

“CAN YOU LOOK AFTER US?”
THE INFLUENCE OF
ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE
FOR CHILDREN’S EXPERIENCES
IN AN EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTRE

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the influence of organisational culture for children's lived experiences in an early childhood centre in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Organisational culture, or 'the way we do things around here', has not been the focus of comprehensive research in early childhood settings, yet my research has shown it to be a powerful influence for children's experiences. Understanding the nature of organisational culture in the early childhood education context, and how it arises and endures, is therefore important for a fuller understanding of children's experiences in such settings.

A case study approach within a qualitative research paradigm is taken, including individual interviews with staff, children and parents, a focus group interview with teachers, observations, artefact analysis and reflective notes. The analysis takes the form of a grounded theory approach, beginning with the identification of enacted centre norms, which were found to be the linchpin of the centre's organisational culture.

My study uses two frameworks for analysis to explore the organisational culture of the case study centre in terms of influences for children's experiences. The first is Schein's (2010) model of organisational culture, which identifies three progressively deeper levels from visible actions and artefacts, through espoused core values, to deeply held assumptions and beliefs revealed by norms that were enacted but unacknowledged. The second is Foucault's conception of power,

particularly disciplinary power and biopower, and his notion that specific patterns of social norms serve to integrate people into social entities.

Findings from Schein's lens showed how espoused values contributed to enacted norms, which directly influenced children's experiences in the case study centre. The espoused value of child choice was traced as a specific example, for its influence for children's experiences. This value arose not from the founder of the organisation, as Schein suggests, but from the teaching team, with the designated centre leader contributing to its endurance through ensuring a strong level of fit with new members of the teaching team, and to a lesser extent with incoming parents.

Analysis from Foucault's lens revealed that while younger children were coming to grips with the content and context of centre norms, the older children were able to predict that adults would act according to centre norms, and to use that knowledge to meet their own desires of the moment. Surveillance as a commonly employed technique of disciplinary power, intersected with a core centre value of child safety, leading to a child perceiving that she was unsafe unless being watched by an adult. This is an example of biopower inserting itself into the psyche of the child.

Thus, organisational culture becomes a curriculum issue, because it is shaping children's experiences in early childhood education as children make their own sense of norms and way things get done. To continue to ignore it is to close our

eyes to critical aspects of what children are learning in our early childhood settings.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

This research explores the influence of organisational culture for children's lived experiences in an early childhood centre in Aotearoa New Zealand. In this introductory chapter, through a brief professional biography, I will explain my wonderings that led me to undertake research on this topic. To orient my study, I identify the broad philosophical and theoretical underpinnings and outline the core concepts of culture and organisational culture. The Aotearoa New Zealand early childhood context in which my study took place will be described, before this chapter concludes with an overview of the shape of this thesis.

My professional profile

Edwards (2010) discusses the importance of researchers revealing their starting points, as such self-awareness aids insight as to the impact of this on the research process. This is particularly important in studies into culture, where research activity is inevitably embedded in researchers' own cultural backgrounds (Valsiner, 1997). Thus, it is relevant to outline briefly, my professional background and the experiences which led me to my research topic.

I completed my 2-year Diploma of Teaching and Kindergarten Diploma in the mid-1980s, at a time when there was increasing awareness in Aotearoa New Zealand society of indigenous issues and rights. I taught in kindergartens in Christchurch for around six years, working with a variety of teaching colleagues who had completed their qualifications at different levels (from one year

'Childcare' certificates to an ex-primary teacher holding a degree) and in different historical periods as far back as the 1950s. My understanding of 'culture' as something broader than ethnicity grew as a result of reflection on these experiences of different ways of thinking.

Over the next years I moved into teacher education, working with early childhood students in nannyng and initial teacher education (ITE) programmes. My roles expanded to include lecturing at Polytechnic and University levels, and Programme Manager for various private ITE providers. Throughout, I continued visiting teaching students completing their practical course requirements in centres, which kept me in touch with the realities of what was happening in the sector for children, teachers and families. This also gave me a broad base to reflect on in terms of children's experiences in different centres, and in the same centre over time.

Changing times

The three decades from the 1980s saw many significant socio-political changes in the early childhood sector. When I first moved into teacher education, early childhood 'workers' (as they were then known) were fighting to be regarded as 'teachers' in the same sense as their primary and secondary counterparts – a battle eventually won, with qualified early childhood teachers becoming eligible for full registration as teachers. The nature of qualifications also changed, with three-year teaching Diplomas of Teaching becoming the benchmark qualification, and the subsequent introduction of teaching Degrees that are now commonly held by teachers in the sector. Also of significance was the 2002

introduction of *Pathways to the Future: Ngaa Huarahi Arataki* (Ministry of Education, 2002) by the government of the day. This documented a 10-year strategic plan for early childhood education services, with goals centred on increasing young children's participation in early childhood services and the quality of those services.

Ideas about teaching and learning were changing too. For example, when I 'trained' as a Kindergarten teacher, I was taught Piagetian theory as the basis for understanding children's development. By the time I became a teacher educator, Vygotskian sociocultural theory had taken centre stage. The image of the solitary child working alone to construct their understanding of the world became replaced with the image of the child surrounded by and in relationship with others, leading to learning and development. Also of significance was the introduction of the early childhood curriculum *Te Whaariki: He whaariki matauranga mo nga mokopuna o Aotearoa: Early childhood curriculum* (Ministry of Education, 1996; hereafter referred to as *Te Whaariki*), which eventually becoming a mandatory curriculum for all infants, toddlers and young children in licensed early childhood settings in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Throughout all these important mindshifts, and the resulting changes I, and my professional colleagues, made in the way we thought and spoke within and about the sector, I wondered how much had truly changed for young children in terms of their day to day experiences in early childhood settings. To illustrate, I recall reading a description of kindergarten children playing in a sandpit to a group of my students, and asking them the extent to which it rang true as typical of what

an observer might see. We all paused to reflect when I revealed that the passage was written 50 years previously. I had a sense that although early childhood teachers were changing what happened in their heads, what happened in their actions changed less so, with even less impact for children's experiences.

Over the next decade or so, I saw many excellent graduates from teacher education programmes I had worked in enter a range of early childhood settings. However, I became dismayed by what I often saw happening next. Some of my most highly talented graduate teachers taught for only a few months before leaving early childhood teaching for other careers. Others who stayed teaching expressed to me their unease at finding they were not the teacher they had thought they would be. In discussing this with them, it became clear that a significant influence on what they felt able to do and be as a teacher lay in the workplaces they were joining. However, we were unclear as to exactly what it was about early childhood settings that was having such a powerful influence. I had a persistent feeling that something important was being ignored.

In my professional roles, I had directly experienced particular early childhood settings where children were receiving what in my perception was a suboptimal quality of education and care, sometimes despite the passing of many years and the complete and multiple changeover of staff, management and ownership of the centre during that time. One day, while visiting a student in a centre who was completing a practicum for her teacher education programme, we reflected together on what the differences were between this and her previous experience, such that one was positive and the other much less so. We discussed the

accepted thinking of the time, that, “Quality is the result of the interaction of the ratio of trained adults to children, the number of children (or group size), and, in some services, the qualification levels of teachers. Collectively, these factors form the foundation on which quality ECE is built” (Ministry of Education, 2002). None of those factors seemed to us to explain the qualitative difference we saw in the experiences of the children. Finally, the student said to me, “It’s just the way they DO things around here.” Her comment stuck with me and crystallised, and this research is the result.

Arriving at my research question

My thoughts around organisational culture and the potential influence of this on children’s experiences had thus had a long genesis. I began looking for answers to inform myself, firstly about organisational culture in general, secondly about organisational culture in educational settings, and thirdly about organisational culture in early childhood settings in the Aotearoa New Zealand context. I found bountiful literature about organisational culture in general, and read seminal works such as Peters and Waterman’s (1982) publication *In Search of Excellence*. I also found a body of literature that applied various aspects of organisational culture to educational settings. Such reading confirmed in my mind that an organisation’s culture has a significant influence on the everyday experiences of those in the setting, including in educational settings. What stood out for me about the literature from educational settings, however, was that it centred around the adults and what they did; there seemed little information available about the influence of organisational culture for the *children’s* experiences. I reasoned that if organisational culture was valid as a concept to apply to

educational settings generally, and early childhood settings in Aotearoa New Zealand specifically, and given that early childhood settings exist for children first (in the sense that without children there is no need for such settings), then surely the influence for children's experiences was the *most* important consideration.

My central research question became: How does organisational culture influence children's lived experiences in an early childhood centre? Within this were several areas of interest, including how organisational culture was transmitted and maintained, how it arose and endured, challenges to the centre's culture, and how children contributed to the centre's organisational culture.

Broad theoretical underpinnings

Moscovici (1988, p. 26), a social psychologist, used the term "social representation" to refer to the coherent set of beliefs, ideas and practices that are held in common between members of communities. "Once representations have taken shape... [they] are integrated into everyday ways of doing things"

(Moscovici, 1988, p. 216). As an experienced early childhood educator and teacher educator, I am a member of a community that at this time and place, holds to certain core views and beliefs. It is inevitable that these core views and beliefs (or in Moscovici's terms, social representations), whether explicit or implicit, have influenced my thoughts and actions throughout my research.

Valsiner (1997) identifies in particular, the influence of social representations on the theories researchers choose to use (or ignore), methods they choose to use in capturing phenomena, how data is derived from the phenomena, and

assumptions (explicit or implicit) underlying explanations of phenomena. It is therefore important for the integrity and transparency of my research, to be as clear as possible from the outset about the broad assumptions that underlay my thinking and acting as I went about my investigation into the organisational culture of early childhood centres.

To begin, I have assumed an individual-socioecological perspective (Valsiner, 1997). This approach sees an individual's actions (what they do) as situated within a physical and social environment, which cannot be made sense of separately from that environment. Examples of theories of human development and learning that share this broad assumption include Vygotsky's sociocultural approach (Berk & Winsler, 1995), and Rogoff's (2003) focus on human development as a cultural process.

Further, I subscribe to the belief that people are active in generating meaning from their interactions with their surroundings. This is at root a constructivist perspective, perhaps harking back to my training in Piaget's theory of child development with its emphasis on the twin processes of accommodation and assimilation in learning. However, Vygotsky's theory of learning also includes a focus on children's "constructive transformation of the social world to restructure his or her own individual mental functioning" (Berk & Winsler, 1995, p. 24). I have further taken the view that people, their environments, and the interactions between them, are not static or fixed. As Rogoff (2003, p. 11) states, "Humans develop through their changing participation in the sociocultural activities of their communities, which also change".

By phrasing my research question to begin with 'how' (rather than 'does'), it is made explicit that I entered this study assuming that the organisational culture of early childhood settings does indeed influence children's moment by moment experiences, in ways that matter; literature relevant to this discussion is detailed in Chapter 2 of this work.

The notion of culture

Before entering the detail of my study, it is helpful to briefly outline the wider sociological and anthropological notion of culture from which the idea of organisational culture grew.

The history of philosophical thought resonates with the idea that people's social and physical environments influence their experience; both Spinoza and Aristotle, for example, discussed 'man' [sic] as a 'social animal'. This idea has also been recognised from the earliest days of psychology as a discipline. Baldwin, co-founder of the Department of Psychology at Princeton University, wrote, "A man [sic] is a social outcome rather than a social unit... Social acts of his... are his because they are society's first; otherwise he would not have learned them nor have had any tendency to do them" (Baldwin, 1902, in Valsiner, 1997, p. 131).

Investigations into aspects of culture have continued since that time by social scientists across many disciplines. As examples, Ratner, a cultural psychologist, states, "Human psychological capacities are different from animals' because their

environment is different. It is cultural” (2006, p. 70). Chaiklin (2001) states that all human psychological phenomena have been influenced by culture; that is, by the social, historical, and cultural contexts in which they arise. The individual’s internalisation of culture is a key principle in Vygotsky’s sociocultural theory of human development, where “[Culture] first appears between people as an interpsychological category, and then within the individual child as an intrapsychological category” (Vygotsky, 1981, in Cole, 1996, p. 110). Rogoff’s view of human development bridges psychology and anthropology by stating that, “Human development is a cultural process. As a biological species, humans are defined in terms of our cultural participation” (2003, p. 3).

Bates (1986) points out that although cultural beliefs, values, symbols, institutions and artefacts are passed on from one generation to another, these are not static. Rather, the efforts of individuals to learn and take part in the life of the group they have been born into means that culture undergoes continuous construction and reconstruction.

Although an agreed definition of culture remains elusive, there is general acceptance that it is a collective phenomenon that arises as a product of people being together in groups; that it is something that is socially constructed; that it varies between groups; and that it is significant in influencing what people do (Bellot, 2011; Brennan, 2005).

An important concept in the cultural studies literature is ‘cultural artefact’. This term is used to describe objects, such as tools or works of art, created by humans

that give information about the culture of its creators and users. Philosopher and historical epistemologist Wartofsky defined cultural artefacts as devices enabling people to share cultural interpretations of social experiences. Thus, they are both storage vessels, and transmitters, of cultural knowledge (Wartofsky, Gould, & Cohen, 1994). Valsiner (1997), for example, conducted research examining a child's highchair as a cultural artefact, revealing a particular culture's expectations around infants' eating. He interpreted the primary function of a high chair as narrowing a child's zone of free movement, so as to facilitate organisation of a mealtime in a culturally specific way. Reducing a child's ability to move also allowed for a focus on other developing cultural skills, such as self-feeding by using a spoon. In such ways, the highchair as a cultural artefact assists the child's eating to become culturally organised.

From culture to organisational culture

The organisational culture literature takes a narrower view than that of the sociological theorists mentioned above, in that its starting point for discussion is an organisation, rather than a broader society. The rationale for the link between 'culture' and 'organisational culture' is the parallel that, in the same way as where there are groups of people with a shared history there is a culture, where there are groups of people in an organisation with a shared history, there will be an organisational culture. Just as culture varies between groups, so organisational culture varies between organisations, and it is significant in influencing what people do within the organisation (Giles & Yates, 2014; McKenna, 2006; Schein, 2010). These ideas have been extensively explored with

an explosion of literature generated in this area since the 1980s (Furnham, 2005; McKenna, 2006; Parker, 2000).

Despite the parallels, there is a notable distinction apparent between the management literature and social sciences approaches to culture. The fundamental purpose of investigations into culture by anthropologists, sociologists and other social scientists, is to describe and understand (Bates, 1986). In contrast, the managerial interest in organisational culture is usually with a view to manipulation and control, often expressed in terms of the pursuit of organisational excellence. To illustrate, Waddell et al (2009, pp. 97-98) describe organisational culture as important for two reasons. Firstly, it “makes management possible in situations where managers cannot be constantly supervising employees”. Secondly, a strong and cohesive organisational culture ensures “employees focus on thinking about what is best for the business in the long run – so all their decisions and actions become oriented towards helping the organisation perform well”.

One notably different approach in the management literature is Block’s *The Empowered Manager* (1987), in which he stresses that all management structures and systems reflect a framework for the distribution of power. In Block’s view, power is the foundation for an organisation’s culture. This approach has resonance with Foucault’s ideas about power, a framework I eventually came to use in discussing my findings. For Foucault, as with Block, power is less about physical force, and more about a relationship of struggle; it is not something “acquired, seized, or shared, something that one holds on to or

allows to slip away; power is exercised from innumerable points, in the interplay of nonegalitarian and mobile relations” (Foucault, 1978, p. 94).

Culture or climate?

Many writers use the term ‘organisational climate’ interchangeably with ‘organisational culture’ (Bochner, 2003), and indeed it seems the concepts are closely related. Furnham (2005) views climate as more akin to morale, rather less enduring and more superficial than culture. Schoen and Teddlie (2008, p. 129) view school culture and school climate as “different levels of the same construct”, with climate better thought of as one facet of culture. Gruenert (2008) provides specific examples of school culture compared to school climate: where climate can be thought of as the way people are feeling in the school, culture is about the way things are done. Where climate is based on people’s perceptions, culture is grounded in values and beliefs. “If culture is the personality of the organisation, then climate represents that organisation’s attitude” (Gruenert, 2008, p. 58).

Bellot (2011) notes that both climate and culture focus on the interplay of individuals and their surroundings, with climate regarded generally as a more superficial aspect of culture. She concludes that attempting to determine which produces and/or affects the other is a circular debate. For the purposes of my investigation, I used the term ‘organisational culture’ in preference to ‘climate’, in line with the general acceptance in the literature that this concept speaks better to the depth and breadth of my investigation.

Applying ideas of culture to educational settings

The analogy between culture in a given society and culture in schools is often traced back to Waller's (1932/1961) classic work, *The Sociology of Teaching*. Waller's self-professed starting point in his book is that children and teachers are "whole human beings tied together in a complex maze of social interconnections" (Waller, 1932/1961, p. 1). He refers to schools as social organisms, with "a culture that is definitely their own" (p. 7). He also recognises the impact of the wider societal culture on school culture. For example, he discusses discipline problems within classrooms and school communities in terms of the older generation in society trying to impose its preformed ways of doing things on the young.

Many sociologists since Waller's time have explored the link between culture in wider society and school culture. Bowles and Gintis (1976), for example, argued for the correspondence between the culture of schools and the culture of the wider society – specifically, capitalist relations of production in Western societies. Their view, that important aspects of culture and shared sets of meanings are learned through schooling, is clear in their statement,

The structure of social relations in education not only inures the student to the discipline of the work place, but develops the types of personal demeanor, modes of self-presentation, self-image, and social-class identifications which are the crucial ingredients of job adequacy. Specifically, the social relationships of education – the relationships between administrators and teachers, teachers and students, students and students, and students and their work – replicate the hierarchical division of labor (p. 131).

At around the same time, Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) were developing their theory of cultural reproduction that focused on the role of schooling in shaping

the consciousness of students in ways that led them to accept the cultural and social values of the dominant culture.

However, there have been criticisms that such explanations are both overly deterministic, and somewhat removed from the reality of what actually occurs in schools (Bates, 1986). It is assumed that what happens in a particular school in a given society is fundamentally the same as what happens in any other school in the same society. Whilst from a sufficient distance this argument may have some force, the wide-angled lens being used underplays the dynamic of the constant creating and recreating that occurs in the more intimate, day-to-day life of an educational setting as the people within it, whatever their purpose for being there, all act and interact. The intent of my own research was to focus much more closely on these moment-by-moment experiences.

Definition of organisational culture used in this study

As the organisational culture literature has increasingly moved to a deeper understanding of organisations as socially constructed, definitions of organisational culture have come to centre on group members' attitudes, expectations and behaviour patterns, and the assumptions and values which underpin these (see for example Driskill & Brenton, 2005; Elkin & Inkson, 2000).

For the purposes of my study, the definition of organisational culture I settled on came from the writing of Bochner (2003, p. 303), namely, "a set of shared meanings that are learned, characterise a particular group, and distinguish it from others". I selected this definition as sufficiently representative of the

management literature, while remaining in alignment with the assumptions underpinning my study – that is, it allows for a constructivist and dynamic approach within a dynamic socioecological perspective, and is open to Foucauldian notions of power. Further, the inclusion of learning in this definition positions people at the heart of the concept, which is in line with my research focus on organisational culture as it influences children’s lived experiences. Additionally, when in discussion with study participants, I used as a definition ‘the way we do things around here’, originally used by Deal and Kennedy (1982) and in popular use as a folk definition of the concept since (Bochner, 2003).

Context for this study

Having outlined some core concepts and theoretical positionings to orient my study, an explanation of the wider context in which it took place is needed. There is a range of early childhood education and care settings operating in Aotearoa New Zealand at the present time. At the governmental level, they fall under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education, who classifies them for licensing and funding purposes as either teacher-led (kindergartens, education and care services, and home-based education and care) or parent-led (kohanga reo, playcentres, and playgroups). My study focuses on teacher-led services, specifically those that fall within the designation of education and care services.

‘Education and care services’ is a blanket term that includes a wide range of differently structured and operated services. Some are privately owned businesses, some are community-based centres not expected to make a profit,

others are adjunct services attached to workplaces or other facilities such as gymnasiums (Ministry of Education, 2002). Some may follow particular teaching and learning philosophies, such as that of Montessori, Steiner, or Reggio Emilia. Some may have a management board consisting largely of parents and/or representatives from the wider business. Others may have one owner, who may or may not have an interest in and understanding of early childhood education. Yet other centres are part of large national or international chains owned by corporations. Often, there is a centre 'director' or 'manager' (nomenclature varies) who may or may not have a teaching background themselves, who has responsibility for reporting to and from the Board or owner/s to the teaching team.

This diversity means there is no set pattern where decision-making power sits with regard to factors such as policy setting and implementation, leadership, staffing, and everyday management of the setting (all of which are relevant to organisational culture). However, to receive government funding, all education and care services must be licensed. To gain and maintain a license, a service must meet government requirements with regard to staff qualifications, ratios of adults to children, and service size. Further, they must meet standards based on the Education (Early Childhood Services) Regulations 2008, with regard to specific curriculum, premises and facilities, health and safety, and governance, management and administration requirements. Included in the curriculum standard is adherence to "any curriculum framework prescribed by the Minister" (Ministry of Education, 2009, p. 3); that curriculum framework is currently the

principles and strands of the early childhood curriculum document *Te Whaariki* (Ministry of Education, 1996).

This context is an important backdrop to my study, as is made clear within the curriculum document itself. A model of nested levels of learning is posited, based on Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological theory of human development. This model makes clear that it is not only the immediate learning environment which influences the curriculum, but also "the nation's beliefs and values about children and early childhood care and education" (Ministry of Education, 1996, p. 19). The licensing criteria and regulatory and curriculum frameworks impose some outer boundaries on the early childhood centre in my study, in terms of what is possible and not possible in the way things are done within any licensed early childhood centre in New Zealand.

An overview of this thesis

In this introductory chapter I have laid out relevant aspects of my professional background, how I came to my research question, a brief outline of the notions of culture and organisational culture, the theoretical beliefs and assumptions underlying my research, and the wider New Zealand early childhood education context my study took place in.

In Chapter 2, I provide an overview of what is written about organisational culture generally, before considering its application and relevance to educational settings in general and early childhood centres in particular. My review of the literature confirms that there has been very little investigation into

organisational culture in early childhood settings; that which I found focuses mostly on adults, leaving unexplored the influence of the concept for children's lived experiences, which is central to my own investigation.

Chapter 3 explains the methodology I used in my research, being a qualitative case study within an interpretivist paradigm. The positioning of the children within this is discussed, and I outline the research methods I employed, including observation, individual and focus group interviews, document and artefact analysis, and reflective notes. Ethical considerations and my approach to analysis are discussed, before the chapter concludes by introducing the participants of my study and describing key aspects of the early childhood centre in which my research was undertaken.

Against this backdrop, Chapter 4 describes my data gathering and generating process as it unfolded, including how parent and child participants were selected. I clarify how I positioned myself as a researcher when gathering and generating information, and detail how I went about interviews, observations, and gathering artefacts and documents, along with the decisions and changes I made to my intended research process along the way. An integrated analysis of observations, interviews, document analysis, and reflective notes, led to the establishment of a set of 104 centre norms, all of which I had seen enacted in observations.

It was clear that centre norms directly influenced children's lived experiences at Tui Preschool (the pseudonym I adopted for my case study centre) in complex

ways. These findings are examined from two different viewpoints in the next two chapters of this thesis, to answer different aspects of my research question. In Chapter 5 I use Schein's (2010) model of organisational culture to explore the nature of this and how it endured at Tui Preschool. Analysis of explicit justifications for the centre norms, which sit at Level 1 of Schein's model, identified a Level 2 espoused centre value of child choice, and I discuss how this value arose and endured in the setting. I also identify enacted but unacknowledged norms which suggests glimpses of the unstated assumptions and beliefs that Schein (2010) views as at the third, deepest level of an organisation's culture.

In Chapter 6, I add the lens of Foucault to focus on the children's lived experiences of the organisational culture of Tui Preschool. I use his notion of power relations, disciplinary power, biopower, normalising judgments, and surveillance, to further explore the children's experiences within the organisational culture of Tui preschool. I conclude this chapter by suggesting that organisational culture is a curriculum issue, as it is shaping children's experiences as they make their own sense of the way things are done in early childhood centres.

Chapter 7 summarises my findings and conclusions, considers methodological strengths and weaknesses, and suggests possible ways forward from where my study ends, thus drawing my work to a conclusion.

CHAPTER 2: ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The overall purpose of this chapter is to examine the applicability of the concept of organisational culture for understanding children's experiences in early childhood settings, and to investigate what is already known, thereby locating my own study.

To begin, I first needed to understand what was known about organisational culture generally. As this chapter explains, I found no shortage of factors characterised in the literature as being of significance to an organisation's culture, and thus, to the experience of people within the organisation. However, the individual-socioecological perspective underpinning my research, where individuals' actions are considered in interaction with their environments (Valsiner, 1997), prompted me to search for more holistic approaches. I eventually settled on Schein's (2010) model of organisational culture as providing the conceptual framework for my study.

Once I had developed an understanding at the conceptual level, I searched for literature investigating organisational culture in Aotearoa New Zealand early childhood settings. I was able to find just three directly relevant research studies, each of which is reviewed in this chapter. Because there was such a paucity of information linking organisational culture with children's experiences in early childhood settings, I widened my search for information to consider literature focussed on influences for children's experiences generally in

education. However, I could find little in this body of literature that linked to organisational culture as a concept. I therefore returned to the work of Schein (2010) to explore literature relating to three aspects of organisational culture thought particularly important in his writings, namely leadership, the culture of subgroups within organisations, and the socialisation of newcomers.

What constitutes organisational culture?

In beginning my search for information to help me conceptualise organisational culture for my study, my reading of the management literature soon revealed a plethora of factors that had been independently investigated for their influence on what people say, do and feel within an organisation. A sampling of these factors from the management literature (see Deal & Peterson, 2009; Furnham, 2005; McKenna, 2006; Schein, 2004, 2010; Waddell et al., 2009) includes:

- Organisational history and associated myths and stories;
- Rites and ceremonies;
- Reward systems;
- Creativity and innovation;
- Employee commitment;
- Knowledge management systems;
- Human resources management systems;
- Cohesiveness of groups;
- Size of group;
- Types of leadership;
- Role ambiguity and conflict;
- Stress;

- Teamwork;
- Centralisation versus decentralisation of organisational structure;
- Impact of the founder;
- Person-organisation fit; and
- Socialisation of newcomers

Considering organisational culture from an educational standpoint, literature around classroom culture from the educational context of Aotearoa New Zealand revealed similar lists of factors. A typical example comes from McGee and Fraser (2008), who nominate showing respect for students, pronouncing and writing names correctly, knowing each student's culture, holding overall expectations for everyone within the classroom while recognising individual achievement, creating opportunities for students to own and take responsibility for their learning, ensuring the classroom is a safe place to take risks, and collaboration with parents, as key factors in a classroom culture that promotes learning .

McGee and Fraser note that this is not an exhaustive list, and make little reference as to why these particular factors are thought worthy of being featured over others. Thus, I found this type of literature to be superficial in terms of my search for a deep understanding of the concept of organisational culture.

A further issue with lists of factors such as these for my own study, is that they do not take into account the individual-socioecological approach which recognises that people's actions take place in a social and physical environment and cannot be made sense of without considering those environments (Valsiner, 1997). Rogoff (2003) describes cultural practices as connected and to be

understood in relation to each other, and I was also mindful of systems theorist Weiss's metaphor that the life of a city cannot be described by the list of names and numbers in a telephone book (Weiss, 1969). Therefore, I concluded that examining factors thought relevant to organisational culture independently of each other, and without considering how they were enacted, would not reveal the essence of the concept. In other words, I rejected an additive elementarism approach, where factors are examined independently of each other and added together to make a summation of the whole, in favour of structural holism, where recognition of connections between elements is viewed as essential for conceptual understanding (Valsiner, 1997).

For these reasons, I did not go further into literature that examined independent features thought significant to organisational culture, but searched instead for literature that took a more holistic view in recognising connections between factors, as people experienced them.

Organisational culture typologies

The next body of management literature I considered focused on frequently occurring patterns in some of the factors that constitute organisational culture. One influential example of this type was devised by Deal and Kennedy (1982). Their publication *Corporate Culture: The Rules and Rituals of Corporate Life*, proposed four types of organisational cultures: 'tough-guy macho' (characterised by a high-risk, high-gain orientation to the organisation's activities), 'work hard-play hard' (characterised by persistence at relatively low-risk activity), 'bet your company' (ponderous, slow-moving, respectful of authority) and 'process' (the

classic bureaucracy with an emphasis on process, orderliness and attention to detail).

On the face of it, I couldn't see typologies such as these, arising from studies of organisations whose aspirations were to make a financial profit, as bearing much resemblance to the education sector, where the emphasis was on learning and an aspiration to give children "lifelong foundations for success" (Ministry of Education, 2002, p. 1). I therefore searched more specifically for literature that described typologies of school cultures.

One such early effort came from Schlechty (1976), who described 36 school types along four either-or dimensions: expectations of teachers (bureaucratic vs professional and autonomous); tightness of structure; view of students (as members of the school, clients being offered a service, or products who should attain a certain standard); and student commitment (moral, calculative or alienative). This approach resonated somewhat with my experiences; for example, I could see that in a general way, there might be differences for children's experiences in early childhood settings where the view was to provide a service for working parents, versus those where the view was to prepare children for school.

Although typologies such as these came closer to the integrated and holistic approach to organisational culture that I was looking for, nevertheless I was again dissatisfied with using this body of literature to underpin my own research. There were two reasons for this. Firstly, my experiences told me that

organisational culture in early childhood settings was something altogether messier, more variable, and more complex than the neat typologies claimed in these books. Secondly, I was mindful of Valsiner's (1997) arguments as to the influence of a researcher's pre-existing knowledge and beliefs on research processes, methods and explanations of outcomes. I reasoned that approaching my study with a selected typology framework already in mind would limit my data collection and analysis, and potentially weaken the scope and trustworthiness of my findings by blinding me to other possibilities.

Schein's framework of organisational culture

My ongoing search for a more holistic, integrated conceptual framework for organisational culture led me to the work of Schein, who was for many years Professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Sloan School of Management, and a long-term and influential writer on the topic of organisational management. The first edition of his work, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, was published in 1985, and over the years he has continued to update this seminal work with the latest, fourth, edition published in 2010. While acknowledging changes that have occurred over that period of time, particularly due to growth in technology and the effects of globalisation, Schein argues that, "[T]he basic conceptual model... articulated in the first three editions is still sound as a way of analysing [organisational culture]" (Schein, 2010, p. iii). In Schein's model I found the framework I used in my research for developing an understanding of the organisational culture of an early childhood centre.

Schein (2010) argues that there are four critical features that are the essence of organisational culture. These are that it:

- is deeply, often unconsciously embedded;
- is pervasive, influencing all aspects of an organisation;
- provides structural stability through a sense of group identity; and
- promotes integration within the organisation by allowing group members to make orderly sense of the workplace.

Having identified the core characteristics of organisational culture, Schein (2010) outlines a three-level model of the concept. His use of the word 'level' refers to the visibility of the phenomenon, with Level 1 being most visible and the subsequent two levels increasingly covert. A summary of Schein's model is presented below as Figure 1.

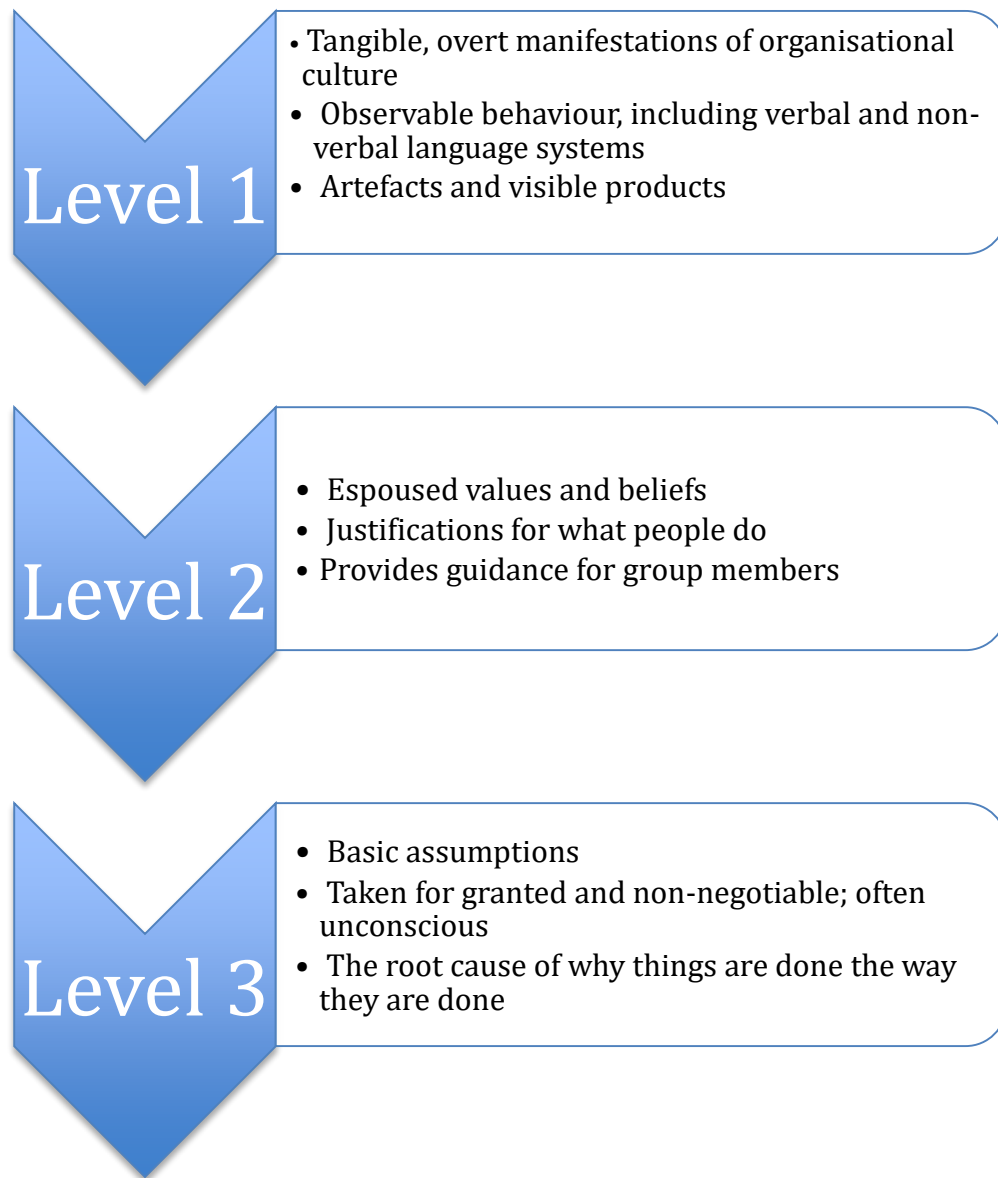


Figure 1. Summary of Schein's model of organisational culture

Level 1 of Schein's model consists of observable behaviour, and verbal and non-verbal language systems. This includes routines and rituals, celebrations, ceremonies, what is said and what is not, jargon, humour, stories, myths, acceptable ways to approach others, gestures and dress codes, and so on.

Artefacts, such as logos, documents, policies, building furnishings, and status symbols such as a reserved car park and larger chair for the director, are physical manifestations of this first level of an organisation's culture, and thus an important indicator of what the people in an organisation care about.

Where much of the management literature limits itself to a focus on these visible signs of organisational culture, Schein contends that this level is superficial, and indeed hard to decipher on its own. To understand these overt signs of an organisation's culture, Schein argues it is necessary to talk with people within the organisation to understand the values and beliefs that are used as justifications for these observable behaviours and products. These publically espoused justifications constitute the second level of his model. Shared group experiences lead to consensus about these justifications, and their effectiveness lies in the usefulness for guiding group members in what is acceptable day-to-day behaviour, and for the socialisation of newcomers to the organisation.

The third, deepest level of Schein's model consists of the assumptions that underlie the Level 2 espoused beliefs and values; that is, the "unconscious, taken-for-granted beliefs, perceptions, thoughts and feelings [that are the] ultimate source of values and action" (Schein, 2004, p. 26). These include assumptions about reality and truth, about the nature of time and space, and about human nature, activity and relationships. Such assumptions lie buried deeply in an individual's or group's awareness, yet Schein argues that this level is the most powerful in influencing what people do. This is because these deep assumptions, the root cause of why things are done the way they are done, are so fundamental

and all-encompassing that they are simply no longer thought about. Schein (2004, p. 16) goes so far as to refer to them “Non-negotiable values”.

Organisational culture and the wider societal context

Although Schein’s focus is largely on culture within organisations, he recognises that, “to fully understand what goes on inside the organization, it is necessary to understand... the organization’s macro context” (Schein, 2010, p. 55). Similarly, Bochner (2003, p. 310), whose definition of organisational culture I used for my study, clarifies that, “an organisation’s culture develops as an adaptive response to its particular environmental circumstances... internal developments are shaped by the external sociocultural context”. Organisational culture can thus perhaps be thought of as a culture within a culture.

Relating this to the Aotearoa New Zealand early childhood context, there are clear boundaries set by government agencies around what can and cannot happen in centres. Of prime significance is that centres are required to meet particular standards set out in the Education (Early Childhood Services) Regulations 2008, if they wish to obtain and retain government funding. Other examples of influences coming from the governmental level include the mandated early childhood curriculum *Te Whaariki* (Ministry of Education, 1996), and qualifications required for adults working in various types of early childhood settings. As such government-determined requirements change, the way a setting operates and the actions of centre leaders, managers and teachers is also required to change; thus, organisational culture will inevitably be affected.

An example from the research is illustrative here. In Australia, Fenech, Robertson, Sumison and Goodfellow (2007) surveyed teachers in 212 early childhood settings throughout New South Wales to find out about the effects of government early childhood regulations on their practice. Respondents reported some positive impacts, along with frustration at the detrimental impact on teachers' autonomy, leading to a decrease in job satisfaction. The authors discuss this latter finding in terms of research showing that lowered teacher satisfaction negatively influences teacher responsiveness and positive interactions with children; a clear example of an influence from wider society influencing the organisational culture of early childhood settings, although the impact of this for children is suggested rather than directly explored.

Parsons (as cited in McGrath et al., 2008), an Australian early childhood educator, identifies how regulatory requirements at the macro, societal level can influence children's experiences by limiting possibilities. She describes what was for her a profound moment when, having asked children in her early childhood setting what excursions they would like to make, a child asked to go snorkelling. She reflected, "The snorkelling was a wakeup call for me of what we can actually do with children... We let the regulations and governing bodies make us feel that it would be tricky to do, rather than exciting to work out how we could do it" (McGrath et al., 2008, p. 155).

