“Do you dance at work Mummy?”

An ethnographic study of young children’s perspectives of work

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ABSTRACT

This study foregrounds young children’s perspectives of work, allowing their opinions, experiences and knowledge to become visible. It questions the ways in which young children understand work, and what work means to young children.

When viewed in relation to children, the concept of work has a chequered history. Researchers’ perspectives have alternated between presenting work as ‘good’ or ‘bad’ for children. However, children’s own perspectives of work are largely missing from research literature. In particular, there is a gap in research into young children’s perspectives of work in New Zealand. This study seeks to fill part of that gap.

In the current study, fourteen young children (ages 3-4) from two New Zealand early childhood education [ECE] settings, shared their perspectives of work as part of a two-year ethnographic research project. They actively participated in the research through taking photographs and contributing to interviews. In addition, children photographed work at home, and two families participated in home-based interviews. Additional data were constructed through participant listening (Forsey, 2010) and participant observation. A thematic analysis of the data was undertaken using Rogoff’s (2003) framework of community, interpersonal and personal lenses.

Sociocultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978) is used in this study to illustrate that children’s learning about work draws on their own agency, together with the skills and knowledge of those with more experience. Thus, work, when viewed as a sociocultural activity, is neither good nor bad. It is simply an activity that affects young children’s lives on a daily basis. The study also uses childhood studies theory (Lenzer, 2001) to explain that how children are perceived, and their subsequent access to participation in activities such as work, are largely shaped by their relationships. Childhood studies
theory also acknowledges that children have a right to participate and that their perspectives are valuable.

The young children in this study built knowledge of work through observation in their ECE settings and homes. They learned about work through guided participation (Rogoff, 2003) with more experienced workers. They recognised that who was able to work and what they could work at, were affected by values, beliefs and rules enacted in the contexts of ECE and home. Young children in this study expressed a clear desire to be involved in work themselves. It was relationships – with “people, places and things” (Ministry of Education, 1996, p. 11) – that shaped their ability to participate in work. In particular, the study identified that their participation was directly affected by adult discourses about children. When adults believe that children should be free from work, or that children are incompetent in relation to work, they limit children’s opportunities to work (Morelli, Rogoff, & Angelillo, 2003). In contrast, many of the young children in this study were active participants in work. The adults in their lives recognised their competence and the benefits they gained from participation in work.

The current study helps to make young children’s participation in work visible. It shows that young children actively contribute to communities and argues that their participation should not remain hidden. In addition, it recognises that young children are able to share ideas about their worlds when provided with tools and opportunities to participate. For young children in this study, the focus on cameras provided a new means of communication. The study shows that using visual research methods can potentially broaden young children’s ability to share feelings, ideas and knowledge about their worlds.
This thesis is dedicated to
Jack McAlevey (1921-2012) and Mona McAlevey

Thanks for your guidance and for teaching me patience.

Number 11
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My heartfelt thanks go out to my beautiful family – Sharon, Grace and Alex. Sharon you have gifted me time and support, keeping our family fed, warm and happy. I could not have done this without you! Grace and Alex thank you for your patience and help. You both continue to inspire me!

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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

“Do you dance at work Mummy?”

Caleb, my colleague’s 3 year old son, gifted me this statement at the beginning of this research project. It has inspired my thinking and has hovered as a background sentinel guarding my words to ensure they remain true to the young children involved in this research.

Work has a profound effect on the lives of young children. It ascribes hope, creates expectations and compartmentalises their daily lives. As an early childhood education [ECE] lecturer who visits a variety of ECE settings on a regular basis, I am struck by the patience, enthusiasm, tenacity and endeavour of the young children I see engaged in work. I have had many discussions with colleagues about children’s work, and have pondered my own young children’s involvement in work.

Caleb’s initial question was a signal that some parts of our lives as working adults were hidden from young children. Upon deeper reflection I realised that young children’s own experiences, knowledge and feelings about work were also hidden from me. This thesis sets out to find out more about young children’s perspectives of work.

1.1 WHY FOCUS ON WORK?

As teachers, parents and researchers, we could benefit from knowing more about what young children think, feel and do in relation to work. If work is important to young children, as my own experiences with young children have suggested, we could

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1 Pseudonyms have been used throughout this thesis to protect confidentiality.
do more to help build their knowledge and experience of work. Finding out young children’s own perspectives of work could broaden what we know about how young children construct their world-views.

The large, albeit not exhaustive, review of literature that informed this thesis confirmed that work is significant in children’s lives (Liebel, 2012). Work affects children in a variety of contexts including home and educational settings (Bourdillon, 2006). Children’s health, family incomes and social worlds are shaped and sorted by the societal and cultural meanings that underpin what work is and means (Weisgram, Bigler, & Liben, 2010). The meanings that have been attached to work in relation to children have changed over time, particularly in the Western world, where the notion of work has become entwined with a notion of danger (Liebel, 2004). In ECE, for example, work has often been viewed as ‘bad’ and has been seen in opposition to play (Grieshaber & McArdle; Wohlwend, 2007).

The literature clearly indicates that children in different contexts have very different experiences of work. Therefore what work means to different children is also likely to vary. There is huge variation worldwide in terms of children’s work experiences which ensue from the conditions children live in. In many countries, for example, children have to engage in paid work in order to provide for their families (Bourdillon, 2006). This does not mean that children do not enjoy work, in fact many children consider work part of their identity and value access to participation in work (Liebel, 2004). Work can also elicit deep emotional responses in children. Recently in Bolivia, for example, children agitated for change to protect their rights as paid workers which were under threat from new legislation. Their protests led to their participation in the drafting of new laws (Liebel, 2015).
Throughout the world, work is a daily, home-based feature of children’s lives (Solberg, 1997). The hidden nature of children’s work (Thorne, 1987) is still a reality as there is a significant gap in the literature in relation to young children and work. It has been difficult for me to locate literature sources that provide in-depth information about young children’s involvement in work, particularly in New Zealand. This thesis, therefore, is aimed at finding out what young children think, feel and do in relation to work.

1.2 WHY CONSIDER YOUNG CHILDREN’S PERSPECTIVES?

Foregrounding young children’s perspectives is a key approach in this thesis. A focus on their perspectives has been incorporated through the choice of theoretical foundations, participatory methods (Corsaro & Molinari, 2000), inclusion of children’s own words and ideas in the discussion, and as an analytical filter for data analysis. Childhood studies theory has provided a reminder that children are capable of providing comment on their own lives, and that they have a right to participate and contribute to society (Woodhead, 2008). Listening to children’s perspectives can provide opportunities to understand what the world means to them, rather than relying on adult observations (Graue & Walsh, 1998).

Childhood studies theory has also questioned the marginalisation of children (Lenzer, 2001). The gap in literature in relation to young children’s perspectives of work contributes to children’s lives being hidden. Therefore including young children’s perspectives in this thesis has been important because it has helped to make young children’s lives visible (Mayall, 2002). Young children’s agency has been prioritised (Smith, 2013) through the sharing of knowledge by young children using their own
photographs and providing commentaries on their lives in interviews. Young children
deserve to have their ideas valued and promoted (Qvortrup, 1987) and they should be
provided with opportunities to share knowledge from their own standpoints. Although
this knowledge cannot be considered to represent other young children’s realities
(Thomson & Gunter, 2007) it does illuminate the active contributions young children
can and do make as workers (Jorgenson, 2006).

1.3 RESEARCHER’S APPROACH TO WORK

Reading literature has helped to shape my own view of work, particularly in
relation to young children. Perhaps the most important change in my thinking was the
realisation that at the outset of this study, I focused on understanding young children’s
perspectives of adults’ work. Applying sociocultural and childhood studies theoretical
notions to my own thinking about young children enabled me to see that I was
forgetting young children’s own participation in work.

I now view work as a sociocultural activity. Work is different from other
sociocultural activities because of its focus on predetermined outcomes (Katz, 2008)
often in relation to a goal or a need (Bourdillon, 2006). Work is task oriented, effort-
based (Goodnow, 1988) and something that needs to be done. I believe that young
children observe and participate in work, on a day-to-day basis, within their cultural
communities (Goodnow, 1988). For me, work is neither good nor bad, it simply is.
Young children’s subjective responses to work – whether work is something they like
or do not like – depend upon the contexts in which they encounter work, and the

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2 My shortened definition for work is located in 1.5
interactions they have that shape those responses (Hungerland, Liebel, Milne, & Wihstutz, 2007).

The young children’s work that I discuss in this thesis is unpaid work. Goodnow (1988) distinguished children’s work from adults’ work on the basis of it being unpaid. This definition applies to the experiences of children in this thesis, although I acknowledge that there are other young children who do engage in paid labour for subsistence. Therefore this is not a definition I would apply to the work of all young children. As Liebel (2004) has argued, work is a continuum of experiences for young children, and one young child’s experience cannot easily be compared to another’s.

1.4 DEFINITIONS

1.4.1 Work

Work is a sociocultural activity that young children observe or take part in within their communities. It is an effort-based task, which needs to be done to meet an individual/community goal or need. Young children’s participation in work is shaped by others they interact with and the contexts in which their interactions take place.

1.4.2 Young children

Young children in this thesis refers to an age-based definition provided in Te Whāriki (Ministry of Education, 1996) of children aged 2 ½ to school entry age.

1.4.3 Young children's participation in work

Liebel (2004) discussed a salient concept in relation to children’s participation in work. This concept corresponds with what I found in the current study - adults’ beliefs about children shape children’s participation in work.
Figure 1 shows my appropriation of Liebel’s (2004) idea. Very simply, I believe that children have a greater range of opportunities to participate in work when adults draw on discourses which position children as competent and capable. Conversely, when adults position children as weak and in need of protection, children have fewer opportunities to participate in work. In addition, the research I have undertaken with young children suggests that children’s participation can only be fully understood when children’s own assessments of their participation are also taken into consideration. Therefore adults should not just assume children are participating in experiences because of what they can see happening – adults should ask children whether they think and feel they are participating.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

One key research question and three sub-questions are focused on in this thesis, as seen in Table 1. These four broad questions are aimed at eliciting a deeper understanding of what role work played in the lives of the young children in this study and how it affected their lives. In exploring these questions, the thesis also aims to find out how/what young children thought about their relationships, both with other children and adults.
This was a small, local study that was undertaken on the South Island in New Zealand. It involved a small number of children (14 focus children), two families and teachers from two early childhood education settings. Ethnography was the methodological approach which allowed children to participate in the study in an active way, over a long period of time. As a researcher I was able to learn about the contexts children participated in through building trusting, ethical relationships with them. Children helped to construct research data through interviews and taking photographs. The study highlighted the creative power of photography as a method that broadened children’s modes of communication.

This study is based on an interpretive view of reality (Creswell, 2009). This view provides recognition that knowledge is partial, contextual, and open to many forms of interpretation (Thomson & Gunter, 2007). Therefore the findings of this study are made in relation to the participants in this study, not young children in a general sense. I am also mindful that the children in this study were likely to have been in positions of privilege relative to many other children. All of the children in this study had food, housing and education provided for them on a daily basis, and they did not need to engage in work to live. Therefore, this thesis makes no claims to providing findings that can be or should be applied to young children on a wider basis. This study also focuses on non-paid work, consequently it does not offer comment on issues

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<th>Main Question</th>
<th>In what ways do young children understand work?</th>
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<td>Sub-Questions</td>
<td>What does work mean to young children?</td>
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<td>How are young children’s ideas about work shaped by their interactions with other children, family and teachers?</td>
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<td>What can young children’s understandings of adults’ work teach us about how they perceive the worlds of children and adults?</td>
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surrounding child labour or employment rights, and does little to add to knowledge about children’s work on a global level.

This study helps to make young children’s participation in work visible. It highlights the potential for undertaking more research into young children’s lives. It also speaks volumes about the importance of listening to young children’s ideas and finding ways to share them with broader audiences.

1.6  LOCATING THE RESEARCHER

As a researcher I am conscious that I affect the research I am undertaking (Flick, 2002). I have come to this study with experiences as an ECE teacher, as an ECE lecturer, as a mother of young children, as a worker and as someone who was once a young child. The feelings, thoughts, beliefs and experiences I have had in the past affect how and who I am now as a researcher (Thomson & Gunter, 2007).

For example, comments I have heard as a visiting lecturer from teachers and children have sparked my interest in the nature of teacher/child interactions. My own children’s ongoing contributions to helping our family have highlighted the potential benefits of young children’s roles as workers. Discussions with colleagues have identified the importance of meaning-making for children. All of these understandings have shaped my position as a researcher within the research worlds that I have reviewed. I have been aware that as a researcher I have engaged in an interdependent process with participants, and that all of us have moved in and out of the roles of being observers, and being observed (Fox, Martin, & Green, 2007).

As a researcher exploring the daily lives of participants, I was conscious that I brought my own assumptions to the research (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). Before I
entered the field I had already begun reading a wide range of literature, and had engaged in early forms of analysis through developing research questions, choosing methodologies and methods (Bogdan & Biklin, 1982). Those experiences all shaped my thinking and my interactions with participants.

I maintained a reflexive approach (Patton, 2002), as I built relationships with young children, teachers and parents. As we undertook research together, we co-constructed meanings which contributed to the creation of findings (Te One, 2008). My previous experiences of being a researcher also affected how I entered into each experience of research in the current study (Higgs, 2010), and helped to ensure that the current research relationships were built in a trusting, ethical way. This focus on ethics was continued throughout all aspects of the research including making choices about theory, methodology and methods, analysis, and presentation of data.

1.7 THESIS STRUCTURE

Chapter One has provided the rationale for this thesis. Sociocultural theory and childhood studies theory are explored in a deeper way in Chapter Two to show that young children’s perspectives of work are shaped by who they interact with, and the contexts in which those interactions take place. This discussion highlights the importance of foregrounding young children’s own perspectives in order to make their participation in work visible. Chapter Three presents a review of literature focusing on the contexts of home and education, which illuminates the hidden nature of young children’s work. Chapter Four positions this study within an ethnographic methodological approach, outlining the use of methods including observation, interview and document analysis. The next three chapters, Chapters Five–Seven, present discussions based on findings of the research that analyse young children’s participation
in the contexts of an ECE setting, home and an ethnographic research project. Finally, Chapter Eight provides a conclusion to the thesis by reflecting on the findings in relation to literature. This is followed by a discussion of the study’s findings, limitations and recommendations for future research.
CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

INTRODUCTION

The theoretical underpinning of this thesis is built on simple, yet powerful ideas. Young children learn about work through interactions and participation in cultural communities. However, young children’s participation in work is often hidden, and deserves to be recognised.

The theoretical framework of this thesis is supported by the twin pillars of sociocultural theory and childhood studies. Sociocultural theory acknowledges that young children’s perspectives of work are shaped by who they interact with and where those interactions take place (Fleer, Anning & Cullen, 2004). In this chapter I utilise ideas from sociocultural theorists such as Vygotsky (1978) and Rogoff (2003) to illustrate that children learn about work through relationships. Rogoff’s emphasis on participation is particularly relevant to my thesis, as it allows me to comprehend how children learn about work through the communities they are a part of. Therefore, Rogoff’s approach to learning is productive for understanding how young children develop perspectives of work through participation in ECE settings and homes.

This chapter also focuses on the importance of learning directly from young children themselves. I use ideas emanating from childhood studies that call attention to the recognition of young children’s agency and competency. The childhood studies’ emphasis on foregrounding children’s perspectives assists me to clearly understand the notion that young children are active participants in work. This idea is developed further through a consideration of the role of adults in relation to children’s
participation. How adults listen to children and how they perceive children, shapes children’s ability to participate in society.

Sociocultural theory will be introduced in the first section with an initial focus on the ideas of Vygotsky followed by a discussion of Rogoff’s lenses of analysis. In the second section, themes from childhood studies theory will be discussed. I conclude the discussion in the third section through a brief consideration of how the combined theoretical pairing of sociocultural theory and childhood studies theory can be utilised to understand work.

2.1 SOCIOCULTURAL THEORY

Within the field of early childhood education, learner-focused constructivist understandings of children’s development and learning have been challenged by those who support a sociocultural approach to learning (Jane, 2006). The notion that children’s development happens in a universal, stage-based process, has been reconceptualised by academics and researchers (Edwards, 2003; Edwards, 2007; Fleer, 2003a). Piaget’s suggestion that development and learning are biologically-driven processes that can be applied to all children has been rejected as a flawed, culturally-insensitive approach.

Academics such as Dahlberg, Moss and Pence (1999) and Fleer (2005) have argued for acknowledgment that children’s learning is constructed through social interactions, and is affected by the cultural contexts that it takes place in. This focus on learning through relationships is attributed to theorising by Russian academic Lev Vygotsky, whose ideas surfaced in the West in the 1960s, many years after his work was translated (Smith, 2013). Vygotsky (1978) introduced several interrelated key
concepts including learning through relationships, the zone of proximal development and mediated learning.

2.1.1 *Learning involves relationships*

Located in Lev Vygotsky’s seminal ideas about education, a sociocultural reading of children’s learning suggests that meanings are constructed through dialogue and interactions in a range of contexts (Vygotsky, 1978). Vygotsky (1978) posited that children make sense of the world and then internalise those understandings through interactions with others – particularly those with more skills or experience. Vygotsky’s (1978) belief that learning moved from a social form to a psychological form is identified in the oft-quoted statement “An interpersonal process is transformed into an intrapersonal one. Every function in the child’s cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level, and later, on the individual level; first, between people..., and then inside the child” (p.57).

Vygotsky’s stance on the importance of social learning was a major point of difference from other theories of learning that were prevalent when he developed his theorising. Other theorists of Vygotsky’s era, such as Dewey, also recognised the role of social interactions as a primary source of learning. For Dewey, the ultimate goal of learning was *individual* development. Vygotsky, in contrast, considered that learning should help children to become industrious contributors to their communities (Glassman, 2001). Vygotsky’s theorising suggested that learning involves both psychological *and* social processes (Brennan, 2007). He believed that cognition and emotions were both integral to learning and could not be understood in isolation from each other (Mahn & John-Steiner, 2002).
Vygotsky’s focus on social learning also delineated the distinction between sociocultural ideas about development and the theorising of academics such as Piaget. From a Piagetian perspective, development was seen as a natural unfolding of latent ideas and skills that led to further learning. Adults could assist a child’s learning by providing resources and experiences that matched a child’s level of development. In contrast, Vygotsky emphasised the importance of going beyond a child’s current level of development. He suggested that children develop by having their learning stretched by those with more knowledge and experience (Smith, 2013). From a Vygotskian perspective, people with more knowledge and experience than children, were instrumental to children’s learning (Cutter-Mackenzie, Edwards, Moore, & Boyd, 2014).

2.1.2 The zone of proximal development [ZPD]

Vygotsky’s focus on the ZPD was a central element of his theory of children’s learning (Smith, 2013). The ZPD represents an area of development between a child’s current level of development, and where his/her development could potentially move to, with assistance from others who are more knowledgeable or experienced (Vygotsky, 1978). In simple terms, Vygotsky believed that children could advance their learning through interacting with more knowledgeable others. Through watching, listening, talking and spending time with adults or “more capable peers” (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86) children reach new levels of development then internalise what they have learned. Contemporary scholars recognise the ZPD as being more than simply an expert/novice dyadic interaction. For example, the ZPD has also been recognised in group endeavours where the co-construction of knowledge emerges through a synergistic sharing of ideas (Lantolf, 2000).
The emotional support that comes from these collaborative approaches is also an important aspect of children’s learning and can help to build their confidence about subsequent learning. Vygotsky’s (1999) concept of perezhivanie is relevant to identify here as it helps to clarify the connections between children’s emotions and learning. How children feel and make sense of the emotions that come from interactions – perezhivanie – is a fundamental part of their learning (Mahn & John-Steiner, 2002). As Brennan (2007) has commented, the messages that children learn through interactions with others have a lasting impact on children’s learning, and equally, how those messages are delivered to children, also leaves a learning legacy. The link between young children’s emotions and their learning about work is discussed in Chapter Five.

Social interactions are therefore a key aspect of children’s learning from a sociocultural perspective. Vygotsky (1978) also recognised that through social interactions children learn knowledge that underpins practices and beliefs in their communities. This knowledge is developed through the social and historical experiences of their communities (Edwards, 2005).

2.1.3 Learning is mediated

Thus children’s learning does not occur in isolation, it is influenced by who is in the learning environment, what happens there, the resources that are used and the rules that govern participation. The communication and experiences within contexts are mediated by cultural tools (Vygotsky, 1978). Cultural tools can be either “technical” (Hansman, 2001, p. 45) for example toys, pencils and computers or “psychological” (Hansman, 2001, p. 45) such as language or rules for behaviour. Cultural tools act as both a support for children’s learning and shape children’s learning (Fleer, Anning, & Cullen, 2004). In addition, cultural tools have the potential to either limit or sanction
children’s actions. What is significant here is that cultural tools have the potential for multiple meanings. The meanings of cultural tools are only revealed by how they are used in particular situations (Edwards, 2004). Consequently, cultural tools help to ensure that participants in a context share the same understandings of what takes place in that context (Hansman, 2001).

Vygotsky had a particular interest in language as a mediating tool. He identified language as the primary tool that assists children to learn from others, and also as a means of making links to historical community knowledge (Vygotsky, 1978). Vygotsky (1978) used language to show that children learn first from their interactions with others, then use that knowledge internally, a concept that became known as appropriation through the work of Leont’ev (Scott & Palinscar, 2013). Thus language was seen as a mediator both on a social level and on an individual level (Vygotsky, 1987). Language was recognised both as the means through which cultural information is shared with children and as a tool that children could use to understand their experiences.

In the current study, for example, children learned about work through their interactions with others in early childhood settings and in their homes. What other people said about work and the language that was used to describe, organise and evaluate work, helped to shape young children’s perspectives of work. Later children shared their perspectives on work with me through explaining what work was and relating its importance to them. Children used language both to make sense of work and to share their understandings of work.
2.1.4  Rogoff’s lenses of analysis

Rogoff (1990) presented ideas that built on and challenged aspects of Vygotsky’s theorising. Whereas Vygotsky identified that children learned different knowledge in different communities based on their different social and historical experiences, Rogoff (1995) placed additional emphasis on the role of communities themselves in children’s learning. Vygotsky (1978) highlighted the development of ideas from interpersonal to intrapersonal learning whereas Rogoff (1990) also considered the cultural beliefs of learning contexts a fundamental influence on children’s thinking. Here, the unwritten rules around interactions, based on habitual practices and uncontested discourses, are seen as helping to form children’s ideas (Fleer, 2003b). Each context is recognised as having its own culture and its own cultural tools. Each context has its own set of rules for interaction, its own belief systems, particular forms of knowledge, and systems of communication (Hansman, 2001).

In addition, Vygotsky (1978) suggested that sociocultural events or activities should be studied as a whole in preference to studying individual elements such as a person or environment. Rogoff’s (1995) framework also promoted the idea that the individual and the social are indivisible and integral to understanding children’s learning (Lenters, 2007). She recognised the wisdom of focusing on a sociocultural event or activity though she also considered that individual components could be studied if analysed in relation to other components. For instance in this project children’s perspectives of work are analysed by considering young children’s learning contexts, their interactions with children and adults, and their own personal ideas and experiences. Contexts, interactions and personal experiences are discussed independent of each other, in addition to considering their links. Rogoff (1995) argued that understanding children’s learning requires a focused analysis of all elements of
participation that comprise a sociocultural activity. She proposed analysing each
element separately – with recognition that other elements are still present, simply in the
background. Rogoff’s view was that each element – which she proposed could be
analysed through a conceptual lens - was linked to other elements, and all were equally
important. She referred to each element of participation as “grains of focus within
the whole sociocultural activity” (Rogoff, 1995, p. 141). In other words, in this project
a young child’s perspective of work is shaped in a particular context, and is influenced
by the relationships within that context, and the personal understanding that young child
brings to work based on his/her previous experiences. To understand that child’s
perspective in an in-depth way, it is important to understand what and how contextual
factors, interpersonal factors and personal factors affect the shaping of that perspective.

Rogoff’s (1990; 1993; 1995; 2003; 2007; 2016) iterations of sociocultural
theory suggested children’s meanings are shaped by the interaction of their own
personal histories, social interactions and cultural beliefs. This approach emphasised the
need to understand children and environments, in addition to the relationships that
occur in those contexts. It identified ‘knowing’ about the world as (cognition) an active
process, not an accumulation of knowledge or proficiencies. The emphasis here is on
understanding changes in activities rather than understanding an individual’s aptitude or
knowledge (Rogoff, 1993). Rogoff (1995) offered a holistic analytical perspective that
recognised the relationship between an individual, their interactions with others, and the
cultural context in which they occur. This was recognition that children’s learning is
situated and that children are active contributors to their learning. Hence, seen from
Rogoff’s theoretical perspective, contexts of learning both affect what and how children
learn, but are also changed by the contributions children make themselves (Ring, 2006).
In this study the contexts of an ECE setting and home were analysed to understand their
influence on young children’s perspectives of work. Children constructed data in both settings to show their understandings of others’ work, and to show how they themselves contributed to both contexts.

Rogoff’s framework offers three lenses of analysis – the community lens, the interpersonal lens and the personal lens (Rogoff, 1995). Rogoff (1995) identified developmental processes that operate within each area of participation – “apprenticeship, guided participation, and participatory appropriation” (p. 139). Rogoff (1995) considered that people learn in communities through a process of apprenticeship, through guidance by more experienced others, and through adopting community beliefs and practices as one’s own. Research into sociocultural activity can use the lenses in a dynamic way, moving from lens to lens in order to illuminate reveal both historical and emerging aspects of sociocultural activities in cultural communities (Fleer, et al., 2004).

2.1.4.1 The community lens.

Information that is analysed through the community lens provides understandings of sociocultural activities that identify the institutional rules, practices, values and cultural tools of the communities that shape them (Rogoff, 1995). An up-skilling of new community members is part of the objective of sociocultural activity, so that they are able to participate more fully in future sociocultural activities. Through her focus on analysis through the community lens, Rogoff (2003) illustrated that children’s learning occurs in various communities where they engage in habitual events and activities alongside peers and adults. Children are transformed by participating in community activities, and are better able to deal with other similar events and activities. Rogoff’s (2003) notion of contexts for learning was broader than Vygotsky, as she identified that children’s learning can happen in both formal and informal ways. She
also recognised that significant learning takes place in informal contexts, such as family homes. In terms of this study, learning about work took place in ECE settings and young children’s homes. Young children drew on experiences with teachers, other children and families to identify their learning about work. Their experiences of work took place during community events such as Montessori sessions in an ECE setting, and during family routines at home.

Rogoff (1995) drew on the notion of apprenticeship to recognise that children’s learning and development occurs in group-based contexts – for example early childhood education settings, or family homes - where participants work together towards a common goal. In these communities, those who are less experienced in community practices learn how to participate from those who are more experienced. In referring to the concept of apprenticeship Rogoff (1995) acknowledged it had been used by many scholars previously, but that her use of the term was different. She moved beyond a dualistic focus on experts and novices, arguing that apprenticeship is more wide-ranging with an investigation of the social systems that activities take place in.

This approach still includes a focus on experts and neophytes, yet everyone in the group is recognised as learning in some way, and the actions of each person are seen to affect others in the group (Rogoff, 1995). Newcomers to the group learn about the cultural practices, beliefs and ways of being in that community, whereas experts learn about how to support and include those who are new. Rogoff (1995) asserted the importance of understanding how people interact within a community, through the concept of apprenticeship. Rogoff’s (1993) notion of apprenticeship had an additional focus on investigating the relationship of sociocultural activities to other cultural features of communities such as values, resources, and social mores. In order to make
sense of what takes place in a community lens, it is necessary to focus on the community goals, ideals, beliefs, organisation, cultural capital, rules and tools, and how they have been constructed over time. Understanding what takes place in learning contexts is vital as this can also illuminate power relations within these contexts (Lewis & Moje, 2003; Li, 2010; Perry, 2012).

Relationships in the community lens involve interactions between those with more experience in the community and those with less experience. Those interactions contribute to a process of development that Rogoff (1995) called guided participation. In this process, more experienced community members guide the learning of less experienced members, through their shared interactions.

2.1.4.2 Interpersonal lens

Analysis through the interpersonal lens focuses on the interactions between learners and others in shared community experiences (Rogoff, 1993). Learning, when analysed through the interpersonal lens involves the process of “guided participation” (Rogoff, 1995, p. 139). Rogoff (1993) placed equal emphasis on the notions of “active participation and communication” (p.135), recognising the reciprocal roles of learners and their collaborators in joint social endeavours.

Rogoff (1993) articulated her interpretation of guidance as one where more experienced community members provide direction for activities, whether they do so informally or formally, and indirectly or directly. This ‘direction’ is negotiated between participants - between those with experience and newcomers through mutually bridged meanings (Rogoff, 2003). Guidance from Rogoff’s (2003) perspective is a broad term that encompasses a range of guidance methods. Rogoff (2003) refers to explanation, teasing, shaming and instruction within interactions that take place face-to-face or other
situations where children learn about cultural “values, skills, and practices” (p. 284) that have been passed on by previous generations.

Rogoff’s (1993) presentation of guidance is one where experienced community members collaborate with learners to manage the practical aspects of activities. Such collaboration necessitates negotiation so that there is a level of shared understanding in relation to activities. This “intersubjectivity” (Rogoff, 1993, p. 135) results from a process of communication that includes both learners and experts. Here, children are able to collaborate in activities with community experts, making their own contributions to the community. The involvement of both children and more experienced others contributes to a mutual structuring of participation (Rogoff, 2003). Children’s actions have an impact on how others in the community participate in community endeavours, as much as children’s actions themselves are shaped by others (Rogoff, 2003).

From this perspective, children are seen as learning through active participation in the daily activities of their communities. Here being active could involve ‘doing things’ but it could also involve just ‘watching’ (Rogoff, 1990). Children’s learning is guided by others who are more experienced in the routine activities and events of their communities. Rogoff’s (1993) concept of participation recognises a learner’s input through attempts to understand activities, as well as making themselves available to learn. Rogoff (1993) argued that her notion of guided participation went beyond Vygotsky’s belief that the ability to reason at a higher cognitive level should be the goal of cognition. Rogoff’s (1993) concept of guided participation extended the focus of cognitive development by a recognition that children learn through their participation in a very broad range of cultural contexts such as homes and neighbourhoods. In many of these contexts, children’s cognitive development is supported by a range of non-academic, instruction-free guidance (Rogoff, 2003). In this research project, for
example, young children’s learning about work is explored in two communities – an ECE setting and the home. Young children learned about work in both communities.

Children change through their interactions with others in shared community endeavours. How that participation affects an individual child can be understood by a focus on analysis through the personal lens. A focus on the personal lens allows children’s individual thinking, learning and experiences to be understood. This recognises that within any group experiences young children have, their own thoughts and experiences will be different from other young children’s experiences.

2.1.4.3 The personal lens

The concept of analysis using a personal lens suggests that children learn about their place in communities through participation, and their relationships with other participants (Rogoff, 1990). In this way children’s thinking and actions change through taking part in a community’s activities and interacting with others. In turn, their actions and thoughts contribute to change in the community. Rogoff (1995) called this a process of participatory appropriation. This approach recognises that children’s learning happens through a dynamic process of interdependence with others. How children negotiate decisions and actions with others in those settings shapes their own cognition (Rogoff, 1995; 1998).

Rogoff (2003) theorised that interpreting activity through the personal lens should have a dual focus on participation and appropriation. The notion of participation is key to children’s development. Children, by virtue of their ability to participate in community activities, are able to participate more fully in subsequent community activities. Here there is a suggestion that children’s participation leads to children’s development, as the notion of participation is aligned with appropriation (Rogoff,
Through participation in sociocultural activities, children change how they understand those activities, and can assume greater responsibility for them (Rogoff, 1995). Appropriation is an active process where children can contribute to their communities by taking part in community activities, whether in a tangible way, or through modifying their thinking to make sense of others’ thoughts and practices. Rogoff (1995) demonstrated that participating in sociocultural activities was appropriation, it was not for appropriation. Young children in this research project learned about work through participation in family routines. Their contributions as active participants carrying out family household tasks taught them about work as they undertook work.

In Rogoff’s (1995) view, participation was about a process of personal growth, in contrast with existing beliefs that participation was about increasing knowledge. This perspective delineates between a static view of appropriation (new information is acquired from the social world then internalised in a child’s mind), and a dynamic view of appropriation (an ongoing, interdependent process which enriches and extends a child’s ability to participate in similar activities) (Rogoff, 1995).

Rogoff’s (1995) perspective acknowledges the interdependence of children and others in their communities in activities that change over time, and through their interactions (Robbins, 2007). Children’s participation is shaped by the goals and values of their learning contexts and the contexts are shaped in turn, by children’s participation (Edwards, 2006). This perspective identifies cognition as an active, changing process that emerges from interactions between individuals in social contexts. Rogoff’s (1995) interpretation of appropriation also presented the relationship between an individual and an activity as inseparable. Here, a child who participates in a sociocultural activity is
viewed as part of the activity itself, and also part of the social world - affecting the activity, others and her/himself through the participation (Rogoff, 1995).

Rogoff’s lenses of analysis framework introduced a dynamic perspective of contextual learning that changes in relation to people, places and time. It situates children’s learning within cultural contexts that change through children’s own contributions (Hannigan, 2010). Her notion that children and the contexts they learn in co-construct each other reflects the idea that culture itself is an interactive process, not a static collection of attributes (Rogoff, 2016).

To understand young children’s perspectives of work, I also need to find a way to foreground young children’s perspectives. My concern is that focusing solely on a sociocultural theoretical approach may mean that young children’s voices become lost within the collective voices of their wider communities. Childhood studies theory (Woodhead, 2006) champions the perspectives of children and using this as a complementary approach to sociocultural theory helps to ensure young children’s perspectives of work are clearly heard.

### 2.2 CHILDHOOD STUDIES THEORY

Childhood studies is a theoretical perspective that promotes the visibility of children’s lives. It is a rights-based, interdisciplinary approach to understanding how children’s lives are shaped by the contexts they live in. It emerged in the early 1990s from concerns over the representation of children in academic theory and research (Lenzer, 2001).

Several themes from childhood studies theory that resonate with the current study will be presented in this chapter. The status of children will be discussed first,
followed by a focus on the notion of foregrounding children’s perspectives. It will be seen that childhood studies incorporates a wider focus than just children. Understanding children and how they are positioned, necessitates an understanding of adults, and their role in shaping children’s participation. Hence, the discussion that unfolds in this section also addresses listening to children, the social construction of childhood and relationships between children and adults, illustrated by links to this project.

2.2.1 Status of children

Childhood studies theorists have questioned the representation of children in academic theory and research (James & Prout, 2015; Kehily, 2008; Lenzer, 2001; Qvortrup, 1987; Smith, 2013; Thorne, 1987; Woodhead, 2006). Concerns have been raised about the marginalisation of children, and the fragmented nature of information relating to children’s lives.

Criticism has been levelled at the undue focus on the socialisation of children (Qvortrup, 1987). The socialisation perspective presents children as passive ‘objects’ who are immature, lacking experience and competence (Mayall, 2000). Children are seen as dependent on adults, who can help them to learn how to become rational and responsible (Smith, 2013). Children, from this perspective, are not seen as ‘real’ members of society as they are perceived to lack the desirable qualities of adults. This perception of children’s naiveté excludes them from society as “human becomings” (Qvortrup, 1987, p.5), rather than human beings. Children are identified as learning how to become adults rather than as people with their own ideas, feelings and practices. In research, the subsumption of ‘children’ into wider classes such as ‘family’ and ‘education’, has been judged as marginalising children (Lenzer, 2001). An initial focus
for childhood studies theorists, therefore, has been to recognise children as unique in their own right (Lenzer, 2001).

Foregrounding children’s ideas, thoughts and feelings is paramount in order to make children’s lives visible (James & Prout, 2015). Valuing children’s own accounts of their worlds provides more realistic reflections of their lives than accounts fashioned solely from adult standpoints (Thorne, 1987). Promoting children’s visibility is an ontological beckoning to study children’s lives in a comprehensive way that reflects children’s “fullness as human beings” (Lenzer, 2001, p. 183).

Childhood studies theory identifies that the status of children should be recognised as important and as a right. Children are people who are active and who make decisions about their lives. This status as “rights-bearing citizen[s]” (Woodhead, 2008, p.19) should be reflected in research into decision-making that affects children’s lives, whether that be theoretical, political, research-based or practice-based (Woodhead, 2006). This right is enshrined in human rights treaties such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (United Nations, 1989). UNCRC acknowledges children’s right to make decisions about their lives, to have their opinions listened to and participate in the activities of their communities (A. Smith, 2013). In New Zealand this right is also reflected in the national ECE curriculum Te Whāriki, which acknowledges that children have strengths, can make effective decisions and learn through interactions with other children and adults (Ministry of Education, 1996). When children are given the right to participate they

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3 It should be noted that UNCRC has also been criticised for promoting a universalised Western image of childhood, with narrow interpretations of family and work (Mayall, 2000). It contradicts the notion that childhood is a social construct, and that there is not just one kind of childhood, there are many (Te One, 2005).
benefit emotionally, with increased opportunities to build relationships and to have a sense of control over their actions (Foote, Ellis, & Gasson, 2013).

2.2.2 *Foregrounding children’s perspectives*

A focus on children’s rights can help to broaden what is known about children’s lives by illuminating their realities and enhancing their social conditions. There is a link here to foregrounding children’s standpoints (Mayall, 2000). Childhood studies theory argues that children’s views about their lives are relevant and important. Listening to the “muted voices” (Hardman, 1973 cited in Woodhead, 2006, p. 30) of children recognises their worth. Children have a right to be seen as competent, and to be provided opportunities to participate in their communities through thought and action (Smith, 2013). Therefore, when considering research into children’s lives, children themselves should be considered an integral part of the research process, instead of objects of research. Children should be included as active *subjects* who have valuable and insightful contributions to share (Woodhead, 2008). The perspectives of young children in this research project were foregrounded through sharing their actions, feelings, and ideas as expressed through their words and photographs. Young children were active participants in this project.

This view of children as subjects is based on the notion that children have agency. Mayall (2002) argued that children’s agency reflects their ability to have an impact on their worlds through what they say and do. She explained that agency is based on relationships and that it is a negotiated process. Being able to negotiate gives children a way to change the world (Waller & Bitou, 2011), although their agency is affected by children’s place in society. Mayall (2002) further advised that agency can only be fully understood “within the parameters of childhood’s minority status” (p. 21).
What she proposed is that children’s ability to be agentic is shaped by adults, who are in a position of power relative to children, and by structural constraints such as gender and income (Qvortrup, 1987). Adults have an important responsibility to ensure that children have opportunities to be agentic, whilst ensuring that they are given appropriate support physically and emotionally, to express their agency (Smith, 2013).

Children’s participation, therefore, is equally about children as agents who voice their opinions and about adults as listeners. Children’s participation in their communities is shaped in significant ways by adults who take their perspectives seriously. Te One (2008) has identified listening to children’s voices “as a political act that unites the child with civil society” (p.7). She drew on Pufall and Unsworth’s (2004) definitions of agency and voice to emphasise their complementarity and their importance for children’s wellbeing. From this perspective having a voice gives children a way to articulate intent. Agency provides them opportunities to put that intent into motion through actions (Pufall & Unsworth, 2004). Adults who make space to listen to children’s voices, therefore, offer children a liberty of expression with opportunities to articulate beliefs, to concur and dispute. They endorse children’s rights to agency and voice (Te One, 2008).

2.2.3 Listening to children

Listening to children has been adopted as an espistemology (Danby, 2002), methodology (Clark & Moss, 2005) and pedagogy (Edwards, Gandini & Forman, 1998) by those who find credence in childhood studies’ ideas. Listening to children places value on children’s ideas, experiences and feelings (Clark, 2004). It is based on the notion of “insider epistemology” (Tangen, 2008, p. 159), which recognises that those who are ‘inside’ experiences, know most in relation to what happens in those
experiences. Children, viewed from this position, are best placed to have knowledge about what happens in their own lives.

