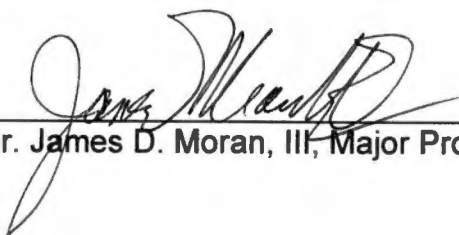
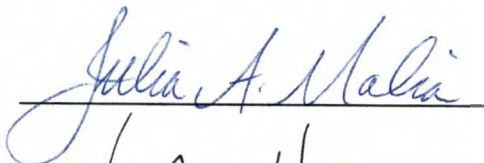


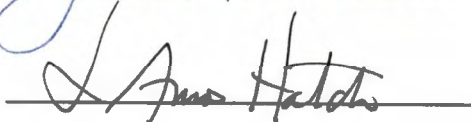
To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Eliza Labouisse Dean entitled, "When they start doing things like that, they are ready to go: What the infant's transition from the infant classroom to the toddler classroom means to teachers." I have examined the final copy of this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, with a major in Human Ecology.


Dr. James D. Moran, III, Major Professor

We have read this dissertation
and recommend its acceptance:







Accepted for the council:


Associate Vice Chancellor and
Dean of The Graduate School

**"WHEN THEY START DOING THINGS LIKE THAT, THEY ARE READY TO
GO": WHAT THE INFANT'S TRANSITION FROM THE INFANT CLASSROOM
TO THE TODDLER CLASSROOM MEANS TO TEACHERS**

A Dissertation

Presented for the

Doctor of Philosophy

Degree

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Eliza Labouisse Dean

August 2000

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First, I would like to thank the six teachers who let me come into their classrooms and be with them. Candace especially went out of her way to help me. Without them, of course, I would not have a study.

I would like to thank my Dissertation Committee, Jim Moran, Amos Hatch, Julia Malia, and Melissa Groves for their support and encouragement. I feel especially thankful to Amos Hatch for introducing me to qualitative research and for always encouraging me to improve the quality of my work.

I would also like to thank the Phenomenology Research Group, led by Sandra Thomas and Howard Pollio, for including me in their group. One group member said this group was his favorite part of graduate school, and I now agree with him. Each week when I left this group, I felt energized and excited about my study. I appreciate the way we had animated discussions about the infant and toddler teachers.

Finally, I would like to thank my family and friends, especially Miss Isabel Schaad, Chuck Jones, and Joel Keebler.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to better understand the transition from an infant classroom to a toddler classroom from the perspective of the childcare teachers. How they constructed meaning of the transition was the focus of this study. Using participant observation and interviewing as methods, the words and actions of six teachers in a childcare center were captured. Five to six hours per week for a total of six months were spent in an infant classroom and a toddler classroom. From field notes and interview transcripts, four themes were developed: (a) Teachers played both a mother and an educator role with the infants before and after the transitions. (b) Some of the teachers became connected to and later disconnected from the infants. (c) After the transitions, some teachers felt they were losing the infants. However, these same teachers also thought the infants were ready to move to the toddler room. (d) The teachers felt powerlessness because they did not make the decisions about the transition process. The teachers who played a mother role were the ones who formed connections and who experienced loss as a result of the transition. The findings from this study can help educators restructure childcare programs. The data suggest that they may want to keep the same teachers and children together for longer periods of time.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Imagine this scene in the infant classroom of the Live Oak Child Development Center.¹ These field notes were taken during this study.

The large, open, and spacious classroom has many windows and Winnie-the-Pooh decorations. On one side of the classroom, Jerome², an eleven-month old infant, is walking toward his teacher Candace. He learned to walk a few days ago. Candace is kneeling on the floor, waiting for him to crash into her. On the other side of the room, Lila, a ten-month old infant girl, stands in the book corner, waving her arms up and down and saying, "Ball, ball, ball." She waits for Lena, another teacher, to roll a red rubber ball back to her. They have been playing this game for twenty minutes. Lena says, "Lila, you have learned a new word. Ball, that's right. Ball. Ball. I am so proud of you."

The classroom door opens, and the director comes in. "Candace," she says. "Jerome will move next Monday to the toddler room. I sent a letter to his parents today, o.k. Is everything o.k.?" "Yes," Candace said. Then the director turns and leaves the room.

At this moment, how does Candace feel, and what thoughts are going through her head? She has been with Jerome for almost a year, and now he will move to a new classroom with a new teacher because it is time for his transition to the toddler room. Is Candace sad? Angry? Relieved? Does she feel nothing? Does she want Jerome to go or stay? How will she feel when Lila makes her transition, and how will the other teacher, Lena, feel? This study will explore the transition from the infant classroom to the toddler classroom from the perspective

¹ The names of places have been changed to protect the privacy of the participants in this study.

² The names of children and teachers have been replaced with pseudonyms.

of the teachers. Chapter One will state the purpose of this study, identify research questions, discuss a theoretical perspective, and present a statement of research bias related to the study.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to better understand the experiences of childcare teachers when infants make a transition from an infant classroom to a toddler classroom. The childcare teachers in this study were teachers of infants and toddlers in one childcare center.³ The infant teachers cared for the infants in one classroom, and the toddler teachers cared for the toddlers in another classroom. The infant and toddler classrooms were part of a larger childcare center that served children from six weeks of age to school-aged children in an after-school program. The toddler classroom was approximately thirty feet down the hall from the infant classroom. Usually, shortly after an infant celebrated his first birthday, he began the transition into the toddler classroom. In this study, the "transition" was defined as the permanent move the child made from the infant classroom to the toddler classroom. Usually, this move was gradual. First the infant started visiting in the toddler classroom for short periods of time but then returned to the infant classroom. After several visits, a date was set for the child to begin attending the toddler classroom full time. How did the teachers

³ All of the childcare teachers in this study were women. Therefore, I will refer to childcare teachers as "she" throughout the paper. For the children I will use both "he" and "she" as appropriate.

make sense of this experience? What was the meaning of the transition for them? What did it mean to the teachers when the children left their care for another teacher's care? These are the critical questions addressed in this study.

Every childcare center has its own policy for determining when and how a child is supposed to move from one classroom to another. In some programs, infants move to a new classroom when they are six months old; in other programs, children stay with the same teacher for five years. The interest of this study, however, was a center in which infants moved to a toddler classroom most typically around the time when the infant was 12 months old. The children not only changed classrooms but also had new teachers, a model that is typical within many childcare centers.

Few studies have examined the meaning of this transition to the teacher, although many studies have shown the teacher to be an important figure to a child. For example, Howes, Matheson, and Hamilton (1994) found that for infants in non-familial care their attachment to the teacher was a stronger predictor of future peer competence than was their attachment to the mother. In an earlier study, Howes (1990) compared infants enrolled in childcare before age one to children enrolled after age one. For infants enrolled before age one, "teacher socialization" was a stronger predictor for social competence than was "family socialization." Just the reverse was true for infants enrolled after age one. Teacher socialization was a measure of the teacher's involvement with the child and a measure of the teacher's investment in the child at school. Family

socialization was a measure of the parents' involvement with and investment in the child at home and in a research setting.

This study used participant observation and interviews with teachers to capture teachers' experiences during the time of transition. The descriptions generated from the study should be useful to educators and parents as they make decisions concerning transitions. The descriptions will also allow the reader to have a deeper understanding of what a teacher does on a daily basis and what those experiences mean to her.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

- #1: What role did the teacher play in the life of an infant or toddler?
- #2: What was the nature of the relationship between the teacher and an infant?
- #3: How did the teacher and an infant end a relationship together?
- #4: How did the teacher and a toddler begin a relationship together?
- #5: What was the nature of the relationship between the teacher and a toddler?
- #6: What kinds of experiences did the teacher and an infant have during the transition?
- #7: What kinds of experiences did the teacher and a toddler have during the transition?

#8: How did the teacher prepare for the transition?

#9: How did the teacher experience the transition?

#10: What was the meaning of the transition for the teacher?

Theoretical Perspective

Blumer's (1969) theory of symbolic interactionism informed this study, as it provided a framework to better understand the meanings that teachers had of infants and toddlers during the times of transition. Blumer (1969, p. 2) stated three premises that capture the essence of this theory:

1. "Human beings act toward things on the basis of the meanings that the things have for them." "Things" can refer to people, places, objects, and events. It is important that we know the meanings because meanings drive our actions and tell us what to do. For example, when a teacher and an infant interact, they each have a meaning of themselves and of the other, and they use their meanings to decide their next course of action. A teacher may believe that an infant is content playing alone.
2. "The meaning of such things is derived from or arises out of, the social interaction that one has with one's fellows." This premise tells us that our meanings are generated in our social interactions as we define ourselves and others based on how we interact with other social beings. For example, the meaning a teacher has of an infant comes from her social interactions with that infant. After spending many weeks together in the

infant classroom, a teacher has come to believe that an infant is independent and enjoys spending time alone.

3. "These meanings are handled in, and modified through, an interpretive process used by the person in dealing with the things he encounters."

This premise suggests that there is an interpretive process two people go through when establishing or forming these meanings. First, a person has a conversation, which is a kind of social interaction, with himself or herself about the meaning of a "thing" (a person, place, object, or event). Then, the person may or may not share this meaning with the other he or she is currently engaged with. Regardless of whether these persons share it or not, the meaning they have defined for themselves determines their next course of action in the social interaction. For example, a teacher interacting with an infant may tell herself that this infant is content playing alone and therefore wants to be left alone at the moment. Her meaning of the infant is that the infant is content on his or her own. The teacher then uses this meaning to decide her next course of action, which is to walk away from this child.

In summary, Blumer suggested that when two people interact, they actively interpret what the other person is doing. First, they have a conversation with themselves, through this they construct a meaning of the person, object, place, or event, and then they interpret this meaning to themselves and to those around them. They use this interpretation to make the next move in the

interaction. Their interpretation is a meaning that belongs to them. People create meanings of the "things" in their lives in their social interactions, and they use an interpretive process.

Blumer also discussed joint action. When people are together in a group, they take joint action. They have a conversation with themselves, construct a meaning, share their meanings with others instead of only keeping it to themselves, and then take action. Groups engage in joint actions that are repetitive, but each time the joint action is created again from the beginning. It may seem that these joint actions are permanent and a "part of the culture," but we re-construct the joint action each and every time. We create the value or norm; the value or norm does not create us.

For example, people go to church every Sunday and do the same thing in church every week. The people are having conversations with themselves, designating meanings of things, and then interpreting their meanings to each other. Together, they form the joint action of going to church. It is not that the church has always been there, and that the church is telling people how to act. Rather, the people are creating and forming the experience of church each and every time they go.

Blumer wrote, "This general process should be seen, of course, in the differential character which it necessarily has by virtue of the fact that people cluster in different groups, belong to different associations, and occupy different positions. They accordingly approach each other differently, live in different

worlds, and guide themselves by different sets of meanings. (1969, p. 21).” We live in different places, belong to different groups and organizations, and hold different positions. In these different worlds we form different meanings that guide us in our actions.

There are groups in the infant and toddler classrooms. Each time a child transitions from one classroom to another, the group reproduces a joint action. The transition becomes embedded in the life of the childcare center and becomes a routine that can seem to have a life of its own. But, for each transition, the teachers and children engage in a ritual or a script to recreate the experience.

Each group is different. The group discussed in this study is different from any other group because the group is a collection of unique individuals that will not be found anywhere else. They may hold meanings that are similar to teachers and children in other centers, but the meanings at one childcare center will never be identical to meanings in another center.

A researcher could use symbolic interactionism to better understand the following interaction between a teacher and an infant. A teacher was holding an infant girl when the infant’s mother came through the door. The mother said “hi,” and then the girl turned her head and buried herself in the teacher’s body. The teacher said, “Oh, she must want to stay here with me.” The teacher and infant had a social interaction when the mother came through the door, and then the teacher interpreted their actions.

A researcher would have to interview the teacher and continue to observe her to learn about her interpretations. One possible interpretation for the teacher could be that the infant did not want to leave the teacher. If so, then she might say to the mother and girl, "Let's go sit down and play for a few minutes to give Belle a chance to say goodbye to me." The teacher would use her interpretations to make her next move. The infant girl would also interpret the social interaction between her mother, her teacher, and herself and use her interpretations to make her next move. Using her body language, she could tell the teacher and her mother that she had a hard time saying goodbye to her teacher.

An alternative way the teacher could interpret the event could be that the infant did not want to go to the mother. If so, the teacher might respond differently to the mother and make a different move. Perhaps, she would not say anything to the mother, especially if she suspected something negative was happening in the child's home. The teacher's next move might be to talk to the director and express her concerns after the mother had left.

The purpose of describing these two different interpretations is to show how the same sequence of events can lead to two different interpretations by the teacher. The teacher will interpret the events in her own way and construct her own meanings. The task for the researcher is to better understand the particular interpretations for the teacher.

Symbolic interactionism was the theory used to better understand the transition, which is an important time period because it marks the end of a teacher-infant relationship and it is period of change. If we understand the teachers' meanings during the times of transition, we will know better how to help them handle these potentially difficult times.

The remainder of the narrative will be framed within the first person. Such a format recognizes that the researcher is an intimate player in the group and that meaning ascribed is by its very nature subjective.

Statement of Research Bias

I present my research biases for readers to give a better understanding of who I was and what I believed during the study. The purpose of reflecting on my biases was to make me aware of what I believed so that I could bracket my beliefs and set them aside. I attempted to separate my biases from the meanings of my participants. I did not want to lead my participants to say things that I believed simply to have them confirm or disconfirm my preformed ideas.

A bracketing interview was used to discover these biases. A colleague asked me the same questions I was planning to ask the six teachers. She used the same interview schedule I used in the formal interviews (see pp. 50-51 for the interview schedule I used with the six teachers). For example, we discovered in my bracketing interview that I believed teachers should hold infants. This knowledge was invaluable in the actual interviews. If, when I was interviewing

the teachers, they said they held the infants a lot, I wanted to temper my reaction, not getting overly excited and saying, "Me too! I feel the same way." This and other information from the bracketing interview allowed me to recognize when I might be leading the interviewee in a particular direction. It was important that they take their own course without my biases (both positive and negative) coloring their responses. When I analyzed and interpreted the data, I also bracketed my beliefs. I wanted to hear the meanings of my participants, not of myself.

A second reason for conducting a bracketing interview was to allow me to experience what it was like to be a participant (an interviewee). I developed a sense how easy or difficult it was to talk about certain topics, enabling me to empathize with the participants. The bracketing interview is not designed to make the interviewer objective. Rather, it enables one to be sensitive to the distinction between interviewer and interviewee ascribed meanings.

Three themes emerged in my bracketing interview. I expressed a confidence in my effectiveness when caring for infants; I believed certain infants (but not all) belonged to me; I distinguished between natural and unnatural separations. Each one of these observations will be discussed in turn.

As I talked about my work as an infant teacher, I verified myself as a competent effective professional. For example, as part of the bracketing interview, I described an incident with an infant girl:

I was in there and one day a new child came. Her name was Mary... This little baby was crying and crying and crying all day. You know

it was her first day. All the teachers had been trying to pick her up and trying to help her stop crying...When I picked her up I had the idea to go outside onto the playground. It was sort of nice weather. I picked her up and we went outside just right out the door. We were under this big tree with these leaves, and she stopped crying. And I was like, "Wow, I got this child to stop crying." And I felt so good about that, real effective.

The infants made me feel that I had a purpose in life, that they needed me, and that I knew how to take care of them. Perhaps more importantly, I recognized that I wanted to show the world how it was supposed to be done, with the sensitivity and responsiveness called for in the literature.

In addition, I developed the sense that certain infants belonged to me, even though I knew I was not the mother. Interactions were not simply about performing tasks but also about developing intimacy, even ownership. I said this about Mary:

It became known that whenever she'd start crying they'd say, "Oh Eliza, go get your little Mary." She became like mine. And the other teachers would say you need to go get her. I would look forward to going to the infant center to see her.

However, other experiences led me to acknowledge the differences between my relationship and that of a parent. For two and a half years, prior to this study, I had taken care of one little girl in her home, thirty hours per week. I had started when she was one week old. From this experience, I realized how difficult it was to take care of someone else's child. Sometimes I experienced jealousy of the parents because the infant was not my child. Other times, I was relieved that the child did not belong to me, and I anxiously waited for the parents to come home so that I could leave.

Finally, in the bracketing interview I made a distinction between natural and unnatural separations. A natural separation was when two people felt they were ready to leave each other. When both were ready, they said goodbye. An unnatural separation was when at least one of the parties was not ready to separate and it seemed forced. In an example of an infant teacher and an infant, I related:

Molly (the teacher) and Niko (the infant) had an unnatural separation. My perception was that she felt sick and she wasn't ready for him to go. She felt badly inside...Molly touched Niko a lot. They were physically close...And I mean just, she (Molly) used to always, I used to watch this because she would always pick him up and kiss him and bury her face in him, played with his hair."

Personally, I had a difficult time with similar separations. The hardest part for me was that when I said goodbye to the children I had taken care of, there was no projection of a relationship into the future. I knew I would probably not see them again, and I knew they would not remember me. Yet for me, it was during the times with these children that I felt most alive. Therefore, I felt sad because I knew after saying goodbye it was over. It was final. It was not like I was a parent or grandparent who would see the child grow up over time.

In summary, the bracketing interview revealed my personal biases about working with infants and about transitions. I felt effective taking care of infants. They gave purpose and meaning to my life, and I felt like they belonged to me, which was sometimes problematic. I could not take them home with me, but then there were times that I did not want to. Ending our relationships was always hard

because I knew I would not see them again. Our relationships were temporary and that realization was not comfortable.

In observing and interviewing the teachers in this study, I was aware that they often expressed different feelings and thoughts from me. Some felt close to the infants while others did not. Some had problems ending their relationships during the transitions, while others did not. I attempted to set aside my biases and just listen.

Conclusion

I had the experience of caring for infants and watching them move to the toddler classroom. Because I felt effective and alive with the infants, it felt painful to me when they moved. I wanted to know if other teachers felt the same way and therefore began this study. To find answers, I decided to spend time with teachers to discover what was important to them. By going to their classrooms, I could watch them interacting with the infants and making sense of the transition.

It was critical that I remained aware of my biases during data collection and analysis. To describe their experiences I had to be involved with them while at the same time setting my biases aside. The meanings I found were unique and specific to the teachers in one childcare center. By focusing on one place, I was able to explore beneath the surface of the teachers' words and actions and reveal meanings.

This chapter introduced the study, by stating the purpose, research questions, theoretical framework and bias statement. The next chapter will review the literature to show how this study fits into the existing professional conversation about childcare teachers and transitions.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Chapter Two is divided into six sections with the first three sections describing the teacher-infant relationship. It is important to understand the teacher-infant relationship because whatever happens between a teacher and an infant during their one-year together influences the teacher's experience of the transition. For example, if the teacher enjoyed the infant, she might not want him to go, whereas if she struggled with him, she might feel relieved for him to go. Studies reviewed in the first three sections found three kinds of possibilities that might happen between teachers and infants: (a) A teacher might feel like a mother substitute. (b) She might or might not establish a bond, attachment, or closeness to the infant. (c) She might focus on separation issues because of where the infant-toddler is in his development. These three issues will be reviewed below.

The fourth and fifth sections of this chapter describe what educators believe the transition is like for teachers in general and how the transition process might be changed. No empirical studies directly addressing teachers' experiences in infant classroom transitions were found. The sixth section of this chapter concerns foster care because foster care parents experience a situation somewhat similar to childcare teachers when the children they take care of move to a permanent home or another foster family. Childcare teachers could learn

from foster parents what the separation is like when children move to a new caregiver. Each section will now be discussed in turn.

Mother Substitutes

Three studies, Ayers (1989), Suransky (1982), and Delpit (1995), have found examples of teachers either feeling like a mother substitute or being thought of as a mother substitute by someone else. Ayers (1989) described an infant-toddler teacher, while the other two researchers described teachers of “older” young children (three to six years old). In his book The Good Preschool Teacher, Ayers (1989) used ethnographic methods to better understand the experiences of an infant-toddler teacher named Anna. Anna and two other teachers cared for nine infant-toddlers, and Anna described herself as being a mother substitute. She believed in providing a continuity of affection and responsiveness, and she said she struggled with separations. As a child, she was separated from her parents and sent back to Cuba to live with her grandmother; later, she was reunited with her mother. Because of her experiences she felt she knew how the toddlers felt when they separated from their parents in the mornings. Although Anna did not specifically address the transition from an infant room to a toddler room, she did describe having to let the child go. Ayers (1989, p. 32) wrote, “She loves the child enough to hold it close, but also enough to let go when the child is ready to fly free.” He continued, “...she is mature enough to remember deep within the desire to be held but also the desire to run off.”

Anna read books to the children that dealt with separations. She described tuning in to how infants felt and reading body language and facial expressions. Ayers (1989, p. 35) quoted her saying, "Of course you have to be with a young kid a lot to know what her body movements mean, what her facial expressions mean. But eventually you learn." Anna highlighted the importance of having enough time with infants to learn about them.

Suransky (1982) described a childcare center, located in an African-American community, that was a "home away from home." The teachers played a mother role, and they knew that many of the children had troubles at home. These children lived in an inner-city neighborhood with few resources, surrounded by poverty and violence. Therefore, the teachers wanted to provide a home-like atmosphere at the center to give children a feeling of safety and comfort; two feelings they may not have had at home. Only then could the children learn. The teachers allowed children to work in any area of the large classroom, and they enforced only a few important classroom rules. Older women, some of whom were grandmothers to children in the center, volunteered there and commanded the most respect and power.

The teachers in Suransky's (1982) study reported that they enjoyed going to work, and they believed their needs were important too. For example, if a teacher wanted to paint a picture or make a collage, she could do so even if the children did not want to as long as the children were otherwise occupied. They made a point not to follow rigid schedules and to allow the day to have a natural flow. The teachers listened to their own internal clocks, and often they would

decide on the spur of the moment to take a trip to the market because it “felt right.” The teachers lived in the moment and used their feelings to make decisions.

Forty children, between two and a half and six years of age, attended this center. The children did not make a transition from one classroom to another but rather remained together as one large group. The children stayed with the same teachers throughout their time in the program.

Delpit (1995) discovered that Latino parents thought teachers should be surrogate mothers to their six-year old children. In a predominantly Puerto Rican school in Boston, the Latino parents came with their children to school. They insisted upon staying with their children for thirty minutes until the bell rang because they believed their six-year old children needed to be in the physical presence of an adult at all times. They thought of a six-year old as a baby still in need of a mother's protection. On the other hand, the teachers wanted the parents to drop the children off in the schoolyard and then leave because they believed the children would be safe by themselves. Therefore, the parents decided they needed to stay in the schoolyard with their children and assume the responsibility for protecting their children as the teachers had different beliefs. The parents felt that the teachers did not want to protect their children and that the teachers did not want the parents protecting their children.

The teachers and parents had different expectations for the teacher's role. The parents believed their children needed a teacher who was a mother figure,

whereas the teachers saw themselves as educators and believed the children could and maybe should take care of themselves.

In the three studies just reviewed, the teachers acted like or were expected to act like a second mother for three different reasons. In the Ayers (1989) study, Anna acted like a second mother because the children were infants, and their young age demanded a second mother. In Suransky's (1982) study, the teachers acted like a second mother because the children came from impoverished neighborhoods; therefore, the teachers compensated for missing ingredients. In Delpit's (1995) study, the teachers were expected to act like a second mother because of the child's age and cultural values. In the eyes of these Latino parents, a six-year old was still a baby. In the three studies, the teachers provided (or were expected to provide) affection, safety, and comfort to the children.

Emotional Investment: Teacher-Child Attachment

In a qualitative study of infant-toddler day care, Leavitt (1994) described a very different scenario: teachers who did not have an emotional investment in the infants and toddlers for whom they cared. She was a participant observer in six childcare centers over a seven-year period. Part of Leavitt's explanation for the lack of emotional investment was that teachers did not have enough time to be with the infants because the infants made the transition into the next classroom too soon. Most of the infants stayed less than one year with the same teacher before making the transition to the next teacher. Leavitt argued that teachers

needed regular contact with infants over an extended period of time. If that happened, teachers could be with the infants as they grew up and could take pride in them as they mastered new tasks and developed new skills.

The teachers in Leavitt's study (1994) did not tune in to the infants' emotions. Instead, they would ignore, dismiss, or neglect a sad or angry infant because they did not want infants expressing "negative" emotions such as sadness, frustration, or anger. They equated their success as teachers with a smooth running classroom of smiling infants. Also, the teachers used their power to handle infants and toddlers as though they were objects. For example, they changed infants' diapers without speaking to them, and they enforced a rigid time schedule, which took precedence over attending to an individual child's needs. They maintained control over children's play by choosing toys for them and by telling them how to use the toys. Leavitt described the physical space of the classrooms as closed and restricting because children were repeatedly told to stay in their classrooms and not to venture out.

Nelson's (1995) study on family day care highlighted a different problem of teachers and children staying together over extended periods of time. She interviewed 70 family day care providers in Vermont who stayed with children for longer periods of time, sometimes up to five years. There was not a transition from an infant classroom to a toddler classroom because the children stayed with the same provider in the home. However, a common theme for providers was that it was painful, sometimes too painful, to become attached to children. In some cases, parents mistreated their children at home, and the providers felt

they could not save these children. Also, some parents pulled their children out of the family day care home without warning, which again made it painful for the provider if she was attached to the child. To avoid this pain, the providers distanced themselves from the children.

