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Six friendships : the social experiences of preschool-aged children with and without disabilities

Sylvia Lynne Webster

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I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Sylvia Lynne Webster entitled "Six friendships : the social experiences of preschool-aged children with and without disabilities." I have examined the final electronic copy of this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, with a major in Education.

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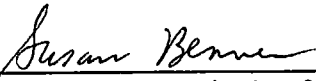
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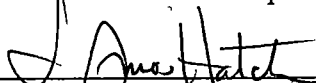
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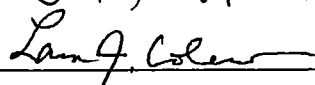
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Susan Benner, Major Professor


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and recommend its acceptance:







Accepted for the Council:



Associate Vice Chancellor and
Dean of The Graduate School

SIX FRIENDSHIPS: THE SOCIAL EXPERIENCES OF PRESCHOOL-AGED
CHILDREN WITH AND WITHOUT DISABILITIES

A Dissertation
Presented for the
Doctor of Philosophy
Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Sylvia Lynne Webster
May 2000

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to the children, parents, and teachers who graciously participated in this project. Without them, these stories could not be told.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

There are several people to whom I am grateful for their assistance in completing this project. To my committee chair, Susan Benner who has spent countless hours on the phone with me and reading copies of manuscript, over the past several months as I have prepared and completed this project. To Amos Hatch for sharing his passion and love of children and encouraging me to tackle such an endeavor. To Larry Coleman for helping me recognize my abilities and to Mick Nordquist for his support and encouragement along the way.

I would also like to thank Don, Bob, Vicki, and Betty whose support, friendship, and humor have been invaluable throughout the process. Lastly, the greatest debt I owe is to my husband, John. Without his help and encouragement I would never have reached this moment.

Abstract

This study looks at naturally existing friendships among preschool-aged children with and without disabilities in inclusive settings. The study is a naturalistic study. Data were collected through participant observations and interviews. Field notes were taken during observations and recorded in a field journal. Interviews were audio taped and transcribed. Analysis of the field notes and interview transcripts was inductive. Analysis involved organizing and categorizing information into units of meaning and searching for themes. Analysis uncovered descriptions, meanings, and revealed various perspectives regarding the friendships studied including those of the children, parents, and teachers. The study describes six friendships among children with and without disabilities that developed without an intervention plan. The inclusive environments provided the opportunity for the children to meet one another and interaction among the children to occur. The teachers, parents, researcher, and the children themselves recognized the relationships as friendships. The friendships are described as typical and portray characteristics that are common among friendships during the preschool age period. The friendships were dynamic and changed throughout the course of the study. Of the friendships studied, four remained intact throughout the course of the study and two of the friendships dissolved. In the relationships that dissolved, variance in developmental levels affected the dissolution of the relationships. Several factors influenced the formation of the friendships including similarity in play styles, the opportunity to engage in similar activities, similar knowledge and interests, proximity, and parental factors.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Importance of the Problem

Federal legislation mandating a free, appropriate public education for all children with disabilities was first enacted in 1975 through the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, formally known as the Education of all Handicapped Children Act). The subsequent passage of PL 99-457 brought the nation's attention to infants and toddlers with disabilities, as services were mandated and provided to these young children with disabilities and their families. The passage of the American's with Disabilities Act provided the impetus for change throughout communities across America. Among the changes brought about from these laws is the integration of individuals with disabilities in our communities, schools, and places of business. As a result of the increased integration of individuals with disabilities into American communities, interactions with them have increased and the opportunities for the establishment of relationships with individuals with disabilities have developed.

Inclusive schools are schools that value diversity, support children of varying abilities in general education classrooms, where staff share ownership of all children and related educational decisions regardless of diagnosis or label, and all staff work together to help all students achieve to their maximum potential. The movement toward creating inclusive schools and preschools has accelerated rapidly over the past several years. Researchers, teachers, and consumers are learning more about the effects of inclusion on students with disabilities and are beginning to look at the effects of inclusion on students without disabilities. An area of major interest is the social relationships between students

with and without disabilities.

The social relationship literature, over the past several years, includes looking at social interaction skills and how to promote social acceptance between children with and without (Hunt, Alwell, Farron-Davis & Goetz, 1996; Janney & Snell, 1996; Lee & Odom, 1996). A few studies have looked at friendships that exist between children with and without disabilities, but consistently point to the field's lack of understanding regarding the interactions and relationships between these children that occur naturally (Hall, 1994; Kliewer, 1995; Staub, Schwartz, Gallucci, & Peck, 1994; and Staub, 1998).

The Importance of Friendship

Friendships occupy a significant part of children's lives and serve several important functions. Friendships provide companionship. Friends share both the good and bad times. Friends are people a child can trust. Friendships with peers help children to develop self-identity and a sense of emotional security. Being in the presence of a close friend can be comforting and pleasurable and spending time with a group of friends can help children gain a sense of community and belonging (Staub, 1998). Experiences and interactions with similar aged peers help children develop awareness about themselves and provide a better understanding of social reality than family experience alone can give. Peers and peer friendship provide the opportunity to learn how to influence age mates who are equal in power and status to the child (Rubenstein, 1984; Hartup, 1996). Children learn how to protect, assume responsibility, reciprocate, and appreciate another's point of view through their interactions with their peers (Staub). The social skills developed throughout these peer interactions, may contribute to later success in both personal and work relationships. Friends have been known to provide instruction

in important areas of life such as managing aggression or sexual relationships (Fine, 1981) and have been found to help children mediate stress in their lives (Cobb, 1976). Friendships meet our need for social integration and a close friendship also may meet our need for attachment.

Aside from companionship, friendships can also create a context for the development of various social behaviors and are important for children's social emotional development (Bowlby, 1982). Friendships are viewed as the context in which the social system has its origins (Harter, 1983; Sullivan, 1953) and through which the regulation of emotions develops (Berscheid, 1986). Friendships have been found to promote social development, including complex forms of play (Gottman & Parkhurst, 1980), social communication, group entry, cooperation, and impulse control (Hartup & Sancilio, 1986). Researchers have also found that children who are familiar with each other initiate more interactions with their peers, have more social interactions, and interact in ways that are cognitively more mature (Hurley-Geffner, 1995). Friends also meet cognitive needs by providing stimulation in form of the shared experiences, activities and the exchange of gossip and ideas. Friends also provide a frame of reference through which we can interpret the world and find meaning in our experiences. Friends meet our social and emotional needs through the provision of love and esteem. Some also have suggested that such relationships are of particular importance in the development of children's sense of self (Sullivan, 1953) and that troubled peer relations are associated with both current and later adjustment problems (e.g., Parker & Asher, 1987).

There are several developmental, psychological, and sociological reasons for supporting childhood friendships between typically developing children. These same

reasons can be given for supporting friendships between children with and without disabilities. For children with disabilities, friendships provide several, important benefits. Friendships serve important emotional functions by providing children with nurturance, support, and security (Asher & Gottman, 1981); promote social development (Asher & Gottman); provide the opportunity to develop, practice, and maintain a variety of communicative, cognitive, and social-emotional skills (Asher & Gottman); and provide the context to practice and master the social rules that govern how to use social skills and behaviors across a variety of settings (Meyer, 1996).

Why are friendships so important? As Kendrick (1991) states

For any child to have a sense of growth and genuine self-esteem, there has to be at least one truly caring, accepting friend. One ordinary garden-variety kid-friend can achieve all sorts of miracles in learning that a classroom of special educators, speech therapists, and social workers cannot seem to manage (p. E7).

Purpose

There is a need for more research to promote increased dialogue and understanding about friendships between children with and without disabilities that exist naturally in inclusive environments and present perspectives from all participants in the relationship. My study looks at relationships between children with and without disabilities. The purpose of my study is to understand and describe the relationships as they naturally occur in inclusive classrooms. The study presents perspectives from both the children with and without disabilities, their parents, and teachers, regarding these relationships. Studying the experiences of children in friendships with disabled peers will help educators develop a better understanding of these relationships. Developing a better understanding of these relationships will help professionals serve children with and

without disabilities in inclusive classroom settings. If professionals recognize and acknowledge friendships that are in place in inclusive classrooms, the relationships may potentially be utilized as a support mechanism for children with disabilities in these inclusive settings. Recognizing, supporting and utilizing these relationships as support mechanisms for children with disabilities in inclusive classrooms may reduce the time required by teachers to develop implement and monitor intervention strategies.

A naturalistic study based on participant observations and interviews was conducted with preschool children, their teachers, and parents. Observations focused on both the typically developing children and children with disabilities engaged in friendships, as they were involved in various activities across the day. Interviews took place with the children, their teachers, and parents.

Research Questions

The question that served as the focus of my study was: *What are the experiences of preschool aged children with and without moderate disabilities who are engaged in friendships in inclusive preschool settings?* Within the focus question are subquestions that will reveal important pieces of information that will add to our understanding of the friendships between children with and without disabilities.

1. How do the children involved describe these friendships?
2. What do these friendships mean to the children involved?
3. What are the dynamics of the friendships as they play out in the classroom?
4. How do the teachers/parents view/describe these friendships?
5. What do these friendships mean to the teachers and parents?

The descriptions and analyses of the friendships studied will help to expand the

current knowledge base in the area of inclusive preschool settings and relationships in those settings. The knowledge is expected to benefit teachers of preschool children, other direct service providers, and researchers in early childhood special education.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

In order to begin to develop an understanding of friendships among preschool-aged children with and without disabilities, I reviewed literature drawn from three main sources; friendships between typically developing children, integration of young children with special needs, and friendships between children with and without disabilities. In the section covering friendships between typically developing children, I specifically cover literature that discusses what friendships are, why children engage in friendships, and how these relationships are formed. Under the category of integration of young children and the effects of integration upon children's social development, the discussion includes intervention programs that address the development of social skills in children with disabilities. Finally, I review the limited body of literature that addresses the relationships between young children with and without disabilities. I conclude the section with a discussion of the assessment and measurement of friendships between young children.

Definitions

Upon reviewing the literature for a definition of friendship, I came across a variety of definitions of the concept, which incorporated other terms including social competence and social skills. Social competence and social skills are factors that affect friendship development and maintenance and also need to be defined. So, in the following section I define social competence, social skills, and present an overview of definitions of friendship. I conclude the section with the presentation of the definition of friendship that helped guide my study of the friendships of preschool children with and

without disabilities.

Social Competence and Social Interaction Skills

Gresham and Reschly (1988) define social competence as a multidimensional construct that includes 1) adaptive behavior; 2) social skills; and 3) peer relationship variables: peer acceptance, rejection, and friendship. Gresham and Reschly conceptualized social competence distinct from social skills. Social skills are specific behaviors that a person uses to perform competently on social tasks. Social competence is an evaluative term based on social agents' judgments, given a certain criteria, of whether a person has performed social tasks adequately. Judgments may be based on opinions of significant others, usually parents, teachers, or peers; comparisons to explicit criteria, the number of social tasks performed correctly in relation to a criterion; or comparisons to a normative sample. Gresham and Reschly view social skills as specific behaviors that result in judgments of social competence. Social skills are specific behaviors that lead to acceptance and popularity within a peer group and are exhibited by children in social settings. Social interaction skills are measured by rate or frequency of occurrence.

Social competence is acquired through interactions with others in the social environment. Social interactions provide the medium through which children acquire many important developmental skills (Hartup, 1983, 1996). Children develop the ability to play, negotiate, be leaders as well as followers, nurture friendships, give and receive comfort, and refine and practice language and cognitive skills during their interactions with others. Children who are unable to develop positive peer relationships by middle childhood may have a range of negative social outcomes as adolescents and adults

(McConnell & Odom, 1986; Parker & Asher, 1987).

Children who do not have the opportunity to or are not able to develop and maintain peer relationships may also be limited in their ability to develop social networks that support the continued development of social skills. The early school years appear to be a critical point in this process as children begin to spend more of their day with peers, practicing and refining their social skills and developing the interaction patterns that they will use in their present and future social relationships.

The development of young children's social competence has been an area of increasing interest to researchers in child development and education since the 1970's. Specific interaction skills for young children between the toddler and preschool period include such things as: ease of entry into playgroups or activities; affective expressions; engaging in reciprocal play; communicating meaning to others; and social knowledge of the peer group (Howes, 1987). Social interaction skills are affected by a child's level of cognitive development, are sequential, and occur in a predictable sequence. The presence of a disability may interfere with a child's ability to develop effective and appropriate social skills. Children with disabilities may have delays in social competence in excess of those expected due to their cognitive delays (Guralnick & Weinhouse, 1984). Some of these delays may be related to the lack of standard communication and interaction skills, but they may also be due to infrequent interactions with typically developing peers or inadequate support for these interactions (Schwartz, 1996; Haring, 1991; Odom, Chandler, Ostrosky, McConnell, & Reany, 1992).

Friendships

Everyone knows what friendship is until asked to define it. Then, it seems, no one knows. There are virtually as many definitions of friendship as there are social scientists studying the topic. In developing a guiding definition of friendship between preschool-aged children for the current study, I looked at how both social scientists and laypeople conceptualize friendship.

Social Scientists Define Friendship

Hinde (1979) defines an interpersonal relationship as “a series of interactions between two individuals known to each other” (p. 15). He, as well as many other social scientists, views relationships as comprising cognitive, behavioral, and affective or emotional components. Because he conceptualizes relationships as a series of interactions, Hinde implies that relationships involve a longer time period than a single encounter and that each interaction episode is influenced by other interactions in the relationship (Fehr, 1996). Along the same lines, Berscheid and Peplau (1983), contend that individuals are in a relationship with one another if they have impact on each other, and if they are “interdependent”. That is, a change in one person causes a change in the other and vice versa.

Besides these generic conceptions of relationships, social scientists also have offered specific definitions of friendship. Among these definitions are: “Friends are people who spontaneously seek the company of one another; furthermore, they seek proximity in the absence of strong social pressures to do so.” (Hartup, 1975, p. 11). “A friend is someone who likes and wishes to do well for someone else and who believes that these feelings and good intentions are reciprocated by the other party.” (Reisman,

1979, pp. 93-94). "Friendship: voluntary interdependence between two persons over time, that is intended to facilitate social-emotional goals of the participants, and may involve varying types and degrees of companionship, intimacy, affection and mutual assistance." (Hays, 1988, p. 395). "Friendship is defined as a relationship involving voluntary or unconstrained interaction in which the participants respond to one another personally, that is, as unique individuals rather than as packages of discrete attributes or mere role occupants." (Wright, 1984, p. 119). These definitions portray friendship as a voluntary, personal relationship. A friendship usually provides intimacy and assistance. And friends usually like one another and seek each other's company.

Children Define Friendship

The fact that even young children possess knowledge of the concept attests to the importance of friendship. In fact, children's conceptions of friendship have received considerable attention (see Furman, 1982; Rubin, 1980; Selman, 1980). When preschool children are asked, "What is a friend?" three themes are apparent in their responses: play (someone who plays with you), prosocial behavior (someone who shares toys with you) and the absence of aggression (someone who does not hit you). Young children also frequently report that a friend is someone you like (Berndt, 1988; Furman, 1982). When asked why a particular individual is their friend, it is not uncommon for children to refer to the person's physical characteristics (e.g., he has red hair) or possessions (e.g., she has a Barbie doll).

As children get older, they are less likely to emphasize physical attributes or property. For example, when Furman and Bierman (1983) asked "What is a friend?" 6- and 7-year olds mentioned concrete, observable features such as physical characteristics

and common activities less frequently than did 4- and 5-year olds. The older children also were more likely to list relational features such as affection and support like helping and sharing.

Young children possess a concept of friendship in which the typical features are concrete, observable characteristics. As children develop, their capacity for abstract thought is reflected in their conception of friendship (Selman, 1980). Children have ideas and notions about how a friendship works, what they expect from their friends and the rules that govern their actions toward friends. All of these ideas and concepts about friendship change over time as the child grows, develops and matures emotionally. Both qualitative and quantitative changes occur with the child's changing view of the concept of friendship. Relationship building is developmental and children need different things from friends at different ages. I will highlight children's conceptions of friendships and how these conceptions develop over time, up until about age 9.

Playmates: The Earliest Friendships 2-4 Years

Before the age of 2, contact between children is pretty much dictated by parents arranging play and attending organized activities like childcare. Usually, somewhere between the ages of 2-4, children go to preschool, or attend day care, where they have increased opportunities to play with peers without adult intervention. At the same time, along with increased opportunities for interaction, children are developing critical social skills such as predicting what someone might do, choosing actions and understanding what might be expected in certain situations, which aid in the development of friendships. As children progress up this continuum of development, they are also moving from solitary to cooperative, and associative play (Selman, 1980).

Children at this time are usually better at initiating an interaction than they are at responding to others' overtures. So, they may inadvertently ignore or actively reject other children's attempts to join their play. This phenomenon is often observed once the play has been established. By that time, a solitary player or group of children has centered on carrying out the play episode in a particular way, which includes only those currently involved. It then becomes difficult for them to expand their thinking to envision how the newcomer could be included (Selman, 1980).

Going to School: 5-9 Years

During this general time frame, friends are seen as people who do things for them or give them things, fulfilling an immediate need. Friendships commonly develop because of proximity issues. Children become friends with peers who are in the same classroom, engage in similar activities or are seated near each other. The concept of reciprocity begins to develop around 6, when children are commonly borrowing and returning items.

During this period, children identify those age-mates as friends whose behavior pleases them. For some children, good feelings are engendered by a playmate that will give them a turn, share gum, offer them rides on the new two-wheeler, pick them for the team, or save them a seat on the bus. For others, pleasure comes from having another child accept the turn, the gum, the ride, inclusion on the team, or the seat. Because each friend is concerned about whether his or her wants are being satisfied, neither necessarily considers what to do to bring pleasure to the other (Selman, 1980).

Commonly during this period, children try out different social roles: leader, follower, negotiator, instigator, comic, collaborator, appeaser, or comforter. As part of

this process, they experiment with a variety of behaviors that may or may not match their usual manner. It is normal for children who are practicing in their roles to manifest extreme examples of them. A child who wants to be more assertive may become bossy and overbearing; a child who discovers the benefits of comedy may become silly or outrageous (Selman, 1980).

Although youngsters concentrate much of their energy on the friendship process, they have difficulty maintaining more than one close relationship at a time. An outgrowth of their struggle to identify friends is that they become preoccupied with discussing who is their friend and who is not. This is when children can be overheard to say, "You can't be my friend; Mary's my friend." Pairs change from day to day and frequently are determined by who gets together first, by what people are wearing, or by a newfound common interest (Selman, 1980).

Guiding Definition for the Study

From my review of the literature and related material, I have concluded that friendship is a complex concept. Friendships are as individualized as their participants and are therefore described in a variety of ways, highlighting a vast array of characteristics.

Discussed throughout the literature on friendships are specific skills that are likely to lead to the development of friendships and the concept of social competence. Children who have friends are generally viewed as socially competent. Several definitions of friendship have incorporated a list of specific skills that must be present, and rates of interaction that must be achieved, in order to be classified as friendship. Other researchers have attempted to describe certain characteristics about the concept of

friendship, incorporating ideas from participants as their concepts change and develop and have indicated that play, prosocial behaviors, and the absence of aggression marks friendships among young children. Young children who are friends show a special interest in each other and often prefer to play or spend time together.

Researchers who write about friendships among children with and without developmental disabilities believe that if advances in our knowledge of friendships among children with and without disabilities are going to be made, several factors must be considered when designing and conducting such research. One fundamental issue is defining friendship through the use of direct behavioral observation. That is, spending time objectively observing interactions that children have with one another, repeatedly, over time. Once sufficient observations are made, researchers can begin to identify themes or patterns among the interactions, which can be used to describe the friendships (Hurley-Geffner, 1995).

In light of this information provided by Hurley-Geffner (1995) and the characteristics that mark friendships between preschool-aged children, I used a guiding definition to identify friendship pairs for the study. For the purpose of the current study with preschool children and identification of friendship pairs for participation, friendship was defined as a dyadic relationship between peers, characterized by repeated interest in spending time or playing together.

Theories of Friendship

Theorists and researchers have developed and utilized several theories to explain why friendships develop with certain people. These theories can be organized into three classes: reinforcement; social exchange and equity theories; and cognitive consistency

theories. Reinforcement theorists maintain that we like people who reward us, as well as people with whom we associate the receipt of rewards. Social exchange and equity theories also emphasize the importance of rewards. In exchange theories, it is predicted that rewards determine the level of satisfaction in a relationship. Additional constructs such as availability of alternatives and investments are important to account for the level of commitment. In explaining relationship satisfaction and commitment or stability, equity theories emphasize the importance of perceptions of one's partner's level of rewards relative to one's own. Cognitive consistency theories regard the need for balance as a fundamental human motivation, and, therefore postulate that we will be attracted to people whose attitudes are consistent with ours (Fehr, 1996).

Reinforcement Theories

Reinforcement theories grew out of the behaviorist tradition in psychology. Theorists applied reinforcement principles to the study of attraction and predicted that we are attracted to people who provide us with rewards. These theorists also imported principles of classical conditioning and further predicted that we like people who are merely associated with our experience of receiving rewards. In other words, if another person happens to be present when something good happens to us, we are likely to be attracted to him or her. We like people who reward us, as well as people whom we associate with the receipt of rewards (Byrne & Clore, 1970; Clore & Byrne, 1974; Lott & Lott, 1960, 1974).

Social Exchange and Equity Theories

Like reinforcement theories, social exchange and equity theories emphasize the role of rewards in attraction. These theories seek to explain behavior in ongoing

relationships, rather than focusing only on initial attraction and consider a number of constructs, in addition to rewards, to account for satisfaction and commitment in relationships (Fehr, 1996).

In exchange theories, it is predicted that rewards determine the level of satisfaction in a relationship. Additional constructs such as availability of alternatives and investments are also considered to account for the level of commitment. In explaining relationship satisfaction and commitment, equity theories emphasize the importance of perceptions of one's partner's level of rewards in relation to one's own.

A basic premise in exchange theories is that for people to be satisfied in a relationship, the rewards must outweigh the costs (Thibaut & Kelley, 1959). Thibaut and Kelley's Interdependence Theory compares the outcomes in a current relationship with the outcomes people have experienced in the past and with the outcomes they anticipate receiving in available alternative relationships. These standards of comparison are referred to as the comparison level and the comparison level for alternatives. The comparison level is the yardstick we use to evaluate how satisfying we find a relationship. According to the theory, the process of assessing satisfaction involves comparisons with the outcomes other people are receiving in their relationships, as well as comparisons with our own past relationships. Based on these comparisons, we develop a sense of the level of rewards and costs that we deserve in a relationship. If the outcomes in a current relationship meet this standard, the theory predicts that we will be satisfied with the relationship. If outcomes fall below the comparison level, we will be dissatisfied. If the theory is applied to friendships, it suggests that we develop a standard, the comparison level, for what we feel we deserve in a friendship. The theory would

predict that we should feel satisfied with friendships that exceed this standard, and dissatisfied with friendships that fail to meet it.

Another theory, which falls under the social exchange and equity class, is Rusbult's (1980) investment model. This model focuses on the prediction of commitment in relationships, such as friendship. According to the model, commitment is predicted by three variables: satisfaction, comparison level for alternatives, and investment. She maintains that outcomes determine satisfaction and satisfaction is one of the determinants of commitment. Also, the availability of alternatives and investments effect commitment. Investments are things such as time, emotional energy, or shared possessions that would be lost if the relationship ended.

Cognitive Consistency Theories

The basic assumption underlying cognitive consistency, or balance theories, is that we have a need for consistency or balance in our lives. Usually, balance is conceptualized in terms of attitudes, positive or negative, between people or objects in a triadic relation. Cognitive consistency theorists differ somewhat in what they consider to be a balanced relationship. However, they agree on a fundamental premise, namely, that human beings are motivated to maintain balance or consistency, because balanced relations are stable and unbalanced relations are not. These theories are concerned with the perception of imbalance, because it is this perception that motivates individuals to try to restore balance. So, in the same way that the perception of inequity initiates attempts at equity restoration, the perception of imbalance triggers restoration efforts. This need for balance is considered a fundamental human motivation and the consistency theorists postulate that we will be attracted to people whose attitudes are consistent with ours

(Fehr, 1996).

Developmental Theories

Numerous developmental theories have been established to help explain how a friendship develops. Developmental theories seek to explain the unfolding of relationships by charting a sequence of stages. Generally, such theories begin with the stage at which partners are strangers to one another and end with either the establishment of a mutual relationship or the dissolution of the relationship.

Levinger and Levinger (1986) have outlined five stages in the course of a friendship between children, from acquaintance to termination. During the first stage, children become acquainted, and are impacted by several factors including proximity, opportunities to interact, and setting. The second stage of friendship is the build-up phase. During this stage, children decide whether to move their relationship from an acquaintance to a higher level of intimacy. The third stage is when the friendship continues with moderate closeness over a period of time. This is usually the most pleasurable and comfortable stage in a friendship when the friends have gotten to know each other well and there is little conflict between them (Staub, 1998). The fourth stage is deterioration and the final stage of friendship is termination.

Stage I: Becoming Acquainted

In order to become acquainted with others, children need opportunities to get to know someone on a more personal level. These opportunities arise when children are in close proximity with others. People who inhabit the same environment are more likely to become friends than those who do not. With children, the issue of proximity is usually met by a school system.

Aside from proximity, opportunities to interact affect the likelihood of a relationship developing. The more likely one is of encountering another person again, the more worthwhile it may seem to invest the time necessary to establish a relationship. Factors such as how close children's homes are to one another, how frequently they play together, and how close their ages are all can contribute to a child's friendship choice. These factors are out of a young child's control. The choice to interact again and more intensively, begins to be based on other cues. Among schoolmates and neighbors, children tend to interact largely with those who are most like themselves. Other factors including social skills, responsiveness, and shyness also effect children's friendship choices.

Children are known to pick their friends based on similarities. Gender and age are dominant considerations in who is a friend with whom. Children prefer same-sex, same-age playmates throughout childhood and even at a very early age tend to exclude opposite sex and non-age mates from their play (Hartup, 1983). Friends may also resemble one another in terms of achievement, physical or cognitive skill, and degree of sociability (Cavallaro & Porter, 1980). Aside from searching for likenesses, children often choose as friends, peers whose characteristics complement their own personality and capacities (Rubin, 1980). Rubin further explains that like attitudes may effect friendships also. An awareness of similar attitudes facilitates friendship relations between children who initially perceive themselves as totally different. Such knowledge has been found to promote increased friendships among children of differing races and between nondisabled and disabled children (Byrne & Griffit, 1966; Insko & Robinson, 1967).

Similarities in choice of activities, in energy level, and in skills all begin to affect a child's choice of a playmate. Young children typically view their friends as "momentary physical playmates" or whomever they happen to be playing with (Rubin, 1980). They usually think of their friends in terms of physical attributes, rather than in terms of psychological qualities such as personal needs, interests, or character traits. At these early ages, most children do not have a clear idea of an enduring relationship that exists apart from specific encounters.

Some children have difficulties developing friendships because they lack social skills, such as responding appropriately to what the other person says, showing appropriate sequencing of gaze or posture, or following appropriate conversation turn taking norms. Failure to perform such behaviors can undermine the formation of a friendship.

Children are also attracted to potential friends who are responsive to them. When individuals behave in responsive ways, showing interest and concern, their interaction partner likes them more (Gottman, Gonso, & Rasmussen, 1975). Actions that children engage in that are seen as responsive behaviors are smiling and speaking pleasantly or offering greetings, asking for information, responding to others' greetings and inquiries, offering information, and inviting participation. (Stocking, Arezzo, & Leavitt, 1980). These signals let others know that the children want to be friends. Another behavior widely interpreted, as a friendly overture is imitation. Children enjoy being imitated and are apt to be friendly toward peers who copy their actions (Guralnick, 1976; Hartup, 1978; Widerstrom, 1982).

Children who suffer from shyness may be especially likely to show social skills

deficits and lack of responsiveness. Shy people initiate fewer conversations, are slower to reply to other person's comments, smile less, make less eye contact and are generally less responsive than are nonshy people. These kinds of behaviors have the consequence of leading people to infer that the shy person does not wish to interact (Jones & Carpenter, 1986).

Stage 2: Building a Friendship

As a friendship moves from acquaintanceship to the beginning of friendship, the understanding that one's presence is important to the other person deepens the relationship. At this stage, children begin seeking one another out. For young children, best friends are the ones you play with the most and a lot of children become friends based on this criteria.

Stage 3: Continuation

The continuation of friendship is facilitated by the exchange of intimate information, emotional support, and shared activities. Increased intimacy between friends and helping one another leads to increased benefits and rewards derived from friendship. As the friendship continues to grow and develop, individuals reveal more intimate and deeper information about themselves.

Stage 4: Deterioration

Friendships may deteriorate for a variety of reasons. Children may be separated geographically, or develop different interests or abilities. Friendships have also been known to breakdown because of differences in the rate of social development of the children in the friendship.

Stage 5: Ending

The end of a friendship may be the final result of a gradual drifting apart, as one or both friends' recognize that they no longer provide the same satisfaction to one another (Rubin, 1980). The endings of friendships and their replacement with new ones are said to be signs of normal development rather than of social inadequacy (Hartup, 1983). More generally, the ending of a close friendship, whether because of physical separation or psychological disengagement, usually represents a crisis of some proportion in the child's life (Rubin, 1980).

Studies of Friendship Formation in Young Children

In his monograph, *How Children Become Friends*, Gottman (1983) provided what might be considered the first detailed description of friendship formation. Gottman's work was inductive. He was looking for trends that might emerge from the data and had no hypotheses to evaluate. Gottman's specific aim was to provide a sequential analysis or description of the conversations of children as they develop toward friendship.

Two studies were performed. In Study 1, "host" children aged 3-6 years were paired once with their best friend and once with a previously unacquainted child of similar age and their conversations were audio taped. Study 2 involved unacquainted dyads, aged 3-9 years, whose conversations were taped. Later, the mothers answered a questionnaire about the children's relationship. From the 2 studies, Gottman (1983) determined that the best predictor of progression to friendship was the proportion of agreement expressed by the guest child.

Based on the content of the tapes, Gottman identified seven conversation processes as potential predictors of friendship formation: communication clarity and

connectedness, information exchange, exploration of similarities and differences, establishment of common-ground play activities, resolution of conflict, positive reciprocity, and self-disclosure. All of these conversational processes were found to predict friendship formation, although some were more important at certain stages of friendship than other. For example, in the first meeting it was important to interact with one another in a low-conflict and connected fashion in order to exchange information and establish common ground activity.

Parker (1986) designed an experimental study to investigate the role of Gottman's conversational processes in friendship formation. Children, ages 4 and 5, interacted with a talking doll. A confederate who acted either skilled or unskilled in these processes (e.g., reciprocating vs. not reciprocating the child's self-disclosure produced the doll's voice). Children who interacted with a doll who was skilled in these conversational processes were more likely to hit it off with the doll (e.g., they chose to play with the doll again later, reported to their parents that they liked the doll). Parker concluded that these conversational processes played a causal role in friendship formation.

Corsaro's (1985) study on children's peer culture has contributed greatly to our understanding of friendship development between young children. Corsaro notes that preschool children share two major interrelated concerns: 1) social participation and 2) the protection of interaction space. Throughout his study, Corsaro observed that children rarely engaged in solitary play and when they found themselves alone, children attempted to gain entry into one of the ongoing peer episodes. Children who were involved in an ongoing play episode resisted the access attempts of other nonparticipating children. These concerns were the source of many recurrent conflicts among the children in

Corsaro's study. Through observations, Corsaro revealed that the vast majority of children's play episodes were of short duration and termination of these episodes was typically abrupt.

In response to the fragility of their interaction, Corsaro observed that the children developed a wide variety of access and resistance strategies. Among the more popular access strategies were; nonverbal entry (i.e., entering a play area without verbal marking), producing a variant of ongoing behavior, and encirclement. Corsaro (1985) notes that although initial access attempts were frequently resisted, if the children persisted and employed a sequence and variety of attempts, group entry was more likely. Among the more popular resistance strategies used by the preschoolers were the claim of ownership of object or play area, reference to overcrowding, and verbalization without justification (e.g., "No! Get out of here!"). In addition, Corsaro notes that the children frequently used the concept of friendship as a strategy for access (e.g., "we're friends, right?") and resistance (e.g., "you can't play because you're not our friend"). Finally, Corsaro observes that the vast majority of children did not form "best friend" type relationships but instead formed many friendships.

As Corsaro sees it, the children's developing conceptualizations and use of friendship are intimately tied to specific organizational features in peer culture:

Through peer interactive experience in the nursery school, the children come to realize that interaction is fragile and acceptance into ongoing activities is often difficult, and therefore, develop stable relations with several playmates as a way to maximize the probability of successful entry . . . friendship often serves specific integrative functions (such as gaining access to, building solidarity, and mutual trust in, and protecting the interactive space of play groups) in the nursery school, and is seldom based on the children's recognition of enduring personal characteristics of playmates. (Corsaro, 1985, p. 158)

While the vast majority of children used and conceptualized friendship as described above, Corsaro (1985) did observe two children who were "best friends." He reports: "These two children not only use the term 'best friends,' but discuss friendship at a fairly abstract level" (1985, p. 167). Corsaro explains that even though these children developed a different type of relationship than most preschool aged children, the friendship was still utilized to meet the contextual demands of the peer culture.

Integrated Settings

An important step in young children making friends, is spending time in proximity with peers who are potential friends. Another consideration in friendship development is that young children usually choose peers as friends that they perceive as similar to themselves in some way. Aside from proximity and similarities, children must possess and competently perform a number of social and interaction skills necessary to engage with peers and become friends. Integrating children with disabilities with their nondisabled peers addresses the issue of proximity and increases the opportunities for interaction. Through proximity, increased opportunities for interaction, and spending time together, individuals who initially appear very dissimilar may discover similarities between and among themselves. Duck (1991) concludes that "interaction has a positive effect on liking and it modifies the effect of similarity on its own" (p. 78).

Just an increased opportunity for interaction, does not guarantee children with disabilities will interact with nondisabled peers and form relationships. Several interventions have been developed and implemented, with varying degrees of success, to help improve social skills, interaction rates or other skills that may lead to the development of relationships.

Integrating or including young children with disabilities into education programs with their typically developing peers has been identified as a "best practice" in early childhood special education for the past several years (McLean & Odom, 1996). For the past several years many preschool children with disabilities have been receiving integrated services in classrooms with their nondisabled peers. As more children with disabilities have been placed in integrated settings, researchers have become interested in studying the integrated environment and its effect on social development of children.

Social Outcomes

I will look at studies that are concerned with the impact of the educational placement on children's social life, parents and teachers perceptions of benefits from inclusive settings, for both children with and without disabilities, along with a review of intervention programs designed to facilitate the social skill acquisition of children with disabilities in integrated settings.

Fryxell and Kennedy (1995) studied the impact of educational placement on social life of students with severe disabilities between the ages of 6 and 12, placed in either general education or special education classes. The researchers utilized a direct observation index to determine students that children with disabilities interacted with for substantial amounts of time at school. They also developed and used an interview-based index of students' social network members and the occurrence of social support behaviors. The results from these two measures indicated that: a) students placed in general education settings had higher levels of social contact with peers without disabilities; b) students in general education received and gave higher levels of social support; and c) students in general education placements had substantially larger

friendships networks composed primarily of peers without disabilities. These findings are consistent with other empirical studies regarding the benefits of inclusive educational approaches for students' with severe disabilities social development (Hunt, Farron-Davis, Beckstead, Curtis & Goetz, 1994; Salisbury, Palombaro, & Hollowood, 1993).