Tangen (2008) asserted that listening is an interactive process which involves both those who are listened to, and those who listen, as active subjects. By sharing the significance of feelings and ideas, participants in the listening process co-construct new information together. In the current study, for instance, as an ‘outsider’ researcher I have listened to children’s insider perspectives on work through their spoken words and sounds, their actions, photographs and drawings and through observations of their interactions. I recognise that what I present in this thesis is a partial representation of the meanings I have come to understand through the time and discussions I have shared with children. There are also ethical considerations at stake here. As a researcher I am having the ‘final say’ in relation to what is represented in this thesis. I have not included every single word or action that I have heard/seen from children throughout the research process. I have made choices about which words and actions are included. Therefore I also believe it is imperative for any discussion of listening to children to consider how children’s voices are re-presented.

2.2.4 Childhood – a social construction

A cautious approach needs to be used to how children’s actions and positioning are interpreted (Adams, 2014; Alanen & Mayall, 2001; Lee, 2001; Mannion, 2007; Prout, 2005; Tangen, 2008). Childhood studies theory argues that childhood is an institutional category that is part of the social organisation of many societies (James & Prout, 2015). Viewed from this perspective childhood is a social experience that changes on the basis on historical and cultural contexts, in relation to their attendant

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* Ethical considerations are discussed further in Chapter Four.
beliefs and practices (Woodhead, 2006). Thus childhood can be understood more properly as ‘childhoods’ that are based on “works of imagination” (Lee, 2001, p. 1) about children which shape and organise the lived experiences of individual children. Thus children experience childhood in different ways, depending on the contexts they participate in. In this project, for example, young children identified both similarities and differences in approaches to work in their homes. Young children were also given differing opportunities to participate in work in their homes, with some experiencing greater levels of responsibility than other children.

A socially constructed perspective of childhood is not about age or biological difference, rather it speaks of expectations about children – how they should ‘be’ and how they should be perceived. Attention should also be directed towards the care with which social constructions of childhood are used, given their potential to exclude children. As Woodhead (2008) has cogently articulated for example, a Western social construction of childhood has been lofted as an idealised childhood that other cultural forms of childhood are measured against.

In addition, an over-reliance on social construction has the potential to override other perspectives on children’s lives. Of particular concern is how social constructions of children and childhood can overshadow children’s own views. For example, in a recent British study Adams (2014) asked 7-11 year old children in Britain their views on the definition of ‘a child’. Many of their responses indicated that for those children, biological aspects of their lives were of heightened importance. Being small relative to adults or older children had an impact on how children in the study felt, with some feeling disempowered in ways that impacted on “their status as children” (Adams, 2014, p. 172). If their experiences were viewed solely through a social constructionist
lens, by analysing what physical experiences ‘mean’ from a social perspective (James & Prout, 1997), children’s voices about feeling small could well be lost (Adams, 2014).

As Prout (2005) has argued, childhood is shaped both by biology and culture. For many children, what happens biologically has a considerable impact on their lives. If too much emphasis is placed on the social construction of childhood, adults run the risk of misunderstanding children. Placing excessive emphasis on social constructions can also be problematic in relation to the concept of difference (Lee, 2001). Social constructions of childhood posit that the only real distinctions between people – including between children and adults – are distinctions in how they are viewed. This can obscure the importance and value of recognising how people differ. For example, if children are viewed the same as adults, there is a potential for any differences between them to be seen as unreal, with a loss of children’s voices and unique experiences (Lee, 2001).

Childhood is often viewed in relation to the social construct of adulthood. Many scholars have identified understanding the relationships between children and adults as a key aspect of understanding children’s experiences of their worlds (Alanen & Mayall, 2001; James & Prout, 2015; Mannion, 2007; Mayall, 2002).

2.2.5 Relationships between children and adults

Understanding children’s experiences involves an understanding of social processes that involve other people, particularly adults. Thus to fully understand children’s participation it is necessary to understand the relationships between children and adults (Mannion, 2007). Mannion’s (2007) thesis that a binary distinction between children and adults should be reframed as an interdependent relational process is persuasive. Mannion (2007) considered that understanding children’s participation in
the world entails more than just focusing on hearing children’s voices. A rhetoric which only focuses on listening to children obscures the involvement of adults in the production of children’s voices. Mannion (2007) surmised that environments where children are able to stand up for themselves, share their ideas and be seen as participants, affect both children and adults.

Mannion (2007) drew on the notion of “generationing” (Alanen & Mayall, 2001, p. 129) to illustrate that ‘child’ is a relational term, often used to compare children to adults. Practices based on generationing dictate the relative positions of children and adults, and define how they should interact at specific ages (Mannion, 2007). Therefore to understand children’s participation it is necessary to consider them in relation to adults in their lives. Viewed from this perspective, the relations between children and adults affect how children participate. This recognises that adults are a key part of dialogue that occurs in negotiating how, where and when children can participate (Mannion, 2007).

Research involving children should be focused in the contexts of their relationships. In particular, adults have a major influence and how children are perceived often results from definitions created by adults (Woodhead, 2008). Exploring the processes that take place in generational relationships illuminates children’s contributions to their social contexts, particularly their involvement in building relationships (Mayall, 2002). Generationing shapes children’s lives through a control of information about childhood by adults, the hidden nature of children’s work and relegating children to the private sphere.

Childhood studies theory is an important foundation for understanding children’s perspectives of their own lives. It recognises that children are important
members of their societies who make valuable contributions. Childhood studies theory provides a reminder that children’s ideas and feelings deserve to be represented through research which foregrounds the standpoints of children. Children should be included as active subjects of research in ways that help to make their lives visible. Childhood studies places value on children’s right to participate. It complements sociocultural theory as a useful tool for illuminating young children’s perspectives of work.

2.3 SOCIOCULTURAL THEORY/CHILDHOOD STUDIES THEORY

In combination, sociocultural theory and childhood studies theory provide a dual focus on learning through relationships and participation. Considering how work is understood and enacted in young children’s families and ECE settings, how learning about work is communicated between children and adults in those contexts, and how that learning transforms an individual’s participation in their communities, affords a deep and holistic approach to understanding what work means for those children. Foregrounding young children’s own understandings of work ensures that children’s participation in work is made visible, and is given value.

Therefore, any exploration of the meanings children construct about work, should consider the inter-relatedness of their personal understandings, their social interactions, and the cultural beliefs that form a part of the contexts they participate in. From this perspective, how children participate in work depends on the context in which the work takes place (Edwards, 2003). Young children participate in a variety of contexts, and they have multiple, complex interactions. The combination of those experiences helps children to form meanings about their world (Siry & Kremer, 2011). This view of learning places value on children’s previous knowledge and skills (Hedges & Cullen, 2003) and rejects the notion that children’s understandings are directly
related to their age or stage of development. It recognises that being a child does not
equate with being unable to express a view (Smith, 2002). For the young children in
this study, for example, young children’s perspectives of work were directly shaped by
being able to participate in work. Those who had more experience of participation in
work had more information to draw on to share.

Experiences in one context may be very different from experiences in another.
The practices and customs in any given context express the history and culture of that
setting (Fleer, 2003a). At home for example, whatever is important to a child’s family
in relation to work will be signified through the kinds of activities that take place, the
objects that are used and the duties undertaken by family members (Anning & Ring,
2004). As young children shift between contexts, they have to negotiate an interruption
between their experiences in each setting. For instance, the practices, customs,
activities, objects and responsibilities children have become accustomed to at home
may conflict with what they experience in an ECE setting. The tools they are
accustomed to using at home – such as a particular way of speaking – may be very
different from the tools used in ECE. Similarly, the objects and activities of ECE may
be very different from their everyday experiences at home (Anning & Ring, 2004).
Each context may be underpinned by different ideas about what is important or
acceptable about work.

Accordingly, in order to fully comprehend young children’s understanding of
work it is vital to consider the situated contexts in which they learn about work. Li’s
(2010) eloquent argument provides a reminder that these contexts are shaped and
affected by the people who take part in them, historical events and institutional
practices and values. Thus, to understand young children’s ideas about work also
necessitates a review of structural factors that affect young children’s learning contexts (Perry, 2012).

Bowes and Goodnow (1996) supported the need to explore culture as part of any consideration of children’s understandings of work. Rogoff’s (2016) notion of culture as a process elicits a deeper appreciation of the multiple, complex worlds in which children participate. It acknowledges that children learn through membership of a variety of groups and that the perspectives of work held by these different groups may be contradictory. It also allows taken-for-granted ideas about work to be questioned. A focus on culture recognises that within any one cultural community there may be a variety of viewpoints, and that the power of any one viewpoint may change over time. Similarly, it acknowledges that within a specific community people may consider some viewpoints more important relative to others, based on their own personal histories. Finally, exploring the cultures of children’s different contexts may allow for an analysis of the meanings that are embedded in the everyday conversations, beliefs and structures that are found there (Rogoff, 2016).

**SUMMARY**

A sociocultural approach to understanding children’s learning forms an important foundation for the current study. It recognises that children’s learning is a mutually supportive endeavour between more experienced others and children. It combines the notion of support from those with experience together with the notion of children’s own agency, in a situated context with its own particular practices, rules and history (Lenters, 2007).

Childhood studies theory complements sociocultural ideas about exploring the relationships between children and adults. It recognises that how children are perceived,
and their subsequent ability to participate in activities such as work, are largely shaped by adults. Childhood studies theory also acknowledges that children have a right to participate and that their perspectives on their worlds are valuable and should be listened to.

The sociocultural and childhood studies underpinnings of the current study have helped to build strong epistemological and methodological foundations. The study is built around the notion that young children can and do contribute to work. It places importance on including young children’s own perspectives about work with recognition of the contributions they make to and through work as knowing, active participants in early childhood settings and homes. The study focuses on young children’s perspectives of work within the contexts and relationships of their own lives. Young children are viewed as an integral part of the research as active subjects and their views are foregrounded.

The current study has helped to show that the young children who took part in this research project were knowledgeable about work in their lives. They were able to describe, debate and interpret work. The research also shows that young children were active participants in work and received benefits from their participation. Young children’s participation was shaped by a process of mutual negotiation with others, especially adults. Young children’s desire to participate, and their access to opportunities for participation in work, shaped their identities both as community members and as workers. The current study has helped to contribute new knowledge about young children by making their participation in work visible.
CHAPTER THREE

LITERATURE REVIEW

INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an overview of literature relating to young children and work. It would seem that while many researchers have a strong interest in work, their interest in how work relates to young children is less evident. Work has been delineated and debated by researchers in various disciplines including but not limited to, psychology, career development, sociology, education, geography and economics. I have enjoyed the opportunity to explore the research approaches in disciplines different from my own, however, I have found that the multiple meanings and values used by researchers obfuscate an understanding of work. In contrast, one very clear message revealed by the review is that there are gaps in what is known about the meanings young children place on work, particularly within New Zealand.

Although this review discusses and evaluates research about work, the real story it reveals is one about young children. The review identifies salient images of how researchers view young children, and how those perspectives shape researchers’ methodologies and analysis. The review proposes that young children’s perspectives are largely missing from literature on work. Young children have valid and valuable ideas to share, and their voices deserve to be heard. Childhood studies theorists have advocated for more inclusion of children’s perspectives, viewing participation as their right as citizens (Smith, 2013), as a way to have agency (Mayall, 2002) and because young children are insightful (Woodhead, 2008).
The review begins with an overview of work, followed by a brief discussion about childhood. Then career development literature is examined with a focus on its portrayal of children. Finally two contexts – home and educational environments – are explored in relation to how they shape children’s perspectives of work.

3.1 OVERVIEW OF WORK

Children’s views on work have been studied by academics investigating a range of contexts. Bowes and Goodnow’s (1996) review suggests work has been studied in relation to choosing vocations and teaching children how to negotiate the economy. In the social sciences, research into children’s work has concentrated on paid work (Bowes & Goodnow, 1996). Some of the research into work and children has involved primary school aged children, but younger children’s perspectives tend to be missing. Overall, research into children and work seems disjointed, as a variety of aspects have been studied, in dissimilar contexts, by academics from different disciplines, using both qualitative and quantitative methodologies (Larson, 2004).

There is no one unified definition of work (Anderson, 2010; Bowes & Goodnow, 1996). This knocked my interpretative-confidence initially, but my concern was short-lived as I considered the reasons for a lack of definition. The meaning of work differs depending upon its context and the purpose for defining it. Thus there is no one form of ‘work truth’. Two children, for example, may both engage in similar household chores, but their experience of those chores, and the feelings and thoughts they associate with the chores may be completely different. Therefore, I have evaluated literature to find how it explains the relationship between young children and work, based on the knowledge that I will not find one definitive explanation. This review has
fuelled my own desire in the current study to discover young children’s own perspectives on work

I searched widely for young children’s perspectives on work in New Zealand. There is a small body of recent New Zealand literature that focuses on work in relation to children (Anderson, 2010; Diorio & Gasson, 2009; Gasson, Calder, Diorio, Smith & Stigter, 2014; Gasson & Linsell, 2011; Gasson & Calder, 2013; O’Neill, 2010). That research has focused on older children and young people, mostly in relation to paid work. There is a dearth of research into young children’s perspectives on work in New Zealand. Additionally, research has discussed parents’ views on young people’s paid work (Gasson et al., 2014) or has sought the perspectives of young people providing retrospective accounts of their work in younger days (Anderson, 2010). The perspectives of young children themselves are missing.

Nevertheless, this research contributes relevant concerns that can help to illuminate understandings of young children’s work. Gasson and Linsell (2011) have criticised political and legal decisions that have been made on behalf of children in relation to work, without any consideration of what children think about those decisions. There is a reminder that such decision-making is undertaken based on adults’ socially constructed notions of childhood. How children are constructed as workers – whether they should or should not work for example – affects their access to experiences of work (Gasson et al., 2014). Children are often excluded from such discussions about work based on a “moralising rhetoric” (Diorio & Gasson, 2009, p.2), which paints children as immature or in need of protection.
3.2 ‘CHILDHOOD’ AND WORK

Research literature focusing on children and work often draws on dated ideas about children. Industrialisation brought significant changes to the lives of children and to how children were perceived (Santer, Griffiths, Goodall, National Children’s Bureau & Play England, 2007). Prior to industrialisation, work was viewed as the norm for children with little time for play or relaxation. Industrialisation led to children being employed in factories and textile mills in jobs that were often hazardous to their health and safety. Concern over children’s wellbeing brought legislative changes in the 1800s. This also created change in how work and school were seen in relation to children. Universal, compulsory schooling was established by the end of the 19th century to liberate children from the exploitation of paid labour. Schools became seen as a safe place where children could be free from the risky demands of employment (Santer et al., 2007).

This change led to a discourse of viewing children as either delinquent or schooled. For the first time, children were seen as a separate social category from adults and the construction of ‘childhood’ was created (Hendrick, 1997). Zelizer (1985) refers to the “sacred twentieth-century child” (p.58) who has been protected from engaging in paid work. With the changes in industrialisation, the notion of ‘work’ became entwined with the notion of ‘employment’ (Clark, 2000). For many researchers it seems that everything connected with a negative view of child labour has become associated with ‘work’ – an unnatural state of being, the end of freedom, and learning through being taken advantage of (Walkerdine, 1989).

The link between work and employment has become an enduring concept that shapes how researchers from more recent times explore children’s ideas about work. In
the 1990s, for example, researchers aimed to explain children’s understandings of work. Researchers asked children questions directly related to employment or the economy, or asked questions based on a work/play dichotomy. Predictably, two main types of understanding emerged - work involves going to a place away from home for money, or is located in a binary pair with play (Bowes & Goodnow, 1996). Bowes and Goodnow (1996) theorised that this distinction draws upon the concepts of “effort, of pleasure, [and] autonomy” (p. 302). If an experience requires effort, is not very pleasurable and is not of a child’s choosing, then it is likely to be seen as ‘work’. In Apple and King’s (1990) study involving American kindergarten-aged children (the equivalent of New Zealand primary school new entrants), drawing and colouring pictures became ‘work’ when they were teacher directed experiences.

The discussion in the following section focuses on career development literature. Career development research is a field that has close links to psychology. Its focus is on understanding how people think about careers and work, on an individual and social level. It considers individual motivation, beliefs and rewards, in addition to and what people contribute to wider society through careers, both socially and economically (Watts, 2006).

At first glance, career development literature may appear to be an odd choice of reading for a study that focuses on children. Even so, I have found a parallel in the thinking of some career development academics in relation to my own thinking about work. Bright (2007) for example, asked “Children seem to learn early on that play is fun but irrelevant, and work is relevant but not fun. Why is this, and how can this be addressed? ” (p. 11). Though Bright’s motivation may differ from mine, I am also interested in how young children perceive work, and how their ideas have been shaped. The main reason career development research has been included in this review it that
there is a large body of information relating to children – much more than in other disciplines – and because I consider it important to assess the images it portrays of children.

3.3 CAREER DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH

Hutchings (1993) was critical of the deficit approach of research into work and children in the 1990s, particularly researchers’ views of children as miniature adults. Her comments foreshadowed childhood studies’ call for research that values children’s thoughts about their own lives (Prout & James, 1997). Career development research has faced similar criticism. The image of children presented in much of the career development research is that children are innocent, unaware and unable to act when it comes to work. In this view, childhood is seen as a preparation ground for being an adult, and looks ahead, rather than focusing on what is relevant and of current importance for children (Prout & James, 1997).

Children’s career development research has been informed by psychological approaches to research (Schultheiss, 2008). A focus on questions with forced-choice answers, for example, means that a very narrow knowledge base has been created about children’s understanding of the world of work. By asking questions with a limited range of expected responses, the ability to tap into children’s creativity and meaning-making has been lost. Being able to answer yes or no, or choose a category, tells little about why a child might answer in a certain way. Children’s career research has had a narrow overall focus on cross-sectional and statistics-based methodologies. Studies have been undertaken predominantly in North America (Watson & McMahon, 2008) with middle-class children (Schultheiss, 2008). In addition, a narrow range of questions has been
asked, producing findings that are largely descriptive (Porfeli, Hartung, & Vondracek, 2008).

Theorists such as Super (1957) and Gottfredson (2004) positioned children as being involved in a world of fantasy, not able to understand or make connections with the ‘real’ world of work (Porfeli, et al., 2008). Super’s (1957) ideas have been criticised as outdated and inapplicable to the lives of children today who face different expectations and pressures in relation to work (Watson & McMahon, 2005). Super’s ideas have also received criticism for not recognising the importance of social contexts on children’s learning (Leung, 2008). Schultheiss (2008) notes the irony that despite children spending large amounts of time in educational settings, few of the studies undertaken into children’s career development have focused on educational contexts.

In comparison to other age groups, the research into young children is limited (Schultheiss, 2008). Additionally, the analysis of young children’s interests in occupations is often based on understandings gained from research with older age groups that may not be appropriate for young children (Tracey, 2001). Another factor that compromises children’s ability to contribute effectively is the focus on paid work. This results in children having to answer questions about topics that are distant from their own experience. In effect, their lack of knowledge sees them portrayed as having “limited and late understanding.” (Bowes & Goodnow, 1996, p. 300). This research has focused on identifying what children know about work, rather than how they have come to know it (Hartung, Porfeli, & Vondracek, 2005; Watson & McMahon, 2005).

The methodological approaches used by the majority of researchers into children and careers, limit knowledge about children’s understandings of work (Schultheiss, 2008; Watson & McMahon, 2008). The narrow focus of the research fails
to recognise the multiplicity of ways that children view work, based upon their own cultures and world experiences (Corsaro, 2011; Prout & James, 1997). The research assumes that the knowledge produced can be generalised to all children, in all contexts. It focuses on individuals, with a lack of recognition that children’s understandings are formed in specific contexts, through interactions with others. This does not discount the value of the research undertaken thus far and it recognises that it needs to be complemented by a wider range of methodologies to provide a more complex understanding of why and what children think (McNamee, 2000).

Hartung, Porfeli and Vondracek (2005) recommended that researchers begin to recognise the active, complex ways that children think about and interact with work. This calls for research that reflects a range of socio-economic backgrounds, age groups and cultures and has a focus on both the holistic nature and the process of children’s learning (Watson & McMahon, 2005). Schultheiss (2008) suggested incorporating qualitative research would help to create new theories. She recognised the potential for inter-disciplinary, contextually-based research that aligns with educational curricula.

In response to Schultheiss’s (2008) invitation, the next two sections of the review present international commentaries on work that acknowledge the importance of context. The discussion focuses on the specific contexts of home and educational settings.

3.4 WORK AT HOME

Children form ideas, meanings and knowledge about work in different contexts. Contextual factors such as location, activity, equipment, clothes, payment, enjoyment and knowledge of their parents’ or friends’ jobs have an important effect on what children identify as work (Mauthner, Maclean, & McKee, 2000). In addition, other
important contextual factors include time and space (Harden, Backett-Milburn, MacLean, Cunningham-Burley, & Jamieson, 2013; Jorgenson, 2006). Many researchers identify home as a significant context that shapes children’s ideas about work (Baxter & Strazdins, 2014; Clark, 2000; Hutchings, 1993; Jorgenson, 2006; Schultheiss, 2006; Thorne, 1987).

Home is seen as a place where children first develop an understanding of work through observations of the ways their parents work, and what parents say about work (Baxter & Strazdins, 2014). Schultheiss (2006) proposed that children learn about work through the stories that are shared at home. Through sharing those stories children develop a sense of belonging they associate with work. In contrast, Clark (2000) argued that the strongest link between families and work is based on people, not emotions. In this view, family and work are likened to two distinct territories – each with its own set of rules and expectations – that people move between as “border crossers” (Clark, 2000, p. 747).

Harden et al. (2013) surmised that families create boundaries between their home and other contexts to protect the ‘special’ location of home. Children and parents in Harden et al.’s (2013) qualitative, longitudinal study in Scotland viewed home as a private place where children could be free to be themselves through “…meaningful relationships, activities and possessions” (Harden, et al., 2013, p. 308). Whereas public locations such as after-school programmes restricted children’s sense of freedom. Similarly children in a British study were concerned about the prospect of childcare when their mothers returned to paid employment (Ridge, 2007). Changes to work at the public, macro level of society – including, in this example how and when mothers engage in paid work - can have profound effects on the private localised lives of children, and shape their views of work (Mauthner, et al., 2000). Harden et al. (2013)
identified home as a place to fulfil parental values for childhood – being an individual, being private and having choice – that reflect neoliberal values underpinning what it means to be a parent and a family. This aligns with Solberg’s (1997) observation that families construct what childhood looks like through their interactions about how “everyday domestic life” (p.126) is organised in their homes.

The study by Harden et al. (2013) also showed that despite the influence of other family members, children are not passive recipients – they are active participants in the work lives of their families through everyday chores and routines in their homes (Christensen, 2002; Levey, 2009a; Solberg, 1997). Many children, for example, receive pocket money for participation in work. Being a worker can thus motivate and reward children, bring recognition from their sociocultural group and contribute to a sense of self-esteem (O’Neill, 2010). Nevertheless this participation by children is often unrecognised, particularly if based on the view that childhood should be seen as a time for children to be free from work. Work becomes defined in relation to adults’ activities from adults’ standpoints with little regard for children’s contributions, (Jorgenson, 2006) and reflects children’s lack of power relative to adults (Levison, 2000). Levison (2000), commenting from the discipline of economics, was critical of this positioning of children where it is seen as “acceptable to exclude children from paid work but reasonable to require them to undertake unpaid work” (p. 126).

Hence children’s everyday household chores are seen by some researchers as the most hidden form of children’s work (Jorgenson, 2006; Levey, 2009a). Thorne’s (1987) notion of children’s invisible work included caring for others, actively shaping the culture of families, and negotiating/debating the organisation of household chores. Thorne (1987) argued that the image of an inactive, private, dependent child is myopic and devalues children’s agency and contributions. Jorgenson (2006) suggested that
research should incorporate children’s perspectives to question further what gets called appropriate in relation to where and when work takes place.

3.5 WORK IN EDUCATIONAL SETTINGS

Children’s perspectives on work have been elicited in research based in educational settings. Most of this research has been undertaken in schools, with a very narrow focus on early childhood educational settings (Apple & King, 1990; Bowes & Goodnow, 1996; Chapparo & Hooper, 2002; Keating, Fabian, Jordan, Mavers, & Roberts, 2000; King, 1979; Lowe & Chapparo, 2010; Wing, 1995). Work has also been studied as a secondary issue in relation to play (Barnett, 2013; Keating et al. 2000; McInnes, Howard, Miles & Crowley, 2011; Santer, Griffiths, Goodall, National Children’s Bureau & Play England, 2007) or as part of an exploration into children’s transitions to school (Coleborne, 2009; Corsaro & Molinari, 2000; Einarsdottir, 2010).

Research in educational settings has identified that a combination of factors shape children’s ideas about work, particularly teachers (Wohlwend, 2007), also peers and friends (Mauthner, et al., 2000), and social and physical aspects of educational contexts (Chapparo & Hooper, 2002; McInnes, Howard, Miles, & Crowley, 2011). For instance, children in an Australian study viewed tasks differently depending upon where they happened at school. When singing took place in the playground, children viewed it as play. Alternatively, when singing took place in their classroom, children viewed it as work. Work was seen as an activity to be done alone, in the classroom. Work also involved an element of compulsion – children had to do what their teacher directed them to do (Chapparo & Hooper, 2002). Children in a British study also felt that work was compulsory (Keating, et al., 2000). The teachers in this study created a division
between work and play through using play as an incentive for the completion of work. Play became something fun, though less important than work (Keating, et al., 2000).

A distinction between work and play is also made by others in the education field. King (1979) argued that children use learner choice as a distinguishing factor between work and play in educational settings. The children in King’s (1979) study believed teachers prioritised work over play, and that play could be interrupted for work. In Wing’s (1995) school-based study, children also defined work and play as being very different. ‘Work’ involved an element of compulsion, and involved an element of external control, whereas ‘play’ involved activities where children had free choice about what to do. Children in this study did not equate play with work. This study showed that the meaning children placed on work resulted from a combination of interactions and experiences in their classrooms. These meanings helped them to develop a structure for understanding what happened in the wider world of school (Wing, 1995).

Wing’s (1995) study also related that when teachers presented activities as ‘play’ but with accompanying expectations, supervision and evaluation, children recognised them as ‘work’. Teachers in Wing’s (1995) study were unaware that children were able to discern between ‘play’ and ‘work’ with this level of sophistication (Wing, 1995). This distinction between work and play aligns to a notion of play as having an explicit focus on an experience or process, whereas work is viewed as being more directed to an outcome or goal (Dandridge, 1986; Katz, 2010). Barnett (2013) criticised King and Wing’s approaches to research believing the researchers asked questions in a way that directly contrasted work and play eliciting responses that also placed work in opposition to play.
Work and play are often viewed as opposites, particularly in relation to children. The next section of the discussion explores this division in a closer way.

3.5.1 Work vs play.

Work has been viewed both as something that is desirable and as something that disaffects people. The interpretation of work has varied in different time periods, based on philosophical, practical and spiritual ideals. Brehony (2013) argued that how adults conceive of work affects their perspectives of play in relation to education. He articulated that play is always framed in relation to work (Brehony, 2013). This is relevant to the current study as adults’ relationships with young children shape children’s access to knowledge and experience of work. Adults’ concepts of work and play have a direct effect on how that construction takes place.

Wohlwend (2007) contended that the language teachers use can subtly organise educational settings into “work and play” (p. 16). In Wohlwend’s (2007) study based in the United States, ECE teachers identified work as being the opposite of play. Work was described as having a “vital, serious, and rigorous nature” (Wohlwend, 2007, p. 3). In one sense, it had no meaning of its own and was seen as being whatever play was not. Teachers found it problematic to identify exactly what it was. What some teachers identified as work, others considered play. Over twenty years’ earlier, King (1979) identified that teachers saw play as either being a child’s work, or a form of protection from the boring, exacting nature of work. Work has also been associated with a teacher-directed, fact-absorbing approach to education (Walkerdine, 1989). Both perspectives suggest work is an unnatural practice, something that teachers must help children to avoid. As Walkerdine (1989) convincingly argued, the meaning of work has been
imbued with “values, fantasies, fears, desires” (p. 274). It has become the ‘other’ of play.

Synodi (2010) explained that the dichotomy between work and play is created by teachers who use a “directive approach to education” (p.188). As a result children distinguish between activities they choose and control as ‘play’ and learning becomes associated with the presence of teachers (Synodi, 2010). Thus, the conceptions of teachers in relation to work, and in relation to children’s learning, have a direct effect on children’s conceptions of work. This is potentially problematic when research also suggests that teachers within one setting often have different, sometimes contradictory views about what constitutes work (Grieshaber & McArdle, 2010; Rengel, 2014; Wohlwend, 2007).

Montessori’s philosophical approach to education contrasts Synodi’s (2010) notion of a ‘directive’ teacher. Montessori believed that work and play were very different things, and that children should direct their own learning. Montessori perceived play as being a self-limited activity with no long-term benefit to children. She warned of the dangers of fantasy, and advised that play without a purpose would damage a child’s mental health (O'Donnell, 2013). Work, in contrast, was viewed as a noble activity, which would help to free a child’s mind (Montessori, 1973). Montessori conceived of work as providing a way for a child to become “a mature human being” (Isaacs, 2012, p. 113). Choice from a Montessori philosophical perspective is very important, and children are provided opportunities to direct their own learning (Chisnall, 2011). One of the basic aims of a Montessori approach is to promote a child’s freedom with responsibility (O'Donnell, 2013). Thus, in Montessori settings, children are provided with opportunities to choose and undertake their own activities. Children’s
participation in these self-directed activities, their involvement with others - “the totality of the child’s efforts” (Isaacs, 2012, p. 113) - is considered work.

Ailwood (2003) also contested the notion that work and play are opposites. She argued that positioning play in opposition to work undermines play and ignores the reality of social and power relations between adults and children, and between children themselves. Grieshaber and McArdle (2010) agreed, advising that a work/play opposition can be divisive in an early childhood setting, with a wide spectrum of teacher approaches. Grieshaber and McArdle (2010) differentiated between teachers who favour play over work (with child-directed learning experiences, informal teaching, and no modelling) and teachers who favour work over play (with teacher-directed, formal, planned experiences). The authors also described a middle ground where teachers offer experiences based on play and work. There is a warning here to ensure that teachers do not overcompensate in trying to provide a balance. McInnes et al. (2011) noted that some teachers have adopted use of the word ‘work’ while avoiding the word ‘play’, to ensure they value all children’s endeavours. The scholars caution that doing so may create new or reinforce existing dichotomies between children and adults, home and educational settings, and work and play (McInnes, et al., 2011).

The work/play dichotomy illuminates beliefs about childhood within ECE. In ECE there is also a pervasive belief that ‘play is a child’s work’ (Ailwood, 2003; Santer, Griffiths, Goodall, National Children’s Bureau & Play England, 2007). It is a discourse created by adults based on the beliefs of philosophers such as Rousseau (1892), and Froebel (1826/1899), and has become enshrined in ECE practices, beliefs and philosophies. Rousseau (1892) conceptualised an education for children where they had freedom to play and make their own choices, without adult intervention. Despite Rousseau’s (1892) educational aspirations being directed at a select few, (boys from
wealthy families in the 18th century), his ideas have been incorporated into a wide range of contemporary ECE settings (Grieshaber & McArdle, 2010). Consequently, play has come to be seen as a natural way for children to learn.

Play was a principal concept in Froebel’s (1826/1899) theorising about children’s learning, which distinguished his pedagogical approach from many other educationalists of his era. His development of the ‘kindergarten’ was based on a conception of play as being innocent, spiritual, significant and important (Brehony, 2013). Froebel (1826/1899) did not see play as being in opposition to work - he saw them as being connected. Froebel (1826/1899) believed that engaging in play, including opportunities for improving manual dexterity through manipulating objects, would naturally evolve into work. For Froebel (1826/1899), work was a way to unfold a person’s full potential, a way to express their godliness through being creative and productive. Opportunities to play in Froebel’s (1826/1899) view should be offered to children, before expecting them to engage in work (Brehony, 2013).

The phrase “play is the work of the child” (Marenholtz-Bulow, as cited in Brehony, 2013, p. 6) has been attributed to Froebel (1826/1899). According to Brehony (2013) however, the phrase is much more likely to have come from his successor, Baroness Bertha von Marenholtz-Bülow. The Baroness subjugated Froebel’s (1826/1899) focus on play, placing an emphasis on developing work habits in kindergartens to prepare children for vocations. She saw kindergartens as places to develop a positive attitude to work to transform the “coarse and rough behaviour” (Marenholtz-Bulow, as cited in Brehony, 2013, p. 64) of children from the working class. Work from this perspective, was a way to eliminate deviancy through regulating and governing children’s ideas and practices.
3.5.2 Play and work in New Zealand ECE

Within New Zealand the importance of play has been debated through exposure to a wide range of philosophical ideas including, but not limited to, Dewey, Froebel, Isaacs, Piaget, Rousseau, Sutton-Smith and Vygotsky (Stover, 2011). The idea that ‘play is a child’s work’ became established within the thinking of many New Zealand ECE teachers through the philosophy of Playcentre, though the thinking behind play and work in this context was markedly different from that of the Baroness von Marenholtz-Bülow.

Playcentre is a New Zealand parent-run organisation that began during World War Two (Stover, 2011). The notion that free play is vital to children’s health and wellbeing is a cornerstone of Playcentre’s approach to education. Play is promoted as an important way to learn, and something that children do every day, alongside adults. The emphasis is “how a child is engaged” (Stover, 2011, p. 39, original emphasis) rather than what a child does and uses in their play. Play, from this perspective, concerns the psychological impact of children choosing and engaging with people, nature and the physical environment (Hill, Somerset & Grey, 1965/1969; Somerset, 1958/1991; Somerset, 1973/1984; Somerset, 2000). In the Playcentre perspective children’s play is equated with work and children are presented as “work[ing] all [their] waking hours” (Somerset, 1975, p. 5). Here, the seriousness associated with work is equated with play as a way to legitimise play. At odds with this is the idea that for adults, play and work are different things. Play is presented as something that adults have choice over, as part of their leisure (Hill, Somerset & Grey, 1965/1969; Somerset, 1958/1991; Somerset, 1976/1990; Somerset, 2000).
There is a link between the micro level application of the notion of play in individual ECE settings such as a Playcentre and the macro level application of the notion of ‘play’ within *Te Whāriki* (Ministry of Education, 1996), New Zealand’s early childhood curriculum. Play is presented within the curriculum as a valid, important and necessary context for children’s learning. At first glance, the curriculum appears to say very little about the concept of ‘work’, instead, a closer inspection reveals at least thirteen references to work. Work is presented in the curriculum as an activity that involves children and adults in early childhood settings. There is a recognition that infants, toddlers and young children all work. For instance children “work hard to achieve goals such as learning to walk” (Ministry of Education, 1996, p.29). For toddlers there is recognition that they should have access to “meaningful and, where possible, genuine contexts ...for... play and work. Brushes are used to sweep paths, for example, and water for cleaning walls” (Ministry of Education, 1996, p. 85) to engage in work toddlers (p.86). The notion of work is connected to attending to school for young children. In reference to the transition from ECE settings to primary school, the notion of work becomes connected to the idea of inclusion and operating in groups, as young children should “respect, and enjoy working with, children who are different in some way; [and] be familiar with working co-operatively” (Ministry of Education, 1996, p. 65).

However, the messages about work presented in *Te Whāriki* (Ministry of Education, 1996) are confusing, reflective perhaps of the varying, sometimes conflicting beliefs teachers in the ECE sector have about work (Wohlwend, 2007). Work is presented as a goal setting process involved in activities such as “learning to walk, forming letters and numbers, and contributing to group interaction” (Ministry of Education, 1996, p. 29). Work is also presented as something separate from play, yet
what separates the two is not clearly delineated. It is suggested that teachers should provide “meaningful” contexts for the work and play of toddlers (p. 85). In spite of this, no clarification is provided about what these differing contexts might include or look like. Children moving on to school settings are presented as individuals who work and play alongside other children. Work is also presented as a ‘world’ that is separate from children, yet connected to their lives (p. 56). It is through working theories that Te Whāriki presents most of its references to ‘work’, but the information about working theories is descriptive rather than explanatory (Hedges & Jones, 2012). Working theories refer to the ideas and understandings children and adults have as they make sense of the worlds they participate in. These ideas help them to become more able participants, and to exercise and develop cognition (Hedges & Jones, 2012).

The idea that children engage in both play and work in ECE settings is reflected in the use of the term “people, places and things” (Ministry of Education, 1996, p. 11) throughout Te Whāriki (Ministry of Education, 1996). It recognises that children engage in learning through play and work experiences alongside others – whether those others are human or otherwise. The phrase people places and things “acts as a bridge between work and play” (H. May, personal communication, March, 2016). It emphasises the notion of children’s relationships being fundamental to their learning.

Nevertheless, competing discourses about work and play create tensions and pressure for many ECE teachers in New Zealand (Keating, et al., 2000). The positive guidance afforded by Te Whāriki (Ministry of Education, 1996) has to negotiate space with wider societal pressures on teachers and parents.
3.5.3 Pressure to prepare children

A discourse that valorises the importance of play sits uneasily alongside a discourse that views educational settings as a place to ‘train’ the future workforce of society. The thinking behind negative perspectives of work stems, in part, from public education being established to liberate children from the exploitation of paid labour. Schools and later, ECE, became a place where children could be free from the demands of work (Hendrick, 1997).

Recent government-initiated educational reforms in many countries including New Zealand have seen a focus on preparing children for later participation in the labour market. Based on an ethos that values work, this perspective sees children’s work in school as an effort-based job (Wohlwend, 2007). Elsewhere, this has created pressure for teachers to ensure students reach certain levels of achievement. A strong focus on learning through work can be seen in the approach of kindergarten teachers in Korea, who consider work the opposite of play. Children who achieve well educationally are viewed as bringing honour to their families (Ahn, 2008). Many young children in Korea are required to take extra-curricular lessons, in addition to attending ECE, to develop their academic skills. In a government run nationwide survey, over 85% of parents indicated their children received extra-curricular lessons (Kwon, 2002). In the United States, school funding, and often teachers’ careers, have been dependent upon reaching pre-imposed targets (McAllister, Wilson, Green, & Baldwin, 2005). Testing of young children, to prepare for the school-based testing associated with the USA’s No Child Left Behind Act, sometimes happens before children even begin school (Schulting, Malone, & Dodge, 2005).
In New Zealand the recently-introduced National Standards have created fear that there will be greater future accountability related to young children reaching particular achievement levels. Watchfulness over government policies in relation to ECE is recommended by many academics. Alcock and Haggerty (2013), for example, take issue with the rhetoric of policies such as National Standards as they consider them to be based on a view of childhood that focuses on preparing children for what they will become, rather than focusing on children as they are now. There is also concern that heightened parental anxiety over young children’s achievements may place additional pressure on ECE teachers to prepare children for success at school (Clarke, 2010).

Thus, there are many teachers who are likely to buy into the notion that a focus on developing a work ethos in young children may be of importance (Wohlwend, 2007). Wohlwend’s research positioned teachers as trying to find balance in their ideas about work and play in relation to academic expectations placed on children. This also links into a pervasive discourse of readiness for school. The concern over school readiness is also conveyed to young children. In Corsaro and Molinari’s (2000) Italian study on transition to school, children were told that less time would be available at school for playing than for working. Children learned about what work would be like at school through discussions with teachers, siblings, parents and their peers. Children’s image of school, which emerged during conversations with each other, was a location where work was seen as more important than play. When children began school they learned that there was a clear-cut distinction between work and play, including a temporal distinction punctuated by cues such as school bells (Corsaro & Molinari, 2000).

Additional studies show that by the time children begin school, they have a clear view of school as being a workplace (Mauthner, et al., 2000). Work becomes associated
with learning through activities such as sitting at a table and using tools such as paper and pencils. Children recognise listening, reading, writing and thinking as work tasks, that happen inside a classroom, whereas play happens in the outdoor environment (Chapparo & Hooper, 2002; Coleborne, 2009; Einarsdottir, 2010; Keating, et al., 2000).

