Parents' perceptions of early childhood development

in the Langkloof farming communities

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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that this study project is my own original work and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it at any other university in order to obtain a degree.

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ABSTRACT

Early childhood development has a lifelong impact on the future of each human being. However, all South Africans do not have equal access to the same quality ECD opportunities and services. As a means to advance knowledge in this regard, this study explores parents' perceptions regarding early childhood development (ECD) and their involvement therein, particularly within the Langkloof farming communities. Furthermore, the objective is to formulate guidelines, which can be applied to promote parents' involvement in ECD at home and at the ECD partial care facility the children are enrolled at. For this reason an interpretive, descriptive research design was utilised as methodology, which enables the determination of practical applicability. The data for this study was gathered by means of five focus groups, consisting of not more than eight participants per group. Participants were sampled though a purposeful sampling strategy to ensure that the most informative participants were selected for the study. Gathered data were transcribed and analysed on the basis of the basic qualitative analysis process, incorporating the thematic analysis strategy.

The findings of this study indicate that parents have a pertinent understanding of ECD and parental involvement in relation to existing literature on ECD. Participants' perceptions complement existing ECD-related literature, indicating that parental involvement in ECD includes a home-centred as well as a facility-centred approach. Participants made reference to their concerns and satisfactions with the ECD services that they are currently receiving. They furthermore made reference to the challenges that prohibit them from optimal parental involvement in the ECD of their children, both at home, as well as at the ECD partial care facilities their children are enrolled at.

Participants made suggestions on how they could be supported to address their concerns and challenges in both home-centred and facility-centred approaches in order to enhance parental involvement in their community. In general findings suggest that parents have the skills and are aware of their rights and responsibilities with regard to ECD parental

involvement. However, if their insights were to be additionally buttressed in particular ways, their children's development in the early years could be enhanced.

Based on the findings therefore, this study recommends that governmental departments focus on determining the actual requirements of parents, based on their unique understanding of their circumstances and beliefs by means of practice-based research in less fortunate communities. Furthermore it is recommended that government departments, other role players involved in community-based ECD service delivery and farm owners should play a developmental, empowering and supportive role to assist parents to improve in respect of home-centred, as well as facility-centred parental involvement in ECD. In general the findings of this study therefore suggest that support services to parental involvement in ECD must be individualised based on research and theory and the requirements of parents and children in a specific context.

OPSOMMING

Vroeë kinderontwikkeling het 'n lewenslange impak op die toekoms van elke persoon. Ten spyte daarvan het alle Suid Afrikaners nie gelyke toegang tot dieselfde kwaliteit dienste vir vroeë kinderontwikkeling nie. In 'n poging om kennis in hierdie verband te bevorder, ondersoek hierdie studie ouers se persepsies van vroeë kinderontwikkeling en hul betrokkenheid daarby. 'n Bykomende doel van hierdie studie is om riglyne te formuleer wat prakties geïmplementeer kan word om ouers se betrokkenheid by vroeë kinderontwikkeling tuis, sowel as by die fasiliteit waar hul kinders ingeskryf is, te bevorder. Om hierdie rede het die navorser gebruik gemaak van 'n interpreterende beskrywende navorsingsontwerp met die gemeenskaplike doel om praktiese uitvoerbaarheid te bewerkstellig. Die data van hierdie studie is ingesamel met behulp van vyf fokusgroepe, met nie meer nie as agt deelnemers per fokusgroep. Deelnemers is geselekteer met behulp van 'n doelgerigte steekproefneming, ten einde die geskikste deelnemers vir die studie te identifiseer. Ingesamelde data is getranskribeer en geanaliseer volgens die basiese kwalitatiewe analiserings proses, met inagneming van die tematiese analiseringstrategie.

Die bevindinge van hierdie studie het bewys dat ouers 'n pertinente begrip van vroeë kinderontwikkeling en hul betrokkenheid daarby het. Deelnemers se persepsies komplementeer bestaande literatuur oor vroeë kinderontwikkeling, wat aandui dat ouerbetrokkenheid by vroeë kinderontwikkeling tuis-, sowel as fasiliteitbetrokkenheid insluit. Deelnemers het verwys na hul bekommernisse en tevredenheid met die vroeë kinderontwikkelingsdienste wat hulle tans ontvang. Deelnemers het verder verwys na uitdagings wat hulle tans verhoed om optimaal betrokke te raak by die vroeë ontwikkeling van hul kinders, tuis sowel as by die fasiliteit waar hul kinders ingeskryf is. Deelnemers het voorstelle gemaak van hoe hulle ondersteun kan word om hulle bekommernisse en uitdagings aan te spreek ten einde ouerbetrokkenheid tuis en by die fasiliteite en sodoende in hulle gemeenskap te bevorder. In die algemeen het bevindinge bewys dat ouers wel die vaardighede het en bewus is van hulle regte en verantwoordelikhede met betrekking tot hul betrokkenheid by vroeë kinderontwikkeling.

Hulle het egter spesifieke behoeftes wat aangespreek moet word om die vroeë ontwikkeling van hul kinders te bevorder.

Gegrond op die bevindinge, beveel hierdie studie aan dat staatsdepartemente fokus op die ondersoek van ouers se werklike behoeftes, gebaseer op hulle unieke begrip van hul kultuur en omstandighede, met behulp van praktyk-gerigte navorsing. Verder word aanbeveel dat staatsdepartemente, rol spelers wat betrokke is by gemeenskapsgebaseerde vroeë kinderontwikkelingsdienslewering en plaaseienaars 'n ontwikkelingsgerigte, bemagtigende en ondersteunende rol vervul om tuis- en fasiliteit-gebaseerde ouerbetrokkenheid te bevorder. In die algemeen is die bevindinge van hierdie studie dat ondersteuningsdienste aan ouers, ten opsigte van hul betrokkenheid by vroeë kinderontwikkeling, geïndividualiseer word, gegrond op die behoeftes van ouers in 'n spesifieke gemeenskap, na effektiewe konsultasie tussen al die relevante rolspelers.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ARNEC	Asia-Pacific Regional Network for Early Childhood
DHE	Department of Higher Education
DOBE	Department of Basic Education
DOE	Department of Education
DOET	Department of Education and Training
DOH	Department of Health
DOSD	Department of Social Development
ECCE	Early Childhood Care and Education
ECD	Early childhood development
HSRC	Human Sciences Research Council
NELDS	National Early Learning and Development Standards
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

KEY TERMS

ECD

The academic discipline of psychology refers to childhood as a developmental stage in the biological development to maturity. During the early childhood years, from birth to school-going age, a process of development occurs on emotional, cognitive, sensory, spiritual, moral, physical, social and communication level. This definition is also related to how policy documents describe early childhood development (DOSD, 2007:2).

ECD services

ECD services refer to all services that promote or support the development of young children. These services are usually rendered by practitioners at the ECD partial care facility, by government departments, private business or training institutions and community members. Service delivery in ECD is an integrated effort (Children's Act (No. 38 of 2005) – Chapter 5; DOE, DOSD and DOE, 2005:2).

Parents/Caregivers

Anyone who is responsible for the caring and raising of young children; they can be fathers, mothers, grandparents, uncles, aunts, brothers, sisters, practitioners or community members (The National DOSD's parental capacity-building training (2008:219).

Parental involvement

Parental involvement in ECD is an integral part of ECD service delivery and relates to two categories, namely home-centred and facility-centred involvement (Korfmacher *et al*., 2012:2).

ECD Partial Care Facility

An ECD partial care facility is a building where six or more children, from birth to school-going age, are cared for by a person other than their parents or caregivers for specific hours of the day or night (Children's Act No. 38 of 2005, Chapter 5). An ECD partial care facility is sometimes also referred to as a crèche, a nursery school, a pre-(primary) school, a playschool or a day-care. For the purpose of this study ECD partial care facility is the terminology that the researcher uses to describe such a facility. However, the other terminology might be used when direct quotations by participants or other writers are utilised.

ECD programme

An ECD programme is a planned programme structured within an ECD service providing learning and support to children from zero to school-going age. Such a programme is based on thorough knowledge of the developmental age, stage and needs of these children. An ECD programme is also known as a schedule of activities, a learning programme or curriculum (Berry *et al*., 2011:17).

Practitioners

The adult employed at an ECD partial care facility that is responsible for the implementation of the ECD programme at the facility.

Department of Education

The National Department of Education was split into two sub-departments, namely the Department of Basic Education (DBE) and the Department of Higher Education (DOHE). The DBE is responsible for all schools from Grade R to Grade 12, as well as adult literacy programmes, while the DOHE focuses on post-school education and training. In this research study the researcher will refer to the DOE and the DOBE. The DOBE plays an important role in ECD in relation to the development of learning standards.

CHAPTER 1

ORIENTATION TO THE RESEARCH

1.1 INTRODUCTION AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

1.1.1 INTRODUCTION

Over the past few years early childhood development (ECD) has attracted a great deal of interest and funding from government and international agencies in both international and national arenas. Research shows that ECD is a critical area for government intervention (Biersteker, 2012:52-53; Engle, 2007:237). The early years of a child have been identified as the "ideal period for the passing on of morals and values like respect for human rights, appreciation of diversity, anti-bias tolerance and justice with the long-term goal of building a peaceful, prosperous and democratic society" (DOSD, 2007:13). ECD can be considered as the most important phase for all human beings (DOSD, 2007:13; Fagbeminiyi, 2011:2; Gelman, 2004:149).The rationale for investigating mechanisms intended to ensure the development of children's early years is significant for the well-being ("how children are now") and well-becoming ("how children will do as adults") of children (Bray & Dawes, 2007:15).

The researcher is a social worker at the Department of Social Development (DOSD). Her primary responsibility includes the registration of both private (independent) and community-based early childhood development (ECD) partial care facilities and ECD programmes within the service delivery area of George. The registration of ECD partial care facilities refers to the mandate that was given to the DOSD to assess and approve or reject the registration of all private and community-based ECD facilities where more than six children, from birth to school-going age, are cared for by a person other than their parents or caregivers for specific hours of the day or night (Children's Act (No. 38 of 2005) - Chapter 5). The registration of ECD programmes refers to the assessment and approval or

rejection of ECD learning activities that are presented to children at ECD partial care facilities, youth centres, learning institutions or outreach programmes (Children's Act (No. 38 of 2005) - Chapter 6).

This chapter serves as a summary of the background, introduction and problem statement of this research study. Its aim is to offer an explication of the problem(s), including a summary of existing literature on related work. The problem statement is followed by the research goal and the central theoretical statement. Furthermore the chapter contains a detailed summary of the methodological procedures that are planned in order to achieve the stated goal. The chapter ends with an outline of the different chapters of this dissertation, as well as a conclusion to this chapter.

1.1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Toddlers need to master a range of skills during the ECD stage. The child's ability to master these skills hugely impacts his/her ability to master development skills at later developmental stages (Biersteker & Dawes, 2008:185). Some of these skills include school readiness (Fagbeminiyi, 2011:2), helping children to distinguish between right and wrong and developing the child's concept of self (Biersteker & Dawes, 2008:185). Research in developed countries proved that early cognitive and social-emotional development contribute to school progress and the correct intervention at this stage can have sustained cognitive and school achievement benefits (McGregor *et al*., 2007:61). Schwienhart and Weikart (2005:1) found that early learning undoubtedly contributes to later academic success.

National and international research from developing and developed countries agrees that the effect of parental involvement in ECD improves school and general learning performances of children (Dawes & Donald, 2000:20; Espinosa, 1995:1). Biersteker and Dawes (2008:201) are of the opinion that the involvement of parents in the education of their children is strongly associated with positive child development outcomes. Although writers differ in their style of describing parent involvement, their descriptions also share similarities. Korfmacher *et al*., (2012:2) divide parental involvement into two categories, namely facility-centred

involvement and home-centred involvement. These two categories basically refer to parents either getting more involved at the facility where their child is enrolled, by attending meetings, being on the facilities management board, etc. vs. parents actively helping their children at home with homework and further implementing developmental learning activities at home. Others, such as Clark (2007:1-2), Fagbeminiyi (2011:46-47) and DOSD (2008:2), further unpack parental involvement by describing what facility-centred involvement and home-centred involvement refer to in more detail. Both categorisations of involvement are equally important as the one category complements the other.

It is thus not surprising that international agencies and national governments have set important goals related to ECD. The importance of ECD is recognised by the United Nations. The Convention for the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (1989) states that every child has the right to development and obligates state departments to undertake all appropriate measures to implement the rights of children as set out in the UNCRC. For the purpose of guaranteeing and promoting the rights set forth in the UNCRC, Article 18 stipulates that "State Parties shall render appropriate assistance to parents and legal guardians in the performance of their child-rearing responsibilities and shall ensure the development of institutions, facilities and services for the care of children. State Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that children of working parents have the right to benefit from child-care services and facilities for which they are eligible" (UNCRC, 1989).

The rights of the child as stipulated above and the mandate that was given to state parties lead to the development of various South African policies, which support ECD. Examples include the White Paper on Education and Training (1995); the National Health Act (No. 61 of 2003) (2004); the Strategic Priorities for the National Health System (2004-2009); the White Paper on Social Welfare (1997); and the Education White Paper 6 (2001). Furthermore within the South African context, the national Department of Basic Education (DOBE) is mandated to deliver ECD services for children aged between 6 to 9 years, while the Department

of Health (DOE) and the DOSD are primarily focused on those aged 0-5 years (DOE, DOSD & DOE, 2005:20).

The availability of different legislation and policies leads to uncoordinated services to ECD, which resulted in the development of documents, such as The National Integrated Plan for ECD in South Africa (2005) and the National Guidelines for ECD (2007). These documents aim to provide greater specification concerning the need for inter-sectoral collaboration and integrated servicing. As all the different government departments play a role in ECD service delivery, service delivery in ECD is thus an integrated effort (DOE, DOSD, & DOH, 2005). Integrated ECD service delivery, according to the DOBE (2009:3), firstly refers to the aim of holistically developing children, emotionally, physically, mentally, spiritually and socially. Secondly, integrated services refer to all sectors and departments having to make a contribution to delivering ECD services in South Africa as mandated in the abovementioned legislation.

Thirdly, integrated ECD service delivery refers to five approaches to holistically developing children. These five approaches include the training of caregivers; public awareness and enhancing demand; strengthening of institutional resources and capacity building; promotion of community development; and education of parents (Young, 1996:v). Prominent then in ECD policies is the recognition that parents play a substantive role during the ECD period. Parental involvement in ECD is thus an integral part of ECD service delivery. It is perceived as a necessity for the empowerment of communities in an effort by the state to address contemporary inequalities (Williams & Sameuls, 2001:15).

Due to the significance of parental involvement in ECD there is a need for research into parents' understanding of their contribution to the early development of their children and ECD service delivery. This need for research is confirmed by an evaluation of ECD conducted by Biersteker and Dawes (2008:188) on the five categories for monitoring in ECD, as part of the Human Capacity Development Review, published by the Human Sciences Research Council. It was found that

South African data is only available for three of five identified categories for monitoring ECD at country level. The five categories as identified by the Consultative Group for ECCE are coverage access and use (the access to and location of ECD in each province), programme quality, political will; policy and financing; cost and expenditure and status of or effects of parental involvement on children and parents. South African data on ECD monitoring are only available for the first three categories (Biersteker & Dawes 2008:188). They thus found that although the support for parents to stimulate development is crucial no data is available on the status or effects of support services to parents in ECD (Biersteker & Dawes, 2008:202).

According to Barbour (2008:1), the first step to support parents in their involvement with their children's development is to understand them by forming a partnership of mutual respect and co-operative decision making. Espinosa (1995:3) also refers to this when she writes about the background and culture of Hispanic parents. She argues that parents from different backgrounds and cultures experience parenting differently (Espinosa, 1995:1). Dawes and Donald (2000:20) emphasise the importance of cultural and developmental sensitivity in attempts to improve children's chances in community contexts. They are convinced that "cultures structure the settings within which the child's activities take place, they determine how children's needs are seen, and they suggest what is or is not acceptable behaviour at different ages and for different genders" (Dawes & Donald, 2000:20). "Cultures also indicate the signs of children's well-being and distress" (Dawes & Donald, 2000:20). Access to communities can be hindered and the acceptability, efficacy and sustainability of interventions can be reduced when these aspects of the local contexts are ignored (Dawes & Donald 2000:21).

Despite the clear need for parental participation and community-based early learning, St. Pierre and Layzer's (1998:8) research suggests that parents in lower-income communities simply do not believe that their children require special parent involvement to develop well. Bray and Dawes (2008:43) refer to this suggestion in their research on the impact of parental programmes aimed at the   improvement

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of children's development. Bray and Dawes (2008:43) and Biersteker and Kvalsvig (2008:189) confirmed, however, that South Africa has a lack of data with regard to parents' perceptions of their involvement and long-term effects on ECD.

Parental involvement is an integral component of optimal ECD and ECD service delivery, especially in a community-based setting. How parents perceive ECD determines their involvement therein. To address the gap, which exists regarding the lack of data on parents' involvement in ECD, the following research question will guide the study:

How do parents of children in the ECD phase in the Langkloof farming communities perceive ECD?

The findings of this research will be used to formulate guidelines for proposed appropriate strategies to facilitate and motivate parent involvement in ECD in the Langkloof farming communities.

1.2   RESEARCH GOAL

The aim of this study is to qualitatively explore and describe, through an interpretive descriptive strategy, what parents' perceptions are regarding ECD and their involvement in their children's development in the Langkloof farming communities. This data will be used to formulate guidelines for the DOSD to support parents in their responsibility for their young children's development.

1.2.1 CENTRAL THEORETICAL STATEMENT

Knowledge of parents' perceptions of ECD will assist in the formulation of guidelines for an integrated ECD service delivery strategy and thus parents' ability to assist and be involved in the optimal development of their own children.

