School of Education

Navigating the literacy landscape of the twenty-first century: parents and families supporting young children's emergent literacy

Megan Patricia Walsh

This thesis is presented for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

of

Curtin University

March 2020

Declaration

To the best of my knowledge and belief, this thesis contains no material previously published by any other person except where due acknowledgement has been made.

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university.

Human Ethics (For projects involving human participants/tissues, etc.) The research presented and reported on in this thesis was conducted in accordance with the National Health and Medical Research Council Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007) - updated March 2014. The proposed research study received human research ethics approval from the Curtin University Human Research Ethics Committee (EC00262) Approval Number # HRE2016-0190

Signature ████████

Date 4/3/2020

Abstract

Literacy continues to evolve to meet the challenges of rapid advancements in technology, people mobility, and family and community diversity of the 21st century. Parents, families and the community play a crucial part in laying the foundation for assisting young children's development of emergent literacy skills in order for them to become capable, confident speakers and listeners, readers and writers. It is acknowledged that children do not all have the same opportunity for language experiences and literacy models within their family and communities. This research aimed to investigate the lived experiences of 21st century parents supporting their pre-school child's emergent literacy. A Mixed Methods approach was applied to this investigation. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was engaged to explore interview transcripts of parents' perceptions when supporting their child's emergent literacy. A questionnaire played a supportive role and was employed to investigate a wider parent population's emergent literacy attitudes, values and behaviours. The findings of this research demonstrate parents' confidence and positive attitudes towards literacy and their own abilities. Parents engage in informal literacy experiences to support their child's emergent literacy and are influenced by their own childhood experiences. Technology is part of family life and is utilised to support emergent literacy. Parents identified outside agencies as valuable in supporting emergent literacy and acknowledged that a lack of time was the main factor that hindered them from engaging in emergent literacy activities with their child.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Associate Professor Jenny Jay who has been with me from the very beginning of this long but exciting journey. Words cannot express my gratitude for everything you have done for me. Providing advice, discussing issues and being readily available to answer phone calls has been a wonderful assistance to me, especially when I moved to New South Wales. I have enjoyed problem solving with you and have learnt a lot about early childhood too. Thank you so very much!

Thank you to Dr Sharon Davies for joining my supervisory team along the way. I appreciate the advice you have provided to guide me with my thesis and would like to thank you for the support and kind words. Your encouragement has been greatly appreciated.

This research would not have been possible without the wonderful research participants. Thank you to all the parents who were interviewed and to all the many parents who answered the questionnaire. Without your data I would not have been able to complete this research. I would also like to acknowledge the schools and early learning centres and Playgroup WA who gracefully accepted my request to leave the questionnaires along with the ethics approval for parents to complete. Your willingness to allow your organisations to be involved my research helped collection of data become a much easier process. Thank you so much.

Finally, I would like to thank my long-suffering husband Michael. He has been a tower of strength and encouragement for me throughout this journey. Thank you for keeping me focused and helping me remain excited about conducting research. I don't think I could have achieved my Doctorate without your unending support. Last but not least, I would like to thank my two sons, Rowley and Gus. They remained positive, kind and loving towards me throughout the six years it has taken me to complete this degree. Their belief in me is something I will treasure forever. Thank you, boys, so very much.

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my parents, Edward (deceased) and Patricia Horne for truly valuing education by giving all of their seven children the educational opportunities they never had.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF APPENDICES

Chapter 1

Introduction

This chapter consists of identifying the background and rationale for this research. Being a teacher for thirty years, the researcher had the opportunity to interact with families and observe how they communicated with each other. From early in the researcher's teaching career, it was noticed that not all children learnt to read once formal schooling commenced. In some families, children did not read at home with their parents. It was apparent that not all families had the same attitudes and values towards literacy; however, from the researcher's experience, their reasons for not reading at home remained consistent over the years. Living overseas identified another reason associated with culture why some children did not read at home which explained why they found it challenging to learn to read once they began school. Living in the 21st century brought different challenges to family life and learning to read. Technology effortlessly integrated itself into family life and along with it, brought new experiences which families continue to navigate their way through to this very day. The world is constantly changing, and with that, so have families, the home environment and how they engage with one another. Vygotsky's socio-cultural perspective identifies that children learn through experiences with more knowledgeable others in their home and community environments (Berk & Winsler, 1995). Bronfenbrenner identifies that a child's development is influenced through interactions with others, and the context and communities in which they live (Tudge, Mercon-Vargas, Liang, & Payir, 2017). Understanding these perspectives and their influence associated with how children learn, provided the motivation to ponder what it would be like for a parent in the 21st century, trying to support their child's emergent literacy. Such contemplation was the foundation for this investigation, how 21st century parents make sense of their experiences supporting their young child's emergent literacy. In particular, what do parents find helpful and what prevents them from supporting their child's emergent literacy. This chapter concludes with an overview for the organisation of this thesis.

Background/Rationale for this research

I had always wanted to be a teacher. My eldest sister was a teacher and in my early teens when school was finished for me for the year, I would assist in her classroom. I observed her teach, plan lessons, interact with students, parents and other staff members and I liked what I saw. She taught Grade 1 and I especially liked this year level because they were full of energy, enthusiastic and were still young enough to believe in the Easter Bunny, Santa and the Tooth Fairy!

The days of helping in my sister's classroom have long since passed. I have now been a teacher for nearly 30 years. The majority of my teaching experience has been in the early years, primarily Kindergarten, Year 1 and Year 2. In my early career days, I taught in small country towns. It did not take long for me to decide that English was my favourite curriculum area to teach. I used stories as a springboard to further develop children's vocabulary and knowledge about new concepts. In my naivety this is what I thought parents might also be doing at home.

I developed positive relationships with the parents of the children in my classes. It was here when I noticed disparities between children's reading routines at home. Some children read at home and while others didn't. I remember meeting with parents and encouraging them to read with their children at home. I could not understand why they did not read at home because I was witnessing the impact of its absence at school. Reasons for not reading with their child at home usually consisted of "We had sport last night", "visitors over for dinner", "too tired", "too busy", "not feeling well", "forgot or left the books at school". Through many conversations with parents and colleagues, I soon found out families were not all the same, they held different beliefs and values towards reading and writing, listening and speaking.

Teaching enabled me to live and teach in other countries. I have had the good fortune to teach in Wyoming in the United States and Muscat in Oman. I thought that in the United States, parental support for listening to their child read at home would be different than in Australia. This perception existed because everything I saw about the United States in the media was always bigger and better than Australia which made me believe it would be the same for families and literacy. It did not take me long to discover that it was the same. Some children read with their parents at home, while others did not. The reasons why they were not reading at home were consistent with

the reasons I had experienced in Australia and the only difference was their accent! This experience confirmed for me that the experiences' parents engaged in with their child at home such as listening to them read, writing and including them in stimulating conversations shapes their competence in reading and writing.

It wasn't until we moved to Muscat in Oman, a Muslim country, and I taught in an international school that I learnt about the influence of one's culture upon emergent literacy practices. My Year 1 class comprised of children from different countries around the world who had different religious beliefs and many of whom spoke English as a second language. Teaching in Oman helped me appreciate how culture influences home literacy environment and practices such as valuing singing, oral storytelling, playing games and completing chores together more so than reading and talking about books together (Holly, Washington, & Washington, 2006; Leseman & Tuijl, 2006; Lilly & Greene, 2004; Vaughn, Linan-Thompson, Pollard-Durodola, Mathes, & Cardenas Hagan, 2006).

Being a teacher has given me the opportunity to teach and work in partnership with many families, within Australia, the United States and Oman. Over the span of those 30 years, I have evolved and changed as a teacher and as a person. I attribute those changes to further study, maturity, people I have come into contact with along the way and experiences within the various environments I have engaged in. Reflecting upon my experiences and connecting with parents and their young children, I must acknowledge that families have always been changing and growing, responding to the environment around them too, their communities and cultures in addition to the complexities' life might present.

Moll (1992) considers that children come to school with their own literacy experiences that are related to their home environment which incorporates activities connected with knowledge, social experiences and wellbeing gained in a community environment. This is known as 'funds of knowledge.' It is now the 21st century and children continue to begin school with wide literacy experiences that may or may not align with those of the school. Bronfenbrenner identified 'Time' as one of the proximal processes that impacts upon a child's cognitive development. Many years have passed since I started my teaching journey, and I am still faced with the same literacy challenges that have been constantly presented themselves throughout my teaching career. Even in the 21st

century, there are children who continue to experience difficulties learning to read and write. Some children read with their parents at home and others do not. These experiences have encouraged me to reflect upon how parents engage in emergent literacy activities with their children at home and how they influence the emergent literacy knowledge and skills their young children take with them to commence school.

I know from experience that some children learn to read quickly with the support of their parents, family and friends while others do not have such guidance and assistance at home (DeTemple, 2001; Fellowes & Oakley, 2010; Suskind, 2015). Family values and attitudes towards literacy, the home literacy environment and community and cultural diversity all shape the literacy children take to school (Benveniste, 2013; Hart & Risley, 1995; Haynes, 2010; Hood, Cobnlon, & Andrews, 2008; Senechal, 2012; Sénéchal & Lefevre, 2014; Senechal, Lefevre, Thomas, & Daley, 1998; Wasik & van Horn, 2012; Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998).

Evidence from neuroscience clearly states that parents are the ones who have the most influence on their child's development (Belsky & de Haan, 2011; Benveniste, 2013; Berk, 2006). Research has identified that the type of relationship that exists between a child and their parent affects brain development (Belsky & de Haan, 2011; Benveniste, 2013; Kirkman, Dadds, & Hawes, 2018; Suskind, 2015). It is considered that it is 'parent interactions with their child' and 'not who parents are' that shapes a child's development (Benveniste, 2013; Suskind, 2015).

> "When parents develop deep and loving relationships with their children, they offer their children an enriching environment in which to grow and learn. Positive parenting involves being loving and setting consistent and clear expectations. Positive parents adapt to their children's changing needs, and raise their children with confidence" (Benveniste, 2013, p. 4).

The quality of parenting, the interactions and responsiveness of parents influences children's development (Kirkman et al., 2018; Landry & Smith, 2006; Morrison, McDonald Connor, & Bachman, 2006; Suskind, 2015). Experiences in the early years of life provide the foundation and scaffold for future learning. Neuroscience has identified this as the 'bottom up' approach for building the brain's architecture (Benveniste, 2013). What parents do with their child is crucial for brain development and impacts upon a child's learning, health, social, spiritual and emotional

development and their well-being (Benveniste, 2013; Berk, 2006; Garvey, 2017; Suskind, 2015). The most important time for a child's brain development is in the first five years of their life although, it is in the first three years where the most rapid growth occurs (Benveniste, 2013; Berk, 2006; Suskind, 2015).

The nature or nurture debate continues to promote discussion among academics (Garvey, 2017). Neuroscience considers that nature and nurture jointly add to the growth of a child's brain development (Garvey, 2017). The predisposition of genes contributes towards children developing in specific ways and it is the role of the environment that decides how the genes are displayed. However, it is the early experiences in life that Benveniste (2013) and Suskind (2015) suggest has more influence on a child's development than heredity. This being the case, it is essential parents provide an enriching environment filled with positive and caring interactions with their children (Aram & Levin, 2011; Baroody & Diamond, 2012; Berk, 2006; Robinson, 2007; Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998).

The evidence from neuroscience supports Bronfenbrenner's bioecological theory. Bronfenbrenner (1994) places the child at the centre of their development. The interactions children have with family, friends, teachers, and extended family which occur at home, school and in the community influences their development (Rosa & Tudge, 2013). How the interactions and activities transpire are contingent upon the personal characteristics of the people involved, in addition to the context in which they occur such as at home, childcare, or at the park (Rosa & Tudge, 2013; Tudge et al., 2017). Furthermore, communities also influence how children learn. A community's cultural beliefs, values and practices change with the passage of time (Berk, 2006; Rosa & Tudge, 2013; Tudge et al., 2017).

Within the structure of the Australian Early Year Learning Framework (EYLF), the socio-cultural perspective is one of the perspectives, which lays the foundation of how children develop and learn (Vygotsky, 1978). In support of Bronfenbrenner (1994) bioecological theory, this perspective also considers that learning is achieved through social interaction (Berk, 2006; Berk & Winsler, 1995). Children learn through engaging in stimulating conversation, watching, copying and being guided by more experienced people (Barratt-Pugh & Allen, 2011; Barratt-Pugh & Rohl, 2000; Benveniste, 2013; Fellowes & Oakley, 2010; Suskind, 2015). Such interaction pave

the way for new learning that would not have been likely if the child attempted the task independently (Fellowes & Oakley, 2010). This form of interaction is known as the zone of proximal development.

Recent research conducted by Teale, Whittingham, and Hoffman (2020) found that young children benefit from the involvement of quality pre-school programs. Consequently, teachers play an important role supporting and extending young children's emergent literacy skills (Piasta, Farley, & Justice, 2020). Unsatisfactory knowledge the area of literacy, influences the quality of teaching children experience. During the past decade, there has been media attention placed upon teachers and their skills and knowledge in the areas or literacy and numeracy. Current affairs programs have reported that around 10% of teaching students have failed to meet the necessary standards for literacy and numeracy Anton et al. (2015). In 2008, the National Curriculum Board announced changes to the guidelines for teaching reading and writing in order to combat the decline in children's reading and writing achievements. Teachers are now required to sit literacy and numeracy exams before they graduate from their teaching degree Mitchell et al. (2008). Therefore, the quality of literacy teaching in the yearly years is another element that impacts children's learning and therefore highlights the importance of literacy support within the home environment.

Bronfenbrenner (1994) acknowledges cultural beliefs, values and practices do not stand still but in fact, change over time. This is evident with parents raising children in the 21st century. The most obvious changes have been the advancement of technology along with its seamless integration into the fabric of daily life. The introduction of technology into family life impacts the way in which families live and operate (Plowman, McPake, & Stephen, 2010). These 21st century parents have no role models to follow because such technology did not exist when parents in the generation before them were guiding their children. As a teacher, I have seen first-hand how connected parents and children are to technology. Technology is now being used to develop young children's emergent literacy through the use of e-books and while iPads and tablets are used for writing (Neumann, 2016b, 2018b). Consequently, children are now expected to become proficient with not only non-digital but also with digital tools. This has led to the development of digital literacy which refers to the ability to make meaning and communicate successfully with the use of digital tools (Neumann, Finger, & Neumann, 2017).

Over the years I have observed changes in family structures. Parents may be geographically separated from their family due to work commitments or break down in the family unit. For various reasons, some children may live with both parents, one parent, extended family or in foster care. Reflecting upon Vygotsky and Bronfenbrenner's theories, I can appreciate how these structures impact upon a child's development and a parent's ability to support their child's emergent literacy.

The Australian curriculum supports Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory of learning, however this has not always been the case. There have been many other theories of how children have learnt to read and write over the past one hundred years including the Maturational, Developmental, Connectionist, Emergent, Socio-Cultural and Critical literacy theories (Barratt-Pugh & Rohl, 2000). These theories are interrelated and build upon past understandings.

Cultural beliefs, values and attitudes are all shaped by the passing of time. Understanding the significance of Vygotsky's socio-cultural perspective and Bronfenbrenner's bioecological theory of human development and drawing upon my own teaching experiences, I am encouraged to question what it is like for 21st century parents supporting their child's emergent literacy? The desire to assist parents to provide a robust emergent literacy foundation for their young children so they can learn to read and write and engage in dialogue with others has been the motivation for this research.

This investigation aims to uncover what it is like for 21st century parents supporting their young child's emergent literacy. This thesis intends to add to the already robust literature that demonstrates the important role of the home, family and community in emergent literacy.

Structure of the Thesis

This thesis is comprised of six chapters. Chapter One introduced the background and rationale for this research. Throughout the researcher's teaching career, children have continued to experience difficulties learning to read and write and the present day is no exception. Neuroscience has identified parent interaction with their children assists in brain development. The home environment, parents' values and beliefs about literacy and a family's culture, shape a child's literacy development. Changes in family structures and changes in technology and its integration into everyday life has

influenced how families function. This has prompted the researcher to question through this investigation, what it might be like for a 21st century parent trying to support their child's emergent literacy.

Chapter Two reviews the literature relating to the role of parents supporting their child's literacy development. It begins by discussing the meaning of literacy and how the definition has changed over time to meet the ever-changing needs of society. Parents and families in the 21st century are acknowledged as playing a critical role in supporting the emergent literacy knowledge and skills of young children, however this has not always been the case. A history of 20th century literacy perspectives, which includes Maturational, Developmental, Connectionist, Emergent, Socio-Cultural and Critical literacy theories describe the changing role parents have played supporting their child's literacy development over the past century. Twenty-first century families have embraced technology and it now has permeated throughout every facet of their lives changing the way families operate. Parents provide a role model for the way technology is used in the home and their attitudes and values about the use of technology influences how children interact with it are discussed in this chapter. Emergent literacy includes skills involving concepts of print, phonemic awareness, environmental print, letter knowledge, pretend reading and writing are defined and discussed. The relevance of inside-out and outside-in emergent literacy skills are defined and explained. In the 21st century, parents continue to play an important role in developing their child's emergent literacy skills. The home environment, parents' interactions with their children and how they utilise technology are considered. Finally, family support programs have a place in society. They provide assistance to families in the early years. The role and benefit of family support programs are considered.

Chapter Three outlines the methodology used in this study. It commences with an explanation of the conceptual framework the researcher holds about the study. An explanation of how Vygotsky's socio-cultural perspective and Bronfenbrenner's bioecological theory of human development contribute to the theoretical framework which underpins this investigation is supplied. A description of the embedded mixed method research design consisting of sequential collection of qualitative and quantitative data, weighting and mixing components are outlined. The history of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) and an explanation of how it is

applied to qualitative research is explained. The methods used to collect data, participants, and how the data were analysed are discussed. Finally, research rigour, ethical considerations and the significance of the study are explained.

Chapter Four begins with an interpretation and analysis of the superordinate themes derived from the semi structured interviews. This is followed by an explanation of how the questionnaire support the superordinate themes from the qualitative data collection. A combined analysis of the questionnaire and the superordinate themes follows.

Chapter Five provides a discussion of the results from the analysis of the semi-structured interviews and the questionnaire. The superordinate themes are explored and supported with data collected from the questionnaires. Furthermore, a discussion of emergent literacy activities in the areas of reading, writing and oral language follows. Finally, a discussion of how parents considered a 'lack of time' prevented them from supporting their child's emergent literacy concludes this chapter.

Finally, Chapter Six identifies the limitations of the study. This is followed by the identification of several recommendations as a result of this research. Lastly, implications for future research are identified.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Introduction

This chapter commences by identifying what literacy means to people living in the first part of the 21st century. It then moves on to acknowledging the literacy landscape has changed over the past 100 years too. There have been many different perspectives in relation to how children learn to read and how best to teach them. This literature review discusses such perspectives in order of occurrence over time beginning with the Maturational perspective, then the Developmental perspective, followed by the Connectionist perspective, and Emergent Literacy perspective, then the Socio-cultural perspective and finally the Critical theory perspective. Each of these perspectives is discussed in connection with how it was considered children learnt to read and how reading should be taught. The role parents play in teaching their child to read begins to evolve throughout each perspective.

The discussion then moves to the role parents play supporting their child's emergent literacy in the new technological age of the early 21st century. Parents are in unfamiliar circumstances because such advanced technology was not available when they were young. Children learn literacy and digital skills through observation and peer tutoring. Parents are role models for their children and their attitudes and values towards the use of technology impact how children interact with it and learn. Following this, the concept of early literacy development is discussed. It is acknowledged here; the significant role and contribution parents play in developing their child's literacy. Oral language, reading and writing all contribute towards assisting children to build knowledge about the world around them. The concept of emergent literacy is explained and discussed in light of inside processes which concern knowledge of rules for interpreting sounds and outside processes which relate to the context in which reading and writing are taking place. Attention is then moved to the role parents play in developing their child's emergent literacy. The discussion centres around how parents and the home and community environment play a crucial part in laying the foundation for assisting young children to develop these emergent literacy skills in order to become capable, confident readers and writers. Finally, the chapter concludes with a

discussion centred around the role of family support programs and the benefits they provide in developing young children's emergent literacy skills.

Literacy

When asked to define literacy in the early part of the twentieth century, most people were of the understanding that it related to reading and writing and was primarily a set of skills obtained at school (Wasik & van Horn, 2012). One hundred years later in the early part of the 21st century, advances in technology have affected the ways in which we now converse, use our free time and engage in work related jobs. New aspects of literacy have developed as a result of the use of the internet, email, tablets, mobile phones, text messaging, laptop computers, DVDs, digital imaging and videos. Literacy now demands a greater range of language capabilities, knowledge and skills. To define literacy is a challenging task, largely because it is always transforming to meet the demands of society.

Otto (2008, p. 2) describes literacy users as "being active, critical and creative users not only of print and spoken language but also of the visual language of film and television, commercial and political advertising, photography and more" Hill (2006) defines literacy as "reading, writing, speaking and listening and involves the knowledge and skills required to engage in activities required for effective functioning in the community" (p. 3). Luke (1993) states "Literacy is dynamic, evolving social and historical construction. It is not a fixed, static body of skills" (p.3). Although literacy is still traditionally defined as the ability to read and write, the meaning of literacy has increased to include a set of complex, multidimensional skills that begin at birth and expand over a person's lifetime (Wasik & van Horn, 2012). Literacy is a cultural phenomenon and it is constantly changing to meet the complexities of the economic, political and technological world (Teale & Sulzby, 1986). Literacy is defined by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment, Reporting Authority (ACARA) as:

> "Literacy encompasses the knowledge and skills students need to access, understand, analyse and evaluate information, make meaning, express thoughts and emotions, present thoughts and opinions, interact with others and participate in activities at school and in their lives beyond school. Success in any learning area depends upon being able to use the significant, identifiable

11

and distinctive literacy that is important for learning and representative of the content of that learning area." ACARA (2020).

Furthermore, Sumison and Cheeseman (2009) provide another literacy definition in the Australian Early Years Learning Framework:

Literacy is the capacity, confidence and disposition to use language in all its forms. Literacy incorporates a range of modes of communication including music, movement, dance, storytelling, visual arts, media and drama, as well as talking, listening, viewing, reading and writing. Contemporary texts include electronic and print based media. In an increasingly technological world, the ability to critically analyse texts is a key component of literacy. Children benefit from opportunities to explore their world using technologies and to develop confidence in using digital media (Sumison & Cheeseman, 2009, p. 38).

In Australia, the literacy landscape has changed over the past 100 years and so has the role that parents play in developing the literacy skills of their young children at home and in the community. There have been six major perspectives that have resulted in changes in our understanding of literacy that have consequently made an impact upon the role of parents and how literacy is supported at home, within early learning settings and in early childhood classrooms (Crawford, 1995; S. Hill, 1997). The Maturational, Developmental, Connectionist, Emergent, Socio-Cultural and Critical literacy theories are interrelated and build upon past understandings. How literacy skills are viewed is built upon this historical knowledge which in turn reflects the significance of the role of parents and caregivers in developing children's literacy knowledge and skills.

Perspectives of literacy have transformed and expanded over time. Reflecting upon the 20th century and now, the beginning of the 21st century, knowledge and understandings of one literacy theory, have been applied as the building blocks for the next. Historical perspectives of how children learnt to read and write allows educators to examine and develop an appreciation for past literacy theories. Identification of how individual theories valued the contribution of parents and their influence on the literacy growth of their young children changed over a period of time. Slowly, recognition of

the impact of parental involvement upon literacy development became more important and was reflected in the theory of that era.

Maturational Perspective

In the early part of nineteenth century, readiness for literacy instruction was guided by the maturational philosophy and was largely based on the research of Gesell (1925). Within this perspective, Gesell (1925) believed that a child's capability to learn to read and write was not dependent upon the home environment, language or experiences. Barratt-Pugh and Rohl (2000) stated that within the maturation perspective, parents were considered to have very little knowledge or understanding of how children learn to read and write and therefore had little influence of a child's literacy development. A maturational perspective believed that children needed time to mature before they could learn to read and write. Supporters of the nature argument considered maturation transpired as a consequence of a biological maturation otherwise known as a neural ripening in the brain. Children were expected to progress through a sequence of stages that required time and could not be rushed (Crawford, 1995; S. Hill, 1997) Researchers Morphett and Washburne (1931) conducted two studies; one in 1928-29 and another in 1929-30 in order to ascertain a suitable mental age for children to begin reading instruction. In September 1928, 141 children and eight first grade teachers in Winnetks, Illinois participated in the study. Eight experienced first grade teachers taught reading following twenty-one steps that progressed through the beginning reading materials. In February 1929, teachers assessed the children's improvement by the number of progress steps they had completed. The children were also tested on their sight word recognition. After reviewing the results of the assessments, the First-Grade teachers agreed that the children who appeared to be ready to learn to read at the beginning of the school year completed thirteen steps and knew 37 sight words by February. This measure was then used at the baseline for satisfactory progress. The Detroit First Grade Intelligence test and the Stanford Revision of the Binet-Simon Scale were used to establish mental age (Morphett & Washburne, 1931). There was high correlation between a child's ability to learn to read measured by the reading progress steps and the sight word scores and mental age. In both the Detroit First Grade Intelligence test and the Stanford Revision of the Binet-Simon Scale it was identified that children of six years and six months made much better reading progress than less

13

mature children. A repetition of the study was conducted in 1929-30 and involved different children, teachers and tests arrived at the same assumptions. As a result, Morphett and Washburne (1931) came to the conclusion that the mental age of six years and six months was appropriate for children to be deemed ready for formal literacy instruction.

Readiness to read was viewed as something that could be determined from a battery of tests and nature taking its course. A series of standardised readiness tests relating to visual, auditory and motor skills were given to children in order to determine whether they were prepared to receive formal teaching (Fellowes & Oakley, 2010). The solution for children who were experiencing difficulties developing beginning literacy skills was to delay instruction until they had acquired the maturity to learn to read and write. The belief that literacy development did not begin until formal instruction diminished the role of parents in fostering their child's literacy development. As a result, parents in Western cultures such as Australia and the United States in the 1920s and 1930s generally did not engage in literacy activities such as reading and writing at home.

Developmental Perspective

The research of Gesell (1925) on child development and maturation being the indicator of reading readiness continued to be accepted by parents and researchers up until the 1950s. Is was not until the late 1950s and 1960s that readiness for literacy instruction changed from the 'just wait and let nature take its course' approach which underpinned the maturation philosophy to 'teach children what they need to know' so formal instruction can begin (Crawford, 1995; S. Hill, 1997; Teale & Sulzby, 1986) . The theory driving this philosophy was behaviourism and was based on the research of Durkin (1966) and Chall (1967). The developmental theory of learning to read and write proposed a child's readiness could be shaped by experience (Crawford, 1995; Fellowes & Oakley, 2010; S. Hill, 1997; Teale & Sulzby, 1986). It is at this point in time that the role of parents was identified as a possible positive support for literacy. Suitable pre-reading experiences could speed up a child's readiness to learn to read and write (Hoskisson, 1977). Proponents of this perspective strongly believed it was nurture, not nature, that was responsible for children's readiness to begin reading and writing.

This developmental approach towards reading readiness was influenced by pre-reading experiences. Many early childhood settings exposed children to literacy and other questionable experiences as a way of progressing reading readiness. Some readiness programs involved structured, sequentially organised, skills-based drills in the form of workbooks. Reading and writing were thought to be separate skills and were taught in isolation through methodical direct instruction (Barratt-Pugh & Rohl, 2000). The developmental perspective stressed the need for experience and instruction in order to facilitate readiness. Hoskisson (1977) suggested that reading readiness signified that children had to be prepared for formal reading instruction because they were not yet ready to learn to read. Certain skills, such as learning letter names and sounds needed to have been mastered before they could benefit from formal reading instruction. In many instances, children were required to pass a prescribed reading readiness test before they were allowed to receive any formal reading instruction.

It is within the developmental perspective that the role of parents is given some consideration for their contribution towards reading readiness. The developmental approach encouraged parents, caregivers and preschools to become involved in pre-school readiness programs. Standish (1959) reported that a child's readiness was influenced by the parents' interest in reading and the student's home background. In his paper on 'Readiness to Read' (Standish, 1959) he identified myriad of issues facing teachers attempting to teach young children to read when starting school. He was one of few researchers at the time to indicate that some parents provided valuable experiences which supported reading readiness when entering school while others with little or no interest in reading failed to prepare their children for learning to read and write.

Connectionist Perspective

Another perspective of literacy acquisition is the connectionist theory of early literacy learning Jager-Adams (1990). The connectionist perspective has close affiliation with philosophies of the developmental readiness perspective (Crawford, 1995; S. Hill, 1997). This perspective acknowledges the contribution of parents and families in developing the literacy process. Within the connectionist perspective, parents and caregivers are urged to read to, as well as listen to their children read at home.

Supporters of this perspective believe that literacy knowledge is built upon a sequence of skills and experiences that are put together to make a whole. A scope and sequence chart is used to explicitly teach reading and writing to children. Within this perspective there is an emphasis on becoming proficient at identifying alphabet graphemes-phoneme, spelling patterns, reading words, fluency and comprehension, automaticity of reading and overlearning. Connectionists follow the developmental perspective's view of pre-reading and reading readiness. They support a stage theory of reading development. Children are expected to pass through a succession of stages during their journey to becoming literate. Students who are unable to meet the requirements set for each stage are identified as needing remediation (Lilly & Greene, 2004).

Emergent Literacy Perspective

It is not until the Emergent literacy perspective of the 1970s and 1980s, that the role parents played in developing their child's literacy was acknowledged and supported by research (Clay, 1972). During the 1970s, Marie Clay, a researcher from New Zealand, started applying the term 'emergent literacy' when referring to the skills, knowledge and attitudes that developed before formal schooling commenced. Based on her research findings, Clay believed that children begin school with knowledge about concepts of print and with a working knowledge and understanding of the intentions for reading and writing (Makin, 2007). The influential theories for the emergent perspective included cognitive and developmental psychology and were based on the theories of Piaget (Solsken, 1995).

Unlike the maturational and developmental theories, it was from the emergent theory that researchers recognised the real importance and impact parents and caregivers had upon supporting their child's literacy development (Butler, 1979; Clay, 1986; Dickinson & McCabe, 2001; Fellowes & Oakley, 2010; Hart & Risley, 1995; Makin, 2007; Manolitsis, Georgiou, & Parrila, 2011; Otto, 2008; Roskos, 2009; Senechal et al., 1998; Snow, Barnes, Chandler, Goodman, & Hemphill, 1991; Teale & Sulzby, 1986; Wasik & van Horn, 2012; Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998). The emergent perspective viewed the home environment as an integral part of a continuing process where parents, extended family and caregivers contributed to the literacy understanding of the children in their care through oral language, reading, and writing.

Reading, writing and oral language are considered interrelated skills that developed over time due to participation in literacy activities and should not be taught in isolation. This perspective was concerned with what children could accomplish, with knowledge and understandings being built upon incrementally within stages along a continuum. Barratt-Pugh and Rohl (2000) consider experiences provided by family and extended family members were central to the development of skills and understandings of emergent literacy.

Socio-Cultural Perspective

In the 1990s, the socio-cultural perspective appeared, following the emergent views of literacy. Within this perspective, the contributions of parents and caregivers are considered pivotal to the construction of literacy learning before the onset of formal schooling. The socio-cultural theory finds it roots in socio-psycholinguistics and cultural anthropology and draws upon the social interactionist theories of Vygotsky (Crawford, 1995; S. Hill, 1997; Solsken, 1995). This perspective emphasises the importance of knowledge being constructed within a socially facilitated cultural context and that language is a key element of children's attainment of knowledge (Wasik & van Horn, 2012; Weinberger, 1996). The socio-cultural perspective believes children acquire knowledge with the assistance of someone with more expertise. It is within a continuum of behaviour called the 'zone of proximal development' which requires support and scaffolding to enable new knowledge and understandings (Berk, 2006).

Knowledge is jointly constructed in the socio-cultural perspective, and consists of social and cultural engagement whereby a more experienced adult such as a parent scaffolds learning for the child. Skills and experiences exist at the edge of the child's learning. A more knowledgeable 'other' assists the child to make connections, develop skills and understandings that build upon previous encounters (Barratt-Pugh & Rohl, 2000; Berk, 2006; Fellowes & Oakley, 2010; Otto, 2008). Through the social constructionist perspective, the role of parents and caregivers is to scaffold learning through a variety of everyday, meaningful experiences and is considered vital to how children make meaning and develop emergent literacy skills and behaviours (Solsken, 1995). Parents and caregivers hold the key to providing experiences within the 'zone of proximal development' scaffolding learning the literacy skills young children bring

with them to school (Berk, 2006; Dickinson & McCabe, 2001; Fellowes & Oakley, 2010; Hart & Risley, 1995; Lilly & Greene, 2004; Neumann, 2018a, 2018b; Wasik & van Horn, 2012).

Critical Theory Perspective

The critical theory view of literacy emerged in the 1990's and is based on the research of Taylor (1991) and Solsken (1995) and theorist Freire (1996). Critical and feminist theories are the foundation of critical theory. The contribution of parents and caregivers in the development of literacy is at the centre of critical literacy. Underpinning this theory is the recognition of the significant influence of parents, caregivers and their cultural practices have upon children's literacy. This perspective identifies family experiences of social injustices is due to cultural and socio-economic differences and is fuelled by the need for change and equality in literacy. Children can be marginalised because of cultural differences, values and attitudes found at home and within communities that are not the same as the dominant culture identified at school (Solsken, 1995). Inequalities occur because children do not possess the cultural capital valued by the dominant culture. This perspective identifies the influence and impact of parents, caregivers and families' ability to support young children's emergent literacy skills at home (Bourdieu, 1977).

Information and Communication Technology

As we progress into the 21st century, the role of parents supporting emergent literacy development in their young children continues to transform and be challenged as they embrace information and communication technology (ICT) in the home (Danby et al., 2013) . A general definition of the term ICT includes communication devices and their usage such as mobile technology (tablets, smart phones, laptops), desktop computers and the internet (Jurka Lepičnik & Pija, 2014). The home is made up of a technological and social landscape in which family practices are modelled, shaped and communicated (Plowman, McPake, & Stephen, 2008). Grandparents, relatives and family friends, older siblings and parents enable the social landscape of the home. Families use technology for many purposes some of which include work related reasons as well as entertainment, as a source of information, education and relaxation. Families access technology in order to communicate with others for example through

Skype and FaceTime. Such technology is used to communicate for work purposes in addition to maintaining relationships with friends, relatives and family members who are not always physically present (Holloway, Green, & Love, 2014).

Children acquire a range of digital and emergent literacy skills when interacting with technology in the home (Akhter, 2011; Neumann, 2018a, 2018b; Plowman & McPake, 2013; Plowman et al., 2008; Plowman, Stephen, & McPake, 2010; Plowman, Stevenson, Stephen, & McPake, 2012). According to Plowman et al. (2008) some parents may not be fully aware of the role they play in teaching digital skills. Parents may believe children just 'picked up' knowledge and skills. Young children's development of digital knowledge and skills are not solely a result of direct teaching from parents but rather a combination of explicit teaching and observing on the peripheral while their parents engage with technology at home (Lave, 1991). In line with Vygotsky's emphasis on scaffolding and the socio-cultural perspective, parents support their child's learning by modelling uses of technology and providing opportunities for children to participate in and observe genuine every day activities. Parent attitudes and beliefs about technological devices and learning opportunities influences the types of devices children access, activities they engage in and the amount of time they use digital devices (Bleakley, Jordan, & Hennessy, 2013; Holloway, Hoddon, Green, & Stevenson, 2019; Lauricella, Wartella, & Rideout, 2015).

Parents exert substantial control over digital activities and resources they allow their young children access at home (Bleakley et al., 2013; Lauricella et al., 2015; Plowman & McPake, 2013; Plowman et al., 2008; Plowman, Stephen, et al., 2010; Plowman et al., 2012). In research conducted by Plowman et al. (2008) and Orlando (2019) parents did not always introduce their children to technology for educational purposes but in fact for the benefits of allowing the parents some time to complete chores, for some uninterrupted quiet time and to watch favourite television shows. These results were later supported by Holloway et al. (2014) and Nikken and Schols (2015) proposing parents, grandparents and other caregivers were inclined to use technology as a childcare tool in order to keep children occupied when they were busy with household tasks. These research findings shed light upon the demanding but significant challenges 21st century parents and caregivers experience when supporting their young children's emergent literacy skills at home. These studies identify the complexities

faced at home when determining the extent of how and why young children interact with digital technology in the home.

Early Literacy Development

Much research has taken place which emphasises the importance of the role parents and caregivers play in developing emergent literacy skills in young children (Aram & Levin, 2011; Dennis & Horn, 2011; Dickinson & McCabe, 2001; Evans & Shaw, 2008; Fellowes & Oakley, 2010; S. Hill, 2006; Hoffman & Whittingham, 2017; Landry & Smith, 2006; Manolitsis et al., 2011; Neumann, 2018a, 2018b; Plowman et al., 2008; Roskos & Neuman, 2014; Senechal et al., 1998; Snow et al., 1991; Teale & Sulzby, 1986). Emergent literacy is described by Neuman, Copple, and Bredekamp (2000, p. 3) as "literacy learning begins at birth and is encouraged through participation with adults in meaningful activities; these literacy behaviours change and eventually become conventional over time."

Describing literacy in young children as emergent suggests that even though children may be unable to create written texts, they do participate in literate behaviours which cultivates the development of reading and writing. According to Whitehurst and Lonigan (1998) early literacy contains skills, knowledge and attitudes that are developmental forerunners to reading and writing. Emergent literacy is founded on the view that children obtain literacy skills not only as a consequence of direct instruction but also as a result of a stimulating environment in which children are made aware of print, observe the intention and uses of print and are interested and inspired to interact with print (Britto, Fuligni, & Brooks-Gunn, 2006). The concept of emergent literacy relates to the behaviours of young children when they pretend to write, read a book or tell a story which demonstrates ideas about literacy, oral language and concepts of print, letters, sounds and commonly used words (Snow et al., 1991) .

Roskos (2009) explain that talking, reading and writing combine to build children's knowledge about the world and about words. As they start to learn to read and write, children rely on their considerable speech experiences to help them learn about print. Oral language is the foundation for building reading and writing skills. Often, children whose oral language vocabularies are flourishing, have a much easier time learning to read and write because they recognise the words they know in spoken language when they encounter them in print. Reading and oral comprehension are related to word

knowledge. The more words children know, the more likely it is that they will understand text containing those words (Combs, 2011).

Language consists of sounds otherwise known as phonemes (Fellowes & Oakley, 2010). Phonemic awareness is the ability to hear sounds, in the form of syllables, rhyme and phonemes (Evans & Shaw, 2008; Fellowes & Oakley, 2010). Phonemic awareness is part of emergent literacy and usually develops before children begin formal schooling and plays a significant part in helping children learn to read and write (Jager-Adams, 1990). It typically develops from greater to smaller sound parts with awareness of syllables and rhyme being acquired before single phonemes (Evans & Shaw, 2008). The identification of hearing if two words rhyme is the first step on the journey towards developing phonemic awareness (Torgeson & Mathes, 2000) . Bryant, Maclean, Bradley, and Crossland (1990) found that rhyming leads to hearing phonemes which helps children learn about the alphabet in the form of letter sound relationships.

Whitehurst and Lonigan (1998) are responsible for the identification of skills, which recognise the components of emergent literacy. The typology of skills has been grouped according to two clear processes, firstly the outside-in and secondly, the inside out. The outside-in processes are concerned with the way children comprehend the setting within which the writing they are attempting to read or write occurs. There are three components of the outside-in processes, which are language, emergent reading and conventions of print. Inside-out processes encompass skills that signify children's knowledge of the rules for interpreting the specific sounds. The components of the inside-out processes include linguistic awareness, emergent writing and phoneme-grapheme correspondence (Britto et al., 2006; Evans & Shaw, 2008).

Oral language, (receptive and expressive) is one of the components of the outside-in processes. An important aspect of language is the ability to understand and apply vocabulary. Young children also need to be able to put words together in grammatically appropriate phrases and sentences. Semantics is another component of language, which relates to being able to use words to convey meaning. Finally, pragmatics is a feature of language and is related to knowing when and how to use language within different social contexts, such as saying happy birthday to someone who is having a birthday party (Landry & Smith, 2006).

Pretending to read, and reading environmental print are examples of emergent reading, and the outside-in process. Other examples that fall into this category include knowing that print carries a message; however young children may read their own writing and unfamiliar texts differently each time. Emergent readers refer to the cover of a book to assist with text selection, which is primarily based on enjoyment, and identify and talk about characters in books. They depend heavily upon knowledge of the topic and text organisation such as pictures when pretending to read. Utilising strategies such as connecting to comprehend the story for example, linking the text to themselves and their own experiences is another way emergent readers demonstrate the outside-in process (Annandale, 2004).

Conventions of print is the final element in the outside-in processes and is where young children demonstrate beginning literacy conventions (Johnston & Rogers, 2001). How books work, such as identifying the front and back of a book, where a story begins and ends and directionality are all examples of conventions of print. Within the emergent literacy stage, children are developing an awareness that books have authors and illustrators (Antonacci, 2004; Clay, 1986). Children's ability to successfully recognise conventions of print relates to the experiences they have participated in at home and in the community.

The components of the inside-out processes include linguistic awareness, emergent writing and phoneme-grapheme correspondence. Linguistic awareness relates to having the ability to understand the complexities of language and being able to apply it to different purposes and audiences (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998). Children may be able to follow a simple set of instructions, but are unable to demonstrate their knowledge that the instructions are units of language called words and that they are constructed from units of sound made up of different phonemes. It is important that children are supported during this stage at home and in the community because it is the significant speech experiences that assists them learn about print (Roskos, 2009).

Exhibiting behaviours such as pretending to write and learning to write are characteristics of the inside-out, process. Other behaviours may include assigning messages to their own writing and demonstrating that writing and drawing a different. Emergent writers state the purpose and audience for writing such as this is a birthday card for mum. They begin to use known letters or approximations of letters to represent

writing. Personal experiences are used by children as an incentive for writing (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998). Children pretending to write and learning to write are influenced by their exposure of adults modelling reading and writing for different purposes and audiences at home, at work and in the community (Roskos, 2009).

The final skill of the inside-out process relates to identifying and applying phonemes and graphemes. Children need to understand the link between phonemes (sounds) and alphabet letters (graphemes). It is during this stage of emergent literacy that parents begin to expose their children to the identification of letters and their sounds. The amount of time and effort parents engage in phonics activities with their child at home and in the community is different according to the importance each family places on learning such a skill (Barratt-Pugh & Rohl, 2000).

Information and communication technologies are now widely adopted and utilised within the home (Jurka Lepičnik & Pija, 2014; Neumann, 2014, 2016b, 2018a, 2018b; Neumann et al., 2017; Plowman & McPake, 2013; Plowman et al., 2008; Plowman, Stephen, et al., 2010; Plowman, Stevenson, McPake, Stephen, & Adey, 2011; Prensky, 2001). Bulger, Mayer, and Metzger (2014) consider digital technology to be tools to be used to construct meaning and communicate with others through reading and writing. Discussion has now emerged with regards to the part that digital texts play in the development of emergent literacy. We now must consider the emergent skills and knowledge that result as a consequence of using technology. Neumann et al. (2017) describe emergent digital literacy skills as knowledge and attitudes that are recognised as being the developmental foundations of proficient digital literacies capabilities. Presently there is an absence of understanding of exactly how technology skills emerge and influence emergent literacy skills in reading and writing by means of digital and non-digital texts (Neumann et al., 2017). Research conducted by Neumann et al. (2017) created a conceptual framework for the acquisition of digital literacy. It suggests that there is a transference of emergent literacy skills and knowledge through digital and non-digital texts.

The Role of Parents/Guardians at Home

The researcher has defined the concept of '21st century parent' as someone who has or is the main carer of children and is living in the first quartile of the 21st century. It is acknowledged that early 21st century parents are presented with universal challenges that did not exist 30 to 50 years ago such as those associated with 24/7 access to information through technology (Sclafani, 2012). Furthermore, 21st century parents live in culturally diverse societies that influence values and attitudes towards parenting (Brown, Gourdine, Waites, & Owens, 2013; Sclafani, 2012).

Attitudes and values parents have towards literacy influences children's learning (Sclafani, 2012; Weigel, Martin, & Bennett, 2005, 2006). Parents' beliefs in reading as well as the home learning environment they construct influences children's reading and ability to learn (Bennett, Weigal, & Martin, 2002; Yeo, Ong, & Ng, 2014). Beliefs parents hold about their role in developing their child's emergent literacy and the attitudes they have towards reading influences the literacy activities they provide at home (Yeo et al., 2014). Positive associations have been established concerning parental attitudes and values towards reading and parent-child literacy encounters they part-take in at home (Nistler & Maiers, 1999; Weigel et al., 2006; Yeo et al., 2014).

There is research to indicate that some parents have gender-biased literacy values and attitudes when they consider girls to be better at literacy than boys (Ozturk, Hill, & Yates, 2016). Parents' gender-based expectations about their child's abilities impacts upon their child's motivation and attitudes towards literacy. Parents' perceptions of differences in literacy abilities between boys and girl acts like a self-fulfilling prophecy and influences how some parents behave towards boys and girls (Wentzel, 2014). Consequently, such values and attitudes may impact how parents support their son's literacy, resulting in missed opportunities to engage in meaningful experiences in order for him to reach his potential (Wentzel, 2014). Parents who establish a home environment where education is valued help set children up for success (Sclafani, 2012). Modelling positive literacy mindsets and engaging encouragingly in activities enables parents to create a home learning environment that demonstrates their literacy attitudes and values.

Roskos (2009) explain how children require the support of everyone in their social settings to rapidly develop their oral language skills during their pre-school years, as

they form the foundation for effective communication. It is through everyday experiences that children gain the language skills they need to become effective competent readers and writers (Levy, Gong, Hessels, Evans, & Jared, 2006). Parents, other adults and peers assist children to learn words, which they then use to form sentences, develop syntax and build concepts about words to help learn world around them. Children who lack exposure to rich language experiences often find learning to read and write difficult (Levy et al., 2006).

Children need effective early literacy skills to engage in living in the early 21st century living. They need to develop oral language comprehension for listening and speaking, vocabulary for building background knowledge, phonological awareness and alphabet knowledge to attend to the structure and sounds of language, and print knowledge to develop concepts about books and printed words. The role of parents and the community environment play a crucial part in laying the foundation for assisting young children to develop these emergent literacy skills in order to become capable, confident readers and writers.