Several researchers have engaged in extensive work with parents of children with disabilities to ascertain their feelings about children receiving services in integrated settings and the benefit of these programs to the overall social development of their child. Demchak and Drinkwater (1992) summarize research in this area and indicate that parents have identified the benefits of inclusive programs to include more appropriate social interactions, more interactions with children without disabilities, higher levels of social play and more advanced play.

In order to add another dimension to research on the impact of educational placement on the social life of children with disabilities, Peck, Carlson & Helmstetter (1992) conducted surveys with 125 parents and 95 teachers involved in programs integrating children with disabilities into regular preschool and kindergarten classes. Their surveys and research focused on the outcomes of the integrated placements for typically developing children. Peck et al. utilized semi-structured interviews with 5 teachers and 5 parents, to ascertain categories of perceived outcomes of the integrated program for typically developing children. The researchers then developed a survey instrument that measured the extent the perceptions of teachers and parents identified during interviews were shared by teachers and parents from integrated programs across the state.

Results from the Peck, Carlson and Helmstetter (1992) study indicate that both

parents and teachers of typically developing children perceive important benefits accruing to these children as a result of their involvement in integrated programs. The nature of these perceived benefits centered on changes in social cognition, specifically becoming more aware of others' needs; prosocial personal characteristics; and the acceptance of human diversity. These types of outcomes were highly valued by parents and teachers. The data further indicated that common concerns about potential drawbacks to integration, such as reduction in teacher attention to typically developing children, or development of undesirable behavior from the children with disabilities, were not generally perceived as problems in these programs. The parents in the study indicated that they would not prefer for their child to be educated with only other typically developing children. These results are consistent with an emergent research base suggesting benefits may accrue to typically developing students involved in integrated programs (Bailey & Winton, 1987, 1989; Biklen, 1985; Giangreco et al., 1993; Green & Stoneman, 1989; Murray-Seegart, 1989; Peck, 1990; Staub & Peck, 1994/95; and Turnbull & Winton, 1983).

By looking at specific environments, Fryxell and Kennedy (1995) ascertained that children with disabilities in inclusive placements have higher levels of social contacts, receive and give higher levels of social supports, and have larger friendship networks than their peers in segregated education placements. Demchack and Drinkwater's 1992 review of parents' feelings toward their children with disabilities participating in inclusive settings, indicates parents feel that placement of their children in inclusive settings effects social development in the areas of increased social interactions and play. Parents and teachers of typically developing children in integrated settings (Peck, Carlson

& Helmstetter, 1992) perceive benefits to these children from participating in an integrated setting to include becoming more aware of others' needs and acceptance of human diversity. These findings are particularly important when considering friendships between children with and without disabilities. From this review of studies, one can conclude that the environment does effect social outcomes for both typically developing children and children with disabilities.

Aside from participation and placement in an integrated setting, another important factor in the development of friendships is a child's social competence and the attainment of social interaction skills. Social competence effects how a child is perceived by his peers and ultimately acceptance, rejection and popularity. Children who demonstrate appropriate interaction skills are more likely to have friends and children, who have friends, generally have good social interaction skills.

Children's Social Interactions

Acquiring social interaction skills and learning to use them competently with peers has been described as a major developmental task of the preschool years, but children with disabilities often lag behind their typically developing same-aged peers in development of these skills (Odom, McConnell, & McEvoy, 1992). A substantial body of literature exists comparing patterns of social interaction of children with disabilities to that of typically developing peers in integrated settings (Blackmon & Dembo, 1984; Dunlop, Stoneman, & Cantrell, 1980; Kohl, Beckman, & Swenson-Pierce, 1984; Seba, 1983). From this body of research, it can be concluded that as a group, preschool children with disabilities are at risk for problems in the development of social interaction skills and related behaviors. Compared to age-mates with typical development, children

eligible for early childhood special education services exhibit lower rates of social initiations, social responses and other aspects of social interaction (Spicuzza, McConnell, & Odom, 1991; Strain, 1983); spend less time engaged in classroom activities where social interaction is likely to occur (Odom, Peterson, McConnell, & Ostrosky, 1990); and are likely to use fewer and lower-quality, social strategies for participating effectively in interactions with other children (Guralnick, 1992).

To address these and other social behavioral deficits, researchers have devoted substantial attention and resources to the development of social interaction skill interventions. The literature is replete with examples of intervention strategies, programs and their documented effectiveness to help promote social interactions skills with children with disabilities (McConnell, Sisson, Cort, & Strain, 1991; Odom, Chandler, Ostrosky, McConnell, & Reaney, 1992; Odom, McConnell, & McEvoy, 1992). These interventions build on a wide range of individual tactics, including changes to the physical and social ecology of classrooms or other settings (Sainato & Carta, 1992; Salisbury et. al, 1995; Sontag, 1997), provision of peer or child focused social skill training and free play prompts and praise (McEvoy, Odom, & McConnell, 1992; Odom & Strain, 1984; Davis, Langone & Malone, 1996; English, Goldstein, Shafer & Kaczmarek, 1997), teacher prompting (Odom & Strain, 1986; Strain, Shores, & Kerr, 1976), use of sociodramatic activity (Strain, 1981; Strain & Shores, 1977), contingent social reinforcement (Strain, Shores, & Kerr, 1976), token reinforcement (Odom et al., 1985), modeling (Apolloni, Cooke, 1977; O'Connor, 1972) and group socialization activities (McEvoy, Twardosz, & Bishop, 1990).

Adding to this extensive body of literature and research are two recent examples

of intervention packages utilized with preschool aged children in integrated classroom settings to promote social interaction skills between children with and without disabilities. Davis, Langone and Malone (1996) implemented an intervention package with preschool aged children with and without disabilities aimed at promoting prosocial behaviors among participants. English, Goldstein, Shafer & Kaczmarek (1997) investigated the effectiveness of an intervention program designed to increase social interaction of preschoolers with disabilities when paired with more than one nondisabled peer and implemented across various settings. These two intervention programs will be discussed below:

Davis, Langone and Malone (1996) were interested in monitoring the effectiveness of an intervention program designed to promote prosocial behaviors of children and the generalization of prosocial behaviors to different settings. Preschool children with and without disabilities, enrolled in integrated settings, participated in the study. Participants were removed from their classroom settings and taken to rooms where they were instructed to spend time together. Baseline data was collected during this period and researchers determined the number of social initiations and responses that occurred during these sessions. The intervention package included: verbal instruction; modeling; rehearsal and practice; feedback. Reinforcement for participants was implemented with the groups of children. Immediately following the intervention sessions, children were left alone and videotaped. Video taped segments were then analyzed for positive social interactions, including initiations and responses to initiations. Researchers then determined the number of initiations and responses between children during free play to determine generalization of the intervention.

Results indicated that the number of interactions, initiations and responses to initiations between children with and without disabilities increased during the intervention stage of the study. These findings are consistent with other research in this area of intervention promoting social interaction between children with and without disabilities (Odom & Strain, 1986). The interaction skills that were practiced during intervention were not evident during free play in the integrated classrooms. Although social interaction rates following the intervention period were higher than they were during baseline conditions.

English, Goldstein, Shafer and Kaczmarek (1997) involved preschool children with and without disabilities in an intervention program to increase the disabled children's overall peer interaction across multiple settings and to assess the effects of dyadic strategy use on the rate of social interactions. Preschoolers without disabilities were involved in sensitivity training and peer strategy use training. During sensitivity training, children were exposed to video taped segments of children with mild developmental disabilities attempting to communicate with peers in a nontraditional way through gestures or the use of signs. Researchers then held discussions with children regarding what they thought the children with disabilities in the video wanted, were trying to communicate or say. Children were then trained utilizing 3 direct instruction lessons with 2-3 practice sessions. Training consisted of 3 buddy strategies that comprised a sequential behavioral chain. In a small group, children were taught to maintain proximity with an assigned peer when verbally reminded. Second, peers were taught to say the targeted child's name, establish mutual attention and suggest playing together or talk about the ongoing activity. Third, peers were taught to maintain

proximity and to continue to play and talk to the buddy. Children with disabilities were involved in dyadic training procedures. These procedures were a modified version of the children without disabilities' stay-play-talk strategy, this is to stay and play with their buddy. The trained peers were rotated around to various children with disabilities and were instructed to use their buddy strategies (stay-play-talk) in and across the day's activities.

Results from the English et al. (1997) study indicate that the peer strategy-use training resulted in improved social communicative interactions between the children with and without disabilities. The authors conclude that rotating peers who served as buddies to their disabled classmates provided an increased opportunity for children with disabilities and peers to generalize social skills to more than one child. But, because children were rotated, the development of relationships among children may have been curtailed. Relationship development was monitored by changes in sociometric status and by the generalization of buddy skills to "nonbuddy" activities, such as transition times or activities on nonbuddy dyads. The authors conclude that the use of multiple peers on a rotating schedule, while effective in increasing rates of interaction, may not support relationship development over time.

Another important factor in the English et al. (1997) study is that the typically developing children did not choose to participate in the intervention program. This lack of choice may also effect the development of relationships. Free choice is a component in friendship formation (Christopher, Hansen & Macmillan, 1991).

Inclusive settings provide the opportunity for children with and without disabilities to interact and spend time with one another. Interventions provide a variety

of remediations aimed at helping children with disabilities perform specific steps, skills or behaviors, necessary to become friends. But, the concept of friendship itself is so much more than just skills. Friendships provide an exciting and distinctive world for children. A world that reflects a special understanding and skill on the part of the children. As Gottman and his colleagues write

Friends can create a world of great involvement and high adventure, and they can do it at the tender age of 3 or 4. They must coordinate their efforts with all the virtuosity of an accomplished jazz quartet, and they must manage the amount of conflict between them. These things require enormous social skill. (Gottman & Parker, 1985, p. 3).

Friendships Between Children With and Without Disabilities

When considering friendships of children with and without disabilities, we need to address some fundamental questions. Primarily, do friendships exist between children with and without disabilities? If these friendships do exist, what are they like and how do they develop? To answer these questions, I looked at a small body of literature that addresses friendships between young children with and without disabilities.

The Existence of Friendships Between Children With and Without Disabilities

The research addressing friendships between young children with and without disabilities makes a strong statement and showing for the existence of such relationships.

Buysse (1993) conducted a study with preschool age children placed in community childcare, their mothers, and teachers to determine the number of preschool children with disabilities engaged in a friendship. Through utilization of surveys, developmental inventories and behavioral assessments, Buysse determined that 80% of the preschoolers were reported to be engaged in friendships.

Obtaining similar results, Hall (1994) used a variety of measurement techniques to determine if children with and without disabilities were engaged in friendships: peer nominations, behavior observations and interviews with teachers and kindergarten to first grade children. Hall discovered that friendships existed between children with and without disabilities and these friendships were identified and labeled as friendships by the typically developing children in the classroom. Proximity measures and behavior observations corroborated the friendships.

Staub et al. (1994) and Staub (1998) through the use of participant observation, videotape and interviews with children without disabilities, teachers and parents of both children with and without disabilities, provide a detailed description of friendships that exist between children with and without disabilities in early childhood classrooms. These friendships are described as "mutual" and having developed "in nontutorial contexts".

Describing Friendships Between Children With and Without Disabilities

Friendships between children with and without disabilities, are very similar to and share many of the same characteristics as friendships between typically developing children. Staub et al. (1994) and Staub (1998) through interviews with teachers and parents, revealed that friendships between children with and without disabilities share many similar characteristics as relationships between typically developing children. Friends were described as enabling individuals to assume other roles (i.e. a leadership role), displaying affection toward one another and meeting individual needs (i.e. security). These children have friendships with disabled children for many of the same reasons that they have friendships with nondisabled children. The friend meets a certain need, and provides comfort, stability or companionship. Hall (1994) asked children why

they spent time with children with disabilities. The majority of the students explained that they were friends with the disabled child, the disabled child played with them, or they liked doing the same things. Buysse (1993) summarized from her study with parents and teachers of preschoolers with disabilities, that children without disabilities that engaged in friendships with children with disabilities, shared similar characteristics and had the opportunity to spend time together.

There are vast similarities between relationships between typically developing children and children with disabilities. Children engaged in friendships with children with disabilities because they share similar personality characteristics with their friends with disabilities, provide affection and emotional support for each other, enable nondisabled children to assume a variety of roles, usually leadership or helping roles and maybe the most powerful statements used when describing friendships between children with and without disabilities is that the friendships provide comfort, security and meet the individual children's needs (Staub et.al, 1994).

The Development of Friendships Between Children With and Without Disabilities

Just as in friendships between typically developing children, several factors effect formation of friendships between children with and without disabilities. Several students when interviewed by Staub et al. (1994) and Staub (1998) were asked how they became friends with children with disabilities stated reasons of proximity, helping each other and playing together. Through observations, the researchers revealed that classrooms that employed cooperative learning activities and where more students engaged in group work were reflective of classroom ecologies where friendships between children with and without disabilities existed.

Buysse's (1993) study revealed through parent and teacher interviews and completion of surveys, that several factors affected friendship development between children with and without disabilities. Among these factors were: the opportunity to spend time together, having access to children with disabilities with similar personality characteristics and typically developing children, adult involvement, classroom materials, activities and ecologies.

Hall's (1994) sociometric nominations revealed a high number of children wanted to spend time with children with disabilities and were observed in proximity to children with disabilities. The brief interviews with children revealed that students identified the child with disabilities observed in proximity as a friend.

Common factors that were identified as contributing to friendship formation among children with and without disabilities in studies were proximity, helping one another, and playing together. Other factors that affected friendship development include the opportunity to spend time together, children sharing similar characteristics, classroom materials, activities, ecologies, and adult involvement.

Measurement and Assessment of Friendship

The friendships of preschoolers and very young children generally have been assessed in three ways: by asking children to identify their friendship preferences using sociometric techniques, by observing children and by asking a knowledgeable informant to report children's friendships with peers. A brief review of each method and when each method is generally used are presented below.

Sociometric Assessments

Sociometric techniques are used to index the internal structure of a peer group. These techniques look specifically at peer acceptance and rejection, and friendship preferences. Peer acceptance, rejection and friendship preferences are considered peer relationship variables, which are part of a child's overall social competence. Peer-referenced assessment includes both sociometric assessment and peer assessment. Sociometric assessment describes the degree to which children like or dislike each other and the attraction among members of the group. Peer assessment can be referred to as a collection of techniques designed to measure the attraction among members of a specific group or the specific behaviors, traits or roles of persons in a specific group or the specific behaviors (Gresham & Little, 1993).

Sociometric assessment includes a variety of methods including 1) peer nominations; 2) peer ratings; and 3) paired comparison methods. Each of the 3 methods will be discussed briefly.

Peer Nominations

Peer nominations tap into two dimensions of sociometric status, social preference and social impact. Social preference is the degree a child is liked/disliked by peers. Social impact is the social salience or noticeability of children. Social preference and social impact are combined and used by researchers to form 5 separate sociometric status groups: popular, rejected, neglected, controversial and aversive. Each of these status groups has different behavioral correlates.

Peer Ratings

Peer ratings require children to rate peers on a 3 or 5-point scale according to preferences for engaging in some activity. For example, rating children as preferred play or work partners.

Paired Comparison

In paired comparison, children are presented with all possible pairs of peers and choose among pairs according to some relevant dimension. For example choosing pairs as playmates or friends.

Mutual Positive Nominations

In addition to these measures, an assessment of mutual positive nominations may be used to analyze the nature of social networks and examine reciprocal friendship dyads. Preschool children typically are provided with photographs of their classmates and asked to choose children they like to play with or to rate their peers by scoring them into boxes labeled with happy, sad and neutral faces.

Hall (1994) utilized a combination of sociometric techniques to determine if children with and without disabilities were engaged in friendships. She utilized positive and negative peer nominations to determine the social status of students with disabilities in the various classrooms studied. Results indicated that students with disabilities varied in their social status from low to high status. Furthermore, status did not determine if the children were engaged in friendships. All children with disabilities were involved in friendships. Hall also utilized mutual positive nominations to determine the reciprocity in choice of playmates between the children with and without disabilities. She discovered no consistent patterns between the social status of children with disabilities

and the social status of classmates with mutual positive nominations. The majority of reciprocal nominations were from peers neither of low or high status.

Studies that are attempting to determine who a child's friends are, or a child's position in the peer group, would utilize sociometric techniques. Researchers commonly utilize mutual positive nominations to identify friendship dyads. A potential problem utilizing sociometric techniques with preschool children is that they do not always give consistent answers to sociometric questions.

Observational Methodology

Observational methodology is frequently used to assess the peer relations of young children. Observations have been utilized to document interactions between children, and the social behavior of popular and unpopular children. Observational methodology has been frequently utilized in both experimental and natural settings.

Three of the studies focusing on friendships between children with and without disabilities that I reviewed utilized observational methodology, but in a different ways. Hall (1994) utilized children in proximity to target children in conjunction with sociometric techniques and interviews, to determine friendship pairs. She identified specific criteria for being considered in proximity by targeting a specific amount of space around the child with a disability. When a child entered the space and remained there for a specific amount of time, he/she was considered in proximity to the child with disabilities.

Staub, Schwartz, Gallucci & Peck (1994) and Staub (1998) asked teachers to name children whom they felt were connected to a peer with a disability. Once these nominations were made, the researchers utilized observations to corroborate the pairs of

children identified by the teachers. Once the identification of participants took place, the researchers employed participant observations in inclusive classrooms where the children were enrolled. During the observations, descriptive field notes were taken regarding friendship dyads. A variety of observations were completed while concentrating on the child with disabilities, child without disabilities, and the general classroom. Staub et al. used information from their observations to describe friendship in detail and provide a framework for implementing interviews with children about their friendships with children with disabilities.

Researchers who are interested in describing friendships, how friends interact with one another, or how their interactions are affected by variations in their situational context could employ observational techniques.

Knowledgeable Informant

A third technique for assessing friendship in young children involves asking a knowledgeable informant, usually a parent, teacher, or caregiver who knows the child, to report friendship preferences. More recently, investigators have employed brief interviews with young children regarding their choice of friends or preferred activities (Hall, 1994; Staub et al., 1994; and Staub, 1998). All of the studies I reviewed that highlighted friendships between children with and without disabilities, utilized a knowledgeable informant in order to gain information regarding the friendship under study.

Buysse (1993) utilized a survey, the Early Childhood Friendship Survey, with parents and teachers of children with disabilities to determine the number of children with disabilities engaged in relationships. According to predefined criteria, the children's

relationships were categorized as mutual friendships, type I unilateral friendships or type II unilateral friendships. Results revealed that 80% of the children with disabilities in the study were engaged in mutual friendships.

Hall (1994) through a brief interview format, talked with children who spent time in proximity to a child with disabilities. The children were identified as the classmates that spent the most time in proximity to children with disabilities. The children were asked why they spent time with the child with disabilities. Teachers were also asked about why they thought the child spent so much time in proximity to the child with disabilities. Interviews with the teachers revealed that they felt that the child spent time with the disabled child because of certain personality characteristics, sharing activities and parental influence. Children indicated that they spent time with the child with disabilities because they were friends, played together or shared activities or toys.

Staub, Schwartz, Gallucci & Peck (1994) interviewed teachers, parents, assistants and children regarding their perceptions of friendships between children with and without disabilities. Their aim was to gain information about the relationship from various perspectives of people involved and understand the meaning of the relationship as seen by the informant. In ascertaining what children's friendships are like, how children perceive their friendships and how their friendships are perceived by others, a researcher would employ an interview format with a teacher, caregiver or the child themselves.

Summary and Implications

Including young children with disabilities in inclusive settings with their nondisabled peers has been considered best practice in early childhood special education for the past several years and is supported by legal mandates and social concerns.

Arguments for including children with disabilities in integrated settings include improved social skills, opportunities for interaction with nondisabled peers, and the development of social relationships.

Placing children with disabilities in integrated settings has produced social outcomes for both children with and without disabilities. Children with disabilities have increased levels of social contact with children without disabilities, give and receive higher levels of social support, and have larger friendship networks than disabled peers in segregated settings (Fryxell & Kennedy, 1995; Hunt, Farron-Davis, Beckstead, Curtis and Goetz, 1994; Salisbury, Palombaro, & Hollowood, 1993). Parents perceive positive outcomes for children with disabilities placed in integrated settings including more appropriate social interactions, more interactions with children without disabilities and higher levels of social play and more advanced play (Demchack & Drinkwater, 1992). Parents of children without disabilities have listed positive effects from placement in integrated settings accruing to their children including changes in social cognition, becoming more aware of others needs, prosocial personal characteristics, and acceptance of human diversity (Peck, Carson & Helmstetter, 1992).

Although positive benefits result from being members of integrated classrooms and proximity is a fundamental building block in the development of young children's relationships, not all children with disabilities in integrated settings have developed relationships with nondisabled peers. Researchers have revealed that young children with disabilities lack some of the fundamental social skills necessary to develop friendships (Odom, McConnell & McEvoy, 1992). A wide variety of interventions have been developed and implemented to promote the social skills and improve the overall social

competence of children with disabilities. These studies add an important piece in the development of an overall picture of friendships between young children with and without disabilities, but stop short of describing actual friendships or revealing information about friendships, by focusing on specific skills necessary to become friends.

Within the past few years, a limited number of studies have begun to address this void in the research of social relationships between young children with and without disabilities and have begun to look at actual friendships that exist between young children with and without disabilities (Buysse, 1993; Hall, 1994; Staub, Schwartz, Gallucci & Peck, 1994; Staub, 1998).

Although limited in scope, the literature addressing friendships between young children with and without disabilities answers some basic questions and adds to our understanding of these relationships. Friendships between children with and without disabilities do exist, they share similar characteristics, and develop in similar ways as friendships between nondisabled peers.

This body of studies also reveals other questions and issues that are absent in the literature of friendships between children with and without disabilities. Of the studies reviewed, only one (Buysse, 1993) focused exclusively on preschool aged children and their friendships between children with and without disabilities. The other studies highlighted the friendships of young children from preschool up through the early elementary years. Over the past few years, there has been an increase in the integration of young children with disabilities in integrated preschool settings. This integration has resulted in part because of legal mandates including the reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, the American's with Disabilities Act and the Head Start

mandate to enroll a minimum of 10% of children with disabilities. Along with these legal mandates, social concern regarding the number of children with disabilities receiving services in preschool settings has increased. Aside from children with disabilities being placed in integrated settings and having increased opportunities to interact with nondisabled peers, curricula in these settings commonly focus on the development of social skills and relationships. Both the fields of early childhood education and early childhood special education target the development of social relationships as a primary goal of the preschool years. Opportunities to study the relationships between young children with and without disabilities in natural settings, are higher than they have ever been.

Three of the studies reviewed, Hall (1994), Staub (1998), and Staub, et al. (1994) utilized information given by nondisabled children to develop a picture of the friendships between children with and without disabilities. The children in the studies revealed relevant and important information about their friendships and why they were friends with children with disabilities. Including playing together, liking each other, and being in proximity to one another. The information given by the children with disabilities helped paint a more descriptive picture of the friendships studied, but the researchers did not include information from the children with disabilities. These children also have important ideas to share about their friendships, and their voices need to be heard.

Of the studies reviewed Staub et. al (1994) and Staub (1998) interviewed parents and teachers to gain information and perspectives on the friendships between children with and without disabilities. The information provided by the adults revealed important pieces of information about the friendships and helped provide a more detailed

description of the friendships studied.

Among the studies reviewed, various definitions of friendship were given and the construct measured through sociometric techniques, observational techniques, and information gained from a knowledgeable informant. In order for us to better understand friendships among preschool children with and without disabilities, we do not need to impose specific criteria or conditions upon relationships in order to be considered a friendship, but rather need to let the children's voices be heard and describe the concept of friendships revealing their meaning and perceptions of the relationships.

These studies point to some specific areas of needed research when we consider friendships of preschool children with and without disabilities that my study will address. My study addresses friendships among preschool-aged children with and without disabilities enrolled in inclusive settings. Focusing on preschool-aged children with and without disabilities will expand the current research base and knowledge of friendships during this developmental period. Continued research needs to be conducted to provide detailed descriptions of friendships of children with and without disabilities. From these descriptions, we can begin to develop an understanding of these friendships of preschool children with and without disabilities. We can begin to ascertain the dynamics of these friendships including when they take place, contextual variables that may impact the relationships and the quality and type of interactions between the friends.

My study includes interviews with the children, both with and without disabilities, their parents, and teachers. By talking with all of the participants in the study, I reveal various perceptions of the friendships including those of the children, teachers and parents. These perceptions may help us to begin to understand what these friendships

mean to various individuals and begin to help us understand why some children engage in friendships with children with disabilities.

I entered the research setting with a guiding definition of friendship that highlighted characteristics among friendships of preschool-aged children. I observed the children interact with one another and targeted children that displayed these friendship characteristics. Once the pairs of children were identified as potential friends, my selections were corroborated with the teachers. Throughout the study, the participants revealed their definitions and meanings of friendship through interactions and conversations with their friends and me.

Researchers and educators have recognized the importance of friendships among preschool aged children for some time, but it has only been in the past few years, that we have begun to recognize the importance of friendships for young children with disabilities. Researchers have put forth-tremendous efforts to provide opportunities for children with disabilities to interact and develop relationships with nondisabled peers. The majority of research on relationships between young children and specifically children with and without disabilities focuses on social competence, the extent a particular child is liked or disliked by their peers, the sociometrics of the classroom, or social behavior of individuals. The studies focus on specific, measurable behaviors. The studies do not provide a description of friendships per se, but the skills necessary to make friends. If we want to understand friendships of children with and without disabilities, we do not need to focus narrowly on specific social skills, social competence or how it is acquired, but the friendships themselves. We need to develop an understanding for the relationships as a whole, not just bits and pieces. There is a need for more research to

promote increased dialogue and understanding about friendships between children with and without disabilities. This is what I am interested in naturally occurring friendships between children with and without disabilities.

A number of variables that appear to impact friendship and relationship development and maintenance, have been examined in isolation, the current study attempts to identify young children who have established friendships with children with disabilities and describe their friendships; specifically, what their friendships look like and what they mean to the children involved, parents and teachers. Because of the suggested significance of peer relationships in the early years and the difficulties encountered by children with special needs in the social realm, investigating the positive peer relationships of young children with disabilities is particularly relevant.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Research Design and Rationale

The face of public education and the delivery of services to preschool-aged children with disabilities have changed over the past several years. As a result of laws and social concerns, more children with disabilities are being educated alongside their nondisabled peers. This education is taking place in many settings across our country including public schools, day care centers, and preschools. As a result of this integration, more researchers are interested in the effects of inclusive schooling on children both with and without disabilities. Parents and teachers are seeing more relationships develop between children with and without disabilities and have voiced questions about these relationships. The majority of the integration research in the area of relationships focuses on social competence and the social skills necessary to make and keep friends, leaving many questions unanswered about the relationships themselves.

The purpose of my study of preschool aged children with and without disabilities was to understand and describe friendships between these children. In order to attempt to uncover the meaning of friendships between children with and without disabilities, and to understand how the participants describe the friendships and how teachers and parents perceive the relationships, I used participant observation and interviews. I needed to develop an awareness and understanding of the places, times, and contexts in which the relationships existed. Through participant observation, I was able to study these issues. Interviews allowed the children, parents, and teachers to describe actions, activities they engaged in together, and feelings about their partner. The adult interviewees, teachers

and parents, were able to describe how they perceive the relationship and reveal qualities about the relationship that I may have overlooked or not had the opportunity to see during observations.

The research design that I implemented for this study was naturalistic inquiry, utilizing participant observation and interviews. I chose a qualitative design for several reasons. Primarily, I believe that utilizing a qualitative design enabled me to better achieve my purpose of understanding and describing the friendships between children with and without disabilities than any quantitative measures I might have used. Aside from employing qualitative methodology to achieve my primary research purpose, I believe there were other compelling reasons to undertake a qualitative study looking at friendships between children with and without disabilities as outlined below.

First, I selected a qualitative study because of the nature of the research question. In a qualitative study, the research question often starts with a how or a what, so that initial explorations into the topic describe what is going on (Creswell, 1998). My study focused on the description of friendships of children with and without disabilities and was guided by the question: *What are the experiences of preschool-aged children with and without moderate disabilities who are engaged in friendships in inclusive preschool settings?*

Second, I chose a qualitative study because there is a limited body of qualitative research that addresses friendships between children with and without disabilities. The majority of the studies are quantitative and focus on specific skills necessary to become friends, the friendship formation process, and intervention programs to help children develop friendships, but not on actual descriptions of friendships between children with

and without disabilities. From a qualitative description of these relationships, we can learn many things, including an appreciation for the value of the diversity of friendships among preschool-aged children. Descriptions of friendships between children with and without disabilities will help to present a detailed view of the topic. Only with detailed descriptions of these friendships will we begin to understand the dimensions and variables that support these relationships.

A third reason for choosing a qualitative approach was to study relationships in their natural setting. One of the strengths of qualitative research is that it takes place in natural settings, where friendships have developed and continue to grow daily. By spending entire school days in the Head Start classrooms and engaging in participant observation, I had the opportunity to observe the friendship pairs engaged in a variety of activities throughout the course of a day. While in the Head Start classrooms, I watched, listened, and interacted with the children, as they were engaged in activities with their friends. It is from these words and actions that I began to develop an understanding of the friendships.

Fourth, I selected a qualitative approach because audiences are becoming receptive to qualitative research. The fields of education and special education are becoming more receptive to qualitative work and beginning to listen to qualitative stories. Professionals in the fields of education and special education are beginning to look outside of quantitative sciences to generate solutions to problems and address issues that are relevant in the field today.

Fifth, and finally, I chose to employ a qualitative approach to emphasize my role as an active learner. I wanted to tell the story of these friendships between children with

and without disabilities from the participants' view, not as an "expert" who passes judgment on the participants. Through the use of qualitative methodology, I will let the children's voices be heard as they offer descriptions of their friendships and what these friendships mean to them.

Limitations of the Study

This study was subject to a number of limitations.

1. The study took place with a relatively small number of participants, 6 friendship pairs, their parents and teachers. Including more participants and representing their various perspectives could strengthen the study.
2. The study took place in one of two classroom settings, which were governed by the same Head Start agency. Another dimension that would add strength to the study would be to include findings from various other classrooms, outside of the Head Start model. Inclusion of other classroom models may point to more and varied findings regarding classroom ecology and instructional and curriculum factors.
3. All of the children diagnosed with disabilities in the study were identified with developmental delay, except for Beth who is diagnosed with cerebral palsy. Therefore, friendships among preschool aged children with more significant disabilities may look different and exhibit different qualities than the friendships studied in these two Head Start classrooms.

Theoretical Perspective

Throughout the literature on qualitative research, references to paradigms and worldviews are common. Most researchers believe that the alignment of research and a

worldview is crucial for meaningful discovery. As Ferguson (1993) explains “ . . . the most cogent, coherent and productive research agendas are rarely those driven solely by methodological affiliation. Rather, such research needs to be solidly grounded in a way of seeing the world that constantly provokes curiosity, imaginations, and inquiry, not just for the knowledge generated, the problems solved, or the explanation achieved, but also for the discoveries about knowing that are revealed during the exploration” (p.37).

Guba and Lincoln (1994) describe a paradigm as “ a set of basic beliefs that deals with ultimates or first principles. It represents a world view that defines, for its holder, the nature of the “world,” the individual’s place in it, and the range of possible relationships to that world and its parts. . .” (p. 107). Guba and Lincoln further explain that the beliefs are basic in the sense that they must be accepted simply on faith because there is no way to establish their ultimate truthfulness. Inquiry paradigms define for inquirers what it is they are about and what falls within and outside the limits of legitimate inquiry. The basic beliefs of inquiry paradigms are ascertained by answering questions about ontology, the nature of reality; epistemology, the relationship between the researcher and the researched and what can be known; and methodology, how can the researcher go about finding out whatever he or she believes can be known.

It is my goal within the next few paragraphs to outline the perspective that guided my research on friendships between children with and without disabilities. The majority of research in the area of friendships between children with and without disabilities focuses on specific skills necessary to become friends, the friendship formation process, and intervention programs to help children develop friendships. I was interested in looking at friendships that exist between children with and without disabilities in

inclusive settings to develop an overall understanding of these relationships and what they mean to the children involved. In order to capture the meaning of these relationships, I had to understand the context in which the friendships exist and also the meaning of the relationship from the perspective of the participants. In order to do this, I utilized a constructivist perspective to frame my study. I will outline how constructivists' answer the questions of ontology, epistemology and methodology and how these issues impacted my study of friendships between children with and without disabilities.

Constructivism

Ontology

Ontology concerns itself with the form and nature of reality and what can be known about reality. In regard to the ontology question, constructivists are considered relativists, acknowledging that several realities or truths may exist at any given time and that there is not a singular Truth (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Guba and Lincoln further explain that for constructivists, reality exists as mental constructions that are socially and experientially based and arise out of interactions. The groups of individuals who are interacting define and agree upon reality, but it is not considered static. As more people or things enter or leave the group, they reconstruct the reality to reflect assimilation of new ideas and perceptions.

Not only is meaning constructed through interactions, but it is also affected by varying contexts. Meaning can be described as a process affected by context and constructed by individuals. Meaning is not "given" to people, but people are constantly creating meaning through an active process. This creation of meaning takes places within several contexts and is affected by these contexts. The historical, social and

person/human contexts all affect the individual's making of meaning (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

As I watched and interacted with the children in the Head Start centers my ideas and notions about their friendships continuously changed and developed. The children, parents, and teachers all defined and described friendship in a variety of ways. Through the use of quotes, presenting themes that reflect words used by informants and presenting evidence of different perspectives on each theme, I present the participants' different perspectives and ideas in regard to the friendships between children with and without disabilities. It is from these various definitions and meanings of friendship that I am able to present my understandings of the relationships studied.

My research reveals various definitions and uses of friendships within the Head Start context I studied. Multiple perspectives are presented from a variety of sources, including children, teachers and parents of children with and without disabilities. It was important to recognize and describe the concept of friendship from the child's perspective and develop an understanding of the meaning of friendships to them.

I entered the research setting with a guiding definition of friendship that was used for initial identification of participants. Friendship was defined as a dyadic relationship between peers, characterized by repeated interest in spending time or playing together. It was important for me as a researcher to suspend judgment about the quality of a relationship, or not to specify numeric criteria necessary to be defined as a friendship. In light of this, I utilized the guiding definition to identify friendship pairs for the study, and then let the children's definitions and voices regarding their friendships be heard throughout the study. Their voices allowed me to describe these relationships and served

to help me develop an understanding of these friendships, from their perspective.

Epistemology

Epistemology addresses the questions of how do we know the world and the nature of the relationship between the investigator and the respondents. Constructivists are described by Guba and Lincoln as transactional and subjectivist. Knowledge is created through interaction between the investigator and the respondents. Throughout interactions, the investigator and the respondents shape one another, and create understandings, and knowledge. Constructivists acknowledge that you cannot separate the inquirer from the known, and furthermore, that all knowledge is a human construction. Therefore the researcher is seen as a co-creator of knowledge.