1.3   RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1.3.1 LITERATURE OVERVIEW

The literature to be reviewed and used in the study is related to the well-being status of children in a developing context, early childhood development as well as international, national and regional policy frameworks with regards to integrated early childhood development services. In-depth attention will be given to integrated early childhood development initiatives in partnership with parents.

The search engines in use will be those available through the NWU library services: A to Z list; Ebsco Host, Google Scholar, Scopus and Sage publications.

1.3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

A qualitative, interpretive descriptive research design is used when a researcher aims to accurately explore and describe the perceptions of a certain population (Creswell, 2007:56). The researcher chose to make use of a qualitative, interpretive descriptive research design, which aims to understand the known and unknown by means of the empirical study and evidence. Rather than making assumptions, this study develops an in-depth understanding of how parents perceive their roles and responsibilities during the ECD of their children as proposed by Lindlof and Taylor (2011:109). A qualitative, interpretive descriptive research design will thus be followed, as it is known to be useful when seeking a better understanding of participants' perceptions. This research design is also known to have an application potential (Thorne *et al*., 2004:5), which makes it even more applicable to this specific research study, the aim of which is not merely to describe or understand the perceptions of parents, but to consider how descriptions can be applied (Thorne *et al.,* 2004:7). This applied research therefore has a practical goal.

1.3.3 POPULATION AND SAMPLING

Data will be gathered from parents working on farms in the Langkloof area. Children in poor rural communities in South Africa experience particular challenges with respect to the access to and quality of early childhood development opportunities due to poverty, despite available policies and programmes (Biersteker & Dawes, 2008:192; DOE, 2001:7). Research conducted within such communities is thus considered to have added significance to national data on ECD, as well as to the interpretive descriptive design.

The Langkloof farming community consists of several farms, and the seven farms that are identified for this research project, each have an active ECD partial care facility. Four parents on each farm, whose children are attending these facilities, will take part in the study. Purposeful (Creswell, 2013:156) or purposive sampling (Newman, 2003:231) will be used in the study to select participants. Purposive sampling is used when the researcher wants to identify particular types of participants for in-depth investigation. In the case of this study the particular types of participants will be parents of children between the ages of 0 and 5 years, who are currently receiving ECD services from the facility their children are enrolled in. The purpose of this method of sampling is less on the generalising of the population and more on gaining a deeper understanding of the topic (Neuman, 2003:231). The researcher will identify an ECD facility representative who may be a teacher, principal or a management member, who will assist in the sampling of the particular participants. If the requirements for data saturation are not met, more participants will be included.

1.4   METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION

1.4.1 DATA COLLECTION

Focus groups will be used as method of data collection, in order to create a non-threatening environment where information can be exchanged by means of discussion (Greeff, 2011:361). Focus groups create the opportunity for participants

to share their experiences and feelings more willingly when they are surrounded by other participants whom they perceive to be like themselves (Greeff, 2011:363). Interpretive descriptive research studies are normally utilised in relatively small samples (Thorne *et al*., 2004:5), therefore the researcher plans to conduct at least four focus groups, consisting of no more than eight interviewees in each group. The focus group discussion will be guided by a predetermined discussion guide (See Annexure D), with predetermined, semi-structured questions. Semi-structured focus group interviews will give the researcher the flexibility to follow-up on interesting avenues that might emerge during the interview (Greeff, 2011:351).

1.4.2 THE ROLE OF THE RESEARCHER/PROCEDURES

In this research study the role of the researcher (Creswell, 2007:132-134) will be to

- obtain permission from the NWU research panel for the proposal of this study;

- obtain permission from the Director and Ethics Committee of the DOSD, whose client system the researcher wants to make use of in order to do the research. This will be followed by obtaining permission from the prospective sampled participants after explaining the purpose, procedures and role of the researcher with regard to the study to them;

- include information and background on the purpose of the research project for participants to better understand the purpose of the research (Creswell, 2009:177);

- comment on connections between the researcher and the participants and on the research sites, because this might lead to compromises on the researcher's ability to disclose information and it may raise power issues (Creswell, 2009:177);

- obtain indemnity forms should it be necessary for the researcher to transport the participants;

- study the necessary interviewing techniques, communication techniques, myths and common pitfalls associated with focus groups and semi-structured interviewing;

- study the principles for developing questions for focus groups;

- compile applicable semi-structured and nondirective questions as a guide for focus groups and interviews;

- obtain the necessary permission for a location, dates and times for the sessions; and

- clarify the recording equipment that the researcher will use to generate the data.

1.5 DATA ANALYSIS

The researcher will make use of a qualitative thematic data analysis strategy (Braun & Clark, 2006; Creswell 2007; and Creswell, 2009). The following steps will be utilised for data analysis:

- *Preparation, organisation and familiarising*: After collecting the data by means of focus groups the researcher needs to make sure that all recorded data were fully captured before starting with the analysing process. By typing and organising recorded data, the researcher will give herself the opportunity to become more familiar with the data and to make enough back-up copies of data, which will be safely stored during the finalisation of the research report.

- *Reading, memoing and generating initial codes:* The researcher will read data repeatedly in order to obtain a general sense of the information at which time the researcher will start to identify general thoughts, codes and themes within the transcribed data.

- *Searching, reviewing, defining and naming themes:* By continuously reviewing themes and the transcribed data, the researcher will, with the

assistance of an assistant coder, name themes and assign the relevant data to the different themes.

- *Representation of data and producing the report*: In order to compile a reflective report of the analysed data the researcher will select captivating extracts from the transcribed data in an effort to ensure trustworthiness.

1.6 ETHICAL ASPECTS

This research is designed to fall under the Centre for Child, Youth and Family Studies project: Developing sustainable support to enhance quality of life and well-being for children, youth and families in South Africa: a trans-disciplinary approach.

Informed consent (Somekh & Lewin, 2011:26): The researcher will develop an informed consent contract explaining to participants exactly what the research will entail; indicating possible harm and allowing participants to withdraw from the research should they wish to do so. The researcher will also gain informed permission from the DOSD to make use of their client system and on the farms where it is needed the researcher will gain the necessary permission from the employers on the farms to speak to their workers, in order to prevent the research from impacting on parents' working obligations.

Confidentiality and anonymity: It will be the responsibility of the researcher to reassure participants that all gathered information will be handled confidentially and that participants have the right to refuse to allow publication of information that they think might harm them. Identifying particulars of participants will remain anonymous during report writing as suggested by Somekh and Lewin (2011:26).

Pre-publication access: Participants will have access to the analysed data before publication to offer them the opportunity to comment on or add to interpretation, thereby demonstrating respect for potential differences of interpretation and giving participants the right to a fair voice (Somekh & Lewin, 2011:26).

It is the researcher's responsibility to ensure that investigation proceedings are followed correctly and that no one is deceived by the findings. No untruthful information will thus be added to or subtracted from the information gathered. The researcher thus undertakes to be accurate and honest in the reporting of her research (Gravetter & Forzano, 2005:56).

Non-deception of participants: The researcher undertakes to not give any incorrect information or to withhold information to ensure participants' involvement (Strydom, 2011:118-119).

Should any other ethical issues come to the fore; ethical decision making will be done by the researcher with the help of her supervisor. The university also has two committees that need to approve the research proposal. These committees will also be involved in ethical decision making, should an unforeseen need arise (Strydom, 2011:126-127). As a social worker, the researcher will also adhere to the South African Council for Social Service Professions (SACSSP) course of conduct as set out in Policy Guidelines for Course of Conduct, Code of Ethics and the Rules for social workers.

1.7 TRUSTWORTHINESS

The researcher will implement the following criteria in order to ensure trustworthiness in this study (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011:274-278; Schurink, Fouché & De Vos, 2011:419-421):

Triangulation: Triangulation will be ensured by making use of multiple sources. This means that the collected data that has relevance to the research topic and will be able to inform the research question with applicable data relating the research topic will be gathered from participants. On the other hand, triangulation also refers to making use of multiple methods and making use of multiple researchers' opinions (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011:274).

The researcher will make use of a voice recorder, as well as a video recorder in addition to the focus group discussions, to ensure that all relevant data is recorded. Interviews are known as a method to verify meanings of common perceptions and beliefs (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011:179). According to Wilcott (cited in Creswell, 2009:190) the question approach is one of the approaches that is used to end research projects in certain qualitative research designs. Therefore, should the analysing process reflect a lack of collected data, the researcher will follow up on new questions by means of one on one, telephonic interviews. For this reason participants will be asked to volunteer their availability for one on one interviews, should the need arise. Since the researcher is under the supervision of a research supervisor and co-supervisor, who in their own right are researchers, the researcher will meet Lindlof and Taylor's (2011:274) suggestion of the utilisation of multiple experienced researchers to prevent bias opinions or shortcomings. Furthermore trustworthiness will be promoted by means of the following aspects:

Credibility/authenticity: Credibility is an alternative term typical to qualitative research in contrast to the term validity which is more typical in quantitative research. Credibility entails that the research study/procedures must be conducted in such a way as to ensure accuracy. It aims to determine whether collected data matches the reconstruction and representation given by the researcher at the end of the study (Schurink, Fouché & De Vos, 2011:419- 421). To ensure credibility the researcher will follow a planned and structured analysing process, with the help of an assistant coder. The representation and interpretation of analysed data will be supervised by the researcher's supervisor and co-supervisor to further ensure credibility.

Transferability: Transferability in qualitative research can be described as the ability of the findings to be generalised from one population to the other (Schurink, Fouché & De Vos, 2011:420). Traditionalists are of the opinion that transferability in qualitative research is problematic. However, Schurink, Fouché and De Vos (2011:420) suggest two strategies to enhance the transferability of a qualitative study, namely: theoretical frameworks and multiple resources. The researcher will

refer to theoretical frameworks, models and processes to show how data collection and analysis will be guided (Schurink, Fouché & De Vos, 2011:420).

Dependability: Dependability is an alternative to reliability "where the researcher attempts to account for changing conditions in a phenomenon" (Schurink, Fouché & De Vos, 2011:420). This means that the analysed data of a research study must be applicable to the phenomenon even if the context changes. According to Schurink, Fouché and De Vos (2011:420-421) "positivists' notions of reliability assume an unchanging universe where inquiry can be replicated". This is not true with qualitative research. The concept of replication in a qualitative study is problematic due to the assumption that the social world is always constructed (Schurink, Fouché & De Vos, 2011:421). The researcher will thus aim to promote dependability by giving a rich, broad, unbiased description of data, based on a theoretical framework, through a well-supervised process of analysis.

Confirmability: According to Lincoln and Guba (cited in Schurink, Fouché & De Vos, 2011:420) confirmability refers to the availability of evidence to corroborate the findings and interpretations made by the researcher. The researcher will thus keep sufficient evidence of collected data and incorporate evidence into the report in order to assure the reader that collected data is reflective of the actual collected data.

1.8   CHAPTER OUTLINE

Chapter 1:   Orientation to the research

Chapter 2:   Early childhood development and parental involvement: A theoretical perspective

Chapter 3:   Research Methodology

Chapter 4:   Presentation and discussion of data

Chapter 5:   Conclusions, limitations and recommendations

1.9   CONCLUSION

Chapter 1 served as the planning for this study and the proposal that was presented to the two research panels from the North-West University. This chapter was also utilised as a proposal to the Director of Social Development in the Eden Karoo Region and the ethical committee of the Department of Social Development in Cape Town. Chapter 2 will present a discussion of literature that was reviewed in relation to the research topic.

CHAPTER 2

EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT AND PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT: A THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The problem statement in the first chapter affirmed that ECD lays the foundation, not only for more successful schooling, but also for social and human capacity in general (Biersteker & Dawes 2008:185). It also made reference to the undeniable importance and positive contribution of parental involvement during the early years of children's lives (Dawes & Donald, 2000:20; Espinosa, 1995:1). Due to the significance of parental involvement in ECD there is a need for research into parents' understanding of their contribution to the early development of their children and ECD service delivery.

The intent of this research study was to explore and describe parents' perceptions of ECD and their involvement therein. This chapter provides a discussion of existing literature on early childhood development (ECD), and ECD policies, programmes and integrated ECD service delivery with specific reference to parental involvement in ECD. The focus of this chapter is on developing a theoretical perspective on ECD and parental involvement to situate this study. In this way this chapter will provide a theoretical basis that will assist in understanding and explaining the findings from the empirical data.

2.2 EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

ECD is defined as "the process of social, spiritual, moral, emotional, physical and mental development of children between the ages of birth and nine years" (DOSD, 2007: 6).The social development of a young child refers to the forming of the child's basic spiritual beliefs, gender and the ability to adapt to the outside world (DOSD, 2007:75). The relationships that children have with their families, the ECD

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partial care facility, adults and peers form their social context and impact on how they think, learn and develop (Cherry, 2013(a):1).

The emotional development of children in the ECD phase refers to their ability to name and understand their feelings. (DOSD, 2007:75). Children's emotional expressiveness and knowledge of their own and others' emotions are important for social and academic success (Denham, Bassett & Zinsser, 2012:137). Children who can maintain positive emotions were found more likely to engage well with classroom tasks and thus progress better in school (Denham, Bassett & Zinsser, 2012:138).

The physical development of young children refers to the ability to control the body, move small muscles, learning how to look after their bodies, and also staying healthy and clean (DOSD, 2007:76). Early childhood is a time of tremendous physical change, for instance arms , legs and muscles stretch as it is necessary for balancing, work and play (Oswalt, 2013:1).Teaching children about healthy lifestyles is vital as healthy growth is supported by a healthy lifestyle (Oswalt, 2013:1). The intellectual or cognitive development of children is associated with memory, reasoning, problem solving and thinking (Cherry, 2013(b):1).

Some of the developmental groupings mentioned can be linked to the social and emotional competencies as mentioned by Hughes, Patterson and Terrel (2005:56-103) and Sparrow and Knight (2006:29). They suggest that personal and social competencies typically entail development in the areas of self-regard, self-awareness, assertiveness, independence, self-actualisation, empathy, social responsibility, interpersonal relationships, stress tolerance, impulse control, reality testing, flexibility and problem solving. It is clear that strategies to enhance these competencies in parents and their young children hold promise in the context of ECD. Emotional well-being and social competency thus provide a strong foundation for human development (Shonkoff, 2009:2). The emotional and physical health, social skills and cognitive capacities that emerge in the early years of a

child's life are all important fundamentals for success in school and later on in the workplace and community (Shonkoff, 2009:2).

Dawes and Donald (2000:2) suggest that the ecological approach, formulated by Bronfenbrenner (1979-1986) is an effective child development theory in attempting to understand the holistic development of the child. This approach suggests that there are various (micro-, meso-, exo-, macro- and chronosystems) systems that influence the child's development, whether negative or positive (Dawes & Donald, 2000:2). The microsystem refers to the interactive situations with which the child comes into contact on a face to face basis, such as the parent and/or as in this case, the ECD partial care facility (Dawes & Donald, 2000:3). The macro- (cultural level of influence), exo- (interactions of those who have a relationship with the child) and mesosystems (a set of associated microsystems), do not involve the child directly, but include the interactions of those who have a relationship with the child (Dawes & Donald, 2000:2), such as the parents' employer or the management board of the ECD partial care facility. Chronosystems refer to stable or disruptive elements, which reflect changes in the developing child through the lifespan, such as economic aspects, trauma, depression, political change or poverty (Dawes & Donald, 2000:2). Parents constitute the most influential system in the early childhood years (Dawes & Donald, 2000:2).

There is thus no doubt that children's early experiences determine their future learning, health and behaviour (Shonkoff, 2009:1). Quality care, support and education during early childhood are beneficial to children's growth and development throughout their lives (DOBE, 2009:7). This conclusion is based on scientific findings showing that the human brain's capacity to change declines as a person grows older (Biersteker 2012:52; Shonkoff, 2009:1). During the early years of a person's life, his or her brain capacity is flexible; it is able to reorganise itself and to adapt to new or unexpected challenges (Shonkoff, 2009:2). At the age of three a child's brain is twice as active as that of an adult's brain (Goswami, 2006:1). As a person grows older his or her brain becomes more specialised, it

executes more complex functions, based on the foundation that was laid down during the early years of his or her life (Shonkoff, 2009:2).

The importance of ECD is further demonstrated in research conducted by Rolnick and Grunewald (2003:1) on ECD and its benefits and relation to the economy. They found that ECD is rarely portrayed as economic development initiatives, whilst it ought to be at the top of every economic development list (Rolnick & Grunewald, 2003:1). They are also of the opinion that children ought to receive the right support for growth and development in their early years, making it more likely for them to succeed in school and to later on contribute to society (Rolnick & Grunewald, 2003:2). If the theories of capital building (Lin, Cook & Burt, 2001) are taken into account, it will imply the building of human, linguistic and intellectual capital, through social capital to contribute to future economic capital.

Children who experience negative influences, such as extreme poverty, abuse and/or neglect in their early years, weaken their developing brain's architecture and permanently set their body's stress response system on high alert, thereby increasing their risk for a range of chronic diseases (Shonkoff, 2009:1). This confirms Vygotsky's (1986-1934) opinion that adults play a vital role in the "scaffolding" of the child's development (DOET, 2006:6). Furthermore research has proven that trying to give a child the right support, care and education at a later stage of his or her life is likely to be less successful and in some cases even ineffective (Shonkoff, 2009:3). While there is no magic age or one effective recipe to appropriately support children, Shonkoff (2009) suggests that providing them with support, care and education as early as possible seems important for positive outcomes in the long term.