In the Aotearoa New Zealand context, Duncan's (2001) PhD thesis also illustrates how changes in wider society influence what happens in early childhood settings. Her study explored how eight Kindergarten teachers experienced social

and political changes between 1984 and 1996. The impact of social concerns at the time regarding the sexual abuse of young children, alongside the introduction of government bulk funding of early childhood centres, were two specific examples teachers cited as impacting directly on their daily work. Duncan concluded that, “the social, economic and political changes which were overtaking the communities the kindergarten teachers were working within... overtook teachers’ time and energy and changed their relationships with their parents [and] their communities...” (Duncan, 2001, p. 187).

While acknowledging the influence of wider societal influences for organisational culture, I took these as a given for my own study, confining my exploration to what was occurring inside the bounded system of an early childhood centre. This was in line with my research question focus on capturing the children’s immediate experiences directly, within the micro-world of the centre.

Organisational culture in early childhood educational settings

Having found in Schein’s model a conceptual framework for studying organisational culture that fit with my research orientation, and determining my focus at the micro level within the centre rather than the wider societal level, I next looked for research specifically investigating organisational culture in early childhood settings in Aotearoa New Zealand. This yielded three studies, namely Gibbons (2005), McLeod (2002), and Hatherly (1997). The most recent of these investigations, Gibbons’ (2005) Masters thesis investigated organisational culture in two Playcentre settings. She focused on morning tea

routines as a window to each setting's culture, and categorised her data according to a predetermined framework into environmental, social, philosophical, structural and pedagogical factors.

Gibbons' analysis showed that activities, which appeared to be haphazard, were in fact underpinned and connected by each setting's values. Further, she identified mismatches between educators' espoused values (Level 2 of Schein's (2010) framework of organisational culture), with their actions (Level 1 of Schein's model), which she attributed to underlying assumptions and beliefs sitting at Schein's Level 3. For example, while the adults spoke of morning tea time as "time together for the whole group" (Gibbons, 2005, p. 23), children were expected to help themselves to their own food and to leave the table once finished. Gibbons interpreted these practices as rooted in assumptions of individualism and independence, despite the espoused value of group togetherness.

Reviewing Gibbons' work gave me confidence in the utility and potency of Schein's model for understanding the organisational culture of an early childhood setting. However, Gibbons' conclusions focused on "acknowledging that the organisational culture shapes how educators in early childhood settings behave, and therefore the experiences provided for children" (Gibbons, 2005, p. 24). In my own research, I was aiming to explore children's lived experiences of and contribution to organisational culture directly, rather than primarily through the conduit of adults' actions.

The second study was McLeod's (2002) doctoral thesis, focused on organisational culture as it impacted on "the quality of educational provision" for children (McLeod, 2003, p. 51). McLeod used Schein's model of organisational culture to analyse data from 10 early childhood centres. She interviewed two staff members, two parents, the person nominated as the holder of the government license to operate the centre, and the 'person responsible' (a permanent employee who holds a recognised early childhood teaching qualification and current teacher registration; typically the professional leader in a centre) from each centre, triangulating this information with ERO reports, demographic details, and artefacts such as minutes of staff meetings.

McLeod (2002) found that the assumptions, values and beliefs about children held by the workers in each centre were a core concept that influenced the centre's organisational culture. In turn, the strongest influence on how the conception of the child came about was from the founder of the setting. Differences in conceptions of the child were seen to influence both the values underlying the organisational culture of the centre, and pedagogical practices of teachers. For example, educators who worked in community based early childhood settings typically viewed children as needing affordable care to allow parents a break from their parenting role. In contrast, those in corporately owned centres held an image of the child as dependent and in need of care while their parents worked, leading to pedagogical practices in tension with the mandatory curriculum *Te Whaariki's* (Ministry of Education, 1996) view of the child as capable and competent. McLeod (2002, p. 340) concluded that "Pedagogical issues and their relationships with (and possible dependency on)

organisational culture required further specific research to ensure that early childhood centre culture is not impeding children's learning".

A methodological limitation of McLeod's (2002) study is that she did not actually observe what happened in any of the centres from which she obtained data. It is well-accepted in social sciences research that what people do, and what they say they do, is not necessarily congruent (Johnson & Christensen, 2008). Further, Schein (2010), whose framework McLeod uses to analyse her data, points out that interviewing participants is likely to yield socially acceptable responses in the first instance. Relying on interviews without including observations as another source of data for her study somewhat weakens the credibility of the conclusions she has drawn. A further limitation of her findings in terms of my own area of research is that as with Gibbons (2005), influences for children's lived experiences in early childhood settings are inferred through adults' actions, rather than examined directly.

The third study of organisational culture in an Aotearoa New Zealand early childhood context was a case study conducted by Hatherly (1997). Unlike McLeod (2002), Hatherly chose to include participant observation alongside formal interviews and document analysis, adding an extra level of strength to her findings. In common with McLeod (2002), Hatherly found that the circumstances surrounding the founding of the centre continued to have an impact on values, beliefs and assumptions ten years later. For example, her case study centre was established to provide a service to parents who were shift-workers. This meant that the centre was open for 12-hour days, which resulted

in a large number of staff who were also required to work in shifts to keep the centre open for such long days. This resulted in what Hatherly termed a “domino effect” (p. 51) throughout the centre. It meant, for example, that it was difficult for staff to meet together to engage in collaborative reflection on educational matters.

In common with Gibbons (2005), Hatherly also found evidence of adults’ actions being at odds with the espoused values of the centre. For example, ‘meeting children’s individual needs’ was publically espoused as the paramount value, but she found this was undermined by the unspoken belief that “adults knew children’s needs best... individual autonomy and preferences were often subsumed by the need to learn control and compliance” (Hatherly, 1997, p. 50). Here again was evidence of the applicability of Schein’s model of organisational culture as a conceptual framework for my study. However, Hatherly’s study, in common with McLeod (2002) and Gibbons (2005), again falls short of a robust exploration of organisational culture as it directly influences children’s lived experiences.

Failing to find relevant research from the Aotearoa New Zealand context that informed my own investigation, I looked to research from overseas to fill the void. Generalising research from overseas contexts to Aotearoa New Zealand settings requires careful consideration of contextual differences; for example, there are differences in requirements for qualifications to be held by teachers between countries, and the sociocultural framework for Aotearoa New Zealand’s mandatory early childhood curriculum *Te Whaariki* (Ministry of Education,

1996) is not necessarily mirrored elsewhere. However, one recent report by Hard and Jonsdottir (2013), the former an Australian researcher and the latter based in Iceland, discussed the highly feminised workforce in early childhood education in those countries that is also a feature in Aotearoa New Zealand. Hard and Jonsdottir noted a workplace culture of “niceness” (p, 319) in early childhood setting in both countries, which impacted on staff by silencing debate and promoting conformity. A “nice milieu” had also been mentioned by Hatherly (1997, p. 44) as a feature of the organisational culture in her case study centre, evidenced in the prioritising of friendly relationships over pedagogical discussion. Yet again, however, what this culture of ‘niceness’ meant for the children’s lived experiences was not directly explored.

In summary, these research reports all provide evidence for the relevance and influence of organisational culture (sets of shared meanings that are learned, characterise a particular group, and distinguish it from others) for early childhood educational settings. However, in terms of my own investigation, they all fall short in directly examining the influence of organisational culture for children’s lived experiences.

Looking for elements of organisational culture in the wider educational literature

Because I was able to find so little literature explicitly linking organisational culture directly with children’s lived experiences in early childhood settings, I widened my search to explore literature that focused on what was known about influences on children’s experiences in teaching and learning, reasoning that

organisational culture might be implicitly embedded in such work. I focused on three bodies of research in particular that have been well investigated over the years for their impact on children's experiences, namely teachers' actions, contexts for teaching and learning, and children's learning dispositions.

Teachers' actions

Gibbons (2005), McLeod (2002), and Hatherly (1997) had explained organisational culture as influencing children's experiences through adults' actions. I therefore thought it worthwhile to examine the literature exploring the influence of teachers' actions for children's experiences, as it seemed reasonable to expect that organisational culture might feature in this literature as a variable impacting on teachers' actions in ways that influenced children. However, I quickly found within this body of research a strong tendency to see teachers individually or as a professional group carrying much of the responsibility for children's experiences, with little investigation as to the potential influence of organisational culture sitting behind that. A typical example from the early childhood context is Farquhar's (2003) *Quality teaching: Early Foundations Best Evidence Synthesis*, carried out for the Aotearoa New Zealand Ministry of Education. This meta-analysis of a wide range of research studies identifies the importance of teachers viewing children as emergent learners, using a co-constructive approach, and being responsive to children's overall well-being. These phenomena are all positioned as if they wholly lie within the teachers' sphere of control and responsibility. While the organisation of the social and physical environment is also identified as important, the review is silent on

anything resembling organisational culture (sets of shared meanings that are learned) and its direct influence for children.

Contexts for teaching and learning

I therefore moved past the literature about teachers' actions, to literature considering the contexts teachers worked in. Here, I found a broader perspective in the work of Fenstermacher and Richardson (2005), Professors of Education at the University of Michigan. They draw a distinction between good teaching, a task the teacher undertakes, and successful teaching, grounded in student learning. In emphasising the importance of contextual factors such as time, facilities, and resources in successful teaching, they conclude that successful teaching and learning "may not be actionable in deficient contexts" (p. 207).

Further literature examining the influence of contexts for children's experiences comes from the work of Claxton and Carr (2004, p. 91), who describe learning environments as "prohibiting, affording, inviting or potentiating". Schubert (2004, p. ix) follows a similar theme in suggesting the notion of place as "...a significant contributor to education, especially to curriculum and teaching". However, while recognising the impact of contexts for children's lived experiences speaks to the second part of my research question, I found this body of literature to be silent on the contribution of organisational culture to those contexts.

Children's learning dispositions

Fenstermacher and Richardson (2005, p. 142) consider "willingness and effort on the part of the learner" as a further critical factor for successful teaching. Such learning dispositions, variously defined as "habits of mind or tendencies to respond to certain kinds of situations in particular ways" (Katz, 2008, p. 54), and as "being ready, willing and able" to learn (Carr, 2001, p. 10), are a familiar concept in the early childhood sector in Aotearoa New Zealand. Carr (2001) argues that learning dispositions consist of situated learning strategies plus motivation, where 'situated learning strategies' reflect learning strategies (skills, knowledge and intent), social partners and practices, and tools. Thus, learning dispositions "reside in the reciprocal and responsive relationships between children and other people, places and things" (Carr, 2004, in Duncan, Jones, & Carr, 2008, p. 108). Through the emphasis on reciprocal relationships, a glimpse of organisational culture (a set of shared meanings that is learned) and its potential influence for children's lived experiences in early childhood settings can be seen. However, organisational culture as a concept remains unexplored in this work.

At this point, finding so little relevant research with which to inform my study, I returned to the writings of Schein (2004, 2010) to identify aspects of organisational culture considered to be of particular significance for people's experiences, with a view to searching for information relating to those aspects in the wider educational literature. Three areas that received particular prominence in his writing were leadership, subcultures, and the socialisation of newcomers to the organisation, so I next focussed my search for literature in

those areas, hoping to uncover links to people's lived experiences within organisations embedded within such writing.

Organisational culture and leadership

In Schein's view, leadership and the culture of an organisation are fundamentally intertwined: "It is leadership that has created the particular culture content that the group ends up with" (Schein, 2010, p. 72). Exploring the educational leadership literature is not a straightforward matter, however. As Nuthall (2013, in Ord et al., 2013, p. ix) states, "The field of leadership remains one of the most complex and contested domains of contemporary theory and practice in education".

Particularly problematic in the Aotearoa New Zealand early childhood research context is that there is considerable variation in where leadership functions reside, depending in part on the nature and structure of the early childhood setting. Further, those in leadership positions have a variety of titles, such as 'head teacher', 'team leader', 'senior teacher', 'supervisor', 'centre manager', 'centre leader', 'professional services manager', or 'director', often without clarification as to whether the person referred to holds a teaching qualification and is, or ever has been, part of a teaching team. This makes interpreting and comparing results across studies difficult. It is not altogether surprising, then, that in reviewing the leadership literature, Scrivens (2003, p. 29) concluded, "[T]here is little direct evidence from early childhood services about the effect that leaders have on what happens for children".

Thornton (2010, p. 39) reached a similar conclusion, describing research evidence linking leadership with outcomes for children in early childhood settings as “virtually non-existent”. Part of the explanation for this, in her view, lay in the different nature of student achievement between early childhood settings and the compulsory education sector; young children’s learning is typically less quantifiable than student achievement data from primary school onwards.

It was such student achievement data that formed the basis of a meta-analysis by Robinson (2009), who specifically looked for links between these student outcomes and school leadership in the compulsory schooling sector. Two key messages from Robinson’s research are that leadership in schools is more effective when it sits with a team rather than an individual – that is, distributed leadership; and that school leaders should focus on improving teaching and learning to improve student outcomes – that is, on pedagogical leadership (Boyd, 2009). These two leadership approaches also feature in the report, *Conceptualising Leadership in Early Childhood Education in Aotearoa New Zealand*, published by the New Zealand Teachers Council (Thornton, Wansborough, Clarkin-Phillips, Aitken, & Tamati, 2009). Therefore, I turned to a consideration of distributed and pedagogical approaches to leadership, hoping to find within that body of literature, information relevant to organisational culture and the influence of this for children’s lived experiences.

Distributed leadership

Distributed leadership turns away from a focus on leadership as an individual's traits and functions, to a focus on leadership as "a web of activities and interactions stretched across people and situations" (Leithwood, Day, Sammons, Harris, & Hopkins, 2006, p. 46). A distributed leadership model is typically grounded in the knowledge bases of the individuals in the group, with people from many levels throughout the setting using their particular areas of strength for the overall benefit of the organisation (Bull & Gilbert, 2012; Clarkin-Phillips, 2009; Ebbeck & Waniganayake, 2003).

As a result of her research into leadership in Aotearoa New Zealand early childhood contexts, Thornton (2005, p. 162) has suggested, "working collaboratively in a learning community towards a shared vision" as a definition of distributed leadership. Picking up on the participatory and decentralised nature of the distributed leadership model, Ebbeck and Waniganayake (2003, p. 35) describe how this might look in an early childhood centre:

There could be four people working side by side with each specialising in terms of curriculum, personnel management, centre administration and outreach or community development work... an individual with specific expertise and experience has the responsibility for guiding and coordinating activities with a particular focus.

In its idealised form, distributed leadership occurs "not as a conscious process but as people spontaneously exercise their initiative" (MacBeath, 2005, p. 362), thus maximizing the human expertise of the setting (Nupponen, 2006).

Thornton (2005) investigated leadership in three early childhood Centres of Innovation (COI) in Aotearoa New Zealand. COIs were existing early childhood educational settings selected, on the basis of quality and innovative practice, to carry out specific research projects in their settings, with the support of an experienced researcher (Meade, 2005). In investigating leadership in a community-based centre with a parent cooperative management team, a parent-led Playcentre, and a state Kindergarten with a designated Head Teacher, Thornton found that despite differences in philosophy and management structures, all three centres operated with a distributed style of leadership characterised by a collaborative culture. In her concluding remarks, she linked this form of leadership to the cultures of excellent centres, suggesting:

The model of teacher leadership, which is a feature of the COI, needs to be encouraged in the whole ECE sector to ensure that teachers working with young children work collegially, are committed to quality practices, and maintain their dedication and enthusiasm (p. 164).

However, Thornton's report stops short of investigating the effects of such leadership directly on children's lived experiences, which is central to my research investigation.

Interestingly, and in contrast to Thornton, Waniganayake, Morda and Kapsalakis' (2000) investigation into leadership in Australian early childhood settings found that although staff talked of shared decision-making, the reality reflected positional authority. Similarly, when the staff at the Massey Child Care Centre in Palmerston North deliberately chose to implement a distributed leadership approach within their community of practice,

It became apparent that formal leadership was a necessary component of a community of practice... somebody needs to lead the building and maintenance of the learning community so that other members are able to take an active part in it (Jordan, 2008, p. 79).

While such findings raise questions as to whether distributed leadership is able to be fully realised in practice, Timperley (2005) sounds a cautionary note from another perspective. Her research in Aotearoa New Zealand primary school settings identified that in both formal and informal models of distributed leadership, teachers with expertise were not necessarily accepted as leaders by their colleagues, and conversely, acceptability as a teacher leader was not necessarily associated with expertise. She concluded that

Distributing leadership over more people is a risky business and may result in the greater distribution of incompetence. *I suggest that increasing the distribution of leadership is only desirable if the quality of the leadership activities contributes to assisting teachers to provide more effective instruction to their students, and it is on these qualities that we should focus* (Timperley, 2005, p. 417; emphasis in original)

Hard and Jonsdottir (2013) are in accord with this conclusion, noting that distributed leadership models may be a particular concern in early childhood settings where staff are often young and relatively inexperienced. They go so far as to suggest that it may be “irresponsible” (p. 322) to delegate too much leadership in such contexts. While agreeing with Thornton that the existence of collegial relationships is critical for the success of distributed leadership, they conclude that both positional and distributed approaches are appropriate in early childhood settings.

The COI research project carried out at the Massey Child Care Centre, referred to above, was described as focusing on exploring the link between distributed

leadership and outcomes for children. Distributed leadership, underpinned by an organisational culture of trust and collaboration where teachers “felt safe in challenging each other and speaking their minds at meetings” (Jordan, 2008, p. 83), was credited with enabling the teachers to work together in ways that supported children’s learning, such as “sharing expertise and knowledge, questioning and challenging, engaging in critical reflection, and establishing support networks “ (Bary et al., 2008, p. vi).

Examining what was described as distributed leadership in this study more closely, revealed that it consisted of teachers “providing constructive feedback on each others’ actions”, “accessing each others’ thinking” and “keeping each other informed about the specific curriculum needs of individual children”, within an overall focus for leadership on the “understanding of curriculum and teaching and learning” (Jordan, 2008, p. 83). This description suggests a pedagogical leadership orientation, which (in line with Timperley’s (2005) conclusion) may have been more significant for children’s outcomes than how leadership was distributed. A survey of the pedagogical leadership literature is therefore warranted.

Pedagogical leadership

Pedagogical leadership focuses on “thinking about how particular leadership tasks and activities might impact on student achievement and well-being” (Timperley & Robertson, 2011, p. 7). In the early childhood context, Heikka and Waniganayake (2011, p. 510) define this further as, “taking responsibility for the shared understanding of the aims and methods of learning and teaching of young

children". The involvement of leaders in teachers' professional learning and development, characterised by Timperley (2011) as a significant shift in recent times, is the major characteristic in this type of leadership. The link to organisational culture is made explicit by Stoll (2011), who notes that pedagogical leadership creates a professional culture with shared clarity of purpose and a focus on improving student learning.

A major international study linking pedagogical leadership with culture in educational settings and student outcomes is the International Successful School Principalship Project (ISSPP). This study's exploration of case studies from 20 countries included nine Aotearoa New Zealand schools and one early childhood centre. The major finding of the ISSPP was that successful educational leadership has a vision and purpose of improving teaching and learning outcomes at its core – in other words, is pedagogical in nature (Notman, 2011). However, while such research links pedagogical leadership to a school's culture and to outcomes for children, there is still a gap in knowledge about the influence for children's lived, immediate experiences.

Returning to the Aotearoa New Zealand early childhood context, a recent research project carried out by Ord et al (2013) focused on strengthening pedagogical leadership through the use of expansive learning theory in a range of early childhood settings. In reading this research report, I was able to identify occasional glimpses of a link between leadership, centre culture, and children's experiences. For example, a centre leader dealing with an "organisational culture so ingrained that the object of current practice is to maintain the status

quo” (Ord et al., 2013, p. 84) described the effects of a change to a more collaborative team teaching style. She noted that this led to the teachers having more time, which they spent sitting and engaging with children for longer periods of time each day – thus linking the organisational culture of the centre to children’s lived experiences. However, the influences for children’s lived experiences (in this case, having more time spent with them by their teachers) are again funnelled through what adults do, rather than directly explored.

In summary, my reading of literature around distributed and pedagogical leadership suggested that there was a link to be made between this, organisational culture, and children’s lived experiences. The generalised and vague nature of what was known confirmed that such links were underexplored, adding importance to my own investigative focus.

Children as a subgroup in early childhood settings

The second aspect of Schein’s (2010) framework for understanding organisational culture that I searched for literature on was that of subgroups within an organisation. Schein points out that even when exposed to the same artefacts and expectations of ways to behave (Level 1 of his model) and espoused values (Level 2), groups of people within an organisation may be strongly divided based on the deeper shared assumptions that sit at Level 3 of his model.

Parker (2000, p. 1) uses the term “fragmented unities” to describe organisational cultures where people sometimes see themselves as a collective, but at other times are divided into subgroups. Subcultures in the management literature

tend to be based on differences between groupings, such as location, profession, and level of responsibility (Taylor, 2014). However, in the context of my own investigation in an early childhood centre, the most obvious difference between groups is that of age.

Young children are central to the existence of an early childhood centre as an organisation, in the sense that without the children, there is no reason for anyone else to be there. Despite this, and despite being numerically the largest subgroup, children typically have little overt ability to determine how the centre is structured, managed and led; this is seen to be the responsibility of the adults. Hatherly (1997), for example, found that even when the adults in her case study centre publically espoused the value of child-initiated activities and shared decision-making with children (Level 2 of Schein's model of organisational culture), the reality was that children's individual preferences were less important than their conformity and compliance to adult decisions.

Another important difference is that children typically have very little choice about their membership of the organisation - that is, the early childhood setting they attend. Their parents/caregivers determine which centre they attend, when, and for how long. Once they are there, they have little choice about staying within the physical boundaries of the centre, typically requiring assistance from an adult to leave it, whether temporarily or permanently. This gives children's 'membership' of a centre a compulsory quality different to that of the adults in the centre, and also to most adults within the organisational research literature.

Reflecting these differences between children and adults as subgroups in early childhood settings, Stephenson (2009, p. 119) found the demarcation to be significant as “a fundamental source of boundaries to children’s curriculum experiences”, embodied and embedded in her case study centre’s architecture (such as full doors on areas that adults, but not children, were allowed to enter) and resources (teachers, but not children, were permitted to use the CD player, photocopier, computer and so on). Thus, while Schein (2010) characterises the differences between subcultures within an organisation as essentially task-based, in an early childhood context the differences between adults and children as subgroups is of a different quality than this.

Despite the fewer choices available to children as a subgroup than adults, and the enforced quality of their membership of the early childhood centre as an organisation, a key assumption of my research is that children are active constructors of their cultural and social understandings, rather than passive recipients. This view is underpinned by the sociocultural theory of Vygotsky (1978), who views children as active in making sense of their interpersonal experiences.

Corsaro’s (1990, 2005) in-depth explorations of children in early childhood settings in America and Italy led to him describing young children as “active, creative social agents who produce their own unique children’s cultures while simultaneously contributing to the production of adult societies” (Corsaro, 2005, p. 3). He concludes that, “Important features of peer cultures arise and develop

as a result of children's attempts to make sense of and to a certain extent resist the adult world" (p. 132). He further describes what he terms an "underlife in preschools" (p. 151). By this he means children's actions and reactions that present a challenge to the centre's espoused norms and rules, typically those norms and rules felt by children to impinge on their own autonomy. Cosaro considers the 'underlife' to be an essential part of the children's group identity, as they engage in behaviours such as exaggerated violation of rules, mocking, subterfuge, and working the system, to evade and resist centre norms and adult authority.

Another example of children's active role in shaping their social environment comes from Campbell (2005), who used Foucault's notion of discourse to describe how the children in her classroom resisted teachers' attempts to establish 'equal access to learning' as a guiding value in their setting. She describes this occurring through "the daily discursive struggles between teachers and children, and between children" (p. 149), and notes, "We watched as our discourse of social justice was displaced and reconfigured by how children practiced their gender... the children reinstated their own gendered social order with sexist, heterosexist, classist and 'racist' efforts... we as teachers were co-opted into supporting how children re-established their gendered social order" (pp. 155 – 156).

In the Aotearoa New Zealand early childhood educational context, Brennan's (2005, p. 80) doctoral research examining children's enculturation into a childcare setting found that "[C]hildren's resistance to cultural participation...

was as common as their willingness to participate". She gave examples of children who deliberately, and sometimes very subtly, broke the rules, creating "a sense of 'them' (adults) and 'us' (children) that served to bond and consolidate children with their peers and distinguished them as a subculture within adult dominated centre culture" (p. 143).

These studies confirmed that the influence of organisational culture for children's lived experiences is not one-directional, and that understanding of this should not be limited to a viewpoint centred on the actions of adults. They further reinforce the focus of my investigation.

Socialisation of newcomers

The third factor highlighted by Schein (2010) as of particular significance is that of socialisation of newcomers to an organisation. He points out that, "How we are supposed to perceive, feel, and act in a given society [or] organization... has been taught to us by our various socialization experiences" (p. 2).

Socialisation is widely regarded in the management literature as important to maintaining an organisation's existing culture (Furnham, 2005; McKenna, 2006). Waddell et al (2009), for example, note that it is through socialisation experiences that newcomers to an organisation "internalise an organisation's values and norms and behave in accordance with them – not because they think they have to but because they think that these values and norms describe the right and proper way to behave" (p. 100).

In relation to my study within the bounds of an early childhood setting, the two main groups of newcomers relevant to consider are those previously identified as subgroups, that is, the teachers and the children, and so I turned to the literature relating to the socialisation of each in turn.

Teachers' socialisation as newcomers to an organisation

In the management literature, newcomers to an organisation are usually adults. Socialisation into an existing organisation's culture is described as both formal (for example, through induction programmes and the use of staff handbooks) and informal (such as through newcomers observing actions of experienced group members, hearing the stories told and so on). In these ways newcomers to the organisation learn over a period of time what is expected of them in their role within the organisation, such as acceptable and unacceptable behaviour, how to interact with others, and appropriate ways to express their emotions (McKenna, 2006). Bochner (2003) points out, however, that although superficial behaviours such as manner of dress, and peripheral values such as punctuality may change, these are comparatively superficial; it does not necessarily follow that the newcomer's core values and assumptions will change and align with those of the organisation. To reframe this point using Schein's terms, visible signs of fitting in with an organisation's culture (Level 1 of his model), and Level 2 espoused values and beliefs, will be more amenable to change than the deeply held core values and beliefs that sit at Level 3.

Schein (2010) acknowledges that specific occupational groups will hold shared assumptions, values and beliefs (Level 3 of his model of organisational culture)

as a result of their training and the identity they acquire in practising their occupation. There are echoes here of Foucault's notion of discourse; that is, of systemized bodies of thinking and shared language and concepts that form the basis of how people understand, feel and practice in specific areas (MacNaughton, 2005). In the educational context, many members of teaching teams entering schools and early childhood settings in New Zealand today have completed a programme of initial teacher education, which will have included not only knowledge, understandings and skills for teaching, but also some level of professional socialisation intended to facilitate their internalisation of the values and norms of the teaching profession generally. Thus they join an educational setting holding not only core personal values, but also a sense of a professional culture – that is, “the distinctive blend of norms, values, and accepted modes of professional practice, both formal and informal, that prevail among [qualified teachers]” (Kardos, Moore Johnson, Peske, Kauffman, & Liu, 2001, p. 254).

Nevertheless, research into the first year of teaching (for example, Flores, 2006; Kardos et al., 2001; Youngs, 2007) typically reveals this to be an “extraordinary and tumultuous experience” (Franks, 2005, p. 1) for new teachers. Sabar (2004, p. 147) refers directly to school culture as a reason for this, comparing the beginning teacher's adjustment to school culture to that of migrants to a new country:

The beginning teacher is a stranger who is often not familiar with the accepted norms and symbols in the school or with the hidden internal codes which exist among teachers and students. In this respect, novice teachers seem to resemble immigrants who leave a familiar culture and move into a strange one that is both attractive and repellent.

One of Sabar's (2004) research participants commented that, "So many of the rules in school are absurd to me... when I commented [on one], I got looks from the other teachers that sent me the message that I am either naïve or stupid" (p. 153). This is a direct reference to the influence of organisational culture.

Similarly, in the Aotearoa New Zealand early childhood context, Aitken's (2006) research exploring the experiences of eight newly qualified teachers, refers to their efforts to fit in to teaching teams as an aspect of organisational culture that varied between centres, reflected in (for example) expectations placed on the new teachers and the level of support and mentoring provided.

The impact of socialisation is not to deny the agency of newcomers to an organisation, however. From the management literature, Furnham (2005) points out that some people change their working environment to fit their own needs and aspirations. With regard to beginning teachers, Hebert and Worthy's (2001) case study of a beginning teacher outlines how she went about taking a proactive stance in the face of an unsupportive school culture. This teacher "engaged in specific behaviours which contributed to a positive induction year, particularly... manoeuvring the social and political culture of the school... there was much she could and did do to affect the outcomes of her induction year" (p. 910). Specific strategies mentioned include building relationships with those who were in a position to help her access resources for her teaching, participating in school-related extra-curricular activities, and being proactive in scheduling appraisals and evaluations of her teaching.

Children's socialisation as newcomers to an early childhood setting

Brennan's (2005) PhD thesis examined children's enculturation to an early childhood centre, including how they came to learn what was expected of them, what was permitted, expected, and disapproved of. Her review of the literature concluded that there is much more to be learned about how children are influenced by the many cumulative sources of existing social norms when they enter an early childhood setting for the first time. Brennan's own study found "many examples of children negotiating cultural messages and resisting enculturation attempts" (p. 78). She used the ideas of Foucault to explore children interrupting social norms. Interestingly, she gives an example of an infant as young as five months old, playfully contesting the 'Be quiet at bedtime' rule by banging her cup noisily.

An alternative perspective is offered by Tomasello, an American developmental psychologist and co-director of the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology in Leipzig, Germany. He has conducted extensive research over the years focussing on how children become part of cultural groups, investigating prosocial acts such as helping, informing, and sharing. His research with infants and toddlers under 2 years of age showed that spontaneous acts of these types were already occurring by infants' first birthdays, with little evidence that deliberate socialisation from any source had played any part in the emergence of this "indiscriminate altruism" (Tomasello, 2009, p. 29). It is his conclusion that "homo sapiens are adapted for acting and thinking cooperatively in cultural groups" (Tomasello, 2009, p. xv). Interestingly, Tomasello's research found that children also actively seek norms out and participate in enforcing

them. His research showed that this concern for 'doing things right' (that is, according to established group norms) was not just instrumental, that is, based on respect for authority or children's desire to please others around them. Rather, from the age of around three, children viewed social norms as existing outside of individuals and carrying their own independent force.

Foucault's explanation comes from a sociological rather than developmental lens. His study of institutions such as prisons, hospitals and factories led to him developing the notion of disciplinary power, described as something that "reaches into the very grain of individuals, touches their bodies and inserts itself into their actions and attitudes, their discourses, learning processes and everyday lives" (Foucault, 1980, p. 39). Thus if the early childhood setting is regarded as an institution, it follows that the inevitable power relations within it will influence children's experiences including what they come to believe is the correct way to act, feel, think, and learn.

Chapter summary

To summarise this chapter, in searching for a conceptual framework of organisational culture for my study, I rejected approaches that listed significant factors or arranged these into typologies, preferring instead Schein's three-level model of organisational culture. Having settled on a conceptual framework, and deciding to limit my study to inside the bounded world of the early childhood centre, I set out to find what was known about organisational culture in early childhood settings in Aotearoa New Zealand. I was able to locate only three studies that explored this, and while those studies confirmed the relevance and

usefulness of applying the concept to early childhood settings, none of them directly investigated children's lived experiences in relation to this.

Searching the educational research literature more widely to look for organisational culture implicit in research about children's experiences yielded no further information pertinent to my study. Therefore, I returned to the writing of Schein (2010), who identified leadership, subcultures within organisations, and the socialisation of newcomers to organisations as of particular importance for people's experiences of organisational culture.

My reading of literature around distributed and pedagogical leadership was suggestive of links between organisational culture and children's experiences; however this research was based in the main on student achievement outcomes in schools, whereas my research intent was to focus on children's lived experiences in early childhood settings. I did find two studies where a link between leadership, organisational culture and children's experiences in early childhood settings could be glimpsed, as reported in Bary et al (2008), and Ord et al (2013). This simultaneously confirmed the relevance of my investigation, and the current lack of research exploration in the area. In conjunction with the research literature around children as a subgroup actively creating their own 'underlife' (Corsaro, 2005), these reports also validated the importance of my intention to explore children's lived experiences directly, rather than only through a viewpoint focused on adults' actions.

In short, my reading of the literature confirmed how little was known about the influence of organisational culture for children's lived experiences in early childhood settings. Chapter 3 explains the methodology I adopted in my own research as I set about addressing this gap in knowledge.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY, RESEARCH METHODS, AND THE CENTRE CONTEXT AND PARTICIPANTS

The purpose of this chapter is to explain the methodological decisions that underpinned how I went about my exploration of the influence of an early childhood centre's organisational culture for children's lived experiences. Through being explicit about my methodology and data gathering and generating techniques, and the context in which this data was obtained, I aim to both explain the reasoning behind the way I went about my investigation, and to offer as sound a representation of the context for that research as I can. This information adds to the robustness of my research process and is thus weight to my findings.

I begin by positioning my research as a qualitative case study within an interpretivist paradigm, and explaining my thinking about the position of the children within that. The particular methods I used to gather and generate information within that case study centre are discussed, along with ethical considerations and my approach to data analysis. I then explain how I selected Tui Preschool (a pseudonym) to be the case study centre, introduce the participants, and describe some key aspects of the early childhood centre in which my study was carried out.

Theoretical underpinnings of the research design

There are many philosophical traditions within social science research, each holding beliefs about the nature of reality (ontology), the nature and form of knowledge (epistemology), and how knowledge of the world is gained

(methodology) (Johnson & Christensen, 2008). In relation to my research focus, my conceptualisation of organisational culture was that it was something more complex than could be captured by independently examining component parts and then adding them together. My research question also contained an explicit focus on understanding children's lived experiences in an early childhood centre. Thus, I could see a strong fit with the interpretivist research paradigm, and decided to use a qualitative research design.

An interpretivist research paradigm focuses on "understanding the subjective world of human experience" (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007, p. 204), and includes a diverse range of approaches such as postpositivist, constructivist, feminist and so forth (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). Held in common by these approaches are beliefs that reality is socially constructed; that there are multiple realities, and thus a holistic approach (where the whole is considered greater than the sum of its parts) is considered most useful; and that the research process should be naturalistic and begin inductively (Creswell, 1998).

Qualitative research is characterised as emergent and fluid in nature, focusing on open-ended exploration, studying phenomena as they naturally occur, developing theories and explanations based on interpretations, and resulting in a rich narrative report rather than statistics (Johnson & Christensen, 2008).

Qualitative approaches are of particular advantage when the aim of research is on 'getting under the skin' of a group and attempting to view it from the inside (Gillham, 2000), as they allow the researcher to focus on illuminating "the shifting networks of complex interactions that make up the contexts which

provide the constraints and possibilities for action and interpretation” (Edwards, 2010, p. 155).

Having positioned my research as qualitative and interpretivist in orientation, I turned to a consideration of a specific research methodology aligned with this perspective that would facilitate the gathering and generating of rich information relevant to my research question. In the management literature, case studies are considered to be essential to uncover the deeper aspects of organisational culture (Bochner, 2003). A case study is essentially the exploration of a system bounded by time and space (Creswell, 1998; Stake, 2003). Recognising that systems are made up of many parts, case study research aims to uncover the patterns of interplay between parts in an effort to understand the system as a whole (Johnson & Christensen, 2008; Stake, 2003). A case study approach was therefore consistent with my research focus and theoretical positionings.

Stake (2003) identifies two types of case studies, namely intrinsic and instrumental. Intrinsic case studies focus on analysing information to understand the specific case being studied, whereas in instrumental case studies the primary interest lies in facilitating insights beyond the immediate case study context (Stake, 2003). My approach was instrumental, as my intent was to gain insight and understanding of the influence of organisational culture on children’s lived experiences, rather than to understand the case study centre for its own sake.

In summary, for my investigation into the influence of organisational culture for children's lived experiences, I decided on a qualitative case study methodology within an interpretivist paradigm. Before determining specific methods with which to gather and generate information, however, I needed to think through the place of the children within my research, and to this I next turned my attention.

Research and young children

There are many understandings of appropriate ways for children to be involved in research. Wyness (2006) summarises these by questioning whether research should be on, for, with, or by children. My perspective in relation to this comes from a sociocultural paradigm embraced by Rogoff (2003), Corsaro (2005), and Brennan (2005), that children are active social actors in the cultural context. "Children shape, and are shaped by, the world around them" (Kincheloe, 2005, p. xiii); this includes the world of the early childhood centre. Therefore, in designing my research, I had a commitment to including children as participants in a way that was more than 'on' or 'for' them.

Rhedding-Jones, Bae and Winger (2008) make a call to resist research which turns children into objects, and to give space for children's voices. Although young children's voices have often been excluded from research in the past (Kincheloe, 2005), it has been increasingly recognised that children are capable of reporting on and discussing their views and experiences (Sumison, 2005). Indeed, "significant knowledge gains result when children's active participation in the research process is deliberately solicited and when their perspectives,

views and feelings are accepted as genuine, valid evidence” (Woodhead & Faulkner, 2008, p. 34). The challenge for me became how to do this in my own study.

One answer came from Christensen and James (2008), who argue for using the same research methods for child and adult participants. This appeared, on the face of it, to be an equitable solution, and I therefore formed the intent to use the same information gathering tools with all participants.

However, this raised other considerations, as I realised that I could not expect child and adult participants to view me as researcher in the same ways. Clearly, I was an adult myself. As such, I entered the investigation with some level of natural alliance with the adult participants. I also had the further connections of fellow parent and/or fellow early childhood colleagues to draw on, when relationship building was important (for example, in carrying out individual interviews). In trying to enter the children’s world as a non-child, however, not only did I have no natural alliance, but the children’s perspective might well have been to view me by default as a person with power over them (Harwood, 2010; Mayall, 2008). I was mindful that “giving children a voice, listening to their stories, watching their agentic actions and really seeing them has to be grounded in an awareness of the asymmetric power relations between adults and children” (Rhedding-Jones et al., 2008, p. 54).

Two strategies I therefore decided to use were firstly, to focus observations on capturing children’s stories as they played out. My intent was that this would

move my research lens towards viewing the children as “subjects with concerns”, rather than “objects of concern” (Woodhead & Faulkner, 2008, p. 22). Secondly, I determined to follow Mayall’s (2008, p. 110) recommendation to adopt a “least-adult role, blending in to the social world of children, not siding with adults, operating physically and metaphorically on the children’s level in their social worlds”, whenever I was in the case study centre.