School and home are different environments where children learn to read and write and both have a different focus. Aram and Levin (2011) comment that school is focussed on teaching content, skills and strategies to become readers and writers, while the home provides opportunities for literacy experiences that are combined with everyday communication, daily games, and errands that endorse a close caregiver relationship. The home literacy environment (HLE) is a term used to encompass a variety of child-adult activities related to literacy (Manolitsis et al., 2011). Home literacy activities include joint book reading, teaching the alphabet, interaction with environmental print, writing names and words, increasing vocabulary through extended discourse, developing phonemic awareness and phonics. Weinberger (1996) states that home activities are conducted in a naturalistic manner, and maximise learning opportunities by following the interest of the child. However, it must be noted that there are times when parents do use materials such as flash cards to support their child's learning. For the most part, unplanned activities are without the pressure of time restraints and less planning than those experienced in school settings.

Formal and informal literacy experiences are two dimensions of the Home Literacy Model that affect language and literacy (Sénéchal & Lefevre, 2014). When print is

present but not the focus of the adult-child interaction it is considered to be an informal literacy experience. Rodriguez and Tamis-LeMonda (2011) suggest that informal literacy experiences expose children to written language such as those found in shared book reading. These experiences promote receptive language and early vocabulary acquisition and the quality of parents' engagement with children endorses their language and cognitive development in numerous ways. Children profit from experiencing modelled adult speech that is frequent, diverse and complex. Informal literacy experiences contribute indirectly to reading skills in later grades through their connection to early language skills.

Sénéchal and Lefevre (2014) also describe formal activities as those where literacy activities involve a focus on the print. Formal literacy experiences include letter and sound knowledge and word reading skills. They report that parents facilitating formal learning includes teaching letters and words to their children at home helps to predict concepts of print, letter knowledge, invented spelling and decoding simple words. Research indicates that formal literacy experiences contribute indirectly to reading skills in later grades through the effects of emergent literacy skills (Dennis & Horn, 2011; Levy et al., 2006). Levy et al. (2006) note that there is a reciprocal relationship between print understanding and reading. Parental coaching in printing, letter names and sounds and reading is vital to the development of written language concepts because when children interact with print it is scaffolding the progress of writing skills significantly more than listening passively to an adult reading (Levy et al., 2006).

In more recent years, the introduction of digital technologies such as mobile phones, tablets, iPads, iPods and navigation devices require additional skills for communication in home literacy activities. The home literacy environment plays a major role in the growth of young children's awareness, understanding and knowledge of written language (Sylva et al., 2011). Children are now growing up in a digital environment and are familiar with using technology in everyday life (Holloway et al., 2019; Laidlaw, O'Mara, & So-Har Wong, 2019; Mangan & Hoel, 2019; Orlando, 2019). Changes in technology are transpiring at a fast rate making it difficult for parents and researchers to keep up to date.

Parents play a significant role in developing their child's early literacy and influence children's experiences with technology at home (Holloway et al., 2019; Neumann,

2016b; Plowman et al., 2011). The values and attitudes of parents play a significant role in fostering or avoiding opportunities for learning through the use of technology. Parents' experiences with technology at work or at school, their proficiency with technology and beliefs regarding the significance of digital skills in the future all impact upon children's learning with digital technology (Plowman et al., 2011). By the time children are ready to attend school they may have acquired learning in the areas of operational competencies, expanding knowledge of the world around them and finally how technology is used in everyday life to support family connections and communicate (Plowman et al., 2011). In some instances, the technology children have access to at home is more up to date than what is offered in the school setting.

Following Vygotsky's socio-cultural perspective of how we learn, scaffolding guides and supports a child through a task they would be unable to complete independently (Fellowes & Oakley, 2010; Teale & Sulzby, 1986; Wasik & van Horn, 2012). Research identified that parents underestimated their role in teaching children to use digital technology because their teaching was not visible to them (Plowman et al., 2008; Plowman et al., 2011). They discovered that parents in fact support their children through modelling behaviour such as setting up games and providing an example to follow. Research by Yelland and Masters (2007) considers there are three forms of scaffolding available when using technology. Cognitive scaffolding facilitates children's ability to answer problems and acquire conceptual and procedural understandings. Affective scaffolding gives children positive feedback and inspiration to finish tasks. Finally, there is technical scaffolding which assists children with using the digital device and negotiating the software. Digital literacy is new, fast moving and forever evolving. Research has not kept up the pace leaving parents with little guidance. Parents, while not always noticing how they support learning with digital technology do so on a regular basis, providing opportunities to extend emergent literacy skills of their young children.

Digital literacy is creating a need for educational settings and their policy to recognise that children begin school with varying degrees of experience with technology (Maureen, Meij, & Jong, 2018; Neumann et al., 2017). Stephen, McPake, Plowman, and Berch-Heyman (2008) suggest that young children cite their parents as the source of the development of their technological skills. They also propose that children view technology as a shared family practice rather than knowledge and skills they will be

applying at school. Digital technology is utilised in pre-school settings to support learning (Neumann, 2018b; Neumann & Neumann, 2017; Zabatiero, Straker, Mantilla, Edwards, & Danby, 2018). Young children begin pre-school with many digital experiences gained from the home learning environment. Research has found that pre-school educators are more likely to include technology as part of their teaching and learning if they have a positive attitude towards it and consider they are competent uses in their private lives (Thorpe et al., 2015).

McPake, Stephen, Plowman, Sime, and Downey (2004) identify that technology is a cultural practice which varies between families depending upon their values and attitudes towards its use. Recent research conducted by Baker, Sanders, and Morawska (2017) suggests that all parents are accessing the internet and use it to guide parenting practices.

Researchers have investigated the benefits of using technology to support literacy learning in the home setting. Desktop computers allow children to explore print and have been found to have a positive influence on emergent literacy skills (Neumann, 2016b). Studies have revealed parents' active interaction while reading an electronic book with young children benefits their emergent literacy skills as opposed to young children engaging with the electronic book independently (Neumann, 2018a, 2018b; Plowman et al., 2008; Sylva et al., 2011). Children aged between 2-4 years who regularly used tablets containing writing apps at home experienced better print awareness and letter sound knowledge than children who used them infrequently at home (Neumann, 2016b). Improved name writing skills using a tablet is another positive effect digital technology. Tablets are portable, easy to control, engaging through the use of colour, sound effect and interactive qualities (Neumann, 2018b). They provide additional worthwhile opportunities for pre-school children to acquire emergent writing skills through experimenting with writing and drawing (Neumann, 2014).

Educators in the 21st century acknowledge family, community and culture influence a child from before birth (Sumison & Cheeseman, 2009). This social and cultural connection impacts upon a child's literacy knowledge and competence and the context in which it is learned. As a result of this connection, children in the 21st century become acquainted with literacies that are undertaken in their families and communities.

Starting from a very young age, this connection influences children's development of different understandings as to what counts as literacy. These understandings will differ from children in diverse social and cultural contexts (Barratt-Pugh & Rohl, 2000).

Family Support Programs

The socio-cultural perspective emphasises the central role that families and cultural groups play in children's learning and the importance of respectful relationships and providing insight into social and cultural contexts of learning and development. Children enter the world without language and then learn one of thousands of languages according to the family into which they are born. Some children become bilingual at birth. Not only does the family environment determine the child's early language but a family's culture, beliefs, and traditions also affect the way in which children use words within sentences to communicate (Hart & Risley, 1995, 1999).

Research has identified the role of families in the home environment serves as an important influence in the development of emergent literacy skills in young children (Fellowes & Oakley, 2010; Jay & Rohl, 2005; Roskos, 2009; Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998). A family's culture, traditions and beliefs influence young children's literacy experiences (Wasik & van Horn, 2012). Consequently, parents provide different types of literacy support for their children, but these are not always linked to school-based literacy practices (Fellowes & Oakley, 2010). Educators need to be mindful of diverse cultural practices and encourage children's home language and experiences within the school setting. It is important that early learning centres and schools do not treat all families the same and socioeconomic and cultural differences are acknowledged and supported (Hannon, Nutbrown, & Morgan, 2020). As a result of the wide range of experiences children commence school with, a number of community-based programs around the world have been established to assist parents in providing their young children with emergent literacy experiences related to school practices.

Such family support programs provide parents and caregivers with assistance during the early years to develop the knowledge and skills that help with the transition to literacy engagement at school. In Australia, some of the more familiar family programs include the HIPPI program, Bridging the Gap and Let's Read (Barratt-Pugh & Maloney, 2015; Freeman & Bochner, 2008). Better Beginnings is another example of a successful home literacy support program. The goal of this program is to nurture

parent's understanding of being their child's first teacher. It aims to increase parent knowledge and develop an awareness of emergent literacy skills that involve engaging in appropriate experiences during their child's early years of life (Barratt-Pugh & Maloney, 2015).

Conclusion

During the past three decades, there has been much research regarding literacy acquisition, development and the role of adults in the home environment (Hart & Risley, 1995; Sénéchal & Lefevre, 2014; Snow et al., 1991; Teale & Sulzby, 1986; Weinberger, 1996; Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998). Such research has dramatically changed the understanding of the role of literacy practices used in family homes, early learning centres and early childhood classrooms. Researchers have identified that children engage in three forms of literacy experiences at home. Firstly, experiences where children interact with their parents during reading and writing activities. Secondly experiences where children independently engage in print and finally where children observe their parents model reading and writing behaviours (Senechal, 2012; Teale & Sulzby, 1986). The zone of proximal development is where with the assistance, children accomplish a task that would have otherwise been unachievable on their own (Fellowes & Oakley, 2010). Children are active inquirers of knowledge and diverse social and cultural contexts affect children's cognition. By applying the socio-cultural perspective of literacy in this early part of the 21st century, we know that a family's literacy is influenced by their culture and their community. Furthermore, families are now faced with the challenges of demonstrating a wide variety of literacy skills when they engage in technology that is changing at a rapid rate. Technology has the potential to be a rich tool for literacy development. However, not all children have access to the same technological devices and not all technology is being used to its learning potential. Such a gap between the have and the have not, is known as the digital divide (Kilbride, 2016). The existence of the digital divide prevents some children from entering school with similar knowledge and skills as their classmates.

We are now in the early part of the 21st century and rapid changes in technology, family structures and family mobility indicate it is time to investigate emergent literacy practices in young children before they enter formal schooling. How do 21st century parents conceptualise supporting emergent literacy skills of their young children?

Investigating the barriers parents face and what support systems are available to assist them when navigating the emergent literacy journey with their young child at home will help researchers and educators' understanding. Such insights have the potential for educators to change strategies and practices to be more aligned with circumstances in the home.

Chapter 3

Research Design – Methodology

Introduction

Information contained in this chapter is organised into four sections, each containing several sub sections. The first section begins with the identification of the interpretivist paradigm. The philosophical orientations held by the researcher are presented in an overview of the conceptual and theoretical frameworks that underpin this research. Section Two relates to the research design applied to this investigation and includes a rationale for the selection of this design to address the research questions. A description and explanation of the embedded mixed method approach is discussed which incorporates the qualitative methodology of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis. Section Three is concerned with data collection procedure, participants, data collection instruments. The chapter concludes with Section Four, with an explanation of the research rigour and ethical considerations which have taken place during this research. Finally, the chapter ends with a discussion about the significance of the research.

Section One: Research Philosophies and Methodologies

Conceptual Framework
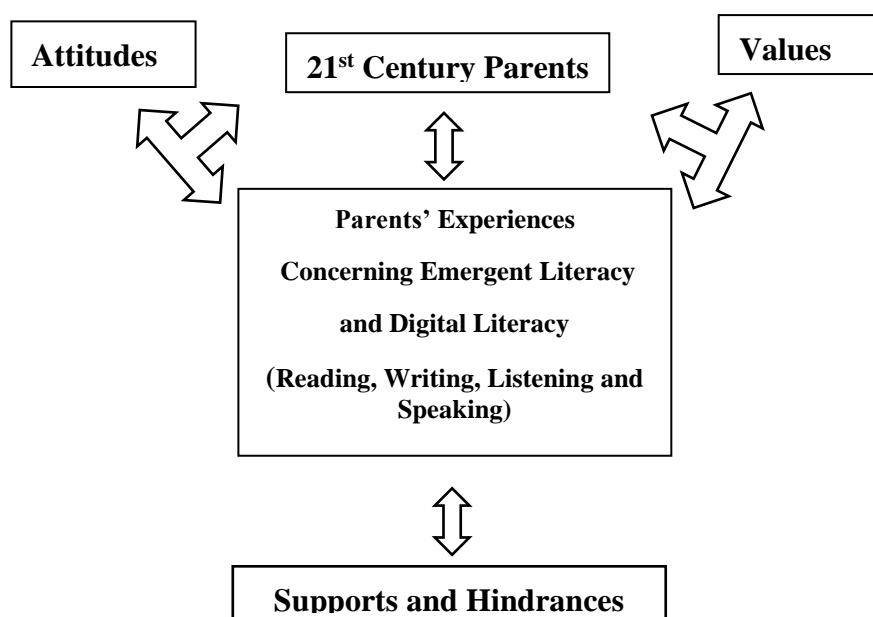
Figure 3. 1 Conceptual framework showing ideas and beliefs about 21st century parents supporting their child's emergent literacy.

A conceptual framework refers to the ideas and beliefs the researcher holds about the phenomena being studied (Maxwell, 2013). Figure 3.1 provides the conceptual framework for this research. Centred at the top of the diagram is a box titled '21st Century Parents.' This group encompasses the people who play the central role in developing young children's emergent literacy. It is considered they are the first educators of their child. The box placed directly below is titled 'Experiences of Emergent Literacy.' There is a reciprocal arrow between these two boxes indicating an assumed relationship. The experiences of parents and caregivers concerning emergent literacy; reading, writing, speaking, listening and digital literacy is constantly connected. It is understood that the experiences of parents and caregivers influences the way in which children encounter literacy in the home, consequently justifying the reciprocal arrow.

On the left side of this central box is a box titled 'Attitudes' and on the left side is a box titled 'Values'. Attitudes refers to how parents and caregivers think and feel about emergent literacy. There is an arrow demonstrating this relationship between the Attitudes box and the top and central boxes. It is believed that parents and caregivers' attitudes towards emergent literacy impacts upon how they engage in literacy activities

with their child at home and in the community. The Values box on the right is associated with the importance parents and caregivers place on emergent literacy and how they support such development in the home environment. This relationship is demonstrated by reciprocal arrows between the values box and the top and central boxes. How parents' value emergent literacy impacts upon how they support their child at home and in the community.

The double arrow leading down from the central box is titled 'Supports and Hindrances.' There are events and objects that parents consider assist or prevent them from developing their child's emergent literacy. The double arrow can be justified because there are some objects and experiences parents perceive helpful when engaging in reading, writing, speaking and listening experiences and there are others that prevent them from providing such experiences for their children.

Research Aim

The intent of this embedded mixed methods study was to understand what it was like for 21st century parents supporting their child's emergent literacy. In this study, parents' lived experiences were explored using interviews with 12 parent participants. Furthermore, a questionnaire was used to measure a wider parent and caregiver population's attitudes, values and behaviour when supporting their child's emergent literacy. The reason for combining both qualitative and quantitative data was to gain a broader viewpoint of 21st century parents' perceptions of supporting their child's emergent literacy skills during the preschool years.

Research Questions

1A. How do 21st century parents describe their experiences of supporting the emergent literacy skills of their young children?

Subsidiary Questions

2B. What assists parents to support early literacy development in their young children in the 21st century?

3C. What hinders parents in supporting early literacy development in their young children in the 21st century?

Theoretical Framework

The paradigm which underpins this investigation is interpretivist. The epistemology of this worldview acknowledges that social interactions are the basis for knowledge (O'Donoghue, 2018). Therefore, the ontology relates to how people create and make sense of their reality (O'Donoghue, 2018). Consequently, supporting this research are two theoretical perspectives which align with the interpretivist paradigm consisting of Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory and Bronfenbrenner's bioecological theory of human development (Berk, 2006; Berk & Winsler, 1995). The combination of these theories provides a comprehensive foundation and framework for understanding children's cognitive development and the important role parents and the home environment play in supporting children's emergent literacy.

According to Vygotsky, cognitive development is a socially mediated process (Berk, 2006; Berk & Winsler, 1995; Fellowes & Oakley, 2010). It is through co-operative dialogue with more knowledgeable others that children learn how to think and act in a culturally accepted way within a community. Vygotsky believed that mature partners assist children to develop through culturally meaningful experiences which influence the child's thought processes and learning (Berk, 2006). Conversations and guidance between a child and a more informed person are necessary if they are to acquire new skills and understandings. Such support allows the child to complete a task they would not have been able to accomplish independently (Fellowes & Oakley, 2010). This is known as the zone of proximal development. Children then internalise the dialogue and strategies contained within to independently achieve new skills (Berk & Winsler, 1995). Therefore, the premise for this research is that learning is socially mediated and it is this understanding of Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory which provides part of the framework for exploring 21st century parents' lived experiences of supporting their young child's emergent literacy.

Bronfenbrenner's bioecological theory of human development is the second theory underpinning this research and complements Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory. Ecology means the relationship between organisms and the environment in which they exist (Tudge et al., 2017). Bronfenbrenner (1994) bioecological theory of human development was his last version of the theory. The theory is characterised by the four elements consisting of Processes-Persons-Context-Time (PPCT). Proximal processes

are central to Bronfenbrenner's theory. Proximal processes are concerned with interactions, meaningful relationships which occur between people or between people and objects and symbols over an extended period of time (Rosa & Tudge, 2013; Tudge et al., 2017). Proximal processes are influenced by a person's characteristics, context and time simultaneously (Tudge et al., 2017).

A person's characteristics are the second element in Bronfenbrenner's bioecological theory of human development. This element incorporates three human traits which include disposition, resource and demand characteristics (Tudge et al., 2017). It is understood that a person's characteristics influences proximal processes and therefore their developmental outcomes.

Context is the third element of Bronfenbrenner's bioecological theory of human development. Proximal processes are extensively influenced by the context or environment in which they are taking place. Context is comprised of four systems which impact upon a child's development. At the centre is the child, and this is known as the microsystem. The microsystem incorporates interactions and activities children experience in their environment (Berk, 2006). The mesosystem is the connection and interaction that occurs between the child and their family, childcare centres, school and neighbourhood play areas (Berk, 2006; Tudge et al., 2017). The third context is the exosystem and is associated with outside social settings. These include a parent's workplace, community organisations and social networks (Berk, 2006; Tudge et al., 2017). It is believed that such social settings impact upon a child's immediate environment. The macrosystem is the final of the four contexts which influences a child's development. 'A macrosystem includes people who share common values, beliefs, practices, access to resources and a sense of common identity' (Tudge et al., 2017, p. 50). The support a child receives in the microsystem is affected by aspects of the macrosystem. Consequently, the context in which children experience interactions or proximal processes influence their emergent literacy experiences.

The final component of Bronfenbrenner's bioecological theory of human development is related to the concept of 'Time' and is explained in two ways. Firstly, time is not static and is always changing as demonstrated in changes in peoples' values, cultural beliefs and practices. Significant changes in life events such as parents' divorce, affects the relationship children have with their environment therefore influencing their

development (Berk, 2006). Secondly it refers to what happens over a period of time during a proximal process. This can be demonstrated in how often parents interact with their children. Bronfenbrenner recognised that if proximal processes are to be effective, they need to occur frequently and with growing difficulty (Rosa & Tudge, 2013).

Bronfenbrenner's bioecological theory of human development (PPCT) provides the appropriate model to explore how 21st century parents support their child's emergent literacy. This bioecological understanding is reflected within this research through the proximal processes parents engage in with their children, and the context in which interactions occur. Furthermore, a child's characteristics and the time devoted to proximal processes by parents are also represented in this research.

Quantitative Research

Quantitative research involves the organised investigation of a phenomena using numerical or statistical data (Halcomb & Hickman, 2015). Quantitative research considers the phenomena under investigation can be studied (Watson, 2015). It is a way to assessing objective theories by studying the relationship between variables (Creswell, 2009). A variable is an attribute which researchers' study. Researchers use an instrument to measure the variables in the investigation. The instrument produces numerical data which are analysed through the use of statistical procedures. Quantitative research is deductive because the researcher measures the phenomena, analyses the results and draws conclusions (Watson, 2015). The results from quantitative research are generalised and the findings are able to be replicated.

Qualitative Research

In qualitative research, people are active creators of their world. They make meaning from events and with these they create reality. The science behind qualitative research is based on common sense and reason. Qualitative research relies on interpretations and is subjective and not value free. Within social research, qualitative methodology aims at interpreting, understanding social life, and discovering peoples' meanings. This is achieved through studying the phenomena in its natural setting.

The primary research design applied to this investigation was qualitative. It drew upon Interpretative Phenomenology (IPA) as a philosophy as well as a methodology.

Sarantakos (2005) believes that qualitative researchers consider reality to be subjective, diverse and multiple.

> "Reality is experienced internally (not through the senses), and resides in the minds of the people who construct it; hence each person constructs his/her own reality, which is therefore subjective" (Sarantakos, 2005, p. 41)

There are as many realities as there are people and each person's reality is different because of the various ways in which they perceive the world around them. Humans interpret reality differently and subjectivity and objectivity are entwined and cannot be separated. People are creators of their world, they are not restricted to external laws and make their own meaning. "The science of qualitative research is based on common sense and reason. Scientists rely on interpretations, which are not value free." (Sarantakos, 2005, p. 42). Therefore, this research has been guided by the interpretivist paradigm.

Section Two: Mixed Methods Research

Several publications dating back to the 1980s all involving quantitative and qualitative research is generally the timeframe for when mixed methods was being employed in research (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Many researchers were writing about an approach to research that did not just rely on one tradition, instead utilised the strengths of both strands of quantitative and qualitative methods of research. There were many names given to research that incorporated quantitative and qualitative methods, however today it is known as mixed methods (Tashakkori & Creswell, 2007).

A mixed method research design was selected to conduct this investigation. The definition of mixed methods research design is:

> "an approach to inquiry that combines or associates both qualitative and quantitative forms. It involves philosophical assumptions, the use of qualitative and quantitative approaches, and the mixing of both approaches in a study. Thus, it is more than simply collecting and analysing both kinds of data; it involves the use of both approaches in tandem so that the overall strength of a study is greater than either qualitative or quantitative research" (Creswell, 2009, p. 4).

A mixed methods design requires the researcher to be involved in extensive data collection in qualitative and quantitative data. This form of data collection is time intensive and requires the researcher to be familiar with the features of qualitative and quantitative data. Creswell (2009) believes that mixed methods necessitates the researcher is able to analyse text and numerical data in order to establish an understanding of the phenomena being investigated and answer the research questions. This research employed a sequential embedded strategy otherwise known as a nested strategy (Creswell, 2007a).
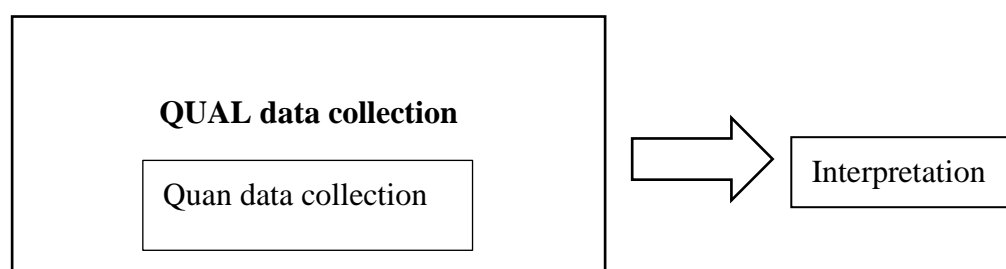
Figure 3. 2 Embedded research design.

The purpose of the embedded research design is to have one form of data play a supportive role to the dominant form of data (Creswell, 2012). In this research, qualitative data in the shape of semi structured interviews was employed as the primary form of data. Quantitative data in the form of a questionnaire was utilised as the supporting data to the qualitative data. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was applied to understand the lived experiences of the 12 participants recruited for the semi structured interviews in the qualitative phase of data collection. Due to the idiographic nature of IPA, it is recommended that small sample sizes are used. In this research a small sample size allowed the researcher to delve deeply into the participants' perceptions of supporting their child's emergent literacy in the 21st century. Owing to the use of reduced size of participants in the qualitative phase, it was necessary to gather quantitative data from a larger sample size in order to establish a comprehensive understanding of 21st century parents' perspective of supporting their young child's emergent literacy. Consequently, the purpose of the quantitative data was to provide additional information about the phenomena being investigated. Furthermore, utilising a mixed method approach to this investigation allowed the researcher to apply the strengths from the qualitative and quantitative data collection to provide an integrated understanding of the phenomena than what could have been achieved if only qualitative data been applied (Creswell, 2009; Halcomb & Hickman,

2015). In mixed methods research there are several aspects which influence the design and the procedures. Important aspects of mixed methods research design relate to timing, weighting, mixing and theorising (Creswell, 2007b).

Mixed Methods Timing

Timing of collecting qualitative and quantitative data is an important aspect in mixed methods research. This research utilised sequential data collection whereby the qualitative data which was the primary form of data was gathered in the first phase. Semi-structured interviews were used from a purposive sample of 12 parent participants. Quantitative data was gathered in the second phase of data collection and was comprised of a questionnaire. Again, this was a purposive sample because it was considered that the questions contained in the questionnaire would have more meaning to parents who were familiar with the phenomena being investigated.

Mixed Methods Weighting

The weighting in mixed method research relates to priority given to the qualitative or quantitative research. In this investigation, priority was given to the qualitative research and the quantitative research played a supportive role. Using IPA to establish an understanding of 21st century parents' perceptions of how they support their child's emergent literacy allowed the researcher to explore common themes amongst interview participants and develop a rich interpretation of their experiences. The questionnaire enabled the researcher to gather information from a larger sample size in order to support the themes established in the qualitative data collection phase.

Mixed Methods Mixing

In mixed method research, mixing refers to when the qualitative and quantitative data are mixed. In this mixed method research, the qualitative and quantitative data were collected concurrently. The qualitative data from the parent interviews were analysed first and themes were established. Then the quantitative data from the questionnaires were analysed. The quantitative data was embedded into the superordinated themes established from the qualitative analysis so as to provide additional information concerning 21st century parents' experiences supporting their child's emergent literacy.

Interpretative Phenomenology (IPA)

The qualitative tradition employed in this investigation utilised the principles of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) and is largely based on the work of Smith, Flowers, and Larkin (2009). Interpretative Phenomenology is a research method which is informed by three main areas of the philosophy of knowledge consisting of phenomenology, hermeneutics and idiography (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2012). These three principles, phenomenology, hermeneutics and idiography have formed the theoretical foundations to this inquiry and facilitated the direction of this research process as demonstrated in Table 3.1 below.

Table 3. 1 Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis.

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis		
(Based on 3 theoretical foundations)		
⬇	⬇	⬇
Ideography	**Phenomenology**	**Hermeneutics**
		⬇
		Gadamar's philosophy
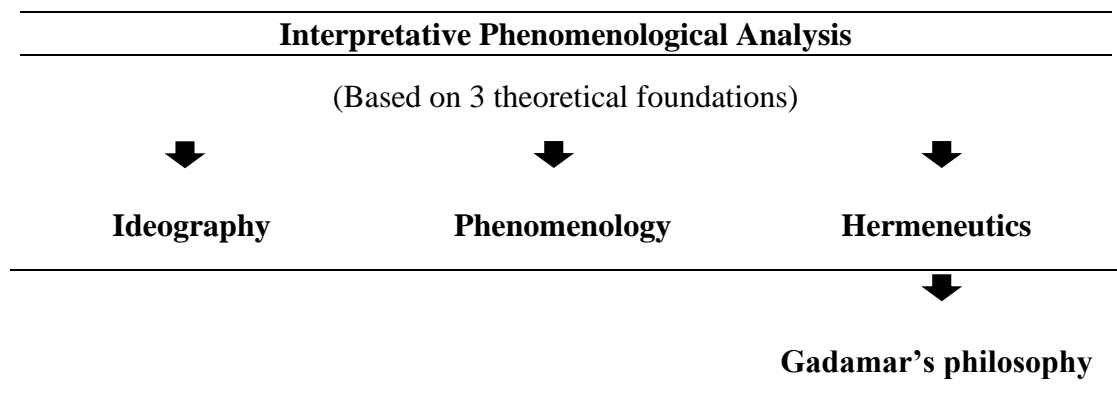
Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis is a research approach for examining in detail, how people make sense of their lived experiences. It is concerned with the exploration of personal experience and how participants perceive and make sense of an experience or an event in their social world (Benner, 2012). The approach is phenomenological because it involves a comprehensive examination of the participant's lifeworld. The lifeworld refers to the taken for granted, everyday life that people experience. Heidegger utilised this term to express his beliefs that individual's realities are different from one another and are ultimately influenced by the world around them (Flood, 2010).

Smith et al. (2009) explains that humans are sense making beings and descriptions given by participants attempting to make sense of their experiences reflects their efforts to understand their experiences. Such attempts to comprehend their experiences are therefore an interpretative act which is hermeneutics. IPA analysis

always involves interpretation. Discussion is essential between the participant's understanding of their experience and the researcher's own interpretation of it (Shaw, 2014). It is Gadamer's hermeneutic phenomenology that is the inspiration for the interpretation applied in this IPA. Gadamer's work concentrates on how language reveals 'being' and that understanding can only be achieved through language (Sloan & Bowe, 2014). Language, understanding and interpretation are invariably connected. For Gadamer, language is the medium which allows the world to be represented. The researcher is taking part in an analytical process of making sense of the participant's personal world. This analytical process is often described as double hermeneutic or dual interpretation (Smith et al., 2009). This means the IPA researcher is attempting to understand what an experience, object or event is like from the participant's perspective while attempting to understand and frame questions referring to the text presented (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2012). This form of interpretation benefits the analysis by making the study deeper and more comprehensive.

An important component of the analytical process for interpreting texts in IPA is the hermeneutic circle. The hermeneutic circle symbolises the process in which the researcher is constantly moving between interpretations of parts of the text and also that of the whole text, in order to create understanding of the phenomenon (Pollio, 1997). The aim to acquire a clear understanding of the phenomena being studied through constantly making meaning from the small parts in relation to the whole experience (Smith et al., 2009).

According to Pietkiewicz and Smith (2012) IPA combines ideas from hermeneutics and phenomenology subsequently developing a method that is descriptive because it relates to how phenomena appear and letting such phenomena express itself. IPA is also interpretative, because it acknowledges there is no such thing as an uninterpreted phenomenon.

Idiography is the third major influence upon Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis. It is concerned with developing a detailed, in-depth analysis of each case by investigating the participant's perception of a phenomena in relation to their specific contexts (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2012). Idiography in IPA functions on two levels. Firstly, the investigation must be comprehensive and systematic which is achieved by conducting a detailed analysis. Secondly, IPA is focused on understanding how the

particular phenomena are perceived by the participant in their specific context. Idiography allows the researcher to concentrate on the minutiae, so movement between themes produced in the analysis reveals similarities and differences between participants' perceptions.

IPA was the appropriate methodology for this study in order to understand parent's 'lived experiences,' or in other words their everyday experiences of supporting their young child's emergent literacy at home. Our world is changing rapidly and it is through the adoption of IPA the meaning of the lived experience of supporting a young child's emergent literacy in the 21st century can be interpreted. Being able to make sense of parents' experiences cannot be completely achieved through examining a table of numbers, social status or a set of behaviours. Instead, by carefully listening to the participants describe their subjective experiences and recall events, the researcher can acquire a deeper and more valuable meaning of the experience and therefore a richer interpretation of the text.

IPA provides the opportunity for the researcher to conduct a naturalistic, social inquiry. Parents are the first educators of their children. Vygotsky's sociocultural perspective acknowledges the role families and communities play in a child's cognitive development. Parents have the opportunity to support their child to build a solid foundation for speaking, listening, reading and writing before they reach school age (Roskos, 2009). Bronfenbrenner (1994) and his bioecological theory of human development recognises proximal processes, people, context and time impact upon the cognitive development of a child. These elements can be explored through the lived experiences of 21st century parents supporting their child's emergent literacy. Not all children have the same literacy knowledge and experiences before they enter school. Consequently, IPA provides the opportunity for the researcher to explore the meanings underlying the experiences of 21st century parents, which influences how they support their child's emergent literacy.

Social research aims at understanding social life and discovering peoples' meanings. Applying Gadamer's philosophy and the methodology and methods of IPA, dialogue between the researcher and the parents in the form of the hermeneutic circle supports the construction of shared meaning to interpret the interview participants' experiences.

The hermeneutic circle assists the researcher to create a richer meaning of 21st century parents' experiences of how they support their young child's emergent literacy.

Phenomenology

The first of the two philosophical traditions and guiding methodologies for this study is Phenomenology. Phenomenology is an overarching term encompassing a philosophical movement and a range of research methodologies. The term phenomenology translated from Greek means 'to bring to light' (Miles, Chapman, Francis, & Taylor, 2013). In the 18th century, the term, phenomenology was used in philosophy texts by philosophers such as Kant (1724-1804) and later by Hegal (1770-1831) when he wrote Phenomenology of Spirit in 1807 (Moran, 2000).

Phenomenology is a philosophy and a research methodology that can be utilised by qualitative researchers to investigate experienced phenomena. Moran (2000) acknowledges phenomenology as a radical way to philosophise and should be seen as a practice not a system. Phenomenology therefore has emphasis on delving into matters to obtain the truth, it is an avenue to describe phenomena, however it appears and manifests itself in the consciousness of the experiencer (Moran, 2000).

Phenomenology is best described as the study of lived experience (Finlay, 2012; Moran, 2000; Moustakas, 1994; Sloan & Bowe, 2014; van Manen & Adams, 2010). The phrase 'lived experience' originated from the German word *'Erlebnis'* which means: "experience as we live through it and recognise it as a particular type of experience" (van Manen & Adams, 2010, p. 450) Based on this understanding, phenomenology orders and examines how the humans experience the world (van Manen & Adams, 2010). There are many types of phenomenology that meet as a philosophy and methodology (Sloan & Bowe, 2014). There are two main schools of phenomenological approaches: description (eidetic) based on the work of Edmund Husserl (1859-1938) and interpretation (hermeneutic) initially grounded in the work of Heidegger (1889-1976). Hermeneutic phenomenology followed the descriptive phenomenology as a way of identifying the essence of human experience (Sloan & Bowe, 2014).

Descriptive Phenomenology Edmund Husserl

Around the turn of the twentieth century, Edmund Husserl (1859-1938) established his phenomenology as a philosophy to contest Cartesian philosophy which he considered to be objective, empirical and positivist (Sloan & Bowe, 2014). He was dissatisfied with the natural sciences and their focus on objectivity as a means to studying human experiences. Husserl believed that empirical science was not the only approach to science. It was Franz Brentano's (1838-1917) use of descriptive psychology in a project which required the description of mental acts that inspired Husseral's (1859-1938) development of phenomenology as a philosophy (Moran, 2000).

Transcendental or descriptive phenomenology is the original form of phenomenological philosophy as conceptualized by Edmund Husserl (1859-1938). Transcendence represents the understanding that one cannot view an object from all perspectives at once so the full essence of an object can only be obtained in pure consciousness, removed from the awareness of the experiential word (van Manen & Adams, 2010). Description is used to ascertain the true meaning of the phenomenon rather than explain the individual's experiences (Finlay, 2012; Tuohy, Cooney, Dowling, Murphy, & Sixmith, 2013).

Husserl considered the world to be a very ordered system, which is shaped by people who participate in creating and maintaining that order. He believed people were not mindful of this created ordered world but accepted it as a natural phenomenon without questioning it (Sarantakos, 1993). Husserl thought that it was necessary to capture the essence of everyday experiences in order to obtain the most fundamental knowledge which is a science of the world of lived experience (Porter & Robinson, 2011). His phenomenology comprised of moving outside the everyday experiences otherwise known as the 'natural attitude' so one could examine that experience. The natural attitude is considered a prejudice or bias that phenomenologists must overcome.

Hammond (1991) states that the concepts of essence, intentionality and reduction are central to Husseral's phenomenology. Husseral felt it important to go beyond what was created by people in their consciousness so that the central acts of consciousness could be revealed (Sarantakos, 1993). He developed a phenomenological method in order to achieve phenomenological attitude. The phenomenological method would identify fundamental structures and characteristics of human experience (Smith et al.,

2009). The method involved eidetic reduction otherwise known as bracketing or epoche. This means one must suspend prejudices and biases by bracketing them, or putting them to one side in order to reach the essence of pure consciousness (Smith et al., 2009). Husseral believed that objects of our consciousness do exist and that questions can be answered by complete independence, if bracketing is applied.

Hermeneutic Phenomenology

The second of the two philosophical traditions and guiding methodologies for this study is Hermeneutics. Hermeneutics is known as the theory and practice of interpretation and its aim is to uncover hidden meanings and develop a shared understanding (Dowling, 2004; Higgs, Paterson, & Kinsella, 2012). The name 'hermeneutics' originated from Hermes, the legendary Greek messenger who bore knowledge and understanding between the gods and mortals (Higgs et al., 2012). In the 17th century, hermeneutics was concerned with the interpretation of texts, particularly in the context of Biblical studies (Crotty, 1998).

Hermeneutic phenomenology is an interpretive approach to study the participants of everyday worlds from the perspectives of the people experiencing a particular phenomenon (Miles et al., 2013). Subjective experience of individuals and groups is the focus of hermeneutic phenomenology (Prasad-Kafle, 2011). It is an attempt to unveil the world as experienced by the subject through their life stories. Hermeneutic phenomenology asserts that interpretations are a descriptive process in itself. Flood (2010) explains that hermeneutics surpasses the description of central concepts, instead delves into the hidden meanings entrenched in everyday experiences.

Heidegger made a break from Husserl's descriptive phenomenology and developed hermeneutic phenomenology as a philosophical methodology. The main difference between the Husserlain and the Heideggerian approaches is that while Husseral promotes bracketing, Heidegger believes that assumptions are not to be suspended. Heidegger considers that the world cannot be bracketed or judgement about existent things suspended or deferred because that would affect the meaning and the context of our relationship to them in the world (Porter & Robinson, 2011). Therefore, expert personal knowledge on behalf of the researcher is valuable and assists to guide the inquiry.

Heidegger was critical of the manner in which Husserl portrayed phenomenology, specifically Husserl's view of the importance of description rather than understanding (Cohen & Omery, 1994). According to Heidegger the main focus of philosophy was on the nature of existence (ontology) whereas Husseral's emphasis was on the nature of knowledge (epistemology) (Dowling, 2007).

In the second half of the twentieth century other philosophers and methodologists became involved and improved and added to the thoughts and approaches developed by Husserl and Heidegger (Sloan & Bowe, 2014). It is Gadamer's hermeneutic phenomenology that is the inspiration for the interpretation applied in this inquiry. Gadamer's philosophy has been informed by the work of Heidegger. Gadamer's work concentrates on how language reveals 'being' and that understanding can only be achieved through language (Sloan & Bowe, 2014). Language, understanding and interpretation are invariably connected. For Gadamer, language is the medium which allows the world to be represented.

Understanding is participative, conversational and dialogic. It is always connected to language and is achieved through logic of question and answer. In Gadamer's hermeneutic phenomenology, understanding is obtained from personal involvement by the researcher in a reciprocal process of interpretation that is inextricably related with one's 'dasein' or being in the world (Moran, 2000; Sloan & Bowe, 2014). For Gadamer, we are more than just observers in the world. Horizons are considered the background of various assumptions, meanings and experiences one holds, that are flexible and changeable (Flood, 2010). Our horizons of the past and those of the present help us to make meaning of the phenomena being investigated in collaboration with the participant (Geanellos, 2000). Dialogue from the past and the present is the basis for interpretation.

Human activity must be experienced as a living activity in the moment. Through interactions we experience in conversation and dialogue we encounter a fundamental and universal way of understanding than offered by objectivism. 'Gadamer's hermeneutics is concerned with creating and open ended questioning and answering between the past and the present and between the world and the interpreter'(Porter & Robinson, 2011, p.80). In hermeneutics, interpretation is never final but merely an understanding from the interpreter's perspective. What an interpreter brings to a text,

and the manner in which they question the text invariably impacts upon the meaning they derive (Geanellos, 1998).

Characteristics of Hermeneutic Phenomenology

Applying the hermeneutic approach to inquiry based on the philosophy of Gadamer, the researcher must recognise that basic philosophical assumptions inform our interpretations. There are three key philosophical assumptions that inform hermeneutics as an approach to interpretation, understanding and knowledge creation (Higgs et al., 2012).

Fusion of Horizons

For Gadamer, in order to comprehend understanding, we must acknowledge our pre-judgements which are formed by 'effective history'. Our consciousness is influenced by our assumptions and prejudices of a phenomenon. When we come to understand a phenomenon it is through our historical effectiveness (Moran, 2000). Our ability to understand is therefore influenced by our prejudgements. A fusion of horizons is a metaphor used by Gadamer, which emphasises that different interpretations can be joined through dialogue to create a shared understanding of a phenomena (Geanellos, 2000; Higgs et al., 2012). Gadamer defines the 'fusion of horizons' as the process of interpretation. To be able to understand, one must recognise that we are divided by different horizons of understanding and that shared understanding comes with overlapping agreement, otherwise known as a merging of horizons (Geanellos, 2000; Moran, 2000). Feedback and further discussion of a phenomenon with research participants is an essential aspect of Gadamerian approach. Conversations enable the horizon of the interpreter and the phenomena to combine.

Dialogue of questions and answers

Gadamer's hermeneutic approach recognises that at the core of understanding is language. He emphasizes that language is the means by which understanding is achieved (Gadamer, 1989). Questions and answers are an identifying aspect of Gadamer's hermeneutics. Dialogue is the medium by which knowledge is constructed and meaning is derived through a conversation between the text and the inquirer.

Smith et al. (2009) identify interpretation as being dialogue between the past and the present with the aim of learning from the past in the context of the present.

The Hermeneutic Circle

Instead of applying bracketing to preconceptions or prejudgments such as those found in descriptive phenomenology, the hermeneutic circle is used in hermeneutic phenomenology to obtain the true meaning of the phenomena being studied. The hermeneutic circle is known as an analytical process for interpreting texts. This metaphor is a means to enrich the interpreter's understanding and experience of a text. The researcher becomes part of this circle moving continually between interpretations of parts of the text and interpretations of the whole text, developing understanding of the phenomenon (Pollio, 1997). The aim to acquire a clear understanding of the phenomena being studied through constantly making meaning from the small parts in relation to the whole experience (Smith et al., 2009).

The hermeneutic circle as a methodological process, concerned with understanding the whole text and also the parts that are interdependent activities. "Constructing meaning of the whole means making sense of the parts, and grasping the meaning of the parts depended on having some sense of the whole." (Schwandt, 2007, p. 133). Smith et al. (2009) state the hermeneutic circle is concerned with the lively relationship between the parts and the whole, at various levels. The inquirer becomes part of the circle moving from interpretations of the whole text to interpretations of parts of the text (Higgs et al., 2012). An interpretation of a section of text is seen in the context of the inquirer's knowledge and understanding of what they have already read on the subject and that history is changed by the encounter with the new piece of text (Smith et al., 2009).

Gadamer (1989) considers the hermeneutic circle has the ability to correct our prejudgments in view of the text, and with new understanding of which leads to new biases that in turn leads to the formation of new pre-understanding. It is through the hermeneutic circle, that interpretation gives way to the true meaning of an experience.

Conclusion

The interpretative paradigm is the chosen research approach for this investigation. This approach accentuates social interaction as the foundation for knowledge and that knowledge is jointly constructed (O'Donoghue, 2018). This investigation has been guided by the socio-cultural perspective and Bronfenbrenner's bioecological theory of human development. A mixed method investigation has been utilized to gather data. Qualitative data is noted as being the primary source of data for this investigation. Interpretative Phenomenology has been applied to explore how 21st century parents conceptualize their experiences of supporting their child's emergent literacy. Quantitative data in the form of a questionnaire has been utilized to support the qualitative data gathered from the parent interviews. Together, both forms of data enable the researcher to develop a comprehensive picture of 21st century parents' perceptions of how they engage in emergent literacy with their young children before the commencement of formal schooling.

Section Three: Qualitative and Quantitative Data Collection

In order to develop a comprehensive understanding of the lived experiences of 21st century parents supporting the emergent literacy skills of their young children, this research involved a mixed methods approach. This involved qualitative and quantitative forms of data collection. Data collection was conducted concurrently. Qualitative data was collected in the form of participant interviews. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was the qualitative approach used to make meaning from the spoken words contained in the interviews. In qualitative research, IPA is used is to investigate how people make sense of their experiences (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2012; Smith et al., 2009).

This qualitative method is most suitable for obtaining perceptions, ideas, beliefs and opinions because it is difficult to measure these characteristics in a quantitative way. Perceptions, ideas, beliefs and opinions are subjective and are expressed by the person providing the data and being interpreted by the researcher (Creswell, 2012). The interview questions in this study were exploratory in nature with the aim of providing insight into how parents make sense of their experiences while supporting their young child's emergent literacy.

A quantitative method of data collection was also employed in this research. The quantitative method is used in studies which require systematic empirical studies that involve quantifying through mathematics and statistics. The data are then collected and transformed into numbers to see if a relationship can be found to draw conclusions from the data collected (Bryman, 2007). In this research, the quantitative method used to collect data was by written questionnaire. The questionnaire allowed the researcher to access and gather data about emergent literacy attitudes and behaviours associated with a larger population. This information assisted the researcher to construct an understanding of 21st century parents' attitudes, values and behaviours associated with emergent literacy in the years before formal schooling.

Ideas for the development of questions for the interviews and questionnaire were obtained from examples found in the works of Senechal et al. (1998), Boudreau (2005), Bleakley et al. (2013), Marvin and Ogden (2002) and Turner (2009). They provided the foundation for which the semi-structured interview questions and the parent questionnaire were based (Appendix A and B). Many of the interview questions were utilised in the questionnaire to ensure similar topics were covered. This strategy established a close link between the interview questions and the questionnaire. Having 2 forms of data collection performed concurrently enabled a wider understanding of the phenomena being investigated.

Interview participant selection

Creswell (2012) states that the intention of qualitative research is not to generalize to a population but rather purposefully select participants in order to achieve an insightful understanding of the phenomena being studied. Participants in Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis research are purposefully selected because they provide insight into a particular experience (Smith et al., 2009). IPA research advocate that participant selection should represent groups of people who can relate to the research question and provide a perspective instead of generalising to a population. Small sample sizes are used in IPA studies because of its idiographic approach that is involved with understanding a specific phenomenon in particular circumstances.