In order for children to develop in all of the mentioned areas of development it is clear that they have certain needs that ought to be fulfilled by the adults in their lives. In addition to care, support and education (Shonkoff, 2009:3), children also need affection, good nutrition, they need to be played with, communicated with, listened to and they need to be exposed to safe, healthy and clean environments,

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surfaces and equipment (Biersteker, 2012:53; DOSD, 2007:76). Children must be exposed to stimulation and motivation for learning through a variety of activities (Biersteker, 2012:53; DOSD, 2007:76-77). These needs clearly resemble Maslow's (1971) hierarchy of human needs (Huitt (2007:1). Maslow (1971) thus groups children's needs as being (Huitt, 2007:1):

Physiological, which include hunger, thirst and bodily comforts;

Safety and security from danger;

Belongingness and love, referring to their need to affiliate with others and to be accepted;

Esteem which relates to achievement, competency, gaining approval and recognition;

Cognitive, meaning they have the need to know, to understand and explore;

Aesthetic, which refers to symmetry order and beauty;

Self-actualisation is the need to find self-fulfilment and to realise one's potential and;

Self-transcendence, which entails the need to help others find self-fulfilment and realise their potential.

Emphasis is placed on parental involvement in ECD because parental involvement in ECD improves school and general learning performances of children (Espinosa, 1995:1). Research found that the education of parents with regards to their responsibility towards their children and the support of families lead to positive family life and the enjoyment of long-term benefits. It is clear that ECD forms the most important part of a child's life and that parents' involvement in ECD should be a priority.

Moreover, investing in ECD holds positive benefits, not only for the child, the parents and the family, but also for the whole community and its economy

(Shonkoff, 2009:1). It would thus be beneficial for all countries to invest in ECD programmes and initiatives not only because of the economic benefits, but also because research proved that investing in ECD leads to better working public schools, more educated workers and less crime (Rolnick & Grunewald, 2003:11). In the next section parental involvement will be outlined in more detail, while the following section considers the way in which the state enables parents to be involved in ECD.

2.3   PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN ECD

Parental involvement can be thought of as the investment of resources by parents, in the lives of children (Fagbeminiyi, 2011:46). Korfmacher *et al.* (2012:2) refer to two categories of parental involvement, namely facility-centred involvement and home-centred involvement. Facility-centred involvement refers to parents getting involved at the ECD partial care facility where their child is enrolled (Korfmacher *et al*, 2012:2). Home-centred involvement refers to parents being actively involved in helping their children with homework and further   implementing developmental learning activities at home (Korfmacher *et al*, 2012:2).   Home-centred   parental involvement as Clark (2007:1-2) suggests, also includes, for example, parents reading to/with their children at home as a daily routine from as early as possible. Parental illiteracy may thus have a negative influence on home-centred parental involvement.

Fagbeminiyi (2011:46) describes parental involvement as an individualised, working alliance between a family and the ECD partial care facility. These are the two key sites where adults are closest to children for extended periods of time and can therefore have a relatively sustainable influence on children's development (Dawes & Donald, 2000:20). These two microsystems of intervention have frequently presented to be the successful contributors to child development in poorer communities with limited resources (Dawes & Donald, 2000:20). Therefore these two parties constantly have to work and communicate with each other to

maintain an efficient alliance towards promoting parental involvement and to contribute to optimal development in ECD (Fagbeminiyi, 2011:46).

The constant communicating and alliance between these two sites entail what Epstein (1997:1) refers to as the six types of involvement, namely parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making and collaborating with the community. *Parenting* refers to the ECD facility assisting parents to provide a home environment that supports children as students whilst parents assist the ECD partial care facility to understand the families (Epstein, 1997:1). *Communicating* refers to the constant sharing of learning programmes and progress between the two sites. Parents *volunteering* their time to be trained and recruited to assist at the ECD partial care facility, are empowering themselves to better support their children. The ECD partial care facilities can further promote parental involvement by including families in *learning* activities *at home* and allowing parents to form part of the governance *decision making* and by assisting with the coordination of *resources* and services to families and *communities* (Epstein, 1997:1).

Dawes and Donald (2000:20) suggest, similar to Epstein's (1997) approach, that the integration between home and the facility provides support for the continuous holistic development of children. Poor ECD service delivery is multidimensional (influenced by various systems), which is why interventions must be undertaken in an integrated way and on multiple levels (Dawes & Donald, 2000:20).

Espinosa (1995) conducted research on the involvement of Hispanic parents in ECD. She found that the unquestionable fact of the importance of ECD is not enough to get Hispanic parents involved in ECD. She said that "to determine effective strategies for connecting Hispanic parents and their children's early childhood programmes, educators need to develop a greater understanding of the features of the Hispanic culture that influences parents' childrearing and socialisation practices, communication styles, and orientation toward formal education" (Espinosa, 1995:1). Espinosa's (1995) research also emphasises the

importance of an alliance and understanding between facilities and parents and it confirms Korfmacher's (2012) descriptions of parental involvement, including home-centred and facility-centred involvement.

Based on their research on parental involvement Espinosa (1995) and Evans (2001) draw the conclusion that parental involvement is determined by a variety of factors, such as their experiences, their culture, the point in time within the project that the parents' participation is being defined, underpinned by the ecological perspective of Bronfenbrenner (cited in Dawes & Donald, 2000). Evans (2001), however, goes further by suggesting that parents of children in the ECD phase usually have appropriate knowledge and skills at their disposal to contribute to more effective development opportunities for their children, but they are not always listened to and understood and their potential is sometimes undermined as a result (Evans, 2001:3). According to Santrock (2007: 10), most parents want their children to grow into healthy, happy, socially mature individuals, but are confused as to what their responsibility as parents is in order to reach that goal.

Both these suggestions strongly relate to the theory of fundamental human needs to development (Cruz, Stahel & Max-Neef, 2009:2024; Maslow, 1971).They argue that the satisfiers to human needs change, based on the culture and circumstances of the context. Satisfiers include personal (the individual's skills and determination), having (the availability of resources), actions (what can be done in order to address the need), time (the appropriate time to be able to address the need) and spaces (the environment or context). These satisfiers differ from individual to individual and from context to context. They need to complement each other in order to satisfy the needs of the community. So even though parents might have the knowledge and skills to be optimally involved in their children's development, as Evans (2001) suggests, parents might experience not *having* the opportunity to implement (action) their skills. Implementing their skills will require them to have the correct satisfiers, which complement each other, such as *having* the confidence of *being* involved and *demonstrating (action)* their skills.

Evans (2001) and Espinosa (1995) thus recommend that parents' perceptions of their parental involvement, whether in home-centred or facility-centred involvement, need to be understood before they can be supported to better involvement and contribution to their children's development. The chapter now turns to the context of parental involvement in South Africa given the legislative and policy frameworks in a bid to understand how these challenges are addressed by the state.

2.4 ECD POLICIES, PROGRAMMES AND INTEGRATED ECD SERVICE DELIVERY

It was not until the 1980's that the South African government began to seriously acknowledge the relevance of ECD in policies (Williams & Sameuls, 2001:5). Despite an effort by government departments to contribute to ECD, the racist practices of apartheid and related socio-economic inequalities caused children, especially those in poorer areas to continue receiving a lack of developmental opportunities (Williams & Sameuls, 2001:5). Therefore, since 1994, the democratically elected South African government committed itself to the building and reconstruction of various legislation, policies and programmes to address children's needs (DOE, DOSD & DOH, 2005).

Currently the goals of ECD-related policies and programmes in South Africa are guided by the need to redress the inequalities of the past and therefore have various aims, including

- prioritising previously disadvantaged communities;

- empowering previously disadvantaged parents and families, especially those in poor areas, who lack the resources to contribute to the effective development of their children; and

- contributing to the development of democratic governance (management) structures, which involve parents and communities (Williams & Sameuls, 2001:15).

The abovementioned aims are specifically related to community-based ECD services and indicate the difference between community-based and private ECD partial care facilities. While it is the government's aim to support ECD in poorer areas though supporting community-based ECD partial care facilities, private ECD facilities are able to function independently after registration (Williams & Sameuls, 2001:5-11). Different to children in community-based ECD partial care facilities, children who were enrolled in private ECD partial care facilities (higher income areas) were found to be successful in school, because their parents were educated and able to optimally support them during their ECD phase (Williams & Sameuls, 2001:5-11). It is thus no wonder that South African ECD service delivery policies have various goals to assist and empower parents of children in community-based ECD partial care facilities.

ECD-related policies and programmes in South Africa are also based on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Children (UNCRC), which was adopted during 1989. The UNCRC is an international agreement of adherence between all nations who accept it. Among other obligations, the UNCRC obligates all state parties to ensure that ECD partial care facilities are available for the care of children, especially children of working parents (UNCRC, 1989, Article 18(3)). Moreover state parties are obligated to ensure that appropriate assistance is given to parents/caregivers in the performance of their child-rearing responsibilities (UNCRC, 1989, Article 18(3)). Furthermore, state parties are obligated to provide additional support in cases where families experience higher levels of poverty (UNCRC, 1989).

South Africa forms part of the nations who accepted the UNCRC (1989) and is thus obligated to adhere to the said Article. The South African government therefore took the initiative to mandate the National Department of Social Development

(DOSD) and the National Department of Education (DOE) to take the lead responsibility for ECD service delivery in South Africa (Williams & Sameuls, 2001:5). Whilst the National Department of Basic Education (DOBE) has the primary responsibility for the six- to nine-year cohorts, the DOSD is primarily focused on the zero to five-year cohorts, in collaboration with other government and private stakeholders (Williams & Sameuls, 2001:5).

In an effort to provide quality care to children in the ECD phase, the South African government obligates its DOSD to take the leading role in the registrations of all ECD partial care facilities and ECD programmes for children between the ages of 0 and 5 years (Children's Act No. 38 of 2005, Chapter 5 & Chapter 6) in South Africa. The DOSD is also mandated to maintain a record of all registered ECD partial care facilities in each province and to ensure that there are enough ECD partial care facilities available in the province. The DOSD also provides funding to ECD partial care facilities, especially in communities where families may lack the means to provide proper shelter, food and other basic necessities to their children, taking in consideration the conditions as contemplated in the act (Children's Act 38 of 2005, Chapter 5). These funded ECD partial care facilities or those who qualify for funding from the DOSD are referred to as community-based ECD partial care facilities (Biersteker & Dawes, 2008:187).

In order for both private and community-based ECD partial care facilities to be approved for registration, they need to adhere to a set of norms and standards (Children's Act No. 38 of 2005, Chapter 5). There are specific requirements within the set norms and standards, which obligate ECD partial care facilities to take certain actions that would promote parental involvement in ECD partial care facilities. These requirements are as follow:

- Personnel at ECD partial care facilities have to make all families aware of all the rules, policies and procedures of the facility before a child is enrolled at the facility. The purpose is to give parents the opportunity to decide whether

the facility is the most appropriate for the needs of their children (DOSD, 2007:53-54).

This requirement complements the aim of the White Paper on Education and Training, which is to give parents the right to choose the form of education or development activities, which are best for their children, especially the early years of education, irrespective of whether the service is provided by the state or not (DOE, 1995).

- ECD partial care facilities must have a special licence to transport children and it is the responsibility of families to ensure that such licencing is in place before allowing their children to be transported (DOSD, 2007:53-54).

- Practitioners working at an ECD partial care facility must present a planned programme that addresses the developmental needs of the children of all ages. The pre-planned learning programme must illustrate to parents that practitioners understand the development of the child (DOSD, 2007:54-55).

These requirements also complements the aim of the DOE, which is to get parents to fulfil their primary responsibility which is to ensure that their children receive education. Moreover, it is the right and responsibility of all parents to take part in the governance of the ECD programme that is presented to their children (DOE, 1995). However, there is a lack of monitoring of the implementation of these requirements (Biersteker & Dawes, 2008:187).

In order for an ECD programme to be approved for registration, the programme must also adhere to a set of norms and standards as determined by National State Parties (Children's Act No. 38 of 2005, Chapter 6). As in the case of the norms and standards with regard to the ECD partial care registration, the norms and standards for the ECD programme registration are prescribed in order to ensure that all children receive quality education leading to optimal development. Some of the norms and standards for ECD programme registration require certain actions aimed at parental involvement in ECD. This is another effort by governmental policy developers to support parents with their parental responsibility towards their

children. Some of the actions that are required from ECD partial care facilities are as follows (Berry, Jamieson & James, 2011:42-43):

- ECD programmes must include caregivers in the development of positive behaviours in children;

- ECD programmes should ensure that parents are participating in their children's development;

- ECD programmes should educate and support parents;

- The parents / caregivers of vulnerable children and children with special needs must be provided with information, knowledge and skills; and

- Activities should promote a positive relationship between the programme, families and the community and use existing community resources.

Although the DOSD is clearly mandated with the leading role to take responsibility for the development of children in the ECD phase, they fulfil their responsibility in collaboration with other government departments. There are various other departments within the South African government, mandated to contribute to the optimal development of children in the ECD phase as referred to in policy documents, such as the White Paper on Education and Training (1995); the National Health Act No. 61 of 2003-2004; the Strategic Priorities for the National Health System (2004-2009); the White Paper on Social Welfare (1997); the Education White Paper 6 (2001); the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (1990); the Births and Deaths Registration Act No. 51 of 1992; and the National Water Act No 35. of 1994 to name but a few (DOE, DOSD & DOE, 2005:20). The Integrated plan for ECD (2005) provides a review of all the government departments who were mandated to play a critical role within ECD service delivery. Only those with specific relevance to parental involvement in ECD are discussed here.

The majority of ECD-related policies do, however, make reference to the parental responsibility in ECD, placing ECD within the family environment and targeting parents (DOSD, 1997). Furthermore, legislation points out that all parents have the right to be consulted with regard to the development of their children (DOE, 1995), to take part in the governance of the ECD partial care facility where their child is enrolled (DOSD, 1995), to choose the development programme that their children are exposed to (DOE, 1995) and to have access to free health services for them and their children (DOH, 2003-2004). State policies thus make provision for the two categories of parental involvement (home-centred and facility-centred) (Korfmacher *et al.*, 2012:2).

It is clear that the integrated approach to ECD and developed policies on ECD are in agreement with the developmental approach to social welfare that the DOSD (2013) supports. Since 1994 the aim of the DOSD has been to move from a welfarist approach to a social development approach to social welfare (DOSD, 2013:1; Gray, 1996; Midgley, 1996:2-8). The aim of this shift is to develop and empower individuals, groups and communities by teaching them to be self-reliant (DOSD, 2013:6). Therefore it is clear that policies and procedures in ECD service delivery, whether the service is rendered by government or private institutions, has to fulfil a supporting and empowering function. The developmental approach that government departments take is related to Patel's (2005:110) social development approach to social welfare, which suggests that those who seek help have to be active participants in the solving of their own problems.

Parents are the most important teachers of their children (DOSD, 2011-2012:16). State parties should at all times aim to provide programmes that complement the parents' role and are developed as far as possible in partnership with parents, including through active cooperation between parents, professionals and others involved in the development of children (UNCRC, 2006:13). It is thus clear that parental involvement plays a fundamental role within ECD and various government departments are mandated to promote and contribute to active parental involvement (DOSD, 2007:19). Given the evidence that policies for ECD service delivery are

developed to empower parents with a long-term goal of addressing inequalities of previous disadvantaged communities, it stands to reason that reporting on the progress made in terms of parental involvement would be the top priority of ECD service delivery in South Africa. It was, however, difficult to retrieve reports on ECD service delivery that focus on the progress made related to parental involvement.

South African legislative and policy frameworks related to ECD provide an enabling context within which parents can be involved in the early development of their children. Rights come with the responsibility of the parents to become actively involved in the ECD of their children (DOE, 1995). The DOSD (2008:19) is of the opinion that all parents/caregivers do have a variety of skills that are needed to raise their babies, because they learn from sharing their skills and learning from one another's mistakes (DOSD (2008:219). Although the state, via policy content, has attempted to enable and empower parents with the ability to ensure the best delivery of ECD services to their children, understanding how parents are engaging these opportunities remains a hiatus.

2.5 THEORETICAL REFLECTION

In an effort to understand ECD it was important for the researcher to consider multiple psychological child development theories. A variety of well-developed development theories on child development are available. However, the ecological systems theory, as developed by Bronfenbrenner (cited in Dawes & Donald, 2000) most effectively assisted the researcher to understand the holistic development of the child. The ecological perspective suggests that a child's development is influenced by various systems, of which parents are the most influential microsystem. Maslow's (1971) hierarchy of needs assisted the holistic understanding of children's needs, because the undeniable importance of parental involvement in ECD became more evident. To understand the governmental ECD policies and programmes and ECD integrated services, the researcher made use of the social development approach to social welfare. This approach implies that

policies and programmes should be developed and implemented in such a way that they are able to enhance the existing strengths and capabilities of people within their unique context.

2.6   CONCLUSION

The discussion in this chapter illustrates that ECD is the most important phase in every individual's life, and that parents' involvement increases the efficacy of ECD. It is also clear that policies and programmes aim to promote parental involvement in ECD service delivery. Stakeholders are indeed obligated to enable and empower parents towards continuous, sustainable and optimal involvement. The chapter, however, concludes that reporting on the progress of such policy outcomes related to parental involvement in a South African context can be deepened.

The aim of this study which is to investigate the perceptions of parents regarding the ECD phase and their involvement therein would provide a window into such reporting. In this way the recommended research may be able to suggest guidelines to assist parents towards improved parental involvement and thus the optimal development of children during their early development phase.

CHAPTER 3
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The literature review that was done in Chapter 2 proved the importance of ECD, the undeniably positive effects parental involvement in ECD has and how clear policies and programmes are designed to promote parental involvement in ECD service delivery. The analysis of the consulted literature by means of child development theories, human development perspectives and service delivery approaches assisted the researcher to identify the gaps in ECD-related data. Despite supportive programmes and policies that are aimed at empowering parents and the numerous opportunities that parents have of being assisted in addressing their needs and those of their children, there was lack of data on: how parents perceive these opportunities; whether parents are accessing these opportunities and what effect current ECD service delivery has on parents and children. The identified gaps thus motivated the aim of this study, which is to explore parents' perceptions of ECD and their involvement therein. The researcher's goal is to apply an understanding of parents' perceptions in the development of guidelines for supporting parents' involvement with the ECD of their children, at home and at the facility.