Research methods used

It is typical within a qualitative research paradigm to use multiple methods to gather full and lush descriptions from a variety of sources about the area of investigation (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003; Edwards, 2010). Consistent with that approach, rather than examining discrete elements of the setting such as individual characteristics of the children, qualifications of staff, or how particular procedures were enacted by adults, I decided to focus my data gathering on generating rich descriptions of aspects of the early childhood centre as they were talked about and lived, in interaction with each other.

Therefore, to investigate the ‘way things were done’ at my case study early childhood centre and the influence of this for children’s experiences, I decided to use individual interviews for adults and children, focus group interviews for adults and children, observations of children’s experiences within the centre, document and artefact analysis, and reflective notes. This section details the methods used; how these played out as my research process unfolded is described in Chapter 4.

Individual interviews

I regarded interviewing participants as integral to my information gathering, as in this way I could go beyond describing participants' acts to gathering something of their views, values, assumptions, and ideologies (Creswell, 2008) which are an important aspect of organisational culture (Schein, 2010).

Interviews are regarded by Gillham (2000) as fundamental in case study research, due to the richness of the communication that is possible in a face-to-face situation. Also, individual interviews also allow for the establishment and building up of empathetic and trustful relationships, which Wyness (2006) regards as essential if the researcher is to gain a sense of how people view their worlds.

One limitation of using interviews to gather information is that participants may view this as a chance to "impress you, hide data, or blow off steam" (Schein, 2010, p. 181) rather than provide an accurate picture of their experiences of the culture. It was possible, for example, that the qualified teachers might resort to teacher talk; that is, to "subjectivities embedded and embodied within the discursive conventions of the early childhood profession and childcare as an institution" (Brennan, 2005, p. 93), rather than to their perceptions of how things were in the centre. However, I did not consider this problematic for my research, as according to Schein's (2010) framework, publicly espoused views and beliefs are informative in their own right as to an organisation's culture.

I decided to use semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions, including those of the type recommended by Driskill and Brenton (2005) as

particularly useful in exploring organisational culture; examples included experience questions ('give me an example of a time when...'), grand tour questions ('walk me through your day here'), and hypothetical questions ('what would happen here if...'). In this way the interviews could remain focused while also allowing participants space to discuss their perspectives, values and beliefs.

I decided to interview all of the teaching team at Tui Preschool (including the supervisor), four parents, four children, and the owner/founder. Copies of the interview schedules used to prompt data generation with participants are included as Appendices A - E.

In deciding how to go about interviewing child participants, I was aware that as Gollop (2000) points out, from their perspective there may well be no obvious benefits of the interview, with the resulting lack of personal investment affecting both the process and the information obtained. Mayall's (2008) issue as to a perception of asymmetrical power relations also needed to be taken into account. Strategies I used came from Gollop (2000) and included taking a non-expert role ('I don't know what it's like when...') and using what rather than why questions ('What do you like about it?' rather than 'Why do you like it?'). By using such types of questions I aimed to position myself as a novice to the centre, with the child interviewee as experienced in the life of the centre, an approach Corsaro (1990) had found useful. I also aimed to take an overall approach to child interviews that was akin to a social conversation, without losing sight of the ultimate point of the conversation from the research perspective – to gather

something of the child's perspective about the way things were done at the centre.

I also gave some thought as to where best to hold the children's interviews. Scott (2000, in Wyness, 2006) considers the location of interviews of children to be crucial, arguing that children's responses are context-dependent. I therefore decided to carry out the interviews in the child's centre, considering that this would have the benefits of being an environment with which they were familiar, and that being in the context I was intending to discuss would help provide cues and prompts for myself and the children. For example, instead of asking, "What do you like about your centre?" I could request that a child show me what they liked about this place we were in.

Focus group interviews

Focus group interviews, as semi-structured group discussions, can be used to examine the meanings people hold, with the group discussion allowing a collective view to arise yielding information and insights that would not have occurred through interviewing individuals (McLachlan, 2005; Ryan & Lobman, 2007). Given Schein's (2010) theory that the deepest level of organisational culture is often outside of individual awareness, focus group interviews had the potential to uncover insights and add depth to my information generating. Therefore, I decided to use this method to supplement individual interviews. Because I thought it possible that each group of participants might hold its own collective yet distinctive perspective, I planned for one focus group interview for

staff working in the centre, another for any or all of the parents, and another for any or all of the children.

One feature of focus group interviews usually described as a weakness, is that the data obtained may be coloured by the desire of individuals to keep face in front of colleagues (Cohen et al., 2007). In the context of organisational culture, Schein (2010) notes that asking participants directly about their values and assumptions is likely to yield the participant's perception of a socially acceptable response. I was hoping that a focus group could yield insights deeper than this; however, even if all that resulted was at the 'socially acceptable' level, this in itself was relevant to my investigation of organisational culture, as espoused beliefs and values constitute the second level of Schein's model. Further, as this was only one data gathering method used in my study, any disparities between espoused group views, individual views, and actions seen during observations, were likely to become apparent during the data analysis stage.

Observation

Observation is a standard case study data gathering method, as well as being a familiar tool in early childhood education, and a recommended technique for investigations into organisational culture (Driskill & Brenton, 2005). In deciding to use observation as a data gathering method, I took a contrary position to McLeod (2002), who considered interviews of teachers sufficient to gain insight into early childhood centre culture. My reading and reasoning led me to conclude that observing what people did in the centre yielded information at least as important as asking people what they did and why. Further, I regarded

observation as essential for providing a window into the 'here-and-now' of children's lived experiences, which was central to my research question.

Wolcott (2009) specifies participant observation as at the heart of qualitative research. However, there are many interpretations of what participant observation means, so that Creswell (1998, p. 123) concluded that the participant observer role "...varies from being a complete outsider to a complete insider". Indeed, Tedlock (2003, p. 180) refers to the term as an "oxymoron... impl[y]ing simultaneous emotional involvement and objective detachment".

Cohen et al. (2007, p. 404) refer to the 'participant-as-observer' as someone who is part of the context, who documents events for research purposes, whereas the 'observer-as-participant' is someone known to the group as a researcher who otherwise would not be there. I positioned myself more towards the 'observer' than 'participant' end of the scale, reasoning that to participate in the centre would pose two challenges to my information gathering. First, by participating, I would be disturbing the very culture I wished to investigate to a much greater extent than if I only observed. Further, by participating, I would run the risk of more rapidly being enculturated into the centre myself, making me less able to see the influences and nuances in which I was interested.

When thinking about how many observations to undertake, and how long each session should take, I thought it important to strike an appropriate balance between gathering adequate information, establishing the credibility of that information through sufficient engagement (Kiley & Jensen, 2003), and becoming

desensitised myself to the organisational culture I was there to explore, as Hatherly (1997) warned could happen from being in the centre for too long. I decided to balance these considerations by observing in the centre twice at every point of its opening hours, and to observe on each day of the week at least once.

For the purposes of exploring of my research question, I deemed the specific characteristics of actual children observed to be unimportant. For example, I did not strive to observe equal numbers of boys and girls or particular ethnicities. Rather, as a set of data, I was aiming for my observations to capture children's typical daily experiences in the centre.

In carrying out observations, I aimed to generate "thick descriptions" containing enough detail to allow readers to be transported into the setting (Geertz, 1994). I thought about using a video camera to aid in this, particularly to capture detail around children's experiences. Although I received ethical approval for this, in the event I decided to make pen and paper recordings instead. This was because, despite the undoubted advantage of video recordings being able to be viewed more than once, I considered that using pen and paper to record was less intrusive to the culture I was there to investigate (Edwards, 2010). Further, pen and paper enabled me to be more intuitive in my approach through being alert to children's subtle cues in relation to contextual subtleties (a small sound here, an overheard conversation in the distance, a glance through the window or into an adjoining play area, and so on). This follows the thinking of Helm (2011), who notes that in complex situations, using professional intuition is a rational response, as it permits past experiences to guide responses to new, rapidly

unfolding situations. My past experiences in early childhood centres supported my intuitive approach when undertaking observations.

When designing my research, I did not decide on the specific focus of observations ahead of time, but intended to be guided by an initial analysis of the interview data to show me where to begin. However, I was aware that I would need to find a balance between a focus on small events and the larger context, lest I become ‘unable to see the wood for the trees’. In alignment with an intuitive approach (and as previously discussed, with my intent to position children as subjects with concerns), a technique I decided to use was to follow the experiences of a child during an observational period. Brennan (2005) noted in her study that this had helped her include relevant features of the wider context in her information gathering, especially where she felt she had been focusing so closely on capturing and recording thick data meant that she felt she was “miss[ing] the overriding atmosphere or tone of events” (p. 92). This approach was in alignment with my research question focus on children’s lived experiences.

Document and artefact analysis

Documents, a type of artefact, are situated products significant to an organisation’s culture, in that they may make explicit the espoused values and beliefs that influence the way things are to be done. Documents such as policy manuals influence culture by specifying expectations and standards and thus constraining actions, even while members of the organisation choose to conform

to them; thus, “both choice and constraint are simultaneously true” (Driskill & Brenton, 2005, p. 18).

In the Aotearoa New Zealand early childhood context, centres are required to have documented policies in specific areas. Each time a teacher chooses to follow a centre policy, the power of such policies in the future has been added to, even though the teacher might feel constrained by it. In this way documents can serve as the “drivers, media (channels), mediators (filters), and outcomes of social interaction” (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 204). I therefore decided it was important to include documents and artefacts as important sources of information for my study.

To do this, as well as gathering publically available documents (such as the centre’s Policy Manual, which was available online), I was alert during interviews to any mention of artefacts and documents, and when mentioned I asked to view them and/or make a copy of them. I also included descriptions of documentation and artefacts that were on public display in the centre, in my observational notes. Appendix F lists the documents and artefacts I gathered as part of my study.

Reflective notes

Valsiner (1997) argues for the importance of the researcher’s intuitive grasp of the phenomena under study, pointing to its significance for the investigator’s thinking. Gillham (2000) refers to knowledge that is sensed or felt, that researchers find hard to justify or explain. I reasoned that such alternate ways of

knowing could yield insights and thus play a helpful role if acknowledged, documented, and explored.

Brennan (2005) noted the importance of reflective notes to her investigation, using them to capture and express developing ideas and intuitions. I therefore decided to make it my practice to write reflective notes after completing observational visits and interviews, during data analysis, and whenever I felt that articulating a hunch, idea or concern by writing it down would help me examine it more clearly.

Ethical considerations

I was committed to acting ethically, respectfully, and sensitively with regards to relationships with all of those I came into contact with during my research. I was also committed to minimising the impact of my actions on usual centre routines and processes, which was critical to the credibility of the information I intended (Edwards, 2010). I was guided in my decisions by the 1998 version of the Ethical Guidelines developed by the New Zealand Association for Research in Education (since revised in 2010), and I developed and submitted for approval an ethics application following the expected procedures for research involving human participants, which was approved by my governing university.

To maximise the potential for informed consent, I prepared and used information letters and consent forms for the centre owner and supervisor, the parents of all children attending the centre, the teachers and staff working in the centre, and the parents I interviewed (see Appendices G - K). In these I made

explicit what I was intending to do, asked for permission for those activities, explained how confidentiality would be maintained, and confirmed the participants' right to withdraw from the study at any point, including the right to withdraw consent for my use of information provided.

Johnson and Christensen (2008) consider that children are not able to give informed consent, as it is difficult to be certain that they are free from the desires of others when they make a decision to participate. To address this, I ensured informed consent from parents of all the centre children, to include them in my observations. The teachers in the centre introduced me to the children on my first morning at the centre, explaining that I was there to write stories about what the children and teachers did at the centre. Thereafter, if approached by a child while documenting an observation, I answered that I was writing stories of what children were doing. If the querying child was one I had been observing, I offered to read back to a child what I had just written, and asked if I had got it right and if it was okay for me to have that information. Occasionally a child would ask to 'write' in my observational recording book also, and I let them do so.

As well as this, while observing, I remained sensitive to verbal and non-verbal indicators of children's assent, so that if I was observing a child and their body language indicated that they were not comfortable with this (by turning their back, for example), I would stop observing and recording. In this way I regarded children's ongoing assent as provisional and renegotiable. This was easily accommodated within my research, as my observations were not dependent on

any particular child or children. In this way, children's assent to being observed was continually (if silently) negotiated, and I could be more confident therefore that their participation was voluntary. This approach is in line with Harwood's (2010) recommendation for an ongoing assenting process when researching with young children.

For the children I interviewed, I sought first their parents' consent, then their own written assent, before proceeding. The child assent form is contained in Appendix L, and I read this out to each child before their interview. Again, I viewed children's assent as provisional, and in the event this meant that not every intended child interview was carried out (as explained in Chapter 4). On the other hand, some of the children particularly liked hearing the recordings of their own voices, and whenever they asked, I replayed their own interviews for them.

Approach to analysis

Case study research typically takes an inductive approach to data analysis (Gillham, 2000). This led me to decide upon using a grounded theory approach for making sense of my data. Grounded theory is theory "derived from data, systematically gathered and analysed through the research process..." (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 12). The theory emerges from the data, in the belief that this offers greater insight and understanding than fitting data to pre-existing theory. A grounded theory approach was consistent with my earlier decision not to enter my investigation with a predetermine typology of organisational culture in mind, but rather to allow the data generated to speak for itself.

In line with the grounded theory approach, I planned to begin data analysis after completing my set of individual interviews, before progressing on to any direct observations within the centre. By completing this analysis before entering the centre, I was deliberately attempting to limit my direct exposure to the organisational culture of the centre, and thus heighten the trustworthiness of my information by reducing the possibility of my own experiences and impressions of the centre culture colouring my interpretation of participant's perspectives.

Selecting the case study centre

Having decided on a case study approach, the research methods I would use and my approach to analysis, received ethics approval, and thought through the place of the children, I was ready to select an early childhood centre to be the case study setting in which I would explore my research question. In doing this, I was drawn to the approach of the *Success Case Method*, with its focus on "looking intentionally for the very best" (Brinkerhoff, 2005, p. 100). Brinkerhoff argued that focusing on successful cases makes clearer what outcomes are possible and the factors and contexts in which this can occur. Hatherley (1997, p. 63) had concluded her study in an early childhood setting by suggesting that, "it may be informative to examine the culture of 'excellent' centres as an insight into the contributing values, behaviours and assumptions." In following this suggestion, I hoped that uncovering influences of organisational culture on children's lived experiences in an excellent early childhood centre would have value for other settings.

'Excellence' is a notoriously slippery term. In the *Success Case Method*, successful cases "often are selected using only intuitive judgment" (Brinkerhoff, 1983, p. 58), and "simply by asking people" to identify successful cases (Brinkerhoff, 2005, p. 91). While this intuitive approach had some appeal, I decided to add more rigour to my selection process by also considering both reputation and long-term standing in the early childhood community. To do this, I decided to supplement my own judgments by gathering the knowledge and judgments of my colleagues in the early childhood community, and to read the two latest Education Review Office (ERO) reports for each centre that arose as a possibility. The ERO reports needed to explicitly mention positive experiences for children, for consideration as my case study centre.

At this point I also decided to focus on an over-2s area of a centre. My reasoning for this was that it would both facilitate inclusion of the children's perspectives of their experiences, and improve the validity of such data, if the children were of an age that they could verbalise this.

Other than this, because I viewed the case study centre as of instrumental rather than intrinsic importance (Stake, 2003) – that is, for its ability to shed light on my research question rather than of interest for its own sake - factors such as the centre's location, proportions of qualified staff, number of children enrolled, and the nature of the centre management (private business, not-for-profit, parent board etc) did not play a part in influencing centre selection.

I have been involved in the early childhood community in my home city for many years, as a parent, teacher and teacher educator. Thus I entered this study already holding intuitive judgments and opinions as to possible centres for selection. Casual conversations about what was happening in various centres were already a normal part of my week with a variety of friends and associates, so it was a simple matter to listen out for indications of suitable centres, and to research ERO reports as potential case study centres came to my attention. I also worked the other way round, reading recent ERO reports, and for those that specifically indicated positive experiences for children, asking friends and associates what they knew about these centres.

One problem with this method of identification was that, very quickly, I began to receive conflicting information. One person might be tremendously excited about what they had seen at a centre, while the next would be shaking their heads doubtfully as to the children's experience there. A more serious problem, however, soon became apparent. I had already decided that some centres did not meet my intuitive, subjective standard of excellence, and therefore would not be suitable. Even if the ERO reports had been glowing, I realized that what I thought I knew would impact on my ability to see past my own preconceptions, thus threatening the trustworthiness of the data I intended to gather and my interpretations of this. The situation was little different when gathering others' opinions to supplement my own intuitive judgments of excellence; my respect for such opinions could again jeopardise my ability to enter the early childhood setting with the relatively untainted eyes needed to investigate organisational culture.

Within a short time I realised that my study into organisational culture needed to take place in an early childhood centre with which I had had no prior contact and held minimal preconceptions. At this time I met Imogen (all names are pseudonyms), a qualified early childhood teacher who had set up and still owned a small number of early childhood centres in another city, all of which had excellent reputations, confirmed by the recent ERO reports. I went to Imogen's city and met with her to explain what was entailed in my research, and giving her a centre owner/supervisor information and consent form, which she signed. We discussed which of her centres might be most suitable, given my preference for an over-2s context and her knowledge of which centres might be most receptive to an approach. She then introduced me to Annabel, the supervisor of Tui Preschool.

I met Annabel in the centre the next morning and outlined my research plans, at the end of which she gave me signed consent to proceed. She invited me to the centre for the next staff meeting to meet the teachers and discuss my research with them.

The story of how my study progressed in Tui Preschool is taken up in Chapter 4. To conclude this chapter, I will introduce the participants I interviewed for my study, and provide a description of aspects of Tui Preschool, to paint a robust backdrop for the explanation of that research process.

The participants

Participants I interviewed for my investigation into the influence of organisational culture for children's lived experiences included all the staff employed at Tui Preschool, four parents, and four children out of six approached. All names are pseudonyms.

The teachers

There were seven teacher participants in the study. Annabel, the supervisor of Tui Preschool, had completed her Bachelor of Education (ECE teaching) qualification in 2004 and had immediately come to the centre as a beginning teacher in her first teaching position. Over subsequent years, she had risen to the role of supervisor, although she was one of the youngest of the teaching team. She was a fully registered teacher, and had two young children, the older of whom attended the centre full-time. Annabel had been instrumental in the appointment of the other staff, all of whom had been at the centre for less than two years at the time of my study.

Brenda, the assistant supervisor, held a Bachelor of Education (Teaching) in Early Childhood Education, awarded in 2004, and a first aid certificate. She and Annabel had been classmates together when studying for their teaching qualification. She was working as a supervisor in another centre when she was rung by Annabel and asked to join the team at Tui Preschool as assistant supervisor. The timing was right for her and she accepted, nearly two years before my study began. Two months after she arrived, Annabel went on maternity leave, and Brenda was the relieving supervisor for three months until

Annabel's return. If ever Annabel was away from the centre, Brenda stepped up to the supervisor's role and responsibilities; otherwise she worked with the children as a teacher.

Carol held a Diploma of Teaching gained in 1998, and a current first aid certificate. The oldest member of the teaching team, she had been involved in early childhood education for 25 years, including work in Playcentre, home-based care and as owner of her own childcare centre. After some months researching various early childhood services she made a conscious decision that she wanted to work in the chain of centres Tui Preschool belonged to; she chose Tui Preschool after being offered the choice of a position in two of the chain centres. She drove a considerable distance to and from the centre each day to do this. She had been teaching in the centre for around 9 months when I interviewed her.

Diane held a level 5 Diploma in Early Childhood Education dated March 2008, which she had gained as an international student. Thus she was not recognised as a fully qualified teacher. She intended to become a permanent resident of New Zealand, and then to complete a degree in early childhood teaching. After gaining her Diploma she did some research on the internet, looking for a centre she thought she would enjoy working in. She phoned the owner of Tui Preschool and was subsequently interviewed and given day-to-day relieving work. After about a month, a permanent teaching position at Tui Preschool arose, and she was offered a week's trial, after which she was appointed. She had been there for about a year when my study began.

Emma had been working at the centre for about 18 months when I interviewed her. She had completed a Bachelor of Arts degree with combined majors in Early Childhood Studies and Education, and a Bachelor of Teaching (Early Childhood Education), awarded in May 2008. Her final teaching placement had been at another of the centres owned by Imogen, and the supervisor there encouraged her to apply for a position within that group of centres. Although Emma had initially intended relieving around a variety of centres after graduating, in the event she accepted a permanent position at Tui Preschool.

Frances held a Diploma of Teaching awarded in July 2007. She had previously worked in kindergartens with small teaching teams of 3 or 4. She moved to a house just up the road from Tui Preschool and approached the centre directly to be a reliever, becoming a permanent staff member around 2 months later. She had been a member of the teaching team for about 8 months when my study began. She went on maternity leave before my observations in the centre began.

Greg was nearing the end of his second year of a field-based early childhood teaching qualification. He became the full-time long-term reliever at the centre, covering Frances' leave. He came to early childhood education through an interest in working with children with special needs.

Between them, the seven teachers had gained their qualifications (or part-qualifications) at four different teacher education providers located throughout New Zealand.

Other employees

Hannah was the centre cook, employed from 9am to 1pm each day to prepare morning and afternoon teas and a cooked lunch daily for the children. It was also her role to design menus, which she did according to Ministry of Health guidelines for healthy eating for children, and to buy food within budget allowances. She described herself as having experience rather than training for her position, which she had seen advertised in the supermarket over a year ago. Her previous experience within early childhood centres was limited to visits to services her nieces and nephews attended. Although she held no early childhood teacher qualifications or experience, she would sometimes “help out” over lunchtimes and had occasionally relieved for short periods “if they’re really stuck” (Hannah’s interview, p. 5).

Imogen was the owner and founder of the chain of centres, and played a full-time role as a Director, including holding legal responsibility as Service Provider for all of the centres. As such, she retained oversight of the affairs of all the centres she owned, including carrying out all yearly staff appraisals, holding monthly supervisor meetings, and being present and part of ERO reviews. A qualified early childhood teacher herself, she was supervisor of the first centre she opened a number of years ago. Once she felt confident that her assistant supervisor was ready to become supervisor herself, Imogen left to open another centre as supervisor, and she repeated this pattern to grow her cluster of centres.

Child and parent participants

Laurence and Laura: Laura worked part-time as a teacher at a school handy to the centre in which Laurence was enrolled. Laurence's older brother had also attended the centre but had moved on to school two months prior to my study beginning. Laurence attended the centre three full days per week, having started there soon after he turned two years old, 18 months ago. Laura felt he had tended to play with his older brother's friends, but now they had also left for school Laurence was making his own friends, in particular a girl who (like him) had begun the centre without having attended the contributing under-2s centre.

Mark and Mary: Mary worked four full days per week, and Mark attended the centre for those four full days. He started in the contributing under-2s centre at four months of age, and transferred to Tui preschool at around 2 ½ years of age. He was just over four years old when I interviewed him and his mum. They lived quite close to the centre.

Geoffrey and Geraldine: Geraldine worked part-time. Her older child (now aged six) had attended both this centre and the contributing under-2s centre. Geoffrey also began in the under-2s centre and had transferred to Tui Preschool soon after he was two; he had just turned three at the time I interviewed Geraldine. He attended the centre three full days per week.

Simon and Sophie: Sophie was also a mother of two, and worked four days per week, during which time Simon (four and a bit years old) attended the centre.

He had attended the under-2s centre, as had his younger brother who had transferred over to the study centre just a week or two prior to my interview with Sophie.

Chloe and Amelia: Chloe and Amelia were both four and a half years old when I interviewed them. Their mother was not one of the adult participants interviewed. Chloe and Amelia attended the centre full-time, five days per week, and had been there since transferring from the under-2s centre over two years ago.

Tui Preschool

Stake (2003) views it as important that researchers who use the case study methodology, describe their cases sufficiently thoroughly for readers to be able to imagine themselves in the setting and thus, draw their own conclusions. A full and rich description of the case study context allows judgments to be made about the transferability of the research findings (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004; Kiley & Jensen, 2003). Further, Schein (2010, p. 138) points out that the physical layout of an organisation is relevant to consider when investigating its culture, as it is “often used to guide and channel the behavior of members of the organization, thereby becoming a powerful builder and reinforcer of norms”. These considerations lead me to offer at this point, a relatively extensive description of Tui Preschool.

The physical setting

Tui Preschool was a full day preschool licensed for 34 children over the age of 2 years. It was open from 7.30am to 6.00pm weekdays. It was a privately owned centre, one of a chain set up and owned by Imogen, who held legal responsibility as the Service Provider to ensure all government regulations were consistently met within the centre. Located in a city suburb, it was a family home when purchased, and then remodelled to suit the purposes of the preschool.

Just inside the front door entrance to the children's areas were a whiteboard, used by teachers to write daily messages to families, and a pocket system for distributing written/printed notices for each child. Children's lockers were also in this area, and the wall space above was used to display the teachers' profile posters and qualifications and a large collage poster made by the staff with photos of children and words describing the centre.

Adjoining the entrance way was a carpeted room with a half door. This room had the least natural light of any rooms in the centre, and it had been made quite soft, with material draped on the ceilings and cushions scattered. It contained dolls and resources to support children's family play and dramatic play, and was also used for group gatherings of the younger children, and as the sleep room after lunch. When it was being used for sleeping children, soft material curtains were hung in the doorways to indicate the room was not available for playing, and so that children were able to leave the area when they woke without requiring an adult to open a door.

At the far end of this room, accessible by a further door at that end, was the nappy changing area with associated equipment. This had stairs so that the children could climb up to the changing pad themselves.

The main play space for the children consisted of a large room, one end of which was carpeted and contained children's resources such as books, puzzles, puppets, a large dolls' house, Duplo and other construction materials, resources for music and movement, science exhibits, a low table and chairs, child-sized soft furniture and so forth. Group times for the older children and/or for the whole group took place in this space. The other part of the room had a lino floor, with three rectangular tables and plentiful wooden children's chairs. This space was usually used for art and craft activities, with resources for this arranged in containers in shelves that are mostly accessible by the children. Often teachers set out two of the tables with activities for the children; the third was almost always left clear for children to use with the self-selected resources.

Along almost the length of this room ran the kitchen. Separating this from the children's play space was a long breakfast bar, with a lowered serving shelf at one end. An adult in the kitchen could glance up and see immediately into the art spaces, but not the whole of the carpeted area. Access to the kitchen was through a half door at each end, kept bolted. Access to the laundry and adults' toilet was through the kitchen.

At the far end of the art space was a door providing access to the outside deck and play areas. The building turned in an L-shape at this point. In this part of the room was a kidney-shaped food ('kai') table with about 9 or 10 child-sized chairs around it. The children's toilets were beyond this, along with a low trough with taps at a height suitable for the children to use.

The staff room and indoor resource storage area were situated away from children's play spaces and were not accessible to them.

Outside access for children was gained through the door at the end of the art room, which led to a deck and an L-shaped play area. Permanent structures outside included a large sandpit covered with a shade structure, and a climbing frame and slide surrounded by safety matting. There was also a fenced off garden area with child-sized outdoor seating; it reminded me of a 'secret garden'. The outdoor area also contained play resources such as large cable reels and ladders. Extra resources for open-ended play, such as planks, tyres, lengths of hessian, and mats, were located in a storage shed.

Support from Head Office

Head Office staff supported Tui Preschool by handling the payment of accounts, wages, and maintenance of equipment and grounds. Imogen also worked from Head Office and described herself as available at the end of the phone to offer support and guidance to Annabel in particular, but said she was rarely in the centre. Other contact Imogen had with the Tui Preschool community was through the annual survey of parents whose children attended any of the centres

she owned, through conducting annual teacher and supervisor appraisals, and facilitation of a yearly policy review meeting with supervisors.

Staffing arrangements within the centre

When I first entered Tui Preschool, the teachers were Annabel (supervisor and teacher), Brenda (assistant supervisor and teacher), Carol, Diane, Emma and Frances, all of whom worked full-time in the centre. By the time I started my observations in the centre Frances had gone on long-term leave, and Greg had joined as a full-time relieving staff member. Towards the end of my study Annabel chose to reduce her working hours to four days per week, with a regular relieving teacher covering the fifth day.

As supervisor, Annabel spent most of her day with the children except for two hours' non-contact time each morning, when she completed office-based tasks essential to the running of the centre. All other teachers had two hours' non-contact time each week, during which they remained at the centre and worked on tasks such as updating the children's profile books. Profile books were large soft covered books individualised to each child, which were added to throughout the child's time in the centre. A typical profile book would contain a 'Welcome' page addressed to the child and family, photos of significant people and events from the child's life provided by their family, regular monthly 'learning stories' assessments of the child's learning, comments from families in relation to these, and documentation of celebrations of milestones achieved and special events at the centre. Each teacher was responsible for maintaining ten profile books, and much care was taken in this.

Teachers did light cleaning and tidying duties during and at the end of each day, with a cleaner employed to do a more thorough clean; this person was never in the centre when there were children or adults present. Teacher meetings were held once a month after the centre closed, for one hour. Food was provided for these meetings, and an agenda was made which any teacher could add to (as I saw Emma do, just prior to the first teacher meeting I attended).

The families and their engagement with the centre

The children attending Tui Preschool were from a variety of cultures, and most lived in two-parent families and were attending the preschool because of their parents' work commitments. A large majority of the children who attended the centre had transferred there from the contributing under-2s centre also owned by Imogen, located nearby.

Parent forums were held at the centre about once a month. These were on topics decided by the teachers but determined by relevance to what was happening in the centre. For example, the parent forum I attended (run by Annabel and attended by four other teachers and seven parents from six families) focused on treating head lice, sought parents' views on turning an emerging children's interest in make-up into a programme focus, discussed teachers' strategies for managing super-hero play, and introduced the idea of having primary caregivers for each child.

Twice a year, the centre held 'Parent-teacher interviews', where parents were

offered formal appointment times to talk with staff about their children's progress. Teachers would present children's profile books to parents during these meetings, and a template form was used to document both teacher and parent discussion points; this form was then added to the child's profile book.

The daily routine

The daily routine was explained to me by Emma in her interview, and confirmed by other teachers and my subsequent observations. I have summarised this in Table 1 below.

Table 1

Timeline of a Typical Day at Tui Preschool

Routines of this place	What does this mean for children?
<p>7.00am:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First teacher arrives, sets up inside play areas for children, attends to laundry 	
<p>7.30am:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Second teacher arrives • Centre opens and children begin to arrive 	Children are welcomed and settled in to activities available inside
<p>8.00am:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Third and fourth teachers arrive • Door to outside is opened and at least one teacher goes outside • A teacher prepares morning tea 	Outside environment becomes available to the children; they often help the teachers set up the environment by suggesting and positioning equipment
<p>9.00am:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fifth teacher, supervisor and cook arrive • Supervisor carries out non-contact office duties for two hours (away from children) • Supervised, rolling morning tea begins • Morning tea breaks for each teacher in turn (10 minutes each) 	<p>Self-chosen play continues in inside and outside environments</p> <p>Morning tea is available to children, who can generally choose when to participate within an overall timeframe of an hour</p>
<p>Around 10.00am:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cook clears away morning tea and prepares lunch • Teachers run group times 	Everyone comes inside. Two concurrent group times are offered to children, with two teachers at each. Children may opt out. After group time (around 20 minutes) there is self-chosen play for children, inside and outside
<p>11am:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervisor comes into ratio with children • Lunch breaks begin for teachers 	Self-chosen play continues for children

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nappy and toileting checks are carried out 	
<p>Around 11.15am</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preparation for serving of children's lunch begins with tidying up 	Children help tidy up in preparation for lunch
<p>Around 11.30am:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lunch is placed on the servery by the cook One teacher remains at the kai table until all children have eaten One teacher readies the sleep room 	<p>Supervised, rolling lunch time begins with younger children eating first</p> <p>Older children continue to play indoors</p>
<p>Around 12 noon:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> One teacher is now constantly in sleep room while children are there Cook prepares snacks for the rest of the day 	<p>Younger children are encouraged to move to the sleep room one by one as they finish lunch</p> <p>Older children are invited to eat and can continue to play indoors</p>
<p>Around 12.30:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cook tidies away lunch, cleans kitchen and leaves at 1pm Sleep room teacher re-clothes children once their nap is over, checks nappies and returns them to the inside playroom 	Non-resting children are encouraged to play outside, or inside if play is quiet
<p>Around 2.20pm:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A general tidy-up time occurs 	Everyone comes inside and helps tidy up
<p>Around 2.30pm:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers run group times Afternoon tea breaks for each teacher in turn (10 minutes each) One teacher sets up and supervises afternoon tea 	<p>Two concurrent group times are offered to children with two teachers at each.</p> <p>Children may opt out. Supervised, rolling afternoon tea is available to children at the end of this time, along with inside play</p>
<p>Around 3pm:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> One teacher takes 2 hours non contact 	<p>Many children leave at or soon after 3pm.</p> <p>Inside play continues until most parents</p>

away from children, to write assessments of children's learning	have collected their children; then the outside area is opened to children again
4.00pm: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First teacher finishes for the day • Second teacher has half an hour non contact for cleaning/end of day tasks 	Outside play is encouraged. Most days if the weather is reasonable, everyone goes to play in the park next door to the centre
4.30pm: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Second teacher finishes for the day • Third teacher has half an hour non contact for cleaning/end of day tasks 	All return to the centre and come inside. A late snack is offered to the remaining children.
5.00pm: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Third and fourth teachers finish for the day • Fifth teacher tidies and cleans, while supervisor stays with children 	Inside play in the main playroom only from now until the centre closes
6.00pm: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervisor and fifth teacher finish for the day; centre closes 	

All kai (food) times at Tui Preschool were 'rolling', meaning that food was presented at the servery or on the kai table and children could choose when to come to the kai table to eat within a certain timeframe. A teacher was always positioned at the kai table while food was available to children.

With regard to group times, these took place concurrently, one for the older children and one for the younger children; children were not obliged to attend, and were expected to play quietly without disturbing the group if they chose to continue with other activities. Although scheduled for up to half an hour,

individual teachers decided on the day how long was appropriate, as Emma explained to me:

...20 minutes of singing and dancing and reading stories, and it's depending on how the group sort of, you know, the vibe is, you know, we might carry on or we might say to them okay well let's just you know chill out, have some stories and or you guys can come and play now (Emma's interview, p. 3).

During their lunch breaks, teachers would sometimes leave the centre, or would use the downstairs staff room, where I noticed them at various times eating, reading a book, chatting on the phone, or using the centre computer for private purposes.

Chapter summary

In summary, I decided that a qualitative case study approach would serve me best in my investigation into the influence of organisational culture for children's lived experiences in early childhood setting. The specific methods I intended to use to gather and generate data are summarised in Table 2 below.

Table 2

Summary of Intended Methods for Gathering and Generating Data

Method	Description
Individual interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Centre founder and owner • 4 children • 4 parents • All permanent teachers
Focus groups	One for teachers One for parents One for children
Observations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8 sessions within the normal centre opening hours • between 2-3 hours duration per observational session • covering every day of the week and every time of day the centre was open
Document and artefact analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all publically available documents • items referred to specifically by participants in interviews • descriptions of physical surroundings, contents of walls and display boards etc
Reflections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As required to capture my hunches, ideas or concerns

After clarifying the place of the children in my research and ethical considerations, I have described the participants I interviewed, and the context of Tui Preschool, to heighten transparency and strengthen the base for the sense I made of my findings.

In Chapter 4, I describe how my research process unfolded, explaining decisions and changes made along the way as I went about gathering and generating the information for my investigation. In accordance with a grounded theory approach, I also outline my first analyses of information, where this informed next steps of my research process.

CHAPTER 4: GATHERING AND GENERATING DATA AND INITIAL ANALYSES

This chapter provides a description of my data gathering and generating process as it unfolded, and explains the decisions and changes I made along the way. In line with the grounded theory approach, I regarded data analysis as an ongoing activity rather than something to be done after all information has been gathered (Edwards, 2010). Therefore, this chapter also includes my first analyses of data, undertaken to guide my next steps in the research and to provide feedback to the teacher participants.

A theme throughout this thesis is my intent to follow calls for qualitative researchers to be explicit about decisions made in the research process (see for example, Creswell, 2008, p. 177). This call is particularly strong when case study methodology is employed; as Stake (2003, p. 144) quite baldly states, “The report will be the researcher’s dressing of the case’s own story... the researcher ultimately decides the criteria of representation”. I was very aware that no matter how much I might try to include others’ voices, it remained at every stage my choices as a researcher that would be presented, filtered through my own view, coloured by my own biases, prejudices, instincts, reflections, assumptions, blindnesses, and what I thought I knew. This was particularly so given my background and experiences as an early childhood teacher. Nowhere was this more problematic for me than in my gathering, generating, analysing and interpreting of information.

I decided to accept the qualitative researcher's challenge as responsibly and faithfully as I could by being as explicit as possible about the choices I made; that intent guides this chapter.

Gaining participants' consent

When selecting my case study centre, I began with gaining the consent of Imogen (the centre owner) and Annabel (the centre supervisor), who gave me permission to approach the Tui Preschool teachers, parents and children to discuss conducting my research in their centre. I then attended the next scheduled teaching team meeting, where I met Carol, Diane, Emma, and Frances. After explaining my research purpose and process, all of the teachers present gave written consent. Brenda, the assistant supervisor, was absent, having gone home sick during the day; I left an information sheet and written consent form for her at the centre, which she returned to me by mail. To ensure informed consent, I went over it with her face to face before her interview.

Parent information and consent forms (Appendix I) were then distributed to every centre family via the centre's existing pocket system. This was to ensure parents were fully informed as to the nature of my research, and what information I would potentially be gathering about their child, by what means. Envelopes were supplied for parents to use when returning the forms, with family names written on the outside. In this way staff could check off as forms were returned from families, without knowing the nature of each response.

It took approximately two months for consent forms from all centre families to be returned. Consent was obtained for all but one child, for whom no observations or other data were gathered. Two families requested limitations on their child's participation (for example, no observations during personal caregiving routines such as nappy changing and toileting); these requests were noted and wishes respected.

Interviewing Imogen

Schein (2010) identifies the beliefs, values and assumptions of the founder of the organisation as of particular significance, noting that, "even in mature companies, one can trace many of their assumptions to the beliefs and values of the founder and early leaders" (p. 242). McLeod (2002) also found the ongoing relevance of the founder on the culture of New Zealand early childhood educational settings. I therefore decided to begin my study by interviewing Imogen as the owner and founder of Tui Preschool, reasoning that this would give me a clear point of entry to the organisational culture of the centre. Therefore, while I was waiting for consent forms from all centre families to be returned, I contacted Imogen to make a time for her interview. I discovered that she was leaving for an 8-week overseas trip, at the end of that week. As I could not physically get to her city before she left, I suggested carrying out an initial interview either by phone or email; she preferred email.