Schools are also viewed as places where children are taught how to function within institutions – how to respond to rules and how to behave appropriately in groups (Ailwood, 2003). Wohlwend (2007) identifies the use of praising quietness as a teaching strategy that reinforces ‘good’ behaviour. In the United States (McClelland, Morrison, & Holmes, 2000) psychological scales are used to test kindergarten children’s “...work-related skills” (p.307), including turn-taking, responding to directions, focusing on a task and managing work items. New Zealand’s ‘B4 School Test’ (Ministry of Health, 2008) has worrying parallels as aspects of it also present a deficit approach to understanding children’s lives. Some of the questions in that test present images of children who do not behave as teachers expect them to, as having some kind of psychological problem. In my opinion, adults are not always comfortable with the idea that children might resist adult ideas. It is easier to pathologise resistance rather than try to understand it.

3.6 CROSS-CULTURAL INTERPRETATIONS OF WORK

Pressure from parents to prepare young children for school is highlighted in a recent New Zealand study involving Cook Island, Samoan and Tongan pre-service student teachers’ retrospective memories of play as children. The participants in Leaupepe’s (2011) study discussed the pressure they felt in their role of teachers from parents in ECE settings. Parents had an expectation that their children would be involved in educational experiences involving productive work such as creating
“paintings and drawings” (p.27). Drawing on their retrospective accounts of play as children, the participants also recalled that work had much more value placed on it than play. Here, adults did not view play as being valuable, but that they sometimes used it to reward children’s work. The student teachers recalled that as children they were able to resist the negative aspects of work by turning experiences of work into play (Leaupepe, 2010).

Similarly, a New Zealand study focusing on Chinese parents illustrates the importance of culture in relation to work and play (Huang, 2013). Huang (2013) explains that it is a cultural expectation for Chinese children to “work hard to learn rather than play” (p.13). Thus, Chinese parents, according to Huang (2013) place greater emphasis on developing academic skills. Huang (2013) also discussed the role of work in rural Chinese settings.

The views of work in rural communities is a theme that is echoed in wider cross-cultural literature (Bourdillon, 2006; Liebel, 2004; Long, 2013). This literature acts as a reminder that for many children, work is bound up with notions of responsibility for their communities. For those children there is little difference between work and play, as participating in daily routines and chores is a physical necessity (Long, 2013). Vietnamese parents in rural communities, for example, view playing as a waste of time, preferring children to be engaged in labour instead (Vujanovic, 2005). There is also recognition here that much of the literature focusing on children and work is written from the perspective of privileged Western societies, based on particular views, values and beliefs about work.

Long’s (2013) cogent evaluation of Jamaican children’s play experiences reveals the impact of Western ideals through colonisation. She identified that Jamaican
teachers have entrenched views about work and play, seeing them in opposition. This deep-rooted view has developed through education being seen “as a means of upward mobility” (Long, 2013, p.10). Play has become stigmatised in Jamaica, and despite the introduction of a play-based early childhood curriculum, teachers resist the use of play as a tool for teaching (Long, 2013).

The ideas of these international commentators are a salient reminder that the meaning of work varies across cultures (Fleer, 1999). These ideas also illustrate that the reasons children work, and the conditions that they work in vary considerably throughout the world (Hungerland, et al., 2007). Therefore, any meanings that children make about work need to be understood in relation to culture, time, history and political contexts (Dockett & Fleer, 2002).

Exploring the cultures of children’s different contexts may allow for an analysis of the meanings that are embedded in the everyday conversations, beliefs and structures that are found there. Liebel (2004) suggested that work should be seen as a continuum of experiences. Liebel’s (2004) argument is persuasive and it reinforces the idea that work needs to be understood from a variety of standpoints.

Regrettably, even within research that focuses on work in ECE, there is a dearth of literature that expresses the standpoints of children. Research is needed that considers the structures that affect young children’s understanding of work, as well as local examples of young children’s work (Jennings, Aitken, Lopez Estrada, & Fernandez, 2006). To understand young children’s perspectives on work in a more comprehensive and cohesive way, there needs to be research that considers the “individual realities of children, their families and societies” (Jennings, et al., 2006, p. 238).
I believe that understanding play and work not as binary opposites, but rather as sociocultural activities that children engage in as they participate in communities, offers a more open-ended appreciation of both play and work. Seen from this perspective neither play nor work is ascribed a credit-based understanding, and neither is valued as more important than the other (Bourdillon, Levison, Myers & White, 2010). Liebel’s (2004) view of work deepens this idea as he proposed that work should be seen as an activity that meets the needs of individual children or their communities.

Liebel (2004) further suggested that to take up this perspective of work requires a change from viewing children as needing to be protected and cared for by adults. It requires seeing children as capable of meeting their own needs, and given opportunities to do so. This perspective recognises that children are more than simply adults-in-the-making being prepared for future roles in society. It acknowledges that children already participate in society in activities such as work (Bourdillon, 2006).

SUMMARY

This chapter has introduced ideas that show children are both affected by and affect work. Children’s perspectives on work are shaped by adults’ views of them, and by contextual factors in homes and educational environments. Adults’ perspectives have dominated research into children and work. In career development research children have been viewed as innocent, and childhood a time to prepare for future adult roles. Home has been presented as a context where children learn about work through shared stories and observations of the work of family members. Research also shows that young children are active participants in work at home, yet this work remains hidden.
Research in educational settings has also marginalised young children in relation to work, as the majority of research into work has been undertaken in schools. It has been shown that work and play are often defined and discussed in relation to each other. Teachers who view work and play in opposition to each other determine the experiences children have based on their affinities. Some teachers also face pressure to provide ‘work-based’ education to prepare children for their future lives at school and as adults. The literature provides a reminder that work happens in different ways for different children in different contexts. Therefore work should be presented from more than just adult standpoints.

This review has identified that young children’s perspectives are clearly missing from research into work. Young children’s perspectives of work are missing throughout a range of disciplines (Mauthner, et al., 2000) including childhood studies (Boocock & Scott, cited in Levey, 2009). This loss has emerged through adult views of what childhood should be, and through adults not recognising or valuing children’s work (Levey, 2009a). Opportunities abound for research to be undertaken with children that privileges children’s standpoints. Young children’s perspectives of work deserve to be made visible.

Chapter Four demonstrates that it is possible to undertake research with young children which makes their perspectives of work visible. In that chapter discussion about the methodology adopted for this research project is presented. It will highlight the value of using a methodology which recognises that young children’s perspectives of work are affected by the contexts work takes place in, and places emphasis on including young children as active participants.
CHAPTER FOUR

METHODOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

Chapters Two and Three presented the argument that children should be involved as active participants in research which focuses on children’s live. This chapter will provide an outline of the choices I have made as a researcher to ensure young children have been included in this research project in a sensitive, ethical way which illuminates their perspectives of work. The discussion makes clear how the methodological approach of ethnography complemented by the data-construction methods of observation, interview and document analysis, has supported children to share their thinking. The chapter also considers how my own thinking and experience have shaped the research.

The chapter sets out the theoretical reasoning behind the methodological approach by considering interpretivism then ethnography. This is followed by ethical considerations and finally by a focus on elements of the research design. Table 2 sets out the research questions, together with the data construction methods used in the research.

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<th>Research Question and Sub-Questions</th>
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<td>In what ways do young children understand work?</td>
<td>Observation, interview, document analysis</td>
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<td>What does work mean to young children?</td>
<td>Observation, interview</td>
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<td>How are young children’s ideas about work shaped by their interactions with other children, family and teachers?</td>
<td>Observation, interview, document analysis</td>
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<tr>
<td>What can young children’s understandings of adults’ work teach us about how they perceive the worlds of children and adults?</td>
<td>Observation, interview</td>
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4.1 INTERPRETIVISM

The current study is located within an interpretive paradigm (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005) underpinned by a belief that there is no one objective social world. The social world does not sit apart from people as an independent entity that can be understood in a neutral way (Crotty, 1998). Instead, the interpretive approach suggests a relativist position, with multiple realities that people construct, negotiate and interpret (Gray, 2013).

Constructionism is the epistemology that supports an interpretive approach to research (Crotty, 1998). Constructionist epistemology rejects the notion that there is any one kind of objective meaning or truth. People construct inter-subjective meanings (knowledge) about their worlds, through interactions and participation. These meanings include feelings, ideas, rules and rituals (Crotty, 1998). Furthermore, people act in intentional ways, and make deliberate actions (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011). People are not passive bystanders in their lives. Crotty (1998) also acknowledged that people have different ways of creating meanings, and different people may apply different meanings to an identical phenomenon.

The current study focuses on the phenomenon of ‘work’. An interpretive reading of work implies that there are a variety of ways that young children encounter and make sense of work. An interpretive approach to research, such as the current study, should therefore create spaces for young children to express their ideas and understandings (Lather, 2006) about work, in meaningful ways. An interpretive approach suggests that young children’s actions as intentional, active subjects who construct their social worlds should also be acknowledged. The current study has a focus on children’s perspectives, with the recognition that as a researcher, I can only
partially represent aspects of their realities (Cohen, et al., 2011). I can hope to understand and interpret young children’s experiences, yet I should provide opportunities for young children to tell their own stories.

An interpretive approach also reminds me that young children’s social worlds are incredibly complex. This signals the need to ensure that the current study draws on a wide range of data to provide a comprehensive discussion of information about young children’s lives. Cohen et al. (2011) promoted the notion that any interpretation of behaviours and events in young children’s lives should be identified as “situated activities” (p.17). Therefore, the current study will also acknowledge that contexts are liable to have profound effects on experiences of work in young children’s lives. The ideas that a wide range of data should be used, and that knowledge is constructed contextually, have affected my perspective on data in this study. Throughout the thesis I have used the phrase ‘data construction’ in preference to the oft-cited ‘data generation’. Data in this study were not simply pieces of knowledge waiting to be gathered or collected (Polkinghorne, 2005). Instead I saw data as having being constructed through choices I made over which sources of information to draw on and how I used them. I also saw data as being constructed through the interactions I had with research participants. What transpired in those experiences was contextual and ‘in-the-moment’.

The situated nature of research, as identified in the interpretive approach, cautions against generalising findings from the current study to other population groups or contexts. This recognises that truth is relative and that there may be many accounts of what counts as truth (Creswell, 2009; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Flick, 2002). Within the current study, there are multiple accounts of what young children believe reality to be. It is not envisaged that these results can or indeed should be applied to other children and adults. What can be predicted is that this study will add to current
understandings of what young children believe about work. This increased understanding may promote ideas and other research questions that can be applied to other settings.

An interpretive approach is congruent with the theoretical perspectives that underpin the current research into young children’s perspectives of work. Sociocultural theory and childhood studies theory promote the importance of listening to children’s own perspectives of life, and ensuring that research foregrounds those perspectives. In turn, selecting a methodological approach that aligns with interpretive thought, sociocultural theory and childhood studies theory, has been critical to ensuring coherence throughout the whole of the study. Ethnography has provided the means to merge those ideas together.

4.2 ETHNOGRAPHY

A qualitative ethnographic approach has been used for this project. Ethnography is a research approach that was developed in Western anthropology in the 1800s (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). Created as a way of studying cultures and groups different from those of researchers, it has grown and changed over time. There has been a shift from a focus on studying ‘others’ to a focus on understanding culture as a changing, dynamic process (Zaharlick, 1992).

My approach to ethnography is based on Zaharlick’s (1992) notion that ethnography is finding out about how people live their lives. It is characterised by a focus on relationships and observations of people in their own settings as they go about their daily lives, over a sustained period of time (Zaharlick, 1992). Ethnographers have direct involvement with the people they study, and use a variety of methods to create data (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007).
Ethnography is a methodology that resonates with sociocultural theory and childhood studies theory as it provides a vehicle for children to share their perspectives of life. Being ‘in the field’ allowed me as a researcher to get to know children, to hear their ideas and to learn what they believed about work. I was able to learn that different children had different ideas about work. Children’s own experiences at home and in ECE settings, through interactions with others, shaped what they thought and believed about work.

In the current study ethnography allowed children’s ideas to be made visible over time through verbalisations, body language and through taking photographs. A strength of this methodological approach was that it enabled me to learn about children’s ideas in the moment (James & Prout, 2015) Ethnography provided a focus on children as human beings rather than “human becomings” (Qvortrup, 1987, p.5). It acknowledged that children were “provocateurs in social relations” (Harcourt, 2011, p. 333), capable of having an impact on their worlds.

Concentrating on children’s own perspectives has lent itself to an in-depth exploration of children’s understandings of work. Ethnography has been an ideal methodology for this purpose (Creswell, 2009) as it has allowed for multiple visits over a long time period to explore the lives of children within ECE settings and homes. Repeated visits provided children the opportunity to get to know me, and to become accustomed to seeing me as part of their daily lives. In turn, it afforded me the opportunity to learn about the day-to-day interactions and experiences of differing contexts. As Mawson (2010) learned in his ethnographic study of an Auckland kindergarten, this was a sensitive, respectful methodology for conducting research with young children. As Stephenson (2009) articulated in another New Zealand study, ethnography was also a good fit with ECE settings, as teachers in ECE settings are often
seen observing children, writing notes and talking to children. Researchers such as James and Prout (2015) have also identified ethnography as an ideal methodological approach for research with children as it provides children with a direct way for their voices to be heard and to participate. Other researchers in New Zealand have also found ethnographic methods ideal for eliciting the perspectives of young children in their own, everyday settings (Alcock, 2007; Stephenson, 2009; Te One, 2008).

An ethnographic approach enabled me to construct data both by learning about the interactions of children and adults within early childhood settings and in homes, and through analysing setting texts such as learning stories and written parent communications. This research involved adopting a position of learner as I found out more about the ECE communities and their members (Zaharlick, 1992). As Corsaro (2011) has further noted, this also helped to build trust with children in the setting. Using ethnographic methods allowed observation of settings in a direct way over a long period of time. This facilitated a dynamic research process, where new information was constructed in a responsive way. This approach provided time to establish trust and relationships with children. Ethnography also promoted a holistic overview as the interconnections between children, adults, early childhood setting and homes were elucidated (Zaharlick, 1992).

4.3 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The ethics of this project were considered very carefully. In particular, working with children raised many important questions. The ethics of the project were guided by the requirements of the University of Otago Human Ethics Committee [UoOHEC]. The proposal was also submitted to the Ngai Tahu Research Consultation Committee as the research was undertaken in ECE settings, which are agents of the Crown. In addition to
this, the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi were reflected on throughout the whole research process by finding ways to ensure participants were protected, they could participate easily and the research was carried out in partnership with them (Wilson & Neville, 2009). This resonated with wanting children to be active participants, not objects of research. Powell and Smith (2009) argued that children should be seen as strong, active participants, not weak, and sensitive. Studies show that children want to have their ideas included in research (Powell, Graham, Taylor, Newell & Fitzgerald, 2011; Smith, 2002). Children are competent and very capable of commenting on their own lives (Hunleth, 2011).

4.3.1 Child Assent/Adult Consent

After consent was granted by the UoOHEC (13/189, 28/06/2013) approaches was made to ECE settings through their management teams. An information sheet and consent form which outlined the details and potential involvement of those in the ECE settings (see Appendix A) were subsequently distributed (see Appendix B).

There is an ongoing debate over whether children can provide informed consent for research. Loveridge’s (2010) report suggests that within New Zealand, the issue of informed consent versus assent is vigorously debated. Loveridge (2010) identified the absence of legislation in New Zealand which asserts a minimum age for providing informed consent. She noted the wide range of variation among tertiary institutions in relation to their positions over whether children could and should provide informed consent. For this project after reading varying arguments presented by Loveridge (2010) and other researchers (Cocks, 2006; Dockett & Perry, 2011; Dockett, Eindarsdottir, Perry, 2009; Flewitt, 2005), I elected to provide assent forms for children to sign or make a special mark on. Assent forms were sent to children alongside consent forms for
their parents or guardians to sign, accompanied by an information booklet for children (see Appendix C). Parents were asked to carefully discuss the forms with children and invite them to air any concerns or questions about their involvement. Flewitt (2005) found this a useful strategy that provided children a safe place to discuss concerns, away from the pressure of the research context.

For me the idea of an assent form appealed more because it was linked to the notion of an ongoing process of consent. Cocks (2006) argued that assent signalled a process of interdependence between children and researchers. What I particularly liked about Cocks’ (2006) argument was the suggestion that researchers should have responsibility for checking to see whether children were comfortable being involved in the research. It links to the notion that consent is not a static process, rather it is ongoing and it is a process built on the relationship between researchers and participants (Dockett, Einarsdottir & Perry, 2012). Flewitt (2005) emphasised the importance of establishing dialogues with children, teachers, auxiliary staff and parents as a way of ensuring their protection and participation. She notes that consent is important but should not be considered finished simply through participants signing a consent form. She suggests the notion of ‘provisional consent’ and that consent is an ongoing process throughout the project. This is echoed by other researchers who suggest that it creates opportunities both for sharing information and for negotiating participation (Danby & Farrell, 2004; Ebrahim, 2010; Powell, et al., 2011)

What this meant in practice for the current study is that for any interaction I have had with children or adults, I checked with them to ensure it was acceptable for me to observe and record information. The time I spent in ECE settings getting to know children and adults was invaluable and contributed to assent and consent being a negotiated process. Through building relationships with participants I learned to ‘read’
their communication more effectively. This was particularly important with children. I found that children wanted to express their right to not participate in the study at different times. This was sometimes communicated verbally with a ‘no’ although it was expressed more often through body language – a changing gaze, a turn of the head, a shift in body position, running in the opposite direction! If I had relied on a single signature provided months earlier on a form, I may have acted in an unethical way, championing my needs as a researcher over children’s rights to non-participation.

4.3.2 Relinquishing power as a researcher

I also found that reflecting on my needs as a researcher versus the needs of participants played out in other unexpected ways. Many experiences during the study confirmed the value of being cognisant of ethical concerns specific to the research contexts. I needed to have an awareness of the situated ethics of each context, and to respond appropriately (Simons & Usher as cited in Ebrahim, 2010). For example, there were times when I had to give up my particular research agenda for a day. The effects of storms on one of the ECE settings, and tiredness of staff on another occasion, meant I needed to put my needs aside. Similarly centre changes at the other ECE setting resulted in ongoing issues for staff and children. Realising that my needs as a researcher were less important that those of the participants lengthened the research process, yet it created a sounder process in the end.

With children I learned that my needs as a researcher were not always in alignment with children’s own ideas and needs. For instance, I learned very quickly that although my focus was on work, children often were more interested in other aspects of life. When they took photographs, there was sometimes no connection I could see with work. Indeed, relinquishing control over what I wanted or expected children to use
cameras for was a move that helped to build a much broader range of experiences and the production of a richer body of data.

This is a tussle that has also been referred to by other researchers (Kinnunen & Puroila, 2015; Stephenson, 2009). Kinnunen and Puroila (2015) made the salient observation that this is actually an epistemological tussle. It is about making sense of how children construct knowledge. This experience taught Kinnunen and Puroila (2015) that children’s “knowledge is not to be grabbed, picked up or taken away. It is a contextually and relationally based process of seeking (Caine and Steeves, 2009)” (p. 15).

Using other strategies during the process of research also helped to give children opportunities to express their power. For example, I ensured that I visited the settings before engaging in research with children. These “familiarisation periods” (Barley & Bath, 2014, p. 182) afforded children time to become accustomed to seeing me as a researcher in their settings. I was also careful to ensure that children knew they had the right to say no to participate at any stage of the project. They learned that they could say no to me, or they could ask another adult to pass that message on to me. I adopted Danby and Farrell’s (2004) practice of reviewing the assent information – the information booklet – with children prior to experiences such as interviews. In addition, children also learned the importance of asking others for permission to take photographs. Teachers commented on the value of children being able to say “no”. All of the strategies discussed in this section helped to create what Flewitt (2005) referred to as “formal and informal opportunities for participants to say no” (p. 2).

I was aware that it was impossible to entirely eliminate the effects of the child/adult power imbalance that existed between me as a researcher and young children participating in the research. Some of the strategies I adopted such as the use of a range of methods, and allowing young children to comment from their own
perspectives ameliorated the imbalance, but could never totally eliminate it (Cope, 2009; Danby & Farrell, 2004).

4.4 RESEARCH DESIGN

Designing the research for the current study required an approach that reflected both a focus on interpretivism and ethnography in relation to my original research questions. I designed an approach which recognised that knowledge was situated, partial and constructed through interactions and participation (Crotty, 1998). One of the significant considerations for the research design was using an approach that enabled me to gain an in-depth understanding of the contexts in which children constructed knowledge. In addition, I needed to think about particular contexts where children learned about work. I was also mindful of the need to understand how knowledge was constructed through children’s relationships. Therefore, for this study I used an approach that required me to visit young children’s homes and ECE settings, in a project that spanned over two years. The project began with a pilot study\(^5\) to test out (van Teijlingen & Hundley, 2001) questions and methods. I visited the pilot setting over several months from August, 2012 to May, 2013. Overall, there were 25 visits to the field, for a total of 32 hours.

The research process had three phases; negotiating access and consent, data construction, analysis and dissemination. In practice, the research plan did not unfold sequentially through the phases. The lived experience of time ‘in the field’ meant that some elements of the process occurred earlier or later than originally planned for. This was not a huge setback overall, it simply meant that the whole study took much longer.

\(^5\) Further discussion about the pilot study and the second ECE setting will be provided in Section 4.5.4.
than initially intended. In addition, some of the research elements – for example analysis, and negotiating consent – occurred throughout the whole project, rather than in discrete phases.

The research design for the second study site was developed after adjustments were made at the completion of the pilot study. I visited the second setting between August 2013 and September 2014. I also visited two of the homes of children from the second setting, with the final visit taking place in January 2015. Overall, there were 54 visits to the second setting, with a total of 46 hours. Visits varied from 10 minutes (initial visit) through to three hours, with most being an hour long.

4.4.1 Access/sample

For the pilot study I approached a range of South Island ECE settings in person. I had no preference in relation to the type of setting, as long as there were children attending aged approximately 3-6 years of age. The first setting I approached (Kowhai) had children in the required age group, and accepted my invitation to participate in the study. I did not approach any additional settings for the pilot study.

Participants in the pilot study included children and adults. A centre consent form (See Appendix A) and consent forms for teachers (see Appendix B), were given to the centre manager, who took them to a staff meeting, then phoned me to let me know that the centre had accepted my invitation to participate in the study. Children, their parents (or caregivers) and staff were invited to participate. At Kowhai, all children aged three-six were asked for assent via assent forms (see Appendix C). The forms were sent home alongside information sheets for parents (see Appendix C), consent forms for parents (see Appendix C), and an information booklet for children (see Appendix C). Invitations to participate were accepted by eight children and two
dropped out before the research began due to moving away from Kowhai. I initially aimed to select six focus children from Kowhai using a purposive sample. Every 5th name of the roll was to be chosen until 6 names were selected based on the following inclusion criteria: three boys, three girls; 3-6 years of age; varied ethnicities. There was eventually no need to selectively choose participants as only six responded to the invitation, who fortuitously met the selection criteria.

After the pilot study, I decided to narrow the age group to 4-6 year olds for the second study, to more clearly reflect the organisation of age-based groups in ECE settings. I also decided that it would be better to approach a range of settings, rather than just one. I developed a flyer that was delivered to seven settings in person (See Appendix E). One setting (Nikau) accepted the invitation to participate.

Consent for participation at Nikau was provided by centre management, and teachers. Six children were invited to participate, based on staff suggestions in relation to selection criteria. Several months into the project, two additional children from Nikau became participants, through their own desire to take part. Focus children signed assent forms (see Appendix C), and their parents signed consent forms (see Appendix C). All focus children were also provided with copies of information booklets (see Appendix C). An additional large A3-sized copy of the information booklet was also used throughout the project to remind children that they had a right to say no to participation.

4.4.2 Methods

The research process was aimed at making it possible to elicit children’s understandings of work through use of a range of methods. Rogoff’s (2003) three foci of analysis suggested the need to find multiple ways of garnering personal, interpersonal and institutional information about work. In addition childhood studies
theory advocated undertaking research in ways that reflected young children’s strengths and abilities (Mayall, 2002). Hence I used a wide range of data-gathering methods for this project including observations, interviews, and document analysis. An overview of the methods can be seen in Table 3.

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<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Context</th>
<th>Strategies</th>
<th>Documentation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Observation</td>
<td>ECE Settings</td>
<td>Participant observation</td>
<td>Digital recordings</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Researcher</td>
<td></td>
<td>Participant listening</td>
<td>Field notes</td>
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<td>Memos</td>
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<td>Photographs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>ECE Settings</td>
<td>Single, pairs, groups</td>
<td>Digital recordings</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Researcher</td>
<td>Homes</td>
<td>(photographs, art materials)</td>
<td>Field notes</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Children</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Memos</td>
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<tr>
<td>Document Construction/Analysis</td>
<td>ECE Settings</td>
<td>Photographs</td>
<td>Field notes</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Researcher</td>
<td>Homes</td>
<td>Centre planning, centre website,</td>
<td>Memos</td>
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<td>Parent’s workplace</td>
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<td>newsletters, Te Whāriki</td>
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A review of research that had been undertaken with children revealed that using a range of methods in the current study would be advantageous. Researchers such as Stephenson (2009) found it useful to use a range of strategies for talking to children. She found that some of her initial strategies did not work well in practice, and that having back-up strategies available was important. This echoed Anning and Ring’s (2004) proposal that children use a variety of ways to make meaning. Clark ‘s (2005) review of literature of research undertaken with children also indicated that research methods should accommodate the varied nature of children’s expression, and should be fun, with a view to producing rich data. Clark (2005) noted that researchers have used methods such as observation, interviews, structured activities and multi-sensory tools.
She believed that a key value of using a range of methods was that they provided an opportunity to establish close relationships with children, based on active listening.

Elsewhere Clark and Moss (2005) termed this a ‘mosaic approach’. My approach incorporated many of the elements of a mosaic approach (Clark, 2005a) as it drew on a range of methods; involved children as active, competent participants; had a focus on children exploring meanings; could be adapted for use in other settings; and was undertaken in children’s own ‘lived experiences” (p. 13).

4.4.2.1 Observation and listening

The current study clearly corresponds to the Clark and Moss (2005) focus on listening. I incorporated a range of methods to broaden the way I listened to children, and I was careful to ensure that children contributed their ideas in an active way as participants. I also changed the prominence I originally gave to participant observation. Although participant observation is recognised as a primary method - considered by some the primary method - of ethnography (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007), there has been some debate. Forsey (2010) has persuasively argued that “participant listening” (p.558) is as valid and important as participant observation. I have also been mindful of Heshusius’ (1995) contribution which reminded me that listening is a conscious act of full engagement which bridges the “selfother” (p.122) divide. I have found that a combination of listening to and observing children in a holistic way –through their body language, emotional language and verbal language – has provided deeper and richer understandings overall.

Initially as I undertook participant observations I tried to be as unobtrusive as possible, as suggested by Corsaro (2011) and planned to wait for children to approach me. Although this worked initially as children essentially ignored me as a new adult in
their settings, it was impossible to maintain for a longer period of time. Waiting to ‘be approached’ by children was impossible to manage and spoke more of my naïveté as someone returning to the field after a long absence from research. The exact moment an interaction began was often hard to identify. For example many times just entering a room was the beginning of an interaction if my eyes happened to meet the eyes of a child. Who initiated the interaction was often impossible to identify.

All observations and experiences in settings were written up as field notes after each visit. Each set of notes helped to reconstruct what I had observed, heard and felt during each visit (Wolfinger, 2002). The form I developed for field notes (see Appendix D) included space to record relevant ideas about contextual factors. The field notes provided excellent information that supplemented other forms of data. Reviewing field notes on an ongoing basis assisted me to hone my analysis. I also wrote memos throughout the study, often capturing early analytical hunches and questions. Memos were a tool I used to record my emerging ideas about data, and what it might mean (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982). The very act of writing often stimulated my thinking about the data, about participants and the research overall.

4.4.2.2 Photographs

In an effort to establish active listening I ensured that children took an active role in constructing data. I provided six small digital cameras for children to take photographs of work. I showed them how to hold and use the cameras. We discussed the importance of asking other people for permission to photograph them. Children at Kowhai and Nikau took 291 photographs in total, in their ECE settings, homes and the workplace of a child’s father.
Children’s photographs became tools that facilitated discussions about work through their facility to trigger feelings, thoughts and memories. Smith, Duncan and Marshall (2005) lauded the way photographs created a common point of interest between researchers and child participants in their study, enabling deep discussion. They found that photographs enabled them to make immediate connections with children’s own lives. Tammivaara and Enright (1986) also highlighted the importance of having something tangible to discuss with children in interviews. I found that photographs also provided a way to connect with children’s lives, sometimes without the need for ensuing discussions. Photographs became a way for me to connect with participants and it was the togetherness that was important in those shared moments.

I considered the process of photography equally as important as using the photographs for elicitation interviews. Drew, Duncan and Sawyer’s (2010) research with older children revealed that taking photographs was empowering for children as they had control over where, who and what was photographed. The children in the current study had similar responses. Although Einarsdottir (2005) and Roe (2007) caution that adults may misinterpret children’s meanings in photographs or put too much meaning on them, I found that children’s photographs provided a unique way for them to communicate. I recognised that of all the methods and resources available to them, it was cameras and photographs that children wanted to use above all else. As I became more familiar with children’s images and observed their interactions using cameras, I became conscious of cameras as tools of empowerment for children. Taking photographs provided children with a way to participate in the contexts of their ECE settings and homes that they were not usually allowed to do. Children were given copies of their own photographs to keep, which also contributed to their sense of ownership over the photographic process.
Informed by literature on visual research methods, I realised that children are usually treated in an objective way in relation to cameras and photography. As Harrison (2002) has surmised, family photograph albums are replete with images of children performing for audiences of mothers, fathers, uncles, aunts and grandparents (Rose, 2010). It is rare to see a child’s photograph of other family members in albums. Having control of a camera, and over the images it produced gave children in the current study an active way to contribute and participate using skills and experience (Thomson & Gunter, 2007).

Children’s contributions in the current study show that visual research methods provide the means for “a high level of child-led participation in research” (Young & Barrett, 2001, p. 141). There is scope for increasing child-led participation to explore more of the visual elements of life that Harrison (2002) has asserted are neglected in social research. Focusing on visual research methods could bring new and rich information through inquiry, representation and dissemination (Mitchell, 2008).

4.4.2.3 Interviews.

The research study incorporated semi-structured, informal interviews (see Appendix H for interview schedules) with children individually, in pairs and small groups; and semi-structured informal interviews with parents and teachers. Interview questions were simple, open-ended and linked to the research questions. For example, questions for children generally centred on finding out what they considered work.

I used photographs as prompts for some of the interviews – photographs I had taken of the settings, photographs children had taken themselves, as well as a set of 62 internet-generated free, labelled-for-reuse images – which depicted children and adults engaged in a variety of activities within homes and educational settings. I chose internet
photographs which showed what I believed were common daily experiences in ECE and home settings. I asked children whether they could see work in any of the photographs. Despite their usefulness, internet photographs sometimes led to a ‘work or not-work’ dualistic focus, which made it difficult to steer the conversation back to a deeper focus for some of the photographs. The best results from using the photographs came when they were used in small groups, as the children responded to other children’s comments, which elicited further discussion.

There were 27 recorded interviews that I undertook, in addition to a range of conversational interviews, some of which I only took notes for, not recordings. Children undertook a total of five interviews with teachers and parents. The interviews I had with children were informative and produce detailed, rich information. Children were intrigued to hear their own voices when the recordings of interviews were played back to them. Additional resources such as art materials sometimes gave children something extra to do and think about which made our interactions more relaxed.

After I had got to know individual children I tailored the structure of interviews to suit their needs. Some children warmed to interviews in pairs, whereas other children preferred individual interviews. Smith, Duncan and Marshall (2005) considered interviews with a peer helped children to relax in an interview, and for some of the participants in the current study this was also true. I also found that I began many informal interviews with two or three children then found that several other children joined in. Leaving the interviews open-ended and flexible to change meant that as interviewer I could avoid controlling interviews through directing children during the interview or through managing all of the discussion in the interview (Tammivaara & Enright, 1986). I asked children to find places they preferred for interviews, but found that contextual constraints often made this difficult, particularly at Kowhai, where space
was at a premium. The conversational interviews were useful as they were undertaken as part of children’s ordinary experiences, and their relaxed nature help children to feel comfortable (Stephenson, 2009; Te One, 2008). Children also had the opportunity to interview adults including teachers and parents. This was an opportunity some of the children took up nonetheless it was very challenging and scary for them. I needed to support them throughout the interviews. If I was to use this approach in the future I would do a great deal of practice with children first to build their experience and confidence.

4.4.2.4 Document analysis

I recorded information from documents including daily planning, newsletters, learning stories, and communication to parents and whanau via websites. In addition, I searched for references to ‘work’ within Te Whāriki (Ministry of Education, 1996). All documentation provided valuable insights into contextual factors. I was particularly interested in the language used in relation to the concept of work, but also in relation to the images of children the use of language portrayed. Much of this focus on documentation took place during the early phase of research which provided an additional benefit in relation to getting to know participants. Focusing on document analysis provided a legitimate means of being present in each setting without the need for children or adults to have to interact with me. It provided all of them with “familiarisation periods” (Barley & Bath, 2014) when they could become accustomed to having a researcher in their presence. For example, having a physical presence in the research settings meant children became used to seeing me, and after a short time, many felt safe enough to approach me for interactions.
4.4.3 Data analysis

By the completion of time in the field, there was a large body of data to analyse including photographs, interviews, field notes, observations notes, memos, and notes relating to documents. I initially attempted to analyse data using NVivo\(^6\). I did this by trying to teach myself the programme and was unsuccessful. This process, despite using up a good deal of valuable time, helped to orient me towards organising data in a logical way, and making links between different kinds of data. It put me in a good, albeit slightly frustrated place, for beginning again the process of data analysis.

I transcribed all digital recordings myself, which was a lengthy and rewarding process. Listening to participants helped me to stay in touch with the data, and I found that the act of listening enabled me to do some early analysis. I realised that some ideas were repeated by different participants and that in other places some words stood out as I heard then typed them. Transcribing the recordings myself also contributed to me producing a consistent and logical formatting system that made the task of analysis easier in addition to strengthening script-checks for accuracy. Having read a range of literature focusing on qualitative analysis, I was influenced by the ideas of researchers such as Bogdan and Biklin (1982), Creswell (2009) and Flick (2002). I was mindful that there was no ‘one’ way to do qualitative research (Punch, 2002). The closest description of my approach to data analysis in this study is a general inductive analysis (which will be discussed in further detail below) (Thomas, 2006). I am aware that in reality I have used deductive reasoning for some of the analysis. For example, my previous experiences as a teacher and lecturer who visited ECE settings affected how I thought about work, young children and what I looked for in the data. Similarly the literature I

\(^6\) NVivo is a computer-based qualitative programme that researchers use to organise and analyse data.
had consulted in relation to work and to young children, suggested a number of potential codes. Such codes were part of my initial deductive approach to the analysis. For instance, I looked for examples in the data that made links to ideas such as ‘teacher presence’ and ‘visibility of children’. Codes also came directly from the research questions. For example, I searched the data for references to young children and adults in relation to work, to reflect the language of the research questions.

The starting point for my analysis proper was Bogdan and Biklin’s (1982) proposal that “certain words, phrases, patterns of behaviour, subject’s ways of thinking, and events repeat and stand out” (p. 166). I searched through the body of data looking ideas that ‘stood out’. When I found them I assigned codes to each one, noting where they were found, and I subsequently searched across other data to see if the code also applied elsewhere. I was careful to run through this process several times to ensure all data was covered. The initial coding produced over 150 codes (see Appendix F).
Repeated readings of the codes enabled me to group the data as I began to see links between codes. These repeated readings were done in a variety of ways, many of them hands-on experiences that allowed me to physically manipulate the data. Initially I cut up copies of each code then grouped them in the pockets of a clear-file (see Figure 2). The advantage of this method was being able to move the codes from pocket to pocket as I sought connections between them. As I grouped the codes I also created categories that brought them together (See Appendix G). I then created files with sub-codes connected to larger codes (categories), with examples of data for each sub-code. I subsequently cut-and-pasted examples of categories and their corresponding codes onto index cards (one category per card – see Figures 3-4). I had read about another researcher (Nuttall, 2004) using card indexes and realised it would be a useful process for me to try. The cards made it possible to move and sort categories, which became a beneficial analytical device. I used the cards to support more thinking about themes. I brought several categories together in themes, using large pieces of paper to brainstorm connections between categories, and then to see how themes related to each other. An example can be found in types of work children identified at home. Initially children identified examples such as gardening, collecting mail and caring for pets. I assigned each example a code, then when I began to group the codes I realised there was a
connection between the codes and created a category of ‘work is taking part in household chores’. This category became part of a larger theme that focused on children’s own participation in work.

The data analysis process was a long, well thought-out process. I revisited each part of the process several times trying out different connections to ensure the process was thorough, consistent and produced in-depth information. I used both ideas from the literature and ideas which were presented in parts of the data to interrogate (Richards & Richards as cited in Dey, 2003) the whole body of data. As a researcher I was active in the process of analysis throughout the research study, constructing data through interactions with participants, the information they presented and wider literature.

4.4.3.1 Presentation of findings and analysis

Findings based on the data are presented in Chapters 5, 6 and 7. Direct quotes, examples from observations, photographs taken by young children, and ideas from the document analysis are used to provide a thick and rich description of young children’s experiences of work. Discussion in the chapters provides broad answers to the research questions, as well as deliberating on issues raised by the theoretical approaches of sociocultural theory and childhood studies theory. Findings in relation to young children are discussed in the contexts of ECE settings, home and this research project. Rogoff’s (2003) three lenses of analysis frame the discussion in each findings chapter, as the findings are discussed using a community lens, an interpersonal lens, then a personal lens.
Each chapter contains excerpts from interviews, with a participant’s own words shown in italics. Those quotes are not written verbatim as I cleaned the data to remove fillers such as ‘um’, and other information that would have identified participants. This cleaning resulted in small changes but did not change the meaning of what participants said. At the end of each direct quote from participants an abbreviation is provided in parentheses to show the day, month, year and participant (DD-MM-YY, Name) whose words are being referred to. In the future I would aim to transcribe recordings by noting silences, inflections, emphasis and so on, in order to provide detailed information for a conversation analysis (Danby, 2002; Psathas, 1995). Including all of that information would add a new and rich layer of interpretation.

4.4.3.2 Trusting ethnography

Common criticisms levelled at ethnography include concerns over the researcher’s “domination”, “validity and reliability” and “claim to generalisability” (Stephenson, 2009, p.94). In this research project, I questioned my use of power as a researcher in an ongoing, reflexive way. I was aware that I brought my own preconceptions about work, young children and ECE, based on my own understandings and experiences (Malterud, 2001). I attempted to redress some of the young child/adult power imbalance through involving children as much as possible throughout the research process. I am aware, like Stephenson (2009), that it was impossible to totally negate this imbalance.

A range of methods was used to triangulate data in order to ensure the research was both rigorous and robust (Flick, 2002; Stephenson, 2009). As an alternative to seeking validity and reliability, triangulation made the research deep, broad, rich and complex by ensuring a wide range of views and perspectives were incorporated (Denzin
& Lincoln, 2000). I originally intended to include member checking as a strategy to enhance the trustworthiness of the data (Bickman & Rog, 2009), though doing so would have contradicted the interpretive view of ‘truth’. What I mean is that people’s views of reality, of what counts as ‘real’ change (Creswell, 2009). Thus what a participant shared as ‘reality’ during an interview might be quite different from what they believed at a later date. I therefore elected not to use member checking as a strategy. It should be noted that all data constructed by/with participants were always available to them should they have wished to view or alter them.

