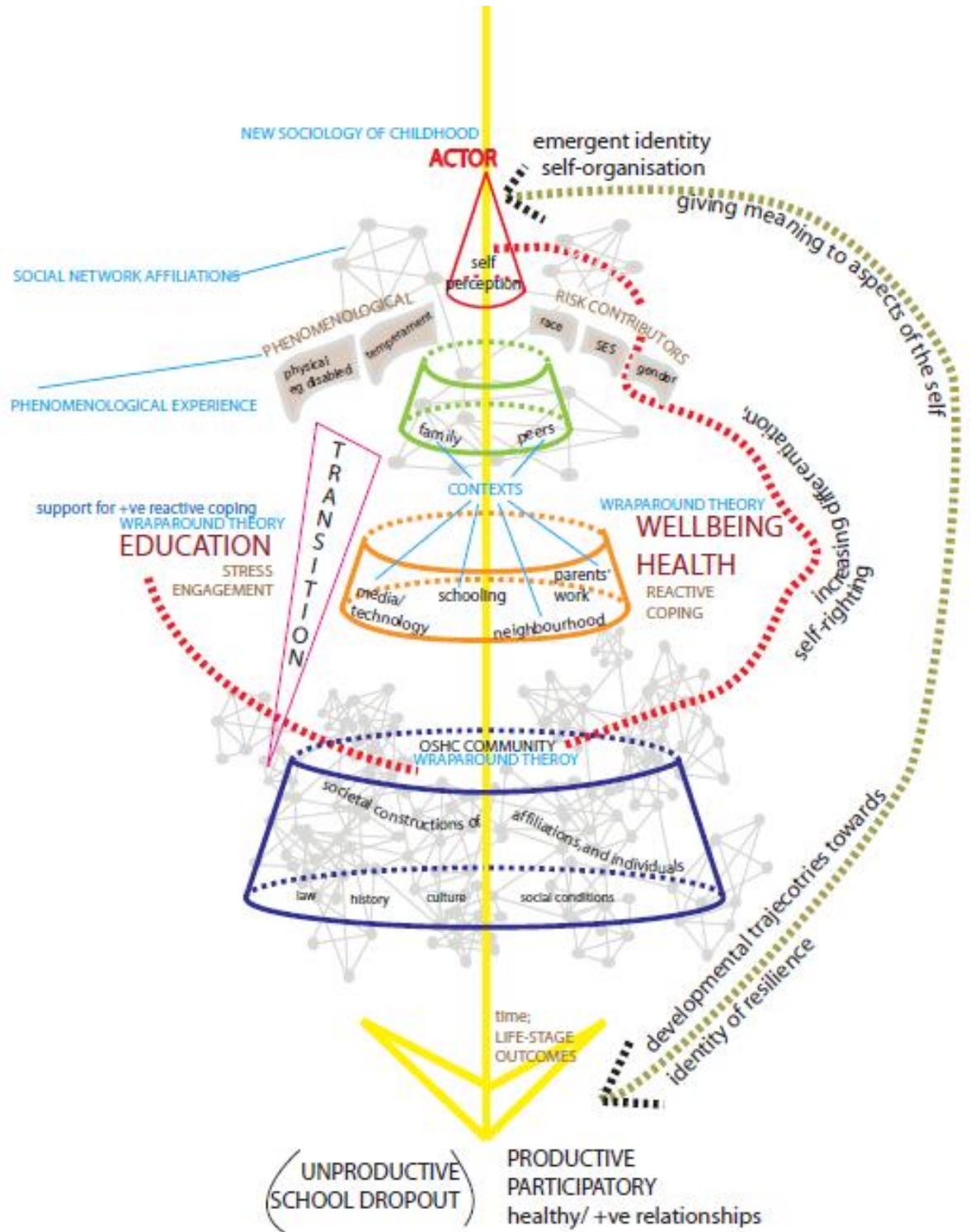


The proposed 'transition' indicators.



Wraparound model

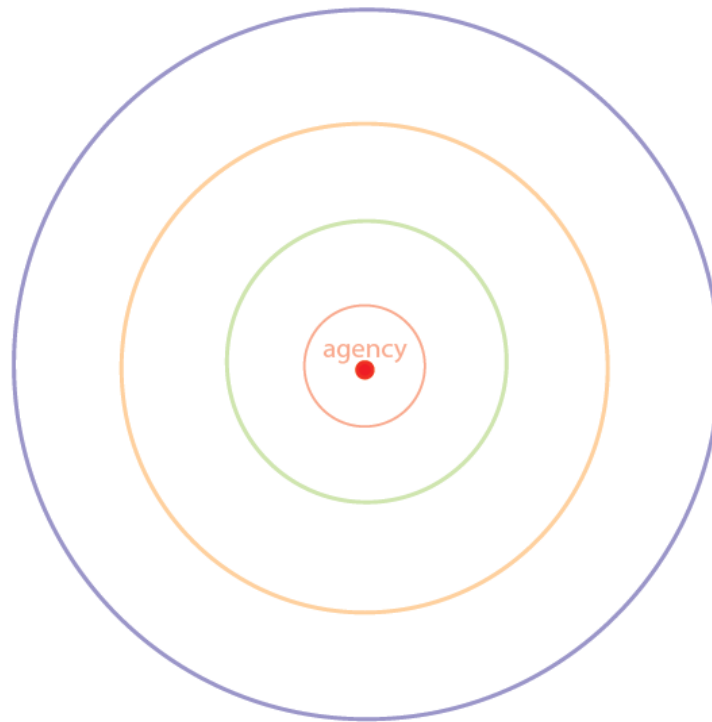




Model created for proposal

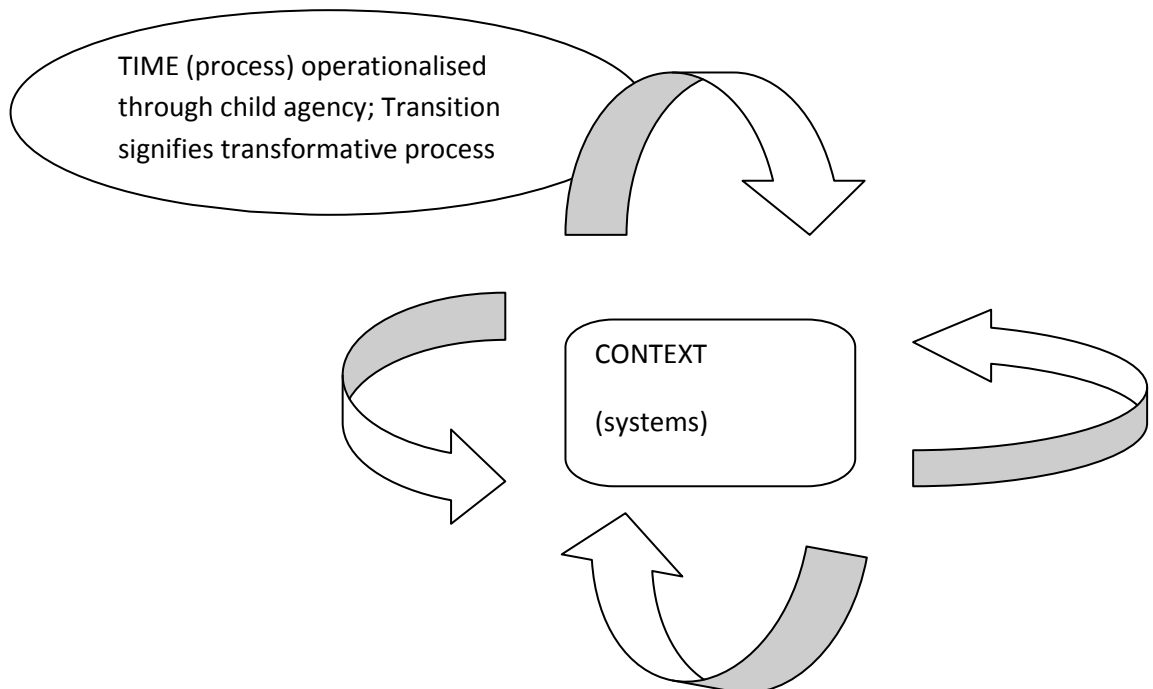
integrative model.pdf

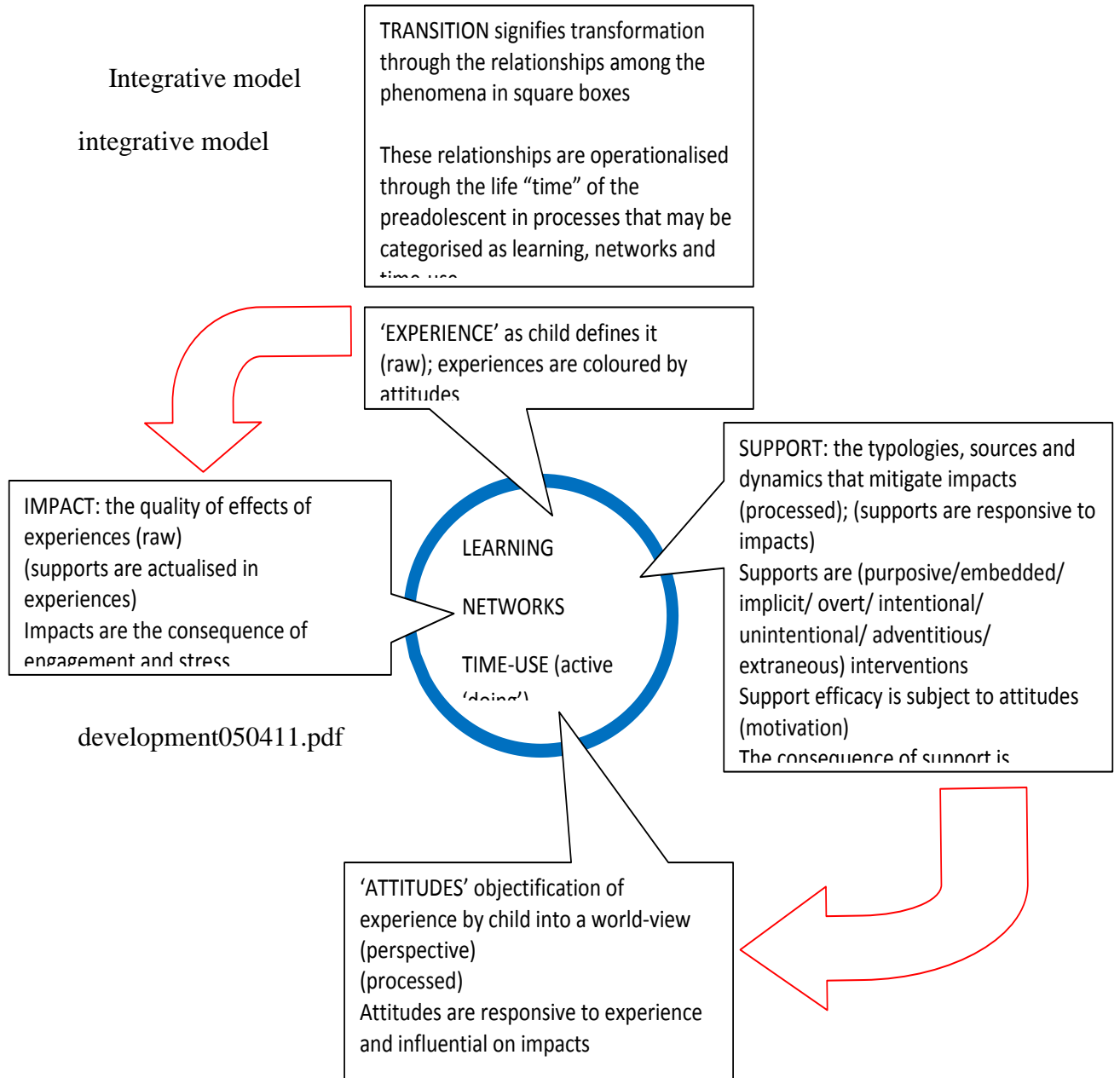
integrative model development020411.ai

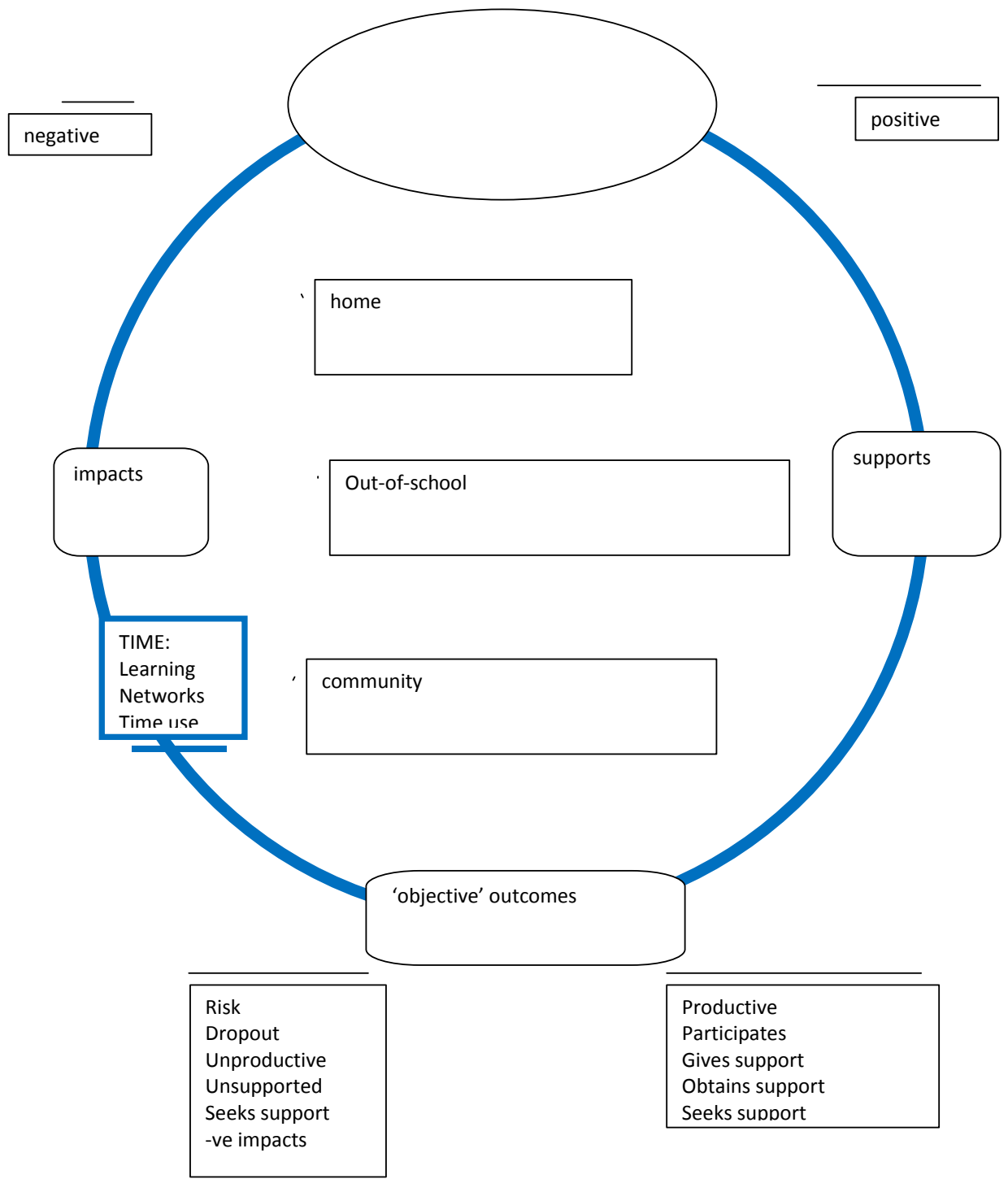


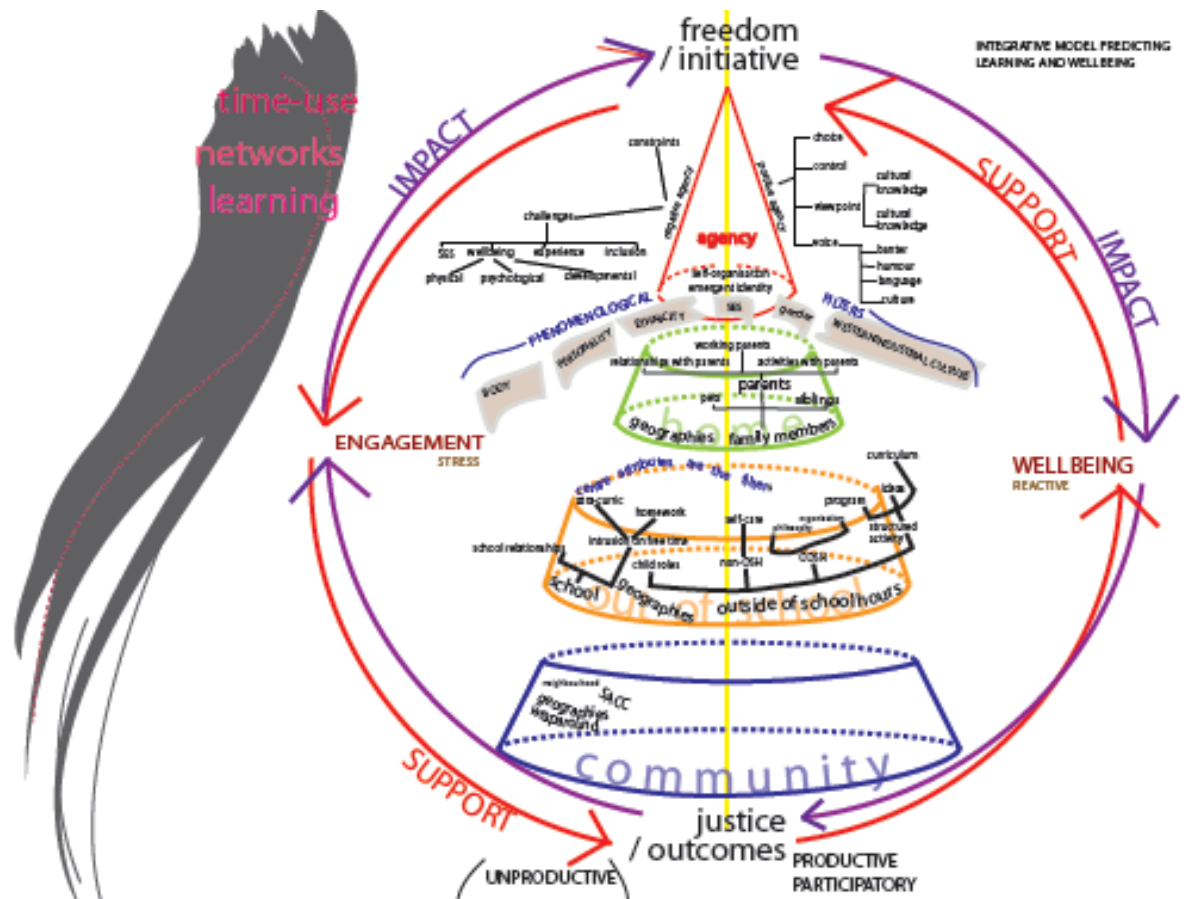
Systems

concentric view050411.pdf









For the moment, I have left a number of early attempts at matrix and queries, stored in the Results folder. In the meantime, over the last couple of weeks, I have reorganised my coding structure. This work is described above and informs the ‘evolution of the model’ diagrams that are linked to this document. I saved the Queries, too, so I have a record of how I went about trying to look at the topics that now seem to work. The important changes have come from my decision to represent time as operationalising the context-bound child agency focus. In my perspective, agency is enacted through three important theme categories: learning, networks and time use. This meant shifting the ‘time’ stuff out of the model’s structure. It is hard to show its dynamic graphically, I find, so I have placed it to the side of the ‘cone’ diagram, like a splash of paint, a movement and an intention. It is, after all, a dimension distinctly different from the constructed forms that derive from cultural practice. Indeed, I’m anxious to place time as transformative, and thereby create the ‘natural logic’ for the idea that transition and time, as I am drawing it, are really the same thing. After all, while it may be argued that time passes regardless of human agency. I would like to think about time as both a function of human activity and a transformer of it, through the above-listed operators. I have written a bit about this previously, but will repeat here that I wish to characterise time as a subjective and engagement-linked ‘quantity’—it changes the shape of phenomena according to the activity processes and the level of absorption in them. The degree to which children have agency is therefore central in this idea, which resonates along the lines of fulfilment, creative freedom and whatever happiness is. Indeed I would like to argue I think that time is an illusion that we depend on to structure meaning and knowledge making. Or rather, as Primo Levi viewed it, we need to lay a grid of meaning over the chaos of time so that we can live in the universe. Whichever way time is made existential through human activity processes and it may even be considered not to exist at all outside human consciousness. I intend to develop this in circular terms of attitude-formation and the influence of experience as two opposites in the way we approach and value our time. Finally, I drew my attention to the time dimension in Bronfenbrenner’s early ecology model. It is interesting to me that he locates systems in the time, not space, dimension.