In phenomenological research, purposive sampling is utilized for the selection of participants who have a wealth of knowledge and experiences of the phenomena being investigated. Purposive sampling ensures the research questions contain meaning for

the participant. Based on this knowledge, the selection criteria were only open to parents and caregivers with children between the ages of 12 months to four years of age. Such intentional selection would provide access to understanding how 21st century parents' make sense of their experiences when supporting the emergent literacy of their young children. Parents and caregivers with this specific criterion were eligible because it was considered they were best equipped to describe their current experiences of supporting their child's emergent literacy.

Although IPA proposes that a similar group of participants can lead to a greater insight into the phenomena being studied, the findings are not always easily transferrable to a broader audience (Smith et al., 2009). These authors view transferability in terms of theoretical transferability instead of empirical generalisability. The transferability of this research is made possible when the reader makes connections between the analysis of the IPA inquiry and their own private and professional experience. The in-depth analysis provides the reader with the ability to assess its transferability to persons in circumstances which are relatively similar. The reader can also refer to further research in the tradition of the IPA paradigm which provide comparable data in other contexts to support the transferability of the study.

Recruitment for interviews

Parent participants were required for the interviews. This involved recruiting 12 parents for collecting qualitative data which involved semi-structured, open ended interviews. Early learning centres were deemed a possible source from which to recruit parents The mychild.gov.au website was used to identify early learning centres in metropolitan Perth and a list was generated. All the names of the early learning centres were placed in a container and five were randomly chosen. The managers of each of the early learning centres were then contacted by telephone. Details of the research project were explained and permission was sought to allow information letters along with consent forms to be sent home, inviting parents of children between the ages of 12 months to four years of age be interviewed for the research project (Appendices C and D).

Table 3. 2 Recruitment for semi structured interviews.

Recruitment		Total
Early Learning Centres		7
Friends/Relatives/Colleagues		5
	Total	12

Only 1 of the 5 early learning centres contacted accepted the research request. The manager of this centre identified 35 families that matched the criteria. Forty-five cover letters along with detailed information about the study and consent forms were all were left with the early learning centre's receptionist (Appendix E). Twelve parents in total offered to become a part of the semi structured interviews. Seven parents accepted the invitation to be a part of the research as a result of the 45 information letters and consent forms distributed to the early learning centre.

Early learning centres, associates of the researcher and the initial seven interview participants were asked to assist with identifying additional participants for the research. The remaining 5 interview participants were acquired for the semi structured interviews. The final 5 participants contacted the researcher through face to face contact, telephone and email.

Semi structured interviews

Twelve parents were involved in the semi structured interviews. Eight interviews were conducted face to face at a location, day and time convenient to the participant and the researcher. Four interviews were completed on the telephone at a time and day suitable to the participant and the researcher. The participants consisted of 8 women and 4 men who were all the mothers and fathers of children between the ages of 12 months and four years. Within this group of 12 participants, there were 2 married couples. Three of the female participants identified English as a second language whose first languages were Spanish, Japanese and Serbo-Croatian. The interviews were conducted over a period of 4 months. Each interview lasted between 15 and 33 minutes, however a majority of the interviews were around 20 minutes long.

The aim of the semi structured interview was to gather data about how the participants make sense of their experiences when supporting the emergent literacy skills of their

young children. The researcher followed the same procedure for all 12 interviews. For the first 10 minutes before each interview began, the researcher attempted to get to know the participant through casual conversation. This provided the opportunity to build rapport and trust between the researcher and the participant. It also assisted in providing a safe and comfortable environment in which information could be shared. Once the researcher and the participant felt they were ready to begin, the researcher reminded the participant of the study's intention and they could elect to withdraw at any time. The researcher notified the participants that the interview was being recorded and transcribed for the purpose of the study and each participant would receive a transcript of their own interview to review for accuracy. The researcher informed each participant they could be contacted again to discuss their interview. Participants were reminded that all information would be private and pseudonyms were negotiated and assigned to each participant to ensure anonymity. The researcher asked each of the participants who were interviewed face to face to sign the consent form in order for the interview to begin. In the case of participants being interviewed on the phone, consent forms were emailed to the researcher before the interview was conducted.

When the participant was ready, the researcher notified them the recording of the interview was about to begin. The researcher then proceeded with recording the interview. Each participant was asked a total of 25 open-ended questions. During each of the interviews the researcher took brief notes (Creswell, 2007b, 2009). The researcher had questions to follow but remained flexible to pursue questions and comments of the participants (Creswell, 2012). The researcher maintained a courteous and professional demeanor throughout each interview. At the conclusion of each of the interviews the researcher thanked the participant for their involvement and reminded them that a transcript of the interview would be emailed to them once all interviews were completed. The participants were also reminded of future follow up discussions regarding interviews.

At the conclusion of the 12 interviews, the researcher employed the services of a transcription company to transcribe the interviews. All the participants were emailed a copy of their interview to check for accuracy. Only six out of the 12 participants replied to indicate the transcripts were correct. No response was obtained from the other six participants even after a second request was sent to each of them, reminding them to review their interview transcript.

Analysis of the interview transcripts

The main purpose of IPA is the participant's lived experience and the meaning which they attribute to such an experience. It must be noted that the final result is known as double hermeneutics which is an account of what the researcher thinks the participant is thinking or meaning (Smith et al., 2009). Smith et al. (2009) These authors also suggest that IPA analyses are subjective while also being exact, dialogical and methodical in its application.

Step 1: Reading and Rereading

The analysis applied to the 12 interview transcripts followed six specific steps proposed by Smith et al. (2009). The first step was called Reading and Rereading. As this step implies, reading and rereading was applied to the analysis of the 12 transcripts. The researcher initially listened to each of the recorded interviews. The researcher copied the interview text into a new document and added columns for note taking. As suggested by Smith et al. (2009) the researcher made some notes about her own thoughts and feelings towards the interview process in order to improve focus. The researcher then read each transcript four times each over the course of four weeks in order to become more familiar with the transcripts and to actively engage with the data contained within each interview.

Step 2: Initial Noting

The second step was called Initial noting (Smith et al., 2009). Part of this step merged with Step 1 as the researcher instinctively began to make notes in the columns created within the transcripts during the repeated readings in Step 1. The researcher then followed the recommendations of Smith et al. (2009) to analyse the text using three distinct processes each with a different focus. These processes were as identified by Smith et al. (2009, p. 84)

- "Descriptive comments focused on describing the content of what the participant has said, the subject of the talk within the transcript (normal text).
- Linguistic comments: focused on exploring the specific use of language by the participant (italic).

- Conceptual comments focused on engaging at a more interrogative and conceptual level (underlined)."

In the columns during the note taking analysis, normal text was used when the researcher believed the participant was being descriptive. Italics were used when the researcher thought the participant used metaphors, synonyms, varied their tone, used pronouns, laughed or paused etc. Finally, text was underlined when the researcher was required to interpret the concepts discussed by the participant.

Step 3: Developing Emergent Themes

Smith et al. (2009) consider Step 3 to signify the appearance of the hermeneutic circle. It is within this step the researcher was required to take apart the whole in order examine and reorganise the small parts of the data. The interview text became a series of parts where the researcher attempted to turn notes from Step 2 into themes. The researcher considered the language used within every sentence and in every word of the transcript in relation to how it was either descriptive, linguistic or conceptual. The researcher applied Gardamarian dialogue by acknowledging their own pre-understandings with new knowledge or understanding obtained from examining the participant's experiences. The researcher needed to ensure that the themes that emerged from the transcripts encapsulated and revealed an understanding (Smith et al., 2009). After much deliberation themes were written in the column on the far-left side of the transcript. The researcher also colour coded sections of the text to match the theme in the left column.

Step 4: Searching for Connection Across Emergent Themes

After ascertaining a set of themes across a transcript, the researcher organised them into the order they appeared in the transcripts. The list of themes was then printed, cut up and then spread out on the floor. The themes were moved around by placing similar understandings together. Exploration of patterns and connections were carefully considered. Applying this hands-on approach helped the researcher to visualise the connections between the various emergent themes which aided the development of new clusters. This process is called abstraction. The new cluster of similar themes was given a new theme title.

Step 5: Moving to the Next Case

Once the analysis was completed on the first transcript, the researcher moved to the second transcript and systematically repeated the process mentioned in Steps 1-4. Smith et al. (2009)recommend that it is important to treat each new transcript individually. With each new account, the researcher acknowledged pre-understandings gained from the previous analysis in order for new themes to emerge. Treating each participant's account of their experiences on their own terms, encouraged detail which resulted in a comprehensive investigation while adhering to the idiography side of IPA.

Step 6: Looking for Patterns Across Cases

The next phase concerned searching for patterns across all of the themes. A table was made for each participant and spread out on a table. Such organisation made it easier to scan each participant's smaller themes within the superordinate theme and identify any that were common across all participants' accounts. Once the themes had been identified the researcher then created a table of themes for the group. This demonstrated how themes were connected within each superordinate theme while also identifying the theme for each participant.

Once the patterns across the interviews had been determined, the researcher commenced interpretation of each of the themes in relation to the participants' responses. This is where the hermeneutic circle was utilised, moving from individual words to sentences and back to words. The process of interpretation is a form of double hermeneutics, whereby the interview participant is trying to make sense of their experiences and the researcher is trying to make sense of the participant making sense of their 'lived experiences' (Smith et al., 2009).

Written Questionnaire

Surveys are used in quantitative research to investigate attitudes, opinions, characteristics or behaviours of a population (Creswell, 2009). There are various forms of surveys available to researchers; however, the most common forms are questionnaires and interviews. The researcher collects numerical data from the questionnaires which are then analysed to determine trends from responses that can be generalised to a population. A questionnaire allows data collection from a larger

number of people compared to qualitative research methods such as those used in IPA. There are different forms of survey designs available which include cross-sectional and longitudinal (Creswell, 2012). Survey distribution can take the form of telephone, mail, face to face interview, web based, email or personal delivery.

Quantitative and qualitative data were collected concurrently for this research. The quantitative research involved a parent questionnaire, which linked directly to the research questions and the questions contained in the parent semi structured interview. The questionnaire was comprised of a cross-sectional design. A cross-sectional design measures attitudes and values of a population at one point in time (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). The questionnaire used in this research examined current attitudes and behaviours of 21st century parents supporting their young child's emergent literacy.

The questionnaire was designed to provide the researcher with a broader understanding of the phenomena being investigated and the themes developed from the interviews conducted and analysed during qualitative data collection. It was intended that the data gathered from the questionnaire would assist the researcher to form a comprehensive understanding of the phenomena being investigated. Consequently, the questionnaire was designed to give the researcher a broader view of how 21st century parents are supporting their young child's emergent literacy.

The main research question was the foundation upon which the questionnaire was developed.

1A How do 21st century parents describe their experiences of supporting the emergent literacy skills of their young children?

The research of Senechal et al. (1998) , Boudreau (2005), Bleakley et al. (2013) Turner (2009) and Marvin and Ogden (2002) provided examples of questions used in emergent literacy interviews and questionnaires. These examples became the foundation for which the questionnaire was developed. The questions created for the Likert scale was used as the measurement tool to score the data in the questionnaire. This scale provided options for answers that are considered equal distance apart (Creswell, 2012). A numeric value was allocated to each of the four possible answers for each question in ascending order (1 low to 4 high).

The questionnaire comprised of four sections, each relating to emergent literacy and linked to many of the questions asked during the semi structured interviews:

Section A: Parent attitudes towards literacy

Section B: Factors that support reading, writing, oral language

Section C: Factors that inhibit emergent literacy

Section D: Space for further personal comments

The first section (A) was titled 'Parent attitudes towards literacy' and contained 17 questions. This section required the respondent to reflect upon their own thoughts and feelings about emergent literacy. The second section (B) and third section (C) the questionnaire related to the two subsidiary research questions. The first subsidiary question comprised of:

2B What assists parents to support early literacy development in their young children in the 21st century?

The questions posed in this section were all considered associated behaviours when supporting young children's emergent literacy (reading, writing, oral language). This section comprised of 25 questions that were divided into three parts of literacy which commenced with reading followed by writing and finally oral language.

The third section (C) by written questionnaire related to what prevented parents from supporting their child's emergent literacy.

3C. What hinders parents in supporting early literacy development in their young children in the 21st century?

This third section (C) was directly associated with what might hinder parents from engaging in emergent literacy activities at home. This section comprised of eight questions all relating to possible real-life reasons why parents may not be able to support their child's emergent literacy.

In the final section (D) of the questionnaire, parents were provided with space to accommodate personal emergent literacy reflections.

Questionnaire Participants

Volunteers for the questionnaire comprised of participants who were parents of children between the ages of 12 months to four years and who were willing to complete the questionnaire. According to Creswell (2009) the distribution of the questionnaires falls into the category of convenience selection because the participants already belonged to formed groups, organisations and family units (Smith et al., 2009). consider it is important to find a similar group of people to ensure the research question is relevant. A total of 102 completed questionnaires were returned to the researcher out of a total of 500 distributed.

Table 3. 3 Recruitment for the questionnaire.

Recruitment	Total
5 Early Learning Centres	32
Playgroup WA	2
2 Schools	23
Friends/Relatives/Colleagues	45
Final total:	102

The researcher again referred the mychild.gov.au website to identify early learning centres in metropolitan Perth and a list was generated using this website. The researcher placed the names of the early learning centres in a container and subsequently randomly selected ten names. These 10 early learning centres which incorporated a wide area ranging from northern Perth suburbs to southern Perth suburbs were contacted by the researcher by telephone. Five out of 10 early learning centres accepted the offer to participate in the research.

Once permission was obtained, a cover letter was written for distribution at the early learning centres (Appendix E). The researcher personally visited the five early learning centres and gave each of the centre's directors forty cover letters, research information, consent forms, a copy of the questionnaire along with an envelope addressed to the researcher (Appendices B, E and F). The researcher explained to the directors at each

of the centres the questionnaires would be collected on the specified day. Parents were expected to use the envelope provided in which to return the questionnaires. Any returned questionnaires would be personally collected by the researcher at a later date. The questionnaires remained at each early learning centre for four weeks, allowing enough time for the parents to complete it. Two hundred questionnaires were distributed and a total of thirty-two questionnaires were returned from the five early learning centres.

The not for profit organisation called Playgroup WA was approached to participate in the research because of its access to parents with children between the ages of 12 months and 4 years. The director gave permission to distribute the parent questionnaire via a link on the Playgroup WA Facebook page. A request was made by the director for a brief explanation of the research be written for the Facebook page so parents could choose if they wanted to open the link which lead them to information about the research including consent and a copy of the questionnaire (Appendix G). Two people completed the questionnaire via this form of dissemination.

Another avenue used to dispense the questionnaire was through the school system. Two metropolitan schools were approached and granted permission to distribute the questionnaires. They requested a cover letter be written and attached to the research information (Appendix H). A total of eighty questionnaires were distributed between the two schools. The parents were given three weeks to complete the questionnaire and return it to their child's classroom teacher. A total of twenty-three questionnaires were returned.

Finally, the researcher contacted friends, relatives and work colleagues to distribute the questionnaire within their local communities and social circles. A total of 220 questionnaires along with the general cover letter, research information, consent forms and envelopes were circulated using the snowball sampling method. A total of 45 questionnaires were returned to the researcher out of 220 questionnaires using this method of distribution.

Questionnaire Data Collection

A total of 102 questionnaires were returned to the researcher for analysis. This part of the research involved a quantitative process. To commence the analysis of the

questionnaires, the researcher linked the superordinate themes identified from the interview participants involved in the qualitative analysis to questions asked in the questionnaire in the quantitative data collection (Appendix I).

Descriptive statistics was used to help summarise trends in the data. The researcher used SPSS to perform an analysis of the questionnaires. Questions were analysed using a valid percentage score from 101 questionnaires. Although there were 102 questionnaires returned, the respondent for questionnaire number 64 answered all the questions with the same high rating. As a result, it was decided that the information contained in questionnaire 64 would not be included and was deemed as a missing value by SPSS. In addition, there were 10 other instances where information from questions were missing from the analysis. This was the result of parents not answering a question or had answered the same question twice. Missing information was left blank when entering the data collection table and deemed as a missing value by SPSS. Finally, some questionnaire participants took the opportunity to complete the section at the end of the questionnaire to write any further comments they had about emergent literacy. A total of 22 out of a total of 102 participants wrote a brief comment about their own emergent literacy experiences. This information was included in the interpretation during the analysis stage.

Each questionnaire was given a number commencing at 1 and concluding at 102. The questionnaire comprised of a total of 50 questions each with a choice of four possible answers. For every question contained in the questionnaire, a value was assigned to each answer in ascending order, ranging from 1 being the lowest and 4 being highest. The participants highlighted the answer that best represented them. A valid percentage for each question was determined using the SPSS program. The results from each question was presented in the form of a bar graph because they portray trends and distributions of data suited to this quantitative phase of the research (Creswell, 2007b). Questions were arranged according to the themes established from the interview transcripts which allowed the respective graphs to be compared.

Notes made when the researcher was rereading the questions in the questionnaire helped link the questions to a superordinate theme, the researcher then focused on how questions could be analysed separately but compared together. It was established that questions linked to the smaller themes and associated with one superordinate theme

would be placed in the same graph so they could be compared. Therefore, for example, questions relating to the superordinate theme of 'Influence' were placed in separate graphs but compared together where it was considered necessary by the researcher. The information obtained from analysing the results of questionnaires facilitated the researcher to construct a holistic picture of how 21st century parents support their young child's emergent literacy from a larger group of people.

Section Four: How the Research was Conducted

Research Rigour

In order to assess qualitative research, Yardley (2000) has developed four broad principles. These four principles which comprise of sensitivity to context, commitment to rigour, transparency and coherence and impact and importance have been chosen to measure the quality of this research (Smith et al., 2009; Yardley, 2000). These principles are not a set of rules, rather they are flexible in nature because the interpretation attributed to the principles may differ according to the characteristics of the research (Yardley, 2000).

The first principle is sensitivity to context (Yardley, 2000). This means that the researcher is familiar with the theoretical literature relating to the phenomena, empirical data , participants' perspectives, socio-cultural setting, and ethical issues that may impact the study (Yardley, 2000). To address this principle the researcher read an extensive amount of literature related to family literacy and emergent literacy. The researcher became familiar with theoretical and empirical data available concerning emergent and family literacy, qualitative and quantitative traditions. The researcher reflected upon the historical knowledge they had already acquired. Reflection enabled the researcher to be sensitive to the needs of the interview participants and create trust and build a rapport so as to promote a comfortable environment. Sensitivity towards the research participants was established through the recruitment of a purposive sample who were familiar with the phenomena being investigated. The researcher applied the hermeneutic circle to obtain a deeper understanding of the participants' perspectives when supporting their child's emergent literacy. A fusion of horizons was generated through clarification with interview participants in order for a shared understanding to be created. The researcher discussed the possibility of ethical issues that may arise with the primary research supervisor.

The second principle of Yardley (2000) is known as commitment and rigour. Commitment is concerned with the researcher's prolonged engagement with the phenomena being investigated, being sensitive towards participants and being immersed in theoretical and empirical data (Yardley, 2000). Rigour is concerned with the thoroughness of the research (Smith et al., 2009; Yardley, 2000). To address commitment the researcher read widely on the phenomena being investigated. Transcripts of the participants' interviews were transcribed and read multiple times in order to obtain a deeper understanding of the participants' perspectives. Such an exercise involved an extensive amount of time over an extended period. The researcher contacted the participants to clarify the authenticity of the transcripts and elucidate further meaning from text. The researcher was sensitive to the needs of the interview participants and ensured the time and location of interviews was convenient to the participants. Sensitivity was also applied to questionnaires recipients. The researcher contacted early learning centres and schools and collaborated with staff to distribute the questionnaires at an appropriate time. The researcher regularly communicated with the supervisors on the investigation to check ideas, and discuss issues and reflect upon unfolding interpretations of the data. This allowed the researcher to minimise their own subjectivity and enabled interpretations that were authentic and well defined.

Firstly, rigour was established throughout the investigation. Rigour was demonstrated in the development of the questions for the interview and the questionnaire. The researcher based the interview questions and the questionnaire on the works of previous research by Senechal et al. (1998), Boudreau (2005), Bleakley et al. (2013) Turner (2009) and Marvin and Ogden (2002). The Likert scale was developed by the researcher to investigate three research questions. Consequently, it was used as a measurement tool to score the data in the questionnaire. The items in the Likert scale matched the content they were intended to measure, therefore demonstrating content validity. The results of the questionnaire supported seminal findings which proved their concurrent validity. The interview questions were directly linked to the questions in the questionnaire. According to Creswell (2007b) triangulation occurs when different data sources are used to build a clear explanation for the themes. The researcher used data from interview transcripts, questionnaires and feedback from the research supervisors to interpret and explain the themes that emerged from the investigation. This form of triangulation ensured that the validity and rigour of the

questionnaire. Furthermore, the researcher initially distributed the questionnaire amongst friends to seek feedback and determine its trustworthiness and validity. The researcher used SPSS to analyse the frequency of the data in the form of percentages. Each questionnaire was numbered and participant interviews were transcribed. Transcriptions were emailed to the interview participants to confirm authenticity. Exploration of the participants' words was interpreted through the use of the hermeneutic circle in order to develop a rich and meaningful understanding of the phenomena being investigated. Due to the idiographic nature of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis, the researcher moved beyond a simple description to what exists to a meaningful interpretation. This allowed the researcher to share information about each interview participant in addition to shared themes (Smith et al., 2009). Furthermore, interviews were analysed and extensive notes were taken in relation to the themes identified in the interviews which support the rigour undertaken in this research.

According to Yardley (2000) the third principle concerning the value of this research is associated with transparency and coherence. Transparency relates to how clearly the phases of the research process are explained in the write up of the investigation (Smith et al., 2009). Coherence refers to the consistency established in the finished write up. This research has clearly established the steps to conducting the investigation. The method for conducting the research in addition to the notes, tables, graphs and transcriptions have been recorded and analysed and have provided a clear passage to understand how the research was undertaken. Excerpts from the interviews have been presented in alongside the researcher's interpretation which allows for readers to follow the researcher's justification for their interpretation. This research demonstrates coherency by following the principles in Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis and the findings of the research. Qualitative research has been established as the primary source of this research supported by quantitative findings. The write up contains clear stages of investigation and explanation of the research findings.

Impact and importance is the fourth principle identified by Yardley (2000). This principle relates to the theoretical and usefulness of the study as well as the socio-cultural impact. Through the use of IPA, the lived experiences of 21st century parents has been explored and interpreted. This study is useful in that it has identified through parents' perspective how parents support their child's emergent literacy. Such an

understanding provides an opportunity to support parents through the various recommendations established from the findings and identify opportunities for future research.

Ethical Considerations

Throughout data collection and analysis, careful monitoring is required to ensure ethical research practice (Smith et al., 2009). There are important ethical issues that need to be addressed when conducting research which involve the safety of the research participants and receiving informed consent and confidentiality.

The researcher maintained a high standard of ethical conduct throughout this research. This was achieved by supporting the University's code of ethics for research and research studies. Informed consent was obtained from research participants and they were guarded by the researcher from any risk or harm. The form acknowledges the rights of the participant will be protected (Creswell, 2009). In this research, participants were given the research information statement which contained all the relevant information required in order to establish an informed decision. They were encouraged by the researcher to ask questions to establish a clear understanding of the investigation and what was expected of them during the course of the research. The researcher contacted the interview participants to clarify text in the transcripts and construct are shared understanding. Furthermore, participants were given the opportunity to withdraw from the research at any time. Informed consent was obtained before any interviews or questionnaires were completed.

Confidentiality is an important and essential aspect of research and one that has been respected and diligently followed during the course of this research. The questionnaire was completed anonymously making it impossible to identify any of the participants. Each interview audio recording was assigned a pseudonym in order to protect the participants' identify. These pseudonyms were applied to the excerpts used in the write up. All interviews were orgainsed at a location convenient to the participant or arranged to be conducted by telephone at a time that suited the participant. Furthermore, before each recording, the researcher reminded the participant their involvement was voluntary and the interview could be ceased at any time. This measure helped the interview participants feel more comfortable, knowing they had control during the interview.

In conclusion at no time during this research, were any participants subjected to any risk or harm. The researcher did not engage in any deceptive practices and there were no issues raised during this investigation. The data for this research has been stored electronically on the Curtin University R Drive. It will be stored there for a maximum of 7 years after which it will be destroyed.

Significance of this Study

Since earlier studies in family literacy (Hart & Risley, 1995) parents have been recognised as the first educators of their children and therefore play a vital role in their development. The aim of this research is to contribute to the literature relating to how parents support the emergent literacy of their young children. The world is rapidly changing, people are more mobile, and technological advances are impacting upon the way people live. Applying Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis to research the 'lived experiences' of parents, provides insight into how 21st century parents assist their young children in the early years before the commencement of formal schooling. A questionnaire extends to a wider parent population and provides additional information related to 21st century parents' attitudes and behaviours. The new knowledge gained from this research will inform parent groups, early learning centres and schools by providing them with a valuable insight into how 21st century parents engage in emergent literacy with their children at home. Furthermore, this research also identifies challenges and effective literacy supports for parents as they navigate their way through the literacy landscape.

Chapter 4

Data Analysis

Introduction

This chapter analyses the interview transcripts of the 12 participants and the questionnaire. The chapter is divided into four sections and begins by introducing the 12 interview participants. Section One commences with the identification of what the interview participants considered helped them to facilitate their child's emergent literacy. This is followed by Section Two, with the description of what the interview participants perceived hindered them from supporting their child's emergent literacy. It then moves on to Section Three whereby Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis is utilised to explore the 12 interview participants' lived experiences when supporting their child's emergent literacy. This form of in-depth analysis identifies four superordinate themes from the interview transcripts which include 1. Guilt, 2. Influence, 3 Judgement and 4. Family life. An explanation of each of the superordinate themes and their smaller sub themes is provided in relation these parents' lived experiences. Section Four is associated with the quantitative data collected in the questionnaire. This section commences by answering the two subsidiary research questions using information gathered from the questionnaires. It begins by identifying and explaining what supports reading, writing and oral language and secondly what hinders parents engaging in emergent literacy activities with their children. Section Four concludes with the analysis between the four superordinated themes and their related sub themes that emerged from the participant interviews and describes and explains their connection with the quantitative data obtained from the written questionnaires.

Research questions:

Analysis for this study centred around the experiences of parents supporting the emergent literacy skills of their young children. This research has defined and has referred to 'living in the 21st century' as the first quartile of the 21st century. The aim of the research was to develop an in-depth understanding of how 21st parents perceived their experiences through the accounts they provided during an interview and through

the distribution of a parent and care giver questionnaire. The analysis of the interviews and questionnaires also provided answers to the research questions:

1A How do 21st century parents describe their experiences of supporting the emergent literacy skills of their young children?

2B What assists parents to support early literacy development in their young children in the 21st century?

3C What hinders parents in supporting early literacy development in their young children in the 21st century?

A purposive sampling strategy was used in this study to enable participants to make connections to the research questions. Therefore, the selection criteria was suited to parents and caregivers with children between the ages of 12 months and four years of age. Such intentional selection provided access to understanding how 21st century parents' made sense of their experiences when supporting the emergent literacy of their young children.

Interview Participants

Twelve parents volunteered to be interviewed for this research. Out of the 12 parents who were interviewed, eight were female and four were male. Eleven of the participants were in relationships whereby both parents were living in the same house and one participant was a single parent. The participants had either one or two children. Their ages were between 12 months and six years old. Three of the participants in this study spoke English as a second language. Their first languages were Spanish, Japanese and Serbo-Croatian. No information was collected from the participants with regards to their socio-economic status. Working commitments of the parents involved in the study has been supplied in Table 4 below. There were 10 parents who were involved in some form of full-time employment or study. Two participants worked part-time. Table 4 has added additional information that has assisted with understanding the lives, experiences and behaviours of the interview participants.

Table 4. 1 Interview participants' work capacity.

Participant	Marital Status	Full time student	Both parents work full time	One parent works full time	One parent works part time
EMMA	SINGLE	YES			
AMY	MARRIED			YES	YES
TAMMY	MARRIED	YES		YES	
KAY	MARRIED			YES	YES
DENISE	MARRIED		YES		
DI	MARRIED		YES		
SAM	MARRIED		YES		
GEMMA	MARRIED		YES		
LEO	MARRIED		YES		
LEE	MARRIED		YES		
BILL	DEFACTO		YES		
JILL	DEFACTO		YES		

Section One: Support for Emergent Literacy

The first subsidiary question related to identifying what parents perceived to be helpful when supporting their child's emergent literacy. When asked this question during the interview, the majority of the parents responded quickly with little or no wait time. The results have established that outside organisations were perceived as being very helpful resources when supporting young children's emergent literacy.

The participants in this study consisted of a mixture of working parents and full-time students with children between the ages of 12 months to 4 years old. As a consequence of the 12 interview participants working and studying, all their children spent time in some form of outside care. The parents were asked for their opinion about what they considered was most helpful when supporting their child's emergent literacy. Table 5 below, has established that nine out of 12 parents identified an organisation as being the most supportive in helping them develop their child's emergent literacy skills. Out

of these nine parents, seven perceived early learning centres were the most beneficial for helping them with ideas to support their child's emergent literacy. In addition to these seven parents, one parent chose the local library and one parent selected an organisation called Best Beginnings as their perception of what was most helpful.

Table 4. 2 Direct or indirect contact.

Parent	Comment	Avenue	Direct contact	Indirect contact
Tammy	The day care centre. Because they're not just a child-minding place.	Early Learning Centre	Yes	
Amy	I'm really thrilled at what day care can give them.	Early Learning Centre	Yes	
Jill	Advice they've given us from day care as well.	Early Learning Centre	Yes	
Bill	Probably day care I'd say.	Early Learning Centre	Yes	
Leo	Having to deal with and communicate with 25 others and compete with 25 other kids their age as well as their carers, I think that's been pretty key in their development.	Early Learning Centre	Yes	
Gemma	So, kind of from day care but it's not because day care has said to us we're doing mummies this week, it's because they come home and asked about it.	Early Learning Centre		Yes
Denise	You get all these emails from day care saying this is the book we're reading.	Early Learning Centre	Yes	
Emma	I think I'd actually have to say the lady from Best Beginnings, the health nurse lady.	Best Beginnings	Yes	
Lee	Having access to the library.	Library	Yes	
Kay	Alphabet on magnets. And I think she has really learnt the alphabet because of this activity.	Educational Toy	N/A	N/A

Sam	I would say the Dr Seuss chart is good.	Educational Toy	N/A	N/A
Di	With my little one I think the best thing that has happened for him is being the second child.	Second Child	N/A	N/A

Outside Organisations

The perception by nine out of 12 parents that an outside organisation assisted them to support their child's emergent literacy was revealing. This occurred by direct or indirect interaction. A direct interaction has been defined as being when parents have spoken or communicated in person, by email or by telephone to staff. Children's initiation of the replication of learning experiences and knowledge across to the home environment by was considered indirect interaction. An example of support from an outside organisation was when Denise said,

> "You get all these emails from day care saying this is the book we're reading so I either buy it or just borrow it from the library so we have it for a certain period of time. And then she's happy because she has it in day care and she still talks about it and wants to read it. And I'm like, okay, here we go, let's just go and get it. So that helps me a lot as a parent because I am not looking for books, she might be interested in this or that."

The above quote is evidence that parents have valued the knowledge and understanding outside organisations possess by their willingness to listen to advice, read information and follow up by further extending concepts experienced by their child within the home environment.

Direct Interaction

Avenues of support appeared in the form of direct and indirect lived experiences. Direct engagement with staff at early learning centres was thought to be a significant support in developing emergent literacy skills. When parents were asked what they considered most helpful when supporting child's emergent literacy Jill said, "the information and advice that they've given us at day care as well." From Jill's response, it was clear she listened to the advice from early learning staff and found it valuable. She used the term 'information' to indicate the staff provided her with more than just

advice about her son's progress but additional material as a way of enhancing her knowledge on meaningful topics, most likely relating to child development.

Amy had two sons at an early learning centre. She reacted in a very positive manner towards her experiences of direct interaction with the early learning staff. For Amy, having her sons at an early learning centre is not just viewed as a good support system and source of information, she considered it in terms of being beneficial for the whole family when she said:

> "I'm really thrilled with what day care can give them. And I think we're absolutely super-duper lucky to be at the day care that we're at because I feel like the carers – it's been really good for our family, I can't imagine if you're not getting."

This extract is an example of how Amy's family has connected with the early learning centre. Amy appreciated and valued the early learning centre, hence her optimistic answer. By using of the word 'thrilled,' Amy displayed a positive emotional connection she experienced with the early learning centre her children attended. When she said "I can't imagine if you're not getting" revealed the emotion of empathy towards other parents or families who are not in the same position. This suggested that Amy is unable to understand what it is like without the support of the early learning centre in her life.

Tammy also selected the early learning centre as what was most helpful to her when she was supporting her son's emergent literacy. Her circumstances were different to Amy and Jill. Tammy was Japanese and spoke English as a second language. She had no relatives in Australia and she nominated herself and not her Australian husband as the main parent who supported their son's emergent literacy at home.

Tammy's opinion of the early learning centre ran deeper than a place where her son attended to be cared for while she studied. This is supported when she said:

> "The Day Care Centre. Because they're not just a child-minding place, I really found them, an early development education place so I think that' – and if I went to a different childcare where they're not focused on early learnings then the result would be different."

Tammy considered the early learning centres as a place that educated and supported her son as well as herself. Tammy acknowledged that the early learning centre made a difference to her son's learning. She recognised that not all early learning centres were the same and it was the focus on early learning that assisted Tammy to distinguish between what she believed to be positive or a negative learning result for her and her son.

Indirect Interaction

The second category presented as support from early learning centres is through indirect lived experiences. This meant that the parents were not directly communicating face to face with the early learning staff, it was the repercussion of their child's experiences at the early learning centre which crossed over into the home environment. Children discussed books and asked their parents questions about concepts explored at the early learning centre. Such interaction allowed parents the opportunity to build upon the early learning centre's emergent literacy experiences at home. Indirect lived experiences were evident when Gemma said:

> "And then the kids will come home and I won't necessarily know what they've been read at day care but they'll keep asking about it. Recently it was mummies so then we went and saw a mummies exhibit that was on. So, kind of from day care but not because day care has said to us we're doing mummies this week, it because they've come home and asked about it."

From this comment it was obvious that Gemma took notice of what her sons were saying and listened their experiences at the early learning centre. Gemma valued their experiences at the early learning centre and consequently built upon them by taking her sons out into the wider community to see a mummies exhibit at the local museum. As a result of this experience, Gemma was extending her sons' knowledge, understanding and vocabulary about mummies, hence supporting their emergent literacy. The early learning centre was indirectly giving Gemma the opportunity to further develop emergent literacy learning experiences at home.

Denise was a full-time working parent and it was also through her child's experiences at the early learning centre she was able to enhance her emergent literacy experiences at home. Denise remarked that she, "found very helpful when she goes to an early

learning centre, she comes home to me with an idea, she keeps telling me the story and I'm like, what is this story?" Like Gemma, Denise appreciated her daughter's experiences at the early learning centre. The concepts she learnt about were important to Denise and she was open and willing to investigate the books her daughter was listening to at the early learning centre and asked questions about at home to further enrich her experiences.

Leo was a full-time working parent. He considered the early learning centre to have a significant impact on his sons' literacy development particularly in the area of oral language. This was confirmed when he said,

> "I think it's just interaction. If I reflect on where they are relative to other kids who aren't as exposed to lots of people, so they're at day care five days a week compared to kids that are not, then my opinion is they're probably more advanced in their literacy development. Part of that could be what we do at home with them but I think just having to deal with and communicate with 25 others and, compete with, 25 other kids their age as well as carers, I think that's been pretty key in their development. You don't get the benefit of just communicating through grunting or through having people persist, you've got to compete with others for attention so you've got to learn to get it right.

This comment illustrated the importance Leo placed on the oral language element of emergent literacy. The ability to be an effective communicator was emphasised when he repeated the number 25. From Leo's point of view, 25 was a large number of children to vie for attention. Nevertheless, having 25 other children in the class helped his sons to develop and refine their communication skills. Leo described the ability to communicate under such circumstances like a competition when he used the word 'compete.' This implied the children needed to communicate effectively to ensure they got what they wanted. The experience of competing with many other children at the early learning centre was a fundamental component of developing his son's effective oral language skills.

The outside organisation that Lee considered most helpful for him supporting his sons' emergent literacy was the local library. This was demonstrated when said, "Having access to the library, the library's been awesome and living close to the library was fantastic and now we've moved closer to it, it's good. I don't know, just being switched

75

on." While Lee has not exactly pinpointed how his local library has assisted him, he has considered it a valuable resource for him and his family. However, the most likely reason he thought the library was so helpful was because of the access it gave his family books. This was verified when he said,

> "Just to borrow books. It's a bit of free – goes and pulls a book out, reads, a quick look at the pictures and yes, that's interesting, no, it's not, I want this one, I want this one. We've got that one here. My wife has a knack of looking at it and going, I think that one would be good for you and I sort of look and go really?"

Best Beginnings is an organisation aimed to increase child health and wellbeing, social support networks as well as parent and family functioning (Western Australian Government, 2020). Home visitations by professionals to parents of infants provided advice, support and information about caring for young children. Best Beginnings was identified by Emma as being helpful resource. This was perceived when she said, "I think I'd actually have to say the lady from the Best Beginnings, the health nurse lady. Yeah, she has. She's amazing honestly, she's been such a massive help, not just with, but with everything. She's such a good resource." Like Lee, Emily does not exactly say how Best Beginnings assisted her, although she did say it was a good help for her with everything.

This research revealed 21st century parents' perception of the central role outside organisations such as early learning centres, the local library and the Best Beginnings program played in the community. These organisations have been established as helpful facilities for parents and families. As the research has demonstrated, early learning centres were places of early learning and considered a most important resource for children and also parents supporting their child's emergent literacy. Overall, the contribution of outside organisations for families assisting children to develop emergent literacy skills should not be underestimated.

Section Two: Factors that Hinder Parents when Supporting Emergent Literacy

3C What hinders parents in supporting early literacy development in their young children in the 21st century?

The second subsidiary question related to identification of what parents believed hindered them from supporting their young child's early literacy development. Twenty-first century living is continuously changing and fast paced. It is important that children have acquired oral language comprehension for listening and speaking, vocabulary for constructing background knowledge, phonological awareness and alphabet knowledge to attend to the structure and sounds of language, and print knowledge to develop concepts about books and printed words (Fellowes & Oakley, 2010; Roskos, 2009; Senechal et al., 1998). Laying the foundation for such important skills is facilitated by parents, families and the community.

When participants were asked during the interview what they considered challenged or hindered them from supporting their child's emergent literacy, 11 out of 12 answers involved the element of 'time' as a major factor. Other factors which hindered them from supporting their child's emergent literacy included stress, money, having more than one child and the short attention span of young children.

Table 4. 3 Factors that hinder parents from supporting their child's emergent literacy.

Participant	Hindrance	Comment
Tammy	Stress & Time	My stress in life I suppose and time and I guess that's related to stress.
Amy	Stress & Time	So I think stress and lack of time through work, they're big things.
Jill	Time	I think it's just time, just not having a lot of time to really sit down and talk to him all of the time.
Bill	Time & Money	I'd say time and money probably. Unfortunately, we live in a world where we're constantly rushing about, we're on the move and you don't get as much time as probably 10, 15 years ago.
Leo	Time	Probably nothing other than time, time and time to be spending with them.
Gemma	Time	Time and that most of our friends are working parents so by the time you pick up children at the end of the day from day care, getting them home, feeding them dinner, doing bath, the kids are tired and you're in no fit state to be teaching them.

Denise	Time & Tiredness	It's just a lack of time. If the parents are basically full-time parents, they go to work every day, I think it's a lack of time and being tired in the evening as well.
Emma	Attention span	I suppose it's her attention span, but that's just her age I suppose.
Lee	Time	Purely time. Especially we're moving into this modern age where women are going back to work as well and that puts pressure on.
Kay	Time and more than one child	Maybe time and more than one child.
Sam	Time & Cost of living	Being time poor definitely, the cost of living.
Di	Desire & Time	Parents have to be willing to do that, that's one thing they need to want to do that and also with the busy life, working parents or social events or whatever, that sometimes they don't have all the time you will want to have.

Eleven out of 12 participants considered 'time' as the major contributor which prevented them from supporting their child's emergent literacy (see Table 4.3). The interview participants were all involved in some capacity of work or study. For some parents it appeared that being a parent who worked or studied interrupted time spent participating in literacy experiences. Working or studying made some parents tired in the evening. They arrived home and a whole new working role begins with attending to the family. Thinking about the working day did not stop when you left the office. Thoughts of the day followed employees home and the recollection of events caused stress in the lives of some parents and that hindered them from engaging with their children. The effect of being a working parent was highlighted when Amy's explained:

> "So maybe one of the things that stops me supporting is time. But also stress of work that's going on, I think the more stressed you are, well for me, the more stressed I am you kind of withdraw back because you're trying to manage everything and you're not talking as much."

Amy described how she managed stress in her life. She knew work caused the stress and was aware how it affected her. The notion of 'withdraw back' suggested she was

not as social as she used to be and was more quiet than usual. She was not talking as much because her mind might be occupied with what was happening at work. It seemed she released control and let others sort things out for her when she was stressed. It appeared she was caught in a cycle of working, that created stress within her life and as a result manifested as lack of time spent with her children supporting their emergent literacy.

Gemma's lived experiences provided another viewpoint of how working resulted in a lack of time spent with children when she said:

> "Time and that most of our friends are working parents so by the time you pick up children at the end of the day from day care, getting them home, feeding them dinner, doing bath, the kids are tired and you're in no fit state to be teaching them."

Gemma mentioned that most her friends were working parents, indicating she was not the only one who is trying to manage work and children. Working all day and then went home to care for children took a toll on her. She was left tired like her children and just did not have the energy to be supporting their emergent literacy.

Bill added another perspective about what hindered him from supporting his child's emergent literacy when he said, "I'd say time and money probably. Unfortunately, we live in a world where we're constantly rushing about, we're on the move and you don't get as much time as probably 10, 15 years ago." He identified time as the first reason and then included money as another possible reason. Bill attempted to justify his thinking by conceding that the world we were living in was busy, people were moving but not at a slow pace. Bill acknowledged the movement as rushing which suggested a lack of time was the reason for the need to rush. He compared life today with that of 10 to 15 years ago and suggested there was a difference and parents back then spent more time with their children than parents these days. Bill does not elaborate how money hindered him from supporting his child's emergent literacy.

Conclusion

Living in the 21st century is fast paced and busy. The lack of time is identified by the lived experiences of the participants as the main reason why parents were unable to support their child's emergent literacy. However, the lack of time was compounded by

the other reasons which impact upon supporting young children's emergent literacy. These other factors included the need for money to meet living expenses, so parents had to work to get paid. Consequently, working decreased the amount of time parents spent with their child compared to a stay at home parent who was not engaged in paid employment and was at home all day. Stress hindered parents from engaging fully with their child because their mind was occupied by thoughts related to work. Furthermore, having more than one child made life busy and at times difficult to manage. Children wanting their parents' attention at the same time can be problematic in addition to attending to daily family routines. Subsequently, it is likely that the lack of time was the result of these other factors participants mentioned during the interviews.

Section Three: Analysis of Interview Themes

The analysis of the interviews provided valuable insight into 21st century parents' experiences when supporting their child's emergent literacy. The interpretative analysis identified four superordinate themes which flowed through the participants' interviews. The superordinate themes revealed during the analysis included 1 Guilt, 2 Influences, 3 Judgements and 4 Family Life. Each of these themes were composed of a cluster of smaller, related themes. It was these sub themes, grouped together that gave meaning to each of the superordinate themes. Each of the superordinate themes will now be discussed in relation to the collection smaller related themes.

Table 4. 4 Superordinate themes from the parent interviews.

	Interview Superordinate Themes			
	1 Guilt	**2 Influence**	**3 Judgement**	**4 Family Life**
Sub Theme Clusters	Technology	Childhood experiences	Knowledge of emergent literacy	Perceptions of emergent literacy
	Not doing enough literacy	Family and Friends	Comparing other children	Role of parents
	Neglecting one's first culture	Community	Judging other parents	Technology and emergent literacy
			Emergent Literacy	

Superordinate theme: 1 Guilt

People have different lived experiences. The feeling of guilt was an emotion that people experienced daily, weekly, monthly, yearly. According to Tracy and Robins (2006) people felt guilt when they concentrated on negative features of what they had or had not done. The research established that nine participants demonstrated a feeling of guilt during the interview process. Participants of this research perceived guilt in different ways. The three areas guilt featured in the interviews included feeling guilty about how technology was used in the home to occupy children, feeling guilty about not doing enough activities at home to support their child's emergent literacy and finally feeling guilty about neglecting one's first culture.

Table 4. 5 Superordinate theme: 1 Guilt and related sub themes.

Superordinate theme: 1 Guilt		
Technology	Not doing enough literacy activities	Neglecting one's first culture

Sub theme: Technology

Children in the 21st century are growing up with technology as a part of their daily life (Spink, Danby, Mallan, & Butler, 2010). They do not know a way of life that does not have technology embedded into its everyday existence. Prensky (2014) stated that the world we live in now has become much more networked and has given children Always on Real Time Access otherwise known as ARTA. Furthermore, Prensky (2014) has defined parents of these children as 'The Last Pre-Internet Generation' otherwise known as LPIG. Family life is changing, and now it is common for both parents to be working either full time or part time and this is where the guilt about technology was revealed. This research has established that three parents felt guilty about using technology.

Amy and Sam recognised they used technology to help them manage their lives at home. Amy said, **"**So the television plays a big role in my ability to do that which is really – when I say television, iPad, so ABC Kids. It doesn't make you feel good when you do it." Furthermore, Sam remarked, "Sometimes we'll be a bit lazy and she'll just be on the iPad watching her shows while I'm running around and getting dinner ready and sorting out (child's name) and all that stuff."

Amy and Sam used technology to assist them to manage their daily routines. Both were working parents who acknowledged they engaged the services of technology to babysit their children. Amy was reflective and does not like how using technology in this way made her feel. Alternatively, Sam's reasoning for using technology was because he was lazy, however he did not indicate other activities he could have provided for his daughter to engage in while he was busy.