Two studies discussed how infants were influenced by a transition from one classroom to another, but not how the teachers were affected. Raikes (1993) found that infants who stayed with the same teacher for more than one year were more likely to be securely attached to their teacher than were infants who changed teachers within a year. Raikes directed a childcare program where one teacher and four or five children stayed together as a "family" for up to five years. Howes and Hamilton (1992b) found that children who changed teachers after 18 to 24 months had lower security scores on the Attachment Q-set measure at 24 and 30 months than did children who did not have teacher changes. Thus, the longer a child and teacher stayed together, the more likely they were to form a secure attachment or an attachment with higher scores.

The quantitative studies (Raikes, 1993; Howes & Hamilton, 1992b) described above highlighted the benefits of teachers and children staying together for longer periods, namely secure attachments, whereas the qualitative studies (Nelson, 1995; Leavitt, 1994) described potential problems. A teacher could become too close to a child and experience distress if she felt like she needed to save a child but could not, or a teacher could not have enough time to be with a child and subsequently not invest her emotions in the child. These studies suggest that teachers and children need more time together to give the

children and teachers what they need, but as teachers and children develop closer relationships, difficult issues will need to be resolved.

Teachers Helped Children with Separations

Ayers (1989) and Kalmanson (1990) described teachers who addressed the issue of separation for young children. These teachers did not describe separations specifically related to the transition from one teacher to another, but instead daily separations from parents and separation in a general sense. The teachers had qualities that allowed them to be effective with separations. Ayers (1989) in The Good Preschool Teacher described Chana, a teacher who cared for a group of toddlers in her own home. Chana had positive experiences with separations when she was a child and therefore believed she knew as an adult how to help the toddlers for whom she cared. Ayers quoted her as saying, "I think I'm pretty good at suffering the sadness and the letdown of separation, and then really enjoying the reunion – perhaps because my early separations weren't dreadful for me and I learned in my own extended family to trust separation. In any case I'm not torn up about separation questions and in a sense that makes me the perfect person for what I do" (pg. 47). She said that accepting a separation was not enough because a new relationship would emerge. She said, "The fun is in the details in the adjustment" (pg. 49). Chana's past helped her and gave her the ability to give the toddlers what they needed.

Chana recognized the pain but then dealt with it, and she expected the same from the parents and her staff. She said she expected them to

acknowledge the pain and loss of separation, whether it was when parents left in the mornings or if someone experienced a death. Her curriculum was separation. Ayers quoted her as saying, "All I commit to, and what I work on, is that children will feel okay here without their parents, that they'll be able to acknowledge the difficulties and still participate fully in life here. That's the whole program" (pg. 46). In Chana's program they took field trips to the toddlers' homes, and she encouraged the parents to bring photos, books, and tapes from home for the children to listen to throughout the day. Thus, she created a bridge between home and her family day-care.

Kalmanson (1990) also believed the infant teacher needed certain qualities to help infants and toddlers deal with separations. Specifically, the teacher needed to attune herself to the rhythms and personality of the child, and she needed to understand the emotional tone of the child's family; the teacher had to pay attention to the child's emotions and to the family's acknowledgment of the child's fears. Some children might have parents who offer more support during times of separation than do others, which would help the teacher with the child at the childcare center.

Teachers' Perspectives of the Transition

Miller (1998) discussed the transition from the infant to the toddler room from the perspective of the caregiver. She said the caregiver could feel relieved to see an infant (and her parents) move up to the next room, however, just as often, the caregiver could feel loss. The caregiver sees the child grow from a

helpless infant into an active and energetic toddler and takes pride in the child's development. She could fall in love with the child, which would make it difficult to say "goodbye" or "have a nice life."

Suggestions for Restructuring Childcare

Miller (1998) gave three suggestions to deal with the transition. First, the "continuity of care" option, a growing trend, is for a teacher and a group of four infants to stay together for three years; when the infants enter preschool the teacher can start over in the infant room.⁴ The advantage of this approach is that teachers have more variety and depth to their jobs and can be with the infants as they grow. The second option is to move one caregiver up with a group of infants and leave the others behind; this option assumes there are two infant teachers. The third option is to have the transition and to make it gradual with the director organizing a meeting with the parents of the child and the teachers from both classrooms (infant and toddler). The infant should visit the new toddler classroom with the infant teacher, her anchor of safety, and the infant should be the guide for how long the transition should last.

Lieberman (1993) has provided a list of quality childcare indicators. The first and most important indicator on her list was "stability of care." She wrote,

⁴ If the teacher stays with four children for three years, the teacher-child ratio will remain 1:4 for three years. Childcare centers typically increase ratios in the child's second and third years of life (in toddler classrooms) to 1:6. Therefore, to keep the typical ratios and to simultaneously implement continuity of care, the teacher will have to add two new toddlers to her group in the second year to make a total group size of six.

The ongoing availability of the same caregiver or a small number of caregivers is a requisite to establish trusting emotional relationships that are not marred by a continuous process of loss and replacement. In addition, caregivers who are committed to their jobs for the long term relate to children in more stimulating and developmentally appropriate ways than those who see child care as a temporary job. (p. 22)

The remaining indicators were caregiver training, the child-adult ratio, group size, and the presence of another adult. Thus, stability of care was more important than were ratios and group sizes.

Two authors from Britain, Goldschmied & Jackson (1994), suggested assigning a child to a key person. They said, "The denial of close personal relationships is a serious flaw in most group day care, which can partly be overcome by changes in organization" (p. 36). The key person cares for three or four children and has regular contact for some part of every day with her small group. Other caregivers help the key person care for her group during different parts of the day. They suggest avoiding a change in key person, but if it must happen, then the child and caregiver must have time to work through their feelings of sadness and loss. Such time needs to be provided regardless of the cause of the change, including the resignation of the key person from the program or the transitioning of the child to a new key person. If there is a change in key person, the former key person and the child should be given opportunities to stay in touch through letters, visits, and photographs. Even though the key person may be gone, she can still live inside the child (and vice versa).

Goldschmied and Jackson (1994) reported that when teachers formed close attachments to the infants, absenteeism declined. The teachers felt they

had to be there for their babies. On the other hand, they recognized that for some infant teachers it might be difficult to develop the key person approach. Some teachers prefer the distance that could come from frequent changes in children and eschew an emotional involvement. They might have experienced difficult separations from children in the past and therefore feel that staying together for a longer period of time would make the final separation even more painful than a shorter-lived relationship.

Goldschmied and Jackson (1994) suggested that as adults we need to think about the important people in our lives to know how children may feel about the important people in their lives. We have had important people, and when we have had to say goodbye, we did things to keep that person with us even though we did not see them anymore. We wrote letters, thought about them, and called them on the phone. As a result those people are still with us and shape our lives. We need to provide similar experiences for children; it is desirable for young children to become close to people, even if one day they have to say goodbye.

The head of a day nursery described the benefits of assigning a small group of children to one caregiver. She wrote,

Since we established a key worker system here closer relationships have been developed between staff and parents, especially in the baby room. Children seem to settle into life at the nursery more easily. Some who had been at the nursery for a while and were still not happy, settled at once when they realized that one adult was their special person. Barry, who we had only seen tearful and withdrawn, became a smiling, outgoing, confident child almost overnight when he got his key person. For the first few days, he sat on her lap, then he took off and played with the other children happily, knowing that she was somewhere in the room. (Goldschmied & Jackson, 1994, p. 49)

The children seemed to feel more secure and therefore were able to explore, knowing that the same key person was there for them.

Daniel (1993) reflected upon her experience of eight years as director of a University lab school program. She believed a child could have an "effective" transition, if the child had plenty of time. She recommended letting the child visit the new toddler room with the infant teacher before leaving the child on his or her own in the new room. Daniel used the metaphor of mountain climbing to describe the transition experience for the child. At first the child is terrified and tenuous and needs the expert's reassurance and guidance. In the beginning, the old familiar infant teacher is the expert, and then the toddler teacher becomes the expert as she helps the child feel comfortable in the new room.

In summary, early childhood professionals have proposed different ways of grouping young children and their teachers in childcare and for moving the children to a new classroom. Some believe the yearly transition model is workable, as long as the children have time to adjust, whereas others feel the children and teachers should remain together for at least three years to provide stability and security.

Experiences of Foster Parents

Children who can not live with their biological parents for safety and other reasons often live with a foster family until a permanent home is found for them. Therefore, foster parents also care for other people's children for a limited amount of time until the child is placed in a permanent home or another foster

family. Just like in childcare centers, in foster care the relationship between a foster parent and child is temporary. The foster parent experiences a transition when the child leaves for a new family.

Two studies (Gleeson & O'Donnell, 1997; Bandawe & Louw, 1997) have found that foster parents and children bonded and developed attachments, similar to that with the childcare research. In fact, the foster parents in Bandawe and Louw's (1997) study became attached to the children and thus did not want to part with them. They denied the temporary nature of the relationship and assumed that foster care was the same thing as adoption. These foster parents reported that the foster children had a positive impact on their lives and that the children brought joy to their homes. They invested their money, time, and care in the children. They reported it was easier to take in an infant as opposed to an older child because an infant could be molded. Also, an older child might not be as accepting of a foster parent as would an infant. These parents wanted foster children because they did not have children of their own. Also, in their Malawi culture, a marriage was not seen as complete unless there were children.

Researchers (Silver, DiLorenzo, Zukoski, Ross, Amster, & Schlegel; 1999; Testa & Rolock, 1999) found that foster children had many different caregivers in a short period of time, parallel to the situation in childcare. Testa and Rolock (1999) found that only 20% of the foster children in their study were with the same foster family two years later. Therefore, they advocated for continuity of care. Barbell and Wright (1999) redefined foster parents as extended family who continue to have involvement with children after reunification with biological

parents. The foster care literature gives us another example of what the experience is like to say goodbye to other people's children. Again, similar to that with the childcare research, no empirical studies were found concerning the experiences of foster parents when children made a transition to a new family.

Conclusion

There is a gap in the literature concerning teachers' experiences with infant and toddler classroom transitions. Little is known about what teachers feel and think when children move to a new classroom. We know what the relationship can be like between a teacher and a child during their time together, but we do not know what it is like for the teacher when the child leaves. Although little research is done, a number of authors argue persuasively for continuity of care to minimize the number of transitions for the sake of both the child and the teacher. Yet, the apparent dominant mode within center care fails to attend to the teacher's experience, perhaps partly because we do not have sufficient information on the nature of that experience during the period of transition. In this study, I used methods similar to those of Leavitt (1994), Ayers (1989), and Suransky (1982), specifically participant observation and interviewing. The next chapter explains these methods.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Chapter three describes the methodological approach and research design. After describing the methodological approach of naturalistic inquiry, this chapter explains how this approach is related to the theory of symbolic interactionism. The research design includes a description of the participants and their context, data collection and data analysis, the researcher-researched relationship, and ethical issues.

Methodological Approach

The methodological approach of naturalistic inquiry, developed by Lincoln and Guba (1985), informed this study. The first axiom in naturalistic inquiry is that there are multiple realities that individuals construct. Each person constructs his own version of reality, and these realities are holistic and contextual. In this study, I placed myself in the context of the childcare center to capture the multiple realities of the teachers during the periods of transition. Each teacher constructed her own reality of the transitions.

Teachers observed the same incident and created different meanings for themselves and ascribed different meanings to the child. Four teachers were with Belle, an infant, when she made the transition from the infant room to the toddler room. They each constructed a different meaning of the same event.

Candace and Maria, two infant teachers, described Belle's transition as being a positive experience, with Candace focusing on her actions and Maria emphasizing her readiness for the new room. Candace said, "She's more quiet in there [toddler room] in the beginning, calm, but she still, she didn't cry, she just observed quietly the room for awhile... Belle... So she did fine." Maria said, "Belle did good because she was ready. She was off the bottle, she was eating table food, and she was walking. Everything was ready. Means good, you know, she did not give the toddler room any problem."

On the other hand, Lena, an infant teacher, and Nia, a toddler teacher, both said she was not yet ready for the transition when it occurred. Lena said, "She, I really still don't think she has the social skills she needs to be in that room. It's very hard for her to communicate or socialize with the other students." Nia said, "She just wants to sit by herself and read books and, which is fine, you know, but I don't think that she was quite ready to come out of the infant room." Each teacher constructed her own meaning for Belle's transition.

The second axiom is that the knower (the researcher) and known (the informant or participant) are inseparable. They interact and influence each other throughout a research study. In fact, they must interact to allow the researcher to gain access to data. I developed relationships with the participants and asked them to reflect on their experiences with the infants and toddlers, which made me part of the scene I described.

The third axiom is that multiple realities are specific to a particular time and place. They depend on their context for meaning. Thus, the context of this

particular childcare center and the community in which it resides are relevant. In this study the teachers worked in a for-profit childcare center in a suburb of a medium sized Southeastern American city. More information about the childcare center will be given later in this chapter (in the "Live Oak Child Development Center" section).

The fourth axiom is that naturalistic inquirers believe in simultaneous mutual shaping. There are forces that interact back and forth. As one force shapes the other, the other is shaping the former at the same time. It is impossible to know which is the cause and which is the effect. For example, when Lena watched Sam, an infant, push a toy lawnmower across the floor, she encouraged him to keep going. Sam became excited and continued to push the toy, which made Lena encourage him more. Sam continued pushing. One person was not causing the other to act; rather, they both were influencing each other in this game of give and take.

The fifth axiom is that research is never value-free. Research is laden with values from the paradigms we choose, the methods we select, and the research questions we ask. For example, the methods of participant observation and interviewing, chosen for this study, both value relationships with participants.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) defined four criteria for establishing the trustworthiness that guided this study: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Credibility is the extent to which the multiple and constructed realities of the participants are accurately portrayed. In this study, I stayed in the field for a prolonged period of time, listened to the participants, and triangulated

the data. Triangulation is the process of using multiple sources (multiple informants) and multiple methods (interviewing and participant observation).

Member checking was also used. This process entailed bringing the data, analyses, and interpretations back to the teachers for their feedback. Portions of my field notes were given to the teachers, and they corrected me when I had incorrectly reported something. Each teacher was given a copy of her interview transcript and was asked to tell what she wanted deleted and added. The goal was to have the interviews accurately portray their experiences of the transitions.

The second criterion of transferability addresses the issue of applicability. Transferability is the extent to which a reader can take the findings from one context and use them in another. If the sending context (the research context) is similar enough to the receiving context (the reader's context), then the findings may be transferred and used. Detailed descriptions of the context are presented later in this chapter.

The third criterion of dependability addresses the issue of consistency. To establish dependability an audit procedure was followed, which entailed collecting, organizing, and cataloging raw data, data analysis processes, decisions about method and design, and interpretations for others to see. Field notes, interview transcripts, data analysis worksheets, taxonomies, a componential analysis, and fieldwork journal entries are organized and available from the author for readers to peruse. The personal journal describes turning points in the study and decisions concerning data analysis. This audit procedure

allows others to follow the path of the research to determine the appropriate level of thoroughness and detail.

The fourth criterion, confirmability, is the extent to which findings are supported by the data. Themes are supported by examples from the raw data. Field notes and interview transcripts are available from the author for readers to see the evidence.

Naturalistic inquiry relates to the theory of symbolic interactionism because both the approach and the theory regard meanings ("realities") to be the essential information we need to understand human action. Naturalistic inquiry gives us the tools to uncover people's meanings, while symbolic interactionism gives us a framework within which to examine the data. By closely paying attention to the conversations and interactions people have, we can better understand their realities, which make them act the way they do.

Naturalistic inquiry tells us to go to where the people are and be with them so that we may better understand them, while symbolic interactionism tells us to analyze the conversations and interactions that we hear and see. First we must go to where the people are, and second we must analyze what they are doing.

Research Design

The participants

The participants in this study were teachers in both the infant and toddler classrooms from one childcare center in a mid-sized Southeastern city. The center was renamed the Live Oak Child Development Center for this study.

Three infant teachers, two toddler teachers, and one floater teacher who worked in both classrooms made a total of six teachers for the study. All the teachers were women (20 to 50 years old), and all were White. The six teachers worked full time (40 hours per week) and had been working at Live Oak for as little as eleven months to as many as eight years.

Five of the six teachers had their own children, and one full time teacher in the infant room was expecting her second child during this study. Two of the teachers' children attended Live Oak, and another full time teacher in the infant room had her children enrolled in the after school program.

The teachers used a "creative play" curriculum (Catron & Allen, 1993), where teachers provided toys and materials on low shelves so that the children could choose their own materials. They also planned activities to meet the needs of the whole child, which included the child's personal awareness, emotional well-being, communication, socialization, cognition, and perceptual motor skills. In the infant classroom, each child followed his own schedule, whereas in the toddler room the children followed the same group schedule. In the toddler room the teachers directed more group activities.

Below are profiles of the six teachers (names have been changed):

Candace:

Thirty-eight year old Candace was the lead teacher in the infant classroom. Born in Germany, she had lived in the United States for over ten years and had worked at Live Oak for seven years. Candace was married and had three school-aged children, all of whom attended the Live Oak after-school

program. She was pursuing a degree in child development, taking classes at a local community college. She had a degree from Germany but said "it didn't count" here. On the weekends she watched her children play soccer and participated in her church.

Maria:

Maria had been an assistant teacher in the infant room for one year. In her late twenties, she was also born outside the United States, having come from Turkey about three years before the study began. At the end of this study, she left Live Oak because she was pregnant with her second child and her doctor told her she needed bed rest. Her four-year old daughter attended Live Oak, and her husband was working on his Ph.D. at the local university. Though English was not her native language, she had no trouble communicating with anyone around her.

Lena:

Lena was also an assistant teacher in the infant classroom and had worked there for two years. She was in her late thirties and comes originally from Minnesota. She had worked in different classrooms at Live Oak but had settled into the infant classroom. She had one daughter. Her degree was in special education. Lena liked to put the radio on and dance with the infants.

Nia:

Nia was an assistant teacher in the toddler room and had worked at Live Oak for eleven months. She was in her early twenties, the youngest teacher in the study, and the only one who did not have her own children. Her grandmother

and aunt were in the education field. After experiences in some of the aunt's elementary classes, she decided she preferred younger children (toddler age) because she liked the way toddlers expressed their feelings and showed their amazement at everyday things such as lightning and thunder. They were not boring or dull to her. At the end of this study, Nia moved to an older toddler classroom, and then four months later, she permanently left the center.

Danielle:

Danielle, in her early forties, was the lead teacher in the toddler room. She had worked at Live Oak for eight years and filled in as director when the directors were out of the building. In the late afternoons, she had to make sure the rooms were staffed, and at 6:00 had to close the center. Danielle had one teenaged son.

Amanda:

Amanda was a floater teacher for both the infant and the toddler classrooms. She was in her late twenties with a degree in English Literature. Her two-year old son also attended Live Oak. At the time of our interview, she told me she was getting a divorce and that she and her son would be moving back to another state to be with her family. She had worked at Live Oak for almost a year.

Live Oak Child Development Center

This center was selected from three centers, which met the following criteria:

1. The infants made a transition from an infant classroom to a toddler classroom during their second year of life.
2. The directors, teachers from the infant and toddler classrooms, and parents of the children expressed an interest in cooperating with the study.

Although all three centers met both these criteria, this particular center was selected due to the perception that the investigator had more easily established the necessary rapport with the director, teachers, parents, and children. The teachers were perceived as willing to share their thoughts and feelings about the transitions. Live Oak was accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), which meant they upheld standards above and beyond state licensure (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997). For example, they had lower teacher-child ratios (1:4 in the infant room and 1:6 in the toddler room) than they were expected to have from the state. Therefore, I believed I would be able to see teacher-child interactions (playing on the floor), instead of only routine care and teachers merely trying to survive the day.

To determine if the participants were interested, a meeting with the director and teachers to discuss the study was scheduled. I asked the teachers if they would allow me to spend several hours (four to five) per week in their classrooms for approximately six months, participating with them and observing them. I indicated that I would follow the direction of the teachers in caring for the children. The teachers were asked if they would be willing to be interviewed at

times convenient for them that did not interfere with their teaching responsibilities.

The observations and interviews were planned to contain information about the children and their parents as well, thus a meeting with parents was also scheduled. I explained my study to parents and gave them informed consent forms to sign, which asked for their permission for me to care for their child while I was in the center. Parents who did not wish for their children to be involved were assured that neither they nor their child would be penalized or excluded in any way at the childcare center.

One parent in the infant classroom did not return the informed consent form, and thus anything about this child was not included in my field notes. Therefore, there were events happening that were not recorded in my data. I handled this situation by making an arrangement with the teachers ahead of time that if this child wanted attention from me, another teacher would step in and help that child immediately.

Live Oak was located in a suburb of a mid-sized Southeastern city. Ten years ago, the two directors, Tracy and Gaye, started the center with five children but by 2000 had over one-hundred children enrolled. They were planning to expand the center by putting a portable building on the piece of land adjacent to the building. Both Tracy and Gaye had school-aged children who had previously attended Live Oak as young children.

The center served children from six-weeks of age to after-school aged children. Live Oak had nine classrooms: Infant, Toddler I, Toddler II, Toddler III,

Preschool I, Preschool II, Pre-K I, Pre-K II, and After-school. This study involved only the infant and toddler I classrooms. See Figure A-1 for a drawing of the layout of classrooms at Live Oak.⁵

The infant classroom:

The infant room was one of the largest classrooms in the center. At the time of the study, there were nine full-time and five part-time infants enrolled. There were large windows two feet apart from each other on two walls of the classroom, and the outside light poured in. Winnie-the-Pooh pictures were on the walls and on mobiles, hanging from the ceiling, and there were also seasonal pictures such as snowmen and winter scenes. The infant classroom was divided into two spaces, one for the older infants on the right and the other for the younger infants on the left. A half door (three feet high) separated the two sides. The space for the older infants was big and open, and there were cribs against the walls, circling the room. The remainder of the room was devoted to floor space.

On the right side of the "older" space there was a bookshelf with at least 30 different board or soft books. There was a large colored mat in the book corner and a mirror along the bottom of the wall for the infants to see their reflections. On the left side of the "older" side, there were low shelves with different kinds of infant toys, including rattles, stuffed dolls, plastic bottles filled with water and little objects, stacking toys, and little balls. Big plastic beach balls were also in the room. Most of the time, toys were spread out on the floor,

⁵ All figures and tables, except Figure 1, are located in Appendices A and C.

unless a teacher had decided to pick up the room. In the center of the room there was a plastic garden center where infants could go in and pull themselves up on the edges. There were at least three walkers and several infant seats scattered throughout the room. The diaper changing counter was on the left side of the "older side" next to two sinks and a counter for the teachers. There were two high chairs and two small refrigerators next to the teacher counter, and there was a large closet for supplies on the older side and two cabinets above the sink for food and diapers.

The space for the younger infants was set back off to the left from the main classroom space. This space contained the cribs for the younger infants and also several rocking chairs. Each crib had a mobile over it that parents had brought in. The teachers used this area to rock infants in the rocking chairs, to give the younger infants their bottles, and to let the younger infants sleep. See Figure A-2 for a drawing of the infant classroom. During my study eight infants made the transition. By the end of my study, two more were ready to move.

The toddler classroom:

The toddler room was down the hall from the infant classroom, and it was smaller than the infant room. At the time of the study, there were eleven toddlers enrolled. The toddler room was connected to an older toddler room by a closet, and people walked through the closet to get from one toddler room to the other.

A large open area was in the center of the room where the toddlers played on the floor. Surrounding the floor space were low shelves filled with toys and dramatic play materials (play stoves and washing machines). A large semi-

circular table with ten small seats attached was placed next to the floor space; a teacher could sit on one side of the table and be in touch with ten toddlers. The teachers used this table for snacks, lunch, and group activities and also put the toddlers in these seats when they needed to clean up the room.

The diaper changing counter and a sink were located on the far end of the classroom with cabinets above and below the counter. There was one window and a door, leading out to the older children's playground. There were several beanbags in the book corner located next to the door leading to the outside. See Figure A-3 for a drawing of the toddler classroom.

Playground:

The toddlers used the playground on the East side of the building. The infant classroom had a door, the top half of which was glass, that opened to the playground. This door allowed the infant teachers to see the toddlers (their "former" infants) when they were outside. Most of the playground had a grass surface. There were two swings, a low slide, and a piece of climbing equipment, and beneath all pieces of equipment were small pebbles. The infants were not allowed outside because older children could come and knock them over; therefore, the center was planning to build a fence around a small area to have just for the infants.

Time period for study

I spent four to five hours per week at Live Oak for approximately six months from December 1998 until July 1999. I participated and observed in the

infant classroom and observed in the toddler classroom throughout the length of the study. The lead teacher in the toddler classroom asked that I mostly observe in her classroom. I will discuss my relationships with the teachers later in this chapter, in the section entitled, "Researcher-researched relationship." Time was divided between the infant and toddler classrooms to see teachers from both classrooms during the transitions. For example, one week I spent three hours on a Wednesday afternoon in the infant classroom and two hours on a Monday morning in the toddler classroom. Another week I spent two hours on a Tuesday morning in the infant room and three hours on a Thursday afternoon in the toddler room. I varied the days of the week and the time of day in both classrooms throughout the study. For several weeks, I came only once a week but stayed for six hours.