This goal ultimately assisted the researcher in deciding which research design would be most appropriate to implement in this study. It also made it easier for the researcher to choose the most appropriate sampling, data collection and data analysis method. The latter three, in addition to the research design, will be discussed in the following section. This discussion will be followed by a discussion of the ethical aspects that were implemented and how trustworthiness was ensured. The purpose of this chapter is thus to reflect on methodological decisions used to guide the execution of this research study. This chapter ends with conclusions on the methodological implementation process.

3.2   RESEARCH APPROACH AND DESIGN

It is important for researchers to follow a specific research design that will guide them to the most appropriate manner in which to collect the data they need to gather to reach their research goals (Fouché, *et al.,* 2011:144). The research design that was chosen for this research study was chosen based on the goal that this study aims to reach. The goal was to explore and describe what parents' perceptions are regarding ECD and their involvement in their children's development in the Langkloof farming communities. The researcher had the option of using a quantitative, a qualitative or a mixed method research design, which includes both qualitative and quantitative design elements. The researcher found the qualitative research design to be the most appropriate for the purpose of this study merely because of the difference between the two designs. Contrary to the quantitative research design which focuses on testing objectives, theories and the relationship between variables, the qualitative research design focuses on the exploration, description, understanding and interpretation of individual's perceptions of a social or human problem or setting (Creswell, 2009:4). The purpose of a qualitative research design was thus in line with the purpose of this study.

In their discussion of the qualitative research design, Fouché and Schurink (2011:312-323) unpack the five strategies that may be used to design a qualitative study, namely ethnographic study, phenomenological study, biographic study, case study and grounded theory study. Whilst reading and studying these five strategies the researcher found that none of the mentioned strategies could accurately describe what the researcher wanted to do with this study. Fortunately, as Sandelowski (2000:334) describes it, qualitative researchers now have a wider range of strategies that can be used to design qualitative research, such as descriptive research design and interpretive descriptive research design. Sandelowski (2000:334-335) feels strongly that qualitative researchers sometimes use the abovementioned five strategies (ethnographic study, phenomenological study, biographic study, case study and grounded theory study) to describe their research, when in fact what some of them are actually doing is purely interpreting and describing gathered data.

Thus for the purposes of this study, the researcher chose and implemented a qualitative, interpretive descriptive research design. A qualitative, interpretive descriptive research design was suitable to use in this research study, because its aims are to accurately explore and describe the perceptions of a certain population (Creswell, 2007:56). A qualitative, interpretive descriptive research design aims to understand the known and unknown by means of the empirical study and evidence. Instead of making assumptions, it is the intention of the qualitative, interpretive descriptive researcher to develop an in-depth understanding of how participants perceive, understand and experience a specific issue (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011:109). The qualitative, interpretive descriptive research design was thus best suited to implement in this research study because its goal is similar to the goal of this research study.

3.3   SAMPLING

Sampling is important, because studying an entire population would be exhausting and time consuming (Strydom, 2011:224). For this study the researcher made use of a purposeful sampling strategy, which according to Creswell (2013:156) refers to the purposeful selection of participants, because they can seemingly inform an understanding of the research problem or topic (Creswell, 2013:156). The researcher therefore followed and implemented the following process.

-    Within the context of South African governmental ECD service delivery the age groups within the ECD phase are divided. Whilst the DOBE takes responsibility for the education of children from school-going age to nine years by including them in the formal schooling system (DOSD, 2007:20), the DOSD and the DOH take responsibility for children from 0 to 5 years (Biersteker, 2008:184). Children from 0 to 5 years are usually the age cohort that ECD partial care facilities cater for. Therefore the participants will consist of parents of children from birth to school-going age, thus 0 to 5 years.

-    In an effort to identify participants who would inform a rich understanding to this study the researcher made contact with one representative (principle,

practitioner, management member) at each ECD partial care facility (crèche) who would be able to identity willing participants most able to provide applicable information, relevant to the study. The crèche representatives were a teacher, the principal or the farmer's wife who is involved at the ECD partial care facility on the farm. The crèche representatives knew the parents and were in a better position to identify the appropriate parents for the study.

- From the literature review that was done it was clear that fathers' involvement in the ECD of their children is as important as the role of the mothers. Therefore the researcher specifically asked that crèche representatives identify mothers, as well as fathers to participate in this research study. This decision and sampling strategy ultimately helped the researcher identify participants with different viewpoints. Therefore the researcher could, as Creswell (2013:158) says, meet the multiple interests and needs of this particular study.

- The Langkloof farming community was the area in which the researcher chose to implement the research, due to the researcher's experience of working with ECD partial care facilities on these farms. The children in the Langkloof farming communities are perceived as vulnerable, due to higher levels of poverty that are experienced by their parents (DOE, DOSD & DOH, 2005:4). The DOSD's primary responsibility is to render services to children, especially vulnerable children in poorer communities (Williams & Sameuls, 2001). This research context was most appropriate for the research study since research proves that children in poorer communities still do not receive good platforms for development (Biersteker & Dawes, 2008:185).

- It was the researcher's aim to sample four parents on each of the seven identified farms within the Langkloof farming communities to ensure that the maximum number of parents from different backgrounds and cultural experiences were incorporated within the samples. Having done so contributed to the researcher's goal of data saturation. The researcher was open to include more participants if data saturation was not achieved through the mentioned participants.

The size of the sample depended a great deal on the research design, which according to Thorne *et al.* (2004:5*)* is known to be utilised in relatively small samples, such as focus groups. It was also based on the researcher's drive to achieve data saturation.

3.4 DATA COLLECTION

Five focus groups were used for data collection (Whittaker, 2009:46-60). Focus group interviewing was useful, because it allowed the researcher control over the line of questioning (Creswell, 2009:179). According to Whittaker (2009:48), apart from the fact that focus groups allow for many different opinions, they can also generate a vast amount of data in a relatively small time. Whittaker (2009:48) also indicates that focus groups are better suited to participants with difficulties in literacy, than for instance questionnaires, which require a certain level of writing skills. It was anticipated that the participants in this study may encounter challenges with regard to literacy.

Focus groups are said to be expensive and unpredictable and planning focus groups is said to take a lot of time and the implementation requires experienced facilitators (Greeff, 2011:363-364). In this research study, however, very little trouble in planning and setting up the focus groups was experienced. Not only were participants more than willing to take part, but the venues in which the focus groups were conducted were easily accessible. In most cases the focus groups were conducted within the ECD partial care facility. The relative ease of the experience can be accounted for by the fact that the researcher is known to the crèche representatives, making it simpler to gain access to venues and participants. The expenses to conduct the focus groups included petrol to get to the different farms and telephone calls to the crèche representatives.

The focus groups were conducted by means of a discussion guide (Whittaker, 2009:53). The discussion between the researcher and the participants was thus guided by a pre-determined list of topics and questions as suggested by Whittaker (2009:53). The discussion guide was formulated with the assistance of the research

supervisors. It allowed the researcher to follow up on interesting avenues that frequently emerged during the focus group discussions (Greeff, 2011:352). Before entering into the initial interviews the researcher reviewed and understood the necessary interviewing and communication techniques, which prepared her for the facilitation of the focus groups. The researcher also used her social work skills, such as reflective listening and interviewing.

Before implementing the focus groups for the research study the researcher was coincidentally a participant in a focus group research study by the research team of the Head Office of the DOSD. This exercise created an appropriate opportunity for the researcher to experience practical implementation of the communication and interviewing techniques that are normally utilised in a focus group. The researcher could thus appropriately prepare herself for the focus groups in this study. This experience also gave the researcher more confidence to implement the appropriate techniques of focus groups and the researcher was able to conduct focus group discussions in such a manner that set participants at ease and motivated their participation.

The data that came from the focus group discussions were recorded on a video camera, as well as a voice recorder. During the first and second focus groups the researcher noticed that the video camera might cause participants to feel uneasy. Even though they were ensured of anonymity, the video recording caused a sense of uneasiness. Therefore in the following focus groups, the researcher made sure that the video camera was not focused on the participants. The researcher also explained to participants that the video camera merely served as a backup for the voice recording in case of a defective voice recording to help the researcher when transcribing the collected data.

As part of the continued aim of the researcher to achieve data saturation, follow-up individual interviews were planned if it should become necessary. However, there was no need to implement this part of the planning since rich data were collected by means of the focus groups.

3.5 DATA ANALYSIS

A process of qualitative data analysis was followed by thematic analysis. Thematic analysis can be defined at a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within qualitative data (Braun & Clark, 2006:79).

- *Preparation, organisation and familiarising*: The researcher made sure that all possible data were gathered, before starting with the process of data analysis. The researcher typed and organised the volumes of video- and voice-recorded data, giving herself the opportunity to become more familiar with the data and to make enough back-up copies of data, which were safely stored and serve as proof of the findings (Creswell, 2007:148; Creswell, 2009:185).

- *Reading, memoing and generating initial codes:* The researcher repeatedly read the data in order to identify general codes and/or themes throughout the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code.

- *Searching, reviewing, defining and naming themes:* The researcher coded themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme. This process included the on-going review of themes to refine the specifics of each; the overall story of the analysed data with the aim to generate clear definitions and names for each theme. In this part of the analysing process the researcher was assisted by an objective coder who contributed to the objective analysing of the data to promote trustworthiness.

- *Representation of data and producing the report:* The researcher selected compelling extracts from the transcribed data. Relating back to the research question and literature produced in Chapter two, the researcher could compile the representation of the data in Chapter four.

3.6 ETHICAL ASPECTS

In an effort to protect the participants of this research study, the researcher had the proposal of this research approved by the research panel of the Centre for Child, Youth and Family Studies in Wellington and an NWU Faculty Research panel. Both of these research panels consist of qualified researchers, employed by the North-West, University. The researcher received approval for the proposed research during June 2012.

Furthermore, the research proposal was included in a broad ethics application, which comprehends the research focus of the Centre for Child, Youth and Family Studies. This research has been registered under the project: Developing sustainable support to enhance quality of life and well-being for children, youth and families in South Africa: a trans-disciplinary approach. The ethics number is NWU-00060-12-A1. Throughout the implementation of the research proposal, the researcher had regular contact with her supervisor and co-supervisor at the Centre for Child, Youth and Family Studies, in order to ensure that the research study would be conducted ethically and responsibly.

Permission for the research was also obtained from the Director of the DOSD in the Eden Karoo region (see Annexure C) because the researcher identified the research sites from the ECD data base of the DOSD in the Eden Karoo region. This was followed by obtaining permission from the Ethics Committee at the Head Office of the DOSD in Cape Town. Where it was necessary, the researcher gained the permission from the employers (see Annexures E & F) of the parents on the farms, in order to prevent the research from impacting on parents' working obligations. This aim was successfully reached as the focus groups did not impact on the working hours of any parent. Focus groups were scheduled based on participants' availability. The facility representatives that were identified to assist the researcher in the sampling of the appropriate participants also signed a consent form (see Annexures G & H). In some cases the researcher had to transport participants in her own vehicle from one farm to the other and/or back and therefore the researcher

designed indemnity forms, which the transported participants had to sign (See Annexure I). In order to obtain all the above-mentioned ethics approvals, the researcher implemented the following aspects related to ethics in her research study, as suggested by Somekh and Lewin (2011:26).

The researcher ensured that all written consent letters included all the information, the background and the purpose of the research study to prevent any uncertainties. The researcher also made sure that the written consent letters specified the role of the researcher to prevent compromises on the researcher's ability to disclose information and to not raise power issues as suggested by Creswell, (2009:177). The researcher is known to participants as a social worker at the DOSD, therefore the researcher verbally explained to them that her role in the research is not that of a social worker but as a researcher, doing research in order to obtain a master's degree. This is the information that was also in writing on the consent forms. This explanation, however, did not prevent participants from asking questions, relating to the researcher's profession, which caused the researcher having to repeatedly explain her role to participants.

Before facilitating the focus groups the researcher introduced herself to participants, clarified her role, and again explained to participants the background and purpose of the focus groups. The purpose for this was to make sure that everyone understood their roles and consent letters they signed. The researcher also made participants aware that she might want to contact some of them at a later stage, should the need arise to verify information. The participants who availed themselves for this purpose had to write contact numbers on their consent letter. However, due to the rich amount of data that was collected through focus group interviewing, the researcher had no need to contact participants after analysing the data.

As Somekh and Lewin (2011:26) point out, it was not always possible to outline all the possible consequences of the research study in advance. For this reason participants were always reminded that participation in the study was voluntary and

they were allowed to withdraw from the research study should they wish to do so. However, no participants withdrew from the study. The researcher ensured confidentiality and anonymity by keeping participants' identities anonymous during report writing. The researcher strived to always give participants correct information and handled everything openly by making the research proposal available to all the involved parties who wanted to read it. In the same way the analysed data would be made available. In a further effort in ensure confidentiality and anonymity the researcher stored all proof of collected data as well as transcripts at the Centre for Child, Youth and Family Studies.

During data analysis the researcher ensured that analysed data was reflected correctly by implementing the analysing process with the assistance of her research supervisor and a research assistant. Direct quotations were added in the analysed data to prove that no untruthful information is reflected. The researcher reported the collected data as accurately and honestly in this document as possible. As participants spoke mainly Afrikaans, the quotations were translated. For ethical and quality purposes care was taken, with the help of a language editor, to preserve the original quality of the words of participants. To ensure accuracy, the original Afrikaans words are included in Chapter 4. An excerpt of a transcribed focus group discussion is also presented in Afrikaans and English in Annexure L. All video and voice recordings were submitted to the Centre of Child, Youth and Family Studies in Wellington for safe keeping.

3.7   TRUSTWORTHINESS

The purposeful sampling strategy contributed to the sampling of appropriate participants, who were able to provide a rich, satisfying amount of data. The assistance of a coder, a supervisor and co-supervisor supported the objective representation of the data. Triangulation in the following aspects was also adhered to as planned (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011:274-278; Schurink, Fouché & De Vos, 2011:419-421):

Credibility/authenticity and dependability: To ensure credibility a planned and structured analysing process, with the assistance of a coder was implemented. The use of multiple theories kept the researcher from assuming an unchanging social world and to keep account of possible changing conditions on the topic of ECD, thus insuring dependability of the study. A supervised process of interpretation and representation further contributed to the credibility of the study (Schurink, Fouché & De Vos, 2011:419- 421).

Transferability: To ensure transferability the researcher based her understanding and interpretations of data on theoretical frameworks, models and processes. (Schurink, Fouché & De Vos, 2011:420).

Confirmability: By adding confirmative quotations within the representation of collected data ensured the confirmability of the researcher's interpretation reflected in Chapter 4.

3.8 CONCLUSION

The research methodology that the researcher planned to implement in this study seems to have been the appropriate methods to collect data that could address the problem as stated in Chapter 1. In Chapter 5 a final critical overview will be provided regarding how the research question has been answered and how the research goal was achieved through the research methodology discussed in this chapter. This chapter is followed by a presentation and discussion of the data that was gathered by means of the research methodology. The findings are evaluated and discussed with reference to the theoretical framework that was developed in Chapter 2.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF DATA

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The literature review in Chapter 2 indicated the importance of ECD. It reflected the undeniable positive effects of parental involvement in the early development of children. The review on available policies and programmes indicated that policies are developed in an effort to promote parental involvement in ECD service delivery. In an effort to develop a theoretical perspective to situate this study, the linkage between existing literature on ECD and parental involvement therein, was explored. The theoretical framework that was developed assisted in the identification of the gap in ECD parental involvement. The same theoretical framework was utilised in this chapter to understand and interpret the data that was gathered for this study.

The aim of this chapter is thus to present the analysed data that was gathered as described in Chapter 3. During data analysis three overarching themes were identified (see table below). Each overarching theme is explained together with its own themes and subthemes. Direct quotations from participants have been inserted in order to substantiate the arguments made in the chapter. This in turn serves to amplify the trustworthiness of the analysis.

TABLE OF THEMES

Overarching theme	Themes	Subthemes
Parents' perceptions of children's requirements for early childhood development	Parenting	Love, care and attention Religion Learning and teaching
	ECD partial care facility	Basic education Qualified staff Daily programmes Additional staff, sufficient supervision and attention Buildings, premises, resources and equipment Good nutrition
Concerns and satisfactions regarding requirements for child development	Barriers to adequate parenting	Negative traditions Uninvolved fathers Limited resources Poor parenting and parental illiteracy
	ECD partial care facility	Shortage of food Lack of basic education Shortage of staff Equipment, buildings and premises Management
	Structural challenges	
	Governmental challenges	
Suggestions to address concerns	Social well-being of parents	Minimising alcohol abuse Sport Weekend activities Parental care plan

Overarching theme	Themes	Subthemes
	ECD Partial care facility	Involved parents
		Informed consultation
		Independent functioning
		Elect new management committee consisting of parents
		Enough nutritious food
	State support	On-site visits and facilitation of meetings
		Additional, qualified staff
		Subsidy and food
		Skills development for parents
		Equipment
		Less dependence on government/state

4.2 PARENTS' PERCEPTIONS OFCHILDREN'S REQUIREMENTS FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

The first overarching theme constitutes an explanation of what parents perceived as their children's requirements for optimal development. Participants' perceptions could clearly be divided into what they thought children require from themselves and what children require from an ECD partial care facility. Parents, however, perceived a clear separation with respect to the responsibility of each context (home and facility) despite the recognition that it is ultimately shared between the two parties. In other words, evidence from focus groups suggested that parents share Korfmacher *et al.'s* (2012:2) understanding that relates to two categories of parental involvement, namely home-centred involvement and facility-centred involvement. Therefore it was clear that parents perceived the ECD partial care facility to be an important role player in their children's development and overall growth. Similar to the ecological system approach, it appears as though parents

perceive themselves and the ECD partial care facility to be the microsystems influencing their children's development (Dawes & Donald, 2000).