By interviewing parents and teachers, I began to form a view of what influences the children outside of the Head Start center and contexts in which I observed. Parents revealed ideas and issues that have influenced opinions and attitudes in them, which, in turn, effect their children. As the parents and teachers discussed the friendships between the children with and without disabilities, I attempted to remain cognizant of the fact that I was constantly interpreting information from my particular view and ideological base.

Methodology

The methodology question refers to how the inquirer goes about finding out whatever he or she believes can be known. Guba and Lincoln (1994) describe constructivists as hermeneutical and dialectical when considering the issue of methods and are aimed at the reconstruction of previously held constructions. They further explain that the personal nature of social constructions suggests that individual constructions can be elicited and refined only through interaction between and among the

investigator and respondents. The final aim is to come up with a construction that is more informed and sophisticated than any of the preceding constructions - including the construction of the investigator. The researcher must reflect not only on what has occurred between people in a particular setting, but also on events throughout their lives that have contributed to making the individuals who they are today. The aim is to generate constructions that the individuals create together. The purpose of the research is not to control and predict, but to understand and empower.

Interaction with participants through the use of participant observation and interviews with children, parent, and teachers, facilitated my overall understanding of the friendships studied. By watching the children interact with one another throughout the Head Start classrooms, listening to their conversations with one another, and asking questions about the relationships of the children, parents, and teachers, I was able to develop a better understanding of the friendships studied and discover various perspectives regarding the friendships.

Site Selection and Participation

During the initial stages of planning, there were several factors that influenced my choice of Head Start agencies to conduct my study. Among these factors were the goals of the research project, my ability to gain access to the classroom and children, and obtain permission to conduct the study. In the following section these factors are discussed. Following this discussion, I outline the steps that I followed in gaining access, securing permission to conduct the study, and identifying participants. I conclude the section with a description of each of the classrooms where I conducted my research.

Factors Impacting Site Selection

There were several factors that influenced my selection of a research site, including the overall goals of the research project and my ability to gain access and secure permission to conduct the study. In the following section I address the factors that I considered and that impacted my choice of classrooms where I conducted my study.

Initially, I had to consider the overall goal of the project, to describe friendships of preschool-aged children with and without disabilities in inclusive preschool settings. Choices were limited to preschool sites using an integrated model. In the region where I conducted the study, that meant Head Start classrooms where children with disabilities were enrolled. I also considered the overall quality of the research site that would enable me to achieve my research purpose. In order to accurately describe and develop an understanding of the friendships, I would need to develop an understanding of the classroom culture where the children were enrolled. In order to aid in my development of this cultural understanding, I considered three additional factors: limiting the number of locations to conduct observations, the opportunity to observe frequently recurring activities, and access (Spradley, 1980).

In order to discover cultural meaning, I needed to limit the number of settings where I conducted research. I identified a single Head Start agency that had several possible classrooms that would be appropriate for data collection. By identifying one Head Start agency to work with throughout the research project, I limited the number of people and organizations that I dealt with throughout the study.

Although one agency was identified, I conducted observations in two classrooms, in separate locations that were governed by the same Head Start agency. I conducted

research in more than one classroom because I did not have enough participants from a single room to meet the criteria outlined for the study. I limited my observations to the two Head Start classrooms and all of the places the children went within those classrooms and throughout the course of the Head Start day. I was interested in developing an understanding of the specific classroom cultures and how these cultures defined friendship, which was facilitated by my remaining within the contexts of the two classroom settings.

In identifying the setting where I was going to conduct my study, I also considered the opportunity to observe frequently recurring activities. In order to discover the cultural rules for behavior, a sample of similar activities needs to be repeated over and over (Spradley, 1980). In the Head Start classrooms, the teachers had developed routines and schedules that were very predictable and occurred on a regular basis and quite frequently. I observed weekly in the classrooms, which enabled me to recognize developing patterns of interaction among the children. These schedules and routines made it possible for me to develop an understanding of the overall classroom and provided me the opportunity to look at the interactions between children and develop an understanding of their friendships.

In choosing my research site, I also considered accessibility. Since I wanted to conduct my research within the context of Head Start classrooms, I had to gain entry into those settings, which would provide access to the children, parents, and teachers. Although access to the settings and participants was monitored by the Head Start director and program requirements, one of the factors that eased access was the fact that Head Start programs and classes are accustomed to having people enter into the classroom and

conduct observations for a variety of reasons. The Head Start culture allows for parents and professionals to spend time in classrooms and interact with children and staff. So, upon meeting with the director to gain initial access, I was not asking for something out of the ordinary. Once I had identified an agency that I felt would enable me to meet my goals of the research project, I moved into securing permission from the various classrooms and participants.

Seeking Permission

The Head Start classrooms where I conducted my study are limited-entry social situations (Spradley, 1980). Before entering into the Head Start classrooms, I had to gain permission from several people. Initially, I had to obtain permission from the Head Start director to conduct my study. I then had to obtain permission from the teachers and then finally from the parents of the children selected as potential participants. Aside from receiving permission from the Head Start agency and staff, I also went through a human subjects review at the University of Tennessee before the study could commence.

I met with the director of the Head Start program and the local community action agency to discuss the possibility of her centers participating in the study. She approved the study and had me present the proposal to the program coordinators. They agreed to participate and the disability coordinator was designated as my contact person at the agency and provided assistance with class selection.

Class Selection and Participant Criteria

Once permission was granted by the director and agency for me to conduct my study in the Head Start classrooms, I began to compile a list of classrooms where eligible participants were enrolled. The study was designed to look at the friendships of children

with and without disabilities and includes preschool-aged children diagnosed with developmental delay. The children in the studied that are diagnosed with developmental delay met the criteria in one of two ways. The children were functioning at a developmental level of 2 or more standard deviations below the mean in one area of development, in this case cognitive. Or the student met the criteria by functioning at a developmental level of 1.5 standard deviations in two or more areas of development either cognitive and communication, or cognitive and social and emotional, or cognitive and adaptive functioning.

The coordinator compiled a list of students already identified that met the criteria and also children that she felt might meet the criteria that were in the process of being evaluated and also indicated class location. We determined that the eligible children were enrolled in one of three centers.

I reviewed the student list and class assignments and eliminated one center because of driving distance from my home and low potential number of participants. From the remaining two centers, Richmond and Lexington, I began with the Richmond classroom, which was located at the community action agency. The Richmond classroom had 5 children already identified that met the criteria for inclusion in the study. If I did not identify any or enough friendship pairs for the study in the Richmond location, I would then go to the Lexington classroom.

During an initial meeting with the teaching staff from Richmond, both the teacher, Donna and the assistant teacher, Kim agreed to participate, and we scheduled a day for initial observations to begin the process to identify the participants.

Selection of Participants

Once a list of possible participants (children with disabilities) was compiled, a classroom selected, the teacher agreed to participate, and a day to conduct initial observations for identification was set, I was ready to begin identification of potential friendship pairs. The purpose of my study was to understand and describe the friendships of preschool aged children with and without disabilities. In order to achieve this goal, the children's perspectives and definitions of friendships would need to be obtained. But, this step could not take place until children were identified. So, for the purpose of selection of participants, friendship was defined as a dyadic relationship between peers, characterized by repeated interest in spending time or playing together, and enjoying the time with each other. I conducted observations watching the children with disabilities interact with other children throughout the course of the day. I was looking for pairs of children that met the characteristics of the guiding definition of friendships. Once my selections of potential friendship pairs were made, I corroborated my choices with the classroom teachers.

Observations for Identification of Participants

Richmond

After spending 4 days in the classroom, I identified 6 friendship pairs that met the criteria for the study. I corroborated my choices with the Donna and Kim, the teacher and assistant. I then sent permission forms home with the children for their parents to sign.

When I returned to the setting 3 days later, I discovered that two of the children with disabilities that I had identified had left the program. This left 4 friendship pairs.

These children's parents signed consent forms for themselves and their children to participate in the study. I then obtained the child's assent to participate in the study. (see Appendix A for sample letter of introduction, consent and assent forms).

Lexington

In order to meet the spirit of the proposal and develop a deeper understanding of the friendships among preschool-aged children with and without disabilities, I wanted to identify more participants for inclusion in the study. I contacted the staff at the Lexington Head Start and met with the teacher, Liz and her assistant, Lynn and discussed the study with them. They both agreed to participate in the study and felt that there would probably be several children from which to choose.

Upon my initial day of observation at the center, I identified four friendship pairs. I corroborated my findings of these friendships once again with Liz and Lynn and sent the consent forms home with the parents. Two of the children's fathers denied consent for their children to participate in the study, which left me with two friendship pairs with signed consent forms.

Descriptions of the Classrooms

The children attend one of two Head Start Centers in a large rural state in the Northern Plains region of the United States. Setting one, Richmond is located within the parent community action agency, and Lexington is housed in the basement of a church. A brief description of the two settings follows.

Richmond Head Start

The city of Richmond can be described as a typical Northern Plains town with a Midwestern flair. Small in size and population with 6,000 people, most individuals

within the community know each other. The town is home to a small state university. Enrollment at the university, 1300, adds to the overall population of Richmond.

The population of the community itself is predominantly white, except for the few Asian students and teachers at the university and has a strong Scandinavian influence. The people are outgoing, friendly and accepting of individuals who move in from other regions. There are several small farming communities within a 15-mile radius of Richmond and these folks buy supplies in Richmond, adding to its overall economy.

The Richmond classroom is well equipped and staffed with a teacher, assistant, cook, and bus monitor. There is a fenced in playground behind the classroom and the kitchen is adjacent to the classroom. The teacher, Donna has taught Head Start for 7 years, at the Richmond center. She exhibits a great love and affection for children and is very gentle and caring. Kim, the teaching assistant, has substituted for the last 3 years and this is her first permanent position within Head Start. Kim tends to the details of the classroom such as parent notes, keeping up with the children's belongings and provides support to Donna and the children as needed.

Both the cook and the bus monitor at the Richmond Center interact with the children and teachers on a daily basis. Jan, the cook, has worked with Head Start since its inception in Richmond, some 20 odd years ago. Bob, the bus monitor, is a retired history teacher and plays in a local jazz band during the evenings.

The children and staff at Richmond welcomed and included me in their classroom from the beginning of the study. The staff went out of their way to make me feel included, asking me to sit with a group of children during meals, checking to make sure that I would be at the center for special birthday celebrations, and also invited me to the

Christmas party and the end of the year art fair. Donna and Kim were interested in my study and would ask questions throughout the time I spent in their classroom about how the study was progressing. Both Deb and Kim would share information or scenarios that had happened between the pairs of children in the study while I was not there.

The staff's interaction with the children was also positive. The children entered the setting each day, excited about being there, and Deb and Kim greeted them with enthusiasm and hugs, and listened attentively to the stories that the children shared about what was happening at home, events that took place on the way to school, or upcoming events. Deb was very attuned to the children's needs and was seen several times throughout the study sitting on the floor with a child talking, holding a child, hugging a child, or rocking a child to sooth hurt feelings, a fall, or general woes a 3-5 year old child faces.

The children in the classroom interacted with one another in a mild mannered way. I rarely saw scuffles between the children throughout the course of the study and I would have to say that Donna's consistency and expectations of children's behavior contributed to this fact. The few times a child would hit another child, Deb would gently remind them that that is not how 3 year olds act at Head Start. She would remind the students that in her classroom, children were nice to one another and used words to settle arguments, or they asked an adult to help them. The children responded very positively to this and were seen attempting to solve their own scuffles, or overheard talking with Deb, Kim, or other adults about any problems or concerns they may be having with another child.

Lexington Head Start

The city of Lexington is also home to a state university. With an enrollment of 12,000 the University has a major impact on the community of Lexington itself. Aside from an Asian influence at the University, the community is home to Mexican Americans and Native Americans.

The Head Start classroom is housed in the basement of a local church. There are two classrooms that are utilized for this location that are separated by an adjoining hallway with a bathroom. The kitchen/cafeteria is located down the hallway and the teacher's office is upstairs. The children play out beside the church for outside activities in a fairly small space. A local school is across the street and the teacher and staff take the children to that location on occasion to play on the playground equipment.

Liz, the teacher, has taught Head Start for 5 years, at this center. Lynn, the assistant teacher, has been at the Lexington center for 3 years. Lynn does a great deal of planning and whole group instruction in the classroom.

The cook, Ann, interacts with the children and teachers on a daily basis. Ann works closely with Lynn to provide materials for the cooking center in the classroom. There was not a permanent bus monitor while I was engaged in the study. Several university practicum students and student teachers were present in the classroom throughout the course of the study.

The children and staff at Lexington were accommodating to me throughout the study. Liz and Lynn both helped organize consent forms that were sent home and returned to the centers. When two of the parents did not return their consent forms on the designated day, Liz phoned the parents and reminded them that the forms were due. Liz

phoned me the next day to let me know that both of the parents had returned the consent forms. When it came time to interview parents, Liz phoned one parent that I was having a difficult time contacting and set up a parent conference and arranged for the interview at the same time.

Liz and Lynn were very interested in my study and would ask questions throughout the time I spent in their classroom about how the study was progressing. Both Liz and Lynn would share information or scenarios that had happened between the pairs of children in the study while I was not there.

The staff's interaction with the children was consistent. There were several children in the classroom that interacted with one another in a rambunctious and loud manner. These children were seen wrestling with one another, taking items away from each other, and often times running to another room or area in the classroom. There was one child, a girl, who was in the process of being evaluated for some emotional and behavioral issues. Frequently, either Liz or Lynn's day consisted of attending to this child's needs. She would strike out at other children, take items away from other children, or destroy other children's or teacher's materials.

The layout of the classroom may have also contributed to the children's amount of movement. There were two classrooms that were adjoined by a hallway, with a bathroom. Once group time was over, the children were free to move from one room to the next and among activities.

The Classrooms' Curricula

The curriculum that is implemented in the classrooms can be described as age appropriate and play based. The time that the children spent in organized teacher led

activities was limited to small and whole group. During these organized times, children were expected to sit on a designated spot and attend to the teacher for a story or directions. The children also would engage in some type of extension activity or related work. The children would then move from center to center throughout the classroom engaging in a variety of activities. The classroom was set up with a role play or housekeeping area, a reading, language arts area, block area, puzzle area, sensory table, art activities, and science, discovery area. The children were free to move around the classroom and engage in activities of their choice. The children also engaged in free play daily, which took place outside as the weather permitted. During free play the children would play on the playground equipment or use a variety of balls, tricycles, Hula Hoops, or Sit and Spins.

Procedures

Throughout the study of friendships among preschool children with and without disabilities, I was moving from observing a social situation in the Head Start classrooms to developing an understanding of the friendships studied within the context of the classroom cultures. In the following sections I describe the specific types of data collection and analysis that I implemented throughout the course of my study that helped me achieve this goal. I utilized a variety of different types of observations and analysis throughout the study, depending on what I was looking for and questions that I needed to answer. Regardless of the type of data collected, I followed with some type of analysis. This analysis revealed ideas about the settings and friendships that helped guide subsequent data collection. Spradley (1980) explains that the movement back and forth between data collection and analysis allows the researcher to follow a predictable

sequence of asking questions, collecting data, and analyzing data.

I began the study with general questions about the setting and friendships and refined the questions as the study proceeded. Throughout the study I watched and listened to the participants' actions and words. The participants' words and actions helped guide my direction throughout the study and helped me discover how they defined friendship and to develop an overall understanding of the friendships and what the friendships meant to the participants.

Data Collection

Throughout my study on friendships of preschool aged children with and without disabilities, I collected data through observations and interviews with the children, their parents, and teachers. Data from the classroom observations and interviews were reviewed and inductively analyzed to search for categories, relationships, and themes. The interviews were audio taped and transcribed. These transcripts along with descriptive field notes from observations and my fieldwork journal served as the basis for data analysis.

Participant Observation

I engaged in participant observations in two Head Start classrooms where the pairs of children were enrolled. Locations for observation included the classroom, lunchroom, and playground. I arrived at the centers before the children and left after the children departed for the day. At Richmond, I arrived at 8:30 and left at 2:00 and at Lexington I arrived at 8:30 and left at 1:00.

I observed during a variety of activities and in different locations throughout the centers. By observing for the entire school day, I got a comprehensive picture of events

and activities that took place in the Head Start centers and became familiar with the routines and schedules, which helped me to develop an understanding of the social situation.

The observations occurred over a period of 15 weeks, for 3 days each week. I attempted to capture the activities of children, the physical characteristics of the social situation, and what it felt like to be a part of the scene. I spent time with the children with and without disabilities, engaged them in casual conversation, joked with them, shared their concerns and accomplishments, and in the case of the Richmond center, ate with them. I attempted to understand the world of these children as they understand it, rather than imagining what it is like. I was interested in the perspectives of the children, their parents, and teachers and how they view friendships.

The purpose of engaging in participant observation in the Head Start classrooms was to develop an understanding of these complex social settings and social relationships by seeing them holistically. In an effort to achieve this purpose, I did several things. Initially, I did not enter the setting with a specific list of research questions to answer, but rather with general guidelines and questions to address. As the study developed, I asked questions based on what I saw or heard in the centers, or while talking with the participants. My study was not limited to specific behavioral acts, but focused on the children's friendships. My observations were not limited to aggressive acts, the performance of specific social skills, social interactions, or other specific behaviors. I watched and observed the children across various activities and spent entire days in the settings. This broad focus, along with spending 15 weeks in the settings, helped me to develop an understanding of the settings and relationships.

My Role as a Participant Observer with Preschoolers

The methodology of participant observation requires that the researcher become directly involved as a participant in peoples' daily lives. The participant role provides access to the world of everyday life from the standpoint of a member or insider.

Participant observation is a unique method for gaining access to the interior aspects of human existence. Through participation, I was able to observe and experience the meanings and interactions of people from the role of an insider.

Engaging in participant observation with a group of preschool-aged children presented some undeniable challenges. The goal of participant observation research is to establish equal status contact with your informants. Several factors could potentially affect how the children would see and react to me. Among these factors were my size, age, any authority that I had over the children, and contact with the children.

My size and age were physical factors that eliminated me from "going native" and becoming a preschooler. Because of my size, I could not participate in some activities with the children, like going through the tube slide, playing in the dollhouse, or riding tricycles. At times when the children I was observing were participating in these activities, I would sit on the sideline and observe or interact with the children from the perimeter of the activity.

Just from the fact that I am an adult, the children potentially saw me in the role of disciplinarian or having some authority over them. Upon entering the settings, I discussed my role with the teachers and assistant teachers and indicated that I would not discipline the children or intervene in situations in any way, unless the children were in immediate danger of harming themselves or others. After a few times of children saying

“he took my car, tell him to give it back” and my responding “you should tell your teacher” the children began to recognize that I was not fulfilling a ‘typical’ adult role and would not settle disputes for them.

Throughout my observations with the children, I strove to become a friend to them and someone that they could trust. I wanted the children to share their experiences, understanding, and meanings of friendship with me. In order to do this, I treated the children with respect and developed rapport and trust with them. As Cottle (1973) explains most children can sense whether a researcher looks like a good bet as a friend and will usually spot those who attempt something other than what they are and who make them uncomfortable. By being approving, accepting, sympathetic and supportive, I developed rapport and established trust with the children.

Although the Head Start culture is familiar and comfortable with people conducting observations and spending time in classrooms, I was focusing on children and engaging in specific observations of children during interactions throughout the course of the day. It was not a consideration for me to observe the children from a one way mirror or observation room, which one of the settings had, but rather I wanted to be able to hear all of the subtleties during interactions and attempt to catch the nuances of the children’s friendships, which would only be possible by observing alongside the children and teachers. Since I was going to spend several weeks in the classrooms alongside the children and other people, my presence needed to be explained. In order to help explain my presence, the teachers at both of the classrooms introduced me to the class on my first day of observation during morning circle time. The teachers explained to the children that I would be spending some time in their classes over the next few months watching

them play with their friends. Throughout the course of the study, the teachers were very receptive to my presence and went about their duties and activities without much attention to my presence. I feel that the teacher's actions and acceptance of me throughout the study, helped the students begin to recognize me as a part of their classroom and develop a sense of trust of me. Throughout the course of the study, I openly answered questions that children had about my presence in the classroom and what I was doing.

At the beginning of the study, several children were curious about my presence in the classroom and my role. Several children asked "whose mom are you?" or "are you a teacher?" I would respond to the children that I was there to watch them play with their friends and I was not a mom or a teacher in their classroom. As the study progressed, children asked questions about when I would return to their classroom and if I would be there to participate in a special event or activity. Frequently throughout the study children would inquire, "Sylvia, are you watching today?" or "Do you want to play with us again today?"

Another factor I had to consider was the data collection tools I would use throughout the study. In order to keep descriptive field notes, I entered the setting each morning with a clipboard, legal pad, and pen. As my observations began, children asked questions not only about what I was doing, but also why I had a notepad and what I was writing on it. I explained to the children that I was making notes about them and their friends and writing down things about the classroom and what was happening.

Throughout the study at various times, children would ask to see my clipboard or notepad, which I would show them. They would ask "Am I in your book?" I would

answer if I had written something down about them. Children wanted to make entries into the field log also, which I would let them do. My field notes have children's names they wrote and pictures that the children drew. Sometimes, the children would want to write in the pad and take the paper home with them, where they had practiced writing their name or drawing a picture. (See appendix B for examples).

Johnson (1975) explains that a basic requirement for a participant observer is that he or she does not feel excessive personal anxiety becoming close to those studied. While conducting the study and in the company of the children, I was emotionally comfortable. I enjoyed being with children; found it exhilarating and felt I have the ability and desire to listen to them. I looked forward to my observations and time that I spent in the classrooms. I looked forward to the hugs, smiles, and pats and efforts to vie for my attention when I came to the centers. I was not afraid of giving up some of my 'adult status' or dignity. I was not afraid to sit on the floor, go down the slide, dig in the sandbox, or paint with the children. I played with trucks, blocks, and dolls and dug in the sandbox. I slid down the slide, swung and jumped rope. Participating in these activities with the children gave me a deeper understanding of the children's friendships and the cultural rules that governed their behavior.

As the children began to see me as a part of their classroom, they more freely discussed issues related to their friendships and openly interacted with peers during observations of interactions and contexts in which the friendship occurred. This helped me generate a more detailed description and develop a deeper understanding of the friendships.

Types of Participation

My role as an observer in the Head Start classroom fluctuated between passive, moderate, and active participation. Spradley (1980) describes a passive participant as one who is “present at the scene of action but does not participate or interact with other people to any great extent.” (p. 59). A passive participant does not occupy any role in the social situation other than to be a bystander, spectator, or loiterer. Spradley further explains that observations in public places often begin with this kind of detachment. After I became more comfortable with the Head Start centers and the staff and children became more accustomed to me, I moved into the role of moderate participation. Spradley describes moderate participation as seeking to maintain a balance between being an insider and an outsider, between participation and observation. During this stage, I interacted with the children, staff and parents and became more a part of the Head Start classrooms. By this time, the children were used to having me in their classrooms and I was seen as just another person in their class. After developing rapport and trust with the children and staff, I moved into more active participation. Spradley explains that active participants seek to do what other people are doing, not only to be accepted, but also to come to understand the cultural rules for behavior. During this period I participated in the activities with the children and became a part of their games.

Types of Observations

Throughout the course of the study, I conducted descriptive, focused and selective observations. I began data collection for the study with what Spradley (1980) refers to as descriptive observations. During descriptive observations I observed general overall patterns of behavior in the Head Start classrooms. I looked for an overview of the general

routines and activities that took place within the settings. I approached the Head Start classrooms and ongoing activities with only the general question in mind: "What is going on here?" During these observations, I recorded what I saw as overview information of the Head Start classrooms, activities that took place, the schedule, people present, and the overall routine.

Descriptive observations can be further classified as grand tour and mini tour observations. Grand tour observations took place initially and helped me to focus on the major dimensions of the Head Start classrooms. Spradley (1980) describes these nine dimensions as space, actor, activity, object, act, event, time, goal and feeling. Following the grand tour observations, I made what Spradley refers to as mini-tour observations. These observations focus on a smaller unit of experience than the grand tour. Mini-tour observations take a component of a grand tour observation and describe it in more detail. For example, after observing for a few days, and developing an awareness of the overall routine, I began to look at specific routines that took place in the classrooms. So in my field notes, I described whole group instruction including the order of events and behavioral expectations during the group activity.

Once I had developed an awareness and initial understanding of the settings, routines, and people within each setting, I moved into more focused observations. During these focused observations, I looked at specific components of the settings and friendships. I was attempting to collect more specific information and details about both the settings and the relationships. I also conducted selective observations during which time I observed selective friendships, during specific times, or a specific activity or routine in order to gather more detail about the relationship or event observed. As the

observations progressed, I moved from a broad to a very specific focus. Initially I wanted to understand all I could about the setting and people involved. I then became more interested in learning more about the friendships, what the children did together, activities they engaged in with one another, and how they interacted with each other.

Observation Schedule

The study took place over a 15-week period, with observations occurring for three full days per week. In table 1 below, I indicate the dates of observation that were conducted at each center.

Table 1-1. Observation schedule of time spent in each Head Start classroom.

Month	Richmond	Lexington
October	20, 21	
	26, 27, 28	
November	2, 4	3
	10	9, 11
	16, 18	17
	24	25
		30
December	1	2
	7, 9	8
	15	14, 16
January	5	4, 6
	12	11, 13
	19	18, 20
	26	25, 27
May	9, 10	11, 12

I began collecting data on October 20th in Richmond and November 3rd in Lexington. There was a two-week break for Christmas from December 20 until January 3 and observations were completed on January 29. I went to the Head Start classrooms on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday of each week. I rotated and went to Lexington for two days and Richmond for one, and switched the following week. I followed this

rotation until after Christmas, when I went to Lexington for two days each week and Richmond for one to allow for a more equal number of days at each center. The total number of days I spent in the Richmond center was 19 and 18 in the Lexington center.

When I left the two centers in January, I asked the teachers if I could come back toward the end of the school year and see what was happening with the children and both agreed. I thought another dimension of how the friendships had changed over the course of the year, would add strength to my overall study. Therefore, I spent an additional two days in each setting, toward the end of the school year during the week of May 9.

Taking Fieldnotes

During each observation, I took descriptive field notes. I completed what Spradley (1980) refers to as a condensed account, recording phrases, single words and unconnected sentences in an attempt to capture all of the information possible during the observation period. I recorded objective descriptions of the behaviors and interactions between the students. My own personal reflections, comments, or analysis were bracketed in order to separate them from the actual written account of events that occurred.

Following each observation period, within an hour, I reviewed the account and filled in details and recalled information that was not recorded on the spot. I then typed the field notes, printed them and placed them in my notebook. These notes served as an expanded account of the observation (Spradley, 1980).

After the first week of data collection in both locations, I provided copies of my field notes to the teachers and teacher assistants. I explained to them the format that I would follow throughout the course of the study to collect data. I provided them with

copies of the condensed account I completed in each of the classrooms and the accompanying expanded account. I pointed out places throughout the entries where I had made personal comments, asked myself questions, or any analytic information and placed these sections in brackets. Once I explained the format of the notes I would be collecting throughout the course of the study, I asked the teachers and assistants to review the information and write comments, questions, or clarifications that they felt needed to be included in the account. I collected the copies from them the following week. None of the participants had any questions or comments that they made on the field notes I gave them. Two more times throughout the course of the study, I provided the teachers and assistants with copies of the condensed and expanded accounts and ask for feedback, questions, comments or concerns. During both times, the teachers and assistants did not include any questions, comments, and concerns or recommend any changes to the accounts.

Interviews

I conducted open-ended interviews. Fontana and Frey (1994) explain that open-ended interviews are used to understand complex behavior of members of groups without imposing any prior categorization, which may limit the field of inquiry. Interviews were conducted with the teachers, parents, and children. For the adults, interviews lasted from 45 to 90 minutes. The parents' interviews lasted a little over an hour. The teachers' interviews varied in time, between 50 and 90 minutes. The children's interviews lasted between 5 and 15 minutes. Interviews varied for each group of informants, but had some similarities. All interviews used open-ended questions. Each of the interviews began with a general, open-ended question. For example, "Tell me about Beth and Janelle's

relationship.” Subsequent questions were asked to gain more information about the relationship between the students with and without disabilities and to attempt to reveal the meaning of the relationship as viewed by the informants. Each interview was tape-recorded. During the interview I kept anecdotal notes. I recorded any further questions that I could ask the interviewee or things that I could look for during subsequent observations. Following the interview sessions, I transcribed and typed the interviews. These transcripts, along with my notes kept during the interviews, also served as data for further analysis and were placed in my notebook. (See interview protocols in Appendix C)

Interviews with Teachers

The teachers were interviewed twice. The first interview took place toward the beginning of the study to corroborate my selection of participants and focused on an overview of the friendships between children with and without disabilities in their respective classrooms. Teachers were asked to describe the relationships and discuss particular activities in which the pairs engaged. The second interview with the teachers took place toward the end of the study and focused on descriptions of the friendships. Teachers were also asked guiding questions to ascertain their thoughts regarding why the children engage in the relationships and what benefits they felt the children receive from the friendships, and how the relationships have changed over the course of the study.

Interviews with Children

Interviews with the children were conducted toward the end of the study and took place in the children’s Head Start classrooms during periods of free play. Guiding questions for the children were asked in order to explore the child’s perception of the

friendship. I felt that it was important to observe the children for several sessions and then interview them in order to get at their meanings and understanding of the friendship. Questions asked of the students were general questions about their friends, naming their friends, and describing their friendships.

When it came time to conduct interviews, I explained to the children that I wanted to talk to them about their friends and that I was going to record what they said and then we would be able to listen to their voice. Initially, I turned on the recorder and asked the children some very simple questions, like what their names were and where they went to school. I would then play the recording back, so they could hear their voice. This strategy worked well to ease the children's anxiety. The children became involved during the interview talking about their friends, and did not seem to pay attention to the recorder.

Interviews With Young Children: Factors for Consideration

It is important to remember that the children in this study were between the ages of 3 and 5, and their ability to engage in a lengthy, formal interview was somewhat inhibited by their age and developmental level. As Hatch (1990) explains, in an optimal researcher-informant relationship, "the informant becomes an active participant in the research process, recognizing and accepting the role of 'teaching' the ethnographer" (p. 253). There are issues that arise when interviewing young children that may impede the development of such a relationship. According to Hatch, there are four issues that can threaten the quality of interviews with young children: 1) the adult-child problem; 2) the right-answer problem; 3) the pre-operational thought problem; and 4) the self-as-social object problem.

Society and our culture have certain expectations regarding roles that individuals assume. Children generally see adults as authority figures and in positions of power. Children also, within the contexts of classrooms, see adults as teachers. One thing that I did in order to facilitate a more open exchange of ideas between the children and myself and address the issue of roles was to develop relationships with the children (Hatch, 1990). The children needed time to adjust to having another adult in the classroom and by spending time with the children and interacting with them, I hoped to make them begin to feel more comfortable with me and understand my role in the classroom, as I watched them with their friends.

As Hatch (1990) explains, another related issue that may affect the interview process is that young children commonly perceive that there is a 'right' answer to interview questions and strive to provide the correct answer. I monitored my body language and facial expressions during the interview so as to avoid showing any indication that a child's answer was 'right' or 'wrong'. I provided encouragement to the child throughout the interview as answers to questions were given. As Hatch explains, "accepting children's answers is essential if the right-answer phenomenon is to be avoided" (p. 262).

Hatch (1990) further explains that developmental psychologists believe children between the ages of 2 to 7 are operating at a pre-operational stage of development. Pre-operational thought may limit a child's ability to respond in the same manner we would expect from older informants. Some factors that may impact the interview process include egocentrism, the inability to take another person's point of view; complexive thinking, the stringing together of ideas that have no unifying concept; and centering, the

inability to consider more than one aspect of a situation at one time (Hatch). It was crucial for me during the interview process to take all of these factors into consideration and generate questions for the children accordingly. As Hatch states "it is a mistake to expect young children to attend to questions or generate responses that involve complex or abstract relationships" (p. 261). As a researcher I strove to ask questions that the children were capable of answering.

Young children are unable to think of themselves in the same ways that they understand other persons or objects external to them. As Hatch (1990) elaborates, "what seems important here is to emphasize that when children are interviewed concerning events observed in classroom contexts and asked to analyze their own behavior or reflect on their own motives or attitudes, they may not be able to step outside the immediate experience of being themselves and respond as we would hope" (p. 259). Questions I asked the children regarding their friendships were based on concrete experiences that the children had participated in and I had observed throughout the course of the study.

I based the interview questions for the children on observations and included questions about activities the friends engaged in together, conversations between the friends, and contexts in which the friendship exists. Since guiding questions for the children's interviews were based on the actual friendships and issues that arose during observations, I felt it was critical to wait toward the end of the study to complete the interview. After several weeks of observation, I had a better understanding of the children's friendships. Also, the children were more comfortable with me, which helped the interview process.

Interviews with Parents

Parent interviews were conducted in a variety of locations including the Head Start centers, parents' homes, restaurants, places of employment, the University, and with two parents, over the telephone. Interviews were scheduled at the convenience of the parents.

The parents of children with and without disabilities were interviewed one time near the middle of the study, after I began to grasp the friendships. Parents were asked to describe the relationship between their child and a specific friend. Guiding questions were asked in an attempt to reveal the parents' thoughts as to why the children engage in the relationship and the perceived benefits the children receive from the friendship.

Informal Interviews

Besides the more formal open-ended interviews described above, I also engaged in more informal conversations with the participants (the children, teachers, and parents) throughout the course of the study. Data from these conversations and any analytic descriptions were recorded in my field notes. I feel that valuable information was gained from these "conversations" and see them as more naturally occurring conversations between the participants and me.

Several times throughout the course of the study, as I was engaged in observation, children would talk to me as they were playing, or I would ask them questions about their activity. I would ask general questions about what activity the children were playing and they would name the activity or explain the activity to me. For example one day Beth and Krista were playing Titanic and I asked them "What are you guys playing?" and Beth offers "Titanic." "How do you play that?" I questioned further, at which point Beth and

Krista gave an elaborate description of the game and the rules for playing the game. These interactions helped me gain an understanding of the activities that the children engaged in together and also the types of interactions that occurred.

I think that these informal interviews with the children provided tremendous insight into the children's friendships and their perceptions about them. Hatch (1990) outlines a very convincing argument for emphasizing informal rather than formal interviews in studies involving young children. As Hatch explains, the structure of a formal interview emphasizes the superior power of the researcher. The researcher makes all of the decisions regarding the interview, including choosing the place and time, directing the action, asking the questions, and recording the responses. The child may perceive the interview process as a one-on-one testing session, which may lead to children striving to give the right answer to interview questions (Hatch). In informal settings, actions of the children were the starting point of an interaction that had a contextual base in their reality. It was easier to ask children to explain their actions immediately after they occurred than to ask them at a later time to recall the situation.