## Appendix 6: Field schedule, showing generation and auditing of field

### data

<p>HOYDEN PRELIMINARY INTERVIEW WITH COORDINATOR</p> <p>Hoyden_fieldnotes 1-CODED</p> <p>15 October TRANSCRIPT Preliminary interview with MUP centipede Glebe Alex McKean; AlexMcKean_prelim_interv_field_notes_151010; AlexMcKean_prelim_interv_151010; AlexMcKean_pretranscribed trans in NVivo1-CODED; audio in NVivo</p>	<p>HOYDEN WORKSHOP</p> <p>1 November                  Hoydenwkshp1.doc;                  Hoydenwkshp1_nvivo8.txt;                  Hoydenwkshp2.doc;                  Hoydenwkshp2_nvivo8.txt;                  Hoydenwkshp3.doc;                  Hoydenwkshp3_nvivo8.txt;                  Hoydenwkshp4.doc;                  Hoydenwkshp4_nvivo8.txt;                  Hoydenwkshp5.doc;                  Hoydenwkshp5_nvivo8.txt;                  Hoydenwkshp6.doc;                  Hoydenwkshp6_nvivo8.txt;                  Hoydenwkshp7.doc;                  Hoydenwkshp7_nvivo8.txt;                  Hoydenwkshp8.doc;                  Hoydenwkshp8_nvivo8.txt;                  Hoydenwkshp9.doc;                  Hoydenwkshp9_nvivo8.txt;                  Hoydenwkshp10.doc;                  Hoydenwkshp10_nvivo8.txt;                  Hoydenwkshp11.doc;                  Hoydenwkshp11_nvivo8.txt;                  Hoydenwkshp21.doc;                  Hoydenwkshp21_nvivo8.txt;                  Hoydenwkshp22.doc;                  Hoydenwkshp22_nvivo8.txt;                  Hoydenwkshp23.doc;                  Hoydenwkshp23_nvivo8.txt;                  Hoydenwkshp24.doc;                  Hoydenwkshp24_nvivo8.txt;                  Hoydenwkshp25.doc;                  Hoydenwkshp25_nvivo8.txt;                  Hoydenwkshp26.doc;                  Hoydenwkshp26_nvivo8.txt;                  Hoydenwkshp27.doc;                  Hoydenwkshp27_nvivo8.txt;                  Hoydenwkshp28.doc;                  Hoydenwkshp28_nvivo8.txt;                  Hoydenwkshp29.doc;                  Hoydenwkshp29_nvivo8.txt;                  Hoydenwkshp30.doc;                  Hoydenwkshp30_nvivo8.txt;                  Hoydenwkshp31.doc;                  Hoydenwkshp31_nvivo8.txt;                  Hoydenwkshp32.doc;                  Hoydenwkshp32_nvivo8.txt;                  Hoydenwkshp33.doc;                  Hoydenwkshp33_nvivo8.txt;                  Hoydenwkshp34.doc;                  Hoydenwkshp34_nvivo8.txt;                  Hoydenwkshp35.doc;                  Hoydenwkshp35_nvivo8.txt;                  Hoydenwkshp36.doc;                  Hoydenwkshp36_nvivo8.txt;                  Hoydenwkshp37.doc;                  Hoydenwkshp37_nvivo8.txt;                  Hoydenwkshp38.doc;                  Hoydenwkshp38_nvivo8.txt;                  Hoydenwkshp39.doc;                  Hoydenwkshp39_nvivo8.txt;                  Hoydenwkshp40.doc;                  Hoydenwkshp40_nvivo8.txt;                  Hoydenwkshp41.doc;                  Hoydenwkshp41_nvivo8.txt;</p>	<p>HOYDEN FOCUS GROUP</p> <p>12 November                  Hoyden_fg1.doc;                  Hoyden_fg1_nvivo8.txt;                  Hoyden_fg2.doc;                  Hoyden_fg2_nvivo8.txt;                  Hoyden_fg3.doc;                  Hoyden_fg3_nvivo8.txt                  transcribed trans in NVivo; video in NVivo</p>	<p>HOYDEN CHILD INTERVIEWS-2</p> <p>Hoydenf26_interv_151110_nvivo8;                  Hoydenf26_interv_151110 (2);                  Hoydenf26_interv_151110; text transcribed &amp; 1-CODED; [audio not yet coded]                  Hoydenf25_interv_121110_nvivo8;                  Hoydenf25_interv_121110 (2);                  Hoydenf25_interv_121110 text transcribed &amp; 1-CODED [audio not yet coded]</p>	<p>HOYDEN YOUTH INTERVIEWS—NO Fieldwork finished</p>
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	Hoydenwkshp42.doc; Hoydenwkshp42_nvivo8.txt; <a href="#">transcribed trans in NVivo</a> ; <a href="#">video in NVivo</a>			
<p><b>DORNET PRELIMINARY INTERVIEW WITH COORDINATOR</b></p> <p><b>Dornet field notes 1-CODED</b></p> <p>18 October Transcript preliminary interview with; prelim int part d_101018_006; prelim int part b_101018_004; prelim int part a_101018_007; field notes prelim interview DonnaRein 181010 <a href="#">transcribed trans in NVivo1-CODED</a>; <a href="#">audio in NVivo</a></p>	<p><b>DORNET WORKSHOP</b></p> <p>28 October dornetwkshp26a_28th October; dornetwkshp26a; dornetwkshp26[1]; dornetwkshp26; dornetwkshp25.doc; dornetwkshp25_nvivo8.txt; dornetwkshp24txt; dornetwkshp24_28th October; dornetwkshp24[1]; dornetwkshp23a_28th October; dornetwkshp23[3]; larwkshp23; dornetwkshp22txt; dornetwkshp22_28th October; dornetwkshp22[2]; dornet_workshop_audio281010 ; <a href="#">transcribed trans in NVivo</a>; <a href="#">video in NVivo</a></p>	<p><b>DORNET FOCUS GROUP</b></p> <p>4 November: dornet_fg_2a_4th November; dornet_fg_2_4th November; dornet_fg_2[2]; dornet_fg_1_4th November; dornet_fg_1[1]4th November; dornet_fg_1[1]; <a href="#">transcribed trans in NVivo</a>; <a href="#">video in NVivo</a></p>	<p><b>DORNET CHILD INTERVIEWS-3</b></p> <p>dornet_ch_interv1111 10_camilla; dornet_ch_interv1111 10_camilla.mp3; dornet_ch_interv1111 10_camilla_nvivo8; dornet_ch_interv1111 10_camilla <a href="#">transcribed</a> dornet_ch_interv1111 10Melody; dornet_ch_interv1111 10Melody_nvivo8; dornet_ch_interv1111 10Melody (2); dornet_ch_interv1111 10Melody <a href="#">transcribed</a> dornet_ch_interv1111 10samantha dornet_ch_interv1111 10samantha_nvivo8; dornet_ch_interv1111 10_samantha (2); dornet_ch_interv1111 10_samantha; <a href="#">transcribed</a></p>	<p><b>DORNET YOUTH INTERVIEWS-NO</b></p> <p>Fieldwork finished</p>
<p><b>ASYA PRELIMINARY INTERVIEW WITH COORDINATOR</b></p> <p><b>Asya_field_notes; 1-CODED</b></p> <p>12 November DonnaRein_prelim_in terv121110 (2); DonnaRein_prelim_in terv121110 <a href="#">transcribed trans in NVivo1-CODED</a>; <a href="#">audio in NVivo</a></p>	<p><b>ASYA WORKSHOP</b></p> <p>26 October 3: Asya_workshp_audio261010; asyawkshp1.doc; asyawkshp1_nvivo8.txt; <a href="#">transcribed trans in NVivo</a>; <a href="#">video in NVivo</a></p>	<p><b>ASYA FOCUS GROUP</b></p> <p>2 November asya_focus_group2_021110; asya_fg7_nvivo8_2nd Nov; asya_fg7_2nd Nov; asya_fg6_nvivo8_2nd Nov; asya_fg6_2nd Nov; asya_fg5_nvivo8_2nd Nov; asya_fg5_2nd Nov; asya_fg42nd Nov; asya_fg4_nvivo8_2nd Nov; asya_fg3_nvivo8_2nd Nov; asya_fg3_2nd Nov; asya_fg2_nvivo8_2nd Nov; asya_fg2.doc_2nd Nov; asya_fg1_nvivo8_2nd Nov; <a href="#">transcribed trans in NVivo</a>; <a href="#">video in NVivo</a></p>	<p><b>ASYA CHILD INTERVIEWS-4</b></p> <p>19 November early interview with Peter: Peter (2); Peter; Peterpart2; Peterpart1_2; Peterpart1; Peter_part2_nvivo8; Peter_part2_nvivo8; PeterPART 1 <a href="#">transcribed trans in NVivo</a>; <a href="#">audio in NVivo</a></p> <p>23 November Marina_interv161110; Marina_interv161110_nvivo8 (2); Marina_interv161110_nvivo8; Marina_interv161110 (2); Marina_interv161110; <a href="#">transcribed trans in NVivo</a>; <a href="#">audio in NVivo</a></p> <p>PeterPART 1 <a href="#">transcribed trans in NVivo</a>; <a href="#">audio in NVivo</a></p> <p>Max: Max (2); Max; <a href="#">transcribed trans in NVivo</a>; <a href="#">audio in NVivo</a></p> <p>291110 interview Emily: Emily_interv291110_nvivo8 (2); Emily_interv291110_n</p>	<p><b>ASYA YOUTH INTERVIEWS- NO</b></p> <p>Fieldwork finished</p>



			<p>vivo8; Emily_interv291110 (2); Emily_interv291110; transcribed trans in NVivo; audio in NVivo</p> <p>021210Additional interv with Peter PART 2 transcribed trans in NVivo; audio in NVivo</p>	
<p>TURING PRELIMINARY INTERVIEW WITH COORDINATOR</p> <p>Turing_field_notes; 1-CODED</p> <p>9 November 10am TaraLing_prleim_interv091110_nvivo8; TaraLing_prleim_interv091110 (2); TaraLing_prleim_interv091110transcribed trans in NVivo1-CODED; audio in NVivo SamanthaTurner_SA CC_091110Pt2_nvivo8; SamanthaTurner_SA CC_091110Pt2; SamanthaTurner_SA CC_091110Pt1_nvivo8; SamanthaTurner_SA CC_091110Pt1_2; SamanthaTurner_SA CC_091110Pt1; transcribed trans in NVivo1-CODED; audio in NVivo</p>	<p>TURING WORKSHOP</p> <p>3 November Turingwkshp8_nvivo8_3rd Nov; Turingwkshp8_3rd Nov; Turingwkshp7_nvivo8_3rd Nov; Turingwkshp7_3rd Nov; Turingwkshp6_nvivo8_3rd Nov; Turingwkshp6_3rd Nov; Turingwkshp4_nvivo8_3rd Nov; Turingwkshp4_3rd Nov; Turingwkshp3_nvivo8_3rd Nov; Turingwkshp3_3rd Nov; Turingwkshp2_nvivo8_3rd Nov; Turingwkshp2_3rd Nov; Turingwkshp1_nvivo8_3rd Nov; Turingwkshp1_3rd Nov; Turing_audio_workshop; transcribed trans in NVivo; video in NVivo</p>	<p>TURING FOCUS GROUP</p> <p>9 November Turing_focus_group_0911101; Turing_fg_12_nvivo8_9th November; Turing_fg_12_nvivo8; Turing_fg_12_9th November; Turing_fg_1_nvivo8_9th November; Turing_fg_1_nvivo8; Turing_fg_1_9th November transcribed trans in NVivo; video in NVivo</p>	<p>TURING CHILD INTERVIEWS-2</p> <p>9 November declan_interv_091110; declan_interv_091110_nvivo8; declan_interv_091110 (2); declan_interv_091110 transcribed trans in NVivo; audio in NVivo</p> <p>dorothy_interv; dorothy_interv_nvivo8; dorothy_interv (2); dorothy_interv transcribed trans in NVivo; audio in NVivo</p>	<p>TURING YOUTH INTERVIEWS-1</p> <p>24 November interview with Edwina: Edwina_interv_241110_nvivo8; Edwina_interv_241110 (2); Edwina_interv_241110; transcribed trans in NVivo; audio in NVivo Fieldwork finished</p>
<p>KENTLEDGE PRELIMINARY INTERVIEW WITH COORDINATOR;</p> <p>Kentledge field notes; 1-CODED</p> <p>25 October 12 noon Transcript preliminary interview GillianKent251010; Kentledge_prelim_interv251010; GillianKent_prelim_interv_part3_251010; GillianKent_prelim_interv_part3_251010; GillianKent_prelim_interv_part2_251010; prelim_interv_GillianKent251010 transcribed trans in NVivo 1-CODED; audio in NVivo</p>	<p>KENTLEDGE WORKSHOP</p> <p>Girls Thursday 4 November at Clovelly beach Boys Wednesday 17 November St Peters; kentledge_wkshp1_boys171110.doc; kentledge_wkshp1_boys171110_nvivo8.txt; kentledge_wkshp2.doc; kentledge_wkshp2_boys171110.doc; kentledge_wkshp2_boys171110_nvivo8.txt; kentledge_wkshp3_boys171110.doc; kentledge_wkshp3_boys171110_nvivo8.txt; kentledge_wkshp4.doc; kentledge_wkshp4_boys171110.doc; kentledge_wkshp4_boys171110_nvivo8.txt; kentledge_wkshp4_nvivo8.txt; transcribed trans in NVivo; video in NVivo</p>	<p>KENTLEDGE FOCUS GROUP</p> <p>25 November kentledge_focus_group_251110_nvivo8; kentledge_focus_group_251110 - transcribed trans in NVivo; video in NVivo</p>	<p>KENTLEDGE CHILD INTERVIEWS-2</p> <p>1 December 3.45 Karen: Karen_ch_interv011210_nvivo8; Karen_ch_interv011210 (2); Karen_ch_interv011210; transcribed trans in NVivo; audio in NVivo</p> <p>1 December 3.45 Toni: Toni_ch_interv011210_nvivo8; Toni_ch_interv011210 (2); Toni_ch_interv011210 transcribed trans in NVivo; audio in NVivo</p>	<p>KENTLEDGE YOUTH INTERVIEWS-1</p> <p>1 December Oliver; transcribed trans in NVivo; audio in NVivo Fieldwork finished</p>
PALMAR	PALMAR WORKSHOP	PALMAR FOCUS GROUP	PALMAR CHILD	PALMAR YOUTH



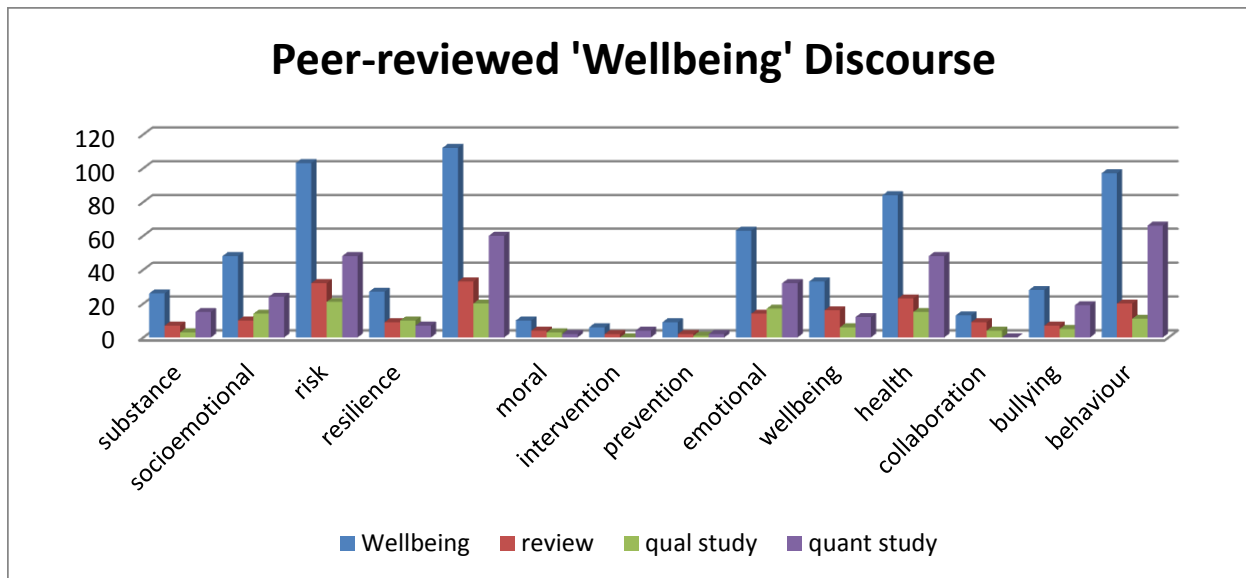
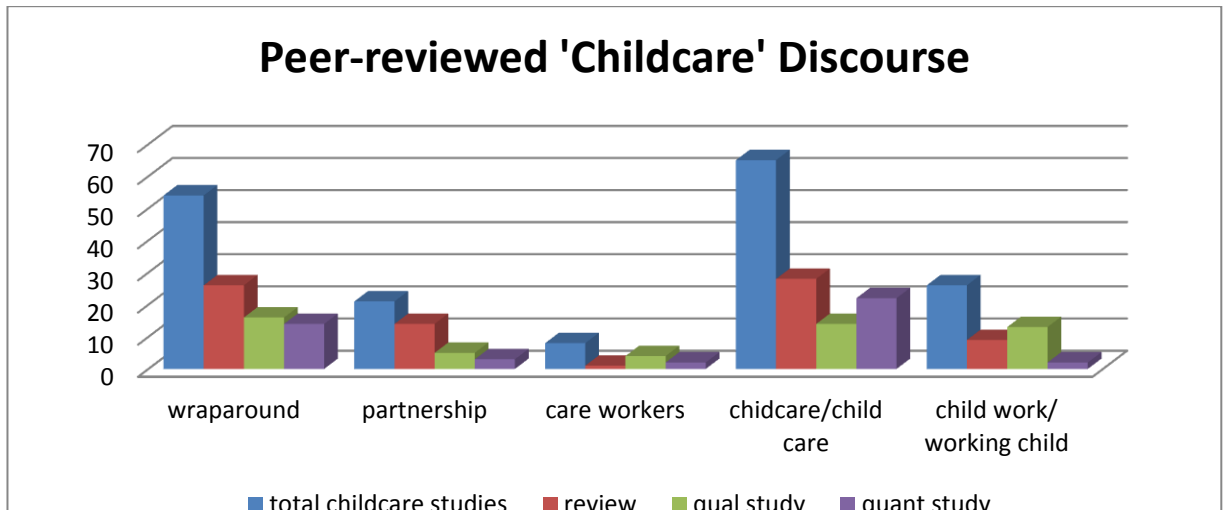
<p>PRELIMINARY INTERVIEW WITH COORDINATOR</p> <p>Palmar_field_notes; <b>1-CODED</b></p> <p>27 October HelenMarr_Prelim_interv_transcript; HelenMarr_prelim_interv_271010pref transcribed trans in NVivo; <b>1-CODED</b> audio in NVivo</p>	<p>30 November Palmar_wkshp301110; Palmar_TRANSCRIPT_WKS H; transcribed trans in NVivo; video in NVivo</p>	<p>30 November palmar_focus_grp301110_Pt2; palmar_focus_grp301110_Pt1; palmar_focus_group_301110_nvivo8; palmar_focus_group_301110; 20101130153534_nvivo8; 20101130153534; transcribed trans in NVivo; video in NVivo</p>	<p>INTERVIEWS</p> <p>7 December interview ChrisInterv071210.doc ; ChrisInterv071210_nvivo8.txt;PatrickInterv011210.doc; PatrickInterv011210_nvivo8.txt; transcribed trans in NVivo; audio in NVivo</p>	<p>INTERVIEWS—NO Fieldwork finished</p>
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## Appendix 7: Early systematic review of literature to identify gaps in research and major themes

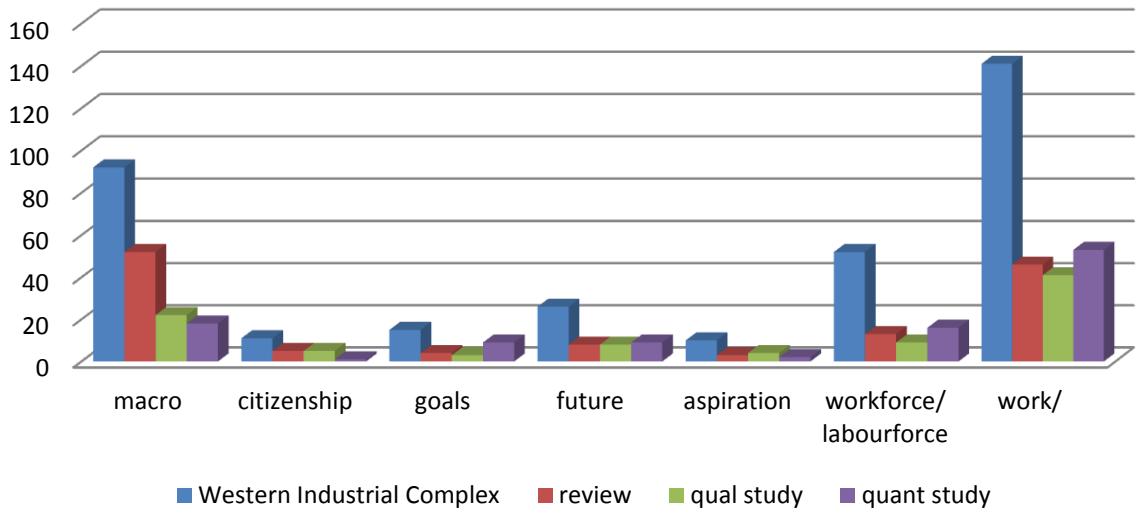
Based on 1,325 peer-reviewed articles read between 2008 and 2011.