The infants moved to the toddler classroom when a space opened up for them, either one at a time or in small groups. In January 1999, five infants moved as a group. In February, one infant moved, and in March, two infants moved. The directors were planning to move several infants at the end of July. Therefore, I witnessed a total of eight transitions during the study.

Data collection and data analysis

Participant observation

Spradley's (1980) developmental research sequence model guided participant observation. This ethnographic research cycle called for asking questions, collecting data, making an ethnographic record, analyzing the data,

and then starting over by asking more questions. Data were collected and analyzed throughout the study. The purpose of analyzing data throughout the study was to let the analyses guide the next observations and to identify what was salient in the field for additional observations. From the data, themes were developed, which were assertions that applied to numerous situations.

In the first stage of data collection, descriptive observations were made. I wrote down everything I saw and recorded dialogue. I described the interactions between teachers and children. In talking to teachers, at first I simply joined in on their existing conversations, then I started asking them questions related to the transition. For example, I asked, "How is Belle doing, now that she's in the toddler room?"; "What was it like for you when Belle moved?"; and "What was the process for Belle's transition?"

In the infant classroom, for the first two months of the study I was more of a participant, and then in the later months I was more of an observer. In my participant phase, I wanted to establish relationships with the teachers and children so that we would feel comfortable in each other's presence. I wanted them to act naturally so that later I could record natural behavior. Therefore, I played with the infants, changed their diapers, gave them bottles, fed them snacks, and patted them to sleep. Periodically, I would step out of the room to write notes about what had happened in the room. Immediately after my three-hour visit, I would spend several hours filling in my field notes.

After two months of participating with the infants and their teachers, I became more of an observer, which meant I brought my note pad into the infant

classroom. By this time, the teachers were comfortable with my presence. I explained to them that I needed a note pad to record exact phrases. Candace thought the note pad in the classroom was a good idea, and she said I would be able to record more detail.

Not unlike other researchers (for example, Goldstein, 1997) taking notes in the classroom was a challenge, especially with the infants. I would sit down on the floor and write with my back against a wall. Sometimes an infant who could crawl or walk would come up to me and try to eat my pen. I would hide my pen and paper under a mat and play with him for a few minutes. Then, I would move to a new part of the room and resume my note taking. Periodically, I took 10 to 15 minute breaks from my note taking so that I could talk to the teachers and children. When I took notes, I could not make eye contact with any of the infants, otherwise they would move toward me. I learned that I could not play and take notes at the same time because the infants thought my pen was a toy. Also, playing and caring for infants is a full body experience. The children wanted to climb on top of me, knock me down, and sit in my lap.

In the toddler room, I was always an observer, which meant I always had my note pad and pen with me in the room. Danielle had asked that I mainly observe, as she did not want me to change diapers or feed the children. Therefore, it was easier to take notes in this classroom. Unfortunately, I did not develop as close relationships with the toddlers and their teachers as I did with the infants and their teachers. Because I did not participate with the toddlers, we

were not as relaxed around each other, and the teachers did not open up as much to me. Therefore, I did not learn as much as I could have about them.

Shortly after recording the field notes, analysis of the data began. My observations were used to make a domain analysis. A domain analysis involved compiling a list of cultural domains, which Spradley (1980) defined as categories of cultural meaning that included other smaller categories. The cultural domain had a cover term, included terms, and a semantic relationship. The cover term was the name of the category. For example, I identified domains called "kinds of toys," "kinds of routine procedures," "ways to manage germs," and "things teachers say." The included terms were the names for the items in the category. In the domain of "kinds of infant toys" the included terms were, "rattle," "book," "doll," "ball," and "mobile." The semantic relationship was the relationship between the cover term and the included terms. In my example above, the relationship between the cover term and included terms was that an included term was "a kind of" cover term. A rattle was a kind of infant toy. The semantic relationship linked the included terms to the cover term.

There were different types of semantic relationships that used principles such as inclusion (x is kind of y; a teacher giving an infant a bottle is a kind of teacher-infant interaction) and spatial (x is a place in y; the book corner is a place in the infant room). Other semantic relationships included: rationale (x is a reason for doing y; needing spaces for new infants is a reason for the transition), function (x is used for y; the toddler table is used for group activities), sequence (x is a step in y; the infant teacher taking the infant for a visit in the toddler room

is a step in the transition process), attribution (x is a characteristic of y; free-spirited is a characteristic of Lena), and means-end (x is a way to do y; moving cold turkey is a way to do the transition). A domain analysis worksheet for each domain listed the cover term, included terms, and the semantic relationship.

After finding many domains with a variety of semantic relationships, I returned to the field to make focused observations. In my focused observations, I selected twelve domains to focus on. These included:

A. Interactions

1. "kinds of teacher-infant interactions"
2. "kinds of teacher-toddler interactions"

B. Transition

1. "kinds of things teachers said about the transition"
2. "steps in the transition process"
3. "reasons for the transition"
4. "kinds of things teachers said about policies"

C. Teacher characteristics

1. "characteristics of Candace"
2. "characteristics of Maria"
3. "characteristics of Lena"
4. "characteristics of Nia"
5. "characteristics of Danielle"
6. "characteristics of Amanda"

Sub-domains within each domain were identified. I also looked across domains to see if two or more domains could be combined to make a single domain.

After making focused observations, a taxonomy was made, providing an organization to the domains. Within each domain, the included terms were organized and an outline was made to show the different levels and relationships in the taxonomy. Spradley (1980) wrote, "A taxonomy, then, differs from a domain in only one respect: It shows the relationship among all the included terms in a domain. A taxonomy reveals subsets and the way they are related to the whole." (p. 113) A copy of the taxonomy is included in Appendix B.

After creating the taxonomy, I returned to the field for final observations. The next step in data analysis was to make a componential analysis, which focused on the characteristics and qualities of domains. In doing so, I looked for contrasts within each domain. Finally, themes were developed. Ways in which domains were related to each other and how domains related to the cultural scene as a whole were identified.

Wolcott's (1994) Transforming Qualitative Data helped distinguish between the three ingredients of qualitative research. The first ingredient was description, the second was analysis, and the third was interpretation. Descriptions were the observations I made or that had been reported to me by the participants. Analysis entailed looking for patterns and interrelationships among the essential features from my descriptions. Interpretation involved attempting to say what it all meant. Wolcott (1994) suggested erring on the side

of having too much description and too little interpretation. A strong base of descriptions from which to make interpretations is needed.

In the descriptions, I used what Wolcott (1994) labeled as "progressive focusing." The problem to address was the transition, and I focused in on the transition and then stepped back to look at the broader picture. The broader picture was that the teachers were part of a system in which they had little power, as they did not make the decisions concerning the transitions. What Wolcott (1994) called the "chronological approach" was also used by describing what it was like for the teachers before the transition and then what it was like after the transition.

Interviewing

Formal interviews with five of the six teachers were conducted as were informal interviews with all six of the teachers. Spradley's (1979) Ethnographic Interview informed the interview process. Danielle, a toddler teacher, did not wish to have a formal interview. She did agree to let me observe her classroom, and she did allow me to have informal interviews with her. For the formal interviews, I met with each teacher individually for approximately an hour and a half. Our interviews were taped so that they could be transcribed at a later time. In the formal interviews the following questions were used:

*Tell me about a time when a child in your care left the infant
classroom for the toddler classroom.

*What are the reasons for the transition?

- *What are the steps in the transition process?
- *What was it like for you when an infant left his or her classroom for the toddler classroom?
- *How was this transition (the one that a teacher is talking about at the moment) different than others?
- *Describe a relationship you had with an infant or toddler.
- *How do you prepare for the transition?
- *Describe your role as a teacher of infants or toddlers.
- *Describe a typical day in your classroom.
- *What interactions do you have with the parents about the transition?
- *What is your teaching philosophy?
- *Tell me about staff turnover here.
- *What is your experience when children leave the program?
- *Tell me about a time when a child left the program.

Informal interviews throughout the study were also conducted with all six of the teachers. I had opportunities to talk to them while they cared for the children because of my participation with the teachers in the classrooms. Sometimes these took place in the afternoons when most infants had gone home, other times when the infants were sleeping. I also went into the kitchen and break room and found teachers to informally interview.

In the informal interviews I asked questions about what I had observed. For example, one day I saw Lila (an infant who had moved to the toddler room)

stomping her feet on the playground as she was looking into the infant room. I asked Candace, "What was going on with Lila on the playground?" When I heard the infant teachers talking about who was going to move up next to the toddler room, I asked them, "What will that be like for you when Andy (an infant) moves up?" I asked Danielle how certain infants were doing now that they were in the toddler room and what it was like for her the first week they were there.

Research group

I participated in a weekly, qualitative research group, consisting of faculty and students from the departments of psychology, nursing, education, and child and family studies. Usually, there were ten to twelve members of the group in any given meeting, which usually lasted for two hours. Members of the research group signed confidentiality statements to protect the privacy of the participants. I shared four interview transcripts and excerpts from my field notes in a total of five sessions. The group members gave alternative perspectives on the data, raised additional questions, and kept me grounded in the data by asking me to support what I had found with examples from the texts. Lincoln and Guba (1985) labeled this group process as "peer debriefing."

Researcher-researched relationship

In this section, I will discuss the researcher-researched relationship, which includes finding a key informant, gaining entry, establishing rapport, and

discussing data collection with the teachers. I will also describe the kinds of relationships I had with the six teachers.

First, I had to find a key informant. I explained the study to my friend, Candace, who worked in the infant classroom at Live Oak. She said I was welcome to come to her classroom to participate and observe and gave me the phone numbers of her directors. I called them and asked if I could come out and meet them. I spoke with Tracy, a director, and she asked that I just explain my study over the phone. She said a meeting was not necessary and that as long as Candace and Danielle did not mind me being there that it was fine with her. Therefore, Candace became my key informant.

The first day at Live Oak I filled out an employee application, listing references and giving permission to the directors to run a police check on me. My second day at Live Oak before I entered the building, I saw Candace waiting for me in the lobby. She smiled, helping relieve the nervousness I felt coming to the center on my first day in the classroom. She took me into the classroom and introduced me to Maria and Lena, the full-time assistant teachers, told me the names of each infant, and gave me a tour of the classroom. I told her I was there to participate and observe, which meant I would change diapers and give bottles if she wanted me to.

A month after being at Live Oak, I asked Candace to introduce me to the toddler teachers. I felt I needed my key informant to help me establish an "in" to the toddler room. She took me to the toddler room, and I explained my study to Danielle and Nia, the two toddler teachers. Danielle said, "Would you like to just

peek through the window?" I told her that I needed to be in the classroom down on the floor with the children because I wanted to help her care for the toddlers to better understand her experiences with their transitions. Danielle agreed to let me come in the room to observe, but at this point she did not want me to help care for the toddlers.

Establishing rapport with the teachers was needed so that they would act naturally in the classrooms and so that they would open up to me in our formal and informal interviews. Spradley (1979) defined rapport as a harmonious relationship between an ethnographer and an informant. He described four stages two people experience when one is interviewing the other. They experience apprehension, exploration, cooperation, and finally participation. To establish rapport, I eased myself into the scene. I arrived in casual clothes with just a pad of paper and pen. The first thing I would do was sit down on the floor because I did not want to be a threat to the children or the teachers. My comfort level was directly related to how the teachers accepted me. Their body language, tone of voice, and gestures enabled me to feel welcomed.

Wolcott (1995) wrote that researchers could determine how well they knew their informants (participants) by the personal information the informants may or may not have shared with them. For example, if informants were sharing information about their grandmothers and their sleeping habits, then the researchers could say they knew them well.

I used Wolcott's (1995) gauge to determine how well I knew my participants. Candace did not tell me about her grandmother, but she told me

about her three children and the visit her parents made from another country. Sometimes in the late afternoons, when most of the infants had gone home, Candace shared her stories with me. Maria also told me about her family in Turkey, her husband working on his Ph.D., and worries about her daughter in the pre-kindergarten program. Lena shared her personal stories with all the teachers in the classroom.

I established rapport with all the teachers, except for Danielle. Even though she told me it was fine for me to be in her classroom, I always felt tense in her presence. When I asked her if I could come to her room, she said, "Sure honey, no problem. The kids don't seem to mind you, so no problem." However, when I was in the room with her, she was quiet and did not speak much to me. When she did speak, it felt like a formal presentation. She would explain an activity they were doing or she would tell me about a child. Her words told me "yes, you can be here," but her body language told me "I really don't want you here."

I explained to all the teachers how I took "raw" notes in the classroom but then later went home and filled in the notes with more detail to create "field notes." One day Candace said, "I hope you're writing positive things about us." It was then that I decided to bring a sample from my field notes to show the teachers what my data looked like. Samples were brought each week to them; not all of my field notes, just selected portions. They read them and commented when I had "not gotten it right." Candace later indicated that she looked forward

to getting the samples because one day when I forgot her copy, she said, "You forgot the notes. I always read them, and I have a special file at home for them."

The researcher-researched relationship had a direct influence on the kind of data I collected. The more open, honest, and comfortable I was with the participants, the more access I had to data. I followed the guidelines of Hatch and Bondy (1986) by discussing with participants the kind of relationship we wanted to have and our roles and responsibilities.

Hatch and Bondy (1986) described four styles of researcher-teacher (researched) relationships and placed them on a continuum. Moving from right to left, the relationships could be participating-collaborative, accommodating-cooperative, reluctant-protective, or antagonistic-defensive. The further the relationship is to the right the better chance the researcher has for obtaining data that reflects the natural state of a classroom.

In the participating-collaborative relationship, the researched (the participant) has input into the design and implementation of the study. The teacher is part of the research team. I did not have this kind of relationship with the teachers because I did not ask them to help with research design.

Feldman (1993) also constructed a specific definition of "collaboration" for university researchers and school teachers. He said they must, "...work with parity; assume equal responsibility for problem identification, data collection, analysis, and report writing; share the same set of goals, and assure that needs are met." (p. 343) Using Feldman's definition, Candace and I did not have collaboration. We were friendly to each other, she helped me distribute and

collect informed consent forms, and she welcomed me into her classroom at any time. But I assumed responsibility for identifying the research questions, for collecting and analyzing data, and for writing the final report. I wanted us to have equal status, and I attempted to level the playing ground by asking her to tell me what to do. But, she was a childcare teacher, and I was a university graduate student. In our society a graduate student has more power and opportunities than does a childcare teacher, and we both knew that.

I had an accommodating-cooperative relationship with all the teachers, except for Danielle. In the accommodating-cooperative relationships the teachers understand and believe in the goals of the research study, they feel comfortable with the researcher, and they want to help the researcher. Hatch and Bondy reported that usually these teachers feel confident about their jobs and do not try to hide things or change their behaviors in front of the researcher. I will now describe my relationship with Candace to illustrate this kind of relationship.

Candace and I were open with each other, trusted each other, and shared our stories; as a result, I obtained useful and rich data. She also volunteered to help me collect the necessary informed consent forms from the other teachers and parents. As I would explain the nature of the study, she would stand next to me, nodding her head and giving her approval. Then I would distribute the form, and if I was not there when the teacher or parent returned it, she would collect it for me. I do not think I would have been able to get as many forms back if she had not been with me.

I went to Candace's classroom usually two to three hours at a time. The most productive periods for my data collection were in the afternoons when most of the children were asleep or many had gone home. During those times, Candace and I would have conversations about the infants' transitions. She would volunteer to me how certain children were doing who had moved into the toddler room, and she would tell me who would be going next and if he or she was ready. We would talk about the policies at the center and whether she agreed with them. We would discuss certain parents and how some were easier to work with than were others.

With Danielle, I would characterize my relationship as reluctant-protective, the style, according to Hatch and Bondy, when teachers feel like they must edit their behavior in front of the researcher. They want the researcher to think they are good teachers and are worried that they will not come across as effective teachers. Therefore, they watch what they do in front of the researcher. Danielle was the only teacher I did not formally interview. Twice we had an interview scheduled, but she had to cancel both times. When I tried to re-schedule for the third time, she told me to find someone else to interview because she did not have the time.

Ethical issues

Four ethical issues were of concern in this study: (a) how to initially present the purpose of the research; (b) what was the appropriate level of my involvement with the participants; (c) how to portray the participants in my final

report; and (d) how best to leave the research site after being there for six months.

When I presented myself to Live Oak, I was forthright about my purpose. In the initial conversation with a director and subsequent conversations with teachers, I told them I was conducting a dissertation study on teachers' experiences during the times of transitions. I asked if I could work alongside them in the classroom several hours per week for six months. I felt I needed to be open and honest about my identity and purpose because I wanted to work closely with the teachers and gain their trust.

The second issue concerned my level of involvement, what role to fill in the room, and how best to handle differences in practice. I was involved in the daily life of the classrooms, following the directions of the teachers. I fed the infants, changed their diapers, helped them go to sleep for a nap, and played with them on the floor. When a conflict situation arose between two children or between a teacher and a child, I followed the guidance of the teachers in handling the situation. Within the classroom, I yielded to the authority of the teacher.

However, there was a time when I wanted to intervene on a child's behalf. A situation arose where the teachers and I had different beliefs about how to comfort a child. In one of the classrooms, a child was crying the entire time I was there (two hours). The teachers said that they could not hold her because she wanted to be held all day, and they could not do that. I believed the child needed someone to hold her, but I did not pick up the child because I did not want to go

against the teachers' beliefs or threaten the teachers' authority. Handling the personal conflict between my own preferred practices and those of the teachers has been a source of continuing discomfort.

The third ethical issue was how to portray the participants in the final paper. Throughout the study I shared findings with participants and asked for their feedback to accurately portray their experiences. The infant and the toddler teachers received samples of my field notes and could see what I was using as data. Candace occasionally corrected me about information I had recorded. Each teacher was given a copy of her interview transcript from our formal interview, asking for her feedback on information she wanted deleted or added. I did not want to embarrass or humiliate them by revealing information they did not wish to be reported.

In a few incidences, I had to decide whether or not to report observations and parts of interviews that could have hurt or "betrayed" another teacher or parent. For example, one teacher told me that another teacher had lied to a parent about what the child had done that day. Because this incident was not related to the purpose of my study, the transition to the toddler room, I did not report it. In reporting information, Wolcott (1995, pp. 147-151) suggested keeping the limits and boundaries of the study in mind. If negative incidences are related to the focus of the study, they should be reported. If not related, they should be left alone. Wolcott also suggested being candid, but discreet. He wrote, "Similarly, sticky issues can often be alluded to in such a way that insiders recognize whether you were being discreet, rather than simply naïve, while

outsiders need be no more the wiser" (p. 151). I reported sticky issues so that insiders would know I was aware of them, but did not divulge the details to the outside world.

The fourth ethical issue was how to leave the field once the study was completed – handling my own transition. Punch (1994) noted that some participants felt pain and loss after intense research studies. One way for them to display their anger was to say at the end of the study that the researcher did not adequately portray their realities and that the work should be destroyed, even though during the study they found the findings to be credible. In this study I began talking about the end of the study with the participants one month in advance. Candace, my key informant, seemed to be the most affected. Several weeks before the end she asked me, "How many more times will you be here?" When I would say "two" or "one," she would say, "Oh no." She said, "We will have to keep in touch." The other teachers did not respond in this manner after hearing about my departure. Candace's reaction is evidence of the special relationship we had.

Before publishing the dissertation as a book, I will ask each teacher for her permission to include information about her in the book. If a teacher does not want her stories published, I will delete all information about this teacher from the study. I plan to give each of the six teachers a copy of the dissertation.

Conclusion

In this chapter, the methods used to gather the words and actions of the teachers during the times of transitions were explained. These methods depended on my ability to relate to the teachers; I needed to make them feel comfortable so that they would act naturally and reveal their meanings to me. Because I participated with the infant teachers, they were able to see that I was interested in their work and that I cared about the children. Therefore, they were more willing to contribute to the research project.

My intent was to shed light on the transition experience so that one day the process may be improved if necessary. A familiar mantra in childcare is "the children come first." While this statement is important because often children's needs are neglected, teachers' needs are also important to consider. If the teachers feel the transition is being handled in an appropriate manner for them and for the children, then they will feel better about their work and, as a result, offer better care to the children. In the next chapter four themes will be discussed.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

After completing the domain analysis, a taxonomy, and a componential analysis, four themes were identified. The first theme was that teachers played both a mother and an educator role; each teacher played both roles but differed in how much they displayed each role. The mother/educator role theme had a direct relationship to how teachers experienced the transition of children. A mother-role teacher would feel as if she was giving up her own child, whereas an educator-role teacher would see this as a positive and necessary step in the child's development.

In the second theme, the teachers were either connected to or disconnected from the infants. Two infant teachers established close and intimate relationships with certain children and then had to disconnect from them after the transition. The toddler teachers made new connections with the children as they moved into the toddler room. Depending on the teachers' personalities and beliefs, some teachers were closer to the children than were others.

With the third theme, the infant teachers expressed a personal loss for themselves after the transition even as they recognized the infant was ready to move to the new toddler room. They described feeling sad or angry about certain infants moving to the toddler room. Loss was characterized by the

teacher not wanting the infant to leave, wanting the infant to come back for a visit, and not being able to help the infant after the transition. Readiness was characterized by the teacher believing that the infant needed new activities, toys, and teachers in a toddler classroom.

The fourth theme was that teachers experienced powerlessness concerning the transition process. They did not make the decisions about when the infants should move, about how the transition process should be handled, and about how they could keep in touch. The teachers waited for an official word to come from the office, telling them when a certain infant would move. Also, two policies made it difficult for teachers in the infant classroom to visit with former infants: Former infants were not supposed to visit in the infant classroom, and teachers were not supposed to visit former infants in their new classrooms. I will discuss both of these policies in the fourth theme.

The first three themes were closely related to each other. The teachers felt conflicted about their roles, their connections, and their feelings of loss. When the teachers played more of the mother role, they were more likely to form deeper connections and to experience loss (after the transition) than they were when they played the educator role. In the educator role, they maintained a distance from the children and subsequently did not feel as much loss when the infants moved to the new classroom. This discussion of the how the themes were related will be continued at the end of this chapter.

The ten research questions from Chapter One (p. 4) are each addressed in one or more themes. This relationship is depicted in Table C-1. Research

question #1 "What role did the teacher play in the life of an infant or toddler?" is addressed in the mother/educator role theme; the teacher played both a mother and an educator role.

Research questions #2 through #5 are addressed in the mother/educator, connection/disconnection, and readiness/loss themes. These questions are: "What was the nature of the relationship between the teacher and an infant?", "How did the teacher and an infant end a relationship together?", "How did the teacher and a toddler begin a relationship together?", and "What was the nature of the relationship between the teacher and a toddler?" Some of the teachers formed physical, mental, and emotional connections with the children, whereas other teachers kept their distance. When teachers ended their relationships, they had to disconnect.

Research questions #6 and #7 are addressed in the connection/disconnection and readiness/loss themes. These questions are: "What kinds of experiences did a teacher and an infant have during the transition?" and "What kinds of experiences did a teacher and a toddler have during the transition?" Sometimes teachers experienced loss after breaking their connections, whereas other times teachers focused more on the infant's readiness for the next room.

Research question #8 "How did a teacher prepare for the transition?" is addressed in the readiness/loss and powerlessness themes. The teachers prepared by indicating to each other and to the directors when an infant was ready to move and then by waiting for the directors to tell them what to do. In the

conclusion to chapter four when I discuss the relationships among the themes, research questions #9 and #10 will be addressed. These questions are: "How did the teacher experience the transition?" and "What was the meaning of the transition for the teacher?" Each theme will now be discussed in turn.

Mother/Educator Roles

Each teacher in this study played both a mother role, like Anna in The Good Preschool Teacher (Ayers, 1989), and an educator role. Candace and Nia played the mother role more often than they did the educator role, whereas Maria, Danielle, and Amanda played the educator role more often. Lena played each role somewhat equally. When teachers were in the mother role, they expressed their emotions, they used language that sounded like a mother, they described being in an infant's home or wanting to take an infant to their homes, and they focused on individual children. All the teachers who assumed a mother role had special relationships with two or three children. A teacher in the educator role teacher expressed less emotion, used language that sounded like an educator, and treated infants and toddlers more like a group than like a collection of individuals.

The mother role

Candace was very much characterized by the mother role because of the words she described the infants using and the emotions she expressed.

Candace described a scene where an infant girl who had moved to the toddler room searched for her former infant teachers. She said:

For a lot of them call us Mom, you know, they say Mommy, they mean us too, you know. It makes me sad even thinking of it. This is bad...Yes, but I still remember that one (an infant girl's transition). That was bad. She knew where our room was...They were on the playground. She came to our window. To the window, she knew we were in there, cried. It was bad. She did that for awhile.

Candace perceived the word "Mommy" as referring to her, and she felt sad thinking about the infant girl's transition. As I will demonstrate later, teachers in the educator role used different words, such as "students" and "transfer," to describe children and the transition, and they did not let themselves become as emotionally involved with the children.