Fieldwork Journal

Aside from field notes that I took during observations and interviews, I kept a journal. I recorded my experiences, ideas, fears, mistakes, confusions, breakthroughs, and problems that arose during the course of my study. I maintained the journal throughout the course of the study. Entries were made following observations or interviews with the study participants or after analysis and writing took place and were placed in a section in my notebook. Spradley (1980) explains that a journal represents the personal side of fieldwork and it includes reactions to informants and the feelings

sensed from others. Although I bracketed my personal feelings throughout field notes and interview transcripts, the journal was a place for me to react openly to the day, events and interactions with people. By putting down feelings about events, I was able to identify some biases and remain cognizant of my role as an observer.

By utilizing a variety of data collection methods, I gained a holistic view and deeper understanding of the children and their friendships. Through participant observation, I began to uncover the meaning of the friendships between the children with and without disabilities. Interviews with the children helped to provide descriptions of the friendships from my understanding of the children's perspectives of friendships. Adult interviews revealed other influences on the child's life including parent perceptions, attitudes, and teacher beliefs. Observations of the children allowed me to watch the children as they interacted with one another and made meaning in their lives in the social context of the Head Start classrooms.

Data Analysis

Data collection and analysis were not two distinct phases throughout my study. As the data was collected, analysis began and continued throughout the course of the study. Analysis was inductive and moved from looking at specific pieces and parts of the scenes and friendships, to developing an overview and understanding of the friendships observed. Various types of analysis were conducted including identifying domains, analyzing taxonomic structure, searching for characteristics, and discovering themes. All of these data analysis procedures are described below along with a description of the purpose of each form of analysis.

Making a Domain Analysis

I initially started collecting data through descriptive observations looking for an overview of the settings, and general information about the children and their friendships. As I began to collect data through observations, my field notes continued to grow and I needed to make sense of the information collected. I began looking for some meaning in the data by conducting a domain analysis. Domain analysis is a way of breaking down large amounts of information into smaller pieces or categories (Spradley, 1980).

A cultural domain is a category of cultural meaning that includes other smaller categories. Domains are made up of three basic elements: a cover term, included terms, and a semantic relationship. A cover term is a name for a cultural domain; included terms are the names of all the smaller categories inside the domain, and the semantic relationship links the two categories together. For example I identified feeding babies as a kind of play activity in the housekeeping center. In this example, "feeding babies" is an included term, "is a kind of" is the semantic relationship and "play activity in the housekeeping center" is a cover term.

In order to conduct domain analysis, I continually looked at 10 different possible semantic relationships that exist. These ten possible relationships are strict inclusion, spatial, cause-effect, rationale, location for action, function, means-end, sequence, attribution, and temporal. I initially chose a single semantic relationship, strict inclusion and prepared a domain analysis worksheet (see Appendix D for an example of a strict inclusion domain worksheet). Once I had selected the semantic relationship strict inclusion, I reviewed field notes and looked for anything that would fall in this category. I began compiling a master domain list, through which I was able to track relationships I

had discovered and what remained to be analyzed (See Appendix E for a sample of a working domain list).

I then repeated the search for meanings using a different semantic relationship, spatial and described many of the areas in the classrooms and outside (See Appendix F for an example of a spatial domain worksheet). These helped me to know when and where to observe the children engaging in specific activities. Domain analysis continued throughout the study as new data were collected. Every few days, I looked back at categories and added to existing domains, or found new ones. I continued to go back to field notes throughout study and search for included and cover terms for all ten relationships.

As I continued to collect data and conduct domain analysis, I was discovering small pieces of information about the friendships. The domain lists were growing larger as I kept adding more to the domains. I wanted to know how all of the information within the domains was structured, so I began to look at how the domains were organized.

Selecting a Focus and Focused Observations

Moving from descriptive to focused observations, I developed what Spradley (1980) refers to as a focus, looked at related components of the classroom cultures and relationships, and studied them in detail. A focus is a single cultural domain or a few related domains and the relationship of these domains to the rest of the cultural scene.

Selecting a focus helped me to limit the scope of my study while maintaining a holistic viewpoint. In order to select my focus I began with several cultural domains that appeared related that would help me to achieve my overall goal of understanding the

friendships studied. I looked back at expanded domain lists and this helped me to see what was somewhat related. I then looked at a sample of field note entries and searched for possible cover terms and included terms that fit the relationship. The domains selected for focus were inclusion, means-end, characteristics, and rationale (See Appendix G for a list of the domains selected and initial analysis).

Once a focus was selected, I developed structural questions that helped guide my observations. These questions made use of the semantic relationship of the domain, for example "What are all of the kinds of affection that Abby and Ingrid display with one another?" By applying a structural questions from each domain during observations, I was able to continue to discover more examples, or kinds of affection that Abby and Ingrid displayed with one another, which helped me to develop an understanding of the various friendships.

Taxonomic Analysis

A taxonomy is a set of categories that are organized on the basis of a single semantic relationship. It shows the relationship among things inside a cultural domain by creating subcategories inside the domain for organizing the information. The taxonomy shows the relationships among all of the included terms in a domain, and reveals subsets and the way they are related to the whole. Spradley (1980) explains that taxonomies have at least 2 different levels, cover terms and included terms. A cover term may be "kinds of affection," and included terms might be hugging, kissing, and holding hands.

The domains that I had selected for my focus were also selected for taxonomic analysis. Initially, I looked for similarities among the included terms in a single domain. Once any similarities were identified, I searched for additional included terms by

applying a structural question to each included term within the domain. I then constructed a tentative taxonomy and conducted more focused observations to check out the taxonomy and made any necessary modifications. Once observations were complete, I constructed a complete taxonomy (See Appendix H for a complete taxonomy of the inclusion domain).

Now, I had units of meaning and how the information was organized. I wanted more specifics about the relationships and what made the relationships different or unique, so I moved into selective observations and conducting interviews.

Selective Observations and Interviews

As I began to develop an understanding of the social situation and particular activities and events that took place within the various Head Start classrooms, I began to develop an understanding of the friendships in which the children were involved. I wanted to spend time observing specific relationships, during specific activities and ask various participants about the friendships in order to discover all I could about the relationships.

It was from these selective observations and interviews that I developed a deeper understanding of the friendships in which the children were involved and was able to develop an awareness of the diversity among the observed relationships. Also during this period of data collection, I also conducted interviews with the children, their parents, and teachers. The interviews revealed further characteristics of the relationships. These interviews highlighted not only similarities, but also differences among the children's relationships.

Inventory of Characteristics

As interviews and selective observations began, I began to organize the information into a table (see Appendix I for a completed characteristics table). Through observations, I had identified several characteristics about the children and their relationships. However, as I organized the data, areas about the friendships remained unclear. These points helped define my interview questions. I had identified some characteristics of friendships in general through observing and listening to the children, but also wanted to corroborate these words with the participants.

I also wanted to contrast the various friendships and characteristics. As . . . interviews and selective observations were conducted, I looked back over interview transcripts and field notes from observations and added to my table. I listed characteristics that had emerged throughout the course of the study, from the observations, interviews, domain, and taxonomic analysis for each of the children involved. This helped me develop an awareness of the individual children and their friendships. Some common characteristics were emerging from the data that could be used to describe the children's relationships. I was interested not only in the individual characteristics of the children, but also in the commonalties and differences among the friendship pairs and what holds all of these similarities and differences together. I began searching for themes. The themes are what let us answer questions about friendships and meaning within the cultural context of the two Head Start classrooms.

Cultural Themes

In order to discover themes that were tying all of the information about each of the children and their friendships together, I immersed myself in the culture and the data.

I had been out of the classrooms for three months and continued analyzing data and writing. I returned to each of the Head Start classrooms for 2 consecutive days. Once observations were complete, I spent several hours reviewing field notes from throughout the study, interview transcripts, and analysis. As I immersed myself not only in the data, but also in the culture, themes began to emerge.

I looked for general patterns across the pairs of children that revealed cultural meaning they ascribe to words, actions, and objects. I tell the story of the six children by revealing how the children defined friendship, how they spent time with their friends, and how they acted toward and with their friends. The general notion that seemed to tie everything together was what friendship means.

Methodological Issues

There are several factors that are taken into account when considering the goodness or quality of a qualitative inquiry. As Guba and Lincoln (1994) explain, a goal of qualitative research is to report trustworthy findings. In order to establish trustworthiness with the participants and readers, I have done several things throughout the course of my study. I spent a 15-week period in the field, collected data from several sources, and utilized a variety of methods. In order to deal with my bias, I bracketed personal information throughout my field notes, and maintained a fieldwork journal. In my report I thoroughly discuss the data collection and analysis procedures that I followed. Findings that are reported and conclusions that are drawn are based on several data sources and numerous examples are provided to demonstrate the connection between the data and the conclusion drawn. Trustworthiness can be broken into various components including credibility, transferability, and confirmability. In the following

section I address the issues of credibility, transferability, and confirmability as they relate to my study. This material is followed by a description of the triangulation of data and how this strengthens this study's overall trustworthiness.

Credibility refers to accurately reporting events that take place at the observation site and accurately reporting the participants' views (Lincoln & Guba, 1994). By being in the field over a fifteen-week period and spending entire school days in the various Head Start classrooms, I formed a more accurate picture of what was going on in the classrooms and settings. I began to recognize patterns of events and interactions that took place in those settings and these helped focus my study. I also collected data from multiple sources, including observations and interviews to help check for accuracy in my findings.

In order to establish credibility with the adult participants, I took my work back to the adult participants and made the transcripts of interviews and information from field notes available to them for review (Lincoln & Guba, 1994). I provided teachers and parents with copies of their interview transcripts for review. I asked them to provide any written feedback or comments on the transcripts and to provide any additional information in order to clarify or expand on any comments that they had made throughout the interview. The participants made no changes or clarifications to the transcripts. Two parents did not return their transcripts within the week deadline, so I followed up with a phone call to them. Both indicated that they had no questions, comments, or any additions to the transcripts. My field notes were made available to the teachers and teacher assistants for review three times throughout the course of the study as described previously in the section on taking field notes. In order to help enhance the credibility of

explanations I present in my text, I have utilized excerpts from my field notes and the words of the participants to describe and present meanings and understandings of the relationships.

Some would argue that the purpose of research and inquiry is to generate solutions to problems that can be applied to other similar situations, or that are generalizable (Janesick, 1994). As a qualitative researcher in Head Start classrooms, I was not interested in the future replication of my study. I was interested and concerned with the individuals whom participated in my study and the meaning in their lives. I would hope that as someone reads my work, they filter out what they can and cannot use, and take the information and apply it to a new situation. As I present my understanding of the friendships between children with and without disabilities, it is from a perspective. Ideally, this understanding will provide a lens someone else can use to look at friendships between children with and without disabilities.

Lincoln and Guba (1994) describe confirmability as similar to objectivity. In qualitative research, the researcher is involved in all aspects of data collection and analysis. The researcher in qualitative methodology is seen as the instrument through which interpretations are made and reported. I brought with me my own set of personal beliefs and biases, which could not be fully separated from the research process. What I did in an effort to manage the influence of my knowledge, perspective, and biases was to bracket my own personal feelings, interpretations, ideas or questions throughout the course of the study. I reminded myself, while in the research setting, of my role as a researcher. I attempted to suspend any interpretation or preconceived ideas that I had about friendships between children with and without disabilities throughout the course of

the study. I also maintained a personal field journal throughout the study, which served as a place to record thoughts, questions, feelings, initial interpretations and other personal information. Bracketing, keeping a fieldwork journal, and making a conscious effort to remind myself of my role as a researcher all served to help me remain aware of my biases about the friendships and social situations that I observed throughout the study.

As Lincoln and Guba (1994) explain, other ways to address the issue of confirmability are to thoroughly discuss and explain the steps in the data collection and analysis processes. In previous sections of this chapter I have done this. I address issues of site and participant selection, data collection, and analysis. Throughout the study, there are several examples from field notes, interviews, and analysis provided to the reader to help provide a detailed description of the data collection and analysis.

Triangulation is the reliance on several kinds of methods or data in an attempt to ensure the accuracy of the research. Triangulation has been described by Denzin (1978) to include the use of a variety of data sources, different researchers, multiple theoretical perspectives to interpret a set of data, and multiple methods to study a single problem. I collected data from several sources and through various methods. The participants in the study included the children engaged in the friendships, the parents, and their teachers. I also collected data through a variety of methods. I employed participant observation and interview methodology in the study. These two methods produced both descriptive field notes and interview transcripts. I maintained a fieldwork journal and bracketed interpretations, questions, or analysis during the interview process and while taking descriptive field notes. Aside from collecting data from various sources and utilizing a variety of methods, I made the transcripts of the interviews available for review by the

adult participants, and provided them with various copies of field notes throughout the course of the study. Throughout my study I collected data from various sources and used a variety of methods in collection and analysis of the data. These materials and various techniques of collection and analysis help lay the foundation for reporting trustworthy results that were credible, transferable, and confirmable.

In sum, the process of achieving trustworthiness is built on credibility, transferability, and confirmability. I sought to attain these standards of trustworthiness through the process of triangulation of data. In part I used multiple perspectives (teachers, parents, and children) direct observation, interviews, and participant confirmability of field notes and analysis as data sources.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

My purpose in undertaking this study was to understand and describe the friendships between preschool aged children with and without disabilities. I feel that the best way to portray the friendships to readers is to describe the pairs of children I studied and then present the general patterns or characteristics of their individual relationships. In order to aid the reader in developing an understanding of the six friendships, at the time of this study, I have developed a framework that will be utilized to help tell the children's stories. For each pair, I begin to tell the stories of the friendships by introducing the individual children. Following this introduction, I describe the friendships the children were involved in, describe factors that influence the friendships, discuss the benefits derived from their friendships, and conclude with a discussion of how the friendships have changed over the course of the study.

The children's stories reveal many ideas about the friendships, how they work and why they are important in their lives. It is from these stories that the general patterns of friendship emerged. These patterns will help us to begin to understand the meaning of friendship to the children as revealed through their words and actions. The descriptions of the friendships are drawn from the words and actions of the participants and based on data collected through participant observations and interviews. In order to hear the participants' voices and ideas, a number of quotes and excerpts from my field notes are used.

Each of the children chosen to participate in the study brought a certain spark, ideas and notions, as they revealed the meaning and importance of friendship to them.

Each had unique contributions and ideas that added to the depth of the study and my overall understanding of friendships in general and specifically with preschool-aged children with disabilities.

Abby and Ingrid

"Some people come into our lives, leave footprints on our hearts, and we are never the same." Unknown

Abby is a 4 -year-old Caucasian female. Aside from attending Head Start, Abby attends "special needs" preschool during the afternoon after Head Start. Abby is diagnosed as developmentally delayed, showing scores below the mean on standardized assessments in the areas of cognitive, communication, social emotional, and adaptive functioning. Abby is a quiet and soft-spoken child. She is rather thin and lanky and has blonde hair and big blue eyes. She often wears a pair of overalls with a "Tweety Bird" embroidered on the front. She carries a Tweety Bird backpack and her favorite stuffed animal, which usually accompanies her to Head Start, is a Tweety Bird. This is Abby's first year in the Lexington Head Start classroom.

Abby is the older of two children and resides with her mother and younger brother in a mobile home park. Abby's mother has been diagnosed with a terminal illness and Abby has missed some school throughout the course of the study to stay home with her mom. At this point, Abby's mom is unable to work, so she remains at home and does some volunteer work at the Head Start center as her health allows. Her mother voices concern over her illness and what will happen to her children after her death.

In the morning, throughout my observations, Abby would greet both Liz and Lynn, the teacher and assistant teacher with a hug before putting her belongings away.

After putting her items away and preparing for breakfast, Abby would greet college students, myself or other visitors, with hugs or pats on the back. Some of Abby's favorite activities are art activities, cooking activities and spending time in the housekeeping center.

Ingrid is a 4-year-old Caucasian female. Ingrid appears to be of average height and weight for her age. She has extremely long blondish brown hair, which she usually wears with some type of barrette or ribbon. Ingrid is an outgoing and sociable child and has been described as "bubbly" by her teachers. Ingrid seems to be a perceptive child and tunes in to other children quite readily. She can often be seen helping younger children negotiate for toys or a turn on the computer and frequently encouraging children to complete activities. She is the first to congratulate a peer when he or she wins a race or receives special recognition from the teacher.

Ingrid is also one of two children and resides with her mother and younger brother. Her mother works at a local grocery store in the delicatessen. This is Ingrid's first year in Head Start.

Ingrid enjoys interacting with a variety of peers at the Head Start center and seems to get along well with them. She enjoys cooking activities, art, and spending time in the housekeeping center. Ingrid is an affectionate child with both peers and staff.

The Friendship

Abby and Ingrid's mothers report that this is both of the girls' first friendship. The two girls were seen in each other's company throughout the study and were reported to spend time with each other in one another's homes in the afternoons. Both parents indicate that the two girls talk about one another at home quite frequently and share

stories of what they did at school that day during free play or center time. The girls enjoyed playing with the babies, spending time in the housekeeping area, engaging in role-play or dramatic play, outside activities, finger puppets, reading, and stencils.

Characteristics that are highlighted to describe Abby and Ingrid's friendship are affection, being nice to one another, liking one another, showing a desire to spend time with each other, and having fun with one another.

Being Affectionate with One Another

Abby and Ingrid were seen together frequently throughout the course of the study and were affectionate with one another. It was not uncommon to see the two girls with their arms around one another, patting each other on the back, holding hands, or hugging one another. Often times, Abby and Ingrid would enter the classroom from the bus, meals or outside activities with their arms around one another or holding each other's hands.

Affection was an important factor in their friendship as we see in the following excerpts from my field notes and interviews. The children are preparing to return to the classroom from breakfast.

Lynn begins calling names of children to line up. Ingrid is in front of Abby in line and turns around and faces her. Ingrid reaches over and hugs Abby. Abby leans her head on Ingrid's shoulder. The group begins walking down the hallway, Abby and Ingrid walk hand in hand.

Abby and Ingrid were in the same morning small group together and were usually seen sitting next to one another and holding hands or placing their arms around one another. In the scenario below, the students had returned from the lunchroom and were making their way to the carpet for small group.

As the children enter the classroom, Abby goes to the group area and sits down. A few minutes later, Ingrid walks over to the carpet and sits down beside Abby. The girls wait with their arms around one another for Liz to begin the group activity.

Not only were the girls seen holding hands during small group, it was also common for the two girls to sit next to one another and hold hands throughout large group activities.

Liz was finishing up large group and began calling names of students to go down to the lunchroom. Abby and Ingrid were seated on the back row, next to one another and holding hands.

Besides holding hands or placing their arms around one another, often times Abby and Ingrid would hug one another while they were engaged in an activity together.

The two girls were making Christmas cards for their mothers and busy chatting about the presents they had asked for and what Santa was going to bring them.

Ingrid looks over at the card Abby has made. "That's pretty Abby!" and hugs her. "Thanks" Abby replies.

Other times, I saw the girls enter an area where the other was playing and hug their friend, as we see below when Abby enters the housekeeping area where Ingrid is engaged in play with two other girls.

Ingrid is playing with the dolls. She and two other girls are pretending to bathe and dress them as they prepare to go to work. Abby walks into the area and Ingrid says "hi". "Hi" responds Abby and walks over to Ingrid and hugs her.

Ingrid pats Abby on the back. "So, you gonna do this with us?" questions Ingrid.

“Sure” replies Abby.

Abby and Ingrid were seen throughout the course of the study with their arms around one another, hugging one another, touching one another, or spending time in close proximity with one another. Physical contact and affection were a factor in Abby and Ingrid’s friendship.

Being Nice to One Another

For Abby and Ingrid, being nice to one another was a fundamental factor in their friendship. The two girls were nice to one another in a variety of ways including sharing materials and helping each other. When discussing their relationship with me, Ingrid reveals that she thinks that Abby is nice to her because she plays with her and also helps her.

When I asked Ingrid to tell me about her friendship with Abby, she states, “We are nice to each other.” I inquired how she and Abby were nice to one another and Ingrid explained, “We play together and help each other.” I talked with Ingrid about how she and Abby help one another: “What does Abby do to help you?” Ingrid responds, “When I couldn’t make the card. Abby helped me”

Aside from assistance with projects, Ingrid reveals that Abby helps her by giving her items that she needs. “. . . And yeah, one time I needed a Band-Aid and she gave me one of hers.”

Abby would not only do nice things for Ingrid, but also these acts of kindness were reciprocated frequently, as we see in the excerpt below when Ingrid secures a Sit and Spin for Abby.

Abby and Ingrid are standing near the rack with the sit and spins . . . Abby has her

hand up to retrieve a sit and spin. Another little boy reaches up and takes the sit and spin as Lynn hands it down. Abby looks at him somewhat bewildered. Lynn begins to hand another piece of equipment down off the rack and Ingrid reaches up and grabs the Sit and Spin and sits it on the ground "there you go, Abby".

Abby did not ask Ingrid to retrieve the sit and spin for her, but Ingrid did and placed the equipment beside Abby. It was not as if Ingrid was looking for recognition or accolades when she got the piece of equipment for Abby, it was just a natural part of their relationship.

I saw several incidents when Abby performed nice deeds for Ingrid also. One day at breakfast, Ingrid's table ran out of applesauce and Abby offered some from her table.

Ingrid had asked Annette for some more applesauce and Annette tells Ingrid that she doesn't have anymore and she could ask another table. Abby picks up the bowl of applesauce from her table and walks to the cart where Ingrid is standing with Annette. Abby offers her bowl of applesauce to Ingrid and says, "here Ingrid we have some you can have". Ingrid thanks Abby for the bowl and carries it back to her table.

Before Ingrid could ask another table for some of their applesauce, Abby offers the applesauce from her table to Ingrid.

Throughout the study, the children participated in making a variety of special treats like cookies, biscuits, fudge, and root beer floats. One day the students were making root beer floats with Lynn and Abby makes sure that Ingrid is included in the activity.

Lynn was in the classroom next to the computer, she did not announce that she was making floats [I guess she was going to surprise the children]. Abby was at the writing table when Lynn began making floats. She moved over to the table, stood in line with a few other children and got her float. She then walked out of the classroom. A few minutes later, she returned with Ingrid in tow, hand in hand. Abby stood in line with Ingrid, who retrieved her float and the two of them went to the reading area and sat down and ate their floats.

Liking One Another

Abby's and Ingrid's parents discussed how both girls talk about one another at home. Abby's mom reveals that Abby talks about Ingrid at home and tells her mom what they did at school, "She talks about Ingrid a lot. She says 'we have fun!' Tomorrow I go to school and see Ingrid." Abby is not only talking about her friend Ingrid at home but also discussing with her mom that she will get to see Ingrid upon her return to school the following day.

Ingrid's mom adds, "Ingrid talks about Abby all the time. She tells me what they did, how much fun they had. They really like each other. They spend a lot of time with each other at school and also at our houses. They get along great!"

Abby and Ingrid's parents were aware of their daughter's friendship not only because they played at one another's homes, but also because their daughters talked about their friends at home. Their parents articulated that their daughters liked one another.

The concept of Abby and Ingrid liking one another also became evident during conversations I had with both Ingrid and Abby. While I was talking with Ingrid about her friendship with Abby she offers, "We like each other." Abby echoed this same

sentiment during a conversation we had about her friends. I asked Abby what she could tell me about Ingrid and she replied, "Well, we like each other. We do stuff together."

Both Abby and Ingrid articulated that they liked one another to both their parents and me. The girls' parents explained that they know their daughters liked one another because they talked about each other at home and also they played at each other's houses.

Wanting to Spend Time With One Another

Abby and Ingrid spent a lot of time together over the course of the study and across a variety of activities. It became obvious throughout the course of the study that Abby and Ingrid wanted to spend time with one another. The girls would engage in the same activities, ask the other to do a specific activity with them, or ask a teacher or adult if they could spend time together.

At times, Abby or Ingrid would look around the classroom for the other one and then move to that area and join in the activity with a friend as we see in the scenario below when Ingrid moves to the housekeeping center after completing an art project.

Ingrid is in the art center, finishing up a necklace. After putting items away she scans the room and looks over in the housekeeping center where Abby is playing with 2 other girls. The girls are pretending, rolling out dough, and cutting it out with cookie cutters. Ingrid enters the housekeeping center, picks up an apron, puts it on, and begins to cut out star shapes with the cutter.

Aside from moving to a specific area to be with one another, Abby and Ingrid would move playthings, or toys to be close to each other. In the scenario below, Abby and Ingrid are playing outside on the sit and spins and decide to move from the sidewalk

to the grass. When Abby does not move as far away from the sidewalk as Ingrid, Ingrid retrieves Abby's toy and places it next to hers.

Abby carries her Sit and Spin a little ways onto the grass and sits it down. Ingrid carries hers further and sits it down. She looks around for Abby who is standing next to her Sit and Spin. Ingrid walks over and picks up Abby's toy and carries it to where hers is and sits it next to hers. Abby follows Ingrid to the toys. The two of them begin spinning.

Sometimes, the girls would ask each other to engage in a specific activity as we see below when Abby asks Ingrid to make cards with her.

Ingrid is playing in the housekeeping center and Abby walks over to her, "hey do you wanna do the cards today?" "Yeah." Ingrid responds. Abby adds "O.K. Great let's go." The two of them head off hand in hand to the art center.

Ingrid also asked Abby to participate in specific activities with her. The two girls are sitting at the lunch table waiting to eat and Ingrid asks Abby to play the flags with her.

Ingrid says "remember the other day we did the flags. I liked that, let's do it again, wanna?" "Sure" Abby replies "I'm gonna get a purple one this time." "Yea" Ingrid adds and "I'll do pink. Pink is my best color." Ingrid puts her arm around Abby's shoulder and squeezes and giggles. Abby begins giggling. The two of them continue giggling.

Not only did the girls ask one another to engage in specific activities, but at times would also ask Liz if they could sit together. The students had assigned seats during meal times and often Abby or Ingrid would ask if they could sit together during a meal.

In the excerpt below, we will see an example of this as Abby asks Liz if she and Ingrid can sit together at lunch.

Liz was finishing up the large group activity for the day and beginning to call names of children to wash their hands to get ready for lunch. Liz calls Ingrid's name. Hand in hand Abby and Ingrid walk up to Liz. And Abby says "Liz, we wanna eat by each other today, can we?" Liz responds "sure, just let Annette know that I said it was O.K."

Not only did Abby and Ingrid ask Liz if they could sit together during meal times, the girls would also ask one another if they would like to sit by each other for group activities. In the scenario below Ingrid asks Abby if she will sit next to her during small group. The children are lined up waiting to return to the classroom and Ingrid and Abby are standing in line next to one another.

Ingrid asks Abby "are you gonna sit by me?" "Sure responds Abby". Ingrid grabs Abby and hugs her. The two girls begin giggling as they wait for the line to move down the hallway.

Abby and Ingrid demonstrated their desire to spend time with one another in a variety of ways. The girls would engage in the same activities with one another, ask each other to do a specific activity with them, or ask the teacher for permission to sit next to one another during meal times.

Having Fun

Abby and Ingrid were seen frequently laughing and giggling with each other or smiling throughout the day and across activities. The enjoyment that the girls received from spending time with one another is demonstrated in the scenario below as Abby and

Ingrid are washing their hands and getting ready to go to lunch.

After they have washed their hands, they go down the hallway toward the kitchen, arm in arm and giggling. As they enter the lunchroom they are cordially greeted by Annette "hi girls, how are you today?" Ingrid "we are great. Liz said we can eat together today." Annette "O.K. let's get your two chairs moved together then." Abby gives Ingrid an excited squeeze and the two of them follow Annette to the table where she has placed their chairs.

Abby and Ingrid also enjoyed the time they spent together in various activities including playing on the playground. In the scenario below, the class has walked over to the elementary school and is on the playground. Abby and Ingrid are on the spinning wheel with several other children and a teacher's aide is pushing them.

Abby is holding onto the bar with both hands and facing Ingrid, who is also holding on. The teacher's aide begins pushing and the children begin laughing and screaming. The aide continues to push for a few minutes and then lets the equipment slow down. As the wheel slows down, Ingrid looks at Abby and begins giggling. Abby is smiling at her and begins to laugh.

Not only did Abby and Ingrid spend time together at Head Start playing, but they also spent time together playing at each other's houses, as Abby's mom describes, "They get along well with each other when they are at the house. They play Barbie dolls, dress up, get into mom's make up. They tried to plug my curling iron in. (mom laughs) they do all kinds of stuff. They have fun!"

Factors that Influence the Friendship

Several factors influenced Abby and Ingrid's friendship, including proximity, similar interests, and their mother's relationship. During an interview with me, Liz discusses proximity and similar interests as having an impact on Abby and Ingrid's friendship. When talking with me about proximity, Liz explains "well, the girls are in the same small group, so they do have the opportunity to spend time with one another. So, I think because they spent time in small group, it helped them begin a friendship, and then moved on to other activities together."

Liz also reveals that similar interests may have also affected the development of Abby and Ingrid's relationship. "Both girls really like to do a lot of the same stuff. They like to play in the dramatic play area and the art area especially. I think just doing those things together um, liking some of the same activities probably brought them together."

Another factor aside from proximity and similar interests in Abby and Ingrid's relationship seems to be the fact that their mothers are friends. Abby's mom discusses her friendship with Ingrid's mother and how she feels their relationship impacts their daughters' friendship.

Well Ingrid's mom and I are friends. We do some stuff together and we have Ingrid over to the house. When we go to the grocery store, Abby sees Ingrid's mom working and sees us talking and stuff. I think Abby feels real comfortable with Ingrid and her mom maybe because we are friends too. We didn't know that Abby and Ingrid were going to be in the same Head Start. See we met before, at the safe house. [Abby's mom pauses. She averts her eyes from mine, looking

down at the table. I was trying to decide if I should ask her to explain more about the safe house and she looked back up, with tears in her eyes and continued]

So, on the first day when I took Abby to school and saw Ingrid and Mary, I was excited to see her again and Abby was very happy to have a friend there too.

For Abby and Ingrid proximity, similar interests and parental factors all seem to have influenced the development and maintenance of their friendship

Benefits of the Friendship

Both Abby and Ingrid have benefited from their friendship in a variety of ways, including having a friend and a companion. The girls' parents discuss the importance of their daughters' friendships with one another.

In her friendship with Ingrid, Abby has the opportunity to have a friendship with a child her age, which seems to please Abby tremendously. As her mother explains, "She is really happy; I have to say that she is really happy. Before, she was never around kids but her brother and she never got along with kids and she was scared to be around kids until she started school. So, mainly to have a friendship."

Ingrid's mom explains that for Ingrid, having a friend is a great benefit to her daughter. "She counts on Abby being there (at school). She knows that she will have somebody to play with that likes the stuff she likes. Abby is there for her, I think Ingrid depends on that."

The friendship provided other opportunities for the girls also, including access and inclusion to materials and activities. In the scenario below, we see how Abby and Ingrid's friendship was the basis for Ingrid's acceptance into the housekeeping area and assimilation into the established activity. Abby and three other girls are playing in the

housekeeping area pretending to get ready to go to work.

Ingrid walks over to the center and asks "hat are you doing?" One of the girls responds "you can't come in here. We have enough people already." Abby responds, "yea she can, she's my friend." The little girl rebuts "but we have enough people." Abby quickly says "but we don't have a baby-sitter." Another girl adds "you were gonna be the baby-sitter Abby member?" Abby "yea, well Ingrid can help me then." The little girl shrugs her shoulders.

Aside from these shared benefits, Abby and Ingrid also received various individual benefits from their friendship including developing social skills, giving and receiving affection, and becoming a role model to other children.

Abby's mother reveals that she feels her daughter's friendship with Ingrid has taught her some important skills, including sharing and being polite, which have helped her develop as she explains, "Abby learns to share a lot. Politeness. She has learned a lot from Ingrid, being polite. Thank you mom. She has really changed. She has grown up a lot. She doesn't seem like my baby anymore."

Aside from the opportunity to develop and practice important social skills, Liz talks about how Abby benefits from the affection that Ingrid provides her.

Um, well I would say that I think like for Abby, Ingrid was a benefit to her because of Ingrid's qualities to give and with Abby needing some of that and where Ingrid is you know the real affectionate, comforting type and I think that's something that Abby could thrive off of too.

Besides the opportunity to develop and practice social skills and receiving affection, Abby's mom discusses the idea that her daughter's relationship with Ingrid

provides her with a certain closeness that she does not experience with other relationships. Abby's mom explains the closeness that Abby and Ingrid share with one another, "Ingrid's friendship means a lot to her (Abby). It is almost like they are sisters. Ingrid has a little sister, but Abby doesn't and she wants one, but I can't have one. They are like sisters."

Ingrid also receives many benefits from her relationship with Abby, including becoming a role model. Liz explains that Ingrid's relationship with Abby has helped Ingrid to become a role model to other children.

Um, I think maybe you know it could be that satisfaction of being that bigger role model or that older role model for Abby. Not that she is older, but just um, kinda has more of that nature to, Ingrid seems to help Abby along socially sometimes. Abby is very soft spoken, so sometimes I think it really helps her to have a friend like Ingrid that is more outgoing. Um, Abby is just soft spoken and easy to be a friend with.

Abby has learned some important skills from her friendship with Ingrid and benefits from having a friend and a companion. Ingrid enjoys being a role model for Abby and depends on their relationship for companionship.

Friendships Change, Grow, and Develop

Abby and Ingrid's friendship has changed throughout the course of the study. Both Abby and Ingrid have developed relationships with other children, but still spend time with one another. For both Abby and Ingrid, their friendship has been a support for both of them and has helped them develop other relationships, as Liz explains.

I think um at the beginning of the year, that both of the girls were really shy and

quiet. They do have similar dispositions and I think this helped them become friends with one another. As the year went on, I think their friendship gave both of them confidence to make friends with other kids. Because now, they play together and spend time with each other, but it's not just one another. They both have other friends, which is great. I think they depend on their friendship. They know it is always going to be there, but it's O.K. to have other friends too.

When I talked with Abby about her friendship with Ingrid and any new friendships that she has developed, Abby articulates "I like to play with Caitlin and Tia and Ingrid, they are my friends." When I asked her what she did with her friends she makes a differentiation between activities she does with Caitlin and Tia and activities that she does with Ingrid. "I play dolls with Caitlin and Tia" but when we talked about activities with Ingrid, Abby articulates, "I do lots of stuff with Ingrid. We eat, play teacher and stuff."

Abby is able to make a differentiation in the time that she spends with Ingrid and her other friends. She articulates that she eats and does other activities with Ingrid and plays dolls with the two other little girls.

Like Abby, Ingrid differentiates her friendship with Abby from other friendships that she has developed. When talking about her friendship with Abby, Ingrid explains "I play with her the most. We have fun." When asked to explain why she plays with Abby the most Ingrid articulates "Cause I want to and we like each other and I know her the longest."

Abby also makes some differentiation among the activities that she engages in with Abby and other friends. Ingrid explains that she does a variety of activities with

Abby including “Barbies, puzzles, cooking, dolls” and with her other friends she plays “school.” I asked Ingrid why she and Abby did all of those things together and she responded “We like each other.”

Ingrid articulates that she is friends with Abby and also other children now. She indicates some differences between her and Abby’s relationship and her relationships with the other girls. Ingrid stresses that she and Abby like one another and have known each other the longest. Ingrid discusses a variety of activities that she engages in with Abby including routines and child chosen activities.

Although Abby and Ingrid have developed relationships with other children, they both still recognize one another as friends. The two girls articulate subtle differences between their relationships with one another and other children. Both of the girls differentiate between activities that they do with each other and their other friends. The girls spend time with their other friends primarily engaged in some type of play activity, and time with one another across activities and settings.