I believe that undertaking research in the settings of ECE and homes, over a long period of time, contributed to the trustworthiness of the data. Like Stephenson (2009), I found that the continuous, long-lasting nature of the research had a significant positive effect on the strength of the study as I built trusting relationships with participants. A final strategy that I used throughout the project was writing memos – to map ideas, interpret what was seen and heard, and for use as a process for reflection. These all added to the study’s rigour (Hood as cited in Stephenson, 2009). I wrote memos in a journal after each visit and together with field notes (see Appendix D for example of field notes form), they were a significant mnemonic prompt during the period of analysis.

This research project is not based on a claim of being able to generalise its findings to other population groups or contexts. This echoes the interpretive recognition that truth is relative and that there may be many accounts of what counts as truth (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Flick, 2002; Stephenson, 2009). Within this research project there were multiple accounts of what participants believed reality to be. Work meant different things to different children.
As discussed in the section on interpretivism, it is not envisaged that the current study’s findings can be applied to other children and adults in early childhood settings. This project will deepen knowledge about what young children believe about work. This increased understanding may promote ideas that can be transferred to other settings, and may inspire new research projects in other settings. My hope is that this study will motivate others to help make young children’s work more visible.

4.4.4 Setting and participants

The research for the current study was undertaken in two ECE settings, and two family homes. The ECE settings were both based in New Zealand, in small semi-rural towns. Kowhai and Nikau were similar settings in many ways – two flourishing, busy centres immersed in the world of education for young children. Both were privately owned semi-rural centres peopled by Pākehā female teachers, and predominantly, Pākehā children. For many children, Kowhai and Nikau were places where they spent more of their waking hours during the working week, and where peers and teachers became like a second family. Each ECE setting had its own culture, its own way of ‘doing’ ECE. In each setting how children interacted, the understandings they constructed together and the ideas they shared, created their own unique experiences of childhood at Kowhai and Nikau (Cobb, Danby, & Farrell, 2005). Kowhai is introduced as the pilot setting first, followed by a discussion about Nikau.

4.4.4.1 Kowhai – the pilot setting

Kowhai (see Figure 5) was a fast-paced, noisy, small centre, licensed for 45 children, split into two sections – an under 2s section and an over 2s section. The over

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7 Limited information about the settings is provided in order to protect the anonymity of the settings and participants.
8 New Zealand teachers of European descent.
2s section was very busy, full of people and resources. There were various inside spaces for children to participate in individual or group activities. Outside children could participate in sandpit experiences, climb, swing, shoot hoops, or engage in carpentry. Children chose their own activities. Teachers engaged in meaningful conversations with children, but also gave children time to engage in activities at their own pace, without teacher direction. The overall programme was loosely structured, with regular set times for meals, rest, care routines and mat-times. The daily group size in the over 2s averaged approximately 30 children, with four teachers.

The focus of the pilot study was to ‘try out’ (van Teijlingen & Hundley, 2001) some of the methods before embarking on a larger research project. In addition to fine-tuning the instruments for research, the pilot helped to identify potential issues with constructing data, and provided an ongoing consideration of ethics and relationships (Sampson, 2004). The first phase of the pilot study, negotiating access and consent, took considerably longer than originally anticipated. There was no way to speed up the process, as it needed to happen at a pace that respected the Kowhai community. I ‘cold called’ the centre manager, explaining the intended aims and plans for the pilot study. That is, I approached a centre I had no previous relationship with. The centre manager expressed enthusiasm and discussed the project at a subsequent staff meeting.
Three weeks later I made my first official visit to the field. As noted earlier all children aged three to six years of age in the centre were invited to participate in the initial data gathering. Envelopes were sent home to all centre families (over 50) that included information sheets and consent forms for parents, as well as information booklets and assent forms for children (See Appendix C). Information sheets and consent forms for adult participants were also distributed to teachers via the manager.

After three months, only 10 sets of forms had been returned by families, despite information being passed on for the centre newsletter, and friendly ‘reminders’ from the manager to families. Two reasons may account for the low return. Some forms were mislaid during the daily comings-and-goings of family life. The second reason was that not returning the forms was the easiest way for families to quietly decline the invitation to participate in the pilot study. In retrospect, the attempt to gain consent from all families in the centre made the data gathering a difficult process. For the follow-up project at Nikau I planned instead to gain consent from centre management for undertaking research in the centre. The manager at Kowhai verbally agreed to the research project, and signed a consent form, however she did not pass on the centre consent form. By the time I had realised I did not have a written centre consent form, the manager had moved on from the centre, and I was nearly ready to exit the field.

My attempt to gain consent from all families was sensitive and well-considered in relation to the ideal of inclusion (Podmore, 2006), but impractical in relation to the busy, people-filled research setting. Undertaking an ethnographic study in a small centre has taught me many things, particularly about the importance of consent, clear communication and research settings. In the end I only received consent for teachers and the six focus children, and verbal consent from the manager to do research in the centre. Not having written centre consent seriously affected the research process.
The lack of consent meant that I could not undertake observations of the day-to-day happenings at Kowhai. I was able to take photographs of the centre itself, but could not take photographs that included children other than the focus children. Kowhai was a small, busy centre. I found that almost any time I went to photograph focus children that there were invariably other children in the frame. Focus children had strong relationships with many others in the setting, and I wanted to convey a sense of their importance in photographs. I particularly wanted to use photographs of children relating to their peers for the purpose of elicitation interviews. A lack of consent made that impossible. It also meant focus children were unable to take photographs of their friends that could be used for analysis. Children in the setting did use cameras to take photographs, but these were not kept or used for analysis.

Communication became highlighted as an issue in many different ways. I never had any formal introduction to teachers and there seemed to be a lack of a key person I could talk to. For example, finding out where cameras were was sometimes a complicated process and once resulted in a camera going missing. The lack of a key person also meant communication with parents was affected at times. I sent cameras home with accompanying hand-written notes explaining that children would use the cameras to take photographs of work. The notes were not clear to all parents unfortunately. If there had been an intermediary, that person could have helped to give the message a second time to parents, and also to clarify any questions.

The pilot study provided an opportunity for me to gain early snapshots of the data. It highlighted methodological issues such as ensuring all children had fair access to turns with research equipment, and the need for a key person to liaise with. I also found out that participating in the research was seen as exciting by many of the children
in the setting. Seeing equipment such as cameras, notebooks, pencils and the digital recorder was enough to start what bordered on a small riot at times!

The pilot study highlighted the need for a second study to explore questions in a deeper way that also allowed children the means for more active participation in the research. Overall, the pilot study was an excellent learning ground that created initial analysis that helped to frame the thesis. This allowed me to review and hone my research strategies for the second research site.

4.4.4.2 Nikau

Nikau (see Figures 6-8), like Kowhai, was a semi-rural ECE centre that was privately owned. It was licensed for over 60 children. The research at Nikau was carried out in the 4 year old classroom, which had three teachers. The roll size varied during the times I was there from 13 – 20 children. Nikau, like Kowhai, was a busy place. Children engaged in activities at tables in the classroom, or outside in a large playground that had climbing frames, swings, a sandpit, forts, a bicycle track, an art area, carpentry area, vegetable gardens, and a large expanse of grass.
Perhaps the most significant difference between Kowhai and Nikau was that Nikau was a Montessori (Montessori, 1973) setting. The classroom layout was structured using Montessori principles, and provided resources focusing on different areas of learning including practical life, mathematics, sensorial materials, nature studies, language and reading, music and cultural activities. The centre followed a highly structured day and also provided many opportunities for children to engage in activities of their choice.

I initially intended to undertake research for seven months at Nikau, but found that issues such as weather, illness and unexpected events meant the time stretched out into 13 months. I was concerned at the outset of the research at Nikau, that carrying out a research project in a Montessori setting may have been problematic. I was worried that undertaking an investigation into work in a setting that had a particular and well developed concept of work, may have affected the data. My concern was that children would associate the idea of work solely with the Montessori resources and practices in their setting. I continued with Nikau in spite of my reservations, as I recognised that I needed to find out information through carefully conducted research rather than making judgements based on my own biases.

I employed a strategy based on a research project I had read about earlier, in the hope it would identify any issues with the data at Nikau. Howard (2002) used photographs showing children engaged in activities in different locations. She included photographs of children sitting at a table, sitting on the floor, lying down, with other children, with teachers, and alone. Howard (2002) used the photographs to identify connections that children made between play, work and learning.
I used the set of free photographs from the internet discussed earlier which showed children and adults in early childhood settings and homes engaged in a range of activities. These photographs proved to be an important resource for research in a Montessori setting. I used the photographs to ascertain whether the associations young children made with work at Nikau were only made in connection with Montessori resources. What I found (as will be discussed in Chapter 5) was that many young children identified similar ideas about work in relation to non-Montessori settings. In the end, conducting research in a Montessori setting brought many benefits to the project as it illuminated children’s opportunities for participation in an environment where work was valued.

4.4.4.3 Visiting families

The families of two young children from Nikau – Sophia and Miranda – accepted an invitation to have interviews in their homes. The families were welcoming and participated in different ways. The Thompson family met me at their home for the interview and all contributed apart from Mike (aged two) who slept through the interview. Miranda and her mother Alexis were both home for their interview, although Alexis preferred the focus of the interview to be on Miranda. For both interviews, we discussed photographs taken by Sophia and Miranda, and we also focused on finding out more about how work happened in the contexts of their homes. Each interview took approximately 90 minutes and both were audio recorded.

4.4.4.4 Participants

All participants who participated in this project made generous contributions of time and thought. Children, in particular, entered the research with enthusiasm and commitment. Six focus children from Kowhai took part in the current study.
Participants at Nikau included eight focus children in addition to four teachers. As noted in the previous section, the members of two families were also participants – Alexis and Miranda Brown, Sally, Stephen, BT and Sophia Thompson. All participants are listed in Table 4. Two of the participants Isabella at Kowhai, and Miranda at Nikau were late additions to the study. Neither was originally selected as a focus child, although both expressed a strong desire to be involved and were included at a later date. Chapters Five, Six and Seven introduce focus children in a more personal and in-depth way.

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Some details have been altered to maintain anonymity. All names are pseudonyms. Some of the children chose their own pseudonyms, although adults preferred to have one chosen for them.
SUMMARY

This chapter has shown the interpretive process that was used to both construct and analyse data in this study. Ethnography was chosen as a methodology which aligned to the interpretive notion that knowledge about work is not based on one truth. It sought out the perspectives of many young children, with a recognition that their perspectives were likely to be different from each other. In addition, there was an acknowledgement that young children’s perspectives of work were shaped through their interactions with “people, places and things” (Ministry of Education, 1996, p. 11).

Accordingly a methodology was chosen that provided young children opportunities to share their individual perspectives of work as well as to construct understandings in group situations. Ethnography, complemented by a range of methods including observation, interview and document analysis, ensured young children could participate in this research project in an active way. Young children participated in the contexts of ECE settings and their homes, which were familiar and comfortable environments. Young children constructed data through taking photographs, interacting with other children and adults, and sharing their ideas verbally. Multiple data construction methods were used to ensure that a variety of information was drawn on to present the many different perspectives of work that young children presented. This recognised the partial, situated (Crotty, 1998) nature of knowledge. Research was undertaken in a sensitive, ethical way in order to protect young children, and to undertake research in partnership with them.
INTRODUCTION

Nikau is one of the ECE settings discussed in Chapter Four and was introduced as a setting that was based on Montessori (Montessori, 1973) philosophy and Te Whāriki (Ministry of Education, 1996). The analysis of interviews, observations and photographs at Nikau reveals that work was a daily part of children’s lives, that children could identify work, and were knowledgeable about work. Despite this, how and when children at Nikau could participate in work themselves was clearly shaped by the teachers. How those adults viewed children in relation to competence, delimited children’s participation in work. A key message that emerges from this analysis is that when adults view children as competent they provide opportunities for them to be active participants in work.

The structure of this chapter is based on Rogoff’s (2003) three lenses of analysis – the community lens, the interpersonal lens and the personal lens. Rogoff (2003) proposed analysing the elements of participation in sociocultural activities using the three lenses. Each element will be analysed separately, however with recognition that this separation is purely an analytical convention to enable a focus on each element in an in-depth way. In the real world of everyday life at Nikau, these elements of participation co-exist. Everyday life in an ECE setting is busy, changeable and as Leafgren (2008) might describe it ‘messy’.

The chapter begins with a community lens discussion which is explored in the context of Nikau, focusing on values and beliefs about work, the physical nature of
work and the ways choice shapes work. In the next section, work at Nikau is considered through an interpersonal lens with an initial focus on children’s relationships with adults, then relationships with peers. The final section provides an analysis through a personal lens focusing on the experiences of a child at Nikau – Isabella.

5.1 Community Lens

Children learn about work in communities through a process of apprenticeship (Rogoff, 1995). Children at Nikau learned through observing and spending time with people more experienced in work, including teachers and other children. Over time, as children learned more about what was acceptable and desirable in relation to work, they were able to participate more fully in work activities (Rogoff, 1995). Understanding how work is viewed and enacted in the community plane, involves analysis of the institutional values, resources and processes, together with cultural tools used within the community.

5.1.1 Young children’s perspectives of work in a Montessori context

Rogoff (2003) viewed children’s participation in the events of their community as a process of transformation. Nikau illustrates well for the reader how young children at Nikau participated in formal and informal events on a daily basis as a form of apprenticeship. Through participating in these events children at Nikau learned how to ‘be’ members of their ECE communities, and become more knowledgeable and responsible as they gained more experience of being a learner at Nikau. Their participation taught them the shared goals of their communities, how each community valued reaching those goals, and how to make use of the community’s cultural tools in the process (Rogoff, 1995).
Young children’s perspectives of work at Nikau were shaped by what they saw, heard and learned about work in their settings. The learning they did about work as individuals had direct links to their interactions with other children and adults, and to the culturally inscribed values, beliefs and practices that informed their ECE settings. This reflects the findings of Chapparo and Hooper’s (2002) research in Australia. Chapparo and Hooper (2002) undertook research into 6 year old children’s perceptions of work during a school day, in Sydney. The findings of their study suggested that contextual factors in educational settings have a profound effect on children’s perspectives of work.

This research project suggests that when teachers valued the concept of work, children quickly learned to recognise work for themselves and placed importance on it. Within the four-year old classroom at Nikau, work was recognised as important by teachers and children. Montessorians value work and it is a central tenet of beliefs about how children learn. Work from a Montessori perspective is instinctive and noble, and helps children to experience joy through being able to explore, then master activities. Through work children’s personalities are liberated as children become able to exercise self-control both mentally and physically. According to this view, work helps children to become virtuous (Cossentino, 2006).

Nikau children’s perspectives on work were shaped by other children, teachers and the Montessori setting. Most children recognised that work was done in the setting by children and adults. They were quick to identify Montessori work as the main form of children’s work, with some adamant that no other work happened there (1-04-14). Penny, a child, commented:
Fi  Do you work?

Penny  At preschool. Work.

Fi  What work?

Penny  (laughing incredulously) Montessori work!

(17-10-13, Penny)

Penny’s response was typical of answers from children at Nikau, when asked about work. For most children work was closely connected to ‘Montessori work’. Teachers introduced Montessori activities during line-time, where they gave demonstrations of how to do an activity. Teachers carefully prepared the environment to ensure that children had opportunities to direct their own learning. Furniture was child-sized and Montessori resources were displayed on child-height shelves. Resources reflected a range of areas typical of Montessori approaches – practical life, sensorial, mathematics, language and culture. Montessori activities are designed to be ‘self-correcting’. There was only one way to do a Montessori activity ‘correctly’, which enabled children to learn to do the activities correctly themselves, with a minimal input from adults.

For many children at Nikau, the concept of work became entwined with Montessori activities, and the cultural artefacts that were a part of them. ‘Things’ were important to these children. The physical – whether in reference to a Montessori resource or to children’s activity – was an integral aspect of work, according to children at Nikau. The next section explores this idea of physicality in more detail.

5.1.2 Physical nature of work

Relationships, from a sociocultural perspective, involve more than just people, they also involve places and objects (Prout, 2005). Interactions with things, puzzles,
Montessori activities and other cultural artefacts and tools in the Montessori environment were an important part of the way Isabella and other children at Nikau learned how to ‘do’ Montessori and in turn, how to ‘do work’. Rules about what was acceptable in relation to work were conveyed through routines, and reinforced through teachers’ words and actions. Rules became entwined with the use of resources. For example, on Nikau’s website parents were advised that children learn important, habitual work practices such as putting activities away before beginning a new activity. Putting resources away after using them had become a rule that teachers convey through reminding children verbally, and it was reinforced by teachers’ use of gaze. Sometimes all teachers needed to do was to look at somebody, then the shelves, to remind children of this rule.

Teachers at Nikau changed resources every Friday afternoon taking time to also create new resources to stimulate children’s thinking. Montessori work happened during a morning session and an afternoon session. Children were able to choose from a variety of activities from shelves. They either sat down at a table, or unrolled a mat to use on the floor, to do the activities. Children did not have to complete each activity but were expected to return activities to the shelves when they were finished with them. If children had difficulty knowing how to do an activity, they could ask a teacher for assistance. Teachers generally sat back and observed children undertaking activities, offering gentle words of encouragement. If a child was busy then teachers left him/her to work independently. Other children could join the activity if invited and children sometimes helped their peers with activities.

Children at Nikau expressed their ideas about how work happens in their centre through photographs, and in interviews. Their photographs suggested work involved children and adults, mostly inside the classroom. A consistent finding from interviews
was that children at Nikau identified work in their setting as activities that involved sitting down and actively doing something. This was a finding that also emerged from another photograph sorting activity. Children identified bouncing on a moon-hopper (31-01-14, Chris; 3-02-14, Nadia; 6-03-14, Sophia) and building with blocks while sitting on the mat (31-01-14, Chris) as work. Alternatively, children who were sitting down for mat-time were *not* working. When I asked whether mat-time was work, Chris replied “No, they have to go on the mat” (31-01-14, Chris). He repeated this idea again, later in the interview “They’re sitting on the mat and that teacher is reading a book. So that’s not work” (31-01-14, Chris). Teachers who sat with children during mat-time in photographs, were, in contrast, identified as doing work because they were actively reading and talking to children (31-01-14, Chris). In a group interview the distinction between work and non-work during mat-time was delineated very clearly:

Malcolm: *And they’re reading, that’s work.*

Fi *The teacher is reading. What about the children listening. Are they doing work?*

Malcolm: *No*

Patricia: *They’re quiet, on the mat.*

(30-01-14)

Later in the same conversation children also noted that teachers who were actively involved in Montessori activities were doing work. Montessori work was linked directly to Montessori activities:

Fi: *He does look a bit like a teacher. Do you think teachers do work?*

Malcolm: *They teach children and they help with Montessori work.*
Fi: *Montessori work. What do you know about Montessori work?*

Malcolm: *You do things.*

Fi: *You do things, like with different activities? What does Montessori work teach you?*

Patricia: *You do that (pointing to activities on shelves), and that, and that. Everything here.*

(30-01-14)

Isabella identified the link she made between work, doing Montessori activities and using Montessori resources. As we sat together one afternoon, Isabella folded paper pizzas for me. During our discussion she demarcated the boundaries of home and Nikau by referring to activities that happen at home that for her, were very clearly not work. She showed her learning about structuring experiences into work and ‘not-work’ by location¹¹:

Fi: *Is making pizza work?*

Isabella: *No. And cleaning toilets isn’t work. And settling the baby isn’t work. But doing a puzzle is work.*

Fi: *So you mean like getting a puzzle off the shelf over there would be work?*

Isabella: *Yes. Like Ricky over there with a puzzle (points to another child doing a puzzle at a table). Can I get my camera? To take a photo of’ Ricky doing a puzzle? I love taking photos. We don’t have cameras at home, just phones. (28-05-14, Isabella)*

Isabella’s photograph of Ricky (Figure 13) can be seen in the following series of photographs, along with photographs from other children Chris, and Evan (Figures 9 -

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¹¹ While Isabella has made a statement that could also be analysed through theorising about aspects of gender, analysis is not provided here, as the focus is work.
The photographs have a distinct focus on Montessori materials, puzzles and books rather than children themselves. Children can be seen in each photograph, but it is their hands rather than their faces that are predominant.

This focus on hands suggests that for these children at Nikau, there was a strong physical component to their learning. Each puzzle piece, peg, counter, bead, spoon, mathematics resource and sensorial object in the photographs were important to children at Nikau. They represented work, learning and mastery. Childhood studies theorists have suggested that children’s learning is shaped by relationships with “people, places and things” (Ministry of Education, 1996, p. 11). Therefore understanding Nikau children’s perspectives on work necessitates understanding that for children, work was more than just who they engaged with it also involved what they used to facilitate their learning and how they used them.

Children were shown working independently in Figures 15 and 16 with hints of possible collaboration. A knee, a foot and an unrelated arm shared space in the building activity of Figure 17. Two children sat close together at one end of a table in Figure 18. They had numerous chairs to choose from, but decided to sit close to each other.
The focus on physicality is continued in the next series of photographs (Figures 19-21) with a particular consideration of action. Children associated being physically active while focused on a task as ‘work’. This reflects the earlier comment by children that just sitting quietly on the mat was not work. The first two photographs depict teachers in the classroom. Children identified the teacher sweeping the floor and wiping a table (Figures 19-20) as doing work. In contrast, a teacher seen in Figure 21 was identified as not doing work because she was “just watching the kids” (26-06-14, Sophia).
Similarly, a boy in the sandpit (Figure 22) posing for a photograph was not considered to be doing work whereas other children in a sandpit photograph (Figure 23), who were digging and using equipment, were identified as working. Work happened in the book corner if someone was there (Figure 24), but if it was a photograph of just the books (Figure 25), work was not identified as happening there.
The perspectives of children at Nikau resonate with Howard’s (2002) study. Howard researched work and play with young children in South Wales. She emphasised the importance of cues from the environment in children’s perspectives on events in their lives. Children in Howard’s (2002) study made a connection between work and sitting at tables. They also identified teacher presence as a significant factor that helped them interpret an activity as work. Children at Nikau certainly identified sitting down as being connected to work, although not necessarily at tables. This distinction may have arisen from their Montessori setting as children often referred to using mats on the floor. Mats may have served a similar function to tables in other settings. Mats delineated a learning area for an individual child. Other children could join a child who was using a mat, but only if invited. The mat was rolled up once the child’s activity was finished. Isabella, when viewing photographs for example, identified a connection between sitting down on a mat and doing work.

Fi They’re both very busy. So are they doing work?
(Isabella nods)

Fi How do you know they’re doing work? How do you know they’re not doing something else?

Isabella Because they’re sitting.
Fi: *They’re sitting? Do you have to sit down when you work?*  
(Isabella nods)

Isabella: *You are sitting down when you work, you get a mat and sit down on your bottom.*  

(6-06-14, Isabella)

One of the activities that children did on a daily basis sitting down at tables was printing. A focus on learning to read and write was a prominent feature of the work environment at Nikau. Teachers responded to a school readiness discourse that placed value on children developing academic skills (Clarke, 2010). Chisnall’s (2011) thesis suggests that some Montessori ECE settings in New Zealand actively promote their centres as places where children can progress their reading, writing and mathematical skills.

Children at Nikau had printing books that they could choose to use, or were reminded to use. Evan printed the names of friends in my notebook one day. Bronwyn encouraged him, making a connection between his writing and work “*Sign your name so Fi will know it’s your work*” (4-10-13, Evan). Children learned to read and print the letters of the alphabet, as well as to recognise a range of sounds. Before children began school they were tested by teachers (in an informal way) to see how many letters, and sound combinations they could recognise. This was an important aspect of children’s learning at Nikau, and one that teachers and some children were very proud of. Bronwyn often told me how individual children were doing, particularly those who were doing well. Nadia, for instance had “done well” recognising all the letters and most of the sounds. “*There were only 2 sounds she couldn’t do. They’re both very tricky sounds*” (10-03-14). Nadia had told me about reading herself during an interview the previous month when we were doing a photograph-sorting activity. She made connections between reading, doing work and going to school:
Nadia looks at photographs with Fi

Nadia That’s work.

Fi Are they down on the mat together?

(Nadia nods)

Nadia Reading a book. Sometimes I do reading.

Fi Is it work when you do reading?

(Nadia nods)

Nadia Mmmhmm. ’Cause I’m going to school this year....

(2-02-14, Nadia)

Cultural artefacts such as printing books and cultural tools such as the daily classroom rituals shaped and delineated how work was enacted in the Nikau environment. The physical lay-out of the classroom, practices such as line-time, demonstration and use of activities, and interactions of children and teachers were all underscored by a system of apprenticeship with its attendant focus on rules, social practices and power relations (Rogoff, 1995; Rogoff, 2003). Children at Nikau could clearly identify work in their setting, nevertheless, rules about who chose and used resources in the classroom shaped how work was viewed and practised.

5.1.3 Choice shapes work

Children had a choice over which resources they used during Montessori sessions, but they did not have a choice over which resources were available to choose from and little choice over how they were used. During Montessori sessions children could use Montessori materials, art materials or do printing in their individual printing books.

The concept of choice was considered important by teachers at Nikau. It provided children with the chance to make their own decisions, and direct their own learning. Choice became a way of validating teachers’ values around fairness, and about seeing children as
competent and capable. Childhood studies theory provides a reminder that children should be involved in decision-making since it is important that their voices should be heard (Prout & James, 1997). Researchers also caution that children’s ability to make decisions in meaningful ways can be curtailed by adults (Bourdillon, 2006).

At Nikau the notion of choice was narrowed because teachers managed children’s ability to choose. Children had a choice of resources to use, and in addition, they had to choose an activity during Montessori sessions. Children had to choose a resource from a specific range of resources that had to be used within a specified timeframe, in a specified way, within a specific environment. For teachers the idea of choice was tied up with the idea of knowing children’s needs and desires as learners, but also with teachers’ understanding of Montessori. One teacher commented “It probably seems prescriptive from the outside, but if you know the children, you go with what they want to do.” (23-08-15, teacher). Teachers at Nikau also recognised that they had choice as teachers over how they adopted and incorporated Montessori beliefs and practices. There was an implication that the original philosophy as conceived by Maria Montessori offered children more agency in relation to choice than they had in the contemporary setting of Nikau. “This isn’t a true Montessori centre. If it was the children could do whatever they wanted, make a cup of tea or a sandwich” (23-08-15, teacher).

In spite of teachers considering that they offered choice, children at Nikau felt that they sometimes had no choice about doing work. Chris responded to my questions about Montessori work when viewing some of his photographs of work at Nikau:

Fi So this puzzle is that a Montessori work activity? What is Montessori work?
Chris: *Um, Montessori work is a thing that you need to work on a...cause you’ve got to. You’ve got to learn and stuff.*

Fi: *Oh, does it teach you special things? What does a jigsaw, what does that puzzle teach you? What happens if you can’t do it the first time?*

Chris: *Ah, you’ve got to do it again.*

Fi: *Do you keep doing it until you can do it?*

(Chris nods)

Fi: *They look like fun some of them too. Oh look there are the letters from it. So what do have to do with that one, sort out the letters?*

Chris: *You put them in.*

Fi: *Is it tricky?*

Chris: *No, not quite tricky. Jamie did that too.*

(23-04-14, Chris)

Chris saw Montessori work as a compulsory activity, one that he had no choice about. This sense of work being compulsory because a teacher has decided it needs to be done is a finding that researchers highlighted in their British primary school study (Keating, et al., 2000). Unlike the children in Keating et al.’s (2000) study, having to do work was not necessarily a negative experience for Chris. This resonates with research that shows children can find work a satisfying and positive experience (Chapparo & Hooper, 2002; Liebel, 2004). In many ways Chris saw Montessori work as contributing to his learning. For example, having to choose and finish activities became linked to his identity as a learner. He recognised the need to repeat activities until he was able to master them. Chris ranked activities according to their level of difficulty, and also used them as a tool to rank other
children’s abilities as learners. He identified Jamie as someone who could not do all Montessori activities, but was able to do this puzzle as it was ‘not quite tricky’.

The links Chris made to learning reflected many of the interpretations teachers at Nikau placed on work. Lara’s comments about work at Nikau, for example, made direct links to obligation, choice and learning:

Lara: Obviously the Montessori side, ‘cause I think we use the word work. You know, you need to choose some work to do. So, I think they get that idea that work is something that they, they have to do, I guess, I don’t know, they get the choice, but yeah... What do I mean by work? It’s probably quite a heavy word to use with children, to use with them especially when it’s sort of a preschool situation. When we say work I guess we mean learning, yeah learning, learning time I guess. ‘Cause if it was a free play centre with dress ups and dolls and that kind of stuff everywhere you know we wouldn’t be saying to them to go and choose some work today. So I guess we put it as an educational learning perspective I guess. That’s what work is at this centre.

(11-09-14, Lara)

Lara recognised that work at Nikau was compulsory and that children could make choices about work, albeit in a limited way. There was a sense of hesitation as she pondered the ideas of choice. She identified work as something different from free play, and made a direct connection between work and learning, also implying that work was educational but play was not.

Analysis of young children’s perspectives of work in the Nikau community has demonstrated the profound effect of contextual factors. This discussion has identified that at Nikau the Montessori philosophy adopted by teachers shaped young children’s perspectives of work. Teachers applied their beliefs about the importance of work to children’s learning across all aspects of the community including the use of resources,
the availability of choice, and the structuring of time and space. Children, as apprentices, learned that work is physical, is compulsory, and that mastering work can bring feelings of success to learners.

In the next section the discussion focuses on children’s relationships and how they shaped their learning about work. This discussion has a dual focus – on children’s relationships with adults, then children’s relationships with their peers. Analysis is made using Rogoff’s (2003) notion of an interpersonal lens.

5.2 **INTERPERSONAL LENS**

Children at Nikau learned about work through relationships. They learned through guidance provided by those in their ECE settings with more experience and knowledge about work. This process of learning is what Rogoff called ‘guided participation’ (Rogoff, 1995). At Nikau, children who were learning about work developed their understandings in a process of constructing meaning alongside others. This resonates with the Māori concept of ako (Royal-Tangaere, 1997) which recognises learning as a shared process where the roles of learner and teacher are sometimes interchangeable. This happens as learners and teachers attempt to create shared understandings about their worlds. Rogoff (2003) proposed that this “mutual bridging of meanings” (p. 285) allows learners and those with more experience opportunities to shape their participation in communities. As this collaborative meaning-making unfolds, learners and teachers also make decisions about who, when and how people can participate. The discussion about relationships begins with a focus on how children at Nikau related to adults.
5.2.1 Relationships with adults

At Nikau how teachers related to children reflected their beliefs about children and about learning. Those beliefs shaped and structured children’s ability to participate in work at Nikau. Beliefs and values were developed through teachers’ own experiences and broader discourses such as Western ECE beliefs about the importance of play. For example, teachers separated work from play albeit perhaps unconsciously.

At Nikau teachers made a very clear-cut distinction between work and play in their organisation of space. Rogoff (2003) observed that distinctions such as this are a common feature of the way that adults structure children’s participation in everyday community experiences. Inside spaces were designated as areas for work and outside spaces were designated as areas for play. When children went outside, there was a strong sense of freedom. During ‘free choice/outside’ times children could spend time in the sandpit, garden, use swings and climbing equipment, ride bikes, use art materials, play-cook in the kitchen area, or wash babies. The outside area was a huge space, and as a result teachers tended to spend their outside time standing, scanning, speaking to each other and monitoring children’s activities.

One unintended consequence of the organisation of Nikau into separate work/play spaces was that there was little time for shared interaction between children and teachers. Teachers recognised the impact on their interactions: “You know with our bunch of children there’s very little time sometimes to actually sit down and play because you’ve got to constantly be supervising” (11-09-14, Lara). Children also noticed this but interpreted it in their own way. Penny’s perspective was that teachers only seemed to have time to talk to each other:

Fi Do the teachers and children work?
Penny: Not the teachers.

Fi: What do they do?

Penny: Nothing. They just talk. Even dance.

(6-12-13, Penny)

As a teacher at Nikau, Lara provided outside experiences that created a respite from work. Children were given opportunities that saw them being busy in ways that required Lara and her colleagues to “constantly be supervising”. This clear demarcation between work and play was also reinforced in other ways. For example, the daily schedule that was displayed on the classroom wall separated ‘Montessori/Art’ sessions from ‘Free Choice/Outside’ sessions. A separation between work and play was maintained during the organisation of time during holiday periods. One of the centre managers at Nikau informed me that Montessori sessions did not take place during holiday periods: “It’s quiet during the holidays…and we don’t do any work” (4-10-13). Bronwyn, a Nikau teacher confirmed this for me when I visited during the Summer holiday season. When I entered the 4 year old classroom children everyone was busy engaged in free play with toys of their choice. Bronwyn commented that she was letting them “play with their choice of toys today before next week” (30-01-14). Bronwyn indicated that the following week they would return to their regular schedule.

During the ‘Free choice/Outside’ sessions that I observed, teachers’ interactions with children reinforced the idea that work was something separate from play. At Nikau one day, a group of boys stood up at a fence and began yelling to a teacher in another area. They had been making paper aeroplanes but unsatisfied with their results they decided they needed help from the teacher who they deemed to be an expert plane-maker.

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12 Some children still attended Nikau during holiday periods.
One of the teachers in their area approached them and told them to stop yelling. “Ask her later. She’s trying to do her work.” (7-11-13).

Seen from the perspective of guided participation, the boys had attempted to further their learning about the construction of paper aeroplanes by consulting an expert. They considered themselves apprentices in the process and needed to hone their skills by observing somebody with more developed skills. Their teacher, through her brief interaction with the boys, structured their participation and their understanding of work. She taught them people who are working should be given the space and time to focus on it. Whilst the boys saw the activity as one which would help them to increase their learning, the teacher reinforced the idea that an activity such as making planes, which was taking place during free choice time outside, should not interrupt the more important task of work.

Children also observed teachers doing work outside. What children see others doing makes an important contribution to their learning (Rogoff, Paradise, Arauz, Correa-Chavez & Angelillo, 2003). One child observed, for instance, that teachers were working when they made sandcastles (1-04-14). Sophia built on her peer’s comments, providing an explanation with a link to guided participation. Her emphasis was on the role of helping. She positioned teachers as people who guide children’s learning: “Yes, they can make something and they can help the children make something. They can help the children.” (1-04-14).

Bronwyn, a teacher at Nikau, was the subject of a photograph by Isabella (Figure 26). Isabella observed that Bronwyn did not find work enjoyable, and believed this reflected how other people feel about work too:

Isabella  

Ah this is Bronwyn taking the blue tack off the paper.
Fi

So how do you know she’s doing work?

Isabella

Yes.

Figure 26 Work in the Classroom
(May 2014, Isabella)

Fi

So how do you know she is doing work?

Isabella

Because it is work.

Fi

Does it make her happy?

(Isabella shakes her head)

Fi

Does work make anybody happy?

Isabella

No.

(6-06-14, Isabella)

Isabella’s photographs of teachers (Figures 19, 20 and 26) seem to contradict her ideas about work at home. Earlier she identified activities such as cleaning toilets at home as not being work. Yet the photographs she took of teachers – all focused on cleaning – do show work, in her view. It seems that the notion of work has clearly become entwined with the Montessori setting for Isabella. Cleaning was work, in her view, if it happened at Nikau, by teachers.
The environment at Nikau, the resources and people there influenced Isabella’s knowledge of and thinking about work. It is also important to remember that what Isabella has shared should not be understood information that represents an essentialised Isabella. Knowledge should not be seen as a fixed entity – it should be viewed as something in motion. Different people can have different opinions/views of the same experience at different times in their lives (Pat Thomson & Gunter, 2007) which is consistent with ideas from sociocultural theory (Rogoff, 2003).

The guided participation that contributed to children’s learning at Nikau was particularly evident in interactions between children. Chris, a child at Nikau, took his own learning about work at Montessori and applied it to interactions with other children, in turn structuring their understandings of work. In a discussion about one of his photographs (Figure 27) Chris took of a peer doing work, he emphasised the fact that Curtis had almost been able to master an activity by finishing it.

**Figure 27 Work in the Classroom**
(March 2014, Chris)

Fi  
*You’ve got Curtis. Is he doing some work in that photograph?*

Chris  
*Yes. He was doing socks.  
Socks? Was he sorting them out into pairs?*
Chris (nodding) And he was almost finished, and he was almost finished and then I went to see another one.

Fi Great.

Chris And I said good work.

Fi You said good work?

Chris Mm and he kept doing it.

Fi Do you think it helps when you say things like that?

Chris Mm it helps them get it, do it more quicker.

(23-04-14, Chris)

Chris’ comments touched on many important aspects of work at Nikau, and demonstrated his place as an experienced member of the Nikau community. There was an implication that in this environment, to be a good learner was equated with repeating and finishing activities, and respecting other people. By encouraging Curtis, who was a newcomer to the 4 year old classroom and a novice, Chris was being respectful, and helping Curtis to be a fast and masterful learner. Chris considered that he was helping Curtis to keep doing his task as Curtis “kept doing it”. Chris, as an experienced classroom member, guided the learning of Curtis using techniques he had observed teachers using. His interpretation of the value of saying “good work” was insightful. He recognised that encouraging Curtis would positively reinforce his learning. This is a useful illustration from a sociocultural perspective of the complexity of the ZPD (Vygotsky, 1978).

As a learner Curtis was motivated and encouraged to hone his skills and add to his knowledge. The ZPD for Curtis involved learning how to roll socks, but it also involved his relationships with children and teachers in the classroom. He had observed his teacher Bronwyn demonstrating sock-rolling during a line-time session a month
earlier (3-02-14). He had also experienced support from Chris both through his interest in Curtis’s learning, and through his encouraging words. Support for learners in ECE settings comes from their peers, not just teachers. This support can build the confidence of learners so that they are better prepared to engage in new endeavours in the future (Mahn & John-Steiner, 2002).

The interaction between Chris and Curtis raises a useful point - children’s learning also needs to be considered from an affective perspective, not simply a cognitive perspective. How children feel about their learning, and the interactions that shape their learning, ought to be considered alongside a focus on what and how they are learning. Contemporary sociocultural theorists speak of the need to focus on Vygotsky’s (1999) concept of perezhivanie (Brennan, 2014; Mahn & John-Steiner, 2002). Perezhivanie acknowledges the holistic nature of learning through uniting thinking and feeling. Thus, children’s communication should be interpreted as more than simply expressing ideas or knowledge through words. Malcolm’s contribution shows the importance of feelings and reflects the understanding that the emotional tone children carry as they express ideas helps to build meanings with other children (Rogoff, 1995).

In the next section, examples of children’s interactions identify the important role of emotions in children’s learning. Children learn both through their own experiences of emotion and through witnessing how other children express their feelings.