Bill's feeling of guilt in relation to the use of technology varied from Amy and Sam. He commented, "I suppose, just consciously, I don't want to hook him into just staring at the screen all the time." Bill allowed his son to use the iPad to watch children's shows. He was interested in purchasing applications for the iPad but was reflective when he used the word 'consciously' suggesting with further consideration, he would not want his son looking at a screen all the time. It was possible that Bill may have preferred a balance between technology and other activities.

In summary, Amy, Sam and Bill all shared a sense of guilt towards the use of technology. Amy and Sam shared the same guilt because they used technology as a babysitting tool. Their feelings of guilt were a result of not appreciating or understanding technology's potential. Technology provided many opportunities for learning and perhaps it was this misconception that created guilty feelings. Bill's guilt related to his desire to have a balance between screen time and other opportunities for learning.

Sub theme: Not Doing Enough Literacy

It is well documented that home literacy experiences impact upon the development of a child's emergent literacy skills (Dickinson & McCabe, 2001; Hart & Risley, 1995; Pinkham & Neuman, 2012; Senechal et al., 1998; Snow et al., 1991; Wasik & van Horn, 2012). Literacy rich home environments involving language, reading and writing contribute to the development of emergent literacy skills. The socio-cultural perspective acknowledges that young children learn from more knowledgeable others, including their parents, caregivers, relatives and friends. Interpreting the lived experiences of 21st century parents identified another form of guilt. A total of six parents experienced guilt because they believed they should be doing more to support their child's emergent literacy at home.

Di remarked, "I'm a teacher so I should do more but I don't." Di identified herself as a teacher and this admission carries its own weight of guilt. Di believed that because she was a teacher this meant she should be engaging in more emergent literacy experiences with her child in comparison to other people who were not teachers. Therefore, Di's guilt was intensified. She felt guilty because she was a teacher and knew the importance of supporting children's literacy and she felt guilty because she was not providing any additional experiences for her child.

Tammy's lived experiences of guilt related to believing she did not spend enough time with her son. This was illustrated when she said, "So when I'm thinking that way I'm not spending enough time but when I am engaged with him in conversations I still do try to make that conversation worthwhile for him to learn new things." She attempted to deal with her guilt by utilising the compensation strategy. During the time she was with her son, Tammy puts more effort into the conversation. Her focus was on her son and she tried to ensure the conversation was worthwhile and a learning opportunity for him.

Lee's guilt was different to Di and Tammy. Lee's guilt originated from devoting more time to read with one child than the other. Lee demonstrated this when he said, "(child's name) doesn't really get a book, we don't really read to (child's name) that much, as much as we did to (child's name) and it's something that worries me but I don't know how to solve it." Lee's eldest child received more attention than the younger child. Lee's time was not divided equally between the two children and this stirred a feeling of guilt. He found it difficult to manage both children and dedicate an equal amount of reading with each of them. Lee admitted he felt worried and does not know how to solve the issue so both children were read to at night.

In summary, the participants lived experience of feeling guilty about not participating in enough literacy at home arose for different reasons. These 21st century parents wanted to do more for their children and felt guilty because from their perspective they did not spend enough time engaging in emergent literacy activities.

Sub theme: Neglecting One's First Culture

Only three out of 12 participants in this research spoke English as a second language and shared the same guilt associated with neglecting their first culture. Two of these

participants referred to their experiences of being read to as a child in their home language. Denise emigrated from Yugoslavia and Tammy emigrated from Japan. They experienced a shared sense of guilt because they wanted their children to be able to speak English but they also wanted them to learn their home language and listen to and read books in that language. Denise bought well known English books for her daughter to read and is unfamiliar with them. Her husband remembered the books from his own childhood experiences and was able to make connections with the books. Denise appreciated the connection her husband had to the English books and felt guilty her daughter did not want to read books in her home language, books she had a connection to and were important to her. This demonstrated when she said:

> "I remember as we buy them and he's like, "That book is great, I remember that one." So, he can relate to it and it helps, whereas, me being from a different country I want her to read my books in my language but she just won't have it."

Tammy was Japanese and her husband was Australian and did not speak Japanese. Her husband only read English books to their son. Tammy recognised that her son did not receive a lot of exposure to Japanese books. She wanted make sure his contact with Japanese books is similar to his experiences with English books. Tammy was trying to compensate for the English he received at by selecting Japanese books to read to her son when the opportunity arose at home. She acknowledged that she read English books if her son wanted that, but when the choice was hers, she read Japanese books. Tammy was attempting to make her son's exposure to English and Japanese equal.

Tammy was trying to support her son's emergent literacy in English and Japanese when she said, "If he wants English books I'll read it but when I choose I try and choose a Japanese book because he goes to that day care so he gets read English books there." She wanted to expose her son to the Japanese culture so made the most of the opportunities at home to read Japanese books to her son. It was a balancing act between English and Japanese which was where the feeling of guilt was revealed.

In summary, it appeared that some 21st century parents experienced the feeling of guilt. The parents were individuals with their own perceptions which created a variety of reasons why they felt guilty. For some parents the guilt related to their efforts to support their children's emergent literacy. Parents who emigrated to Australia felt

guilty because they were not spending enough time exposing their child to their own culture. Some parents experienced guilt because of the way the utilised technology as a babysitter to help them manage their day, while other parents felt guilty because they believed they are not participating in enough emergent literacy activities with their child at home. These parents demonstrated that guilt was a part of 21st living, however it was individual their lived experiences that impacted upon how the guilt is manifested in their lives.

Superordinate theme: 2 Influences on Emergent Literacy

The superordinate theme of 'Influence' was dispersed throughout the interviews with the 12 participants. Their lived experiences of supporting their child's emergent literacy revealed they experienced being influenced when supporting their child's emergent literacy in three main areas. As shown in Table 4.6, the first of these influences came in the form of the participants being influenced by their own childhood experiences. This historical knowledge, the memories and experiences of their childhood, affected how they supported their child's emergent literacy at home. The second sub theme related to how the participants were influenced by family and friends. The impact from family and friends shaped literacy experiences at home. Influence from the wider community was the final sub-theme. Community organisations influenced the participants and guided emergent literacy decisions.

Table 4. 6 Superordinate theme: 2 Influences and related sub themes.

Superordinate theme: 2 Influence on emergent literacy		
Childhood experiences	Family and friends	Community

Sub theme: Childhood Experiences Influence

During the interviews, three of the participants reflected upon their childhood literacy experiences. These three participants remembered how their parents read to them and interacted with them. The majority of these experiences were positive. The participants relied upon this historical knowledge, which contained recollections of their childhood experiences to support their own child's emergent literacy. Their experiences in

childhood influenced the way in which their own children experienced emergent literacy today.

Sam drew upon childhood experiences when he said, "Mum read to us a lot when we were kids. I have very strong positive emotional memories of mum reading big long form stories, she read us The Hobbit and other stories." The extract illustrated Sam's fond reflection of his childhood emergent literacy experiences. When he was thinking about his early experiences, Sam's memories were intense and moving. He recalled being read to a lot by his mother. Such experiences were reflected in the way Sam supported his children.

Like Sam, Jill also acknowledged that her ideas for supporting her son's emergent literacy came from her own experiences as a child when she explained, "And from family and friends, from what happened to me when I was growing up, my parents used to read to me so I follow that, yeah the same sort of influences I suppose." She recalled her parents reading to her and suggested that this knowledge was transferred to experiences with her son. Her parents provided a literacy role model and consequently influenced the way she engaged in emergent literacy activities with her son many years later.

Lee's childhood memories about literacy are not as positive as Sam and Jill's. This is evident when he said:

> "I remember how I learnt to read. No. And it's a bit difficult because we're worried about him being advance and unsupported at this level. I was an advanced student at school as well and they treated me special. And I'm not sure that that's the right way to go either but I don't know what the – and the thing is they have programmes but not at Kinda"

Lee recalled how he learnt to read and identified his advanced literacy abilities and how he was treated differently. He viewed his son as being similar to himself as a young boy. Lee acknowledged that his son had advanced literacy skills for his age. He felt conflicted because he did not want his son to undergo the same treatment he experienced as a young boy because of his superior literacy skills. Lee did not like being considered 'special' and did not believe that approach was the right avenue to follow with his son. He was worried his son was not receiving the appropriate assistance in relation to his present skill level. Lee recalled this was partly due to the

fact that there was not any outside literacy support available for such a young child. His own childhood experiences influenced Lee's thinking. Such early experiences had Lee feeling uncertain and worried about his son's development. Lee's childhood experiences created conflict and uncertainty leaving him unsure of how best to support his son's advanced literacy skills.

In summary, the participants had mostly positive memories of their own childhood literacy experiences. Memories of childhood influenced how they engaged with their child during emergent literacy experiences. The participants' perceptions of 'that experience worked for me, so I think it will work for my children' was utilised as a model for supporting emergent literacy.

Sub theme: Family and Friends Influence

The second area of influence was concerned the impact family and friends had on supporting emergent literacy. Throughout the interviews, 10 participants identified ways in which their family and friends supported their child's emergent literacy. Many of the participants recalled books being given as presents for special occasions and general literacy experiences such as family and friends reading to their children. These were subtle ways family and friends shaped emergent literacy experiences. The participants acknowledged time spent with loved ones, being read to and books received as gifts contributed towards the development their child's literacy.

Leo identified his aunt as someone who had supports his son's emergent literacy when he explained:

> "And, in particular, my aunt, who used to be a teacher, would send activities down or send pictures that she's taken and tell stories to them and that's then consolidated when she spends time with them through the type of – which is that kindergarten teacher and she's always in that mode."

Leo's aunt influenced his children's emergent literacy through books she wrote for them as well as the time she spent with them, conversing and reading to them. He recognised her skills as a kindergarten teacher and indicated its importance when he mentioned it twice. This suggested that Leo respected his aunt and had confidence in her abilities because she was a retired kindergarten teacher. The time spent with his

aunt and the books she made for his sons helped to shape his sons' emergent literacy experiences.

Unlike Leo, Tammy's parents lived in Japan, however this was not a barrier for influencing her son's emergent literacy. This was evident when she remarked, "But we do call up with my parents weekly and yes, I think it's important that my son is getting different levels of Japanese." Tammy used technology remain connected to her parents in Japan. Oral language is an important component of emergent literacy. Tammy identified how her parents influenced her son's level of Japanese oral language when they engaged in conversation on Skype. This was achieved through their vocabulary which was quite different to Tammy's Japanese vocabulary. Engaging in conversation in Japanese, Tammy believed has had a positive influence on her son's development of the Japanese language.

Bill's indicated he was influenced by his friends and the decisions they made about their child's learning when he said:

> "I think it might have been the friends who have got a little girl that is the same sort of age, I think she's got one (blackboard) and we just wanted to get him something for his birthday and we thought that it might be a nice idea."

Bill's son was a similar age to his friend's daughter. This comparison suggested that he noticed what other parents did and how it suited their child and then applied it to his own situation. Bill purchased a blackboard for his son because he saw how successful it was for his friend's daughter. He did not know what to get his son and made his decision by observing the impact of such a gift with another family. This was a subtle influence and ultimately impacted upon the development of emergent literacy through offering the chance to scribble, draw and write on an interesting surface.

It was evident that emergent literacy has been nurtured through influences from family and friends. The extracts demonstrated how family and friends have delicately modified the emergent literacy experiences at home. This was achieved through children receiving books as gifts, role modelling good grammar and vocabulary and purchasing gifts other children of the same age enjoy using. Family and friends spending time talking and reading books with the participants' young children also guided emergent literacy experiences.

Sub theme: Community Influence

The lived experiences of three of the interview participants suggested they sustained some form of influence from organisations in the community. There were many organisations in the local and wider community which were available for parents to consult for literacy guidance. It appeared that many participants sought advice from outside organisations in order to support their child's literacy. This meant parents were reflective about the needs of their children and pursued support to assist their child's emergent literacy.

Lee's son was experiencing some oral language difficulties. He noticed the difficulties in his son's ability to recall events in sequence and decided to take his son to be assessed by a speech pathologist. This is evident when he recalled the visit:

> "That's right, that's what the speech path said we should do is talk about it and my wife's been doing that - is to say what happened today, where did we go first then were did we go next then where did we go."

The Speech Pathologist provided advice to Lee and his wife and suggested ways to improve their son's ability to sequence events. Lee commented that his wife was following the speech pathologist's advice, but neglected to mention if he is also following the same advice with his son. The support from the speech pathologist influenced the way Lee's wife communicated with their son to ensure it made a positive impact on his oral language development.

Gemma revealed she was influenced by the way the carers spoke to her sons at the early learning centre day when she commented:

> "I probably mimic the way that a carer would speak to them at day care on a daily basis and they speak to them, they don't pander to them, they don't change their language, they speak to them in a way that's appropriate."

She observed the way the carers interacted with her sons and approved of what she witnessed. This was evident when she used the words 'in a way that's appropriate." Gemma agreed with the language the carers use to speak to her sons. Without formal acknowledgement, the carers at the early learning centre were providing an oral language role model for Gemma to use. Gemma observed the carers interactions and then applied it with her sons at home. Early learning centres were important

organisations in communities because they acted as role models for parents. These organisations were another form of support which can positively influence how parents support their child's emergent literacy. Gemma used her observation skills and the role model the early learning educators provided to improve the communication with her sons.

Unlike Gemma, Di identified the local library as being supportive when she was choosing books to read with her daughter when she said:

> "Like, they have a really beautiful library created in there as well so they always have a week for the book with certain topics so the kids can actually remember the story, that's what I really like. And they always tell us, look, these are the books we're going through, these are the recommendations, the latest releases. And I can have a conversation with them what they actually recommend so they are quite good with that."

The library was an attractive place to visit and Di felt comfortable there. The library staff provided guidance when selecting books and directed parents' attention to the latest releases. Di sought advice by engaging in conversations with the library staff about text selection and recommendations. Guidance from the library staff helped Di to choose suitable books for her daughter which she acknowledged when she commented, "they are quite good with that." The local library and the staff played a role in supporting Di and her daughter's emergent literacy. This was achieved by providing information and recommendations to parents and offering an appealing environment to visit which encouraged them make regular visits.

The lived experiences shaped the way in which the participants sought assistance in the community, some were through direct communication with organisations and professionals and others were through the domain of role modelling. Community organisations played a powerful role in guiding how parents supported their child's emergent literacy. This was most likely because of the access to a variety of professionals in the community for example librarians, childcare workers, speech pathologists and health nurses such as employees of Better Beginnings.

Superordinate theme: 3 Judgement

The superordinate theme of 'Judgement' applied to areas where some form of assessment took place during the interview by the participants. Through their lived experiences, all 12 parents revealed they made some judgements in some of the four common areas mentioned below in Table 10. Firstly, the participants evaluated their own knowledge of emergent literacy. They compared their child with other children to establish a form of measurement for growth. The participants judged other parents and finally made judgements about their child's emergent literacy.

Table 4. 7 Superordinate theme: 3 Judgement and related sub themes.

Superordinate theme: 3 Judgement			
Knowledge of emergent literacy	Comparing other children	Judging other parents	Emergent literacy

Sub theme: Knowledge of Emergent Literacy

This research has established that overall five parents made judgements about emergent literacy. Kay was a young mother who felt confident about her own abilities to support her daughter's emergent literacy. She relied upon her intuition when engaging in emergent literacy activities with her daughter. This was evident when she remarked, "I don't know, I just go with what I feel. I don't really read up on what I should be doing at a certain age, it just comes from what I feel." Kay conceded that she did not know what knowledge and skills are need to support a child's literacy development and was not worried about it. She did not concern herself with early childhood milestones to guide her but instead appeared to rely upon common sense and her own capabilities to provide support for her daughter.

Like Kay, Leo appeared to have a confident attitude towards literacy and demonstrated this when he commented, "It's going to be an incremental thing of building blocks, getting small things done that they can understand and they can take that next step and gradually they just build and build on that." Leo used the analogy of building blocks to show his understanding of the knowledge and skills needed to support his sons' emergent literacy. Leo showed an understanding of how children learned by scaffolding his son's experiences. This was an example of Vygotsky's zone of

proximal development. By providing opportunities for leaning in small achievable increments he was laying a solid foundation upon which to develop his son's emergent literacy.

Emma had one child and like Kay and Leo exuded a positive self-reflection of her own knowledge and understanding when supporting her daughter. This was clear when she remarked, "Yeah, I think I do. We spoke a lot with the child health nurse about language and speech and just the gross motor skills and other skills they need." Emma sought the assistance and expertise of the child health nurse in order to broaden her knowledge and skills in the area of early childhood. It appeared the support Emma received from the child health nurse helped develop her confidence and knowledge because she mentioned gross motor skills and other skills (not identified) that young children needed to develop.

These 21st century parents fairly evaluated their own understanding of the knowledge and skills they required to support emergent literacy. Six of the participants did not know what knowledge and skills are required in order to support emergent literacy and do not let this worry them. They relied on their common sense and what felt right to them. The remaining six participants had positive perceptions about their own knowledge in this area. They displayed confidence and common sense in their approaches to how best support their child's emergent literacy. Some of these parents referred to websites, discussions with other parents and parenting books, health nurses and early learning centre staff for suggestions in order to expand their understanding of the necessary emergent literacy knowledge and skills.

Sub theme: Comparing Other Children

A total of three parents revealed during the interview process that they made comparisons between their own child and other people's children. The main purpose of these comparisons appeared to be to measure progress. This was evident when Jill commented, "If I see a friend whose child is going well with something I ask them what they're doing." Jill's comment was an example of a parent who watched other children perform some type of skill. She noticed that one of her friend's children had developed a particular skill very well. Jill quickly compared her child's ability with that of her friend's child and noticed that the other child is better at doing the skill than her own child. Jill was confident enough to approach her friend and ask for further

information. Such information is considered by Jill and if she agreed with it, she applied to her own child to improve their development of the skill.

Gemma provided another point of view when she made comparisons between children when she said:

> "Depending on who your friends are and what their children are like then it could give you a warped sense of where your child is at and whether they're behind and then being able to find the tools to help you with your child at whatever stage they're at."

Gemma was cautious when it came to comparing other children. She believed that comparing a child to another child who did not fall into the normal range of development was not reliable. Parents easily obtained an unrealistic or as Gemma said 'warped' view of their child's development. Consequently, this made the comparison untrustworthy and not an accurate measurement. When Gemma used the word 'tools' she inferred that parents searched for strategies or tools to help them with their child's development at that particular point in time.

Lee makes comparisons when he is 'on Kinda duty.' Lee observed the writing skills of the other children in the group during his time at a Kindy helper. He applied the knowledge of his own son's skills and measured this knowledge against the other children's writing abilities when the said "He is average at writing. There are kids at the Kinda who are far worse than (child's name)." Seeing the other children's writing abilities, and using this as a form of measurement, Lee was able to make comparisons and judgements about his son's writing ability. To make a point, Lee added there were children who were less skilled than his son at writing. It seemed he mentioned this to make it clear that his son's writing ability was not the lowest in the class. It also implied that Lee might be feeling disappointed since his son was an advanced reader while in Lee's opinion only has average writing abilities.

In this research it was established that three parents to compared their child with another child of the same age. Parents used their observations skills to determine the progress of their child. Their observations resulted in positive comparisons with other children. However, as noted by one parent, in order to achieve a reliable comparison of their child's emergent literacy growth, parents needed to measure using a child who was developing at a normal rate. Parents were at risk of creating a false sense of their

child's capabilities if they compared their child with another whose rate of development did not fall within the normal range. Unfortunately, no parents discussed how they identified what were acceptable skills, knowledge and behaviours for children at certain ages when making judgements. Families had different values and attitudes towards literacy resulting in varying levels of exposure to oral language, reading, writing, phonics and phonemic awareness. As a result, parents needed to be mindful when measuring their child's emergent literacy growth against another child's growth. It was possible that inaccurate judgements about their child's emergent literacy development might affect the way in which they supported their child.

Sub theme: Judging Other Parents

In this research a total of four participants compared their own perceptions of parenting with those of other parents. Bill worked full time and his partner worked four days a week. Bill and his partner did not have many other friends with children. Bill made a comparison with his friend that did have children when he said, "Like the mum's home pretty much five days a week here my partner, (her name), she has to work four days a week so it's kind of comparing apples to oranges I suppose." In this extract, Bill used the idiom 'comparing apples to oranges' when he was referring to comparing his partner who worked with the family friend who was a stay at home mum. Bill believed the circumstances were different and therefore it was difficult to make comparisons between a working mother and a stay at home mother.

Gemma, a fulltime working parent made a very clear judgement about her friends who were working parents. This was illustrated when she said:

> "Most of our friends are university graduates, at least one degree. And so they're used to having a profession that they know well and that they're good at and that they're qualified at. And then you have children and they're not qualified at anything to do with children and they don't know how to do it so they seek out professional help. And it's not like finding professional help for older children who might need tutoring, it's very hard to find professional help for primary school or pre-primary ages and that's their solution. And most of them are consultants or something with an idea of let's just go pay someone to fix it."

During Gemma's extract she pointed out that her friends were well educated and had good jobs. Gemma believed that her friends, even with all their qualifications did not have the knowledge to assist their children. Being highly qualified in one field did not transfer to raising children. Gemma's perception about her friends was connected to their profession. She believed that consultants resolved issues by employing and outsider to 'fix' it, since essentially a consultant was an outsider with expertise in a specific area. Gemma suggested that the type of employment people have may affect how they go about supporting their child's emergent literacy.

Tammy was a full-time student. Her husband also worked full time and they had one son. Tammy recognised there were different parenting styles when she said, "And in parenting generally, I think we all judge parents, different parents anyway, so that's not quite helpful." Tammy's extract revealed her perception of the behaviour of parents. Tammy honestly acknowledged that parents judged each other. This revelation most likely came from her own lived experiences with other parents. Tammy added more detail to her initial comment by suggesting that making judgements were reserved for parents who are classified as being 'different' from other parents. This additional detail indicated she believed if you did not follow what was considered normal parenting behaviour then other parents judged you because of your different style. Tammy admitted that judging other parents who had varied parenting approaches was not helpful. This concluding comment likely originated from personal experience, since Tammy was Japanese and has been raised in the Japanese culture which was different from the Australian culture.

Some of the parent participants in this research observed each other and made judgements every day. These extracts illustrate that parents judge other parents according to a variety of reasons. It appears that some long-standing judgements, such as those made about working parents and stay at home parents continues in the 21st century. Raising children is a difficult task which comes which an enormous responsibility. Making judgements about other parents' style of parenting was subjective because everyone will always have opinions about how things should be done.

Sub theme: Emergent Literacy

Throughout the interviews, all 12 parents discussed lived experiences of unplanned literacy experiences with their young children. Emergent literacy integrates the very beginnings of oral language, reading, writing, phonics and phonemic awareness. Parents made judgements about their children's early attempts at reading, writing and vocabulary development and often did not recognise them as the foundation of their child's literacy journey. This was evident when Kay said, "She can say it verbally but writing down she doesn't know how to do the shapes yet but she can be like A, L and she'll do little lines pretending that she's written her name." Kay's comment provided an early example of writing attempts. Her daughter showed an interest in writing at a young age. Kay modelled orally the name of the letter. When Kay said her daughter was 'pretending' this indicated an evaluation she made about her daughter's writing attempts. Such an appraisal suggested that Kay had not made the link that these attempts were the foundation of her daughter's writing journey.

Learning phonics and developing phonemic awareness are important elements of emergent literacy. Like Kay, Di attempted to support her daughter's emergent literacy when she recalled:

> "So, I tell her this is not probably L but it's P and then she's like p, p, p, p, p so it's that sort of thing, so she grabs the newspaper whenever she sees it. So, I think that what we do or packaging from any sweets or yoghurts, she's pretending she's reading."

Di was informally naming a letter of the alphabet in an unplanned experience. Her daughter used the information her mother provided to search for the letter in a newspaper. Environmental print and the context in which it presents itself are where children learn to read words, signs and symbols (Weinberger, 1996). Environmental print is found everywhere, and includes road signs, food packaging, advertisements on television, in shop windows, outside restaurants, newspapers, magazines and much more. Di was similar to Kay with respect to the concept of pretending to write and pretending to read. Either mother did not make the connection that the action by their daughters were examples of emergent reading and writing. From Di's daughter's perspective, she was reading, unlike Di's judgement that she was just 'pretending to read.'

Emma had one child and was a single parent. She was developing her daughter's vocabulary. This was clear when she said, "So every time we see a tree I'll say tree; every time we see a car I'll say car and stuff like that. She's catching on so I think that's working." Emma's recalled an event when they went to the park. She tried to extend her daughter's vocabulary by identifying nouns. Emma made a judgement about her daughter's ability to recall the nouns. She described her daughter's progress as 'catching on' meaning she did not get it at first, but now is beginning to do it. From Emma's perspective the experience of naming objects is beneficial for expanding her daughter's vocabulary.

It is difficult to identify the exact moment after birth when young children embark on their emergent literacy journey. Parents made judgements about their child's early attempts at reading, writing and vocabulary development. Parents did not always value such early attempts and do not connect them to the foundation of literacy learning. Unfortunately, scribbles and lines are deemed just that, scribbles and lines and were not considered by their parents for their true value which were, early attempts at communicating in writing and gaining meaning from reading.

Superordinate theme: 4 Family Life

The final superordinate theme that flowed throughout the interviews with the participants was associated with 'Family Life.' All the parents revealed some attitudes and values towards the superordinate theme of Family Life. Contained within this umbrella were three smaller connected sub themes as shown in Table 4.8. These themes related to the everyday experiences and opinions of the participants' emergent literacy at home.

Table 4. 8 Superordinate theme: 3 Family Life and related sub themes.

Superordinate theme: 4 Family Life		
Perceptions of emergent literacy	Role of parents	Technology and emergent literacy

Sub theme: Perceptions of Emergent Literacy Activities

During the interview, participants were asked to share their thoughts about how they felt when engaging in emergent literacy experiences with their children. All 12 participants reflected upon their experiences and were able to provide some insight about their feelings when supporting their child's emergent literacy.

Jill's revealed her perception of how she has felt at different times when engaging in emergent literacy activities with her son. This is illustrated when Jill said:

> "When he's interested it's fantastic, there's no better feeling I suppose than when you actually feel you're teaching him something worthwhile and interesting. But then obviously, sometimes it's very frustrating when he's just not interested and he doesn't want to know and he's not engaged with it but you keep trying I suppose."

During the literacy experiences, Jill took on the role of a teacher, educating her son in what she believed to be meaningful and stimulating concepts. When her son was attentive, Jill felt happy. During the times when her son is not interested or engaged in the activity, Jill has felt frustrated. Even throughout feelings of frustration, Jill was of the opinion that it is important to keep persevering most likely at another time.

Like many of the participants, Di's extract divulged her feelings of happiness towards the experiences she shared with her daughter when she said:

> "It makes me feel happy, inspired, it fills me to make more so I think that's part of being excited when you see this little smiley face or you can always ask additional questions so that makes you feel like the child is actually gaining something and it's getting interested in it as well so it makes me feel really happy."

Di's motivation to continue supporting her daughter was derived from observing her daughter's body language and also through the interest she displayed during the experiences. She was observant and utilised these skills to guide the interactions with her daughter.

Tammy's perception was different to Jill and Di because English was not her first language. She revealed that she did not feel frustrated during interactions with her

son, it was more concerned with the energy it takes for her to explain the English and Japanese languages to her son in a format that he was able to understand. This was apparent when she said, "It's not easy, I don't feel frustrated but I suppose it is a little bit energy consuming, activities mentally and it's consuming mentally, not mental health, but energy wise." Tammy wanted her son to learn both languages and because of this desire, she found it mentally draining when explaining the grammar and meaning of words to her son.

Overall, the majority of parents recalled spending time engaging in emergent literacy experiences with their child made them feel happy. They observed their child's reactions to activities and concepts and applied this knowledge as motivation to continue. Parents felt proud when they noticed their children learning concepts. Like any situation, there were times when parents recalled feelings of frustration which was to be expected when dealing with young children who have short attention spans and parents who might be tired after working all day.

Sub theme: Role of Parents

The socio-cultural perspective acknowledges the important contribution parents, families and the community provide in supporting emergent literacy in young children (Hart & Risley, 1995; Roskos & Neuman, 2014). The participants were asked to share their point of view regarding the significance of the role parents played in supporting their child's emergent literacy. All 12 participants disclosed similar perspectives associated with the role of parents supporting young children's emergent literacy.

Kay considered parents played a central role when developing young children's emergent literacy. This was evident when Kay said, "Ten out of ten probably because you're the main teacher and you want them to be the best that they can be and to have a little bit of knowledge before they are in primary, for their own confidence as well." Kay used the term, 'ten out of ten' to describe the importance of the role parents played in supporting their child's emergent literacy. Giving the highest score possible, Kay believed parents performed a central role, likening it to that of a teacher. Kay's comment uncovered her view of having some 'cultural capital' when she used the term 'a little bit of knowledge.' This indicated that Kay thought it was important to have some understanding and experiences of literacy which are connected with what was required in the literacy setting at school (Fellowes & Oakley, 2010). Kay believed that

having some cultural capital helped to boost children's confidence before entering primary school.

Like Kay, Denise believed parents played a vital role in supporting their child's emergent literacy when she said:

> "It's very important. Because I believe, one, the education of your child is not only left for the teachers. So the teachers just kind of provoke them to learn and encourage them to learn and stuff but it needs to be consistent across every single environment they go."

Denise thought that parental contribution to literacy learning was important, and such education should not only be the responsibility of the teachers at school to undertake. Denise perceived teachers have the role of igniting children's interest to learn new things and parents were obliged to ensure learning was constantly taking place in other environments which included at home and out in the community.

Like Kay and Denise, Emma also believed parents were central to the development of a child's emergent literacy. This was evident when she reflected:

> "I think it's very important because you are the major contributor to a lot of the knowledge, at least (child's name) age group which is 2, so she's not for a lot of exposure to people other than her immediate family and her parents especially. So how we react and deal with literacy will directly impact how she feels and develops in that area."

Emma's extract demonstrated her belief that when children were very young, parents were central in sharing knowledge. When there was not a lot of exposure to other people, it was the parents' responsibility to ensure literacy experiences are occurring. It was important to Emma that she role modelled literacy behaviours for her daughter, because this helped shape her daughter's values and attitudes towards literacy as she grew up.

All participants agreed that the role of parents was central in developing literacy before formal schooling. As some of the participants suggested, literacy learning was not solely the responsibility of the school because parents were the first educators of their children, and should therefore take charge in exposing their child to literacy learning

before formal school. Such experiences might influence the cultural capital a child takes with them to school.

Sub theme: Technology and Emergent Literacy

Twenty-first century children are growing up with technology and have not known life without it. Technology that exists now, did not exist when their parents were growing up. This research has established that 7 of the parent participants used technology at home to support their child's literacy learning in some capacity.

Amy used technology to support her son's reading when she commented, "ABC kids. So, in a way it's like television but (child's name) has reading and so (child's name) has just started to sort of spark an interest in it so I signed him up for it." In her comment Amy observed her son's interest in reading and consequently downloaded the ABC Kids application to support this curiosity. The use of technology was directed towards further developing her son's learning and not for leisure activities.

Sam used technology for pleasure and for educational purposes. This was demonstrated when he remarked, "There's an ABC Kids app which she enjoys, she also loves Curious George so there's a Curious George game with shapes and puzzles and things which she enjoys playing.' In Sam's comment he mentioned some games that he downloaded for his daughter to play as a leisure activity. Sam's use of technology with his daughter was a combination of education and pleasure.

Like Amy and Sam, Tammy also used technology to support her son's learning when she said, "We had an iPad app, it goes through the Japanese alphabet, which I started relearning and some English and we have also picture books in the iPad so he will read." Tammy's comment illustrated the benefits technology had for English as a second language learners. She used an application on the iPad to teach her son the Japanese alphabet while at the same time relearning it for herself. It was important for Tammy that she exposed to Japanese and English which she achieved through utilising applications on the iPad.

The participants at times, used technology for different purposes. Sometimes, technology was used as a form on entertainment through the use of child friendly games. On other occasions, the participants utilised the applications to support literacy and numeracy learning. Technology was available in all households, but not all parents

have downloaded applications for their children to use. ABC Kids' television and applications were a popular choice amongst the parents as a form of both leisure educational purposes. Parents demonstrated they were in control of what was downloaded onto iPads, and the type of television programs the children were allowed to watch. It was the parents who determined the purpose the technology served.

Section Four: Questionnaire Analysis

Written questionnaires

The analysis of the questionnaires commenced with what was generally happening in the community. This enabled a broader understanding of parents' perspective in relation to what supported or hindered emergent literacy interactions.

Factors that Support Emergent Literacy

Section 2B of the questionnaire titled 'Factors that Support Emergent Literacy' was focused on elements that supported emergent literacy associated with:

- Reading
- Writing
- Oral Language

Participants answered questions in the written questionnaire about activities that supported emergent literacy in these three key areas. Some questions in the analysis were compared with each other in the same graph due to the relationship that the researcher perceived existed between them.

Support for Reading

In the section 2B titled 'Factors that Support Emergent Literacy' there were nine questions in the questionnaire that were associated with support for emergent reading. These nine questions were analysed and organised according to how parents supported their young child's reading at home.

Question 1B: How often do you read to your child?
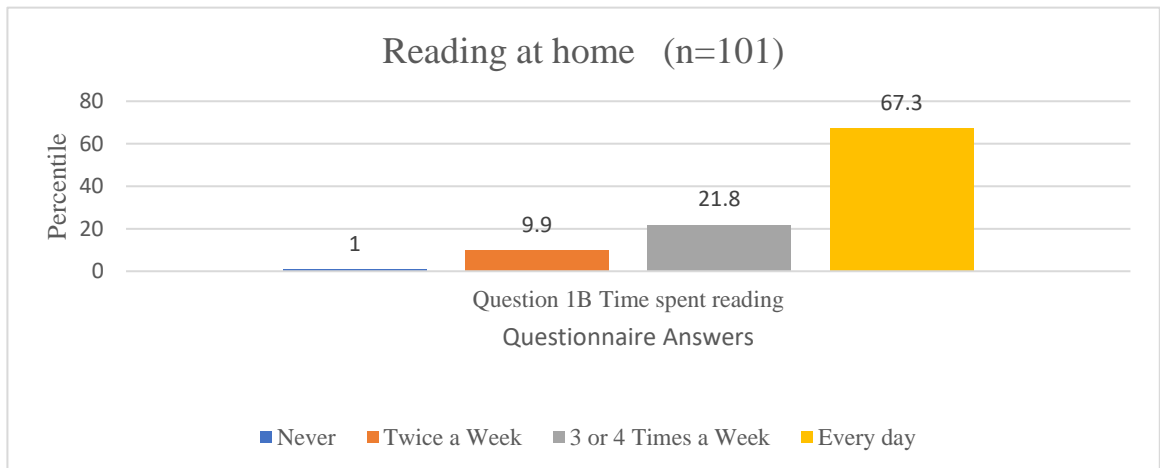
Figure 4. 1 How often parents read with their child at home.

Overall the results indicated that parents did read frequently to their child. The recognition of the contribution reading to children has on emergent literacy development is valued by parents (see Figure 4.1). A total of 67.3% parents read every day with their child while 21.8% of parents read 3 or 4 times a week. The high percentage of parents reading to their children may also reflect influences from the media, family and their own childhood experiences.

Question 2B: Do you get your ideas to support your child's reading development from books?

Question 3B: Do you get your ideas to support your child's reading development from the media?
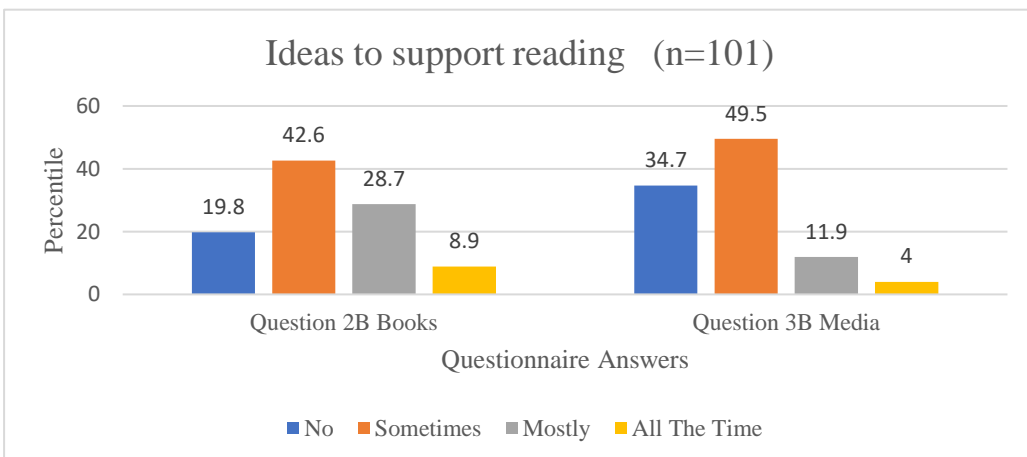
Figure 4. 2 Parents use of books and the media to obtain ideas for reading.

Books remained a marginally more popular choice by parents than the media for obtaining ideas to support their child's reading development (See Figure 4.2). A total of 28.7% parents answered they 'Mostly' obtained ideas from books compared to

11.9% who 'Mostly' utilised the media for ideas. There are slightly more parents who 'Sometimes' referred to the media than books. This could be the beginning of a shift from a reliance on books to the convenience of the media for ideas to assist with the development of emergent literacy.

Question 4B: Do you go to your local library and borrow books?

Library Visits (n=101)
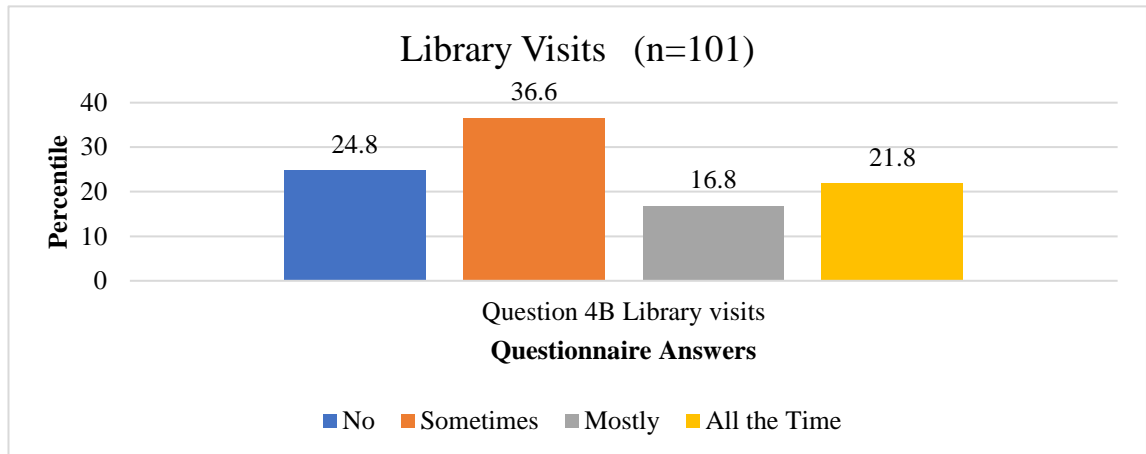
Figure 4. 3 Parents' visits to the local library.

Parents did visit the library to borrow books (Figure 4.3). A total of 36.6% of parents were more inclined to 'Sometimes' go to the library compared to 21.8% who visit the library 'All the time.' This indicated that some families might be too busy to commit to going to the library on a regular basis. There were still 24.8% of parents who never visited the library to borrow books. On reason could be that they prefer the convenience of personal libraries at home.

Question 5B: Do you own books at home that you read to your child?
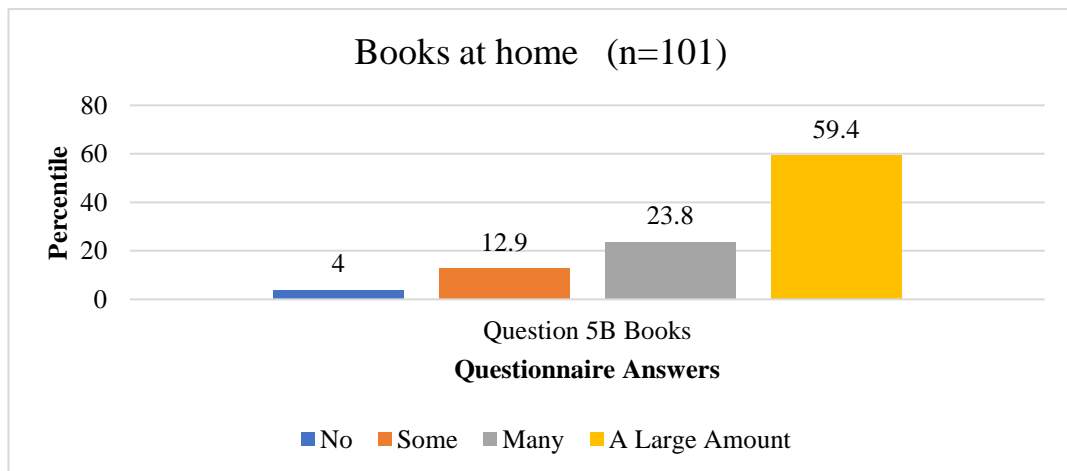
Books at home (n=101)

Figure 4. 4 Ownership of books at home.

The majority of parents owned books at home that they read to their children (see Figure 4.4). A total of 59.4% said they owned a 'Large amount of books' while 23.8% considered they own 'Many' books. The ownership of books at home may be the result of gifts from family and friends. The media also influenced the purchasing of books through advertisements in addition to special awards such as the Children's Book Council Awards bestowed for best children's literature. Children requesting stories heard at early learning centres could also have influenced the number of books available in the home.

Question 6B: "Do you ask your child questions while you are reading to them?"

Question 7B: "Do you talk about the pictures when you are reading with your child?"
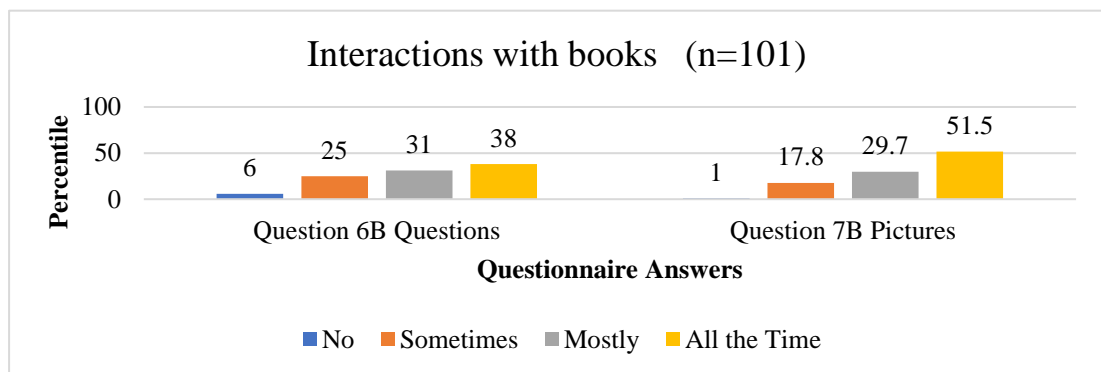
Figure 4. 5 Parents asking questions and talking about the pictures when reading with their child.

Parents were more inclined to talk about the pictures in the story with 51.5% indicated they did this 'All of the Time' whereas only 38% believed they asked questions 'All the time' while reading with their child (see Figure 4.5). It was likely that pictures provided parents with a visual scaffold which was a springboard for discussion whereas asking children age appropriate questions might have posed more of a challenge for some parents and the children attempting to answer them. Furthermore, it may have also been the children's ages influenced the way in which interactions with books proceeded.

Question 8B: Do you teach the names of the letters of the alphabet when you are reading with your child?

Question 9B: Do you teach the sounds of the alphabet when reading with your child?

Letter names and sounds when reading   (n=101)
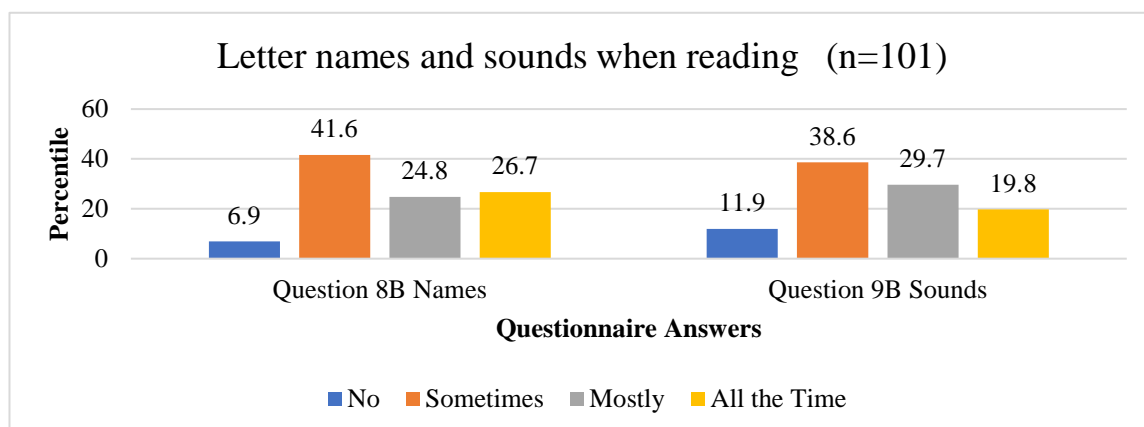
Figure 4. 6 Parents teaching the names and sounds of the letters of the alphabet when reading with their child.

When reading to their child it was established that parents did teach the names and sounds of the letters of the alphabet (see Figure 4.6). However, the results demonstrate that parents are predisposed to teaching the letter names slightly more so than the letter sounds. A total of 6.9% of parents believed they 'Never' taught letter names compared with 11.9% of parents who thought they 'Never' taught letter sounds. Childhood influences and the ease at which identifying a letter name compared with letters having multiple sounds could be reasons why identifying letter names was preferred over letter sounds.

Support for Writing

Section 2B in the questionnaire, titled 'Factors that Support Emergent literacy,' there were six questions that related directly to emergent writing. These six questions were analysed and organised in relation to how parents supported their child's writing at home.

Question 10B: Do you do writing activities with your child at home? (eg: write letters of the alphabet, child's name).