4.2.1 PARENTING

The following subthemes, which parents who participated in the focus groups perceived as requirements for their children's development have been grouped under the theme 'parenting'. This is because the following requirements are related to parents' daily responsibilities to their children.

4.2.1.1 LOVE, CARE AND ATTENTION

Participants perceived the love, care and attention of parents as a requirement for children to grow and develop. This links with Max-Neef's (1991) conception of human scale development, where understanding and affection are viewed as fundamental human needs (Max-Neef, 1991:31). The participants perceive love as forming the basis of parenting, to which all the other requirements can be added. This perception of parents can also be associated with the circles of courage model, which begins with the spirit of belonging, indicating that children experience a universal longing for caring relationships in order to feel loved (Brendtro, Brokenleg & Van Bockem, 2011:10).

The following quote illustrates the participant's view that material belongings are not enough and that children need the love from their fathers and parents in general. This is in line with the views of Hobfoll (1998) and Hobfoll, *et al.* (2011:1400-1408) who state that material resources, as well as personal and psychosocial resources are important for well—balanced functioning. In poor communities the non-tangible resources, such as care and affection can often be developed, even when tangible, material resources, such as food and clothing are scarce.

"Jy kan jou kind alles gee, klere en goed, maar as die kind nie vader- en ouer-liefde het nie…"(3)

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"You can give your child everything, clothes and things, but if the child does not have fatherly and parental love…"(3)

The participants highlighted that their children are exposed to extensive negative circumstances, which emphasises their need to care for their children more. They were of the opinion that if parents could take proper care of their children and be more attentive to their needs, parents would be able to provide children with maximum safety and contentment. This again links with the fundamental need outlined by Max-Neef (1991:31), namely protection.

"En, omdat kinders deesdae so kwesbaar is, ons moet baie meer sorg oor kinders vandag sien jy."(3)

"We must take better care of our children, because they are so much more vulnerable these days."(3)

Participants noted that their children thrive on communicating, playing, singing, and having the appropriate resources to enable these actions. These actions will be satisfiers regarding basic human needs, such as participation, protection, creativity, rest and idleness, understanding and affection (Max-Neef, 1991:31). Love, care and attention extend to providing children with nutrition. Participants therefore also highlighted that parents have to ensure that children eat nutritious food, such as vegetables, because it contributes to healthy growth and development. This links with the foundational work of Maslow (Huitt, 2007) as expanded by Max-Neef (1991:31) on human needs where subsistence needs are singled out as crucial material resources.

Clearly, participating parents want what is best for their children. In the following quotations parents indicated that they would like their children to be exposed to better opportunities and become better adults than they are.

"En laat hulle ook maar net kom waar hulle wil kom in die wêreld, want gee maar die kind daai geleentheid wat jy nie gehad het nie."(3)

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"Allow them to become what they want in life; give them the opportunity that you did not have."(3)

"Elke ouer wil maar net die beste vir sy kind hê."(1)

"Every parent only wants what is best for his child."(1)

"Ek meen, ek het nie crèche geloop nie, en nou is daar darem geleentheid vir hom."(3)

"I mean, I did not go to crèche and now there is an opportunity for him."(3)

"Jy wil eintlik dit ook vir jou kind hê wat jy nie kon bereik nie."(4)

"You actually want what you never achieved, for your child."(4)

Participants' perceptions of their involvement in the early development of their children's lives displayed parental love, care and attention. This extended further to their recognition that children require bidirectional communication between parents and child, good nutrition and the desire for better opportunities. Parents further highlighted religion, together with learning and teaching as mechanisms towards better opportunities, which will be discussed in the following two sections.

4.2.1.2 RELIGION

Max-Neef (1991:31) outlines spirituality as a fundamental human need. The participants in the focus groups also perceive religion as a very important aspect on which their parenting is based. The following quotations are examples of how participants referred to religion.

"Ek dink die grootste een sal wees, Godsdiens, dit begin daar."(3)

"I think the biggest one will be religion; that is where it all begins."(3)

There are participants who referred to religion as a method of enforcing routine within your household and on your children.

"As ouers begin op 'n Sondag kerk loop nê, dis nou nie 'n talent nie nê, maar ek bedoel dis 'n roetine wat hulle vir hulle kinders kan leer, ons gaan Sondag   kerk toe."(3)

"If parents could begin to go to church on Sunday, it is not a talent, but it is a routine they can teach their children."(3)

Other participants felt that exercising their religion is an approach to keeping families busy and contributing to less crime in their community. Religion is thus also seen as a method to keep children safe, linking it with the fundamental human need of protection of Max-Neef (1991:31).

"Soos ons ook, ons is baie betrokke by die kerk die sangaande en so. As dit die sangaande is dan is die kinders meer betrokke by die sangaande. Miskien nou meer die konserte maak dat kinders meer betrokke is, dan gaan daar minder misdaad ook wees."(4)

"Like us, we are very involved at the church, going to song evenings and so. Children are very involved in the song evenings, maybe more the concerts, but the more children are involved the less crime there will be."(4)

4.2.1.3 LEARNING AND TEACHING

Participants perceive learning and teaching as part of their daily parental responsibilities towards their children.

"Ek sal hom moet leer van klein af. Die skoolwerk, vooruit al. Ons moet begin by A en B, 1 en 2'hulle."(5)

"I have to teach him from a young age. School work, A and B and 1 and 2's."(5)

In an effort to support the learning and teaching of the young children, participants suggest that parents provide their children with the required learning material.

"En as hy 'n pen soek, gee ek hom 'n pen dat hy kan aangaan met die dinge of ek sê ook vir hom gediggies op."(3)

"And when he wants a pen, I give him one in order for him to continue. Or I recite rhymes for him."(3)

There were participants who referred to learning and teaching as laying the foundations for a child's life. Learning and teaching are thus perceived as important needs and a necessity for children, by these participants.

"Ek het ook gelees maar in die boeke van jou kind se crèche loopbaan is soos die fondament, waar die huis gaan opstaan. Jy moet hom van klein af… As die fondament swak is, gaan die huis nie kan staan nie. Dan gaan hy op een of ander tyd loop krake kry, soos hulle ook nou praat van die geleerdheid, dit moet ook ingestel wees van klein af."(2)

"I read in books that your child's crèche period is like the foundation that the house is going to stand on. You must start from a young age… If the foundation is weak, the house will not be able to stand. It is going to get cracks one time or another. Like they are referring to learning now, it must be implemented from a young age."(2)

Love, care and attention, religion, as well as learning and teaching were shown to be perceived as parental responsibilities. In effect they can also be conceived of as home-centred requirements pertaining to parental involvement.

4.2.2 ECD PARTIAL CARE FACILITY

In addition to parenting, participants highlighted what they perceive to be what their children require from the ECD partial care facility where their children are enrolled. The aspects that parents identified as requirements can be related to the norms and standards for ECD partial care facilities (DOSD, 2007). These requirements will be discussed now.

4.2.2.1 BASIC EDUCATION

Participants refer to basic education as one of the main responsibilities of an ECD partial care facility in order to help prepare their children for school.

"Sodat hulle voorbereid kan wees vir die skool."(2)

"In order for them to be prepared for school."(2)

Participants are of the opinion that basic education at the ECD partial care facility will contribute to children's progress at school.

"Ons wil ook, as ons kind die eerste jaar skool toe gaan, iets aan die einde van die jaar kry van haar kant af of van hom kant af, wat sê hy het hard gewerk die jaar."(2)

"When our child goes to school for the first year, we also want to receive something at the end of the year, saying that the child worked hard for the year."(2)

4.2.2.2 QUALIFIED STAFF

In order for children to receive basic education at an ECD partial care facility, participants mentioned the requirement that the ECD partial care facility employ qualified staff.

"Ja, maar dan moet daar 'n persoon wees wat die kinders kan leer."(1)

"Yes, but then there must be someone who can teach the children."(1)

Participants suggest that in cases where facilities do not have qualified staff, the current employed staff ought to receive training in order to become qualified.

"Sy moet nog vir 'n opleiding gaan."(2)

"She must still go for training."(2)

4.2.2.3 DAILY PROGRAMMES

Participants have their own ideas of what the basic education for children at an ECD partial care facility should entail. They feel that there are certain activities that ought to be implemented in the daily programme, such as physical exercises;

"Lekker laat hulle speel en stap en al daai dinge."(1)

"Let them play, walk and all of those fun things."(1)

Praying and singing;

"Maar dit is hoe dit veronderstel is om te wees. Hulle moet in die oggende bid en dan sing hulle, soos op 'n skool."(1)

"But that is how it is supposed to be. They must pray and sing in the mornings, like in school."(1)

Discipline and routine;

"Kinders moet leer hoe om by 'n tafel te sit, hoe om stil te sit"(1)

"Children must be taught how to sit at a table; how to sit still."(1)

"Hulle moet hulle tye eet wat hulle moet eet."(4)

"They must eat when they are supposed to eat." (4)

Daily activities, which include colouring, counting and basic education for school readiness.

"Wat hulle kan leer, is soos in kleure en getalle. Hulle is nog klein so…"(2)

They can learn about colours and numbers. They are still small so…"(2)

"Die skoolwerk, vooruit al. Ons moet begin by A en B, 1 en 2'hulle."(5)

"Schoolwork, starting with A and B, 1 and 2."(5)

4.2.2.4 ADDITIONAL STAFF, SUFFICIENT SUPERVISION AND ATTENTION

Participants mentioned that children need attention and sufficient supervision at ECD partial care facilities. Therefore at facilities where only one staff member is employed, parents require the employment of additional staff. Participants are of the opinion that it is impossible for one staff member to clean, supervise and attend to children's safety, and cook, as well as teach children.

"Kyk hierso nê, moet daar 'n kok wees en daar moet een wees wat aan die babas kyk en een wat nou aan die groterige kinders kyk."(1)

"See here, must be a cook, someone to look after the babies and someone to look after the older children."(1)

4.2.2.5 BUILDINGS, PREMISES, RESOURCES AND EQUIPMENT

Participants highlight that in addition to basic education, daily programmes, additional and qualified staff, there are various other requirements children have at ECD partial care facilities. These requirements include playing equipment, providing enough space and bedding in order for children to rest peacefully.

"Ek voel maar net die speelgeriewe moet net reg wees vir hulle."(1)

"I just feel that the play equipment must be available for them."(1)

"Ek sal hulle slaapkamer maak soos 'n slaapkamer, nie almal so op 'n hoop nie."(1)

"I would make their bedroom like a bedroom, not squeezing everyone together."(1)

They also require all the necessary equipment that children need in order to learn.

"Tafeltjies en stoeltjies. Kyk soos gordyntjies, speelgoedjies, beddegoed, alle beddegoed, lakentjies, soos sulke goed. Handdoeke en soos matrassies."(1)

"Tables and chairs. See, like curtains, toys, all the bedding and so on. Towels and mattresses."(1)

"Die skryfbehoeftes en mos nou die kleure groen, pienk en pers, sulke behoeftes het ons, ja"(2)

The stationery and the colours, green, pink and purple, those are the needs we have."(2)

More importantly participants say that children require safety.

"Die veiligheid. En hier is lelike slange gevaarlike slange, hulle loop hier rond. Dis baie warm hier by ons. Hulle kruip deur, as daar nog iets teen die draad gewees het wat hom kan uitblok, maar daar is niks nie."(2)

"The safety. Ugly snakes are crawling around here, because it is very hot here. They crawl through here. If only there was something at the fence to keep them out. There is nothing to keep them out."(2)

Furthermore participants identified a hygienically clean environment at ECD partial care facilities to ensure their children's safety.

"'n Skoon omgewing."(5)

"A clean environment."(5)

"En 'n medisynekissie met medisyne en handskoene en sulke goedte moet sy hê want dit is nie hier nie."(5)

"She does not have a first-aid kit, gloves or anything like that here."(5)

4.2.2.6 GOOD NUTRITION

Hunger and malnutrition are realities in South Africa. Tempelhof (2013) wrote that 20 million people in South Africa have no security in terms of regular meals. She refers to a Medical Research Council and Water Research Commission report

where it is stated that especially people in rural areas often have unhealthy eating patterns, which can stunt growth and development. A recommendation in this mentioned report is that poor people in rural areas should be involved in growing nutritious food for own consumption. Participants are of the opinion that children require a balanced, nutritional diet, in order to be healthy, which can also be linked to Max-Neef's (1991) classification of fundamental human needs in including subsistence needs, which include food that is necessary for physical health and optimal cognitive development.

"Kyk ek verwag 'n gesonde dieet"(2)

"I expect a healthy diet."(2)

"Hulle moet gesond kan eet, natuurlik groente."(4)

"They must eat healthy, vegetables of course."(4)

Parents also require that ECD partial care facilities work closely with the local clinic in order to insure that their children receive the basic medical services they need on a monthly basis.

"Soos mos nou dit wat hulle kry, soos Panado stroop en doen."(5)

"What they usually get, like Panado syrup and so on."(5)

Although there is no formal scope of practice available for workers in ECD facilities, it is important that they have a good understanding of the limits of their authority and responsibilities. Especially medically-related input can be an ethical dilemma and they should ideally have good working relationships with community nurses and doctors. The ECD workers should be subjected to in-service training where they learn basic first aid skills, and also learn to understand the limitations to their input. It could be worthwhile to also involve the Child Accident Prevention Foundation of South Africa (CAPFSA) (situated at the Red Cross Children's Hospital) in training and also to negotiate access for ECD workers to the educational leaflets and other material provided by CAPFSA.

It is clear that the requirements are reflections of the needs of parents with regard to ECD, their involvement and ECD services. All these requirements could directly (microsystem) or indirectly (macrosystem) relate to Maslow's (1971) hierarchy of needs or Max-Neef's (1991) fundamental human needs. Parents' experiences of their children's needs could in some instances also be understood on the basis of other theories, such as the circle of courage (Brendtro, Brokenleg & Van Bockem, 2011:10) and the Conservation of Resources theory outlined by Hobfoll (1998:54) and Hobfoll, *et al.* (2011) where four resource categories are outlined. Two of these categories encompass tangible and material resources, namely object (housing, furniture, etc.) and energy (food, money, electricity, etc.). There are also two non-tangible resource categories, namely personal and condition or psychosocial resources (Van der Merwe & Kassan-Newton, 2007:352).

Practitioners in ECD can use the resource categories as a framework to understand resource loss and gain in the Langkloof farming communities as it impacts on ECD. Loss spirals can typically entail that a child's nutritional needs are not met, which can impact negatively on learning and cognitive development. This can facilitate resource loss spirals, which can have long-term implications into adulthood. However, if some resources are made available, such as adequate and nutritious feeding, it can have a positive impact on physical and other areas of development, on learning and can facilitate long-term gain spirals. In this regard it is important to understand what community members value as resources and to use their strengths and wisdom when working towards resource gain.

This finding proves that parents' perceptions of ECD needs are relatively in line with what ECD literature suggests. The researcher will now give a tabled summary and discussion on what parents perceived as satisfactions and concerns that hinder the satisfaction of their children's developmental requirements.

4.3 CONCERNS AND SATISFACTIONS REGARDING REQUIREMENTS FOR CHILD DEVELOPMENT

Participants were concerned that the requirements for their children's development are not currently met within their context, namely the Langkloof farming communities. A few of the participants were, however, more satisfied with their children's experience at ECD partial care facilities on particular farms in the Langkloof. In other words ECD facilities, even in one geographical area cannot be viewed in exactly the same way. At the same time both parents' concerns and satisfactions could be discerned within related matters. The second overarching theme represents a discussion of the concerns that parents have with regard to their parenting abilities, as well as matters parents were satisfied with regarding ECD partial care facilities. In addition participants also voiced concerns with the role that government departments play within ECD service delivery. Additionally parents were concerned about significant structural challenges that impact negatively on the optimal development of their children.

4.3.1 BARRIERS TO ADEQUATE PARENTING

Participants perceived particular requirements for their children, as noted in the previous overarching theme, but also voiced a number of barriers that parents encounter, which hinders parents' ability to provide in the requirements of their children. In other words, participants mentioned factors that prevented them from optimal home-centred involvement (Korfmacher, et al. (2012). These barriers to home-centred involvement are thus explained in this section.

4.3.1.1 NEGATIVE TRADITIONS

Parents highlighted that over the years it became a tradition for children on farms to become what their parents are. Parents lost their hope for their children to become more educated than they are and to reach more than they reached.

"En ek dink baie, dis seker maar nou die jare wat hulle op die plaas bly. Dit het begin tradisies word dat ouers maar so is en die kind gaan ook maar so raak en dit is die probleem. Ek dink daai goed moet gebreek raak."(3)

"I think maybe it is the years that they lived on the farm. It became a tradition for parents that children will also become like that and that is the problem. I think that tradition should be broken."(3)

These negative traditions cause children to continue in the footsteps of their parents, because they are not subjected to anything else. It is something that is carried over from generation to generation and participants say they think it will continue, because they are not subjected to any alternatives to living.

"Ok, right, my ma is so, my pa is so, so ek gaan ook nie verder as dit nie."(3)

"Ok, right, my mother is like that, my father is like that, so I will not go further than that."(3)

"Maar op die oomblik het hy nie 'n keuse nie, en dit gaan mos nou van generasie tot generasie. Hy gaan sy kinders ook so leer, 'in fact'."(3)

"But at the moment he does not have a choice and it goes from generation to generation. He is going to teach his children to be like that as well, in fact."(3)

One of these negative traditions experienced in this context is alcohol abuse. Parents also relate this tradition to a lack of alternatives; they say that there is nothing else for them to do and therefore parents abuse alcohol on weekends. The abuse of alcohol contributes to poor parenting and is therefore also seen as a barrier to home-centred parental involvement.