Michael and Daniel

“Don’t walk in front of me, I may not follow. Don’t walk behind me, I may not lead. Just walk beside me and be my friend.” Albert Camus

Michael is a 5-year-old Caucasian male. Michael has blondish brown hair and brown eyes. Michael is a quiet child in groups, but comes out of his shell and becomes more talkative, with smaller numbers of people. Michael can be seen throughout the classroom engaging in a variety of activities, but by far the thing he spends the most time with is the computer. Liz limits the amount of time that Michael spends on the computer daily, so he will interact with other children and develop skills in other targeted areas.

Michael is recognized as the classroom computer expert and whenever a child has a question, about a game or how to do something on the computer, he or she will ask Michael. Michael is diagnosed as developmentally delayed, showing scores below the mean on standardized assessments in the areas of cognitive, communication, and social emotional. His speech is often times difficult to understand, but Daniel is usually nearby to interpret to inexperienced adults or children who cannot understand Michael. This is Michael's first year in Head Start.

Michael is the older of two children and resides with his mother, stepfather, and a younger brother. Michael's stepfather is unemployed. His mother attends classes at a local university and is undecided at this time about her career choice.

Daniel is a 5-year-old Caucasian male. Daniel has brown hair and eyes and appears to be of average height and weight. Daniel is usually spotted with a grin on his face, which shows off his dimples and the mischief in his eyes. He is energetic and sociable. Daniel interacts with a variety of children and often is described by his teachers as the ringleader for a group of boys in the classroom. This is Daniel's first year at Head Start.

Daniel is one of 5 children, with 2 older and 2 younger brothers. He resides with his 4 brothers, mother and stepfather on a farm. Daniel's stepfather works a variety of odd jobs besides farming and his mother works primarily in the home and tends bar at a local club a few evenings a week.

Daniel is a bright and inquisitive child who enjoys participating in most Head Start activities. Some of his favorites are working on the computer, playing with the sand and water table and playing in the block area. Daniel is creative and uses his imagination

quite frequently to develop elaborate play scenarios in the block area with Michael and other friends.

The Friendship

Michael and Daniel spend time together engaged in a variety of activities. The boys enjoy spending time on the computer, completing puzzles, working in the water/sand table, and playing with a variety of materials in the block area. The boys are seen frequently in the block area building and destroying things and engaging in a variety of "pretend" activities like sharks, airport, hospital, garage, trains, and dirt movers.

Michael and Daniel's friendship has been described by their teacher and parents as typical. When asked to describe Michael and Daniel's relationship, Liz stresses that the relationship is not any different than any other relationship in her class, "Well, you know, I don't really see their friendship as different. And you know, with the special needs part, I don't think that Daniel sees that you know, at all. He just sees Michael as another child, friend to play with. He sees Michael as a little boy."

Michael's mom describes her son's relationship with Daniel as "... just a little boy relationship. When I see them in the class they are doing what other little boys are doing. They may be on the computer together or building something with the blocks. They seem to really like each other and wrestle around with each other."

Characteristics of Michael and Daniel's relationship that emerged throughout the course of the study were being nice to one another, wanting to be with one another, and having fun with each other.

Being Nice to One Another

Michael articulated the construct of being nice to one another during an interview with me about his friendship with Daniel. When asked to describe his relationship with Daniel, Michael explains, "We play stuff and are nice to each other." When I asked Michael "What does being nice to one another mean?" he explains "Well, you know, it means that you are not mean to one another. And you don't, you don't do stuff like pull hair or hit." For Michael being nice to one another meant an absence of physical aggression. A few days before I talked with Michael, I observed he and Daniel playing with a group of boys. The boys had put together the train track and were taking turns pushing their train cars around the track. During the play scenario some aggressive acts occurred.

After a few minutes, A.J. began ramming his train into the other boys'. Michael said, "Stop A.J. you are not playing the right way. You are not playing nice!" Lynn reminded A.J. to "play nice". A.J. ignored Lynn's reprimand and hit Michael on the arm. Michael screamed, "Stop it" and A.J. replied with pulling Michael's hair. (Lynn intervened and removed A.J. from the area after insuring that Michael was O.K.)

Later that afternoon, I talked with Michael about how A.J. had acted. I began "Michael, what happened when you were playing trains with Daniel and A.J.?" "A.J. was mean and hit me," Michael explains. "Oh, would Daniel hit you?" I asked. "No, if he did I wouldn't be his friend. I don't hit him and he doesn't hit me. That is not nice!" Michael explains.

In a conversation with me, Daniel also reveals that he is nice to his friends by

playing with them, taking turns, and sharing things. “So, how are you nice to your friends Daniel?” I asked and Daniel responds, “I play with them and they play with me. We take turns and share stuff.” In the scenario below Daniel shares a stuffed animal he has with Michael. The children are having a pajama party at school, so they all came to the center dressed in their pajamas and were allowed to bring a stuffed animal. During large group time Liz instructed the students to get their stuffed animals from their backpacks and get prepared to talk about them with the group.

Michael looks distraught and becomes upset and begins crying when he realizes that he does not have his stuffed animal. Liz and Lynn spend several minutes trying to calm him down, but to no avail. Daniel goes to his backpack and returns with a Lion King that looks like it came out of a kid’s meal and gives it to Michael. “That’s not mine” Michael insists. “I know” Daniel explains, “my little brother left it in my bag, so you can borrow it.”

I explored the topic of sharing items further with Daniel when I asked “Do you share stuff with people that aren’t your friends?” Daniel explains “Sometimes, sometimes if Liz makes me.” In the scenario above, Liz did not instruct Daniel to share a stuffed animal with Michael. Daniel went to his backpack on his own and returned with a stuffed animal for Michael.

Throughout the study I also saw Michael freely share objects with Daniel. In the scenario below Michael and Daniel are playing in the block area with the hospital set. The two boys are driving ambulances back and forth to the hospital and Michael shares a figure with Daniel.

Michael and Daniel drive their ambulances to the hospital. Michael opens the

back of the ambulance and pulls out a man and places him on the hospital bed.

The boys back the ambulances away from the hospital and "go on another run."

Daniel announces "I don't have anything in the back seat." Michael drives his ambulance over to Daniel's takes a man out of his ambulance and puts it in

Daniel's ambulance.

Wanting to Spend Time With One Another

Another important characteristic that emerged in Michael and Daniel's relationship was their desire to spend time with one another. The boys were seen frequently in one another's company during center time and organized activities. One way that Michael and Daniel demonstrated their desire to be with one another was to save seats for one another during organized activities. In the scenario below Michael returns to the classroom from speech and the students are in large group listening to Liz read a story.

Liz looked up as Michael stood on the perimeter of the group and greeted him.

Daniel kneeled, pulled another placemat from beneath his bottom and sat it on the floor next to his. Daniel patted the placemat and motioned for Michael to sit down. Michael did not seem to see Daniel, so after a few minutes Daniel said "Michael, I have your spot." Michael joined Daniel on the carpet.

Not only did Daniel save seats for Michael when he was out of the room for speech, but Michael also would save spots for Daniel. In the scenario below the children are busy cleaning up after center time. As they finish they are going to the carpet to sit and wait for large group. Michael has finished picking up and has gone to the group area and sits down on a placemat, leans over to the side and puts his arms on another

placemat.

Several more children come to the group. One boy stands by Michael and looks at the placemat where he has his hands. "I wanna sit there" the boy says. "There are a bunch more over there" Michael says as he points to other placemats. The boy walks off and finds a seat. Daniel comes over to the carpet and looks around. He sees Michael and walks over toward him. Michael lifts his arms up off the placemat and Daniel sits down.

Michael made it clear to the other boy in the scenario above that he did not want him to sit next to him when he pointed out "there are a bunch more over there" and that he did want Daniel to sit next to him. When Daniel came to the group area he walked over to Michael, Michael lifted his arms off of the placemat, and Daniel sat down next to him.

Michael and Daniel also sat together during small and large group activities as we see in the descriptions below.

The students are returning from breakfast and going to small groups. Michael and Daniel enter room 2, walk over to the carpet and sit beside one another.

Later that same day, Liz has announced that it is clean up time. The children are picking up toys and as areas are cleaned up, are moving to the large group area.

Michael is cleaning up in the block area and Daniel is in the housekeeping area.

Michael finishes with the blocks and sits down (this is the large group area).

After a few minutes, Daniel walks over to the group area, looks around and walks to the side of the carpet and sits beside Michael.

In the scenario below the bus has arrived and as students put their belongings

away and wash their hands, they are moving down to the cafeteria.

Michael and Daniel are at the sink washing their hands and are some of the last kids in the classroom. Liz walks up and tells them to move along. Daniel asks "hey Liz, can we eat together today?" "Sure" Liz responds "we will move your chairs when we get down there."

Aside from sitting next to one another during group and meal times, Michael and Daniel would also move to different areas in the classroom to be with their friend. In the scenario below, Michael and Daniel have just completed putting a puzzle together and Michael asks Daniel to do another puzzle with him.

"Hey let's do this one" Michael says as he points to another puzzle on the shelf. Daniel says "no, I already did that" and walks over to the water table and begins playing. Michael waits a few minutes, walks over to the water table, puts on an apron and begins making alphabet soup with Daniel.

At other times, Daniel would move to an area or join in an activity to be near Michael, as we see below when Daniel moves to the computer to join Michael.

The two boys had just completed writing their names at the writing table. Daniel moves to the science table where Liz has tornadoes in soda bottles set up. "Hey Michael, let's do this." "Nah, I don't want to" Michael responds and walks over to the computer. Daniel gets up from the science table and joins Michael at the computer "so what game are we gonna do first?"

Michael and Daniel demonstrated their desire to be with one another by sitting by one another during group activities, asking for permission to sit with one another during meal times, and following each other to different areas or activities in the classroom.

Having Fun

Another facet of Michael and Daniel's relationship is that the two boys enjoyed the time they spent with one another and had fun with each other. This enjoyment was evidenced by the giggles, smiles and high five's that the two boys exchanged throughout the study. Michael and Daniel seemed to have fun with one another regardless of what they were doing as we see in the scenario below when Michael and Daniel pretend to ice skate. There has been a major snowstorm and the kids are arriving at the center all bundled up with snowsuits and boots. There are several puddles of water on the floor from snow from the bottom of boots. Michael has gone straight to his locker and begins to get out of his snowsuit.

Daniel walks over and says "Hi Michael. Need some help buddy?" Michael replies with a crooked grin and "sure, these are hard boots." Michael sits on the floor and lifts his leg up for Daniel to begin pulling off his boot. As Daniel pulls, he steps back into a puddle of melted snow and slips backwards, letting go of Michael's leg and falling on his bottom. Daniel quickly looks around the room (as if he is looking to see if anyone saw him) and then over at Michael. The two of them begin giggling.

A few minutes later, the two of them go down the hallway toward the kitchen, with Daniel pretending to ice skate on the floor and Michael laughing loudly at him.

Michael and Daniel's excitement and fun were evidenced throughout other activities as well. As we see below while Michael and Daniel are working on a computer game. Michael is operating the mouse and Daniel is seated next to him. The program works on sequencing skills and has the child move different articles of clothing with the

mouse, to a boy on the screen. Michael and Daniel have just discovered that if they try to place the clothes on the boy in the wrong order, the clothing will quickly 'fly' off the computer screen and then reappear in the closet.

"That is too cool!" Michael says very excitedly. Michael looks at Daniel and begins laughing. "Hey Daniel watch this!" Michael moves the mouse to another article of clothing, a pair of shoes and drags them over to the boy's feet. When he releases the mouse the shoes fly off the screen. Michael laughs loudly and says "flying shoes, flying shoes!" Daniel begins bouncing up and down in his seat. "Do it again! Do it again!"

Michael continues moving clothes onto the figure for the next few minutes. He does not appear to be attempting to choose the "right" clothes or dress the boy in the right sequence, but rather seems to be concentrating on choosing items out of sequence that will then "fly" off the screen. Daniel continues to watch and both of the boys are laughing. Daniel then asks if he can have a turn.

"Wow! Can I do it once Michael?" The boys switch places and Daniel begins moving articles of clothing and gets the same result as Michael, the clothes fly off the screen. Daniel continues moving clothes and both of the boys continue to laugh. Michael raises his hand to Daniel. Daniel gives Michael a high five and adds "let's do it some more!"

The boys continued playing on the computer for the next several minutes. Their excitement over discovering the flying clothes did not die down. Several other children joined in and watched as Michael and Daniel took turns making the clothes fly.

Throughout the course of the study several other incidents like the ones described

above were witnessed. It was obvious that Michael and Daniel enjoyed one another's company and had fun while they spent time together.

Factors that Influence the Friendship

The opportunity for both Michael and Daniel to attend the same Head Start classroom laid their groundwork for their friendship as explained by both of the boys and Liz. Michael and Daniel became friends this year at Head Start when, as Michael explains, "I found Daniel the first day." Daniel elaborates "I became friends with Michael because he was here, because he was in Head Start." When talking about Michael and Daniel's friendship with me, Liz adds "... But, they have always been friends from the beginning."

Not only did this basic opportunity of being in the same Head Start classroom affect Michael and Daniel's friendship, but also other factors, including enjoying the same activities, similar play styles, and similar knowledge about activities all affected the boys' relationship.

Liz talked about Michael and Daniel enjoying the same activities during a conversation with me and how she feels that these common activities helped to form the basis of the boy's friendship. She says,

O.K. I guess from the beginning I think they kind of connected because both of them really enjoy particular activities. A lot of it I think is the activities that brought them together. I think they are compatible on the computer and in the block area, that is something they both enjoy doing and in the sensory table. They both enjoy doing those kinds of activities, so I think the activities may have brought them together.

Aside from enjoying common activities, similar play styles had an affect on Michael and Daniel's friendship as Liz explains, "You know, they are both kind of the rough and tumble play, play boys. They like to wrestle around, give high five's, knock things down. They don't get mad at each other, when they crash things like they do with other kids."

A shared knowledge base also seems to have influenced Michael and Daniel's friendship as Liz elaborates. "The boys play well together. They both know a lot about the different things they do together, like the computer and blocks and sensory table. Because they know about these things, I think they get along well. The big thing seems that they have some things in common that they enjoy doing and it makes it more fun to be together."

For Michael and Daniel, the opportunity to be in the same Head Start classroom, enjoying the same activities, similar play styles, and similar knowledge about activities all affected the boy's relationship.

Benefits of the Friendship

Michael and Daniel received several benefits from their friendship including companionship and having a playmate. Other mutual benefits that the boys received were access to areas and materials and inclusion in activities.

Michael and Daniel would move freely between centers and activities throughout the classroom and join in established activities with one another and other children. The smoothness of this facet of their friendship is illustrated in the scenario below where Michael is in the block area with 2 other boys playing sharks, and Daniel walks from the art area over to the block area and sits down and begins playing with the boys.

Daniel reaches into the bucket and retrieves two fish. He places his fish on Michael's swimming pool with Michael's fish. The boys begin to have their fish swim around and then move over to a neighbor's pool to "attack". A few minutes later another boy walks over and sits down next to Daniel. Michael speaks up "hey, we are all full here. You can't play." "Yes I can too" responds the boy "there are lot's of fish". "We said no" Daniel explained "we have enough here."

In the scenario above, Daniel gained access to the block area and also was assimilated into the shark activity. Daniel's access was further illustrated by the boys' denying access to another child who attempted to join the activity. Not only did Daniel gain access and inclusion in activities, but Michael did also. In the excerpt below, we see Michael gain access to the dramatic play area and also the materials that Daniel is using. There is a group of 4 children playing in the "bakery" in the dramatic play area. They are rolling out dough, cutting it into shapes with cookie cutters, decorating it with sprinkles, placing the shapes on cookie sheets and baking them. Once the cookies are baked, the children are using a spatula to remove the cookies from the sheet and place them on a platter. There are 4 sets of materials in the center. Michael walks over to the dramatic play area and watches what the children are doing for a few minutes.

Michael enters the dramatic play area and stands by Daniel. Daniel says "Hey Michael, you wanna help me decorate these?" "Sure" Michael replies and begins to pick up some sprinkles and shake onto the cookies. Another child speaks up "hey, he can't be in here cause we don't have enough stuff!" "Yes he can" counters Daniel "he is doing it with me and using my stuff!"

Similar scenes were repeated throughout the course of the study, where Michael and

Daniel would enter areas or join in established activities with one another.

Aside from shared benefits, both Michael and Daniel received individual benefits from their friendship with one another. For Michael, Daniel is a good role model and demonstrates friendship-making skills. Michael has benefited from watching Daniel engage in a variety of relationships with several children as Liz explains.

Maybe, maybe its just more of that social part, you know, learning that because when he first started, he wasn't real social, he really was isolated and he didn't really have a lot of friends and I think maybe Daniel has been able to bring him out of his shell a little bit. You know, offering that kind of excitement in Daniel, where Michael is more laid back that Daniel can bring some of those qualities out in him.

Aside from support in the development of social skills, Michael and Daniel's relationship provides Michael with a lot of support and encouragement, as Daniel's mom explains,

Daniel's a helper. I would probably say, if anything, that Daniel probably takes more time with him (Michael), is patient with him and lets him do things on his own. But helps him if he needs it.

Daniel's mom's description aligns with observations that I made through the course of the study. Daniel was seen checking up on Michael, encouraging and providing support throughout the course of the study. Daniel consistently brought Michael up to speed on what was going on in the classroom, upon his return from speech, would save a seat for Michael and often times sit by Michael while he completed center activities or other projects. Daniel encouraged Michael to try new activities and provided the support

he needed to successfully complete the activity.

In the excerpt below, the children are playing a train game. The children have formed a train, by lining up behind one another and holding on the waist of the person in front of them. Lynn begins to play a tape and the children move around the room following the directions given on the tape. Daniel is in line behind another boy, Nick. Michael is standing to the side of the group.

Daniel drops out of the line and moves to the side of the group with Michael.

Daniel demonstrates to Michael how to make a train, by placing his hands around Michael's waist. Daniel tells Michael that they are going to follow the directions on the tape and what they are going to do once they have joined the train. The two boys get back in line, Daniel stands behind Michael and they join in with the class to play the game.

Besides the opportunity to develop social skills and receive support and encouragement from Daniel, Matthew's mom stresses that for Michael, his relationship with Daniel lets him be a little boy.

Michael knows you know that he is different. He goes to the special class and has therapy. With Daniel it's different. Daniel doesn't seem to care about Matt's differences. They just play and have fun!

When talking with Liz about Michael and Daniel's relationship she reveals "They both (Michael & Daniel) contribute to and receive things from their friendship. It is not like only Michael benefits from it. Daniel has learned a lot from Michael too." Daniel receives benefits from his friendship with Michael, including the opportunity to engage in an equal relationship, to express personality traits, and to look at things in a different

way.

I discussed Michael and Daniel's relationship with Daniel's mom and she reveals the benefits that she feels her son receives from his and Michael's friendship.

I think probably the biggest thing for Daniel is having a relationship with someone that is equal. He is the same age with everyone here and there are no brothers. At home, Daniel is just one of 6 brothers. Here he just gets to be Daniel.

We continued to talk about Michael and Daniel's relationship and benefits that she feels Daniel receives from the friendship.

I think it lets Daniel's sensitive side come out. I think maybe he just picked up on that Michael was a little different and needed just a little something, maybe patience or extra help and he was able to provide it. Daniel is good like that with his little brother at home too.

Liz sheds some light on Michael and Daniel's relationship as she discusses how Michael has helped Daniel look at things in a different way.

Um, maybe just being able to see the more subtle side of things. Michael's not quite as outgoing but is more relaxed that way. Michael has the ability to concentrate on certain things, you know being able to stay with a task for a longer period of time, and Daniel has seen that and has been drawn into that.

There were several times throughout the study where Michael encouraged Daniel to stay with a task until it was complete. One day, the boys were working on a puzzle together. Daniel sighs and comments "this puzzle sure is tough," "Yeah, but we just gotta keep going. We can do it!" encourages Michael. Daniel adds "yeah we'll finish

it!”

Upon a first look, Michael and Daniel seem an unlikely pair for one another. Michael is a shy and quiet child and Daniel is outgoing and sociable. It is the differences in their personalities that seem to have brought them together and provide both of them with some important benefits. Their friendship has provided Michael and Daniel with the opportunity to practice and also develop important social skills and meet individual needs.

Friendships Change, Grow, and Develop

Throughout the course of the study, Michael and Daniel were consistently seen in proximity with one another. As the study progressed, the two boys were seen developing alliances and spending more time with other children. Liz sheds some light on the status of Michael and Daniel’s relationship as she explains her perception of the relationship at the end of the school year.

I guess, I think that they’re feeling more comfortable that they can go off and find other friends too, but I think that they always know that the other one is there, you know? Because they don’t play together as much as they used to. I know they have sought out other friends as well.

Liz’s description illuminates some important characteristics of Michael and Daniel’s relationship. The two boys are still perceived as friends, but have developed other friendships. Daniel has always had alliances with other children, but Michael is now at a point where he has developed some relationships with other children besides Daniel.

I continued to talk with Liz about Michael and Daniel’s relationship and how she

thinks it will change in the future.

Well, you know, I could see them being friends after they leave here. Maybe in Kindergarten and stuff. Even if they weren't in the same class, I think they would still play together and know they could depend on each other, like during recess or something.

Michael and Daniel's relationship has changed over the course of the study from an exclusive friendship with one another, to include other children. The two boys have developed relationships with other children but still depend on their friendship with one another. As Liz states ". . . they always know that the other one is there." Michael and Daniel's relationship is something that both of the boys count on.

Beth, Janelle, Monica and Krista

The next four children I will introduce, Beth, Janelle, Monica, and Krista spent a lot of time together in a group, but distinct friendship pairs also developed away from the group. The two children that have identified disabilities are Beth and Krista. These two girls developed a friendship not only with each other, but also with other typically developing children. The friendship pairs that will be discussed are Beth and Janelle, Beth and Monica, Krista and Janelle, and Krista and Beth. Monica and Janelle were also friends, but their friendship will not be presented in the discussion, since both of these girls are typically developing children. The only alliance that did not develop into a friendship among the four members of the group, were Krista and Monica. These two girls played in a group together, but did not consider one another to be friends.

In this next section I will introduce you to each of the individual children, Beth, Janelle, Monica, and Krista. Once descriptions of the individual children are given, I will

follow with discussions of each of the four friendships.

Beth is a 4-year-old Caucasian female. She is an attractive child and has long blond hair and brown eyes. Beth usually has a smile on her face and a twinkle in her eye. She seems to enjoy the time she spends at Head Start and enters the classroom each morning with an exuberance and excitement as she greets Donna and Kim. Beth makes a point of speaking to all of the adults in the classroom as she enters, including Jane the cook, the two teachers, and any other adults who are present that day. Beth is a likable child, and it is a joy to spend time with her.

This is Beth's first year at Head Start. Her parents are both college students at the local University. Her mother is studying to be a special education teacher and her father, a computer information specialist. Beth is an only child and is diagnosed with cerebral palsy. Beth has braces on her legs and walks with the assistance of a walker. Because of her cerebral palsy, she moves somewhat slower than her classmates, but does not seem to miss out on any opportunities to participate in activities in the classroom or on the playground. One of Beth's favorite activities on the playground is sliding. She can often be found during outside play on the slide with Janelle, Monica and Krista. She very slowly walks up the steps, crawls to the top of the slide, and slides down into the arms of a teacher or classmate. Aside from sliding, Beth enjoys drawing, painting, working with Playdough, reading books, playing on the computer, playing outside, and playing in the housekeeping center.

Donna and Kim discuss personality characteristics that they feel affect Beth's acceptance into the classroom and the culture one day during outside play. Donna, Kim and I were watching Beth and Monica playing on the slide with several other children.

Donna commented, "You know, I think it is super how well Beth gets along with the other kids." Kim then adds, "She does get along really well with everyone. Don't you think that Beth is real comfortable herself and that helps the others?" Donna replies, "Yea" and elaborates, "In her self portrait she (Beth) has her walker there drawn in the picture as a part of her."

Aside from Head Start, Beth attends preschool two afternoons a week, which is where she receives physical and occupational therapy. The preschool is housed in a local elementary school and enrolls only children with identified disabilities.

Janelle is a 4-year-old Caucasian female. This is also Janelle's first year in Head Start. Janelle has curly long hair and is a bit shorter than her same age peers. She is somewhat diminutive and petite. Janelle appears to be a happy child and is frequently singing, laughing or giggling. Janelle is an affectionate child with the staff and other children in the classroom. Donna and Kim describe Janelle as a "nurturer". She is often seen helping some of the younger children put on shoes, is the first to volunteer for extra cleaning duty and to help Jane in the kitchen, or assist Gordie to set the table.

Janelle can frequently be found in the housekeeping center, where she will be dressed up as a "mom" with a dress, high heels, and accompanying jewelry. Janelle also enjoys working with Playdough, and painting, outside activities and games.

Janelle resides with her older brother, mom and a cat. Janelle's mother is recently divorced, and Janelle spends some time with her father on the weekends. Janelle's mother works at a local factory and plans to start college when Janelle enters kindergarten. She plans to become either a teacher or a physical therapist. Because of the time required for her job, Chris does not spend as much time in the Head Start center

as she would like, but often comes during vacation periods or while the factory is closed, to help out or spend time with Janelle and her friends.

Monica is a 4-year-old Korean female. Monica is a bright child who asks a lot of questions and seeks explanations from staff and other adults in the classroom. Monica interacts with a limited number of children and is slow to develop relationships with others. Once Monica has established a connection, she seems to latch on. I could always count on Monica to squeal, run up to me and give me a huge hug when I entered the classroom. Her mother explains that Monica is slow to warm up to new people and seems to “need to know you will be around before establishing a relationship.” Monica would consistently ask me when I would return and “how many more days” until she would see me again. Monica is reliant on “rules” to govern her behavior and interaction with her peers and could be overheard in the classroom telling others that they were playing the wrong way. Monica would then explain how the game was supposed to be played.

Monica lives with her mom and the latest addition to the family, her younger sister, who was born toward the end of the study. Monica’s mom is unemployed and is in the process of applying to the local University. Monica’s grandparents were also frequently seen at the center and Monica shared several stories with me about spending the weekend with them. Monica enjoys a variety of activities in the program. Some of her favorites are the housekeeping area, computer and outside play. Monica is a competitive child and was frequently overheard developing games or engaging in activities with friends to see who could jump the furthest, run the fastest, or slide the quickest.

Krista is a 4-year-old Native American female. Krista has extremely long dark curly hair, and dark eyes. Krista is an outgoing child and talks and interacts with several adults and children in the classroom. Krista is diagnosed as developmentally delayed, showing scores below the mean on standardized assessments in the areas of cognitive, communication, social emotional, and adaptive functioning. Her speech is difficult to understand at times, but Krista patiently repeats herself until peers or adults understand her. Krista is an inquisitive and friendly child.

Krista and her mother moved from the southwest to the northern plains at the beginning of the school year, and this is her first year in Head Start. Krista is an only child and spends a lot of time with her Grandma and an Uncle who have also relocated to the same community. Krista and her mother live in a two-bedroom apartment in town. Her mom does not drive, so she depends on family to provide transportation, or they walk. Krista's mom works at a local café preparing food and washing dishes.

Krista enjoys most activities in the classroom, but seems to prefer playing in the housekeeping center or outside activities. Krista also attends preschool two days a week for children with diagnosed disabilities along with Beth.

Beth and Janelle

"If you live to be one hundred, I wish to be one hundred minus a day, so I never have to live a day without you." Winnie the Pooh

The Friendship

Beth and Janelle are frequently seen in each other's company and engage in a variety of activities with one another including playing in the housekeeping and science areas, engaging in dramatic play, sliding, painting, or completing other art activities. The

girls enjoy both inside activities and spending time outside. Besides playing, the girls spend time with one another during organized group activities.

When asked to describe Beth and Janelle's relationship, Donna stresses that their friendship looks like and works like other children's friendships. "When I think of their friendship and I look around the classroom and see other friendships, it doesn't strike me as that much different than any other friendship in this classroom." Donna stresses that Beth's disability does not impact the girl's friendship, "I guess maybe if I think about other friendships that I have seen between kids with and without disabilities that there is sometimes something that stands out that makes their friendship a little different, and I don't necessarily see that with Beth and Janelle." Not only does Donna feel that Beth's disability does not impact her friendship with Janelle, she further explains "I just see them being two little 4-year-old girls that are friends and want to play together and want to spend time together. It just happens that one of them has a disability." Janelle's mom echoes this same sentiment as she talks about her daughter's relationship with Beth. Chris explains that initially, she thinks that Janelle was curious about Beth's braces and her walker, but these things don't seem to be an issue in their friendship anymore. "I think when Janelle first met Beth, she did think about the braces on her legs and that Beth was somewhat different, but now, now, I think that she just thinks of Beth as someone that is nice to her, that will play with her and she likes Beth. She doesn't even really talk about the braces anymore. I don't think it is a big deal. They are just friends."

Donna's comments illuminate the quality of Beth and Janelle's friendship, as she describes the friendship as typical and when Janelle's mom explains, "They are just friends." Aside from being described as typical, other important characteristics came to

light throughout the course of the study and will be used to describe Beth and Janelle's friendship including affection, being nice to one another, liking one another, showing a desire to spend time with one other, and having fun with one another.

Being Affectionate With One Another

Throughout the course of the study, it was not unusual to see Beth and Janelle with their arms around one another, holding hands, hugging each other or Janelle with her hand over Beth's on her walker. Often times, Beth and Janelle would enter the classroom from the bus or from outside activities and Janelle would have her hand over the top of Beth's as we see in the excerpt below as the two girls come in from outside play. Donna has blown the whistle for the children to line up. Beth and Janelle get up out of the sandbox and begin to make their way over to the door. The two girls are standing beside one another, with their arms around each other, waiting to go inside.

Donna opens the door for the children to enter the classroom. Beth grabs onto her walker and Janelle places her hand over Beth's. The two girls walk into the classroom, with Janelle holding onto Beth's hand.

At other times, Beth and Janelle were seen hugging each other and leaning their head on one another's shoulders. Beth is at the art table finishing up a stencil project and Janelle walks over from the science table.

Janelle puts her arm around Beth and squeezes her shoulders. Beth leans her head over on Janelle's shoulder. Janelle asks Beth to join her at the science table.

When Beth agrees, Janelle squeezes Beth's shoulders again and pats her on the back.

Frequently during group time, Beth and Janelle would sit next to one another with

their arms around each other as we see in the excerpt below during small group.

Donna is reading the story of *The Three Bears*. Beth is seated in the front row, in front of Donna.

Janelle approaches the group and walks up and sits next to Janelle. Janelle reaches over and places her arm around Beth's shoulders, Beth does the same.

Throughout the story, the two girls sit with their arms around each other.

Beth and Janelle were affectionate with one another by holding hands, hugging, putting their arms around one another or leaning their head on each other's shoulders.

The girls were seen throughout the study during a variety of activities displaying affection with one another.

Being Nice to One Another

Janelle articulated the concept of her and Beth being nice to one another during a conversation with me. Janelle explained that the two girls were nice to one another by playing with each other and sharing. "What can you tell me about Beth?" I asked Janelle. "Well, she is nice to me and I am nice to her" replied Janelle. "How is Beth nice to you?" I asked. "She shares her stuff with me and she plays with me" explains Janelle. "Oh, I see" I replied "what does Janelle share with you?" "Lot's of stuff" Janelle stated "her toys and markers and yeah, she let's me touch her walker!" "Wow! Beth let's you touch her walker?" I asked. "Yeah!" Janelle offered "not everybody can. Just her friends" explains Janelle. "That is really special!" "Yeah, I like it" explains Janelle. "So, how are you nice to Beth?" I asked Janelle. "Well, I play with her, I share stuff with her too, and I get the walker sometimes" explained Janelle.

Not only did Janelle talk about her and Beth sharing items, but I also saw several

incidents throughout the study where the girls shared items with one another. During center time one day, the girls were at the art table coloring Goldilock's scenes. Beth had started coloring a few minutes before Janelle, so she was further along on her picture.

Janelle began coloring her picture. She and Beth were talking about their pictures. Janelle offered, "I am going to color her hair yellow" and began to look in the marker box for a marker. "Here is a yellow one, you can use this one" Beth said as she offered Janelle a yellow marker. Janelle takes the marker and colors the hair on the picture.

Aside from sharing items and materials with one another, I also observed the girls helping one another throughout the study. In the scenario below, Janelle retrieves Beth's walker for her as the children are moving from the group area to the tables.

Donna is reading the group a story about stars. After the story the children are moving over to the table to write in their journals about the story and draw a picture. Janelle gets up and walks to the back of the group area and retrieves Beth's walker and pushes it up to where Beth is seated. The two girls move over to the table and begin working on their journals.

Besides the help that Beth received from Janelle, Beth would often help Janelle as we see below when Beth finds a glue stick for Janelle. Janelle is at the art table cutting out shapes and gluing them into a book. Beth walks over to the table to see what Janelle is doing.

"Hey what are you doing?" asks Beth. "Working on this book" Janelle explains. Beth watches as Janelle finishes cutting the shapes. "I'm gonna glue 'em now" offers Janelle. Janelle looks around the table and says "I need glue." "I'll get ya

some” offers Beth as she gets up and walks to the art shelf. She looks in a shoebox and picks up a glue stick and takes it back to the table. “There you go” she explains as she hands the glue stick to Janelle.

Both Beth and Janelle were nice to one another by playing with each other, sharing items, and helping each other.

Liking One Another

Beth and Janelle’s parents revealed the idea that the children like each other and expressed this by talking about their friends at home. Janelle’s mom discusses how Janelle talks about Beth at home.

She talks about Beth a lot. She always tells me first off what they did at school.

Beth and I played house, we drew, we played outside, and we sat on the bus together. You know, stuff like that.

Janelle’s mom explains that aside from telling her mom what she did with Beth at school, Janelle also tells her mother that she likes Beth. “Well, Janelle really likes Beth. She talks about Beth at home and tells me she likes her.”

Beth also talks about Janelle with her parents. Her father reports that Beth usually talks about what she and Janelle and her other friends did at school that day. Her father states that Beth will talk about the games they played or what happened on the bus on the way home.

Wanting to Spend Time with One Another

Another important characteristic that emerged in Beth and Janelle’s relationship was their desire to spend time with one another. The girls were seen throughout the study in both organized groups and free play activities. One way that Beth and Janelle

demonstrated their desire to be with one another was by seeking one another out. In the scenario below the children are singing a song in small group. As the song finishes, the children are finding seats on the floor.

Beth is sitting on the front row, in front of Donna. She looks around and sees Janelle. Beth reaches over and pats the floor beside her. Janelle comes to the front of the group and sits besides Beth.

Not only did Beth seek Janelle out, but Janelle also would seek Beth out to spend time with. In the excerpt below the children have gone outside for free play and are moving to different areas on the playground.

Janelle runs over to the sandbox and sits down with two other girls and they begin to build sandcastles. Beth stands off to the side, near the air conditioner. She is looking around the playground and seems to be deciding where she will go play. Janelle looks up from the sandbox over toward where Beth is standing. She gets up and walks over to Beth and says "Beth, we are over here, waiting for you."