In the same conversation about the infant girl who cried and looked for Candace through a window, Candace described how it was difficult for her to watch this infant girl make her transition. She said:

I have one time, a baby, the hardest one... She cried every time she saw us again. After she moved. And even when she visited in the rooms before,...she didn't do as good. So we waited and did it kind of what we call the cold turkey kind of thing. You know, you had to move and there was no way back. You know from one day to the next. Because she did not do. We tried a few times...She screamed. Right away was holding on, did not want to, did not want to stay, but when she got age wise, too old, she really really had to, or you know, she did not do as good as the other babies in the room anymore. Because she was too old for our room you know, so we had to eventually...Move her up. That's what we call it. Cold turkey. [I felt]...bad in a way. You know, you want them to feel good about it and we had to, we could not go with her, because it did interrupt it for her, for the room, for everybody else. You know messed up the whole other rooms too. But, made me feel bad because it's not right. It's like taking a person, how do you say it, that she liked, I don't know how to say it, away from, you know, it's like separation, you would think it was like in a family when the mommy or the daddy goes, you know...For them you are, yes.

Again, she described an emotion, feeling "bad," and she used words that likened her to a parent when she described the separation between her and the girl as similar to that of a mother and child. She was not balanced between the mother and educator roles.

Candace described another infant for whom she played the mother role. She also was a babysitter for this infant boy on weekends, which appeared to heighten the relationship. When his parents came to pick him up at Live Oak, he did not want to leave Candace; rather, he wanted to stay with her. She said:

I had babies, I know it doesn't make the parents feel good. I had babies before and they came. The parents came at night, they did not want to go. So we held them and tried to give them to them and they hold on to us...Actually it is a long time ago. He's in second grade now. First grade. O.k., yea. I used to babysit for the child too. So that, he really really knew me. On weekends, I babysitted on Saturdays for him. So, he had a good relationship with me still and the kids, so, still...He didn't want to go, no.

Candace believed that the boy saw her as a mother figure because of his preference of being with her rather than the real parents when it was time for him to go home. Another characteristic of being a mother-role teacher was spending time in the infant's home or wanting the infant to spend time in her home. These teachers chose to blur the boundaries between home and work and blend their personal and professional lives.

However, there were times when Candace was able to clearly differentiate between her role and that of an infant's mother. One day an infant boy was in his crib and was saying, "Ma ma ma ma." In my field notes I wrote:

There was a little boy whimpering and crying in his crib. He was saying, "Ma ma ma ma." Candace said, "That's right, your Mama will be here soon. That's right. Mama is coming."

In this instance, she perceived the sounds “Ma ma ma...” to mean the boy’s real mother, not her. Therefore, with this boy she did not play the mother role.

Nia, a toddler assistant teacher, also played more of the mother role than she did of the educator role. She described a toddler boy, Patrick, whom she said was “her baby.” She said she would take care of him for the rest of his life if he needed. Nia said:

He’s my baby. And even his parents know. They went on, it’s Patrick, they went on a vacation, they brought me pictures and all that stuff so I wouldn’t miss him too bad. But, he is one that I would take home with me if something happened. I would take care of him for the rest of his life. We just like, and it’s hard not to show favoritism and stuff, but it’s just as soon as I come into a room, he just runs right to me. And we play and we, I mean I feel like, I don’t know. I feel like I definitely fill in for his mom’s shoes when he is here. I mean he does not go home unloved or anything, you know. But we just, somehow, I don’t know why we just kind of connected.

Nia demonstrated three aforementioned characteristics and one new characteristic of being a mother role teacher. She used the “mother” language (“my baby”), she expressed emotion (love), and she imagined taking him to her home. The new characteristic was “showing favoritism” or having a special relationship with a particular infant (“...it’s hard not to show favoritism...”).

Mother-role teachers had special relationships with two or three children, while educator-role teachers treated all children equally as a group. During the six-month period I spent in the two classrooms, Nia chose Patrick and Lila for special relationships; Candace chose Jerome and Lila; and Lena chose Andy, Belle, and Sam. These were the children the teachers talked more about in our interviews

and played with more in the classrooms. The teachers in the mother role did not neglect the other children; they just did not feel as strongly about them.

Nia did have a special relationship with Patrick after seeking him out. She said:

But whenever I was in there, like I would, probably the first thing I would do would be go find him and, you know, and say good morning and all that stuff. And then as I was playing with other children, I could just tell that he was kind of like circling me, you know. Or if somebody would like sit in my lap, he would be back here. Just, like, I would just scratch his back. He would lay in my lap and I would scratch his back. Or I mean we would just rough house together or. And, I mean, Danielle, she um, of course another thing, she's not, she doesn't stay on the floor a lot and roll around with them and stuff. So they react to me differently because I'm just a big kid, you know, and I chase them around and all that stuff. And she's more just, kind of tells them "no" and stuff like that, you know, like the teacher does, but. You know, definitely, I know that's why they like me, you know, they connect with me. And I think when I came in there Patrick just needed that. Because I'm sure he'd been in there for a little while and, you know, and I'm sure his parents treat him like that, so.

Part of having a special relationship meant having more physical contact with that child than with others. For example, Patrick circled Nia and they "rough-housed" together. Nia believed that she interacted with Patrick in a way similar to that of his parents; therefore, she identified with them and believed she played their role.

However, the part of Nia's relationship with Patrick that she did not like was when Patrick's mother would come pick him up because Patrick would immediately run to his mother. Nia did not want him to forget her. She said:

But as soon as he sees his Mom, he leaves me and goes straight to her. So I mean it's nothing, you know...I hate it. It's like, it's like, I mean I'll sit there and I'll be like, see 'ya. And I'll wave until he like smiles and kind of you know. But, I don't know. It's something like when the parents aren't there, all the kids treat you a lot different than when their parents are there. Definitely.

There were problems for Nia from playing the mother role. It was hard for her when Patrick's mother came to pick him up because Patrick reminded her that she was not equivalent to the real mother. Although Nia perhaps saw herself as equivalent to a parent, Patrick did not when both were present.

The educator role

Maria, Danielle, and Amanda played more of the educator role than they did of the mother role. Lena went back and forth between roles. Maria told me that she treated all of the children the same. When I asked her to pick one child and to describe the relationship she had with that child, she told me she could not do that. She said:

Let me see, I have relationship all of them same. It's hard. It's really hard to tell because, you know, we always do same thing for everyone not special treat...for someone, anybody same. Whatever you know we didn't, our room, we did not separate the room infant younger, infant or older infant. We do take care of all of them the same time. This way it's hard to tell, Eliza. I can not do.

Maria treated the infants as a group, not as a collection of individuals, and she emphasized giving everybody equal treatment.

Instead of talking about her relationships with the infants, Maria talked about indicators of when infants were ready to move to the toddler room. She said they had to be drinking from a cup (bottle free), walking, and eating table food. One day she told me that two boys were now eating table food. I wrote in my field notes:

Then Maria came in the room. "Eliza," she said. "Sam and Andy are eating table food. Andy is very neat. He eats one pea at a time. Sam

was covered from head to foot with macaroni and cheese." Lena and Maria told me how the two infant boys were both up in their highchairs, eating table food. While Andy is very neat, Sam wanted to get food all over him. They said it was a contrast.

Maria told me that the infants were "fine" when they moved over to the toddler room and that she still saw them in the hall or through the window to the playground. She said, "We give them hugs when we see them in hall. They are fine, Eliza. They are fine." She did not elaborate any further on how she felt or what the children meant to her. She did not get too close, and she did not describe them as being like her children.

Lena played both roles somewhat equally. First, I will describe her educator role and then her mother role. When Lena was in her educator role, she used an "educator" language by referring to the infants as "students" and the transition as a "transfer." She said:

And at the time Audrey was going up, we had like five other students that went up. We tried the boys. We tried Patrick and two others. They did not transfer very well... But, it, this next group of students is going to be harder to transfer. And we'll have to move two of them in July and we just don't know which ones to transfer. Right now we just don't have, the students that need to transfer just aren't mature enough. And the ones that should, that we could transfer aren't old enough. So we're kind of in a sticky wicket here.

Lena also used the word "report" when she told a mother her infant daughter would have to report to the toddler room the next Monday. The infant was moving to the toddler room. She said:

...And kind of remind her again when she leaves that that Friday, that Monday she has to report to a different room, and if she wants, you know, you can bring her here and we'll just kind of help you back over there and show you how to do it, if that would help.

However, in my observations of Lena, I saw her mother role. One day she was holding an infant boy who had vision problems because his eyes rolled back and forth and were not yet able to focus on one object. Her language sounded like a mother as she said, "You are my baby." This day, she did not refer to him as a student. In the connection/disconnection and readiness/loss themes, there will be more evidence of Lena playing a mother role when she expresses her emotions and describes her special relationships.

Danielle, the lead teacher in the toddler room, played more of the educator role than she did of the mother role. In the toddler classroom there was a semi-circular table with ten small seats attached, which Danielle used for various functions. She put the toddlers in their seats when she wanted to clean up the room, do group activities, and serve snack and lunch. I wrote in my field notes:

In the toddler room there were nine toddlers, sitting in seats around a semi-circular table. These seats were attached to the table. The toddlers were not able to get out of the seats without a teacher helping them. Danielle said, "We're cleaning up the room, so we put these guys in here." Two minutes later Danielle brought a plastic bag full of green play-dough to the table. She gave each child a small amount. One toddler boy was crying. He would not touch the play-dough. Danielle said, "What's the matter, don't you want to play with play-dough? It's play-dough. See the play-dough."...Five minutes later she picked up the play-dough and cleaned the table. The toddlers were still in their seats. Next, she brought a stack of books to the table and spread them out in front of the toddlers. The toddlers picked up the books. One little girl was crying. She raised her arms up in the air. The toddler next to her was poking her accidentally with a book. Danielle said, "Everybody read a book. Read the books. Look, see the book!" Danielle turned to me and said, "In this classroom, we do an activity, play a little, do an activity, play a little. They don't have long attention spans, so you really can't spend much time on one activity."...

Even though some of the children were clearly not happy participating in the group activities, Danielle continued to contain the children as a single group. She attributed their difficulties at the table to short attention spans.

Danielle also acted as a guard out on the playground to keep a toddler from biting the others. I wrote in my field notes:

When I first walked out on to the playground, Danielle told me, "This child has bitten four times. Four times. I have to watch her all the time." Then she showed me the bite mark on Audrey's arm. Audrey held her arm up to show me. Audrey rubbed the place where she had been bitten. Danielle stood up against the gate and watched the children. Her face looked serious. She did not smile or talk to any of the children or to me. She stood and watched. All of a sudden I heard Danielle scream to the girl who had previously bitten, "No! No! Do not bite!" Her scream was a high pitched squeal. She pulled this girl from the slide and put her down on the rocks. The girl had just bitten Lila who was coming up the steps of the slide... Then Danielle told me she was going on break. She said, "Liza, I'm going on break, o.k. I'm taking this child (the child who had bitten Lila) with me inside." Danielle said to the girl, "You're going inside to another room."

Danielle had a different way from Nia of interacting with the toddlers; she stood at the fence and watched carefully to keep one child from harming the others.

Amanda, who worked in both classrooms, played more of an educator role. She described how she had to think of the toddlers as a group following the same schedule, as opposed to individuals each with their own schedule. She said:

It is such a change for them (the toddlers). Uh, they eat table food. Only table food. They sit in those little chairs, all together right there. They, I mean, they're on a schedule. Totally on a schedule. Those kids (the infants) aren't, you work by their schedule, whatever they need you know... They just, it's not nearly as catering (in the toddler room).

In summary, the teachers in the mother role expressed emotions, used a "mother" language, blended work and family, treated children as individuals, and

had special relationships. In contrast, teachers in the educator role expressed less emotion, used an "educator" language, and treated the children as a group. The next section will describe how each of these kinds of teachers formed connections to the children.

Connection/Disconnection

The second theme was that teachers could be classified as being connected or disconnected to the infants and toddlers. Candace and Lena established emotional, mental, and physical connections with the infants; after the transition, they had to disconnect from the infants. The critical aspects of connection were looking inside the child, recognizing his emotions, and spending an extended amount of time with him in his play. Nia established the same kinds of connections as did Candace and Lena after the infants moved to the toddler room. The teachers who played the mother role established stronger connections to the children with whom they had special relationships; therefore, they were not connected in the same way to every child in the room. Maria, Amanda, and Danielle, educator-role teachers, did not establish the same kinds of connections with the infants or toddlers, as did the others, because they were less emotionally involved. Their relationships were more formal and distant.

Connections in the infant room

When an infant first started attending Live Oak, it took time for Candace to establish a connection. Sometimes that adjustment occurred easily, as

evidenced by the infant not crying; other times could be more difficult with one infant crying continuously for three days. Although Sam did not have a special relationship with Candace, the following description illustrates the challenges of having a new infant in the room and the beginnings of a connection. I wrote in my field notes:

There was a new baby boy, Sam, there today. He started this past Monday. Today is Wednesday. Candace said, "He cried all day on Monday and a lot on Tuesday." He was sleeping when I walked in today, so I did not hear him crying when I first arrived. Candace said, "He is afraid. He wants to be held all the time. His mother moved to [this state] from another state. We are not sure about the Dad, where he is." When he woke up, Candace held him.

Candace tuned into how Sam felt and acknowledged his fears, and after three days, he stopped crying.

Candace also tuned into the emotional life of Jerome. She was sitting on the floor with another infant in her lap when Jerome came and hit the infant in the face. I wrote in my field notes:

Candace was holding a small infant girl in her lap. Jerome came up to the baby and swatted her in the face. Candace said, "I think you are jealous, aren't you? You want to be here in my lap, don't you?" Candace had a soft voice.

Candace interpreted this hit to mean that Jerome was jealous and that he wanted to be the one sitting in her lap. She could have immediately scolded him for his behavior, but instead she acknowledged how she thought he felt and comforted him. Candace tried to understand a child's emotions the same way Anna did in Ayers' (1989) The Good Preschool Teacher. Anna tuned in to the emotional lives of the infants in her center by reading their facial expressions and body language.

Candace also took pride in Jerome's accomplishments. I wrote in my field notes:

When I walked in today, Candace said, "Jerome started walking over the weekend. He's walking in here now, a few steps." I saw him walk without holding on to anything. He took off with his arms waving in the air. He made eye contact with Candace, then he smiled and babbled some sounds, and finally he crashed into Candace.

Learning to walk is an important and exciting milestone in a child's development, and the teachers were there as the infants took their first steps. Candace was especially proud of Jerome because of how much she cared about him.

Candace recognized when the infants were expressing their emotions to each other. I took these field notes:

Two infants were sitting side by side. They were playing with a toy that made sounds when they touched it. One infant screamed and then the other imitated him. They continued imitating each other for several minutes. Candace walked over to them and said, "Jerome, you are teaching Belle how to scream, aren't you? You're mad, and you're teaching Belle how to be mad."

Candace believed Jerome was expressing his anger and teaching Belle how to do the same. Similar to the incident mentioned earlier when Jerome hit a younger infant in the face, Candace could have scolded Jerome and Belle for screaming, but instead she chose to address their emotions. Candace had more confidence and willingness to deal with all the infants' emotions than did the teachers in Leavitt's (1994) study. Leavitt (1994) described teachers who only acknowledged infants when they expressed "positive" emotions such as happiness and joy; the teachers ignored them when they expressed "negative" emotions such as sadness, anger, or frustration. These teachers wanted the infants to smile and laugh so that others would think of them as good teachers.

Lena spent an extended amount of time (twenty minutes) with Andy, clearing his path as he pushed a toy lawnmower around the room. I took these field notes:

Andy pushed the toy lawnmower around the room. Then he pushed the toy into the wall. He lifted the toy up, turned his body around, and marched off in a new direction. His picked up speed as he went across the room. Lena told him, "You have great problem solving skills!!" She watched him charge across the room and cleared his way several times when he was about to run into a johnny jump up (bouncy seat) or another infant. Lena said, "Andy, I'm going to miss you. You have such a cute personality."

In our interview, Lena described this situation with Andy that was just presented. She said:

We have a toy. A push toy in the nursery, where he (Andy) can pull himself up and he can walk behind it. He is not able to walk by himself yet. He's only 9 months old. And so he's got a development, is up there with a year old. He will probably go before most of the [one] year olds that we have. And he has four teeth and a round head, and rosy red cheeks that are just, you just have to hug him. He's so cute. When he hugs he hugs back and he gets excited. He'll pinch or he'll bite. He doesn't know he's doing it. He's got problem solving skills that is great. And he's got a funny personality. He's just always happy. And it's hard to give up babies, that are just, and he's so easy because he'll let you know when he's hungry. He'll stop. He just kind of just stops moving and he'll just go, unh unh unh. Can't speak a word, but, unh, unh, unh. You feed him and he's just happy as a lark, let's go again. And he's always, he's always wanting to play. He plays lots and lots. He plays fun, he plays hard. And you just know when you, well wait a minute, we want another one like you, can't we just keep you for awhile, Andy.

As Lena recounted this story, I could hear how much she enjoyed him. She had spent enough time with him to tune into his mental abilities (his problem solving skills), his emotions (his happiness), and his physical needs (his hunger). She acknowledged how hard it would be to give him up and wished that they could keep him for more time.

Lena told me that on the weekends she wished Andy could be in her home, taking things out of her cabinets. She said:

But yes, the other night I was sitting there thinking, it would be really fun just to have a little baby crawling around in the house. I want Andy, he'd be fun. I could see him crawling in my cupboards and pulling out the bowls, and I think Andy, because he is so active. And my house is active. And so he would adapt real well. And then I kind of think in the back of my mind, uh, Jerome wouldn't, and Audrey wouldn't, you know. But, oh, it would be sweet to hold little Andy and have him playing, you know, because sometimes you just want to play all day.

Wanting an infant in her home was a characteristic of being a mother role teacher. Therefore, in the above transcript, Lena sounded more like a mother than like an educator because of her desire to have Andy crawling around in her home. When Lena played her mother role, Andy became one of her favorites and thus she connected with him. For Lena, Andy was different from the other infants because he liked to play and he was active; Lena described herself as being active and wanting to play, which suggests that she might have identified with Andy and therefore connected with him.

Lena established a connection with Sam after he had been in the program for several months. She watched him struggle with the same toy lawnmower Andy had used, and she tried to teach him how to turn it. I wrote in my field notes:

Sam pushed a toy lawnmower around the room. He's 10 months old. Lena said, "Sam has no problem solving skills. He throws a fit. She said to him as he was pushing the lawnmower into the wall, "Can you turn it? Can you make it turn?" He kept pushing it into the wall. Then he would make the back wheels come up. The lawnmower was pressed up against the wall. Sam would make little noises and turn his head around to look at Lena. Lena said, "O.K., I'll help you. Because you didn't whine." Sam pushed the toy around some more and started making noises again. Lena said, "Well, it isn't in the way of anything. We could drop it." She

collapsed the toy into a flat push toy. Sam started crying. Lena said, "Well, that's not what you wanted, was it?" She said, "Do you want me to make it tall? Use your words. Say 'tall.' Oh, don't yell at me. Now, that's not allowed."...We were watching Sam push the lawnmower around some more and she said, "You can do it without Ms. Lena. Turn it. He doesn't know the concept of 'turn it.' But that's o.k."

Lena and Sam engaged in this game of give and take. She wanted him to learn how to push the lawnmower on his own, but she was also there to help him. In this example, Lena and Sam had a mental connection because she took the time to teach him a new skill.

Lena described both Andy and Sam using the same toy lawnmower and stated that Andy had great problem solving skills with the toy, whereas Sam did not. Andy was four weeks older than Sam; however, Lena did not mention the age difference when she was describing their differences.

Lena also connected with Belle. She discovered how Belle liked to lie on the floor and roll and how she liked to read books. In our interview Lena said:

I would sit on the floor and I do, I still do this, I'm terrible, I play with these babies. And we'd sit on the floor and Belle would just kind of like to lay on you. She didn't want you to hold her in your lap, she didn't want you to, you know, twist her back and forth like you're dancing or bouncing, little pony goes to town, or nursery rhymes. She wanted you just to lay there and let her roll on you and she'd read the book the way she thought it was supposed to be read, and in her language... You always have one child that just doesn't want to play, just rather just kind of be by itself and observe. And I think that's what she does is observe. And when they get in her way, she gets kind of upset. She'll bite or she'll pinch or she'll pull their hair just to get away. She knows that if she does bad things, they will leave her alone.

Lena described Belle in detail and noted her uniqueness. After spending time together, Lena learned how to make Belle comfortable by giving her space and letting her interact in her own way.

Maintaining the connection after the transition

After the transition, each infant teacher did something different to stay in touch with the old infants. Right away, Candace visited them in their new room. Lena waited a week or two, but then she visited them on the playground or in the toddler classroom. I heard Maria telling parents that she would visit the former infants, but I was never able to see her visiting. Candace described her visits to me, which I wrote in my field notes:

Soon after I arrived I asked Candace about the five babies who had recently moved to the toddler room. She said, "I come an hour early now so I can see them. If I pick them up, they cry when I leave. If I don't touch them, they don't cry."

Candace came in early by choice and did not receive extra pay; she felt it was important to maintain her connections with the former infants immediately after they made the transition. She was not ready to end her relationships with them just yet.

She also visited Audrey, an infant, after Audrey moved to the toddler room. In our interview she said:

That time I used to work from 9:00 – 6:00, but I had to come in early, so I spent the time before 9:00 in that room. She always came, but she did not want me to put her down again, so that was the hard part. When you have to leave again. They know. You know, when you put them down, they did not want that to happen. But she was always happy to see me.

It was harder for Candace to leave the toddler room if she touched the former infants than if she just talked to them. Thus, Candace seemed to be maintaining distance at the same time she was seeking contact both for her sake and that of the child.

Candace remembered the infants after they had moved. A few weeks after Jerome moved over, Candace was sitting on the floor with several infants. I took these field notes:

Candace was sitting on the floor with three infants around her. Lila stood up and reached for the tape recorder. Candace said, "Would you like to hear some music?" She turned the tape recorder on. When she heard the song, "Old MacDonald," she said, "Oh, that used to be Jerome's favorite song."

Even though Jerome was no longer physically present in her classroom, he was still on her mind.

Candace liked it when the infants learned to say her name, but it was not until they got to the toddler room that they could do this. She said the parents would bring the toddlers (the former infants) back to Candace and teach them her name. She said:

That's the fun part, they start talking and they can say the things, in the infant room they could not say. You know. They talk. And Danielle (toddler teacher) always tells them or the parents. A lot of times the parents too, they teach them our names still. And that is really really nice. You know, they call you by name now. In the infant room, they never, you know, really, some of them can, but not many can say. Danielle's name, they can say, it's easy. But mine, they can not say... So, the parents help a lot too and they see me and they ask, "Candace," and they tell the kids again too. But that is nice. That's the good part. It's strange in a way, though because you do not remember them this way, you know, and then all of a sudden they start talking and it seems to happen so fast then too. But only one word sentences, you know from hardly nothing, just babble sounds like ma ma ma, da da da, you know, to, to whole things. That is the good part. That's nice.

Candace enjoyed seeing the children develop and wanted the former infants to remember her and to communicate with her on a new level. She was excited that they could now speak to her, which was not the way they had interacted with her in the infant room. She did not want to forget them after they moved, and

perhaps thought that by learning her name they would be more likely to remember her. The parents had to bring the former infants back to the infant teachers, which meant they played a part in keeping the infant teacher and former infant in communication.

For the first week after an infant had moved to the toddler room, Lena felt she had to duck down when she passed the door to the toddler room. The top half of the door was glass, and she did not want the former infant to see her. She said:

The first week is an adjustment, but we have to stay away from that room for the first week. I was told, you know, don't go near, if we go by the windows and the kids can see you, kind of duck down on the door and stuff. And that's understandable.

Lena believed she would upset the children if they saw her and therefore gave them time to settle in, whereas Candace believed the children needed to see her the first week. (Or, perhaps it was Candace that needed to see the children).

Lena did visit her former infants after the first week. One day she opened the door to the playground and saw them. I wrote in my field notes:

Lena opened the infant classroom door. The toddlers were playing outside. Five toddlers came to see her. She was kneeling down, holding one of the infant boys. The infant boy was smiling. Lena said to the toddlers, "Did you come to see my babies. Hi Lila (a former infant). Hi Lila. Hi Lila. How are you doing? Hi Jerome (a former infant)." She said to the infants, "Do you remember Jerome? Hunh? Do you remember Jerome? Hi sweetheart." The toddlers stood outside of the infant classroom but did not go in. After five minutes Lena said, "Oh, I hear one of the babies crying. Ms. Lena has to shut the door." She helped several toddlers move back and then shut the door.

Although Lena certainly wanted to see her former infants, she maintained boundaries. She believed they needed to stay outside with their new toddler

teacher. Center rules stated that the infants and toddlers were not to go back and forth between their respective areas. Perhaps also it was a reflection of her “finalization” of the transition.

Maria said that she would see the infants again after they moved to the toddler room. I heard her tell a mother she would visit the mother’s infant in the toddler room. I wrote in my field notes:

Then one infant girl’s mother came to pick her daughter up. She said to Maria, “Well, I guess my daughter will be in [the] toddler [room] when you get back [from maternity leave].” Maria said, “We will come and see her. On the playground. In the classroom. Yes, we will come and see them.”