5.2.2 Relationships with peers - negotiating participation

Children’s interactions with their peers at Nikau often provided an entry point into informal communities of learning. How each interaction unfolded affected both the meanings children created together, and their ability to participate in the
communities of learning. Children’s discussions during the research project offered them opportunities to co-construct the meanings they placed on work. The following example is a useful illustration of Rogoff’s (2003) notion of the “mutual bridging of meanings” (p. 285). Three children sat with me as we discussed internet photographs. Malcolm, Patricia and Peter discussed their ideas about the photographs as they sought to find a common understanding of both work and their positions in the group. As the discussion unfolded it was clear that each participant had to modify their positions in order to make a contribution and to find common perspectives with other members of the group. The meanings that were reached by conclusion of the discussion were created together. Despite the appearance of contrasting initial ideas, there was a sense of unity at the conclusion of the interaction:

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fi</td>
<td>So how come this one is not work?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malcolm</td>
<td>Because they’re playing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fi</td>
<td>Oh, so playing is different from work?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How is it different?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malcolm</td>
<td>‘Cause they’re not doing jobs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fi</td>
<td>Do you think it makes them feel different?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>If you’re playing and you don’t have to do jobs, how does it make you feel?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malcolm</td>
<td>It makes me feel excited!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(30-01-14)</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Malcolm helped the other children to learn that work is something different from play. He identified work as something that is associated with doing jobs. He became very animated when he stated that not doing jobs made him feel excited. Malcolm’s enthusiasm about not doing jobs was conveyed very clearly through his words, facial expressions and volume.
Malcolm continued to dominate the discussion, but the other two children listened intently and Patricia offered ideas as the discussion progressed:

Malcolm (looking at another photo). That’s work, she’s cleaning something.
Fi Do you ever do cleaning?
Malcolm No, but I do set the table sometimes.
Patricia I help set the table and I clean the floor.
Fi With a broom?
Patricia With a vacuum cleaner.
Fi Oh look, here’s a photo of someone cleaning the floors.
Malcolm (to Fi) I don’t think that’s work, do you think it’s work?
Fi I’m not sure, can you tell by looking at their faces?
(30-01-14)

The discussion allowed the children to co-construct meanings about work as they made connections between the microsystems (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) of their homes and Nikau. They were able to learn more about each other by referring to knowledge and experiences they had at home. Work, in this part of the discussion, also took on a position of status for the children involved. Malcolm identified some of the work roles he participated in at home. He told the group that he had the job of setting the table, but cleaning was not work that he participated in. This helped Patricia to share a connection to Malcolm, but also gave her an opening to have more of a voice in the interaction. She communicated the fact that she too set the table, but that she was also involved in cleaning at her home. She seemed proud as she said this and stating it gave her the opportunity to stake her identity as a worker. The importance of this role was emphasised as she let everyone know that it was a vacuum cleaner she used for the cleaning, not just a broom. Malcolm, eager to maintain his central role in the group and possibly, to undermine Patricia’s importance, questioned whether cleaning could
actually be considered work. He looked to me as an adult for confirmation of his thinking. Malcolm employed social referencing – checking for my emotional reaction in relation to my facial expression and verbal response (Campos, Sorce, Emde, & Svejda, 1983).

Malcolm  *They’re baking, that’s work. And I think they’re playing on a computer, I don’t think that’s work.*

Peter  *I got that vacuum cleaner!!!*

Fi  *Is that like your one at home?*

Peter  *Yes. It’s got one, two, two wheels at the back, and one wheel at the front.*

(30-01-14)

Peter was finally able to assert his position as an active member of the group. He had observed and listened to the other participants, quietly biding his time until an opportunity presented itself for him to participate. He seized on the discussion about vacuum cleaners, making a clear link between his home experiences and the current discussion. He was energised and spoke quickly in a loud voice, as he identified the details of his vacuum cleaner. Having ‘arrived’ in the conversation he was then content to sit back once again and listen.

Fi  *What about these people?*

Malcolm  *What are they doing? Looks like they’re cooking.*

Fi  *Do you think they’re doing work?*

Malcolm  *Yeah.*

Patricia (looking at another photograph)

*They’re mowing lawns!*

Malcolm  *That’s work.*

Fi  *Mowing lawns is work.*

(30-01-14)
In this final segment of the discussion Malcolm and Patricia reached a consensus with each other. Having negotiated meaning and jostled for positions within the group, they reached a mutual level of intersubjectivity. Patricia felt secure enough to make a suggestion about a photograph. Malcolm’s tone was conciliatory as he announced that Patricia’s identification of lawn-mowing could be considered work.

The style of interactions noted in the exchange between Malcolm, Patricia and Peter was also observed in other interactions between children. Many discussions seemed to have a two-fold purpose – for children to communicate ideas about work and to contest the right to participate. Occasionally the actions of children were constraining and served to limit the participation of other children in activities. Children used techniques such as shaming (Rogoff, 2003) to reinforce the previous actions of adults through their communication.

In the next extract Sophia and Melanie, two children at Nikau, sat with me and looked at some photographs their peers had taken of children at Nikau. Each time they found a photograph depicting work they were able to place a sticker on the page below the photograph:
Sophia: *What are they doing? They’re fighting, fighting isn’t work.*
Fi: *Fighting’s not work, how do you know?*
Melanie: *They’re cuddling.*
Sophia: *They’re cuddling and fighting.*

(1-04-14)

In the first part of the interaction, Sophia and Melanie both offered their opinions, and Sophia moderated her ideas to include Melanie’s idea about “cuddling”. As the discussion moved on, Melanie reinforced her acceptance of Sophia’s ideas by echoing her words. They developed an intersubjective understanding of what could be counted as ‘work’ through this shared language.

As the discussion continued Sophia became animated by the possibility of using stickers. Melanie, not wanting to miss out on the sticker-choosing opportunity, ensured I remembered to include her.

Fi: *(Looking at the next photograph)*
Now what about that place? Does any work happen there?
Sophia: No, it’s just books.
Melanie: It’s just books
(Sophia pulls out the next photographs)
Fi: *What about the people in the sandpit?*
Sophia: They’re doing work. That one is doing work, that one there.
Fi: And what’s he doing?
Sophia: He’s playing rugby.
Fi  
*Is that work?*

Sophia  
*Yes. Can we put a sticker on?*

(Fi nods)

Melanie  
*Me too.*

(1-04-14)

Sophia, aware of Melanie’s desire to use the stickers reminds her a little later in the discussion that she can have more stickers if she can remember to stay focused on work.

Fi  
*Chainsawing. Is that work? Looks a bit like a chainsaw but it looks a bit like one of those traffic cones too.*

Melanie  
*It is a traffic cone.*

Sophia  
(To Melanie) *We can put another one on if we find another person doing work.*

(1-04-14)

As the discussion continued Sophia conveyed more of her understanding of work, expressing her opinion that work and play are not separate activities. Sophia explained that work was the same as playing. Earlier in this chapter, children identified being physically active in the sandpit as work. In the discussion with Melanie it appears that Sophia appeared to draw on that definition of work but combined it with the outdoor focus on play that was introduced by teachers. From Sophia’s perspective, being active in the sandpit was work, and at the same time it was play, because it was taking place outside where teachers sent children each day for a ‘free play’ session. Melanie also reminded Sophia and me that the actions of Dom and Chris, who were discussed at the beginning of the interaction, should not be considered to be doing work.
or play. As a participant in the discussion, Melanie was able to listen to Sophia’s ideas, process them, then apply them in context and remind us of them at the end of the conversation.

Sophia’s and Melanie’s discussion shows the value that can come from children having opportunities to think, and deliberate ideas together. Engaging in dialogue together has helped them to establish intersubjectivity and to co-construct (Fleer, et al., 2004) the notion of work. Learning from interactions such as the one between Sophia and Melanie is important and can help to change how children approach other interactions and experiences. Rogoff referred to this process as “participatory appropriation” (1995; 2003).

Other interactions at Nikau, when analysed through the interpersonal lens, also identified the role of relationships in shaping young children’s perspectives of work. Relationships brought young children’s ideas about work together with other children’s and adults’ ideas about work. Those interactions created moments of affective and...
cognitive learning (Vygotsky, 1978) which enabled young children to make connections with other people at Nikau, as well as links to people and experiences from their homes. As children bridged meanings (Rogoff, 2003) through debate with children, they also negotiated their right to participate. In addition, young children’s relationships with adults shaped how they understood work and also where and how they could work themselves. During this process young children’s understandings of the world of adults, were affected by the actions of teachers. Children learned that when adults work in particular places (such as outside at Nikau) a sense of separation was created between children and adults. Sociocultural theorists such as Vygotsky (1978) and Rogoff (2003), in addition to childhood studies theorists such as Mayall (2002) and Corsaro (2011) suggest that interactions with adults shape children’s understanding of their worlds. Young children’s experiences at Nikau also suggest that a lack of interactions can have a profound effect too.

5.3 PERSONAL LENS

Children learn from taking part in activities alongside more experienced members of communities. Over time they learn how to take on community roles and expand their understanding of community activities through a process of “participatory appropriation” (Rogoff, 1995, p. 14). Being involved in and learning how to do activities prepares children for taking part in similar, subsequent activities. Rogoff’s (1995) concept of appropriation focuses on how a child changes through their participation. Appropriation from this perspective moves away from a view of learning as developing new skills or acquiring new knowledge. It has a dual focus on taking part
in activities/experiences within communities, as well as finding out how those
activities/experiences take place.

Discussion in the Personal Lens section will focus on the experiences of
Isabella a child from Nikau who changed through participating in work. Being able
to contribute ideas about work helped broaden her modes of participation in this
community of learning. Isabella’s experiences show that children have strong
desires in relation to participation. They want to be involved and to take part in the
activities of their communities.

5.3.1 Isabella

The next part of the discussion introduces an episode of learning broken into
three separate extracts. The episode shows the changing nature of Isabella’s
participation at Nikau and how it was shaped in this instance by her interaction with
another child, Dom. Dom and I had been discussing internet photographs, wondering
about their link to work. Isabella and a peer, Chris, ‘gatecrashed’ the conversation.
After Chris moved away to another activity, Isabella stayed behind. The episode shows
both Isabella’s strong desire to be an active participant in the discussion with Dom and
me, and the newness of her skills as she learned to participate in the discussion. The
episode opens with us all looking at photographs:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fi</th>
<th>What’s happening here?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dom</td>
<td>Dishes. These are jobs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fi</td>
<td>Do you do that job at home? (Dom and Isabella both shake their heads).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fi</td>
<td>Who does that job?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dom</td>
<td>My mum.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Isabella: *My mum.*

Fi: *So your mum does work at your house when she does the dishes?*

Dom: *I always help her.*

Fi: *What do you do to help her?*

Isabella: (Isabella looks at the next photograph). *Painting. I got paint at my house.*

Dom: *With the dishes.* (Dom looks at the painting photograph) *That is not work. Why are there so many pictures?*

Fi: *I have a lot of pictures. You can stop whenever you want to though.*

(31-01-14, Dom, Isabella)

In this initial extract Isabella promoted herself as a participant when she shook her head at the same time as Dom in response to a question I asked Dom. She echoed Dom’s next response by repeating his answer a split second later. Unsure of how to enter the discussion with her own ideas, Isabella moved on from the current topic and shared ideas about a different photograph in a very loud voice. The volume of her voice matched her rising anxiety over finding a way to contribute to the discussion. She attempted to move the discussion along by focusing on the next photograph and by making a link to her own life experiences. Dom ignored her comment by responding to my earlier question, and then tried to shut down Isabella’s participation by announcing that painting was not work. Undeterred by Dom’s rebuff, Isabella continued to press on with her interest in being a participant.

Isabella: *Can I have a turn after Dom?*

Dom: *This is work. Hammering with a nail.*

Isabella: *That’s a man feeding a baby with a baby bottle.*
Fi  *Do you think that’s work?*

Dom  *No.*

Isabella  *I think this is work do you Dom?*

Dom  *That’s work.*

Fi  *What’s she doing?*

Dom  *Building stuff.*

Fi  *She does look like she’s building things. So building’s work?*

Dom  *Yeah.*

Isabella  *Yeah.*

(31-01-14, Dom, Isabella)

Isabella asked – albeit very quietly - whether she could have a chance to participate. Despite a lack of response, Isabella forged ahead and offered her commentary on photographs. My question relating to her statement validated her participation and Dom showed his acceptance of Isabella by answering my question. Isabella then directly interacted with Dom asking for his confirmation that her interpretation of a photograph was correct. He acknowledged her input and both participants ended with a shared definition of building being work.

A little later in the discussion Dom and Isabella started to show differing opinions in their interpretation of the photographs.

Isabella  *She’s playing doctors.*

Dom  *I wonder what she’s playing?*

Fi  *Well look at what she’s got around her neck. She’s got a stethoscope.*
Isabella  They must be playing doctors.

Dom  And that must be a fire engine man and that must be an outer space (man). I think that’s a cannon.

Isabella  It might be a lollipop ‘cause there’s a stick.

Dom  I think that’s a cannon. That’s working, they’re making dinner.

(31-01-14, Dom, Isabella)

Isabella’s suggestion that a child in a photograph was “playing doctors” was completely ignored by Dom. He acted as if Isabella had not spoken by asking what game the girl in the photograph might be playing. Isabella restated her opinion and strengthened her argument by giving emphasis to ‘must’. Dom briefly accepted Isabella’s input by picking up on the use of ‘must’ using it twice in his sentence. Isabella showed her interest in Dom’s comments but offered an alternative suggestion, since she associated the presence of ‘sticks’ with lollipops. Dom discounted her idea by restating his opinion that it was a cannon.

In the final part of the episode Isabella continued to focus on her idea about children “playing doctors”. She was trying to ensure that Dom heard and responded to her idea. She had learned to show her determination as clearly as Dom had demonstrated his.

Dom  Yeah...This is not work.

Fi  What are they doing?

Dom  Cuddling themselves.

Isabella  They must be playing doctors.

Fi  It looks like a doctor’s kit doesn’t it?

Dom  Excuse me. Why can’t she go away?
Fi  *Can you come back in a minute? Then you can have a turn Isabella.* (Isabella moves away)

Dom  *I can’t concentrate.*

Fi  *Okay so here’s a man in a room with some children. What are they doing?*

Dom  *Work, they’re working, they’re doing work. Playing doctors and stuff.*

Fi  *So what about this one?*

Dom  *This is work. They’re doing painting.*

Isabella  *(hanging over rail) They’re doing painting.*

Fi  *I’ll ask you in a minute Isabella.*

Dom  *They’re doing painting, that’s work.*

(31-01-14, Dom, Isabella)

Dom attempted to shape Isabella’s participation by sending her away from the group. He used techniques he had learned to make the process quick and socially acceptable. He initiated the process by using manners saying “Excuse me” and then explained his need for Isabella to leave by saying he was unable to “concentrate”. Then he continued to interpret the photographs using ideas that had originally come from Isabella. Expulsion from the interaction did not deter Isabella, who resisted the rejection by offering her continued input while hanging over the rail.

A few days later Isabella took what she had learned from interacting with Dom and used it in another interaction she had using the ideas she had learned in a new way. She transformed them to fit her intentions and the new interaction she had with Chris. She had joined me to discuss internet photographs, and Chris tried to participate in the
experience. Chris sat beside us, looking at a treasure map as he observed and listened to our interaction.

Isabella  
That’s work.

Fi  
What about the father?

Chris  
He’s watching the kids.

Fi  
So is anyone doing work in that one?

Isabella  
Yes (putting a baby doll into a bed).

Chris  
I’ll show you. (Chris puts his map in front of Fi). You start from here and go through Long Grass Valley to Big Bug Valley.

Isabella  
I dropped the baby into the basket.

Fi  
You did it very gently.

In this episode of learning Isabella told me about the work she could see in the photographs we had and she continued to carry on with other activities as we talked. Chris interrupted our discussion to show me his map. Isabella ignored his comments, referring to her activity with the doll instead.

Isabella  
(Looking at the next photograph) That’s work.

Chris  
You can kill that one, that wee one ’cause he can’t fight strong but you can. You’ve got to try to kill him. He’ll sting you that means he’s caught.

Fi  
Okay I’m just going to talk to Isabella and then I’ll come back to you.

Isabella  
Can you go away Chris?

Chris  
I’ll just sit here.
I think Isabella’s finding it hard to concentrate.

It’s okay he’s going to be quiet now. That’s work?

Gosh there are a lot of people who do work.

Isabella, feeling frustrated with the interjections from Chris, used techniques she learned from her earlier interaction with Dom, to structure Chris’ participation in the work discussion. She asked for Chris to move away from the discussion, but did it in a much more direct way than Dom had done. She spoke to Chris directly, without using manners to soften her message, or asking me to intervene. Chris remained where he was, but attempted to stay quiet. In the final part of the episode it is clear that Isabella was finding it very hard to focus on the discussion even though Chris remained silent. She became increasingly unsettled, as reflected in her increasing inability to think clearly. She referred to not being able to concentrate, echoing the much earlier words of Dom.

Isabella  Just one. My brother’s only got one too. That’s work (looking at photo). I can kind of see what he’s doing.

Fi  If you turn it round a bit, like this, you might be able to tell. (Fi rotates the photograph) See now? What do you think he’s doing?

Isabella  Cleaning the bathroom.

Fi  Cleaning the bathroom, is that work?

Isabella  No. Yes. I can’t see what they’re doing (looking at another photo).

Fi  I think they’re at a trough filled with sand. And they’ve got bowls.

Isabella  They must be playing sanding.

Fi  Do you think it’s work when children are playing like that?
Isabella’s interest and participation in work was reflected in learning stories (Carr, 2001) that teachers at Nikau wrote. Learning stories are a form of narrative assessment used in ECE in New Zealand. They are a form of assessment that focuses on the process of learning rather than a focus on outcomes. Teachers use learning stories to document children’s “transformation of participation” (Fleer, et al., 2004, p. 184). The language and messages in Isabella’s learning stories show that her participation was transformed over time. The language and messages are important to consider, as these were reflections of specific moments of Isabella’s learning, but may also have constructed her subsequent learning. Learning stories were recorded in profile books at Nikau, and they were freely available for children to read. Children enjoyed the opportunity to read about their past experiences (or have them read by adults), and revisiting this learning helped them to shape their identities as learners and workers.

As seen earlier in the chapter (see ‘Values and beliefs’) Isabella made a strong connection between work and Montessori activities and resources. Some of the words that were used in her learning stories were directly linked to work:

1. Isabella you *quietly worked* (emphasis added) away.
2. Isabella *learning to work* at a task from beginning to end helps to further *develop power of control and concentration*.
3. Isabella *worked confidently and steadily* placing the blocks logically and accurately to build the arch.
4. Isabella *worked confidently* making sure…
5. Isabella today I watched as you *challenged yourself working* on the fraction circle activity.
6. You *worked confidently*.
7. It’s great to see you *working mostly independently* Isabella.
8. It’s great to see you concentrating on your work so well.

Through the choice of language in these learning stories Isabella has been told by teachers that work involves being quiet, needs to be completed and should be done independently. As a worker Isabella has been told that she was quiet, could concentrate well and build in a logical, accurate way. She was a confident, sometimes independent learner who concentrated and gave hard tasks a go.

These messages were reinforced through other learning stories, without a clear or direct link to work. Strong messages about persistence were threaded throughout the learning stories:

1. Isabella you tried really hard at this activity showing a lot of persistence.
2. …with such a focused look of determination on your face.
3. Isabella you persisted until you could do it to your satisfaction and I could tell from the big grin on your face that you were proud of your efforts.
4. ..but with patience and determination plus a whole lot of chatting away to me, you managed to fix it back together.
5. Perseverance.
6. …continued sewing confidently until “oh no, I did it again!” You then employed some quiet ‘self talk’ to figure out where you had gone wrong.
7. Isabella it was great watching your perseverance with your task, correcting your mistakes as you went until you had successfully completed your picture.
8. Completing your chosen activity despite the distractions of those around you.

The learning stories also suggested that Isabella was able to learn by asking for assistance from teachers:
1. She required some guidance.
2. …often looking for reassurance and help from the teacher.
3. “What do you do with this Bronwyn?”
4. All the while talking away to me about which pieces you thought would fit and confirming them with me by asking if I thought it was right.

One learning story also made a link to Isabella’s life at home. In addition, Isabella was told throughout the learning stories that as a learner she had many positive qualities, and that she often showed positive reactions to her own learning:

1. We will continue to offer you other folding activities such as folding cloths and towels so that you will develop the skills necessary to help look after your own clothes and belongings. **Do you help Mum and Dad with the washing at home Isabella?**
2. **Busy playing** with...
3. **Carefully folding** socks...
4. You **tried really hard** and did a **great job!**
5. **Inspired** by Isabella.
6. Isabella obviously **enjoyed the challenge.**
7. **Enthusiastic** Isabella...
8. ...as you were **happily playing** with the mobilo.
9. Isabella I could see from the look on your face that you were **amazed and impressed**…
10. Isabella you are **always enthusiastic** with whatever you do, and that is a great trait to have.
11. **Well done** Isabella.
12. I could tell by your **smiling face.**

Information conveyed by teachers to children and their families shapes the identity of children as learners and workers. The words and the choice of events that teachers actively chose to communicate in Isabella’s learning stories had the ongoing effect of guiding Isabella’s ongoing participation in the future. Learning
stories provide an effective way for learners to re-visit their learning over time (Carr, 2001).

In the following final example, Isabella’s desire to participate by contributing her own ideas is moderated by the emotional tone of her peer Sophia. Isabella and Sophia debated what counted as work as they championed their own experiences and opinions in an effort to be seen as most knowledgeable. Isabella’s retreat from the discussion mirrored the increasing volume of Sophia’s voice. What was revealing about this episode is that it shows Isabella’s increased confidence in participation. In this example she initiated an interaction with me about work. She saw me sitting at a table and picked up a bowl of internet photographs that she brought over to show me. She proceeded to ask me about work:

Isabella: Can you see anyone who you think is doing work?
Fi: I can see some people who I think are doing work. What about you. Can you see anyone?
Isabella: She’s doing work. He’s not. He is doing work, and he is too.
(Sophia joined us with a puzzled look on her face)
Sophia: That’s not work.
Isabella: Yes it is.
Sophia: No it’s not.
Isabella: Yes it is. We do that at home.
Sophia: THAT IS NOT WORK.
Isabella: Yeah, that’s not doing work.

(2-07-14, Sophia, Isabella)
Although Isabella attempted to maintain her position by making links to her experiences of work at home, Sophia’s assertive approach\(^\text{13}\) had a greater influence and Isabella elected to yield rather than continue to argue.

Isabella learned about work through interactions at Nikau. Her learning came through relationships with people, but also with things and places. This learning enabled Isabella to widen her modes of participation, changing aspects of her identity in the process. Isabella’s actions as an agent at Nikau also affected the participation of others in her community. Learning about work, for Isabella, was a process that she was both constructed by and constructed.

**SUMMARY**

Sociocultural theory (Rogoff, 2003) provides a reminder that learning in is partial, local and affected by particular aspects of the context in which learning takes place. Young children at Nikau learned about work in a context that was built upon the philosophy of Montessori (1973). Teachers structured young children’s learning about work through organising space, time and learning experiences, in addition to setting up rules and practices that were particular to the Nikau community.

The Montessori philosophy of the Nikau community provided a framework that presented work as something positive and desirable. Young children recognised that both adults and children did work at Nikau, but that for children work was a compulsory experience. The focus on sitting down to use Montessori resources saw young children make links between being physically active, using objects and the

\(^\text{13}\) Somewhat ironically, Sophia was interacting in an assertive way that she learned through experiences of standing up to her older brother at home. In the next chapter, snippets of Sophia’s conversations with her brother will show this style of verbal banter.
notion of work. Young children also learned, through their role as apprentices, that having mastery over aspects of work could bring a sense of achievement.

Young children at Nikau showed that for them, work was an activity they learned about and participated in holistically – through thoughts, feelings and physically. It was relationships – with “people, places and things” (Ministry of Education, 1996, p. 11) – that shaped children’s ability to participate in work. Through interactions with other children and teachers, young children developed their own personal interpretations of work. Children negotiated what work meant through interactions which helped to create mutual understandings (Rogoff, 2003). Having the space to interpret work with other children was particularly important, and highlighted the significance of young children’s peer relationships.

Young children’s relationships with teachers also shaped their perspectives of work, and in turn, their understandings of the worlds of adults. Teachers organised the Nikau environment into spaces for work and spaces for play which created a notion of separateness between children and adults. Inside, children’s work was expected to be done independently and only required an adult’s input if a child could not complete an activity alone. Outside, teachers’ work necessitated their supervision of large areas, which provided minimal opportunities for child-adult interactions.
CHAPTER SIX

WORK AT HOME

INTRODUCTION

In Chapter Five children’s participation in work was a feature of the educational approach at Nikau. Children at Nikau participated in work, were knowledgeable about work and could articulate ideas about work. Their participation in work in their ECE context was directly affected by adult views of children and of work, as well as adult structuring of space and choice. The discussion in this chapter focuses on young children from both Nikau and Kowhai, and their experiences of work in their homes. As the discussion unfolds, it will show that adults’ perspectives of children in relation to work, at home, are a major influence on children’s own perspectives of work.

Home is recognised as a significant context that shapes children’s ideas about work (Baxter & Strazdins, 2014; Clark, 2000; Hutchings, 1993; Jorgenson, 2006; Schultheiss, 2008; Thorne, 1987). Within this context, factors such as activities, equipment, clothes, payment, enjoyment, knowledge of parents’ or others’ jobs (Mauthner, et al., 2000), time and space (Harden, et al., 2013; Jorgenson, 2006) affect how children view work. Home is a place where children develop understandings of work through observations of the ways other family members work and what they say about work (Baxter & Strazdins, 2014). It is also a place where children’s own participation in work is affected by discourses about children. When adults believe children should be free from work, children’s access to opportunities to participate in work become limited (Morelli, et al., 2003).
Rogoff’s three lenses of analysis will be used in this chapter to analyse work in home settings. The lenses will be used to explore activities in the community, in interpersonal interactions, and on a personal level, in order to interpret children’s experiences of work in their homes.

6.1 COMMUNITY LENS

Children from both Kowhai and Nikau placed a central focus on work as a family event. They observed work in their homes through camera lenses and through interactions with family members. The data they constructed through photographs and interviews shows their interest in and close connection to their family lives. In these families, work signified an important activity or duty (Anning & Ring, 2004). Work was one of the day-to-day routines that contributed to the learning of these children (Morelli, et al., 2003). Children identified that work in their homes was done by other people, and children themselves. The discussion turns first to the work of parents and its effects on structuring children’s participation in work at home.

6.1.1 Parents’ work

The photographs seen in Figures 29-31 taken by children depict people at home who children identified as doing work. In this series, children were observers of work, as opposed to participating in the work activities themselves. Notwithstanding that children learn both from observation of others and from taking part in activities themselves (Rogoff, 1995), these photographs suggest that children at Kowhai and Nikau may have had more opportunities to watch house-work than they did to ‘do’ house-work.
Figures 29-31 depict the work of Aroha, Sophia and Miranda’s parents. Aroha’s mother was faced away from the camera, intent in her work activity of preparing a meal. Figures 30-31 show the gardening work of Sophia and Miranda’s fathers. There is a similarity that goes beyond the focus on gardens. Though the gardens resonate as places which Sophia and Miranda associate with their fathers, both fathers were absent when the photographs were taken by their daughters. (Ironically, they were away as a result of undertaking paid employment). Sophia and Miranda both identify these spaces as reminding them of the presence of their fathers, though seen together the photographs create a focus on absence. For Sophia and Miranda, there was a sense that the gardens were their fathers’ domain – their ‘patches’ as it were. These areas were separate from the girls, but also helped to create a sense of belonging for the girls. The gardens were their fathers’ gardens and they were also places where they too could have experiences. For instance, Sophia demarcated the photograph’s location as a space for an adult’s work or children’s play:

Sophia ...and that’s the grass in the garden.
Fi Do you do work there?
Sophia My Dad does.
Fi: What does he do?

Sophia: Me and BT and Mike, we play out there. We play lots of games.

(28-05-14, Sophia)

The images presented in Figures 29-31 photographs reflect what I would suggest is a daily occurrence for many children in Western society families. Parents, engrossed by the daily rituals of running their households, engage with children from afar. Parents cook and garden to provide for their children, yet often do it in a way that is removed from their children. When I interviewed Miranda at home, she initially identified only her mother’s work. Her mother reminded her of all the work her father did at home, and encouraged Miranda to take photographs of his work in the garden. As Miranda’s mother acknowledged in an insightful way, children’s notions of work at home are shaped by what and who they see. Miranda saw more of her mother’s work at home because she was able to spend more time at home due to the flexibility of her job. Miranda found it hard to think about her father’s work and had to be prompted by her mother to do so.

In the excerpt above, Sophia did not answer my question about what work her father did in the garden, almost as though she did not know. A similar response was elicited from Sophia during an interview with her family, when I asked if her parents worked away from home. Like Miranda above, Sophia initially had a problem identifying her father’s work. She readily identified her mother’s work however had trouble thinking about her father’s job. When some of my questions were too hard to answer, her mother, then her brother, and eventually her father stepped in to rephrase the questions and to prompt her thinking:
Sophia when you think about your mum and dad, does anybody do any work outside, away from home?

Sophia  Yes.. um...Mummy does the washing outside. Sometimes Daddy does it. Mummy does it more than Daddy.

(laughter from Stephen her father)

Fi  And what about going away from home does anyone do work?

Sophia  Yes, cause we went camping that time and one kid got lost cause he was biking then on the flying fox and his dad went away and he got lost and we our family walked over to him and said “where’s your dad?” and he said um, I was on the flying fox and my dad went away. They were both biking and his dad went away.

Fi  I see

Sally  Sophia when you wake up in the morning and your dad’s not here, where’s he gone?

Sophia  To work

Fi  Mmm where’s that?

Sophia  Ah,

BT  He’s a C.

Sally  What does he do? Sophia: He takes the people with him to do the work outside.

Stephen  With the pigs...

Sophia  With pig, sheeps

(26-06-14)

Sophia’s home work structure was similar to Miranda’s in terms of her mother spending a great deal of time at home. Sophia’s father worked away from home, therefore his work tended to remain hidden from Sophia. She knew less about his work, and had less experience of it to draw on for discussion. In this discussion Sophia relied on prompts from her mother, brother and father to help her think about her father’s work.

Children’s participation in work was delimited by parents in these families. Academics suggest that this structuring of participation (Rogoff, 2003) occurs as a result of children being viewed as needing to be protected from work (Thorne, 1987), or
because children are seen as incompetent in relation to work activities (Liebel, 2004). Children in an American study had little access to work at home, and were more involved in “specialised child-focused activities” (Morelli, et al., 2003, p. 264). The busyness of daily routines such as house-work often sees children watching the process of work involved in maintaining households. In those homes children are viewed as too slow or incapable of using cooking utensils, washing dishes thoroughly or using vacuum cleaners.

As observers of their parents’ work activities children at Kowhai and Nikau learned about how work happened in their families by means of a process of apprenticeship (Rogoff, 2003). Through watching their parents’ activities they learned about the routines that helped to maintain their households. An initial sociocultural reading of these children’s observations, particularly from an apprenticeship perspective, suggests that the children were participants in work in their homes. They were part of their home communities and they were being guided by more experienced workers (Rogoff, 2003). Alternatively, when children’s own perspectives were foregrounded (James & Prout, 2015) a different reading emerged. Consider Nadia’s example:

Nadia

*Mummy sometimes lets me do vacuuming.*

*Sometimes.*

Fi

*Do you like vacuuming?*

Nadia

*One time she let me do it. But not all the house. Not all of the parts, only one part, it was the kitchen.*

(3-02-14)

From an apprenticeship perspective it could be considered that Nadia was a “legitimate peripheral participant” (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 29). As a newcomer to
vacuuming, her mother allowed her to try using a vacuum cleaner. This perspective is an adultist interpretation that does not consider Nadia’s feelings as expressed in the excerpt. She spoke of a desire to be more involved in vacuum cleaning. She wanted to be involved in the whole process, not just one small section of the house. Her words suggest that to be a participant in work by vacuuming, she should have had a greater responsibility. Although she had been allowed to use the vacuum cleaner, it seemed a token gesture, and not one that saw her fully involved as an active participant. From her standpoint as a child, Nadia was able to recognise that different children have different opportunities in relation to vacuuming. Children who were allowed to do vacuuming were viewed by Nadia as doing work, and she also saw them as having a sense of control over the process. During an internet photograph-sorting session she commented:

Nadia (nods)...another vacuum cleaner?
Fi Another vacuum cleaner! This person’s a bit younger than the other person.
Nadia So maybe he’s doing his own vacuuming.
Fi So is he doing work?
Nadia Yes

(3-02-14)

These examples show that parents structured children’s participation by making decisions about what children could do and where, as part of the apprenticeship process (Rogoff, 2003). Parents’ decisions, based on their views about children and what they should be allowed to do, affected children’s participation and their sense of agency. Dom, another child at Nikau had experiences which affected how he viewed the agency of other children, and their participation in work. Dom expressed some hesitancy in relation to whether vacuuming could be identified as work:
Fi  What about this one? He’s got a vacuum cleaner.

Dom  I think he’s a boy, a little boy, and his dad said no, and he’s trying to turn the vacuum cleaner on. This is working. Or maybe it’s not working.

Fi  You can think whatever you want, work or not working.

Later during the same discussion:

Fi  And what about this guy?

Dom  He’s touching the vacuum cleaner. I think his dad told him not to touch the vacuum cleaner. I think this is not work.

(31-01-14, Dom)

Dom’s experience shows that children can and do resist adults’ expectations of what they should be doing. It also illustrates how adults’ responses to children’s agency can affect children’s future interpretation of work. Other children at Kowhai and Nikau had different experiences in relation to the structuring of participation in relation to work at home. This is a salient reminder that notions of childhood are many and varied. How childhood is constructed changes in relation to people, contexts and time. How children experience childhood also differs as a result (James & Prout, 2015).

Children also observed other children in their homes exerting agency in relation to work. The next section provides a discussion about the work of siblings.
6.1.2 Siblings' work

The photographs in Figures 32-34 invite a notion of agency in relation to work. The photographs depict the siblings of children from Kowhai and Nikau, who participated in work. All three photographs were taken in close proximity to the subjects. This closeness suggests some negotiation between the photographers and their siblings. Learning about work and understanding work, when viewed together with this idea of closeness, indicates a process of negotiation. Work in the home in these examples was a mutual enterprise (Rogoff, 2003).

In Figure 32, Dom presented an image of his sister, who he interpreted as doing work. His photograph promoted a sense of action. Dom’s sister was depicted wearing a dancing costume and shoes, mid-way through a performance for her brother. Dom was able to recognise work happening in different contexts, based on different perceptions of what children were allowed to do. It seems as if dancing was viewed as a legitimate form of work in his home, whereas his earlier experience of vacuuming, when done by children, was questionable as a work activity. In this example Dom was also shown to be applying learning he had developed about work at Nikau to his experiences at home. Dancing was viewed as a work experience because his sister was being physically active in the photograph.

![Figure 32 Sister (April 2014, Dom)](image1)
![Figure 33 Brother (January 2013, Joseph)](image2)
![Figure 34 BT (April 2014, Sophia)](image3)
In Figure 33, Joseph showed a photograph of his older brother Cole. Joseph said Cole was not working in this photograph, and he also assured me that Cole did sometimes work at home as “he goes on his puter and he does work.” (11-01-13). As my discussion with Joseph continued he became increasingly animated as he described Cole’s work outside of the home:

Joseph   *He goes out to the supermarket and he works.*

Fi    *Oh does he work at the supermarket.*

Joseph   *And he does work.*

Fi    *What does he do there at the supermarket?*

Joseph   *He, he shoots the trolley in the [indecipherable] and when they buy it he gives it back to the person.*

Fi    *Does he look after the trolleys?* (Joseph nods) (11-01-13)

Joseph learned about his brother’s experiences as a worker through stories shared at home. What gets said about work in homes is a key way that children’s understandings of work are shaped (Baxter & Strazdins, 2014). Joseph learned that older children such as his teenaged brother are able to work both at home and outside the home. His animated expressions and tone of voice as he talked about wrangling trolleys suggested he thought it sounded like fun.

Sophia too, learned about work through observing and listening to her brother BT. Sophia’s photograph of BT in Figure 34 showed him being busy doing writing “work for home” (28-05-14). Here Sophia, like Dom in the previous example, applied learning from Nikau to experiences of work at home. Her brother was sitting down and
was writing with cultural objects that were also used at Nikau for work. This link between writing and work was developed further in discussions Sophia had at home with her family. Children learn about work through the stories that are shared at home. Through sharing those stories children develop a sense of belonging they associate with work (Schultheiss, 2006). Sophia was able to observe her brother’s sense of belonging in relation to work which helped her to learn about the value her family placed on writing as a form of work.

BT confirmed the importance of his writing work when he told me in a family interview that “I have my own desk.” (26-06-14). Through this particular discussion about work, Sophia learned that her family considered writing to be a form of work. She was able to see that BT had a sense of ownership over his work. Sophia learned that work could make people feel important and that others in the family contributed to that sense of importance and took pride in it:

    BT   I can start writing a book. I’m putting my photos in it.
    Fi   That’s a good idea, that’s a good way to use your photos and to share them with other people.
    BT   There’ll be chapters ’cause they’re all different photos.

(Later in the same discussion)

    Sally  Why don’t you tell Fi what you want to do. What’s your ambition?
    BT     When I grow up. I want to, I wanna film movies, write books and film movies.

(26-06-14)

As the discussion unfolded with Sophia’s family it became clear that the shared discussion about BT’s writing work was linked to much more than just talking about a
work activity. What work meant to families had an impact on what work meant to individual children.

6.1.3 The meaning of work

Work, for Sophia’s family became a way for the family to make a connection together. The discussion about work became a shared activity where everyone had an opportunity to make a contribution. Learning here was not just for Sophia, but for everyone involved as they stretched their thinking together (Rogoff, 1997). While focused on work, the discussion became larger than just work as BT and his mother made links to a potential future for BT. Work in Sophia’s family became imbued with dreams and hopes. A little later in the discussion Sophia’s mother ensured that Sophia could see the link to herself in relation to writing and work. She quizzed (Rogoff, Paradise, Arauz, Correa-Chávez, & Angelillo, 2003) Sophia about work at Nikau, waiting for Sophia to give her anticipated responses:

Sally: *What do you do when you’re working at preschool?*

Sophia: *Just playing but I forgot what I do.*

Sally: *What about your handwriting? Or is that just handwriting?*

Sophia: *Work.*

Sally: *What’s Bronwyn doing when she types up those nice stories about you?*

Sophia: *That’s work.*

(26-06-14)

Sally already knew the answers to the questions she asked Sophia. In this instance Sally attempted to reinforce Sophia’s understanding of the link between writing and work by helping her to recognise the link back to activities at Nikau.
Parents such as Sally were instrumental in shaping what children thought and felt about work. It was not simply the words of parents that shaped children’s thinking, but also their feelings and actions. For example, the activity of washing clothes represented much more to people than simply getting clothes clean.

Washing was a work activity discussed by children at Kowhai and Nikau almost exclusively in relation to their mothers. The photographs in Figures 35-37 show three instances of washing at home. This is a fascinating collection of photographs that reflects the ubiquity of household tasks such as washing. Seen individually each photograph represents a moment in time that each photographer shared with their mothers. Brought together as a whole, the photographs unite the mothers depicted as workers within their families. The children who took these photographs saw their mothers as workers, and the photographs themselves helped to recreate that image.

Rose (2010) provided a reminder of the importance of taking time to interpret images carefully. It is also important for children to have this opportunity. As members of a of a ‘visual culture’ the children at Kowhai and Nikau lived in worlds that were saturated with images such as those from books, television, movies, advertising hoardings and family photographs. Being able to interpret their own worlds through photography helped to give them another way to express their voices and provide comments on their lives (Rose, 2010).

Figure 35 is a photograph Sophia took of her mother Sally taking washing off their clothesline. I had learned previously that “doing the wash” (06-03-14, Sophia) was a home activity that Sophia considered to be work. In Sophia’s photograph her mother was shown unpegging clothes and putting them into baskets. Washing was an important, sizeable daily event in their family, with two baskets needing to be used. The
photograph was taken close to her mother, and could have been taken mid-conversation. Her mother smiled warmly at the camera.

Rose’s (2001) theorising was equally important for the attention it placed on the meanings that images carry. Meanings about images change depending on where images are interpreted. Rose (2001) urged consideration of three sites – where the image was produced, the image itself and where the image is seen. Sophia produced the photograph of her mother during a research endeavour that allowed her to interact with her mother. It could be viewed both as a record of work in Sophia’s home, and also as a memory of a moment of shared time with her mother. The image itself is a representation of their family life and the image is similar to many other family ‘snaps’ (Rose, 2010). It shows a family member engaged in a familiar activity, smiling at the photographer. In contrast, when presented in this thesis, the meaning of the image can be viewed in quite a different way. Sophia’s photograph presented an image that contradicted the reality of work for Sophia’s mother.