Question 15B: Do you have paper and pencils readily available for your child to use?
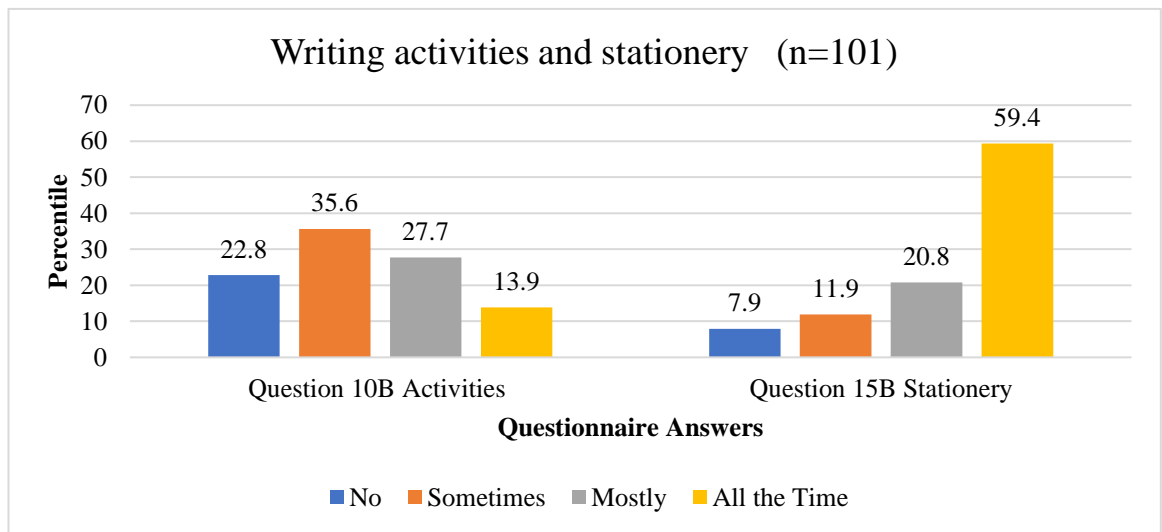
Figure 4. 7 Parents writing with their child and the availability of stationery at home.

Overall, parents allowed children to have access to stationery and engaged in emergent writing with them (see Figure 4.7). It appeared that 59.4% of children had access to stationery 'All the Time' which corresponded with the majority of parents being involved in emergent writing at various levels. A total of 22.8% of parents did not write with their children which could be the result of the parents believing their child was too young for such an activity, parents were too busy or possibly lacked the knowledge to support their child in such a task.

Question 11B: Do you get your ideas to support your child's writing development from books?

Question 12B: Do you get your ideas to support your child's writing development from the media?
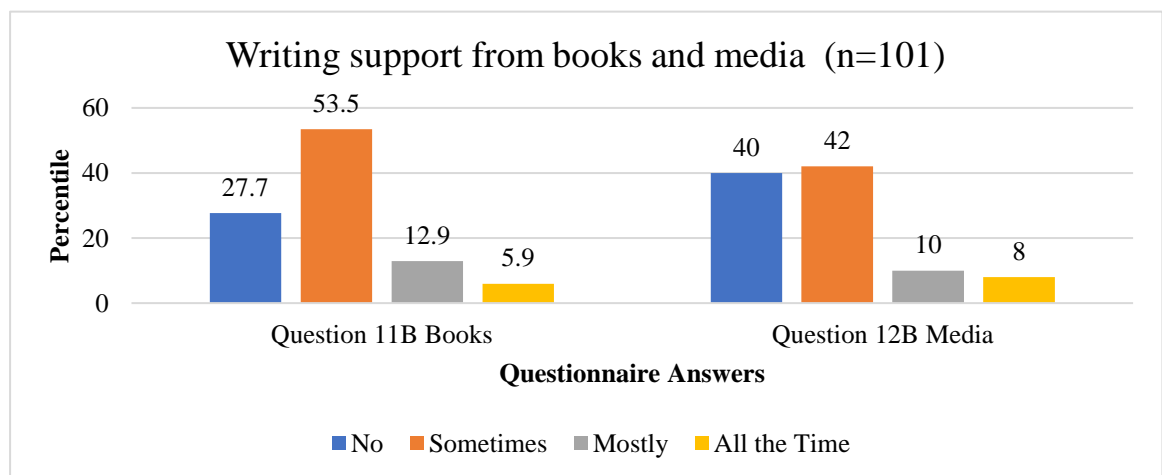
Figure 4. 8 Parents obtained ideas to support emergent literacy from books and the media.

Parents obtained ideas from books and the media in order to assist with the development of their child's emergent writing (see Figure 4.8). In general, parents were slightly more inclined to consult books for ideas to support their child's emergent writing than check the media. This is represented in 27.7% of parents who did not refer to books for ideas to support their child's writing compared with 40% who did not consult the media. Marginally more parents referred to the media 'All the Time' (8%) than check books 'All the Time' (5.9%). This small increase in the consultation of the media may be the consequence of convenience to the internet and hand-held devices and parents' familiarity with technology.

Question 13B: Have you purchased writing activity books for your child to complete (eg: alphabet, number books).

Question 14B: Have you ever downloaded worksheets from the internet that focus on writing for your child to complete?
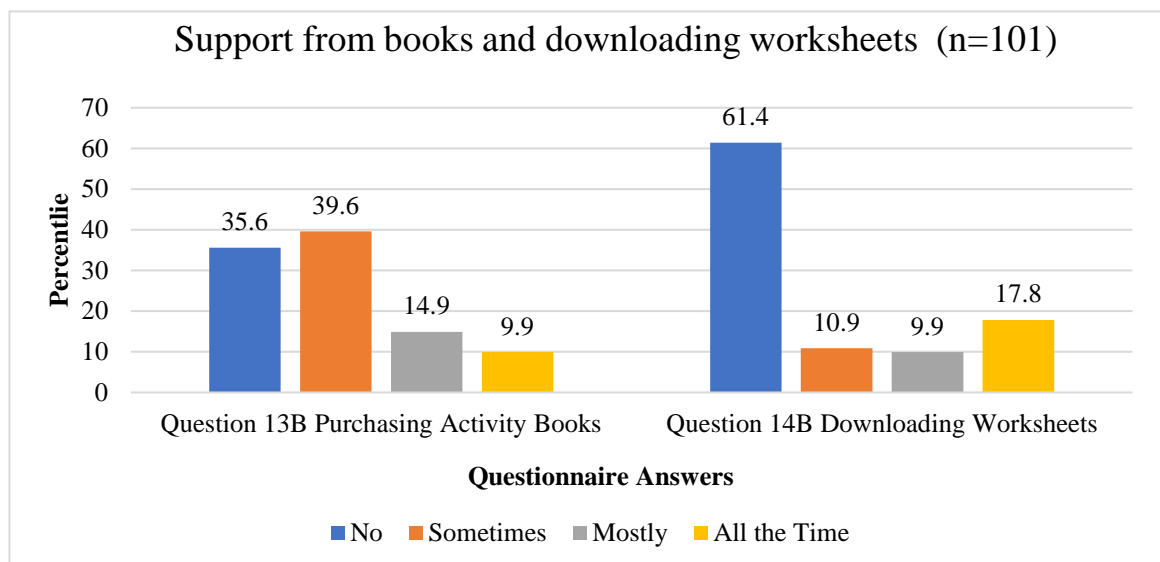
Figure 4. 9 Parents supporting emergent literacy by purchasing books and downloading worksheets.

Parents preferred to purchase activity books more than download worksheets from the internet (see Figure 4.9). This was exemplified in a total of 61.4% of parents did not download writing worksheets from the internet as opposed to 35.6% who did not purchase activity books to support their child's emergent writing. Parents were more inclined to 'Sometimes' purchase activity books (39.6%) to develop their child's emergent writing compared to 10.9% of parents who 'Sometimes' downloaded worksheets. However, a total of 17.8% of parents believed they downloaded worksheets 'All the Time' from the internet as opposed to only 9.9% of parents who purchased activity books 'All the Time.' This increase in downloading worksheets 'All

the Time' could be the outcome of the convenience of technology, age of the children involved and the improved skill level of parents at downloading.

Support for Oral Language

Section 2B in 'Factors that Support Emergent Literacy' eight questions were associated with supporting emergent oral language. These eight questions were analysed and organised according to how parents supported their young child's oral language at home.

Question 16B: Do you play rhyming games with your child?

Question 22B: Do you make up stories for your child to listen to?
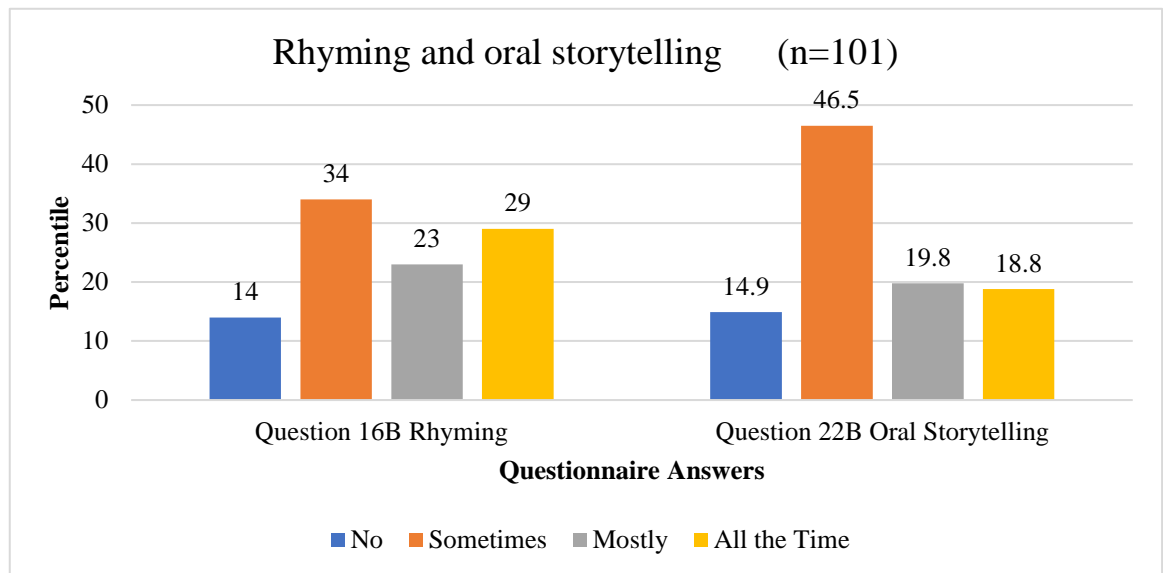
Figure 4. 10 Parents playing rhyming games and telling stories to their children.

The results showed that parents did engage in rhyming and oral story telling with their child (see Figure 4.10). However, it appeared that parents were more inclined to consistently rhyme with their child while telling stories to them was something that was more likely to occur only 'Sometimes' (46.5%). This was demonstrated in the consistently high percentages of parents who believed they 'Sometimes' (34%), 'Mostly' (23%) and 'All the Time' (29%) rhymed with their child. The results for engaging in oral storytelling were high for 'Sometimes' but then were not sustained for the other possible answers. It was probable that parents found rhyming easier to make up and was fun to engage in with their child as opposed to using their own creativity in order to produce a story that was appealing to their child and age appropriate.

Question: 17B: Does your child ask you questions about events and experiences they have had or are having?

Child asking questions   (n=101)
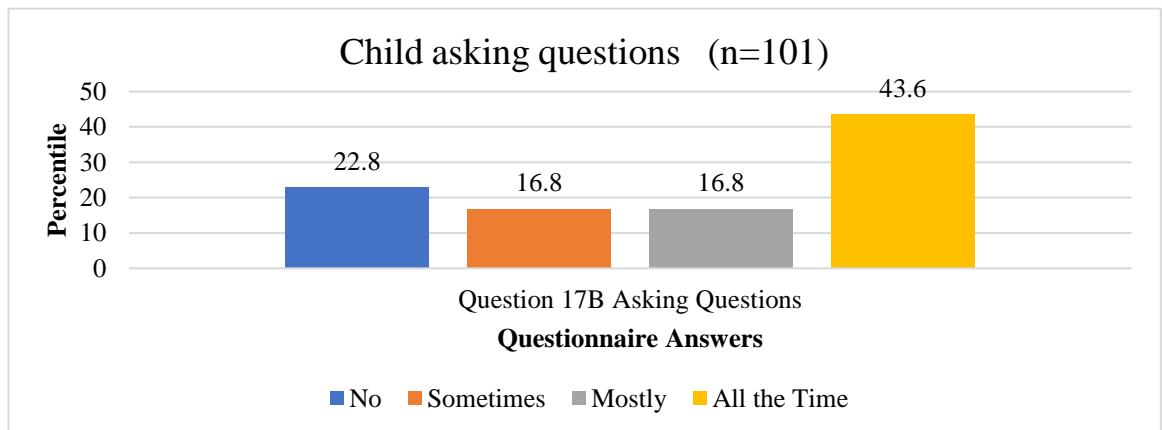
Figure 4. 11 Children asking their parents questions.

Children did ask their parents questions about experiences they have had or were having (see Figure 4.11). Parents (43.6%) believed that their child asked them questions 'All the Time.' Such a high rating was possible because children frequently began their questions with 'Why?' and did not stop asking 'Why?' until they were satisfied with the answer. Incessant questioning was memorable for parents and could be the reason for the high rating. A total of 22.8% of parents felt their children did not ask questions about events and experiences. It was possible that the parents thought their children were too young with limited vocabularies that did not cater for asking questions.

Question: 18B: Do you have long conversations with your child (each person taking many turns to talk).

Question 21B: Do you talk about experiences you have had with your child? (eg: zoo visit, going to the footy)

Forms of conversations   (n=101)
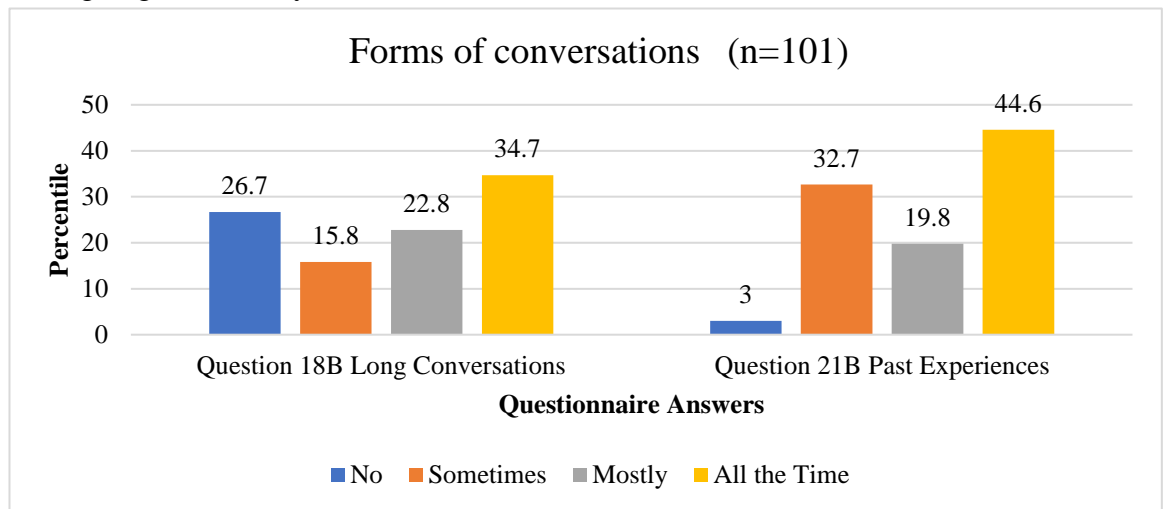
Figure 4. 12 Children engaged in long conversations and recalling past experiences with their parents.

Overall, parents were more likely to participate in recalling past experiences than engage in long conversations with their child (see Figure 4.12). This was demonstrated in only 3% of parents who did not recall past experiences with their child as opposed to 26.7% of parents who did not engage in long conversations with their child. It appeared that parents found it easier to recall past experiences with their child as compared to engaging in long conversations. A child's age, concentration, limited vocabulary and busy family life might be contributing factors why so many parents did not engage in long conversations with their child.

Question 19B: Do you get your ideas to support your child's oral language development from books?

Question 20B: Do you get your ideas to support your child's oral language development from the media?
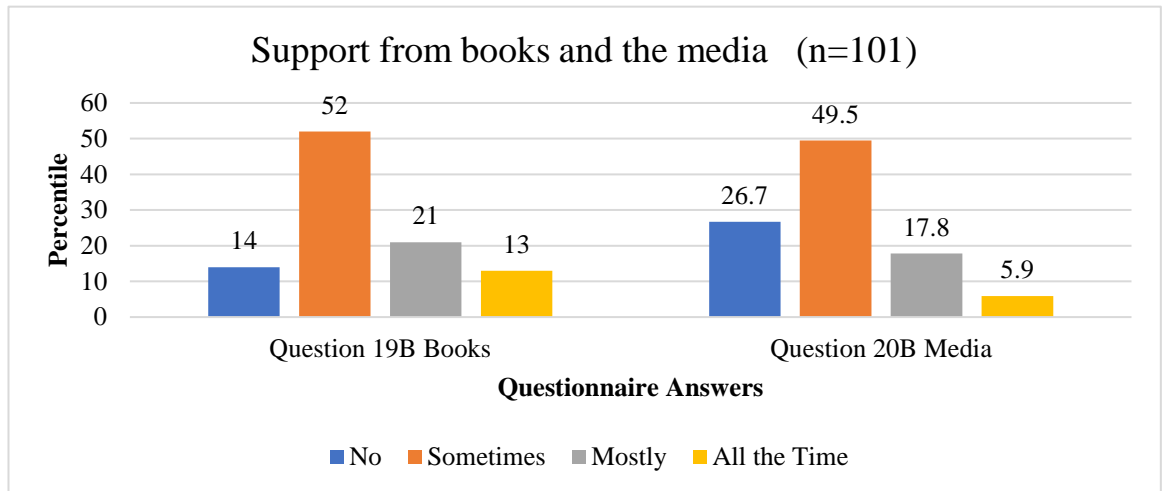
Figure 4. 13 Support for oral language from books and the media.

Parents were more inclined to refer to books for ideas to support oral language development than consult the media (see Figure 4.13). This is represented in 26.7% of parents who did not check the media compared to 14% of parents who did not refer to books. However, the results were comparable when parents 'Sometimes' referred to Books (52%) and the Media (49.5%). This may be a consequence of parents beginning to use the convenience of technology to gain ideas to support their child's oral language.

Factors that Hinder Support for Emergent Literacy

Section 3C, in the questionnaire, was devoted to events that hindered parents from engaging in emergent literacy experiences with their child. This section was comprised of eight questions that related to parents' perception about what hindered them from supporting their child's emergent literacy at home.

Question 1C: Does lack of time prevent you from supporting your child's emergent literacy development?

Question 3C: Does your 'work commitments' prevent you from supporting your child's emergent literacy development?
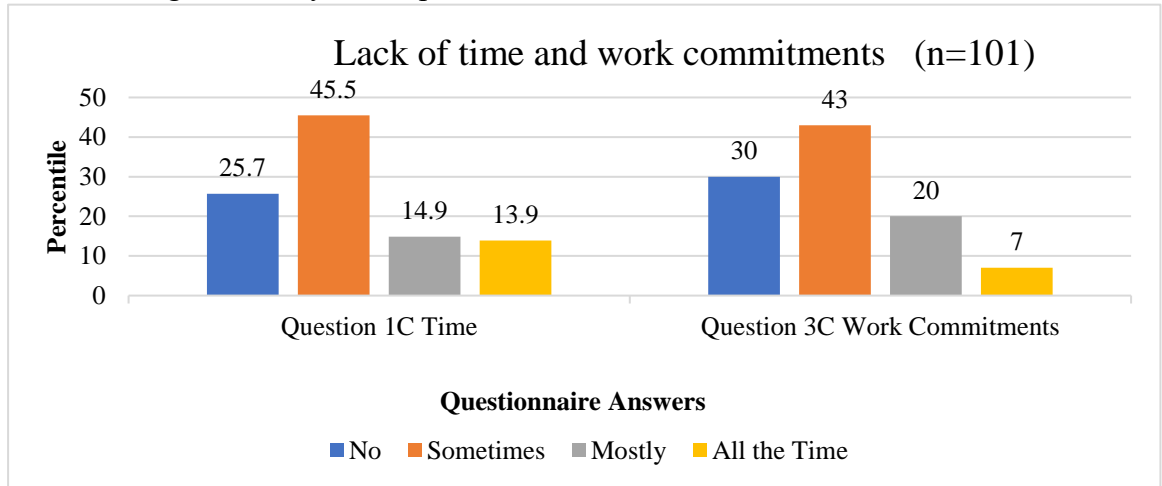
Figure 4. 14 Perceptions of lack of time and work commitments which prevent support for emergent literacy.

As seen in Figure 4.14, the results were comparable between lack of time and work commitments across both questions. Parents (45.5%) believed that their lack of time 'Sometimes' hampered their efforts to support their child's emergent literacy while 43% of parents also felt it was their work commitments that 'Sometimes' hindered them from partaking in emergent literacy activities with their child. It is possible from the results represented in figure 4.25 were the cause and effect of each other. Parent's lack of time to support their child's emergent literacy was the result of their work commitments (employment or study).

Question 2C: Does your 'lack of patience' prevent you from supporting your child's emergent literacy development?
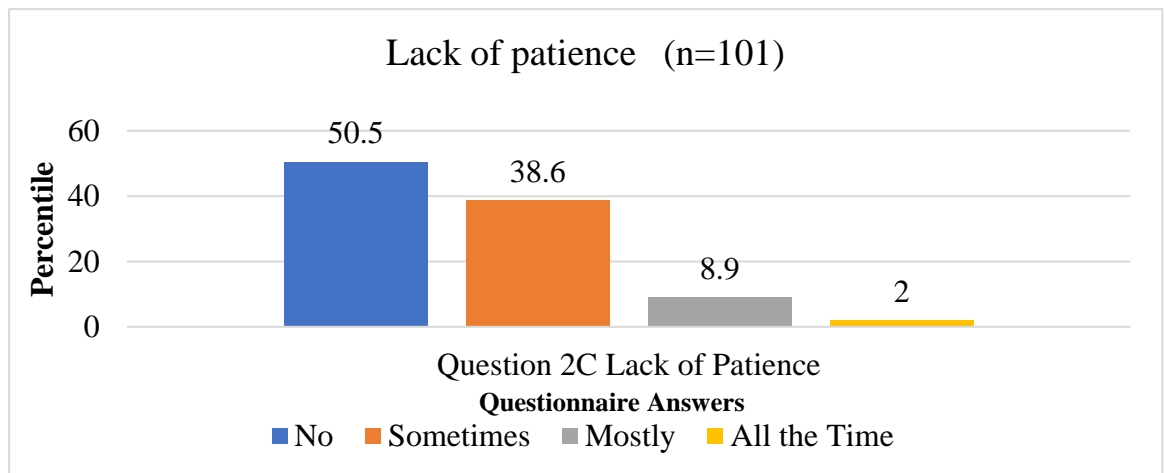
Figure 4. 15 Parents' perception of how patience impacts upon their ability to support their child's emergent literacy.

The behaviours of parents suggested that a lack of patience either did or did not prevent them from joining in emergent literacy experiences with their child (see Figure 4.15). A total of 50.5% of respondents believed their patience levels did not affect their ability to support their child's emergent literacy. For the remaining 49.5% of respondents, to varying degrees of a lack of patience affected their ability to engage in emergent literacy activities with their child. A parent's temperament, child's age, attention span, more than one child and feeling tired at the end of the day could be responsible for such a division between the impact patience had on a parent's ability to support their child's emergent literacy.

Question 4C: Does your 'knowledge/skills' prevent you from supporting your child's emergent literacy development?

Question 7C: Does your belief that 'the school should be teaching these skills and not me' prevent you from supporting your child's emergent literacy?
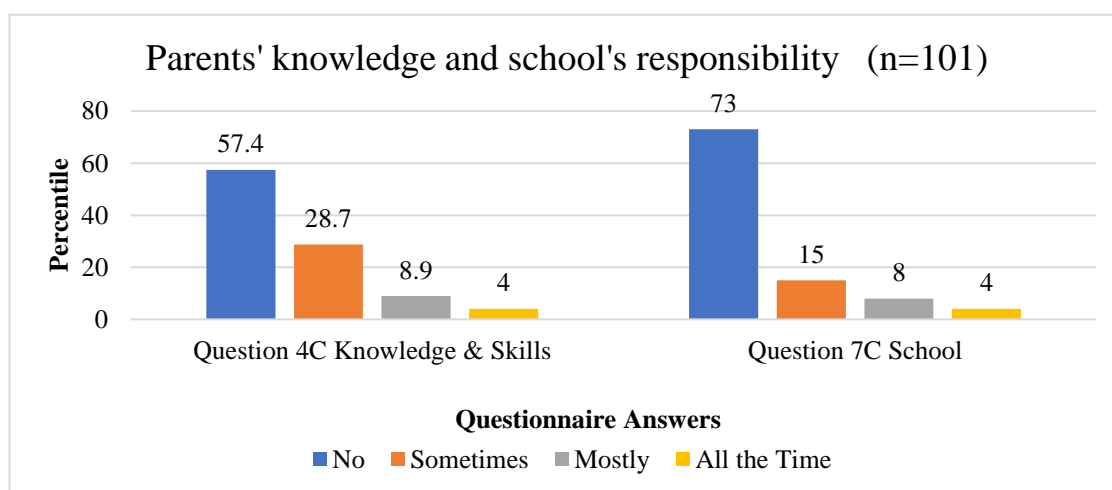
Figure 4. 16 Parents' perception about their own knowledge and skills and the school's responsibility to emergent literacy.

In general, parents' knowledge and skills did not prevent them from engaging in activities with their child and subsequently they did not believe it was only the school's responsibility to develop their child's emergent literacy (see Figure 4.16). While more than half of the parents (57.4%) believed that their knowledge and skills did not stop them from supporting their child's emergent literacy there were many (42.6%) to varying degrees who do thought it prevented them. It was possible that self-esteem and confidence were factors in how parents perceive their own abilities. This may explain why some parents believed their own knowledge and skills prevented them from supporting their child's emergent literacy.

Question 5C: Does your 'health' prevent you from supporting your child's emergent literacy development?
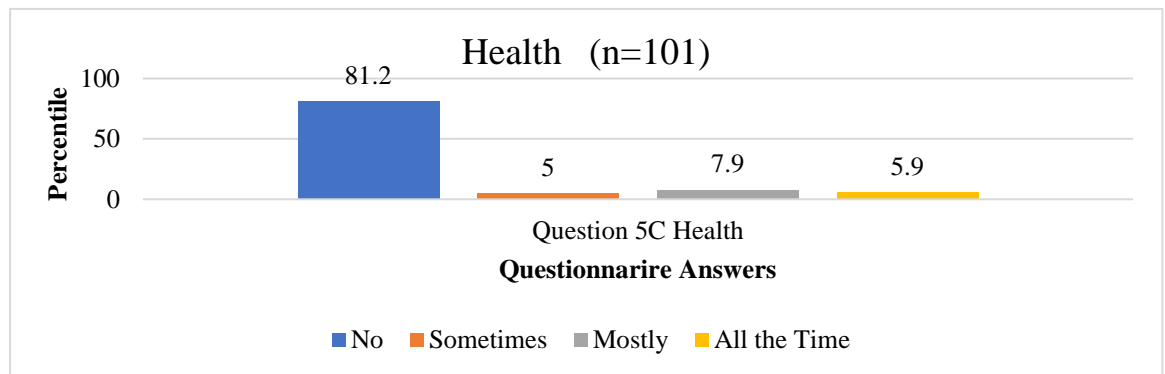
Figure 4. 17 Parents' perception about their health and its impact upon emergent literacy.

Overall, parents' health did not appear to prevent them from supporting their child's emergent literacy (see Figure 4.17). The majority of participants (81.2%) considered their health did not interfere with their ability to support their child's emergent literacy compared to 18.8% of parents thought it did. These results might be considered normal because of the various illnesses that were evident in communities today which impact upon a person's ability to assist with the progression of their child's emergent literacy. It was also unlikely that everyone (questionnaire participants) can be healthy all the time.

Question 6C: Does your 'other family commitments' prevent you from supporting your child's emergent literacy development?

Question 8C: Do your 'cultural beliefs' prevent you from supporting your child's emergent literacy development?
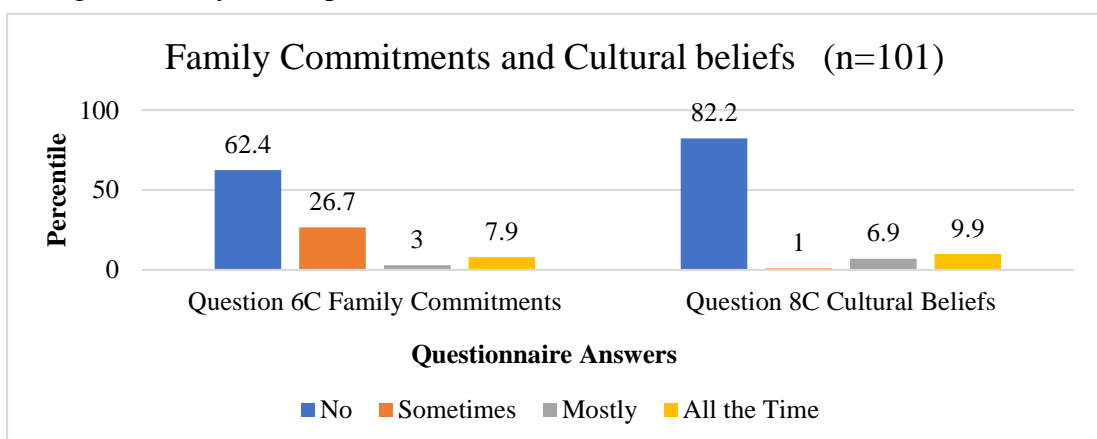
*Figure 4. 18* Parents' perception about family commitments and cultural beliefs.

Family commitments and parents' cultural beliefs generally did not prevent parents from supporting their child's emergent literacy (see Figure 4.18). The majority of

parents (62.4%) thought their 'other family commitments' did not impact upon their ability to support their child's emergent literacy. This result coincided with the influence of parents' cultural beliefs had on their ability to support emergent literacy because cultural beliefs could be considered as being associated with 'other family commitments.' A total of 82.2% of parents considered their cultural beliefs did not prevent them from supporting their child's emergent literacy. However, to varying degrees, 37.6% of parents did believe 'other family commitments' prevented them from supporting their child's emergent literacy. Factors for such an opinion might include families being involved in sporting groups, community service groups such as Rotary, music and school commitments, further education and attending family gatherings etc.

Additional written questionnaire comments

At the conclusion of the questionnaire in section 4D, participants had the opportunity to make additional comments in the available space provided. The perceptions in the written comments offered complementary evidence about the experiences of 21st century parents' when supporting their child's emergent literacy at home. The parents were invited to add their acuities in relation to the following question:

Do you have any further reasons regarding what helps or prevents you supporting your child's emergent literacy? If so, please write your reasons in the space below.

Twenty-two parents out of 102 wrote comments and described their experiences about what they thought was helpful or what they considered to be a hindrance when developing their child's emergent literacy. The majority of parents focused on the positive aspect of what they perceived to be supportive when developing their child's emergent literacy (Appendix J). The most common suggestions for what was helpful are in Table 4.9 below.

Support for emergent literacy

Table 4. 9 Written questionnaire comments about what supports emergent literacy.

Support for emergent literacy			
Historical knowledge	Incidental learning opportunities	Books and modelled behaviour	Outside organisations

Historical Knowledge

Three questionnaire participants acknowledged that having older children in the family was perceived as being beneficial for younger siblings' development of emergent literacy. Questionnaire 1 also supported this comment when they wrote, "Having an older child and now understanding the process has helped me. Lucky second child." In addition, questionnaire 13 stated "My 4-year-old is the youngest of three children. I have learnt many ways to support my youngest's emergent literacy development through trial and error with the older children it helps to see what is ahead to know what to do know." These comments suggested that parents used knowledge from prior experiences to support the emergent literacy skills of younger child. Parents considered such historical knowledge as a valuable resource in developing emergent literacy skills of younger children.

Incidental Learning Opportunities

A total of six parents wrote about incidental learning opportunities as examples of support for the development of emergent literacy. Such learning opportunities were many and varied and occurred throughout the day. Questionnaire 7 commented, "I make the most of the incidental literacy moments that arise, often led by her and these are definitely more valuable in terms of her literacy development, or try to integrate it into play." Questionnaire 31 also supported with perception when they wrote, "My daughter is learning a lot through daily activities - shopping, cooking, playing and our conversations during and after, look for the apples, BBB for banana. Show me the red strawberries etc." These statements illustrated parents' understanding of what assisted the development of emergent literacy. Parents' experiences acknowledged occasions whereby emergent literacy was supported at home or out in the community. These incidental learning opportunities supported the development of emergent literacy.

Books and Modelled Behaviour

Parents reading their own books, children having access to books at home and parents reading to children were recognised by parents as being very helpful when supporting a young child's emergent literacy. A total of six parents wrote a comment about the learning opportunities books provided young children. Questionnaire 14 stated, "What helps is having books at home, visible, that are not just for the children but for the parents. Also seeing parents read." Furthermore, questionnaire 31 said, "Reading stories which my husband and I enjoyed during our childhood does support our daughter's literacy development." The participants' values towards reading laid the foundation for reading to children and having books at home. The home environment where children had access to books to read as well as being read to by their parents were associated with being helpful when developing young children's emergent literacy.

Outside Organisations

Outside organisations were perceived as being helpful in shaping emergent literacy experiences. Knowledge and skills from other agencies guided parents to facilitate their child's oral language, reading and writing. Five parents wrote a comment about how outside organisations helped them to support their child. This was also demonstrated in the comment written by questionnaire 13, **"**The Better Beginnings programme was also beneficial when the children were younger. The story time sessions at the local library were also lots of fun (& Baby Rhyme time)." Speech pathologists were identified by questionnaire 18 when they commented, "Older children have required speech therapy/stuttering theory which has provided me with a wealth of information on early speech/reading." Questionnaire 48 stated, "I observe the Junior Kindy lesson plan posted and incorporate those themes at home ie: get books from the library about sunsets etc." Acknowledging assistance to support their child's emergent literacy demonstrated parents' ability to self-reflect on their own skills and knowledge in order to identify when and where they needed guidance to improve the outcomes for their children.

Factors that Hinder the Development of Emergent Literacy

Only six out of the 22 participants who wrote responses in section 4D took the opportunity to highlight their perception of what hindered them supporting their child's emergent literacy at home (Appendix K). Table 4.10 identified the two main areas where concerns were raised, which included 'parents' attitude towards technology' and secondly 'family'.

Table 4. 10 Parents' perception of what hinders emergent literacy.

What hinders emergent literacy	
Technology	Family

Technology

A total of five out of 22 written responses in the questionnaire showed that parents considered technology could be a hindrance when supporting the emergent literacy of young children. This was exemplified in the comment questionnaire 14 made, ''I also believe no media (TV, iPad, etc.) is very important at this age; it develops imagination, creativity, self-reliance – all of which are related to early literacy." Furthermore questionnaire 48 stated, "We feel strongly that reliance upon technology/TV/screen are a significant hindrance to language, literacy and numeracy development." These comments highlighted parents' attitudes towards technology and their perceptions that it hampered the development of emergent literacy.

Family

It was acknowledged by three participants in the written section 4D of the questionnaire that 'family' hindered parents from supporting young children's emergent literacy. This perception was supported by the written comment in questionnaire 6, "Busy with other children in the family." Questionnaire 7 added to this perception, when they wrote, "It is difficult to do some literacy activities with an 18-month-old around." This suggested that it was likely that the work, care and attention associated with having more than one child hampered parents from facilitating their young child's emergent literacy. Furthermore, opinions such as those of belonging to grandparents may also have influenced and delayed parents form developing their child's emergent literacy skills. This was seen in the comment by

questionnaire 8 whey they wrote, "My parents can be both a support and a hindrance as they say let kids be kids taking the view that there is plenty of time for that in school." This response highlighted it was not only direct family members but also extended family could hinder emergent literacy development.

Twenty-first Century Parents' Experiences of Supporting their Child's Emergent Literacy

This section of the analysis was associated with the main research question of how 21st century parents conceptualized supporting emergent literacy skills of their young children. Questions contained in the questionnaire were associated with three out of four superordinate themes which include Influence, Judgement and Family life. These were represented in Appendix H. The superordinate theme of 'Guilt' could not be associated with questions in the questionnaire and therefore was not represented.

Superordinate theme: 2 Influence

In section A, of the questionnaire titled 'Parents Attitudes Towards Literacy' there were four questions associated with the superordinate theme of 'Influence' and its smaller cluster of sub themes as shown in Table 14.

Table 4. 11 Superordinate theme: 2 Influences and related sub themes.

Superordinate theme: 2 Influence		
Childhood experiences	Family and friends	Community

Sub theme: Childhood Experiences

Question 5A: How much do you rely on your own literacy experiences from when you were a child in order to support your child's emergent literacy?
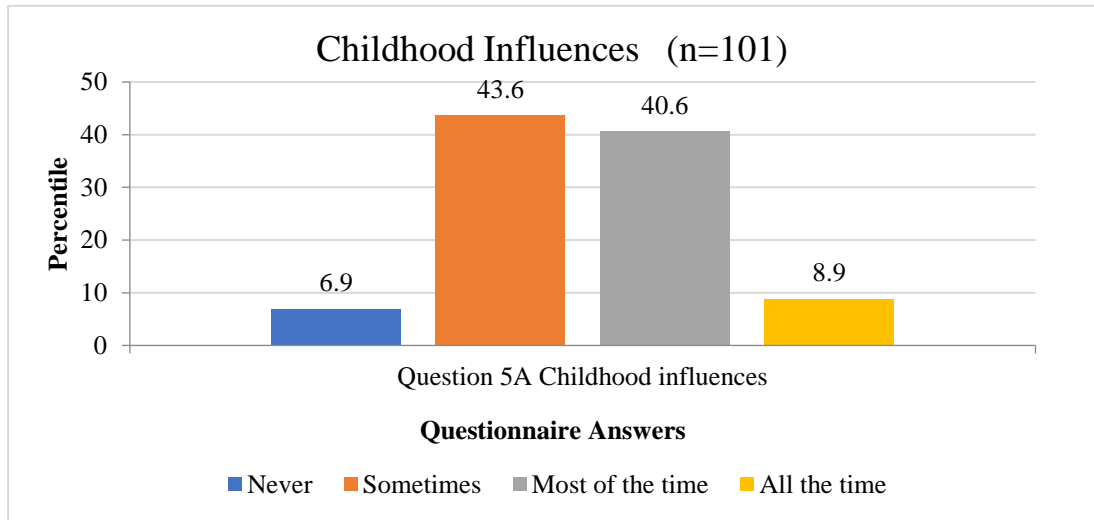
Figure 4. 19 Parents influenced by their childhood experiences.

Most commonly, participants acknowledged they were influenced by their childhood experiences (see Figure 4.19). Only 6.9% of participants identified as 'Never' using their childhood literacy experiences to support their child's emergent literacy. This may have been the case because such participants may have not had many literacy experiences in their childhood on which they could refer to as a resource. This was in contrast to the remainder of the participants who acknowledged they were influenced by their childhood literacy experiences. The positive emotions and the ease at which experiences could be conveniently retrieved was a likely reason why parents rated being influenced by their childhood experiences so highly. A total of 43.6% thought they were 'Sometimes' influenced by their literacy experiences in childhood while 40.6% believed 'Most of the Time' they referred to their experiences in childhood to shape literacy encounters with their child. There are 8.9% of parents who felt they relied 'All the time' on their childhood experiences to support their own child's emergent literacy.

Sub theme: Influence of Friends and Family

Question 9A: Do your friends influence how you support your child's emergent literacy?

Question 10A: Does your family and extended family influence how you support your child's emergent literacy?

121
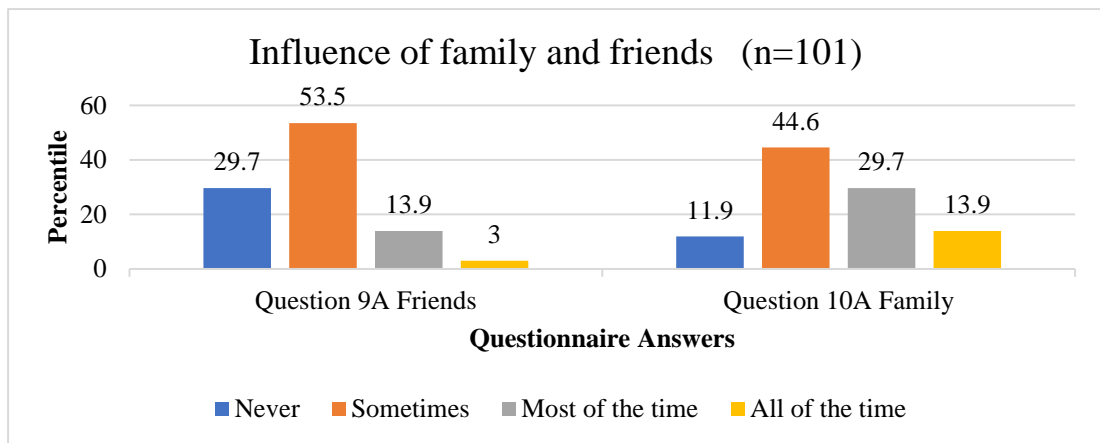
Figure 4. 20 Friends' influence on emergent literacy.

Overall, friends and family did shape children's emergent literacy experiences with family being more influential than friends (see Figure 4.20). In question 9, 53.5% of parents identified their friends 'Sometimes' influenced how they support their child's literacy development. This was in contrast with the connection of family, who identified 44.6% as being 'Sometimes' influenced by family and 29.9% as 'Most of the Time' being influenced by family. Stronger ties with family, particularly grandparents and aunties and uncles were likely to be the reason why participants rated these areas so high.

Sub theme: Influence of Media on Emergent Literacy

In the section 1A, called 'Parent Attitudes' in the questionnaire, only question 11 related to how the media influenced the way in which parents supported their child's emergent literacy.

Question 11A: "Does the media influence how you support your child's emergent literacy?"
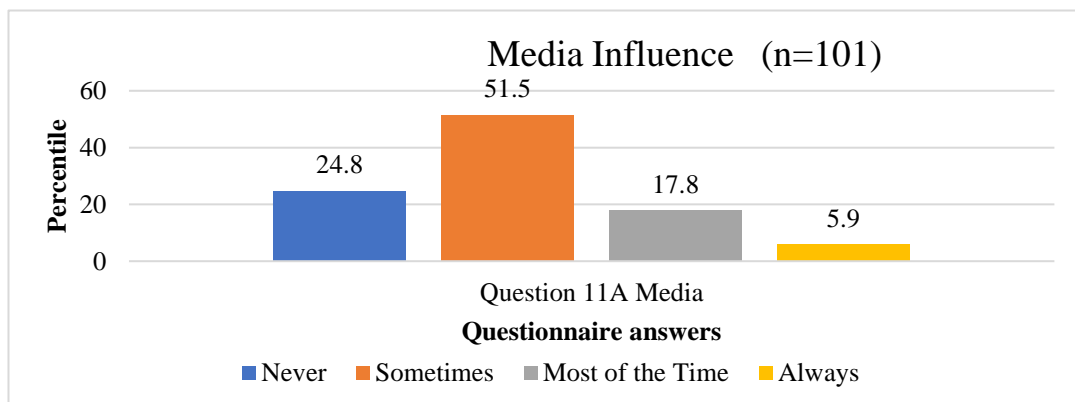
Figure 4. 21 The media influencing ideas to support emergent literacy.

Media as a mode of communication did play a part in influencing parents when supporting their child's emergent literacy (See Figure 4.21). While 24.8% of parents answer they were 'Never' influenced by the media, the remaining 75.2% of parent participants were influenced to varying degrees. Parents communicated through various media outlets and this was reflected in the 51.5% of people who responded they were 'Sometimes' influenced by the media compared with 17.8% who believed that 'Most of the Time' they were influenced by the media. Consequently, it was likely that media's presence in parents' daily lives shaped the emergent literacy encounters in which children were involved.

Superordinate theme: 3 Judgement

There were four questions contained in the questionnaire that were associated with the theme of 'Judgement' and its smaller cluster of related sub-themes as shown in Table 4.12. There were no questions that were directly associated to the sub theme of how parents judged each other and therefore this was not be analysed.

Table 4. 12 Superordinate theme: 3 Judgement and related sub themes.

3 Judgement			
Knowledge of emergent literacy	Comparing other children	Judging other parents	Emergent Literacy

Sub theme: Knowledge of Emergent Literacy

Question 1A: How would you rate your understanding of emergent literacy?
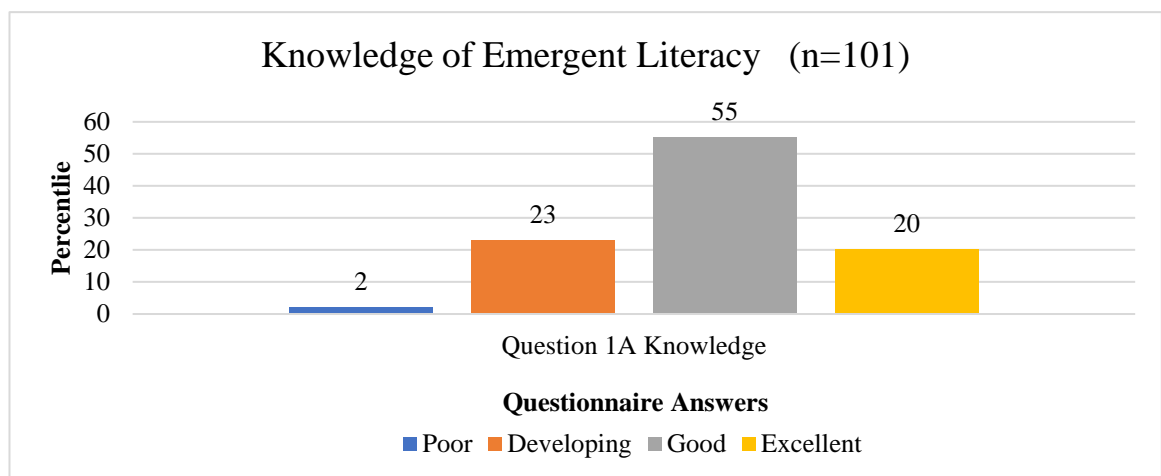
Figure 4. 22 Parents' knowledge of emergent literacy.

Generally, parents had very positive views about their emergent literacy knowledge. The results in Figure 4.22 demonstrated the optimistic perception parents held about their knowledge of emergent literacy skills. A possible reason for this optimism could be attributed to access to professionals in early learning centres, the media and family and friends. A total of 55% believed they had a 'Good' understanding of emergent literacy compared with 20% who considered they had an 'Excellent' knowledge of emergent literacy. There were 25% of participants who believed their knowledge about emergent literacy was still developing or considered poor. This suggested some parents may have lacked access to support materials or did not have the education levels themselves in order to increase their knowledge about emergent literacy. Furthermore, parents who lacked confidence when supporting their child may not have volunteered to participate in the questionnaire and therefore may not be represented.