"Ons kan nie uitgaan êrens heen nie, ons bly net hierso, ons drink net om ons besig te hou."(5)

"We cannot go out anywhere, we are always here, and we drink to keep ourselves busy."(5)

"My ma is dronk, ok, right, ek slip uit die huis uit, ek kom my tyd in, my ma gaan nie weet nie."(3)

"My mother is drunk, ok, right, I go out of the house and come back when I want to, my mother won't even know."(3)

In this section participants highlighted what they perceive as major microsystems, which indirectly impact on the optimal development of their children (Dawes & Donald, 2000). Negative traditions, including alcohol abuse impair parents' ability to effectively and appropriately be involved in the development of their children. Parents also experience other barriers to home-centred parental involvement, which include uninvolved fathers, limited resources and a lack of parental skills.

4.3.1.2 UNINVOLVED FATHERS

Fathers admitted to being uninvolved and referred to parental involvement in ECD as a mother's responsibility.

"Nee, dis mos net die vrouens wat kan praat."(1)

"No, it is just the woman that can talk."(1)

"Nee maar die pa's kom nie eintlik hierso, om te sien wat hier aangaan nie."(5)

"No, but the fathers do not really come to see what is going on."

Most uninvolved fathers are thus unaware of the full extent of mothers' concerns.

"Maar ek kom nie eintlik altyd hier nie. Ek hoor net."(5)

"But I don't always come here. I just hear."(5)

The lack of involvement causes a lack of knowledge with regard to the requirements and concerns as noted and the full extent thereof. However, there were fathers that are involved and fully aware of the needs of their children. Fathers are perceived as a microsystem in the ecological system perspective of the child (Dawes & Donald, 2000:3). A negative microsystem might have a negative effect on children's development.

4.3.1.3 LIMITED RESOURCES

Participants mentioned that due to poverty, parents do not always have the resources to provide in the requirements of their children. Similar to the perspective of Robert, St. Pierre and Layzer (1998:1) on poverty, parents also refer to poverty as negatively influencing parent-child relationships and child development.

"Dit gaan maar swaar met ons. Ons moet maar kyk hoe om te kry wat ons in die hande kan kry, om hulle gelukkig te hou."(2)

"Things are not going well with us. We struggle to find what we can get to keep them happy."(2)

However, some parents prefer not to see their circumstances as a barrier to adequate parenting. The fact that parents who are living in the same community perceive the same aspect differently could be related to Cruz, Stahel and Max-Neef's (2009:2024) theory to human needs, which suggest that human needs stay the same, but the satisfiers differ based on an individual's sense of being, having, actions, times and spaces. While some parents might experience poverty as being a barrier, others might experience it as having a situation they would be able to overcome (Cruz, Stahel & Max-Neef, 2009:2024).

"Ek kan nie omstandighede blameer nie, jy kan maar hoe arm wees, of jy kan vir hoe min geld het, maar ek dink aan die einde van die dag, hang dit van jouself af wat jy van jou lewe maak."(3)

"I cannot blame my circumstances. No matter how poor you are or how little money you have, it depends on yourself and what you want to make of your life at the end of the day."(3)

4.3.1.4   POOR PARENTING SKILLS AND PARENTAL ILLITERACY

Participants say that some parents just do not have the necessary parental or problem-solving skills to appropriately parent their children. The illiteracy of parents hinders their ability as the microsystem, to positively influence or contribute to the development of their children (Dawes & Donald, 2000:3).

"Hulle is eens nie 'n voorbeeld vir daai kind nie."(3)

"They are not even setting an example for their child."(3)

Participants mentioned that the illiteracy of some parents is also negatively impacting their ability to learn and teach their children. So even though parents might want to contribute to the development of their children, they might find it difficult.

"Daar is party wat standerd 4 so uit die skool uit is."(3)

"There are some who finished school in standard 4."(3)

"Maar sy het die verlange om haar kind te leer te kry want sy het dit nie   gekry nie."(4)

"But she has the longing to teach her child, because she did not receive that."(4)

Barriers to parenting can be viewed as impediments or obstructions parents perceived to be related to the home environment of children. Parents, however, also voiced concerns connected to certain ECD partial care facilities in respect of the requirements. This following section will elaborate on these concerns.

4.3.2 ECD PARTIAL CARE FACILITY

Participants perceived particular requirements for their children that ought to be addressed by the ECD partial care facility where their children are enrolled, as noted in the previous overarching theme. However, they also voice a number of concerns they have that these requirements are not currently met, keeping in mind that particular ECD partial care facilities do meet some of the noted requirements.

4.3.2.1 SHORTAGE OF FOOD

Participants said that most ECD partial care facilities do not have enough nutritious food for children.

"Die kinders eet nie pap hier by die crèche nie."(1)

"Children do not eat porridge here at the crèche."(1)

"In die aande as daai kinders by die huis kom, dan huil hulle. Sy sê sy is honger."(1)

"At night when the children come home, they cry. She says she is hungry."(1)

"Hier word nie kos gekoop nie."(5)

"No food is bought here."(5)

Some of these parents' children even experienced serious health problems, due to a lack of enough and nutritious food.

"Die kind is ondervoed. Die dokter vra waar eet die kind bedags, toe sê ek dis bedags by die crèche waar die kind so eet."(1)

"The child is underfed. The doctor asked where the child eats during the day and I told him it was at the ECD partial care facility where they eat like that."(1)

"Toe my kind so verstop gewees het."(5)

"When my child was constipated."(5)

However, there were some parents who were satisfied with the food that was provided to their children. They felt that the children do receive nutritious food.

"Maar ek weet die kinders by ons eet groente."(1)

"But I know our children eat vegetables."(1)

Some participants perceive the ECD partial care facilities as unable to provide in the physical needs of their children. They too suggest that enough nutritious food is needed for the healthy physical development of a child as suggested by Oswald (2013:1).

4.3.2.2 LACK OF BASIC EDUCATION

Due to the fact that most ECD partial care facilities do not have adequate and qualified staff, parents are concerned that their children are not receiving the basic education that is needed for them to be prepared for school.

"Nou hier kry hulle nie geleerdheid nie, nou gaan hulle skool toe en dan moet hulle weer daai volgende jaar daar sit want hulle het nie geleer by die vorige skool waar hulle was nie."(2)

"They do not receive education here, so when they go to school they have to sit in there for two years, because they weren't taught anything at their previous school."(2)

However, at the facilities where the members of staff are qualified and more than one staff member are employed, children are receiving basic education. Parents whose children are enrolled at these ECD partial care facilities are satisfied, because they can see that their children are disciplined and they are making good progress.

"Hulle word gedissiplineer, hier word hulle geleer."(3)

"They are disciplined, they are learning here."(3)

"Ek kan sien, maar my kind hy vorder. Hy is maar nou eers twee jaar oud. Nee regtigwaar hulle leer."(4)

"I can see my child is progressing. He is only two years old. No really they are learning."(4)

It seems that in some cases at the ECD partial care facilities the requirement of development and learning is not achieved due to barriers, such as staff shortages. In those facilities the children are then "looked after" but not developed with particular programmes. This is in contrast to what the DOSD (2007) requires from ECD partial care facilities in South Africa.

4.3.2.3   SHORTAGE OF STAFF

Participants said that some of the ECD partial care facilities have a shortage of staff. The ECD partial care facilities they referred to only had one staff member, who is responsible for all the tasks at the facility, thus being overloaded with work.

"En by ons is net een vrou, sy moet kos kook, sy moet skoon maak, sy moet na die babatjies kyk en dan is daar nog ander kindertjies wat daar is…"(1)

*"*And here we only have one woman, she cooks, she must clean, she must look after the babies and there are still more children as well…"(1)

Besides having too much work and children having a lack of supervision, the current member of staff has no training to prepare the children for school.

"Sy gee nie genoeg aandag aan almal nie. Want die kind is nou nat, dan moet sy rond hardloop om daai kind droog te maak, so dit werk nie so nie."(2)

She doesn't give enough attention to everybody. Because when one child is wet, then she must run around to clean that child, it is not working like that."(2)

Participants are also concerned about the ECD partial care facility having a lack of other resources, such as money to pay for additional staff.

"Hier is niemand om daai kinders te leer nie."(2)

"There is nobody here to teach the children."(2)

"Aan die een kant is dit maar die finansies verstaan jy. Hulle moet ook nou maar seker kyk hoeveel kry hulle, verstaan. Wat is die begroting. Nee ek bedoel nou om die juffrouens te betaal."(4)

"On the one hand it is the finances. Maybe they must see how much they have first, understand. The budget. I mean to pay the teachers."(4)

However, a few other parents' children are enrolled at ECD partial care facilities where qualified practitioners were employed. These are also the facilities that had more than one staff member. These few parents thus experienced satisfaction with the services that these facilities rendered. They felt the qualified staff knew exactly how to work with their children.

"Sy het 'n manier om met die kind te werk."(3)

"She has a way of working with the child."(3)

4.3.2.4 EQUIPMENT, BUILDINGS AND PREMISES

Participants say that most of the ECD partial care facilities do not have enough toys, learning material and other equipment needed at an ECD partial care facility for the children to learn, play, and be healthy.

"Hulle kan nie reg speel nie, want hier is nie regtig geriewe wat hulle kan mee speel nie. Al hulle goed is stukkend, die swaaie is gebreek."(1)

"They cannot really play, because there is not playing equipment they can play with. Everything is broken, the swings are broken."(1)

"Hier is nie 'n stoof nie, die stoof het mos geblaas."(2)

"We don't have a stove here, it broke."(2)

"Hier is baie goedte hier wat nodig is."(5)

"There are a lot of things that we need here."(5)

Most participants also feel that these facilities are too small. Children thus do not have enough space and children do not enjoy a hygienically clean environment.

"Ja, hy is baie klein, ja. U kan sommer hier ook staan, dan kan u sien, hoe lyk daai klein dingetjie daar. Dit lyk nie vir my soos 'n crèche nie, sien u. Daar is nie ruimte nie."(1)

"Yes, it is very small. You can see that small thing from here. It does not look like a crèche to me. There is no space."(1)

Participants are also concerned about the outdoor premises not being suitable for the health and safety of children. They say that some outdoor premises do not provide grass or shade for children to play, which might impact on their health. If they want to play in the shade they have to go behind the premises, which might impact on their safety.

"Hier is nie 'n koelteboom nie, is buitekant die hekkie."(2)

"There is no tree for shade here, it is outside the gates."(2)

"Kyk jy sien hier is nie eens gras nie, waarop hulle kan sit en speel nie."(2)

"There is not even grass for them to sit and play on."(2)

4.3.2.5 MANAGEMENT

Most participants are concerned with the manner in which ECD partial care facilities are managed. Their concern is that some management committees do not ensure that the abovementioned concerns are attended to. Parents have questions about the management of the facility. Parents are unclear about the activities of the management and have the desire to be informed about how subsidised money from government is managed.

"Maar ons wil die papiere sien…"(2)

"But we want to see the papers…"(2)

"En waarnatoe gaan dit?"(2)

"And where is it going?"(2)

Participants say parents are not allowed to be involved in the decision making of the management, whilst they have the need to be involved. They are concerned about the management being the only body that is in control of the management of the facility. Parents have the need to be consulted by the management when decisions are made. Parents feel that there are certain requirements that are not currently met, due to a lack of sufficient communication and cooperation between parents, staff and management. These findings are in direct contrast to what is suggested by Epstein's six approaches to involvement. He specifically suggests that parents have to form part of decision making and governance (Epstein, 1997). Epstein's suggestion corresponds with state policy that proposes the development of democratic governance (management) structures, which involve parents and communities in community-based ECD partial care facilities (Williams & Samuels, 2001:15).

"Hulle vra nie vir ons nie, hulle stel net die mense aan, as ons kom moet ons ook maar net hoor die een of daai een is by die crèche…"(1)

"They do not ask us, they just employ the people. When we come here, we just hear, they employed this one or that one at the crèche."(1)

Participants mention that the management fulfil their functions from a distance. They suggest that management's lack of needs contributes to their inappropriate management style. They mentioned that because management are not aware of the ECD partial care facility's real needs, they are not managing the facility properly.

"Hulle weet nie wat hier aangaan nie, hulle sit heeldag by die kantoor of daar by die huis. Hulle kom nie na die crèche persoonlike self om te kom kyk nie."(2)

"They do not know what is going on here, they sit in their offices or there at home. They do not come to the facility, personally to see what the needs are."(2)

Based on the mentioned concerns that parents have about the management of the ECD partial care facilities, it is clear that there is some tension between parents and the management of these facilities. The tension causes a separation between management and parents. Parents experience a feeling of scepticism in the ability of current management committees to fulfil their role.

"Hulle moes dit lankal gedoen het, maar nou net as daai mense kom, dan wil hulle nou daai ding kom doen, so gaan dit…"(2)

"They should have done it a long time ago, but now, if those people come, then they want to come and do that, that is how it goes…"(2)

In the mentioned quotes parents say that the management is not doing what they ought to do, they only do something when they know that they will be monitored by the government.

4.3.3 STRUCTURAL CHALLENGES

Poverty and agricultural challenges in farming communities are perceived by parents as barriers that negatively affect the development of children. Parents feel

that because they are poor it is more difficult for them to provide in the developmental needs of their children.

"Ons weet dit gaan swaar op die plase met ons en kyk hier is nou baie dinge wat ook gebeur in die landbou, kyk dit bring alles tot op 'n vertraging, so ons moet maar net kop hou."(2)

"We know that it is heavy going on the farms, and now with what is happening in the agriculture, see it causes everything to slow down, so we must just stay focussed."(2)

Participants feel that parents' unreasonable working hours also cause poor service delivery at the ECD partial care facility. When parents work overtime, practitioners are also forced to work overtime, without being consulted or having any assistance or extra payment.

"En na-ure soos in nou is da miskien wat ons gou na-ure moet werk, hulle laat weet nie."(2)

"And after hours like in sometimes we have to work overtime after work, they do not inform them."(2)

"Veral in die oestyd, dan moet hulle ekstra ure insit, ons kom amper halfsewe partykeer by die huis."(2)

"Especially in the harvest time, than they must put in extra hours, we almost come home at half past six, sometimes."(2)

"Maar dis waar die ding inkom, omdat die mense so laat werk."(3)

"But that is where it comes in, because the people are working so late."(3)

Participants feel that long working hours also impact parenting negatively. They feel that due to this work-related challenge the adults in children's lives are too

tired and sometimes not able to give their children the necessary love, care and attention.

4.3.4 GOVERNMENTAL CHALLENGES

Participants are concerned with the Department of Social Development (DOSD) whom they feel do not visit them or the ECD partial care facility directly. They are therefore of the opinion that personnel from the DOSD do not understand the actual needs and circumstances of the children, parents and the ECD partial care facility. They mentioned that the DOSD officials must make direct contact with them, instead of with the farm owners' offices. This concern that parents have can be related to the gap identified by Biersteker and Dawes (2008:188), which indicates that there is a lack of reporting on the effects of ECD programmes and services to parents.

"Hoe ry hulle dan ons mis? Hoekom kom hulle dan nie hier ook in nie. Hulle moet hier 'n slag in die crèche ingaan dat hulle kan sien hoe lyk daai crèche. Hulle moet verby die kantore ry."(1)

"How do they drive past us? Why don't they also come here? The must go into that crèche to see how it looks inside that crèche. They must drive past the offices."(1)

"Hulle kom kyk nie wat is die omstandighede by die crèche nie."(2)

"They do not come to see what the circumstances are at the crèche."(2)

Participants are also concerned about the services that the Department of Health (DOH) renders. They feel the DOH is not prioritising services at the ECD partial care facilities on their farms.

"Daai sister kom ook net wanneer sy wil hier uit. Sy kom nie elke keer op haar datum nie."(5)

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"That sister only comes when she wants to. She does not come on her dates."(5)

In the previous theme a distinction between home-centered and facility-centered responsibilities for children's requirements in the ECD phase were detected from participants' narratives in the focus groups. When parents voiced their concerns together with what they were satisfied about it further reflected this distinction.

4.4 SUGGESTIONS TO ADDRESS CONCERNS

During the focus group discussions participants suggested ideas that could serve as suggestions to address their concerns. The following discussion reflects on these suggestions.

4.4.1 SOCIAL WELL-BEING OF PARENTS

Participants demonstrated awareness that, as parents, their well-being is critical to the development of their children in their early years. Parents suggested ideas regarding aspects of their social well-being, which could be altered.

4.4.1.1 MINIMISING ALCOHOL ABUSE

Participants mention that it would help if farm owners had stricter rules with regard to alcohol abuse. One parent referred to his employer who was already implementing such policies and according to him, it works.

"As jy op die 'company' se property is, jy het hier ingetrek, dan het hulle reëls en regulasies wat die mense volgens moet leef, so as jy nie hou by die regulasies nie, moet jy weet, of jy word ge-"fire" of jy word onttrek as jy oortree. Ek dink dis waar die werkgewers ook moet inkom, want hulle het die werkers op die plaas en ek dink hulle moet tog, hhm hulle kan tog mense help. Hulle het tog die fasiliteite om mense te help."(3)

"If you are living on the property of the company, then they have rules and regulations, which the people have to live in accordance with. If you do not follow the regulations, you know you are fired. I think that is where the employer comes in; it is because of them that the workers are on the farm, they can help people. They have the facilities to help people."(3)

"Want as ek hier dronknes hou en staan en baklei, sal my bestuurder afkom, hy gaan vir my vra wat is die probleem, waarmee kan ek help, verstaan jy, so ek dink werkgewers kan ook help."(3)

"Because, if I'm drunk and fighting my manager will come down and ask what the problem is, ask what he can help with, so I think the employer can also help."(3)

He argues that the employer is on the farm on a daily basis, which makes it easier for him to monitor alcohol abuse instead of expecting governmental officials or other stakeholders to intervene in this problem.