Beth and Janelle would also ask one another to engage in a variety of activities and games. In the scenario below, Janelle asked Beth to play "sisters" with her. The children are finishing with large group and Donna is beginning to call on students to report to various centers of their choice around the classroom.

Janelle is seated in front of Beth and turns around to Beth and says "Are we gonna play sisters again today?" "You bet", replies Beth. A few minutes pass and Donna asks Janelle where she would like to play. "Beth and me are gonna play sisters!" explains Janelle.

Beth would also ask Janelle to engage in specific activities with her. In the

excerpt below, Beth asks Janelle to play with the Playdough with her. The children are in large group and are moving to centers in the classroom. Donna asks Beth where she would like to play.

“I wanna do Playdough with Janelle. Will you do the Playdough with me?” Beth says to Janelle. “I’ll do it”, replies Janelle. “Do you want to cut out shapes?”

Beth asks Janelle. “Yep” replies Janelle.

Another way that Beth and Janelle indicated that they wanted to spend time with one another was by choosing each other for walking partners. Each week, the students would report to the gymnasium across from the center for a rhythm and games class that was implemented by a university class. Each week, the children were instructed “to line up and find a walking partner” by Donna or Kim. In the scenario below, we see Janelle ask Beth to be her walking partner.

The students are busy getting their coats and gloves on to go outside. Janelle finishes putting on her coat, looks around the room, and walks over to Janelle’s locker, where Kim is helping her get her coat on. “You wanna be my walking partner today?” asks Janelle. “You bet!” replies Janelle.

Aside from asking one another to be “walking partners” Beth and Janelle were frequently overheard asking each other to sit by them on the bus. In the scenario below the students are lining up to come inside from free play for lunch. Beth and Janelle are in line beside one another. The two girls are talking about their bus ride home.

“We gonna sit together on the bus today?” Beth asks Janelle. “Yea, Gordie said we could” explains Janelle.

In a conversation with Gordie, I asked if Beth and Janelle usually sat with one

another on the bus. "Oh yea" Gordie replies "those two are always together on the bus. They talk with one another and make up games. They usually sit together. I would say the only times they don't are when Beth goes to Garfield with Bob." When Beth goes to "special needs" preschool, a driver with a school car comes to the Head Start center to pick Beth up and take her to the afternoon session.

Beth and Janelle had several ways of indicating that they wanted to spend time with one another. The two girls sought one another out, asked one another to engage in specific classroom activities, and general routines that occurred throughout the study.

Having Fun

Not only did Beth and Janelle seek one another out to spend time with, but also the time they spent in each other's company could be described as enjoyable. The two girls were seen frequently laughing, smiling, hugging, or with their arms around one another. In the scenario below, Beth and Janelle are playing on the slide outside. The two girls are "racing" down the slides together.

Beth and Janelle are on top of the platform, getting ready to slide down the slides.

Janelle says "on your mark get set, go!" and the two girls begin sliding down the slide. Janelle lets out a whoop and Beth begins to giggle. When they get to the bottom of the slide both girls are laughing.

Besides having fun with one another during free play activities, Beth and Janelle also enjoyed the time they spent with one another during center time. In the excerpt below, the two girls are in the science center balancing a scale with plastic bears. The girls are attempting to balance the scales, by placing bears onto both sides of the scale.

The left side of the scale is weighed down further than the right. Janelle places

some bears on the right side in an attempt to balance the scale. As she does, the left side rises sharply. Janelle gasps “ah” as she looks at the scale with wide eyes. Beth places her hand over her mouth and begins to giggle. Janelle removes the bears from the left side and it quickly moves down. The two girls giggle and take turns causing the scale to move up and down abruptly.

Aside from observations that Beth and Janelle enjoyed themselves while with one another, parents echoed these same sentiments as we discussed the children’s friendships. Janelle’s mom elaborates on Janelle and Beth’s relationship “When I go to the center and they are playing games together, they seem to get along well, they seem to have fun.” Beth’s mom adds “Beth tells us what she does with Janelle. She tells us that they play with each other and have fun. When I go to the center the two of them are usually together and seem to be enjoying one another. They laugh and giggle. They have fun together!”

Factors that Influence the Friendship

Several factors have influenced Beth and Janelle’s friendship including proximity, liking similar activities and fulfilling needs. Kim brings up the issue of proximity as she discusses the two girl’s being in the same small group together and how this may have affected their friendship. “Both of the girls are on 2nd load, so they ride the bus together and then they are in small group together in the afternoon. They get to spend a lot of time together, so I think just maybe that opportunity really started the whole thing.” Donna explains that Beth and Janelle like a lot of the same activities and she feels this also has affected their friendship. “They both really like a lot of the same activities. Both girls really enjoy the housekeeping area and also art activities. They have started playing a lot

of games, board games together too.”

Besides proximity and similar interests, having individual needs met is a factor in Beth and Janelle’s friendship. Donna discusses how needs and recognizing needs are underlying issues in Beth and Janelle’s relationship as she talks about the two girls becoming friends.

I think, I think they became friends because possibly, possibly Janelle saw a need in Beth to have help with the walker or, I think that’s just the kind of person that Janelle is. Just tender hearted, and helpful. Beth needed some kind of assistance and Janelle was there.

Even though Janelle provides some assistance to Beth with her walker, Donna stresses that the friendship meets needs for Janelle as well as she explains “I think the fact that their interests are real similar kinda helped throw them together at the beginning, but with Janelle being so willing to nurture and help Beth when she needs it. Janelle would not be friends with Beth if she didn’t enjoy it.”

For Beth and Janelle, the issues of proximity, liking similar activities, and fulfilling needs are all important factors in their friendship. When Donna articulates “But, Janelle would not be friends with Beth if she didn’t enjoy it” epitomizes the mutuality of Beth and Janelle’s friendship. It was apparent that Beth and Janelle enjoyed spending time with one another as evidenced by the amount of time they were together during the study and also their obvious happiness and bright dispositions, when they were in each other’s company.

Benefits of the Friendship

Beth and Janelle's friendship provided the girls with several benefits including companionship and having a friend. As Janelle's mom explains "This is the first time that Janelle has had a friendship with a child that was not her brother or another relative. There are other children that she plays with at school, but her relationship with Beth is different. I think that Janelle knows that she can count on Beth to be there. That they will play together and spend time together." Donna adds, "I think for the girls, that they both really depend on their friendship. They depend on each other to play with and spend time with. They know the other will be there. I think they trust each other."

Aside from a friendship and having someone to spend time with, Beth and Janelle's relationship provides both of the girls other benefits including access to materials, areas, and inclusion in activities. In the scenario below we see how Beth and Janelle's friendship serves as the basis for Beth's access to the washing machine during a play scenario in the housekeeping center.

Krista, Janelle, and two other girls are playing in the housekeeping center. Janelle is pretending to wash and iron clothes. Beth walks over to the center from the painting easel and announces "I'm gonna go do the laundry." "O.K." Janelle acknowledges. Beth makes her way over to the washing machine, opens it up, removes the clothes and places them in a basket. "Those are ready to fold" Beth says. "O.K." Janelle answers and begins folding the clothes.

Below we see another little girl attempt to remove clothes from the washing machine like Beth did and Janelle insists that she cannot play with the clothes or the girls.

Another little girl opens the lid of the machine and begins to remove the clothes

that Beth placed in the machine. "No! You can't do that." Janelle says. She places the clothes back in the washer and closes the lid. "They are done" the little girl counters. "No they're not" Janelle explains "we are playing here. You need to go somewhere else." "But I need to do the wash" the little girl reasons. "We are playing here, you can't use it!" Janelle insists and stands in front of the machine.

Janelle provided Beth access to the washing machine and included her in the activity when she allowed Beth to remove things from the washing machine. When the other little girl attempted to remove the articles that Beth had placed in the machine, she was told "no" by Janelle. Janelle further explained to the little girl that she could not have access to the washing machine because she and Beth were using it. Janelle blocked the little girl's access by standing in front of the piece of equipment.

Not only did Janelle provide access to materials and areas to Beth, but Beth also did the same. In the excerpt below, Beth allows Janelle to walk with her walker and then subsequently denies access to the walker to another child. Beth, Janelle and two other girls on sitting on the floor in the group area, retelling a story with felt pieces that Donna had used during morning group.

Janelle stands up and walks over and retrieves Beth's walker that is by the bookcase. Instead of pushing the walker, she uses it. Another girl says "hey, can I have a turn?" "No!" Beth says, "it's mine." "Yeah" the little girl says "but you let Janelle walk with it." "I don't want you to" Beth offers.

The little girl walks away from the area and goes to the art table where Donna is working with a group of children. The little girl asks Donna to come to the area where

Beth and Janelle are playing and explains

“Hey Donna, she (pointing to Janelle) won’t let me use the walker.” Donna explains “it is Beth’s decision, you have to ask her.” The little girl once again asks Beth “can I use the walker? You let her” as the girl points to Janelle. “No” Beth says “you are not my friend.”

Not only did Beth provide Janelle with access to her walker, but denied access to the other girl because of a lack of friendship.

Aside from these shared benefits of friendship, and access and inclusion to activities and materials, Beth and Janelle both received several individual benefits from their friendship. Among these benefits were the opportunity to spend time with another child and engage in preferred activities, give and accept physical assistance, express personality traits and develop an appreciation for people with differences.

During an interview with me, Beth’s dad indicates that he feels that Beth and Janelle’s friendship provides companionship for Beth and also provides her with the opportunity to engage in activities that she likes to do, “Well, you know, I think it is somebody for her to play with and be with and do the things she likes to do.” As we discussed the girls’ friendship further, Beth’s father reveals that he thinks the girls have a lot in common as he states, “I think her and Janelle really like to do the same stuff and they can do the same stuff, so they play with each other.”

Beth’s mother reveals the idea that her daughter receives and has learned to accept physical assistance from Janelle. Beth’s mom explains the type of assistance that her daughter needs “Sometimes she does need some help with stuff. Moving a chair, getting her walker, or picking something up off the floor. Not all the time, but you know

sometimes.” Her mother further explains that Beth does not like people to do things for her “She is pretty independent and doesn’t like a whole lot of people to do stuff for her.” Beth’s mom continues to discuss the physical assistance that Janelle provides her daughter and how Janelle will help Beth when she doesn’t ask for help. “With Janelle it is different. Sometimes she won’t ask, when she probably should, and Janelle is there to help her out.” Beth’s mom further explains the giving and receiving of assistance as she continues to talk about the girls’ relationship and explains “Beth doesn’t mind that Janelle helps. It seems with Janelle and her that it is O.K.”

Donna explains that for Janelle, her relationship with Beth provides several benefits including a friendship and a good feeling about helping someone. As Donna explains “Janelle enjoys Beth. She enjoys the feeling that she gets from helping someone.” Donna continues to explain that Janelle helps a lot of other children in the classroom, but with Beth it is different. “If it was just to help someone, Janelle could get that with someone else, but she doesn’t choose to.” Donna continues “It is different because it is not just Janelle helping Beth. It is Janelle helping Beth, her friend. I don’t think Janelle really sees it as help. I think she sees it as a part of their friendship.”

There were several incidents throughout the course of the study that illuminated the mutuality and rhythm of Beth and Janelle’s friendship. Janelle’s perception of a need and eagerness to help and Beth’s willingness to accept that assistance from Janelle is very well illustrated by the story below. It has recently snowed, so there are snowdrifts around the perimeter of the playground. Donna, Beth and Janelle are walking around the playground. As the girls approach a snowdrift, they walk over the drift instead of around.

As they pass the playhouse, they come to a drift. “I’m gonna go over” squeals

Janelle and she scampers up the side and slides back down the other side.

Beth steps to the side of her walker as she approaches the drift. She lets go of her walker as she reaches for Donna's hand. As she begins to walk, Janelle reaches her side and takes her other hand and helps Beth steady herself. Arm-in-arm, the three walk over the drift. Beth looks toward Janelle and grins broadly.

Beth did not ask for Janelle's assistance, but her friend was there beside her to offer a helping hand. Not only did Janelle offer a hand, but Beth also accepted her friend's help.

Aside from the opportunity to help Beth, Janelle receives other benefits from her relationship with Beth including "an appreciation for people with differences." Janelle's mom explains further

I am so glad that she has this friendship with Beth. It can teach her a lot. Janelle is learning some important things about people with differences too that she couldn't get anywhere else. It is real important for me that my kids don't make fun of other people, you know with disabilities and stuff and I think her friendship with Beth will stick with her for a long time. I hope so anyway. I am real glad that she is friends with Beth. It is good.

Having a friend to spend time with and engage in activities with was an important benefit for both Beth and Janelle. Their relationship fulfilled needs for both of the girls. Because of their friendship, Janelle had the opportunity to practice some of her nurturing skills and provide Beth with physical assistance and Beth learned to accept this assistance graciously from her friend.

Friendships Change, Grow, and Develop

Of all the friendship pairs that I observed at Richmond Head Start, Beth and Janelle's is the longest lasting and most enduring. Beth and Janelle's relationship has changed over the study to be even stronger than during the initial stages of the study. When asked to describe how Beth and Janelle's relationship has changed Kim explains, "Well, it definitely has blossomed. I see, even in the last couple of weeks, more of them together. They seem to be spending their center and free time together." Donna expands "Yea, that has been over several days and them seeking each other out to sit beside one another. Janelle asked me if Beth could sit next to her in group, they are together all the time on the bus. I think it's gotten to where there is, to where they are real comfortable with their friendship. It's just kind of a matter of fact thing."

Beth and Janelle's relationship has developed to more of an exclusive friendship between the two girls. They are spending more time with one another across activities and locations. The girls themselves articulate the status of their relationship as they talk with me about their friendship and describe one another as best friends.

I asked Beth to tell me about her friends at Head Start and she replies "Yea. I'm friends with Monica and Janelle, and Janelle is my best friend." I asked Beth why Janelle was her best friend and she explains "Cause we really like each other and she doesn't get mad when I want to play with Monica or somebody else."

Later that day, I asked Janelle about her friends at Head Start and she also indicated that Beth was her best friend as she explains "Beth is my best friend and I play with Monica and Krista and Alyssa." I asked Janelle why she was a best friend with Beth and she offers "I like her the most and we really like to do stuff together. Sometimes, we

play with other people too.”

For both Beth and Janelle, they recognize one another as their best friend. Both of the girls articulate that they enjoy spending time with each other, they like one another and their friend does not get mad if they play with other children. Beth and Janelle enjoy one another and the consistency and support that their friendship provides.

Beth and Monica

“The only way to have a friend is to be one.” Ralph Waldo Emerson

The Friendship

Monica often assumes the dominant role when playing with other children and directs the activity, but with Beth, there seems to be a more natural flow and give and take to their relationship. The scenario below illustrates the flow of Beth and Monica’s relationship. The girls share the decision-making role about the direction of the activity throughout the scene. Monica has invited Beth to come slide with her and Donna is standing at the bottom of the slide to catch Beth. Beth suggests that they have a race.

Beth and Monica slide down as Donna watches. Beth says to Monica as they are walking back to the steps “This time, I’ll try to beat you!” “O.K.” Monica says “let’s go!” The girls slide down again.

In the excerpt above, Monica accepted Beth’s suggestion to see who could slide the quickest down the slide. As the girls reached the bottom of the slide once again Beth suggests that they play another activity.

“Hey, let’s play on the table. Wanna?” as she points to the picnic table. Monica “O.K.” The two girls walk over to the picnic table and sit down and Monica offers “Let’s pretend we are having a picnic.” Beth “O.K.”

Once again Monica accepts Beth's suggestion to play at the table, but suggests that they have a picnic. The two girls were easy going with one another throughout the study, and this facet of their relationship seemed to help them move from one area to another and design new activities in which to engage.

Aside from playing outside, Beth and Monica enjoyed playing in the housekeeping area, Playdough, playing in the playhouse, digging in the sandbox, engaging in art activities, and reading. Characteristics that emerged throughout the study to describe Beth and Monica's friendship are being affectionate with one another, being nice, liking one another, wanting to spend time with each other, and having fun.

Being Affectionate with One Another

Throughout the study, Beth and Monica were affectionate with one another. The girls displayed affection by holding hands and placing their arms around one another. Several times throughout the study, Beth and Monica were seated next to one another during group time. The girls would often hold hands with each other throughout the group activity as we see in the excerpt below. The children are assembling on the carpet for large group. Beth and Monica's assigned spots are next to one another. Monica is on her spot and is waiting.

Beth moves over to the group and sits down on her spot. After she sits down,

Monica reaches over and takes her hand. Donna begins reading the story.

Throughout the group activity, Beth and Monica continue to hold hands.

Aside from holding hands with one another, Beth and Monica were seen frequently with their arms around one another. In the scenario below, Beth and Monica are in the loft and are lying on a bean bag chair. A practicum student is reading a story to

them.

Beth and Monica are sitting beside one another in the beanbag chair. The girls are waiting for Dawn (university practicum student) to begin reading the story. Beth reaches over and places her arm around Monica's shoulder. Monica does the same. Dawn begins to read the story, the two girls lie back in the beanbag with their arms around one another.

Besides displaying affection with one another throughout activities, Beth and Monica frequently held hands while in line or waited in line with their arms around one another. In the excerpt below, the children are lining up outside to come in for lunch.

Beth and Monica slide down the slide and begin to make their way to the line. As they reach the line, Monica reaches over and places her arm around Beth's shoulder. Beth leans her head on Monica's shoulder.

Beth and Monica were seen throughout the study and in a variety of activities holding hands or placing their arms around one another.

Being Nice to One Another

During a conversation with me, Monica reveals that she and Beth are nice to one another as she states "I am nice to her (Beth) and she is nice to me." Monica and Beth were nice to one another by sharing things, playing and hugging one another. When I asked Monica how she and Beth were nice to one another she explains "Well, we share stuff. She asks me to play, I ask her to play. And plus she hugs me."

Besides sharing items, playing and hugging one another, Beth and Monica offered to help or would help one another throughout the study. In the scenario below, Beth and Monica are playing on the slides and Monica ensures her friend does not need help before

moving over to the top of the slide.

Monica is standing on top of the platform watching Beth climb the stairs. Beth stops on the stairs and Monica says "Beth, do you need help?" Beth replies "Nope. I got it."

Monica continues to stand and wait on the platform watching her friend and moves over to the top of the slide once Beth has made it to the top of the platform.

Beth sits on her bottom and begins to swing her legs onto the platform. Beth pulls herself onto the platform and then up and begins walking over to the top of the slide. Monica walks over to the top of the slide and sits down. Beth sits down and says "O.K. I'm ready. How 'bout you?" "Yep" Monica replies.

Not only did Monica offer assistance to Beth, but Beth also did the same. In the scenario below, Donna has asked the children to move things out of the group area to prepare for the assembly of a wooden loft, and Monica is trying to carry a bean bag chair.

Monica reaches down and picks up part of the bean bag chair. She attempts to lift it up, but it is too big. Beth looks over and sees Monica "Hey, wait, I can help too!" she says to Monica. Beth walks over and picks up a portion of the beanbag with one hand. Monica reaches down with both hands and picks up the chair.

The two girls carry it over to the corner, where Donna indicated that it would be stored.

Throughout the course of the study, Beth and Monica were nice to one another by sharing items, playing with one another, being affectionate with each other, and helping one another.

Liking One Another

Liking one another was a fundamental factor in Beth and Monica's relationship and was discussed by Monica and both of the girls' parents. During an interview with me, as I asked Monica to tell me about Beth, Monica discusses that her and Beth like one another.

I asked Monica "What can you tell me about you and Beth?" and Monica explains "We like to take turns, um, and we like each other." I asked Monica to explain "What do you mean you like each other?" and Monica explains that not only does she like Beth, but Beth also likes her. "You know I like her and she likes me."

Monica further reveals that she knows that Beth likes her because Beth tells her and also shows her by being nice to her. I asked Monica "How do you know that Beth likes you?" and Monica replies "She tells me and plus we are nice to each other so I know." I asked Monica to further explain "How does Beth let you know she likes you by being nice?" and Monica elaborates "Well, she shares stuff and asks me to play and sometimes she hugs me too."

Not only did Monica reveal that Beth was nice to her and told her that she liked her, but Monica did the same as she reveals "Well, I play with her, I share stuff with her, and I tell her too." Monica continues "I say 'Beth I like you, you are my friend.'" As my conversation with Monica was ending I asked her "Is there anything else that you would like to tell me about you and Beth?" and Monica offers "Well, she likes me and I like her."

Monica reveals that liking one another seems to be a fundamental piece in her relationship with Beth. Monica is able to articulate that she and Beth like each other and

demonstrate this to one another by sharing, telling one another, and being affectionate with each other. Throughout the course of the study the two girls spent time with one another in a variety of activities and it was not uncommon to see Beth and Monica sharing materials or necessary items to complete a project as we see in the scenario below as the two girls are working on a puzzle. The girls are seated on the floor and are putting a puzzle of a kitchen scene together. The puzzle is over half way done. Beth is working on a section of the table and Monica is working on a chair. Both of the sections they are working on have pieces that are similar in color.

“I don’t know where this piece is”, Monica says as she points to an area on the puzzle. Beth looks over and then looks at the pieces in front of the puzzle. She picks up a piece and offers it to Monica “maybe this goes there” she says as Monica takes the piece.

Not only did Beth offer Monica pieces to complete the puzzle, but Monica does the same as we see below as the girls are completing the puzzle.

The puzzle is complete except for one piece of the table where Beth has been working. Beth gets up on her knees and looks under her bottom to look for the piece. Monica begins looking around the area where she is sitting. She moves her leg and finds the piece. “Hey look, I found it!” Monica explains and she hands the piece to Beth. Beth puts it in place. “There we go!” she exclaims.

Both of the girls’ parents discuss the fact that the girls like each other while talking about their daughter’s friendship. Beth’s and Monica’s parents indicate that their daughters talk about one another at home and share stories of things that they did in school that day or on the bus.

While talking with me, Monica's mom discusses how Monica talks about Beth at home and especially notices if she is absent.

Well, she tells me what they did at school. She'll say "we played house, we painted, we went on the slide." She (Monica) notices if she's (Beth) there or not. Beth's not at school, she'll come home and say, "oh, Beth was sick today, she wasn't at school, so she must be sick. I wonder if she is going to be their tomorrow?" You know?

While talking with Beth's mom she reveals that Beth talks about Monica at home also. "Well, she tells me what they did at school. She tells me what they played, activities they worked on. You know stuff like that."

Beth and Monica demonstrated that they liked one another by sharing items, playing with each other, being nice to each other, displaying affection and telling one another. Beth and Monica's parents reveal that they knew that the two girls liked one another because they talked about each other at home and told their parents what they did in school with their friends.

Wanting to Spend Time With One Another

Beth and Monica spent a lot of time together throughout the course of the study, both playing and during routine activities. Both Beth and Monica voiced the importance of play in their relationship when they talked with me about their friendship and that they enjoyed playing with one another, and asked one another to play. During a conversation with me, Beth discusses how she asks Monica to play while she tells me what they enjoy doing. "Well, we like to slide and play mom and sister. I ask her to play sometimes and sometimes she asks me." "How do you ask Monica to play?" I asked Beth. "I say you

wanna play sister with me?" Beth explains. I inquired with Beth "You said that sometimes Monica asks you to play." "Yea" offered Beth "she says you wanna do the slide?"

There were several times throughout the course of the study that I heard either Beth or Monica ask the other to play, similar to how Beth outlined during our conversation. In the scenario below, Beth is at the art center drawing a picture; Monica has just walked over to the center as is standing beside Beth.

Monica is watching Beth coloring her picture. She stands beside Beth's chair for a few minutes and then asks "you wanna play mom and sisters?" "Yea" replied Beth "I just gotta put my picture away."

Besides verbal invitations that were exchanged between Beth and Monica to engage in specific play activities, the girls demonstrated their desire to spend time with one another by joining their friend in an area, or an activity, as we see in the excerpt below as Monica joins Beth in the housekeeping center. Beth is playing in the housekeeping center with another boy and girl. They are setting the table and pretending to prepare a meal. Monica walks over and enters the area.

"Hey Beth. What are you guys doing?" asks Monica. "Oh, just making lunch" explains Beth. Monica goes over to the cabinet and takes out plates and silverware and begins to set the table. "O.K. the table is ready, we can eat now" offers Monica.

In the above scenario Monica joined Beth in the housekeeping center and joined in the established routine by setting the table. At other times, Beth or Monica would state to an adult that they would like to engage in a certain activity with their friend. In the

scenario below the children are beginning to move from large group to center activities. Beth is seated next to Monica and the two girls are whispering to one another.

Donna asks Beth what she would like to do. "I wanna read the books in the loft with Monica" offers Beth. Beth and Monica get up from the group area and go up into the loft and begin looking at books.

Throughout the study Beth and Monica spent time with one another engaged in a variety of activities. The girls demonstrated their desire to spend time with one another by inviting each other to play, joining their friend in an area or joining in an activity, or stating to an adult what they would like to do with their friend.

Having Fun

Beth and Monica enjoyed the time they spent with one another and had fun with each other. The two girls were observed laughing and giggling during several activities, and seemed to enjoy one another's company regardless of the activity.

One day during center time, I observed Beth and Monica sharing a beanbag and looking at books, and obviously enjoying themselves.

Beth places her arm around Monica's shoulders and Monica opens the book and begins to pretend to read. Monica turns the page and there is a picture of two children making popcorn. Monica begins singing a little ditty about popcorn and the noise it makes, after a few minutes Beth joins in singing pop, pop, pop . . . the two girls bust into laughter and spend the next several minutes switching back and forth between laughing and singing.

Besides enjoying one another's company during center time, Beth and Monica were seen throughout the course of the study laughing, smiling and displaying affection

with one another during outside play as we see in the scene below. The girls are outside playing on the slide. They are both at the top of the slide, getting ready to race to the bottom, and are waiting for Donna to tell them to go.

Beth is smiling broadly as she begins to slide down the slide, she begins to giggle.

When she reaches the bottom, Monica quickly stands in front of the slide and offers her a hand. As Beth reaches for her friend's hand, their feet become tangled and they topple over. The girls are lying on the ground giggling loudly.

Donna comes to check to make sure they are O.K. and begins to help them up. As the girls get up, Monica reaches over and hugs Beth and pats her on the back.

Beth and Monica enjoyed the time they spent with each other during center time, free play or other classroom activities, as evidenced by their smiles, laughter, and affection with one another.

Factors that Influence the Friendship

Several factors influenced Beth and Monica's relationship including Monica's need for companionship, Beth's ability to fill that need, proximity and similar interests. Monica and Beth established a connection early on in the school year as Monica's mom explains. "At the beginning of the year, Monica talked a whole lot about Beth and that Beth was always very nice to her and played with her. Monica has told me about times when she didn't have anybody to play with but Beth would come play with her. And she would tell me I really like Beth, she's my friend."

Monica's sensitivity and need to feel connected and to belong is further revealed by her conversations with me about Beth and how they are "nice to each other." Monica and Beth's friendship initially started because of Monica's need for companionship and

Beth's ability to meet that need and seeking Monica out. As the school year progressed, Beth and Monica were commonly overheard discussing how a certain game should be played. Beth follows and adheres to rules and structure well, which seems to fulfill Monica's need for order and structure.

Benefits of the Friendship

Aside from playing and spending time with one another, Beth and Monica received several benefits from their friendship with one another including access to areas and inclusion in activities. In the scenario below, Monica gains access to the picnic table where Beth and Janelle are seated, while access is denied to another child.

After a few minutes, Monica walks up and sits down on the corner of the bench next to Beth. Beth looks over at Monica and says "hi." Monica responds back to Beth "hi." A little boy walks over to the picnic table and stands next to Monica. After a few minutes he sits on the end of the bench by Janelle. Monica announces, "hey you can't be here. This is for us." The little boy responds back to Monica "this spot is open, why can't I sit here." "Because it is just for us friends" explains Monica.

Monica was provided access to the picnic table where the other child was denied access. When the little boy reasons with the girls that there is room at the table, Monica explains "it is just for us friends." This type of scene was common in the centers as children would grant access to an area to a friend, but access would be denied to another child whom they did not consider to be their friend.

Not only did Beth and Monica grant access to one another to areas where they were playing with other children, but also included their friend in established activities

and ongoing events. In the scene below, Monica and another girl are playing on the slide. They are pretending to play sharks. One of the girls lies on her stomach and attempts to slide down the slide, while the other girl will hold on to her arm and try to save her from reaching the bottom and getting eaten by sharks. Beth walks over to the play structure where the two girls are playing and is included into their ongoing activity.

“What you guys doing?” Asks Beth. “Playing Titanic”, the girls answer in unison. “I am trying to save Alyssa from the sharks down there” (nods head toward the ground) explains Monica. Beth offers “I can help you if you want.” Monica “yea, I could probably use some help, she keeps slipping away.” Another little girl walks up beside Beth and looks up at Monica and Alyssa “hey I can help too.” “No, we don’t want you to play, you not our friend” replies Monica.

Beth was provided access to the area and also included into the activity in which Monica and Alyssa were engaged. Once again, friendship served as the basis in the above scenario for the inclusion of Beth into the established play routine and the exclusion of the other little girl. Friends were consistently assimilated easily into established play sequences and non-friends were not. Friends were granted permission or access to enter an already established routine.

Aside from these shared benefits, both Beth and Monica received some important personal benefits from their friendship. For Beth, Monica’s relationship provided consistency and is something on which she can depend. For Monica, she learned to appreciate differences, saw that it is all right to be different, and has learned to depend on Beth’s relationship for companionship and a playmate.

Beth’s dad talks about her relationship with Monica and describes it as something

on which she can depend. "I think Beth feels real comfortable with Monica and likes to spend time with her. She talks about reading books with Monica and doing computer stuff. I think she knows that she can always play with Monica."

Donna elaborates on the idea of Beth depending on Monica as she talks about their friendship with me. "I think that Beth knows that she can always play with Monica. Monica would never turn her away. Beth can always join in, whatever Monica is doing."

Not only did Beth depend on Monica, but Monica also counted on Beth as a playmate as Donna explains. "Monica counted on Beth to play with too. Beth always lets Monica join in. It doesn't matter what she is doing, or who she is playing with, Beth lets Monica join."

As Monica's mother talks about her daughter's relationship with Beth, she points out that Monica's relationship with Beth is something that she has come to depend on and provides some stability. "I think its, its something that she can depend on. It's just sort of a stable thing for her so, I think it means stability more than anything else. . . predictability." Monica's mother elaborates "When you're that age, that's just something that they know is going to be there the next day. Just like when she gets home, oh mom is going to be there."

Aside from companionship and having a playmate, Monica has also developed an awareness for people with differences, as her Mother explains. "She can see someone, well, we've talked a lot about she knows that she's different than a lot of other kids in town, because um she's Asian. She knows that not many people look like her and she knows that Beth's different too and so I think its good for her to see another little kid that's different you know?"

Aside from this awareness of individuals with differences, Monica's mom explains that she thinks Monica has benefited from her friendship with Beth, because she realizes that people are different and it is all right to be different. "Monica kinda associates that she's different like I am Korean and I don't look like everyone else. And, she sees Beth and I think that's part of why they get along, but I think it's good for her to see that at this young age too. ...Teaches her that people are different and it is O.K. to be different and I think it will help her later on, I think."

Both Beth and Monica receive several benefits from their relationship with one another including access to areas, inclusion in activities, companionship, and a playmate. Beth depends on her friendship with Monica and seems to realize that it is a relationship on which she can depend. Monica has developed an awareness of people with differences and is realizing that it is all right to be different.

Friendships Change, Grow, and Develop

At the end of the study, Beth and Monica were still seen in the company of one another, but both of the girls developed strong ties with other children, Beth with Janelle and Monica with Jaime. Beth and Monica were still friends, but the girls were not spending as much time with one another as they were in the beginning of the study. Both Beth and Monica continue to use their friendship to gain access and entry into activities and also for companionship. In the scene below, Monica and I are sitting on the floor putting a zoo play set together. Monica is talking with me about her trip to the zoo and filling me in on the details of being a big sister. Beth walks over to the area and joins Monica.

Beth placed her hand on Monica's shoulder and squatted down on the floor beside

us. Monica continued talking about the zoo. Beth chimed in to tell me about her experience also. The two girls continued talking as we sat on the floor and put the set together.

When Beth walked over to where Monica and I were seated and sat down, her entry into the established activity was smooth. Beth did not ask permission to join us and Monica did not tell Beth she could not join. For the two girls, their relationship continues to provide dependability and consistency.

Later during the day, I talked with Monica about her friendship with Beth and she revealed that she and Beth were still friends, they like one another, and play together, but they have developed friendships with other children. Monica explains. "Yep, we are friends. We both really like playing with each other." I asked Monica why she was friends with Beth and she reveals "Cause we always have been" Monica continues "and we like each other. Beth plays with me and I play with her." I asked Monica if she and Beth play together every day and she explains "It depends. Depends on what we are doing and if we want to. Monica continues to explain "We don't have to play together all the time." I asked Monica "Why don't you play together all the time?" and she continues "Cause sometimes we don't want to. Sometimes I play with Jaime and she plays with other kids." I asked Monica if she was happy with this arrangement of Beth not playing with her all the time and she offers "Sure. I like it."

Later after talking with Monica, I asked Beth about her friendship with Monica. Beth also reveals that she and Monica were still friends and do not play together all the time. I asked Beth what she and Monica do together and she explains "Just depends. We like to do all kinds of stuff." Beth further discusses their friendship as she explains to me

that she and Monica do not play together all the time “We don’t play together all the time. We like to play with each other sometimes.” When do you play with one another, I asked. “When she wants or I want. Monica doesn’t get mad when I don’t play with her.”

Monica and Beth’s friendship has changed and developed quite a bit over the course of the study. During our initial interviews, activities seemed to be a strong driving force behind their relationship. Both of the girls initially discussed the importance of playing together and spending time with one another. At this juncture, both of the girls seem to depend on their friendship being there for them when they need it. The relationship seems to have developed a nice ebb and flow that allows entrance and access to materials as we saw in the scene above when Beth joined Monica and I putting the zoo set together.

While talking with me about Beth and Monica’s friendship and how it has changed, Donna points out that the girls have established friendships with other children. And how these friendships with other children meet both Beth and Monica’s individual needs.

I think maybe Monica branched off from Beth because she knew that there was a need that could be met with someone else. Monica strikes me as a very competitive child and when I think about her and Beth, I see them looking at a book together, playing on the computer together, those kinds of things, but when I think about things that really remind me of Monica, its all very much physical types of activities, competitive type of running, jumping, sliding the fastest, those kinds of things, which Beth can’t do them that way. I think they are still friends, but not really close friends, like Beth and Janelle or Monica and Jaime.

Beth and Monica have developed relationships with other children to meet needs

that the two girls could not meet in one another. The two girls still spend time together and consider one another to be friends, but have also developed friendships with other children that occupy a large portion of their time and energy.

Krista and Janelle

"It's so much friendlier with two." Winnie the Pooh

The Friendship

Krista's mom reports that the friendships that Krista has developed in Head Start this year are the first friends that she has had and her mom sees them as important to her daughter's development. Krista and Janelle spent a lot of time together throughout the course of the study playing with one another.