activity theory	6	6	0	0
geographies	85	32	26	29
cluster: childhood				
tween	13	4	5	3
teen	11	5	4	1
self	26	8	2	16
identity	117	40	34	44
working children	22	7	13	2
experience	38	13	12	12
street children	7	0	6	0
developmental	27	13	4	11
control	29	14	9	5
power	7	3	4	0
construct	15	9	4	1
commodification	20	9	8	3
choice	8	2	3	3
childhood	94	58	21	9
voice	41	16	17	6
agency	70	32	30	9
cluster: macro/ future				
macro	92	52	22	18
citizenship	11	5	5	1
goals	15	4	3	9
future	26	8	8	9
aspiration	10	3	4	2
workforce/ labourforce	52	13	9	16
work/	141	46	41	53
cluster: wellbeing				
substance	26	7	3	15
socioemotional	48	10	14	24
risk	103	32	21	48
resilience	27	9	10	7
psychosocial/psycho-so	112	33	20	60
moral	10	4	3	2
intervention	6	2	0	4
prevention	9	2	1	2
emotional	63	14	17	32
wellbeing	33	16	6	12
health	84	23	15	48
collaboration	13	9	4	0
bullying	28	7	5	19
behaviour	97	20	11	66
cluster: child care				
wraparound	54	26	16	14
partnership	21	14	5	3
care workers	8	1	4	2
chidcare/child care	65	28	14	22
child work/ working chil	26	9	13	2
cluster: theory/framework				
theory	64	49	10	8
systems	23	14	3	6
sociology	8	5	3	0
visual	14	5	7	1
research with children	63	31	24	4
qualitative	15	9	6	1
PVEST	9	3	1	5
methodology/ method/	43	22	9	7
ecology/ interactivity/in	115	56	26	38
pedagogy	14	7	5	2
epistemology	3	2	1	0
ecology	112	53	25	37
dialogic	7	5	2	0
Vygotsky	36	23	11	2
psychology	11	10	0	1
cluster: time				
time cluster: time use				
time-use	48	15	8	25
generation	30	15	7	9
chronosystem	18	10	3	6
time cluster: learning				
learner identity	34	8	10	16
learning	181	76	61	45
literacy	56	19	18	13
motivation	33	4	4	24
productive pedagogies	12	6	7	2
time cluster: networks				
social/socialisation	255	84	52	109
network	59	18	16	25
micro	12	5	5	2
community	64	33	17	15
adult-child	48	13	15	20
family	87	23	26	35
mothers/fathers	116	18	27	60
friend/peer	113	22	21	53

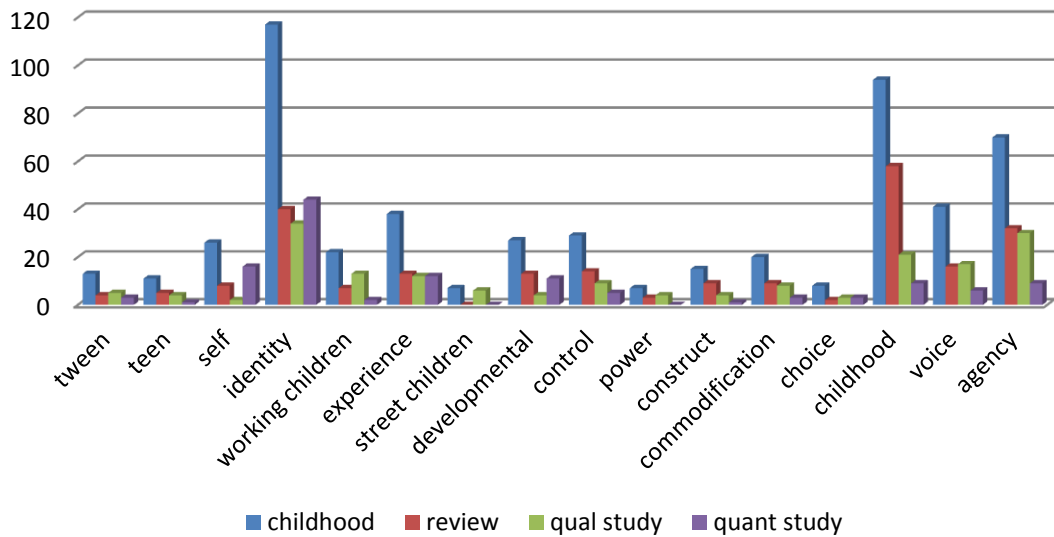
cluster: child care				
wraparound	54	26	16	14
partnership	21	14	5	3
care workers	8	1	4	2
chidcare/child care	65	28	14	22
child work/ working chil	26	9	13	2
cluster: theory/framework				
theory	64	49	10	8
systems	23	14	3	6
sociology	8	5	3	0
visual	14	5	7	1
research with children	63	31	24	4
qualitative	15	9	6	1
PVEST	9	3	1	5
methodology/ method/	43	22	9	7
ecology/ interactivity/in	115	56	26	38
pedagogy	14	7	5	2
epistemology	3	2	1	0
ecology	112	53	25	37
dialogic	7	5	2	0
Vygotsky	36	23	11	2
psychology	11	10	0	1
cluster: time				
time cluster: time use				
time-use	48	15	8	25
generation	30	15	7	9
chronosystem	18	10	3	6
time cluster: learning				
learner identity	34	8	10	16
learning	181	76	61	45
literacy	56	19	18	13
motivation	33	4	4	24
productive pedagogies	12	6	7	2
time cluster: networks				
social/socialisation	255	84	52	109
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community	64	33	17	15
adult-child	48	13	15	20
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mothers/fathers	116	18	27	60
friend/peer	113	22	21	53

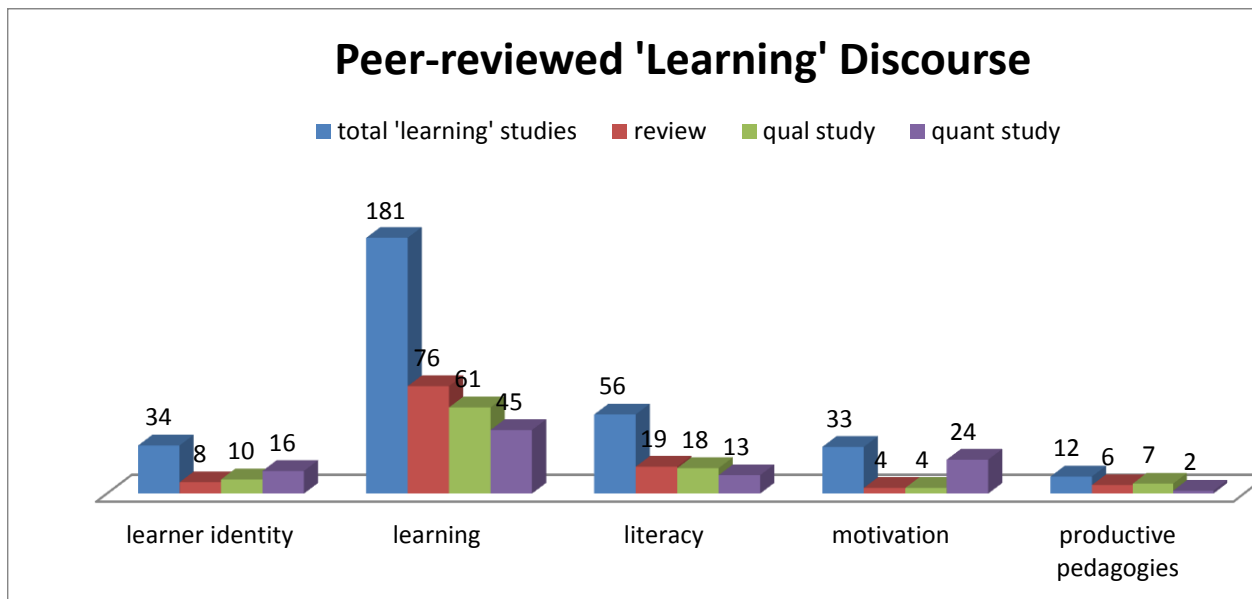
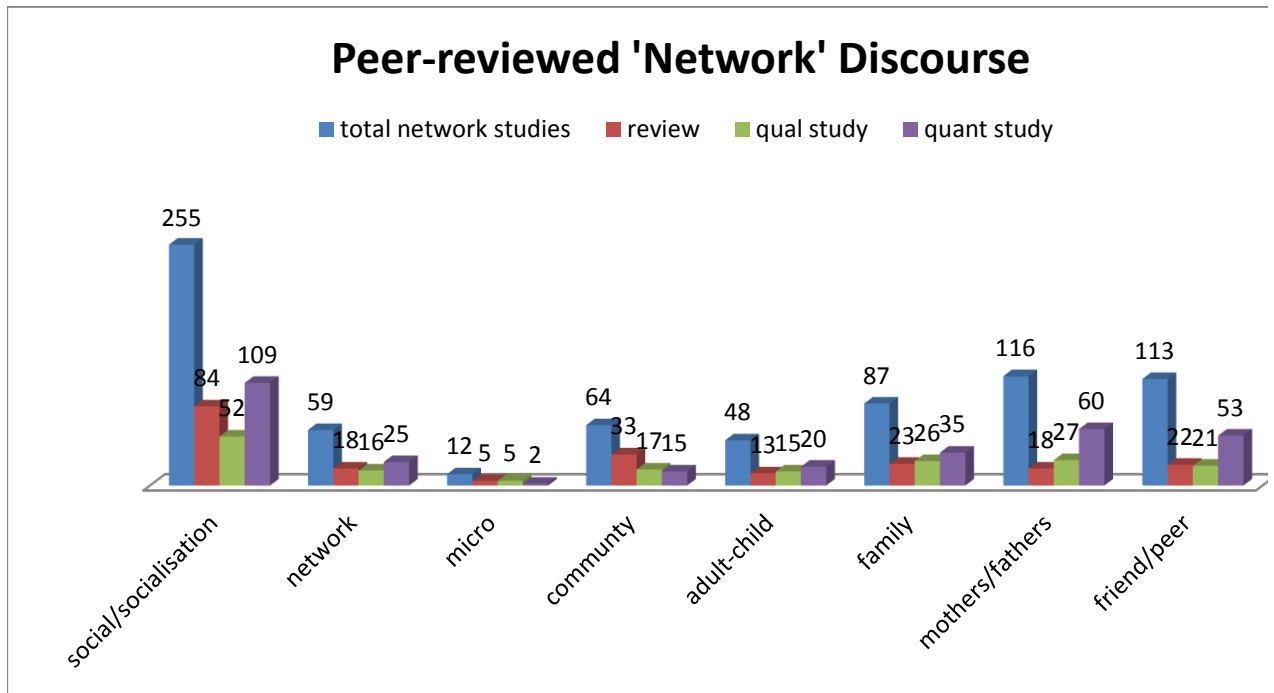


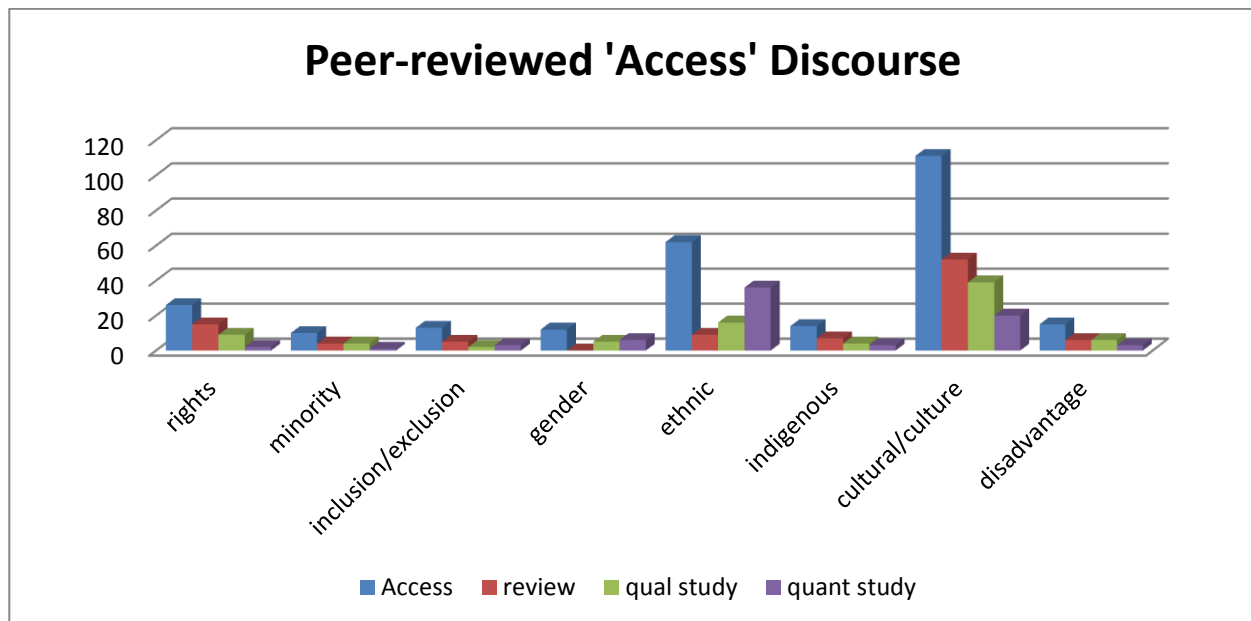
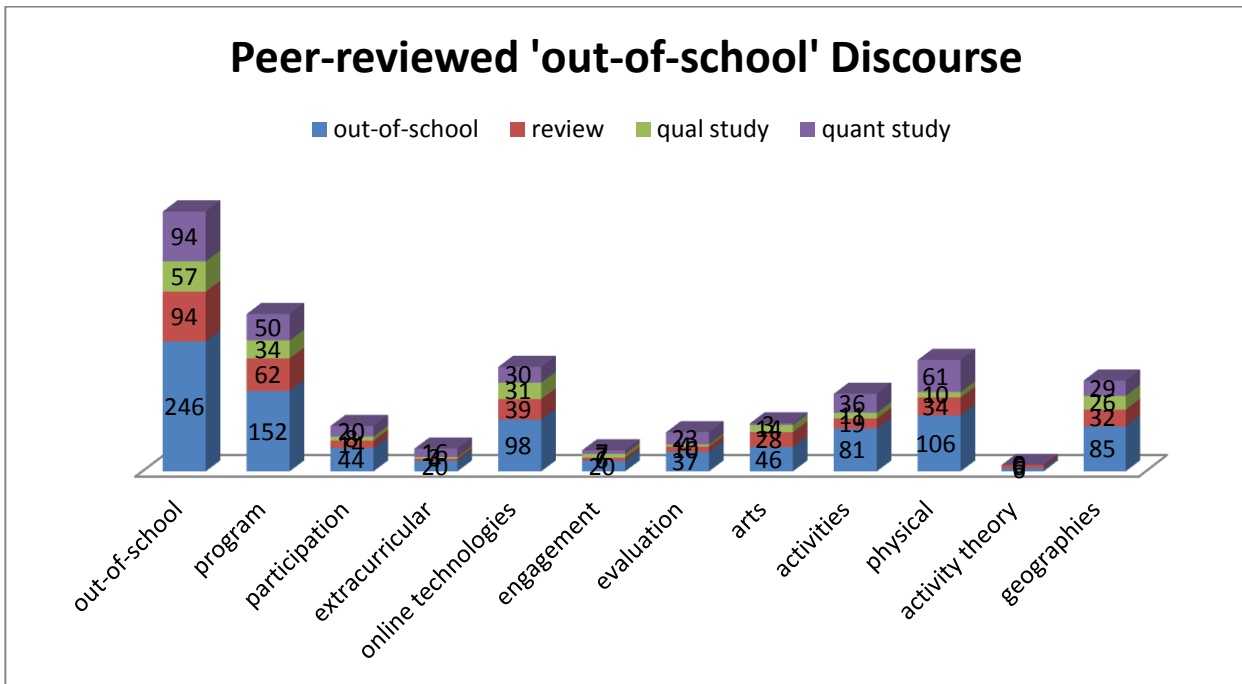
### Peer-reviewed 'Macro' Discourse

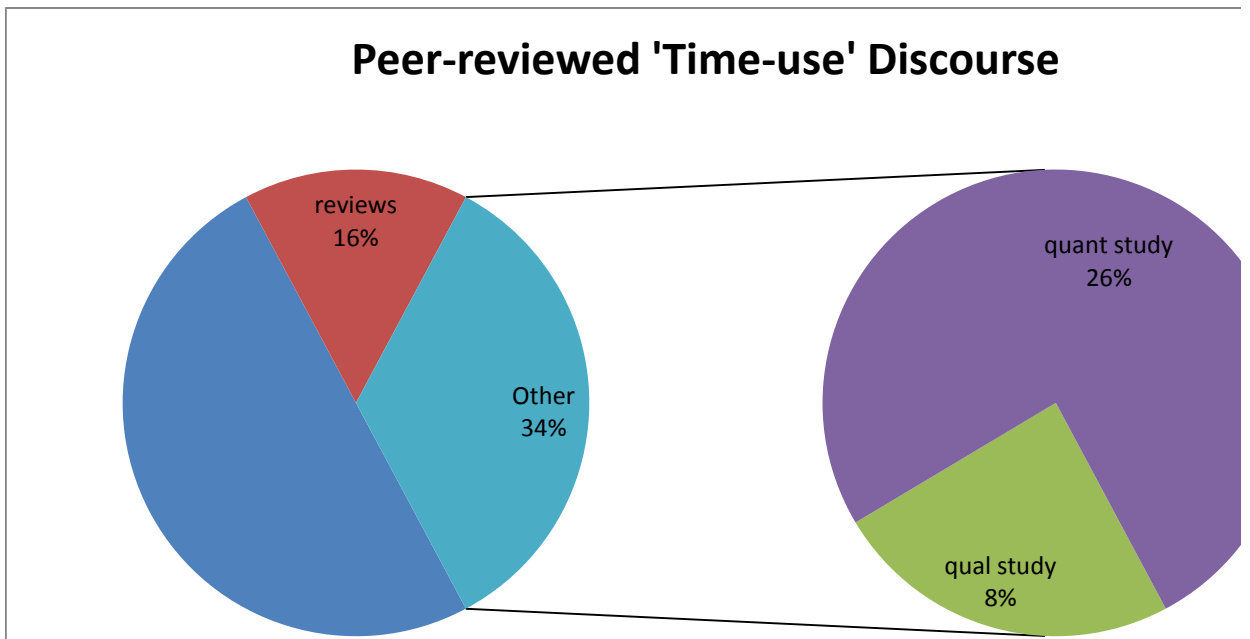
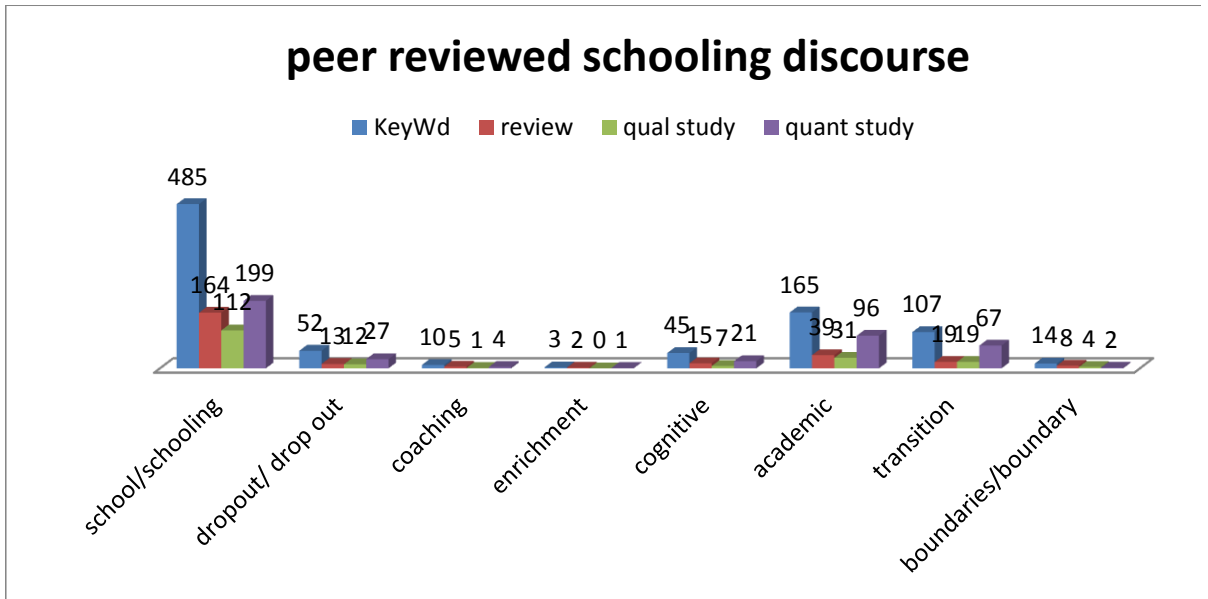