Despite her smiling appearance in this photograph, Sophia’s mother was not someone who enjoyed doing washing and found it an encumbrance. She passed on those messages very strongly in my discussion with Sophia’s family:
Sally  *Washing’s the bane of my life. It’s what I do the most of.*

(26-06-14 Sally)

It was Sophia who first raised the topic of washing during the interview. Attuned to her mother’s feelings about work (Mauthner, et al., 2000), Sophia’s comments opened up a discussion about how much of an impact doing washing had on her mother. Without Sophia’s introduction to washing in their household, it may have remained a hidden topic. Sophia had realised the significance and seriousness of doing washing, and her mother reinforced the message that their broken washing machine increased her burden of work:

Sophia  *We’ve got the latch broken in the washing machine.*

Sally  *So that’s more work for Mum isn’t it Sophia.*

(Sophia nods)

(26-06-14 Sophia)

Later in the discussion Sally mentioned the washing again, sending a double message about work being a reason to laugh, but also something that was not easy, and not shared equally.

Sally  *We know who does all the work BT, eh?*

BT  *Who does?*

Sally  *You’re working at the table, Mum’s at the washing line!!*

(Everyone laughs)

(26-06-14 Sophia)

The photographs in Figures 35-37, in addition to the comments from Sally reinforce the notion that children at Kowhai and Nikau received value-laden messages about work in their homes through what they observed, and heard from family
members, particularly parents. Kate (Figure 36) explained that her mother was routinely, and frequently, involved in work tasks at home. Kate’s identification of her mother’s work echoed a common project theme of caring.

For Kate, much of the work her mother did was connected to caring for her baby brother. During an interview with Kate she had told me: “My Mum does work especially feeding my brother” (11-01-13, Kate). Kate’s experiences focused on her observations of her mother’s work. Like many other children, Kate spent a great deal of time in the company of her mother as she worked at home. As Mayall (2002) discussed, the contexts of home and education are often gendered structures with a predominance of women.

Kate’s presence in the process of caring for her brother is relayed through the photographs (Figures 38-40) she took, despite her never mentioning being involved in the process of caring for her brother herself. Kate’s photographs had a strong focus on artefacts that were part of the process of caring for a baby. Figures 38-39 are close-up photographs of nappies and a bassinet. They suggest Kate’s interest and involvement in the process. Figure 40 juxtaposes the idea of distance as well – Kate is part of the...
process, perhaps only as an observer, not the carer herself. For Kate, the artefacts of caring were reflections of the busy work that saw her mother’s time being spent with her baby brother. Kate’s sense of work was closely aligned to her observations of her mother’s relationship with her younger brother.

Relationships were a key aspect of work for all of the children discussed in this section. Children’s perspectives were analysed through the community lens where it was shown that children identified work as a key feature of their daily lives at home. Young children outlined a variety of work activities undertaken by their parents and siblings. Young children learned that work has different meanings for people and these were communicated in a holistic way through words, actions and feelings. The discussion will now move to a closer focus on relationships in order to understand in a deeper way how interactions shaped children’s understandings of work at home.

6.2 INTERPERSONAL LENS

Many of the children who participated in this research project learned about work in their homes through guided participation (Rogoff, 1995) provided by experienced workers. Parents, as previously discussed, were a primary influence on how and what children learned about work. Children learned about work activities in their homes by observing and listening to their parents as they undertook a range of work activities in their homes including cooking (Aroha, Isabella, Sophia), caring (Kate), observing children (Dom, Isabella), ironing (Nadia), vacuuming (Chris, Dom, Nadia, Sophia), washing (Kate, Nadia, Sophia), doing dishes (Chris, Dom, Nadia), and gardening (Sophia). Children recognised that some work happened away from home.
either temporarily – “My dad is on a plane to Wellington. And he’s doing work there.” (17-10-13, Sophia) - or on an ongoing basis. For example shopping (Bella, Frankie, Kate), car mechanics (Kate), factory work (Frankie), supermarket work (Joseph), social service work (Sophia), and construction work (Frankie).

Children from Kowhai and Nikau identified the importance of work that their family did together. This is discussed in the following section.

6.2.1 Family work

During discussions with children at Kowhai and Nikau, it became apparent that some children did not just observe their parents doing work, but also had their own opportunities to contribute to work in an active way in their homes. One of the most common ways that this work took place was by children being allowed the opportunity to ‘help’ with daily routines in their homes. Hutchings (1993) noted that children often consider helping a reason to be involved in work.

Children at Kowhai and Nikau were integrated into family activities as part of “intent community participation” (Paradise & Rogoff, 2009, p. 106). Children were able to contribute to the activities of their families by “pitching in” to family tasks (Paradise & Rogoff, 2009). This participation helped children to develop notions of themselves as workers and contributing members of their families. Work, in turn, helped them to build and maintain relationships within their families (Liebel, 2004). Work helped children to feel a sense of embeddedness within their families (Schultheiss, 2006), contributing to a sense of belonging. Children often eagerly shared that they had been involved in helping at home. Dom helped his mother with dishes (31-01-14), Isabella with painting (31-01-14). Sophia helped to look after her little brother as a work activity (26-06-14) and helped her mother to bake every week (6-03-14).
Pitching in sometimes meant that the desires of an individual child came second to the needs of a whole family. For example, Isabella’s interest in work was reflected in her taking a camera home numerous times although she did not bring back any photographs. Initially it seemed she was content to simply take a camera home – being involved is what was important, and she was not concerned about the lack of photographs. As the following extract shows, it most probably also reflects the time-poor (Goodin, 2011; Mauthner, et al., 2000) pressure on family life at her home:

Isabella  
_The camera is here Fi._

Fi  
_Did you take some photos?_

Isabella  
_No, not really. We didn’t really have time. We had to help with the new house. Grandma and Granddad are shifting._

(11-06-14)

Isabella’s non-use of the camera was more to do with the busyness of her family than a lack of desire on her part. Isabella’s family did not structure their activities to accommodate Isabella’s interest in taking photographs. They “thinned” (Klocker, 2007) Isabella’s ability to act. The reason Isabella gave was that she was too busy helping with the activities of her family. Therefore, in one sense, Isabella was too busy pitching in (Rogoff, 2014) to undertake research into work.

Isabella’s experience acts as a reminder of the constraints children experience in their learning and participation. Competing family needs took prominence over Isabella’s needs to take photographs. Isabella showed a desire to be agentic through recording work photographs. Despite this, contextual constraints meant that she was unable to do so. Agency is something that is desirable for children, but their ability to exercise it may be constrained by the contexts that shape their lives (Tisdall & Punch, 2012).
Helping in these families was a reciprocal process. Sophia’s family conveyed the importance of ‘helping’ during an interview. Sophia, BT and their mother Sally negotiated the idea of work together:

Fi (whispering to Sophia). What first question shall we ask?

Sophia Uum, about work?

Fi Okay what question can we ask about work?

Sophia Um...um...helping each other.

Fi Helping each other? So do people around here help each other by doing work?

BT Yes

Sophia Yes

Fi What happens?

Sophia Um...

BT Not really much

Sophia Don’t know

Fi Don’t know? Maybe you could ask your mum and dad?

Sally Do you want to ask how we help each other to do work round here?

(26-06-14 Sophia)

Sophia began the discussion by linking work to the idea of helping. BT and Sally joined in the discussion very readily, acknowledging that work in their home involved helping each other. As Sophia and BT struggled momentarily to find examples, their mother and I both ‘helped’ through offering ways to continue the discussion. Our joint participation as discussion members involved ‘bridging meanings’
We attempted to find a common understanding of work through the interaction.

As the discussion unfolded it became clear that work in this home involved adults and children helping each other:

Sophia: *Me and Dad helped doing the washing outside... And I carried the basket inside. But not all, Dad carried it the rest because it was too heavy.*

Fi: *When it had all the washing in it.*

Sophia: *Yeah. It had lots...*

Fi: *I see. And do you usually help with the washing?*

BT: *She normally does.*

(Sophia) 26-06-14

Sophia described how she helped her mother to do washing by trying to bring a washing basket inside. Her father, in turn, helped Sophia, when the task became too arduous. Sophia’s recognition of her mother’s need for assistance structured both her own participation in work, and her father’s participation in work. BT confirmed that this was a routine work activity for Sophia. He used the word ‘normally’ to indicate that Sophia’s involvement with washing was an expected, regularly repeated activity.

Sophia used the same term as the discussion continued:

Sophia: *And I normally help Mum bake.*

Sally: *Sophia helps me bake a lot.*

Fi: *Is that one of your favourite things?*

Sophia: *Yes*

---

Ellipses indicate unrelated interruptions that were removed to allow for continuity in the discussion.
Sally  

On, on Saturdays.

BT  

Dad.

Sally  

BT listen. On Saturdays when we have a home rugby game, Sophia and BT play in the same rugby team, we have to take a plate". So on Friday it’s Sophia’s home day. We do the baking, hey? What do we bake?

Sophia  

Um, cupcakes.

(26-06-14 Sophia)

Sophia also contributed to the work life of her family by baking once a week with her mother. As with washing it was an expected, regular occurrence that she ‘normally’ did. For Sophia’s family work activities were much more than simply tasks that needed to be done. Washing and baking were linked to much bigger ideals such as providing care and maintaining relationships. Pitching in (Paradise & Rogoff, 2009) to these family routines was an important way to make a link to family obligations, and to family traditions. Sophia’s baking with her mother was a way for them to make a contribution to wider social events. Contributing ‘a plate’ allowed them to feel a sense of belonging within their sports-team community. Baking together on a Friday was a way to maintain a family tradition that created memories of togetherness.

Sophia and others in her family mutually structured each other’s participation in work through words and actions. Other children from Kowhai and Nikau also engaged in interactions with their families that mutually structured the participation of children and adults.

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15 ‘Taking a plate’ is a tradition in New Zealand where people are expected to contribute a plate of finger food to share with others at a social event.
6.2.2 Mutual structuring of participation

Children’s interest in work at Kowhai and Nikau was reflected in their parents’ approaches to discuss their children’s work. Parents talked to me or teachers about their children’s research. Frankie’s mother stopped to show me photographs of him working on her phone, Aidan and Joseph’s mothers made approaches about camera issues. Aidan’s mother told me that in relation to work, he was getting “quite good at following me at home now” (1-03-13).

The documentation of children’s own work involved parents. The photographs in Figures 41-46 show Kate and Aidan involved in work activities in their homes. They can be seen doing a range of tasks including gardening, cleaning and recycling. What is immediately obvious is that all of the photographs were taken ‘of’ children, rather than ‘by’ children. This was a concern initially as it raised questions about Kate and Aidan’s participation in relation to agency and power. It suggested that the process of photographs was orchestrated and managed by parents with little input from the children themselves. Subsequent discussion with Kate and Aidan allayed any concerns.
The series of photographs depicted in Figures 41-46 were collaborative ventures between Kate, Aidan and their respective parents. What the photographs represent are the culmination of in-depth discussions about the work Kate and Aidan participated in at home, and how and when it could be recorded. When I asked Aidan about his work at home he was quick and direct in his response “I wash the dishes, I take out the weeds and brush the dog” (11-04-13). The photographs clearly identified that parents were invested in the research process itself.

The photographs are also reflective of what are common rituals for many New Zealand families – engaging in work activities, and taking photographs. Taking photographs and spending time with children in shared activities are part of the daily rituals many families engage in. I was reminded that young children’s ideas are formed in collaboration with other people, and that these collaborations affected the meanings young children place on ideas such as work (Robbins, 2007). What is new here, is the subject of the photographs. Children’s work in homes often goes unrecognised, and is undervalued (Bourdillon, 2006; Solberg, 1997).

The importance of photographs such as those in Figures 41-46 is that they represent children’s active participation in work at home. They show that work is a
collaborative undertaking for many children, negotiated in a mutual way with other members of their families (Rogoff, 2003). These photographs also echo the call for greater inclusion of children’s perspectives on issues that affect their lives (McDowall Clark, 2013). Children’s voices are missing from debates about work because contexts such as ‘work, family and community’ (Mauthner, et al., 2000, p. 137) have been analysed as separate, individual realms of existence. Research in these authors’ views has also focused on children in isolation from the contexts their lives take place in. Images of active, public, collaborative work efforts of children are needed that value children’s agency and contributions (Thorne, 1987). Kate and Aidan’s photographs are important because they help to share children’s perspectives about what gets called appropriate in relation to where/when work takes place.

The stories focus children told drew upon their funds of knowledge of how daily living was organised and happened in their homes (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992). As discussions with children showed, they participated in the social relationships in their homes in active, reciprocal ways (Moll, et al., 1992). Aidan and Kate, for example, discussed their contributions through the jobs they did around their homes. The photographs taken of children and discussions with parents reveal that their families have a powerful influence in “supporting children’s interests” (Hedges, Cullen & Jordan, 2011, p. 187).

Dom and Miranda, two children from Nikau also contributed a series of photographs that showed a reciprocal structuring of participation. Their photographs are pertinent because they show that children are often knowledgeable and interested in their parents’ work (Mauthner, et al., 2000). Dom’s photographs help to create links between his father’s job and home. Dom accompanied his father to his workplace and took a series of photographs. His photographs represent a negotiation with his father.
and his father’s work colleagues. In the process of this negotiation he has structured his father’s participation. He engaged with his father the parent and his father the worker. His father allowed Dom to travel to his workplace, and also to engage with his colleagues. His father’s colleagues agreed to Dom recording their work activities.

Dom’s photographs\(^{16}\) seen in Figures 47-52 show snippets of activity both within and outside of his father’s workshop. As the photographer Dom was positioned both at a distance (Figures 47, 48, 49 and 50) and close (Figures 51, 52) to the subjects of his photographs. Despite his physical distance his camera catches the eye and the smirk of recognition on his father’s face (Figure 47).

The workers in Figure 49 face away from the camera, at a distance from Dom. They expressed a familiarity with each other as they took up similar postures. Overall, Dom’s photographs focus on physicality.

\(^{16}\) These photographs could also be analysed from the perspective of gender, however the emphasis here is work.
Workers picked up wheels (Figure 47), were poised for action (Figure 49) or photographed mid-action (Figure 50-51), and bent over into tight spaces (Figures 51-52) to undertake work tasks. The tools and paraphernalia of this workplace were displayed prominently in many of the photographs (Figures 47-48, 51-52). Much like the emphasis on action Dom learned at Nikau, work is associated with ‘doing’ in Dom’s interpretation of this workplace.

Miranda’s photographs seen in Figures 53-57 also represent a parent’s paid employment, in a different way from Dom’s in that they show Miranda’s mother’s
paid work, which was sometimes carried out from home. For many families an increase in home-based paid employment (Baxter & Strazdins, 2014) has seen a blurring of the boundaries between the private world of home and the public world of work (Harden, et al., 2013).

Miranda’s photographs like Dom’s featured cultural objects relating to work. Her photographs also depict a focus on physicality conveyed through a different kind of action. The tools of Miranda’s mother’s work are a briefcase (Figure 53), work papers (Figure 54), a laptop (Figure 56) and computer mouse (Figure 57). A tape measure doubles as a paperweight (Figures 54-55), and the cable of a telephone trails out of the edge of a photograph (Figure 55). Again, there is a sense that Miranda interpreted work in her home with a focus on action. Although the work involved sitting down, the use of tools gave an additional sense of being active. The image in Figure (57) clearly showed Miranda’s structuring of her mother’s participation. She asked her mother to hold a computer mouse for the photograph. Dom and Miranda were similar ages, from a similar region, however their individual conceptions of work were very different. There is a reminder here that individual children’s perspectives of work can vary considerably because their experiences of work are different (Jennings, et al., 2006). Individual
experiences are important to explore in addition to what happens in communities and in interactions between people.

In this section children’s perspectives of work at home have been explored through the interpersonal lens (Rogoff, 2003). Experienced workers in young children’s homes guided their participation in learning about work. Young children learned about the importance of family work, and contributed to a sense of family wellbeing by “pitching in” (Paradise & Rogoff, 2009) to tasks. Conversely the discussion in this section also highlighted the way in which some children’s work at home was guided by their parents, who delimited children’s access to participation in work. Choosing where, when and how children could work created separation between adults and children.

6.3 PERSONAL LENS

For children in this research project, notions of themselves as workers were affected by what they saw and did at home. Through their own work contributions, children affected the participation of other family members. Caring was one of the ways that children identified making their own contribution to work in their homes, in particular, caring for pets. Some children took photographs of their pets as can be seen in Figures 58-63.

The photographs show that these children spent time with their pets and viewed them as members of their families. Children considered these acts of caring important, legitimate forms of work that contributed to their families. One participant in a group discussion suggested “I think they’re feeding the animals, that’s work.” (30-01-14). Caring for people was not readily identified as work. In fact, children called caring for
people not work more often than they called it work. Kate, as noted in the previous section, was the only child who identified caring for people as work.

Children were forthright and direct with their comments. Dom was adamant that feeding a baby a bottle – whether by a man or woman – was not work: “And this is not work. You have to put it there. That’s not work.” (31-01-14, Dom). This perspective was supported by children’s comments at other times (12-04-14, Sophia; 28-05-14, Isabella).
Sophia discussed the notion of caring during an interaction with me, her mother Sally and father Stephen. She was interpreting internet photographs:

Sophia  
Fi/Sally  
Sophia  
Stephen  
Sophia  
Stephen  
Sally  
Sophia  
Sally  
Sophia  
(26-06-14)

Sophia clearly identified providing care for infants through physical affection and providing food as not work. Sally attempted to shape Sophia’s understanding of these activities as work by linking them to examples at Nikau. Sophia was resolute in her opinion, despite being challenged through the questioning from both her parents. Sophia’s jobs at home – some of her activities as a worker – seemed separate from this notion of caring as ‘non-work’:

Fi  
BT  
Sophia  
(26-06-14)
Sophia’s jobs involve caring – for her dolls and her younger brother. Sophia was quick to identify these roles as part of her contribution to the home as a worker, though she did not equate them with the idea of providing care in the same way that she viewed the care provided for infants. Sophia was outlining some of the ways she contributed to her family in an agentic way. Being able to contribute in this active way was a reflection of the participatory appropriation (Rogoff, 2003) that came with learning about work in her home. She was able to participate herself through caring for her dolls and brother, by appropriating some of the ways that she had witnessed others such as her parents and teachers in the nursery, provide for children.

6.3.1 Nadia: A desire to participate

Nadia also shared photographs from home, and discussed work in relation to her own opportunities for participation. Some of her photographs of work at home can be seen in Figures 64-65. Nadia’s parents can be seen engaged in daily household rituals such as ironing, and doing dishes.

Nadia’s commentary on the photographs was illuminating and provided insight into the organisation of work and the structuring of participation in her home. Earlier in
the chapter Nadia’s desire to be a participant in work at her home was recognised. Her photographs and subsequent discussion based on the photographs, contributed more information about the division of labour in her home.

Nadia  
My mummy’s doing ironing.

Fi  
Doing ironing? My goodness. So is that some of the kind of work that happens in your house?

Nadia  
Yes

Fi  
Does anybody else in your house do ironing?

Nadia  
Just my mummy and daddy and my daddy does dishes.

(10-03-14, Nadia)

At Nadia’s home work was done by Nadia’s parents, and from Nadia’s perspective they appeared to share many of the work tasks equally, and their work involved routine, daily tasks. It was ‘just’ her Mummy and Daddy who did ironing and dishes. In the next excerpt from the discussion, Nadia seemed very aware of her role as a non-worker at home.

Nadia  
That’s my Daddy.

Fi  
And what’s he doing?

Nadia  
Dishes!

Fi  
He’s doing dishes. Does he do them every day? How come he does them?

Nadia  
Because my Mummy and Daddy does it.

Fi  
What about you?

Nadia  
No!!! But when I’m with my Nana I do. (10-03-14, Nadia)
Nadia does not seem to have any reason to question how participation was structured in her home. She accepted it in a matter-of-fact way. To her, that was a routine and accepted way of doing life in her family. She was aware that participation could change in different contexts. At home there were unspoken rules in place that demarcated activities into adults’ responsibilities and children’s responsibilities. These rules ensured that Nadia’s home was a special place (Harden, et al., 2013), which protected her from the pressures of work. The time she spent at Nana’s house provided greater opportunities for participation. At Nana’s house she was able to be an active participant in the world of work (Christensen, 2002). In the final excerpt, Nadia suggested that her parents’ attitudes promoted work as an enjoyable experience.

Nadia  
*Mummy hanging out washing.*

Fi  
*Does she do that every day?*

Nadia  
*No, Mummy and Daddy.*

Fi  
*They both do washing? But what about you?*

Nadia  
*No!! But my Nana does.*

Fi  
*Is it something they like doing?*

Nadia  
*Washing again (looking at more photographs).*

Fi  
*Does she like doing washing?*  
(Nadia nods.)

Fi  
*Does your Dad?*  
(Nadia nods.)

Fi  
*And what about you? Do you do any work at your house?*

Nadia  
*None. I do tidying up though.* (10-03-14, Nadia)
Nadia learned that work was something both her parents liked to do. She was clear that she did not work at home herself. The jobs that she did such as tidying up were relegated to something less than work. Nadia seemed to have taken on a view that children’s activities such as tidying up were less important than the valuable work of adults.

Nadia’s comments are a powerful reminder that home is also a place where children shape ideas about themselves as workers. Academics such as Christensen (2002), Levey (2009) and Solberg (1997) would argue that children such as Nadia contribute to the work lives of their families through everyday chores and routines. Nevertheless their participation often goes unrecognised based on the discourse that children should be seen as free from work. Here work becomes defined in relation to adults’ activities from adult standpoints, with little regard for children’s contributions (Jorgenson, 2006). This reflects children’s lack of power relative to adults.

6.3.2 Sophia: home experiences shape identity as a worker

Like Nadia, Sophia had regular, repeated opportunities to observe the activities of skilled workers in her home. She observed her mother doing washing, caring for her brothers and cooking. She observed her father doing gardening, and appreciated his help with washing baskets. She could also identify the tasks her older brother was in charge of, and was quick to reprimand him when they were not done:

Sally  And what’s BT’s job when I say ‘dinnertime’? What’s he meant to do?

Sophia  Tidy up his work. And he doesn’t do it.

Sally  Not always.
Sophia And sometimes he did not pack that up at teatime.

(26-06-14 Sophia)

In contrast to Nadia, Sophia also had a range of opportunities to feel active as a worker. She was able to exert her agency by commenting on and participating in work activities. She had her own roles within her home – caring for dolls and her brother, baking with her mother, tidying up her toys, and bringing in the washing. Her participation in those roles was talked about within the family and her parents reinforced the roles through verbal reminders:

Sally Sophia, when you get all your puzzles out, what do you have to do when you’ve finished with them?

Sophia Pack them away.

Stephen What do you have to do after you’ve finished big dress-up?

Sophia Pack them away.

Stephen What do you have to do when you get up in the morning?

Sophia Ah, I don’t know.

Stephen You don’t know?

Sophia Get dressed.

BT I have to get in my school uniform.

Sophia And I’ve got to get dressed

(26-06-14 Sophia)

In Sophia’s family there was recognition that mundane household rituals such as cleaning, cooking and self-care responsibilities including getting dressed (Solberg, 1997) were a way for children to participate as workers in their family. There was
recognition in this family that children’s contributions through work helped them to develop independence and to be responsible (Liebel, 2004). There were also underlying messages that accompanied the discussion of work that were passed on to Sophia. She learned that work was necessary but doing less was more desirable than having a great deal of work to do: “So you’re pretty lucky aren’t you. You don’t have that many chores to do, do you?” (26-06-14, Sally). Sophia also learned that some work could be associated with money. She learned that work sometimes results in being paid, but that work in her home was not always rewarded in a financial way. I asked if anybody ever got paid for work:

| BT       | Once I got 50c.          |
| Sally    | BT probably gets incentives. He doesn’t get pocket money at this stage. |
| BT       | No, but I do get-        |
| Stephen  | Maybe a few disincentives (laughter from adults). Like no tablet ay? |

(26-06-14 Sophia)

This example links to wider contradictions around children’s work in relation to remuneration, and to the powerlessness of children relative to adults. As Levinson (2000) has insightfully articulated, it is seen as “acceptable to exclude children from paid work but reasonable to require them to undertake unpaid work” (p.126). The incentivising of work in Sophia’s family may also reflect the financial pressure that came for them as a one-income family supporting five people. Sophia’s mother spoke of the possibility of needing to return to paid employment. In Sophia’s home the prospect of her mother’s employment outside the home raised issues for Sophia, BT and her mother, albeit for different reasons. As the following extract shows, this had been a topic of conversation within the family for some time:
**Sally**  *BT’s been saying to me why don’t I go to work?*

**BT**  *Hey, I never said that.*

**Sally**  *You’ve been asking me why I don’t go to work. And what did I say?*

**Sophia**  *Why did he write that for you?*

**Sally**  *You sat down and I said why do you want Mummy to go to work? What was your answer? Why do you want Mum to go to work?*

**BT**  *Because then I can go to After School Zone.*

(laughter from father)

**Fi**  *Oh yes, the lure of the after school programme.*

**Sally**  *Oh, ‘cause he kept saying it and I thought oh maybe he’s missing out. We don’t go on fancy holidays. And then when we got down to it, it was all about going to After School Zone!*

**Sophia**  *Mum what would happen to me if you went to work?*

**Sally**  *That’s a good question Sophia. You might have to go to After School Zone.*

(26-06-14 Sophia)

This extract highlights the changing nature of work and how it is interpreted. It shows that work can have different meanings for different people, even within the one family. Work promised the possibility of freedom for BT who viewed after school programmes as exciting and fun. BT’s imagined reality contrasted with the reality of after-school programmes for many of the children in Harden el al.’s (2013) study, where children found the programmes limiting and made them feel vulnerable. Work brought anxiety for Sophia who felt worried about her own vulnerability in the
imagined absence of her mother. Work brought fear for Sally in relation to being able to provide for the needs of her family.

As Sophia’s experiences suggest, shared family experiences in relation to work affected how individual children in this project understood and enacted work. The observations children made of skilled workers in their homes affected how children thought about work, and ultimately how children participated in work themselves. The stories, values, rules and feelings expressed about work at home shaped how children felt about work, and how they exerted their agency in relation to work. Children’s input into work at home shaped the ideas and practices of others at home as a result.

**SUMMARY**

Home was a context that provided rich, diverse work experiences for children in this research project. Children learned through observing, discussing, thinking about and experiencing work. Children at Kowhai and Nikau identified work at home as involving a range of household tasks including cleaning, cooking, washing, vacuuming, washing dishes, gardening, and maintenance. Skilled workers including parents, siblings and grandparents introduced children to a wide range of work activities. Children were guided by the knowledge and skills of their family members, and developed their own perspectives of work through these interactions.

For young children, work was often a process that children and their family members negotiated together. Children identified pitching in to household routines that occurred on a regular basis. Children expressed a desire to be participants in work, but accepted that this was not always possible. Their ability to participate in work at home was governed by the needs of their family, and the ‘permission’ of parents, akin to the actions of teachers in Chapter Five. Those who did identify as engaging in work learned
about work through their own efforts and through the interactions they had with others in their homes, in relation to work.

For families, work was more than simply a series of tasks that needed to be completed. Work had links to family hopes, values, and ideals. It was an activity that families participated in together that created shared experiences and memories. For young children work was a way of contributing to their families, and a way of gaining a sense of belonging. Work helped to illuminate their places within their families. For some, work ignited a desire for greater opportunities to participate in family routines. For other children, their roles as workers brought them a sense of satisfaction, the possibility to make important contributions and engendered a sense of responsibility.

Work brought families together in collaborative endeavours, yet at the same time created a sense of separation for some children. Work undertaken solely by adults in the home, or outside of the home where children had no access to it, demarcated the worlds of adults and of children.
CHAPTER SEVEN

CREATIVE PARTICIPATION

INTRODUCTION

The two previous chapters have provided insights into children’s participation in work. They have demonstrated children’s desire to take part in work and how adults’ views of children shaped that participation. It has been argued that adults in ECE settings and in homes structured young children’s time and space, resulting in less opportunities for participation in work. This chapter focuses on young children’s participation in work. It demonstrates their creative spirit in relation to finding ways to participate in their ECE settings and homes. It shows that for some young children, despite being positioned by adults as being able to work only in particular ways, at adult-defined times, doing adult-chosen activities, children found their own ways to participate. It also shows that although adult-structuring of young children’s lives resulted in distance between them, young children were resilient and found solace in building a sense of community with other children.

This chapter draws on Rogoff’s (2003) framework by analysing children’s participation through their sense of community, their interpersonal connections and their personal experiences. Young children at Nikau learned from guidance by teachers, and in turn, used that learning to shape their interactions with others, particularly other children. Viewed through a community lens, their experiences reveal that their participation was shaped by rules and language which they used to both separate from and unite with others. Analysis of young children’s experiences at Nikau and Kowhai, using an interpersonal lens, identifies that young children’s relationships with peers and their use of cultural objects both mediated participation. In the final section of the
chapter a focus on the personal lens shows how participation in a research project facilitated links between home, ECE settings and work. The chapter concludes with a consideration of photographs as texts.

While the first section – community lens – has a direct focus on Nikau, this is not because children’s experiences there were considered more important than any of the other settings. It simply reflects that most of the research data were constructed at Nikau.

7.1 COMMUNITY LENS

Children’s sense of community was shaped by their use of cultural tools. This section provides a discussion of two of those cultural tools – rules and language – to show how children used them to mediate their participation and the participation of others in the Nikau community.

7.1.1 Rules

Kai times were opportunities for children to exert their dominance over other children, and sometimes adults, by enforcing rules. As the experienced members of Nikau, children knew what should happen during the daily kai time routine. Children were particularly concerned about what happened in respect to food. One day a visiting parent sat in during one of the kai times:

Visitor: “What have you got there?”

Child: “Rainbow popcorn. I eated my banana. You can’t eat it until you have had fruit.”

(18-10-13).
A little later there were reminders of where food scraps and rubbish should be placed “Hey that doesn’t go in there.” (child moved wrapper from compost container, glaring at another child, 18-10-13). Rules are a feature of communities that help to regulate behaviour, and are sometimes a way for more experienced members of communities to have control over less experienced members (Rogoff, 1995).

Knowledge of how to behave at Nikau was an example of how power was regulated through rules in that setting. Critical socio-cultural commentators such as Lewis and Moje (2003) and Li (2010) have argued it is important to move beyond a purely descriptive approach to understanding children’s learning. When thinking about how children learn about and participate in work, it is important to consider the effects of their learning environments in relation to discourse, identity and power. How rules are set, surveilled and responded to is a process of power used in educational institutions to induct learners as part of their educational apprenticeship (Foucault, 1982). Teachers at Nikau monitored the actions of children to ensure that rules were obeyed, in order to preserve an orderly atmosphere. Children, in return, were rewarded for their compliance. Isabella, for example, received satisfaction through knowing that resources should be put away. She identified the routine of returning resources to the shelves as an important feature of Montessori work. Isabella described Montessori work as being different from other kinds of work because “You put the dolphin away and the baking away in the cupboard” (23-04-14, Isabella).

Rules are one of the ways that inequity is maintained in relation to power relations in ECE settings. In many ECE settings, including Nikau, children are often expected to respond to rules set and enforced by adults. Children can exert agency by resisting expectations placed on them, but they generally have limited opportunities for creating or changing rules. Teachers do not create rules to subjugate children, instead
they do this to protect children. They act in the belief that they are providing care
(Cobb, et al., 2005). In addition, teachers themselves are vulnerable to the power
processes within their settings. In New Zealand teachers have to respond to demands
from a variety of sources including parents and families, setting management, societal
expectations and governmental agendas exercised through agencies such as the
Education Review Office [ERO] and the Ministry of Education. As Deacon (2006)
suggests, teachers who wield power over children in educational settings, are also
affected by it, perhaps as much as the children themselves.

The use of rules by the wider Nikau community directly affected the sense of
community children had with each other. Rules featured in the Nikau environment in
both explicit and implicit ways. Children were not simply bystanders in relation to rules
as they actively participated in enforcing rules and reminding others about rules,
particularly if they felt a rule was being broken. Children were quick to understand
rules, and how to bend them. Rules were used by children for gaining recognition by
teachers, for exerting authority and as opportunities to show agency. For example at
Nikau, a small brass bell was rung to indicate a transition from outside to inside
activities. Children relished the chance to be able to ring the bell, and recognised it as a
reward for following rules. A teacher reinforced this knowledge telling me that who got
selected to ring the bell was based on “Whoever’s been good” (11-06-14).

Children learned about rules both from their observations of other children, and
their observations of teachers. Inside at Nikau was a place where implicit rules
governed how and when work happened. Children understood that engaging in work,
and working in a quiet way were mandatory requirements during a Montessori session.
Non-engagement in Montessori activities and voices that were too loud were swiftly
responded to with a stern “What Montessori work are you doing at the moment?” (23-
If the noise levels from children became elevated, children were too excited, or there was potential for resources to become damaged, teachers also responded. Boys using Montessori arch blocks to construct aircraft were told “they aren’t to be used like that, and they might get damaged” (25-07-14). In those few quick moments, work became entangled with the notion that resources should be used in particular ways, with care. Other rules about the environment included a focus on cleanliness with an expectation that children coming in from outside would wear shoes and would be free from sand and mud (20-11-13; 13-06-14).

Children exercised their agency by challenging rules (Corsaro, 2011). During line-time sessions children sometimes resisted teacher expectations through making contact with others in the circle on the mat. Children were subtle and did this in nonverbal ways to avoid reproaches from teachers. Children winked, blew kisses and made funny faces, or hand signals in a conspiratorial breaking of the rules. When this happened with me, they knew that I was unable to scold them as I was a newcomer, and also not a teacher (5-09-13; 21-10-13). Often teachers noticed transgressions, but let them pass. It was only when children broke particular rules such as not listening, that rules were enforced. For example, when a child became too noisy he/she was asked to leave the circle and sit at a table until invited back. At other times, rule breaking was dealt with in gentle, joking ways. Dom, who lay down on a table in an attempt to provoke my reaction, was moved by a teacher Katrina, who used a kind, laughing tone as she cuddled him back to his feet (10-03-14). As Brennan (2006) suggests, humour is a culturally acceptable way of both showing affection and enforcing community rules.

Humour is a cultural tool that united children and adults at Nikau (18-10-13; 21-10-13; 3010-13). Line times, for instance, usually began with an activity where adults and children greet each other by passing a stone, saying hello and their neighbouring
child’s name, using the ‘language of the week’. During one line time, introductions in
the circle reached Evan who had two boys called Patrick on either side of him. Hearing
Evan say “Bonjour Patrick, Bonjour Patrick” as he greeted each boy brought loud,
spontaneous laughter from all. Participation in group humour also helped individual
children to learn to develop their own sense of humour. Dom, whose twin brother also
attended Nikau turned to me after Evan’s introductions to both Patricks, saying “It was
a good thing Mum didn’t call us both Dom!” (20-11-13). Children also used humour as
a way to develop a sense of unity with each other. As discussed earlier, kai times were a
frequent site of humour amongst children (5-09-13; 21-10-13; 30-10-13; 7-11-13).

Children at Nikau also used rules to organise others. As a newcomer to Nikau, I
was quickly positioned by children as somebody who needed to know how things
happened in their environment. Oftentimes I was treated by children as if I was a new
child, rather than a visiting adult. For instance, I was chosen by a boy to accompany
him to wash my hands at the end of a line-time (Montessori mat-time). Earlier that
morning during a line-time I was instructed to “Cross your legs like this” (5-09-13). As
someone new to the apprenticeship process (Rogoff, 2003) at Nikau, it felt as though
many of the rules I was learning from children involved regulation of where and how to
place my body. On another occasion, Sophia was alarmed to see me sitting in a
teacher’s chair and conveyed her disapproval “You’re not allowed to sit there. That’s a
teacher’s seat” (11-06-14, Sophia). Children also reminded me of rules to ensure that I
was being respectful of others. Penny invited me to join her in playing a game but
advised me that “You can’t cheat” (20-11-13, Penny).

Children also occasionally told me how I should express emotions. One
afternoon Dom told me that he did not like the look on my face when I was thinking
about answering a question. He told me I should have a “lovely smile on my face all the
time”. Seth, another boy expressed concern at Dom’s comments by kissing me on the cheek saying “I love you Fi”. Dom, who witnessed Seth’s actions, came straight over and said “I love you too Seth, I mean Fi”, then also kissed me on the cheek (10-03-13). Seth, the younger of the boys, but perhaps more experienced in relation to sensitivity, taught Dom with his gesture of a kiss, the importance of considering another person’s feelings.

7.1.2 Language

Language too, was one of the cultural tools that children used to organise other people, and their access to space. Children used language to both separate themselves from others and to unite as a group. In this section, four episodes are discussed where children used language (both verbal language and body language) to separate themselves from others.

The first episode involved children and a teacher. Teachers at Nikau found children’s outside interactions challenging at times. Being ‘free’ to choose experiences, to make noise and to run meant that children’s outside activities sometimes became very boisterous and loud. This occasionally became problematic as in the following episode. The children in this example used language to separate themselves from a teacher, but also to experience a sense of unity with each other as a group:

Friday – the rain has stopped!! Children have been cooped up inside the classroom all week. Now they finally have a chance to run. A group of six boys have gathered by the bushes. They are laughing, yelling, roaring, picking leaves off the bushes and throwing them to the ground. They roar with satisfaction then run wildly to one of the huts. Their yelling and roaring continue. Katrina looks concerned and walks quickly towards the hut. “Stop
The boys stop in their tracks as they take in Katrina’s words. One boy, then all the boys, look at her and growl as loudly as they can, then run off in the opposite direction. Seeing me watching, Katrina comes over and explains “We had a big group of boys who transitioned here at the same time. We had no idea how physical and rough they’d be”.

This was an interesting interaction from a sociocultural perspective. The group of boys and Katrina mutually structured (Rogoff, 2003) each other’s participation, with a minimum of direct discussion. Both parties used their own forms of language to communicate. The only clear discussion was the request from Katrina to stop yelling, which received growling from the boys in response. Katrina attempted to exert control by limiting the boys’ noise. The boys, in turn, attempted to cut off the interaction with Katrina by running off. Katrina made a gender-based interpretation of the boys’ interactions. She attributed their noise, and high energy levels to them being boys.

A broader interpretation might have also considered contextual factors such as the opportunity to be outside after being inside the classroom all week. Another contextual factor related to transitions between contexts and how children carry cultural learning into new environments. In their experiences prior to the four year old classroom, these boys had been in a classroom where teachers had made a conscious decision (after considerable research and debate) to allow children to engage in rough-and-tumble play, rather than trying to control it. The boys had learned that being outside meant that they could be noisy, could engage with others physically, and could be self-

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17 Although there is clearly an opportunity for a more in-depth analysis on the basis of theorising about gender, this is not pursued here because the focus is on work.
directed in their play. They carried that learning through to the new environment of the four year old classroom, where the teachers had different beliefs and expectations around play. As novices in the playground of the four year old classroom, the boys had to learn to negotiate the cultural practices of their new environment (Rogoff, 2003). Katrina attempted to guide the boys’ participation outside by providing boundaries around what was acceptable in that environment. Guided participation occurs in many different ways (Rogoff, 2003) including, on this occasion, chastisement.

In the second episode I consider how girls exerted their authority by verbalising their thoughts from a positional advantage. They used their physicality to control the movements of boys:

*On other occasions I noticed girls attempting to control boys’ play. I was aware that the numbers of boys and girls often became unbalanced, with many more boys on the roll than girls. Girls sometimes organised where boys could locate themselves physically, in order to maintain some control. In a context where the ratios of boys to girls often favoured boys’ dominance, this was one way that girls could affect power relations to their advantage. For instance, on one occasion four girls were playing in one of the huts, and they were sitting up on the benches. Three boys approached the hut, but before they could enter, the girls insisted that they got down on all fours and crawled into the hut. The boys obliged, and swiftly adopted the roles of kittens that the girls directed, but also cared for with food (29-07-14). A few days later I noticed another group of three girls on top of a climbing frame outside. They began yelling at two boys below them. “Don’t stand on our house!” The boys listened and responded by remaining down below, moving only when and where the girls allowed them to go.*
In both of these examples, girls exerted their authority by verbalising their thoughts from a positional advantage. Their heightened positions – being up on benches/on top of the climbing frame – gave them status relative to the lower positions of the boys. The girls separated themselves from the boys, reinforcing their own power as a combined group. Boys acquiesced to the girls’ demands, and by doing so, contributed to the girls courting authority over them. The boys also acted together, perhaps finding strength in numbers rather than acting alone.