Krista and Janelle revealed the idea of play and having someone to play with as an important component of friendship as we discussed what they do with their friends. In an interview with Janelle she talks about her and Krista playing. I asked Janelle "What do you do with Krista"? and Janelle offers "Well, we play. We play a lot". I inquired "What do you play"? "Dolls and dress up. And outside on the slide" explains Janelle. I asked Janelle "Do you like to play with Krista"? "Yea" offers Janelle. "Why do you like to play with Krista"? I asked. "Cause, well, she likes it and we have fun" Janelle responds.

Over the course of the study, Krista and Janelle enjoyed spending time in the housekeeping area and in outside play. Characteristics that emerged throughout the study and are used to describe Krista and Janelle's relationship are being affectionate with one

another, being nice to one another, and wanting to spend time with one another.

Being Affectionate with One Another

Krista and Janelle were affectionate with one another throughout the course of the study. The girls were frequently seen hugging one another, holding hands, and with their arms around one another. Frequently, throughout the course of the study, Krista and Janelle would display affection with one another during arrival and departure times from the center. The girls did not ride the bus with one another and arrived and departed from the center at different times. In the scenario below Krista is preparing to go home for the day and hugs Janelle before her departure.

The bus has arrived and the first group is preparing to leave. Krista is getting her coat on and belongings together. She walks over to the table where Janelle is seated “bye Janelle. See ya tomorrow” and hugs her. “Bye Krista” Janelle says as she reaches up and pats Krista on the back.

At other times throughout the study, Janelle would initiate telling Krista goodbye when the bus arrived in the afternoons. In the excerpt below, the bus has arrived and Krista is preparing her things to go home.

Janelle walks over to where Krista is standing. “See ya tomorrow” Janelle says and hugs Krista. “See ya” Krista replies as she walks out the door.

Besides hugging one another when Krista was leaving for the day, it was not uncommon to see the girl’s exchange hugs when Janelle arrived at the center in the morning. In the scenario below, Krista is playing in the housekeeping center and the bus with the second load of children has pulled into the parking lot.

Krista sees the bus through the window and exclaims “My friends are here, my

friends are here!” Krista moves over to the door where Donna is letting the children into the classroom. Krista pats Janelle on the arm and the two girls hug one another.

Aside from Krista and Janelle exchanging hugs around arriving and departing from the center, the girls would also hug one another at other times throughout the day. In the excerpt below, the children have just finished eating lunch. Janelle is in the bathroom brushing her teeth and Krista is looking for her.

Krista walks into the bathroom where Janelle is brushing her teeth. “Hi” Krista says and puts her arms around Janelle from behind and squeezes her.

Besides hugging one another, Krista and Janelle were also seen with their arms around one another or holding hands. In the excerpt below, the children are seated in large group. Krista and Janelle are sitting next to one another with their arms around one another.

Donna is reading a story about snow. Krista and Janelle are seated on the front row, center. The girls have their arms around one another as they listen to the story.

At other times, Krista and Janelle were seen holding hands. Donna has just announced that it is clean up time and the children are putting toys and other items away and reporting to the group area. Krista and Janelle are taking off the dress up clothes in the housekeeping area.

Krista and Janelle finish putting the clothes away in the housekeeping center.

Janelle grabs Krista’s hand and the two of them walk over to the group area. The girls find their seats, next to one another on the front row and sit down. Donna

begins reading a story. Throughout the story the girls continue to hold hands.

Krista and Janelle were affectionate with one another throughout the course of the study. The two girls were frequently seen hugging one another. Krista and Janelle exchanged hugs during departure and arrival times and also throughout the course of the day. The girls were frequently seen with their arms around one another or holding hands.

Being Nice to One Another

Krista and Janelle were nice to one another throughout the course of the study by playing with one another, helping one another and sharing items. Janelle revealed during a conversation with me that she and Krista were nice to one another by playing with one another. When I asked Janelle to tell me about her friendship with Krista she offers "We are nice to each other." I inquired how she and Krista were nice to each other and Janelle explained "We play with each other."

Aside from playing with one another, Krista and Janelle were nice to one another by helping one another. In the excerpt below, Krista has joined Janelle at the art table where the children are coloring a Goldilocks scene. Janelle secures the materials that Krista needs in order to complete the project from Kim.

Krista sits at the table next to Janelle. Janelle raises her hand and Kim comes over to the table and Janelle says, "Krista needs to do one of these too." "Sure" Kim says and retrieves another blank Goldilocks picture for Krista and places it on the table. "Thanks Kim" said Krista as she began to reach for the crayons.

Not only did Janelle help Krista, but Krista also helped Janelle. In the scenario below, the children have just returned from rhythm and games. It was very cold and snowy outside, so the children are bundled up in boots, snowsuits and winter gear. The

children are taking off their outerwear and returning to the group area. Janelle is having difficulty getting her boots off.

Janelle is seated on her bottom in front of the lockers. She is pulling on her boot, but cannot get it off. Krista walks over "I help you" and reaches down and grabs Janelle's foot and boot. Krista gives a tug and the boot comes off. "I do the other one" Krista offers and she pulls Janelle's other boot off.

Besides helping one another, Krista and Janelle were also nice to one another by sharing items with each other. There were several times throughout the study that I saw both of the girls share materials needed to complete projects with one another and also sharing play things with each other during free time. In the excerpt below, Krista and Janelle are working at the science table completing some leaf rubbings. Janelle arranges her leaves under a piece of construction paper and is ready to color the sheet and Krista realizes she does not have any crayons and offers Janelle some crayons that she has been using.

Krista is watching Janelle arrange leaves under the construction paper. Janelle has the leaves arranged and Krista says "Here you go, (Krista points to crayons that she has been using) what color?" "You pick" Janelle responds. Krista picks up several different colors and offers "You could do different ones" as she hands Janelle the crayons.

Besides Krista sharing items with Janelle, Janelle also shared things with Krista as we see in the excerpt below. The girls are playing in the housekeeping center. They are pretending to prepare a meal for their babies. Janelle has a baby seated in the high chair and offers the high chair to Krista as she is looking for a place to sit her baby.

Janelle is holding a bottle up to the baby's mouth as it is seated in the high chair. Krista is holding her baby and says "I need to feed the baby". "Here" Janelle offers, you put yours here, I'll rock my baby".

Being nice to one another was an important factor in Krista and Janelle's friendship. The two girls were nice to one another by playing together, sharing items and helping one another.

Wanting to Spend Time With One Another

Throughout the course of the study, both Krista and Janelle would seek one another out to spend time together. Sometimes the girls would invite one another to engage in a specific activity. In the scenario below, Janelle asks Krista to play in the housekeeping center with her.

The children are seated in large group and Donna is calling children's names and asking where they would like to play. Janelle taps Krista on the shoulder. Janelle is seated behind Krista. And says, "you wanna play babies with me today?" "Sure" Krista replies.

There were other times throughout the study that Krista would ask Janelle to engage in a certain activity with her. In the excerpt below, Janelle is painting a picture and Krista asks if she will play with the dollhouse with her in the puzzle area.

Krista walks up to the art easel where Janelle is painting. "You wanna do the little dolls with me?" Krista asks. "Yea." Janelle replies as she removes her paint smock and hangs it on the hook.

Besides asking one another to engage in a specific activity, there were other times throughout the course of the study where Krista or Janelle would join their friend in an

area or activity. In the scenario below, Krista joins Janelle at the art table to color a picture of Goldilocks.

Krista walks over to the art table and stands beside Janelle. "Hey. What ya doing?" she inquires. "We are coloring this" responds Janelle as she points to her picture. Krista pulls a chair up close to Janelle and says "I want to do this with you guys."

Janelle would also join Krista in an area or activity as we see in the scenario below when Janelle joins Krista in the housekeeping center where she and two other children are playing doctor's office. Krista is pretending to examine the babies, while the other children are role playing the receptionist and nurse. Janelle watches for a few minutes and then joins in pretending to take the doll's blood pressure.

Janelle walks over and stands next to Krista. She watches as Krista lies the doll on the table and pretends to listen to the heartbeat. Janelle picks up the blood pressure cuff and places it around the doll's leg "We need to do this too" she offers. Another little girl brings another doll into the area, picks up the one on the table and replaces it with the one she walked in with. Krista listens to the heart and Janelle places the blood pressure cuff around the doll's leg.

Krista and Janelle spent time with one another throughout the course of the study. They sought one another out by inviting one another to engage in specific activities or by joining one another in an area or activity.

Factors that Influence the Friendship

Krista and Janelle's friendship seemed to develop on the basis of engagement in common free choice activities. The two girls both enjoyed playing in the housekeeping

center and engaging in fantasy or pretend play. Krista had a tendency to direct other children during play scenarios and Janelle was willing to engage in the type of activity or event that Krista designed, unlike other children.

In the scene below there are several children in the housekeeping center, which is set up as a Doctor's office. The children are beginning to put on the doctor clothes that Donna has brought in. Krista reaches up on the coat rack and pulls down a white lab coat, Janelle reaches and gets one along with one of the boys. Beth is situating herself at the front of the center and announces that she will take appointments. Monica decides that she wants to be the nurse and puts on the nurse's cap. The other little boy picks up a baby and says he will be a patient. Krista locates a stethoscope and puts it around her neck and Janelle retrieves the medicine and "shot". Monica wants to weigh a baby and Krista tells her "no" and takes the baby away. Monica refuses to play with Krista and leaves the area.

A child places a baby on the exam table and Monica walks over and picks the baby up and Krista reaches up to get the baby. "I am the doctor" says Krista "I get to see the baby." "I am going to weigh the baby" explains Monica "they always weigh my little sister when my mom and I take her to the doctor." "No" Krista responds "I don't want you to" and reaches over and takes the baby out of Monica's arms.

When Krista takes the baby away from Monica she becomes frustrated and tries to reason with Krista, but, without success.

Monica crosses her arms around her chest and stomps her foot. "You don't play the right way Krista. I'm not gonna do this" and places her nurse's cap back on

the shelf. Krista has taken the baby over to the examining table and pretending to listen to its heart. Monica leaves the area and goes to the sensory table.

In the rest of the scenario below, we see how Krista and Janelle's relationship works as Krista tells Janelle what to do.

Krista continues to listen to the baby's heart and announces to Janelle "the baby needs a shot. Give it a shot." Janelle complies and pretends to give the baby a shot. Krista reaches down and picks the baby up and hands it back to the little boy "he's better" Krista announces.

Krista continues to tell Janelle what to do as she instructs her to find another patient for her and takes the needle away from Janelle in the scene below.

Krista says "get more babies that I can fix." Janelle gathers up 2 babies and brings them to the examining table where Krista is waiting. Krista pretends to listen to one of the baby's heartbeat and reaches over for the needle that Janelle is holding. "I give the shot now" she says to Janelle who willingly complies.

As Krista took the needle away from Janelle, she looks around the center and retrieves the blood pressure cuff and begins to play with Kim and some other children. Krista joins Janelle and the others and pretends to give Kim a shot. In the excerpt below, two other children enter the center and want to play and Krista reaches over and takes the blood pressure cuff from Janelle.

"I do this now, you give the shot" and hands the needle back to Janelle. The girls examine their two classmates with Krista taking blood pressure and Janelle giving them shots.

Throughout the play scenario described above, Krista directed Janelle's behavior by verbally telling her what to do, stating what she was going to do, or by taking materials from Janelle. Throughout the scenario, Janelle complied and went along with what Krista wanted to do.

Donna sheds some light on Krista and Janelle's relationship as she explains, "Janelle is such a peacemaker. She really doesn't want to hurt anybody's feelings, so I think she thinks it is O.K. that Krista is bossy sometimes. She likes to play in the same areas as Krista and has developed some skills for the two of them to get along together. I think some of Janelle's skills come from having an older brother and learning to get along well with him. The two girls do play well together, maybe because of Janelle's personality."

Krista and Janelle's relationship seemed to be based on the girls' similar interests, proximity in activities and the two of them fulfilling each other's needs. Krista's social skills and interaction skills developed throughout the course of the study and possibly because of her relationship with Janelle. Janelle was patient with Krista throughout the school year and tolerated Krista taking materials from her and directing her activity during play scenarios as described above. Unlike Monica and several of the other children in the class, Janelle continued to play with Krista and would not leave the area when Krista "was not playing right". Janelle was a good role model for Krista and demonstrated some appropriate social skills that I feel helped her develop a relationship with another little girl that enrolled in the center toward the end of the study.

Benefits of the Friendship

Both Krista and Janelle received a variety of benefits from their friendship with one another. A common benefit that the girls shared was having someone to play with and a companion. The fact that Krista and Janelle like to play with one another is revealed in a conversation with Krista's mother. "She (Janelle) is a lovable girl and she loves to play. Krista and Janelle really like to play with each other." Krista and Janelle enjoyed a lot of the same activities and were seen playing together throughout the course of the study in the same areas and engaging in the same activities.

Besides these share benefits of having a companion and playmate, Krista and Janelle also received some individual benefits from their relationship. Krista had the opportunity to develop a friendship and social skills, and Janelle had the opportunity to become a role model to Krista.

Krista's mom explains that she feels that Krista benefits from her relationship with Janelle and Beth by having playmates and friends. As she explains "The only thing I can say is, you know, I'm glad that she does have people to play with and friends." Aside from a friendship, Krista receives other benefits from her relationship with Janelle. Janelle is patient with Krista and like Beth, explains the rules and how to act with other children to Krista and helps her along the way. Like her relationship with Beth, Krista's relationship with Janelle did help her develop some important friendship skills.

Janelle was a model to Krista in a variety of other ways as we see in the scenario below when Janelle and Krista are coloring Goldilock's scenes. As Krista is coloring she looks at Janelle's picture and appears to be using Janelle's work for a model.

Before she picked a crayon up, Krista looked at Janelle's picture. She picked up a

yellow crayon and began to color Goldilocks hair yellow. After she completed the hair, she once again looked at Janelle's picture and chose a blue crayon to color Goldilocks dress, like Janelle's. Krista continued to color, looking at Janelle's pictures as she completed each section of the picture. As the girls continued to color, they talked among themselves about their pictures and the story that Donna had told about Goldilocks.

Krista sought out Janelle to spend time with in the scenario above and also utilized Janelle's work as a model. When Krista joined in with Janelle and Beth in the coloring activity, Janelle made sure that Krista had the materials that she needed in order to complete the project.

Krista and Janelle's friendship provided shared and individual benefits to both of the girls. Both Krista and Janelle benefited from having a playmate and a companion. Krista had the opportunity to develop a friendship and some friendship making skills, while Janelle was able to become a role model for Krista.

Friendships Change, Grow, and Develop

Janelle and Krista's relationship has changed over the course of the school year. Beth and Janelle are spending more time together, so Janelle is spending less time with Krista. Donna talks about how the two girls' play styles have developed and changed throughout the course of the study, and how she feels that this may have an impact on their relationship. Donna points out that Janelle is not seeking Krista out to play with anymore as she explains "Janelle would never, I don't think, turn anyone away that wanted to come and play with her. But, I can't even tell you if I see Janelle trying to seek out Krista anymore." Donna continues to discuss Krista and Janelle's relationship and

explains that she feels a difference in play styles is impacting the girl's friendship.

I think now, I think it's just a happenstance kind of thing where they'll play in the same place. I think Krista is still so involved in solitary play, or parallel play, right alongside them, that she is still in her own little world some of the times. Janelle and the other girls, they seem to have moved much beyond that in their play. They are much more cooperative and interactive with one another. So, I don't think that they really play together a whole lot anymore.

For Krista and Janelle, different play styles and changes in development seem to have had a major impact on their friendship. Janelle has moved to more cooperative play, as Donna explained and Krista is still involved primarily in solitary or parallel play. Consequently, the girls are spending time in the same area of the classroom, but not interacting with one another or spending time developing their friendship.

I asked Donna if she felt that Krista and Janelle would possibly become closer friends in the future and she explains that the girls would possibly spend time with one another, but she does not see them becoming close friends.

I don't know. I can't see Janelle seeking her out, but maybe if they were in the same Kindergarten room together, it may be an association because they know each other from here, but, I don't see them being close friends, just maybe someone to spend time with.

Krista and Janelle's relationship has changed drastically over the course of the study and seems to have dissolved. The girls play in the same areas with one another, but are not seen seeking one another out or interacting with each other to any degree.

Krista's friendships with Janelle and Beth seem to have helped her develop the social

skills necessary to develop a relationship with another child, Shelby. Shelby is much younger; she just turned three and seems to be on a more even developmental level with Krista than Janelle. Krista and Shelby are seen in close proximity of one another throughout the center and across activities. Both of the girls seek one another out to play with. The majority of their play can be described as parallel play where the two girls play alongside one another in the same area.

Krista and Beth

"Each friend represents a world in us, a world not possibly born until they arrive, and it is only by this meeting that a new world is born." Anais Nin

The Friendship

Aside from her friendship with Janelle, Krista also developed a friendship with Beth. Krista and Beth spent time with one another at Head Start and also at special needs preschool in the afternoons. During their time together at Head Start, Krista and Beth enjoyed several activities including art, the sand/water table, housekeeping area, and outside activities. The majority of their activities centered on pretend play or role-playing including Titanic, monsters, and house.

Characteristics that are highlighted to describe Krista and Beth's friendship are affection, being nice to one another, and showing a desire to spend time with one another.

Being Affectionate with One Another

Krista and Beth were seen together frequently throughout the course of the study and were affectionate with one another. It was not uncommon to see the two girls with their arms around one another, hugging one another.

In the scene below, the students are transitioning from outside to inside to prepare

for lunch. Deb has blown the whistle and the student's are beginning to line up and Krista and Beth place their arms around one another.

When Deb blows the whistle, Krista and Beth stand up and begin to make their way from the sandbox toward the door. As they are walking, Krista reaches over and places her arm around Beth's shoulders. When the girls reach the line of children that is forming, Beth reaches over and places her arm around Krista's shoulder. The two girls stand with their arms around each other's shoulders until the children begin to move inside, Beth removes her hand from Krista's shoulders and places it on her walker.

Besides placing their arms around one another, Krista and Beth were also seen frequently hugging one another. In the scenario below the two girls are playing in the housekeeping center together during free play and Krista hugs Beth.

Krista is pretending to make lunch, while Beth is doing the laundry. Beth removes the clothes from the dryer and begins to fold them. After she folds the clothes, Beth puts them away. Once all of the clothes are folded and put away, Beth announces that she is finished with the laundry. Krista replies "that's good Beth" and walks over and hugs Beth.

Besides acts of affection being initiated by Krista, Beth also was affectionate with Krista. In the scenario below, Krista and Beth are playing outside on the slide. They are pretending to play sharks. One of the girls leans over the top of the slide and attempts to hold onto their friend while the other lies on her stomach and tries to slide down the slide. If the child on top lets go of their friend, they will slide to the bottom and get attacked by sharks. Beth is on the top of the slide attempting to hold onto Krista.

Krista wiggles on her stomach and tries to return to the top of the slide. Beth pulls on Krista's arms and Krista safely returns to the top of the slide. The two girls are standing on top of the slide and Krista exclaims "Thanks I was scared!" Beth reaches over and hugs Krista.

Aside from exchanging hugs while engaged in play with one another, Krista and Beth also were seen hugging one another at other times throughout the course of the day. In the excerpt below, Krista is playing in the housekeeping center and Beth is working on an art project.

Krista leaves the housekeeping center, looks around the classroom and walks over to the art table where Beth is working. As Krista approaches the table she says "hi Beth" and reaches down and hugs Beth.

At other times throughout the study, Beth would hug Krista before she left the center for the day. Some days, Beth would leave the center before Krista to go to afternoon preschool to receive physical therapy. In the scenario below, Bob has arrived with the car to take Beth to Garfield for her physical therapy appointment.

Krista and Beth are playing in the puzzle area. The girls are seated on the floor playing a memory game. When Bob arrives, Krista announces "Hey Beth, Bob is here." Krista rises up on her knees and reaches over and hugs Krista.

Krista and Beth were affectionate with one another throughout the course of the study and in a variety of situations. Krista and Beth were seen with their arms around one another or hugging one another during routine activities and across play scenarios.

Being Nice to One Another

Krista and Beth were nice to one another in a variety of ways including playing with one another and helping each other. When talking with Krista about her friendship with Beth, she reveals that she thinks, "Beth is nice". When I asked "how is Beth nice to you?" Krista reveals "she plays with me."

Aside from being nice to one another by playing together, the two girls also provided assistance to one another in a variety of ways throughout the course of the study. In the scene below, Krista and Beth are sitting under the loft. Krista is in the rocking chair and Beth is sitting on the floor. The girls are discussing what they are going to play that day. Krista begins rocking in the chair and pushes back too far and tips the chair over and Beth comforts Krista.

Krista hits her head on the beam that holds the loft up. Krista begins to cry Kim comes over and checks to see if Krista is O.K. She is cradling Krista in her arms. Beth scoots over on her bottom toward Krista and rubs Krista's head and pats her on the shoulder. "Let's go lay in the bean bag Krista and rest".

Besides providing comfort to Krista, Beth also helped Krista throughout the course of the study by keeping up with her belongings. Beth provided verbal reminders to Krista throughout the course of the study to place personal belongings in her backpack or cubby. In the scenario below, the girls have completed an art project and are preparing to move to another center in the classroom. Beth picks her picture up and carries it over to her backpack and puts it in her bag. Beth verbally reminds Krista to put her picture away.

Krista has moved to the housekeeping center and is beginning to put on dress up

clothes. "Hey Krista. You should put your paper away so you have it to take home." Krista moves over to the art table, retrieves her paper and places it in her bag.

Not only did Beth provide assistance to Krista, but there were also several times throughout the study that Krista helped Beth. In the scenario below, the girls are outside on the slide. The two girls go down the slide together and when they reach the bottom, Krista realizes that Beth does not have her walker and retrieves it for Beth.

As Krista reaches the bottom of the slide she sees Beth's walker off to the side by the picnic table. "I got it Beth" Krista announces as she walks over to the picnic table and pushes the walker back to Beth.

Besides retrieving Beth's walker for her, Krista helps her friend by moving items during play scenarios. The two girls are playing in the sandbox, filling up buckets of sand and moving them into the playhouse.

Beth carries a bucket of sand to the playhouse and turns it over. Krista places a bucket on top of hers. The girls carry the buckets back outside and begin to fill them up again. Beth tries to pick up her bucket. "I made it too full". "Let me help" offers Krista. Together the girls carry the bucket of sand into the playhouse and dump it on top of the other two.

Throughout the course of the study Krista and Beth were nice to one another in a variety of ways. Krista felt that Beth was nice to her by playing with her and the girls provided different types of assistance to one another on several occasions throughout the study.

Wanting to Spend Time With One Another

Krista and Beth were seen in each other's company frequently throughout the course of the study. Both girls sought the other out to spend time with throughout the course of the study. The girls would join in activities with their friend, or would ask the other to engage in a certain game or activity. In the excerpt below, Krista joins Beth in the puzzle area where Beth and two other girls are playing with a dollhouse.

Krista walks over from the art table to the puzzle area and sits down beside Beth who is placing dolls and accessories throughout the dollhouse. Krista reaches over Beth and picks up a few people and accessories and begins placing them around the dollhouse.

Not only did Krista join Beth in activities, but Beth would also join Krista in activities. In the scenario below, Krista is playing with the goop at the art table. Beth has just finished painting a picture and moves to the art table with Krista.

Beth places her picture on the shelf to dry. She looks around the room and sees Krista at the goop table with two other children. Beth makes her way over to the table, puts on a paint apron and sits beside Krista. She retrieves some goop from the center of the table and begins cutting shapes with cookie cutters like the other children.

Besides joining one another in an area or activity, Krista and Beth would frequently ask one another to engage in specific activities with them. In the scenario below, Krista, Monica, Janelle and one other girl are at the table playing with the writing boards. Beth approaches the table from the Playdough table and asks Krista to play house with her.

... "Hey Krista, I'm gonna go to housekeeping, do you want to go with me?"

"Just let me finish this" explains Krista as she finishes writing on her wipe off board. Beth stands beside Krista and watches while she finishes the board. "That looks good" offers Beth.

Not only did Beth ask Krista to engage in specific activities, but Krista would also ask Beth to play certain games with her also. In the scenario below, the children are seated in the group area and Donna is calling names for the children to prepare to go outside. Krista asks Beth to play monsters with her.

Krista is seated in front of Beth. Krista turns around and asks Beth to play monsters with her. Beth smiles and says "yea. We gotta get Jordan too!"

Krista and Beth were seen in one another's company throughout the study and sought one another out to spend time with. The girls would join in activities, or invite one another to engage in specific activities.

Factors That Influence the Friendship

Several factors influenced Krista and Beth's friendship including similar interests, proximity and both of the girls' desires to engage in pretend play. During an interview with me, Donna addresses these affecting factors on Krista and Beth's friendship. Donna explains "they both really like to play in the housekeeping area and also they engage in a lot in pretend play." In the scenario below, we see Krista and Beth engage in pretend play while they engage in a game of monsters. Krista and Beth are in the housekeeping center and Jordan is looking at a book in the reading center next to the housekeeping area. Beth looks over toward Jordan and says "we are gonna play monsters. You wanna?" "I'll be the monster and get you guys!" Jordan offers "O.K" Beth agrees

excitedly and says to Krista “you be the baby and I’ll be the mommy. I’ll save you from the monster, let’s go!”

The two girls move quickly to the housekeeping center where Krista offers to Donna “we are running from the monster!” The two girls get on the floor, under the table and place their arms around one another. “I’m scared, I’m scared. The monster will get me!” Krista says. “Don’t worry, I’ll save you” Beth consoles her and gives her a squeeze. The monster approaches the housekeeping center “where are my girls? I need to get them!” Krista squeals and bounds up from under the table and attempts to run from the housekeeping center . . .

Besides similar interests and play styles, outside of Head Start, Krista and Beth attend the same preschool program and their parents use the same day care, so the girls have quite a few opportunities to spend time with one another. It was not uncommon throughout the course of the study to hear the girls discuss Garfield, where they attended preschool, or going to Linda’s, who was their Day Care provider. For Krista and Beth similar interests, similar play styles, and proximity both in and outside of the Head Start classroom all influenced their friendship.

Benefits of the Friendship

Both Krista and Beth have benefited from their friendship in a variety of ways including having someone to spend time with, a friend, and a playmate. Their friendship provides other opportunities for Krista and Beth including inclusion in activities. In the scenario below, Beth approaches the puzzle area where Krista and two other girls are playing with the weeble dollhouse. Beth sits down next to Krista and joins in the activity.

Beth sits down on the carpet next to Krista and reaches into the Rubbermaid

bucket and pulls two Weebles out. She looks at the playhouse and finds a place to put them. The girls continue taking the Weebles out of the bucket and placing them in the dollhouse. After all of the weebles are placed, Krista says "I'm gonna be the sister, you be the baby (points to one of the girls), you be another sister (pointing to the other girl) and you be the mommy Beth." "O.K." Beth responds.

Beth became a part of the activity and was assimilated into the routine by being assigned a role, to be the mother, in the play scenario.

Aside from inclusion and assimilation into activities, Krista and Beth's friendship has enabled the girls to develop some important social skills that will help them in their future relationships. For Beth, she had the opportunity to be placed in a position of a role model and was looked up to by Krista. For Krista, she had the opportunity to play with another child and develop some important social and interaction skills.

Beth has become somewhat of a role model to Krista and has helped Krista develop some much needed interaction skills. Beth takes the time to explain things to Krista as Kim explains during an interview with me.

The other day, they were in the housekeeping center and Krista took a doll from another girl. Beth told her that she couldn't just take stuff from other kids. Krista said, "but I wanted it." Beth told her that wasn't nice and you don't do that to other kids, that she should wait for the girl to be done playing with the doll, then she could have a turn.

Kim continues to explain "I don't think all the kids would be so patient with her. A lot of times, they just tell us that Krista took something or just take it back from her."

Not only is Krista receiving assistance from Beth on interaction with peers, But Beth receives the opportunity to become a role model for Krista and practice other important social skills as well.

Aside from these social tips, Krista receives other important benefits from her friendship with Beth. For Krista, just the opportunity to play with other children and develop relationships is a big stepping-stone, as her mom explains

Well, when we were in the shelter, there weren't any kids to play with. Krista before now never had the chance to play with other kids. Only me and her Uncle, so you know very adult oriented.

Beth and Krista seemed to receive different benefits from their friendship. For Beth, she had the opportunity to assume a different role in a relationship and develop some important skills that will help her in future relationships. For Krista, the opportunity to interact with another child and develop a relationship seemed to be a great accomplishment.

Friendships Change, Grow, and Develop

As with Janelle and Krista, Beth and Krista's relationship has also changed. As Beth's friendship with Janelle developed and become even closer, her friendship with Krista has seemed to dwindle. Donna sheds some light on the change in Beth and Krista's relationship as she explains how she feels that the girls' play styles and interests have developed in somewhat different directions as Beth has matured. Donna explains "Beth likes to play a variety of things and Krista loves to play house, she loves to dress up." Donna continues to discuss the changes in Krista and Beth's relationship as she talks about how Krista plays with other children. "If she (Krista) wants a doll and

somebody's got it, oh well, mine now, and Beth doesn't like to tolerate that kind of action." I asked Donna to explain this change in Krista and Beth's relationship as I inquire "Previously, we saw Beth somewhat nurturing Krista along as far as sharing with other children and taking items away from children. What do you think is happening there now?" Donna explains "Well, I think there was a time when Beth was more patient with Krista. She tried to help her understand that you shouldn't take things away from kids, she explained to Krista and tried to help her with other kids. Krista has gotten better, but she still just takes stuff and that seems to really bother Beth." As Donna and I continue to talk, she reveals that she does not feel that Krista and Beth are really friends anymore. "As far as her friendship with Beth, I don't see a real close friendship there at all, like Beth and Janelle." Donna further explains the time that Krista and Beth spend together "I think that Beth allows her to play with Janelle and her, because Krista assumes the friendship role. She assumes that she is a part of it and they just kind of let her go along for the ride."

I talked with Beth about her friendship with Krista at the end of the study. Beth did not speak enthusiastically about her friendship with Krista when I asked "What can you tell me about Krista?" Beth responds "Um, I don't really know much about Krista." I continued to talk with Krista and inquired if she and Beth still played together and Krista responds "sometimes." When I asked Beth what she and Krista played she did not elaborate much as she stated "dolls and stuff like that." As we continued to talk, Beth reveals that she considers Krista to be a friend part of the time as she explains "Sometimes she is my friend." Beth further elaborates about characteristics that Krista displays that bother Beth. "Sometimes she is bossy and follows me. Sometimes I just

want to play with Janelle. I don't like when she follows me."

As Beth's friendship with Janelle has developed and expanded, her friendship with Krista has diminished. Beth's play style and maturity have developed along different lines than Krista's and this seems to be having an impact on their relationship. Krista is still predominantly spending time in the housekeeping center, and Beth has transitioned away from spending the majority of her time in the housekeeping area to other areas of the classroom. As Beth and Janelle's friendship has developed, Krista has developed a friendship with Shelby.

If Krista had not been friends with Janelle and Beth, she would not have begun to understand the simple nuances of friendship. Krista had the opportunity to practice these skills with Janelle and Beth, so she could develop a relationship with Shelby. As Janelle and Beth matured, Krista was not able to meet their needs as friends. Krista is still very egocentric and her play was centered on meeting her needs. As Janelle and Beth developed, they seemed to be looking for more than just a playmate. Janelle and Beth seemed to be looking for more of a confidant, someone they could depend on and share experiences with and their relationship met these needs.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The purpose of my study of preschool aged children with and without disabilities was to understand and describe friendships between these children. I developed a focus question, which helped guide the overall study, and 5 subquestions, all of which served to help me achieve my goal of understanding and describing the friendships I observed.

The question that served as the focus of my study was: *What are the experiences of preschool aged children with and without moderate disabilities who are engaged in friendships in inclusive preschool settings?* Within the focus question are subquestions that revealed important pieces of information that add to our understanding of the friendships between children with and without disabilities.

1. How do the children involved, describe these friendships?
2. What do these friendships mean to the children involved?
3. What are the dynamics of the friendships as they play out in the classroom?
4. How do the teachers/parents view/describe these friendships?
5. What do these friendships mean to the teachers and parents?

In order to attempt to uncover the meaning of friendships between children with and without disabilities, and to understand how the participants describe the friendships and how teachers and parents perceive the relationships, I used participant observation and interviews. I needed to develop an awareness and understanding of the places, times, and contexts in which the relationships existed. Through participant observation, I was able to study these issues. Interviews allowed the children to describe actions, activities they engaged in together, and feelings about their partner. The adult interviewees,

teachers and parents, were able to describe how they perceive the relationship and reveal qualities about the relationship that I may have overlooked or not had the opportunity to see during observations. The participants' words and actions helped guide my direction throughout the study and helped me discover how they defined friendship and to develop an overall understanding of the friendships and what the friendships meant to the participants.

The Characteristics of Friendship

The concept of friendship has been talked about and discussed across generations and cultures. Friendship seems to be a component of all cultures including preschool-aged children. Having someone to spend time with and do things with was of paramount importance in the Head Start classrooms where I observed.

Friends are commonly thought of as people we enjoy spending time with and like. For young children, the concept of a friend has been described as a playmate or someone with whom to spend time. Friends are used to fulfill an immediate need and children who are friends show some mutual interest in being together. At the outset of this study, I defined friendship as a dyadic relationship between peers, characterized by repeated interest in spending time or playing together. As I engaged in research in the Head Start classrooms, the children and adults began to reveal their ideas, definitions, and notions about friendship to me. To understand what the word friend means in these Head Start classrooms, I watched, listened and asked. Some general characteristics and patterns of friendship emerged throughout the study, which are consistent with children's friendships during the preschool period, including being nice to one another, affectionate with one another, liking one another, choosing to spend time with one another, playing with one

another, and having fun together.

People enjoy spending time with others who they perceive as nice. For the children in the study, like other children their age, being nice to one another was a fundamental building block of their friendships (Furman, 1982; Rubin, 1980; Selman, 1980). The children discussed the concept of being nice to one another and were seen throughout the course of the study engaging in acts of kindness with their friends. The children articulated and demonstrated that they were nice to one another by sharing materials and space with one another, taking turns, providing assistance to their friends as needed, providing comfort, playing together and demonstrating a lack of aggression with each other.

The concept of affection emerged as I observed the children and watched them interact with one another throughout the course of the study. The children in the study were affectionate with one another in a variety of ways including hugging, placing their arms around one another, patting one another on the back or shoulder, or by holding hands. As the teachers discussed the children's friendships, they revealed the idea that they knew the children liked one another because they were affectionate with each other.

A fundamental component of friendship that the children revealed was liking one another. A common component of friendship is liking one another (Berndt, 1988; Furman, 1982). The parents revealed the idea that the children liked each other and expressed this by talking about their friends at home. Parents also explained that the children liked one another because they spent time together. Aside from the children discussing their friends at home with their parents, the children articulated to adults or to their friends that they liked their friends throughout the course of the day or during play.

themselves articulated that they liked their friends to other adults or to their friends throughout the course of the day or during play scenarios.

Aside from having the opportunity to spend time with one another, children must have the desire and skills to let someone know they would like to spend time with them and also to be able to interpret those cues given by their peers (Gresham & Reschly, 1988). The children used a variety of both physical and verbal techniques to indicate that they wanted to spend time with their friends. The children sought one another out throughout the study by asking an adult if they could be with their friend, telling an adult they wanted to be with their friend, or asking a friend to spend time with them. Physically, the children arranged the environment so they could be in proximity with their friend, or moved to an area where their friend was located.