### Peer-reviewed 'Childhood' Discourse

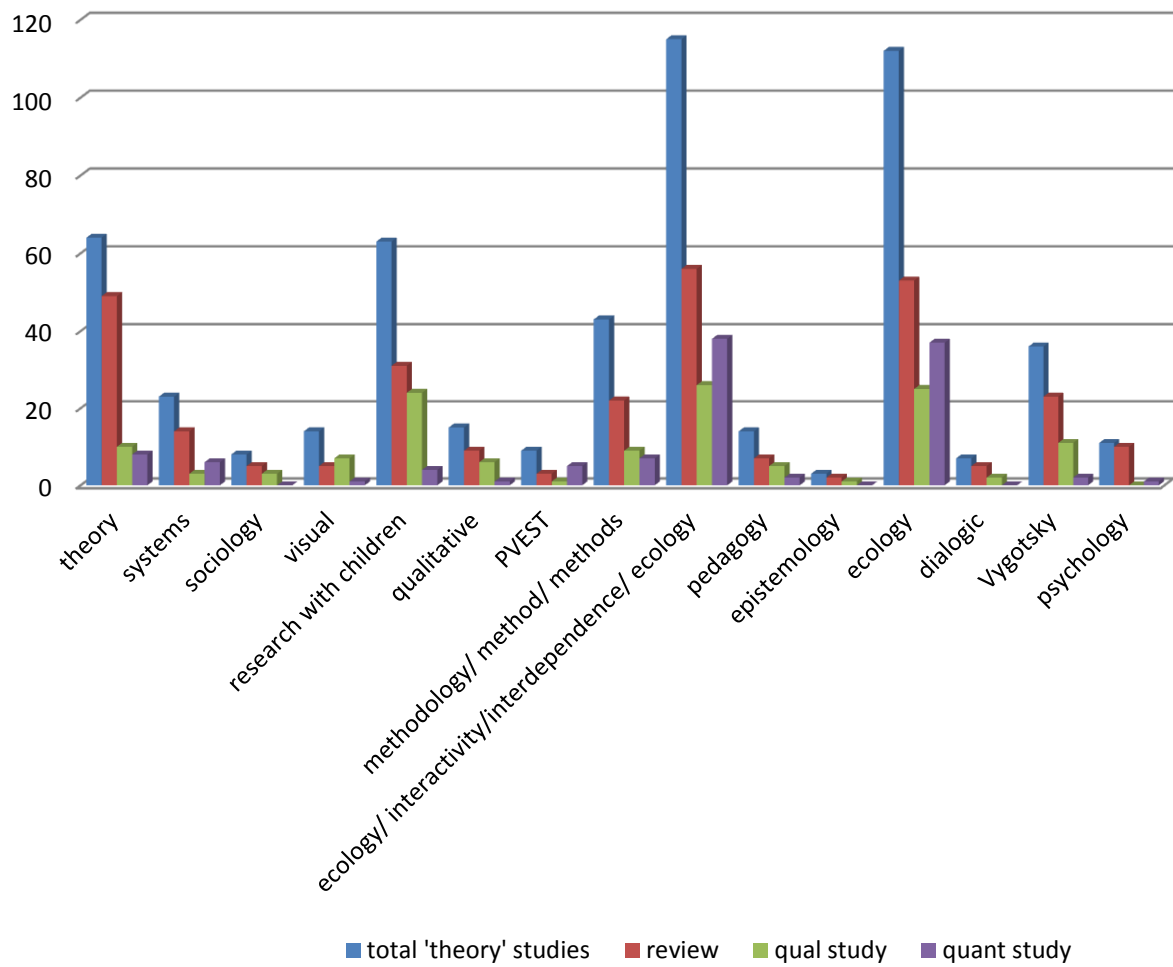








### Peer-reviewed 'Theory' Discourse



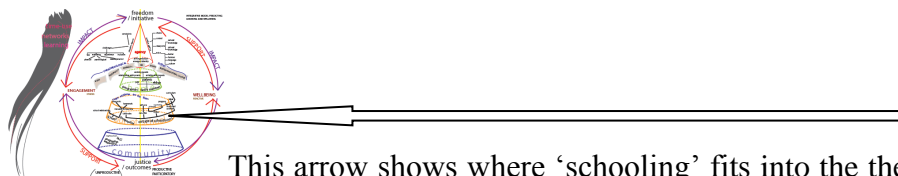




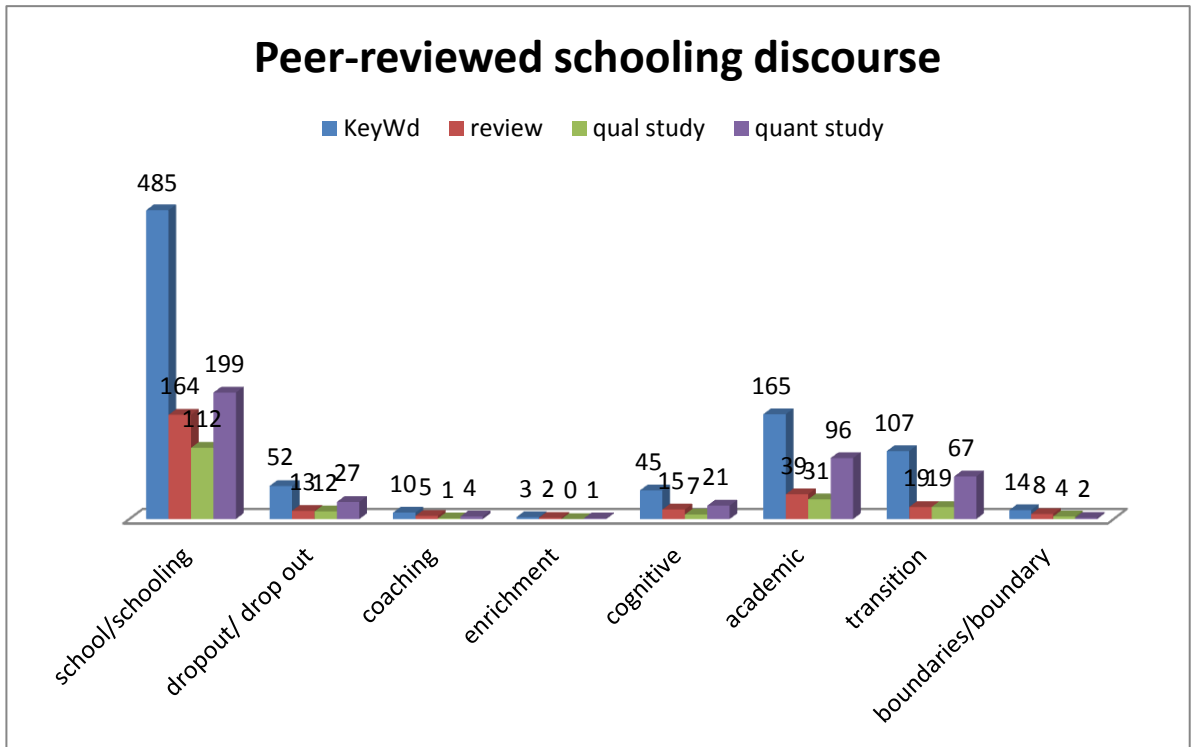
The ‘time’ dimension—or chronosystem—is symbolised in a ‘brush’ graphic to the left of the theoretical framework configuration. I have provided a detail of how I understand this below, under ‘Time’. Child agency is an ecology system fixture in this model. The concept of agency is used variously in the literature, to reference power, process and personal and relational status. However, I use the term advisedly as a specific context located at the micro-level system, where interest is focused on the extent to which children’s constructions of ‘self’ are facilitated or inhibited.

The green segment of the ecology cone represents the interdependency system in which agency is nested. The orange ‘slice’ nested in community systems signifies the out-of-school context, itself, however, implicitly referencing its ‘opposite’—schooling. The circular arrows on which support and impact travel are intended to denote conduits in the relationship between engagement and wellbeing, or disengagement and dysfunctionality in the Australian post-industrial system. The top and bottom of the circular shape present opposites of freedom enabling initiative against the constraints required for justice. Deleterious and productive outcomes are not understood as mutually exclusive, and depend on the quality of time use for their strength.

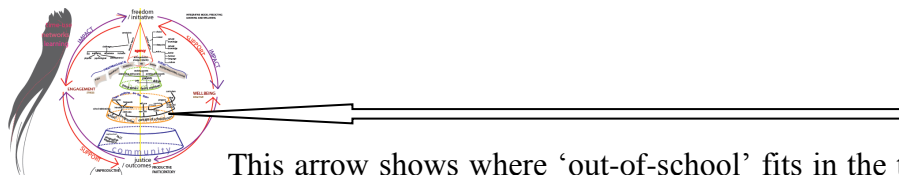
### **Institution cluster: Systems**



This arrow shows where ‘schooling’ fits into the theoretical model. It is, importantly, the opposite of ‘out-of-school’. Academic interest in schooling completely outweighs interest in out-of-school activity, which confirms the salience of new research in the out-of-school field.

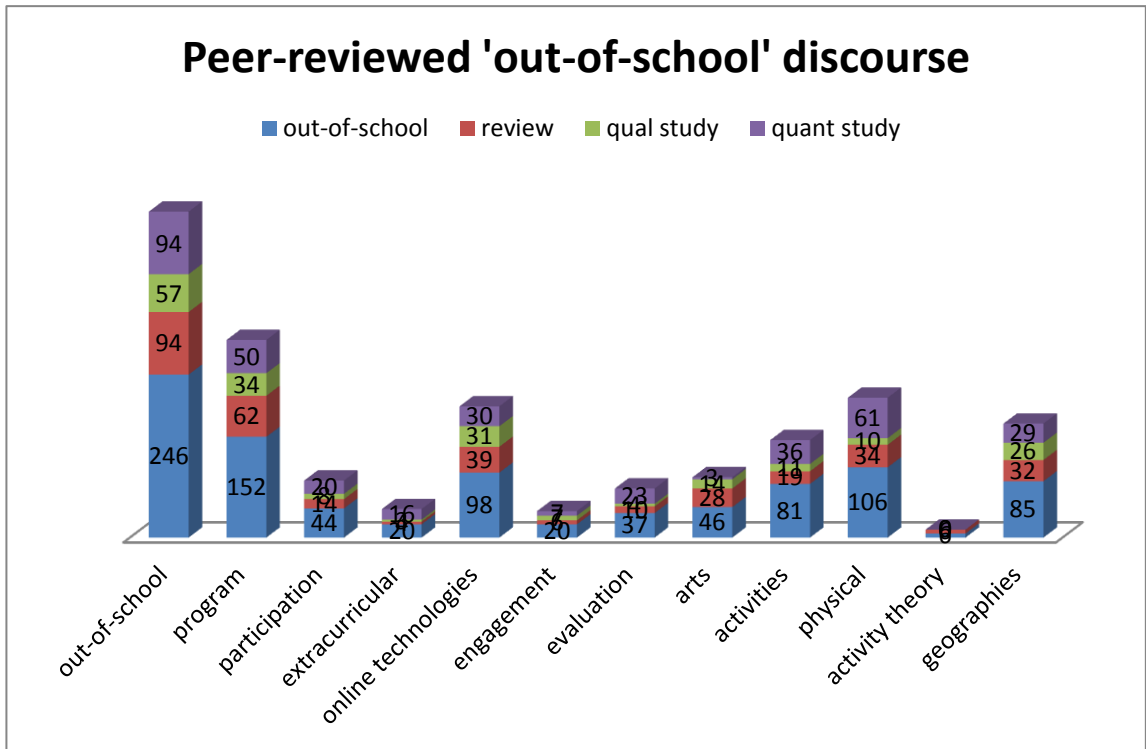


*Article type: school-related. Created 7 August 2011. Green columns represent qualitative studies that were read, demonstrating the dearth of qualitative research activity, especially in negotiation of ‘boundary’ objects and processes that operate transitions.*

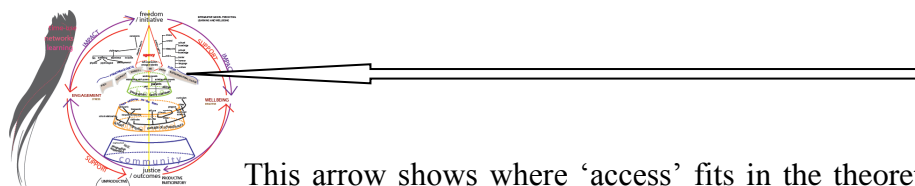


This arrow shows where ‘out-of-school’ fits in the theoretical model.

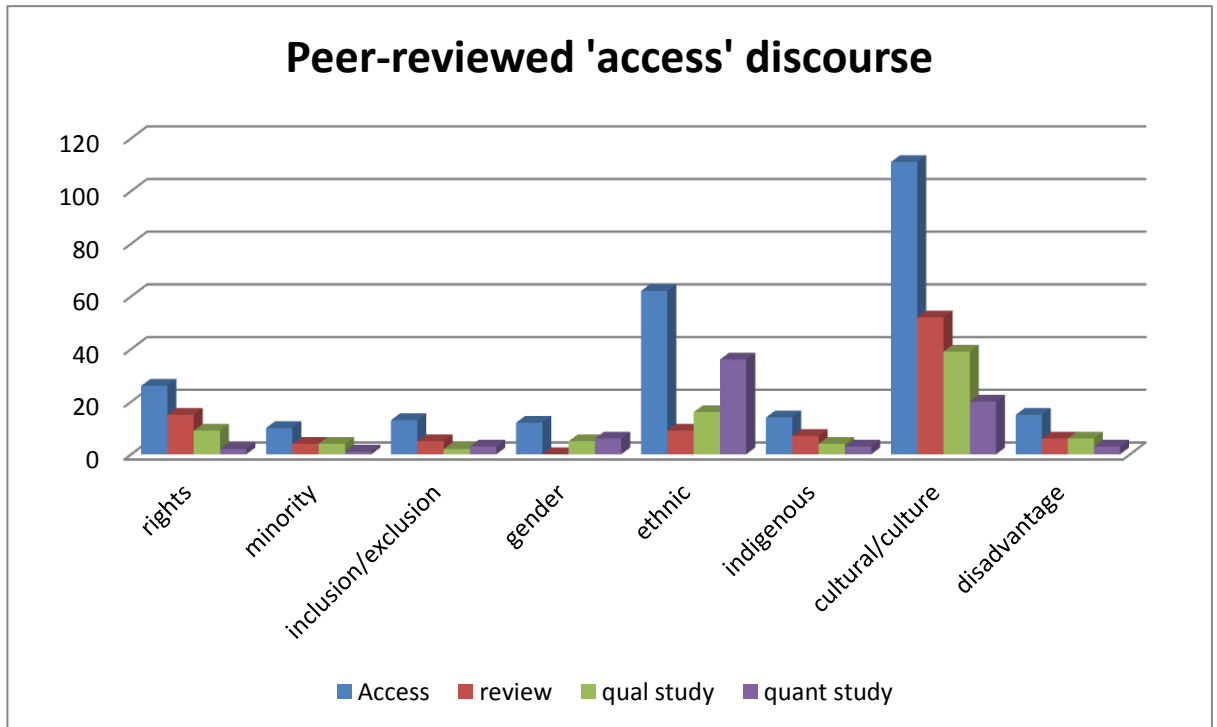
Research interest in this field is only half that shown in schooling, which is unsurprising in the context of the vast discrepancy in funding and macro-level status between education and care. Whereas schools manage increasingly complex and numerous demands on their curricula to address psychosocial wellbeing, outside of schooling, there are few expectations of school-supportive programming. In NSW, education is categorically ruled out of OOSH provision in its key mission statements and philosophical platform.



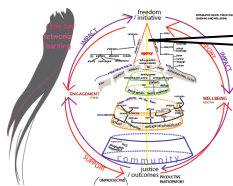
*Article type: 'out-of-school'–related. Created 7 August 2011. Quantitative studies dominate program and evaluation studies—especially those about physical activity. The number of qualitative studies about online technologies/media balances the quantitative studies. Studies linking the effect of out-of-school time use with support for high school transition are too few to show up on this graph.*



This arrow shows where 'access' fits in the theoretical model. The conceptualisation of 'access' as the series of filters through which agencies operates relies on Spencer's PVEST theory. In much of the literature, access issues are a function of systems extending to macro-level in ecology thinking. Here, there is a deliberate symbolic barrier of filters through which the individual child-negotiator acts to constrain and liberate identity formation in complex ways.



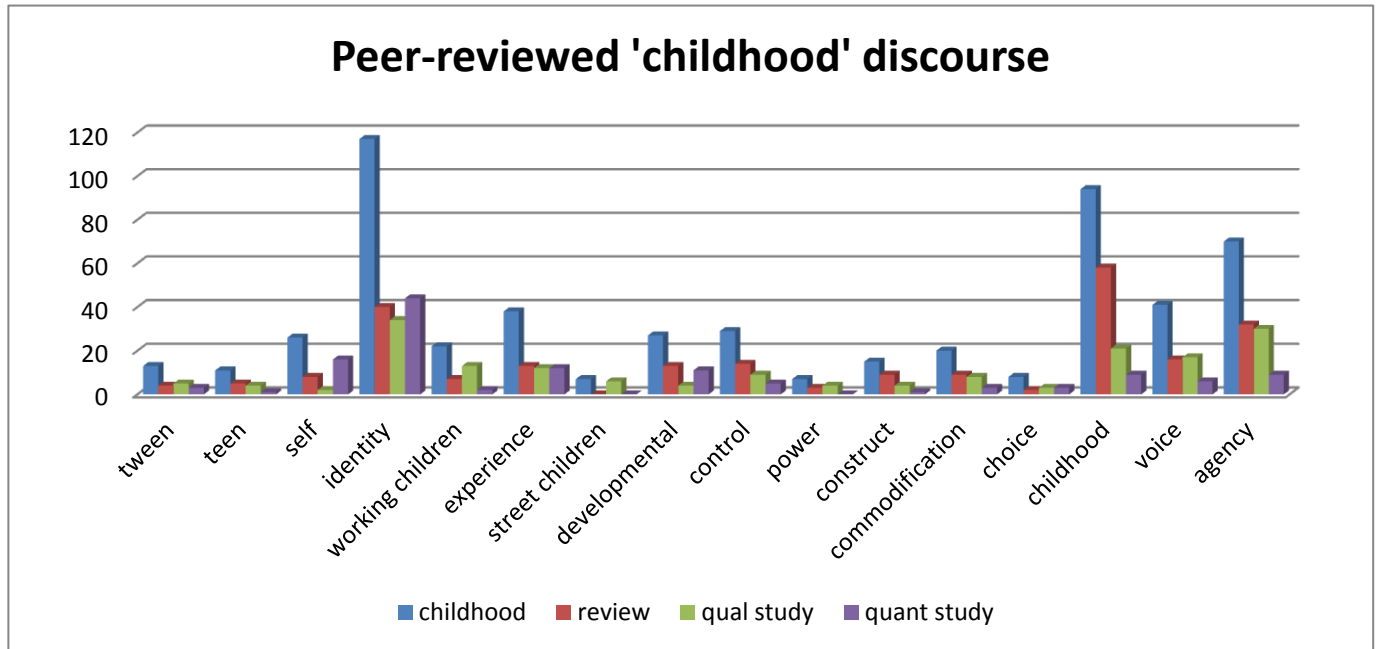
*Article type: access-related. Created 7 August 2011. Green columns represent qualitative studies that were read, demonstrating relatively significant qualitative research activity around cultural issues, generally, and ethnic studies, particularly. However, on the whole, this cluster is dominated by reviews.*



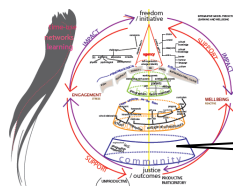
This arrow shows where 'childhood' fits in the theoretical model. I

read widely in this literature cluster, with much of what I read consisting of reviews. I placed a significant number of studies in the 'agency' category, where there is considerable controversy about the meaning of this idea. My framework for 'agency' is explicated in Chapter Two: Orientation to the Guiding Frameworks Underpinning the Interactive Process Model. Much of the literature references agency as a measure of effect, power and even rights. For my study, agency is not an attribute. I centrally

situate the child as a system so that I can explore it as pivotal in negotiations and transactions that occur at the boundaries among all the other systems in the model.