I never was able to see Maria visiting the old infants; therefore, I do not know if she chose not to visit them or if I just did not see her visiting them.

Disconnection

Even though the infant teachers visited the former infants in the toddler classroom, on the playground, and in the hallway, they eventually had to disconnect from the infants. They gradually ended their relationships with the infants.

Candace spent less and less time with the former infants. She was not able to touch them the way she used to. Several weeks after Jerome moved to the toddler room, Candace came into his classroom to return washcloths to Danielle, the lead toddler teacher. Jerome fixed his eyes on Candace, and Candace returned the stare. I took these field notes:

Candace came in to bring some washcloths to the toddler room. She saw me and said, “I forgot you would be here today. I used to have

all these kids, except for this little girl." I watched Jerome. He is now in the toddler room and he used to be in the infant room last month. He looked at Candace and followed her with his eyes until she left the room. Candace looked at him and smiled. Jerome smiled too. Danielle, the toddler teacher, said, "Jerome, do you see who that is?" (pointing to Candace). Then Candace left the room.

They no longer touched each other. They looked at each other for one minute and then did not see each other for the rest of the day. There seemed to be the recognition that the special relationship they had was coming to a close.

There were also two policies, which I will describe in theme four, that prevented Candace from maintaining her connections with the former infants. First, former infants were not to come back and visit in the infant room. Second, teachers were not to visit other classrooms to see children who had previously been in their classrooms.

When Belle, an infant, moved to the toddler room, Lena said that Belle had to break the bond they had. She also wanted Belle's mother to start talking to the toddler teacher, instead of her. She said:

They (the infants) just have to leave their bond. They get bonded to us... So, it's easier for some students just to go cold turkey. And we did it on a couple of them and it worked really really well. And that's why we, um, did this with Belle. And I think it did work out better. I really do. For Belle and her mother. Because when I was in (the infant room), you know, she would ask me questions, and I'm like, you can't ask me. You have to ask Danielle (toddler teacher). You've dealt with me for, you know, the time Belle is up to this age, and you need to do the other teacher.

Although the focus of this study was on teachers and not on parents, the teacher-parent relationship was relevant to the transition. The teacher said goodbye not only to the infant but also to the parent. The parents depended on the teachers for information and for reassurance about their children. Belle's mother used to

ask Lena questions. Therefore, the teachers had to help both the child and the parent make the transition to the new room.

Belle and Jerome had to move "cold turkey." Lena explained this term to me. Jerome moved cold turkey because he screamed when Lena took him to visit in the toddler room. Belle moved cold turkey because she clung to the infant teachers when the toddler teacher came in the infant room. Lena said:

We tried Jerome and Patrick... They did not transfer very well. Even with me going across the hall, Jerome just would not let go, did not like the surroundings. So, we tried it with just me dropping him off. And he wouldn't stop screaming. So we had to bring Jerome back. And what we did was cold turkey, is basically what we called it on him.

What we mean cold turkey. I have to explain this to Maria too because she is from a different country, she didn't understand the term. What we meant by cold turkey is we didn't introduce her (Belle) to Danielle's room. We never took her out of the nursery and took her over to the toddler room and sat with her. When Danielle would come in to the nursery, we'd notice a change in Belle that she didn't want, she would kind of be more clinging, I guess you would say, she would, she would follow Maria or Candace or I around. She wouldn't, she would stare at Danielle. She just didn't want to get to know her. And when she came in, she wouldn't take her eyes off of Danielle. The whole time she was in there, and we'd have her in there an hour and she just did not do well that way. So, we thought, well, she's not going to transfer very good. Instead of causing more emotional upheaval and moving her to the room and bringing her back in an hour and that hour she's in the toddler room, having her cry and fuss and cling and feel uncomfortable, it's easier if we would just take her on Monday morning. Put her over there and let Danielle handle the outcome. Because she was the one that was going to be the teacher, not us. So, we did that on a couple students.

Jerome and Belle both had strong reactions to the toddler room or toddler teacher; therefore, they were moved cold turkey. The infant teachers had to cut themselves off from them.

Although opening the infant classroom door to the toddler playground was a way to maintain a connection with the former infants, the door also symbolized

a barrier. The former infants were not allowed to come through the door back into the infant room. There was a gate in the door to keep the current infants from crawling out and the toddlers from coming in. The toddlers would see the infant teachers. Lila, a new toddler, had just moved to the toddler room from the infant room. I took these field notes:

Lena told me to open the door, so I did. I was holding an infant. All of the toddlers came to the gate, separating the infant room from the playground. I saw the blue sky and the sun. It was about 70 degrees. Lila was standing behind the group of toddlers who were pressed up against the gate. She looked at the infant teachers. She smiled and started to whimper. She started stomping her feet up and down and she began to cry a little bit. Candace said, 'Hi Lila. Hi Lila. Look at Lila. There she is.' Maria looked at Lila too and said, 'Lila! Lila!' Lena looked at Lila. The new toddler assistant picked Lila up. Lila continued looking in the room.

The next day I asked Candace to tell me about Lila's stomping on the playground. She said, "She knows she can not come back in the room. She probably doesn't know how. She probably thinks that if she comes in she won't be able to go back out. And Lila likes to be outside." This explanation was confusing to me. At first, Candace said that Lila knew she could not come back in, but then she said Lila did not know how to come back in. The second part of her response suggested that Lila could have come back in if only she had known how. Yet, I knew from my six months there and from another conversation with Candace that once infants moved to the toddler room, they were not supposed to come back and visit. This rule was a center policy, which I will discuss in theme four. There was not a flow back and forth between the old and the new. The infant teachers and old infants had to stay in their respective areas and were not free to move from room to room.

The infant teachers had to disconnect from the infants because they could no longer spend time with them the way they used to. Candace eventually stopped visiting before her shift. The infants grew older and established new kinds of connections with the toddler teachers, Nia and Danielle.

Connections in the toddler room

In this section, I will explain how the toddler teachers established new connections with the infants that were moving into the toddler room. Nia, the assistant toddler teacher, said that when an infant first entered the toddler room, the former infant/new toddler would disrupt the group's routine. She said:

...When they get that, when they do make that transition from infant to toddler room, it's hard because you have nine other kids that are used to the same schedule and used to doing things, you know. You kind of have to have some kind of routine. And then you have two that make it harder on the other kids, really. But, and then of course you have to find ways of getting closer to that child, and um, because other kids, they know that you're there for them. And they know that you love them. So these kids are coming in, and you know, you just have to really go out of your way to make them feel comfortable. And it's sometimes hard when you have, you know, nine others. But. And need you too, you know. I mean it's just harder because, you know, you're used to routine too, and this kid doesn't want to go to sleep, or he doesn't want to eat, and you know. It just kind of throws everything out of whack. But that's only for a couple of weeks.

Even within the constraints of the group structure, Nia was able to go out of her way to focus on individual children and find ways of becoming close to them. She described how she was "there" for them, how she loved them, and how she wanted them to feel comfortable. Clearly, she was concerned with more than just routine caregiving.

The nature of Nia's relationships was that of connection. Nia, who played more of a mother role, fell in love with Patrick and called him her baby. Nia started working in the toddler room two weeks after Patrick had moved in there from the infant room. She said:

...like when we're playing or...like when we hug or something or, it just feels like, I mean it just feels natural. And it just, I mean, I just have, for some reason, I don't know what started it 'cause he hasn't always been like that, you know. But for some reason, I mean, I just love him so much. You know, that when I hold him or something, I mean he automatically puts his head down and starts patting me. We just, we just have this bond, you know. At first I thought his parents might, you know, feel strange or something. But, I mean they've offered me nanny positions.

Nia had a special relationship with Patrick that was different from all the others. She also mentioned the parent-teacher relationship, specifically that his parents might not like Nia and Patrick's relationship. She was moving in to the parents' territory with her intense feelings of love. But, because they offered her a nanny position she felt that they did accept her relationship with their son.

When Nia had to leave the room just for a few minutes, Patrick would cry for her. At times, Nia felt overwhelmed by this relationship in a way similar to that of the providers in Nelson's (1995) study, who sometimes felt the need to distance themselves from the children. She said:

But, um, he's one that, like that's one of the reasons I kind of had to move up [to another classroom]. Because I couldn't leave for a break without him crying the whole time. And I couldn't, you know, I couldn't walk out of the room, and I couldn't change a diaper, and I couldn't, you know, without him just connecting, you know, holding on to me.

She eventually left this toddler classroom and moved up to a new room for two reasons. One reason was that she did not like the way the lead teacher interacted with the toddlers, and a second reason was that Patrick cried

whenever she left his side. They had become so close that she could not make a move without him.

Nia also connected with Lila. She described Lila as being like a teen-aged girl who knew how to get what she wanted. In our interview she said:

She's like a teenager. Going through puberty. She, um, she's like, she's very emotional, and very, she's just like a girl, I mean, you know, everything that goes with a teenage girl she has already, which has always been surprising to me. She's just, she just seems very advanced. She um, when she wakes up she's very cranky, and when she's hungry, she's cranky, when she's, you know. She just kind of gives off that... She lets you know what she wants, which is good for a baby. It's kind of unusual at that age. But, you can tell when she, who she likes, you can tell who she's connected with. Like the kids and the teachers, and if somebody comes in that she doesn't know, you can, she kind of runs across the room, and she's very aware of what's going on around her. And a lot of the other kids aren't like that. So, she's the one that sticks out the most... I think she's connected to me a lot. Like if I come into the room,...if she's like crying or if she, you know, she automatically just, her eyes get big and she brightens up and claps and you know, how. Because they can't talk, so they have to do something. But, she's, yea, I don't know, I think as soon as they go into a different room, they connect with one person.

In a quote on page 71 of this chapter, Nia described herself as "a big kid" who liked to chase the kids around. Nia's description of herself sounds similar to her description of Lila because they both moved around the room (Nia chased and Lila ran), and they were both emotional and expressive. Later in our interview I asked Nia to describe how Lila was like a teenager, and she said:

kind of wild...can't really tame it...you can't really control it, and...she just always reminds me of somebody that was older...I don't know, we always just call her the cat, 'cause she's just very sneaky...I guess she might just have more personality than I always thought a baby her age could have.

According to Nia, Lila was like a teenager, and because Nia was in her early twenties it had not been that long for her since she had been a teenager.

Perhaps Nia identified with Lila and therefore connected with her.

In our interview Nia explained why she thought the toddlers connected with her. She said:

...I think it's because I use a lot of, you know, I try and show them like with my body that I care about them, and you know I'm always trying to smile. Because kids can pick up on stuff like that I think almost as quick as adults can. Because they can tell as soon as you get upset or, you know. And like with Danielle..., I don't think that, I mean they hug them and stuff, but it's not, you know, they don't use a lot of expressions.

She believed in a deeper level of communication where people used their bodies, intuitions, and expressions.

On the other hand, Danielle played more of an educator role and had different kinds of connections with the toddlers. Her main priority was to clean the toddlers, especially right before their parents came to pick them up. I wrote these field notes:

Danielle cleaned up the other children. I saw her standing at the diaper table, changing diapers and wiping noses and washing faces. I did not hear Danielle speak while she was up there with the children. One toddler girl went over to Danielle and said, "Danielle! Danielle! Danielle!" Danielle said, "What sweetheart? What is it? I'm going to sit down with you in a minute, but I have to clean everybody up." Danielle had to leave the room a couple times for a few minutes. Each time she left this same toddler girl would go to the door and wait for Danielle to return. She would repeat Danielle's name over and over. "Danielle, Danielle, Danielle," she would say as she would look back toward the room. When Danielle came back in, I pointed this out to her and Danielle said, "She's real attached to me. She calls for me all day. Even at home her parents say that she calls out to me." Then Danielle came and sat on the floor. She told me that this toddler who calls for her would also call for another toddler.

In this example, the toddler was the one taking the steps to connect with the teacher by demanding a response from her teacher. Danielle focused on managing the orderliness of the children.

In the next section, I will describe how the infant teachers felt a sense of loss and at the same time thought the child was ready to move when it was time for the transition.

Readiness/Loss

The third theme concerns two experiences teachers had during the times of transition. On the one hand, all the teachers believed an infant needed to move up to the toddler room to continue down the path of proper child development. The infant needed new activities, new materials, and new teachers to further his development; he would learn to walk, talk, play with others, and eat at the table. On the other hand, the teachers expressed a sense of loss about the infant leaving. The mother-role teachers expressed more loss than did the educator-role teachers because they were the ones who had formed deeper connections. Teachers in the mother role did not want certain infants to leave, they wanted former infants to come back and visit, and they were concerned about several infants whom they thought were not doing well in the toddler room. These teachers were torn because they wanted the infants to stay, but they knew they had to go.

The toddler teachers also believed the infant was ready to be in the toddler room; however, they did not describe a sense of loss because they were

not losing a child in this transition from the infant room to the toddler room.

Instead, Nia described how the new toddler caused a temporary disruption in the toddler room group structure. In the remainder of this section, I will first describe how teachers believed infants were ready to move, and then I will describe the loss.

Readiness

When Candace discussed the transition with Belle's mother, she focused on readiness. She said that Belle was ready for new activities and toys and that Belle would do fine. I wrote in my field notes:

I heard Candace talking to Belle's mom about Belle's upcoming transition. The mom said, "So, she's going to moving soon?" Candace said, "Yes, she will probably move sometime next month. She is ready to go. She's ready for new activities and new toys. She does fine. She is ready to go."

Lena also said that Belle was going to do new things when she moved to the toddler room. Lena described the conversation she had with Belle's mother about Belle's upcoming transition. Lena said:

We would tell her parents, we told her parents that she was going to be graduating up in a week's time. Mom and Dad did not take it real well. Well, Momma didn't. She was very upset because she didn't want her baby to grow up. See, if she goes to another room that means they're growing up and they don't want to lose that baby. So, you got to do a lot of talking with the parents. And we, I guess we all kind of just decided, you know, a lot of parents are excited. She wasn't excited. She didn't want Belle to grow up. But, I says, just think, when she goes to the toddler room, she's going to start talking and then she can, instead of, you know, just crawling to you and give you a hug, this time she can go, "Oh, Mommy, I love you." She can learn to talk. And she can learn to play different games. And solve puzzles and do different things that way and try to communicate more with the oral language instead of the physical.

Lena was trying to be encouraging to Belle's mother in preparation for the move by saying that Belle would grow and develop in the new room.

Shortly before Jerome moved up, Candace saw him open the microwave door. (The microwave was down on Jerome's level between two highchairs). I took these field notes:

At one point, Jerome was over by the microwave oven that is between the two high chairs. The microwave was on his level. He popped it open by pressing the correct button. Candace saw him do this and said, "Oh no, he's never done that before. Look, he figured it out." Then, she looked at me and said, "He's ready for the toddler room. When they start doing things like that, they are ready to go. When they start climbing underneath things and opening things, they're ready to go." Maria was listening and nodding her head. Candace said, "One of the directors was in here this morning. They told us to take Jerome to the toddler room because he looked bored."

Candace believed the infants outgrew the infant room because when they started figuring things out, they needed to move out. Once the infants became mobile, they started climbing underneath pieces of furniture, and they started reaching up to counter tops. The infants needed to go to the toddler room to do these "toddler" behaviors.

Candace also saw Andy do something that made her say he needed to go to the toddler room. I wrote in my field notes:

Andy was pushing the play stove around the room, which was bigger than him. Candace looked at him and said, "Two more months. Oh no. He's not moving for two months. He needs to go. They said they're moving somebody up next month, but I'm not sure."

Candace was worried that two more months were going to be too long for Andy to stay in the room because he was now pushing whole pieces of equipment around the room. She knew he was only going to get bigger and more

developed. I did not hear the teachers say that they were tired of a certain infant and that was why he needed to go. Rather, I heard that at a certain developmental level it was time for the infant to go. Also, the infant room ran out of space for the older infant because new infants were coming in.

Loss

The infant teachers who played the mother role felt loss as a result of the transition. Miller (1998) discussed how some teachers fall in love with infants as they watch them grow and develop new abilities and therefore have a difficult time saying goodbye. In this study, the teachers anticipated feeling loss before the infants moved and then, after the transition, they described a sense of loss. They knew they could not keep the infants, and after the transition, they knew they could not be there for the former infants in the same way that they had been there for them in the infant room. In the following section, I will first describe the infant teachers before the transition and then describe them after the transition.

Before the transition

Candace said she could not keep one infant boy. I wrote in my field notes:

An infant boy woke up from his nap. Lena gave him a bottle. She put him in a seat and gave him the bottle. He held it himself. When he was through, Candace took him out and placed him on the carpet. He was sitting up. Candace looked at me and said, "He's so tiny." Then she said to herself, "I can't keep you. You have to crawl and go."

This boy was only six months old and therefore had another six months to be in the infant room. But, Candace was already starting to miss him. She knew that

her relationship with him would only be for one year and that eventually he would crawl his way out to the toddler room. A parent might also say that her son was going to crawl away from her one day. However, parents and children continue their relationships even after the children have grown. But, when infants move out of the classroom, the infant teacher-infant relationship is usually over.

In our interview, Candace elaborated more on this feeling of having to let them go. She said:

So you see the positive things. You know it is good for them to do this (the transition), to get used to more people, not always the same ones taking care of them, you know. That's why they develop better; because in our room we can not offer them what they need; because we always have to compare to the six-week olds, you know. And they get old enough to go, it's better, it's time to go. It's better for them. It's how you have to tell yourself. You know, it doesn't matter how much you like them, you know how close you are. You always have to think of them. It's for them. For their own good... It's like, when you're a parent like they tell you, if you love them, then you have to let them go. You know, that's the same thing.

Even though Candace liked the infants and felt close to them, she focused on what she thought was best for them. One idea she had was that they needed to get used to more people, which the transition would allow. Therefore, she felt she had to put her feelings aside and do what was best for the child. Again, she compared her situation with the infants to her situation as a parent.

Lena anticipated feeling loss because of the transition. One day, Lena was down on the floor with Andy. I took these field notes:

Lena said that Andy was tired and needed to take a nap. She said he would play until he dropped. "He never stops," she said. He was sitting next to the garden center with a toy in his mouth. She put him in his crib and patted him. She said, "By the time they get this way they send them off to the toddler room. It ticks me off."

Lena sounded angry. She spent a year with Andy getting him to a certain point only to have him sent to another room. From quotes earlier in this chapter, it was evident that she had fun with him, and he made her feel alive; therefore, she wanted to stay with him.

In our interview Lena elaborated on why she wanted to keep Andy. She said:

Andy we just don't want to send up because he is just so fun. He is too fun...He just, he is, he's got a personality that just makes you laugh and makes you feel good. And you miss him at night. You know. "Oh, I just need an Andy fix."

She wanted him to stay because he made her feel good, not because it was necessarily the best situation for him. However, on the other hand, one could say that what is best for a teacher is also best for a child because the teacher might then better care for the child.

Lena said that they were not going to let one infant go up as fast as they had allowed some of the others because he had vision problems. She had a degree in special education and believed they should keep him in the infant room. In our interview she said:

Right now, we have a child in the nursery....whose eyesight is bad. And, it will take some adjusting. He is developing fine every other way, but we're not going to let him go up as fast...because he's just not going to adapt well. He hasn't adapted. They might have to just take him and leave him at home...But like he will have some problems. We won't send him up. And you got to learn how to teach him. You can't teach him the same way you can do with Andy. You can give Andy free play...

Lena was worried that the directors would move this infant before he was ready; in other words, the rules of the center would dominate the infant's needs. In theme four I will discuss how the teachers were not key players in the decision

making process concerning transitions; therefore, even though Lena said, "...we're not going to let him go up...", it was not her decision. In this situation Lena played more of an educator role, as she was not discussing this infant's upcoming transition in an emotional way. Rather, she was considering his developmental needs.

After the transition

After transitions, I would ask teachers how they felt. However, I noticed they did not like to talk about this topic. After Jerome's transition, I asked Candace and Maria how they felt. Candace said, "It is very bad." Maria said, "Oh no, we will miss him." But, that is all they said. Perhaps, they numbed themselves from the pain, the way teachers did in Leavitt's (1994) and Nelson's (1995) studies, because they did not want to acknowledge how they felt.

Maria said that when four or five moved at a time, afterwards, it felt empty in the infant room. In our interview she said:

You know, it's hard. Especially like if one moves, it's not so bad. But if like four or five moves up same time, when you come to your classroom it's like empty, everywhere. You know, they are crawling on the floor. Nobody is on the floor. It's hard. It's hard for us too.

Maria, who played more of an educator role, felt the emptiness in the room after a group made the transition and had a sense that something was missing. During this study, five infants moved together as a group, one moved by himself, and then two moved together. The directors moved the infants both in large groups (five or more) and in small groups (two or less) with equal frequency, depending on ages of the children and openings in the next room. If children

were of similar ages and there were multiple openings, the directors believed it best to move them as a group because the children had each other during the move. But, if only one infant was ready and there was an opening in the toddler room, they believed it necessary to move him up to keep the rooms full.

Although the directors believed the children benefited by moving as a group, sometimes it was hard for the infant teachers because then the infant room felt empty after they left. Even though the directors replaced the former infants with new infants, the new infants were usually younger and therefore not crawling on the floor the way the former infants had before their move. Thus, the room would feel different to the infant teacher.

Lena said that it was hard for her when she knew infants who had moved over were crying in the toddler room. In our interview she said:

But it's very hard because I didn't want to give her. I know they're crying. Wait a minute, I used to take care of, when you cry and you're upset I know you're upset, and it was very hard. It was very hard for me.

Lena said it was hard for her because she believed it was hard for them. She sounded like a mother in this quote because mothers often take on their children's pain. In this situation, Lena was not able to help the crying child because the child was in a new room with a new teacher.

Amanda felt loss when a toddler she used to take care of moved to a new room. In our interview she said:

It's harder, like when it was just Abe that left. Because you do miss him. You know, he's just one that left, but it's all, you know. But you look and you think well you know, Pierce is supposed to be playing with Abe and now he's playing with somebody else. And it's just, you're like, something's not right. You know, it's almost like they just, they're gone.

Amanda said that not only did she miss Abe but that also Pierce (a peer) missed him. When an infant moved, he left peers behind, at least temporarily. Amanda said that it did not seem right to her that Pierce's friend had gone.

On the other hand, I heard some statements from the teachers that made me feel they were not experiencing loss. One day, Lena announced that they needed to "get rid" of two because they were getting two new infants soon. We were watching Andy pull himself up in the garden center. She said, "We have to get rid of two by July. We've got two coming in." Lena knew they needed to send two over to keep the system running. Acceptance of these transitions was part of the system.

Powerlessness

A fourth theme was that teachers felt powerlessness about the timing of the transitions and about contact afterwards with old infants. The teachers did not make the decisions about the transition; instead, "they" (the directors in the office) decided when a child should move up. The teachers gave their input, but the directors had the power and the authority over the process. Also, the directors established two policies, which made it difficult for teachers to keep in touch with former infants. I will discuss these two policies later in this theme.

The teachers prepared for the transition by indicating to each other and the directors when an infant was ready and then by waiting for the directors to tell them what to do. The directors told them when the teachers should discuss the

transition with the parents, when the infants should visit in the toddler room (or not visit), and when the infants should move.

The directors told them that they would send letters to the parents, informing them of the move, and that the teachers did not need to discuss the transition with the parents until after the parents had received the official letter. Each morning during an infant's transition period (usually a two week period), one of the two directors would check in with the teachers to discuss when and for how long the infant would visit in the toddler room that day. Candace said in our interview:

...We have to wait 'till it is an official thing from the office, that they tell us and they have it in a written note and then we tell them (the parents) what we are going to do. We let them visit first for awhile and see how they are doing. Sometimes half an hour, sometimes a whole morning. Including nap time or all these things, it's always different from child to child, from day to day.

The teachers believed they knew when the infants were ready to move; they looked to see if they were bottle free, eating table food, and walking. After talking with the parents and determining when infants were ready to try table food in the infant classroom, the infant teachers would give them some in their high chairs to prepare them for the toddler room. However, it was not until they moved to the toddler room that they sat at a table to eat. Most children in the toddler room were off the bottle. Maria said:

See, usually when they start eating table food and start walking, they are ready for toddler room. Some of them is before a year old, some of them are through year old, it depends on the child. Some of them goes early, some of them not, yea, it depends on the child. But it's close to a year... It's hard to move them up. Because they need to be bottle free. It's the other thing. The third thing.

They also looked to see if the infant had a personality that would make it easier for her to move. Did she get along with other kids? Did she mind being touched? Candace said Belle and Lila both had the kind of personalities where they could stand up for themselves and ask for what they needed. Candace said they would not take anything from the other toddlers. I wrote in my field notes:

Before I left I asked Candace who would move next. She said, "Andy and Sam". But Sam is not ready. He's not walking yet, and it will be good if he can stay longer in the infant room. I don't know when they will move up, but probably they will move at the end of the summer when there is an opening in [the] toddler [room]. Belle and Lila had different temperaments. They don't take anything from the bigger kids. They hold their own with the toddlers.

Candace described another infant who had a personality that would make it easier for her to move. She said:

She was one of the younger ones that moved over. But she did good because of her personality. She was ready to go. She could, you know, could do everything. She was an easy going baby, she adjusted easy to different kind of people too. You know some babies get scared when new people come in. You know, she never had any trouble. She was friendly with almost everybody. You know that separation anxiety. She did not have that very much. So she did good with it.