The children revealed the idea of play and having someone to play with as an important component of friendship as we discussed what they did with their friends. Play seems to be at the cornerstone of the children's relationships. When discussing friendships with the parents and teachers, the topic of play was discussed readily. As Janelle's mom revealed "Janelle and Beth play well together. They really like to spend time with one another playing. They get along well." Abby's mom added to this thought while talking about what Abby and Ingrid do while they are at her house "Barbie, they play Barbie dolls. Play dress up; get into mom's make up. They tried to plug my curling iron in. (mom laughs) they do all kinds of stuff. They have fun!"

A mark of friendship is to enjoy the time spent with one another. Aside from observations that the friends found comfort in spending time with one another throughout various activities and enjoyed themselves while with one another, parents and teachers

echoed these same sentiments as we discussed the children's friendships. The friends in the study did have fun with one another across the various types of activities in which they engaged.

The friendships observed displayed characteristics common among preschool-aged children. These relationships exhibited characteristics similar to those friendships of same aged peers, including being nice to one another, affection, liking one another, spending time with one another, playing with one another, and having fun (Corsaro, 1985; Selman, 1980). These relationships exhibited characteristics common to friendships of preschool-aged children and were recognized and defined as friendships from the participants in the study, adding to the growing body of literature that ascertains that friendships between children with and without disabilities exist (Buysse, 1993; Hall, 1994; Staub et.al, 1994; and Staub, 1998).

The Dynamics of Friendship

In order to develop and maintain a friendship, children need opportunities to interact with one another and the desire to spend time with one another (Levinger & Levinger, 1986). The children spent time with one another throughout the course of the study engaged in a variety of activities. In order to have a better understanding of the opportunities children had to spend time with one another, I have categorized these activities into three broad areas: routines, teacher-directed activities, and child-chosen activities. I observed the friendship pairs in and across all of these activities, which added depth to the study and my understanding of the dimensions of the friendships.

Routines are such things as preparation for meals, mealtime, and grooming activities. These are routine type activities that occurred in the centers throughout the

course of the day. Routines are things in which children are expected to participate and do not have control of the direction of the activity.

Teacher-directed activities are large and small group. These are times when the children are expected to come together with their peers and attend to the teacher for some type of instruction or directions. Small groups consisted of 7 to 9 children. During small group time the teacher usually had an activity planned for the children, which lasted somewhere between 10 and 15 minutes, a typical lesson focused on an area of study. After the lesson presentation, the children usually engaged in an extension activity, such as making something, answering questions, or another related activity. During large group the children were required to assemble in a central location on the floor either on assigned or designated spots, to once again attend to the teacher. During large group the focus was on the calendar, days of the week, weather, and other pertinent current events.

Child-chosen activities are activities or events in which the children choose to participate. These activities are things such as center time and outside play. Children choose the center in which they would like to work, or where to play outside during free play. As I observed the friends participating in these child-chosen activities, I realized not all of these activities were the same and the child chosen activities could be divided further and categorized by the purpose of the interaction that took place during the activity. Children participated in activities many times alongside other peers, sharing materials and space, but not working toward a common goal or outcome. For example, children made cards in the art center, played in the water table, or worked on puzzles along side another peer. At other times, the children were seen working in the same area or on the same project to achieve a collaborative outcome. For example, in the

housekeeping center, when the children were seen playing mom and baby-sitter, there were certain roles that were filled by the children and the outcome of the event was dependent upon all of the children involved, their participation, and interaction.

The majority of a 3 – 5-year-old child's day is spent engaged in some form of play and the children in the study were no exception. For several of the children, this was the first opportunity that they had to be around other children, and not under the watchful eye of mom or dad, directing their activities. Play serves important functions for preschool-aged children. The primary means through which preschool children learn is play. Children discover all kinds of relationships, facts and information about how the world and specifically how their culture works, by playing and interacting with other children. Through play, children learn the roles that they are expected to perform, begin to recognize and tolerate differences among one another and begin to learn to function as members of a group (Staub, 1998). Also through play, children learn what is expected of them and what they expect from others (Leister, C., Langenbrunner, M., & Walker, D., 1995).

A distinguishing factor between friendship and another type of relationship, such as a playmate, is to repeatedly seek one another out to spend time engaged in a variety of activities. The children in the study engaged in a variety of play sequences, routines, and activities. The friends spent time with one another in and across areas, places, and activities, and consistently sought one another out to spend time, complete an activity, sit, or play a game. The children did not limit their interactions to one type of activity or to a particular area of the classroom. The children consistently sought out their friends during all the various activities and their interactions during these activities were marked by the

children enjoying each other's company and having fun.

The Life of Friendship

Throughout the course of the study, I watched as the children grew and developed, and their relationships changed. The children's friendships did not remain static throughout the course of the study. Some of the children's relationships grew stronger and the children became even closer than at the beginning of the study. Some children addressed one another as "best friends" and described their relationship as a best friend relationship. In the case of other pairs of friends later in the school year, the children were not spending as much time with one another, or exclusively with one another, as they were in the beginning of the study and developed relationships with other children. These children still spend time with one another and consider one another to be friends, but have developed alliances with other children. In the case of two pairs of children, their friendship dissolved. The children involved in these dissolved friendships had the opportunity to practice and develop friendship making skills and have potentially utilized these skills and developed friendships with other children. These children are cordial to one another, as they are with any other classmate, and may spend time in the same area, but the children do not interact with one another or play together as they did in the past.

For all of the children in the study as they grew and developed, their expectations of and needs from their friendships changed. As children mature their abilities and interests change (Staub, 1998). As these changes occur, it is common for friends to develop in different directions or at a different pace. For some of the children, their friendships continued to meet the children's individual needs and flourish, and in other

cases, the children were not experiencing the same satisfaction from the relationship as they were previously, and the friendship ceased. As children grow and develop they experience different needs and place different demands on their friendships and it is not uncommon for young children to look for new friends to meet their changing needs. The endings of friendships and their replacement with new ones should be taken as signs of normal development (Rubin, 1980).

The Meaning of Friendship

The concepts of mutuality and reciprocity separate a friendship from other types of relationships. In a friendship, both parties must receive some benefit from engaging in the relationship. In the friendships studied, both the children with and without disabilities benefited from their friendships. All of the friendships studied can be described as mutual and reciprocal.

Friendships are among the most important relationships that individuals have throughout the course of their lifetimes and are said to meet a variety of needs and provide participants with several benefits. Friendships provide various kinds of help and support. Friendships meet cognitive needs through shared experiences, activities and the exchange of gossip and ideas (Sullivan, 1953). Friendships also meet our social and emotional needs through the provision of love and esteem (Bowlby, 1982). The children in the study received a variety of benefits from their friendships. Some common benefits that the children received were companionship, access to areas and materials, inclusion in activities, and the opportunity to develop a relationship with a same age peer. Besides these shared benefits, the children received various individual benefits from their friendships. Among these individual benefits are an awareness and appreciation of

differences, the opportunity to practice and develop social skills, the opportunity to express personality traits, and the feeling of acceptance. The children in the study also provided their friends with encouragement, support, affection, and a feeling of acceptance.

The literature is replete with examples of benefits that children with disabilities receive from being educated alongside their nondisabled peers (Demchack & Drinkwater, 1992; Hunt, Farron-Davis, Beckstead, Curtis & Goetz, 1994; Salisbury, Palombaro, & Hollowood, 1993). One of the most important benefits is the opportunity to develop relationships with typically developing children. Each of the children in the study developed a typical friendship with a nondisabled peer. The children's relationships met various needs for them, including companionship, having a playmate, receiving assistance and affection, and learning new skills.

The children without disabilities also received important benefits from engaging in a friendship with a child with a disability. The typically developing children received companionship from their friendships, a playmate, and came to depend on their friendship throughout the day to meet needs, and had the opportunity to practice social skills.

Parents added to my understanding of what benefits the children without disabilities were receiving from their friendships with children with disabilities. One of the most important benefits parents felt their children received from their friendship with a disabled peer was an appreciation and awareness of differences. For the children without disabilities, these friendships provided the opportunity to express other personality traits, such as sensitivity, patience, and nurturance.

Regardless of disability or absence of disability, all children benefit from engaging in friendships with their same age peers. The children in this study had the opportunity to engage in a friendship with a same age peer. Friendship is very important for the overall development of all children. The friendships provided the children with the opportunity to learn how to influence age mates who are equal in power and status (Rubenstein, 1984; Hartup, 1996). Unlike parents, teachers, or other adults, peers do not have more influence and power than the child does. The children's friendships provided the opportunity for the children to practice and expand their repertoire of negotiation skills. Through interactions, the children learned to negotiate getting from others and giving to others, to their mutual satisfaction. The social skills the children developed throughout these peer interactions may contribute to later success in other relationships.

Friendships are among the most significant parts of children's lives, and the friendships in the study were no exception. The children in the study spent several hours each day with their friends at Head Start. The friendships provided the children a frame of reference through which to interpret the world of Head Start and find meaning in their experiences.

Adult Perceptions

Through conversations and interviews, the parents and teachers of children in the study revealed varied perceptions and ideas about the friendships studied. Parents and teachers revealed the idea that the friendships provided companionship for the children involved. Furthermore, the adults described the friendships as relationships that the children could depend on and the relationships provided stability and predictability for the children involved. Parents and teachers also expressed that the relationships enabled

the children to develop and practice social skills and provided the opportunity for the children to express individual personality traits.

Aside from these common ideas that emerged, the parents and teachers also identified some varied ideas and thoughts about the friendships studied. The parents of the children without disabilities expressed the idea that they felt it was important their child had developed a relationship with a child with a disability and voiced pleasure when talking about their child's friendship. The parents of the children without disabilities felt their child received opportunities and experiences that they did not receive with other friendships or relationships. The parents worried about what would happen to the children's relationships as they grew older and voiced concern over their child beginning to notice differences about their friend and experiencing peer pressure about having a friend with a disability. As Daniel's mom explains "I don't think kids at this age know how to be nasty, oh, how do I say this, they know how to be mean to one another, but they don't know how to be mean for external reasons. It's peer pressure and stuff like that at the older age." The parents further expressed concern over what they could do to help their child deal with these issues as Janelle's mom explains "Maybe when they are older, Janelle will think it's different. But, all the peer pressure and all. But, hopefully I can help explain it to her that Beth is not all that different. She is just her friend, you know?"

Possibly the parent's concern is a result of this generation's lack of opportunities to develop relationships with individuals with disabilities themselves. The parents have no background or previous experience to call on to help guide their children as they navigate uncharted waters with their friend.

The parents of children with disabilities were happy that their child had the opportunity to and developed a friendship. Parents felt their child's relationship with nondisabled peers provided them with opportunities to be children first and disabled second. The parents felt that the typically developing children saw their sons and daughters as playmates and friends and not as someone with a disability.

The teachers in the study recognized the relationships as friendships and described the relationships studied as typical of other friendships in their classrooms. While describing the friendships, the teachers highlighted the mutuality and reciprocity of the relationships studied. They pointed out that both of the children in the relationship received some benefit from engaging in the friendship, or the friendship met a specific need for the individual children. Some other qualities about the friendships were revealed by the teachers as they described Michael and Daniel's, and Beth and Janelle's friendships among the strongest in the classroom and could be seen as enduring over the next several years.

Conclusions and Implications for Future Research

Several conclusions can be drawn from this study of six pairs of friends with and without disabilities enrolled in inclusive preschool settings.

Friendships of children with disabilities exist in inclusive classrooms without a prescribed intervention plan. Several studies have focused on specific friendship making skills and programs that have been developed to help "teach" children with disabilities requisite skills of friendship (e.g. McEvoy, Odom, & McConnell, 1992; Odom & Strain, 1984; Davis, Langone, & Malone, 1996; Davis, Langone, & Malone, 1996; Goldstein, Shafer, & Kaczmarek, 1997). These studies make the assumption that children with

disabilities cannot develop a friendship with other children without some type of intervention program. These studies view the children with disabilities as deviant and somehow in need of fixing. A few studies (e.g. Buysse, 1983; Hall, 1994; Staub et al., 1994; and Staub, 1998) have been implemented to determine if relationships between children with and without disabilities exist. The results from these studies are encouraging, revealing that friendships between children with and without disabilities exist. Staub et al., 1994 and Staub, 1998 provided detailed descriptions of the relationships that occur between children with and without disabilities in an inclusive elementary school. The current study provides a detailed description of 6 friendships that naturally developed in two inclusive Head Start classrooms.

Inclusive environments provide the opportunity for children to develop friendships with children with moderate disabilities. In order for a friendship to develop, children must have the opportunity to come together and meet one another. A few studies have looked at the existence of relationships between children with and without disabilities in elementary settings (Hall, 1994; Staub et al., 1994; Staub, 1998). Only one study that addresses the existence of friendships among children with and without disabilities addresses relationships in a preschool setting (Buysse, 1993). The current study addresses relationships that exist among children with and without disabilities in two Head Start classrooms. None of the children would have become friends if the simple opportunity to interact with one another in the same Head Start classroom were not available. That these friendships developed within the context of inclusive classrooms provides credence to the argument that educators should continue to create and maintain inclusive environments.

The relationships were recognized as friendships by the children, parents, teachers and me. For the past several years, researchers have attempted to identify and define friendship by utilizing checklists and requisite skills. Researchers have identified friends through counting the number of interactions two individuals have with one another, the time individuals spend in company with each other, or attempting to measure the quality of a particular interaction to a specific standard (Buysse, 1993; Hall, 1994). Staub et al. (1994) and Staub (1998) identified participants for their study by seeking nominations from classroom teachers of pairs of children, with and without disabilities, that they felt were friends. In the current study, I developed a guiding definition for initial identification of participants and let the participants define friendship through observations and interviews. By letting the children's voices be heard, they describe the concept of friendship, revealing their meanings and perceptions. The children's meanings and perceptions help to broaden our ideas and understandings about friendships among children with and without disabilities.

The friendships in the study are described as typical friendships, having several common characteristics of friendships of preschool-aged children. Throughout the literature, relationships that have developed between children with and without disabilities have been described as tutor, tutee or helper relationships (Hurley-Geffner, 1995). Often adults will refer to children with disabilities as "special friends". The relationships in this study are not referred to by the adults as special or different. None of the relationships were described by the adults as a helper or tutor relationship, or a special friendship. The friendships were described as typical. As adults discussed the friendships, they highlighted qualities that are apparent in other typically developing

children's relationship during the preschool period. The relationships in this study are described as mutual, reciprocal and providing benefits to both children.

The children's friendships were dynamic relationships and changed over the course of the study. Just as with all relationships over the course of time, the children's friendships changed (Selman, 1980; Levinger & Levinger, 1986). The friendships were dynamic relationships and changed as the individuals changed and placed different demands on their friendships. As these changes occurred, the teachers or staff did not intervene to attempt to direct activities or the direction of growth in the relationships. The children discovered for themselves what adjustments and accommodations needed to be made in order for the friendships to continue to meet individual needs. If the children were enrolled in a classroom where an intervention plan to help children develop and maintain friendships was in place, they would not have determined these necessary adjustments to the friendships on their own.

The variance in developmental levels contributes to the dissolution of friendships. As changes in these friendships occurred, not all children were able to accommodate differing needs and their friendships ended. As some of the children matured, they moved into other activities and areas in the classroom, while some children continued to engage in similar activities. As these differences continued to grow and become more apparent, the children were unable to continue to meet each other's needs. In both cases where the friendships dissolved, the difference in social developmental levels contributed to the dissolution of the friendships.

Many factors contributed to the development and maintenance of the friendships studied. As I watched the children and talked with the adults throughout the course of the

study, several ideas were revealed about why the children had originally become friends. Among the ideas that emerged was that the children got along well, displayed similarities in play styles and personalities, and they shared common activities, interests, and knowledge. The friends identified needs in one another and were able to address those needs. The friends had fun with one another and enjoyed the time they spent together. Other factors that contributed to the development of the friendships were proximity and parental factors.

Once again all of these factors point to the fact that the relationships developed naturally, without a prescribed intervention plan, and inclusive settings contributed to the maintenance and development of friendships among children with and without disabilities.

Implications for Future Research

Several environmental factors contribute to the development and maintenance of friendships. For the children in this study, their inclusive classrooms provided the initial opportunity for them to interact with one another. Throughout the Head Start classrooms there were several opportunities for the children to interact and spend time with one another in the context of naturally occurring activities. Without these opportunities to interact and spend time with one another, it is unlikely the children would have become friends.

Further research in inclusive settings and specific practices that occur in inclusive classrooms is warranted. The influence of the structure of the classroom upon the development and maintenance of friendships should be explored looking at specific instructional strategies, curriculum designs, classroom arrangements, and their influence

on the development of friendships among children with and without disabilities.

Researchers need to continue to identify practices that act as supports to these relationships and practices that impede their development.

The teachers and parents who participated in the study recognized the relationships studied as friendships and expressed acceptance of the friendships. The teachers in the study displayed an attitude of acceptance of all children and everyone belonged in their classrooms. The teachers did not put emphasis on changing the child with disabilities or send a message that they viewed the child with disabilities as unacceptable. Further research into the teachers' attitude and acceptance of the children with disabilities and its impact on the development of relationships among children with and without disabilities in inclusive classrooms is warranted. The parental recognition and acceptance of the friendships indicated to the children that their parents valued their friendships. Research focusing on parental attitude, acceptance, and its relationship to the development and maintenance of these friendships is needed.

As more children with disabilities are being educated alongside their nondisabled peers more relationships between children with and without disabilities will develop. As these relationships develop, parents of both children with and without disabilities will continue to raise questions and concerns about practices to support these friendships. Further research into strategies for parents to deal with questions and concerns that they have regarding relationships, and how they can support these relationships needs to be addressed.

The results of this study have implications for several different audiences.

Audiences including policy makers, program administrators, parents, teachers, and other

professionals involved in early childhood special education. I hope that by reading the study, individuals will recognize the value of inclusion models in providing a foundation for the development of friendships between preschool-aged children with and without disabilities. Embedded in this foundation of inclusion is the belief that all children are valued and are equal participants in the program and have access to all opportunities. Furthermore, readers of the study will hopefully see the value in recognizing relationships between preschool-aged children and begin to develop an understanding of the importance and value of these friendships. A better understanding of these relationships from the perspective of the children will hopefully help teachers and other professionals recognize these relationships and create environments that support them.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Letter of Introduction

Dear Parent,

I am an instructor of special education at Dakota State University and am currently conducting my dissertation study to complete requirements for my Ph.D. I would like to invite you and your child to participate in my research project.

I am interested in the friendships between preschool aged children. I will be observing in your child's Head Start classroom over the next few months and would also like to interview you and your child. If you would be willing to participate in the project, please read the attached letter, sign the consent form on the second page and return it to your child's Head Start teacher by _____.

Thank you for considering participating in my research study. If I can answer any questions or if you would like further information, please feel free to contact me. I can be reached at 482-8100 or 256-5277.

Sincerely,

Sylvia Webster

Informed Consent Statement

Over the next few months, I will be observing in your child's Head Start classroom as part of my dissertation research. The focus of this study is on relationships between children with and without disabilities. The objective of this project is to describe the friendships between young children with and without disabilities in inclusive Head Start classrooms. I am interested in what these relationships between children with disabilities look like and what these relationships mean to the children involved, their parents and teacher. You and your child are invited to participate in this study.

The children will simply go about their normal activities as I observe. They may be curious about my presence at first, but after a brief explanation, I imagine that they will ignore me and go about their normal activities with the teacher and other children. There will be no disruption of the classroom as a result of my research activity. During the observations I will write down field notes. These field notes will include descriptions of events taking place in the Head Start classroom, action of the children, or other activities.

In order to round out my observations, I would like to talk to you and your child about your child's friendships. I will talk to your child throughout the study while he/she is engaged in various activities in the classroom. Information from these conversations will be recorded in my field notes. I will formally interview your child 1 time. I will ask your child about his/her relationship with their friend. The questions will be very brief and the overall interview would last somewhere between 5 and 15 minutes. I would also like to interview you 1 time. The interview with you should last somewhere between 45 and 90 minutes. I will ask you questions about your child's friendships. The interview will be scheduled at a convenient time for your and will take place in the Head Start center, or an alternate locations that you choose. The interviews with you and our child will be tape-recorded.

Information obtained through observations and interview will be kept confidential. Data will be stored in the investigator's office in her home for the duration of the study. The research project intends to maintain complete privacy. You can make up false names for yourself and your child. This will give the most complete protection of your privacy and confidentiality. Any information that may be published in scientific journals will not identify you or your child. The forma interview will be tape recorded so that I can remember what you have told me. You do not have to give me your full name, or any other identifying information. If any information that identifies you is recorded, it will not be copied down. No one but the investigators and the types will hear the tape, and after it is typed, the tape will be erased.

You may contact me ant any time if you have further questions or concerns about the projector your participation. My name is Sylvia Webster and I can be reached at PO Box 56 Ramona, SD 57054. Or by phone at (605) 256 – 5274. If you do not want to

_____ Participant's Initials

participate in this study, the program offered to you and your child through Head Start will not change. A decision not to participate will not be interpreted as a lack of interest or support for your child. Your participation in this study is voluntary; you may decline to participate without penalty. If you decide to participate, you may withdraw from the study at anytime without penalty and without loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you withdraw from the study before data collection is completed your data will be returned to you or destroyed.

I have read the above information. I have received a copy of this form. I agree to participate in this study.

Signature _____ Date _____

I also give consent for my child, _____, to participate in the study.
(Child's name)

Signature _____ Date _____

Investigator's signature _____ Date _____

Children's Assent for Participation

I am from the University of Tennessee and I am studying children and their friends. I will be watching you play with your friends. I will ask you questions about your friends. And I will ask your parents and teacher questions about your friends. When I ask you questions, it will take about 10 minutes and I will use a tape recorder and write down notes. I am the only person who will know what you tell me about your friends.

Do you want to play with your friends while I watch you and talk to me about your friends?

Child's Response (circle) YES NO

Child's Name _____

Date _____

Researcher's signature _____

Date _____

Teacher's signature _____

Date _____

* Signs that may indicate that the child is upset can include temper tantrums, crying, shaking head "no" or saying "no", or any other signs that would indicate to the investigator that the child means "no".

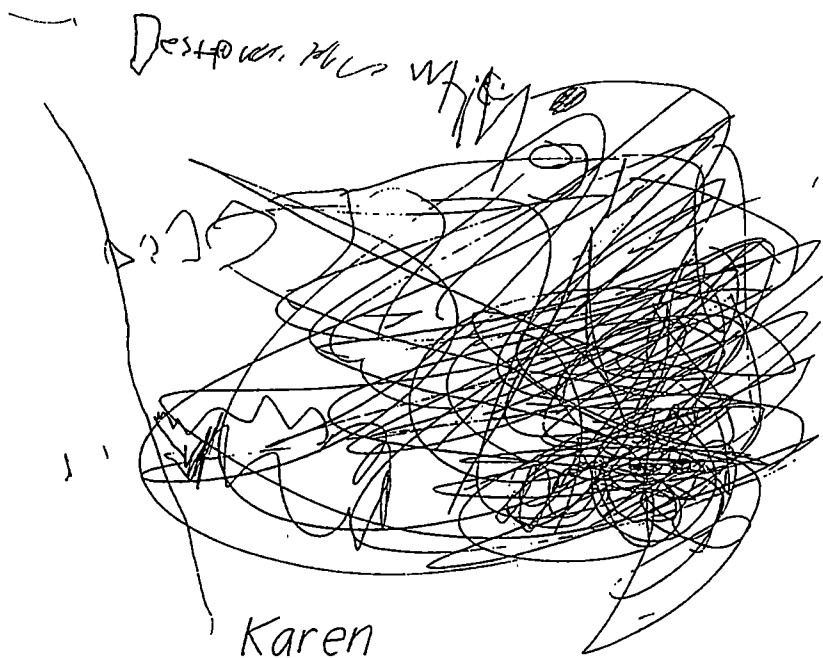
Appendix B

Samples of children's notes and drawings throughout my field note journal.

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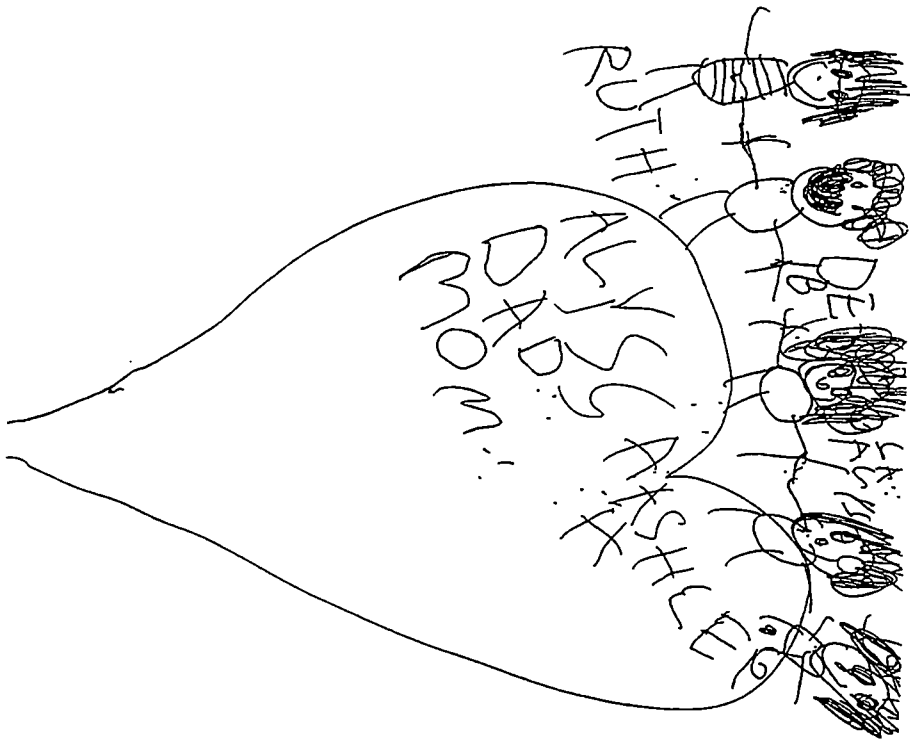
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Karen

Karen





Appendix C

Interview Questions

Interview Guide/Teachers

Interview 1

1. Tell me about _____ and _____'s friendship.
2. What kinds of activities do they like to do together?
3. Why do you think _____ and _____ are friends?

Interview 2

1. Tell me about _____ and _____'s friendship.
2. How do you think _____ and _____ became friends?
3. How has _____ and _____'s friendship changed over the course of the study?
4. Why do you think _____ and _____ are friends?
5. How do you think their relationship will change in the future?
6. What benefits do you think that each of the children receives from the friendship?

Interview Guide/Parents

1. Tell me about _____ and _____'s friendship?
2. What kinds of things do they like to do together?
3. Does your son/daughter talk about _____ at home?
4. Do they play together at your or _____'s house?
5. What do you think your son/daughter receives from their friendship with _____?
6. What do you think _____ receives from your son or daughter?
7. What do you think the friendship means to your son/daughter?
8. Why do you think _____ and _____ are friends?
9. Is there anything else that you would like to tell me about your son/daughter's friendship with _____?

Interview Guide/Children

1. Name some of your friends at Head Start.
2. Tell me about your friend _____.
3. What do you like to do with your friend _____?
4. What is your favorite thing to do with your friend _____?
5. Why are you and _____ friends?

Appendix D

Strict Inclusion: X is a kind of Y
 Richmond Head Start

<u>Included Terms</u>	<u>Semantic Relationship</u>	<u>Cover Term</u>
Feeding babies	<i>is a kind of</i>	<i>play activity in housekeeping center</i>
Preparing food		
Setting the table		
Eating food		
Washing dishes		
Clearing table		
Dressing up		
Walking babies in stroller		
doing laundry		
talking on telephone		
pretend play (11/18 begins)		
baby-sitter, mom, sister, baby		
Taking temperature		
Putting child to bed		

Appendix E

Domain List
Richmond Head Start

1. Strict Inclusion: X is a kind of Y

Kinds of activities
 Kinds of assistance
 Kinds of encouragement
 Kinds of affection
 Kinds of areas
 Kind of teacher directed group activity
 Kinds of duties
 Kinds of routines

2. Means-End: X is a way to Y

Ways to group children
 Ways to assign seats
 Ways to manage children's behavior
 Ways to share space & materials
 Ways to direct other students
 Ways to help someone
 Ways to ask for help
 Ways to indicate friendship
 Ways to decline offers to engage in an activity
 Ways to engage in preferred activities
 Ways to show someone you want to be with them
 Ways to show affection
 Ways to ask someone to play
 Ways to indicate you would like to do another activity
 Ways to spend time with a friend
 Ways to settle disputes

3. Cause-Effect: X is a result of Y

Choosing a place to play – completing circle activities
 Choosing a walking partner – verbal teacher request
 Receiving assistance – asking for assistance
 Receiving assistance – friend requesting assistance
 Role playing – dressing up with the props
 Engaging activity with someone – asking the other person if you can join
 Complying with a request – an explanation
 Walking with Whitney's walker – being Whitney's friend

Sitting next to someone on the bus – being asked
Showing affection – arriving or leaving the center
Engaging in activity with someone – asking them or being asked

4. Location-for-Action: X is a place for doing Y

Places for choosing activities
Places for pretend play
Places for painting & drawing
Places for group organized activity
Places for reading/looking at books
Places for playing with blocks
Places for free play
Places for water/sand play

Appendix F

Spatial: X is a place in Y or X is a part of Y
 Richmond Head Start

<u>Included Terms</u>	<u>Semantic Relationship</u>	<u>Cover Term</u>
The HS classroom	<i>is a place in</i>	<i>Community Action Agency</i>
Bedroom area	<i>is a place in</i>	<i>Housekeeping Center</i>
Kitchen area		
Slide	<i>is a part of</i>	<i>The Playground</i>
Play structure		
Sidewalk		
Shed		
Sand box		
Playhouse		
Air conditioning unit		
Tables	<i>are a part of</i>	<i>The classroom</i>
Chairs		
Centers		
Library		
Group area		
Bathroom		
Lockers		

Appendix G

Selecting an Ethnographic Focus

Why chose the focus selected: to help achieve the overall goal to understand and describe friendships.

Domain: *Inclusion*

Activities
Assistance
Encouragement
Affection
Support

Domain: *Means-end*

Indicate friendship
Decline offer to play
Gain entrance to an area/activity
Ask someone to play
Show affection
Demonstrate want to be with someone
Provide encouragement
Seek approval from peers
Direct other students
Engage in a preferred activity
Indicate want to switch activities
Ask someone to play
Spend time with a friend
Share space/materials
Help someone

Domain: *Characteristics/Attributes*

Children
Relationships

Domain: *Rationale*

Hugging inviting to special activity
Inviting to play
Stick up/defend
Ask to sit next to in group
Negotiate materials from others
Being friends

Category/Topic: Six Relationships – Who the children are

Beth – Janelle

Beth – Monica

Krista – Beth

Krista – Janelle

Abby – Ingrid

Michael – Daniel

Domain: Characteristics/Attributes

Children

Relationships

Research Questions Addressed:

- Characteristics
- Dynamics
- Meaning teachers and parents
- Describe teachers and parents

Category/Topic: What the children do

Domain: Inclusion

Kinds of activities

Kinds of support

Kinds of encouragement

Kinds of affection

Kinds of assistance

Research Questions Addressed:

- Dynamics

Category/Topic: How the children do what they do

Domain: Means-end:

Ways to spend time with one another

Ways to indicate friends

Ways to use friendship

Ways to seek approval

Research Questions Addressed:

- Dynamics
- Meaning to children

Category/Topic: Why they do what they do

Domains: Rationale

Why they are friends

Friendship is a reason for

Research Questions Addressed:

- Meaning to children
- Children describe

Category/Topic: When they do what they do

Domains: Temporal

Research Questions Addressed:

- Dynamics

Category/Topic: What friendship is used for

Domain: Function

children use friends for

Research Questions Addressed

- Dynamics

Appendix H

Taxonomic Analysis of Focus Selected

Domains Selected for analysis:

1. Inclusion
2. Means-end
3. Characteristics or attributes
4. Rationale

Inclusion

A. Target child focused. (Descriptions of dyads, pairs of friends)

- Activities that target children (TC) participate in together
- Assistance TC provide to one another
- Encouragement/praise that TC provide one another
- Affection TC provide to one another
- Kinds of approval seeking

B. Classroom focused. (Description of classroom, staff, routines)

- Activity in the housekeeping center
- Activity in room 2
- Routine children engage in
- Monitoring/management
- Teacher directed activity
- Area in the center
- Signal to transition to another activity
- Adult in the classroom
- Teacher directed group activity
- Center activity
- Entrance/exit to the classroom
- Routine activity

Appendix I

Characteristics of Children's Friendships

	Abby & Ingrid	Michael & Daniel	Beth & Janelle	Beth & Monica	Krista & Janelle	Krista & Beth
<i>Being Nice</i>						
Sharing	X	X	X	X	X	
Helping	X			X	X	X
Looking out for	X					
Lack of aggression		X		X		
Playing together		X	X	X	X	X
Keep up with belongings						X
Providing Comfort						X
Making sure other has materials needed to complete project					X	
Taking turns		X				
<i>Affection</i>						
Hug	X		X		X	X
Arms around	X		X	X	X	X
Pat back	X					
Holding hands	X		X	X	X	
Liking						
Talk at home	X		X	X		
Parents say	X		X			
Child says	X		X	X		
<i>Want to Spend Time</i>						
Engage same activity	X			X	X	X
Ask other to do specific activity	X		X	X	X	X
State to adult want to engage activity w/friend				X		

	Abby & Ingrid	Michael & Daniel	Beth & Janelle	Beth & Monica	Krista & Janelle	Krista & Beth
Ask adult if could spend time together	X	X				
Find friend and move to area	X	X		X	X	X
Move playthings or toys	X					
Ask friend to sit with	X		X			
Saving seats		X				
Sit next to during group		X	X			
Seek one another out	X	X	X		X	X
Choose for walking partners			X			
<i>Having Fun</i>						
Laughing or giggling	X	X	X	X		
Smiling	X	X	X	X		
Mom says	X		X			
High five's		X				

VITA

Sylvia Webster was born in Cincinnati, Ohio on March 10, 1962. She attended schools in the public system of Lexington, Kentucky, the Fayette County Public School System, where she graduated from Henry Clay High School in May, 1980. She entered the college of education at Eastern Kentucky University, Kentucky during 1988, where in December 1990, she received the Bachelor of Arts in Education with teaching certification in elementary education and special education, Kindergarten through grade 12. After teaching for a year, she entered the Master's program in special education at Eastern Kentucky University in 1991, officially receiving the Master's degree in August, 1992 while-and-after working as a special education teacher in public schools in Kentucky. In August of 1992, she entered the University of Tennessee to pursue the Doctorate of Education in Early Childhood Special Education and continued to work with special education students. The doctoral degree was received May, 2000.

She is presently working as an Assistant Professor of Special Education at Dakota State University in Madison, South Dakota.