I was aware that moving to an email interview could change the nature of responses that I might have obtained in a verbal, face-to-face interview; the equivalency of information obtained in oral and email interviews has not been

established (Hamilton & Bowers, 2006). Particular differences that might influence responses include that email interviews allow participants time to reflect on questions and edit their answers; also, spontaneity and visual cues are lost between interviewer and interviewee. However, I considered that starting my information gathering with the owner was sufficiently important to go ahead with emailed questions, bearing in mind that I could follow up with a face-to-face interview later in the information generating process. I therefore went ahead and emailed a list of questions (Appendix E), which was returned to me within the hour. This indicated to me that Imogen had probably not spent a lot of time reflecting on and editing her answers.

Interviewing staff

I also went ahead with interviewing the centre teachers and cook. To do this, I asked these participants to suggest a time and place for each interview, and went along with their suggestions. This was in line with Limerick et al. (1996, in Cohen et al., 2007) who proposed thinking of the interview as a gift. Most teacher interviews took place in the centre staff room, underneath the licensed child spaces and out of sight of anyone in the centre; one took place in the outside grounds of the centre. These interviews with Annabel, Brenda, Carol, Diane, Emma and Frances lasted between 35 and 55 minutes each. Hannah, the centre cook, chose to be interviewed after finishing her working day, sitting on a bench in the park adjacent to the centre. Her interview lasted 27 minutes.

Following the suggestion of Driskill and Brenton (2005), and the finding of Carter, Jordens, McGrath and Little (2009) that the perceived usefulness of the

research influenced participants and encouraged their thoughtful responses, I began each of these interviews by briefly explaining the overall research purpose and why it mattered, in terms of how it could help others. This was another strategy by which I hoped to heighten the trustworthiness of the information gathered from the interviews. In explaining that I was investigating organisational culture and its influence on children's experiences in Tui Preschool, I defined the term 'organisational culture' to each adult participant as 'the way we do things around here', in line with the 'folk' definition of the concept I had adopted from Deal and Kennedy (1982), and used by Hatherly (1997).

Once I had concluded individual interviews with centre staff, the teacher focus group interview was held. This took place at the centre after it had closed for the day, and lasted an hour. It centred around a group exercise asking the teachers to design a 30-second script with visuals for television, highlighting the centre and what makes it different (see Appendix M). I voice recorded this activity. As the activity began with a written brainstorm, the teachers also made a permanent record of their ideas, which I kept for later analysis.

In the focus group interview, the teachers' public ideas were unexpectedly uniform and so similar to what they had each individually told me in their interviews, that I couldn't see any new or unexpected insights generated by this exercise. Indeed, at the conclusion of the interview, Carol pointed to a large pre-existing poster made by the teachers some months earlier and positioned on the

wall by the centre entrance way, and said, “Look, we’ve pretty much redone our poster!” (Reflective note 10).

By this time Imogen had arrived back from overseas, and I was able to carry out a more in-depth, face to face interview with her, for which she invited me to her home. Also at this time, Frances took 6 months’ leave from the centre and Greg, previously a day-to-day relieving teacher for the centre, joined the teaching team. After receiving his signed consent, I interviewed him at the end of his first day as the long-term reliever.

I also carried out a second interview with Annabel, the centre supervisor. This was because I had been surprised at the consistency of messages the teachers gave me during individual interviews and the focus group interview, and I was interested in Annabel’s perspectives about this as the person in the day-to-day leadership role in the centre.

All of these interviews were voice recorded, with the permission of each participant. As each teacher interview was completed, I sent it for professional transcription, the results of which I checked in their entirety against the audio recording for accuracy. In this way I addressed the problem of authenticity and reduced the possible influence of the transcriber on what were key texts for analysis (Tilley & Powick, 2002). However, Imogen’s interview I transcribed myself, as I was now confident with the formatting style used by the professional transcriber. I offered the transcriptions of their own interview to each of the participants for checking; no-one took me up on the offer. I interpreted this as

an indication that the participants were comfortable with what they had said and trusting of the recordings made of this.

Selecting and interviewing parent participants

Once consent forms had been received back from all centre families, I could begin the process of selecting four parents to interview, to gain some insight into their perspectives of the centre culture. As the aim of these interviews was to get an overall picture of parents' views of the organisational culture of the centre and its influence for children's experiences, selection was done on a pragmatic basis of who was interested and available to be interviewed, rather than individual characteristics of parents. I did, however, ensure that at least two parents interviewed had a relatively long connection with the centre (over 3 years), and one was a relative newcomer (under 1 year).

It proved difficult for me to recruit parents personally, due to the centre being in another city. Although parents had completed initial consent forms, I did not have contact details, and I thought it likely that asking Annabel for these would be raising issues for her in the use of private information held by the centre. On the other hand, asking Annabel and the staff to approach parents on my behalf meant that the teachers would know who had been interviewed, and the parents would know that the teachers knew. This raised issues of confidentiality, and might have influenced what parents said in their interviews. Further, I had an ethical commitment to minimising the impact of my research on usual centre life. I was concerned that asking centre staff to approach parents on my behalf might jeopardise that commitment.

Annabel and I discussed these issues. She assured me that staff already talked with parents every day when they dropped off and picked up their children. It would simply be a further topic of conversation, rather than an imposition, to ask if parents would consider being interviewed and to give them the additional information and consent forms (Appendix J). To help address the problem of confidentiality, I asked Annabel and the staff to approach eight parents on my behalf, although I intended interviewing only four. Parents were again given an envelope for the return of their consent forms, so that staff wouldn't know the nature of their response.

I also was able to approach parents directly when I attended a Parent Forum held at the centre one evening. In the end I interviewed three parents initially approached by staff, and one approached by myself at the Parent Forum. All were mothers. In carrying out these interview, I again followed the approach of asking parents where and when they would like them to occur, and went along with the suggestions made.

I interviewed Mary in her own home, on a day that her child Mark didn't attend the centre. Mark was home with her during the time I was there, playing and watching DVDs in an adjoining room and joining with us from time to time.

Geraldine and I spoke in the park next to the centre, while Geoffrey and his older sister played; Laura and I chatted at a local coffee shop before she began work for the day; I interviewed Sophie during her work lunch time at a café in the city. These interviews with parents lasted between 25 and 60 minutes, and were

audio recorded. As with teacher interviews, transcriptions were professionally made, the transcripts checked by myself against the audio recording, and then offered to the participants for checking.

Selecting and interviewing child participants

All of the eight parents who agreed to be interviewed, also gave permission for their child/ren to be approached to be interviewed, so I had a pool of ten children to select from. I decided to begin with those I had already met in the course of my research activities to date; that is, with Mark and Geoffrey.

My first entry into the children's spaces at Tui Preschool was thus with the intent to begin interviewing the child participants. When I went in I paused by the named photos that children put up on a display board to indicate their presence in the centre for the day, hoping to identify some of the children I was intending to interview but had yet to meet. While doing this, Mark bounded up and greeted me heartily, saying, "I know you! You came to my house!" It was thus easy for me to chat with him to re-establish our connection, then move on to showing him and reading him the child assent form (Appendix L) and my voice recorder. Mark signed the assent form with his name, and the interview proceeded. His interview was conducted in two parts, because Mark wanted to stop after a few minutes and hear his voice played back to him, which we did. This was the most successful of my interviews with children, in terms of the amount and nature of the information that was shared with me.

For subsequent child interviews, I tried to be sensitive in approaching potential child participants, doing so only when they appeared not to be highly engaged with centre happenings; for example, I approached Amelia while she was sitting quietly watching some children playing in the park. Not everyone agreed with my request, and for those who didn't, I tried again later in the day or on my next visit to the centre.

My least successful interview attempt was with Geoffrey, who, having just turned three years old, was my youngest child participant. Although he had been present when I had interviewed his mum in the park and he had spoken with me then, in the centre he would look at me steadily for a few seconds and then run off if I spoke to him. After the fourth such occasion, I interpreted his behaviour as an indication of unwillingness to participate, so I desisted in my attempts and he was not interviewed.

Laurence and I had not met before my arrival at the centre to carry out the child participant interviews. Also a younger child, he was fairly wary around me. Although he accepted my invitations to chat about his profile book, and was interested when I showed him how my voice recorder worked, he also declined to engage with me beyond this, and after two attempts I did not persist further in attempting to interview him.

Simon and I had not met prior to my attempting an interview with him, either. But I was able to entice his interest by showing him my voice recorder and how it worked, so that during most subsequent occasions when I was present in the

centre, he would ask to have a turn recording his voice and listening to it. He signed his assent form with his name, and seemed happy to chat freely with me. However, the recordings made were largely on topics of Simon's own choosing and were not always relevant to the topics I had hoped we might discuss and record his perspectives on.

Chloe and Amelia were friends of Mark, and were on the fringes while the interview with him was taking place. They were keen to have their voices recorded also, and both signed assent forms; however as with Simon, recordings made were usually on topics of their own choosing.

With hindsight, I think it was ambitious to expect the children to be prepared to talk to me on what must have appeared random and disconnected topics, when I was a stranger to them. I had designed my research to complete all interviews before beginning observations, bearing in mind Schein's (2004) advice that this information was the gateway to the culture of a particular organisation. However, I underestimated the importance of positioning myself in the children's eyes. If I had allowed myself time in the centre to establish myself as Mayall (2008) recommended, in a 'least-adult' role, perhaps the children would have been more prepared to share their views, even if (from their perspective) only to humour me. The solution would have been to attempt interviews with the children after completing the set of observations in the centre, rather than before. This may also have given me more relevant topics and shared experiences to talk with the children about, which may have helped engagement.

Another change which may have resulted in more successful information generating from the child participants would have been to offer the children the choice of being interviewed in a place of their own choosing, as I did with the adults. It is possible that some may have chosen to be interviewed in their home, for example. This may well have raised other challenges, such as to the confidentiality of their information. I did find myself under some pressure from one parent to reveal what their child had told me, which I was able to resist. Had the interview been carried out in her home, she may well have heard everything the child said, which may or may not have influenced the child's responses and may or may not have had wider consequences for the child and the centre after the interview was concluded. Ultimately, I have no way of knowing to what extent the data I generated from interviewing children would have been different had the interviews taken place elsewhere.

I made transcriptions of children's interviews myself. This was because sometimes knowledge of the context at the time was required to make sense of what a child was saying (for example, where a child was talking about something present but unnamed).

Rethinking focus group interviews for parents and children

During this time I was reconsidering the use of focus group interviews for parents. I had found during individual interviews with parents, that although they were very keen to share with me what they knew of their child's experiences in the centre, they were able to tell me little about the culture of the centre as it played out in day to day happenings. On reflection, this is not

altogether surprising, as every parent said in their interview that their child had been enrolled in the centre to enable them to work, and thus they were not present in the centre for sustained periods of time. A further barrier was a practical one, as coordinating a date and time to meet was difficult, given my residence in a different city and participants' work commitments. In the end, I decided that holding a parent focus group interview was not likely enough to provide new information in relation to my research topic to be worth pursuing, and I abandoned this intended method of information gathering for this group of participants.

Given the difficulties I experienced in engaging with child participants, I decided at this point to retime the child focus group and place it at the end of my set of observations. This was so that the children as a group would have seen me in their centre and become somewhat used to my intermittent presence, and thus be more likely to engage with me during the group interview process.

Having completed individual interviews and the teacher focus group interview, I therefore decided to proceed to observations as the next step of my information gathering and generating. Before I did this, however, and in line with the grounded theory approach that begins data analysis from the early collections of data, I carried out an initial broad-brush analysis of the interview information, to guide me as to possible focus points for my observations.

First analysis of interview data

To begin my analysis of interview transcripts, I used NVivo as a sorting tool, reading through each interview transcript carefully in roughly the order in which the interviews were carried out. As I read, I was looking for repeated and consistent messages about organisational culture, that is, the shared set of learned meanings that characterised the group, or 'the way things are done' at Tui Preschool.

Creswell (1998) refers to this process of making a collection of instances from the data, as categorical aggregation. As my reading of a transcript yielded a new theme, I would stop the analysis and go back through all the previously analysed interviews, looking for additional evidence of the new category. Major categories soon became apparent due to both the frequency and spread throughout transcripts, as reflected in Table 3 below.

Table 3

Themes Arising from Initial Analysis of Interview Data

Theme	Mentioned by	How many instances?
Rules	Owner, cook, 3 children, 3 parents, 7 teachers	33
Teacher passion and knowledge	Owner, 4 parents, 7 teachers	36
Centre teaching philosophy (child choice)	Owner, 1 child, 7 teachers, 1 parent	29
Teacher and centre autonomy	Owner, 1 parent, 7 teachers	32
Respect	Owner, 2 parents, 5 teachers	24
Trust	Owner, 4 teachers	13
Safety and wellbeing	Cook, 4 parents, 5 teachers	23
Centre/wider chain culture	Owner, 2 parents, 5 teachers	28

Consideration of this initial analysis of interviews guided me to begin my observations with a focus on looking for rules: specifically, what was expected, permitted, and disallowed in the centre. This was something I had asked about directly in interviews, on the basis of its significance in the organisational culture literature, and thus almost all participants had discussed this with me. I expected that rules should be apparent in observations of people's actions, and according to Schein (2010), capturing such data would reveal something of the nature of the values, beliefs and assumptions regarded as fundamental to

organisational culture. Bearing in mind the emphasis on children's experience in my research question, I further narrowed my focus for my first observations by positioning myself as a new person in the centre, trying to work out the rules for how children were to act within it.

Of course, having completed the participant interviews, I could not purport to be totally naïve about the rules when entering the centre to observe. I had learned from talking with Chloe that children had to listen (Chloe's interview, p. 3); from Simon, that you shouldn't put stuff over the fence, and not to hit or snatch (Simon's interview, pp. 3-4); and from Mark that big kids were to help the little kids (Mark's interview, p. 5). Parents Laura and Sophie had told me the rule that at children's mealtimes, they had to eat fruit before anything sweet.

Brenda, the assistant supervisor, had put together a booklet entitled 'Keeping Safe at Tui Preschool', and given me a copy of this. She had told me that this was developed through her asking the teachers and the children earlier in the year, what they thought the rules should be at the centre. The resulting 13-page booklet contained the "fundamental rules and why they're important" (Brenda's interview, p. 13). She told me that the booklet was kept in the book area of the centre, but when Mark and I looked for it there during his interview on my first day in the centre, we couldn't find it. Therefore I didn't revisit or refer to this booklet before beginning my observations, considering that whatever rules were "fundamental" would soon be revealed in what people did and said.

The teachers had also told me a small number of the rules for the centre. Again, I deliberately chose not to refresh my memory of them immediately before entering the setting to begin observations (four months after the teacher interviews). My rationale for this was again that I wanted to experience the culture of the rules of the centre as directly as possible. I anticipated that any important rules would soon become clear to me through watching and listening, reasoning that actions would show priorities.

Observations

To begin my set of observations, I entered the setting with the question pertaining to the rules of the centre in my head, namely, 'If I was a child new to this place, what would I need to know about how things are done around here?' I was helped in this by the fact that there were several children who had recently transferred to Tui Preschool from the associated under-2s centre; observing these children's experiences in what was their first few weeks became very informative for my study.

I soon developed the use of the descriptors 'Big' and 'Little' when referring to children I was observing. This was because I was sensing a qualitatively different experience for children based around how long they had been attending the centre. Around 14 of the total group of 34 children (depending on the day of the week) had begun attending the centre within the past few weeks; they were all aged under 2 ½. Capturing this in my data seemed important, which I did by including 'Little' before their name. On the other hand, there were some children who were aged over 4 and had been attending the centre for at

least a year, who seemed to have a different quality about their actions. I referred to these children as 'Big' when documenting observations. The actual descriptors, 'Big' and 'Little', I borrowed from the way the children I interviewed spoke about each other.

As I progressed through documenting my set of observations, I developed the habit of quietly tuning myself in to the atmosphere of the centre on my arrival, and then sensing which child or children something seemed to be happening for at that time. I would then follow that child as unobtrusively as I could while their story played out. At the end of this sequence, I would retune in to the centre atmosphere, and select another child or children to record.

Children might take my interest and cause me to observe and record their experience for a number of reasons. Sometimes it was because they appeared to be on the edge of engagement, other times because they were in the midst of it. I observed one child because they were crying, another because they were laughing. Sometimes I observed the child physically closest to my position, a group of children in a particular area of the centre, or simply the next child to arrive after my observational period began. Other times I would follow an inexplicable intuition that something was about to happen for a particular child. Using my intuition in the context of dense information and my inability to capture it all, not knowing what would prove most important from moment to moment and with very short time frames for making judgment calls about this, has been described by Helm (2011, p. 898) as "the most effective form of rationality".

In this way, I attempted to focus my observations, while retaining a representative view of experiences for children in the centre recorded as richly as possible. I considered that this approach was consistent with the intent of my research question into the influence of organisational culture for children's experiences, as it allowed me to be responsive to the context and remain sensitive to situations as they were unfolding.

As my data gathering process progressed, I began to focus my observations in a more specific way. For example, after the first five observations, I had become puzzled that although older children helping younger children had been emphasised by Annabel, the supervisor, and declared by two of the children as a feature of their centre, I felt I was not capturing this in my observations (Reflective Note 23). I was unsure whether this was because my observations were missing this feature of the setting, or whether it was because it wasn't prominent in what the children actually experienced. I decided that a more focused observation would help resolve this apparent gap in my data collection; Observation 6 was therefore undertaken with the intent to focus on this aspect of centre life.

Also, as I moved towards the final observations, I had noticed that my recordings were not capturing children's joy, or sustained participation and engagement. Again, I was troubled as I recognised that this could simply be speaking to what I was paying attention to and documenting. I discussed this issue in a supervision

meeting and subsequently decided to refocus my final two observations on children's laughter and engagement.

Throughout all my observations, I stayed focused on the children's experiences, in line with my research question. I did not exclude adults from the observations that I recorded, but they feature in a secondary role, only in relation to documentation of children's experiences.

I completed a set of eight observational periods in Tui Preschool totalling 21 $\frac{3}{4}$ hours, with each observation period lasting for between two, and three and a half hours. Table 4 outlines days and times that these occurred, over a 7-week period. Each observation period lasted for between two and three hours, sustained enough to include unfolding stories or sequences of stories, but not so long that I would not be able to remember the detail when writing up my notes. I committed to writing up each observation fully onto my computer within 24 hours of the conclusion of each observation, adding small but potentially significant contextual details while the events were still fresh in my mind.

Table 4

Schedule of Observation Days and Times

Observation number	Day	Time begun and ended	Total hours
1	Wednesday	10.00am – 12.30pm	2 hours 30 minutes
2	Tuesday	3.00pm – 5.50pm	2 hours 50 minutes
3	Wednesday	7.20am – 10.20am	3 hours
4	Tuesday	9.00am – 11.00am	2 hours
5	Tuesday	12.00pm – 2.15pm	2 hours 15 minutes
6	Monday	1.45pm – 5.15pm	3 hours 30 minutes
7	Thursday	7.20am – 10.00am	2 hours 40 minutes
8	Friday	11.00am – 2.00pm	3 hours

There were occasions where teachers were away and day-to-day relieving teachers took their place in the centre. When this occurred, I always approached the relieving teacher at the first opportunity to introduce myself and explain what I was doing. I sought, and in all cases received, their verbal permission to include unidentified observations of them in my observational data, where they became part of a story of a child's experience that I was documenting. Despite this, I felt that they were not really in a position to freely say no, and therefore I tried to avoid recording their actions. The exception to this was in observational period 8, when there were three relievers present. Where relieving teachers were present in my observational recordings, I referred to them as 'RT' rather than by name.

On one occasion a relieving teacher caught me in the staffroom and (without any prompting on my part) talked to me about the centre from her perspective. I documented this conversation in a reflective note.

Positioning myself as a researcher

... in the eyes of the teachers

When observing in the centre, I had decided to take a position as more observer than participant. However, maintaining this position did present me with challenges. I sometimes felt a tension between the demands required of my 'observer' self as researcher and my identity as an experienced early childhood teacher, felt most keenly when I was the only witness to a situation resulting in an upset child, as happened here:

Down in the book corner I see Little Ayesha and Little Brooke on a sofa side by side leafing through a book each. Then Brooke suddenly slaps Ayesha on her right cheek. Ayesha dissolves into noisy tears and Diane (a teacher) is soon on hand. She asks Ayesha what happened but she is crying too much to tell her. Brooke is looking through her book. Diane looks around and sees me looking, and says, "Did you see..." I mime a slap to the cheek. (Observation 6, p. 11)

Ethically, and professionally, I felt uncomfortable resisting the instinct to respond to the child myself, before the teacher arrived. However, I made it my practice to wait, and always a teacher would respond in a short time. A further challenge to my participation would often then arise, as the teacher might try to involve me, as Diane did. I tried to walk a line between upholding the relationships of faith and goodwill established during individual interviews with teachers, and maintaining an outside stance when observing. Sometimes in such situations I felt I could continue observing, maintaining a level of

unobtrusiveness that meant my presence didn't unduly influence what was happening; sometimes I felt I couldn't, and I would abandon the observation at that point.

Another occasion where I felt a strong pull to move from an observer to a participatory role occurred in my last visit to the centre, when due to unexpected teacher illness, the centre was finding it difficult to maintain the required number of registered teachers. As a fully registered teacher myself, I grappled with offering to step in for a few hours. However, I needed to consider the impact of taking this irreversible step, in that stepping in to a teaching role would make it impossible to go back to an outsider's perspective when completing my set of observations.

On reflection, this may have been an opportunity lost. Creswell (2008) suggests that researchers can change role from observer to participant observer as an investigation progresses. In this way the researcher can experience the setting both from the outside, and then as more of an insider. Taking this opportunity to move briefly into a teaching role may have provided me with further insights into the organisational culture of the centre.

... in the eyes of the children

There were indications that the children viewed me, to some extent, as in the role of a teacher. In the example below, a group of children had been taking turns with an acrobat toy brought to the centre from Harriet's home.

Big Harriet goes back to her acrobat toy at the table. Big Milly is now playing with this while [children] Laurence, Big Susan and Big Simon watch. Harriet tells Milly to give the toy back to Simon. Milly says that it's her turn. Harriet says, "You're telling tales, now give it BACK!" "No I'm not telling tales" "Yes you are!" Harriet seems to have a rising fury and she looks around. I am the only adult in the area. There are about 8 children but Harriet is the biggest physically. Milly comes over to me holding the toy and says "Excuse me, Harriet isn't listening to me". Harriet follows her over to me and says "Yes I am. Milly took it off Simon." I say "wait a moment please Harriet, I'm just listening to Milly". Milly repeats, "Harriet isn't listening to me. I didn't take it off Simon". "Yes you did", says Harriet. "No I didn't" says Milly, in a quiet despairing tone. "Yes you did, you took it off Simon" Harriet pronounces loudly with certainty and smiles at me. I get the strong feeling she's expecting me to back her up. I say "I saw Laurence playing with it, and then Milly had her turn. Simon hasn't had a turn at all yet, he's still waiting". Harriet sizes me up for about 10 seconds – there's a pregnant pause from all parties as we all look at each other. Milly looks relieved, as if a weight has shifted off her shoulders, and her face has lost its tension. Then Harriet says "Actually Milly this is going to turn into compost". "What's compost?" asks Milly. Harriet begins to explain, and the two girls go off back to the table together with Milly holding the toy and the relationship seemingly restored. (Observation 3, pp. 10-11)

It felt as if Milly approached me as a teacher, expecting my help. Once she had done so, Harriet was quick to appeal to me in a similar way, as someone who would assist in sorting out the situation. What should Mayall's (2008) 'least-adult' observer do? By simply stating what I had seen, without any comment or suggestion on what should happen next, I was attempting to take a position where I kept my integrity intact without using any power perceived by the children as arising from me being an adult. Perhaps it would have been a more direct reinforcement of my non-participant role to state to the children that I couldn't do anything about the situation, I was busy writing, and to go and find a teacher. At the time, such a response felt false to me, as both children knew that I'd seen what had happened. My response was my attempt to confirm my non-participant status while simultaneously making myself, although undeniably an adult, a 'least-adult'.

There were some further, quite direct challenges from children that seemed an attempt to clarify my position in relation to them. One such challenge occurred early in my first observational visit:

[Big Amelia] gets a tiny piece of playdough on the end of her finger and sneaks it into her mouth, turning to look at me as she does so with a sparkle in her eye – as if waiting for me to challenge her. (Observation 1, p. 4)

In such situations of mildly unacceptable actions, Harwood (2010) in her field work with young children responded by laughing. I felt I would be too compromised in the eyes of the teachers to respond in this way; therefore, I simply looked away with a neutral expression as if distracted by something else.

Such incidents are in line with those reported in Wyness (2006), where observers found their role continually being tested in such ways by children intermittently breaking rules in front of them. On the other hand, Amelia was a child I had interviewed; the incident could therefore be viewed as an indicator of some level of success in my entering the children's world of the centre. Had I felt bold enough to respond in a more eagerly childlike way as Harwood suggested, perhaps further insights into their experience of the organisational culture of the centre would have resulted.

Disturbing the culture I was there to observe

Another challenge in gathering and generating information by observing and writing it down, was to remain as unobtrusive as possible so as to reduce the inevitable disturbance to the organisational culture caused by my being there. Clearly, teachers were aware of my presence, as shown by the Diane's appeal to

me in dealing with the slap incident between Ayesha and Brooke, outlined above.

Children were aware too, particularly those I had interviewed, as the following excerpts make clear:

Big Mark departs from the back of the mat and asks me what I'm writing. I tell him. He goes back and rejoins the group. (Observation 2, p. 2)

Big Simon comes over, asks what I'm writing and wants to do some writing on my notes, so I stop my observation and let him while having a chat with him. (Observation 2, p. 4)

A big child I haven't met before greets me and asks my name. "I'm Sandy. I come here to write stories about children." "Oh." "What's your name? I don't think I've met you before." "Molly". "Hi Molly". Molly runs off. Big Simon runs up to say hello and runs off after Molly. (Observation 6, p. 1)

Big Chloe leaves the group and says to me on the way past, "Sandy can you write down our flicksand?" "You flicked sand?" I ask, confused. "No, flicksand. That's when it's really soft and it can be dangerous!" (Observation 8, p. 7)

Big Chloe goes past and asks me when I'm going to go. "Now", I reply. (Observation 8, p. 8)

Although I tried to minimise my impact, these instances serve as a reminder that my presence in the centre was enough to disturb what happened there. It is therefore necessary to bear this in mind throughout my data analysis, results, and conclusions. Nevertheless, and in contrast with McLeod (2002) who considered interviews enough, observations did allow me to gather and generate a wealth of information about what actually happened in the centre, and this information was essential to getting closer to the heart of my research question.

Child focus group interview

I had arranged in advance to hold a child focus group using a regular morning group time at the centre, just before my last observational period. I had planned

to use the existing group time routine to start a brainstorm and discussion with the whole group of children that could carry on into an art activity. Teachers had told me that children were used to being asked to contribute their ideas as a brainstorm activity at group time, and I saw this for myself during Observation 4, when Emma asked the children at morning group time what ideas they had for possible excursions, recording their answers for all to see on a large sheet of paper and reading this back to them. By waiting for my last observational visit to carry out the focus group activity, I also hoped to avoid any risk of changing the way I was perceived from observer to participant, as in the children's eyes I would be stepping into an activity usually done by teachers.

However, on my final visit, the usual centre routines were upset somewhat by the unexpected absence of several regular teachers and the presence of three relieving staff. These staff expressed a preference not to try to hold a group time for the children at that time, and I considered it ethically important to respect this wish, so the opportunity was lost. This means my planned aim of using the same information gathering and generating methods for adults and children was not carried through.

Gathering documents and artefacts, and writing reflective notes

As I went about my observations I included notes as to the physical surroundings the events took place in. I also spent some focused time writing down what was displayed on walls around the inside of the centre, as I considered that by being displayed publically, such were pertinent to the centre's organisational culture

as they showed what was considered to be important for both insiders and outsiders (Driskill & Brenton, 2005). Observation 3, for example, contains a description of the parents' sign in area including details of the centre licence and a notice addressed to parents advising of an increase in fees. I used a break between teacher interviews to write a detailed description of the staff room, where staff took breaks and spent their non-contact time, and which was used as a more private space for adult conversations (such as if parents requested a formal time to talk with teachers). I also, with permission, made copies of the contents of the large teacher notice board that dominated the room.

Some teachers spontaneously offered me viewing of documentation such as children's profile books, and copies of documentation such as programme planning during their interviews, which I accepted. Where interviews alerted me to the existence of specific documents, for example information packs for families new to the centre, I asked for and generally received, copies. However, some more private and potentially sensitive documentation I did not collect. For example, I asked for and received a blank copy of the form used for teacher appraisal purposes; I did not ask for a completed teacher appraisal form, although this was briefly discussed in more than one teacher interview. My reasoning for this was in line with my instrumental rather than intrinsic interest in the case study centre; that is, in its ability to cast light on my research question, not in the centre for its own sake (Stake, 2003). I considered blank templates sufficient for that exploration. Similarly, although I viewed the profile book used to document Mark's learning, I did not make a copy of this. As another example of the boundaries I drew around which documents were collected,

Imogen referred in her interview to her chain of centres not making a financial profit, and I accepted this statement at face value and did not ask to view or obtain copies of the annual accounts to back up this statement.

A list of the documents I held physical copies of, and documents and artefacts I noted, is contained in Appendix F.

Throughout this time of observation and the gathering of documentation, I continued making reflective notes to capture issues, ideas and feelings arising.

First analysis of observation data as feedback to teachers

Sharing information I had gathered and generated was part of my ethical commitment to give back in some way to the centre. Mindful of Corsaro's (2005) research exploring children's subcultures within early childhood settings, I decided to do this by conducting an initial analysis of observations focused on strategies I saw children using that contributed to the centre culture. In this way, I aimed to provide information I hoped would be of interest and use to the teachers, while also contributing positively (albeit indirectly) to the children's ongoing experiences at Tui Preschool. The themes that arose from this analysis are summarised in Table 5.

Table 5

Themes Presented to Teachers Identifying Ways Children Contributed to the Centre Culture

Children ask for some things to happen within the programme
Children move some equipment (but may not move it all)
If in doubt about what to do, children copy others (but this doesn't always work out for them)
Children can sometimes help adults with tasks
Sometimes, children can tell teachers what to do
Children may tell an adult if a child breaks the rules (whatever the motivation...)
Children sometimes use rules for their own ends
Children uphold some rules as unbreakable
Children challenge some rules overtly
Children break some rules if they can do so without an adult realising (but sometimes they are caught out)
If children don't like an answer from an adult/teacher, they may ask someone else
Invoking their parent can be a way for children to challenge the rules and win (but sometimes their parents' wishes are used against them)
Children may say something untrue and there's a chance they will be believed
In times of conflict, getting in first and/or loudly heightens children's chances of success
Children predict adult behaviour based on past practice (but this is not a failproof strategy)
Children stay under the radar to avoid adult/teacher requests/attention
Physically holding a resource is important when it comes to access/use
Children ask for and expect help from adults/teachers, but they don't seem to ask for or expect help from other children
Children may tell other children what to do and expect it to happen (but children don't always obey other children)
Crying – of any sort – is a strategy that will gain children the attention of adults
Crying of other children is for adults to deal with, rather than other children

About two months after concluding my observations, I went back to Tui preschool one evening and spent an hour with the teachers discussing this first

analysis of my observations. The teachers were indeed interested, especially in the examples I shared of the skill with which the older children could turn situations to their own agendas in ways the teachers declared themselves to have been unaware of. (This initial finding is discussed in detail in Chapter 6.)

In the event, this became my only opportunity to discuss my findings and analyses with the teachers, as personal circumstances forced my withdrawal from study for a few months. When I returned, Annabel was to shortly go on maternity leave, Greg and Carol had left the centre, and three of the four child participants had moved on to school. It seemed futile trying to recreate in people's minds the centre as it was, being now over a year since I first had contact with it. My information gathering and generating therefore came to a close.

For convenience, a summary of my data gathering and generating methods in the order in which they occurred is presented in Table 6.

Table 6

Summary of Data Gathering and Generating Methods As They Occurred

Step	Method	Participants	How?
1	Individual interviews	Imogen, founder and owner	Email interview
		Annabel (supervisor), Brenda (Assistant supervisor), Carol, Emma, Frances (qualified teachers), Diane (teaching team member)	Face to face, in the centre staff room during non contact hours
		Hannah, centre cook	Face to face, in the adjoining park after work
2	Reflective notes	Myself as researcher	Throughout, to capture thoughts, ideas, hunches
3	Gathering documentation and artefacts	Myself as researcher	As items were referred to in interviews
4	Teaching team focus group interview	Annabel, Carol, Emma, Frances, Diane	In the centre after it had closed for the day
5	Individual interviews	Imogen, founder and owner	Face to face, in her home
		Annabel	Face to face, in the centre staff room during non contact hours
		Greg, teaching team member	Face to face, in the centre playground while centre open but Greg not on duty
		Mary, parent	Face to face, in her home, with Mark coming and going

		Geraldine, parent	Face to face, in the adjoining park while Geoffrey and his sister played
		Laura, parent	Face to face, in a local cafe
		Sophie, parent	Face to face, in a city café during her lunch break
		Mark, Simon, Chloe and Amelia (centre children)	Face to face, in the centre during operating hours
6	Initial analysis of interview data	Myself as researcher	
7	Observations, including gathering documents and artefacts and generating descriptions	Myself as researcher	8 sessions of 2-3 hours over 7 weeks
8	Initial analysis of observational data	Myself as researcher	
9	Feedback and discussion with teaching team	Myself, Annabel, Brenda, Carol, Diane, Emma, Greg	

Integrating analyses: Starting with rules, moving to norms

To begin an integrated analysis of information from all of my sources, a starting point came from Reflective note 26, written just after I had completed the last of my eight observational sessions:

I said in my research proposal that I was seeking to uncover the “subtle pressures to think and act in a particular way” (Furnham, 2005, p. 626) that go to the heart of organisational culture, and examine what this means in terms of the children’s experience.

What I have found from observations is that it's got all the subtlety of a sledgehammer – it's about rules. Adults make them, tell them to children (usually with reasons) and children publicly obey them.

According to Schein (2010), rules are a visible sign of the first level of organisational culture, enacted in what people say and do, and in artefacts (in the case of my study, in the centre Policy Manual, introductory packs for families new to the centre, job descriptions, the centre philosophy statement, and so on). The impact of rules was also a theme that had arisen in my initial analysis of participant interviews. Therefore, I decided to begin my analysis of information from all sources with an attempt to identify the rules in the centre as they were enacted.

At this point I realised that my use of the term 'rules' was problematic for my research, as it implied something explicit, specific, known, and somehow orderly. Although the rules themselves felt like a 'sledgehammer', the ways in which they were enacted felt less tangible, somewhat implicit, more complex, and altogether messier.

In reading Schein (2010), I noticed that in much of his writing about rules he also referred to norms; often the two terms were used side by side, and almost interchangeably. Similarly, Stephenson (2009, p. 201) referred to "rules or norms" in her enquiry into children's curriculum experiences, before deciding to focus her analysis on overt teacher-derived centre rules, those being the "vast majority" (Stephenson, 2009, p. 202). However, I was mindful that, "Culture is an intrinsically shared phenomenon that only manifests itself in interaction"

(Schein, 2010, p. 160). Applying this logic to rules, I was interested how they were enacted, not rules for their own sake. I reasoned that limiting my analyses to a focus on overt rules might result in overlooking important aspects of the influence of Tui Preschool's organisational culture for children's experiences. Therefore, at this early stage in my analysis, I changed terminology, and from this point forward I used the word 'norms' rather than 'rules'.

The definition of a norm I used was, "a standard of behaviour shared by group members" (Elkin, Jackson, & Inkson, 2008, p. 177). This definition is typical of those in management literature relating to organisational culture. To identify norms, I started by reading through my observations, selecting from them incidents that showed a sense of a standard of behaviour to be met that was upheld by or applied to more than one person. I then grouped these many small examples into categories, and attempted to write a covering statement that expressed the norm that I was interpreting.

My guidelines for what I considered to be validly included as a norm, were that the evidence for its existence must have:

- Arisen in the course of an observation; it may or may not have been supported from other sources of evidence such as interviews and documents. This was to ensure that all norms identified were indeed enacted, rather than what was thought, said or intended to be.
- Occurred more than once in observations. The exception to this requirement was the case of norms which were almost always present and therefore, somehow, so obvious that they went undocumented

until and unless they were violated (a phenomenon discussed by van Maanen, 2002). In that case, where the one observation alerted me to the existence of an undocumented but on reflection, ever-present norm, I included it in my analysis.

- Been evidenced in two or more adults, and/or two or more children.

This requirement was to ensure that I was identifying a group norm, rather than an individual or personal one.

After this initial sorting, I then used the set of norms I had produced to go through the observations again. I was looking not only for further supporting examples, but also for any disconfirming evidence or examples of apparent exceptions, to refine and clarify the list of norms developed first from observations. If the data was ambivalent or unclear I deleted the norm. This was because, in line with Stake's (2003) instrumental case study approach, my purpose was not to capture a complete set of norms for the centre, but rather to identify those most salient and robustly enacted for their ability to shed light on my investigation into the influence of organisational culture on children's experiences.

Throughout this process I strove to keep my analysis faithfully grounded in the data, that is, to reflect what participants did and said. To help achieve this aim, when formulating norms I strove to keep them descriptive with little sense of values or judgment, and as devoid of any assumptions on my part as I could. By way of example, the norm, *'Children's access to parts of the centre is limited at various times'*, could have been stated in a more value-laden way as, 'Adults

prevent children's access to parts of the centre at certain times, even if children want it'. In this way I aimed for my analysis to be sufficiently clear that on viewing my data, another person would agree that my representation of the norms was fairly based on the information I had obtained, although we might disagree about our interpretations of what it meant.

In line with my research question's focus on children's experiences, I decided that where there were both adult and child behaviours involved around one cluster of indicators of a norm, I would try to write the norm from the child's point of view. Using the previous norm as an example, I could have expressed it equally accurately as 'Adults limit children's access to parts of the centre at various times', but preferred the chosen wording to foreground children's experiences.

This norm is also an example of how, with my continuing review of the norms, I was able to subsume a smaller norm under an umbrella one, as an initial norm focusing on children's access to the outside play area at certain times was able to be subsumed under this broader norm, when my analysis showed that there were other areas of the centre (kitchen, sleeping area) that children were limited from accessing at certain times.