"Die werkgewer wat fisies op die plaas is, is elke dag hier hy sien wat gebeur, so ek dink in 'n mate kan hulle ook help daarmee."(3)

"The employer, who is physically on the farm, sees what is happening, so I think he can help with that."(3)

Participants also suggest that if one parent in a household could stop abusing alcohol, circumstances will start to improve.

"Kyk ek voel altyd, as die pa en die ma drink, en een hou op met drink, gaan dit 'n verskil maak in die huis."(3)

"See, I always feel if the mother and father are drinking and one stops drinking, it would make a difference in the house."(3)

Parents' suggestions to address their barriers to home-centred parental involvement could be related to Evans' (2001:3) suggestion that parents usually have appropriate

knowledge and skills at their disposal to contribute to more effective development opportunities for their children, but they are not always listened to and understood and their potential is sometimes undermined as a result. Other suggestions parents have to address the lack of home-centred parental involvement include sport, weekend activities and a parental care plan.

4.4.1.2 SPORT

There were participants that suggested that sport could be an idea to keep parents and children on the farm busy in an effort to keep parents away from negative macrosystematic influences to parenting, such as alcohol abuse.

"Ons wil die breër gemeenskap meer betrokke maak by sport, want as jy op 'n… dink gou… 'n Dinsdagaand of 'n Donderdagaand of 'n Maandag en elke aand moet oefen en Saterdag moet speel, het jy minder kans om alkohol te gebruik verstaan jy."(3)

"We want to involve the bigger community with sport, because if you exercise on a Tuesday or a Thursday or a Monday and every night and play on a Saturday, you have less time to drink alcohol."(3)

"Die kinders leef hulle uit as daar miskien oor naweke sport is. Dan leef die kleintjies hulle uit daarso.."(4)

"The children enjoy themselves if there is sport over weekends."(4)

However, there were other parents who referred to sport not working previously due to parents who did not participate. This idea thus has a few challenges.

"Dis oor die mense wat nie worry nie. Want ons het die veld gekry vir die sokker en so."(5)

"It is because the people are not interested. Because we did get a field for soccer and so on."(5)

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4.4.1.3   WEEKEND ACTIVITIES

Some participants referred back to a time when weekend activities were held at their community hall to keep parents and children on the farm busy. One parent said that it was fun, and it kept people away from wrong doing.

"Maar ons wil nou naweekaktiwiteite ook vir die kinders hê, wat die kinders sentrum toe kom of veld toe gaan, dan het ons aktiwiteite, miskien, drie tot vier ure op 'n Saterdag. Dan weet ons ten minste dat, hmm… Ons kan nou nie die kinders konstant by die ding hou nie, maar dan het ons darem daai roetine dat ons die kinders darem Saterdae kan besig hou."(3)

"But we want weekend activities, also for the children, because if the children go the centre or the field, then we have activities, maybe four to five hours on a Saturday. We cannot keep the children busy constantly, but we at least have that routine of keeping the children busy on Saturdays."(3)

"Soos ons ook, ons is baie betrokke by die kerk die sangaande en so. As dit die sangaande is dan is die kinders meer betrokke by die sangaande."(4)

"Like us, we are very involved at church, song evenings and so. At song evenings children are more involved."(4)

4.4.1.4   PARENTAL CARE PLAN

Some participants had the idea that parents on the farm need to have a parental plan to avoid parents from exposing children to the culture of alcohol abuse on the farms. They suggest that such a plan would entail certain parents taking responsibility for all the children, whilst others go out to enjoy themselves. Parents can then take turns. When the ones that went out the previous weekend look after the children, the others can go out to enjoy themselves. Parents feel that children might also enjoy it, because they would know they would be excited to do different things on weekends.

"Ek het besluit, die naweek is almal by daai aunty se huis. Daai aunty kyk die naweek aan die kinders. Hulle geniet hulle daar. Daai naweek is dit so, ons maak 'n beurt, sien. So kan ons ma's ook bymekaar kom en so."(5)

"I decided, this weekend everybody must be at one auntie's house. That aunty looks after the children on that weekend. We can take turns. In that way mothers can come together and so on."(5)

Some participants referred back to a time when parenting was a shared responsibility between all parents in a community. When parents still helped each other to create a safe community or environment where children could grow and develop within the security of their parents and the community.

"Ek moet sorg dra oor haar kinders. Dit is eintlik wat regtig kortkom. Dat ons nie meer sorg dra oor mekaar se kinders nie."(3)

"I must care for her children. That is what is lacking. We do not care for each other's children anymore."(3)

Other participants felt that these days they have to be careful and avoid misunderstandings. They felt it would be better if parents, who need the assistance or are in favour of assistance from other parents, take the initiative to ask or communicate to each other in that regard. However, most participants were in favour of assisting one another and they believe that it would be possible.

"Kyk as jy aan my toe kom dan kan ek nog sê, ja, maar sy het die verlangste om haar kind te leer, want sy het dit nie gekry nie, verstaan. Maar dit sal nie 'n probleem wees nie. Om mekaar te help sal nie 'n probleem wees nie, verstaan."(4)

"Look, if you come to me, then I know, she wants to teach her child, because she did not get it. It won't be a problem to help each other."(4)

4.4.2 ECD PARTIAL CARE FACILITY

Parents are, however, also of the opinion that their involvement at the ECD partial care facility would contribute to meeting the requirements of their children. Parents' perception of their involvement at the ECD partial care facility is clearly related to Epstein's (1997) six approaches to involvement. Parents' assessment of ways in which to address concerns unmistakably recognises the distinction between the home environment of children, as well as their experience within the facility (Korfmacher, 2012).

4.4.2.1   INVOLVED PARENTS

Most participants said that they want to be involved at the ECD partial care facility their children are enrolled at. Whilst literature on ECD, ECD policies and Patel's (2005) theory on social welfare and development recommends involvement, parents have the need to be involved. Parents thus also perceive their involvement as a needed contributing factor in ECD service delivery.

"Nou elke keer sê hulle gaan mense binne in die plaas vat, nou vra ek vir MR baie van ons wat hier sit…"(1)

"Every time they say that they are going to take someone on the farm, then I ask him, many of us sit here…"(1)

Parents are of the opinion that their involvement in the ECD facility could include voluntary assistance with cleaning and organising fundraising functions.

"Self gras sny, skoon maak, sulke goete."(1)

"Cut the grass; clean and so on, ourselves."(1)

"Soos 'n funksie miskien hê vir die kinders en daai geldjie wat ons maak, uit die funksie se geld uit, vir hulle iets aankoop."(2)

"Like having a function and using the money to buy something for them."(2)

"Ons kan ander crèches bymekaar bring."(5)

"We can bring other crèches together."(5)

They suggest that joint decision making (Epstein, 1997) can improve ECD service delivery and help the facility to be less dependent of the farm owners.

"Ons wil onse harte uitpraat teenoor wat hier gebeur by die crèche."(5)

"We want to talk about what is happening at the crèche."(5)

"Dan kom die ouers bymekaar saam met haar daar."(1)

"Then the parents come together with her there."(1)

Participants are of the opinion that their involvement at ECD partial care facilities would be helpful in improving the ECD services that are rendered by the facility. They feel that by being informed and forming part of the management committee would contribute to the independent and self-reliant functioning of the facility. This will also give impetus to the fundamental human need of participation as outlined by Max-Neef (1991:17).

4.4.2.2   INFORMED CONSULTATION

Parents expressed a desire to be informed about the procedures and current state of the ECD partial care facility, and to be consulted in managerial decision making. They perceive informed consultation as a method of addressing the communication problem and tensions that exist between parents, care givers and the management. In their estimation, being informed will help them understand why the ECD partial care facility has certain problems.

"Ons moet bymekaar sit, en ons moet ook eintlik weet wat aangaan, sien."(1)

"We must sit together and we must now what is actually going on."(1)

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4.4.2.3   INDEPENDENT FUNCTIONING

In participants' judgment, it would be better and is possible for the ECD facility to be managed independently from the farm owners. In other words parents want the responsibility to lie with them primarily with the option of requesting assistance from the farm owners where necessary. In parents' opinion the ECD facilities, the regulations, procedures and decision making are currently entirely dependent on the farm owners, thus constricting their ability to contribute to the experience of their children at the facility.

"Maar ons kan vra vir grond, die boer hy sal gee. As ons net praat, hy sal gee, dan kan die kinders in die oggend so, die tuin gaan nat maak."(5)

"But we can ask for land, the farmer will give it. If we just talk, he will give. Then the children can go and water the garden in the mornings."(5)

4.4.2.4   ELECT A NEW MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE CONSISTING OF PARENTS

Participants suggested electing a new management structure in order to address the managerial concerns as discussed in the second theme. They feel a new management, consisting of them as parents, would help them to make progress with regard to the adequate service delivery at the ECD partial care facility.

"So ons moet maar 'n vergadering hou en 'n komitee kies, onse mense daaruit kies. Mense wat kan sê wat moet gebeur en so."(5)

"So we must have a meeting and elect a committee, and choose our own people. People who are able to say what must happen."(5)

4.4.2.5   ENOUGH NUTRITIOUS FOOD

Participants feel if the member of staff who is responsible for cooking could buy the food, she would be able to make sure that there was enough, nutritious food for

children to eat. Parents have the idea that if they were given the responsibility, they would be able to make decisions that will ensure better ECD service delivery at the ECD partial care facilities.

"Een week is daar nie kos nie, onse kinders lei honger"(5)

"One week there is no food, our children are starving."(5)

4.4.3 STATE SUPPORT

It appears as though parents have a sense of being able to satisfy their needs (Max-Neef, 1991). However, Max-Neef (1991) suggests that needs are satisfied by the right combination of being, having, action, time and space. At this point it seems as though parents perceive their sense of being able to be combined with action from government to support them in the following actions.

4.4.3.1 ON-SITE VISITS AND FACILITATION OF MEETINGS

Participants want the Department of Social Development to have direct contact with them (on-site visits) and to organise meetings with them in order for them to start discussing their concerns and to choose a new management in order to address their concerns.

"Al wat ons moet doen is ons moet 'n vergadering hou. Net met maatskap praat."(5)

*"*All we have to do is have meeting and talk to social services."(5)

4.4.3.2 ADDITIONAL, QUALIFIED STAFF

Participants mention that the government might be able to help them get additional and qualified staff at their ECD partial care facility.

"Hulle kan miskien iemand stuur wat miskien geleer is, wat miskien die kinders kan kom leer, en so."(1)

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"Maybe they can send someone who is qualified to teach children and so on."(1)

"Maatskap moet ons help om nog een iemand te kry in die crèche. Sodat, as hier nou babatjies kom, dan is daar mos nou iemand wat die doeke ruil. En die een maak nou kos en doen."(5)

"Social services must help us to get someone, so that there is someone that changes the babies' nappies. And the other one cooks and so on."(5)

4.4.3.3 SUBSIDY AND FOOD

Participants seem to be aware that government is already assisting with a subsidy, but wondered whether government would be able to assist more in this regard, while others felt that government could assist the facilities with food, as they are concerned about the lack of food at most of their ECD partial care facilities.

"Ek dink, hoe die staat ons kan help, is om vir ons meer geld te gee by die subsidie."(1)

"I think the state can help by giving us more money as subsidy."(1)

"Ek sal dit regtig waardeer as die staat vir die crèche kan help, soos "like in" die kos."(2)

"I would appreciate it if the government can help with food."(2)

Parents indicated that the government can assist them by paying on-site visits, facilitating meetings, providing additional staff and assisting by means of a larger subsidy and/or food. In addition they requested the government to help parents develop parenting skills by providing training, and providing equipment that is needed at the facility, all in an effort for them to be able to function independently.

4.4.3.4 SKILLS DEVELOPMENT FOR PARENTS

There were participants who enquired whether the government would be able to assist in the development of parental skills for parents.

"Ek wil net vra is daar nie miskien 'n ouerprogram wat ons die ouers op 'n Saterdag hiernatoe kan neem nie en ons wys hulle die lekkerte, die ander gedeelte van die samelewing."(3)

"I just want to know if there is a parenting programme that can help parents. We can bring parents here on a Saturday and show them the other side of society."(3)

4.4.3.5 EQUIPMENT

Participants mentioned that government could assist the ECD partial care facility with obtaining equipment that they see is required at the facility to improve service delivery.

"Kyk soos gordyntjies, speelgoedjies, beddegoed, alle beddegoed, lakentjies, soos sulke goed. Handdoeke en soos matrassies. Tafeltjies en stoeltjies."(1)

"Like curtains, toys, bedding, and so on. Towels and like mattresses. Tables and chairs."(1)

4.4.3.6 LESS DEPENDENCE ON GOVERNMENT/STATE

Participants admit that they need government assistance, but sometimes realise that they cannot always be dependent on government and have to find ways to help themselves as well. This perception can be linked to the social welfare and development approach of Patel (2005). Patel (2005:110) suggests that clients who are in need of assistance must be active participants in addressing their own problems instead of being passive recipients of services.

"Ek dink ons vra altyd te veel vir die regering om iets te doen. Wat doen onsself om onsself te help?"(3)

"I think we always ask too much from the state. What are we doing to help ourselves?"(3)

4.5 DISCUSSION

Data gathered indicated that the parents of the children in the Langkloof farming community are of the opinion that in order for their children to develop optimally, they have certain requirements that need to be fulfilled. This perception of parents can by linked to Maslow's (1971) hierarchy of needs, as well as Max-Neef's (1991) theory on fundamental human needs. These two theories also suggest that human development is based on the satisfaction of needs. As Cruz, Stahel and Max-Neef, (2009:2024) suggest, participants also perceived the developmental needs of children to be relatively similar; however, they could clearly divide the satisfiers of these needs into either being the parent or the ECD partial care facility.

Moreover, the needs that parents suggested their children have could be linked to the Gestalt field theory (Clarkson & Mackewn, 1993:47), which postulates that everything is of a field and that experiences are consistently configured within the field. Within this interaction human beings form patterns of functioning and work with figure and ground configurations where certain experiences will remain incomplete and pressing for attention. Brendtro, Brokenleg and Van Bockern's (2011:1) circle of courage model suggests that children cannot be seen as isolated from the context of their environment. Parents thus relate parenting and ECD service delivery to their children's immediate field of social interactions responsible for the fostering of their children's fundamental needs, such as affection to establish a sense of belonging and attachment.

Participants consistently made a clear distinction between the home environment of children in their formative years and what they experience in the ECD facility (Korfmacher *et al*, 2012). Korfmacher, *et al.'s* (2012:2) understanding that relates

to two categories of parental involvement, namely home-centred involvement and facility-centred involvement. Parents understand that it is their responsibility to provide in the needs of their children and therefore, they know what services ought to be rendered by the ECD partial care facility, where their children are enrolled. They mentioned that it is their right to require certain services from the ECD partial care facility, because they are paying for the services. The services that the participants felt are needed for their children within the ECD partial care facility are similar to what the DOSD requires from ECD partial care facilities as set out in the norms and standards referred to in Chapter 2.

However, in addition to the requirements that are similar to the norms and standards of the DOSD, parents have concerns that specifically relate to their unique circumstances and context. They experience these concerns that are experienced specifically within the Langkloof farming communities as barriers to optimal parenting. This understanding specifically relates to Dawes and Donald's (2000:12) argument stating that negative structural influences on parents or caregivers can contribute to parents' inability to create the conditions needed for positive developmental outcomes for children.

Parents made specific suggestions regarding how the government and farm owners could assist them in order to address these barriers to better home-centred, as well as facility-based involvement. The ideas of parents can be utilised in order to formulate guidelines, as was the aim of this study. Parents' ideas confirm Evans' (2001) argument that parents usually have the skills and abilities to be optimally involved in their children's lives, but might not always be listened to or understood. Thus the perceptions of parents utilised in the formulation of guidelines for ECD service delivery will be outlined in the next chapter.

4.6   CONCLUSION

The presentation of data in this chapter reflects that parents have a pertinent perception of their needs and those of their children. Parents' perceptions could clearly be divided into what is needed and expected from the two microsystems in

their children's context, namely parenting and ECD partial care facilities. The theoretical framework that was developed in Chapter 2 assisted the researcher in the representation and ultimately the understanding of the data. The discussion of the presentation confirmed Dawes and Donald's (2000:1) argument that effective implementation has to planned on a theoretical knowledge of development psychology and literature underpinned by an ecological perspective understanding of the relationship between children and their context. This context refers to "the family and wider sources of influence, such as the ECD partial care facility, the neighborhood, cultural practices and interventions with children" (Dawes & Donald, 2000:2). The evaluation and summary discussion of this study in Chapter 5 will include guidelines for intervention and recommendations for future research related to parental involvement in ECD.

CHAPTER 5
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The literature review in Chapter 2 outlined the unquestionable importance that ECD plays in the lives of all human beings. It also indicated that parental involvement forms an integral part of this important stage and can thus not be regarded separately, especially in community-based service delivery. The long-term effects of parental involvement in ECD benefits not only children but also parents, families and communities. Such benefits include higher rates of school attendance (HSRC, 2004:viii); higher levels of self-esteem, self-confidence and future orientation among children and youth (Shonkoff, 2009:2, HSRC, 2004:viii); a reduction in behaviour problems among youth, including aggression, substance use and crime (HSRC, 2004:viii; Rolnick & Grunewald, 2003:11); higher levels of work productivity (HSRC, 2004:viii); lower levels of stress and stress-related illnesses, resulting in lower levels of work absenteeism, substance use and health care costs due to less health problems (HSRC, 2004:viii); a greater capacity to deal with hardships and crises, which has particular relevance for coping capacity in resource-poor environments (HSRC, 2004:viii); and better quality of life among older persons" (HSRC, 2004:viii). For this reason ECD-related policies and programmes were developed in an effort to support and promote sustainable parental involvement. Despite the importance of parental involvement in ECD, it was found that there is a lack of data available on actual parental involvement initiatives and progress in South Africa (Biersteker & Dawes, 2008:188).