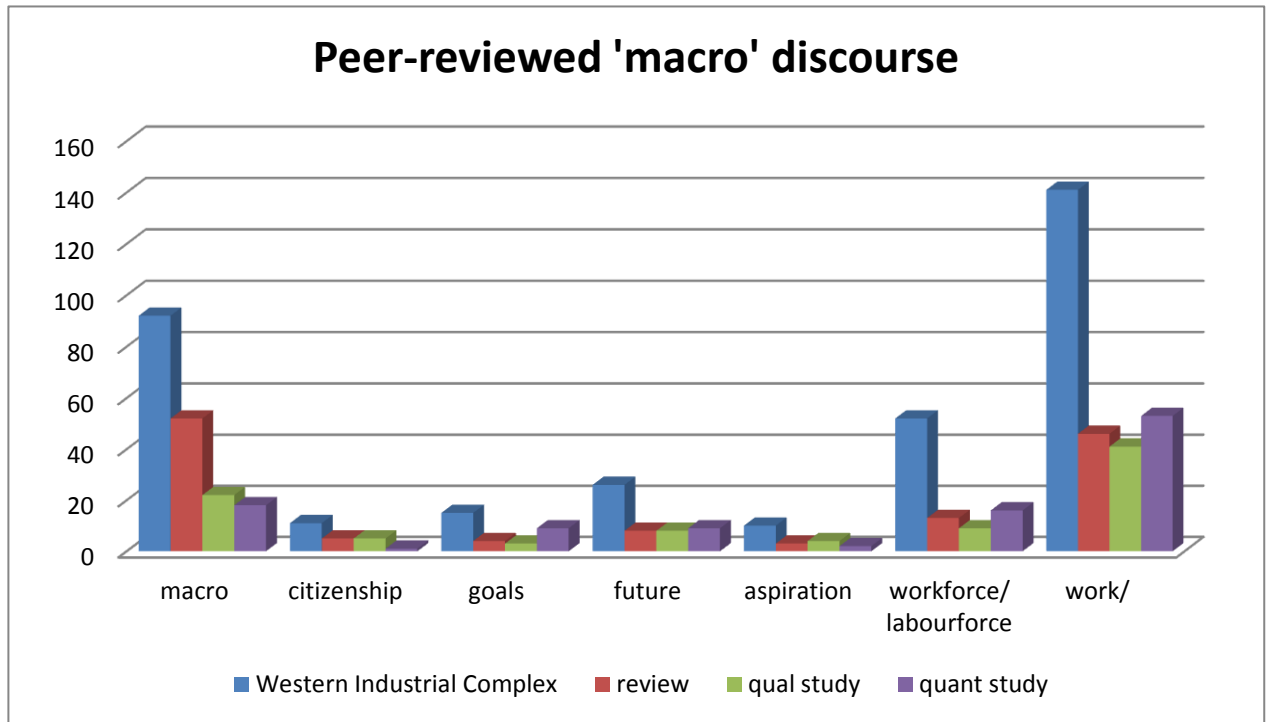


*Article type: 'Childhood'-related. Created 7 August 2011. I strove to read as much as possible in studies concerning agency and identity issues in the context of a child-centred ecology framework. Qualitative studies logically dominated the chosen readings.*

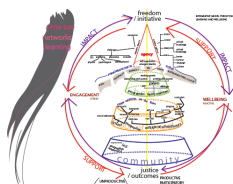


This arrow indicates the 'macro' level system represented in the theoretical model. Whereas there is a growing discourse in majority-world society and governance, and how it compares with Western Industrial systems, my reading focus was predominantly Western, reflecting NSW's conditions. In this thematic reading cluster, I included discourse on young people's aspirations. In these are generally found the indicators for societally sanctioned success factors. Workforce imperatives dominate. The quality of labour is central to how societies reproduce, and central to

hegemonic constructs of children as futures. My study considers how agency negotiates state-sanctioned child constructs, and how children’s best interests may be understood and effected within the values framework of learning pathways.



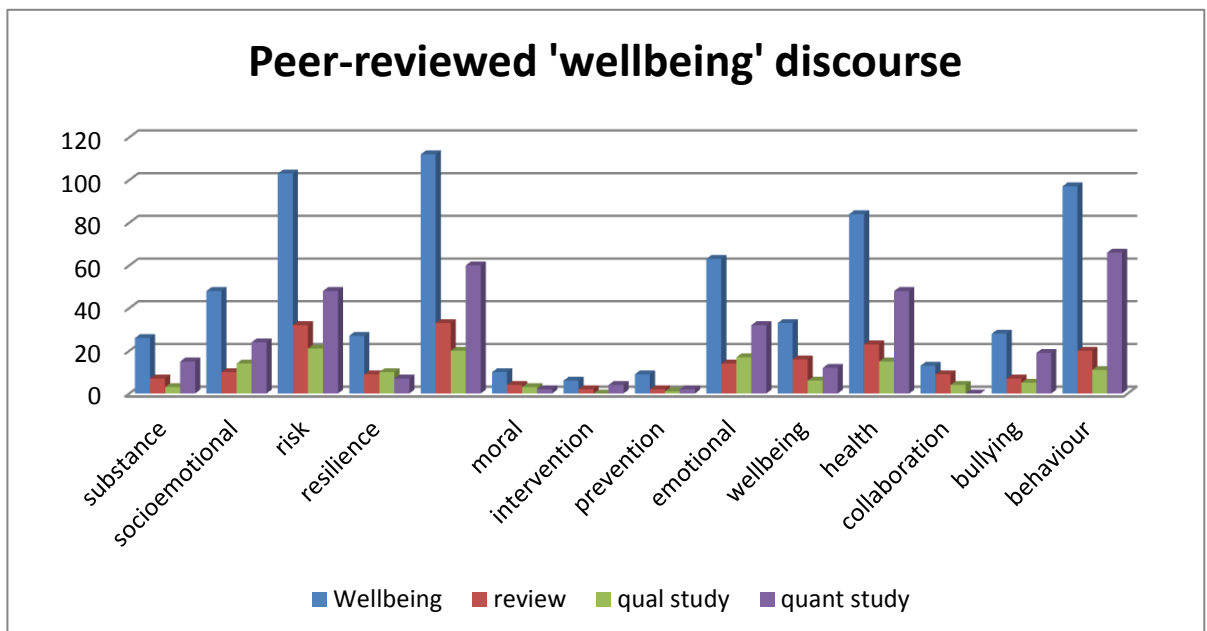
*Article type: 'Macro'-related (ecology perspective Western Industrial Complex system). Created 7 August 2011. I read reviews about the connections between childhood experience in and out of school, and how they relate to adult-centric expectations for children’s adult futures.*



This arrow points to ‘support process outcomes’. Wellbeing in the

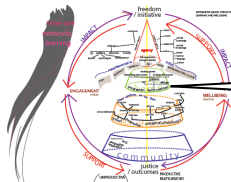
Spencerian paradigm encompasses a wide range of Western Industrial success and risk indicators. In the iterative model that I have derived for this study, these indicators are themselves risk or resilience catalysts, with effect on agency. Their strength and direction is contingent on stress. In my theoretical model, stress represents a neutral

concept, referencing interventions such as schooling and out-of-school time use in particular. Agency, albeit filtered through ‘access’ indicators, has to negotiate the quality of self-regulation processes that stress initiates. Likewise, wellbeing is a function of agential choices about self-regulation that can result in substance abuse and antisocial behaviour on the one hand, or collaboration, psychosocial and physical health and acquisition of societally approved values on the other hand. In the context that the post-Industrial Complex prioritises an educated workforce above all other values—to the extent that schooling is the only passport to full participation in society—children who forge a learner identity early in the education pathway stand a likely chance of achieving positive wellbeing throughout childhood and into adult life. Such high stakes demand attention to how children are supported in their learner identity formation, not only in school, but also in out-of-school time, where resources are wastefully deployed in this perspective.

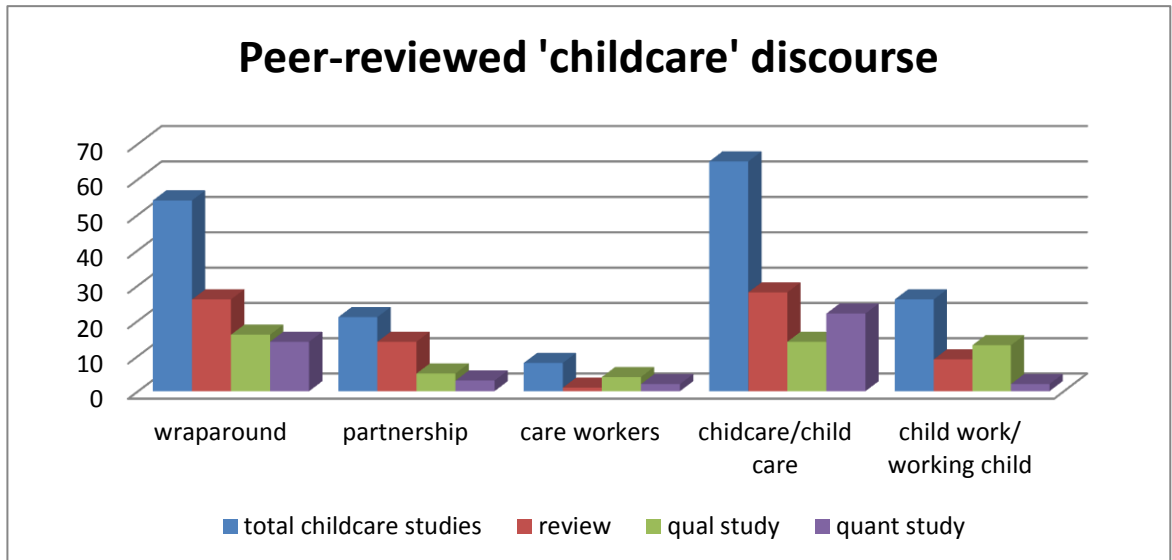




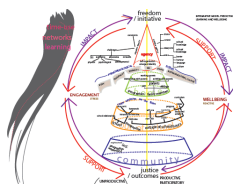
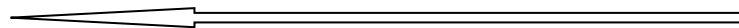
*Article type: 'Wellbeing'-related (PVEST-informed perspective). Created 7 August 2011. I was not as interested in prevention/intervention evaluation studies for particular wellbeing outcomes, as much as I was interested in the factors that contribute to optimal social functioning.*



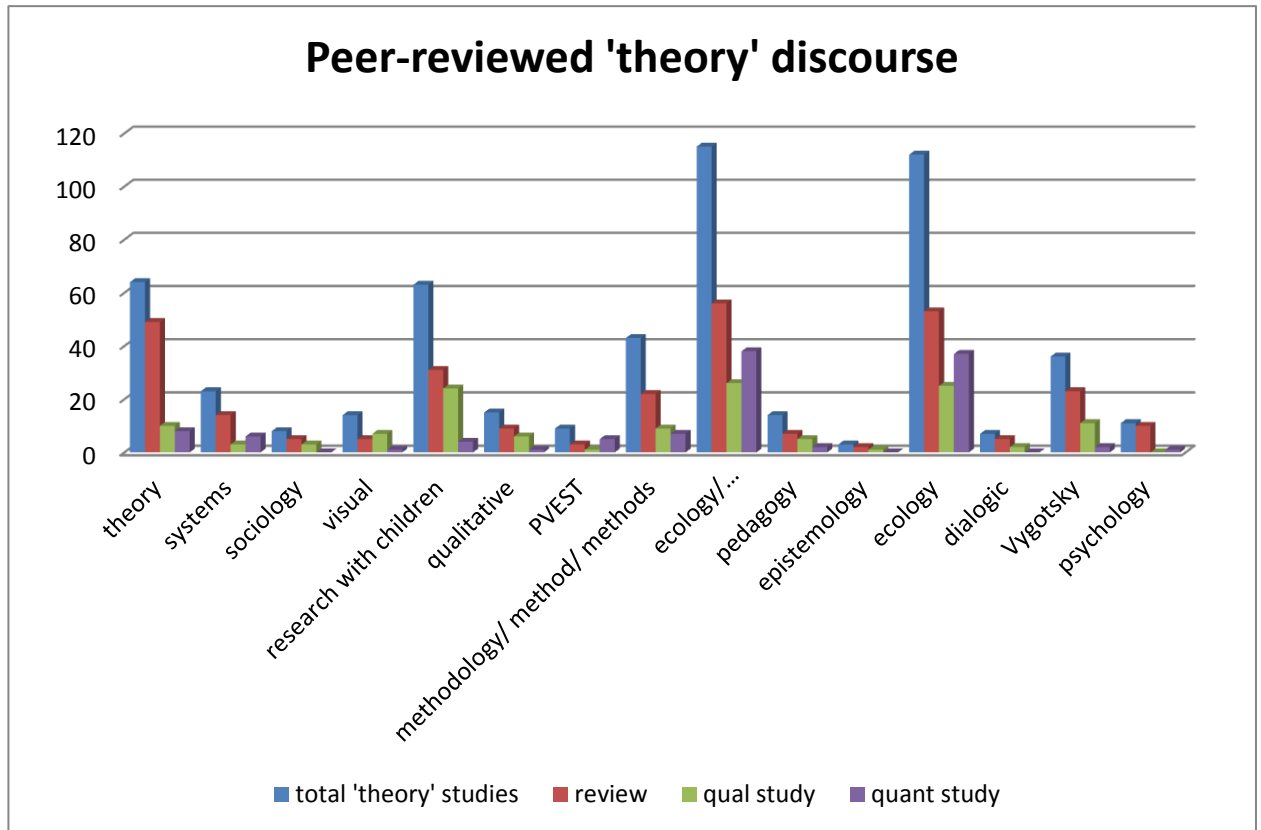
This arrow points to where 'childcare' is situated in the hierarchy of systems, straddling the micro-system and meso-level complexes of geographies, state-approved services, informal care and welfare. The challenges inherent in unarticulated conflicts among the roles of children in these hierarchies are formidable. Few qualitative studies in my reading investigated how they might be articulated with agency at their core. Wraparound theory and practice offer promising approaches, which explains why I sought out discourse in this field. In the data generated for this study and equally in the literature, the work children do come to strong attention. Whereas adult workforce rationales are barely challenged, children's work is highly contentious, largely owing to its association with exploitation. Unpacking the realities of childhood worker experience, however, illuminates the extent to which value-judgments obfuscate the meaning of child work by submerging it in noise about correct parenting, children's incapacity and the economic imperatives of 'achievement'.



*Article type: 'Childcare'-related (Wraparound-informed perspective). Created 7 August 2011. I explored where childcare intersects with child-centred interests, which explains why children's work is included in this category. Many children who work are involved in caring. Principally, I looked for examples of programs, services and reviews that epitomise the principles of Wraparound, even if they do not acknowledge the term. In terms of my framework, the quality of children's time use is key. I have not attempted to obtain comprehensive knowledge of the childcare industry. I focus on care workers only in regards to their relationship with children. It is interesting that studies about working children are overwhelmingly qualitative, suggesting that the subject is largely 'emergent', with little prior purpose in the discourse to explore them.*



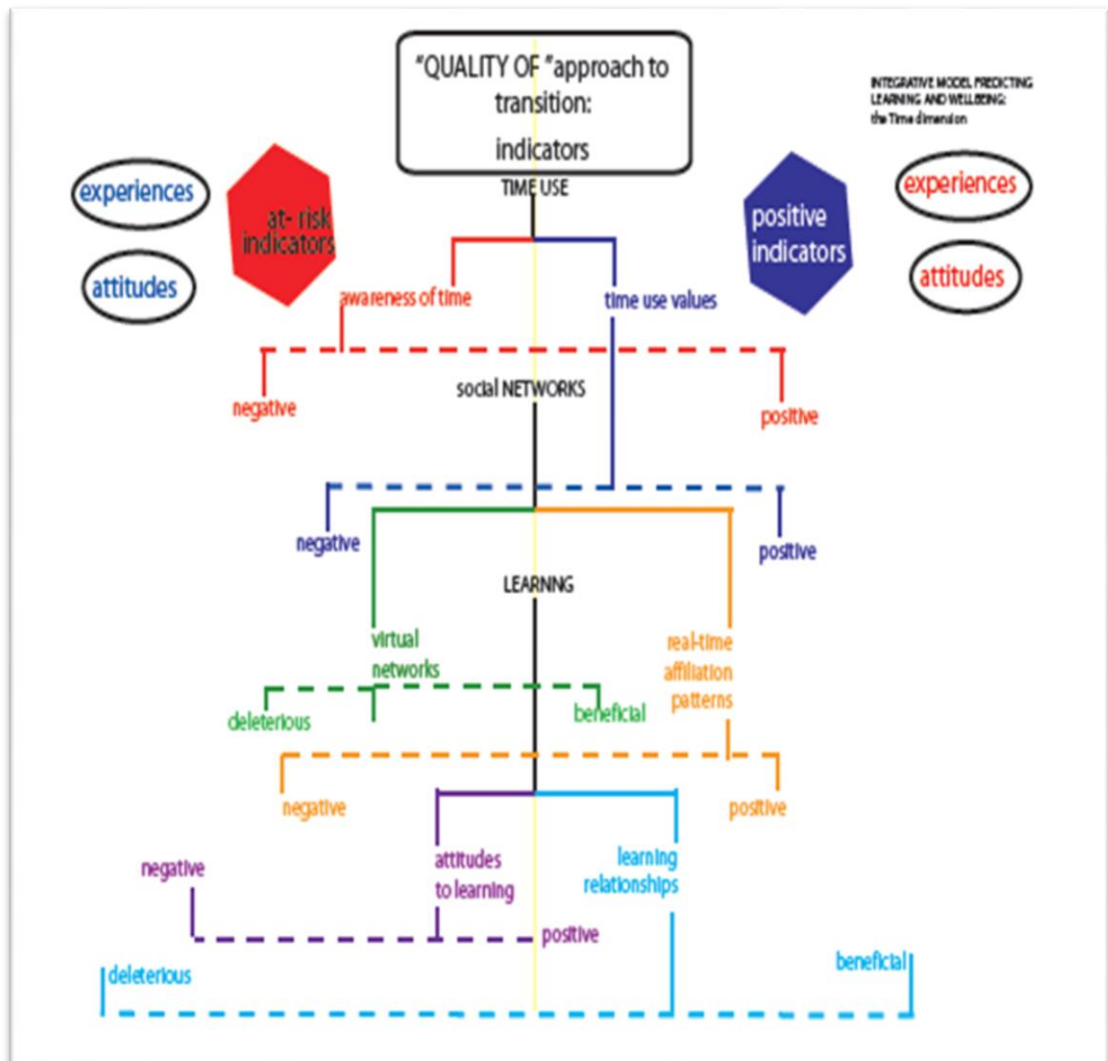
The arrow sits above the model here because theory discourse guided my decisions about how to frame this study. This is explicated in Chapter Two: Orientation to the Guiding Frameworks Underpinning the Interactive Process Model.



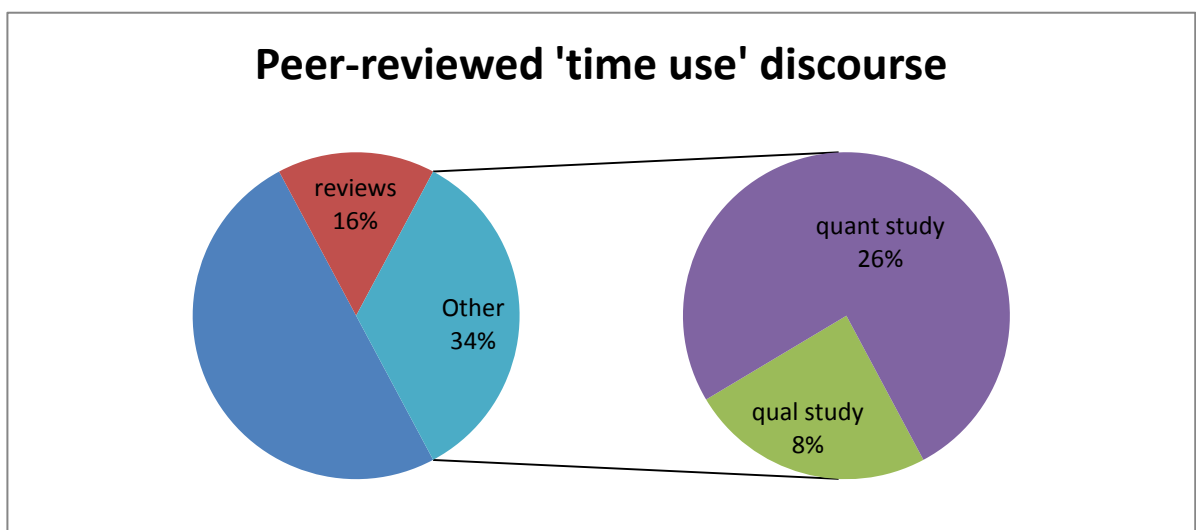
*Article type: 'Theory'-related (Ecology Systems Theory perspective). Created 7 August 2011. I have Vygotsky as a distinct category here, while I do not Bronfenbrenner and other ecology theorists. This is because I was drawn to exploring play/learning–adult/child relationships in more depth than during my early reading about social ecology system perspectives. Likewise, I looked more closely at PVEST because of its adaptations of ecology thinking towards the 'self-righting' processes that pertain to individual identity formation. I also include readings in methodology here, as this is so entwined with theory. Several of the categories, such as psychology and sociology, were represented strongly in my reading about childhood, wellbeing and learning. This graph provides an indicative snapshot of studies that focused centrally on theory. Review studies dominated, as would be expected.*

**Operator cluster: The time category**

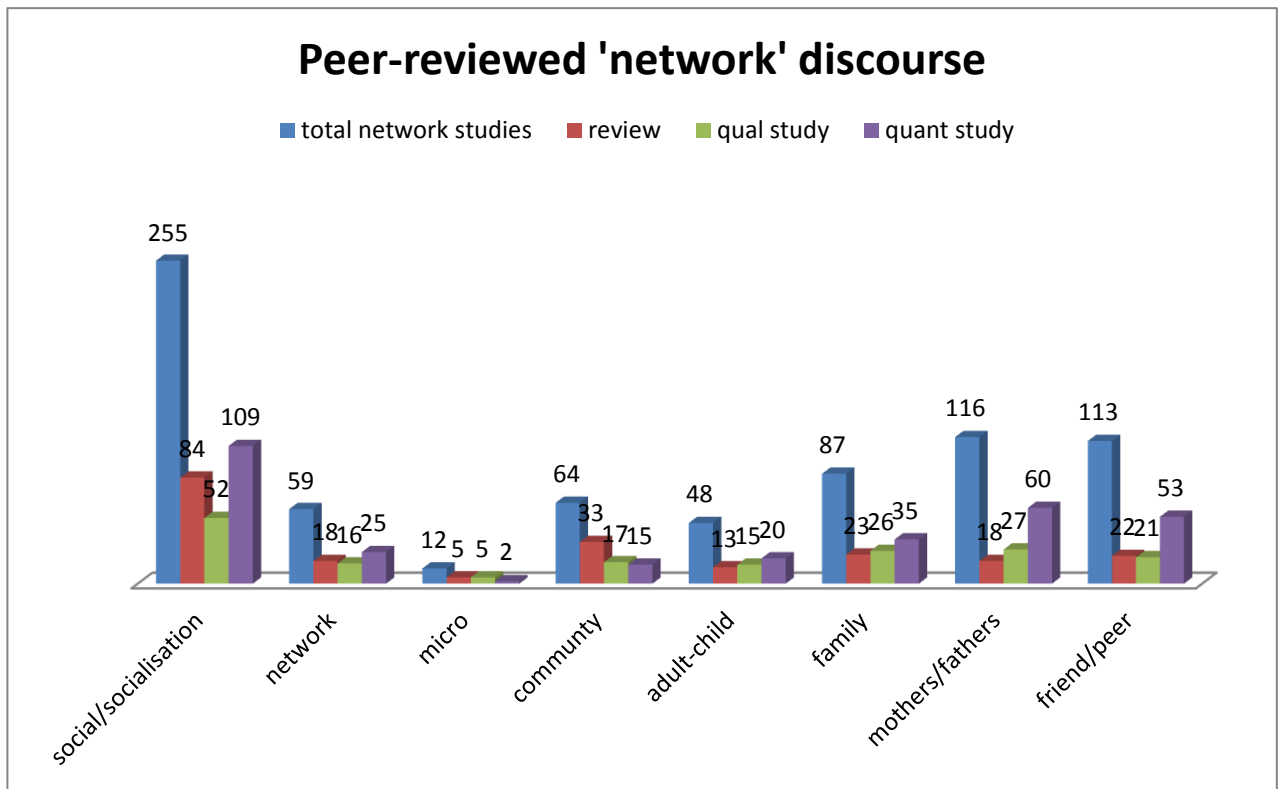
The diagram below is a detail from the proposed Integrative Model that summarises the theoretical relationships that frame the present study. In this model, ‘Time’ is represented by the chronosystem, as described by Bronfenbrenner. Without it, the nested systems that most prominently characterise Ecological Systems Theory are meaningless. I have divided the idea of a chronosystem into three process categories: time-use, networks and learning.