As both Brennan (2005) and Corsaro (2005) had found in their work exploring children's subcultures in early childhood settings, not every norm was followed by children on every occasion for which it was applicable. In taking a constructivist approach to my research, I recognised that the norms, or

standards of behaviour I was attempting to capture within the centre were being constantly negotiated and renegotiated. This did not negate the presence of the norm, however. To show which norms I had seen violated, but were nonetheless standards of behaviour generally accepted and followed by members of the group, I developed the technique of using the word 'should' in a norm to indicate instances where I had seen the norm violated. An example is '*Children should wash their hands before eating*'; use of the word 'should' indicates that although this standard was verbalised and typically enacted by group members, there were also occasions when I saw it violated. In contrast, '*Children must not be outside without a teacher*' is a norm I never saw violated, as shown by use of the word 'must' rather than 'should'.

When writing norms, I used the term 'teachers' to refer to those adults who were employed in a teaching role in the centre and expected to be fulfilling that role daily when they were at the centre (irrespective of the fact that not all adults employed in these roles held full teaching qualifications). The term 'adults' was used to include other adults in the centre as well as the teachers, such as Hannah (the cook), parents, and day-to-day relieving teachers.

Having thoroughly worked through the observations, I then turned to the other data I had generated from interviews and gathered in documentation, examining it for confirming or disconfirming evidence of the norms arising from observations. In this way, I identified 86 norms arising from evidence in observations and integrating further evidence from interviews and documentation. I then worked in the reverse order, from interviews and

documentation back through observations, which resulted in identification of a further 18 norms. Together, this became my final set of 104 norms (Appendix N).

Norms directly influenced children's lived experiences, in complex ways

It was clear to me through my observations and analyses, that norms as a dimension of Tui Preschool's organisational culture directly influenced children's lived experiences, in complex ways. This was not an unexpected finding, as in any social group there are norms that govern behaviour. From the sociocultural perspective within which my study is framed, Vygotsky (1960, in Valsiner, 1997, p. 153) reminds us that, "The child himself acquires the social forms of behaviour and transposes those onto himself". From Schein's (2010, p. 14) perspective, "Culture guide[s] and constrain[s] the behavior of members of a group through the shared norms that are held in that group".

How this came to life in Tui Preschool is illustrated in my notes from the first mealtime I observed, capturing Tom's experience of the norms surrounding this event.

Little Tom approaches the serving area. Brenda [the assistant supervisor] says, "Can you take your scarf off Tom?" He quietly says, "No". "Put it in your locker". "No." It might get food on it". "No". Brenda goes off to tidy. Tom does indeed take his scarf off and puts it in his locker. He comes back minus the scarf and goes to get a piece of bread which has appeared at the serving area. Brenda says, "Not yet Tom, we have two more things to happen yet. Let's go and see if Sue [a relieving teacher] has finished getting the beds ready yet..." She goes off and comes back a few seconds later, saying to Tom, "Yes she's ready, we can have lunch". Tom goes to take bread, but Brenda says, "Go and wash your hands please Tom". He does so. Brenda says grace with the four children who have lined up and supervises while they take a bowl each and self-select and self-serve food

using tongs. Tom takes his bowl of food over to the table, sits down, and eats, twisting in his chair to watch other children.

Tom is sitting at the table with his legs wrapped round the outside of the chair. Brenda physically unwraps his legs and puts them under the table, telling him to keep his legs in. She moves off – he wraps his legs round the chair legs again, almost unconsciously I think. He leaves his bowl at the table while he goes to the serving area to pour a glass of water. He pours it so full it is right to the brim, and then he can't move it without it spilling. He looks round in confusion. Brenda grabs the glass and tips some out, then puts it by his bowl on the table – “there you are Tom”. Tom sits back down. There are now 7 little kids at the table eating together.
(Observation 1, p. 6)

According to Schein (2010, p. 19), “One of the major activities of any new member when she or he enters a new group is to decipher the operating norms”. Tom, who was just over 2 years old, had been at the centre for around three weeks when this observation took place, and this example shows the complexity of the norms young children are faced with having to learn quickly, if they are to get their basic needs (in this case, eating) met. From this observation, I could interpret that Tom has deciphered the centre norms, *‘Children’s eating should take place sitting at the kai table’*, *‘Children generally do the physical selection and serving of food’*, and *‘Children should stay sitting at the kai table until they have finished eating’*. He accepted Brenda’s guidance so that his actions were in accord with the norm, *‘Children should wash hands before eating’*, but not with the norm, *‘Sit with legs in at the kai table’*. Further norms shown to exist by Brenda’s actions include *‘Adults set in motion, and conclude, daily routines’*, *‘Whenever groups of children are eating there is an adult there or close by, supervising’*, *‘Teachers should give a reason when asking a child to do, or stop doing, something’*, *‘If a child is seen doing something not approved of, adults should first respond by speaking to them’*, *‘When children need help, adults provide it,*

rather than other children’, and *‘Adults explain some norms to children, and not others’*. This example, a window into the complexity of enacted norms that operate around an everyday centre routine, also shows how a relative newcomer was learning to act in certain ways according to existing centre norms, with direct guidance from someone experienced in those norms.

Chapter summary

This chapter has explained how the data gathering and generating stages of my research unfolded, including reasons for decisions made along the way. Individual interviews were completed with Tui Preschool’s owner, all staff, and a group of parents, before I entered the children’s spaces at the centre and attempted to interview child participants, with varying degrees of success. An initial analysis of interview data provided direction for my first observations, of which I completed eight sessions over the next few weeks at various times of the day the centre was open. An integrated analysis of observations, interviews, document analysis, and reflective notes, led to the establishment of a set of 104 centre norms, all of which I had seen enacted in observations.

It was clear that centre norms directly influenced children’s lived experiences at Tui Preschool, in complex ways. These findings are examined from two different viewpoints in the next two chapters of this thesis, to answer different aspects of my research question. In Chapter 5 I foreground the organisational culture aspect of my research question, and use Schein’s (2010) model of organisational culture to explore the nature of this and how it endured at Tui Preschool. Then

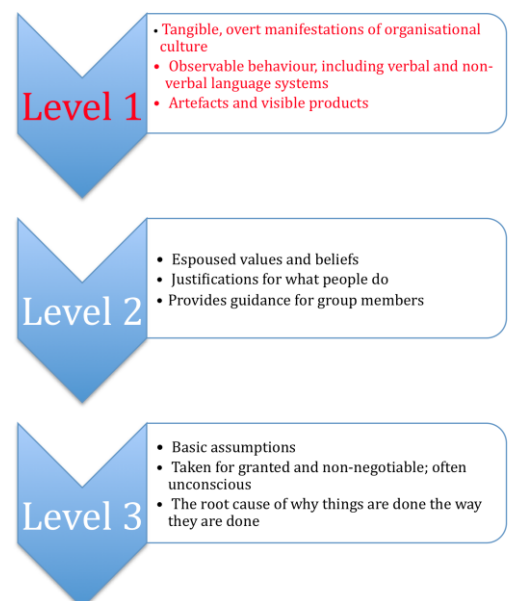
in Chapter 6, I focus on the children's lived experiences of the organisational culture of Tui Preschool, using the additional lens of Foucault.

CHAPTER 5: FOREGROUNDING ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE: STARTING WITH SCHEIN

This chapter discusses my findings guided by Schein's (2010) model of organisational culture. Each of the three levels of his model in turn will be discussed, with a focus on getting close to the heart of the organisational culture of Tui Preschool to explore the influence of this for children's lived experience. Having identified a set of 104 enacted norms that sit at Level 1 of Schein's model, I analyse the explicit justifications given for these to identify Level 2 espoused centre values and beliefs. 'Child choice' is discussed as an example of an espoused value to illustrate how it influenced children's lived experiences in the setting, and how it arose and endured. Identifying and exploring a set of enacted but 'invisible' (unacknowledged) norms suggests glimpses of the unstated assumptions and beliefs that Schein (2010) views as at the third, deepest level of an organisation's culture.

Level 1 of Schein's model: enacted norms

Schein (2010) conceptualises organisational culture as existing at three levels. The first level (highlighted in red) is the most visible and superficial, and includes both verbal and non-verbal language systems and physical artefacts as indicators of the norms people abide by in their day-to-day actions in the organization. The set of



104 norms I had identified in my analysis, being enacted in observations and/or present in documentation, are at this level of Schein's model.

It is Schein's viewpoint that these aspects of organisational culture are significant because they are visible indicators of the second level of an organisation's culture. This deeper level consists of the organisation's espoused values and beliefs, revealed in the justifications used for the norms that are abided by. Therefore, I determined to explore my data and the set of norms I had established to look for indications of this second level of Tui Preschool's organisational culture.

One way to do this would have been to share the set of 104 enacted norms I had identified directly with the participants. In this way I could have verified their accuracy and discussed the justifications behind them, adding confirmatory strength to my interpretations. However, by now over a year had passed since I had been in the centre, and a number of staff, children and parents had moved on, making this approach ultimately too difficult to achieve.

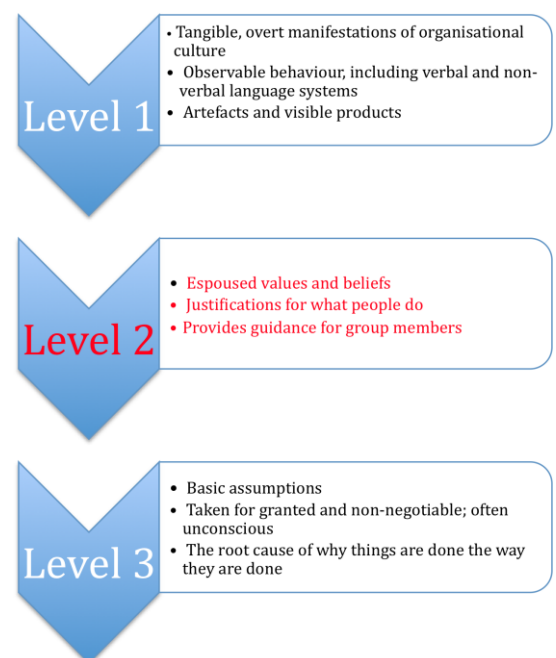
As an alternative way forward, I reasoned that the espoused values underpinning norms, by virtue of being espoused, should be evident through verbalizations captured in observations, and/or in the documentation I had gathered. I therefore carried out a further two steps of analysis, the first to identify which of the full set of enacted norms were present in spoken or written language, and second, to look for an espoused justification for those explicitly stated norms.

An example of an enacted norm that was explicitly verbalised is, *'Playdough should not be eaten'*. In observation 6, Brenda was recorded as saying to a group of little children, "Please don't eat the playdough..." (p. 4). An example of an enacted norm that is explicit in documented language is, *'Children should tidy an area they have been using before leaving the area'*. The 'Keeping Safe' booklet for children states, "We put equipment away when we have finished using it".

I found that 88 of the total 104 enacted centre norms were verbally explicit in observations. This high proportion was probably the result of my focus on observing rules in my early observations, which predisposed my own awareness of norms when they were verbally articulated during observation periods. A smaller number of the enacted norms were visible in written documentation – 39 in total. All but three of these were also verbally explicit. Thus, a total of 91 of the 104 enacted norms were visible in spoken or written language; I will refer to these as 'visible norms' (Appendix O).

Level 2 of Schein's model: Espoused values underlying visible norms

Establishing the set of 91 visible norms gave me a base for identifying the values and beliefs that were consciously upheld by members of the centre, constituting Level 2 of Schein's (2010) model of organisational culture (highlighted in red). For each of those visible norms, I examined



my data for evidence of an explicit and direct justification. By way of illustration, returning to the norm, *'Playdough should not be eaten'*, Brenda was observed asking a group of little children not to eat the playdough. She went on to say, "... because it's very salty for your body" (Observation 6, p. 4). Through this explicit verbal justification for the norm, I was able to interpret with some confidence the espoused value underlying it – in this case, a concern for individual children's wellbeing. In relation to the norm, *'Children should tidy an area they have been using before leaving the area'*, the Keeping Safe booklet for children states that children should put equipment away after use. It goes on to state, "Then it is tidy for the next children who want to play." I interpreted the value underlying this as consideration for others in the group.

Of the 91 visible norms, I found direct justifications for 40 of them, either verbalised or present in written documentation. For a further seven visible norms, I was able to identify links to documentation that made it possible to interpret the value underlying the norm. As an example, I inferred a value for the norm, *'Teachers should give a reason when asking a child to do, or stop doing something'*, from the behaviour guidance policy rationale, which states that "Teachers are required to model pro-social skills at all times. Respect, affection, acceptance and self-confidence are our daily goals for empowering each child". I interpreted giving a child a reason when guiding behaviour as respectful and empowering for the child, while also modelling pro-social skills.

In this way I identified espoused justifications that sit at Schein's second level of organisational culture for 47 of the 91 visible norms (Appendix P). Having

identified the espoused justifications, I was then able to group these into themes, listed below in Table 7.

Table 7

Themes Arising in Espoused Justifications for 'The Way Things are Done' at Tui Preschool

Theme
Child choice / empowerment of children
Safety / wellbeing of the individual child
Group wellbeing / wellbeing of others
Fairness
Respect for children
Teachers as models of pro-social skills
Ownership and care of property
Continual improvement in teaching
Respectful communication between parents and teachers

The two most prevalent themes in espoused values that underpinned enacted norms were child choice and empowerment of children, and safety of the individual child. I will discuss the first of these themes below, to show how the espoused value at Level 2 of Tui Preschool's organisational culture influenced the children's experiences, and to trace its origins and explore why it endured. The theme of child safety will be discussed further in Chapter 6.

'Child choice' as an espoused value

Choices for children was a core espoused value at Tui Preschool. A key artefact in relation to this was the centre teaching philosophy statement, which states,

“We view children as active and capable learners. Teachers offer choices to children and empower them by following their interests and taking their lead”. I first noticed this philosophy statement in its physical form as an A4 sheet of paper with written bullet points, attached to the wall in the adult toilet. I later found it included in the ‘New child and family pack’ given to families when children started at the centre, in the information pack given to new permanent or casual/relieving staff members, and as the subject of a centre self-review.

In addition to being articulated in the teaching philosophy statement, ‘child choice’ as a value was clear in other documentation, such as

- the ‘welcome letter for new parents’, which states, “We offer children choices throughout the day with activities and rolling meal times. We believe that by giving children the opportunity to choose we are supporting their ability to make decisions”
- the daily programme outline, which states, “10.00 – 10.30 group programme times... all activities will be age appropriate and children will be given a choice to join the group programming or continue in self selected play”
- the ‘Behaviour guidance policy procedures’, which states as a strategy for guiding behaviour, “Allow the child time to correct his or her behaviour ie by approaching the situation and asking “what’s happening here?” then offering choices to the child on how to try things differently.”

According to Schein (2010), the particular significance of an espoused value at Level 2 of his model of organisational culture is that it serves as a guide for

members of the organisation in how to act. This was evident in two ways in Tui Preschool. First, it could be seen in the way teachers described going about their everyday activities in the centre. In their interviews, all of the teachers had alerted me to this aspect of the centre teaching philosophy statement, speaking of how the value of 'child choice' influenced what they did, as the following excerpts show:

... the children do have more choices, I mean they have choices in everything, they seriously do, from how they get their nappy changed, whether it's standing up, lying on their tummy, on their back, through to dishing up their own food, and actually when to eat within the rolling periods [Brenda's interview, p. 5].

We have a thing called choices for children and we implement choices all day. Um they choose to have morning or afternoon tea; they choose to come in when they wish to; they choose um whether to participate in group time or not; they choose which activities they'd like to do and they choose who they want to play with [Carol's interview, p. 4].

... giving children choice, that's the, the word that we use a lot that we've sort of come up with um, um, is yeah I mean that is something I guess we're all aiming for is like giving children choice... we do have, you know, there's meal times and mat times and group time but it's like, it's they have more choice. You know if they really don't want to sit down at mat time, that's okay, go find something else quiet to do, you know. They can choose whether they come and eat now, or in half an hour, um you know they can choose do they want to come inside or outside, um, you know they can be a bit more free about what they say, what they do [Emma's interview, pp. 8-9].

This confirmed that the espoused value existed not only on paper as an expressed intent, but guided how teachers implemented centre routines, reflected in the enacted norm, *'Once a daily routine has been set in motion, adults provide both flexibility and limits around children's participation in it'*. Brenda's mention of children choosing when they ate within the rolling kai period is an example of how this played out; another is Carol's reference to children's choices

about their participation in group time, encapsulated in the norm, *'Generally, children can choose whether to join an adult-led group'*. Other enacted norms that were underpinned by this espoused value of 'child choice' include, *'Children generally do the physical selection and serving of their food'*, *'Children may use and move child sized chairs'*, and *'Children protect and protest their physical possession of objects'*.

Further evidence that the espoused value of choices for children influenced children's everyday experiences came from my discussion with Laurence's mother, Laura. Whether through conversation with teachers, the documentation she had been provided with, her own observations, or listening to her son, Laura was well aware of this centre value and could describe how it influenced her son's experience:

They have the mat time and they have the stories, so they have that. But it's not – you know, [the children] don't have to sit down and learn the letter... they're not forced to do any one particular thing. I mean we used to get screeds of pictures and things like that from [my older child when he was at the centre] – we hardly get anything from Laurence, but I know that's because he prefers to be out kicking a ball... Greg, he'll say: "I played rugby with Laurence today" or whatever, and that's what interests him, you know [Laura's interview, p. 32].

The second way in which the espoused value of 'child choice' served as a guide to teachers in how to act, was when more unusual situations arose and it was not necessarily clear to teachers how to respond. Diane gave me an example:

I think I can give you a really good example that really happened to me, and then I bring up to the staff meeting as well. We got the green shed um in the outside of the um, yeah the playground... One afternoon I saw three girls, they were playing inside... I let them to play here because I think: oh why I need to stop them? They having so much fun there... But this time another teacher come out and say: no, we are not allowed to play in there, in the shed...the reason is for safety... just in case some type of earthquake

happened, the things will fall down and hit the children's floor – onto the head, you know... we are still talking about, okay, do we allow the children play in there? (Diane's interview, p. 12).

This example shows the core value of 'child choice' rubbing up against another espoused core value, child safety. The tension between these two fundamental espoused values, with differing courses of teachers' actions entailing depending on which value is seen as more important, was the stimulus for ongoing negotiation of both espoused values by teachers. For children, this again impacted directly on their lived experience: in this case, whether they were allowed to play in the shed.

Previous studies of organisational culture in early childhood settings had revealed some mismatches between espoused beliefs and teacher practices (Gibbons, 2005; Hatherly, 1997; McLeod, 2002). In common with those studies, Carol in her interview identified a mismatch between what I later framed as the norms, '*Adults decide how much clothing children are to wear*', and '*Children should wear shoes outside*', and the espoused centre value of allowing children to choose:

If a teacher's got a hat on, you know you [as a child] are meant to have a hat on. If the teacher's got a coat on, you know that it's too cold... some of the children, if they wanted to, would run round in a t-shirt and we just don't think it's appropriate [laughs] in winter. And some of the children don't understand that their body core heat um – although they feel hot – they've come out from a hot building and then they think they're still warm, but they're not... I mean do you *leave* them to have their choice and then get a cold? and I've been toying with it and I don't know what's right and what's wrong and I'm thinking, yeah we do make them put a coat on and stuff and I'm thinking we do make them put shoes on and what's wrong with walking on a grass with bare feet when it's wet. And so that's – but I can't have my cake and eat it too. So I'm trying to work on that one first and I'm trying to work out where do we control or put rules down

with the children and how can I change it. And that was my biggie, so that's my biggie at the moment (Carol's interview, p. 16).

Looking at the enacted norms I had identified in my analysis of information, I had further reason to wonder as to the extent that the value of 'child choice' was carried through to the children's experiences – that is, how much they really could choose in the centre, given the presence of enacted norms that set boundaries limiting children's choices in various ways. In addition to the two norms discussed by Carol with regard to what children were required to wear, other examples include the norms, *'Adults decide where large furniture is positioned'*, *'Adults position resources, which may or may not be within children's reach'*, *'Children must not be outside without a teacher'*, *'Adults influence what children select to eat'*, *'Adults influence how much children eat'*, *'Children's eating should take place sitting at the kai table'*, *'At snack times, fruit is to be eaten first'*, *'Everyone should be quiet inside, particularly at the kai table and after lunch'*, *'Teachers set in motion, and conclude, daily routines'*, and *'Children's access to parts of the centre is limited at various times'*. This echoes Hatherly's (1997) finding, that children's autonomy and preferences were often less important in practice than an assumption by adults that children should comply.

Mark, one of the children I interviewed, gave me further reason to wonder as to the closeness of the alignment of the espoused value of 'child choice' with children's lived experiences, when we were going through his profile book and I commented on a photo of his birthday celebration at the centre. He told me that he got to choose the children sitting next to him. I asked him what else he got to choose around here, and his reply was, "Not really much" (Mark's interview 2, p.

2). Perhaps he was blind to the many choices around him, 'choice' being invisible until and unless exercised; or perhaps his comment was an expression that he truly felt constrained in what he was able to do and be in the centre.

Of most interest to me for my study, however, was not the content of the espoused value per se, but rather its presence in key centre artefacts including the centre teaching philosophy statement, whereby was transmitted a fundamental expectation about the way things were to be done at Tui Preschool. Teachers acting in accordance with this value led to the ongoing validation and refreshment of many enacted centre norms, thus influencing children's lived experiences. Where situations arose that caused uncertainty in how to respond to specific situations with children, teachers typically appealed to the core value expressed in the philosophy statement; their subsequent grappling with and renegotiating of what 'child choice' meant led to it being revalidated as an integral part of the organisational culture of Tui Preschool.

How did the espoused value 'The children can choose' arise?

Given its prominence and the sense of aliveness this value of 'child choice' had as it was consciously appealed to by teachers for guidance, I was interested to investigate how it had arisen and endured. Schein (2010) considers three factors of importance here, namely the values of the founder/s, the experiences and shared history of group members, and the values brought to the organisation by newcomers. In order to investigate how the espoused value of 'child choice' had arisen to prominence in Tui Preschool I began with the first of these factors, and turned to my interviews with Imogen, its founder.

In our face-to-face interview, when I asked Imogen to describe her ongoing involvement across her centres, she did not mention having a role to play in centre teaching philosophies or the espoused values these contained, either for specific centres, or as part of the wider organisation's expected way of doing things. When I asked her specifically about the culture of her organisation, 'child choice' as an espoused value was not mentioned. Rather, she spoke of her centres having a "nice atmosphere", and "people having a sense of belonging to something that's special" (Imogen's interview, p. 14).

When I asked who decided how things were done at Tui Preschool, Imogen's reply was "The teaching team – by consensus" (Imogen's email interview, p. 2). When it came to carrying out these decisions, she explained to me that Annabel as supervisor was responsible for running Tui Preschool, with Imogen's role being one of guidance and support when this was requested. This was later confirmed by Annabel, who stated, "I'm very much um, in control of our philosophy and um, the way our centre's run here" (Annabel's interview, p. 5).

Imogen expressed that it was important that Annabel and the teachers had a high level of autonomy in what happened in their centre, because, "If you're forever dictated how to do something then you don't step up and you know, you're just doing somebody else's bidding... I want for everyone who works there to feel like they've got the ability to change, make changes." (Imogen's interview, p. 2). Annabel confirmed this approach in her interview, stating, "We're very lucky that Imogen's given us the, the free range of um doing what we

feel is right” (Annabel’s interview, p. 5). When I asked Annabel if it would matter if the philosophy statement at her centre was different from that of other centres owned by Imogen, she replied, “Definitely not. It wouldn’t matter at all” (Annabel’s interview, p. 5).

Therefore, in contrast to Schein’s (2010) view, I could find no evidence that the core value of choices for children was emanating from or particularly influenced by Imogen as the founder of both the centre and the wider organisation. Rather, her emphasis on autonomy for the supervisor and teaching team around what happened there on a day to day basis, made space for the espoused centre value to be chosen by the group themselves, which heightened their alignment with it and thus made enactment of the intent more likely.

In my search for the origins of the core value of ‘child choice’, I next turned my attention to Annabel as the centre’s designated leader. In her interview, Annabel discussed a centre self-review process she had initiated, undertaken with the teaching team just over a year before my contact with the centre began. The documentation for this review specified that the focus was to establish a shared teaching philosophy statement, with the stated intent for the teaching team to come together to

listen to each other and put down on paper how we want our centre to look and feel. We will ensure everyone feels passionate about this to allow motivation and consistency (Centre self-review documentation, February 2008, p. 2).

The fact that the self-review documentation was written by Annabel led me to wonder whether the espoused value of child choice was an outcome of her

pedagogical leadership, or possibly a reflection of Annabel's own core teaching value which had been first imposed to one extent or another on the other teachers via this self-review process, and then become entrenched in the manner Schein (2010) suggested occurs with the founders of organisations.

Annabel's perspective on this was made clear in her interviews, where we specifically discussed the centre teaching philosophy. She explained its genesis:

Our preschool didn't have that passion behind their philosophy because there wasn't such a strong theorist that we could really take from and get excited about. And this is why we kind of, we thought, we need to get – I mean, you ask people earlier what our philosophy was, and it'd be just sort of statements like peaceful calm environment, teaching them and stuff like that where now... [we're] giving [children] the choice, empowering them to make the choices and learning the consequences of what happens if I don't go for lunch now, what's gonna happen? And by doing this we're allowing children to have so much fun so I definitely didn't come into the position thinking I've gotta change this, I was quite happy with what was going on (Annabel's second interview, pp. 4-5).

Pedagogical leadership focuses on teaching approaches and how these influence children's learning (Timperley, 2011), leading to a "shared understanding of the aims and methods of teaching" (Heikka & Waniganayake, 2011, p. 510).

Annabel's focus in leading the development of the teaching philosophy statement was very much on developing the team's shared understanding:

We want a philosophy that we can just spit out to everyone that we feel really strong about. Um and it just, this was it, giving children the choices (Annabel's interview, p. 12).

When it came to the content, Annabel was quite firm that this arose from the team, downplaying her own contribution in favour of a role focussed on the process and overall purpose.

It wasn't me setting the direction. It was me just giving the staff the space and being supportive to the teachers that came up with the idea about it (Annabel's second interview, p. 1).

On the face of it, therefore, there was no evidence that the core value of 'child choice' arose either through strong pedagogical leadership, or through the imposition of the designated leader's own values. Rather, Annabel characterised her role in the establishment of this core value as more about ensuring a process was in place for the team to reach consensus about a guiding value, rather than the content of that value itself.

How did the espoused value of 'child choice' endure?

Further exploration of Annabel's role in relation to the core centre value of child choice, showed that once the content of the centre teaching philosophy was agreed, Annabel was an active guardian of this through her employment decisions. She explained to me her process whereby teachers interested in obtaining employment at the centre were first asked to do relief teaching; in this way she was able to gauge their fit with the espoused centre value of 'child choice'. I asked whether she would employ someone who would find the centre teaching philosophy challenging to work within.

... if they looked at our philosophy and thought well where does this fit in with mine? And if she, if they weren't open to a bit of adaptability and change, then I, I 'd probably have to say no because in the long run it's going to be too much of a kind of, a problematic type of areas later on [Annabel's second interview, p. 7].

Greg's employment provided evidence of this process in action. He had been a reliever in the centre, before accepting a permanent role that commenced during my data gathering stage. When I interviewed him on his first day, he spoke of

'child choice' as the centre teaching philosophy and expressed his own alignment with that value, in relation to a specific situation with a child:

This little chap here, has got a food problem... we've been giving him lots of choices and apparently his speech therapist has told us to pretty much take them away from him and pretty much direct him, and give him direct you know, direct him what to do and things like that... It's a tricky one, because it's like completely sort of going against what [Tui Preschool's] philosophy is in a way... I don't know if I necessarily agree with taking more choices away (Greg's interview, p. 12).

The impact of newcomers to an organisation was identified by Schein (2010) as the second significant factor with regard to the endurance of espoused values. This is because incoming members of an organisation may hold differing values to those established as part of the organisational culture of the setting, which can lead to challenges to the existing ways of doing things. Annabel's approach to the employment of new teaching team members serves to dilute these potential challenges in relation to the espoused value of child choice at Tui Preschool.

I was interested to find out if the care Annabel took to ensure a level of alignment between new teachers coming into the centre and the teaching philosophy statement extended to ensuring similar alignment from the parents of enrolling children. In our second interview, I had asked Annabel what she would do if a number of parents came to her unhappy with the centre teaching philosophy as it stood. Her response was:

If I had that situation I would probably um sit down with the team and discuss it and how we felt as a team. I'd probably take that, result of that and I'd, I would maybe involve Imogen and [Head Office] for their advice, their support, um, and how they feel about it because ultimately it would come under them. Um, and then I'd take that to the parents...we just say "Unfortunately that's not our philosophy at the moment"... they need to understand that we do things for a reason, um, and that if they're not happy with it then unfortunately for the children, the teachers and the

families, they need to find somewhere that [fits] their philosophy...
[Annabel's second interview, p. 8].

This explains why I found the centre teaching philosophy statement in the enrolment information pack given to new families; this was part of Annabel's process for ensuring they also had some level of fit with the espoused centre value of 'child choice'.

In summary, Annabel's actions as the designated leader include ensuring that there was a degree of fit between the values of potential adult newcomers to the organisation (teachers and parents) and the espoused centre value of choices for children. In terms of Schein's (2010) theory, Annabel's leadership limited the potential disruption or challenge to the core value by ensuring adult newcomers had some level of fit with it before becoming permanent members of the group; thus entrenching the value more deeply.

The third factor thought relevant by Schein (2010) for the endurance of an espoused value, relates to the shared history of the group. Schein (2010, p. 223) explains that an espoused value remains part of an organisation's culture "only if it works in the sense of making the organisation successful and reducing the anxiety of the members".

Evidence that the centre was regarded as 'successful' came from many sources, including ERO reports, highly positive community word-of-mouth (reflected in Laura, Geraldine, and Sarah's interviews), the existence of a waiting list of families wanting their children to attend, and that Geoffrey's parents had paid

full fees for some months to ensure a space was held while he wasn't attending (Geraldine's interview). Of course, there would be many factors contributing to this 'success', of which choices for children as an espoused value is but one.

With regard to anxiety, Schein's (2010) view is that this arises within members of organisations when there are mixed messages coming from leaders, resulting in conflict and a lack of stability. In relation to the core espoused value of choices for children, there was no possibility of mixed messages from leaders Imogen and Annabel regarding this, as Imogen didn't involve herself and left it to the teaching team.

I considered the possibility of conflict arising from within the teaching team. I was interested to read a reflection on the newly developed philosophy statement where the central value of child choice was contained, which included the following:

We are all very happy that we have a philosophy created by the current staff, rather than a document where none of our voices were part of. We all have an aim of providing the very best for the children and their families and this is something that brings us together more and more each day. This is an area that we will always be self-reviewing, through conversations with each other and at staff meetings (Centre self-review documentation, April 2008).

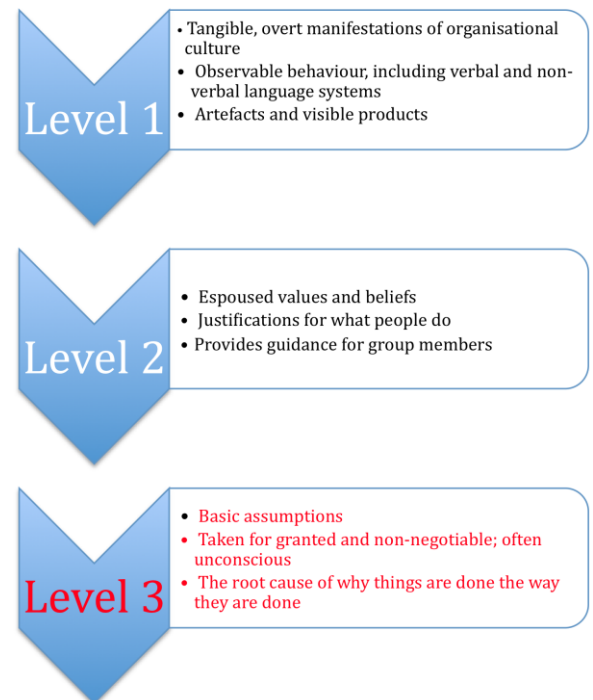
This reflection was written by Annabel two months after the philosophy statement had been established. Her emphasis on this being "something that brings us together more and more each day" again speaks to the overall purpose as being to establish consensus for the teaching team, thus increasing stability and reducing the potential for conflict. The process of involving everyone in the

team in the development of the content of the core value also adds stability, and in these ways, anxiety for teaching team members has been reduced. Further, the core value as an underpinning of some enacted centre norms, including those influencing the way daily routines are carried out, provides a further level of assurance and guidance. As already discussed, when there was less certainty about what to do, the value of child choice was used as a touchstone, with teaching team members knowing that actions based on this value would be regarded by others as acceptable even if there were other points of view or other core values to be considered. It is my interpretation that all of these factors together gave a level of comfort and assurance to the teaching team members, reducing possible anxiety, and thus adding to the endurance of the value.

To summarise, I conclude that at Tui Preschool, the espoused value of choices for children has arisen less by imposition from Imogen as founder, as Schein (2010) would suggest, or through Annabel's actions as a pedagogical leader, and more through the approach of both Annabel and Imogen in allowing autonomy for the teaching team members to determine the content of this guiding value. It survives due to Annabel's ongoing protection of the value from too strong a challenge from newcomers; its effectiveness as a framework for underpinning a number of enacted centre norms, providing a level of certainty and stability for group members; and its ongoing ability to give teachers guidance in their daily actions which reduced potential uncertainty and anxiety to relatively comfortable levels.

Level 3 of Schein's model: Glimpses of unstated assumptions and beliefs

According to Schein's model, the third and deepest level of organisational culture (in red) consists of "unconscious, taken-for-granted beliefs, perceptions, thoughts and feelings [that are the] ultimate source of values and action" (Schein, 2004, p. 26). These deep assumptions, the root cause of why things are done the way they are done, are described by Schein as so fundamental and all-encompassing that they are simply no longer thought about, yet they are the essence of the organisation's culture.



Therefore, to complete my analyses according to Schein's model, I returned to a consideration of the enacted norms for which I could find no publically espoused justifications. I was interested to see if these could be indicators of Level 3 of Tui Preschool's organisational culture, as the lack of explicit justification might mean that the assumptions and beliefs on which they were based were so fundamental and all-encompassing that espoused justifications were simply not thought necessary.

I examined first, the set of 44 enacted, consciously spoken of or written about norms for which there was no explicit justification available within my data (Appendix Q). I quickly saw that there were many norms in this set for which

the lack of an explicit justification was more likely due to the limitations of my information gathering and generating, rather than deeply held assumptions. For example, in considering the norm, *'Children must not be outside without an adult'*, I could see that had I asked participants specifically about the justification for this norm, one would have been readily at hand, alluding to expectations around supervision of children that are a requirement for a licensed centre. Similarly, although there was not explicit justification for the visible enacted norm, *'Equipment and resources should not be put over the fence'*, had I asked specifically, I may well have heard about the inconvenience resulting when the resources need to be fetched and brought back to the centre. Although there was no explicit justification for the norm, *'Younger children eat first at lunch time'*, I had noticed in observations that this was part of a routine for getting the younger children settled into sleep after lunch. Others of these norms could be considered mirrors of social norms in the community beyond the preschool, such as *'Feet should not be put on the kai table'*, *'Children shouldn't show food that's in their mouth'*, *'Little children should wash their faces after eating lunch'*, and *'Sit with legs in at the kai table'*.

Visible norms as indicators of underlying assumptions

However, there were other enacted norms spoken of and/or documented for which I could find no espoused justification, that had a different quality. Some of these seemed to speak to underlying assumptions about what it meant to be a teacher at Tui Preschool. The norm, *'Teachers set in motion, and conclude, daily routines'*, for example, I interpret as speaking to a taken-for-granted assumption about where responsibility lies for ensuring children were sufficiently fed,

rested, and offered group learning times. Similarly, the norm, *'Teachers share professional knowledge with parents'*, could spring from expectations around what it means to be a teacher as a holder of professional knowledge, and assumed responsibilities for disseminating this to others.

As most of the teachers who were participants in my research were fully qualified, and all of them had undergone close to two years of early childhood teacher education, it seemed likely that values and beliefs instilled during teachers' socialisation into the profession were the source of some of these visibly enacted but not explicitly justified norms (Kardos et al., 2001; Schein, 2010). *'In dealing with conflict between children, adults emphasise talking, not listening'*, *'Teachers may refer to children as friends with each other, including in contexts where actions seem unfriendly'*, *'Adults may interrupt children's activity to ask them to do something else'*, *'Adults may use physical actions as well as words to influence what children do'*, *'If children want something, they should ask for it verbally'*, and *'Teachers may be flexible in enforcing norms, according to particular contexts'* are norms I interpret as being of this type.

Invisible norms as indicators of underlying assumptions

Of even greater interest to me in terms of their potential to reveal some of the basic unspoken assumptions that constituted Tui Preschool's organisational culture, however, were the 13 enacted norms which were neither explicitly articulated by participants at Tui Preschool, nor visible in written documentation. This set of norms, which I refer to as 'invisible', had the characteristic of unconscious enactment that Schein (2010) refers to as the

essence of the deepest level of organisational culture. They are contained in Table 8 below.

Table 8

Enacted Norms that were Neither Explicitly Articulated nor Visible in Documentation

Adults decide where large furniture and equipment is positioned
Centre food may be eaten by adults as well as children
When being spoken to by an adult about behaviour not approved of, children typically respond with compliance and silence
Adults may link child compliance directly with being "good"
Children may turn or move away as a way to avoid actual and potential bother
Children may be selective in which adult they make requests of
Where it's likely an adult is unknowing, children choose their narrative
Teachers should not allow children's expressions of emotion to become too intense
Crying (even tearlessly) usually attracts adult attention and help
Children don't show concern for teachers
Saying "excuse me" matters
Children may publically invoke, defend, and protest, some centre norms apparently for their own sake
Big children ask adults for help rather than other children

Given my research question with its focus on children's lived experiences, I was particularly interested in the invisible norms enacted by the children that adults appeared to be unaware of. I considered the possibility that these were known, but ignored, by adults. However, at the conclusion of my data gathering process, I had met with the teachers and discussed early iterations of these norms. The teachers expressed surprise; for example, Carol commented that she hadn't known she was being "manipulated" by "those tricky four year olds" (Reflective note 25). This provides evidence that these child-enacted 'invisible' norms were

indicative of the deepest level of the centre's organisational culture, as experienced by the children.