Sub theme: Comparing other Children

Question 14A: Do you ever compare your child's emergent literacy skills to other children you might know who are the same age?
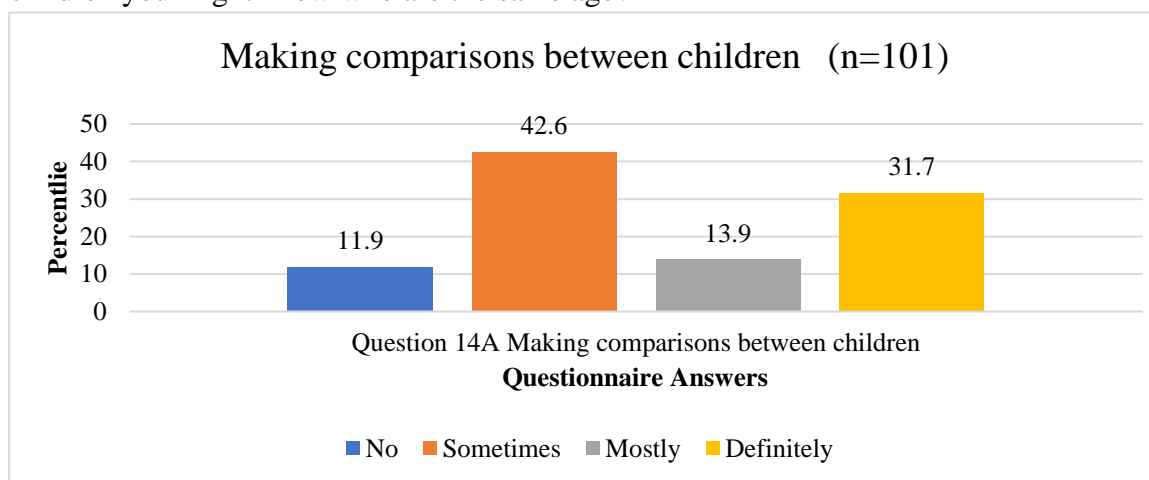
Figure 4. 23 Parents making comparisons between their child and other children of the same age.

The majority of parents did compare their child's emergent literacy skills with other children they knew who were the same age (see Figure 4.23). Quick comparisons could be made without any inconvenience and undertaken anonymously. A total of 42.6% responded they 'Sometimes' compared their children while 31.7% of participants responded by answering they 'Definitely' made comparisons between their child and other children of the same age. Such comparisons could be the result of parents' desire to review their child's progress to ensure they were demonstrating skills and knowledge that were comparable to children of the same age.

Sub theme: Emergent Literacy

Question 24B: Do you set aside time each day to participate in planned emergent literacy activities with you child?

Question 25B: Do you engage in incidental emergent literacy activities during the course of the day with your child at home or out in the community?
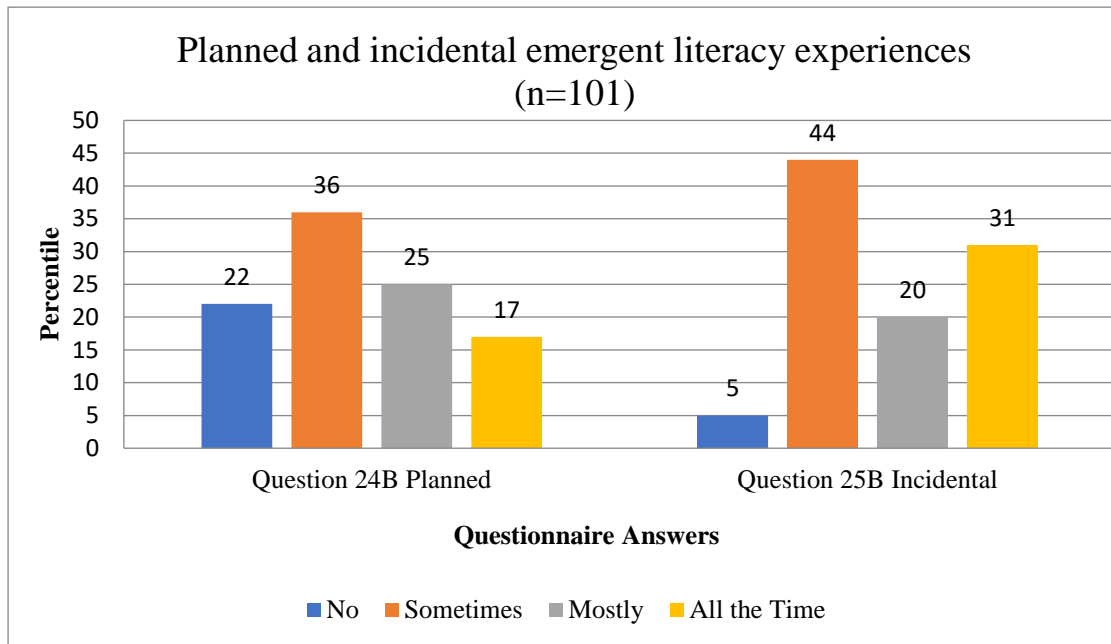
Figure 4. 24 Parents planned and incidental emergent literacy experiences with their child.

Overall parents did engage in planned and incidental emergent literacy experiences with their children (see Figure 4.24). The results revealed they were more inclined to engage in incidental emergent literacy experiences compared with planned experiences. This was exemplified in the total of 22% of parents who thought they did not set aside time to engage in planned emergent literacy experiences whereas only 5% believed they did not participate in incidental emergent literacy activities with their child. The popularity for incidental activities showed parents chose the moment and context for emergent literacy experiences as the need appeared.

Superordinate theme: 4 Family Life

The superordinated theme of 'Family Life' is associated with 12 questions in the questionnaire and their related sub themes as shown in Table 4.13.

Table 4. 13 Superordinate theme: 4 Family life and related sub themes.

4 Family Life		
Perceptions of emergent literacy	Role of parents	Technology and emergent literacy

Sub theme: Perceptions of Emergent Literacy

Question 6A Do you ever feel frustrated when developing your child's emergent literacy skills?

Question 7A Do you feel confused about what emergent literacy experiences you could engage in with your child?
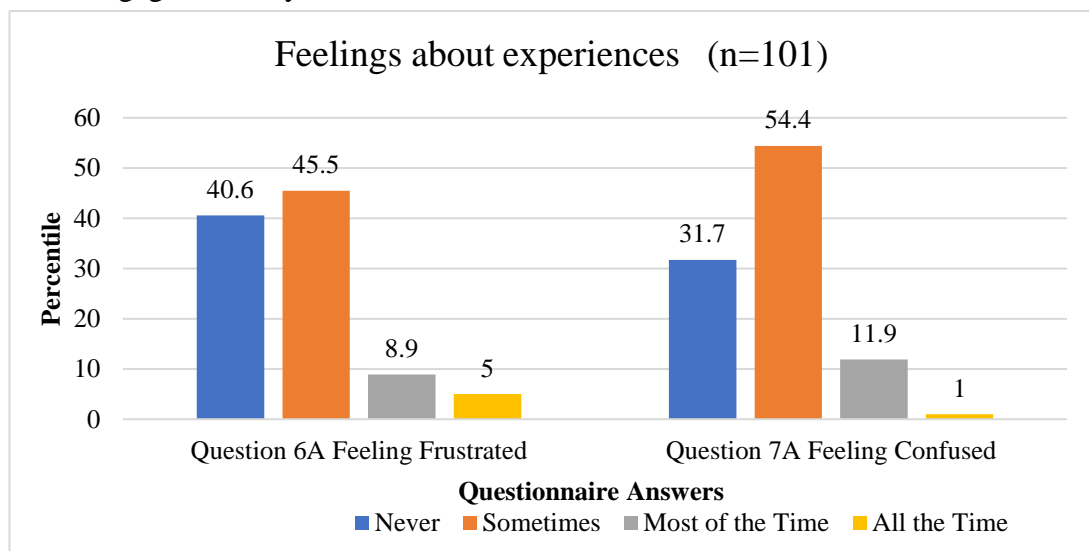
Figure 4. 25 Parents feeling frustrated when engaging in emergent literacy experiences with their child.

Generally, when parents engaged in emergent literacy activities with their child they did experience feelings of frustration and confusion (see Figure 4.25). Parents were more likely to feel confused about what emergent literacy experiences to engage in with their child rather than feel frustrated. A total of 54.4% of parents 'Sometimes' experienced confusion when attempting to think of emergent literacy experiences compared with 45.5% who thought they 'Sometimes' felt frustrated. It was possible the confusion parents experienced could be attributed to the vast amount of information located on the internet and in print-based materials such as books,

parenting magazines and pamphlets. Advice from family and friends could also be credited to parents feeling confused as to what emergent literacy activities they could engage in with their child.

Question 8A Do you believe it is easy to think of emergent literacy activities to engage in with your child?
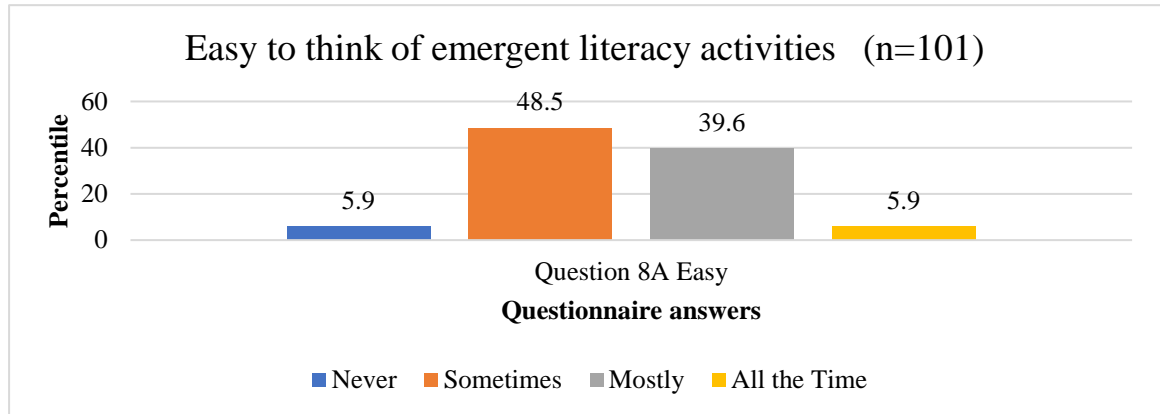
Figure 4. 26 Parent views on how easy it is to think emergent literacy activities with their child.

The majority of parents found it easy to think of emergent literacy activities to engage in with their child (see Figure 4.26). Such positive results could be associated with parents noticing and utilising incidental learning opportunities when they appeared at home and out in the community. Poor knowledge and skills about emergent literacy could be the reason why only 5.9% of parents identified it was 'Never' easy to think of emergent literacy activities.

Question 12A Do you believe children need to develop emergent literacy skills before they begin formal schooling?

Question 13A Do you believe it should be the school's job to develop your child's emergent literacy skills?
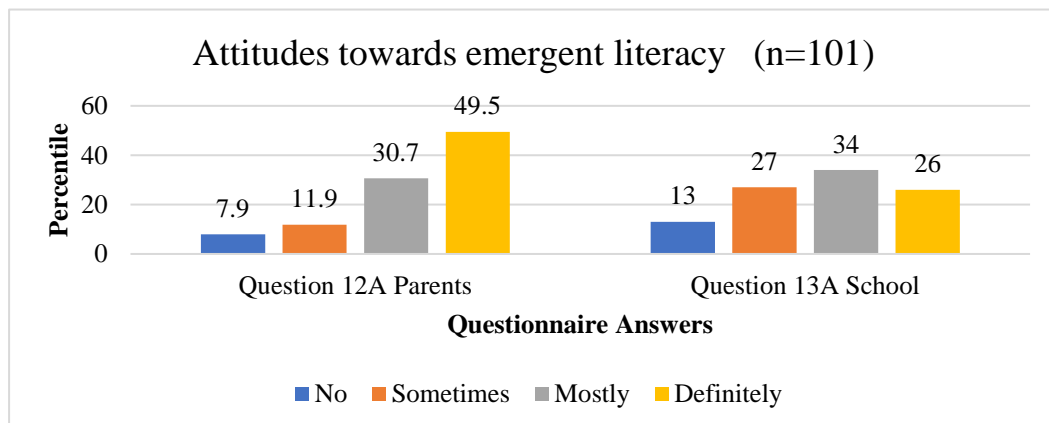
Figure 4. 27 Parent attitudes towards emergent literacy.

The results indicated that parents acknowledged the importance of developing emergent literacy skills before formal schooling while recognising the school also had a responsibility to develop their young children's emergent literacy skills (see Figure 4.27). A total 49.5% of parents 'Definitely' believed children should develop emergent literacy skills before formal schooling compared to 26% who 'Definitely' considered it was the school's role to develop their child's emergent literacy skills. These results show parents valued laying emergent literacy foundations before formal schooling as it provided a scaffold for experiences children are later involved in at school.

Question 16A: Do you believe that when your child is playing with other children it contributes to developing their emergent literacy skills?

Question 17A: Do you believe that when you are playing with your child it contributes to developing your child's emergent literacy skills?
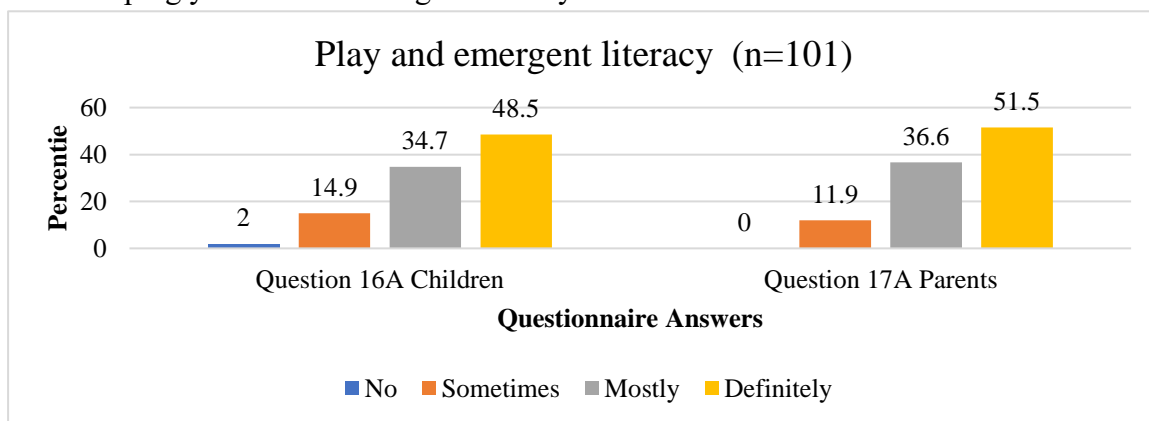
Figure 4. 28 The role of play in developing emergent literacy skills**.**

Overall, the majority of parents believed that when their child played with other children and when they played with their child it contributed to the development of their child's emergent literacy skills (see Figure 4.28). The results for children playing together and parents playing with their child were very similar. This was represented in 51.5% of parents who 'Definitely' believed that when they played with their child it helped develop their child's emergent literacy skills while 48.5% of parents 'Definitely' thought that when children played together it assisted emergent literacy. The contribution of parents' positive perception about their own knowledge and skills and their appreciation of the value play offered as learning opportunities could have been likely influences upon the positive results.

Sub theme: Role of Parents

Question 2A: How important do you think it is for parents to engage in emergent literacy activities with their child?
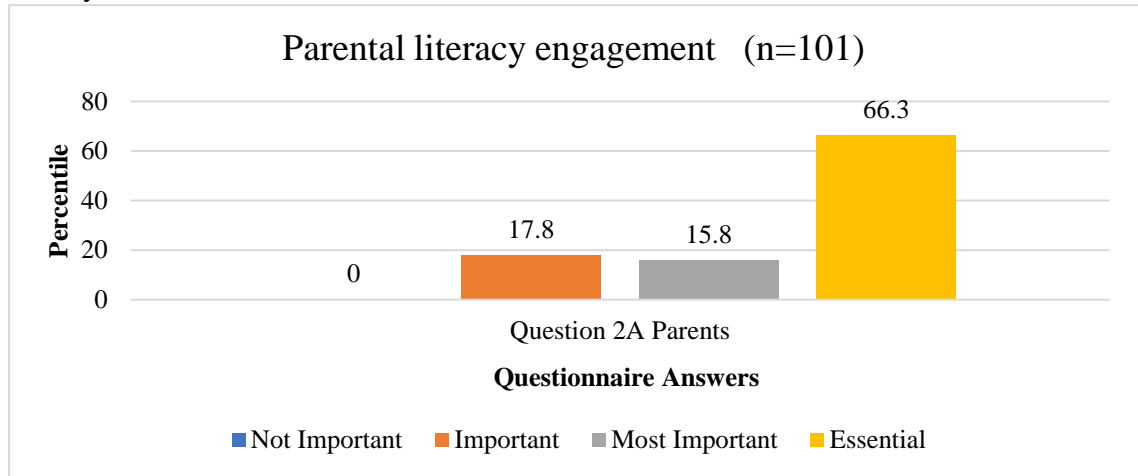
Figure 4. 29 Parents' perceptions about engagement in emergent literacy.

Parents believed they needed to be involved in supporting their child's emergent literacy (see Figure 4.29). A total of 66.3% of parents thought it was 'Essential' they were involved in supporting their child's emergent literacy. No-one believed that parents should not be involved in developing their child's emergent literacy.

Question 3A: Do you believe that you devote an appropriate amount of time to developing your child's emergent literacy skills?
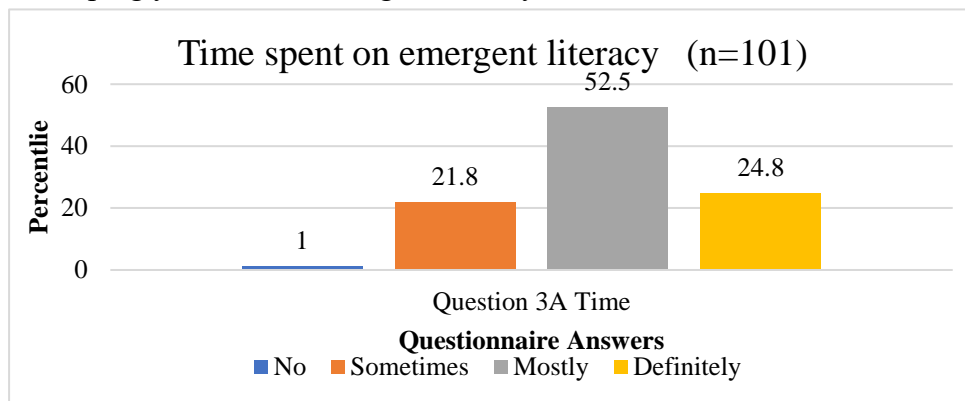
Figure 4. 30 Time devoted by parents to emergent literacy.

Overall, parents perceived they generally devoted an adequate amount of time to developing their child's emergent literacy (see Figure 4.30). At total of 52.5% believed they 'Mostly' devote enough time compared with 24.8% who thought they 'Definitely' dedicated enough time to supporting their child's emergent literacy. However, there was just over 20% who considered they 'Sometimes' allocated enough time for supporting their child's emergent literacy. Such a high percentage was likely due to parents working and having more than one child in the family.

Question 4A: How confident do you feel the literacy choices that you make for your child are making a difference to your child's emergent literacy skills? (pretend reading & writing, letters & sounds, book knowledge and oral language)

Question 15A: How confident do you feel about your own literacy skills when supporting your child's emergent literacy skills?
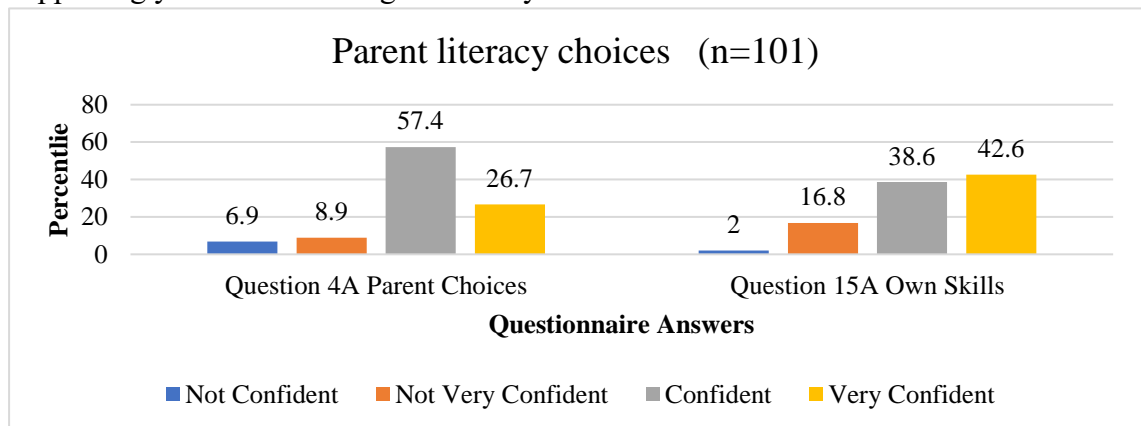
Figure 4. 31 Parents' perceptions about emergent literacy choices and their own literacy skills.

Overall parents were confident that their choices to support their child's emergent literacy was making a difference and they had confidence in their own literacy skills (see Figure 4.31). A total of 57.4% believed they were 'Confident' in the choices they made to develop their child's emergent literacy compared to 42.6% who were 'Very Confident' in their own literacy skills. This demonstrated parents positive view of their own literacy skills was then reflected in the optimistic perception of the emergent literacy selections they made for their child. It was likely that self-confidence in their own abilities affected the choices they made to support their child's emergent literacy.

Sub theme: Technology and Emergent Literacy

Question 23B: Do you use technology to support emergent literacy with your child? (iPad apps, phone, tablet, storybooks on a kindle, television programs, internet games etc.)
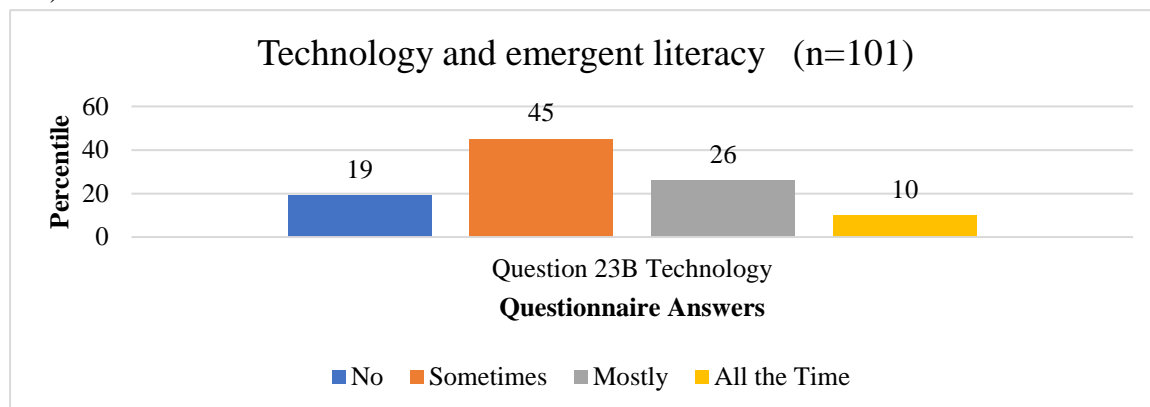
Figure 4. 32 Parents' perceptions associated with the use of technology to support their child's emergent literacy.

Parents generally did use technology to support their child's emergent literacy (see Figure 4.32). A total of 45% of parents 'Sometimes' used technology while 26% answered they 'Mostly' and 10% 'All the time' used technology to support their child's emergent literacy. Access to technology, desirability for children and the convenience it affords parents were likely incentives for its application in supporting emergent literacy.

Summary

This chapter presented an analysis of the qualitative and quantitative data related to the three research questions. It commenced in Section One by analysing what interview participants believed supported them when developing their child's emergent literacy. It then moved on to Section Two and identified what hindered parents from engaging in emergent literacy activities with their child. Section Three, utilised Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis and identified four superordinate themes from the 12 participant interview transcripts (1 Guilt, 2 Influence, 3 Emergent Literacy and 4 Family Life) and their related sub themes. This was followed by Section Four whereby quantitative data from the parent questionnaires was analysed. The data identified what supported reading, writing and oral language and secondly what hindered parents developing their child's emergent literacy. This chapter concluded with the analysis of the four superordinate themes and their related sub themes that

emerged from the participant interviews and described and explained their connection with the quantitative data obtained from the written questionnaires.

Chapter 5

Discussion

Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings associated with the three research questions presented in this thesis. Through the use of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis, the researcher investigates the meanings that participants allocate to their experiences (Biggerstaff & Thompson, 2008). Therefore, these results are considered in the light of their theoretical transferability and are the foundation upon which these research findings are based. This chapter is divided into three sections and utilises the data from the participant interviews and the questionnaires to answer the three research questions. Section One answers the first research question. The results associated with parental experiences of supporting their child's emergent literacy are discussed in relation to four themes which consist of 1. Guilt, 2. Influence, 3. Judgement, 4. Family Life. This is followed by Section Two which reports the results associated with what parents consider supports them when developing their child's emergent literacy. Finally, Section Three is concerned with highlighting the factors that parents believe hinder them from supporting their child's emergent literacy.

Section One: Twenty-First Century Experiences

Recalling experiences of supporting the emergent literacy of their young children, parents have the opportunity to explore their perceptions. Such accounts open a window and provide insight as to the complexities of being a parent, supporting a young child's emergent literacy in the 21st century.

The 12 parent interviews conducted in the first phase of the research using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis provided the foundation upon which the results were based. The data gathered from the 102 questionnaires in complement the results from the parent interviews and provided additional information. This combination facilitated answering the first research question:

1A. How do 21st century parents describe their experiences of supporting the emergent literacy skills of their young children?

During the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis of the parent interviews, four superordinate themes appeared. These themes provided the foundation upon which the results of this research were developed. The four superordinate themes and their related sub themes are shown below in the Table 5.1.

Table 5. 1 Superordinate themes from the parent interviews.

	Interview Superordinate Themes			
	1 Guilt	**2 Influence**	**3 Judgement**	**4 Family Life**
Sub Theme Clusters	Technology	Childhood experiences	Knowledge of emergent literacy	Perceptions of emergent literacy
	Not doing enough literacy	Family and friends	Comparing other children	Role of parents
	Neglecting one's first culture	Community	Judging other parents	Technology and emergent literacy
			Emergent literacy	

These four superordinate themes comprised of a cluster of smaller yet related sub themes as represented above in Table 5.1 and shed light upon the lived experiences of being a 21st century parent who is supporting their young child's emergent literacy. These four themes revealed how 21st century parents made meaning of their life experiences. The interpretations of parents' perceptions, and the results from the questionnaire, identified how 21st century parents approached supporting their child's emergent literacy skills, in the preschool years.

Family Life

Children are growing up in families where life is busy. Many families are involved in community organisations such as sporting groups and engage in active social lives. The role of parents and their attitudes and values towards emergent literacy, continues to impact young children's literacy experiences in the home.

The parents involved in this research acknowledged the significance of the role they played in supporting young children's emergent literacy. It comes as no surprise then,

that they also believed children needed to develop emergent literacy skills before the commencement of formal schooling. These finding are supported by research conducted by Snow et al. (1991) who identified the family function as an educating agent, successfully impacting children's language and literacy progress. Furthermore, there is much research that confirms parent's values about literacy affects emergent literacy outcomes (Bennett et al., 2002; Sénéchal & Lefevre, 2014). Sénéchal and Lefevre (2014) claimed that parenting impacts upon how children's emergent literacy develops so what they do at home counts. The home environment affords children the opportunity to observe and experience literate behaviours, participate in extended conversations, engage in joint reading and writing activities and scaffolded learning with knowledgeable others (Bennett et al., 2002; Kim, 2009; Landry & Smith, 2006; Weigel et al., 2006). The beliefs parents held about the importance of developing emergent literacy skills before beginning school and the time they devoted to engaging in such activities impact upon the experiences they provide for their children at home. This in turn is reflected in the knowledge and skills or 'cultural capital' their children take with them to school (Bourdieu, 1977; Solsken, 1995).

Some parents involved in this research indicated they thought engaging in emergent literacy activities was fun and enjoyed these experiences with their children. However, participating in such activities does appear to come with its own levels of frustration and confusion for parents. The interview and questionnaire findings from this research demonstrated that while parents felt frustration, more experienced confusion when deciding what activities, they could engage in with their child. In many cases both parents are working, families have active social lives and access to technology with numerous options and opportunities for learning might add to parents' feelings of frustration and confusion. Researchers Hindman and Morrison (2012) identified these feelings of frustration and confusion as parent engagement. Hindman and Morrison (2012) viewed parent engagement as a three-dimensional construct, that comprised of firstly sensitivity, responsiveness and warmth, secondly support for a child's independence and self-control and finally involvement in literacy and learning. If parents were feeling frustrated and confused instead of being responsive and loving it was likely that these feelings may impact upon the quality of the literacy experiences they provided for their child. Parents required guidance to relieve the frustration and confusion they experienced developing their child's emergent literacy skills.

Consequently, this where the Australian Government has the opportunity to assist parents to educate our young children, who are the future of our country. Recommendations for such assistance are discussed in chapter 6.

There are many opportunities for parents to progress their child's literacy knowledge and skills. Part of family life involves parents and children playing together. Object, guided and pretend play create occasions for developing emergent literacy (Pinkham & Neuman, 2012). The Australian Government's 'Get up & Grow' guidelines recommended that young children participated in three hours of active outdoor play each day. Fortunately, this research shows that parents acknowledge the importance of play and its contributions towards emergent literacy. While this is true for the participants in this research, for many years now, the media's attention has been directed towards the amount of play that is occurring in the home especially since the introduction of technology. In fact, so much so that Kings Park situated in the heart of Perth has an area called 'Naturescape' devoted to children being actively involved with nature and outdoor play. Creating an area designed specifically to encourage play suggests a need for children to engage in play as well as indicating that not all parents may value play in the same way or have access to a safe outside play environment for their child. Research shows that engaging in imaginative play, parents have the opportunity to develop their child's language and cognitive development (Berk & Winsler, 1995; Frank Masur, 1982). It is important that parents be involved in play with their children because play allows parents to be literacy role models scaffolding experiences for future learning.

Technological changes in society have influenced the way in which play is experienced in online and offline places. Play now has the ability to transfer from physical to virtual domains while incorporating material and immaterial practices (Burnett, Merchant, Pahl, & Rowsell, 2014; Marsh, Hannon, Lewis, & Ritchie, 2017). This research confirmed that 21st century parents were utilising play with technology as another avenue to advance their child's literacy learning. Overall, the majority of the parents engaged in technology as a way of providing opportunities for learning as well as a form of entertainment for their children. It is well known that many 21st century children are growing up in homes that are active users of technology (Marsh et al., 2017; Neumann & Neumann, 2017). Recent research reported that 81% of Australian parents with children between the ages of 2 years to 5 years allow their children to use

the internet (Australian Government, 2019a). Furthermore, only 57% actively monitored what was on the screen. These young children do not know what it is like living without technology. The practice of technology to support emergent literacy skills is becoming more popular as touchscreen devices are growing more accessible for families (Patchan & Puranik, 2016). As more research is taking place in the field of emergent literacy and technology there is evidence of its positive impact upon emergent writing associated with letter name and sound knowledge and print awareness (Neumann, 2016b, 2018b). Parents are the gatekeepers of the digital devices children use. Consequently, the access to technology, the convenience it provided parents and the motivation it gave children were likely reasons for its application in supporting emergent literacy. Therefore it is important that parents use these opportunities to scaffold screen material to assist children's comprehension of the content and use it as a foundation to develop future learning experiences (Holloway et al., 2019; Huber, Highfield, & Kaufman, 2018; Neumann & Neumann, 2017; Stephen & Plowman, 2008).

Twenty-first century family life continues to involve play. Parents have shown they valued time playing with their children and acknowledged that such engagement contributed to their child's literacy outcomes. Just like play, technology is utilised by parents to support learning. This research demonstrated that parents are progressive because they are willing to engage with new technological developments not available when they were young. This is shown in the way they routinely accessed technology to assist with their child's literacy development.

Influences

Every day, parents experience episodes of being influenced and living in the 21st century is no exception. This research identified that 21st century parents experienced the effects of being influenced by their experiences, family, friends and media in relation to how they supported their child's emergent literacy skills.

Plowman, Stephen, et al. (2010) recognised that parents drew upon their childhood experiences help guide their parenting choices. This position was supported by the findings of this research. Recollections of childhood experiences many years before, continued to influence how 21st century parents engaged in emergent literacy activities with their children. The results from this research validated that literacy experiences

in childhood did not remain the domain of childhood, essentially their effects are much longer lasting. Such early experiences were passed down to the next generation by means of family and community role models. However, not all parents are fortunate enough to have the literacy experiences from childhood to draw upon. Sometimes, parents from low socioeconomic families may have little experience in relation to their own parents as literacy roles models along with a home environment that promotes literacy (Arnold & Doctoroff, 2003; Neumann, 2016a; Thomas, Colin, & Leybaert, 2020). Such circumstances make it challenging for these parents to support their child's emergent literacy. It is therefore important that these parents have access to support through avenues that are easy for them to communicate, which may include community organisations, health services, early childhood centres and the internet.

Along with memories of early childhood experiences being utilised as a tool to assist parents support their child's literacy, this research also found that family and friends guided young children's emergent literacy practices. Firstly, the involvement of relatives reading to their children and receiving books and other literacy materials as gifts helped support a young child's emergent literacy. Parents most likely used these materials when engaging in activities with their children when they were from people they knew and loved. Secondly, through geographical separation, relatives remained active participants by engaging in video chatting to communicate with their families and friends. Video chatting provided the opportunity for aunts, uncles and grandparents to be included as valuable resources in the development of young children's emergent literacy skills (Tarasuik & Kaufman, 2017). Evidence from this research demonstrated that video chatting using Skype or Facetime assisted young children to maintain relationships and build language. Using technology in this manner allowed relatives and friends the chance to engage in conversations, read books to children and sustain relationships. It was through the experiences which relatives and friends provided that helped shape young children's emergent literacy encounters. This research found that relatives and family friends provided strong support systems for parents and their children and their actions, confirmed Vygotsky (1978) the socio-cultural perspective and Bronfenbrenner (1994) bioecological theory of child development that provided the foundation for this research. Consequently, it was important parents continued to maintain these relationships and where necessary

integrate technology through the use of the internet via Skype, Facetime and other platforms to remain connected with family and friends.

Living in the 21st century involves some form of engagement with digital technology by the utilising the internet via iPads, mobile phones, tablets and computers. Mantilla and Edwards (2019, p. 183) explained that "Digital technology uses microprocessors to process information in digital form. Digitised information can be stored, re-used and communicated by adults and children for multiple purposes (entertainment, social communication and knowledge sharing)." One way parents engaged with technology was to find parenting information (Danby et al., 2013). Recent Australian research by Baker et al. (2017) reported that Australian parents did use the media (websites) as a guide for parenting information. They claimed that 65% of parents with children between the ages of 2 years to 12 years of age used parenting websites to help guide parenting decisions. Furthermore, a total of 45% of parents used social media as a way to obtain parenting information. Such findings were evident in the results of this research which identified parents were influenced by the media and this shaped the way in which they supported their child's emergent literacy at home. The lived experiences of interview participants identified the internet as a source they accessed to gain information regarding child development, parenting tips and literature relating to emergent literacy. More than half of the questionnaire participants believed the media sometimes influenced how they supported their child's emergent literacy while 17.85% considered the media influenced them all the time. This evidence suggests that parents were active users of technology and applied their skills and knowledge concerning how to navigate websites to readily select and access parenting information. Baker et al. (2017) claimed that access to online parenting information appeared to be similar between high risk and low risk parents. This is consistent with research identifying that families utilised media as an avenue to communicate and stay informed (McClure, Chentsova-Dutton, Barr, Holochwost, & Parrott, 2015; McClure, Chentsova-Dutton, Holowost, Parrott, & Barr, 2018; McPake et al., 2004; Plowman, 2010; Plowman & McPake, 2013) Consequently, it seems that utilising technology such at the internet as a tool to educate parents and improve literacy outcomes for young children is a logical step in supporting parents in all socio-economic groups.

Overall, 21st century parents experienced various forms of influence that guided the way in which they support their child's emergent literacy. This research found that

childhood experiences were firmly implanted in the minds of parents. These experiences were drawn upon many years later as a resource to assist with shaping their own child's literacy. Family and friends help guide young children's literacy outcomes through gifts of books, stationery and experiences. Technology allowed families to communicate and through conversation, influence literacy practices. A benefit of living in the 21st century was that distance was no barrier when families were geographically separated. Technology has quickly integrated itself into many aspects of family life. It was through the use of technology, parents were influenced by the media which influenced their behaviour and ultimately young children's literacy experiences. This research demonstrated that parents perceived that outside influences guided parents' behaviours, consequently contributing to a young child's literacy outcomes.

Judgement

As already discussed in the literature review in Chapter 1 of this thesis, the role parents played, their values and attitudes along with the home environment which they provided shaped their child's literacy outcomes. This research found that 21st century parents had a positive perception about themselves and their performance when supporting their child's emergent literacy skills. When self-assessing their knowledge and understanding of the skills required to support emergent literacy, six interview participants believed they knew what was required compared to six that do not know. Nevertheless, the parents that did not know, were not concerned by this lack of knowledge. Instead, they preferred to follow their 'gut' or 'intuition' and do what they considered 'felt right.' This positive sense of self, corresponded with the findings from the written questionnaire where respondents also felt confident with their understanding of emergent literacy skills. Furthermore, both interview participants and questionnaire respondents had confidence in their own literacy skills and the literacy choices they made on behalf of their child. The perception of feeling they understood the concept of emergent literacy and the skills children begin to demonstrate indicated this would be reflected in the quality of literacy experiences they provided. It is likely then, these children would be exposed to rich language interactions and be involved in experiences that scaffold opportunities to explore reading and writing within the home and community context (Rodriguez & Tamis-LeMonda, 2011). However, while the

participants in this research were feeling confident about themselves and their literacy decisions, not all parents had the same perceptions about themselves. Therefore, it is necessary to ensure all parents have access to information and professionals concerning emergent literacy so they can be role models for their children, and create environments at home where literacy interactions are shared and valued.

It is common practise for educators in early learning centres and schools to arrange meetings with parents to obtain information about their children. The Australian Early Year Learning Framework values the knowledge parents share about their children with the educators (Sumison & Cheeseman, 2009). Parents were the experts when it came to sharing information about their child, so how do they evaluate their child's progress? Glascoe and MacLean (1990) reported that parents were able to utilise observation to make comparisons of children to understand how their child was progressing. This is consistent with the findings of this research. Parents monitored their child's emergent literacy development by employing 'comparison' as an informal method of judgement. Examples of judgements were evident during the interviews when parents described observations about other parents and compared other children to their own child. Lee openly compared his child's ability to write with other children's writing ability. Jill monitored children's progress and found out from parents what they were doing to help their children. Gemma was mindful about comparing children because all children develop at different rates and parents could easily be lulled into a false sense of security if comparisons were made between children not within the normal developing range. The results from the parent questionnaire supported the experiences of the interview participants. Living in the 21st century is full of social engagements, long working hours for parents and community involvement. Therefore, it is understandable that parents use informal judgement to measure their child's emergent literacy. Considering their busy lives, it is probable that the popularity of comparing children's progress was the result of the convenience it afforded active parents, obtaining results within moments of making an observation. Furthermore, the benefits of parents' informal assessment allowed them to identify areas of strengths and weaknesses and if required, seek assistance from experts in the community or as this research identified consult the internet for further information. Currently, there is minimal research available that deals with how parents

made judgements about their child's progress. Further investigation is required and suggestions for assistance are explored in Chapter 6.

There is much evidence to support how the home environment provided endless opportunities for children to be engaged in emergent literacy experiences. Activities concerning reading, writing and oral language present occasions to explore and improve young children's literacy outcomes. This research established that 21st century families preferred incidental compared to planned emergent literacy experiences. Throughout the interviews, parents provided lived experiences of incidental literacy experiences with their young children. The majority of questionnaire participants favoured incidental emergent literacy experiences compared to planned experiences. Furthermore, some interview participants described early literacy attempts to communicate and make meaning as 'pretending to read' and 'scribbling' for letter writing. While the parents held positive perceptions about emergent literacy and their own knowledge they neglected to identify the very early beginnings of emergent literacy and did not recognise these attempts as the basis of their child's literacy journey (Levy et al., 2006; Rohde, 2015; Teale, Hiebert, & Chittenden, 1987). It was likely that incidental learning opportunities were popular with parents because they required less organisation and time, they also occurred as part of the unfolding of everyday family life. These incidental occurrences offered parents the opportunity to understand what their child knew about reading and writing (Pappas & Brown, 1988). It was a chance for parents to scaffold their child's emergent literacy learning in a meaningful context (Levy et al., 2006). Parents are encouraged to be mindful when engaging in literacy experiences with their child in order to cater and extend their child's learning through such occurrences that follow their child's interest which in turn provide teachable moments.

In general, the parent participants made judgements about themselves, their child and their literacy choices. Parents involved in this research demonstrated they have a positive perception about their own literacy skills and knowledge. They felt confident in their literacy approach and selections they made for their children. In order to establish how their child was progressing, these parents relied on informal judgements. Parents measured their child's progress with children of a similar age. Incidental learning opportunities were favoured over planned literacy activities. While parents were comfortable with their literacy decisions, it seemed they did not always recognise

their child's early attempts to read and write, therefore missing the opportunity to engage in a valuable learning opportunity.

Guilt

Everybody experiences some form of guilt throughout their lives. Sometimes for some people, the feeling of guilt can be overwhelming, while at other times the feeling can be easily managed or is just a fleeting emotion, hardly felt at all (Tracy & Robins, 2006). Research conducted by Orlando (2019) identified guilt some parents endured when they allowed their child to engage in technology. The parents in this research were no exception to feeling guilt. Participants' experiences of guilt were many and varied and demonstrated what it was like to be a parent, raising a family and supporting a young child's emergent literacy in a rapidly ever-changing world.

This research uncovered 21st century parents' feelings of guilt during recollections of their lived experiences supporting their child's emergent literacy. A significant part of feeling guilty was associated with the use of digital technology. According to Goodwin (2014), 21st century parents experienced techno-guilt which stemmed from allowing children to use technology. This was consistent with the findings of this research. One interview participant, Amy, described how she allowed her child to watch television or use the iPad, etc. while she cooked dinner and expressed how it made her feel guilty. Sam, another participant felt guilty because he allowed his daughter to engage in technology because he was too lazy to organise an alternative activity. It was understandable that when parents were busy trying to organise a meal or were tired after a busy day at work, they resorted to something that was highly motivating and maintained a child's level of engagement for extended periods of time (Orlando, 2019). However, this was not a new concept. While iPads have only been in existence for the past ten years, television has certainly been around a lot longer. It has been used by parents to keep children entertained while they were busy. Goodwin (2014) advocated that parents should not feel ashamed for permitting their child to engage with technology. There were times when parents did need to utilise technology to calm, divert or entertain their child. Some of the interview participants' guilt surfaced because they were using technology as a babysitter to assist them to manage their day. Allowing their children to play on the iPad or watch television while they cooked dinner or completed other household duties filled them with guilt. As Goodwin

(2014) suggested, technology was another tool from the parent toolbox and should be referred to when other avenues have been exhausted. Providing other enjoyable activities for their child to be engaged in while parents were busy could lessen the guilt. Furthermore, parents could select applications or television programs that were educational. It is possible that relieving guilt could be assisted by guiding technology selections and developing meaningful sustained conversations about the application or program children have been watching. Such actions would allow parents to become more involved and aware of their child's technology experiences and possibly lessen the guilt they felt.

As discussed in Chapter 2 of the literature review, parent's role modelled use of technology and were in charge of their children's screen time. Their children were being raised in a digital world whereby they encountered digital technology at home, at school and in the wider community (Akhter, 2011). Children's screen time is another form of guilt parents endured and was revealed in this research. The internet provides many websites that keep parents informed about suitable amount of screen time for young children. The Australian Government Department of Health has screen time guidelines for parents and caregivers. These guidelines contain recommendations relating to the amount of screen time children should engage in each day. The Australian Government Department of Health's definition of screen time included television, computers, DVD's or additional electronic games. According to the Australian Health Department, children under 2 years of age should not have access to any screen time (Australian Government, 2019b). Huber et al. (2018) considered Australian children were exposed to more screen time than the guidelines stated by the Australian Department of Health, rendering the policy unhelpful to parents who were trying to make informed selections for their children's screen activities. Therefore, the Australian guidelines did not match what was actually happening in homes and contributed towards a sense of guilt in some parents. Technology was integrated into every facet of family life and was utilised by parents and children on a regular basis as sources of information, entertainment and communication. In January 2019, The Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health in the United Kingdom, released new screen time guidelines to assist parents manage their child's screen time. These guidelines provided different recommendations to that of the Australian Government. According to The Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health, there were no 'safe' amounts of

screen time because families were all different and therefore screen times should reflect those differences. They proposed that families negotiated thresholds with their children. If the Australian Government reviewed the guidelines to reflect what was occurring in Australian homes, this would allow parents the chance to make more informed decisions about their child's screen time. Furthermore, it would provide parents with the opportunity to make decisions about screen time associated with how the family engaged in technology and subsequently reduce the feelings of guilt some parents endured. Such a review would reflect family life in the 21st century.

Australia is a country filled with many nationalities. It is a popular country for people to emigrate to and begin a new life. Two out of the three English as a second language interview participants experienced feelings of guilt because they believed they were neglecting their own first language. Focusing on English made them feel guilty because they believed their child was lacking exposure to their culture. These participants felt disconnection from their own culture due to their geographical separation. Today, many families utilised technology to stay connected with loved ones who were geographically separated (McClure et al., 2015). While the Australian Government did not recommend children under 2 years of age accessing screen time, research conducted by McClure et al. (2015) and McClure et al. (2018) found many 21st century families were now turning to video chatting, using Skype or Facetime to connect with family and friends who are separated through distance. While Tammy already acknowledged she used Skype to stay in contact with her parents in Japan, she did not recognise it as an opportunity to alleviate her guilty feelings and further promote her own culture. Utilising video chat technology to remain connected to family and friends and expose their children to their culture was an excellent option for parents to maintain their first culture.