Candace believed that this infant adjusted easily to new people and therefore was ready to go.

Yet, space was the determining factor for the transition. One of the main reasons for moving an infant to the toddler room was that the directors had new infants they wanted to enroll. Therefore, they needed the older infant's space for a new infant. Even if the infant was not ready, but his space was needed by a new infant, they had to move him anyway. Or, if an infant was ready, but there was not a space for him in the next room, they could not move him up.

Before Jerome moved up, Candace said they needed his space. She said, "They're getting a new baby in the infant room, so Jerome needs to move up. Also, children are moving up from toddler I to toddler II." She also said about Belle and Lila, "They're getting all these babies, so Belle and Lila are going to have to move to the toddler I room next month." Candace found out the week before that Jerome would move the following week to the toddler room (see quote on page 1). He moved on the first day of February. There was an opening in the toddler room because a toddler had left the program, and the directors wanted to move Jerome up to keep that room full. Then, they could enroll a new infant to keep the infant room full.

During my six-month study, the infant and toddler classrooms at Live Oak remained 100% full. The center had a waiting list of fifteen children who varied in ages, meaning they were eligible for enrollment in different classrooms; a child did not have to start in the infant room to attend Live Oak. Sometimes a former infant moved to the toddler room a few weeks before his replacement came, but the teachers knew an infant was on the way even if he had not started yet.

At Live Oak, the transitions occurred on an individual basis, meaning that at any time during the year when there was an opening (or openings) in the next room, a child (or children) from the younger classroom was moved up to keep all rooms full. Children did not move as a whole group at one time during the year (for example, late August) the way it is done in elementary schools. If there were five openings in the toddler room because three had moved up and two had left the program, the directors would move five infants up.

However, the teachers believed that the directors moved children up even if they were not ready because they needed their spaces. In our interview,

Candace said:

...That sometimes they (the directors) have to move so many because that's another thing too. When we get new babies, they had that done before, it doesn't happen often, but you have to move them faster than you may, you know, that they have to move up earlier because you need the space for other kids...

Maria also gave an example of an infant being moved for his space. She said:

...He is fine (in) our room. He was fine. But if he gets mad, he cries real bad and it's really hard to calm him down. But usually he was a good baby, but he was still on the bottle. That was the reason. When he move up to toddler room he was still on the bottle... Yea, he still moved. They should be bottle free, but he, we didn't have openings and we just got new babies and then he was the oldest one and he had to go. That's the reason...

This infant was still on the bottle, which, according to the usual criteria, meant he was not ready to move. But, he had to fill a space in the toddler room and his space was needed for a new infant, so he had to move.

Even a mother knew her infant was being moved for his space. Candace said:

...One time it did, but that little boy is not here any more either. The mom actually was worried about that, and she thought, the mommy said, I hope you're not moving him because you need the space for another child. And it kind of really was for that reason. But the child was o.k. in the other room. Just happened to turn out o.k...

Therefore, an infant was moved both because his space was needed and because he was ready to move. Candace explained how the need for space and a child's readiness were unbalanced in determining the timing of a transition.

She came up with a percentage. She said, "It is more the opening, it's more. Let's make it 60-40. 60% the opening, 40% they're ready. It should be more, you know, another reason. You know, as long as they're ready, it's o.k. You can keep them still." Therefore, according to Candace, 60% of the reason for the transition was that they needed space, and 40% was that the infant was ready to be in the next room. Candace believed that there was too much emphasis on needing the space.

Lena described a situation where she felt they made a mistake with a transition because an infant was not ready. She said:

...he would socialize with the other students in the nursery. He really did...He's having a hard time now [in the toddler room], but I wish he was back in here...And we do miss him. And we think we could do better for him than what he's doing in the toddler room. And, we've tried to convince them to bring him back into the nursery and let us have him for another like four or five months... We're going to be sending up some more students right now and we still see the same thing and we convinced the directors, let's move them on maturity because we made a big mistake with him and it hurts our hearts.

She was hoping to convince the directors that they needed to move the children more on maturity level than for other reasons.

However, what Candace and Lena did not mention was that childcare is a business, and in order for the directors (who were also the owners in this case) to pay teacher salaries and other operating expenses, they had to keep the rooms fully occupied. Live Oak was known throughout the community for paying higher salaries than what was typically paid in other centers. (They paid \$7 to \$8 an hour as compared to the typical rate of \$5 or \$6 an hour).

Candace felt powerless to keep her connections with the infants after the transition because of two policies that she did not agree with. Thus, she had to end her relationships with the infants after they moved out of her room. These descriptions of the policies are from the teachers' perspectives; I did not ask the directors about them. However, it was the teachers' interpretations of these policies that shaped their experiences.

The first policy was that former infants were not to come back and visit in the classroom because they could spread germs. Even older siblings were not to come in; they had to stand at the door and look in. Candace said:

That's one thing I don't like. They do not let uh, the other older kids come back in our room. But it's for the safety of the infants, you know, not to catch any germs from them so they get sick. Not even siblings are allowed to come in the room...And I do not agree with that one. They should not, I think they should let at least siblings, you know, come back in the room for awhile, if they want to see their brothers or sisters... They bring them to the door, but that is it. They are not allowed to leave the room... We should be able to take them for, at least for a few minutes to tell them hi, it's o.k., you know, let me come in too. Can not tell a one-year old that the room is off limits. You know, was in for so many months, every day, she got to play in it. See, they (the directors) say nothing because the other day her Mom and Dad, was on a Friday, they came to pick up Lila. They came back to the door and then they both came in with her. And they put her down to play and then, just for a few minutes and Lila was so happy. She found her ball. She likes her ball. Always was her favorite toy. And then they picked her up and she screamed. She did not want to go. You know, but then, it's o.k. because the parents come in. That's the different thing, you know. I guess they couldn't say nothing then. To us they (the directors) would say, you know, don't do this... Because people are touring, they let people come in for tours that are complete strangers. So that is, you know, the limits are not, you know, I don't know. The regulations are not the way I think they should be, you know. What is the difference there? That are complete strangers. They have germs. Why can't the siblings, they are at home with the siblings. Why can't they not come in? You know, at least not for that child, maybe for the other kids, but still.

This policy was unique to Live Oak and was not a licensing regulation. After reviewing the licensing regulations for the state in which Live Oak was located, I discovered that older children were allowed to visit in the infant classroom; there was not a regulation suggesting otherwise. The closest licensing regulation to this policy was:

(M) When infants are cared for in a center with older children, they must not be grouped with children three years of age and over, and a separate area must be provided for them. (<http://nrc.uchsc.edu>)

Older children could visit; but they could not be permanently grouped with infants. Therefore, according to Candace, the directors decided this policy was necessary to prevent the infants from being exposed to a multitude of germs.

What really seemed to bother Candace was the inconsistency in the rule based on the rationale. If infants were not supposed to be exposed to additional germs, then why were the directors bringing tours through? She also felt that a former infant should have access to her former classroom, even for just a short visit, because that child had a history in the infant room.

Candace gave another example of an infant not being able to come back into the infant room after the transition. She said:

Oh, they do sometimes. They knock at the door. They're outside when they play outside. They know we are in there. They knock at the door too. Who did that before? Sally wanted to come in. She does not now. Sally Smith...She's at the door, knocking at the door. Smiling. You know, she always smiles. Right away, she's very sensitive baby too. She sees us, she smiles, she comes to the door. Then you have to tell them, "No, no, you can not come in." That is not, not right. Like, oh, yesterday when we had that gate open, they all cried because they all wanted to be at the gate in the front row. They want to. They would have all been coming in if you would let them...They depend on us, more or less. You know, if we go in there, it's o.k.

Candace wanted them to come back because they were smiling and she believed they wanted to see her again. Even though she did not say this, she probably wanted to see them again too.

Candace described how an infant girl's transition had a sense of permanence and finality. Candace told me in our interview, "You know, you (the infant girl) had to move and there was no way back." For Candace, once the child left, she was gone.

However, Candace said she could see the other side too. She did understand why the directors did not want too many people coming in the infant room. She said:

I see the other side too, you know, with, for first time parents. They do not want the kids exposed to too many. You know, we already have limits that you only use the same teacher. You know, we don't switch the teachers as often. There's only four or five (teachers) that are at all coming to the infant room. But still, you know, I can see their point too. For the new mommies, the first time mommies, you know, with their baby. That they do not want other kids or other adults around. Only as many as they really have to be. So, I see their point, but the other point, they don't think of that yet. You know, they usually change their mind too, when they have siblings. Second kids. That they see. There are two different sides.

The second policy was that teachers were not to go to other classrooms to see children they used to take care of because the visiting teacher could disrupt the routine. Candace said:

We're actually not allowed to do this either... Visit other rooms... On breaks, we're not supposed to... 'Cause with breaks we're supposed to spend in because it's interruptive for the rest of the classroom, they are saying. But especially in infants and toddlers, I don't see it that way. You know, it's not that we interrupt them during circle time or something. You know. I can go see my own children in after-school room, that's o.k. But not, you know, you're not supposed to go to interrupt the whole, the whole thing. That's what they say... Yea, because the kids know, and even the

parents say, like Patrick's sister, when I went, usually when I take my break, it's close to lunch time, and I went to the lounge and their room, they all ate in the gym, kind of, in the after-school room. She always says, she always talks to me, "You have my brother." She always told me. So, she knows. You know, I don't think that's anything wrong with that the kids still see us. They know us. They know all our names. We're here so long. I don't think there's anything wrong. I think it's even good...I am not the boss.

Candace reported this policy to me. However, earlier in this chapter, I described how she did visit former infants in their new toddler room before her shift (p. 82). Thus, the policy was not firm. Candace was a teacher who prided herself on being a model employee and pleasing the directors. In our interview she said, "They like me...The bosses...Because they know they can count on me. All these things. I'm dependable...And they know the parents like me. So that helps." Therefore, she must really have wanted to see her former infants to risk being seen as someone who did not always follow a policy.

When the directors assumed full responsibility without teacher input for making the transition and policy decisions, the teachers were once removed from the process and therefore were powerless. The directors had to keep the classrooms full to keep the business running, and one way to keep them full was to move the children through on a regular, predictable schedule. Leavitt (1994) also described how children in her study were defined by the spaces they occupied as they moved in and out of classrooms each year. Part of the structure at Live Oak was for children to move to a new classroom every eight to ten months, as the rooms were designed and equipped for specific age groups (two to twelve months, twelve to twenty months, twenty to twenty-eight months, and so forth). If children did not move when they were supposed to, their spaces

in the next classroom would remain unoccupied until they moved there, which translated to lost dollars for the center. For every month a space was unoccupied, the center would lose approximately \$400.00.

On the other hand, a teacher's primary concern was for the children to be "ready" for the next room, not keeping all rooms full; thus, a tension existed between the directors and the teachers. For example, one day I heard a director tell a prospective parent that an infant was a "senior" and would graduate soon, making the transition sound like a natural and positive step for the child that was supposed to happen at the end of a year.

Conclusion

The first eight research questions were addressed within the four themes. To summarize the four themes, first, the teachers assumed both a mother and an educator role; second, some of the teachers established deep connections while others did not; third, teachers described the loss they experienced and the child's readiness for the next room; finally, the teachers experienced powerlessness because they did not take part in the decision making process for the transitions. I will conclude this chapter by addressing the last two research questions, "How did the teacher experience the transition?" and "What was the meaning of the transition for the teacher?"

When Candace and Lena played the mother role, they connected to the infants and then experienced loss as a result of the transition. The infant teacher who mostly played the educator role, Maria, did not establish the strong

connections and therefore did not experience the same degree of loss. Candace and Lena talked to infants about how they felt and about what they liked to do. They turned routine procedures into games and sought more physical contact beyond what routinely happened in diaper changes, feedings, and naps.

On the other hand, Maria played the educator role and said she treated all the infants the same. In our interview, she said she could not describe a relationship she had with one infant in detail. She focused on routine tasks such as feeding, diapering, and sleeping.

For Candace and Lena, the transition came like a slamming door that makes people cringe when they hear it. It is as if the door expresses the human emotions of bitterness and anger because of the sharp and loud sound that it makes. After the infant moved, this door separated the former infant from the infant teacher and there was a break in the connection. Even before the infants moved to the toddler room, the mother-role teachers anticipated feeling loss and began to prepare for that eventuality by acknowledging the inevitable separation. Candace said, "I can't keep you. You have to crawl and go." Lena said, "Andy we just don't want to send up because he is just so fun."

On the other hand, when teachers assumed the educator role, it was not as difficult for them to end their relationships because they had not invested their emotions in the infants in the ways they had in the mother role. Instead, they had rationalized the process and determined it was the necessary step to take. For them, the transition was like an automatic door opening and closing; the door

opened and closed because it was part of a system not controlled by human emotions.

After the connections broke, the mother-role teachers experienced loss. Candace described how badly she felt when a former infant girl searched for her through a window, and Lena said it broke "our hearts" when they lost five babies. Even Maria, who played an educator role, said that the classroom felt empty after five babies left at the same time; therefore, she expressed some loss too. However, Maria's loss was somewhat removed from herself as she said the room felt empty, not her.

Once the infant reached the toddler room, the same pattern emerged with the teachers' roles and connections. Nia, the mother-role teacher, formed connections, her deepest ones in her "special" relationships. She fell in love with Patrick and identified with Lila's expressive personality. She talked to toddlers about what they needed and about what they liked to do. On the other hand, Danielle, an educator-role teacher, focused on cleaning and managing the classroom. Thus, her connections were naturally different.

Finally, both kinds of teachers played out their roles and experiences in the same environment, a place where they yielded to the authority of their directors. Teachers in the mother role were more vocal and expressive to me about their dissatisfactions as compared to the others. Candace disagreed with two policies, Lena disagreed with moving an infant up, and Nia disagreed with her lead teacher. In the next chapter I will discuss my interpretations and present implications for restructuring childcare.

CHAPTER FIVE

INTERPRETATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

In this chapter, I will discuss the tension that exists between the mother and educator roles and revisit my bias statement from Chapter One to explain how I personally make sense of this tension. Because of their roles, the mother-role teachers had more difficulty with the transitions than did the educator-role teachers. I will discuss three ways in which these transitions were difficult: (a) the mother-role teachers had conflicting feelings and beliefs; (b) the mother-role teachers experienced repeated losses; and (c) both the mother-role and educator-role teachers felt powerlessness. To conclude this chapter, I will propose a way of restructuring childcare so that teachers and infants could spend three years together before the child's first transition.

Tension Between Mother and Educator Roles

There is tension between the mother and educator roles: The mother-role teacher focuses on social and emotional development, whereas the educator-role teacher focuses on cognitive development. This tension has existed in the past and continues to exist today. For example, in the 1970s three kinds of preschool programs (Bereiter-Engelmann, Darcee, and Montessori) emphasized academic and cognitive development, and one kind (traditional Head Start) focused on the emotional needs of the child (Miller & Dyer, 1975). In the Darcee

program, the teacher's role was reported as, "...teaching, not providing emotional support or being a substitute mother (p. 26)." In both the Darcee and the Bereiter-Englemann programs, the teachers directed children's free-play activities toward learning. In contrast, in the traditional Head Start programs, the goal was for children to identify with and learn to behave like teachers whom they loved. Teachers were supposed to be warm, supportive, non-critical, and as non-demanding as possible.

In this study, the teachers felt the tension between the mother and educator roles. Lena oscillated between the two roles, sounding like an educator in our interview but acting like a mother when I observed her. For example, in the interview she referred to the infants as "students," but in my observations she said to an infant, "You are my baby." Also, in our interview she described her expertise in dealing with exceptional children, which made her sound like an educator. In contrast, in my observations I heard her telling Andy that she did not want him to move up to the toddler classroom, which suggested she was less concerned with the professional nature of the childcare but more concerned with her feelings for Andy. Perhaps, the nature of the interview made her feel more professional and therefore influenced her to sound more like an educator. She knew she was being interviewed for a University study and that her words were being taped.

Nia noted the tension between the two roles when she described herself as someone who stayed on the floor chasing the toddlers but Danielle as someone who stood up and said "no," "like the teacher does." (See p. 70 for

Nia's quote). She said that she interacted with the toddlers the way parents did, therefore like a mother, and that Danielle acted more as a teacher, therefore like an educator. Nia described herself as falling in love with Patrick, taking him home if anything ever happened, and having a hard time leaving him in the room when she had to go. In contrast, I observed Danielle supervising the children on the playground and keeping both the classroom and children in order.

Candace felt the mother versus educator role tension, as evidenced by her following words in an informal interview:

"I want to be in Pre-K, it's more teaching. But they keep me in infant. I'd like your job (meaning me). With college students and still with the kids. I've asked to be in Pre-K. But no, they keep me in the nursery. Everyone else has moved up. Maybe I should tell them I will quit if they don't let me move up." I asked her, "Is the infant room the least favorite room to work in?" Candace responded, "Yes. They think it is just babies. But then they see how hard it really is."

In the classroom, Candace acted more like a mother because of the way she expressed her emotions and had special relationships. But, she wanted to do "teaching," which suggested she wanted to be thought of as an educator. Her statement, "I want to be in Pre-K, it's more teaching" was a paradox because she believed she was not as much of a teacher with the infants as she could have been with four- and five-year olds, yet I described her as the kind of teacher (a mother-role teacher) who gave infants what they needed most: An emotional connection. She did not give all the infants what they needed because she was only connected to those with whom she had special relationships. But, with those special relationships, she did not feel that she was doing the kind of important work that I felt she was doing. She did not consider the way she

interacted with the infants as teaching. Even though Candace had worked at Live Oak for over seven years and was pursuing a degree in the field, she felt like her work with “babies” was not valued or as important as work with older children. Instead, she implied that she needed to be with older children doing more cognitive activities, such as letter and number lessons.

Yet, we know from research on brain development that when teachers touch infants and make eye contact with them, they are enhancing the infant’s cognitive development. Childcare, for those who attend, is an early experience that influences brain development. In the first three years of life, the child’s brain soaks in new information at an enormous rate (faster than it ever will) and develops the organizational foundation upon which all other parts of the brain develop. The child develops working models for who he is, how important he is, and how he relates to others. His brain development during infancy will determine how well adjusted and eager to learn he becomes as an adult. (Fleischauer & Stebbins, 1997; Szanton, 1997)

Therefore, Candace, who played the mother role, was the doing the very teaching that she thought she could only do with older children. She was stimulating the infants’ brain development. Shore (1997) wrote,

Children learn in the context of important relationships. The best way to help very young children grow into curious, confident, able learners is to give them warm, consistent care so that they can form secure attachments to those who care for them (p. 29).

Teachers do not need to use flash cards or tapes of the ABCs with infants and toddlers but instead need to pay attention to their moods and the games that they create (Shore, 1997). It seems that Candace needed validation from others

(directors, instructors at her community college) to feel that her mother role was valuable and that perhaps it was possible to educate as well as nurture.

Besides nurturing the infant through touch and eye contact, teachers must also be knowledgeable of infants' interests, temperaments, states, and individual abilities to process and respond for healthy brain development (Szanton, 1997). Teachers who have an emotional connection with infants might be more likely to spend time with infants on an individual basis getting to know their interests than might teachers who keep their distance. Teachers also must work in quality programs with low ratios, small group sizes, and continuity of care to have opportunities to spend one-on-one time with infants (Szanton, 1997).

In the 1970s, Magda Gerber handled this tension by coining a new term to describe an infant teacher, an "educarer;" an educarer is one who both educates and cares for children (Gerber & Johnson, 1998). Therefore, Gerber recognized both roles as being important. Gerber used "carer," whereas I used "mother" to define the teachers who focused on social and emotional development. In my study, I chose "mother" because the teachers said the children could belong to them – in other words, these teachers implied they could be the mother of these children. They imagined taking them home, they spoke to them like a mother ("you are my baby"), and they believed the infants thought of them as a mother. For example, when the infants would say "Mommy," Candace believed they were referring to her.

In 1978, Gerber founded Resources for Infant Educarers (RIE) to educate parents and professionals in the approach. The seven basic principles of the RIE

philosophy for parents and teachers to follow are: (1) trusting the child to be an initiator, explorer, and self-learner; (2) providing an environment that is physically safe, cognitively challenging, and emotionally nurturing; (3) allowing time for uninterrupted play; (4) allowing freedom to explore and interact with other infants; (5) involving the child in all care activities so the child becomes an active participant rather than a passive recipient; (6) observing the child to understand his or her needs; and (7) defining limits and expectations to develop discipline. Expanding on principles (2) and (6), Gerber wants parents and teachers to encourage infants to be genuine, which means encouraging them to express how they feel – positive or negative. She wants adults to sit back and learn what different infant cries mean, instead of trying to stop the crying. (Gerber & Johnson, 1998)

Using Gerber and Johnson's (1998) philosophy as a model, we can see how the mother-role teachers favored certain principles and the educator-role teachers favored others, suggesting that each role has something to offer but could still improve in the non-favored areas. The strengths of each role should be incorporated into the definition of an infant teacher. The mother-role teachers focused more on providing the emotionally nurturing environment and allowing time for uninterrupted play but less on providing the cognitively challenging environment. The educator-role teachers provided a physically safe classroom (clean and ordered), observed the children to understand their needs, and defined limits and expectations to develop discipline. Danielle and Maria often straightened the classroom and cleaned counters. Danielle observed a child who

had bitten another, and Maria observed the differences in two boys' eating habits. However, they did not provide an emotionally nurturing environment and did not allow time for uninterrupted play. For example, Danielle orchestrated the toddlers' play by placing all the toddlers at the table and changing their play materials every five minutes. To be well-rounded teachers, they ought to be able to provide a physically safe, cognitively challenging, and emotionally nurturing environment.

Taking Gerber's philosophy (Gerber & Johnson, 1998) a step further, we could place teachers in one of four quadrants, depending on how much mothering they displayed and how much educating they displayed. Mothering and educating are independent dimensions, as teachers could be high on both dimensions, high on one and low on another, or low on both. As Figure 1 illustrates, the more a teacher played a mother role, the more emotionally nurturing she was, and the more she played the educator role, the more cognitively challenging she was.

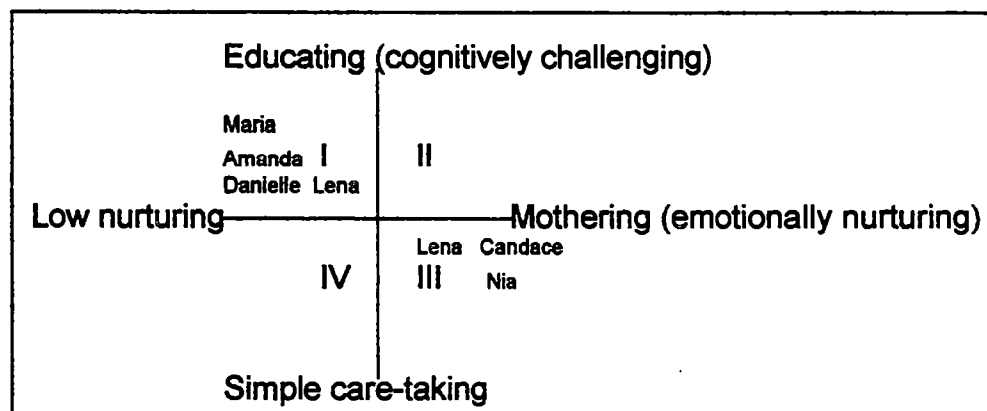


Figure 1. Independent dimensions of mothering and educating

The less she played the mother role, the less nurturing she was, and the less she played the educator role, the more she engaged in simple care-taking as opposed to cognitive stimulation.

Candace and Nia fell in quadrant III because they assumed more of the mother role, established emotional connections with the children, but focused less on learning activities. They were higher on the mothering axis but lower on the educating axis. Amanda, Danielle, and Maria fall in quadrant I because they chose not to establish the emotional connections but instead to concentrate on educating. They were higher on the educating axis but lower on the mothering. Lena switched in and out of the mothering and educating roles; therefore, I placed her in two quadrants, I and III, to illustrate how as she played one role, she gave up the other. Ideally, a teacher would play both roles to provide both the nurturing and the education and be placed in quadrant II, indicating that a teacher could be high on both ends of each dimension. A teacher in quadrant IV should not be employed, as she would provide little nurturing and little education.

Revisiting My Biases

It was clear in this study that I preferred the mother-role teachers over the educator-role teachers. I liked it when the teachers expressed their own emotions and when they tuned in to the children's emotions. I liked how they developed intense relationships with two or three children and how some of them fell in love. I saw the passion and the energy. But, just because I preferred one role over another does not mean that the educator role teachers were bad or that

they had nothing to offer. On the contrary, they had a lot to offer. They made sure that all the children were attended to and that nobody was neglected. Maria said she gave each child equal treatment, and Danielle put all the children in their seats at the table to do the activity and did not leave anyone out. They made sure that no one fell through the cracks. Their relationships may not have been as intense, but they made sure that everyone received proper care. However, by treating all equally, they treated none as special. Both Maria and Danielle were professionals at handling the routines of diapering, feeding, and cleaning, which are all tasks that can be overwhelming if not done properly. If they are not done properly, infants are at risk for getting sick. I should not downplay or ignore the importance of having a clean and smooth running classroom, which both Maria and Danielle did exceptionally well.