Examples of how child-enacted invisible norms played out in the centre, include:

- *'Children may turn or move away as a way to avoid actual and potential bother'*
 - In the story reading session Little Amy gets hit by someone else's foot while the story is being read... Diane [the teacher] saw what happened. "Sam, you need to be careful, you hit Amy, you need to ask are you okay?" Sam is sitting at the back and he turns away from Diane [Observation 6, p. 12]
- *'Children may be selective in which adults they make requests of'*
 - Big Susan asks if she can have bare feet. The teacher answers "No, because it's still a little bit cold on your feet." After about 2 minutes Susan comes over to me and asks if she can have bare feet (Observation 1, p. 4)
- *'Where it's likely an adult is unknowing, children choose their narrative'*
 - The "meeting room" construction [made earlier in the day by Annabel] is getting climbed over by a group of older children, and it's breaking up. Diane (a teacher) comes over and says, "Okay if you break the meeting room that tells me –" Big Wilson interrupts with "Sam did it!" Diane looks at Sam. "Sam if you break it that means – "... [I know Sam was an onlooker only, as I was observing] (Observation 5, p. 5)

Corsaro (2005) describes children in centres producing their own unique children's cultures. The ways in which he describes this occurring are largely overt, such as through mocking and larger-than-life breaches of centre rules. However, he also refers to working-the-system, and the invisible norms I have discussed above, enacted by children, can be characterised as of that type.

Another invisible norm enacted by children but unacknowledged, was *'Children don't show concern for teachers'*. Here is an example of how this norm played out, following on from the 'meeting room' scenario above:

The “meeting room” construction [made earlier in the day by Annabel] is getting climbed over by a group of older children, and it’s breaking up... Diane comes back and says in a sing song voice, “Oh no, the meeting room is gone. Poor Annabel”. The children do not react or respond to her words and she leaves the area again. (Observation 5, pp. 5-6)

About 45 minutes later, Annabel went outside to the area:

There are 3 girls and Archie in the area where the meeting house previously stood. “Hey guys what happened to the meeting house? Wasn’t it good enough? Are you making another?” Amelia says, “Sam broke it” Annabel says “Oh. Are you making it different now?” Annabel says to me with an apologetic laugh that she finds it really difficult, “making something that I think is really good and then...” (Observation 5, p. 9)

I was interested that in this example, Annabel did indeed feel disappointment, but she expressed this to me rather than to the children. This adds weight to my interpretation that there is an unspoken, deeply held assumption reflected in the enacted norm, that it is not within the brief of what it is to be a child at Tui Preschool, to be in a relationship with adults that includes recognition of teachers’ emotions or to show empathy for teachers.

I recorded only one incident in which it appeared to me that a teacher did look to a child to recognise her feelings:

[Emma, a teacher, and Sam] are stacking the plastic blocks in various ways. They crash down again – Emma says “Ow! It hurt my finger. I’ll give it a rub...”. I have a feeling she’s looking for some sympathy or empathy from Sam as she’s looking at him intently, but she gets none at all. (Observation 3, p. 8)

Despite her covert prompt, Emma did not show surprise at Sam’s lack of response, or press the point, for example by showing her hurt finger to Sam or asking him to help her by getting a cold cloth (the centre’s typical first response to a bump injury). Her acceptance of Sam’s blank response, I interpret as being

underpinned by a view of the child held in Tui Preschool in which children recognising teachers' feelings or showing empathy for these plays little part.

A further enacted norm which I interpreted to show a glimpse of unspoken assumptions around what it meant to be a child at Tui Preschool, was the invisible norm enacted by the teachers, *'Teachers should not allow children's expressions of emotion to become too intense'*, demonstrated in the following examples:

I can see through the doorway to the main playroom that Emma [a teacher] is holding a zip-up pencil case and Little Tom has just pulled a soft toy monkey out of it. He is squealing with delight, and Emma appears to be trying to quieten him down (Observation 4, p. 4).

The [younger] children [at group time] are watching the adults and copying their actions, more or less. The CD says to pull back [on the elastic] and let go. The adults let go first, then some of the children. Others continue to hold on. Then one child sits down and two jump into the middle and roll about on the floor laughing. They are told to stand up and hold on to the elastic again, and are physically helped to do this. *It feels like a dampening down again* (Observation 4, p. 7).

Thinking about the unarticulated assumptions about what it is to be a child in the centre, such instances suggest that children are required to control strong emotions. A further example speaks to this assumption, while simultaneously illustrating the norm, *'When being spoken to by an adults about behaviour not approved of, children typically respond with compliance and silence'*:

Big Simon says "You're name's Sand!" I say, "Is it Sand...pit?" Simon laughs and says "No, Sand!" Big Mark calls out loudly with a huge grin on his face, "No her name is Sandy you doofus!" Both boys are giggling. Carol is in the kitchen and calls out sharply, "Mark I don't think you should be calling your friend names like that! Goodness me!" Both boys move away looking crestfallen and I feel a bit guilty (Observation 5, p. 1).

There were many examples of children responding to correction from adults with compliance and silence, sometimes even when it appeared to me that the context meant the child could have grounds to protest:

Big Millie and Big Simon go back to the servery for another scone. Emma says, "Simon and Millie, you've already had another scone. Just one, put that back because it's not fair otherwise." Simon leaves the area quickly – he hadn't quite taken a scone – but Millie is stranded with a scone in one hand which has been half-spread with honey. Emma says, "Millie, put that down and off you go." Millie puts the scone back in the pile and walks away looking subdued, in the direction Simon went, outside (Observation 6, p. 9).

Sam takes a chair from the art table nearby and stands on it to get a better look [at the fish in the tank]. This is how he was standing on a chair when he watched Annabel clean the fish tank a few hours previously. Diane says, "Sam, hop down." Sam does so (Observation 6, p. 9).

Another invisible norm that may have been another reflection of this underlying assumption, was, *'Adults may link child compliance directly with being "good"'*.

[At lunchtime, Brenda says], "Susan you chose a big piece, you need to try it. Good on you for choosing a small bit Mark." (Observation 1, p. 9)

It's 11.25am and food has appeared at the servery. Toby and Ruben are there and seem about to start dishing up. Diane asks, "Did you wash your hands?" Toby says "Yes", and I can see his are glistening with wetness. Diane sniffs them and says "Yes, good boy" ... [a few minutes later] Greg comes in and on his way past the servery asks, "Toby have you washed your hands? Good boy!" (Observation 8, p. 2)

Big Sam is at the servery, and Hannah says to him "Have you had fruit? Have fruit first." Sam was holding a muffin, so it's been fingered all over, but he puts it back in the pile. "Good boy Sam" says Hannah. (Observation 4, pp. 4-5)

To follow Schein's model (2010), I interpret this group of enacted but unacknowledged norms as suggesting deeply held, unspoken, yet pervasive assumptions and beliefs about what it means to be a child in the context of this

early childhood centre. Specifically, they suggest a child who is not expected to show concern for adults, who does not exhibit strong emotions, and who accepts correction with compliance and silence.

My findings would have been strengthened had I been able to go back and query my interpretations and reflect on these deeply held assumptions I have suggested with participants. However, due to the passage of time I had no opportunity to do so. They must therefore remain at the level of my own interpretation and conjecture; but nevertheless they are sufficient to provide glimpses of the underlying culture of Tui Preschool and what this might mean for the children's experiences.

Chapter summary

In this chapter I have used Schein's lens to analyse and discuss the organisational culture of Tui Preschool. All three levels of that model have been considered, which has enabled me to identify some of the espoused values underpinning the enacted norms that directly influence children's experiences in the centre. The espoused value of 'child choice', declared in the centre teaching philosophy statement, has been used as a specific example to show how organisational culture influences children's experiences. This espoused value came not from the preschool founder, as Schein would suggest, but from the teaching team, and Annabel's actions as the designated centre leader contributed to its endurance through ensuring strong level of fit with new members to the teaching team, and a lesser level of fit with incoming parents. The effectiveness of the value in

becoming a touchstone that created a certainty for teachers was seen as a reason for its endurance.

I was also able to identify a small set of norms enacted by children, suggestive of the children's subculture in Tui Preschool and underlying assumptions about the view of what it was to be a child held there. Specifically, these assumptions suggest a child who is not expected to show concern for adults, who does not exhibit strong emotions, and who accepts correction with compliance and silence.

In Chapter 6, I move my analysis from a focus on the organisational culture of Tui Preschool, to foreground children's experiences, using the additional lens of Foucault.

CHAPTER 6: FOREGROUNDING CHILDREN'S EXPERIENCES: ADDING FOUCAULT'S LENS

In Chapter 5 I used Schein's model of organisational culture to analyse and interpret my data, foregrounding and uncovering that culture at progressively deeper levels. Enacted norms and the espoused values for these could be seen as the major carrier of organisational culture, which impacted directly on children's lived experiences in the centre. Further, there was a small group of norms that were unarticulated and unacknowledged, including some enacted by children of which the adults seemed unaware. I have suggested that, in line with Schein's (2010) model of organisational culture, these are indicative of deeply held assumptions and beliefs that go to the heart of the Tui Preschool's organisational culture.

Having completed my analyses according to Schein's (2010) model of organisational culture, it was apparent to me that the richness and complexity of the links between organisational culture and the children's experiences were not fully represented by the identification and analysis of the norms, espoused values, and deeper assumptions I had found. Further, to stop there would be to paint a picture of the children as passive recipients of that culture, which was at odds with my theoretical underpinning of children as active participants in their sociocultural worlds. But in moving to a focus that foregrounded the children's experiences, I found Schein's theory to be unsatisfactory in its explanatory power and relevance. There were two obvious reasons for this. Firstly, Schein's writings were from a business and management perspective, where children

played no part. Secondly, much of his focus was on the links between organisational culture and designated leadership. Thus, I needed to move beyond Schein's model and find a more illuminating framework with which to further explore the children's experiences in relation to Tui Preschool's organisational culture.

After considering alternatives from the education, philosophy and sociology literature, I settled on the ideas of Foucault to provide me with further insight into this aspect of my research. This chapter explores the children's experiences of the organisational culture of Tui Preschool more closely, using the additional lens of Foucault. I begin with outlining a pattern I found in children's integration into the social world of Tui Preschool, before using Foucault's ideas about power to discuss children's resistance, and the older children's strategic use of centre norms to meet their desires. Foucault's concepts of biopower, normalisation, and surveillance are also discussed and illustrated in children's actions. I conclude this chapter by bringing both Schein and Foucault's lenses to bear on some specific incidents which suggest that organisational culture is a curriculum issue, as it is shaping children's experiences as they make their own sense of the way things are done in early childhood centres.

Moving to Foucault

My starting point in considering Foucault's body of work for informing my study was the following:

I don't think we should consider the 'modern state' as an entity which was developed above individuals, ignoring what they are and even their very existence, but on the contrary as a very sophisticated structure, in which

individuals can be integrated, under one condition: that this individuality would be shaped in a new form, and submitted to a set of very specific patterns (Foucault, 1982, in Allan, 2013, p. 26).

Although Foucault was referring to a much larger social entity than an organisation, I was struck by the parallel between what he had written and my own investigation into the organisational culture of Tui Preschool. My observations and analyses had shown me that the early childhood centre as an entity, in common with Foucault's 'modern state', was a complex place where people were submitted to specific patterns of social norms, which served to integrate those individuals within it.

In Chapter 5 I discussed the influence of the centre's teaching philosophy statement as an artefact serving to clarify to incoming adult members of the preschool community, an espoused value that underpinned the norms, or standards of behaviour expected. To reframe this discussion from Foucault's perspective, the actions around this artefact (how it became established, Annabel's employment practices that protected it from strong challenge, its underpinning of centre norms and routines, its use by teachers as a touchstone) served to integrate adults into the social world of the centre. My first step in considering the children's experiences through Foucault's lens, therefore, was to explore how children came to be integrated into the sociocultural world of Tui Preschool.

Integration of children to the sociocultural world of Tui Preschool through norms

In Chapter 4, I described Tom's experience at lunchtime, and I will use the same example to illustrate how a change of analytic lens allows a reconceptualisation of what was occurring:

Little Tom approaches the serving area. Brenda [the assistant supervisor] says, "Can you take your scarf off Tom?" He quietly says, "No". "Put it in your locker". "No." It might get food on it". "No". Brenda goes off to tidy. Tom does indeed take his scarf off and puts it in his locker. He comes back minus the scarf and goes to get a piece of bread which has appeared at the serving area. Brenda says, "Not yet Tom, we have two more things to happen yet. Let's go and see if Sue [a relieving teacher] has finished getting the beds ready yet..." She goes off and comes back a few seconds later, saying to Tom, "Yes she's ready, we can have lunch". Tom goes to take bread, but Brenda says, "Go and wash your hands please Tom". He does so. Brenda says grace with the four children who have lined up and supervises while they take a bowl each and self-select and self-serve food using tongs. Tom takes his bowl of food over to the table, sits down, and eats, twisting in his chair to watch other children.

Tom is sitting at the table with his legs wrapped round the outside of the chair. Brenda physically unwraps his legs and puts them under the table, telling him to keep his legs in. She moves off – he wraps his legs round the chair legs again, almost unconsciously I think. He leaves his bowl at the table while he goes to the serving area to pour a glass of water. He pours it so full it is right to the brim, and then he can't move it without it spilling. He looks round in confusion. Brenda grabs the glass and tips some out, then puts it by his bowl on the table – "there you are Tom". Tom sits back down. There are now 7 little kids at the table eating together (Observation 1, p. 6).

Tom had been at the centre for about three weeks when this observation took place, and I previously identified a number of centre norms this example illustrated. Using Foucault's lens, the significance of this observation lies in how Tom's individuality is being 'shaped into a new form' as he learns the specific content of centre norms, in this case in order to get fed. Brenda's gentle guidance and insistence that he follow the centre norms around the routine of

eating, serve to integrate Tom into the preschool community, as he removes his scarf, puts it in an acceptable place, waits for a teacher to get beds ready, washes his hands, serves his own food, sits in an acceptable place (although in an unacceptable manner), pours his own water, accepts help from the teacher, and returns to his own spot at the table, eventually succeeding in becoming a member of that smaller group as they eat together.

I was interested to see that norms appeared to be more confidently enacted by children after they had been in the centre a few months; I interpret this as evidence that children were being shaped as Foucault suggested. There were subtleties present in that process, as illustrated in the following incident. The context was that Norman's mum asked him to sit at the kai (food) table so she could put his shoes and socks on. The chair Norman sat down in was that previously occupied by Geoffrey (aged 3), who had just gone to the kitchen servery to get more afternoon tea. When Geoffrey returned to the table to find Norman sitting in 'his' spot, the following unfolded:

Geoffrey comes back to the table with a scone in his hand, and says, "I was sitting there." Norman's mum replies, "You were sitting there. Oh dear." She continues putting on Norman's shoes and socks and jacket, while chatting with Emma [the teacher]. Geoffrey stands behind the chair holding his scone. He waits in this way for about 3 minutes, every now and then putting his free hand on the top of the chair. The chair right next to it is unoccupied. Eventually Emma says to Geoffrey, "Did Norman sit in your chair? Is it okay to sit next to him?" Norman's mum says, "We'll get moving soon anyway", then continues talking to Emma about whether or not Norman needs a sleep every day, even though Norman is now fully clothed. About 30 seconds later Norman slides off the chair towards his mum. Geoffrey quickly and smoothly slides onto the chair from the other side, so the chair was barely vacant even for a second (Observation 6, pp. 7-8).

Geoffrey showed by his actions and comment that he has learned the content of the centre norm, *'Use one space only at the kai table; that same space becomes "yours" until you've finished eating'*, and he wished to enact it, even though there were plenty of spare chairs at the table. He had yet to master the nuance around the context/s in which the norm applied, which on this occasion made it okay for him to transgress the norm. Emma's comment showed she had picked up on Geoffrey's wish to act in accordance with the norm, and she suggested to him that in this situation it would be okay if he violated the norm and choose another place to sit. Even with this support, Geoffrey acted in accordance with the centre norm, and he was prepared to wait until the chair was vacant, even though his subsequent actions showed his desire to eat was still present.

Such incidents showed me that learning the content of centre norms was not enough; the shaping and integration that Foucault spoke of took time, as children came to learn the more fine-grained aspects of the contexts in which norms applied.

Conflict situations provided another window into the process of children's individuality being shaped to the norms of Tui Preschool, as evidenced by a difference in actions between younger and older children. Younger children were often observed dealing with conflicts physically, as Little Tom and Robbie illustrate:

Robbie is playing on the floor of the main playroom with magnetic building blocks. Little Tom goes over and snatches two from the floor in front of Robbie, and swivels away quickly. He turns back and snatches another, but this time Robbie cries loudly, with no tears. Tom turns his back and heads off with the building blocks in his hands towards the book

corner. Annabel is coming from that direction; she brings Tom back to Robbie and says to him, "Robbie looks upset, what did you do?" Another child in the area says, "He snatched off Robbie". Annabel talks quietly to Tom as he sits on her knee: "I know you're frustrated but that's not okay" (Observation 6, pp. 2-3).

The centre norm, '*Children sometimes use physical means when dealing with problems between them*', was usually enacted by younger children, in this case by Tom (2 years old) taking the blocks off Robbie. Only rarely did I observe this norm enacted by big kids. Annabel's actions demonstrate the typical response from adults in such situations, the impact of which is evident in older children's actions, where I saw many examples of older children talking to try to solve problems between them. Anoushka and Simon provide an example. To set the scene, Simon is occupied at the table and there is a purple paper flower on the table near to him, when

Big Anoushka comes back to the art table with three paper flowers... "Excuse me Simon, actually the purple one is Lily's, I gave it to Lily so can you trade please?" Big Simon looks at her steadily for a few seconds but then shakes his head briefly and refocuses on his writing. Anoushka says "I'll just have to draw one then". She runs round to the other side of the table, takes a piece of paper and a purple felt pen, and begins drawing (Observation 4, p. 3).

Although the purple flower in question lay on the table between them, neither Anoushka nor Simon attempted to take it; judging from their actions, both seemed satisfied with the outcome as they continued on with their activities. From Foucault's perspective, they have become shaped to act according to the centre norm, '*Children should talk to other children if they want them to do – or stop doing – something*'.

Children's resistance and use of power

To find that children were shaped as they were submitted to a set of specific norms as they became integrated to the sociocultural world of Tui Preschool is not to imply their passivity or powerlessness, however. An important aspect of Foucault's thinking is his freeing of the concept of power from ideas of possession, force and coercion, which he referred to as sovereign power. Rather, in thinking about power:

I do not have in mind a general system of domination exerted by one group over another... power must be understood in the first instance as the multiplicity of force relations immanent in the sphere in which they operate and which constitute their own organization; as the process which, through ceaseless struggles and confrontations, transforms, strengthens, or reverse them (Foucault, 1978, p. 92)

My observations contained many examples of power being exercised by children as well as adults in the centre, in accordance with Foucault's description of "a synaptic regime of power, a regime of its exercise *within* the social body, rather than *from above* it" (Foucault, 1980, p. 39; italics in original). The most obvious place where children's exercise of power was evident was in instances of resistance to adult expectations that children enact centre norms.

Children's challenges to adult expectations in early childhood settings is not a new area of study. Corsaro (2005) regards such challenges from children as second only to their drive for social participation. Stephenson (2009) details situations in her study where children resisted the boundaries of curriculum set by their teachers, for example by making guns out of Duplo despite the 'no guns' rule. She concluded that the exercise of control/power was a major curriculum concern for children. Brennan (2005, p. 166) also found children using a range

of strategies to resist and subvert rules, noting that an important factor in this was the extent to which the rules aligned with their personal goals and desires.

In my own study, I found a qualitative difference between younger and older children's challenges to enacting centre norms. When little kids failed to follow centre norms, this often had a sense of inadvertency about it, so that the situation was more of a mistake as newcomers were learning to fit their actions with centre norms. Josh's experience provides a typical example.

Emma (a teacher) goes to the servery to help Lexi. Little Josh is there with a scone in his hand. "Where did that come from Josh? I think Lexi had it?" Emma takes it off Josh: "You've had lots Josh", she says to him. Emma gets a damp cloth and gives it to Josh, who helps her wipe the table down (Observation 6, pp. 9-10).

Josh's actions challenged two centre norms, one about taking more food than was 'fair' and another about taking something off another child. However, my impression at the time was that his actions had more of a sense of not knowing than a struggle to assert power. This is shown by his subsequent actions; he did not protest when the scone was taken off him, and happily and quickly settled into an alternative, acceptable activity.

Older children's challenges typically had a more deliberate quality about them. However, this is not to say that they were necessarily antagonistic in nature, as Foucault also made plain when discussing resistance in his writings (Allan, 2013). There was often a gleeful quality in older children's resistance to centre norms, demonstrated in this extract by Millie:

[At the afternoon tea table] Big Millie turns to me: "I think we forgot to wash our hands!" with a glint in her eye. She moves off, but not to wash

her hands – rather to chat with Big Simon at the servery as they prepare their muffins with spreads (Observation 4, p. 1).

Similarly, in Mark's interview, he was sitting at the morning tea table and had asked the teacher for some crackers: "Please could I have some crackers? [rhythmically] Please pass the crackers round, please pass the crackers round" (Mark's interview, p. 2). A few minutes later when the teacher's back was turned, Mark took another cracker from the plate and said to me gleefully, "I got another cracker w'out even asking!" I interpreted the contrast between this and his previous behaviour of asking, as an indication of a conscious challenge to a centre norm, deftly executed in the moment.

In my analysis of centre norms, I had identified a small set of acknowledged (visible) norms that appeared to be primarily upheld by the children rather than the adults; such norms provided further examples of older children's playful challenges. An example was the norm, '*There is a recognised "teacher's place" at the kai table*', which both Simon and Harley openly and playfully challenged on different occasions:

[Big Simon] goes [to the kai table] and sits down in the chair in the middle of the kidney shape. Carol [the teacher] comes over with the bowl of Ricies and milk. "Oh, you're sitting in the teacher's chair! Good on you!" says Carol (Observation 7, p. 1).

Big Harley says, "I'm in the teacher's spot!" and he is indeed sitting in the middle of the kidney shape [table]. Emma [the teacher] has made no move to sit there however, even when it was free (Observation 6, p. 6).

According to Foucault, a challenge of this type "does not violate [the limit], but simultaneously affirms and weakens it" (Allan, 2013, p. 30). Harley and Simon's

playful actions both challenged and reinforced the centre norm of where the teacher sits at kai times.

Stephenson (2009) noted a purpose of children's resistance was to exercise control in a teacher-dominated context. My observations did contain some examples where older children in particular protested teacher demands of them in contexts where control could have been influential, for example, around norms for tidying up:

Annabel [the supervisor] is down in the book corner where there is a big jumble of equipment – mobilo, magnetic blocks, books, rakau and a rug. Annabel says to the area generally, "Who was playing down here?" Big Anoushka names 3 children. Annabel fetches those three children from where they were in the art room to tidy up. Big Tim protests, "But you didn't ask us to." Annabel says, "I'm asking you now, and before you leave an activity you need to tidy it away" (Observation 6, p. 3).

However, a Foucauldian interpretation is that rather than such incidences showing resistance to sovereign power, they arise as a product of children in a relationship of struggle attempting to get their own immediate wants met. In Foucault's words,

"Power would be a fragile thing if its only function were to repress... exercising itself only in a negative way. If, on the contrary, power is strong this is because, as we are beginning to realise, it produces effects at the level of desire" (Foucault, 1980, p. 59)

A Foucauldian perspective makes possible an interpretation that Tim's protest when he is called back to tidy arises more from annoyance at the interruption of the play he was enjoyably engaged in and wished to return to, than from a sense of protest against subjugation and control.

A clearer illustration of resistance arising at the level of desire, is reflected in a centre norm I saw enacted by older rather than younger children, namely, *'Children are selective in which adult they make requests of'*. Here is a typical example of how this norm played out at meal times:

We're getting towards the end of lunch now. One big child says to Hannah [the centre cook], "Excuse me Hannah but I don't like patties." "Can you try just a little bit?" "I don't want to try." "I'll help you get just a little bit." And does so, before turning to the kitchen. Annabel comes by, and the child says to her "I don't want the tomato." "Okay" says Annabel (Observation 1, p. 10).

Having tried to refuse patties and failing, the child expresses her desire not to eat tomato to a different adult and this time is successful in having her wishes upheld. Again, my interpretation is that such challenges were less about usurping adult authority, and more about the child getting their immediate desires met, in line with Foucault's ideas of power.

Older children's strategic exercise of power

The previous example of refusing the pattie and tomato at lunchtime shows an older child acting strategically to exercise power in the moment, to get their desires met. This illustrates Foucault's view that power is not possessed; rather it is a struggle of relationship that can arise from anywhere as people try to direct their own and other's actions. Further, Foucault wrote that,

Power is not an institution, and not a structure; neither is it a certain strength we are endowed with; it is the name that one attributes to a complex strategical situation in a particular society (Foucault, 1978, p. 93).

Although Foucault's reference is to broader society rather than a preschool, I found my observations contained several examples of older (but not younger)

children using power strategically in the moment at Tui Preschool. A typical example comes from Harley's actions at the sandpit one afternoon:

Three of the four children [at the sandpit] are playing with sand outside the sandpit now, and I wonder about this given the rule stated clearly earlier today. Surely the children know this? Two children including Big Rua are now shovelling sand from the sandpit directly onto the outside area. Big Harley has just popped down to look at the area and he says, "I'm telling on you, I'm telling on you Rua." He goes to tell Diane [a teacher]. Diane looks down to the area and sees Archie, and calls out "Archie keep the sand in the sandpit please." Archie doesn't look up or respond. I'm not sure that he heard – it seems unlikely as Diane is a long way away. But Rua had already stopped and had turned his back to Diane. Harley comes back to the area, as if to see the impact of his actions (Rua is shovelling sand in the sandpit now), then turns away and leaves. Archie is now digging with his hands, seemingly unconcerned by the whole episode (Observation 5, p. 8).

A second incident also featured Harley, but this time he was on the receiving end of another older child's strategic exercise of power. In the following incident, Mark and Amelia were playing in the book corner and Harley came over from the playdough table to join in, uninvited. Mark and Amelia tried to protect their space and play from Harley's intrusion in several ways, such as turning their backs on him, telling him he was unwelcome and even moving small items of furniture to create a physical barrier to his involvement. While this quiet struggle was playing out, Brenda, the closest teacher, was playing with a group of 2 year old children at the playdough table, reminding them of the centre norm not to eat the playdough. Here is what happened next (*italics indicate my reflection documented at the time of the observation*):

Big Mark comes up to Brenda from the direction of the main playroom. "Brenda, Harley was eating playdough, he was putting it in his mouth." Harley is in the book corner. Brenda goes down to him and has a long talk with him about how many germs he's just eaten. "You need to put it in the rubbish bin now. You need to show the young children how to play with it." She escorts Harley out of the area while they talk and he disposes of the playdough in the rubbish bin.

It was a miniscule piece of playdough, small enough to fit on Harley's fingertip, and I can't help thinking that the impetus for the whole event was that Mark and Amelia were playing in the book corner and Harley invaded their space; this was a way to get him removed (Observation 6, p. 4).

These examples show Harley exercising power strategically against another child on one occasion, and Mark successfully exercising it against Harley on another. From Foucault's perspective, Harley and Mark both had a desire, and exercised power effortlessly and strategically in an attempt to get that desire fulfilled. So it can be seen that at Tui Preschool, power is not something held exclusively by particular individuals, or limited to adults as a subgroup. Older children can and do exercise it also, within the milieu of the organisational culture of the centre with its norms, espoused beliefs, and underlying assumptions.

I wondered why it was that I observed big kids rather than younger children using centre norms in this way. From a developmental viewpoint, Tomasello (2009) would explain this as evidence of young children's growing developmental ability to internalise and enact social norms and to participate in enforcing these, having come to understand that these carry their own independent force. However, such an explanation seems insufficient in the face of Harley and Mark's strategically powerful actions, which go beyond enforcing norms for the sake of the norm itself.

My explanation is that the older children have developed an expectation that others (both children and adults) would follow centre norms, and they were able

to use this knowledge to progress their own agendas. Harley's words make it clear that he fully anticipates that Diane will take some kind of action when he tells her of the transgression of the centre norm, '*Centre resources generally stay in designated areas*' that is occurring in the sandpit. I interpret his actions in returning to the sandpit as him inspecting the consequence of his actions and Diane's response. Mark's actions also show an expectation that if he pointed out a transgression of the norm "*Playdough is not for eating*" to Brenda, she would act to uphold it in a way that was likely to advance Mark's own interests of the moment. In this case, his prediction was correct, and Brenda's removal of Harley from the space meant that Mark and Amelia's play was protected from Harley's attempts to intervene for a while longer.

Thus, while the younger children as newcomers to the social world of Tui Preschool were learning what constitutes appropriate, and inappropriate, standards of behaviour and are learning to fit their actions to these norms, the big kids, as experienced members of the community, have come to understand that most centre norms are expected to be enacted and upheld by adults as well as children. This wider appreciation that adults too are required to act in certain ways, allows the older children to predict adults' actions in particular contexts with some degree of accuracy, and to use that predictive ability to strategically exercise power to progress their own desires of the moment.

Biopower

Foucault's concept of biopower focuses on the subjugation of physical bodies so that they come to act in certain ways: that is, power "in its capillary form of

existence, the point where power reaches into the very grain of individuals, touches their bodies and inserts itself into their actions and attitudes” (Foucault, 1980, p. 39). He traces the arising of biopower back to the eighteenth century, when newly developed systems in prisons, mental hospitals and schools heralded “an explosion of numerous and diverse techniques” (Foucault, 1978, p. 140) resulting in individuals in such institutions coming to discipline themselves – the essence of biopower, literally power over bodies.

The notion of biopower is what I interpret as sitting behind the child-enacted invisible centre norm, *‘Children may turn or move away as a way to avoid actual or potential bother’*. This was a norm I saw typically enacted by older, but not younger, children at Tui Preschool. In this first example, a group of children of varying ages were playing with a Duplo pirate ship:

Guy moves round the table to get the dinghy... [which is] on the table next to Big Lily. Guy picks it up and a tug of war ensues [with Lily] and gets noisier. Guy has hold of an oar and it gets pulled out of its socket. Both children stop and look at it in apparent dismay. The two teachers have been talking over their heads to another child, and do not appear to have noticed. Lily quickly turns away and leaves the dinghy to Guy (Observation 2, p. 5).

In the second example, Simon and Millie, two big kids, have been wiping down their chalk drawings outside with wet cloths.

[Big Simon and Big Millie] go inside to rewet their cloths. Brenda [the assistant supervisor] is there, and she says to Millie, “Millie you’ve wet the floor, you need to use a towel and wipe it up. I’m worried someone might slip.” Millie fetches a big towel and uses her feet to wipe the floor with it. Simon stays at the trough while she does this, rinsing out his cloth repeatedly with eyes down [and his back turned to Brenda] (Observation 6, p. 12).

A Foucauldian explanation of these examples is that the children's actions reveal biopower, as they use their bodies in particular ways to respond to unfolding situations. On the face of it, it seems that both Lily and Simon have physically responded in this way to avoid a consequence which they do not desire, thus providing another example of Foucault's point that rather than being necessarily repressive in nature, exercising power can be used to bring about a more positive outcome.

Biopower in action can also be used to explain the existence of the centre norm previously illustrated, '*When being spoken to by an adult about behaviour not approved of, children typically respond with compliance and silence*'. Here is a further example:

Little Tom goes over to Shane, a slightly bigger kid, and takes a little wooden block from in front of him. Shane yells, "No!" repeatedly, getting louder and louder. Tom has moved back but is standing looking at him. Eventually Shane tackles Tom round the knees and Tom falls to the floor. Annabel [the supervisor] comes in to the room and puts Tom on her knee. She speaks gently to him, then tells Shane he needs to tell Tom with his words, he needs to say, "No Tom" (Observation 6, pp. 6-7).

While Annabel was reminding Shane him to use his words, Shane maintained an active silence, even though Annabel's reminder of the expected standard of behaviour was unnecessary. Shane had already enacted the norm he is reminded of with no success, which arguably led to his subsequent action in enacting an alternate centre norm instead in physically tackling Tom. Yet, Shane did not defend his actions or attempt to explain to Annabel that he had indeed tried talking and saying "No" to Tom. Instead, he responded with silence. This I interpret as another example of biopower.

Normalisation as disciplinary power

Foucault explains the aim of his concept of disciplinary power as being to train people to regulate their actions in the social body (Foucault, 1978). He identified several specific techniques of power through which this happens. Gore's (1998) investigation of Foucault's techniques of power established their relevance for educational settings. In my own study, I identified two such techniques being used by adults as disciplinary power, namely normalisation and surveillance; I will discuss each in turn.

Normalisation is a process explained by Foucault as defining what's normal, through which individuals come to accept certain types of behaviour as appropriate or inappropriate (Gore, 1998). To illustrate, I will return to the previous example of Little Tom and Shane's struggle.

Little Tom goes over to Shane, a bigger kid, and takes a little wooden block from in front of him. Shane yells, "No!" repeatedly, getting louder and louder. Tom has moved back but is standing looking at him. Eventually Shane tackles Tom round the knees and Tom falls to the floor. Annabel [the supervisor] comes in to the room and puts Tom on her knee. She speaks gently to him, then tells Shane he needs to tell Tom with his words, he needs to say, "No Tom" (Observation 6, pp. 6-7).

The children's enactment of this norm was sufficient to attract Annabel's attention and intervention, and she enacted the centre norm, *'If a child is seen by an adult doing something not approved of, adults should first respond by speaking to them'*. This incident shows Annabel using disciplinary power in a Foucauldian sense, that is, through exercising a power relation where the chief function is to train Shane to act in a certain manner, while simultaneously "reproducing the

means of control through acceptance and the ongoing replication of normalising judgements” (Hope, 2013, p. 37). Her actions demonstrated Foucault’s notion of normalisation as she reminded Shane of the expected standard of behaviour, in this case, to use words rather than actions. Shane’s acceptance of this is shown in his silence, even though he had already enacted the norm he was reminded of, without success. The ongoing replication of this normalisation is clear in the existence of centre norms that *‘Children should talk to other children if they want them to do – or stop doing – something’*, *‘Children should talk to try to solve problems between them’*, and that *‘If talking isn’t working, children should ask adults for help in dealing with problems between them’*.

That normalisation is a typical disciplinary power technique used in Tui Preschool is revealed in the existence of the centre norm that teachers explain norms to children; as Brenda said in her interview, “Our aim is to explain why that behaviour is not okay” (Brenda’s interview, p. 13). The success of the process of normalisation is suggested by a parallel incident of snatching, this time with an older child’s experience of the equipment she was using being taken off her by a little kid:

Little John takes a knife that was in Big Susan’s playdough sculpture. She protests verbally, loudly. John runs off – straight into a relieving teacher’s legs! Susan is protesting loudly, John gets ushered back to the table while being told that equipment stays at the table. He retains possession of the knife and Susan gives up her protest, giving her full attention back to her playdough work. The relieving teacher leaves the area, and Susan resumes her verbal protest directly to John, demanding that he give the knife back (Observation 1, p. 3).

It would have been a quick and easy solution, given her size advantage, for Susan to simply take the knife back out of John’s hand. Instead, even when it seemed

that her enactment of the norms about talking to other children when there is a problem wasn't going to be successful, she persisted with this. Viewed through Foucault's lens, it is possible to infer that repeated experiences of normalisation in Tui Preschool have led to her acting in a specific way.

This incident is also another example of biopower in action; specific norms that are part of the organisational culture of Tui Preschool have come to be inserted into Susan's actions, shown by her response to the situation in which she found herself.

Surveillance, and safety as an espoused centre value

Foucault's ideas about surveillance as a technique of disciplinary power arose from his study of prison design, particularly Bentley's panopticon where the watchtower was in the middle, surrounded by backlit cells facing inwards towards the watchtower. The effect of this design was that individuals within the cells were potentially on permanent display, with the uncertainty as to whether they were actually being watched from moment to moment leading to a perception of continuous observation (Hope, 2013). This led the inmates to constrain their own actions. Foucault applied this idea to broader society to explain how people become self-monitoring without the need for constant threats of force.

In common with Hope's (2013) discussion of surveillance in schools, where students have learned to expect that they are being watched, I found evidence

throughout my observations to suggest that the experience of surveillance was familiar to children in Tui preschool:

A child clears Big Simon's pile of sand from the edge of the sandpit with a spade. Simon yells "NO!" loudly and thumps the child hard on the upper arm with his fist. He immediately spins around and looks into the playground, as if to see if this was witnessed by anyone (Observation 5, p. 8).

There was also evidence that children self-monitored their own actions in response to being watched:

Big Jessica has entered the playroom. She kicks her shoes off, walks on, then looks up and sees me looking at her, goes back and picks up her shoes, puts them in her locker, takes off her coat and stuffs it in there too (Observation 6, p. 5).

Of most interest to me, however, was where Foucault's concept of surveillance as a disciplinary technique intersected with a predominant feature of the centre's organisational culture, the espoused value of safety. In Chapter 5, I identified the safety and well-being of children as individuals and groups as an explicit value underpinning many of the centre norms. This theme emerged from the early stages of my data analysis and persisted throughout. It was present in interviews, documentation (including all job descriptions and many centre policies), and observations, and was talked about by children as well as parents and teachers, for example when I perched on a windowsill and was told by Big Simon to move as, "It's not safe" (Observation 5, p. 1). After identifying specific centre norms and examining the explicit justifications given for these, I found that for 30 of them (over a quarter of identified norms), safety for the individual child, or for the group as a whole, was the explicit value to which they appealed. This made it the most commonly espoused value, strongly present at both the

first and second levels of Schein's (2010) three-level model of organisational culture. This conscious level of the importance of safety was overtly transmitted to newcomers (adults and children) to the centre, and was constantly reinforced in multiple ways as part of the centre's organisational culture.

The most obvious influence of this strongly espoused value on children's experiences was that children were kept physically safe in a low hazard environment. But there is one particular moment in my observations that struck me at the time and has stayed with me since, suggesting a much more subtle influence for children. This incident occurred after lunch, when the little kids were inside in bed. About ten big kids were playing in the L-shaped playground outside, with two teachers present. Millie, Molly and Simon (all big kids) were playing an intricate imaginative game centred around role-playing walking dogs on the access ramp, in the view of teacher Diane. But after a few moments, Diane and three other children went out into the adjoining park:

[Diane and the children] are running wildly there. Big Molly looks up, then calls out to me, "Can you look after us? Hey, can you look after us?" (Observation 6, p. 2).

I was struck by Molly's remark, both at the time and since. Her alertness to the departure of the adult's watching gaze, which she had not given any outward sign of being aware of until that gaze left, and the speed with which she responded when it did, I interpret as showing her expectation that she is being consistently, if not constantly, watched by adults.