The 'Time' dimension of the study framework model represents my perspective in a nested flow chart. It references time use choices that influence networks, and proposes that networks comprise the infrastructure of learning. Child agents co-create the terms with which knowledge is made through learning in relationship networks, to the extent that they have choice in how their time is spent. The exploratory aims of this study are to identify supportive and deleterious influences in these processes. These are of fundamental importance in understanding what 'quality' activity looks like, as reflected in the data that was generated in my fieldwork. These understandings will then inform discussion about children's time use outside of schooling, and will inform consequent recommendations for policy, programming and practice in school-age childcare.

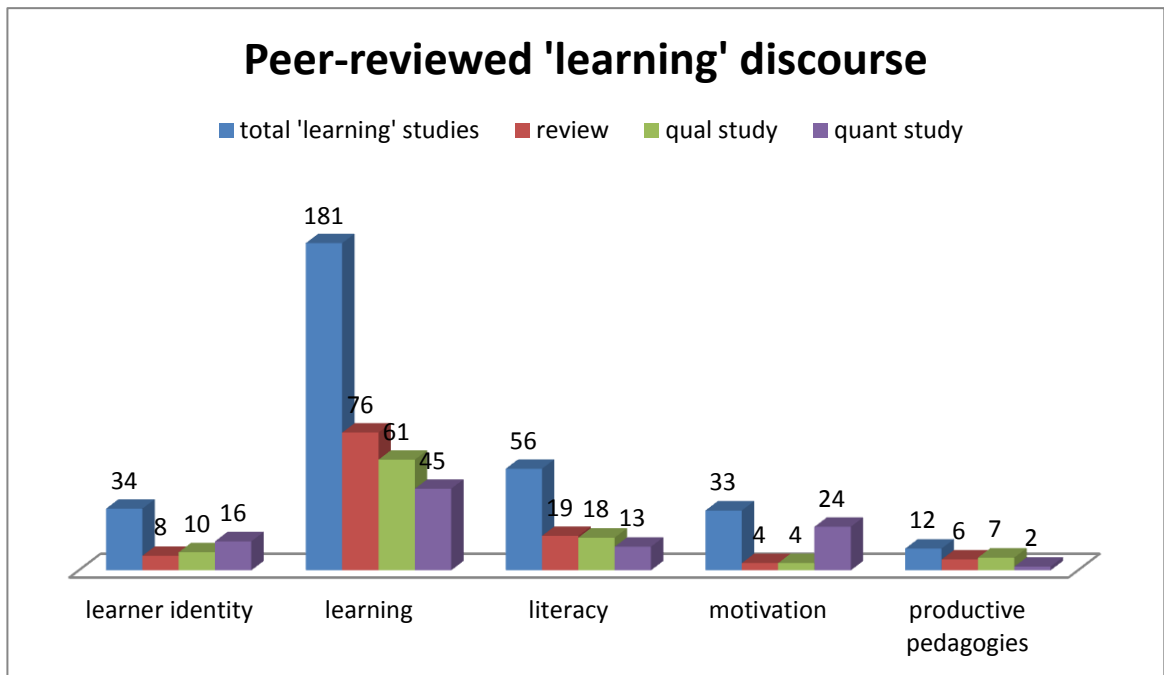


*Article type: 'Time-use'-related (Ecology Systems Theory—chronosystem perspective). Created 7 August 2011. It is easier and perhaps more topical to quantify children's time use, rather than investigate its value and meaning for children. This explains why only eight per cent of the articles I read were qualitative. My study is situated in this gap.*



*Article type: 'Network'- related (Ecology Systems Theory—chronosystem perspective). Created 7 August 2011.*

The categories are a bit imbalanced, as I made them in response to dominant nomenclature in individual articles. I understand 'network' as being the process of making connections among geographically and virtually proximate groups and individuals. In some articles, this is called 'micro-relationship'; in others it is just referred to as 'social'. Thus, this is not my theme 'tree'. Clearly, though, there is fair emphasis on the distinction between peer and child-adult networks, and between family/non-family associations.



*Article type: 'Learning'-related (Ecology Systems Theory—chronosystem perspective). Created 7 August 2011. All the processes in this study are framed in the chronosystem (Bronfenbrenner model), in which identity, motivation, experiential pedagogy, skills and knowledge are operationalised by time.*

The transition process is not represented in a category here (to avoid confusion); however, it does appear in the 'School' discourse graph, where it denotes the compulsory move from primary to high school that is a statutory fixture in institutionalised learning. I have not seen discussion of transition-as-chronosystem, except in the boundaries literature. Most studies view school transition as a discrete period spanning the last year of primary school to the first year of high school. This limited and superficial conceptualisation confuses specific changes of geographies, schedules and network composition with self-actualisation shifts. These shifts reach tipping-points for wellbeing as biological, schooling and family dimensions of the chronosystem converge at the end of the imposed primary school span.

From a PVEST perspective, ‘transition’ denotes the continuous processes of change that take place as a learner identity is consolidated to serve the ultimate purpose of long-term wellbeing. My exploratory study considers the transition to high school from this perspective—as one episode in the clusters of chronosystem processes (that is, learning, network and time use) that typify progression through the life-course. Referencing the approach to adolescence used in majority-world countries may provide an indicative frame for understanding the extent to which high school transitions are biologically and culturally driven. They may also demonstrate the extent to which it is an imperative and value of optimal Western Industrial Complex functioning. The difference has critical implications for child-centred concerns, such as the quality of childhood experience.

This study seeks to influence the formulation of policy that addresses gross injustices and risks that young people are heir to in existing societal conditions. It does so by examining how constructs confining children as ‘futures’ may prevent the agency as learners that children need to exercise if they are to obtain and optimise what post-industrial Australian systems implicitly and overtly promise them. In particular, it explores how children approaching high school transition may obtain fairer and more universal access to that promise. Personal empowerment, knowledge-making, work and community participation in the challenging negotiation through tensions among promise, capability, resourcing, justice and aspiration, are foundational to its realisation.



## Appendix 9: Coordinator interview guide

Preliminary interview with program coordinators or school principal, depending on who coordinates the preadolescent service or program

This first page will be separated from your interview once I have completed it and labelled it with an ID code. Thus, all interviews will be identified only by number, and even this will be seen only by the researcher. Program names will NOT be used, nor will individual interviews be shared with anyone.

If you have any questions, please contact  
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Program name:	<input type="text"/>
Your name and title:	<input type="text"/>
Program contact:	<input type="text"/>
Contact phone #:	<input type="text"/>
Contact email:	<input type="text"/>
Street address:	<input type="text"/>
Postal address:	<input type="text"/>
Date:	<input type="text"/>
Program ID:	<input type="text"/>

---

What is the **nature of** your provision? Is it (circle one):

**Where** is the program located? (circle one)

How would you describe the program **goals**?

How would you characterise **the SES** of families whose children use [your provision]?

Tell me about the local school: **are there links between the school** and [your provision]?

What about the **older children** who attend [your provision]. Can you tell me something about their roles?

How many **participants do you have, on average? School Term:**

How many 10–12 year olds attend [your provision] on each afternoon, respectively?

**How many staff** are involved at [your provision]? Can you touch on their different roles?

**What qualities do you look for** in the people who plan or lead activities?

How do you see older children **relating to younger** children?

Does **schooling creep into the after-school** ‘space’ for older kids?

Can you comment on the **spaces older children** use here?

What **challenges do you perceive older children face** as they approach adolescence and school change?

By the time they get to Grade Six, **do the staff and children interact informally**?

I’m interested in learning about your **program’s relationship with parents**.

What are most **older children doing when they are not at [your provision]**?

What **activities or projects do the older children like best**?

## Appendix 10: Focus group topic guide

### Focus group

Program name:

Date:

Program ID:

---

Your names and IDs:

1. A
2. B
3. C
4. D
5. E
6. F
7. G
8. H

Should kids your age be **supervised** after school?

Why are you at this OSHC as compared to somewhere else?

Do you communicate with **your parents** after school? How?

What has **school-age care** been like for you?

What are **most kids** your age doing after school?

What **kinds of activities do you choose from** after school?

Should other activities be available? What are they?

What will **high school** be like? What do you expect?

What ideas do you have about your future—the next five years, the next 10? What do you think you'll be doing when you are 17?

How much **school stuff** has to be done **outside of school**?

**Where** are your best **friends**?

If you were to **invent a program** for kids your age, what would it look like?

Should kids your age at least have a **part-time job** that earns them money?

How do your families deal with **working** and having older kids to look after?

## Appendix 11: Child interview guide

Semi-structured interview guide for individual preadolescents

Program name:

Your name and age:

Date:

Your ID:

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*I'm interested in finding out what young people your age think about what you do after school and how it affects your life and your family. I'd like to know how your after-school activity helps you for leaving primary school, going to high school and becoming a teenager. I am going to ask you some questions, but you don't have to just answer the questions. The questions are a suggestion about the sorts of things I want to make certain we get to talk about, but we can talk about anything that comes to you as we go along. If you don't understand anything I say, you can easily get me to explain it more. Maybe you'll never have thought about some of the things in our conversation before today. You can say you haven't thought about it, but you might want to think about it on the spot. Remember that if you'd rather not talk about something, just tell me and I'll go on to the next question. We can stop talking any time you want to. It's up to you.*

1. Let's talk about going to [your provision]. What does it mean to you?
2. Now I'd like to talk about the times you spend in an activity program. And I'd like to talk about the ways that the adults in [your provision] can sometimes affect children's lives, and hear about your experiences. Do they affect your life?
3. How do think about the other kids at [your provision]. Are they your friends?
4. I'd like to talk about your role. Do you have a lot of choices at [your provision] or outside of it? Do you feel in charge of your free time?
5. What is the school day like for you—starting from when you get up in the morning?
6. Can you talk about the time you spend with your parents?
7. I'd like you to use your imagination and think of the ways that things could be different.

8. If your family had all the money it would ever need, would you want to change anything about your parents' work? (For instance, they stop working, or change your hours, change jobs/careers?)
9. What advice would you give to other young people whose parents are doing work while bringing up children?
10. I'd like you to use your imagination and think about being in high school. What will be easy? What will be hard?
11. What will your life be like when you leave school? (Prompt.) Will you want to buy a house, buy a car and get a driver's license? Will you be keen to vote in elections? Will you do more study or go straight into a job? Will you keep your friends? How would that work?

**Thank you very much. I really appreciate your time and effort!**

## **Appendix 12: Patrick and Helen at Palmar**

This narrative description of a program initiative at Palmar is condensed from Field Notes and face-to-face interviews with Patrick, aged 12 and Helen, the program Coordinator. It is presented here to illuminate the study's implications and recommendations through a negative example.

### **Patrick**

Patrick presented as wry and sanguine. School was beside the point to him, he remarked with a swagger, homework being especially contemptible. His father committed suicide when he was still a toddler. Patrick is 12, overweight and in Grade Six. He senses he is unbiddable: 'Apparently my dad used to be very kind of stubborn, I guess'. Patrick's mother is finishing a trade course. She is seeking work in Darwin. Patrick does not know where he will attend high school.

Patrick sees his mother on weekends, but that is just the time he has to catch up on sleep. He is so tired from looking after his sister six days each week. Patrick cooks for the family every day. He cannot decide whether he is a free person, because he bucks discipline, or one with many obligations. His mother tries to make him do homework, but he does not like homework. He likes acting and science. He has acted all his life.

I got \$105 for one and a half hours of work. The minimum they can pay you for is three hours, no matter how much you work for. It's like, if you do four hours, it's a hundred and ... \$200, 210 ...'

Patrick would like better clothes, toys, a new Xbox, his own computer, a family jet and a welding torch. He doesn't have a close friend, but goes to wrestling where he meets with 20-30 year-olds. Patrick likes regaling adults with his monologue. He likes impressing them.

pretty much what it is, is a big cog, kind of. All the parts are angled kind of like that, so that when it turns—when it's at this angle—it's leaning on these parts, which means it's out like that; which means there's only that many. When there's only [inaudible] flat, going at this angle, which means there's more. So that it's supposed to keep going. It doesn't work, quite. It loses the slightest amount of power as it goes. No. It just loses [unclear] power. Perpetual has to never lose ... Never lose that power; so it powers itself forever. It's against the third law of thermodynamics/ Newton's third law. As well, with the perpetual motion machine, I think the idea is magnets, because magnets force—there's a lot less things touching each other. Whenever something touches it, it loses momentum from friction, which is Newton's third law: an object will continue its course moving forever if it isn't acted upon by any other force; which, of course, no object has ... every object has something acting on it. Look—by doing that—now, if I just hit that once and then left it, and there was nothing else here ... It would just keep on wobbling forever. Yes; keep on moving and moving and moving.

### Palmar Structured Activity Program: Urban Plus<sup>35</sup>

The Urban Plus project is an opportunity to know their ideas are really useful and we actually listen to them (Helen).

It is a web-based collaborative children's project founded on assumptions that in the next half-century, when today's children will approach retirement, cities will be overpopulated. Participants from as far afield as Brazilian favelas, New York ghettos and Sydney are challenged to prefigure this development. Outcomes include children becoming 'more green, self-sufficient' from interacting on the 'complicated' website. Each child must commit to a mega-mission over periods extending to years, in which they invent a solution to overpopulation and share it online, not only with a peer network, but also for review by a panel of 'experts'. They are educators, architects, designers and professionals, such as,

'I forgot the name, but this guy—Sir Robinson or something—he was one of the advisors for the British Government ... yeah, so it's very interesting'.

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<sup>35</sup> Pseudonym to protect service identity

The best ideas on becoming self-sufficient and sustainable, environmentally friendly and ecologically responsible will be conveyed to the government for implementation. For example, one child invented a herb garden so apartment dwellers could pick their own herbs and avoid travelling through polluted air to market. By clicking on the window showcasing this invention, Helen produced a video flash of a man on a bike with a tray of greens on the handlebars. Some of the other windows had labels; however, when you clicked on them, they went black.

Children's ideas might be encapsulated in

'a song .. a dance to attract attention for advocacy. Anything that they do in media has to be transferred into text, audio, video or photography, so they do some kind of, you know, the little scalar model. They do a woodwork scale model of something.'

Helen championed Urban Plus for its unique challenge, compatible with Better Futures funding objectives.

'Like the idea of, you know, stepping forward from being a kid, and painting all the time, to something that actually has repercussion in their lives for the future. And it's not that they're just kids in an adult world—no. They're going to become adults as well, so all of their ideas need to be developed (Helen)

Initially, ten children signed up for the program, but four dropped out on having it explained to them and another three did not persist through the first session. By the end of November 2010, the group comprised just one child, Patrick. When field work started he was up to his second session in Urban Plus.

### Generational partnering

Helen moved about the space with an air of urgency. Patrick fiddled with one of the computer keyboards. He picked up a cue, sending a ball along the pool table in a meaningless direction at such low velocity that it hovered, wobbled and stopped before it had put much distance between itself and its starting point. Sick of that, Patrick sent the cue flying across the floor, turned his back and sloped around to the screen again.



Helen was at a computer with her back turned to Patrick. She was trying to open Urban Plus; however, she was struggling to get the right web address, and there was no technician to fix the lack of sound and the flickering screen..

With Patrick loitering and the clock ticking, Helen moved over to the tables in front of the whiteboard with its imposing title, 'A Scale Model of a City from Scratch'. Helen and I sat at one table, while Patrick sat at the other. It was good to double participant numbers. Helen suggested we raise issues. Patrick jumped up as Helen complimented his intelligence, knowledge, giftedness, creativity and engagement. He approached the board. He proposed an energy pit like a huge underground swimming pool, except bigger. It removed hydrogen from water. Patrick strode to the computer, clicked on Google and thrilled to pictures of a hydrogen bomb exploding. I asked Patrick if he can draw the pit-pool and how it will work. He had three kinds of hydrogen delivery: one was in packages, on trucks; the other was a fuel pipe straight into cars that all come to a service station; and finally he had pipes that travel underground to power stations, one at the base of each city building. The power stations could convert the hydrogen into electricity and the water from the pit would come either from recycled sewage or from a lake right above the pit. Otherwise, they had to build many pits and have many lakes, as the city was now 200 kilometres across and 300 kilometres down.

The concept was hard to understand. Patrick spoke superbly and fast, enunciating his consonants faultlessly. He drew several boxes, one with waves in it. I asked Patrick what functions these boxes perform. Could he label them? But Patrick cannot write. Helen jumped in to inform me it was a good idea to slow down and for me to put labels on the boxes because Patrick's extreme intelligence and fast pace of idea generation was holding him back. Helen further commented, ignoring her subject, that he has too great a brain for his literacy skills to keep up. Suddenly she turned to him.

‘But I don’t want to offend you, so don’t feel put down, because you are one of the most intelligent people I have ever met’.

Patrick struggled on for a while, marking the board, but it was torture for him. He was looking for a way out. He went over to the computer. Helen looked at the board and copied down the shapes Patrick created. She went into the office, returning with a camera to photograph the board. She took many close-ups and distant shots. She said to Patrick:

Okay, now I have something for you to do at home. Finish doing this. At home. It’s your homework. Bring it to me next week. That way, we can finish the city from scratch, and we can put it on the Urban Plus website.

I asked if the panel of experts will respond before the end of the year.

‘Well, actually there isn’t a panel of experts—yet. It’s just one of the ideas that the creator of Urban Plus has in mind. He is getting his pilot sites to give ideas’.

Helen added,

‘I think, in part, that the program is a bit hard for younger kids. That’s why we used to have 10 doing this program’.

### **Appendix 13: Impacts and supports—Example of continuous data questioning, fourth iteration**

The STRUCTURE of the themes is related to the theoretical model (see Chapter 2 of the thesis).

Iteration 2 and 3 may be identified by a focus on child-centred time and its related concepts of dynamics, change, growth, development and the transitions implicit in these. The first ‘system’ simultaneously seeks to evaluate these ‘time’ forces in contextual terms, so that the influence of systems, including social, geographical, historical and cultural conditions may be understood, qualitatively situating processes in multidimensional spheres of continuously active networks.

Iteration 4 organised the structure to facilitate the exploration of the impacts on children of their time use. In this way, structured support of resilience through impending change may be evaluated.