I was critical of Danielle, Maria, and Amanda because I am more like Candace, Nia, and Lena. But, I must recognize that educator-role teachers bring strengths to the classroom that can not be ignored or dismissed. Danielle was part of the reason why Live Oak was NAEYC accredited because she kept the room clean and orderly. However, even those teachers I labeled as “educators” may not have provided what Gerber and Johnson (1998) called a cognitively challenging environment or involved the child as an active participant.

It would be nice if teachers had multiple strengths – managing routines, trusting the child's initiative for learning, and knowing the children. If teachers had fewer children to care for, perhaps they could master the routines the way Danielle, Maria, and Amanda did and get to know children as individuals the way

Candace, Nia, and Lena did. The mother- role teachers did manage the routines, but not with the same efficiency or determination as did the educator- role teachers. They could not keep the rooms as clean because they spent more time playing. This dilemma of cleaning versus playing is similar to that experienced by a mother at home with her infant. A mother with an infant at home has to decide if she is going to spend more time cleaning the house or more time holding and playing with her baby; she has to do less of one to do more of the other.

Finally, I described mother-role teachers in a positive light: Caring, comforting, connected, in tune, and so forth. But, there are mothers who do not show these qualities. A mother could be emotionally connected to her child but in an abusive manner. She could have a "special" relationship that was damaging to her child, especially if she was unresponsive and insensitive. Therefore, in certain instances, an educator could be more caring and loving to an infant than would be a mother.

In summary, teachers have to play both the mother role (for an emotional connection) and the educator role (for hands-on, active, and creative learning). First, teachers must establish the emotional connections with the children and then incorporate the learning activities in the context of the relationship. The educating can not occur without the relationship; otherwise, teachers will not take time to tune in to the uniqueness and individual abilities of each child. Magda Gerber (Gerber & Johnson, 1998) knew both roles were needed when she created the term "educarer," and brain research (Shore, 1997; Fleischauer &

Stebbins, 1997; Szanton, 1997) tells us that learning for young children must occur in an emotional relationship.

In the research literature reviewed in Chapter Two, most of the infant-toddler childcare programs emphasized infants' social and emotional development, not cognitive development. However, the culture at Live Oak encouraged cognitive development or the educator role – cleanliness, order, and efficiency were rewarded. The transition at one-year of age was an event that made it difficult for teachers to establish emotional connections. It is hard to love an infant, knowing he will leave in ten months. The next section will discuss these difficulties.

Difficulties During the Transitions

During the transitions, the tension between the two roles was evident more so for the mother-role teachers than for the educator-role teachers. Mother-role teachers had conflicting feelings and beliefs, and they experienced repeated losses. The educator-role teachers had an easier time with the transition because they did not feel as conflicted and did not feel as much loss. But, both kinds of teachers felt powerlessness. In the next section I will discuss these three issues: Conflicting feelings and beliefs, repeated losses, and powerlessness.

Conflicting feelings and beliefs

The teachers who played the mother role had conflicting feelings and beliefs about the transition. They experienced an internal struggle because they believed an infant needed to move to the toddler room, yet they felt sad and angry when an infant had to go. They knew an infant would have to leave them eventually and move on. Candace knew she could not keep a tiny infant boy because one day he would crawl and go, and if she loved him she would have to let him go. She also saw infants doing things in the room that made her think they needed to go, so they could develop and grow. She saw Jerome opening the microwave oven and Andy pushing play equipment across the room. Lena told parents that their children needed to move, so they could learn new things. For example, she said Belle would learn to communicate with her mother in a new way.

Yet, the teachers were not emotionally ready to let go of the infant. Lena said that it ticked her off that Andy had to go, indicating she felt angry. She wanted another boy back in the infant room because his transition "hurts our hearts;" she felt that the infant teachers could provide better care for him because they knew him. After the transitions, Candace wanted Lila to come back in the classroom for visits because she was not ready to lose contact with her. She visited infants in their new toddler room even though there was a policy stating teachers were not to visit. She felt sad about a girl who cried for her out on the toddler playground, and she thought about Jerome after his move.

It was as if their beliefs were saying, "You need to go. If I love you, then I have to let you go." But, their emotions were saying, "Don't go. I want you back. This is hard. I feel sad and I miss you." This internal struggle did not feel good to Candace or Lena. The excitement of witnessing new developmental milestones was tempered by the recognition that each milestone meant that the child was closer to leaving her care. In this case the mother-role teachers appeared to be dominated by "heart" rather than "head" whereas for educator-role teachers the reverse was true. Those teachers dominated by emotion provided the close intimate care that the infants appeared to thrive on, but they also clearly had a more difficult time with the transitions. They were powerless to change the system to fit their model and perhaps felt some inadequacy because they had difficulty conforming to the system.

On the other hand, the educator-role teachers did not have the conflicted feelings in the way the mother role teachers did because they did not develop as intense feelings. Therefore, they acted the way they felt. Instead of falling in love, forming special relationships, and treating infants as though they were their own, they prepared the infants to move to the next room.

In the book, The Power of Focusing, Cornell (1996) explained that when people feel conflicted often it is because they are not listening to what is going on inside of them. They pay attention only to their beliefs and ignore their emotions. They have set rules instilled in their minds and are unwilling to change them even when they feel the opposite way. However, when people take time to focus on their senses and emotions, they can determine what is going on inside of them

and how they really feel. Then, they make better decisions because the decisions belong to them. What if the mother-role teachers had used Cornell's (1996) approach? If they had been encouraged to reflect on how they felt, not just what they believed, and then used those feelings to make a decision, they might have decided that the children should be older (for example, three years old) before making a transition. They might have decided that their special relationships were worth keeping for two more years. Candace and Lena had to let the infants move at age one because of the way the center was structured. They did not have a choice of keeping them longer and could not ignore what they were supposed to do; they wanted to stay employed.

Perhaps, one reason why teachers at Live Oak did not use their emotions as a guide was that they were not supposed to make their own decisions about the transition. They were supposed to wait for the directors to tell them what to do. In contrast, the teachers in Suransky's (1982) study made their own decisions and used their feelings as a guide. For example, if teachers felt like taking a spontaneous trip to the market with the children, they did so because it felt right. These teachers enjoyed going to work. In Suransky's study, there were no transitions because all the children stayed with all the teachers for five years. This center was smaller (forty children, ages two to six), which made it easier for them to stay together as one group. They had one large space that was sub-divided into three different areas; however, the teachers reported that children moved freely from area to area and that the boundaries were loose.

Another reason why teachers at Live Oak did not listen to and use their emotions as a guide could have been that they had a definition of "professionalism" that did not value feelings and emotions. In our society, a "professional" is someone who does not let her emotions get in the way and who demands order, cleanliness, logical thinking, and discipline. Our society rewards efficiency and productivity. Goldstein's (1997) work taught me that in Western nations this version of professionalism is a man's way of thinking, whereas women have different ways of thinking and knowing. Women value connections, collaborations, emotions, intuitions, and gut feelings, and they seek to maintain relationships. If we used women's ways of knowing to construct a definition of "professional," we might say professional meant caring, connected, and emotional. Then the mother-role teachers could act like mothers and also consider themselves as professional.

Anna in Ayers' (1989) The Good Preschool Teacher considered herself a professional when she described herself as being affectionate and responsive, qualities she defined as motherly. On the other hand, Leavitt (1994) provided an example of teachers who ignored children's "negative" emotions because they thought they were supposed to have an orderly and conflict-free classroom to be considered good teachers. Therefore, they dismissed children's anger, sadness, and frustration and only acknowledged "positive" emotions such as joy and happiness.

In summary, the mother-role teachers felt one way but acted another. They expressed their emotions about the transition, but they did not make

decisions about the transitions and did not voice their concerns to the directors. Therefore, their frustrations remained undercover at the center.

Repeated losses

Teachers who played the mother role and who formed connections felt loss when an infant moved to the toddler room. The teachers who were connected in a special relationship to an infant experienced these losses on average three to four times a year. Usually, these transitions were emotional and sometimes painful for the teacher. It was hard for the teachers to lose the infants because of what they had to do to break their connections. Sometimes, they had to move the infants "cold turkey," which meant infants did not visit the toddler room before their moves, but instead started full-time on a certain day without visiting. Also, Lena had to duck down on the door and hide from the former infants the first week they were in the toddler room. She felt she had to avoid them because she and the child had strong feelings for each other. Of course, Candace took the opposite approach and visited them immediately in the new room, thus delaying the eventual separation and disconnection that would come.

For teachers who want to be close to infants, if they continue to feel this pain with this same frequency, they might decide in the future that it is better not to get too close to a child. Nelson (1995) and Leavitt (1994) both described childcare teachers who distanced themselves from the children because of difficult experiences. Teachers in Leavitt's study distanced themselves to cope with crowded rooms of crying children, and family childcare teachers in Nelson's

study distanced themselves because they had lost too many children to whom they had once been attached. Distancing oneself is one solution for coping with painful feelings, and both mother-role and educator- role teachers might choose this option to deal with stressful situations. However, for some teachers, it might be difficult to distance themselves if they feel they have to hold back and not fully be themselves.

On the other hand, if teachers experience these transitions once every three years as opposed to once a year, they may feel better. They will have three years to be with the children, which is more time to develop close, intimate relationships. They can invest themselves in the children and not feel like they have to hold back and remain distant. The separation after three years will be more painful than it would be after one year because the closer two people are to each other the more they have to lose when one person leaves; the more important a person is, the harder it is to let him go. However, the goal should not be to avoid these painful feelings but rather to cope with them because they are inevitable. Chana, a teacher described by Ayers (1989) who cared for toddlers in her home, explained how we have to experience the sadness of separations but then look forward to reunions or new relationships. The teachers and children can allow themselves to feel the sadness and pain to then be able to move forward into new relationships. They will also have experienced positive feelings during their three years together, which they can carry with them into their new relationships. One could argue that by keeping yearly transitions, the intensity in the relationship would be less and therefore the separation less painful. We

have to decide which is worse for both teachers and infants: More painful separations or less intense relationships.

In a NICHD Early Child Care Research Network study (1996), the investigators found a significant, yet small, correlation ($-.15$) between caregivers' years of experience and positive care-giving; teachers of infants who had worked more years were less likely to exhibit positive care-giving. The investigators concluded that these caregivers with more years of experience tended to work in childcare centers and child care homes where group sizes were generally larger than were group sizes in other kinds of settings (for example, in-home settings with babysitters or relatives); therefore, the more children, the more difficult it was to exhibit positive care giving. They needed more contact with fewer children.

Although the NICHD study did not address transitions, perhaps reducing the number of transitions (number of losses) per teacher would also increase positive care giving. In other words, would there be a negative correlation between number of transitions and positive care giving? If it was easier for teachers to be positive with smaller group sizes because of fewer children to focus on, would it also be easier if teachers had fewer relationships to start and end? With fewer transitions, they would have more time together, which is another way of giving teachers more contact with children. Also, they would not have to expend as much energy helping new children adjust to the classroom.

One could argue that as teachers see the same age group year after year, the teachers' jobs could become too much of a routine. Especially with infants, teachers repeat the same basic care-giving tasks over and over (diaper

changing, bottles, feeding, napping). Perhaps, if they were able to see fewer children over longer periods of time, they could watch these children grow and experience the child's increased mobility, language development, and expression of feelings. They could revel in each developmental milestone. Thus, the teachers could grow professionally because they could see first-hand how a child develops.

Goldstein (1997) discussed how teachers (of older children) entered into relationships with children knowing they would end in one year. She wrote,

"But the most significant difference between teacherly love and all other forms of love is that teacherly love is shaped and constrained by the academic calendar and the structures of the institution of schooling. To borrow a phrase from the arena of romantic love, teacherly love relationships are always September-to-June affairs. Like fools for love, teachers enter into relationships knowing full well they will not last. Each year, the cycle of teacherly love plays itself out in classrooms. Children arrive, relationships grow and blossom. In June, the gorgeous blossoms are picked while in full bloom." (p. 153)

The teachers at Live Oak experienced the same phenomenon as their relationships were constrained by the transitions. When Candace said that she could not keep a tiny infant boy because he would crawl and go, she was describing Goldstein's (1997) premise. From the beginning, the teachers were aware that their relationships were short-lived (one-year) and had a definite ending point. Is the childcare industry trying to model itself after the school system with the yearly transitions, when in fact infants, toddlers, and preschoolers might need something different? When infants stayed with their teachers for more than a year they were more likely to develop secure

attachments with their teachers (Raikes, 1993). Childcare needs to develop its own system to better meet the needs of the younger children.

Perhaps our dilemma is that we have adopted a "one size fits all" model of early childhood transitions based on the public school model designed for older children. In childcare, we do vary the curriculum, the program focus, and the materials available, but by and large the concept of age level groupings is clearly dominant in the field. The dominance of Developmentally Appropriate Practice (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997) and the designated ratios of teachers to children promote this practice, although not explicitly. The concept of "developmentally appropriate" is such that we have heard some teachers suggest that they can not work with three-year olds because they only know what is appropriate for four-year olds. We seem to be drifting into an age specialization. Ratios that shift from infants to toddlers to preschoolers seem to suggest a different class for each age-level. Thus, the basic assumption of the field is that of transitioning from one teacher to the next and from one room to the next each year (or every six months in the case of younger infants).

In this study, the data suggest that not all teaching styles are best suited for a "yearly transition" environment. The lack of alternative structures may mean that we do not make use of the skills of all our teachers and thus are more susceptible to turnover and burnout. Suppose we had a choice of systems and could match that system (for example, year to year transitions or continue with the same group of children over a two or three year period) with teacher styles (for example, mother or educator).

Maybe childcare as an industry is not ready for such a radical change. Choice of childcare for parents is still largely driven by pricing and location, although quality of care is an ever-increasing factor as evidenced by the increase in accredited centers. "Corporate-culture," however, as a choice of employment is not much of a factor. The match between employee style and corporate practice is a critical factor for success. The mother-role teachers were not at home with the corporate transition practices; their ability to find a place of employment that appreciates their style is severely limited. This may be a critical factor if one makes the assumption that an enthusiastic and experienced teacher plays a critical role in the child's development within the childcare center context.

What we do not know, however, is whether the "mother-educator" dimension is also seen at other periods of transition (for example, the three to four-year old rooms). In this study, the teachers tended to devalue the role of the infant teacher and saw the preschool teacher as the "real teacher." Perhaps that is a factor of transitions, of group sizes, and of the physical nature of infant care.

Teachers felt powerlessness

Both the mother- and the educator-role teachers felt powerlessness because they did not have a voice in what was supposed to happen, even though they were the ones who knew the children best. The teachers in my study did not describe themselves as "burned out." However, Boyd and Schneider (1997) found that a lack of decision-making among teachers was a significant predictor for "burn-out" and retention. Teachers in their study needed

autonomy and control with decisions; otherwise, they became emotionally exhausted, and they depersonalized themselves and the children. The investigators defined depersonalization as having a negative, detached, and callous attitude toward oneself and one's work. Sometimes the teachers in Boyd and Schneider's (1997) study had to make a choice between following the rules or attending to the needs of the children. For example, one rule in many childcare centers is that all children eat lunch at the same time. However, if one child is not hungry and wants to eat later, the teacher has to decide whether to break the rule and let the child eat later or upset the child and make him eat when he is not hungry. Therefore, in the future, if the teachers at Live Oak do not participate in decision-making, they could be at risk for burn out. The fact that, as will be discussed later, nearly all of the interviewed teachers will have left the center within eight months of the interviews lends some credence to this suggestion.

Wolf and Walsh (1998) found that teacher-caregivers in one childcare center (57 children, ages two to nine) worked in an asymmetric and highly regulated system. They had to answer to the state licensing agency, the owner, and parents. They wrote, "Highly regulated systems that do not allow for feedback and for a sense of mutual responsibility are unhealthy systems." (p. 43) In their study, the teachers were not part of the decision-making process in determining regulations. For example, decisions needed to be made about discipline (biting), meals, and licensing requirements. Solutions to these problems were imposed on the teachers without their input, and the result was

powerlessness. The teachers in my study experienced a similar situation when they did not take part in the decisions concerning the transition process.

When employees are part of decision-making processes, they feel better about themselves and, as a result, work harder for the organization, increasing productivity and success (Karp, Sirias, & Arnold, 1999). In Europe and Japan, managers seek worker input because they believe they can teach and learn from their employees (Caudron, 1995). In the United States, the role for a manager or supervisor has changed in the last twenty years from dictator, controller, or overseer to team leader (Leach, 2000; Pecoraro, 1999). Supervisors should treat employees with dignity and respect and give them opportunities to express themselves. Asking for employee input will not diminish the role of supervisor; rather, it will enhance the supervisor's talent, skills, and capabilities. Perhaps, childcare as an industry has failed to catch up to other businesses. If childcare wants to improve its quality and productivity, directors will need to listen to and communicate with their teachers.

Leach (2000) and Pecoraro (1999) also suggested that when supervisors take time to perform the duties of their employees (also known as the 'bottom-up' strategy), they gain a better understanding of what their employees experience and subsequently become better managers. For example, if the directors at Live Oak made a point to spend an extended amount of time in the classroom caring for the children during a two week transition period, they would gain a better understanding of what the teachers experience and become better managers.

Working Mother magazine (October, 1999) identified the top 100 companies for working mothers in terms of flexible work schedules, child care provisions, salary, promotions, and so forth. The best companies had two qualities in common. First, top executives listened to their employees, and second, they communicated with them. If the directors had listened to their employees they would have seen how difficult it was for Candace to break her connections. She wanted to visit her former infants right away, and she wanted to stay in touch with Lila and Jerome. However, even though she did manage to visit in the toddler room, and Lila came back to visit, two policies indicated these visits were not supposed to occur.

Goldschmied and Jackson (1994) would not have agreed with the two policies that discouraged Candace from visiting with her former infants because they believed young children should keep in touch with their former teachers. Together, directors and teachers at Live Oak could have developed new policies to let the teachers keep in touch. Perhaps, they could have spent thirty minutes on their lunch hours visiting former children during times that were not disruptive. Or, they could have had designated times to visit former infants on the playground where there was more room and space. Classrooms can feel crowded and small, especially if one child is upset. Parents of former infants could have been invited to take their children to visit infant teachers at the end of the day after younger infants had gone home. Then the former infants would not have spread their germs to the younger ones. With these revised policies the teachers would have felt better and the children would have remained healthy.

Also, the child could have kept the teacher inside of her even if they were no longer together.

In terms of the timing for transitions, teachers, directors, and parents could have met for a "transition conference" to discuss the child's readiness, available openings, and other concerns. The directors would have maintained their authority over the process, but the teachers might have felt better knowing they had a forum for voicing their concerns. Also, directors and parents might have learned valuable information about some of the children whose transitions were difficult.

The teachers at Live Oak are professional childcare teachers who want a career, not just a paycheck. They provide a valuable service for other women to have careers outside the home. The mothers who bring their children to Live Oak do not have the extended family members available for childcare that families once had in the past and therefore depend on the Live Oak teachers to succeed in their careers. The teachers' work is more valuable than we as a society give them credit for because without them single-parent and dual career families would have fewer options for childcare. Therefore, they should exercise more power and responsibility with important decisions such as the transition.

Implications – Restructuring Childcare

The mother-role teachers need to find a new way to end their relationships with the infants to make their jobs less stressful and more fulfilling. If the teachers feel better about their jobs, the children will then receive better care. I

propose that teachers and children stay together for longer periods of time just as Goldschmied and Jackson (1994), Raikes (1993), Miller (1998), and Lieberman (1993) recommended. But, we should only do this if the teachers want to be with the children for longer periods; if they do not, then we should not force them to be together.

Specifically, a teacher would start with four infants the first year and stay with these four children until they were three years old, a "continuity of care" structure. In addition, after the first and second years, the teacher would add one new child (from a waiting list) to her group, making a total group size of five for the second year and six for the third year. Thus, the center would keep close to the same teacher-child ratios and group sizes that it previously had with yearly transitions. For a comparison of teacher-child ratios and parent fees between a yearly transition structure and a continuity of care structure, see Appendix D. One teacher and her group of children could share a classroom with another teacher and her group so that the teachers would have adult companionship and the children would have more peers with whom to play. When new children were added to the group after the first and second years, it would be best if they were close in age to the original four to make it easier for the teacher in terms of routine care and curriculum planning.

With the proposed continuity of care plan, the cost for the center would be more than it was with yearly transitions, even though parent fees, teacher salaries, and number of teachers would remain the same. The number of children would change, as there would be fewer in the first year, but more in the

following years (see Appendix D). This decrease in the number of children in the first year would reduce the center's income. Also, the center would have to offer additional training for teachers and purchase additional equipment, which would be a significant cost to the center. However, the benefits to both the teachers and children from the continuity of care plan would outweigh the increase in costs. Savings could be realized by reduction in staff and child turnover.

The center would need to implement a professional development training program to keep teachers in tune with the changing needs of the child. The center could hire an early childhood instructor to teach courses in child development and early childhood education (during lunch breaks or evenings), or the directors could pay for the teachers to take the appropriate courses at community colleges. The directors could also arrange a series of workshops at the center concerning current issues. Again, although the initial outlay may be of concern, the potential retention of staff could reduce subsequent training and recruitment costs.

Each year the teachers could adapt their classrooms to meet the developmental needs of the children, or they could move to new classrooms equipped for older children. If they chose to adapt their existing classrooms, they could add new equipment and materials and reuse existing equipment in new ways. For example, usually in infant classrooms, there are large thick mats on the floor upon which infants lie, sit, crawl, and play. When the children grew older, the teachers could use these same mats for tumbling and music. If a classroom did not already have a bathroom with several small toilets, this

bathroom would have to be added. This cost would be difficult to recover because it includes both renovation and dedicated space, but classroom flexibility would be gained.

There are other ways of adapting classrooms for developing children. Teachers could start out with cribs for each child and gradually replace them with cots; therefore, the center would need adequate storage space to hold these items while they were not in use. Adding more storage space could be expensive. The center would have to make an initial investment of more cribs because most centers probably only have ten to twelve cribs, not thirty-six. A center would need thirty-six cribs if nine teachers started out with four infants each at the same time. Hopefully, they could buy cribs that could be taken apart when not in use to save space. Similarly, high chairs would be replaced with small tables and chairs.

In all classrooms, teachers could order new materials and equipment as children grew older such as blocks, books, puzzles and games, imaginary play materials, large motor equipment, and so forth. All classrooms would need many large windows, high ceilings, plants, and doors that opened up to the playground and to an indoor "common area" (for example, an indoor gym or a lobby that could be used for play during inclement weather).

When the majority of children were close to three years of age, they would move as a group to a new preschool classroom with two new teachers, and the former teacher would start over with four infants. Obviously, because the children would not have the same birthdays, some would move a few months

before their third birthday and some would move a few months afterwards. The three-year old children would stay with the same preschool teachers until they were ready for kindergarten. In a preschool classroom, two teachers would take sixteen children to make a teacher-child ratio of one to eight. Again, these group sizes and teacher-child ratios would be similar to what was practiced before with yearly transitions. Live Oak currently has eight teachers for three, four, and five-year olds. For each of these teachers to have eight children in her group, the directors would have to recruit ten additional three-year olds beyond the children that were moving up from the infant-toddler rooms. Directors could develop a waiting list of parents who wanted their children to enter as a six-week old, one-year old, two-year old, and three-year old. These ages would not have to be exact; they are meant to be guidelines. If children left the program, directors could use the waiting list to fill vacant spots.

With fewer transitions, the teachers might become more like extended family. In today's age when families are scattered far and wide, a new extended family member would be a welcome addition, and even for families that are not separated, a new family member could be helpful. There are lots of reasons why parents may need help from others in raising their children. For example, children may live in an impoverished neighborhood, or their mothers may be psychologically damaged. Perhaps, a close teacher-infant relationship could partially compensate for an unhealthy mother-infant relationship (Howes et al., 1988).

Cryer (1999) from the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center in Chapel Hill, NC and a director from a childcare center in Eastern North Carolina have recently advocated keeping teachers and children together for more years. This director had restructured her center, and children were staying with teachers for two to three years before making a transition. She found her teachers were rarely absent because they felt they had to be there at work for "their kids." Although she had not done any formal research, she reported that the children knew each other better, were not as aggressive, had higher self-esteem, and could tie their shoes. Also, the parents had bonded. Dr. Cryer is presently conducting a six-year longitudinal study, comparing continuity of care to yearly transitions. She is interested to know whether "continuity of care" or "quality of care" is the key factor for optimal child development. Goldschmied and Jackson (1994) also reported teachers were absent less after they adopted the "key person" approach. With this approach, one teacher was assigned to care for a small group of children for several years.

There are problems with the plan I propose. First, some teachers believe an infant needs to be exposed to a variety of caregivers so as not to get too attached to one. Second, some teachers feel they are effective with only one age group. Third, some mothers feel insecure about the teacher-infant relationship, which could make a teacher feel uncomfortable and guilty about her relationship with the infant. Fourth, for the teachers, sometimes it is painful to play the mother role. Finally, the teacher and child may not get along well with

each other because the teacher is ineffective or there is a personality conflict. I will discuss each of these issues in turn.