However, Molly's words take this a step further. It seems that not only does she accept and expect to be under observation, but she has developed a belief that the reason for this monitoring by adults is to look after her. That is to say, it appears Molly believes that she and the other children she is playing with need looking after by an adult, even in the context of an activity with a minimal level of risk, where her group had been playing cooperatively together without reference to or intervention from adults for quite some minutes.

At 4 ½ years old, Molly was one of the most capable children in the centre. She was in an environment that met government regulations for safety, where centre policies established clear expectations that child safety was paramount, and where this expectation guided adults' thoughts and actions, as revealed in centre norms and espoused values. Despite all this - or perhaps because of it - Molly appeared to perceive that she was unsafe unless under the possible gaze of an adult.

According to Foucault, those who hold a perception of being under constant surveillance become self-regulating; that is, they become "caught up in a power situation of which they themselves are the bearers" (Foucault, 1977, in Marshall, Douglas, & McDonnel, 2007, p. 64). However, for Molly, the effects seem to run deeper than self-regulation, to the extent that she has developed a perception of herself and/or children generally as potentially unsafe if not being watched.

The effects of perceptions of risk for children was investigated by Bundy et al, (2009) in the context of risk in an Australian school playground. These authors

raise the notion of 'surplus safety' as a feature present not only at the levels of the individual teacher, school systems and policy levels, but also as something entrenched in wider society at this time. They explain 'risk anxiety' as pervasive and rooted in the perception by adults that children are vulnerable and in need of protection from harm. Bundy et al maintain that perceptions of physical danger result in adults limiting children's physically active play, ignoring the benefits of such play for other aspects of a child's well-being. They contend that children may become afraid to use their bodies actively in the face of constant messages from adults that to do so necessarily means they are in danger. I would extend this argument further to suggest that it is not only fear to use their bodies that is being instilled in children due to 'risk anxiety', but a more pervasive belief that they are not able to keep themselves safe unless they are being monitored by an adult.

Organisational culture as a curriculum issue

The incident with Molly allows me to bring both Schein and Foucault's analytical lenses to bear into a finding that at Tui preschool, children were sometimes learning something unacknowledged and arguably unintended. Using the incident with Molly outlined above, from Foucault's viewpoint, this is another example of biopower, where disciplinary power has affected Molly's psyche. From Schein's viewpoint, Molly has made her own sense of the enacted norms and the way things are done at Tui Preschool. From either perspective, Molly has learned something; and thus, organisational culture becomes a curriculum issue.

Was this learning intended? I was not able to ask the teaching team directly.

However, in their interview teachers referred to empowering children, as in this excerpt from Brenda's interview:

I've seen the um, more empowerment for children, so things used to be very much more teacher-directed, um, which was against my philosophy completely (Brenda's interview, p. 3).

A documented group learning story includes the statement,

"At Tui Preschool, we aim for children to feel empowered through achieving things themselves rather than having an adult assume they can not and doing things for them all the time" (Practicing at Kai Time story, 22 June).

Empowerment of children was also raised in the teaching team focus group interview, and it is a Principle of the mandatory early childhood curriculum 'Te Whaariki' (Ministry of Education, 1996) that the centre follows. Molly's learning, that she is unsafe unless being watched, does not sit easily with this evidence of intended teaching of empowerment.

The enacted norm, '*Attending to crying children is adult - and not child - business*', is another norm that I interpret to be an example of unintended learning, again showing organisational culture to be a curriculum issue for children's lived experiences. This norm was of particular interest to me because there had been a recent focus in the centre on promoting relationships between older and younger children that set an expectation that older children would help younger children, which was referred to as 'tuakana/teina' relationships. This was documented by Emma in a programme plan as follows:

We encouraged the older or more skilled children to help out the newer children during routines. This had a twofold effect: it meant the newer children had many helpers (not just teachers) to role model off and it gave the older/more skilled children a chance to feel empowered in their skills/knowledge by helping another child. Our rationale was linked to the Tuakana/Teina theory of development; that peer learning is often more effective than teaching from an adult (Teacher reflection: Learning to help ourselves and others: Developing self help and social skills).

This teaching intent of older children helping younger ones was also documented in The Keeping Safe booklet for children and a recent newsletter for parents. Annabel referred to the focus on tuakana/teina in her interview, and both Mark and Amelia told me that as big kids, they were supposed to help little kids. When I was chatting with Amelia about what the teachers did at Tui preschool, I asked:

Sandy: Do [the teachers] help the little kids?

Amelia: The big kids actually do.

Sandy: The big kids help the little kids, okay. So what do they help the little kids with?

Amelia: Um they sometimes help the little kids (Amelia's interview, pp. 2-3).

Mark was confident in telling me about the responsibilities big kids had in relation to little kids in the centre:

Mark: Um... sometimes the [two year old group] um, do stuff that they're not supposed to do, and the teachers don't do it, we have to do it.

Sandy: Like what?

Mark: Like stop the little children from doing that stuff that they're not supposed to do.

Sandy: Oh, so sometimes the big kids like you help the little kids?

Mark: Yeah

Sandy: So have you helped the little kids sometimes?

Mark: Yup! (Mark's interview 1, p. 5)

It was all the more striking, then, when in one of my observations, Mark calmly ignored a little kid who needed help even though no teacher came to assist for

quite some moments. The context for this observation was morning group time, which is optional for children to attend. Two teachers had taken a group of the youngest children to another room, and Emma had a large group of older children sitting in front of her, with Greg, another teacher, at the back of this group.

Emma has the whiteboard next to her on the step and is asking children for ideas of what they'd like to do. Little Chad, Big Mark and Big Wilson are at the close end of the table in the art room – only a few feet away from where the children are gathered but with their backs to them. Carol (a teacher) has the camera and is going between the two groups, taking photos. She asks the two older boys to be quiet on her way past to the family room (where the younger children are gathered).

Little Chad falls over and cries noisily. The two older boys appear not to notice, and no-one comes to assist him. After about two minutes of crying, Carol comes out from the family room, notices and goes over to him. Mark tells her without looking up that he tripped over. Carol comforts him (Observation 4, p. 6).

Although Mark clearly knew what had happened to make Chad cry, and he reported this accurately to Carol, neither he nor Wilson made any move to help or comfort Chad, and when Carol came over, her actions show this wasn't her expectation either. Despite the explicit teaching intent that big kids help little kids, and Mark telling me of this expectation, he (and Wilson) nevertheless enacted an alternative norm, *'Attending to crying children is adult – and not child – business'*.

A further example of how this norm was enacted arose in a group situation, when Annabel had been reading a story to a group of children in the main playroom. The section in italics was written as a reflective note at the time the observation was made:

Annabel stops reading to attend to a little child who is crying in the book corner. She picks him up and moves to the window with him, looking out. Archie moves up to sit in the chair where she was and holds the book open in front of the children so they can see. They all sit there for about a minute as if holding the scene for Annabel's return. Annabel indeed comes back with the crying child, and sits back in her chair. The others in the group leave as Annabel rocks the child gently.

...it dawns on me that the children show no empathy to the crying child. No-one asks what happened, for example, or why he is crying, or shows any concern on their face. They all just leave, as it becomes clear that Annabel won't be continuing with the story at this time. Annabel doesn't seem surprised by this lack of reaction from the children. And I didn't pick it up until much later – it just seemed a normal part of the place, that when a child cries, it's up to an adult to soothe, and no-one else need bother (Observation 5, p. 2).

My reflective note reveals what I interpret as the children's unintended learning, shown in their actions; namely, that children have learned not to respond to the distress of others.

An explanation from Schein's viewpoint would point to the power of assumptions at Level 3 of Tui Preschool's organisational culture, and suggest that an unexpressed but deeply held belief was operating that was more powerful than the espoused value. The assumption could be an extension of that previously identified; that is, not only are children not expected to show empathy for teachers, they are not expected to show empathy for others at all. Alternatively, there could be an underlying assumption that the ultimate responsibility for children's wellbeing lies with the adults in the centre. I had noticed that it was typical at Tui Preschool for teachers to respond to crying children very quickly; this may have resulted in children learning that there was no need for them to respond as a teacher would soon be on hand. Whichever the assumption, from Foucault's perspective, this learning is again an example of

biopower, where children's actions have been influenced by organisational culture so that they have come to act in a certain way when others are upset.

Chapter summary

Throughout this chapter, I have used Foucault's lens to further inform my study of the impact of organisational culture on children's experiences in an early childhood centre. More specifically, I have used his notion of power relations, disciplinary power, biopower, normalising judgments, and surveillance, as permeating through the milieu of enacted norms and espoused values and beliefs to explain features of children's experiences.

Children were submitted to specific patterns of the norms that are the lynchpin of Tui Preschool's organisational culture. The younger children as newcomers to the centre learned that certain actions in certain contexts constitute appropriate, and inappropriate, standards of behaviour, as they became integrated into the social world of Tui Preschool. The older, more experienced children have come to understand that some centre norms are expected to be enacted and upheld not just by the children, but also by the adults in the centre. This wider appreciation about how adults are required to act allows the older children to predict adults' actions in particular contexts with some degree of accuracy, and to use that predictive knowledge to strategically exercise power to progress their own agendas of the moment.

The effects of surveillance as a technique of disciplinary power, used to support children's safety as a central value of the organisational culture of Tui Preschool, has been argued as leading to a child's perception of herself as unsafe if not being watched, despite engaging in a low risk activity in a regulated physical environment where safety is a core value. I have argued that at Tui Preschool, the ever-present focus on safety, a feature of the organisational culture underpinning both many centre norms and the use of constant surveillance by adults, has led to a child learning that she is not safe unless being watched by an adult. As a further example of unintended learning, I found that children have learned not to respond to the distress of others. In this way, organisational culture becomes a curriculum issue.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSIONS

I began this research study with questions that had been brewing in my mind throughout many years of my professional career as a teacher and teacher educator. I believed that organisational culture was an ‘elephant in the room’ of early childhood settings, in the sense of it being something unacknowledged yet influential for children’s lived experiences; however I had difficulty finding research literature that adequately addressed this topic. As a result of this study, I can now shed some light on this area of knowledge, thus filling an important void.

In this concluding chapter of my thesis, I will draw together and summarise my findings in terms of my research question, consider the methodological strengths and limitations of my study, before finishing with some thoughts and recommendations for future directions.

What does this study tell us about the influence of organisational culture for children’s lived experiences?

My central research question was, ‘How does organisational culture influence children’s lived experiences in an early childhood centre?’ particularly how it was transmitted and maintained, how it arose and endured, how it was challenged, and how children contributed to the organisational culture. Schein’s (2010) three-level framework of organisational culture provided the conceptual framework for me to analyse the organisational culture of my case study centre at progressively deeper levels. Foucault’s ideas about how individuals were

integrated societies, and about power, gave me a conceptual outlook for considering the children's experiences of that culture. Using both frames of reference, I can draw the following conclusions in relation to each part of my research focus.

How was organisational culture transmitted and maintained at Tui Preschool?

- Through enacted centre norms

Enacted centre norms, that is, the “standard[s] of behaviour shared by group members” (Elkin et al., 2008, p. 177), were found to be the linchpin of organisational culture in Tui Preschool. They were significant in transmitting expectations of the way things were to be done, which directly influenced children's lived experiences. These enacted norms sit at the first, most superficial level of Schein's (2010) model of organisational culture, being visible in actions and language.

From Foucault's perspective, enacted norms served to integrate children into the community of the early childhood setting. I observed teachers using Foucault's (1978) disciplinary power techniques of normalisation and surveillance to transmit and maintain existing centre norms. Teachers also enacted the norms themselves, and made many of them verbally explicit to children.

- Through the active participation of older children

Older children not only enacted centre norms themselves, but also pointed out when others did not, in situations where to do so progressed their own agendas

of the moment. While the youngest children, new to the centre, were being “shaped in a new form” (Foucault, 1982, in Allan, 2013, p. 26) as they learned the content of the norms, the slightly more experienced children were learning the fine-grained aspects of the contexts in which norms applied. The older children had not only learned the norms and their nuanced applications, but had developed an expectation that adults in the centre would also act to uphold centre norms; pointing out where others were apparently breaking centre norms both served to get the children’s own needs and wants met, and simultaneously maintained and transmitted the centre norms that were at the heart of the organisational culture of Tui Preschool.

- Through the espoused value of ‘child choice’ captured in the centre teaching philosophy statement

Analysis of the espoused justifications given for centre norms, the second level of Schein’s (2010) framework of organisational culture, highlighted ‘child choice’ as a key espoused value. This value underpinned daily routines and some centre norms. The teachers at Tui Preschool described how it guided their moment-by-moment decisions in ways that directly affected children’s experiences. The centre teaching philosophy statement was a key artefact encapsulating this espoused value, and this document, distributed to all new families and teachers joining the Preschool, thus served to transmit a fundamental expectation of how things were to be done there.

How did organisational culture arise and endure?

- Through team consensus around ‘child choice’ as a core espoused value

Exploring the establishment of the centre teaching philosophy statement provided insight into how the core value of 'child choice', an integral part of the centre's organisational culture influential for children's lived experiences, had arisen and endured. Schein (2010) suggests that core values come from leaders. However, the process initiated by Annabel (the designated centre leader) was focused on ensuring a unified teaching team, rather than on establishing any particular core values base of her own. Neither did she take a strong pedagogical leadership role, where she led the team in or towards a particular model of teaching and learning. Rather, the core espoused value of 'child choice' was reached by consensus from the teaching team. The result of this approach was that teachers were strongly aligned with it, meaning the likelihood of its enactment was strengthened.

- Through the agreed core value being used by teachers to guide their actions

Because teachers had a strong affinity with the core value they had together shaped, their everyday in-the-moment actions supported the ongoing validation and refreshment of many enacted centre norms and routines that influenced children's lived experiences in the centre. Further, when uncertain how to respond to specific situations with children, teachers typically appealed to the core value expressed in the philosophy statement; their subsequent grappling with and renegotiating of what 'child choice' meant led to it being revalidated as an integral part of the organisational culture of Tui Preschool, strengthening its endurance.

How was the existing organisational culture challenged?

Schein (2010) considers that a major source of challenge to existing norms (Level One of his framework) and core values (Level Two) is the values newcomers bring with them. The two main subgroups of newcomers to Tui Preschool were children, and adults (teachers and parents).

- Challenges to enacted norms from children

Stephenson (2009) characterised challenges from the children in her study as intended to usurp adult authority. However, in line with Foucault's (1980, p. 59) view of power as a struggle of relationship producing "effects at the level of desire", I found that at Tui Preschool children's challenges to centre norms typically arose in contexts where children were trying to get their immediate needs and wants met.

Challenges to centre norms from younger children normally had the quality of an inadvertent mistake as they went about trying to achieve their wishes of the moment and were unsure of the applicable norms. Challenges from older children did sometimes have a more deliberate quality about them, but this was typically playful rather than antagonistic in nature. In Foucault's terms, children's challenges to centre norms both strengthened and weakened these simultaneously (Allen, 2013).

- Leadership that limited challenges from adults

I found that Annabel (the designated centre leader) took steps to limit the possibility of challenges from adults by ensuring that new employees had an

alignment with the core espoused value of ‘child choice’ before she offered them permanent employment. This served to limit potential challenges to that core value, which was integral to the organisational culture of Tui Preschool. Further, she also ensured that parents looking to enrol their child were made aware of this core value that guided the way things were to be done at Tui Preschool, again limiting the potential for threat and challenge to this central tenet.

How did children contribute to the organisational culture?

- Key role of older children in maintaining existing enacted norms

As noted above, older children used their ability to predict that adults would act in accordance with centre norms to progress their own agendas of the moment. The older children’s success in using centre norms to meet their needs in this way, made it likely that they would again appeal to centre norms in the future, thus strengthening and revitalising the existing enacted centre norms.

- ‘Invisible’ norms enacted by children

The children’s contribution to the centre’s organisational culture went further than this, however. My data analysis revealed a small set of enacted norms that were neither spoken, nor spoken about, and for which I could find no publically espoused value; I termed these ‘invisible’ norms. Some of these norms were enacted by children, with teachers seemingly unaware of them. This finding is important as it extends the boundaries of an understanding of organisational culture beyond considering what adults in centres do, positioning a consideration of children as active participants essential to any discussion of the

topic. Children are not just shaped by, but also shape, the world of the early childhood centre they are living in.

Organisational culture as an unintended curriculum

It is intriguing to consider how children came to be enacting centre norms of which adults appeared to be unaware of. My explanation is that children are making their own sense of the way things are done at Tui Preschool. Following Schein (2010), children as a subgroup have developed their own taken-for-granted assumptions and beliefs sitting at the Level Three, the deepest level of organisational culture. Foucault's conception of biopower suggests that such assumptions and beliefs have become inserted into children's psyches (Foucault, 1980).

Surveillance as a technique of disciplinary power used at Tui Preschool, led to children expecting to be consistently, if not constantly, under an adult's gaze. This relates to a core espoused value of children's safety, which was another major tenet underpinning the centre's organisational culture. However, an incident with 4½-year-old Molly revealed that the repeated messages rooted in this espoused value led her to a perception that she would be unsafe if not being watched by adults. Molly had made her own sense of her experiences of the organisational culture of Tui Preschool, and in doing so, learned something unacknowledged and arguably unintended by the teachers. In this way, I argue that organisational culture becomes a curriculum issue.

As a further example of unintended learning arising from the organisational culture of Tui Preschool, I found that children had learned not to respond to the distress of others. This finding was all the more striking in the face of an expressed teaching intention that older children help younger ones, told to me by two of my child participants as well as present in documentation. Again, I argue that this finding is rooted in the third, deepest level of Schein's (2010) model of organisational culture, that is, the assumptions and beliefs that are taken for granted; in this case, that children's concern for others was not expected.

Methodological strengths and limitations

My investigation into the influence of organisational culture for children's lived experiences led me into relatively uncharted waters. Had I known more before embarking on my study, there were aspects of my methodology that I would have approached differently, particularly around capturing the children's perspectives and confirming findings with participants. Nevertheless, there are strengths to the multiple method, twin lens approach I took. These strengths and weaknesses will be discussed in this section of the chapter.

Case study approach with multiple methods and lenses

Using a case study approach allowed for a rigorous examination of day-to-day happenings in the early childhood centre, providing fresh insight (Edwards, 2010). By choosing to focus in depth on one centre, I was able to utilise a range of data gathering and generating methods, resulting in a richness of information which facilitated multiple analyses across methods, strengthening the

dependability of my findings (Kiley & Jensen, 2003). This was in contrast to McLeod (2002), who used interviews only in her study of organisational culture. In this way, I was able to meet the qualitative researcher's challenge to capture what's important, analyse with integrity, and build a relatively robust picture in relation to my topic of investigation (Edwards, 2010).

Although coming from very different philosophical and theoretical positions, I was able to find sufficient echoes and areas of overlap between the ideas of Schein, an American management and leadership specialist, and Foucault, a French philosopher, to use both to inform my study. Using their different perspectives to examine and make sense of my data added a greater level of depth and complexity to my findings.

A recognised weakness of case study methodology is that the resulting information may be so specific to the context studied that it is of little use or value to other contexts. A grounded theory approach was used to help mitigate this weakness, with a focus largely at a conceptual level as suggested by Punch (2005). By providing sufficient descriptive information about the setting and context of my study, I aimed to allow judgments to be made about the degree to which my findings are applicable to other settings (Kiley & Jensen, 2003). The extent of the transferability of my findings will ultimately be determined by their resonance with early childhood teachers and leaders in their own early childhood settings.

Capturing children's perspectives

One regret I hold is the limited extent to which I was able to capture children's perspectives. I made the decision to use the same information gathering techniques for children as for adults, namely observations, interviews, and focus group interviews. Observations were the most successful of these techniques, as through these I captured experiences and events which allowed me some insight into the children's world of Tui Preschool. The intuitive rather than predetermined approach I took, in tuning myself in to the atmosphere of the centre and observing and documenting a child's story as it unfolded, proved to be of value in gathering information about children's experiences.

Child interviews were on the whole not successful in generating information relevant to my research topic, with the exception of Mark's interviews. With hindsight, I think it was ambitious to expect the children to be prepared to talk to me on what must have appeared random and disconnected topics, when I was a stranger to them. Further, I had designed my research to complete all interviews before beginning observations, bearing in mind Schein's (2010) advice that this information was the gateway to the culture of a particular organisation.

However, I underestimated the importance of relationships, and of positioning myself in the children's eyes. If I had allowed myself time in the centre to establish myself as Mayall (2008) recommended, in a 'least-adult' role, perhaps the children would have been more prepared to share their views with me.

Carrying out interviews with the children after completing the set of observations in the centre, rather than before, would have given me more

relevant topics and shared experiences to talk with the children about, which may have helped engagement.

I could also have involved the children more actively, for example, by seeking out their interpretations of their experiences. This could have been done by being more actively involved myself through playing with children, which would likely have provided natural opportunities to converse with children and gather their perspectives as experiences were unfolding. Another option would have been using a video camera to record, and then viewing this with children, documenting their perspectives on what was happening.

Other ways to seek children's perspectives include role plays, a technique Harwood (2010) found useful. Also, it may be significant that the child who shared most with me, Mark, I had met in his own home before entering the centre. Visiting the child participants in their homes and building relationships there before attempting to elicit their views at the centre might have been helpful.

Overall, the depth and breadth of information from children's perspectives would have been enhanced had I cast a wider net with a greater variety of methods, and built relationships with the children.

Confirming findings with participants

Another weakness of my study was that I was not able to check my findings and interpretations with participants as often as I would have liked. This

unavoidable reality, due to my withdrawing from study for a period of time, impacted on my research at two points in particular.

First, checking with participants the set of 104 norms I identified, would have added credibility and confirmation to my analysis and interpretations (Edwards, 2010; Graneheim & Lundman, 2004), and gone some way towards avoiding, in the words of Smith (2002, p. 20), “the ethnographer’s power to take what people have to say and to reassemble it to appear in quite a different setting in a different language and with interests and purposes that are not theirs”.

Second, my study would have been significantly strengthened had I queried directly with the teachers, reasons for norms for which I could find no explicit justification. This would have provided clarity around which were rooted in Schein’s (2010) deepest level of organisational culture, that of taken for granted beliefs and assumptions that are the root cause of why things are done the way they are done. This in turn would have allowed me more certainty around the glimpses of this level of the culture I uncovered, and made for a richer understanding of the organisational culture of Tui Preschool.

Future directions

My study has shown that organisational culture does influence children’s lived experiences in an early childhood centre; that is now beyond dispute. In light of this, the current lack of attention paid to this area of children’s experiences in early childhood settings needs rectification. For future investigations, I would suggest the following next steps.

- Involve children as active participants

Given my findings that children were making their own sense of the organisational culture of Tui Preschool, and were active in contributing to that culture, I believe much could be learned from including children as active participants in future research in this area. Following Harwood's (2010) suggestions, children could be involved with formulating specific research questions within the broader area, carrying out information gathering about their experiences (for example, by using cameras and adding commentary to the resulting images), helping to analyse and make sense of the information, and providing input on any subsequent recommendations for change. If this were done in multiple settings, greater depth of understanding would undoubtedly result for the individual centres themselves and for knowledge of the field.

- Teachers as researchers within communities of learning

Another recommendation for future investigations springs from my reflection that my somewhat distant position from the children was a limitation of my research; a closer relationship between myself, as researcher, and the children would have perhaps led to greater insight. Children already have relationships with their teachers; perhaps, therefore, future investigations into organisational culture would be more fruitfully led by teachers than outside researchers.

I have in mind a model of teachers and children working together to carry out investigations into organisational culture within their own communities of learning, using the already familiar tool of centre self-review as a framework. The relationships already in existence could thus become a powerful base for

harnessing rich and potent information about the influence of 'the way we do things' for children's experiences. My study shows a starting place for this work would be examining the centre's norms, core values and hidden assumptions, including looking for meanings that children are making from their experiences in that culture.

One potential problem with this suggestion lies in people being blind to the culture they are living; as the saying goes, 'a fish can't see the water it swims in'. This could be ameliorated by having an associated 'critical friend'/researcher to provide an 'outsider' lens, for example by conducting reality checks of perceptions, observing children to look for enacted norms that adults may not be aware of, debriefing with participants as to the sense being made of findings, and checking audit trails of information and decision points, thus raising the credibility and dependability of the process and results.

- Investigate infants and toddlers

Another of my recommendations centres on the exclusion of infants and toddlers aged under 2 years from my study; yet observing two year old newcomers to Tui Preschool proved insightful. I have no doubt that organisational culture influences younger children's experiences also, and that this area warrants further exploration. Of course, many of these younger children are non-verbal, raising a challenge to capturing their experiences. I believe that further use of intuitive methods of observation with these younger children would be one method to use to attempt to address this.

Concluding comments

From a teaching and learning perspective, the teachers at Tui Preschool spent a lot of time teaching children the content and context of a great number of centre norms, most of which were a visible and acknowledged part of the organisational culture of the centre. However, the existence of some norms enacted by children that adults were unaware of, confirms that children were concurrently making their own meanings from their experiences of the organisational culture. Both of these factors make it clear that organisational culture is a curriculum issue, in accordance with the definition of curriculum in Aotearoa New Zealand's mandatory early childhood curriculum *Te Whāriki* (Ministry of Education, 1996, p. 10): "the sum total of the experiences, activities, and events, whether direct or indirect, which occur within an environment designed to foster children's learning and development".

It is my contention that to continue to ignore organisational culture as a part of children's experience in centres, is to ignore an important layer of children's curriculum experience. What is ignored is rendered more powerful, as it remains unexamined and difficult to challenge (MacNaughton, 2005). The experience of Molly, who has learned that she is unsafe unless being watched by adults, is a potent example of a message learned by a child through her experiences of the centre's organisational culture. Similarly, that children have learned to screen out the distress of others where the opposite intent was being taught, is sobering. The extent to which such unintended learning is problematic needs debate; it cannot be debated while it sits unrecognised.

Children in early childhood centres are making their own sense of messages from the organisational culture of their centres. These messages are not hidden; rather, they are simply overlooked. As early childhood teachers, we are called by our definition of curriculum to look more closely at what children are learning – not just what we think we are teaching – through our well-intentioned actions with their espoused justifications and values. We take our own centres' organisational cultures for granted and so miss its effects on everyone in the centre, including the children. Yet, children are making meaning from their experiences, and if organisational culture is ignored, these meanings are likely to remain unknown and may be unintended and/or problematic.

For our children's learning, we must do more.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Interview questions/topics for parents

How would you like me to describe you, for the purposes of this research?

If I asked you to sum up the essence of [centre name] in three words, those words would be...

What is your association with [centre name]? How did it come to be that your child attends [center name]? (How long, other children, how did you hear about it? On what basis did you make the decision to send your child here? What attracted you to [centre name]?)

Do you remember the early days? What struck you as different, strange, unexpected about the way things were done? What made you feel comfortable / uncomfortable? What sort of induction / settling in process was there, for you as well as for your child?

What is the purpose of [centre name], from your perspective? (Why does it exist?) What do you think your child/the teachers/ the owner might say?

In your opinion, what makes this a great place for children to be? What do you think your child/the teachers would say? What helps sustain this? What would make it even better?

Organisational culture has been described as “The way things are done around here”. What can you tell me about that? Do you see parents generally as having a role in that, in [centre name]? Do you personally have a role in that? If so, what is it?

What do you think the teachers/[supervisor’s name]/your child see parents’ role as? What do you see their role as?

What are the expectations of parents? What would get a parent in trouble? What would happen? What are your expectations of the teachers? Of your child? Of [supervisor’s name]?

What would a new parent need to know to fit in quickly?

[centre name] is a [wider chain name] centre. What does this mean, from your perspective? (Policies question – which do you know about?)

What are the rules here? (eg expectations about getting messy)

Who makes the rules about what here? How are they made? How do you learn them?

Who is a leader here?

How do you give information? How do you receive information? About what?

Have you ever tried changing the way things are done at [centre name]? What happened? If you wanted to change something, how would you go about doing that? Are there any things you would like to see changed but you accept they can't be? (eg more teachers, bigger playground, policies about paying full fess for teacher only days, excluding sick children...)

I asked you at the start about three words to sum up the essence of [centre name]. Now that we've done all this talking, would you still use those three words?

Appendix B

Interview questions/topics for children

What happens when you come here each time? What do you do?

Tell me about your first day/s here. (What did you like? What was weird? What would you tell a new child starting here to help them?)

What do you like about this place? What would make it even better for you? (What would you change if you could?) What do you think other people like? (What do teachers / your parents like about it?)

Who makes the rules here? (Who is the biggest boss?)

What do the teachers do here? What does [supervisor's name] do? What do your family do?

What would get a child in trouble here, with whom? What would happen? (What would get you not allowed to come back?) What would get a teacher / [supervisor's name] / your family in trouble?

Have you ever tried changing the way things are done around here? What happened? If you wanted to change something, how would you go about doing it?

Three words to describe this place would be...

Appendix C

Interview questions/topics for teachers (including supervisor)

Walk me through a typical day here, from your perspective. (You arrive at the centre...)

What is the purpose of this place, from your perspective? What do you think others might say? (What might the owner/parents/children say?)

What is your role in this place? What is its most important aspect, and why?

What do you think others would say about your role?

What helps you carry out this role? What else would help you?

What attracted you to this place? Reflecting on your early experiences here, what struck you about the centre? What was different, strange or unexpected about the way things were done? What would a new parent/teacher/supervisor/child need to know to fit in and feel comfortable working here?

Organisational culture has been described as “The way things are done around here”. What can you tell me about that? What is your role in that?

What do you know of the history of this centre? What has changed over the years? How has it affected how things are done around here? How (if at all) has it impacted on children’s experiences here?

In your opinion, what is it about this place that makes it a great place for children to be? What do you think others would say?

What helps sustain this, in this particular place? What would make it even better?

Who is responsible for ensuring things going well for the children here? (Which things?) Who makes the rules, and how? What gets written down and formalized? What’s more about custom and practice?

Who is a leader here? What is it about that person and what they do that you value most?

What is a child expected to be here? What is required / allowed / negotiable / not allowed of children here? (What would get a child in trouble, and what would happen?)

What would get you in trouble here? With whom? What would happen?

What is this centre doing well that facilitates children’s lived experiences? What needs to be strengthened and maintained? What is an impediment? What needs to change?

Have you ever tried changing the way things are done around here? What happened? If you wanted to change something, how would you go about doing it?

What tensions (if any) are there between how you would like to see things done and the reality of what happens here?

If you heard a rumour about a major change happening here, how (if at all) would you go about finding out about it?

Finally, if I asked you to sum up the essence of this place in three words, those words would be...

Appendix D

Interview/topic questions for centre cook

How would you describe yourself, for the purposes of this research?
How often are you in the centre? What is your role and responsibilities? Who do you answer to over what?

If I asked you to sum up the essence of [centre name] in three words, those words would be...

How did you come to be here? (How long?) What attracted you to this place? (Why do you stay?)

Do you remember the early days? What struck you as different, strange, unexpected about the way things were done? What made you feel comfortable / uncomfortable? What sort of induction / settling in process was there for you?

What is the purpose of [centre name], from your perspective? (Why does it exist?) What do you think the children/ parents/ teachers/ the owner might say?

In your opinion, what makes this a great place for children to be? What do you think the children/ teachers/parents would say? What helps sustain this? What would make it even better, from your perspective?

Organisational culture has been described as “The way things are done around here”. What can you tell me about that? Do you personally have a role in that? If so, what is it?

What do you think the teachers/[supervisor’s name]/children/ parents see are your role? What do you see as their role?

What are the expectations of you in your role here? What would get you in trouble? What would happen? What are your expectations of the teachers/[supervisor’s name]/parents/children?

What would a new person coming to work here need to know to fit in quickly?

[centre name] is a [chain name] centre. What does this mean, from your perspective?

What are the rules here? (eg expectations about menus; level of involvement of children in meal preparation...)

Who makes the rules about what here? How are they made? How did you learn them?

Who is a leader here?

How do you give information? How do you receive information? About what?

Have you ever tried changing the way things are done at [centre name]? What happened? If you wanted to change something, how would you go about doing that? From your perspective, are there any things you would like to see changed but you accept they can't be? (eg hours of work...)

I asked you at the start about three words to sum up the essence of [centre name]. Now that we've done all this talking, would you still use those three words?

Appendix E

Emailed interview questions for owner/founder/Director

As the founder of [name of centre chain], what was it you were setting out to do? Has anything changed about that over time? In what ways do you think any changes have impacted on the children's experiences?

What is the purpose of [centre name], from your perspective?
What do you think teachers/parents/children might say is the purpose?

Can you please explain your role in the life of the centre? How do you think teachers/parents/children see your role?

What would a new parent / teacher/supervisor/child need to know to fit in and feel comfortable being at [centre name]?

In your opinion, what is it that makes [centre name] a great place for children to be? What helps sustain this, at [centre name]? What would make it even better for the children? What do you think teachers/parents/children would say?

Who makes the rules about what happens at [centre name], and how? What gets written down and formalized? What's more about custom and practice? What is required / allowed / negotiable / not allowed of children here? (What would get a child in trouble, and what would happen?)

Where do aspects of leadership sit at [centre name]?

If you wanted to make a change at [centre name], how would you go about doing it? If teachers/parents/children wanted to make a change, how could they do this?

Finally, if I asked you to sum up the essence of this place in three words, those words would be...

Appendix F

Document and artefact summary

Documents copied and collected:

- The current (2009) policy manual
- Documentation of three recent self-reviews carried out by centre teachers
- An operations manual from Head Office addressed to new employees
- A pack of information given to new casual and relieving staff (includes centre philosophy statement)
- A pack of information given to families when their child joins the centre (includes centre philosophy statement)
- A copy of a staff shift roster
- Several magazines published by Head Office given to parents
- A copy of three articles written by a teacher for upcoming professional development workshops she was running on behalf of Head Office
- A 'Transition to school' pamphlet written by the same teacher for centre parents
- An 8-page blank teacher appraisal report
- A blank template for teachers to complete appraising their supervisor's performance
- A blank template for family-teacher interviews
- A blank template of the annual questionnaire completed by parents
- A 1-page document written by a teacher entitled *Keeping safe at [centre name]*
- A 13-page booklet version of *Keeping safe at [centre name]*, written by the same teacher, to be used with the centre children
- The start of a new interest area for programme planning
- An article by a teacher documenting an area of programme planning that she intends submitting to the Head Office magazine, also displayed on the wall in the centre
- Documentation of a group discovery project (programme plan) contributed to by three teachers

Documents copied and collected from the noticeboard in the staff room:

- The centre's three year strategic plan written by the centre owner
- Repairs and maintenance, parents and community, equipment, health and safety, and professional development plans for the current year
- A description of extra teacher responsibilities (such as who was responsible for the monthly art order, fire drill tests, and health and safety)
- A teacher release application form for professional development
- A leave application form
- A sheet produced by Head Office, pinned to the staffroom noticeboard, encouraging 'camaraderie'
- Powerpoint notes from a presentation made by the supervisor to parents at a parent forum

Documents copied and collected from the adult toilet wall:

- A “This is us!!!!” sign introducing the centre philosophy statement
- The centre philosophy statement
- A copy of the wider institute philosophy
- A copy of an inspirational quote about teaching young children

Documents noted but not copied from the noticeboard in the staff room:

- Flyers from various organisations offering professional development opportunities (e.g., from the SPCA offering programmes to teach young children how to treat animals)
- Notice announcing a pasifika teachers network meeting, (the date of the meeting is a month ago)
- An invitation from a teacher education provider asking teachers to become part of a registration network
- An adult community education timetable from a local college for the current school term
- A flyer from the Teachers’ Refresher Course Committee advertising a four day workshop entitled Leadership in early childhood settings: Looking ahead: Titiro whakamua
- A print out of the New Zealand Teachers Council Satisfactory Teacher Dimensions

Documents noted but not copied, visible in the staff room:

- Large planning sheet for the “senior school”
- Profile book planning sheet, listing every permanent teacher’s name along with the names of the children whose profile books each teacher is responsible for
- Monthly calendar showing who among staff is away when (e.g., on annual leave)
- A list specifying names and admin duties for Head Office staff, with direct dial numbers (noted in Observation 3)
- SKIP poster, produced by a government agency, explaining the six things children need to grow up to be “happy, capable adults”
- Hanging on the back of the entrance door, a maintenance notebook laid out with one month to a page.
- On the windowsill behind the sofa, the New Zealand Teachers Council Code of Ethics for Registered Teachers
- Piles of children’s profile books, beautifully presented and mostly done on computer with digital photos.
- Two Christmas cards addressed to centre staff from families
- A notice on the desk specifying the centre closing and opening hours for the Christmas break (noted in Observation 4)

Artefacts visible in staff room:

- Two desks with three work spaces, one with a computer centred in front of it
- Two adult-sized chairs, one with the stuffing coming out

- Shelves above the larger desk, containing filing boxes labelled: Head Office folders, reliever notes, meeting notes, information books, charter/policies, Te Whaariki/Dops, Building WOF/Self-Review, ERO, Ministry Books
- Also in these shelves are a dictionary, local telephone directories, government-produced resources including funding folders, health folders, *Kei Tua o te Pae, Towards Full Registration, Including Everyone, Empowered to Learn*
- A small notice board above the computer desk and below the shelves, containing contact phone numbers for all the centres in the chain, and for relieving teachers
- On the desk, a calculator, phone, piles of papers sorted into three unlabelled trays, various unlabelled folders, a book labelled Special Events and Trip Book 2009, and a box of tissues
- On the floor by the desk, a rubbish bin and a plastic recycling bin for paper, which has some contents in it; some more unlabelled file boxes are stacked on the floor
- On the wall next to the computer desk, seven flax kete, 6 labelled with teacher's names, the remaining one without a label. Those for the supervisor and assistant supervisor have things in them; the others are empty
- On the back of the entrance door, another unlabelled kete
- A comfy two-seater couch
- A display saying "Learning and growing through fun, professionalism and maturity, creating a unique and positive environment in which both children and teachers can develop". Printed out on large font on blue cardboard, placed in a woven flax mat in a kite shape, with shells, a star fish and driftwood attached
- Two whiteboards with stones and shells decorating the edges. One has staff shifts for the next two weeks specified, the other is headed "staff meeting". Over various visits, the following notices appeared on this board: "Meeting with Sandy 15 June 2009"; "Mid-winter Xmas party @ Emma's, optional dates are 3rd or 17th July"; and "Next staff meeting is on Thursday 25th June".
- photocopier, laminator, fire extinguisher, small blower heater, and a loudly ticking clock
- Tape/CD player and one CD entitled *Break it Down: 38 acoustic tracks from today's biggest artists*
- a shiny blue bag with two bottles of wine inside – a gift?
- a few children's puzzles with missing pieces
- lock on staffroom door

Documents publicly available within the centre, noted but not copied:

- Signs on the walls about a forthcoming "Parent Forum" evening
- Teacher communication book, located on the kitchen bench under the phone (noted in observation 6)
- Also on the kitchen bench, several stapled sheets entitled "Conference" (noted in observation 3)

- The daily attendance book, where parents sign their children in and out each day (noted in observation 5)
- Letter from the owner to parents regarding a fee increase (noted in observation 2)
- Notice advertising an end-of-year celebration for all families who attend any of the chain centres (noted in observation 2)
- The centre licence (noted in observation 2)
- The accident/illness register (noted in observation 2)
- A group programming story on the wall of the sleeping room featuring two children S and N “helping” each other (noted in observation 2)
- A folder entitled *Workshops*. Inside are three group stories recently written by two teachers about group happenings for the younger children (noted in observation 3)
- On the wall outside the family room, a display with photos and words, made by teachers, describing what this centre is about (noted in observation 5 and teachers focus group)
- A notice regarding forthcoming parent-teacher interviews (noted in observation 6)
- Poster inviting staff to a *Prizegiving and End of Year Celebration* (noted in observation 7)
- Teacher profile posters (noted in observation 7)
- Copies of each teacher’s qualifications (noted in observation 7)
- A list specifying teacher non-contact times, sleeproom duty and mat-time days (noted in observation 7)
- A list completed by teachers as children eat lunch (noted in observation 1)

Artefacts visible in the centre, specific to this centre (that is, excluding the typical children’s resources for learning)

- A *Who is here today* tree which has photos and first names of each child
- A set of cloth “pockets” by the entrance way. Each pocket has a child’s name. This is where information for parents is put.
- A loose-leaf file of daily centre happenings (e.g., “played fairy snap and memory with the new fairy cards”) (noted in observation 3)
- The low servery bench at the kitchen, from which children serve their own food
- A sign saying *dairy free* with photos of two children, which sometimes appears with food at the servery (noted in observation 6)

Appendix G

Centre owner, and supervisor, information letter and consent form

[University of Canterbury letterhead]

Greetings

My name is Sandy Radford. I have been involved in early childhood education for many years as a teacher and a teacher educator, and now I am studying for my PhD at the University of Canterbury. I am researching how (if at all) the organisational culture of early childhood centres influences children's experiences. I am particularly wanting to uncover and learn from stories of success, and ultimately to share these with others to make a difference for all young children who spend time in early childhood centres. I am asking for your permission to involve your centre in my research.