*IMPACT:* This is to explore and discover the nature and dynamics of mutually influential factors in the worlds children interface outside school hours. These impacts are complex, and this study’s interest in them extends to how families, communities, schools and societies are affected by the activity processes children undertake or are found in.

*IMPACT—OF WHAT KIND:* Impacts are perceived either to benefit stakeholders in children’s worlds, or to disadvantage or even damage them in some way.

*IMPACT—BENEFICIAL:* Multiple benefits are experienced by stakeholders in children’s worlds; some, but not all, simultaneously, and to different degrees. The aim is to identify what these benefits are perceived to be from stakeholders’ points of view [overwhelmingly from children’s points of view], and to evaluate how these benefits colour the quality of children’s lives outside school.

*+ve aspects of differentiated programs.* Differential programming has been trialled and championed in several of the research sites funded by the Better Futures Transition Project, to devise and run short-term and weekly transition support sessions. Not all sites in fact implemented the funded programming. Services that do not run designated programs for children in the 9-12 cohort, nevertheless differentiate them in interviews, and demonstrably make distinctions among older and younger children in terms of expectations for and from them, the spaces they are allocated and the activities they are offered. My question is: Do children who receive designated-funding programs targeting transition show that these programs have influenced their attitudes, aspirations and future-connectedness, compared with children who were not thus served? How were they influenced and in which directions? How central is transition support to the wellbeing of children about to leave primary school? Do children themselves feel they need this support, or are they indifferent unless they have been purposively introduced to the issues? Should school transition support be the sole province of schools, and if not, how might the play 'philosophy' of OOSH be compromised to extend to engaging with the end of childhood and its concomitant challenges?

*Child-adult relations:* How do children relate to adults in out-of-school contexts? How important are these relationships to children? Where the relationships among children and adult carers are dysfunctional, is the impact on children positive in some cases?

*Adult-centric:* What aspects of children's activity processes are centred on adults' priorities, needs and aspirations? How does this focus affect the quality of children's experiences outside school?

*Relationships with adults:* There are many adults, apart from child care providers who interface with children outside of school, and they do so at various degrees of intimacy and distance. How do children perceive these relationships? How dependent on them

are they? How do children manage the power challenges inherent in intergenerational relationships? To what extent are adults dependent on children outside school? To what extent do children initiate and sustain relationships with adults, and how are children impacted by this direction?

*Civics:* What quality of benefits do children derive from participating in social justice awareness and projects? How does the community benefit? How do families benefit?

*Leadership roles in differentiated programs:* Do differentiated programs represent leadership opportunities for children?

*OOSH relationships with children:* What is the care service 'philosophy' of relating to children? How does it construct childhood? How do these conceptualisations influence the experience of children in care? How do children influence the care service to their own benefit?

*Return to OOSH as leader:* What qualities of care services cause children to want to come back and revisit them after they have left primary school? What are the benefits children obtain for themselves by engaging in out-of-school services for younger children in a mentoring role?

*What does it mean to you:* How do children identify the significance of OOSH/care services in their lives?

*Outcomes\_evaluations:* How do children evaluate the quality of services? How do services themselves evaluate their impact on children? What is the primary focus of evaluations by services? How influential on services are children's responses to them?

*OOSH\_participation\_attendance:* How do degrees of participation/attendance at out-of-school services, impact children's quality of life?

*OOSH numbers:* How many children attend the OOSH/out-of-school services in the study? What factors impact these numbers?

*Planning, accountability:* To what extent does targeted planning for 9–12 year olds account for benefits children obtain from participating in their out-of-school service?

*Likes this OOSH:* Does it make a difference in benefits obtained if children like their OOSH service?

*Dislikes this OOSH:* Do children obtain benefits from attending OOSH even if they do not like their service?

*What does differentiated programming mean to you:* How do children perceive the benefits they obtain from differentiated programming? How does this compare with children's perceptions of the significance of OOSH overall in their lives?

*IMPACT—DELETERIOUS:* Negative outcomes are experienced by stakeholders in children's worlds. The aim is to identify how children perceive negative impacts on their lives of out-of-school services.

*-ve aspects of differentiated program:* this node should be merged into the one above [IMPACT—DELETERIOUS].

*IMPACT—ON WHOM:* In the mutually influential systems active in the experience of childhood, impacts affect all stakeholders and participants in varying ways, depending on their role and associations in relation to each child, to each other as individuals and to groups of children and groups of other adults. The question is: How might these impacts be understood to affect how individuals and groups operate within the systems that involve children's lives outside school?

*IMPACT ON CHILD:* This is an overarching category, incorporating the findings of the study. What impacts from systems do children experience, and how relatively significant are they? Are individual children impacted by specific practices in

OOSH/differentiated out-of-school programs? How are children affected by the degree of choice they exercise over the contexts in which they spend time after school? What impacts do children's perceptions and experiences have on the quality of their lives and how do they in turn affect the delivery of services?

*IMPACT ON GROUP:* What are the whole-group impacts of services that children attend? How do these impacts work to enrich or limit community at both service and neighbourhood levels? What benefits are obtained from engagement in whole-group out-of-school settings that may not be available in one-on-one supports?

*IMPACT ON STAFF:* How do the relationships of staff with children impact upon the delivery of services? What impact does staff perception of their role in relation to children's developmental stages and activity processes have on their professional practices? How does the management, administration and 'philosophy' of the out-of-school service influence how staff behave and how they engage with children at both an individual and group level? How does the 'geography' of the service affect staff practices? How do salary and work conditions affect staff relationships and relationships with children?

*IMPACT ON FAMILY:* How does the out-of-school service influence family life? How does family life influence out-of-school services? What demands are placed on families that require them to use out-of-school services, and is there evidence of how much choice there is in use of such services [without family members' responses in the data]?

*IMPACT ON COMMUNITY:* How is the neighbourhood community affected by the out-of-school service? Does the out-of-school service facilitate direct links with community and neighbourhoods? Do community groups or individual representatives of Council and other bodies seek and sustain relationship with the out-of-school service?

*IMPACT ON YOUTH:* How have the two youth in the study been affected through transition by their participation in the OOSH service during their primary school years? What impacts do these youth have now on the out-of-school service?

*IMPACT ON SERVICE:* How have children's expressed experiences and reflections on them impacted the way the out-of-school service has adapted its programming and management?

*IMPACT ON SCHOOL:* How does the out-of-school service influence the community of the school? Has the OOSH service affected the way the school operates? What adaptations are beneficial to the school?

*SUPPORT:* The Transition and After-School Study is about exploring and discovering how children anticipating major life changes seek, obtain and give support individually, as groups, within their care service and beyond it to multiple interfaces that are engaged in schooling, home, work and play. Support may also be characterised by its absence, in which circumstance the question is: How do resilient children compensate for lack of support, and what are the risks unsupported children are heir to? What does out-of-school time use contribute by way of transition support? How is it situated in relation to home and schooling?

*DYNAMICS OF SUPPORT:* How does support work for effect? There are various processes through which children obtain support in this study. What are these processes, and what is their relative significance for transition?

*Citizenship:* the process of building connections with community through civics involvement outside of school hours is a key factor in supported transition, documented in the literature. Are the children in the study engaged in civics? What does that engagement look like, and where are benefits to be found? What kind of civics represents 'best practice' in terms of supportive outcomes in the study contexts?



*OOSH issues\_benefits:* How do the foundational beliefs and attitudes at the out-of-school service 'drive' positive outcomes in support of older children? Do children make links between their experiences of support and these beliefs and attitudes?

*Self-expression:* To what extent do children obtain, seek and give support in out-of-school contexts through their authentic and independent 'voices'? What constrains and enables these voices? How do out-of-school contexts encourage or inhibit child agency?

*Learning:* What do children learn in the out-of-school context? How do they use their learning to obtain support through transition? How does teaching take place outside of schooling, and what are its benefits? How do different understandings and philosophies of learning influence programming and family/community relations?

*Recreation:* How is 'Play' understood within the OOSH context and how is this understanding supportive of transition? What activity processes conform to an OOSH understanding of 'play'? How does this understanding influence the ways relationships are formed and sustained in OOSH? How do these ways support transition?

*Self-esteem:* How are out-of-school contexts supportive of children's self-worth? What programs and activity processes most effectively foster self-esteem? How do children with high self-esteem contribute to the self-worth of others in the group? How do staff respond to and support children with low self-esteem?

*Leadership:* Does placement in leadership roles enhance support for children? What is the nature and quality of the most supportive leadership roles? What is the level and degree of autonomy involved in the leadership that is practised by children? How much choice do older children have in the extent to which they can support other children?

*OOSH Children's health\_wellbeing:* How do children obtain support from socialisation, physical activity, geographies, health/hygiene and nutritional practices in out-of-school services? How does the service actively seek to influence children's wellbeing? Is emotional wellbeing emphasised to the same extent as physical wellbeing in out-of-school services in the study?

*OOSH\_social\_function:* What processes and programs are in place to support children through socialisation? What function do social groups play in transition support? How does the service harness existing social networks to maximise supportive influences on older children? To what extent do children's social networks intersect with their OOSH cohort?

*Programming:* How is programming created and by whom? To what extent does the programming process influence the development of supportive activities? How empowered are older children in this process? What influence do families, management and social pressures have on programming? To what extent are programs developed in collaboration with other agencies and community bodies?

*Socio-economic:* How does the OOSH service harness family and community resources to achieve effective support through transition for older children? What are the supportive resources unique to disadvantaged children? Where is low SES predictive of unsupportive practices, and how do services mitigate these? How does consumerism undermine and support SES?

*Inclusion:* To what extent does the service exploit diversity to support older children in transition? What factors in diversity are important assets in the service? What challenges are there to inclusion in the community/neighbourhood and how are these met to support children?

*Fantasy:* How does children's imaginary facility support them through transition? In what ways does the service encourage and support imaginative play and creativity?

*Conflict:* What benefits can children obtain from experience of conflict to support them through transition? How do services respond to conflict to achieve supportive outcomes? To what extent is conflict a welcomed opportunity at the service, and to what extent is it a disciplinary challenge? Does the service regard conflict as a teaching and socialisation opportunity?

*Wraparound:* How does the scope of service influence the degree of support children obtain? Does the service see its role as keeping children safe in care, or does it have a broader agenda? Does the service 'wrap' itself around the older child? Is there continuation of contact and concern for the older child once it has left the service?

*Social & relationship:* What relationships in the child's networks are supportive? How do they work to provide support? What are the directions of these relationships? How close and distant are they? What are the qualities children most value in them?

*Justice:* How important an influence in supportive care is fairness? What are the moral dimensions of support, like loyalty, and honesty? To what extent are children fearful through lack of trust?

*Safety:* How do children experience the support of care in a safe environment? How does the OOSH environment and practices compare with those outside of OOSH, e.g., in families and communities and school? What factors in activity processes encourage trust in physical and emotional safety?

*Work:* To what extent do children obtain support from the work that they do? Do OOSH services require work of children? Do families? Where is the work children do rewarded intrinsically, and where is it compensated monetarily or through tactile reward? To what

extent do children choose their work and how much of it do they do? How do children define what is work and what is 'other'?

*Freedom:* How free are children, and to what extent does their agency support them through transition? Where do controls come from and how are they managed by older children? To what extent do children feel free to choose a future?

*Convenience:* How do children use passive supports through transition? What do passive supports look like, and what challenges do they present in terms of impending changes? Do children rely on convenience as they might on trust and stability? How does this influence outcomes?

*Change:* How is support obtained by exploiting the inevitability of change? How is change a 'way out' or a 'way through'? To what extent do services focus on change management?

*Future connectedness:* Are children more supported through transition if they have a strong connection to their aspirations? Does the service encourage such connection by modelling change through adaptation to various situations, devising new programming to reflect change such as online tech, and opening up to expertise from the workplace/arts/trades/professions?

*Interests:* To what extent are children supported by their range of interests? Are children more supported if they actively/passionately pursue interests into knowledge and skill? How does the service facilitate interests?

*TYPES OF SUPPORT:* The theme of 'support' is one of the four key categories in the study, because its aim is not simply to explore out-of-school time use practices and preferences, but crucially to understand how services and children as individuals can effectively scaffold impending change. Support is a multiple dynamic of mutual influence on all stakeholders. Different types of support coexist, along with lack of

support, depending on the direction of relationships and the resources of individuals in them. The study seeks to identify these directions and the supportive dynamics that are generated through socialisation in communities of children. The study seeks to understand them at an individual level, but importantly also in the context of the social groupings that out-of-school care services incorporate.

*SEEK SUPPORT:* Support is not objective but activated through social imperatives, whereby connections are initiated and fostered through relationship. Which children seek support, and where do they go to find it? Is there evidence of out-of-school networks providing fertile ground for children to create for themselves the supports that fit their specific needs? What does the proactive seeking of support look like, and who are most successful in obtaining it, especially where passive, convenient or resource-rich supports are least available? Perhaps this is a question about identifying what qualities, beliefs and attitudes in children set them up for resilience.

*GIVE SUPPORT:* The fieldwork for the study found examples of where children themselves provide support to peers, siblings, parents and other adults. What is the nature and variety of the support children offer? To what extent do supportive roles in turn support children's transition? What motivates children to take on supportive roles? What does the capacity of children for supporting others reveal about resilience, empathy, moral judgement and responsibility? To what extent and in what ways are supporter-children practising choice and agency to their fullest capacity?

*OBTAIN SUPPORT:* By far the most voluminous evidence pertaining to support surrounds contexts and activity processes whose rationale it is to provide support. But supportive intentions can and do fall short. What support do children obtain from out-of-school services? Is there a hierarchy of support sources among family, school, structured and unstructured care contexts? How do children understand where they are

supported rather than controlled and directed? Do children trade agency for protection? In what contexts is support liberating, and where does it inhibit children's freedom? Do adults exploit children's vulnerability to impose their own beliefs and agendas?

*Support for employment:* Who do out-of-school services aim to benefit? How does the child-centred focus of this study inhibit a fair perspective on societal expectations of care services? To what extent can these services adapt their charters to accommodate a shift in focus from the needs of the workforce to the holistic needs of childhood?

*UNSUPPORTED:* Where does lack of support occur? What impacts may be attributed to lack of support? Where is lack of support negligence, and where is it to be understood as harm?

*SOURCES OF SUPPORT:* How is the quality and accessibility of support activated through a 'source'? Which outcomes of socialisation processes materialise as support? What care service practices show positive outcomes for support of children in transition?

*Differentiated programming:* Is differentiated programming experienced as supportive by children? Which aspects of differentiated programs are considered the most effective by children? How do care workers experience effective support through their 9–12 programs? How do parents perceive their families are being supported by differentiated programs?

*Mentoring:* Identify the direction(s) and actors in the mentor relationships that are experienced or observed in the study. Who are the most supportive mentors, in children's perspectives? Who do care workers/ services consider the most effective mentors? Do participants and stakeholders recognise mentorship in supportive relationship-building?

*Privately funded activity & lessons:* Do children who access privately funded services perceive them as supportive? Identify the types of support that children obtain from them. How does privately funded activity support families? In which ways do private services obtain support for their work?

*Community facilities:* How are community assets [facilities and services] underwritten by Councils, NGOs, government and industry exploited for the support of 9–12 year olds? To what extent do children access assets they perceive as supportive? To what extent is children's access to them limited?

*Online technologies:* What kinds of supports do children obtain from online technologies? In which respects do children create their own supports through these avenues? To what extent do children consider that online technology use facilitates socialisation, and to what extent do they feel it isolates them? Compare the attitudes and practices of care workers, parents and children towards online technology use in relation to learning. Compare the aspirations/ future connectedness and attitudes to transition of children who freely access online technologies with those who do not have access to them.

*Sport:* How significant is sport as a support in children's transitions? How do children perceive their sporting activities as supportive? How does sport support families? In which respects do care services obtain support from sport? How influential is sport on children's social network formation?

**Appendix 14: Consent form—Access principal**

Faculty of Education and  
Social Work

ABN 15 211 513 464

**CHIEF INVESTIGATOR'S / SUPERVISOR'S NAME**

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**PRINCIPAL of [Name of school] CONSENT FORM for access to school premises**

I, ..... agree to facilitate access to the school premises  
at [address of school] to Anna Johns for the project

TITLE: The Transition and After-school Study

In giving my consent I acknowledge that:

1. I have read the Information Statement and the time involved for my participation in the project. The researcher has given me the opportunity to discuss the information and ask any questions I have about the project and they have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand that I can withdraw access at any time without prejudice to my relationship with the researcher now or in the future.
2. I agree that research data gathered from the results of the study may be published, provided that I or the school cannot be identified.
3. I understand that if I have any questions relating to my participation in this research, I may contact the researcher who will be happy to answer them.
4. I acknowledge receipt of the Information Statement.



.....  
Signature of Principal of [Name of school]

.....  
Please PRINT name

.....  
Date

### Appendix 15: Survey

How old are you today?

Are you male or female?

Which school do you go to?

What grade are you in?

Which suburb do you live in?

Can you write down the after-school activities you do each day of the week?

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday

I have a few questions about your family. Do you have

One parent who works full time



One parent who works part time



Two parents who work full time



Neither parent works



Where were you born?

How would you describe your cultural background?

Do you live with both your parents?  yes  no How many sisters and brothers do you have

Names of brothers and sisters	How old is each brother or sister?	Tick here if they are a stepsister or stepbrother

Do all your brothers and sisters live with you?  yes  no

Do you look after your brothers and sisters after school?  yes  no

On which days of the week do you look after your brother(s) and/or sister(s)? Mark the boxes.

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday

How long do you look after them at any one time? Mark the box.

1 hour or less	2 hours	3 hours	4 hours	5 hours	6 hours	7 hours	8 hours
----------------	---------	---------	---------	---------	---------	---------	---------

Do you do any housework at home?

yes  no

Can you draw a circle around what you do?

Job	Cooking	Cleaning	Laundry	Gardening, lawn mowing, path sweeping	Tidying up in rooms that are not your bedroom	Washing the car	Shopping	Making your own bed, polishing your shoes, ironing your clothes
Underneath each activity you circled, can you write how many minutes or hours each job takes to do?								
Time it takes								

Do you have a paid job, either after school or on non-school days?

Can you describe your job?

yes  no

How much do you earn for the work you do?

\$

**Appendix 16: Consent form—Parent/child**

Faculty of Education and Social Work

ABN 15 211 513 464

**CHIEF INVESTIGATOR'S / SUPERVISOR'S  
NAME***Dr Jennifer Way*

Researcher: Johanna Johns

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 Education Building A35  
 The University of Sydney  
 NSW 2006 AUSTRALIA  
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 Facsimile: +61 2 9351 2606  
 Email:  
 jennifer.way@sydney.edu.au

**PARENT CHILD CONSENT FORM**

I, ..... agree to permit .....,  
 who is

aged ..... years, to participate in the research project

TITLE: The Transition and After-school Study

In giving my consent I acknowledge that:

1. I have read the Information Statement and the time involved for my participation in the project. The researcher has given me the opportunity to discuss the information and ask any questions I have about the project and they have been answered to my satisfaction.
2. I understand that I can withdraw from the focus group at any time. I understand that if the focus group is recorded, I will not be able to request that my answers be erased/destroyed because this would require destroying the material provided by other children.
3. I understand that I can withdraw from the interview at any time without prejudice to my relationship with the researcher now or in the future.
4. I agree that research data gathered from the results of the study may be published, provided that I cannot be identified.
5. I understand that if I have any questions relating to my participation in this research, I may contact the researcher who will be happy to answer them.
6. I acknowledge receipt of the Information Statement.

6. I consent to:

- |                  |     |                          |    |                          |
|------------------|-----|--------------------------|----|--------------------------|
| i) Audio-taping  | YES | <input type="checkbox"/> | NO | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ii) Video-taping | YES | <input type="checkbox"/> | NO | <input type="checkbox"/> |

.....  
Signature of Parent/Guardian

.....  
Signature of Child

.....  
Please PRINT name

.....  
Please PRINT name

.....  
Date

.....  
Date

## Appendix 17: Participant information—Child



Faculty of Education  
and Social Work

15 211 513 464

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### CHIEF INVESTIGATOR'S / SUPERVISOR'S NAME

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### Child INFORMATION STATEMENT for the Transition and After-School Study

#### (1) What is the study about?

The study will ask you how you use your free time after school. It will especially ask for your impressions of what [Name of structured activity program or service] is like for you. You can talk about other things you do after school as well, and what your favourites are. If you can come up with new suggestions about what kids your age could be doing, then that would be very interesting. The whole idea is to put you in the driver's seat and listen to what you have to say. One of the most interesting aspects of this research is to chat with you about the future.

#### (2) Who is carrying out the study?

The study is being conducted by Anna Johns and will form the basis for the degree of PhD at The University of Sydney under the supervision of Dr Jennifer Way.

#### (3) What does the study involve?

The study involves you giving permission and then answering a few short questions about yourself on paper. After that, you'll be in a group around a table, doing a workshop. You'll be asked to do a drawing. If it's okay with you, this workshop will be videoed. The next activity needs between six and eight of you to volunteer for a focus group. This is where you sit in a circle and throw ideas around, and come up with new ideas and information about what it's like being your age in the time after school. If you all agree, the circle activity will be videoed. The last main activity is for only two of you who would like to do an individual face-to-face interview with Anna Johns. It will be more like a friendly, relaxed conversation. If you choose this activity, you'll be able to explore thoughts that relate to your own particular experiences and hopes for the future. In some instances, you may be asked by Anna to have a follow-up interview within a few weeks, so the two of you can talk a bit more about things that are especially highlighted.