In the third episode children also used language to separate themselves from other children, not as a symbol of superiority, but as a way to confirm their identities. Dom, whose twin brother Chris also was a member of the four year old Nikau community, used language to affirm that he was a separate individual from his brother. I noticed one day when I joined children outside for afternoon kai that when Chris and Dom’s mother came to pick them up, Dom said to Chris “Your mum’s here”. Bronwyn (a teacher) explained that Dom always said “Your mum is here, never Mum is here” (20-11-13). Using the word ‘your’ provided a degree of separation for Dom, and helped him to establish himself as an individual, rather than a twin brother.

The fourth episode took place one afternoon when I stopped by the sandpit to talk to a group of children gathered there. They included me in their play, responding to my many questions about a mysterious world that existed beneath the deck, beside the sandpit.

“There’s a hole here.”

“Ooh where does it go to?”

“It goes to another world.”

“What’s it like in that world?”
“It is always morning there.”
“Does anybody live there?”
“Yes, there are dinosaurs.”
“And squid.”
“Dinosaurs and squid. How exciting. Is there anybody else who lives there?”
“A zookeeper.”
“And I’m getting food for them.”
“What food do they eat?”
“Pies. And they like bananas.”
“Pies and bananas. Sounds like delicious food.”

A teacher, Bronwyn, approached us during the last few minutes of our discussion, and started to sweep sand that had shifted onto the deck back into the sandpit. I told her about the hole in the deck beside the sandpit and the world that had been discovered there. She gave a quick smile and continued to sweep sand. She reminded the children it would soon be time to move inside. Children quickly returned to their sandpit activities, moving on from their mysterious world.

Episode four represented a clash of beliefs. Bronwyn, with her Montessori hat on, was dismissive of the ‘make-believe’ play the children and I had engaged in. From a Montessori perspective, children should be involved in experiences that focus on ‘real’ life, not an imagined life (O’Donnell, 2013). Montessori believed children aged three-six needed experiences which helped them to have mastery over their environments. She believed that children need to be given “real things to imagine about” which place them “in more accurate relation with [their] environment” (Montessori, 1973, p. 136). Whereas the children and I considered the story a positive experience, and it brought us
together as a group, in a shared experience. For us as a group the story was exciting, and we enjoyed the synergistic creativity it produced. While Bronwyn did not openly criticise our group experience, she also did not endorse it. Her actions separated our shared imaginings from the ‘real’ world of Nikau. Bronwyn guided our participation in the sandpit by quietly reminding us that real life had more to offer than an imagined one.

This episode also offers insights from a childhood studies perspective. Over many years, researchers have suggested that children create their own worlds separate from the worlds of adults. Levey (2009b) cited the ideas of the Opies in the 1950s, linguists who discussed worlds that children created which were wild and independent of adult interference. Corsaro and Molinaro (2000) referred to children’s “own distinctive peer culture” (p. 17) in their exploration of Italian children’s transitions to school. The Opies, Corsaro and Molinaro suggest that children create these private societies alone and separate from adults.

Episode four shows that although children do engage in building their own worlds, this does not necessarily happen in a way that is totally separate from adults (Waller & Bitou, 2011). When I happened upon the children in the sandpit, their ideas about another world were already unfolding and they had co-constructed aspects of how it looked and who lived there prior to my arrival. I was provided with an invitation into this new world – “There’s a hole here” and I accepted it through the response of an open-ended question “Ooh, where does it go to?” The children and I imagined together, sparking ideas as we continued to talk. Bronwyn, in turn, was also offered an invitation when I relayed our discovery of the hole and the world beneath it. She turned down the invitation in response by sweeping and reminding us of the need to end the experience soon.
In this first section of the chapter it has been shown that cultural tools (Vygotsky, 1987) such as rules and language were used by adults and children to regulate the behaviour of Nikau community members. Young children at Nikau learned from teachers about rules and language then used their learning to exert control over less experienced members of Nikau, and others, including me as a newcomer. Rogoff (2003) refers to this as a process of apprenticeship where more experienced community members such as young children at Nikau, teach less experienced community members how to behave in that context. Young children used rules and language both to include others, particularly their peers, and also to separate themselves. Young children created their own community, which although not totally separate from adults, often involved only children themselves.

7.2 INTERPERSONAL LENS

In the sociocultural settings of Nikau and Kowhai, cultural tools such as rules and language, taught children how to participate in their ECE community. Relationships in those contexts helped young children to learn about work, and participation. As an observer and listener in these contexts, one of the most striking aspects of community for me was the sense of togetherness children found with each other. This section of the chapter, considers children’s interpersonal interactions in greater depth. It acknowledges that children’s relationships grew through taking part in a research project. In addition, the research project helped to illuminate how relationships shaped children’s learning, and enhanced their abilities to participate as members of their communities. Children who participated in this research project learned about how to be members of their communities through relationships. Through relationships with others, particularly children, they mutually structured (Rogoff, 2003) each other’s learning of both research and work.
7.2.1 Finding community with friends

Children’s observations during this research project into work were often recorded in the form of photographs. A teacher at Nikau made the insightful comment that “You must be getting some interesting photographs. The camera is an extension of children’s views” (14-01-14). Children’s photographs of relationships at Nikau are interesting. They have a strong focus on relationships with other children. Children’s photographs of their peers reveal the closeness of their relationships with each other.

A series of photographs taken by Chris, Evan and Isabella can be seen in Figures 66-71. The first three photographs (Figures 66-68) were taken from the vantage point of an onlooker. None of the children in the photographs appear to have directly interacted with the photographers, despite the photographer’s close proximity to the subjects. The focus on elements of physicality is magnetic. In Figure 66 the children used their hands to feel and manipulate objects. Evan stood directly behind the boy in Figure 67. Two boys in Figure 68 stood close to each other and a third boy was seen nearby on a bicycle, interested in their discussion. The photographs suggest a strong sense of comfort. The children in the photographs seemed at ease with each other, and with the photographer.
In the following three photographs (Figures 69-71) the child in each photograph interacted with the photographer. The photographs suggest a feeling of warmth between the subjects and the photographers. The photographers here, as in the first three photographs, stood close to their subjects. The photographs do not show the children’s gaze, but focus instead on their smiles. The smiles can be interpreted in more than one way.

Figure 69 Work in the Classroom (July 2014, Isabella)  
Figure 70 Work in the Classroom (March 2014, Chris)  
Figure 71 Work in the Classroom (July 2014, Isabella)

My initial interpretation was that the smiles suggest a close, friendly relationship between children in the photographs and the photographers. Children looked happy to have their photographs taken, and appear to have enjoyed the experience. An alternative reading is that the children may be performing as they think they should when a photograph is being taken. Photography has become a ubiquitous feature of the lives of many children, and life events – including daily routines – are documented through photographs on a regular basis (Rose, 2010). It may simply be that these children were accustomed to meeting requests for photographs. They knew what was expected from a person with a camera, and were prepared to perform accordingly.
In the next series of photographs taken by Evan, the children were amenable to having their images recorded. The first of these can be seen in Figure 72 where a group of children and I were seen discussing research equipment outside in the playground. Evan was situated behind the main group. Despite his photograph only showing the faces of one child and me, a sense of excitement and interest could be seen in the postures of other children in the photograph. Some of the children were standing, poised for action.

This was an important discussion where children learned about and practised using cameras and recording equipment. There were many questions, and children tried out the equipment. Together we all learned about how to use research equipment as we mutually structured (Rogoff, 1995) our understandings together. Evan’s photograph is fascinating as it shows the changing nature of his participation. He was a legitimate participant in the group yet he remained on the periphery (Lave & Wenger, 1991), in addition to being an “observant participant” (Thomson, 2013) who documented the group’s learning in his photographs.
Evan maintained his participation in the group as the discussion moved elsewhere in the playground. In Figure 73 a girl originally seen in Figure 72 can be seen sitting on a bicycle, part of a three-way research discussion with me and another child. The gaze of both me and the girl were on the third participant, who was out of shot. The discussion was then documented as it finished (Figure 74), showing me watching children as they moved off to do some biking.

Figure 75 shows Evan’s continuing interest in the research process when later in the afternoon he photographed me interacting with Isabella who was learning how to use the digital recorder. Evan’s photographs could be seen as a form of ‘intent participation’ (Rogoff et al., 2003). Evan listened to the discussion I had with others about research and then took a series of photographs as he put what he had learned into action. Evan observed in the role of a “legitimate peripheral participant” (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 29) until he was ready to take on a more active role through recording events using a camera.

Evan’s photographs reveal his interest in children at Nikau. As with others at Nikau, it was Evan’s relationships with other children that seemed to be of most
importance to him. These relationships helped children to guide the learning of their peers, particularly those who were new to the four year old classroom. These relationships provided opportunities for children to learn from each other as they co-constructed meaning. Relationships between children were also key to enabling children to structure each other’s participation at Nikau.

Evan\textsuperscript{18} was one of only two children who took photographs of adults at Nikau. Despite including me as an adult in his photographs (Figures 72-75) Evan’s clear interest was the group process. Evan’s focus on his peers is reflective of a salient feature of the photographs taken by children at Nikau. Few of the photographs depict teachers and in the photographs which do show teachers, they are not seen interacting with children. They are presented as being separate from children, completing their own tasks. Children took a total of 136 photographs at Nikau. Only three of the photographs featured teachers.

The lack of interest by children in taking photographs of teachers may have resulted from the apprenticeship model (Rogoff, 2003) enacted at Nikau. In this setting, children were encouraged to learn independently with minimal input from teachers. Teachers demonstrated how Montessori activities should be used and completed, then provided resources for children to complete at their own pace, only stepping in to offer help if asked or if they recognised a child was struggling. Although children were viewed as capable learners who could acquire knowledge through their own exploration of resources, adults were positioned as experts who knew how to use resources, and who modelled their knowledge to learners.

\textsuperscript{18} The other was Isabella (see Chapter Five).
Children viewed themselves as participating in work, because they could direct their own learning, often without the presence of a teacher. This was very different from the experiences of the three-six year old children in Howard’s (2002) South Wales study. Children in that study equated teacher presence with work because they felt the opportunities to direct their own learning were limited when teachers were present. For those children the notion of work was entwined with teacher presence and a lack of self-direction. At Nikau the notion of work was entwined with the opportunity for children to self-direct their learning, independent of teachers.

For children at Nikau, one of the outcomes of working away from adults was an increased focus on relationships with their peers. Children at Nikau experienced community with each other, separate from teachers. Teachers were a part of the setting and interacted with children, but it was children who were identified in photographs and in interviews, and it was children who were primarily associated with work.

This does not imply that children’s experiences of community with each other meant that they existed in separate worlds from adults at Nikau. Children’s sense of community played out against a backdrop of ongoing child/adult interactions, and were often informed from what children learned from those interactions, and other interactions that they witnessed (Waller & Bitou, 2011). This was also true for other children who participated in this project, such as Joseph and Frankie from Kowhai. In the following example, Joseph drew on knowledge he had built about Frankie based on his earlier observations of how teachers had responded to Frankie.

*One day when I visited Kowhai to discuss photographs with children, I noticed Frankie sitting on a step between rooms. Thinking he was taking a break I stopped to tell him that I had some of his photographs on my laptop. Children called out to let me*
know Frankie was having ‘time out’. I left and sat down with Joseph at a nearby table to discuss some of the photographs he had taken of work at home. A little later, Frankie got up from his step and approached us.

Fi

Hi Frankie.

Joseph

You’re naughty Frankie

Fi

Not anymore.

Joseph

Don’t run Frankie.

Joseph

You don’t need to see Frankie.

(Frankie elbows his way in to see the computer screen)

Joseph

He’s pushing me.

(Joseph sighs and turns back to the screen).

Joseph

That’s the flowers and that’s the big trees over at the neighbours. That’s the road. Last time it was broken.

All that black stuff down the bottom, it’s broken.

(11-01-13, Joseph, Frankie)

In this example, Joseph tried to structure Frankie’s participation in the work-focused discussion. Joseph drew on ideas he had previously gained through social referencing (Rogoff, 1995) to make decisions about what Frankie should be allowed to do. Joseph knew that Frankie had been directed to sit on the step by a teacher. He had witnessed the teacher’s actions and heard the teacher’s words. When Frankie came to join the discussion, Joseph attempted to guide Frankie’s movements through his use of gaze and language. He looked directly at Frankie and used the label of naughty to justify why Frankie should not be a participant in the discussion.

Joseph made attempts to exert control over Frankie’s physical actions by telling him not to run, and that he did not need to see the photographs. Frankie, in turn, exerted his right to be a participant by moving closer to the computer screen, making physical contact with Joseph in the process. Joseph used this as a further reason why Frankie
should not be part of the activity. Joseph eventually relented and accepted Frankie’s participation as part of the group. Determination and perseverance saw Frankie become an active participant in the discussion. Frankie was able to communicate his intentions and desire without uttering a single word. Joseph and Frankie, in effect, structured each other’s participation in the activity. They reached a point of intersubjective understanding with each other, where Frankie and Joseph were both able to participate.

### 7.2.2 Cultural artefacts

This experience with Joseph and Frankie also highlights the importance of ‘things’ such as photographs and cameras to children’s learning about work in this research. Photographs and cameras became cultural artefacts as part of the research process (Kinnunen & Puroila, 2015). They were ‘things’ that were imbued with meaning and were fundamental to children’s learning about work, and expressions of that learning. Young children used photographs, cameras and many other artefacts to express their ideas and to show their knowledge. They used the same artefacts in numerous ways, highlighting their creativity and originality in contributing to “polyvocal conversations” (Thomson, 2016, p. 9). This helped to show that not all children in the study reacted to the world in the same way, or had the same ideas. This recognition is vital to countering a universalised or essentialised notion of childhood (James & Prout, 2015). There is no one kind of childhood.

A simple example can be found in children’s experiences with toolbelts. The following two examples show how children used the same idea – toolbelts – in vastly different ways. The toolbelts meant different things to the children, and were used for different purposes. In the first example, Frankie who had explored the concept of work through participating in the research project applied some of his learning to other
experiences at Kowhai, sometimes in an abstract way. I recall the first time I observed him engage in dramatic play. Frankie and Aidan approached me as I sat inside with a group of children:

Aidan  
*Look Fi I’m a tiger.*

(Frankie walks behind Aidan, with a big smile on his face).

Frankie  
*Look Fi!!*

(Frankie approaches me wearing a toolbelt)

Aidan  
*Frankie’s a builder.*

Fi  
*Are you a builder today Frankie?*

(Frankie nods and smiles broadly)

Frankie  
*Fix bathroom.*

(Frankie takes one of my pens and puts it in his toolbelt).

Fi  
*Are you putting the pen in your toolbelt Frankie?*

Frankie  
(Nods) *And chainsaw, screwdriver.*

(Aidan and Frankie move outside)

(11-01-13, Frankie)

Frankie’s participation was intriguing. He had come inside specifically to show me his costume and the role he was playing. He was helped by Aidan who had engaged in a prior discussion with Frankie about his role as a builder. Frankie communicated information about the contents of his toolbelt. He showed his knowledge about builders and what tools they used. During later discussions outside, Frankie approached me three separate times to help him put on three layers of dress-up clothes. A teacher confirmed
the significance of this experience as she remarked to Frankie: “Frankie! You don’t usually use dress-ups!!” (11-01-13).

For Frankie the toolbelt was symbolic of his agency and identity. It provided him with the opportunity to perform using his developing imagination, and a way to make links to the work he had observed outside of Kowhai. Using the toolbelt in an imaginative way helped Frankie to express agency as playful worker. It broadened his range of communication allowing him to express identities as someone who could share ideas, and as somebody who could be a friend.

In the second example, a toolbelt featured in the experiences of children at Nikau. The following excerpt is from one of my observations at Nikau.

*There is a boy sitting on the mat using Mobilo*. What a special day – Mobilo does not come out very often! He chooses each piece carefully, snapping them together, and measuring them against his waist. The chain is growing longer. Perhaps it’s a carpenter’s toolbelt! Three other boys come to sit down to watch. They copy him and also make belts. They are silent to begin with, but as their belts increase, so too does the excitement level. They stand up, securing their belts around the middle. Isabella has joined in, and is manipulating individual pieces of Mobilo. She is quiet but glances up to keep an eye on the boys. I suddenly realise I am being watched intently. The boys are standing looking at me. It suddenly dawns on me that the toolbelts are not carpenters’ toolbelts as I had thought. They are gunbelts and the boys have become police officers. They begin to catch ‘baddies’. A finger-shaped gun is pointed at me and as I hear the words “Hands up. Stick your hands up” I react without thinking and raise my

---

19 Mobilo is a plastic construction toy with a variety of differently shaped pieces, including many that can be joined together.
hands. The boy shoots me with his gun-fingers and the other boys join in with the shooting, erupting into celebration, having shot a ‘baddie’. A teacher comes over and tells the boys to quieten down. Isabella, stands up smiling and coming forward to me, raises her Mobilo creation to me. “Would you like an ice-cream Fi?”

(4-4-14)

An initial reading of this scene suggests it is a familiar example of interactions between children in ECE settings in New Zealand. It is a group of boys engaging in dramatic play. Sociocultural theory provides a deeper reading that considers the impact of agency, identity and power (Lewis & Moje, 2003). This is not just a story about a boy using Mobilo, it involved his classroom friends, teachers and Nikau as well. Identifying and interpreting the interplay between what happens for an individual, their relationship with others and the context in which this takes place elucidates deeper understandings (Rogoff, 2003).

At Nikau, toys such as Mobilo were few and far between. Mobilo was brought out only occasionally, as it “was interesting” (4-4-14, Katrina) when it came out. What Katrina (a teacher) implied is that Mobilo represented a potential ‘unrest’. It was a symbol of things that could go wrong. In the example provided, boys used Mobilo to engage in a sense of fun together. The toolbelts that were created provided the boys with excitement, shared enjoyment and a sense of power. Toolbelts helped to unite the boys in a shared solidarity, and enabled them to perform roles as law enforcers who exerted control over others. For Isabella, the Mobilo experience provided her with the
chance to show her identity as a “helpful girl”.\(^\text{20}\) She offered me a Mobilo ice-cream, ensuring I was okay.

Teacher intervention only took place when the boys became too noisy. There was no earlier move to curtail the activity when it became apparent that the toolbelts were for guns. At Nikau, many of the parents had occupations or engaged in recreational activities that made use of guns. For many of the children then, guns were a feature of their daily lives. Teachers felt that showing respect for children’s gun play was a sign of respect for their families’ cultures.

This extract illustrates how participation during the Mobilo experience was mutually structured. The boys were provided Mobilo by teachers, which was an unusual experience. The boys were gifted a licence to be creative and imaginative, in an environment that sometimes frowned upon both. The boys, through their physical actions – sitting closely together at the same level, intently observing then copying the toolbelt creator, deftly joining pieces of Mobilo together – came together as a unified group. Further physical movements of standing up and pointing finger-guns intensified by loud voices, structured my participation as a ‘baddie’ who raised my hands. The teacher’s structured the boys’ actions again by moving over to them and verbalising her displeasure. Isabella tried to structure my participation by providing a diversionary activity of eating an ice-cream. In addition, the experience was situated in a context that had strong beliefs about showing respect for children and their families by honouring their cultural practices.

\(^{20}\) There is a wealth of information in this data relating to gender structuring but is beyond the scope of this thesis.
The interactions in this section, viewed through an interpersonal lens (Rogoff, 2003) built on the importance of peer relationships discussed previously in the community lens section. Thus, relationships had a profound effect on children’s participation in this research project. In this study, children showed a deep and intense interest in interacting with and learning from their peers. Young children’s interactions have shown both a separation from adults, and a focus on spending time with other children. This section has demonstrated once again, that children learned from what adults modelled, then applied that learning through interactions with other children, not always in a positive way. In addition this section has highlighted the use of objects to mediate meaning (Wohlwend, 2009). Objects held different meanings for children in different work contexts, highlighting the situated nature of knowledge (Crotty, 1998).

7.3 PERSONAL LENS

Children experienced participation in this project in different ways. Participating in research provided them with opportunities to forge connections between their homes and ECE settings, to communicate in new ways, and to share aspects of work in their lives in creative ways. The first part of the discussion focuses on Frankie, then the second part on Isabella, Joseph, Aroha and Coral. The chapter introduces Frankie, Isabella, Joseph, Aroha and Coral’s ideas and images which display their technical skills and knowledge as competent researchers.

7.3.1 Frankie: work bridges home and ECE

On one of my first visits to Kowhai, Frankie saw me taking photographs and came to ask what I was doing (7-12-12). Frankie was four, confident and affable. He offered his help and readily agreed to take photographs of important places in the centre. The photographs Frankie took can be seen in Figures 76-77 and the
photographs he directed me to take in Figures 78-79. This was a carefully planned series of photographs with Frankie taking time to carefully consider and choose what he wanted to be captured in each photograph.

The photographs are significant in that they are all photographs of *things*. These are material artefacts that Frankie considered important in his daily life at Kowhai. Artefacts such as the shed, windows, tyres and tissues mediated Frankie’s experiences at Kowhai. Through these artefacts Frankie could make connections to other people at Kowhai and to experiences that had taken place there (Bartlett, 2005). Things for children such as Frankie are more than mere objects, they become “identity texts” (Wohlwend, 2011, p. 249). Things become imbued with a variety of meanings that linked to Frankie’s personal experiences at Kowhai and in the wider world, practices and expectations at Kowhai, historical meanings related to particular objects, and beliefs about how they should be used. In this sense, things were *important* to Frankie.

The shed (Figure 76) that holds items such as tools and toys is often a place of great importance to children in ECE settings, for the treasures it promises. The treasures are valued and made safe by being locked away when not in use. Windows seen in Figure 77 from the outside, offer a shadowy glimpse of life inside, but also act as a barrier between the inside and outside worlds of Kowhai.

Frankie’s hands gripped the tyre tightly in Figure 78 suggesting he felt some ownership over them, or that he wanted to afford a clearer vantage-point for the photographer. Knowing that Frankie’s health was affected by asthma heightens the
relevance of the tissues and rubbish bin (Figure 79). Bringing the rubbish bin together
with the tissues provided a means for Frankie to explain without a single word,

the importance of following hygienic routines in a centre. From these four simple
photographs I was taught that Kowhai had exciting things for children to do, had
different places for children to explore both indoors and outdoors, that children had
some ownership over resources and that there were specific processes that helped to run the centre smoothly.

Perhaps the most valuable aspect of Frankie’s photography was the increased scope it gave him for communication. In the previous section there was discussion about a challenging interaction between Joseph and Frankie. This episode was typical of many of the interactions Frankie had with other children. Frankie found it very difficult to communicate verbally, and understanding his messages often required patience and mutually negotiated interpretation. Other children found it difficult to be tolerant, which in turn was frustrating for Frankie. He was sometimes identified by other children - as in the earlier example with Joseph - as somebody who could potentially cause problems.

Participating in a research project about work helped Frankie to explore new ways to communicate his ideas to those around him. Using a camera to show what was important to him opened up a new world for Frankie. In turn, this helped Frankie to forge a new identity as both a worker and a project participant. Identify formation involves both what individuals believe and know about themselves and how others perceive them to be (Bartlett, 2005). Bartlett (2005) spoke of people’s ability to overcome other people’s “negative social positioning” (p.3) by creating new “figured identities” (p.3). For Frankie, this meant that he was able to overcome the negative images other children had of him by expressing ideas through resources that were part of the research project. Objects such as the camera, photographs, notebooks and pens helped him to change aspects of who he was at Kowhai. They allowed Frankie a louder,
clearer voice when his own voice sometimes slowed down and obfuscated the clarity of his communication.

I observed a strong-minded, sensitive, knowledgeable and helpful boy as Frankie participated in the research project. Thinking about, listening and documenting ideas about work provided Frankie opportunities for developing social skills such as caring for others and sharing. For example, often when I arrived at Kowhai Frankie sought me out, taking my bag to carry and protect. Sometimes this care also extended to me. One time when I had been away from the centre for two weeks, Frankie seemed very concerned:

Frankie  *Been at work Fi?*

Fi  *Yes I went to visit some students.*

Frankie  *Long way?*

Fi  *Yes it was a long way Frankie.*

Frankie  *(reaching for my bag) Look after.*

(27-02-13)

Frankie also developed the ability to share during the research project. Having items to look after such as the bag and camera was challenging at first as Frankie wanted to ensure he was the only person who had access to them. Over time through participating in discussions with other children (14-12-12; 8-02-13; 20-02-13), Frankie learned the value of sharing and negotiation. During one discussion about sharing a camera, Frankie helped to develop group rules and a process for ensuring everyone had a turn with the camera (1-02-13).

Frankie broadened his means of communication through his focus on work. As a result of this extended communication he was able to learn new ways to participate at Kowhai, and to strengthen his links to home. Frankie contributed photographs that
showed the mutual interest and investment in work of both he and his family. Participating in the research project seemed to make Frankie feel happy. Frankie was an enthusiastic participant, always ready and willing to take part. His enthusiasm flowed over to others including people in his own family. His mother Mary spoke to me one day at Kowhai:

Mary  
I’m really sorry that Frankie’s only taken four photos. He started taking them as soon as he got home on Friday. He took some of diggers across the road from our house. Then when he woke up on Saturday he was sick with asthma and he ended up being sick all weekend.  
(Showing her own photographs on her i-phone)  
Here he is at home. He loves mowing lawns. (22-01-13)

Participating in the research project helped Frankie to make links between Kowhai, his family and experiences at home. His ongoing participation revealed his active involvement in constructing his life and the lives of his family (James & Prout, 1997). Frankie’s interest and enthusiasm in being involved in research on work meant that his family became involved in his endeavours and organised their time to accommodate his needs in relation to the research. The links between Frankie’s life at Kowhai and his life at home were strengthened by him being able to engage in experiences at Kowhai that helped him to think about his life at home. Being able to draw on “funds of knowledge” (Moll, et al., 1992, p. 133) from home strengthened Frankie’s ability to make contributions at Kowhai.

The subjects of the photographs Frankie took at home further reinforced his links with home, and also maintained his focus on ‘things’. The meanings that these objects had for Frankie helped to make links between the microsystems of Kowhai and
his home. Frankie was able to take an interest he developed at Kowhai, and use it to document images from his home life. These images were subsequently shared with his family, with me and with others at Kowhai. Frankie’s participation did not only affect his learning but also those around him as they “stretched their common understanding” (Rogoff, 1997, p. 272). Frankie’s shots of diggers can be seen in Figures 80-85.

The series of digger photographs shows Frankie’s enduring love of things. The photographs in Figures 80-82 convey a sense of Frankie’s fascination with the diggers and wanting to get closer to them. The camera he used had very basic functions and was not equipped with a zoom lens. He had to be creative in his positioning to ensure that he could get the best shots possible. Each of the first three photographs shows a progressively closer view of the diggers. Notice that all of the photographs
were taken from the vantage point of across the street. Frankie, probably supported by a parent, elected not to cross the road. As a whole, the series of photographs convey a sense of movement and activity.

Frankie’s digger photographs were taken after a discussion we had about work together at Kowhai. I asked Frankie about who did work:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fi</th>
<th>Who do you know who does work?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frankie</td>
<td>My mummy. At Dodd’s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fi</td>
<td>Who else does work?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frankie</td>
<td>ME!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fi</td>
<td>What work do you do?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frankie</td>
<td>A digger.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fi</td>
<td>You do work with a digger?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frankie</td>
<td>Dad brought home digger, compactor. Dad will bring a loader home next week and Daddy’s big digger for the grass.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fi</td>
<td>Will he use it for the grass?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frankie</td>
<td>Hole. In the drive.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(10-01-13)

My discussion with Frankie revealed both his interest in machinery and knowledge of his parents’ jobs. Despite this, his interest in his parents’ jobs was fleeting – it was the machinery his father brought home that was the focus of Frankie’s attention. It is clear that Frankie was proud of his own status as a worker. What can also be ascertained from the discussion is that Frankie felt like he was able to participate in work at his home. His participation was mutually structured with others in his family in a way that made him feel like an active participant (Rogoff, 1995). This idea is reinforced by further information from other photographs.
The photographs in Figures 86-88 show Frankie at home with his father. The photographs depict Frankie as an active participant in family events. In Figure 86 he can be seen working in his kitchen at home with his father. The photographs in Figures 87-88 were taken by Frankie as he observed his father cooking in their kitchen.

Although the photograph in Figure 86 was taken by Frankie’s mother and not Frankie himself, it helps to build an image of the importance of Frankie’s ideas to his family. If this information is added to the earlier information about Frankie – he participated in lawn-mowing and digger-driving– it builds a combined picture of Frankie as an active, contributing member (James & Prout, 2015) of his family. His desire to be a participant in recording aspects of work in his home, contributed to his active construction of family life in his home. Frankie’s relationship with his family ‘thickened’ (Klocker, 2007) his agency. Being provided opportunities to act enriched his ability to exercise agency.

The family had organised time to spend on Frankie’s work research. In turn, the inclusion of Frankie as an active participant in family life represents an important aspect of how childhood was constructed in his household. It is the organisation of
routine daily interactions as part of “everyday domestic life” (Solberg, 1997, p. 126) that affects how children are seen and whether their input is valued. Furthermore, thinking about these home-based experiences in relation to Frankie’s experiences at Kowhai was important, as they were legitimate and important forms of learning. Making links between Frankie’s experiences at Kowhai, and at his home, was a valid way to support his interests at Kowhai (Hedges et al., p. 187).

Frankie was knowledgeable and enthusiastic about work and participating in a research project gave him a way to share that knowledge and enthusiasm. His participation provided ways to make his perspectives of work visible. Being a research participant provided opportunities for Frankie to broaden his means of communication. Frankie, who found communicating through spoken words a protracted and sometimes challenging process, discovered new ways to communicate. Through his focus on work Frankie was also able to strengthen links between Kowhai and his home. He discussed work at home, and shared photographs he took of work when he attended Kowhai. Furthermore, his interest in work grew into a family interest in work.

Frankie had presented himself, on my first days at Kowhai, as a ‘key informant’ (Bernard, 2011) to the research project. Key informants are important to ethnographic approaches as they are knowledgeable and informed about their settings. Although key informants are often sought out by researchers (Bernard, 2011) both Frankie at Kowhai, and Isabella at Nikau, presented themselves as key informants. They expressed their research aspirations with ardent enthusiasm and deep intensity. It was impossible not to involve them.

7.3.2 Isabella

Isabella was not chosen initially as a research participant, but quickly conveyed a desire to take part. She observed me as I took photographs and as ‘focus’ children
experimented with cameras. Isabella wanted to take part, to take photographs and to be asked questions. She shadowed me as I moved around Nikau, observing my actions and interactions. I was often asked when she would be able to take a camera home. Isabella’s desire to be fully involved was fulfilled by her eventual inclusion as a ‘focus child’.

Isabella preferred to listen initially during group experiences, rather than openly contributing her own ideas. She learned from listening to other children, and as time progressed she became more confident in her own ability to participate. Several months into the project Bronwyn, a teacher at Nikau, agreed with me that Isabella had “Started to come out of her shell” (27-03-14). As a legitimate peripheral participant (Lave & Wenger, 1991), Isabella moved from listening to and observing others to asking questions and joining in discussions. During her early involvement she opted to take photographs as a way of expressing ideas, rather than verbalising ideas. A series of Isabella’s outdoor photographs can be seen in Figures 89-97.

Isabella created a series of photographs of places that she considered important at Nikau. Isabella’s photographs provide an eloquent portrait of the importance spaces have for children’s learning. It is not just relationships with people that mediate children’s learning, but also things and places (Prout, 2005). Isabella’s photographs complement the photographs shared by children in Chapters Five and Six. Those mementoes of work communicated children’s interest and emphasis on people, places and things (Ministry of Education, 1996, p. 11) in their ECE settings and at home.
Isabella’s photographs convey a sense of light and texture. The photographs in Figures 89-91 focus on a hut, one of the revered meeting spaces for children at Nikau. Isabella took three photographs showing contrasting textures of wood and metal, from varying angles. The photographs were carefully constructed with time and thought. The next three photographs show the grainy textures of soil and bark. A sprinkler and a plant can be glimpsed in two of the photographs. The third set of photographs shows grass and flowers that were growing at Nikau. Isabella put herself into the photograph of the grass as she bent down to get a closer view.

What is significant about Isabella’s photographic series overall is the lack of people in them. They represent what was a commonplace and comforting activity for Isabella at that time – spending time alone. There were several other children outside at the time the photographs were taken, but Isabella elected to take photographs that did not require her to interact with other people. Isabella’s focus on places speaks to Prout’s (2005) notion that children’s experiences and learning involve more than just their relationships with other people. Photographs such as the knee-grass photograph (Figure 95) suggest the importance of nature to Isabella. For her, learning about work came not just through her encounters with children and adults, it also came through feeling, admiring, touching, smelling and remembering non-human things.

7.3.3 Joseph, Aroha and Coral

Similar experimentation with form and colour emerged through the photographs of Joseph, Aroha and Coral. Their photographs highlight that being able to participate in a research project offered them a variety of ways to express their creativity. Their photographs show a similarity yet each was unique to the photographer’s own experiences and contexts. All of their photographs were taken in their homes. For these children, like Frankie earlier, participation in a research project has helped them to create a link between home and Kowhai, their ECE
setting. Joseph, Aroha and Coral were able to ‘bring’ their homes to Nikau through sharing the photographs they had taken, with peers.

What is interesting about this series of photographs as a whole (Figures 98-115) is that the photographers appeared to completely veer away from a focus on work. They appear to have enjoyed the opportunity to have control over using a camera for their own purposes. The photographs illuminate the creative views of life these children had.

The first set of photographs seen in Figures 98-100, touches on the importance of other living beings (Ministry of Education, 1996; Prout, 2005). The photographs convey a feeling of closeness – the feet of family members sneak to the edges of Figures 98 and 100. Aroha’s family pet in Figure 99 took centre stage in the photograph. Aroha skilfully presented the cat in motion, an almost-blur against the unmoving background. Aroha’s cat was important to her.
The photographs in Figures 101-103, taken by Coral and Joseph, show their fascination with texture. Their photographs deftly hone in on the variations in texture provided by materials created by humans and grown by nature. The photographs evoke a sense of both smoothness and roughness – the viewer can almost feel the surfaces. The regularity of vertical and circular shapes is brought in and out of focus, with varying effects.

The next set of photographs (Figures 104-106) shows more similarities in Coral and Joseph’s approaches to their subjects. Each photographer has taken photographs of their houses. Figure 104 depicts the roofline of Coral’s house from a sharp, sideways angle. Joseph’s image of the roofline of his house is on an angle too, but the photograph provides the added surprise of being taken from inside the house (Figure 106). Joseph’s photograph in Figure 98 complements the angularity of Figures 104 and 106 with its sharp, upward pointing image of his ceiling. For Coral and Joseph, the images they presented of their worlds are not straightforward and ‘ordinary’ family album photographs (Rose, 2010). They showed their worlds as being multi-faceted,
textured appealing places to be.

The photographs in Figures 107-109 are fascinating because they reflect a growing trend in popular culture. Joseph’s photographs are an example of participatory appropriation of current social practices (Rogoff, 1995). The photographs show his awareness of, and appropriation of current social practices. Joseph showed his knowledge, experience and skill with a camera, through taking three ‘selfies’. Joseph used a camera with a viewing screen, so was able to adjust his position (Figure 108) when he could see he was out of shot (Figure 107). He took time to aim the camera, and managed to keep it steady whilst photographing his own image.
The photographs in Figures 110-112 (Joseph) and 113-115 (Coral) are striking images that depict the photographers’ admiration of form, and the varied visual perspectives they had on life in their homes. The camera has been pointed down, up and sideways to show the differing ways they encountered their worlds. Coral has photographed different views of social spaces in her home. She was excited to see the photographs and called friends at Nikau over to view them. She told them, then me: “Look, two lounges, two lounges. (looking at me). I have two lounges at home!”

(20-2-13, Coral). The opportunity to share this information about her home life was exhilarating for Coral.
7.3.4 Photographs as texts

Viewed through Rogoff’s (2003) personal lens, the photographic contributions of Frankie, Isabella, Joseph, Aroha and Coral are testament to their participatory appropriation as community members of Kowhai, Nikau and their homes. What the photographs show is that all of those children participated in this study using cameras with competence, drawing on prior knowledge of how photography ‘gets done’. They learned from family members and other participants in the current study, how and why cameras are used. Frankie, Isabella, Joseph, Aroha and Coral all used that knowledge to document their own and others’ experiences in different contexts. Rose’s (2001) articulation of the need to focus on ‘visuality’ not just the content of photographs is valuable to this analysis. Children came to the current study with funds of knowledge (Moll, et al., 1992) relating to cameras and photography. In addition they showed their “ethical competenc[e]” (Rose, 2014, p. 12) through negotiating taking photographs with a range of people including peers, family and community members. Bronwyn, a teacher at Nikau, spoke about the positive effects on other children too, who were able to say no to having their photographs taken (11-09-14).

As Kinnunen and Puroila (2015) have demonstrated, taking part in all elements of this research photographic endeavour has provided a range of “opportunities for children to choose their way to narrate” (p. 2). All facets of the study – the shared discussions, providing assent, asking consent, observing others, the camera, the photographs – have provided a way to listen to children’s perspectives of their lives. This was one of the key objectives of this thesis. As researchers such as Einarsdottir (2010) and Stephenson (2009a) have found, using research methods such as taking photographs provides a way for children to share ideas through non-verbal methods.
Einarsdottir (2005) has further suggested that the main purpose of using children’s photographs should be for elicitation interviews. She cautioned that misinterpretation could occur if researchers were to interpret children’s photographs without consulting children about their own meanings. There is merit in Einarsdottir’s message – the meaning a child finds in a photograph may differ significantly from any meaning I give it. I cannot assume that I know what a child finds meaningful simply by looking at the same image. I believe there is also value in researchers interpreting photographs in addition to eliciting children’s verbal explanations.

My reasons for this complementary approach are two-fold – as a result of my interactions with children in this study, and through a consideration of literature. For many children in this project, the process of photography was enticing, the photographic products less so. Joseph and Aroha, for instance, had little interest in discussing their photographs once they were printed. The act of creating photographs, of documenting those micro-moments in their lives, was what was of importance to them. They both contributed a few comments about the photographs to me as a researcher, but were more content to look at and share their photographs with friends. For Joseph and Aroha, what was produced in their photographic images was what they wanted to communicate. Their photographs were not just to facilitate communication – they were their communication.

The second part of my argument is an epistemological one. Photographs represent a brief moment in time. How a child felt at the moment they took the photograph, what they thought when they provided a response to me about the photograph, and how they will perceive it in the future may all be different. The meanings they place on a photograph may alter depending on the context in which they
provide a response. Therefore what they know or think about a photograph may not be fixed ideas.

As Thomson (2016) has iterated, photographs can be considered texts that provide an impetus for interpretation. This has become an important mantra for me as I have meditated on data in the current study. The idea of a text implies that multiple readings could be made of photographs in this study, and that contextual factors could affect interpretations. Thomson’s (2016) suggestion of looking for “singularities as well as patterns” (p. 5) across photographs has therefore been valuable. For instance, by comparing photographs, I have made new interpretations, that are quite different from the meanings individual children placed on their photographs. In addition, interpreting photographs alongside a range of other data in the current study, has helped to avoid the ‘precariousness’ of reaching conclusions based on one solitary piece of evidence (Stephenson, 2009a).

This section has illustrated young children’s creative approaches to participating in work. It has shown that young children had a desire to participate in work, and that they brought their own individual ideas to participate in experiences. Work provided a means for young children to make links between their ECE settings and homes, often enriching the experiences of other community members in the process. Work also broadened the means of communication for individual young children, helping them to make aspects of their lives visible in new ways.