My research process would begin with interviewing owners/managers, teachers, four children and their parents/caregivers for their ideas on my topic. These participants will be invited to write down and share with me, any further reflections and insights they may have over the following few weeks. Once the interviews are completed, I would run a focus group interview for each group of participants, and if possible would like to use the centre as the meeting place for these group interviews. I would also like to look at important centre documents, such as policy manuals. Some time after this, I would like to spend between 7 and 10 full days in the centre, observing the usual happenings. Normally this will involve writing notes, but I may want to use a video camera for short periods of time to help me gather information. This would be notified in advance, would only occur with the permission of all involved, and would be carried out as unobtrusively as I can manage. Video recordings will be viewed only by myself.

The centre will not be named or any identifying information provide in anything I write, and copies of anything written for publication will be provided to the centre along with a summary of results. I will at all times endeavour to keep the research process as respectful as possible to all involved and to minimise any disruption to the daily life of the centre, and will ask for feedback from you and all participants about well I am achieving this. Information gathered will be kept in a locked filing cabinet in my office at the University, will be accessed only by myself, and will be destroyed at the end of the research process.

This research has been considered and approved by the University of Canterbury Human Ethics Committee. If you have any questions about this research, you can talk to me or contact me via phone (021 xxx xxxx) or email (sandyradford@xxx). Alternatively you can contact my supervisors, Associate Professor Alison Gilmore (phone xxx xxxx) and Dr Alex Gunn (phone xxx xxxxx). Please keep this information sheet for future reference.

Below is a consent form for you to fill out and return to me, if you are happy for the centre to be involved on the basis outlined in this letter.

Thank you for considering my request. With your support, I am aiming to make a positive difference for young children.

Kind regards

Sandy Radford
Phone: 027 xxx xxxx
Email: sandyradford@xxx

Centre owner and supervisor approval and consent form

I have read and understood the centre approval letter about the research project by Sandy Radford, investigating how the organisational culture of early childhood centres influences children's experiences.

On the basis of this information, I give the researcher permission to involve this centre in the research, and for the researcher to contact teachers, parents and children for the purposes of conducting the research project. I understand that this consent can be withdrawn at any time.

As owner/supervisor, I am happy to be interviewed by the researcher, at a time and place to be mutually negotiated. I agree to the interview being audio recorded.

I am in general happy to allow the researcher access to centre documents such as policy manuals, on the understanding that she will ask for specific documents to which I have the right to approve or decline on an individual basis. Copies would be made only with permission for each document.

I give permission for the researcher to take video footage in the centre as those involved go about their normal activities in the centre. I understand this would be notified in advance, and will only occur with the permission of those involved. Any video recordings made will be viewed only by the researcher.

I understand that the researcher will endeavour to minimise disruption to normal centre life.

I agree to the publication of results and reports, with the understanding that the centre will remain anonymous and no identifying information will be contained in any report. A copy will be provided to the centre of any report for publication, and a summary of results will also be provided at the end of the research.

Name:

Designation:

Centre name:

Signed:

Date:

Appendix H

Teacher information letter and consent form

[University of Canterbury letterhead]

Greetings

My name is Sandy Radford. I have been involved in early childhood education for many years as a teacher and a teacher educator, and now I am studying for my PhD at the University of Canterbury. I am researching how (if at all) the organisational culture of early childhood centres influences children's experiences. I am particularly wanting to uncover and learn from stories of success, and ultimately to share these with other centres to make a difference for all young children who spend time in early childhood centres.

As teachers in the centre, your views are of importance to me, and there are several ways I would like to explore these with you.

First, I would like your permission to take part in an individual interview lasting up to 45 minutes, focusing on your ideas around the research topic. This interview will occur at a time and place suiting us both. To help me remember your ideas, I would like your permission to audiorecord the interviews. You will not be named or any identifying information provided in anything I write as a result of these interviews, and I will take care to ensure that no-one else has access to the recordings. You will be welcome to check your own recording and my transcription of this. You can withdraw your consent at any stage, including consent for me to use any or all of the information you have provided.

Second, I would like to invite you to take part in a focus group interview with the other teachers from this centre, to explore the group's ideas. This interview would most likely take place one evening, for up to two hours. During the meeting we will together write down the group's ideas, and you will get a copy of the final notes from the discussion.

It may be that these discussions lead to your further reflections and insights in the days and weeks following. If this is the case, it would be helpful if you could write these thoughts down and share them with me, either as you have written them or in a further discussion (whichever you prefer).

A further aspect of my research will be direct observations. I am intending to be in the centre for between 7 and 10 days, spread out over a few weeks, observing what happens as children and adults go about their usual day. I am asking for your permission to include you in any written observations I may make. You will not be named or any identifying information provided in anything I write as a result of these observations, and I will take care to ensure that no-one else has access to the notes I make.

It may also be that I wish to use a video camera for short periods of time to video adults and children going about their normal activities during the centre day. I would like to ask your permission for this. I will let everyone know before I do this, so that if you have any specific concerns you can raise them with me before I do any filming. I will be the only person viewing the recordings, I will take great care to ensure there is no unauthorised access possible, and I will destroy it once my research is complete.

This research has been considered and approved by the University of Canterbury Human Ethics Committee. If you have any questions about this research, you can talk to me or contact me via phone (021 xxx xxxx) or email (sandyradford@xxx). Alternatively you can contact my supervisors, Associate Professor Alison Gilmore (phone xxx xxxx) and Dr Alex Gunn (phone xxx xxxx). Please keep this information sheet for your future reference.

Attached is a consent form for you to fill out and return to me via the centre, if you are happy to be involved in each aspect of the research as outlined in this letter. At the end of the research, I will provide the centre with a summary of results.

Thank you for considering my request. With your support, I am aiming to make a positive difference for young children.

Kind regards

Sandy Radford
Phone: 027 xxx xxxx
Email: sandyradford@xxx

Teacher consent form

I have read and understood the teacher information letter about the research project by Sandy Radford, investigating how the organisational culture of early childhood centres influences children's experiences. On the basis of this information:

I agree to an interview with the researcher, at a time and place to be mutually negotiated. YES / NO

I am happy for the interview to be audio recorded. YES / NO

I am willing to attend a focus group meeting with other teachers, lasting up to two hours. YES / NO

I give permission for the researcher to make written observations of activities I may be involved in at the centre YES / NO

I give permission for the researcher to take video footage which may include me, as I go about my usual daily activities in the centre YES / NO

I understand that I can withdraw consent for my participation in the research at any stage, including consent to use any or all of the information I provide.

I understand that all information obtained during the research will be treated as confidential, and that no findings that could identify myself or the centre will be published. I agree that the researcher may publish any results where the anonymity of myself and the centre is maintained.

Name

Designation

Signature

Date

Appendix I

Parent information letter and consent form

[University of Canterbury letterhead]

Greetings

My name is Sandy Radford. I have been involved in early childhood education for many years as a teacher and a teacher educator, and now I am studying for my PhD at the University of Canterbury. I am researching how (if at all) the organisational culture of early childhood centres influences children's experiences. I am particularly wanting to uncover and learn from stories of success, and ultimately to share these with other centres to make a difference for all young children who spend time in early childhood centres.

As part of my research I intend to be in your child's centre for between 7 and 10 days, spread out over a few weeks, observing what happens as children and adults go about their usual day. I am asking for your permission to include your child in any written observations I may make. Your child will not be named or any identifying information provided in anything I write as a result of these observations, and I will take care to ensure that no-one else has access to the observations I make.

It may be that I may want to use a video camera for short periods of time to video adults and children going about their normal activities during the centre day. I would like to ask your permission for this, on behalf of your child. I will let everyone know before the day I do this, so that if you have any specific concerns you can raise them with me before I do any filming. If your child tells me or shows me that they don't want to be videoed (for example, by deliberately turning their back to the camera), I will respect this and stop filming them. I will be the only person viewing the recordings, and I will take great care with any footage obtained to ensure no-one else has access to it. It will be destroyed once my research is complete.

Another part of my research is a group session with the children, where I talk with them about the centre and their experiences in it. This session would occur at the centre, and would take no more than 20 minutes. Children will be able to choose whether or not to take part in this session and will be free to leave it at any point. We will make a collage of our discussion for display.

Finally, I would also like to invite you (along with the other centre parents) to a focus group interview, to be held at the centre. The purpose of this meeting will be to share ideas and discuss with others, aspects of the organisation of the early childhood centre and how this influences a child's experiences. Everyone who comes will receive a copy of the ideas that arose, but no other record of the meeting will be made. Details about when and where this meeting will take place will follow.

This research has been considered and approved by the University of Canterbury Human Ethics Committee. If you have any questions about this research, you can talk to me or contact me via phone (021xxx xxxxx) or email (sandyradford@xxx). Alternatively you can contact my supervisors, Associate Professor Alison Gilmore (phone xxx xxxx) and Dr Alex Gunn (phone xxx xxxx). Please keep this information sheet for your future reference.

Attached is a consent form for you to fill out and return to me via the centre, if you are happy for your child to be involved in the research as outlined in this letter. At the end of the research, I will provide the centre with a summary of results.

Thank you for considering my request. With your support, I am aiming to make a positive difference for young children.

Kind regards

Sandy Radford
Phone: 021 xxx xxxx
Email: sandyradford@xxx

Parent/caregiver consent form

I have read and understood the parent/caregiver information sheet given to me about the research project by Sandy Radford, investigating how the organisational culture of early childhood centres influences children's experiences. On the basis of this information:

I give permission for the researcher to make written observations of activities my child is part of. YES / NO

I give permission for the researcher to take video recordings of my child as they go about their normal activities at the centre.

YES / NO

I give permission for my child to be part of a group session, if my child is willing. YES / NO.

I am interested in attending the focus group meeting for parents (date and time to be advised) YES / NO

I understand that I can withdraw consent for my child to be involved at any stage of the research, and that this includes withdrawal of any information gathered that includes my child.

I agree that the researcher may publish any results where the anonymity of my child, myself and the centre is maintained.

Name

Date

Signature

Child's name

Appendix J

Parent participants' interview information and consent form

[University of Canterbury letterhead]

Greetings

As you will know, I am currently undertaking research in your child's early childhood centre for my PhD through the University of Canterbury. I am researching how (if at all) the organisational culture of early childhood centres influences children's experiences. I am particularly wanting to uncover and learn from stories of success, and ultimately to share these with other centres to make a difference for all young children who spend time in early childhood centres.

An important part of my research is gaining the views of some of the centre children and their parents, in relation to my topic. You and your child have been nominated as participants. In addition to the general observations (as explained in the information sheet you have already received), it would involve an individual interview of about 45 minutes with you, and attendance at a focus group interview with other parents for up to two hours. The individual interview will occur at a time and place mutually agreed upon; the focus group interview will take place at the centre. In the weeks following the interview, you may have some further ideas and insights into the research topic; I would like to invite you to write these down and share them with me, either as they are written or in a further face to face discussion.

I would like to interview your child during a usual session at the centre, either alone or with a friend (as your child prefers), for up to 20 minutes. To help me remember you and your child's ideas, I would like your permission to audiotape the individual interviews. Your child will also be invited to take part in a group discussion (up to 30 minutes) with other children; s/he can choose whether or not to take part, and will be able to leave at any point.

I am asking for your consent, both for yourself and on behalf of your child. Neither you nor your child will be named or any identifying information provided in anything I write as a result of these interviews, and I will take care to ensure that no-one else has access to the recordings. You will be welcome to check your own recording and the transcription of this. You can also withdraw your consent at any stage, including consent for me to use any or all of the information you have provided.

If you have any questions about participating in this research at this extra depth, you can talk to me or contact me via phone (021 xxx xxxx) or email (sandyradford@xxx). Alternatively you can contact my supervisors, Associate Professor Alison Gilmore (phone xxx xxxx) and Dr Alex Gunn (phone xxx xxxx). Please keep this information sheet for your future reference.

Attached is a consent form for you to fill out and return to me via the centre, if you are happy for yourself and your child to be interviewed as outlined in this letter. On gaining your approval, I will also talk with your child and seek their consent as well before proceeding.

Thank you for considering my request. With your support, I am aiming to make a positive difference for young children.

Kind regards

Sandy Radford
Phone: 021 xxx xxxx
Email: sandyradford@xxx

Parent participants' interview consent form

I have read and understood the parent participant information sheet about the research project by Sandy Radford, investigating how the organisational culture of early childhood centres influences children's experiences. On the basis of this information:

I agree to an interview with the researcher, at a time and place to be mutually negotiated.

I am happy for the interview to be audio recorded.

I am willing to attend a focus group meeting with other parents, lasting up to two hours.

I understand that I can check the audiotape of my interview, and can withdraw consent for the use of any or all of the information I provide.

I give permission for my child _____ to be interviewed, and to take part in a group interview with other children. I understand that s/he is free to leave these interviews at any point, and that his/her consent will also be sought before the researcher proceeds with the interviews.

I understand that I can withdraw consent for my child to be interviewed, and also to withdraw consent for the use of any or all of the information provided by my child.

I understand that all information obtained during these interviews will be treated as confidential, and that no findings that could identify myself or my child will be published. I agree that the researcher may publish any results where the anonymity of myself and my child is maintained.

Name

Date

Signature

Child's name

Appendix K

Other staff member (cook) information letter and consent form

[University of Canterbury letterhead]

Greetings

My name is Sandy Radford, and I am studying for my PhD at the University of Canterbury. I am researching how (if at all) the organisational culture of early childhood centres influences children's experiences. I am particularly wanting to uncover and learn from stories of success, and ultimately to share these with other centres to make a difference for all young children who spend time in early childhood centres.

[Centre name] has been chosen as the focus centre for my research. As you are working in the centre, your views are important to me, and I would like to interview you to find out your ideas around my topic. The interview would last up to 45 minutes, at a time and place suiting us both. To help me remember your ideas, I would like your permission to audiorecord the interviews. You will not be named or any identifying information provided in anything I write as a result of these interviews, and I will take care to ensure that no-one else has access to the recording. You will be welcome to check your own recording and the transcription of this. You can withdraw your consent at any stage, including consent for me to use any or all of the information you have provided.

It may be that after the interview you think of some further ideas you would like to add. It would be great if you could write these thoughts down and share them with me, either as you have written them or in a further conversation (whichever you prefer).

A further aspect of my research will be direct observations. I am intending to be in the centre for between 7 and 10 days, spread out over a few weeks, observing what happens as children and adults go about their usual day. I am asking for your permission to include you in any written observations I may make. You will not be named or any identifying information provided in anything I write as a result of these observations, and I will take care to ensure that no-one else has access to the observations I make.

It may also be that I wish to use a video camera for short periods of time to video adults and children going about their usual day. This may also include use of a video camera for short periods of time, to video children at various points throughout their day. I am asking your permission to include you in any observations I may make. You will not be named or any identifying information provided in anything I write as a result of these observations, and I will take care to ensure that no-one else has access to the notes I make. I will be the only person viewing the recordings, I will take great care to ensure there is no unauthorised access possible, and I will destroy it once my research is complete.

This research has been considered and approved by the University of Canterbury Human Ethics Committee. If you have any questions about this research, you can talk to me or contact me via phone (021 xxx xxxx) or email (sandyradford@xxx). Alternatively you can contact my supervisors, Associate Professor Alison Gilmore (phone xxx xxxx) and Dr Alex Gunn (phone xxx xxxx). Please keep this information sheet for your future reference.

Below is a consent form for you to fill out and return to me via the centre, if you are happy to be involved in each aspect of the research as outlined in this letter. At the end of the research, I will provide the centre with a summary of results. The second copy of this letter is for you to keep.

Thank you for considering my request. With your support, I am aiming to make a positive difference for young children.

Kind regards

Sandy Radford
Phone: 027 xxx xxxx
Email: sandyradford@xxx

Consent form

I have read and understood the information letter about the research project by Sandy Radford, investigating how the organisational culture of early childhood centres influences children's experiences. On the basis of this information:

I agree to an interview with the researcher, at a time and place to be mutually negotiated. YES / NO

I am happy for the interview to be audio recorded. YES / NO

I give permission for the researcher to make written observations of activities I may be involved in at the centre YES / NO

I give permission for the researcher to take video footage which may include me, as I go about my usual daily activities in the centre YES / NO

I understand that I can withdraw consent for my participation in the research at any stage, including consent to use any or all of the information I provide.

I understand that all information obtained during the research will be treated as confidential, and that no findings that could identify myself or the centre will be published. I agree that the researcher may publish any results where the anonymity of myself and the centre is maintained.

Name

Date

Signature

Appendix L

Child assent form for children interviewed

Sandy has explained she wants to ask me some questions about the centre and what I like to do here.

I am happy to talk to her about this some time when it suits us both.

It's okay if I choose to have a friend with me when we talk.

It's okay for me to choose not to talk with her too.

Sandy will use the voice recorder to record what I say, so she can remember it better. She won't tell anyone else what I said or let them listen to the recording, but I can listen to it at the centre. I can tell her I don't want her to use what I said, and that's okay.

I might think of something else I want to tell her later on after our talk. I can tell her when I see her at the centre, and she can write it down and read it back to me.

Sandy also wants to talk to a group of children together, and she'll ask me if I want to join in. I can say yes or no, either is okay. If I join in, I can leave when I've had enough.

I know Sandy might want to tell other people some of the things we talk about. If she does this, she won't tell them who I am or what my centre is.

Here is my mark to show I understand and agree with this.



Appendix M

Focus group activity for teachers

Design a 30 second script with visuals for a TV ad about this centre. Remember, there are a lot of other early childhood centres out there, so you need to get across what makes this place different.

Appendix N

Enacted norms

<i>Norms identified from observations: Routines and resources</i>
1. Teachers set in motion, and conclude, daily routines.
2. Once a daily routine has been set in motion, adults provide both flexibility and limits around children's participation in it.
3. Children's access to parts of the centre is limited at various times.
4. Children must not be outside without a teacher.
5. Adults decide how much clothing children are to wear.
6. Adults decide where large furniture and equipment is positioned.
7. Adults position resources, which may or may not be within children's reach.
8. Children may use and move child-sized chairs.
9. Centre resources generally stay in designated areas.
10. Centre resources stay at the centre.
11. Playdough should not be eaten.
12. Generally, children can choose whether to join an adult-led group.
13. Once a child is in a group (including group time), they should participate in a manner appropriate to the group.
14. Everyone should walk inside; running is for outside.
15. Everyone should be quiet inside, particularly at the kai table and after lunch.
16. Being noisy is okay outside.
17. There are routine tidying times, during which children should help tidy.
18. Children should tidy an area they have been using, particularly before leaving the area .
<i>Norms identified from observations: Food and eating</i>
19. All children must come to the kai table at lunch; adults must ensure this happens.
20. Whenever groups of children are eating there is an adult there or close by, supervising.
21. Children's eating should take place sitting at the kai table.
22. The kai table is only to be used for kai.
23. There is a recognized "teacher's place" at the kai table.
24. Preparing food is for adults.
25. There is a maximum number of children allowed to eat at the kai table at any one time.
26. Children should stay sitting at the kai table until they have finished eating.
27. Younger children eat first at lunchtime.
28. Children generally do the physical selection and serving of their food.
29. Adults influence what children select to eat.
30. Adults influence how much children eat.
31. Once a portion of food has been assigned to a child, the child should attempt to eat it.
32. There are set times within which children's eating should take place.
33. Adults should ensure there is enough food for all children.
34. Centre food may be eaten by adults as well as children.
35. Children should wash their hands before eating.
36. If provided, tongs should be used to serve food.
37. Food utensils that have been on the floor should be picked up.
38. Little children should wash their faces after eating lunch.
39. Use one space only at the kai table; that same space becomes "yours" until you've finished eating.
40. At snack times, fruit is to be eaten first.
41. Sit with legs in at the kai table.
42. Chairs should be pushed in at the kai table.
43. Children shouldn't put too much food in their mouth at once.

44. Children shouldn't show food that's in their mouth.
45. Feet should not be put on the kai table.
46. People should put their elbows in when eating.
47. Children shouldn't laugh with their mouth full of food.
<i>Norms identified from observations: Relating to others</i>
48. Adults may interrupt children's activity to ask them to do something else.
49. Teachers should give a reason when asking a child to do, or stop doing, something.
50. Adults may refuse a child's request if this is will uphold centre norms; reasons for refusal should link to the centre norm.
51. If a child is seen by an adult doing something not approved of, adults should first respond by speaking to them.
52. Adults may use physical actions as well as words to influence what children do.
53. When being spoken to by an adult about behaviour not approved of, children typically respond with compliance and silence
54. Adults may link child compliance directly with being "good".
55. Children may turn or move away as a way to avoid actual and potential bother.
56. If children want something, they should ask verbally for it.
57. Children may protest adult requests of them.
58. Children are selective in which adult they make requests of.
59. Where it's likely an adult is unknowing, children choose their narrative.
60. When children need help, adults provide it, rather than other children.
61. Children should talk to other children if they want them to do - or stop doing - something.
62. Children should talk to try to solve problems between them.
63. If talking isn't working, children should ask adults for help in dealing with problems between them.
64. People should listen.
65. In dealing with conflict between children, adults emphasise talking, not listening.
66. Children sometimes use physical means when dealing with problems between them.
67. Children should not take things off other children.
68. Adults may take things off children.
69. Teachers should not allow children's expressions of emotion to become too intense.
70. Crying (even tearlessly) usually attracts adult attention and help.
71. Attending to crying children is adult - and not child - business.
72. Children don't show concern for teachers.
73. Teachers may refer to children as friends with each other, including in contexts where actions seem unfriendly.
74. Actions and words should be gentle and non-hurtful, physically and emotionally.
75. Saying "excuse me" matters.
76. Sometimes, children have to wait.
77. Children's personal belongings should be kept in their lockers.
78. Some items are acknowledged as personally owned and as such are not required to be shared by or with children.
79. Children may publically invoke, defend, and protest, some centre norms apparently for their own sake.
80. Adults articulate some centre norms to children, and not others.
81. Sometimes, children may help teachers.
82. Children protect and protest their physical possession of objects.
83. Children's individual place and space may be actively protected.
84. Sometimes, teachers' obligations to other teachers/adults trumps children's immediate wants.
85. Parents' wishes may trump centre norms.
86. Teachers may be flexible in enforcing some norms, according to particular contexts.

<i>Norms arising from interviews and documentation, for which there is evidence in observations</i>
87. Teachers should make time to talk with parents daily on arrival and/or pickup.
88. Teachers and parents use a variety of methods to communicate with each other.
89. Parent concerns about any aspect of their child's experience at the centre are taken seriously and acted on.
90. Adults treat children respectfully.
91. Relationships throughout the centre should be respectful.
92. Food provided at the centre is nutritionally healthy.
93. Children's individual diets can be catered for at a parent's request.
94. The centre is a smoke-free and alcohol-free environment.
95. The children's spaces are cell-phone free.
96. Children should wear shoes outside.
97. Equipment and resources should not be put over the fence.
98. Adults have different expectations of children according to their age.
99. Big children should help little children.
100. Big children ask adults for help rather than other children.
101. Teachers share professional knowledge with parents.
102. Attention is paid to the safety of children and adults in the centre environment.
103. Teachers use reflection and self-review as a way to improve their practice.
104. Centre equipment and resources are for children's temporary use and are to be shared.

Appendix O

Enacted norms visible in spoken or written language

<i>Routines and resources</i>		
Norm	Verbally explicit?	Documented?
1. Teachers set in motion, and conclude, daily routines	Yes	Teachers' job description
2. Once a daily routine has been set in motion, adults provide both flexibility and limits around children's participation in it	Yes	Sleeping policy, Operations Manual philosophy statement, Assistant Manager job description, introductory letter for new parents
3. Children's access to parts of the centre is limited at various times	Yes	No
4. Children must not be outside without a teacher	Yes	No
5. Adults decide how much clothing children are to wear	Yes	No
7. Adults position resources, which may or may not be within children's reach.	Yes	No
8. Children may use and move child-sized chairs	Yes	No
9. Centre resources generally stay in designated areas	Yes	Teachers' job description
10. Centre resources stay at the centre	Yes	No
11. Playdough should not be eaten	Yes	No
12. Generally, children can choose whether to join an adult-led group.	Yes	No
13. Once a child is in a group (including group time), they should participate in a manner appropriate to the group	Yes	No
14. Everyone should walk inside; running is for outside.	Yes	Keeping Safe booklet for children
15. Everyone should be quiet inside, particularly at the kai table and after lunch	Yes	Keeping Safe booklet for children
16. Being noisy is okay outside	Yes	No
17. There are routine tidying times, during which children should help tidy	Yes	No
18. Children should tidy an area they have been using, particularly before leaving the area	Yes	Keeping Safe booklet for children

<i>Food and eating</i>		
Norm	Verbally explicit?	Documented?
19. All children must come to the kai table at lunch; adults must ensure this happens	Yes	Self-review documentation
20. Whenever groups of children are eating there is an adult there or close by, supervising	Yes	No
21. Children's eating should take place sitting at the kai table	Yes	No
22. The kai table is only to be used for kai	Yes	No
23. There is a recognized "teacher's place" at the kai table	Yes	No
24. Preparing food is for adults	Yes	No

Norm	Verbally explicit?	Documented?
25. There is a maximum number of children allowed to eat at the kai table at any one time	Yes	No
26. Children should stay sitting at the kai table until they have finished eating	Yes	Daily Routine info for parents
27. Younger children eat first at lunch time	Yes	Daily Routine info for parents
28. Children generally do the physical selection and serving of their food	Yes	Healthy food policy, self-review documentation, Daily Routine info for parents, programming documentation
29. Adults influence what children select to eat	Yes	Programming documentation
30. Adults influence how much children eat	Yes	No
31. Once a portion of food has been assigned to a child, the child should attempt to eat it	Yes	No
32. There are set times within which children's eating should take place	Yes	Daily Routine info for parents
33. Adults should ensure there is enough food for all children	Yes	Self-review
35. Children should wash their hands before eating	Yes	Healthy food policy, Keeping Safe booklet for children
36. If provided, tongs should be used to serve food	No	Healthy food policy
37. Food utensils that have been on the floor should be picked up	Yes	No
38. Little children should wash their faces after eating lunch	Yes	No
39. Use one space only at the kai table; that same space becomes "yours" until you've finished eating	Yes	No
40. At snack times, fruit is to be eaten first	Yes	No
41. Sit with legs in at the kai table	Yes	No
42. Chairs should be pushed in at the kai table	Yes	No
43. Children shouldn't put too much food in their mouth at once	Yes	No
44. Children shouldn't show food that's in their mouth	Yes	No
45. Feet should not be put on the kai table	Yes	No
46. People should put their elbows in when eating	Yes	No
47. Children shouldn't laugh with their mouth full of food	Yes	No

<i>Relating to others</i>		
Norm	Verbally explicit?	Documented?
48. Adults may interrupt children's activity to ask them to do something else	Yes	No
49. Teachers should give a reason when asking a child to do, or stop doing, something	Yes	Behaviour guidance policy
50. Adults may refuse a child's request if this is will uphold centre norms; reasons for refusal should link to the centre norm.	Yes	No
51. If a child is seen by an adult doing something not approved of, adults should first respond by speaking to them	Yes	Behaviour guidance policy
52. Adults may use physical actions as well as words to influence what children do	Yes	Behaviour guidance policy
56. If children want something, they should ask verbally for it	Yes	No
57. Children may protest adult requests of them	Yes	No

60. When children need help, adults provide it, rather than other children.	Yes	No
Norm	Verbally explicit?	Documented?
61. Children should talk to other children if they want them to do - or stop doing - something	Yes	No
62. Children should talk to try to solve problems between them.	Yes	No
63. If talking isn't working, children should ask adults for help in dealing with problems between them	Yes	Teachers' and manager job description
64. People should listen	Yes	Keeping Safe booklet for children, programming documentation, manager appraisal
65. In dealing with conflict between children, adults emphasise talking, not listening	Yes	No
66. Children sometimes use physical means when dealing with problems between them	Yes	No
67. Children should not take things off other children	Yes	No
68. Adults may take things off children	Yes	Behaviour guidance policy, transitioning policy
71. Attending to crying children is adult - and not child - business	No	Teachers' and managers' job descriptions
73. Teachers may refer to children as friends with each other, including in contexts where actions seem unfriendly	Yes	No
74. Actions and words should be gentle and non-hurtful, physically and emotionally	Yes	Aggressive play policy, behaviour guidance policy, Operations Manual examples of teacher serious misconduct, teachers' job description, new staff introduction letter, Keeping Safe booklet for children, centre philosophy statement
76. Sometimes, children have to wait	Yes	Programming documentation
77. Children's personal belongings should be kept in their lockers	Yes	Parent induction policy, Keeping Safe booklet for children, programming documentation
78. Some items are acknowledged as personally owned and as such are not required to be shared by or with children	Yes	Settling in policy, sleeping policy, transitioning policy
80. Adults explain some centre norms to children, and not others	Yes	No
81. Sometimes, children may help teachers	Yes	No
82. Children protect and protest their physical possession of objects	Yes	No
83. Children's individual place and space may be actively protected	Yes	No
84. Sometimes, teachers' obligations to other teachers/adults trumps children's immediate wants	Yes	No
85. Parents' wishes may trump centre norms	Yes	No
86. Teachers may be flexible in enforcing some norms, according to particular contexts	Yes	Special needs policy

<i>Norms arising from interviews/documentation</i>		
Norm	Verbally explicit?	Documented?
87. Teachers should make time to talk with parents daily on arrival and/or pickup	Yes	Collaboration with parents policy, teachers' job description, parent stionnaire
88. Teachers and parents use a variety of methods to communicate with each other	Yes	Caring for the environment policy, collaboration with parents policy, programme assessment and evaluation policy, self review policy, settling in policy, Assistant manager / manager job descriptions
89. Parent concerns about any aspect of their child's experience at the centre are taken seriously and acted on	Yes	Biting policy, child protection policy, complaints policy, annual parent questionnaire, Assistant manager / manager job descriptions
90. Adults treat children respectfully	Yes	Behaviour guidance policy, student teacher policy, chain-wide philosophy statement
91. Relationships throughout the centre should be respectful	Yes	Pets policy, student teacher policy, Operations Manual examples of types of serious misconduct, annual parent questionnaire, manager appraisal, self-review documentation, centre philosophy statement, introductory letter for new parents
92. Food provided at the centre is nutritionally healthy	Yes	Health and safety policy, healthy food policy
93. Children's individual diets can be catered for at a parent's request	Yes	Healthy food policy, annual parent questionnaire
94. The centre is a smoke-free and alcohol-free environment	No	Smoke-free policy, Operations Manual examples of serious misconduct
95. The children's spaces are cell-phone free	Yes	No
96. Children should wear shoes outside	Yes	No
97. Equipment and resources should not be put over the fence	Yes	No
98. Adults have different expectations of children according to their age	Yes	Behaviour guidance policy procedures
99. Big children should help little children	Yes	No
101. Teachers share professional knowledge with parents	Yes	Biting policy, programme assessment and evaluation policy, annual parent questionnaire
102. Attention is paid to the safety of children and adults in the centre environment	Yes	Aggressive play policy, biting policy, child health policy, child protection policy, emergency procedures policy, excursions policy, health and safety policy, poisonous plants policy, settling in policy, sleeping policy, sunsmart policy, Operations Manual examples of misconduct, teachers' and managers' job descriptions, annual parent questionnaire, introductory letter for new parents
103. Teachers use reflection and self-review as a way to improve their practice	Yes	Professional development policy, programme assessment and evaluation policy, self review policy, teacher appraisal documentation, centre culture document
104. Centre equipment and resources are for the children's temporary use and are to be shared	Yes	No

Appendix P

Visible norms for which there were justifications available

Direct justifications	Inferred from documentation
2. Once a daily routine has been set in motion, adults provide both flexibility and limits around children's participation in it	
3. Children's access to parts of the centre is limited at various times	
5. Adults decide how much clothing children are to wear	
7. Adults position resources, which may or may not be within children's reach.	
8. Children may use and move child-sized chairs	
10. Centre resources stay at the centre	
11. Playdough should not be eaten	
12. Generally, children can choose whether to join an adult-led group.	
13. Once a child is in a group (including group time), they should participate in a manner appropriate to the group	
14. Everyone should walk inside; running is for outside.	
15. Everyone should be quiet inside, particularly at the kai table and after lunch	
18. Children should tidy an area they have been using, particularly before leaving the area	
28. Children generally do the physical selection and serving of their food	
	29. Adults influence what children select to eat
32. There are set times within which children's eating should take place	
33. Adults should ensure there is enough food for all children	
35. Children should wash their hands before eating	
36. If provided, tongs should be used to serve food	
	37. Food utensils that have been on the floor should be picked up
43. Children shouldn't put too much food in their mouth at once	
46. People should put their elbows in when eating	
	49. Teachers should give a reason when asking a child to do, or stop doing, something
51. If a child is seen by an adult doing something not approved of, adults should first respond by speaking to them	

61. Children should talk to other children if they want them to do - or stop doing – something	
62. Children should talk to try to solve problems between them.	
63. If talking isn't working, children should ask adults for help in dealing with problems between them	
64. People should listen	
	67. Children should not take things off other children
68. Adults may take things off children	
71. Attending to crying children is adult - and not child – business	
74. Actions and words should be gentle and non-hurtful, physically and emotionally	
77. Children's personal belongings should be kept in their lockers	
81. Sometimes, children may help teachers	
	85. Parents' wishes may trump centre norms
87. Teachers should make time to talk with parents daily on arrival and/or pickup	
88. Teachers and parents use a variety of methods to communicate with each other	
	89. Parent concerns about any aspect of their child's experience at the centre are taken seriously and acted on
90. Adults treat children respectfully	
91. Relationships throughout the centre should be respectful	
92. Food provided at the centre is nutritionally healthy	
93. Children's individual diets can be catered for at a parent's request	
94. The centre is a smoke-free and alcohol-free environment	
	98. Adults have different expectations of children according to their age
99. Big children should help little children	
102. Attention is paid to the safety of children and adults in the centre environment	
103. Teachers use reflection and self-review as a way to improve their practice	
104. Centre equipment and resources are for children's temporary use and are to be shared	

Appendix Q

Visible norms for which I could find no espoused justification

1	Teachers set in motion, and conclude, daily routines
4	Children must not be outside without a teacher
9	Centre resources generally stay in designated areas
16	Being noisy is okay outside
17	There are routine tidying times, during which children should help tidy
19	All children must come to the kai table at lunch; adults must ensure this happens
20	Whenever groups of children are eating there is an adult there or close by, supervising
21	Children's eating should take place sitting at the kai table
22	The kai table is only to be used for kai
23	There is a recognized "teacher's place" at the kai table
24	Preparing food is for adults
25	There is a maximum number of children allowed to eat at the kai table at any one time
26	Children should stay sitting at the kai table until they have finished eating
27	Younger children eat first at lunch time
30	Adults influence how much children eat
31	Once a portion of food has been assigned to a child, the child should attempt to eat it
38	Little children should wash their faces after eating lunch
39	Use one space only at the kai table; that same space becomes "yours" until you've finished eating
40	At snack times, fruit is to be eaten first
41	Sit with legs in at the kai table
42	Chairs are to be pushed in at the kai table
44	Children shouldn't show food that's in their mouth
45	Feet should not be put on the kai table
47	Children shouldn't laugh with their mouth full of food
48	Adults may interrupt children's activity to ask them to do something else
50	Adults may refuse a child's request if this is will uphold centre norms; reasons for refusal should link to the centre norm.
52	Adults may use physical actions as well as words to influence what children do
56	If children want something, they should ask verbally for it
57	Children may protest adult requests of them
60	When children need help, adults provide it, rather than other children.
65	In dealing with conflict between children, adults emphasise talking, not listening
66	Children sometimes use physical means when dealing with problems between them
73	Teachers may refer to children as friends with each other, including in contexts where actions seem unfriendly
76	Sometimes, children have to wait
78	Some items are acknowledged as personally owned and as such are not required to be shared by or with children
80	Adults explain some centre norms to children, and not others
82	Children protect and protest their physical possession of objects
83	Children's individual place and space may be actively protected
84	Sometimes, teachers' obligations to other teachers/adults trumps children's immediate wants
86	Teachers may be flexible in enforcing norms, according to particular contexts
95	The children's spaces are cell-phone free
96	Children should wear shoes outside
97	Equipment and resources should not be put over the fence
101	Teachers share professional knowledge with parents