**(4) How much time will the study take?**

All the fieldwork will take place after school, specifically between 3.00 pm and 6.00 pm at [Name of structured activity program or service].

The activities that are planned will all be done within a week (except for any follow-up interviews, which might be a few weeks later). It will take an hour or so for the workshop around the table. If you are in the focus group circle, you will probably be involved for an hour. Each individual face-to-face interview, or chat with Anna Johns, will take an hour as well, and so will a follow-up interview a few weeks later, if you have one.

**(5) Can I withdraw from the study?**

Of course. It is your decision whether or not to be involved. If you decide you don't want to be, then no one will feel as though you let them down and no one will ask you why. The University of Sydney will not remember that you did not get involved, and they will not hold it against you.

If you decide you do want to be part of the research activities, then you can still change your mind and stop, even if it is in the middle of something. If you stop after you've started, or for whatever reason you feel you'd like to stop before you have started, even though you might have signed your permission form, then that's completely okay. It will not affect your relationship with The University of Sydney.

For example, you can stop participating in the round-table workshop at any time if you do not wish to continue. If you do that, then I will leave your drawing out of the study. Being in this study is completely voluntary and you do not have to promise that you will complete the drawing. If you do produce a completed drawing, it means you



consent to be in the study. You can withdraw any time before submitting the completed drawing. Don't forget that your name will not be on the drawing. It will go on a pile without anyone knowing who did it. Once it is finished, then it is too late to take the drawing back, because no one will know which one is yours.

If you are in the focus group and want to get out of it once it has started, then you won't be able to. The reason is that your contributions will be mixed up with everyone else's and it will be impossible to remove the parts that belong to you without the rest of the discussion being affected.

But if you agree to an individual face-to-face interview, then you can stop the interview at any time if you do not wish to continue. In that circumstance, the audio tape will be wiped and whatever you talked about will not be included in the study.

**(6) Will anyone else know the results?**

No. All the aspects of the study, including results, will be strictly confidential and only Anna Johns will have access to them. The drawings and transcripts from interviews and focus groups will be labelled with an ID code. Thus, all the information gathered will be identified only by number, and even this will be seen only by Anna Johns. The name of [Name of structured activity program or service] will NOT be used.

However, if you might disclose information that comes under mandatory reporting requirements, then Anna Johns will not keep them confidential.

A report of the study may be submitted for publication, but it will not be possible to identify you in such a report.

**(7) Will the study benefit me?**

The findings of the research might not benefit you in an obvious or concrete way, but will provide up-to-date information on how people your age feel about approaching high school transition. It can show us what you find important, interesting and worthwhile. Your contribution will help shape discussions about that, and inform new programs.

**(8) Can I tell other people about the study?**

Yes, you are free to talk about the study.

**(9) What if I require further information?**

When you have read this information, Anna Johns will be available to discuss it with you further and answer any questions you may have. If you would like to know more at any stage, please feel free to contact Anna Johns (0419 266 510) or Dr Way (9351 6272).

**(10) What if I have a complaint or concerns?**

**Any person with concerns or complaints about the conduct of a research study can contact the Deputy Manager, Human Ethics Administration, University of Sydney on +61 2 8627 8176 (telephone); +61 2 8627 8177 (facsimile) or [ro.humanethics@sydney.edu.au](mailto:ro.humanethics@sydney.edu.au) (email).**

**This information sheet is for you to keep.**

## Appendix 18: Participant information—Parent



Faculty of Education and  
Social Work

ABN 15 211 513 464

### **CHIEF INVESTIGATOR'S / SUPERVISOR'S NAME**

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Web: <http://sydney.edu.au/>

### **Parent INFORMATION STATEMENT for the Transition and After- School Study**

#### **(1) What is the study about?**

The study will ask children aged 10 to 12 how they use their time between school and home, and will focus on their experience of out-of-school care provisions. It has two goals. First, we would like to capture preadolescents' situations in the hours between the end of the school day and home, from their perspectives. Second, we would like to obtain a picture of how activity practices might influence preadolescents in their approach to high school transition.

#### **(2) Who is carrying out the study?**

The study is being conducted by Anna Johns and will form the basis for the degree of PhD at The University of Sydney under the supervision of Dr Jennifer Way.

#### **(3) What does the study involve?**

The study involves your consenting child completing a short questionnaire before engaging in a video-taped drawing activity at [Name of structured activity program or service]. Six to eight children will be invited to join in a video-taped focus group discussion. Two children from the focus group will be invited to informal individual face-to-face audio-taped interviews. Individual follow-up interviews

will be conducted within the three-month timeframe of the study as a whole.

**(4) How much time will the study take?**

All the fieldwork will take place outside of school hours, specifically between 3.00 pm and 6.00 pm at [Name of structured activity program or service].

The field activity at your centre will be undertaken within a week. Your child's involvement will comprise two hours for the drawing activity in the first instance. If he or she is interested, he or she may be selected to join a focus group discussion that will take about an hour. Two of the children involved in the focus group will be asked if they would like to participate in an individual face-to-face interview which will take about an hour. The same two children from [Name of structured activity program or service] will be invited to follow-up interviews towards the end of the three-month study period.

**(5) Can I withdraw from the study?**

Your decision whether or not to permit your child to participate will not prejudice you or your child's future relations with The University of Sydney. If you decide to permit your child to participate, you are free to withdraw your consent and to discontinue your child's participation at any time without affecting your relationship with The University of Sydney.

Your child may stop participating in the drawing activity at any time if he/she does not wish to continue, and his/her drawing will not be included in the study. Being in this study is completely voluntary and your child is not under any obligation to consent to complete the drawing. Submitting a completed drawing is an indication of your child's consent to participate in the study. Your child can withdraw any time prior to submitting the completed drawing. Once he/she has submitted his/her drawing anonymously, his/her responses cannot be withdrawn because it cannot be identified.

If your child takes part in a focus group and wishes to withdraw, as this is a group activity, it will not be possible to exclude individual data once the session has commenced.

Should your child agree to an individual face-to-face interview, he/she may stop the interview at any time if he/she does not wish to continue. In that circumstance, the audio recording will be erased and the information provided will not be included in the study.

**(6) Will anyone else know the results?**

All aspects of the study, including results, will be strictly confidential and only the researcher will have access to information on participants. The drawings and transcripts from interviews and focus groups will be labelled with an ID code. Thus, all the information gathered will be identified only by number, and even this will be seen only by the researchers. The name of the out-of-school centre your child attends will NOT be used.

Exceptions will be made where your child might disclose information that comes under mandatory reporting requirements.

A report of the study may be submitted for publication, but individual participants will not be identifiable in such a report.

**(7) Will the study benefit my child?**

The research activities are designed with direct benefits to your child in mind. The drawing workshop is a fun, negotiated, shared group activity that may stimulate your child to reflect upon his/her best use of time from his/her perspective. The focus group, being an informal conversation in a circle about after-school, is a further opportunity for your child to exchange perceptions and suggest new ideas. The two children interested in an individual interview (with follow-up interviews where indicated), may enjoy taking the discussions further and in relation to their own thoughts about their futures. The findings may not benefit your child in an immediate, direct or material way, but will provide the field with up-to-date information on how activity practices might influence preadolescents in their approach to high school transition and the values they accord time use. Their input will help shape future discourse and inform programs.

**(8) Can I tell other people about the study?** Yes, you are free to talk about the study.

**(9) What if I require further information?**

When you have read this information, Anna Johns will be available to discuss it with you further and answer any questions you may have. If you would like to know more at any stage, please feel free to contact Anna Johns (0419 266 510) or Dr Way (9351 6272).

**(10) What if I have a complaint or concerns?**

**Any person with concerns or complaints about the conduct of a research study can contact the Deputy Manager, Human Ethics Administration, University of Sydney on +61 2 8627 8176 (telephone); +61 2 8627 8177 (facsimile) or [ro.humanethics@sydney.edu.au](mailto:ro.humanethics@sydney.edu.au) (email).**

**This information sheet is for you to keep.**

## Appendix 19: Participant information—School principals



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**SYDNEY**

**Faculty of Education and  
Social Work**

ABN 15 211 513 464

---

### **CHIEF INVESTIGATOR'S / SUPERVISOR'S NAME**

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### **School Principal INFORMATION STATEMENT for the Transition and After-School Study**

#### **(1) What is the study about?**

The study will ask children aged 10 to 12 how they use their time between school and home, and will focus on their experience of out-of-school care provisions. It has two goals. First, we would like to capture preadolescents' situations in the hours between the end of the school day and home, from their perspectives. Second, we would like to obtain a picture of how activity practices might influence preadolescents in their approach to high school transition.

#### **(2) Who is carrying out the study?**

The study is being conducted by Anna Johns and will form the basis for the degree of PhD at The University of Sydney under the supervision of Dr Jennifer Way.

#### **(3) What does the study involve?**

The study involves the consenting coordinator of [Name of structured activity program or service] participating in an interview before the commencement of field research activities with children aged 10 to 12. It also involves consenting children completing a short questionnaire before engaging in a video-taped drawing activity. Six to eight of the children will be invited to join in a video-taped focus

group discussion. Two children from the focus group will be invited to informal individual face-to-face audio-taped interviews. Individual follow-up interviews will be conducted within the three-month timeframe of the study as a whole.

**(4) How much time will the study take?**

All the fieldwork on your school premises will take place outside of school hours, specifically between 3.00 pm and 6.00 pm at [Name of structured activity program or service]. It will be undertaken within a week. Coordinator interviews will take up to an hour. Children's involvement will comprise two hours for the drawing activity, over an hour for the focus group discussion with six to eight children, and an hour for face-to-face interviews with two children. The same two children from [Name of structured activity program or service] will be invited to follow-up interviews towards the end of the three-month study period.

**(5) Can I withdraw from the study?**

Your decision whether or not to provide access for the study will not prejudice your future relations with The University of Sydney. If you decide to provide access, you are free to withdraw your consent and to discontinue your participation at any time without affecting your relationship with The University of Sydney.

**(6) Will anyone else know the results?**

All aspects of the study, including results, will be strictly confidential and only Anna Johns will have access to information on participants. The drawings and transcripts from interviews and focus groups will be labelled with an ID code. Thus, all the information gathered will be identified only by number, and even this will be seen only by Anna Johns. The name of [Name of structured activity program or service] will NOT be used.

Exceptions will be made where children might disclose information that comes under mandatory reporting requirements.

A report of the study may be submitted for publication, but individual participants will not be identifiable in such a report.

**(7) Will the study benefit my school?**

The study may not benefit [Name of school] in a direct or material way, but findings in this study will provide the field with up-to-date information on how activity practices might influence preadolescents in their approach to high school transition and the values they accord

time use. Their input will help shape future discourse and inform programs.

**(8) Can I tell other people about the study?**

Yes, you are free to talk about the study.

**(9) What if I require further information?**

When you have read this information, Anna Johns will be available to discuss it with you further and answer any questions you may have. If you would like to know more at any stage, please feel free to contact Anna Johns (0419 266 510) or Dr Way (9351 6272).

**(10) What if I have a complaint or concerns?**

**Any person with concerns or complaints about the conduct of a research study can contact the Deputy Manager, Human Ethics Administration, University of Sydney on +61 2 8627 8176 (telephone); +61 2 8627 8177 (facsimile) or [ro.humanethics@sydney.edu.au](mailto:ro.humanethics@sydney.edu.au) (email).**



**Appendix 20: Consent form—Principal**



**Faculty of Education  
and Social Work**

ABN 15 211 513 464

**CHIEF INVESTIGATOR'S / SUPERVISOR'S  
NAME**

*Dr Jennifer Way*

**Researcher: Johanna Johns**

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**PRINCIPAL CONSENT FORM**

I, ..... agree to participate in the face-to-face interview with the researcher, for the project—

TITLE: The Transition and After-school Study

In giving my consent I acknowledge that:

1. I have read the Information Statement and the time involved for my participation in the project. The researcher has given me the opportunity to discuss the information and ask any questions I have about the project and they have been answered to my satisfaction.
2. I understand that I can withdraw from the interview at any time without prejudice to my relationship with the researcher now or in the future.
3. I agree that research data gathered from the results of the study may be published, provided that I cannot be identified.
4. I understand that if I have any questions relating to my participation in this research, I may contact the researcher who will be happy to answer them.
5. I acknowledge receipt of the Information Statement.
6. I consent to

- |     |                    |     |                          |    |                          |
|-----|--------------------|-----|--------------------------|----|--------------------------|
| i)  | Audio-taping       | YES | <input type="checkbox"/> | NO | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ii) | Receiving feedback | YES | <input type="checkbox"/> | NO | <input type="checkbox"/> |

If you answered YES to the 'Receiving Feedback Question', please provide your details i.e. mailing address, email address.

**Feedback Option**

**Address:**

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**Email:**

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### Appendix 21: Field events and participants

Attributes in cases		CODENAME	Workshop	Focus group	Interview	Face-to-face interview times
031210	Survey 1	Jane	01.11.10	12.11.10	12.11.10	26 mins
031210	Survey 2	Mary	01.11.10		15.11.10?	33 mins
031210	Survey 3	Penny	01.11.10			
031210	Survey 4	Susan	01.11.10	12.11.10		
031210	Survey 5	Hong	01.11.10	12.11.10		
031210	Survey 6	Sam	01.11.10	12.11.10		
031210	Survey 7	Allen	01.11.10			
031210	Survey 8	Tyler	12.10.10	12.11.10		
031210	Survey 9	Harry	12.10.10			
			Interview OK			33 mins
031210	Survey 10	Melody	28.10.10	04.11.10	11.11.10	32 mins
031210	Survey 11	Anna	28.10.10			
031210	Survey 12	Brianna	28.10.10	04.11.10		
031210	Survey 13	Felicity	28.10.10	04.11.10		
041210	Survey 14	Jessica	28.10.10	04.11.10		
041210	Survey 15	Camilla	28.10.10	04.11.10	11.11.10	21 mins
041210	Survey 16	Sky	28.10.10	04.11.10		
041210	Survey 17	Samantha	28.10.10	04.11.10	11.11.10	42 mins
041210	Survey 18	Grace	28.10.10	04.11.10		
041210	Survey 19	Jennifer	28.10.10			
041210	Survey 20	Kylie				
041210	Survey 21	Jim	28.10.10			
041210	Survey 22	Tom	28.10.10			
041210	Survey 23	Brian	28.10.10			
041210	Survey 24	Elijah	28.10.10			
041210	Survey 25	Dan	28.10.10			
			Interview OK			Approx. 60 mins
041210	Survey 26	Christine	26.10.10	02.11.10		
041210	Survey 27	Eva	26.10.10	02.11.10		
041210	Survey 28	Marina	26.10.10	02.11.10	16.11.10	28 mins
041210	Survey 29	Emily	26.10.10	02.11.10	29.11.10	26 minutes
041210	Survey 30	Katie	26.10.10	02.11.10		
041210	Survey 31	Tilly	26.10.10	02.11.10		
041210	Survey 32	Andrew	26.10.10	02.11.10		
041210	Survey 33	Matt	26.10.10	02.11.10		
041210	Survey 34	Max	Absent: did chart at home		23.11.10	35 mins
041210	Survey 35	Peter	Did chart at home		23.11.10 part 1 02.12.10 part 2	39 mins 25 mins
				02.11.10	12.11.10	65 mins
041210	Survey 36	Lyn	031110			
041210	Survey 37	Mira	031110			
041210	Survey 38	Jamie	031110	091110		
041210	Survey 39	Sophie	031110			
051210	Survey 40	Tracey	031110			
041210	Survey 42	Dorothy	031110	091110	091110	42 mins
041210	Survey 43	Leanne	031110			
041210	Survey 44	Frances	031110			
041210	Survey 45	Jackie	031110	091110		
041210	Survey 46	Julia	031110			
041210	Survey 55	Ben	031110	091110		

Attributes in cases		CODENAME	Workshop	Focus group	Interview	Face-to-face interview times
041210	Survey 56	David	031110	091110		
041210	Survey 57	Declan	031110	091110	091110	36 mins
041210	Survey 58	Ian	031110			
		Tara			Interv OK	33 mins
		Samantha			Interv OK	18 mins
071210	Survey 241110	Edwina	Chart 241110		24.11.10	41 mins
041210	Survey 77	Denise		25.11.10		
041210	Survey 78	Arlene	04.11.10			
041210	Survey79	Toni	04.11.10	25.11.10	01.12.10	13 mins
041210	Survey80	Karen	04.11.10	25.11.10	01.12.10	22 mins
041210	Survey81	Michelle	04.11.10			
041210	Survey82	Vera	04.11.10	25.11.10		
041210	Survey 83	Bill	17.11.10	25.11.10		
041210	Survey 84	John	17.11.10			
071210	Survey 85	Mark	17.11.10			
041210	Survey86	Jed	17.11.10			
041210	Survey 87	Adam	17.11.10	25.11.10		
041210	Survey 88	Jeremy	17.11.10			
041210	Survey89	Michael	17.11.10			
041210	Survey 90	Duncan	17.11.10			
041210	Survey 91	Zane	17.11.10	25.11.10		
		Gillian	Interv OK			45 mins
071210		Oliver			Yth interv 011210	50 mins
071210	Survey92	Judy				
071210	Survey93	Sandy				
071210	Survey94	Sally	301110	301110		
071210	Survey95	Alex	301110	301110		
071210	Survey96	Norman	301110	301110		
071210	Survey97	Nicholas	301110	301110		
071210	Survey98	Chris	301110	301110	Interview 071210	32 mins
071210	Survey99	Patrick			Interview 071210	36 mins
		Helen	Interv OK			66 mins

**Key and total participant numbers**

Coordinator	Child interview	Youth interview	Coordinator interviews	Surveys	Charts	Number in FG	Child interviews	Youth interviews
			Hoyden 1	Hoyden 9	7	5	2	
			Dornet 1	Dornet 15	15	8	3	
			Asya 1	Asya 10	11	8	4	
			Turing 2	Turing	14	12	2	1
			Kentledge 1	Kentledge 15	16	7	2	1
			Palmar 1	Palmar 9	7	5	2	
			Total 7	72	73	45	15	2

**6.5.**

## Appendix 22: Youth interview guide

*Semi-structured interview guide for individual high school students.*

*I'm interested in finding out what young people your age think about what you do after school and how it affects your life and your family. I'd like to know how your after-school activity helps you when leaving primary school, going to high school and becoming a teenager. I'm going to ask you some questions, but you don't have to just answer the questions. The questions are a suggestion about the sorts of things I want to make certain we get to talk about, but we can talk about anything that comes to you as we go along. If you don't understand anything I say, you can easily get me to explain it more. Maybe you'll never have thought about some of the things in our conversation before today. You can say you haven't thought about it, but you might want to think about it on the spot. Remember that if you'd rather not talk about something, just tell me and I'll go on to the next question. We can stop talking any time you want to. It's up to you.*

1. Let's talk about being a teenager. What does it mean to you?
2. What has it been like to make the transition into high school?
3. How did your after-school activities in primary school prepare you for high school?
4. How did your primary school prepare you for high school?
5. Is high school the same as you thought it would be?
6. What advice would you give to primary schools on how to get kids ready for the big change to high school?
7. If you could invent a top transition program, what would it look like? Would you have one-off activities or, say, a weekly program? What would you include in the program?
8. What advice would you give to primary school students now about getting ready for high school?
9. Were you ready for what you found when you started high school?
10. Did you have any catching up to do academically when you arrived at high school?
11. Are you close to your high school teachers? How would you describe your relationship with them?
12. Do you still visit your old school or OOSH service?
13. Do you have a leadership role at your high school?
14. Are you treated as 'the youngest' at high school?
15. Do you have friends in Grades 10 to 12 at your high school?

16. What do you want to do at Grade 10—go to Year 12 or leave?
17. What ambitions do you have for yourself? How will you make them happen?
18. Now I'd like to talk about the times you spend in an activity program. What do you do after school these days?
19. How different is your after-school time now, compared to when you were in primary school?
20. Do you still have the friends you made before you entered high school? Do you have different friends now? How are they different?
21. I'd like to talk about freedom. Do you have a lot of choices? Do you feel in charge of your free time?
22. What is the school day like for you academically? What about the social side of school?
23. Are you doing well academically?
24. Do you have a lot more homework? When do you do it? Do you get help? Do you need help? Do you think high school students should have extra coaching outside of school?
25. What's the most challenging thing about your life right now?
26. What's the most wonderful thing about your life right now?
27. I'd like you to use your imagination and think of the ways that your time outside of school could be best used.
28. I'd like to talk about the ways that the adults in your life can sometimes affect the lives of young people, and hear about your experiences. Do they affect your life?
29. Can you talk about the time you spend with your parents?
30. How do you feel about both parents in families working full time? Would you like to see at least one parent at home after school?
31. What advice would you give to parents on dealing with teenagers?
32. What will your future life be like?
  - a. Will you want to buy a house, buy a car and get a driver's license?
  - b. Will you be keen to vote in elections?
  - c. Will you do more study or go straight into a job?
  - d. Will you keep your friends?
  - e. How would that work?