**SUMMARY**

This chapter has emphasised children’s desire to participate in work, in addition to their abilities to find their own creative ways of participating in work. It has been demonstrated that a process of apprenticeship (Rogoff, 2003) occurred in both ECE
settings and homes, where children learned through cultural tools such as rules and language, how to participate in work in those contexts. Young children enacted the learning that adults modelled, and applied that learning to organise the actions of others around them.

I have argued that young children learned they were separate from adults, and that they sought and created a sense of community with other young children. This sense of togetherness with other children was exemplified in photographs which depicted the warmth of children’s relationships. In addition, participating in a research project about work gave children opportunities to learn new ways to communicate their understandings of work, and new ways to forge links between their ECE settings and homes. Photographs became visual texts that allowed children a way to share their ideas, feelings and knowledge of work. It helped to make young children’s work-lives visible.
CHAPTER EIGHT

CONCLUSION

INTRODUCTION

Young children are knowledgeable about work, have feelings about work and participate in work. This thesis shows that work is an important feature of the lives of young children, despite the absence of their perspectives of work in literature (Mauthner, Maclean & McKee, 2000). This gap in the literature suggests that young children are undervalued (Bourdillon, 2006) or uninvolved in work (Levey, 2009a). Young children’s perspectives of work have been shared in this research project through words, actions and photographs, and show that listening to young children is valid. Young children are actively involved in work, and deserve to have their perspectives acknowledged and made visible (Thorne, 1987).

This final chapter sets out the understandings I have gained about young children’s perspectives of work. It begins with a discussion of the main findings then considers how the thesis contributes to the extant literature on children and work and theory. I identify limitations that affected the research, in addition to exploring the implications of the research. I then suggest future research that could be inspired by this project, and I close the chapter with some brief concluding remarks.

8.1 YOUNG CHILDREN’S PERSPECTIVES OF WORK

The four broad research questions which sit behind this thesis were aimed at eliciting a deeper understanding of what role work played in the lives of the young children in this study, and how it affected their lives. The thesis also had an objective of
finding out how/what young children thought about their relationships, both with other children and adults. The thesis focused on the following research questions:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Main Question</th>
<th>In what ways do young children understand work?</th>
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<td><strong>Sub-Questions</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>What does work mean to young children?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How are young children’s ideas about work shaped by their interactions with other children, family and teachers?</td>
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<td>What can young children’s understandings of adults’ work teach us about how they perceive the worlds of children and adults?</td>
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Overall there were three main research findings: Firstly, children’s perspectives of work are contextualised. Secondly, children are active participants in work. Thirdly, adults delimit children’s participation in work based on their perspectives of children. These findings are considered in a deeper way in the following discussion which focuses on the recognition that children learn about work in a holistic way through what they think, feel and do.

8.1.1 Thinking about work

In this research project young children’s thoughts about work were affected by who they saw engaging in work, how work was discussed by others, and their own participation in work. Thus, contextual factors, relationships and young children’s own personal experiences all affected what and how young children thought about work. At Nikau, the strength of philosophical beliefs shaped children’s learning and participation in work. Teachers structured the programme and environment based on those beliefs,
using them to make choices about what and how children should learn about work. Teachers’ adoption of Montessori (1973) principles at Nikau saw work presented as positive and desirable, accompanied an expectation that children would engage in work. As a result, teachers structured the environment in an orderly, regulated way with a focus on Montessori resources. Consequently, young children at Nikau interpreted work as a compulsory experience. They identified work as an active, physical experience which involved the manual manipulation of objects. Thinking about work for young children at Nikau was contextually driven and affected both by who they engaged with and what they used to facilitate their learning. The strength of this thinking was apparent in children’s application of it to work in other contexts such as family homes and a father’s business.

Young children in this research project also thought work was a daily feature of their lives at home, which reflects the ideas of Solberg (1997). At home, young children’s perspectives of work were shaped by what they observed, heard and experienced. Young children identified a range of regularly occurring work tasks, in addition to naming skilled family workers including parents, siblings and grandparents. Some young children also identified themselves as workers, listing the many tasks that they undertook. Opportunities to “pitch in” (Paradise & Rogoff, 2009, p. 1) helped children to develop identities as workers and to make valid contributions and to build relationships with their families (Liebel, 2004). Meanwhile, although many young children in this research project expressed a desire to be involved in household routines, their participation in work was delimited by adults.
Young children’s perspectives of work were most readily expressed through interactions and through their own photographs. Talking with others – in particular children - provided the chance to think together, enhancing young children’s understanding of work through shared ideas. Taking photographs became a significant way for young children to express their ideas through visual texts (Rose, 2010). For many children this was a valuable new means of communication.

8.1.2 Feelings about work

My research supports the view that perizhivanie (Brennan, 2014; Mahn, 2002) is an important aspect of understanding young children’s perspectives of work. Children expressed feelings in relation to work and observed others’ emotions too. Young children at Nikau expressed pride and satisfaction in undertaking and completing work in ECE settings. There were also children who noted that not having to do work made them feel happy. Others found a sense of importance and belonging through being able to share stories about work at/from home, reflecting what Schultheiss (2006) identified as a significant feature of work. Children also learned a great deal from observation of the emotions of others, noticeably teachers and parents. The unhappy face of a teacher in a photograph, and the burden of never-ending washing, for example, shaped the interpretations and learning of work for some children. For others, the idea that they wanted to be involved in work, but were not allowed to (for instance doing vacuuming) encouraged a sense of resistance as they tried to express agency.

Underlying the importance of learning about work through emotions was the value of relationships. It was relationships with “people, places and things” (Ministry of
Education, 1996, p.11) that sparked emotional responses in young children in this research. Considering relationships suggests answers for the third and fourth research questions: How are young children’s ideas about work shaped by their interactions with other children, family and teachers? What can young children’s understandings of work teach us about how they perceive the worlds of children and adults?

There was a clear link between relationships and children’s participation in work. Relationships, particularly with adults, had an influence on how, when and what young children could do in relation to work. Teachers’ and parents’ values and beliefs, particularly their views of children, afforded or constrained children’s ability to participate in work. Work, for young children, was a negotiated process that was affected by complex, interrelated contextual factors. Young children in this study had a profound sense of community with each other and cultural tools such as rules and language shaped the ways that they came together. It was these relationships with other children that appeared to be of greatest importance to the young children in this project. For some young children, work was a way to connect with adults in their lives, and to co-construct ideas together. For other young children, the desire to participate in work was superseded by the needs and wishes of adults.

8.1.3 Doing work

Young children learned about work in their ECE settings and homes through a process of apprenticeship with more experienced others (Rogoff, 2003). At Nikau, for example, teachers modelled how to use resources and how to ‘be’ a member of the Nikau community. Young children learned how to do work from their observations of teachers and other children, and from engaging in Montessori activities.
At home many children learned through observation of adults. This research shows that Morelli, Rogoff and Angelillo’s (2003) suggestion that children have little direct access to work in their homes, appears to be justified because many of the images and stories that young children shared indicated they spent a great deal of time observing their parents’ work, rather than taking part in it. Nevertheless there were also many children who described, discussed and documented their own work at home. Those children discussed a wide range of household tasks that they routinely took part in. One of the important ways that children recorded what they ‘did’ in relation to work was through using cameras to take photographs. They showed their abilities to engage in work in creative, insightful ways.

Young children’s perspectives of work were displayed in a variety of ways including through thinking, feeling and doing. Exploring the notion of work provided young children with a legitimate way to make connections between the children and adults in their homes and ECE settings. What work meant to them (research sub-question 2) differed depending on the context, what was happening and who was there. The literature on sociocultural theory (Vygotsky, 1987; Rogoff, 2003) argued that young children’s learning can be understood by examining the contextual relationship and personal factors that affect it. It is clear that the young children in this research project learned about work from more experienced others (Rogoff, 2003) including peers, siblings, parents, teachers and grandparents. This research supports an understanding of how contextual factors such as rules and language affected young children’s learning about work, and notes further, that young children subsequently used them to influence others. What this research adds is that if children’s lives are to
be analysed using sociocultural theory, their own perspectives need to be included as part of the process.

The additional lens of childhood studies has illuminated the significance of adults’ perspectives (Woodhead, 2006) in relation to what and how children learn about work. What this research project shows is that of all the contextual factors considered in this thesis, it is the effect of adults’ perspectives that appears to have had the greatest effects on children’s thoughts, feelings and actions in relation to work. I have surmised that adults’ perspectives of children affect how adults view a concept such as work, which subsequently shapes the experiences they provide for young children in relation to work. It seems that those fundamental views of children shape everything that comes afterwards. This research adds to childhood studies literature by suggesting that other contextual factors also shape children’s perspectives. Adults’ perspectives of children are a key element in shaping how and what children can do in relation to work, for example, nevertheless other contextual factors such as educational philosophies also need to be considered in relation to understanding how young children’s participation is shaped.

8.2 CONTRIBUTION OF THIS RESEARCH

This research contributes to the literature on children and work by showing that young children are knowledgeable about and actively participate in work. The findings add to the extant childhood studies literature by illuminating young children’s agency as workers, helping to make their lives visible (Smith, 2013). My research acknowledges the ways in which relationships affect young children’s participation (Rogoff, 2003) in work. It also suggests that a full understanding of young children’s participation cannot
be ascertained without seeking young children’s opinions on whether they are participating.

This thesis also makes a theorized contribution on young children’s perspectives of work which illuminates understandings of the play-work dichotomy in early childhood education. The thesis contributes to knowledge by showing that young children are interested in, are knowledgeable about and participate actively in work. The findings of this research identify that young children’s ability to be agentic contributors to work is mediated by the sociocultural contexts such as ECE settings and homes, in which they encounter work. Young children in this research project spoke about their desire to actively participate in work. Therefore, adults (whether teachers or parents) should listen by providing opportunities for young children to participate in work.

Early childhood education would benefit from examining the work-play dichotomy in greater detail. When teachers separate work and play, placing greater value on either work or play, they do young children a disservice. Work and play do not need to be viewed as separate and distinct. Recognising the value and benefit of both work and play could create more meaningful, creative opportunities for children to participate as active members of sociocultural contexts. Adopting a new perspective, where work and play are considered together would create increased possibilities for participation and deeper relationships between young children and adults.

Furthermore, this study identifies the specific influence of adults on children’s participation in work. My findings corroborate the importance of teacher presence (Howard, 2002); although I extend this notion beyond just teachers and beyond merely their physical presence. I recognise that all adults affect children’s perspectives of work in varied ways based on their own beliefs and values, structuring children’s time and
space based on what they believe is appropriate for children. My findings concur with Liebel’s (2004) insight that adults’ discourses of children mould organise and delimit young children’s participation in work.

The most important contribution this research makes is its focus on discussing young children’s experiences of work in a New Zealand context. This research demonstrates that young children have agency (Mayall, 2002), contribute to their ECE settings and homes (Christensen, 2002) and have an impact on their worlds (Woodhead, 2008). This study helps to make young children’s lives visible.

8.3 LIMITATIONS

My ontological and epistemological beliefs have affected my methodological approach to this research project. My belief in knowledge being partial and situated means I have used a methodological approach that recognises there is no one ‘truth’ about work. I have used an approach that has provided young children with opportunities to share stories about their own lives. This was a small, local study based in two ECE settings and two homes. It was undertaken over several months, in order for me to learn about the lives of participants by building relationships over time. As a result of the study being small and local, there was limited discussion about what focus children’s experiences might mean in relation to young children more generally. This study also focused on young children’s unpaid work, therefore the study makes no contribution in relation to issues such as child labour, or legislation that affects children as workers.

This is not a study that can be generalised to other settings, as it has been based on my recognition that knowledge is partial, temporal and contextual (Crotty, 1998).
Therefore I believe the findings of this study can only apply to the participants in this study. I do believe that the study has been useful for generating ideas that could be applied in other settings. My hope is that it stimulates the thinking of other researchers who will see the value of sharing children’s perspectives, and illuminating the work young children do. My choices over how to structure this thesis have also affected the interpretation I have provided. For example, I only presented information about Nikau in Chapter 5, and as a result, the interpretation is geared towards understanding a Montessori approach to work. I acknowledge therefore, that different choices about location of material within the thesis may have resulted in a different analytical approach.

Methodological limitations included the choice of settings and issues over consent. The two ECE settings that were chosen were very similar. It may have been useful to focus on settings where participants had more varied experiences in relation to work. Including settings with more diverse family types may have been advantageous. For example, young children’s perspectives of work may have been very different in a single parent family, a family affected by unemployment or a family where children care for parents who are ill. Children warmed to some methods more than others. Cameras were their favourite and first choice of methods. They found conducting interviews with adults a daunting task. More time spent practising interviews, perhaps with each other, or perhaps with puppets, may have eased their anxiety.

One of my strongest concerns as a researcher who has undertaken research which focuses on presenting children’s perspectives is ensuring I am re-presenting children’s ideas in a sensitive and meaningful way (Clark & Moss, 2005). I am very
aware that as an adult in this research project, I am the one who has made decisions about data including how it has been analysed and presented (Mauthner & Doucet, 2003). I acknowledge that I am a contributor to the data construction through the choices I make. I am conscious of the responsibility I have towards my participants. As I’Anson (2013) has concluded, researchers wield considerable power through all stages of the research process, even long after time in the field has ended.

8.4 IMPLICATIONS

This research has implications for educational practice and policy development by illuminating the importance of listening to young children (Clark & Moss, 2005). Work is one part of young children’s lives – there are many more! The research undertaken with young children suggests that they have many stories to share about their lives. Young children’s understandings of their worlds are not being heard and it is incumbent upon adults to find ways to listen to them.

Within education an important place to begin to listen is within initial teacher education programmes. This research project clearly indicated that adults’ perspectives of children and childhood directly affected young children’s opportunities to participate in active ways in their communities. Many children had limited opportunities for participation as a result. I suggest, therefore that initial teacher education programmes place a much greater emphasis on helping student teachers to think deeply about the beliefs that underpin their practice. In particular, learning to recognise and identify their own beliefs about children may enable teachers to be better listeners. In turn, young children may have greater opportunities for participation.

In practice, teachers could incorporate a broader range of strategies for listening to young children. For instance children could have greater involvement in the
construction of their own learning stories. Offering children the chance to identify their own moments of learning, to document their learning (through photographs, art or written text), and to participate in crafting learning stories, would give children a greater sense of ownership over their own learning. I believe it would also provide teachers with deeper insights into children’s perspectives of their lives. It may also offer additional ways to make closer links between the contexts of ECE settings and homes.

Teachers could also analyse practices, and policies in their settings relating to children. Questions could include (but are not limited to):

- Do the children in our setting have choices over resources they can use?
- Do the children in our setting have opportunities for work?
- Do the children in our setting contribute to setting up the environment each day?
- Can the children in our setting contribute to assessment in a meaningful way?
- Are the children in our setting consulted over decisions that affect them?
- Do the children in our setting have a voice in relation to policies in our setting?

Policy development could also be considered on a broader scale in relation to children more generally (Smith, 2013). The literature reviewed for this project highlighted the need for children to be included in decision-making around political and legal decisions in relation to work (Gasson & Linsell, 2011). My research concurs with their calls for inclusion, and I would extend that inclusion to all areas of life where decisions are made that affect children including local government, government, health contexts and educational contexts. It would be beneficial to consider all children and not to make decisions for children based upon notions of competence in relation to age (Woodhead, 2008). We need to rethink our ideas about children and provide ways for them to contribute their perspectives.
8.5 FUTURE RESEARCH

I echo the call from childhood studies researchers for more research that makes young children’s lives visible (James & Prout, 2015; Smith, 2013; Thorne, 1987). There are many other areas of young children’s lives in addition to work which remain hidden. I believe that a focus on participatory methods would enhance young children’s participation in research. Early childhood settings could expand some of their practices to include research with children, both as a way of providing a greater range of learning experiences for young children, and also as a way to create closer links between ECE settings and young children’s homes.

The benefits of doing research with children, particularly using a focus on visual research methods (Thomson & Gunter, 2007), could be exciting for teachers and children. Parents too, could consider the ways children are invited to contribute to their families (Mauthner, et al., 2000), and to acknowledge the work that children already do (Bourdillon, 2006). The findings of this research also imply that adults should take more time to reflect on their beliefs about children. Adults’ beliefs exert a powerful influence on young children’s lives, and engaging in reflection could lead to improved experiences for young children.

My suggestions for future research include more research into young children’s lives to promote greater visibility for young children. I think there would be value in creating increased partnerships between researchers and educational settings to scaffold the research knowledge of teachers and children. In addition, as mentioned in the previous paragraph adopting a greater use of visual research methods would help to provide more opportunities for young children to share their perspectives of their worlds.
Finally, more research into young children’s experiences of work would be valuable. I envisage research that provides more information about how and what work young children do, in addition to young children’s lived experiences of work. That research could also consider work in different contexts, and how it is affected by issues such as poverty, paid employment, providing care (for siblings or parents); culture; and gender.

FINAL COMMENTS

I began this research with the aim of finding out more about young children’s perspectives of work. I have found that young children are active, skilled and enthusiastic participants in work. I have also discovered that young children are capable, creative and insightful researchers. It has been a huge privilege to have been involved in this research and I applaud the childhood studies and sociocultural theorists who have inspired me to listen to and observe young children. Finally, my thanks go out again to the young children who contributed their time and ideas to this research. Like Caleb, who shared his ideas at the beginning of this research, I hope you all have many more dances to come!
References


APPENDICES

APPENDIX A Information sheet/consent form ECE settings

APPENDIX B Information sheet/consent form adult participants

APPENDIX C Consent form ECE settings parents/focus children parents
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APPENDIX D Field notes form

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APPENDIX F Initial coding examples

APPENDIX G Coding category example
APPENDIX A

INFORMATION SHEET AND CONSENT FORM: ECE SETTINGS

“Do you dance at work Mummy?”
An ethnographic exploration of the meanings young children place on work.

INFORMATION SHEET FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD SETTING

Kia ora, thank you for showing an interest in this project. My name is Fiona McAlevey and I am a doctoral student at the University of Otago, under the supervision of Dr Susan Sandretto and Professor Helen May. I would like to request permission to undertake research in your early childhood setting. Please read this information sheet carefully before deciding whether or not research in your setting is a possibility. If you decide to participate I thank you. If you decide not to take part there will be no disadvantage to you and I thank you for considering this request.

This is a project about young children and the phenomenon of work. I am interested in finding out what young children think about work and how their ideas are affected by the communication they have with others. I will be taking an ethnographic approach to the project, so envisage visiting the setting two times a week for 2-3 hours, over a six month time period. This project is being undertaken as part of the requirements for the Doctor of Education.

Everyone in this setting will be invited to take part in the research project – children, parents, teachers and centre staff. Six focus children will be invited to be active participants in the research process through gathering data (photographs and other creative representations). These children will be invited to interview peers, parents, teachers and centre staff. All participants can see the information that is being recorded during the research process, and after the research is finished, a copy of the thesis will be gifted to the centre. Focus children will help to decide how they would like to be given information about the project – for example, perhaps through making a special book together.

Should your setting agree to take part in this project, everyone may be asked to:

- be observed/recorded by the researcher
- have photographs/stories/drawings made by focus children
- be interviewed by children
- let the researcher know if you have been approached by children who feel uncomfortable during any stage of the research

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Please be aware that you may decide to withdraw the early childhood education setting from the project without any disadvantage.

People in the setting may be audio taped or photographed by the researcher or by children. This information will be used to analyse interactions between focus children, their peers, and any other adults who are involved. Audio recordings and photographs made by children may be used to provide information for interviews with children. Everyone will be asked if they are comfortable with participating before any recording takes place. Other data such as the profile books of focus children, policies, books and planning may be analysed. Information about families may be collected through conversations with a focus child. The information will be used to provide insight into the meanings children place on work. Assent will be gained from focus children and consent from their parents/caregivers before any research takes place.

The data collected will be securely stored in such a way that only the researcher and her supervisors, and transcribers, will be able to gain access to it. Data obtained as a result of the research will be retained for at least 5 years in secure storage. Any personal information held may be destroyed at the completion of the research even though the data derived from the research will be kept for much longer or possibly indefinitely. The results of the project may be published and will be available in the University of Otago Library (Dunedin, New Zealand). Information from the research project, including photographs, may also be shared at academic conferences and in journals. If photographs are used, anonymity cannot be guaranteed, but every effort will be made to preserve confidentiality. Information about the project will also be shared with children, staff and parents in a presentation in the early childhood education setting.

At any stage of the research process children, parents, teachers and centre staff can ask to see any information that relates to them. Before the final thesis is published, they will also have an opportunity to see any information relating to them. If there are changes that they would like to make, they will be able to let me know.

Interviews will involve an open-questioning technique. Focus children will decide what questions to ask, and they will carry out the interview at a mutually agreed upon location. The researcher will be present at the interviews to record information. The general line of questioning includes what is work, what work do you do, where do you work, and why? The precise nature of the questions which will be asked have not been determined in advance, but will depend on the way in which the interview develops. Consequently, although the University of Otago Human Ethics Committee is aware of the general areas to be explored in the interview, the Committee has not been able to review the precise questions to be used. In the event that the line of questioning does develop in such a way that participants feel hesitant or uncomfortable they are reminded of their right to decline to answer any particular question(s) and also that they may withdraw from the project at any stage without any disadvantage of any kind.

If you have any questions about our project, either now or in the future, please feel free to contact either:-

Fiona McAlevey or Dr Susan Sandretto
College of Education College of Education
03 366 8000 (work) 03 479 1100
mcafi534@student.otago.ac.nz susan.sandretto@otago.ac.nz
Thank you for taking the time to consider this information.
I look forward to your response,

Fiona McAlevy (researcher)

This study has been approved by the University of Otago Human Ethics Committee. If you have any concerns about the ethical conduct of the research you may contact the Committee through the Human Ethics Committee Administrator (ph 03 479 8256). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated and you will be informed of the outcome.
“Do you dance at work Mummy?”
An ethnographic exploration of the meanings young children place on work.

CONSENT FORM FOR
EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION SETTING MANAGEMENT

I have read the Information Sheet concerning this project and understand what it is about. All my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand that I am free to request further information at any stage.

I know that:-

1. Participation in the project is entirely voluntary;

2. Children, teachers and staff from the setting, and parents are free to withdraw from the project at any time without any disadvantage;

3. Personal identifying information such as contact details will be destroyed at the conclusion of the project but any raw data on which the results of the project depend will be retained in secure storage for at least five years;

4. Photographs and audio-tapes may be made by the researcher or children. The photographs may be used for analysis, and in journal publications and conference presentations.

4. This project involves an open-questioning technique. The general line of questioning includes what is work, what work do you do, where do you work, and why? The precise nature of the questions which will be asked have not been determined in advance, but will depend on the way in which the interview develops and that in the event that the line of questioning develops in such a way that I feel hesitant or uncomfortable I may decline to answer any particular question(s) and/or may withdraw from the project without any disadvantage of any kind.

5. Results will be presented in the ECE setting. The results of the project may be published and will be available in the University of Otago Library (Dunedin, New Zealand). Information about the project, including photographs, may be presented at conferences or published in journals. If photographs are used anonymity cannot be guaranteed, but every attempt will be made to preserve anonymity.

I agree for this early childhood setting to take part in this project.

..................................................... ..................................................
(Signature of participant) (Date)

This study has been approved by the University of Otago Human Ethics Committee. If you have any concerns about the ethical conduct of the research you may contact the Committee
through the Human Ethics Committee Administrator (ph 03 479 8256). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated and you will be informed of the outcome.
APPENDIX B
INFORMATION SHEET AND CONSENT FORM: ADULT PARTICIPANTS

“Do you dance at work Mummy?”
An ethnographic exploration of the meanings young children place on work.

INFORMATION SHEET FOR ADULT PARTICIPANTS

Kia ora, thank you for showing an interest in this project. My name is Fiona McAlevey and I am a doctoral student at the University of Otago. Please read this information sheet carefully before deciding whether or not to participate. If you decide to participate we thank you. If you decide not to take part there will be no disadvantage to you and we thank you for considering our request.

This is a project about young children and work. I am interested in finding out what young children think about work and how their ideas are affected by the communication they have with others. I will be taking an ethnographic approach to the project, so envisage visiting the centre two times a week for 2-3 hours, over a six month time period. This project is being undertaken as part of the requirements for the Doctor of Education.

Everyone in this centre will be invited to take part in the research project – children, parents, teachers and centre staff. Children will be invited to be active participants in the research process, gathering data (photographs and other creative representations). Some children will be involved in interviewing peers, parents, teachers and centre staff. These interviews will take 15-20 minutes each. All participants can see the information that is being recorded during the research process, and after the research is finished, a copy of the thesis will be gifted to the centre. Children will help to decide how they would like to be given information about the project – for example, perhaps through making a special book together.

Should you agree to take part in this project, you will be asked to:

- be observed/recorded by the researcher (if you work at the centre)
- have photographs/stories/drawings made of you by children
- be interviewed by children
- let the researcher know if you have been approached by children who feel uncomfortable during any stage of the research

Please be aware that you may decide not to take part in the project without any disadvantage to yourself of any kind.
You may be audio taped or photographed by the researcher or by children. This information will be used to analyse interactions between you, children and any other adults who are involved. Audio recordings and photographs made by children may be used to provide information for interviews with children. You will be asked if you are comfortable with participating before any recording takes place.

Information about your family may be collected through conversations with your child. The information will be used to provide insight into the meanings children place on work.

The data collected will be securely stored in such a way that only the researcher and her supervisors, and transcribers, will be able to gain access to it. Data obtained as a result of the research will be retained for at least 5 years in secure storage. Any personal information held about you may be destroyed at the completion of the research even though the data derived from the research will be kept for much longer or possibly indefinitely. The results of the project may be published and will be available in the University of Otago Library (Dunedin, New Zealand). Information from the research project, including photographs may also be shared at academic conferences and in journals. If photographs are used anonymity cannot be guaranteed, but every attempt will be made to preserve confidentiality. Information about the project will also be shared with children, staff and parents in a presentation at the ECE setting.

At any stage of the research process you can ask to see any information that relates to you. Before the final thesis is published, you will also have an opportunity to see any information relating to you. If there are changes that you would like to make, you will be able to let me know.

Interviews with you will involve an open-questioning technique. Children will decide what questions to ask, and they will carry out the interview at a mutually agreed upon location. The researcher will be present at the interviews to record information and may ask follow-up questions. The general line of questioning includes what is work, what work do you do, where do you work, and why? The precise nature of the questions which will be asked have not been determined in advance, but will depend on the way in which the interview develops. Consequently, although the University of Otago Human Ethics Committee is aware of the general areas to be explored in the interview, the Committee has not been able to review the precise questions to be used. In the event that the line of questioning does develop in such a way that you feel hesitant or uncomfortable you are reminded of your right to decline to answer any particular question(s) and also that you may withdraw from the project at any stage without any disadvantage to yourself of any kind.

If you have any questions about our project, either now or in the future, please feel free to contact either:-

Fiona McAlevey or Dr Susan Sandretto
College of Education College of Education
03 508 650 200 ext 5022 (work) 03 479 1100
mcafi534@student.otago.ac.nz susan.sandretto@otago.ac.nz

Thank you for taking the time to consider this information.
I look forward to your response,
Fiona McAlevey (researcher)

This study has been approved by the University of Otago Human Ethics Committee. If you have any concerns about the ethical conduct of the research you may contact the Committee through the Human Ethics Committee Administrator (ph 03 479 8256). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated and you will be informed of the outcome.
“Do you dance at work Mummy?”
An ethnographic exploration of the meanings young children place on work.

CONSENT FORM FOR
ADULT PARTICIPANTS

I have read the Information Sheet concerning this project and understand what it is about. All my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand that I am free to request further information at any stage.

I know that:-

1. My participation in the project is entirely voluntary;

2. I am free to withdraw from the project at any time without any disadvantage;

3. Personal identifying information such as contact details will be destroyed at the conclusion of the project but any raw data on which the results of the project depend will be retained in secure storage for at least five years;

4. Photographs and audio-tapes may be made of me by the researcher or children. The photographs may be used for analysis, and in journal publications and conference presentations.

5. This project involves an open-questioning technique. The general line of questioning includes what is work, what work do you do, where do you work, and why? The precise nature of the questions which will be asked have not been determined in advance, but will depend on the way in which the interview develops and that in the event that the line of questioning develops in such a way that I feel hesitant or uncomfortable I may decline to answer any particular question(s) and/or may withdraw from the project without any disadvantage of any kind.

6. Results will be presented in the ECE setting. The results of the project may be published and will be available in the University of Otago Library (Dunedin, New Zealand). Information about the project may be presented at conferences or published in journals. If photographs are used, I understand that anonymity cannot be guaranteed, but that every attempt will be made to preserve my confidentiality.

I agree to take part in this project.

.......................................................
.......................................................

(Signature of participant)  (Date)

This study has been approved by the University of Otago Human Ethics Committee. If you have any concerns about the ethical conduct of the research you may contact the Committee through the Human Ethics Committee Administrator (ph 03 479 8256). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated and you will be informed of the outcome.
APPENDIX C
CONSENT FORM FOR PARENTS/ASSENT FORM FOR CHILDREN/INFORMATION BOOKLET FOR CHILDREN

“Do you dance at work Mummy?”
An ethnographic exploration of the meanings young children place on work.

CONSENT FORM FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION SETTING CHILDREN

I have read the Information Sheet concerning this project and understand what it is about. All my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand that I am free to request further information at any stage.

I know that:

1. My child’s participation in the project is entirely voluntary;

2. I am free to withdraw my child from the project at any time without any disadvantage;

3. Personal identifying information such as contact details will be destroyed at the conclusion of the project but any raw data on which the results of the project depend will be retained in secure storage for at least five years;

4. Photographs and audio-tapes may be made of my child by the researcher or other children. The photographs may be used for analysis, and in journal publications and conference presentations;

5. My child may feel uncomfortable taking part in the research process. I will let my child know that they can tell me or a teacher that they do not want to keep participating in the project. I will tell the researcher if my child feels uncomfortable;

7. Results will be presented back to the setting. The results of the project may be published and will be available in the University of Otago Library (Dunedin, New Zealand), and information presented at academic conferences, or published in journals. If photographs are used, I understand that anonymity cannot be guaranteed, but that every attempt will be made to preserve confidentiality.

I agree for my child to take part in this project.

....................................................................................................................................
....................................................................................................................................
(Signature of parent/guardian) (Date)

....................................................................................................................................
....................................................................................................................................
(Name of child)
This study has been approved by the University of Otago Human Ethics Committee. If you have any concerns about the ethical conduct of the research you may contact the Committee through the Human Ethics Committee Administrator (ph 03 479 8256). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated and you will be informed of the outcome.
“Do you dance at work Mummy?”
An ethnographic exploration of the meanings young children place on work.

CONSENT FORM FOR
PARENTS/GUARDIANS OF FOCUS CHILDREN

I have read the Information Sheet concerning this project and understand what it is about. All my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand that I am free to request further information at any stage.

I know that:

1. My child and family’s participation in the project is entirely voluntary;

2. I am free to withdraw my child or family from the project at any time without any disadvantage;

3. Personal identifying information such as contact details will be destroyed at the conclusion of the project but any raw data on which the results of the project depend will be retained in secure storage for at least five years;

4. Photographs and audio-tapes may be made of my child by the researcher or other children. Photographs may also be made of my family. The photographs may be used for analysis, and in journal publications and conference presentations;

5. This project involves an open-questioning technique. The general line of questioning includes what is work, what work do you do, where do you work, and why? The precise nature of the questions which will be asked have not been determined in advance, but will depend on the way in which the interview develops and that in the event that the line of questioning develops in such a way that I or my family feel hesitant or uncomfortable we may decline to answer any particular question(s) and/or may withdraw from the project without any disadvantage of any kind;

6. My child may feel uncomfortable taking part in the research process. I will let my child know that they can tell me or a teacher that they do not want to keep participating in the project. I will tell the researcher if my child feels uncomfortable;

7. Results will be presented back to the setting. The results of the project may be published and will be available in the University of Otago Library (Dunedin, New Zealand), and information presented at academic conferences, or published in journals. If photographs are used, I understand that anonymity cannot be guaranteed, but that every attempt will be made to preserve confidentiality.

I agree for my child and family to take part in this project.

........................................................................................................ (Signature of parent/guardian)
........................................................................................................ (Date)
........................................................................................................ (Name of child)
This study has been approved by the University of Otago Human Ethics Committee. If you have any concerns about the ethical conduct of the research you may contact the Committee through the Human Ethics Committee Administrator (ph 03 479 8256). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated and you will be informed of the outcome.
“Do you dance at work Mummy?”
An ethnographic exploration of the meanings young children place on work.

ASSENT FORM FOR CHILD PARTICIPANTS

I have been told about this study and understand what it is about. All my questions have been answered in a way that makes sense.

I know that:

1. Participation in this study is voluntary, which means that I do not have to take part if I don’t want to and nothing will happen to me.

2. Anytime I want to stop, that’s okay. I don’t have to give a reason.

3. Fiona, and maybe other children, will photograph and audio-tape me so that they can remember what I say and do.

4. If I don’t want to answer some of the questions, that’s fine.

5. If I have any worries or if I have any other questions, then I can talk about these with Fiona, my parents/guardians or teachers.

6. The paper and computer file with my answers will only be seen by Fiona and the people she is working with. They will keep whatever I say private.

7. Fiona will write up the results from this study for her University work. The results may also be written up in journals and talked about at conferences. My real name will not be on anything Fiona writes up about this study, but some of the photographs I have taken, and that others have taken of me, might be used, and seen by other people. Results will also be shared with other children, teachers and parents in a presentation in my ECE setting. I can take part in the presentation if I want to.

I agree to take part in the study.

.......................................................... ........................................
Signed Date
You Are Invited
To Take Part
in a
ResearchProject
Hi there, my name is Fi.

I am a researcher.

That means I like finding out about things.
Sometimes I watch children playing

Sometimes I ask questions
Sometimes I write down notes

Sometimes I take photographs
I would like you to help me to do some research
To help me ask people questions

To help me take photographs
To share your ideas with me
You can stop doing the research any time.
Just tell an adult you want to stop.
If you or your family have any questions you can contact me:
0508 650 200 ext. 5022
mcafi534@student.otago.ac.nz
APPENDIX D
FIELD NOTES FORM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>PLACE</th>
<th>TIME</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IMPORTANT DETAILS</th>
<th>SENSORY</th>
<th>PERSONAL RESPONSES</th>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WORDS, PHRASES, INSIDER LANGUAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QUESTIONS FOR THE FUTURE</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONVERSATION SUMMARIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix E: ECE SETTING FLYER

“Do you dance at work Mummy?”
An ethnographic exploration of the meanings young children place on work.

I am searching for an early childhood education setting to undertake a research project in. This project is part of my study towards a Doctor of Education degree through the University of Otago. The aim of the project is to find out young children’s perspectives on work. I hope to discover what work means to young children, and how their ideas about work are shaped by interactions with other children, families and caregivers. Very little research has been undertaken into young children’s perspectives on work, particularly in New Zealand.

This research study will focus on working with children, as co-researchers, to explore the meanings they place on work. It will involve all 4-6 years olds in the setting. From this group, a smaller group of 6 participants will be selected that includes three girls and three boys of varied ethnicities. Children will be interviewed to find out the meanings they place on work. The children will also photograph and interview their peers, staff from the setting and parents in relation to work. Participation in this study will be of benefit to the early childhood education setting. Staff, parents and caregivers will learn more about children’s perspectives on work, and their perspectives on the worlds of children and adults. Children will have the opportunity to practise research skills, learning and participating alongside their peers and adults in the setting.

The project will run from July 2013 - March 2014. During that time the researcher will visit the setting on a regular basis to observe, record, and analyse children’s perspectives on work.

If this research study is of interest to your setting, please contact:

Fiona McAlevey: Christchurch 7614
0508 650 200 ext. 5022 (work) mcafi534@student.otago.ac.nz
## APPENDIX F

### INITIAL CODING EXAMPLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>fighting</td>
<td>not work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>accommodating</td>
<td>after school programmes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>good work'</td>
<td>unemployment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>montessori equipment</td>
<td>one income family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>parent helps child</td>
<td>choosing montessori</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jobs at home are not work</td>
<td>washing car = work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>equipment for cooking</td>
<td>nursery teachers = not work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>knowledge of family structure</td>
<td>folding washing = not work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gardening = work</td>
<td>making = not work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>writing = work</td>
<td>work at preschool</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>work and feelings</td>
<td>equipment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cleaning tables = work</td>
<td>cooking = work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>normally help'</td>
<td>mowing lawns = work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rules about work</td>
<td>feeding animals = work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jobs at home</td>
<td>reading = work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>play with little brother</td>
<td>listening = work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>getting dressed</td>
<td>music = work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>payment for work</td>
<td>water play = work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>knowledge of parents' jobs</td>
<td>using blocks = work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>permission for child to work</td>
<td>dancing = not work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>location</td>
<td>cuddling = not work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>compulsory</td>
<td>using slide = not work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>work in relation to play</td>
<td>painting = work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mother</td>
<td>cooking = not work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>father</td>
<td>using moonhoppers = work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>children's work</td>
<td>mat-time = not work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>occupation</td>
<td>safety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>teacher</td>
<td>toys vs real</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>peers</td>
<td>using flour = not work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>indecision</td>
<td>activity = jobs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>work brings rewards</td>
<td>jobs = work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>methodological</td>
<td>doing dishes = work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>montessori work</td>
<td>painting = not work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>work = cleaning</td>
<td>using dress ups = not work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>work = setting table</td>
<td>father in relation to son</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>work = vacuuming</td>
<td>mat-time = work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cleaning floors = not work</td>
<td>playing doctors = work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>baking = work</td>
<td>reading = not work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>playing on computers = not work</td>
<td>hedge-trimming = work</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX G
CODING CATEGORY EXAMPLE

1. What is work?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Work is taking part in household chores</th>
<th>Work is taking part in household chores</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Code</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work = recycling</td>
<td>Taking out the recycling to the recycling bin</td>
<td>Aidan’s photo of recycling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work = gardening</td>
<td>Pulling out weeds, watering plants</td>
<td>Aidan’s photo of pulling weeds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Fi: Do you do work at home Aidan?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Aidan: I wash the dishes, I take out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>the weeds and brush the dog</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(11 April 2013 Aidan1-2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work = pets</td>
<td>Taking care of pets</td>
<td>Aidan’s photos of his dogs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Fi: Do you do work at home Aidan?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Aidan: I wash the dishes, I take out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>the weeds and brush the dog</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(11 April 2013 Aidan1-2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work = dishes</td>
<td>Washing the dishes</td>
<td>Aidan’s photo of doing the dishes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work = mail</td>
<td>Emptying the letterbox</td>
<td>Aidan’s photo of getting the mail</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Work = shopping | Going to buy groceries, making shopping lists | Kate’s photo  
Kate’s photo  
Kate’s photo  
Fi: Does anybody do work at home?  
Bella: Yes, Mum…She goes to the shop.  
Fi: She goes to the shop? What does she buy?  
Bella: Lollipops  
(24 February 2013 Bella 1-4) |
APPENDIX H

INTERVIEW SCHEDULES

Questions for Children in ECE settings

Do you know anybody who does work? What work do they do? Where do they work?

Do teachers do work? What work do they do?

Do children do work? What work do they do?

Can you see anyone here doing work? What work is she/he doing?

Do you do work?

What is work?

Does anybody do work at home?

Do you do work at home?

Are there any questions you would like to ask me?

Children’s Questions for Teachers

Does anyone do work in this centre?

Children’s Questions For Parents at Home

Does anyone do work here?

What work do you do?

Questions for Teachers

As you know I’ve been talking to children about work. I was wondering what you think this environment does to support children’s thinking about work?

Is there anything that you think children have learned through participating in this project?

Are there any questions you want to ask me?