The perception of feeling guilty because they were doing enough to support their child's emergent literacy was a finding from this research. Interview participants Di, Tammy and Lee described feeling guilty because they thought they were not doing enough to support their child's emergent literacy. These findings from the interviews were in contrast to parents' perceptions from the data collected in the questionnaires. While it was difficult to determine if the questionnaire participants feel any guilt, 76.9% reported they spend enough time supporting their child's emergent literacy. Just like interview participants had different reasons for feeling guilty about not devoting

enough time engaging in emergent literacy activities with their child, the same could be said about the concept of time. It was possible that the differences in perceptions of what participants considered was 'enough time' to spend on emergent literacy activities might be quite diverse for various interview and questionnaire participants. Therefore, discrepancies in what was deemed to be 'enough time' may be the reason why there were differences between the interview participants and the questionnaire participants' responses. What might be enough time for one participant may not be for another.

Overall, this study highlighted 21st century parents' experiences of feeling guilty. Participants' perceptions of guilt were associated with technology, culture and lack of time supporting their child's emergent literacy. Parents were always going to have different perceptions and why one parent feels guilty may not result in guilty feelings in another person. Unlike 20th century parents, 21st century parents have the technology at their fingertips that allowed them to shape their children's screen experiences, giving them the power to create an environment that was open to endless opportunities for learning and communicating. Digital technology also allowed families to remain connected to family and friends who were separated by distance. It is possible that by making informed choices about how to optimise the benefits technology has to offer families, role modelling acceptable technology behaviour and co-viewing programs and games may help to ease the guilt some 21st century parents in this research endured.

Section Two: Supports for Emergent literacy

The second section of this research was related to answering the two subsidiary questions. The first question interview participants were asked to recall their lived experiences associated with what they perceived as helpful in supporting their child's emergent literacy.

Question 2B: What assists parents to support early literacy development in their young children in the 21st century?

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics in June 2019, there was a 7% rise from 14% to 21% in the last ten years in relation to families with couples who both worked full time and had young children. As a consequence of parents both working

there was an increase in parents accessing early childhood and care services which included occasional care, long day care, family day care, and preschool/kindergarten. Cleland et al. (2018) reported that Australia had seen an surge in families accessing care for children under the age of five years old. They claimed that more than 50% of children between the ages of two to three years old and 85% of children between the ages of four years and five years old received services from early childhood and care centres. The statistics in relation to early childhood care services provided by Cleland et al. (2018) may account for the findings of this research. The evidence from this research demonstrated that 21st century parents were accessing and valuing the information they received from outside agencies such as early learning centres in order to support their child's emergent literacy skills. It was likely that because parents were busy working, this required them to rely on interactions with early childcare educators and other agencies (speech pathologist, occupational therapist, physiotherapist etc.) to assist with their child's literacy development. Such interactions were deemed worthwhile and very supportive for parents who applied this advice to progress their child's literacy outcomes.

Written Questionnaire

Section 2B of the written questionnaire titled 'Support for Emergent Literacy' identifies aspects of emergent literacy in the areas of reading, writing and oral language that contribute to developing a foundation for literacy learning. This section of the questionnaire provides additional information to the interview participants' perceptions of support for emergent literacy.

Reading

The home literacy environment makes valuable contributions to children's learning (Niklas, Tayler, & Schneider, 2015; Nutbrown et al., 2017; Steiner, 2014). The socio-cultural view of how children learn developed by Vygotsky identified the importance of scaffolding learning with more knowledgeable others. Parents were bridge builders, they filled the gap between the child's world and that of the book (New, 2001). Parent behaviours during shared book interactions such as adding information, asking open ended questions, concentrating on print concepts and triggering abstract language were associated with children's later language skills (Roberts, Jurgens, & Burchinal, 2005).

This research has established that parents engaged in reading to their children. Furthermore, they acknowledged teachable moments during reading experiences. Such experiences followed the interest of the child and supported the 'in the moment context' for which the learning was taking place. The child took the lead and the parents followed by scaffolding the learning. Additionally, it seemed that personal home libraries were popular with the respondents of the questionnaire. Support for literacy at home, the incidence of reading, the amount of books owned and the variety of reading experiences help predict children's later literacy skills (DeTemple, 2001; Senechal, 2012). Owning books at home was convenient for parents and was likely the result of gifts from parents, family and friends and requests from children or recommendations from outside organisations and professionals such as librarians. The quantity of books owned by families indicated the likelihood of support for reading at home and therefore improved outcomes for young children (DeTemple, 2001). It is important parents support their child's emergent reading through shared book experiences and having books accessible to young children at home to enjoy independently.

Another form of support for emergent reading was associated in the conversations that flowed from reading together. Parents in this research believed they engaged in conversations with their children while reading together. Also, more parents talked about the pictures than asked questions. Research suggests that engaging in conversation while reading with children expands vocabulary and improves comprehension (Roskos & Neuman, 2014; Senechal, 2012; Sénéchal & Lefevre, 2014; Senechal et al., 1998). Depending on the age of the child, particularly very young children with limited vocabularies, parents may have felt more comfortable discussing the pictures compared to asking their child questions. Talking about pictures gave parents the chance to increase children's knowledge about characters, emotions, settings and plots. Evidence from this research found that 21st century parents were utilising experiences of reading together and provided informal and formal opportunities for learning that facilitated improved language and cognitive outcomes for their children (Senechal, 2012; Sénéchal & Lefevre, 2014; Senechal et al., 1998). By discussing the pictures and asking questions about the story, parents were setting a solid foundation upon which to further enhance literacy learning for their child.

Writing

Learning to write begins early in a child's life. Emergent writing skills include understanding the function and purpose of writing, scribbles to signify ideas, copying environmental print, letter and sound relationships when writing and a positive attitude towards print and writing (Neumann & Neumann, 2010). This research established that there was less support for writing than reading at home. The majority of questionnaire participants acknowledged they had stationery available for their children to access for writing and drawing. However, these parents were less inclined to engage in writing activities with their children. Parent coaching that concentrated on letter names and sounds and reading during shared experiences with children was essential to comprehending written language concepts (Levy et al., 2006; Rohde, 2015). Providing opportunities for writing allowed parents to involve children with print before they were able to read it (Levy et al., 2006). Additionally, learning about print and print sounds were not passive activities; instead parents have the chance to focus on the concepts of print that need to be learnt to support writing and reading (Levy et al., 2006). Role modelling writing for different purposes allowed children to observe how it was used to achieve different outcomes. Home writing experiences included shopping lists, birthday cards or labelling clothing which were purposeful in nature (Neumann & Neumann, 2010). Parents were busy people who were juggling raising a family and work and social life commitments. It was likely that their active lives and the time and effort it required to demonstrate and explain the skill are the reasons why it did not happen as often between parents and their children compared to reading which was much a more popular activity as identified in this research. It is important for parents to role model literate acts that include writing for different reasons to support knowledge and understanding and promote learning (Senechal, 2012).

Oral Language

The socio-cultural perspective acknowledges the power of social communication to alter the cognitive development of young children. (Berk, 2006; Berk & Winsler, 1995). Children gain knowledge and understanding through social interactions with people, conversations and through a variety of experiences (Fellowes & Oakley, 2010). Reading and writing are established on the foundation of oral language (Dickinson &

DeTemple, 1998; Dickinson & McCabe, 2001; Roskos, 2009). This research found that 21st century parents engaged in conversations with their children however, it was the type of conversation they participated in that was revealing. According to the results of the questionnaire, parents were more likely to recall past experiences with their child rather than engage in long conversations with them. There is a large body of evidence to support the benefits of parent and child interactions and the implications it has on literacy learning (Hart & Risley, 1995; Huttenlocher, Haight, Bryk, Seltzer, & Lyons, 1991; Suskind, 2015; Weinberger, 1996). The lack of effort on parent's behalf influences children's learning. Children learn vocabulary and use language from incoming speech so therefore the amount of vocabulary growth is a reflection of the efforts of parents' speech (Huttenlocher et al., 1991). Developing oral language, children require receptive and expressive language in order to support comprehension for speaking and listening and vocabulary for creating contextual knowledge (Roskos, 2009). Some contributing factors why 21st century parents did not engage in long conversations might include the child's age and concentration, the child's interest in certain topics, distraction caused by technology, child's limited vocabulary and busy family and social life. It is imperative that parents make the effort to participate in long conversations with their children due the considerable potential it provides for building knowledge about the world around them and the benefits it presents for emergent literacy.

Another factor that supports emergent literacy is the ability to hear rhyme. This research identified that rhyming remained a popular emergent literacy activity of 21st century parents. The majority of questionnaire respondents played rhyming games with their child therefore developing phonemic awareness skills which were a part of emergent literacy. The identification of hearing if two words rhyme was the first step on the journey towards developing phonemic awareness (Fellowes & Oakley, 2010). Bryant et al. (1990) claimed that rhyming leads to hearing phonemes which helped children learn about the alphabet in the form of letter sound relationships. The significance of rhyme was already acknowledged by this research in Chapter 2 of the literature review. Many books available for young children these days consist of rhyme stanzas with clear rhythmic arrangements in syllables that made it easy for parents to play rhyming games with their children (Shaw, 2014). Playing rhyming games and reading books that rhyme are pleasurable activities for parents to engage in with their

children. Rhyming games can be played anywhere and with little, if any preparation and are not considered challenging for parents because they can already hear, read and record sounds in words. When 21st century parents read rhyming books and played rhyming games they were developing the rhyming component of phonemic awareness by helping their child to tune their ears into be able to hear sounds in speech (Roskos, 2009). It is advised that parents take the opportunity to play rhyming games with their children in order to develop phonemic awareness skills which underpins a child's ability to form letter sound relationships used in reading and writing (Bryant et al., 1990).

Section Three: Factors that Hinder Support for Emergent Literacy

Question 3C: What hinders parents in supporting early literacy development in their young children in the 21st century?

The third and final subsidiary question in this research was associated with the identification of what hinders 21st century parents from engaging in emergent literacy activities with their child at home. The interview parents as well as the questionnaire participants had the opportunity to identify elements that hindered them from engaging in emergent literacy activities.

This research has established that it 21st century parents considered a 'lack of time' was the main reason that hindered them from supporting their child's emergent literacy. A phenomenal result of 11 out of 12 interview participants associated a 'lack of time' as the main reason that hindered them from spending more time being involved in emergent literacy activities with their child. These results were also consistent with the answers from the questionnaire. Even though participants in the questionnaire perceived they spent enough time supporting their child's emergent literacy skills, 74.3% of questionnaire respondents considered that it was actually a 'lack of time' that was responsible for hindering them from engaging in literacy activities with their child at home. It appeared that the perception of feeling deprived of time interfered with parents' opportunities to support their child. Research associated with parenting suggested that while parents felt time deprived they should consider that it was not only the amount of time they spent with their child, it was also the quality of how they spend the time that was very important (Hsin & Felfe, 2014). This can also be said for supporting young children's literacy. Regular literacy

experiences can be achieved by selecting a time each day so that it becomes part of their family routine makes it easier to manage and something parents and children can look forward to undertaking together. Accordingly, it is essential that parents include spending time with their child on a regular basis a priority, by engaging in quality literacy experiences even when it cannot be sustained for long periods.

Life in the 21st century continues to evolve to meet the new desires and demands of its residents. Closely associated with this perception of a 'lack of time' was the identification of the concept of 'work commitments' which also hindered parents from supporting their child's emergent literacy. There is conflicting research to support that maternal employment impacts young children's cognitive development. Baum Ii (2003) stated that while mothers returning to work did influence young children's cognitive development, it was offset by the positive influences of family income. Other research has identified small but significant effects upon children's cognitive outcomes associated with maternal employment in the first 12 months post birth though, the effects were reduced when maternal employment commenced after the first 12 months (J. Hill, Waldfogel, Brooks-Gunn, & Han, 2005). Conversely, research conducted by Hsin and Felfe (2014) identified that working mothers exchanged the quantity of time for quality time with their children. Furthermore, working mothers were more inclined to part-take in structured activities which was found to positively influence children's cognitive development. (Hsin & Felfe, 2014) also found that not all time spent with parents or participating in unstructured activities facilitated a child's cognitive development. Parents involved in this research thought that a lack of time and work commitments hindered them from supporting their child's emergent literacy. Consequently, in the light of the findings by Hsin and Felfe (2014) working parents are encouraged parents to think about how they can create quality literacy time filled with meaningful experiences while also balancing work commitments.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

Chapter Summary

This research explores 21st century parents' perceptions of how they support their child's emergent literacy skills. It seeks to give meaning to parents' interpretations of their experiences and in doing so, determine what helps and prevents them from developing their child's emergent literacy skills during the preschool years. This chapter begins with identifying the strengths of this research. It then moves on to acknowledging the limitations the research presents. This is followed by recommendations and implications for further research. The chapter ends with concluding remarks from the researcher.

Strengths of the study

The most significant strength of this study is the new knowledge derived from the identification of four superordinate themes of 1. Guilt, 2. Influence, 3. Judgement and 3. Family Life and their 13 associated sub themes. These themes reveal parents' real-life experiences related with how they approach supporting their child's emergent literacy in the 21st century. The themes facilitate a deeper understanding of the socio-cultural perspective through parents' values, attitudes and behaviours, and consequently enable new understandings about parents' perceptions connected to emergent literacy. The themes also reveal parents' beliefs about what supports and hinders them when engaging in literacy experiences with their young children. These themes show how parents perceive their experiences supporting their young child's emergent literacy skills and provide updated knowledge of how parents and the home environment they create is influenced by ever changing world around them.

Smith et al. (2009) consider interpretation is motivated from the participants' words and should not be influenced from the outside. So as to form close alignment of the participants' words and meanings, I needed to take time to reflect upon my own historical knowledge. Developing interpretations about the participants' words, I believe that my 30 years teaching experience and working with the parents of young children has helped with my understanding and interpretation of parents' lived experiences. I also acknowledge that this historical knowledge may have also been an

influence that may impact upon how I understood something (Tuohy et al., 2013). Identifying my historical knowledge, and balancing that with recognising the skill it provides me during the interpretation and analysis phases of this research, is considered as a strength of this study.

A strength of this research is associated with the identification of how 21st century families are using technology to support their child's emergent literacy. Presently, there is little research that relates the changing dynamics of 21st century families and how they utilise technology to develop their child's literacy. This research provides evidence of the impact technology has as a tool parents are now referring to as a way to support their child's emergent literacy.

The results of this research confirm the important findings of seminal research in the early 1980s and therefore is considered as a strength of this research. Twenty-first century parents now live in more culturally diverse societies that influence values and attitudes towards parenting and have access to real time information though 24/7 technology. Consequently, this research identifies the important roles parents, families, and the community play developing young children's emergent literacy. This finding supports earlier research evidence associated with the home environment and family literacy.

Limitations of the Study

Central to the IPA method are the lived experiences of the research participants. The lived experiences are linked with subjective and reflective procedures of interpretation (Reid, Flowers, & Larkin, 2005). This interpretation represents one researcher's perception at one juncture in time. This may be considered by some as a limitation because it is only one person's point of view. The aim of IPA research is to ensure that the interpretation the researcher offers is a trustworthy one and should not be considered the only trustworthy interpretation possible from the text (Smith et al., 2009).

Another limitation of IPA is that the findings from IPA research are idiographic in nature (Pringle, Drummond, McLafferty, & Hendry, 2011). Findings are considered in the light of their theoretical transferability as opposed to empirical generalisability (Pringle et al., 2011; Smith et al., 2009). This means that the interview findings are

concerned with the participants of the study and are not considered to be representative of the general population (Pringle et al., 2011; Smith et al., 2009). It is up to the reader to make connections between IPA analysis and relevant literature, their own knowledge and understandings and by doing so enable them to convey the findings to persons in similar situations (Smith et al., 2009).

Sample

IPA interpretations are developed through the process of the hermeneutic circle. Interpretation is formed by looking at the individual word, then looking at the text as a whole. Moving from individual words to whole sentences assists with the interpretation of the text. Moving backwards and forwards through the text, the researcher is able to think about the text in different ways. This might be considered a limitation because interpretation of the text can always go deeper and it is up to the researcher to determine the end point of interpretation. Consequently, advocate for a small sample size of one to four participants in order to truly gather a rich analysis. The sample size used in this analysis was 12 and considered large for IPA analysis. Having a large sample size may have prevented from developing a deeper analysis and interpretation of the participants' text (Larkin, Watts, & Clifton, 2006; Pringle et al., 2011; Reid et al., 2005).

A purposive sampling strategy was utilised to ensure the research question contained meaning for the participant (Creswell, 2009) . All participants were volunteers and were selected because they all had one common element; they cared for a child between 12 months and 4 years of age. The interview participants were a mix of male and female and included three who were English as a Second Language Learners whose first languages were Spanish, Japanese and Serbo-Croatian. Some may believe this is a limitation because of the specific group the research was directed towards, therefore preventing other possible participants the opportunity to participate (Pringle et al., 2011). Furthermore, participants who volunteered were more interested in literacy than those who did not volunteer potentially giving a biased perspective. Finally, participants were restricted to metropolitan areas and did not include participants from the country. Representing city parents' perceptions and not country parents' perceptions may be considered as having a narrow view of the phenomena and a limitation to the study.

Data Collection

A limitation associated with participant interviews and the questionnaire was the validity of information. Issues of validity are related to understanding and honesty. IPA requires relies upon the voice of participants to be honest during the interview phase and in their responses by written questionnaire (Creswell, 2009; Reid et al., 2005). It is not possible to check if participants understand the questions posed on the questionnaire or truthfulness contained in the responses of the written questionnaire due to their anonymity. Furthermore, the researcher is obliged to accept the interview responses. Meanings are clarified during the interview or at a later date, but there is no way of determining if the interviewee is recalling events and experiences that actually occurred.

Utilising a questionnaire to identify parental experiences maybe considered another limitation of this study. Questionnaires only provide information about behaviours and attitudes and are not considered to be representative of determining one's 'lived experiences.' Furthermore, numerical data collected from questionnaires is generalised to a population in quantitative research (Creswell, 2009). This research was therefore only able to use the data from the questionnaires to provide additional information to the findings in the qualitative data collection and not in the light of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis.

This research involved 12 interview participants and 102 questionnaire respondents. A purposive sampling was used in this research and the only requirement was that participants cared for children between the ages of 12 months and four years of age. No information was collected about their socioeconomic status, how many children they cared for, the age of their children or languages spoken a home. This may be considered a limitation of the research because such information could have been utilised to assist with explaining the research results. Not obtaining such information could be viewed as limiting the depth of the interpretation of the results.

Recommendations

Technology is part of everyday life and commonplace in 21st century homes (Laidlaw et al., 2019; Orlando, 2019). Twenty-first century parents are unable to rely on their childhood memories or their parents as role models because such technology did not

exist when they were young and their parents were raising families. This research recommends that online parent workshops would be feasible considering parents' high engagement with the internet. (Baker et al., 2017). These parent workshops would focus on the numerous opportunities technologies offers for learning, to communicate, to be creative and to be entertained. Furthermore, parent education is required focusing on their role in guiding their child's screen time and balancing it with outdoor activities (McPake, Plowman, & Stephen, 2013; Nikken & Schols, 2015; Plowman & McPake, 2013; Sarachan, 2011; Stephen et al., 2008; Walker, 2013). Finally, online workshops that educate parents about the benefits of engaging in co-viewing technology experiences such as programs, video chats and games gives parents the chance to explain what is happening, make meaning and scaffold their child's knowledge, consequently improving learning outcomes. Ultimately, parents are role models for their children. Parent education is vital for parents and learning outcomes for their children because their attitudes, values and use of technology are replicated in the way their children use technology (Lauricella et al., 2015; Plowman et al., 2008).

Twenty-first century parents are influenced by literacy experiences in childhood which impact upon how they support their child's emergent literacy. Research conducted by Plowman et al. (2008) indicate that parenting choices are shaped by their childhood experiences. Therefore, this research recommends that the government considers utilising technology in order to support all parents and in particular the ones that do not have the experiences in childhood to draw upon, to assist their child's emergent literacy. As families are integrating technology into every facet of their lives, it is advised that an application be developed for mobile devices that serve as a source of memories (videos and tools) for parents relating to emergent literacy development. It is recommended that the application is straightforward and easy to navigate. The aim of the application is to educate parents and support them to create a nurturing emergent literacy experiences similar to the lived childhood experiences recalled in this research which ultimately has a positive impact upon literacy learning children take to school.

This research recognises that many families are accessing technology to support their child's emergent literacy. Noorhidawati (2015) identifies mobile apps have become popular in supporting early childhood literacy. This research recommends that a consortium of parents, teachers and academics could also be established to evaluate applications and online games. This would allow parents to make more informed

choices about the applications and games they purchase to support their child's emergent literacy learning, and potentially improve literacy outcomes.

A significant finding of this research relates to how parents consider outside agencies to be the most supportive when developing their child's emergent literacy. Advice from the staff at early learning centres, speech pathologists, occupational therapists, library staff and child healthcare nurses are recorded as being very helpful sources of information for the development of emergent literacy. Therefore, it is recommended the Australian Government make more funds and training available to strengthen support programs that already exist in the community. This is particularly pertinent to programs associated with the fundamental learning which takes place in the first five years of a child's life.

Parents play a major role in developing young children's emergent literacy skills (Hart & Risley, 1995; Snow et al., 1991; Suskind, 2015; Teale & Sulzby, 1986). It is parents' choice about their use of time that creates the perception of 'a lack of time.' This research recommends that parents focus their thinking more along the lines of engaging in real quality literacy time the with their children and less about the quantity of time. While quantity of time is important, not all quantity of time parents spend with their children is quality. Research by Hsin and Felfe (2014) found that working mothers trade the quantity of time for quality time with their children and is usually in the form of structured activities. Such rethinking promotes utilising the time parents have available to provide quality enriching literacy activities, is a more proactive approach to ensure children receive the valuable support they need to develop their emergent literacy skills.

Implications for Future Research

This research provides the foundation upon which recommendations for further investigations are proposed.

The superordinate themes of Guilt, Influence, Judgement and Family life and their associated sub themes were revealed during the interpretation of the participants' interviews. They provide insight into living in the 21st century and would benefit from further exploration, particularly in light of recent changes that have taken place in society due to Covid-19, drought and bushfires. Our world is constantly changing and

evolving and such investigations associated with the superordinate themes and related sub themes would add to the information provided by this research.

Glascoe and MacLean (1990) report that parents use comparisons to measure their children's progress. This research is consistent with those findings and establishes that parents measure their child's development and make judgements about their child's progress by comparing them to other children of similar ages. While 21st century parents are accessing and valuing support from professionals in the community (speech pathologist, librarians, health nurse, occupational therapist, early learning centre staff) it is unclear as to what judgements and lived experiences prompted them to do so in the first place. Furthermore, it is unknown as to the implications these forms of parental judgements have on emergent literacy. Currently, there is minimal research relating to how parents evaluate their child's progress and the significance of such measurement on emergent literacy. Consequently, it is recommended that future research relates to how parents measure their child's development and what the implications are of such judgements on their child's emergent literacy.

Parents identify that a 'lack of time' hinders them from supporting their child's emergent literacy at home. Parents play a critical role in the development of a child's emergent literacy along with the home environment (Hart & Risley, 1995; Landry & Smith, 2006; Sylva et al., 2011). Perceptions of time can be different for each person. What one person's concept of time is may be in contrast to another person's concept of time. Since it is 'a lack of time' that hinders parents from supporting their child's emergent literacy at home, it is therefore recommended that further IPA investigations be conducted into identifying how parents perceive a 'lack of time.' Furthermore, research involving how they manage their time and what creates the perception of a lack of time could also be incorporated into this investigation.

Technology is part of 21st century family culture with its use integrated in many facets of everyday life. This research finds that 21st century parents are accessing technology to support their child's emergent literacy. The degree to which parents utilise technology to support their child's emergent literacy is reflected in their attitudes and values towards it. Overall, the majority of questionnaire and interview participants acknowledge using technology to assist their child's emergent literacy. Therefore, the migration towards the use of technology in the form of apps, games and e-books to

support emergent literacy requires further investigation. It is especially important that research focuses on how popular apps, games and e-books impact emergent literacy learning. Furthermore, this research would help guide parents' screen time selections to ensure optimal literacy learning opportunities for young children.

The participants in this research are largely recruited through early learning centres and were working or studying fulltime. Consequently, the perspective of the lived experiences of 21st century stay at home parents are not overly represented in this research. Further research involving the perceptions of parents who do stay at home to care for their children would provide additional information concerning how parents support their child's emergent literacy in the 21st century.

Concluding Remarks

As a qualitative research methodology and philosophy, Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis has been extensively used predominately in the areas of psychology and health sciences. This investigation contributes to the small amount of research to date, conducted using IPA in the field of education. Furthermore, this is the first IPA research to be applied to 21st century parents' perceptions of supporting their child's emergent literacy. Understanding the lived experiences of 21st century parents inevitably assists parents, educators and government to facilitate and improve emergent literacy opportunities for young children in the 21st century. In addition, this IPA research identifies the need for future research if 21st century parents are to continue to effectively support their child's emergent literacy and the knowledge and understanding they take with them to formal schooling.

Bibliography

ACARA. (2020). Literacy. Retrieved from https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/general-capabilities/literacy/

Akhter, P. (2011). An extensive review on children's learning process through their use of digital technology at home, *held in* http://dx.doi.org:10.1109/SKIMA.2011.6163197

Annandale, K. (2004). *First steps reading resource book: Addressing current literacy challenges* (2nd ed.. ed.). Port Melbourne, VIC: Harcourt.

Anton, E., Janice, P., Julia, C., Alexis, A., Simon, B., Maria, P., & Miriam, G. (2015). About 10%25 of teaching students have failed to meet required standards of literacy and numeracy.

Antonacci, P. (2004). *Portraits of literacy development: Instruction and assessment in a well-balanced literacy program, K-3*. Upper Saddle River, N.J: Pearson/Merrill/Prentice Hall.

Aram, D., & Levin, I. (2011). Home support of children in the writing process: Contributions to early literacy. In D. K. Dickinson & S. B. Neuman (Eds.), *Hanbook of early literacy research* (Vol. 3, pp. 189-199). Ney York: The Guilford Press.

Arnold, D. H., & Doctoroff, G. L. (2003). The early education of eocioeconomically disadvantaged children. *Annu. Rev. Psychol., 54*(1), 517-545. http://dx.doi.org/10.1146/annurev.psych.54.111301.145442

Australian Government. (2019a). Fact Sheet: Early years online safety program. Retrieved from file:///C:/Users/Walsh/Downloads/fact-sheet-early-years-online-safety-program_0%20(1).pdf

Australian Government. (2019b). Inactivity and screen time. Retrieved from https://www.health.gov.au/internet/publications/publishing.nsf/Content/gug-indig-hb~inactivitiy

Baker, S., Sanders, M., & Morawska, A. (2017). Who uses online parenting support? A cross-sectional survey exploring Australian parents' internet use for parenting. *Journal of Child and Family Studies, 26*(3), 916-927. http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s10826-016-0608-1

Baroody, A. E., & Diamond, K. E. (2012). Links among home literacy environment, literacy interest, and emergent literacy skills in preschoolers at risk for reading difficulties. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education, 32*(2), 78-87. http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0271121410392803

Barratt-Pugh, C., & Allen, N. (2011). Making a difference: Findings from better beginnings a family literacy intervention programme. *The Australian Library Journal, 60*(3), 195-204. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00049670.2011.10722616

Barratt-Pugh, C., & Maloney, C. (2015). Growing Better Beginnings: An evaluation of a family literacy program for pre-schoolers. *Issues in Educational Research, 25*(4), 364-380.

Barratt-Pugh, C., & Rohl, M. (Eds.). (2000). *Literacy learning in the early years*. Crows Nest, NSW: Allen & Unwin.

Baum Ii, C. (2003). Does early maternal employment harm child development? An analysis of the potential benefits of leave taking. *Journal of Labor Economics, 21*(2), 409-448. http://dx.doi.org/10.1086/345563

Belsky, J., & de Haan, M. (2011). Annual research review: Parenting and children's brain development: the end of the beginning. *Journal of child psychology and psychiatry, and allied disciplines, 52*(4), 409-428. http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1469-7610.2010.02281.x

Benner, P. (2012). Interpretative phenomenology. In L. Given (Ed.), *The Sage encyclopedia of qualitative research methods* (pp. 462-464). Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications.

Bennett, K., K., Weigal, D., J., & Martin, S. S. (2002). Children's acquisition of early literacy skills: Examining family contributions. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 17*, 295-317.

Benveniste, J. (2013). A practice guide for working with families from pre-birth to eight years: Engaging families in the early childhood development story. In E. Standing Council on School & C. Early (Eds.): (Standing Council on School Education and Early Childhood).

Berk, L. E. (2006). *Child development* (7th ed.). Boston: Pearson.

Berk, L. E., & Winsler, A. (1995). *Scaffolding children's learning: Vygotsky and early childhood education* Washington: National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Biggerstaff, D., & Thompson, A. R. (2008). Interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA): A qualitative methodology of choice in healthcare Research. *Qualitative Research in Psychology, 5*(3), 214-224. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14780880802314304

Bleakley, A., Jordan, A. B., & Hennessy, M. (2013). The relationship between parents and children's television viewing. *Pediatrics, 132*(2), 364. http://dx.doi.org/10.1542/peds.2012-3415

Boudreau, D. (2005). Use of a parent questionnaire in emergent and early literacy assessment of preschool children. *Language, Speech, and Hearing Services in Schools, 36*(1), 33-47. http://dx.doi.org/10.1044/0161-1461(2005/004)

Bourdieu, P. (1977). Cultural reproduction and social reproduction. In J. Karabel & A. H. Halsey (Eds.), *Power and ideology in education* (pp. 487-511). New York: Oxford University Press.

Britto, P., Fuligni, A., & Brooks-Gunn, J. (2006). Reading ahead: Effective interventions for young children's early literacy development. In D. Dikinson, K & S. B. Neuman (Eds.), *Handbook of Early Literacy Research* (Vol. 2, pp. 311-332). New York: The Guilford Press.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1994). Nature-nurture reconceptualized in developmental perspective: A bioecological model. *Psychological Review, 101*(4), 568-586.

Brown, A. W., Gourdine, R. M., Waites, S., & Owens, A. P. (2013). Parenting in the Twenty-First Century: An Introduction. *Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment: Parenting in the Twenty-First Century, 23*(2), 109-117. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10911359.2013.747410

Bryant, P. E., Maclean, M., Bradley, L. L., & Crossland, J. (1990). Rhyme and alliteration, phoneme detection, and learning to read. *Developmental Psychology, 26*(3), 429-438. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0012-1649.26.3.429

Bryman, A. (2007). Barriers to Integrating Quantitative and Qualitative Research. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research, 1*(1), 8-22. http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/2345678906290531

Bulger, M. E., Mayer, R. E., & Metzger, M. J. (2014). Knowledge and processes that predict proficiency in digital literacy. *Reading and writing: An Interdisciplinary Journal, 27*(9), 1567-1583. http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s11145-014-9507-2

Burnett, C., Merchant, G., Pahl, K., & Rowsell, J. (2014). The (im)materiality of literacy: the significance of subjectivity to new literacies research. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education, 35*(1), 90-103. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01596306.2012.739469

Butler, D. (1979). *Reading begins at home: Preparing children for reading before they go to school* Richmond, Vic.: Primary Education.

Chall, J. S. (1967). *Learning to read: The great debate. An inquiry into the science, art, and ideology of old and new methods of teaching children to read, 1910-1965*.

Clay, M. (1972). *Reading: The patterning of complex behaviour*. London: Heinemann.

Clay, M. (1986). Young readers and their cultural connections. *Australian Journal of Reading, 9*(4), 239-250.

Cleland, P., Byrne, R., Vidgen, H., Irvine, S., Farrell, A., & Gallegos, D. (2018). Advancing Australia's agenda for young children's health and wellbeing: Empirical insights into educator knowledge, confidence and intentions in promoting children's learning, eating, active play and sleep (LEAPS). *Australasian Journal of Early Childhood, 43*(2), 55-63. http://dx.doi.org/10.23965/AJEC.43.2.06

Cohen, M., & Omery, A. (1994). A (1994) schools of phenomenology: Implications for research. In J. Morse, M (Ed.), *Critical issues in qualitative research methods*. Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications.

Combs, B., E. (2011). *Assessing and addressing literacy needs: Cases and instructional strategies*. Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications.

Crawford, P. A. (1995). Early literacy: Emerging perspectives. *Journal of Research in Childhood Education, 10*(1), 71-86. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/02568549509594689

Creswell, J. W. (2007a). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research* Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications.

Creswell, J. W. (2007b). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.

Creswell, J. W. (2009). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.

Creswell, J. W. (2012). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (4th ed. ed.). Boston: Pearson.

Creswell, J. W., & Plano Clark, V. L. (2018). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications.

Crotty, M. (1998). *The foundations of social research: Meaning and perspective in the research process* St Leonards, NSW: Allen & Unwin.

Danby, S., Davidson, C., Theobald, M., Scriven, B., Cobb-Moore, C., Houen, S., . . . Thorpe, K. (2013). Talk in activity during young children's use of digital technologies at home. *Australian Journal of Communication, 40*(2), 83-99.

Dennis, L. R., & Horn, E. (2011). Strategies for supporting early literacy development. *Young Exceptional Children, 14*(3), 29-40. http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1096250611420553

DeTemple, J. M. (2001). Parents and children reading books together. In D. Dickinson, K & P. Tabors, O. (Eds.), *Beginning literacy with language* (pp. 31-51). Baltimore: Paul H Brookes.

Dickinson, D. K., & DeTemple, J. M. (1998). Putting parents in the picture: Maternal reports of preschoolers' literacy as a predictor of early reading. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 13*(2), 241-261.

Dickinson, D. K., & McCabe, A. (2001). Bringing it all together: The multiple origins, skills, and environmental supports of early literacy. *Learning Disabilities Research & Practice, 16*(4), 186-202. http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/0938-8982.00019

Dowling, M. (2004). Hermeneutics: An exploration. *Nurse Researcher, 11*(4), 30-39.

Dowling, M. (2007). From Husserl to van Manen. A review of different phenomenological approaches. *International Journal of Nursing Studies, 44*, 131-142.

Durkin, D. (1966). *Children who read early: Two longitudinal studies*. New York: Teachers' College Press.

Evans, M. A., & Shaw, D. (2008). Home grown for reading: Parental contributions to young children's emergent literacy and word recognition. *Canadian Psychology, 49*(2), 89-95. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0708-5591.49.2.89

Fellowes, J., & Oakley, G. (2010). *Language, literacy and early childhood education*. South Melbourne, VIC: Oxford University Press.

Finlay, L. (2012). Debating phenomenological methods. In N. Friesen, C. Hennriksson & T. Saevi (Eds.), *Hermeneutic phenomenology in education: Method and practice*. Boston: SENSE.

Flood, A. (2010). Understanding phenomenology. *Nurse Researcher, 17*(2), 7-15. http://dx.doi.org/10.7748/nr2010.01.17.2.7.c7457

Freeman, L., & Bochner, S. (2008). Bridging the gap: Improving literacy outcomes for Indigenous students. *Australian Journal of Early Childhood, 33*(4), 9-16.

Freire, P. (1996). *Pedagogy of the oppressed/Paulo Freire; translated by Myra Bergman Ramos* (New rev. ed.. ed.). London: Penguin.

Gadamer, H. G. (1989). *Truth and method* (2nd ed.). New York: Crossroad.

Garvey, D. (2017). *Nurturing personal, social and emotional development in early childhood: A practical guide to understanding brain development and young children's behaviour*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Geanellos, R. (1998). Hermeneutic philosophy. Part I: Implications of its use as methodology in interpretive nursing research. *Nursing Inquiry, 5*(3), 154-163. http://dx.doi.org/10.1046/j.1440-1800.1998.530154.x

Geanellos, R. (2000). Exploring Ricoeur's hermeneutic theory of interpretation as a method of analysing research texts. *Nursing Inquiry, 7*(2), 112-119. http://dx.doi.org/10.1046/j.1440-1800.2000.00062.x

Gesell, A. (1925). Pre-school development and education.Vol. 121, pp. 148-150.

Glascoe, F. P., & MacLean, W. E. (1990). How parents appraise their child's development. *National Council on Family Relations, 39*(3), 280-283. http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/584872

Goodwin, K. (2014). Techno shaming: Why it needs to stop. Retrieved from
https://drkristygoodwin.com/techno-shaming-why-it-needs-to-stop/

Halcomb, E., & Hickman, L. (2015). Mixed methods research. *Nursing standard 29*(32), 41-
47. http://dx.doi.org/10.7748/ns.29.32.41.e8858

Hammond, M. (1991). *Understanding phenomenology* Oxford, UK: B. Blackwell.

Hannon, P., Nutbrown, C., & Morgan, A. (2020). Effects of extending disadvantaged
families' teaching of emergent literacy. *Research Papers in Education, 35*(3), 310-
336. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/02671522.2019.1568531

Hart, B., & Risley, T. R. (1995). *Meaningful differences in the everyday experience of young
american children*. Baltimore: Paul H Brrokes.

Hart, B., & Risley, T. R. (1999). *The social world of children learning to talk*. Baltimore:
Paul H Brookes.

Haynes, R. (2010). Contribution of the home environment to preschool children's emergent
literacy skills. In J. E. Gonzalez (Ed.): (ProQuest Dissertations Publishing).

Higgs, J., Paterson, M., & Kinsella, E. A. (2012). Hermaneutic inquiry: Inperpretation and
understanding in research practice. *Contemporary Psychotherapy, 4*(1), 1-12.

Hill, J., Waldfogel, J., Brooks-Gunn, J., & Han, W.-J. (2005). Maternal employment and
child development: A fresh look using newer methods. *Developmental Psychology,
41*(6), 833-850.

Hill, S. (1997). Perspectives on early literacy and home-school connections. *Australian
Journal of Language and Literacy, 20*(4), 263-279.

Hill, S. (2006). *Developing early literacy: Assessment and teaching*. Prahran, Vic.: Eleanor
Curtain Publishing.

Hindman, A. H., & Morrison, F. J. (2012). Differential contributions of three parenting
dimensions to preschool literacy and social skills in a middle-income sample.
Merrill-Palmer Quarterly, 58(2), 191-223.
http://dx.doi.org/10.1353/mpq.2012.0012

Hoffman, E. B., & Whittingham, C. E. (2017). A neighborhood notion of emergent literacy:
One mixed methods inquiry to inform community learning. *Early Childhood
Education Journal, 45*(2), 175-185. http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s10643-016-0780-3

Holloway, D., Green, L., & Love, C. (2014). All about the APPS: Parental mediation of pre-
schooler's digital lives. *Media International Australia, 153*(1), 148-156.
http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1329878X1415300117

Holloway, D., Hoddon, L., Green, L., & Stevenson, K. J. (2019). The parent-child-app
learning assemblage. Scaffolding early childhood learning through app use in the
family home. In N. Kucirkova, J. Roswell & G. Falloon (Eds.), *The Routledge*

international hanbook of learning with technology in early childhood (pp. 210-218). Retrieved from
https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/curtin/reader.action?docID=5723040&ppg=235

Holly, K., Washington, C., & Washington, J. A. (2006). Recent research on the language and literacy skills of African American students in the early years. In D. Dickinson, K & S. Neuman (Eds.), *Handbook of early literacy research* (Vol. 2, pp. 198-201). New York: The Guildford Press.

Hood, M., Cobnlon, E., & Andrews, G. (2008). Preschool home literacy practices and children's literacy development: A longitudinal analysis. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 100*(2), 252-271.

Hoskisson, K. (1977). Reading readiness: Three viewpoints. *The Elementary School Journal, 78*(1), 45-52. http://dx.doi.org/10.1086/461082

Hsin, A., & Felfe, C. (2014). When does time matter? Maternal employment, children's time with parents and child development. *Demography, 51*(5), 1867-1894. http://dx.doi.org/doi.org10.1007/s13524-014-0334-5

Huber, B., Highfield, K., & Kaufman, J. (2018). Detailing the digital experience: Parent reports of children's media use in the home learning environment. *British Journal of Educational Technology, 49*(5), 821-833. http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/bjet.12667

Huttenlocher, J., Haight, W., Bryk, A., Seltzer, M., & Lyons, T. (1991). Early vocabulary growth: Relation to language input and gender. *Developmental Psychology, 27*(2), 236-248. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0012-1649.27.2.236

Jager-Adams, M. (1990). *Beginning to read: Thinking and learning about print*. Cambridge, MASS: MIT Press.

Jay, J., & Rohl, M. (2005). Conducting a family literacy program: Challenges and successes. *International Journal of Early Childhood, 37*(1), 57-78.

Johnston, P., & Rogers, R. (2001). Early literacy development: The case for informal assessment. In D. K. Dickinson & S. B. Neuman (Eds.), *Handbook of Early Literacy Research* (Vol. 1, pp. 377-389). New York: The Guilford Press.

Jurka Lepičnik, V., & Pija, S. (2014). The information communication technology in the home of four year old preschool children. *Journal of Process Management. New Technologies, 2*(1), 91-97.

Kilbride, J. (2016). Literacy and the digital divide. *English in Aotearoa,*(89), 33-35.

Kim, Y.-S. (2009). The relationship between home literacy practices and developmental trajectories of emergent literacy and conventional literacy skills for Korean children.

An Interdisciplinary Journal, 22(1), 57-84. http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s11145-007-9103-9

Kirkman, J., Dadds, M., & Hawes, D. (2018). Development and validation of the knowledge of parenting Ssrategies scale: Measuring effective parenting strategies. *Journal of Child and Family Studies, 27*(10), 3200-3217. http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s10826-018-1165-6

Laidlaw, L., O'Mara, J., & So-Har Wong, S. (2019). Researching in the iworld. From home to beyond. In N. Kucirkova, J. Rowsell & G. Falloon (Eds.), *The Routledge international handbook of learning with technology in early childhood* (pp. 182-194). Milton: Routledge. Retrieved from https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/curtin/reader.action?docID=5723040&ppg=223

Landry, S., & Smith, K. E. (2006). The influence of parenting on emergent literacy skills. In D. K. Dickinson & S. B. Neuman (Eds.), *Handbook of early literacy research* (Vol. 2, pp. 135-148). New York: The Guilford Press.

Larkin, M., Watts, S., & Clifton, E. (2006). Giving voice and making sense in interpretative phenomenological analysis. *Qualitative Research in Psychology, 3*(2), 102-120. http://dx.doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp062oa

Lauricella, A. R., Wartella, E., & Rideout, V. J. (2015). Young children's screen time: The complex role of parent and child factors. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology, 36*, 11-17. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.appdev.2014.12.001

Lave, J. (1991). *Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

Leseman, P. P. M., & Tuijl, v. (2006). Cultural diversity in early literacy: Findings in Dutch studies. In D. K. Dickinson & S. Neuman (Eds.), *Handbook of early literacy research* (Vol. 2, pp. 211-228). New York: The Guildford Press.

Levy, B. A., Gong, Z., Hessels, S., Evans, M. A., & Jared, D. (2006). Understanding print: Early reading development and the contributions of home literacy experiences. *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology, 93*(1), 63-93. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jecp.2005.07.003

Lilly, E., & Greene, C. (2004). *Developing partnerships with families through children's literature*. Colombus Ohio: Pearson Merrill Prentice Hall.

Makin, L. (2007). *Literacies in childhood: Changing views, challenging practice* (2nd ed.). Marrickville, N.S.W.: Elsevier.

Mangan, A., & Hoel, T. (2019). Technologies, affordances, children and embodied reading. A case for interdisciplinarity *The Routldege international handbook of learning with*

technology in early childhood (pp. 235-247). Milton: Routledge. Retrieved from https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/curtin/reader.action?docID=5723040&ppg=235

Manolitsis, G., Georgiou, G. K., & Parrila, R. (2011). Revisiting the home literacy model of reading development in an orthographically consistent language. In D. K. Dickinson & S. B. Neuman (Eds.), *Hanbook of early literacy research* (Vol. 3). New York: The Guildford Press.

Mantilla, A., & Edwards, S. (2019). Digital technology use by and with young children: A systematic review for the Statement on Young Children and Digital Technologies. *Australasian Journal of Early Childhood, 44*(2), 182-195. http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1836939119832744

Marsh, J., Hannon, P., Lewis, M., & Ritchie, L. (2017). Young children's initiation into family literacy practices in the digital age. *Journal of Early Childhood Research, 15*(1), 47-60. http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1476718X15582095

Marvin, C. A., & Ogden, N. J. (2002). A home literacy inventory: Assessing young children's contexts for emergent literacy. *Young Exceptional Children, 5*(2), 2-10.

Maureen, I., Meij, H., & Jong, T. (2018). Supporting literacy and digital literacy development in early childhood education using storytelling activities. *Journal of OMEP: l'Organisation Mondiale pour l'Education Prescolaire, 50*(3), 371-389. http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s13158-018-0230-z

Maxwell, J. A. (2013). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications.

McClure, E., R., Chentsova-Dutton, Y. E., Barr, R. F., Holochwost, S. J., & Parrott, G. W. (2015). Facetime doesn't count: Video chat as an exception to media restrictions for infants and toddlers. *International Journal of Child-Computer Interaction, 6*, 1-6. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.ijcci.2016.02.002

McClure, E., R., Chentsova-Dutton, Y. E., Holowost, S., J., Parrott, W. G., & Barr, R. (2018). Look at that! Video chat and joint visual attention development among babies and toddlers. *Child Development, 89*(1), 27-36. http://dx.doi.org/10.111/cdev.12833

McPake, J., Plowman, L., & Stephen, C. (2013). Pre-school children creating and communicating with digital technologies in the home. *British Journal of Educational Technology, 44*(3), 421-431. http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8535.2012.01323.x

McPake, J., Stephen, C., Plowman, L., Sime, D., & Downey, S. (2004). Already at a disadvantage? ICT in the home and children's preparation for primary school.

Retrieved from https://www.york.ac.uk/res/e-society/projects/3/already_disadvantage.pdf

Miles, M., Chapman, Y., Francis, K., & Taylor, B. (2013). Exploring heideggerian hermeneutic phenomenology: A perfect fit for midwifery research. *Australian College of Midwives, 26*, 273-276.

Mitchell, P., Ross, J., McHardy, G., Freebody, P., Remington, A., & Peace, M. (2008). Reading And Writing Guidelines Revamped: The National Cirriculum Board has unveiled plans to revamp the guidelines governing the teaching of reading and writing in schools, to help combat declining literacy levels.