Some teachers believe that when infants become toddlers, they should then be with new teachers to have opportunities to get used to more people; therefore, keeping the children with the same teacher for three years would contradict this belief. Candace said in our interview, "So you see the positive things. You know it is good for them to do this (the transition), to get used to more people, not always the same ones taking care of them." These teachers could be informed of the research discussed in chapter two that describes the benefits to children of staying with the same teacher for more than one year (Raikes, 1993; Howes & Hamilton, 1992b).

I have heard teachers say that they are only effective with one age group, such as "ones," "twos," or "threes" and so forth. When I worked as a liaison to a childcare center, an infant teacher told me that she only knew how to take of children until they could walk. After that, she did not know what to do and had to give them to the toddler teacher. Likewise, a preschool teacher expressed her discomfort when the director told her she would have a young three-old in her classroom of older three-year olds, four-year olds, and five-year olds. She worried that the young three-year old would not know what to do in her classroom. But, mothers are able to handle their children as they grow and develop. If the teachers have opportunities to be with the different ages over time, they might discover they could handle it. The children will change gradually as they grow older, and the teachers will have time to adjust to the "new"

children. Of course there will be hurdles as the children start doing new things, but the teachers will gain a broader understanding of child development and education. Candace enjoyed her infants but also wanted to teach preschoolers. If she can stay with the same children for three years, she will be able to teach different age groups and have variety and depth in her job.

Some mothers worry if their children get too close to the teacher that somehow the mother-infant relationship will be damaged. These mothers fear the child might choose the teacher over the mother; therefore, these mothers want their children to change teachers every year so that the child does not get too attached to one teacher. The teacher could feel guilty if she had a close relationship with the child, knowing the mother did not like it. On the other hand, some mothers might feel grateful that there is another person besides them to whom the child can be close. Fox (1977) found that infants could have primary and secondary attachments, which meant that the infant could be attached to both the mother (primary) and a teacher (secondary) without harming either relationship. Fathers, grandparents, and other close family friends can also be placed in the categories of primary or secondary attachments.

Playing the mother role was hard for Nia because she felt and acted like a mother but was not really the mother; the feelings of love and the attachment were there. It was as if during the day Nia lived a fantasy life and pretended that Patrick belonged to her, but when the real mother came, reality set in and the dream was over. Therefore, teachers can have feelings of guilt, competition, jealousy, anger, and desire when they care for someone else's infant. The

solution is not for the teacher to distance herself to avoid the feelings; rather, she needs help in working through these feelings. The directors could organize workshops with guest speakers (clinical psychologists) to discuss these issues.

Another problem could be that a child and teacher do not get along with each other. If they were stuck together for three years, this situation would be harmful for both the child and teacher. The directors, teachers, and parents would need to call a meeting to discuss plans for reassigning the child to a different teacher. However, to minimize this problem the directors, teachers, and parents could spend more time on the front end, arranging a suitable match between teacher and child. Developing a system for placing children with teachers could be the topic for a future research study.

Where Are the Teachers Now?

Since I left Live Oak eight months ago, I have learned that four of the six teachers have left the center. Lena called the center one day to say she needed her paycheck and a two-week vacation. After this call, she was not heard from again. Candace told me toward the end of the study she was looking for a new job in another center because she wanted to work with four and five-year olds, and the Live Oak directors said they could not switch her to the Pre-K room. But, two days before she was supposed to leave Live Oak and start her new job, her directors offered her a position in the Pre-K room. She is still at Live Oak. Maria left Live Oak at the end of my study because she was pregnant with her second child, and her doctor told her she needed bed rest. She was not sure if she was

going to return to Live Oak after having her baby. Amanda moved to another state at the end of my study because she was going through a divorce and felt that she and her young son needed to move closer to her family.

Nia told the directors she wanted to leave the toddler room and move to an older classroom to be with older kids. However, in our interview she told me that it was not that she wanted to be with older kids but that she wanted to leave the lead teacher in the toddler room. She said they had different ideas of what toddlers needed. However, when I talked to Candace in December of 1999, she told me that Nia had "run away to California" with her boyfriend. Danielle is still at Live Oak.

Of course, staff turnover in the industry itself rather than transition is the major cause of instability. Given the current turnover rate, 33% (Center for Child Care Workforce, 2000; Tergesen, A., 1999), it becomes incumbent upon the centers themselves to maximize teacher stability. We may find that teachers' transitions with children may provide increased job allegiance, offsetting some of the concerns regarding pay and benefits.

Conclusion

The teachers played more of the mother role or more of the educator role because of their personality styles and less from professional training. Candace and Danielle had both worked at Live Oak for over seven years and both had taken classes and participated in workshops. Because Live Oak was NAEYC accredited, they both participated in professional development activities such as

observing other programs and studying their own classrooms. Even though they had experienced similar kinds of professional training, they each played a different role. Candace assumed more of the mother role, while Danielle assumed more of the educator. Therefore, personality styles is one way to account for their differences. Lena also had many years of professional training as she had a degree in special education, and at one time she had owned her own childcare center. She played both roles somewhat equally, which makes it difficult to know how her personality style influenced her role.

Nia, Maria, and Amanda had received the least amount of professional training. Nia played more of the mother, while Maria and Amanda played more of the educator. Nia was in her early twenties and had worked at Live Oak for less than a year and therefore had not attended workshops or experienced the accreditation process. But, as a teenager, she had done a lot of babysitting. Maria had recently moved from Turkey and had been a math teacher of older children. Amanda, whose degree was in English literature, had received a small amount of professional training from working in other childcare centers before coming to Live Oak almost one year ago. Therefore, their experiences with professional training were roughly at the same level, yet they interacted with the children in different ways.

The mother-role teachers were characterized by their feelings of love, protection, ownership, sadness, anger, and longing; they invested their emotions in the children. The educator-role teachers were less likely to express their

emotions; instead, they emphasized treating the children as a group in need of equal treatment and not creating special relationships with two or three children.

If centers adopt the “continuity of care” approach where teachers and children stay together for three years, it will be better if the teachers played a mother role because they would be more likely to connect with and invest their emotions in the children. The teachers and children need this emotional connection to spend three years together. If centers keep the yearly transition approach, there will continue to be difficulties for the mother-role teachers when the infants move to the toddler classroom. On the other hand, the educator-role teachers will not have as difficult a time, as they are more likely to maintain a distance and to keep their emotions separate.

I recommend that Live Oak implement the continuity of care plan. This will entail the directors and teachers working together to assign small groups of infants and toddlers to individual teachers and allowing these teachers and children to stay together for several years before the first transition to the preschool classroom. The specific details concerning room assignments, new materials, new storage spaces, extra classrooms, and so forth will have to be worked out by the individuals involved, but the general idea is to make the teacher-child relationship a top priority.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

FIGURES A-1, A-2, A-3

DRAWINGS OF INFANT AND TODDLER CLASSROOMS

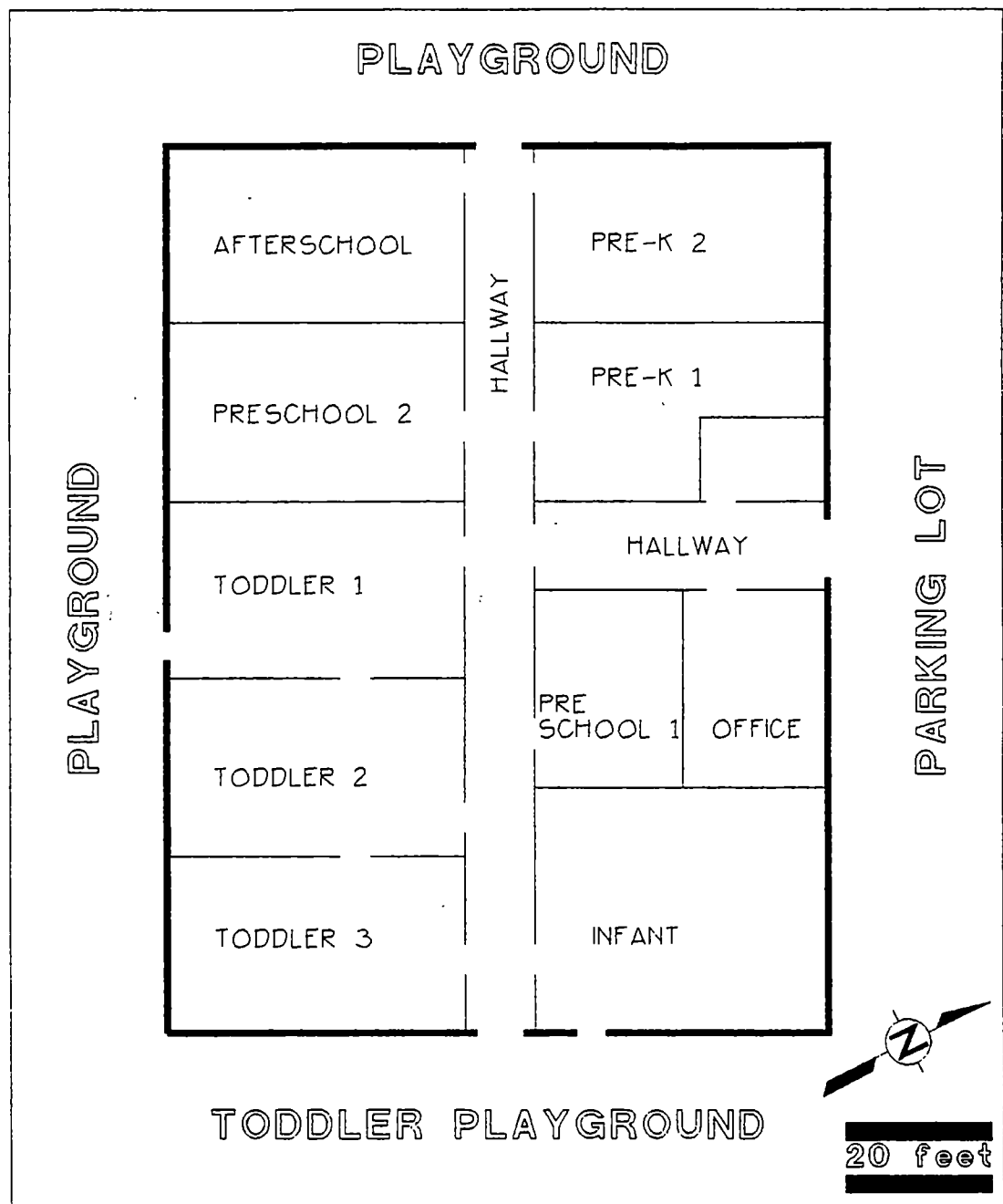


Figure A-1. Layout of classrooms at Live Oak Child Development Center

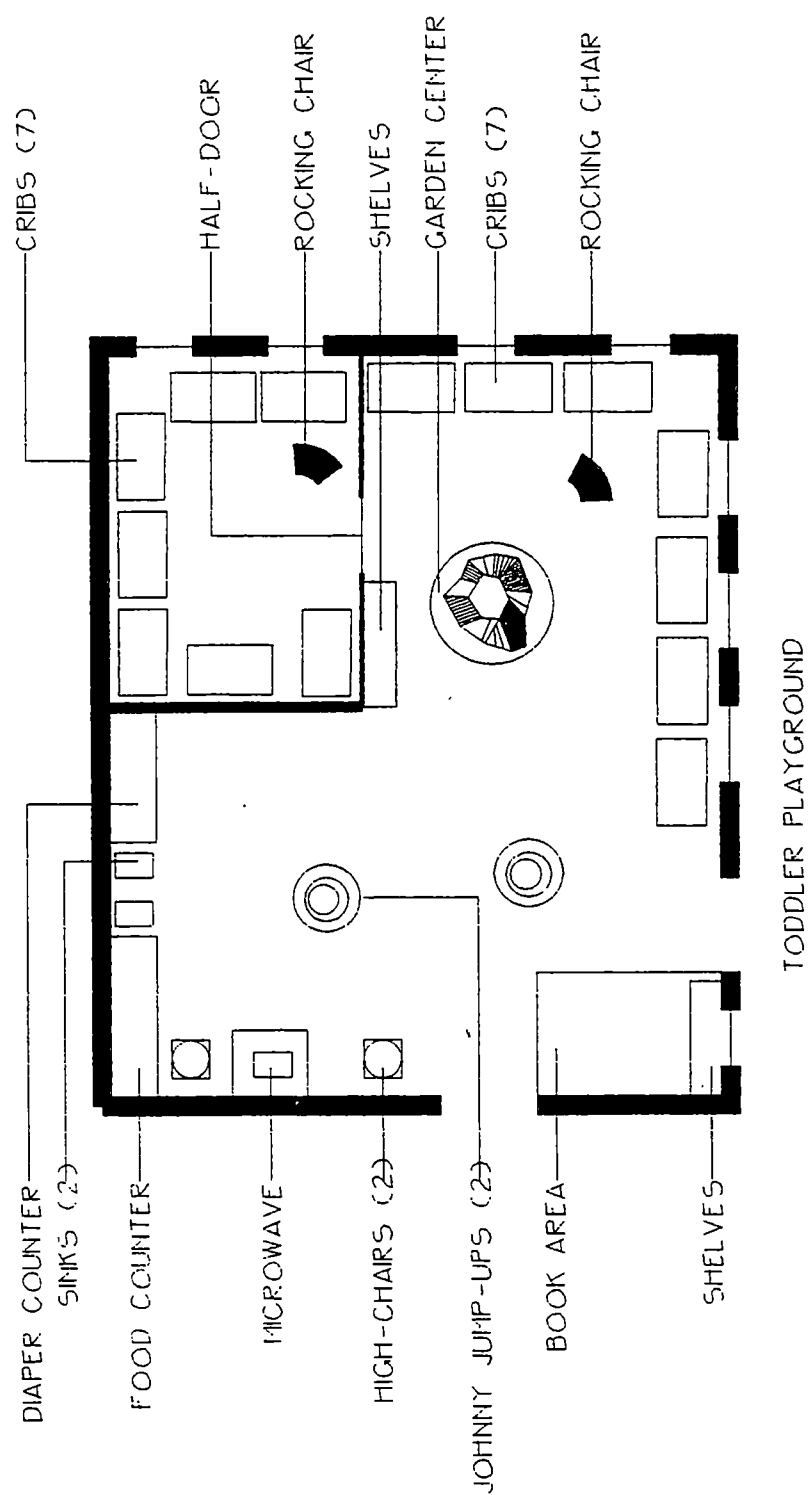


Figure A-2. Drawing of infant classroom

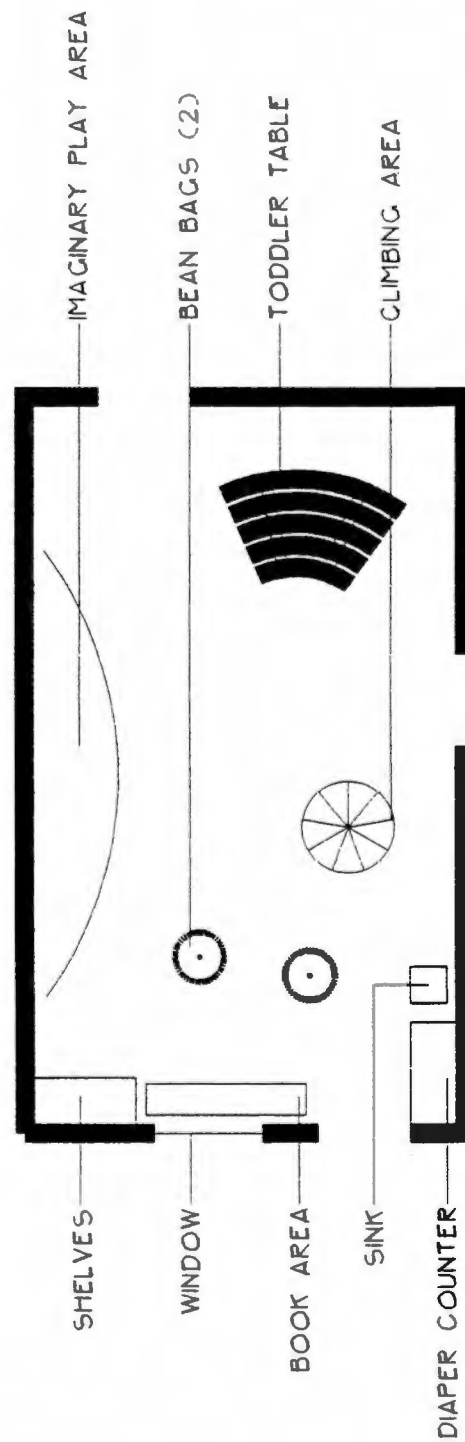


Figure A-3. Drawing of toddler classroom

APPENDIX B

TAXONOMY

APPENDIX B

TAXONOMY

THE TEACHER-CHILD RELATIONSHIP

KINDS OF TEACHER-INFANT/TODDLER INTERACTIONS

- 1. Ways to play a mother role**
 - a. Specific language**
 - b. Emotional expressions**
 - c. Teacher's location in classroom**
 - c. Playful actions**
 - d. Certain beliefs**
- 2. Ways to play an educator role**
 - a. Specific language**
 - b. Equal treatment of children**
 - c. Emphasis on cleanliness and order**
 - d. Assistance to directors**
 - e. Certain beliefs**
- 3. Ways to form connections**
 - a. Physical touch**
 - b. Eye contact and smiling**
 - c. Games**
 - d. Emotional expressions**

- e. Feedings
- f. Close proximity
- 4. Ways to be disconnected
 - a. Teacher's location in classroom
 - b. Emphasis on routine tasks
 - c. Complaints
 - d. Group schedule
- 5. Ways to maintain connections after the transition
 - a. Visits in toddler room
 - b. Visits on playground
 - c. Visits in hallway
- 6. Ways to break connections after the transition
 - a. Hiding
 - b. Center policies

KINDS OF THINGS TEACHERS SAID ABOUT THE TRANSITION

- 1. Ways to express emotions
 - a. Expressions of sadness
 - b. Expressions of loss
 - c. Expressions of anger
 - d. Expressions of helplessness
- 2. Ways to express disagreement
 - a. Discussion of center policies
 - b. Discussion of classroom rules

- c. Discussion of children's problems
 - d. Discussion of teaching styles
- 3. Ways to describe infant's readiness
 - a. List of infant's abilities
 - b. Descriptions of what infant will learn in new classroom
 - c. Descriptions of how infant has outgrown infant room
- 4. Ways to compare infant room to toddler room
 - a. Descriptions of atmosphere in infant room
 - b. Descriptions of atmosphere in toddler room
 - c. Descriptions of schedule in infant room
 - d. Descriptions of schedule in toddler room
 - e. Descriptions of child in infant room
 - f. Descriptions of child in toddler room
- 5. Ways to describe transition process
 - a. Definition of cold turkey
 - b. Discussion of visits to toddler room
 - c. Discussion of child's reactions to new room
 - d. Descriptions of conversations with parents

THE TRANSITION TIME

REASONS FOR THE TRANSITION

- 1. Ways to determine timing of transition
 - a. Available spaces in both classrooms

b. Infant's readiness

c. Infant's birthday

STEPS IN THE TRANSITION PROCESS

1. Steps in moving an infant

a. Director's official word

b. Talk with the parents

c. Toddler teacher's visit in infant room

d. Infant's visit in toddler room

e. Move at end of the month

APPENDIX C

**TABLE C-1: RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND
THEMES**

APPENDIX C

Table C-1. Relationship between research questions and themes. The ten research questions are each addressed by one or more themes.

	<i>Mother/ Educator role theme</i>	<i>Connection/ Dis- connection theme</i>	<i>Readiness/ Loss Theme</i>	<i>Powerless- ness theme</i>	<i>Conclusion (Relation- ships among four themes)</i>
Research Question^a					
#1	X				
#2	X	X			
#3		X	X		
#4		X	X		
#5	X	X			
#6		X	X		
#7		X	X		
#8			X	X	
#9					X
#10					X

^aResearch Questions:

- #1: What role did the teacher play in the life of an infant or toddler?
- #2: What was the nature of the relationship between the teacher and an infant?
- #3: How did the teacher and an infant end a relationship together?
- #4: How did a teacher and a toddler begin a relationship together?
- #5: What was the nature of the relationship between the teacher and a toddler?
- #6: What kinds of experiences did the teacher and an infant have during the transition?
- #7: What kinds of experiences did the teacher and a toddler have during the transition?
- #8: How did the teacher prepare for the transition?
- #9: How did the teacher experience the transition?
- #10: What was the meaning of the transition for the teacher?

APPENDIX D

YEARLY TRANSITION AND CONTINUITY OF CARE MODELS: PARENT FEES AND TEACHER-CHILD RATIOS

APPENDIX D

Yearly transition model: Parent fees and teacher-child ratios

Parent fees:

	<u># of children</u>	<u>weekly rate</u>	<u>weeks</u>	<u>yearly</u>
Infant room	9	\$141	51	64719
	4	\$81	51	16524
Toddler I	14	\$127	51	90678
Toddler II	13	\$122	51	80886
Toddler III	14	\$122	51	87108
Preschool I	16	\$118	51	96288
Preschool II	17	\$118	51	102306
Pre-K I	20	\$118	51	120360
Total	107			658869

Total parent fees for year at Live Oak: \$658,869

Teacher-child ratios:

	<u># of teachers</u>	<u>teacher to child ratio</u>
Infant room	3	1 to 4.3
Toddler I room	2	1 to 7
Toddler II room	2	1 to 6.5
Toddler III room	2	1 to 7
Preschool I	2	1 to 8
Preschool II	2	1 to 8.5
Pre-K I	2	1 to 10
Total	15	

Continuity of care model: Parent fees and teacher-child ratios

Year 1

<u>Teacher</u>	<u># of children</u>	<u>Parent fees/wk.</u>	<u>weeks</u>	<u>Total/year</u>
Candy	4	\$141	51	28764
Maria	4	\$141	51	28764
Lena	4	\$141	51	28764
Nia	4	\$141	51	28764
Danielle	4	\$141	51	28764
Amanda	4	\$141	51	28764
Tina	4	\$141	51	28764
Sue	4	\$141	51	28764
Mary	4	\$141	51	28764
Betty	8	\$118	51	48144
Cary	8	\$118	51	48144
Diane	8	\$118	51	48144
Elaine	8	\$118	51	48144
Fran	8	\$118	51	48144
Gladys	8	\$118	51	48144
Jenny	8	\$118	51	48144
Ingrid	8	\$118	51	48144
Total	100			644028

Total parent fees for year one: \$644,028

Teacher-child ratios: 1 to 4 for infants; 1 to 8 for preschoolers

Year 2

<u>Teacher</u>	<u># of children</u>	<u>Parent fees/wk.</u>	<u>weeks</u>	<u>Total/year</u>
Candy	5	\$127	51	32385
Maria	5	\$127	51	32385
Lena	5	\$127	51	32385
Nia	5	\$127	51	32385
Danielle	5	\$127	51	32385
Amanda	5	\$127	51	32385
Tina	5	\$127	51	32385
Sue	5	\$127	51	32385
Mary	5	\$127	51	32385
Betty	8	\$118	51	48144
Cary	8	\$118	51	48144
Diane	8	\$118	51	48144
Elaine	8	\$118	51	48144
Fran	8	\$118	51	48144
Gladys	8	\$118	51	48144
Jenny	8	\$118	51	48144
Ingrid	8	\$118	51	48144
Total	109			676617

Total parent fees for year two: \$676,617

Teacher-child ratios: 1 to 5 for young toddlers; 1 to 8 for preschoolers

Year 3

<u>Teacher</u>	<u># of children</u>	<u>Parent fees/wk.</u>	<u>weeks</u>	<u>Total/year</u>
Candy	6	\$122	51	37332
Maria	6	\$122	51	37332
Lena	6	\$122	51	37332
Nia	6	\$122	51	37332
Danielle	6	\$122	51	37332
Amanda	6	\$122	51	37332
Tina	6	\$122	51	37332
Sue	6	\$122	51	37332
Mary	6	\$122	51	37332
Betty	9	\$118	51	54162
Cary	9	\$118	51	54162
Diane	9	\$118	51	54162
Elaine	9	\$118	51	54162
Fran	9	\$118	51	54162
Gladys	9	\$118	51	54162
Jenny	9	\$118	51	54162
Ingrid	9	\$118	51	54162
Total	126			769284

Total parent fees for year three: \$769,284

Teacher-child ratios: 1 to 6 for older toddlers; 1 to 8 for preschoolers

Average parent fees over three year period at Live Oak: \$696,643

VITA

Eliza Dean was born in New Orleans, Louisiana on May 16, 1966. She attended elementary and high school there and graduated from Isidore Newman School in June 1984. The following September she began undergraduate study at Cornell University, and in August 1988, she received a Bachelor of Arts degree in psychology. In August 1990, after teaching pre-kindergarten for two years in New Orleans, she accepted a graduate assistantship in the Child Development Laboratories at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, and began study toward a Master's degree in child development. After receiving her Master's degree in 1992, she worked for two years for the University of Tennessee Agricultural Extension Service in the family life division. She returned to graduate school at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville in 1994 to begin doctoral work in child and family studies. During her doctoral work, she taught undergraduate courses in child development and early childhood education at different colleges in Tennessee and North Carolina. The author is a member of several professional organizations, including the National Association for the Education of Young Children.