Moll, L. C. (1992). Funds of knowledge for teaching: Using a qualitative approach to connect homes and classrooms. *Theory into practice, 21*(2), 132-142.

Moran, D. (2000). *Introduction to phenomenology*. London: Routledge.

Morphett, M. V., & Washburne, C. (1931). When should children begin to read? *The Elementary School Journal, 31*(7), 496-503. http://dx.doi.org/10.1086/456609

Morrison, F. J., McDonald Connor, C., & Bachman, H. J. (2006). The transition to school. In D. K. Dickinson & S. B. Neuman (Eds.), *Handbook of early literacy reserach* (Vol. 2, pp. 375-394). New York: The Guilford Press.

Moustakas, C. E. (1994). *Phenomenological research methods*. Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications.

Neuman, S., Copple, C., & Bredekamp, S. (2000). Learning to read and write *National Association for the Education of Young Children*, *held in Washington DC,*

Neumann, M. M. (2014). An examination of touch screen tablets and emergent literacy in Australian pre-school children. *Australian Journal of Education, 58*(2), 109-122. http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0004944114523368

Neumann, M. M. (2016a). A socioeconomic comparison of emergent literacy and home literacy in Australian preschoolers. *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal, 24*(4), 555-566. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/1350293X.2016.1189722

Neumann, M. M. (2016b). Young children's use of touch screen tablets for writing and reading at home: Relationships with emergent literacy. *Computers & Education, 97*, 61-68. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2016.02.013

Neumann, M. M. (2018a). Maternal scaffolding of preschoolers' writing using tablet and paper-pencil tasks: Relations with emergent literacy skills. *Journal of Research in Childhood Education, 32*(1), 67-80. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/02568543.2017.1386740

Neumann, M. M. (2018b). Using tablets and apps to enhance emergent literacy skills in young children. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 42*, 239-246. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.ecresq.2017.10.006

Neumann, M. M., Finger, G., & Neumann, D. L. (2017). A conceptual framework for emergent digital literacy. *Early Childhood Education Journal, 45*(4), 471-479. http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s10643-016-0792-z

Neumann, M. M., & Neumann, D. (2010). Parental strategies to scaffold emergent writing skills in the pre-school child within the home environment. *Early Years, 30*(1), 79-94.

Neumann, M. M., & Neumann, D. L. (2017). The use of touch-screen tablets at home and pre-school to foster emergent literacy. *Journal of Early Childhood Literacy, 17*(2), 203-220. http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1468798415619773

New, R. S. (2001). Early literacy and developmentally appropriate practice: Rethinking the paradigm. In S. Neuman & D. K. Dickinson (Eds.), *Handbook of early literacy research* (Vol. 1, pp. 245-262). New York: The Guildford Press.

Nikken, P., & Schols, M. (2015). How and why parents guide the media use of young children. *Journal of Child and Family Studies, 24*(11), 3423-3435. http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s10826-015-0144-4

Niklas, F., Tayler, C., & Schneider, W. (2015). Home-based literacy activities and children's cognitive outcomes: A comparison between Australia and Germany. *International Journal of Educational Research, 71*, 75-85.

Nistler, R. J., & Maiers, A. (1999). Exploring home-dchool connections: A family literacy perspective on improving urban schools. *Education and Urban Society, 32*(1), 3-17. http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0013124599032001001

Noorhidawati, A. (2015). How do young children engage with mobile apps? Cognitive, psychomotor and affective perspective. *87*, 385-395.

Nutbrown, C., Clough, P., Levy, R., Little, S., Bishop, J., Lamb, T., & Yamada-Rice, D. (2017). Families roles in children's literacy in the UK throughout the 20th century. *Journal of Early Childhood Literacy, 17*(4)

O'Donoghue, T. (2018). *Planning your qualitative research thesis and project: An introduction to interpretivist tesearch in education and the social sciences* (2nd ed.). Milton: Routledge.

Orlando, J. (2019). Young children's home technology use. Responsive qualitative methods for a sensitive topic. In N. Kucirkova, J. Roswell & G. Falloon (Eds.), *The Routledge international hanbook of learning with technology* (pp. 196-209). Retrieved from

https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/curtin/reader.action?docID=5723040&ppg=235

Otto, B. (2008). *Literacy development in early childhood: Reflective teaching for birth to age eight* Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Pearson/Merrill Prentice Hall.

Ozturk, G., Hill, S., & Yates, G. C. R. (2016). Girls, boys and early reading: Parents' gendered views about literacy and children's attitudes towards reading. *Early Child Development and Care, 186*(5), 703-715. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03004430.2015.1053477

Pappas, C. C., & Brown, E. (1988). The development of children's sense of the written story register: An analysis of the texture of kindergarteners' "pretend reading" texts. *Linguistics and Education, 1*(1), 45-79. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0898-5898(88)80010-X

Patchan, M. M., & Puranik, C. S. (2016). Using tablet comupter to teach preschool children to write letters: Exploring the impact of extrinsic and intrinsic feedback. *Computers & Education, 102*, 128-137.

Piasta, S., Farley, K., & Justice, L. (2020). Exploring the nature of associations between educators' knowledge and their emergent literacy classroom practices. *Reading and Writing, 33*(6), 1399-1422. http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s11145-019-10013-4

Pietkiewicz, I., & Smith, J. A. (2012). A practical guide to using interpretative phenomenological analysis in qualitative research psychology. *Psychological Journal, 18*(2), 361-369.

Pinkham, A., & Neuman, S. B. (2012). Early literacy development. In B. H. Wasik (Ed.), *Handbook of Family Litearcy* (pp. 23-37). New York: Taylor & Francis.

Plowman, L. (2010). *Growing up with technology: Young children learning in a digital world* London: Routledge.

Plowman, L., & McPake, J. (2013). Seven myths about young children and technology. *Childhood Education, 89*(1), 27-33. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00094056.2013.757490

Plowman, L., McPake, J., & Stephen, C. (2008). Just picking it up? Young children learning with technology at home. *Cambridge Journal of Education, 38*(3), 303-319. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03057640802287564

Plowman, L., McPake, J., & Stephen, C. (2010). The technologisation of childhood? Young children and technology in the home. *Children & Society, 24*(1), 63-74. http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1099-0860.2008.00180.x

Plowman, L., Stephen, C., & McPake, J. (2010). Supporting young children's learning with technology at home and in preschool. *Research Papers in Education, 25*(1), 93-113. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/02671520802584061

Plowman, L., Stevenson, O., McPake, J., Stephen, C., & Adey, C. (2011). Parents, preschoolers and learning with technology at home: Some implications for policy. *Journal of Computer Assisted Learning, 27*(4), 361-371. http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2729.2011.00432.x

Plowman, L., Stevenson, O., Stephen, C., & McPake, J. (2012). Preschool children's learning with technology at home. *Computers & Education, 59*(1), 30-37. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2011.11.014

Pollio, H. R. (1997). *The phenomenology of everyday life* Cambridge, U.K: Cambridge University Press.

Porter, S. E., & Robinson, C. J. (2011). *Hermeneutics. An introduction to interpretive theory*. Grand Rapids, Michigan, USA: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

Prasad-Kafle, N. (2011). Hermeneutic phenomenological research method simplified. *Bodhi: An interdisciplinary Journal, 5*, 181-200.

Prensky, M. (2001). Digital natives, digital immigrants Part 1. *On the Horizon, 9*(5), 1-6.

Prensky, M. (2014). Changing of the guard. *Scholastic Administrator, 13*(6), 50-52.

Pringle, J., Drummond, J., McLafferty, E., & Hendry, C. (2011). Interpretative phenomenological analysis: A discussion and critique. *Nurse Researcher, 18*(3), 20-24. http://dx.doi.org/10.7748/nr2011.04.18.3.20.c8459

Reid, K., Flowers, P., & Larkin, M. (2005). Exploring lived experience. *Psychological Journal, 18*(1), 20-23.

Roberts, J., Jurgens, J., & Burchinal, M. (2005). The role of home literacy practices in preschool children's language and emergent literacy skills. *Journal of Speech, Language and Hearing Research, 48*, 345-359.

Robinson, M. (2007). *Child development and behaviour 0 - 8: A journey through the early years*. Buckingham: McGraw-Hill Education.

Rodriguez, E. T., & Tamis-LeMonda, C. S. (2011). Trajectories of the home learning environment across the first 5 years: Associations with children's vocabulary and literacy skills at prekindergarten. *Child Development, 82*(4), 1058-1075. http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8624.2011.01614.x

Rohde, L. (2015). The comprehensive emergent literacy model: Early literacy in context. *SAGE Open, 5*(1) http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/2158244015577664

Rosa, E. M., & Tudge, J. (2013). Urie Bronfenbrenner's theory of human development: Its evolution from ecology to bioecology. *Journal of Family Theory & Review, 5*(4), 243-258. http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/jftr.12022

Roskos, K. (2009). *Oral language and early literacy in preschool: Talking, reading and writing*. Newark, Del: International Reading Association.

Roskos, K., & Neuman, S. B. (2014). Best practices in reading. *Reading Teacher, 67*(7), 507-511. http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/trtr.1248

Sarachan, J. (2011). Limiting screen time is not the key to parenting in the digital age. *International Journal of Learning and Media, 3*(4), 1-5. http://dx.doi.org/10.1162/IJLM_a_00082

Sarantakos, S. (1993). *Social Research* South Melbourne: Macmillan.

Sarantakos, S. (2005). *Social research* (3rd ed.). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Schwandt, T. A. (2007). *The SAGE dictionary of qualitative inquiry* (3rd ed.). Los Angeles, California: SAGE Publications.

Sclafani, J. D. (2012). *The educated parent 2: Child rearing in the 21st century* (2nd ed.. ed.). Santa Barbara, CA: Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger.

Senechal, M. (2012). Child language and literacy development at home. In B. H. Wasik (Ed.), *Handbook of family literacy* (2nd ed., pp. 38-50). New York: Routledge.

Sénéchal, M., & Lefevre, J.-A. (2014). Continuity and change in the home literacy environment as predictors of growth in vocabulary and reading. *Child Development, 85*(4), 1552-1568. http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/cdev.12222

Senechal, M., Lefevre, J.-A., Thomas, E., & Daley, K. (1998). Differential effects of home literacy experiences on the development of oral and written language. *Reading Research Quarterly, 33*(1), 96. http://dx.doi.org/10.1598/RRQ.33.1.5

Shaw, R. (2014). *Interpretative phenomenological analysis in applied health research* London: SAGE Publications.

Sloan, A., & Bowe, B. (2014). Phenomenology and hermeneutic phenomenology: The philosophy, the methodologies, and using hermeneutic phenomenology to investigate lecturers' experiences of curriculum design. *Qual Quant, 48*(3), 1291-1303. http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s11135-013-9835-3

Smith, J., Flowers, P., & Larkin, M. (2009). *Interpretative phenomenological analysis: Theory, methods and research*. London: SAGE.

Snow, C. E., Barnes, W. S., Chandler, J., Goodman, I. F., & Hemphill, L. (1991). *Unfulfilled expectations: Home and school influences on literacy*. Cambridge, MASS: Harvard University Press.

Solsken, J. W. (1995). *Literacy, gender, and work in families an in school*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex.

Spink, A., Danby, S., Mallan, K., & Butler, C. (2010). Exploring young children's web searching and technoliteracy. *Journal of Documentation, 66*(2), 191-206. http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/00220411011023616

Standish, E. J. (1959). Teaching children to read. Part III: Readiness to read. *Educational Research, 2*(1), 29-38. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/0013188590020103

Steiner, L. M. (2014). A family literacy intervention to support parents in children's early literacy learning. *Reading Psychology, 35*(8), 1-33. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/02702711.2013.801215

Stephen, C., McPake, J., Plowman, L., & Berch-Heyman, S. (2008). Learning from the children: Exploring preschool childrens encounters with ICT at home. *Journal of Early Childhood Research, 6*(2), 99-117. http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1476718X08088673

Stephen, C., & Plowman, L. (2008). Enhancing learning with information and communication technologies in pre-school. *Early Child Development and Care, 178*(6), 637-654. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03004430600869571

Sumison, J., & Cheeseman, S. (2009). Belonging, being and becoming. *Rattler* (91), 16-18.

Suskind, D. (2015). *Thirty million words: Building a child's brain*. New York: Dutton.

Sylva, K., Chan, L. S., Melhuish, E., Sammons, P., Siraj-Blatchford, I., & Taggart, B. (2011). Emergent literacy environments: Home and preschool influences on children's literacy development. In S. Neuman & D. K. Dickinson (Eds.), *Handbook of early literacy research* (Vol. 3, pp. 97-117). New York: The Guilford Press.

Tashakkori, A., & Creswell, J. W. (2007). Editorial: The new era of mixed methods. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research, 1*(1), 3-7. http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/2345678906293042

Taylor, D. (1991). *Learning denied*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Teale, W. H., Hiebert, E. H., & Chittenden, E. A. (1987). Assessing young children's literacy development. *The Reading Teacher, 40*(8), 772-777.

Teale, W. H., & Sulzby, E. (Eds.). (1986). *Emergent literacy: Writing and reading*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex Pub. Corp.

Teale, W. H., Whittingham, C. E., & Hoffman, E. B. (2020). Early literacy research, 2006–2015: A decade of measured progress. *Journal of Early Childhood Literacy, 20*(2), 169-222. http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1468798418754939

Thomas, N., Colin, C., & Leybaert, J. (2020). Interactive reading to improve language and emergent literacy skills of preschool children from low socioeconomic and

language-minority backgrounds. *Early Childhood Education Journal,*
http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s10643-020-01022-y

Thorpe, K., Hansen, J., Danby, S., Zaki, F. M., Grant, S., Houen, S., . . . Given, L. M.
(2015). Digital access to knowledge in the preschool classroom: Reports from
Australia. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 32*, 174-182.
http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.ecresq.2015.04.001

Torgeson, J., K., & Mathes, P., G. (2000). *A basic guide to understanding, assessing and
teaching phonological awareness*. Austin, TX: Pro-ed.

Tracy, J. L., & Robins, R. W. (2006). Appraisal antecedents of shame and guilt: Support for
a theoretical model. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 32*(10), 1339-1351.
http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0146167206290212

Tudge, J., R. H., Mercon-Vargas, E. A., Liang, Y., & Payir, A. (2017). *The importance of
Urie Bronfenbrenner's bioecological theory for early childhood education.* New
York: Routledge. L. Cohen, E & S. Waite - Stupiansky (Eds.), *Theories of Early
Childhood Education: Developmental, Behaviourist and Critical* (pp. 45-57).
Retrieved from
http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/curtin/reader.action?docID=4816699

Tuohy, D., Cooney, A., Dowling, M., Murphy, K., & Sixmith, J. (2013). An overview of
interpretive phenomenology as a research methodology. *Nurse Researcher, 20*(6),
17-20.

Turner, M. (2009). *An exploration of kindergarten children's multiliteracte practices in their
homes* Doctor of Education University of Wollongong, Wollongong.

van Manen, M., & Adams, C. A. (2010). *Phenomenology*. Dordrecht, Netherlands: Springer.

Vaughn, S., Linan-Thompson, S., Pollard-Durodola, S., Mathes, P. G., & Cardenas Hagan,
E. (2006). Effective interventions for english language learners (Spanish-English) at
risk for reading difficulties. In D. K. Dickinson & S. Neuman (Eds.), *Handbook of
early literacy research* (Vol. 2, pp. 185-197). New York: The Guildford Press.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind and society: The development of higher mental processes*.
Cambridge, MA: Harved University Press.

Walker, S. (2013). Young children and screen time. *Every Child, 19*(4), 34-35.

Wasik, B. H., & van Horn, B. (2012). The role of family literacy in society. In B. H. Wasik
(Ed.), *Handbook of family literacy* (2nd ed.). New York: Routledge.

Watson, R. (2015). Quantitative research. *Nursing standard (Royal College of Nursing
(Great Britain): 1987), 29*(31), 44-48. http://dx.doi.org/10.7748/ns.29.31.44.e8681

Weigel, D. J., Martin, S. S., & Bennett, K. K. (2005). Ecological influences of the home and the child-care Center on preschool-age children's literacy development *Reading Research Quarterly, 40*(2), 204-233.

Weigel, D. J., Martin, S. S., & Bennett, K. K. (2006). Contributions of the home literacy environment to preschool-aged children's emerging literacy and language skills. *Early Child Development and Care, 176*, 357-378.

Weinberger, J. (1996). *Literacy goes to school. The parent's role in young children's literacy learning*. London: Paul Chapman Pty Ltd.

Wentzel, K. R. (2014). *Motivating students to learn* (4. ed.). Hoboken: Hoboken: Taylor and Francis.

Western Australian Government. (2020). Best Beginnings. Retrieved from https://www.dcp.wa.gov.au/SupportingIndividualsAndFamilies/Pages/BestBeginnings.aspx

Whitehurst, G. J., & Lonigan, C. J. (1998). Child development and emergent literacy. *Child Development, 69*(3), 848-872. http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8624.1998.tb06247.x

Yardley, L. (2000). Dilemmas in qualitative health research. *Psychology & Health, 15*(2), 215-228. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/08870440008400302

Yelland, N., & Masters, J. (2007). Rethinking scaffolding in the information age. *Computers and Education, 48*(3), 362-382. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2005.01.010

Yeo, L. S., Ong, W. W., & Ng, C. M. (2014). The home literacy environment and preschool children's reading skills and interest. *Early Education and Development, 25*(6), 791-814. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10409289.2014.862147

Zabatiero, J., Straker, L., Mantilla, A., Edwards, S., & Danby, S. (2018). Young children and digital technology: Australian early childhood education and care sector adults' perspectives. *Australasian Journal of Early Childhood, 43*(2), 14-22. http://dx.doi.org/10.23965/AJEC.43.2.02

Appendix A Possible Interview Questions: Parent Interview

[Reiterate information, sign consent form and remind that no identifying details will be used]. Thanks for agreeing to be part of our research investigation called Navigating the literacy landscape of the twentieth century: parents and families supporting young children's emergent literacy.

I'd like to ask you a few questions about your experiences.

(Research Question1: How do twenty-first century parents experience supporting the emergent literacy skills of their young children at home?)

1. What does being literate mean to you?
2. How do you feel when you are engaged in literacy activities with your child at home? Can you give me an example?
3. What knowledge and skills are needed to support a child's literacy development? Why?
4. What do you believe is an adequate amount of time to support a child's literacy development within the day to day running of family?
5. How important is of the role of parents in supporting their child's literacy at home? Why?
6. How does your family, extended family and the community influence how you support your child's literacy at home?
7. Do your friends influence how you support your child's literacy at home? Why or why not?
8. Where do you get information on literacy development from?

Subsidiary questions:

 (*2A How do parents support early literacy development in their young children in the 21st century?*

Can you give me examples of reading activities at home?)

1. Where do you get your ideas to support your child's reading development from?
2. Do you go to your local library?
3. Can you tell me about those visits?
4. Can you give me examples of writing activities at home?
5. Where do you get your ideas to support your child's writing development from?
6. Can you give me examples of what you do to support your child's oral language development at home?
7. Can you tell me why do you do that?
8. Where do you get your ideas to support your child's oral language development from?
9. Can you tell me about taking your child out to experience activities in the community?
10. Do you use technology with your child to develop literacy skills?
11. Do you engage in unplanned, incidental literacy activities during the course of the day with your child at home or out in the community?
12. What is the best help you have had in supporting literacy activities at home?
13. What hinders parents in supporting early literacy development in their young children in the 21st century?
14. Is there anything that prevents you from supporting your child's literacy activities at home?
15. What do you think is a challenge for parents today in encouraging their children's literacy development?

(3C What hinders parents in supporting early literacy development in their young children in the 21st century?)

1. Is there anything that prevents you from supporting your child's literacy activities at home?
2. What do you think is a challenge for parents today in encouraging their children's literacy development?

Prompts: "Can you give me an example?" or "Can you tell me more about that?"

Appendix B Parent questionnaire

Parent Questionnaire   Curtin University
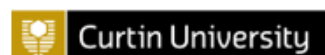
☐ I have received information regarding this research and had an opportunity to ask questions. I believe I understand the purpose, extent and possible risks of my involvement in this project and I voluntarily consent to take part.

Navigating the literacy landscape of the twenty first century: parents and families supporting young children's emergent literacy.

Parent attitudes towards literacy			
1 How would you rate your understanding of emergent literacy? (pretend reading & writing, letters & sounds, book knowledge and oral language)			
Poor	Developing	Good	Excellent
2 How important do you think it is for parents to engage in literacy activities? (eg: reading books & writing, identifying letters & sounds, book knowledge and oral language)			
Not important	Important	Most important	Essential
3 Do you believe that you devote an appropriate amount of time to developing your child's emergent literacy skills?			
No	Sometimes	Mostly	Definitely
4 How confident do you feel that the literacy choices that you make for your child are making a difference to your child's emergent literacy skills? (pretend reading & writing, letters & sounds, book knowledge and oral language)			
Not confident	Not very confident	Mostly confident	Very confident
5 How much do you rely on your own experiences from when you were a child in order to support your child's emergent literacy skills?			
Never	Sometimes	Most of the time	All the time
6 Do you ever feel frustrated when developing your child's literacy skills.			
Never	Sometimes	Most of the time	All the time
7 Do you ever feel confused about what literacy experiences you could engage in with your child?			
Never	Sometimes	Most of the time	All the time
8 Do you believe it easy to think of literacy activities to engage in with your child?			
Never	Sometimes	Most of the time	All the time
9 Do your friends influence how you support your child's emergent literacy?			
Never	Sometimes	Most of the time	All the time

1

181

10 Does your family and extended family influence how you support your child's emergent literacy?			
Never	Sometimes	Most of the time	All the time

11 Does the media influence how you support your child's emergent literacy?			
Never	Sometimes	Most of the time	All the time

12 Do you believe children need to develop emergent literacy skills before they begin formal schooling?			
No	Sometimes	Mostly	Definitely

13 Do you believe it should be the school's job to develop your child's emergent literacy skills?			
No	Sometimes	Mostly	Definitely

14 Do you ever compare your child's literacy skills to other children you might know who are the same age?			
No	Sometimes	Mostly	Definitely

15 How confident do you feel about your own literacy skills when supporting your child's emergent literacy skills?			
Not confident	Not very confident	Mostly confident	Very confident

16 Do you believe that when your child is playing with other children it contributes to developing their literacy skills?			
No	Sometimes	Mostly	Definitely

17 Do you believe that when you are playing with your child it contributes to developing your child's literacy skills?			
No	Sometimes	Mostly	Definitely

Factors that support emergent literacy (reading, writing, oral language)

1 How often do you read to your child?			
NEVER	TWICE A WEEK	3 OR 4 TIMES A WEEK	EVERY DAY

2 Do you get your ideas to support your child's reading development from books?			
NO	SOMETIMES	MOSTLY	ALL THE TIME

3 Do you get your ideas to support your child's reading development from the media?			
NO	SOMETIMES	MOSTLY	ALL THE TIME

4 Do you go to your local library and borrow books?

NO	SOMETIMES	MOSTLY	ALL THE TIME

5 Do you own books at home that you read to your child?

NO	SOME	MANY	A LARGE AMOUNT

6 Do you ask your child questions while you are reading to them?

NO	SOMETIMES	MOSTLY	ALL THE TIME

7 Do you talk about the pictures when you are reading with your child?

NO	SOMETIMES	MOSTLY	ALL THE TIME

8 Do you teach the names of the letters of the alphabet when reading with your child?

NO	SOMETIMES	MOSTLY	ALL THE TIME

9 Do you teach the sounds of the letters of the alphabet when reading with your child?

NO	SOMETIMES	MOSTLY	ALL THE TIME

10 Do you do writing activities with your child at home? (eg: write letters of the alphabet, child's name)

NO	SOMETIMES	MOSTLY	ALL THE TIME

11 Do you get your ideas to support your child's writing development from books?

NO	SOMETIMES	MOSTLY	ALL THE TIME

12 Do you get your ideas to support your child's writing development from the media?

NO	SOMETIMES	MOSTLY	ALL THE TIME

13 Have you purchased writing activity books for your child to complete? (eg: alphabet, number books)

NO	SOMETIMES	MOSTLY	ALL THE TIME

14 Have you ever downloaded worksheets from the internet that focus on writing for your child to complete?

NO	SOMETIMES	MOSTLY	ALL THE TIME

15 Do you have paper and pencils readily available for your child to use?

NO	SOMETIMES	MOSTLY	ALL THE TIME

16 Do you play rhyming games with your child?

NO /TOO YOUNG	SOMETIMES	MOSTLY	ALL THE TIME

17 Does your child ask you questions about events and experiences they have had or are having?

NO/TOO YOUNG	SOMETIMES	MOSTLY	ALL THE TIME

18 Do you have long conversations with your child (each person taking many turns to talk)?

NO/ TOO YOUNG	SOMETIMES	MOSTLY	ALL THE TIME

19 Do you get your ideas to support your child's oral language development from books?

NO	SOMETIMES	MOSTLY	ALL THE TIME

20 Do you get your ideas to support your child's oral language development from the media?

NO	SOMETIMES	MOSTLY	ALL THE TIME

21 Do you talk about experiences you have had with your child? (eg: zoo visit, going to the park, footy)

NO	SOMETIMES	MOSTLY	ALL THE TIME

22 Do you make up stories for your child to listen to?

NO	SOMETIMES	MOSTLY	ALL THE TIME

23 Do you use technology to support literacy with your child? eg: (iPad apps, phone, tablet, internet games)

NO	SOMETIMES	MOSTLY	ALL THE TIME

24 Do you set aside time each day to participate in planned literacy activities with your child?

NO	SOMETIMES	MOSTLY	ALL THE TIME

25 Do you engage in incidental literacy activities during the course of the day with your child at home or out in the community?

NO	SOMETIMES	MOSTLY	ALL THE TIME

Factors that inhibit supporting emergent literacy (reading, writing, oral language)

1 Does 'lack of time' prevent you from supporting your child's emergent literacy development?

NO	SOMETIMES	MOSTLY	ALL THE TIME

2 Does your 'lack of patience' prevent you from supporting your child's emergent literacy development?

NO	SOMETIMES	MOSTLY	ALL THE TIME

3 Does your 'work commitments' prevent you from supporting your child's emergent literacy development?

NO	SOMETIMES	MOSTLY	ALL THE TIME

4 Does your lack of 'knowledge/skills' about emergent literacy prevent you from supporting your child's emergent literacy development?

NO	SOMETIMES	MOSTLY	ALL THE TIME

5 Does your 'health' prevent you from supporting your child's emergent literacy development?

NO	SOMETIMES	MOSTLY	ALL THE TIME

6 Does 'other family commitments' prevent you from supporting your child's emergent literacy development?

NO	SOMETIMES	MOSTLY	ALL THE TIME

7 Does your belief that the 'school should be teaching these skills and not me,' prevent you from supporting your child's emergent literacy development?			
NO	SOMETIMES	MOSTLY	ALL THE TIME

8 Do your cultural beliefs prevent you form supporting your child's emergent literacy development?			
NO	SOMETIMES	MOSTLY	ALL THE TIME

Do you have any further reasons regarding what **help**s or **prevents** you supporting your child's emergent literacy? If so, please write your reasons in the space below.

Thank you for completing this anonymous questionnaire.

Appendix C Parent interview information letter

Dear Parent,

Navigating the literacy landscape of the twenty-first century: parents and families supporting young children's emergent literacy.

My name is Meg Walsh and I am a Doctorate of Education student from Curtin University. I am conducting a research project that aims to investigate how parents, living in a fast transforming 21st century, experience and support their pre-school child's early literacy development. I will also be investigating what assists and hinders parents, supporting the emergent literacy of their pre-school child.

I would like to invite you to take part in the project because you have a child between the ages of twelve months and four years old.

What does participating in the research involve?
Parents will be invited to participate in an initial short informal interview, which will be conducted by myself on a day, time and location agreed to by the parent participant. I would like to audio-record these sessions for transcription purposes only. For the purpose of the research a second and possibly third interview will be organised once the transcripts have been analysed to discuss the interpretation of the interviews.

Do I have to take part?
No. Participating in this research project is entirely voluntary. This decision should always be made completely freely. I will respect all decisions made without question.

What if I wanted to change my initial decision?
I do not anticipate any risks associated with participating in this research project. Participation is voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any time and there will be no penalty for doing so. If you would like to take part in this project, please complete, sign and return the consent form.

Once a decision is made to participate, you can change your mind at any time. There will be no consequences relating to any decision you make regarding participation, other than those already described in this letter.

What will happen to the information I give, and is privacy and confidentiality assured?
All information collected during the research project will be treated confidentially and will be de-identified so that you remain anonymous. All data collected will be stored securely on the Curtin premises for seven years after the project has concluded and will then be confidentially destroyed. The information will be presented in a written thesis, in which your identity will not be revealed.

The identity of parent participants and associated playgroups will not be disclosed at any time. Participant privacy, and the confidentiality of information disclosed by participants, is assured at all times.

The data will be used only for this project, and will not be used in any extended or future research without first obtaining explicit written consent from participants.

A thesis will be written containing the findings of this research as part of the Doctor of Education program at Curtin University. You may be sent a copy of the thesis on request.

Is this research approved?
The research has been approved by the Curtin University's Human Ethics Research Committee (HERC).

Who do I contact if I wish to discuss the project further?
If you have any questions about the research project or require further information you may contact me:

Mrs Meg Walsh
Doctor of Education Student
Curtin University
Kent Street

Bentley WA 6102

Phone███████████
Email: m.walsh@postgrad.curtin.edu.au

If you have any questions or complaints and wish to contact an independent person about this research project, you may contact:
Research Ethics Officer
Phone: 6304 2170
Email: research.ethics@ecu.edu.au

How do I become involved?
If you have had all questions about the project answered to your satisfaction, and are willing to become involved, please complete the **Consent Form** on the next page.

This information letter is for you to keep.

Thank you for your time,

Yours sincerely,

Meg Walsh

Appendix D Parent interview consent form

Curtin University

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

HREC Project Number:	
Project Title:	**Navigating the literacy landscape of the twenty-first century: parents and families supporting young children's emergent literacy.**
Principal Investigator:	Mrs Meg Walsh Doctor of Education Student
Version Number:	1
Version Date:	**1/6/16**

☐ I have read the information statement version listed above and I understand its contents.
☐ I believe I understand the purpose, extent and possible risks of my involvement in this project.
☐ I voluntarily consent to take part in this research project.
☐ I have had an opportunity to ask questions and I am satisfied with the answers I have received.
☐ I understand that this project has been approved by Curtin University Human Research Ethics Committee and will be carried out in line with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007) – updated May 2015.
☐ I understand I will receive a copy of this Information Statement and Consent Form.

☐ I do	☐ I do not	consent to being audio-recorded

☐ I do	☐ I do not	consent to be contacted about future research projects that are related to this project

☐ I do	☐ I do not	consent to the storage and use of my information in future ethically-approved research projects related to this (project/disease)

Participant Name	
Participant Signature	
Date	
Email or phone number if agree to future contact	

<u>Declaration by researcher:</u> I have supplied an Information Letter and Consent Form to the participant who has signed above, and believe that they understand the purpose, extent and possible risks of their involvement in this project.

Researcher Name	Mrs Meg Walsh
Researcher Signature	
Date	

Appendix E Early Learning Centre cover letter

Curtin University

November 23, 2016

Dear Parent

My name is Meg Walsh and I am one of the Year 4 teachers ▮▮▮▮ and a part-time Education Doctorate student at Curtin University. I am conducting a research project that aims to investigate how parents experience and support their pre-school child's early literacy development in the 21st century.

I have developed an anonymous questionnaire to gather data about how parents support their child's emergent literacy skills before formal schooling begins. I would like to invite you to take part in this project if you have a child between the ages **of twelve months and four years old.** The questionnaire will take no more than ten minutes to complete. It will contribute towards acquiring a valuable insight into parents' experiences when developing the emergent literacy skills of their young children, at home and in the community.

If you have a child between the ages of twelve months and four years of age and are willing to complete the questionnaire, please do so before **Friday December 15**. It can be placed in the envelope I have provided and returned to your child's Early Learning Centre teacher. Copies of the Curtin University ethics information letter related to this research has also been supplied to your Early Learning Centre. If you require additional information about this research project, I can be contacted via email on the details provided below.

Regards

Meg Walsh
▮▮▮▮▮▮▮

m.walsh@postgrad.curtin.edu.au

Appendix F Parent questionnaire information letter

Navigating the literacy landscape of the twenty first century: parents and families supporting young children's emergent literacy.

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION STATEMENT

HREC Project Number:	2016/0190
Project Title:	Navigating the literacy landscape of the twenty first century: parents and families supporting young children's emergent literacy.
Principal Investigator:	Associate Professor Jenny Jay Associate Professor for Early Childhood Studies/School of Education Course Coordinator for Early Childhood Studies
Student researcher:	Mrs Meg Walsh

What is the Project About?

I am conducting a research project that aims to investigate how parents, living in a fast transforming 21st century, experience and support their pre-school child's early literacy development. I will also be investigating what assists and hinders parents, supporting emergent literacy of their pre-school child. I would like to invite you to take part in the project because you have a child between the ages of twelve months and four years old.

Who is doing the Research?

My name is Meg Walsh and I am a Doctorate of Education student from Curtin University under the supervision of Associate Professor Jenny Jay and Dr Jennifer Howell. This research will contribute towards obtaining a Doctorate of Education and is a Research Training Scheme funded by the Australian Government. If you choose to complete a questionnaire there will be no costs to you and you will not be paid for participating in this project.

Why am I being asked to take part and what will I have to do?

Parents of children between the ages of twelve months and four years are invited to complete questionnaire. Parents will be invited to anonymously complete a questionnaire about the literacy practices of their family. The questions relate to how you play, talk, read and write with your child. You will be asked to circle the most appropriate answer to your own circumstances. This questionnaire will only have to be completed once and will be anonmyus. Once completed you can put in the envelope provided at the play group or Early Learning Centre where your child attends or it can be handed directly to me.

Are there any benefits' to being in the research project?

There may be no direct benefit to you from participating in this research. Sometimes, people appreciate the opportunity to discuss their feelings. The new knowledge gained from this research will inform parent groups, Early Learning Centres and schools. It will provide them with a valuable insight into challenges and effective literacy supports for parents as they navigate their way through the literacy landscape.

Megan Walsh 17685504
Curtin University is a trademark of Curtin University of Technology.
Page 1
CRICOS Provider Code 00301J (WA)

190

Are there any risks, side-effects, discomforts or inconveniences from being in the research project?

I do not anticipate any risks associated with participating in this research project. Apart from giving up your time, I do not expect that there will be any risks or inconveniences associated with taking part in this study.

Who will have access to my information?

The following people will have access to the information we collect in this research: the research team and the Curtin University Ethics Committee. The information collected in this research will be non-identifiable (anonymous). This means that we do not need to collect individual names or information is anonymous and will not include a code number or name. No one, not even the research team will be able to identify your information. Any information we collect and use during this research will be treated as confidential. The following people will have access to the information we collect in this research: the research team and the Curtin University Ethics Committee

How information will be stored?

Electronic data will be password-protected and hard copy data (including video or audio tapes) will be in locked storage. The information we collect in this study will be kept under secure conditions at Curtin University for 7 years after the research has ended and then it will be destroyed.

Publication of results

A thesis will be written containing the findings of this research as part of the Doctor of Education program at Curtin University.

Will you tell me the results of the research?

I am not able to send you any results from this research as I do not collect any personal information to be able to contact you.

Do I have to take part in the research project?

Taking part in a research project is voluntary. It is your choice to take part or not. You do not have to agree if you do not want to. If you decide to take part and then change your mind, that is okay, you can withdraw from the project. You do not have to give us a reason; just tell us that you want to stop. Please let us know you want to stop so we can make sure you are aware of any thing that needs to be done so you can withdraw safely. If you choose not to take part or start and then stop the study, it will not affect your relationship with the University, staff or colleagues. If you chose to leave the study, we will use any information collected unless you tell us not to.

What happens next and who can I contact about the research?

If you decide to take part in this research we will ask you to sign the consent form. By signing it is telling us that you understand what you have read and what has been discussed. Signing the consent indicates that you agree to be in the research project and have your information used as described. Please take your time and ask any questions you have before you decide what to do. You will be given a copy of this information and the consent form to keep

If you have any questions about the research project or require further information you may contact me or my supervisor:

Megan Walsh 17685504
Curtin University is a trademark of Curtin University of Technology.

Page 2
CRICOS Provider Code 00301J (WA)

191

Navigating the literacy landscape of the twenty first century: parents and families supporting young children's emergent literacy.

Mrs Meg Walsh
Doctor of Education Student
Curtin University
Kent Street
Bentley WA 6102

Phone: █████████

Email: m.walsh@postgrad.curtin.edu.au

Associate Professor Jenny Jay
Associate Professor for Early Childhood
Studies/School of Education
Course Coordinator for Early Childhood
Studies
Curtin University
Kent Street
Bentley WA 6102

Phone: 9266 2170

Email: jenny.jay@curtin.edu.au

Curtin University Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) has approved this study (HREC number 2016/0190. Should you wish to discuss the study with someone not directly involved, in particular, any matters concerning the conduct of the study or your rights as a participant, or you wish to make a confidential complaint, you may contact the Ethics Officer on (08) 9266 9223 or the Manager, Research Integrity on (08) 9266 7093 or email hrec@curtin.edu.au.

Megan Walsh 17685504
Curtin University is a trademark of Curtin University of Technology.

Page 3
CRICOS Provider Code 00301J (WA)

Facebook Information for parent questionnaire

Navigating the literacy landscape of the twenty-first century: parents and families supporting young children's emergent literacy.

My name is Meg Walsh and I am an Education Doctorate student currently conducting a Phenomenological study of lived experiences. This research is related to the experiences of parents who have preschool children, aged between twelve months to five years old and how they support their child's emergent literacy skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking) before formal school begins. I am investigating what twenty-first century parents think, feel, find helpful and challenging when developing their child's emergent literacy skills at home. If you would like to be a part of this research please complete the anonymous parent questionnaire attached and email it to the address at the conclusion of the questionnaire.

Appendix H Cover letter for two schools

Curtin University

November 22, 2016

Dear Parent

My name is Meg Walsh and I am one of the Year 4 teachers ███████ and a part-time Education Doctorate student at Curtin University. I am conducting a research project that aims to investigate how parents experience and support their pre-school child's early literacy development in the 21st century.

I have developed an anonymous questionnaire to gather data about how parents support their child's emergent literacy skills before formal schooling begins. I would like to invite you to take part in this project if you have a child between the ages **of twelve months and four years old.** The questionnaire will take no more than ten minutes to complete. It will contribute towards acquiring a valuable insight into parents' experiences when developing the emergent literacy skills of their young children, at home and in the community.

If you have a child between the ages of twelve months and four years of age and are willing to complete the questionnaire, please do so before **Friday December 15**. It can be placed in the envelope I have provided and returned to your child's Early Learning Centre teacher. Copies of the Curtin University ethics information letter related to this research has also been supplied to your Early Learning Centre. If you require additional information about this research project, I can be contacted via email on the details provided below.

Regards

Meg Walsh

███████

m.walsh@postgrad.curtin.edu.au

Appendix I Themes linked to questions in the questionnaire

Questionnaire Section A	Question Number	Questionnaire Question
Super-ordinate theme: 1 Guilt		
		No questions within the questionnaire could be associated with the theme of 'Guilt.'
Super-ordinate theme: 2 Influence		
Sub theme: Childhood experiences		
Parent Attitudes Towards Literacy	5A	How much do you rely on your own literacy experiences from when you were a child in order to support your child's literacy skills?
Sub theme: Family and Friends		
Parent Attitudes Towards Literacy	9A	Do your friends influence how you support your child's emergent literacy?
Parent Attitudes Towards Literacy	10A	Does your family and extended family influence how you support your child's emergent literacy?
Sub theme: Community		
		No questions in the questionnaire could be associated with the theme of 'Community'
Sub theme: Media		
Parent Attitudes Towards Literacy	11A	Does the media influence how you support your child's emergent literacy?

Super-ordinate theme: 3 Judgement		
Sub theme: Knowledge of Emergent Literacy		
Questionnaire Section	**Question Number**	**Questionnaire Question**
Parent Attitudes Towards Literacy	1A	How would you rate your understanding of emergent literacy?
Sub theme: Comparing other children		
Parent Attitudes Towards Literacy	14A	Do you ever compare your child's emergent literacy skills to other children you might know who are the same age?
Sub theme: Judging other parents		
		There were no questions within the questionnaire that could be associated with the theme of 'judging other parents.'
Sub theme: Emergent Literacy		
Factors that support emergent literacy	24B	Do you set aside time each day to participate in planned literacy activities with your child?
Factors that support emergent literacy	25B	Do you engage in incidental literacy activities during the course of the day with your child at home or out in the community?
Super-ordinate theme: 4 Family Life		
Sub theme: Perceptions of Emergent Literacy		
Questionnaire Section	**Question Number**	**Questionnaire Question**
Parent Attitudes Towards Literacy	6A	Do you ever feel frustrated when developing your child's emergent literacy skills?

Parent Attitudes Towards Literacy	7A	Do you ever feel confused about what emergent literacy experiences you could engage in with your child?
Parent Attitudes Towards Literacy	8A	Do you believe it easy to think of emergent literacy activities to engage in with your child?
Parent Attitudes Towards Literacy	12A	Do you believe children need to develop emergent literacy skills before they begin formal schooling?
Parent Attitudes Towards Literacy	13A	Do you believe it should be the school's job to develop your child's emergent literacy skills?
Parent Attitudes Towards Literacy	16A	Do you believe that when your child is playing with other children it contributes to developing your child's emergent literacy skills?
Parent Attitudes Towards Literacy	17A	Do you believe that when you are playing with your child it contributes to developing your child's emergent literacy skills?

Sub theme: Role of Parents

Questionnaire Section	Question Number	Questionnaire Question
Parent Attitudes Towards Literacy	2 A	How important do you think it is for parents to engage in literacy activities with their child?
Parent Attitudes Towards Literacy	3A	Do you believe that you devote an appropriate amount of time to developing your child's emergent literacy skills?
Parent Attitudes Towards Literacy	4A	How confident do you feel the literacy choices that you make for your child are making a difference to your child's emergent literacy skills?
Parent Attitudes Towards Literacy	15A	How confident do you feel about your own literacy skills when supporting your child's emergent literacy skills?

Sub theme: Technology and Emergent Literacy

Factors that support emergent literacy	23B	Do you use technology to support literacy with your child?

Appendix J Questionnaire written comments identifying factors that support emergent literacy

		Parental perceptions of support for emergent literacy
Historical Knowledge	Questionnaire 1	'Having an older child and now understanding the process has helped me. Lucky second child.'
	Questionnaire 9	'Older sibling helps out. Daughter learns from interactions with older son (9 years).'
	Questionnaire 13	'My 4 year old is the youngest of three children. I have learnt many ways to support my youngest's emergent literacy development through trial and error with the older children it helps to see what is ahead to know what to do know.'
Incidental Learning Opportunities	Questionnaire 7:	'I make the most of the incidental literacy moments that arise, often led by her and these are definitely more valuable in terms of her literacy development, or try to integrate it into play.'
	Questionnaire 8	'My daughter is learning a lot through daily activities - shopping, cooking, playing and our conversations during and after, look for the apples, BBB for banana. Show me the red strawberries etc.'
	Questionnaire 23	'(Child's name) loves to sing songs and engage with music. I believe this helps her with her emergent literacy skills. She also enjoys role playing different characters so we make up stories and events that these characters can do. I also ask her questions of her about WHY she thinks and feels a certain way or what is happening in a story or TV or film she is watching.'
	Questionnaire 31	'Constantly referring to objects/places/people by their name every time they are seen/visited helps our daughter's understanding and vocabulary (in time).'
	Questionnaire 48	'Try to combine learning eg: teaching household contribution with counting or rhyming games.'

	Questionnaire 53	'Conversations, love of reading, talking up books that kids will get to read, playing games, modelling reading all help. Writing in birthday cards for friends. Eye spy with sounds. Having kids invent their own games using sounds. Eye Spy words limited only by imagination. Empowering kids through ownership of their language development.'
Books and Modelled Behaviour	Questionnaire 14:	'What helps is having books at home, visible, that are not just for the children but for the parents. Also seeing parents read.'
	Questionnaire 31	'Reading stories which my husband and I enjoyed during our childhood does support our daughter's literacy development.'
	Questionnaire 47	'I believe that reading is very important and is both enjoyed at home and at Day Care.'
	Questionnaire 48	'Daily reading since birth.'
	Questionnaire 52	'I think it helps that I am a huge lover of reading books and the fact that my daughter shows an interest in books too makes it easier for me to engage her and read regularly.'
	Questionnaire 80	'Strong belief that the child must have physical access to books, age appropriate with a quiet space to enjoy on their own if they choose to. Encourage ownership and respect for the property of books also.'
Outside Organisations	Questionnaire 10	'We also attend occupational therapy another great source of ideas.'
	Questionnaire 13	The Better Beginnings programme was also beneficial when the children were younger. The story time sessions at the local library were also lots of fun. (& Baby Rhyme time)'
	Questionnaire 18	'Older children have required speech therapy/stuttering theory which has provided me with a wealth of information on early speech/reading.'

	Questionnaire 26	'School beginner early learning/reading/writing parent workshops with experienced teachers, invaluable.'
	Questionnaire 48:	'I observe the Junior Kindy lesson plan posted and incorporate those themes at home ie: get books from the library about sunsets etc.'

Appendix K Questionnaire written comments identifying factors that hinder parents supporting their child's emergent literacy

What hinders parents from engaging in emergent literacy activities with their children		
Attitudes Towards Technology	Questionnaire #7	'I also find her desire to sit and watch TV causes an issue.'
	Questionnaire #8	'We do not yet use technology for games or other learning educational tools.'
	Questionnaire #14	'I also believe no media (TV, iPad, etc.) is very important at this age; it develops imagination, creativity, self-reliance – all of which are related to early literacy.'
	Questionnaire #19	'Their screen time is very limited.'
	Questionnaire #48	'We feel strongly that reliance upon technology/TV/screen are a significant hindrance to language, literacy and numeracy development.'
Family	Questionnaire #6	' Busy with other children in the family.'
	Questionnaire #7	'It is difficult to do some literacy activities with an 18 month old around.'
	Questionnaire #8	'My parents can be both a support and a hindrance as they say let kids be kids taking the view that there is plenty of time for that in school.'