To address the gap regarding parental involvement, the aim of this study was thus to qualitatively explore and describe, through an interpretive descriptive strategy, what parents' perceptions are regarding ECD and their involvement in their children's development in the Langkloof farming communities. In an effort to develop a theoretical perspective to situate this study, the link between

developmental psychology and existing literature on ECD, parental involvement in ECD and related policies and procedures were explored. The theoretical framework that was described in Chapter 2 ultimately assisted the researcher in understanding and explaining the empirical data in Chapter 4.

In this chapter the focus will be briefly on the research aim and research question and if the research design and data collection strategies were appropriate in answering the research question. Based on the findings of Chapter 4, guidelines will be formulated that can be utilised by the DOSD to support parents in their involvement with ECD. The researcher is employed by the DOSD and will be able to implement some of the recommendations from this study to facilitate parental involvement in ECD. In the rest of this chapter the limitations of this study will be outlined and recommendations will be made for future research relating to this topic.

5.2   OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH IN RELATION TO GOAL ATTAINMENT

Chapter 1 of the study served as a planning document and proposal for implementation. The researcher is of the opinion that this study did meet the goal set forth in Chapter 1. As the goal indicates, the researcher was able to explore and give a rich description of parents' perceptions of the early development of their children and their involvement therein. In this chapter the research goal will be addressed by formulating guidelines in support of parental involvement in the ECD of their children and related ECD service delivery in the Langkloof farming communities.

Chapter 2 focused on developing a theoretical grounding, based on the literature review and assisting in understanding the constructs of ECD, parental involvement and ECD service delivery. The theoretical grounding assisted the researcher in identifying the gaps in available research and to appropriately situate the study and the contribution of this research project. In an effort to understand ECD it was important for the researcher to consider multiple psychological child development theories. However, the ecological systems theory perspective, as developed by

Bronfenbrenner (cited in Dawes & Donald, 2000) was found to be the most applicable approach in various child development discussions and therefore forms the basis of the theoretical perspective developed in Chapter 2. Looking at child development through the ecological systems perspective clarified why various other perspectives and literature refers to the parents as the most important and primary role players in the development of the child. The parents constitute the microsystem influencing the children. Clearly parents are also influenced by macrosystem dynamics, such as policies, procedures and legislation in the context of ECD. Combining the ecological systems theory perspective with Maslow's (1971) hierarchy of human needs and Max-Neef's (1991) perspective on human needs assisted the holistic understanding of what children need in order to develop holistically.

Governmental ECD policies and programmes and ECD-integrated services, are developed in relation to the social development approach to social welfare (Patel, 2005) that promote community participation, empowerment, respecting local knowledge and facilitating welfare initiatives in such a way that they enhance community ownership, sustainable development and self-reliant individuals and communities. The theoretical perspective on ECD and parental involvement that was developed in Chapter 2 guided the researcher's discussion and interpretation of data in Chapter 4.

Chapter 3 reflected on the methodological procedures the researcher chose to implement in this study. The research design, sampling strategy, data collection method and data analysis methods assisted the researcher to gain a rich data and to reach the goal of this study. The researcher made use of the purposive sampling strategy to identify participants for this study. A discussion guide was used in focus groups to provide a structure, while at the same time having the freedom to discuss interesting avenues without feeling restricted. The data analysis strategy was implemented with the assistance of a coder, contributing the identification of objective themes in the data instead of being distracted by personal perspectives, based on the researcher's work in relation to the ECD partial care facilities, which

formed part of the study. The analysis strategy contributed to the trustworthiness of the study. Trustworthiness was also ensured by the supervision of two research supervisors (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011:274); referring to the theoretical frameworks throughout data analysis (Schurink, Fouché & De Vos, 2011:420) and by incorporating evidence into the report to assure the reader that collected data is reflective of the actual collected data (Lincoln & Guba, cited in Schurink, Fouché & De Vos, 2011:420).

The findings of this study, as presented in *Chapter 4*, indicated that parents in poorer communities do exhibit the abilities and willingness to become involved in the ECD of their children. However, they experience various challenges that places strain their ability or need to become involved. The challenges they experience are unique to their circumstances on the South African farms. Parents require government and farm owners to adhere to legislative and policy requirements in order for them to address these challenges. The results of this study indicate fissures between available policies, programmes and ECD services and the appropriate implementation thereof. The fissure is that parents are not appropriately consulted and included in an effort to promote their involvement. This leads to disempowerment and parents not owning the process of parental involvement. Therefore, contrary to the vision of the DOSD, which is to create self-reliant societies, parents feel dependant and disempowered.

5.3   FINDINGS

Three overarching themes were identified in the data, namely parents' perceptions of their children's requirements for ECD; their concerns and satisfactions about requirements for child development; and suggestions to address those concerns.

The first overarching theme had two themes, namely parenting and the ECD partial care facility. Their views regarding parenting included aspects such as love, care and attention, religion, teaching and learning. This perception of parents can by linked to Maslow's (1971) hierarchy of needs, as well as Max-Neef's (1991) fundamental human needs. Participants thus also perceived the developmental

needs of children to be relatively similar; however, they could clearly divide the satisfiers of these needs into either being the responsibility of parents or the ECD partial care facility. This relates to Korfmacher *et al.*'s (2012) division of parental involvement being home- or facility-centred involvement. Participants indicated that the ECD partial care facility should provide basic education, qualified staff, a daily programme, adequate staff for sufficient supervision, good nutrition and adequate provision of buildings and equipment. The findings of the study prove Fagbeminiyi (2011) and Epstein's (1997) argument that suggests that parental involvement refers to an alliance between parents and the ECD partial care facility their children are enrolled at.

Moreover, the needs that parents suggested their children have could be linked to other developmental theories of child development, such as Brendtro, Brokenleg and Van Bockern's (2011:1) circle of courage model, which suggests that children cannot be seen as isolated from the context of their environment. Parents thus relate parenting and ECD service delivery to their children immediate field of social interactions responsible for the fostering of their children's fundamental needs, such as affection, to establish a sense of belonging and attachment.

The services that the participants felt are needed for their children within the ECD partial care facility are similar to what the DOSD requires from ECD partial care facilities as set out in the norms and standards referred to in Chapter 2. However, in addition to the requirements that are similar to the norms and standards of the DOSD, parents have concerns that specifically relate to their unique circumstances and context. These concerns were the barriers to optimal parental involvement that are experienced specifically within the Langkloof farming communities as outlined in Chapter 4.

With reference to their concerns, however, parents made specific suggestions on how the government and farm owners could assist them in order to address their barriers to better home-centred, as well as facility-centred involvement. The ideas of parents can be utilised in order to formulate guidelines, as was the aim of this

study. The ideas of participants confirm Evans' (2001) argument that parents usually have the skills and abilities to be optimally involved in their children's lives, but might not always be listened to or understood. Suggestions included actions and requirements to address barriers to optimal parenting in the home and facility environment, material support from the government and the farmers for the ECD partial care facility and support to address the inequalities in ECD service delivery. This confirms Dawes and Donald's (2000:2) argument that children's development is shaped different systems, which include their material, social and cultural context.

5.4 GUIDELINES

- The implementation of this study proved that parents were willing to participate in this study. They had the need to express their feelings and understanding of their children's development and their involvement therein. The researcher provided the environment for them to share without regulating their perceptions as if they were inappropriate or wrong. This motivated participants to share a rich quantity of information. Most of the guidelines in this study relate to Dawes and Donald's (2000:20) principles of community-based initiatives and continue with more specific recommendations with specific reference to what was found in the Langkloof farming community.

- In order to assist parental involvement in ECD an understanding has to be gained of how parents see and understand ECD and their involvement there-in. The cultures within different communities determine how development is understood and seen failure to consider these cultures or understanding thereof might hinder access to communities (Dawes & Donald, 2000:20).

- This guideline closely relates to some of the set norms and standards for ECD partial care facility and ECD programme registration. Some norms and standards emphasises parents' right to be consulted and their responsibility to

be involved in the ECD of their children (DOSD, 2007:53-54, DOE, 1995). Therefore it seems inevitable that parents has to be understood and supported.

- By recognising local knowledge it would ultimately be easier to introduce new behaviours, programmes and other initiatives (Dawes & Donald, 2000:20). This is in line with community-based research and generating Mode 2 knowledge (Le Grange, 2005:1208) where researchers and community members are seen as equal partners. Knowledge is shared in spaces of reciprocity and mutual trust. Closely associated to the above, the findings in this study confirmed what Dawes and Donald (2000:20) refer to as interventions informed by knowledge of developmental pathways. By obtaining parents' perceptions of ECD and parental involvement therein, the researcher was able to determine how parents understand early childhood development within their context. The findings proved that parents know what their children in the ECD phase need, based on their circumstances and context. Interventions to support parents should be planned based on their knowledge of ECD, instead of enforcing new initiatives onto them, which they might find difficult to associate with. Therefore to support parents in the improvement of home-centred parental involvement an understanding, such as in this study is needed to determine what parents perceive as home-centred involvement, and the same applies to facility-centred involvement.

- Considering the abovementioned guidelines, parents in this study suggested that their involvement would improve services and opportunities for development for their children. This relates to Dawes and Donald's (2000:20) suggestion that programmes to assist the community should involve the community in order for it to be sustainable. Having parents participate in support initiatives to promote parental involvement is in line with the DOSD's and Patel's (2005) explanation of the social development approach to social welfare.

- To further promote community empowerment and sustainability Dawes and Donald (2000:20) suggest that supportive initiatives should be built and protective factors within the community should be facilitated. Protective factors refer to what would be able to keep children and parents safe and away from sources that do not promote their development (Davies, 2011:106; Dawes & Donald, 2000:20). This informs the next guideline of this study, which is built on utilising parents' suggestions of parental care plans, promotion of safety at the ECD partial care facility, and religious activities to keep parents and children away from danger and negative influences. These are what parents know would work to address the concerns in their community. Davies (2011:106) outlines risk and protective factors in the context of individual children, their families and communities. Looking at ECD within this framework can provide a balanced understanding of risk factors outlined by Davies (2011:103-104), such as prematurity, childhood trauma, parental substance abuse, harsh parenting, inadequate housing, etc., as well as protective factors, such as good health, parental support, household rules and structure, faith and access to social services (Davies, 2011:104).

- Parents suggested that their involvement would be vital in addressing their concerns relating to the shortage of food and good nutrition, which they perceive as a necessity to healthy development. However, it is important to note the strong reference that parents make to government departments and farm owners to contribute and support them towards optimal parental involvement at home and at the ECD partial care facility. They require the assistance of the government in terms of skills development and equipment, whilst they long for a more structured home-centred lifestyle, but feel that they can only achieve that with the assistance of the farm owners. Participants indicated that farm owners can play a contributing role to address the alcohol abuse problem they experience in their community, whilst the government can contribute to better service delivery by more regular on-site visits and

meetings. These guidelines are thus direct and specifically directed to these two role players.

- In terms of guidelines it is also important to note the concerns of participants regarding adequate staff provision to ensure that the teaching and learning function of the ECD partial care facility is possible. This is also necessary to ensure sufficient supervision and attention to the needs of children. Having one staff member at an ECD partial care facility can pose physical danger, because children are left unsupervised when the staff member has to fulfil many different functions.

- It seems pertinent that staff members should receive basic first-aid training, but with clear guidelines as to the limits of their interventions. As mentioned in Chapter 4, the Child Accident Prevention Foundation can be requested to assist with the development of practical guidelines specifically directed at ECD staff in farming communities where there are particular dangers, such as snakes and where medical services may be far from the facility.

- Linked to this, staff, management members and parents should have good working relationships with the community health practitioners, such as nurses and doctors, so that they can provide training, emergency medical services and services aimed at more chronic conditions, such as tuberculosis. This guideline can be closely linked to Epstein's (1997:1) argument which refers to six types of parental involvement, namely parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making and collaborating with the community. It is thus also suggested that home-centred and facility-centred involvement must be promoted on a continuous basis by constant communication between all stakeholders involved with ECD service delivery and parents. On-going, supportive initiatives should thus be implemented throughout the early development of children, based on the needs of the community (parents and children) in order to promote home-centred and facility-centred involvement which ensures optimal development of children.

The research was based on ECD and due to different systems impacting this developmental phase it was found that there are different areas in which intervention and support services are needed, such as substance abuse. This proves Dawes and Donald's (2000:20) argument that supportive initiatives should be implemented at multiple levels. Therefore in order to support parents in their involvement and contribution to ECD after obtaining an understanding of all the above, intervention on multiple levels is required.

5.5   LIMITATIONS

The theoretical basis that was utilised for the purpose of this study assisted the researcher in identifying a gap with regards to parents' perceptions of ECD, their involvement and ECD service delivery. From an ecological systems perspective children are viewed as being part of social context, which includes "the family and wider sources of influence, such as the ECD partial care facility, the neighbourhood, cultural practices and interventions with children" (Dawes and Donald, 2000:2). The purpose of this study was focused on understanding specifically parents' perceptions of ECD and their involvement therein, which guided the researcher to a rather obvious decision of obtaining the information from the parents themselves. Having gained information from parents served the purpose of this study. The findings of this study confirmed Dawes and Donald's (2000) argumentation and the researcher came to the conclusion that in order to understand ECD and parental involvement in a specific context may also necessitate research about the perceptions of practitioners, management members of the ECD partial care facility, community members, and social service practitioners. Understanding the perceptions of systems that influence ECD and parental involvement will inform a more holistic understanding of the context. The focus of this study was limited to parents in a specific rural context.

5.6 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Based on the discussion of the limitations of this study the researcher recommends that research on parents' perceptions is supplemented by exploratory and descriptive research on how other role players within the child's social context perceive parental involvement in integrated ECD. Furthermore, research is needed on the social position of parents in specifically community-based ECD initiatives to address the gap between what policy stipulates with regard to community participation and parental involvement and the implementation of these policy guidelines in the practice field of ECD. Based on this finding, recommendations for further researcher might include:

- Exploring how parents ensure ECD development in a home setting.

- Exploring how practitioners and the management of community-based ECD partial care facilities support home- and facility-centred parental involvement.

- Exploring how governmental departments contribute to home- and facility-centred parental involvement in ECD.

  Finally it is recommended that parents participate in the evaluation of parent support programmes to determine the impact of such programmes on the early development of children and the quality of the caring environment provided by parents and the community.

5.7 CONCLUSION

Research found that there is a lack of data available on actual parental involvement initiatives and progress in South Africa (Biersteker & Dawes, 2008:188). To contribute to this gap of data in this regard, the aim of this study was thus to qualitatively explore and describe, through an interpretive descriptive strategy, what parents' perceptions are regarding ECD and their involvement in their children's development in the Langkloof farming communities. A theoretical framework based on ECD-related literature and theory ultimately assisted the

researcher in the understanding and interpretation of gathered data. An understanding of the perceptions of parents on the early development of their children and their involvement in ECD service delivery enabled the researcher to formulate guidelines that can be utilised to strengthen parents for optimal involvement in and support for integrated ECD services.

This study proved that certain findings in ECD-related literature are based on the controversy in research findings in South Africa. An example of such a finding is that of Samerof (1983), which St. Pierre and Layzer (1998:8) interpret as evidence suggesting that parents in lower income communities "simply do not believe that their children require special parental input to develop well." Bray and Dawes (2008:43) and Biersteker and Kvalsig (2008:189) refer to this interpretation of St. Pierre and Layzer (1998:8) by confirming that South Africa do not have data on these issues, although in a limited manner and restricted to a specific community.

Furthermore, the findings in this study proved to be a contradiction of the assumption "…that low-income parents simply do not believe that their children require special parental input to develop well" (St. Pierre & Layzer, 1998:8). Findings of this study proved that parents in the Langkloof farming community want to be involved in the development of their children and that they believe that their involvement will contribute to satisfying the developmental needs of their children. This study thus succeeded in making a contribution to South African-related research data on ECD with specific reference to parental involvement in the early development of their children and community-based ECD service delivery.

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ANNEXURE A:

INFORMED CONSENT: PROSPECTIVE RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

I, ………………………………………., hereby give permission to form part of the research project of:

Sharelda Kemmies

Student number: 232 88 469

ID number: 870126 0175 083

I understand that the abovementioned student is doing this research project as part of her master's degree studies and not as a social worker employed at the Department of Social Development. I understand that for study purposes this project will be read, scrutinised and approved by the student's supervisor and two separate committees from the North-West University.

The following information has been discussed with me and I thus understand that:

- The purpose of this research project is to explore, understand and describe the perceptions of parents in the Langkloof farming area with regard to early childhood development.

- My name was part of a population of names that was gathered from all ECD facilities in the Langkloof farming areas. All parents of enrolled children at these facilities form part of the population. My name was selected through a purposeful sampling process.

- The research will be conducted by means of focus groups and followed up with interviews if needed in order to try and ensure that the student collects all the relevant data.

- The student will make use of a voice recorder and a video camera as mechanisms of data collection during the interviews and focus groups.

- I may withdraw from the research project at any stage, should I feel the need to do so.

- The student has the responsibility to handle all gathered information confidentially and anonymously.

- The student undertakes to reflect all collected data as honestly as possible in the final report.

- The student undertakes to be honest and not to withhold any information from me in order to gain my participation.

- Any other ethical issues that may surface will be addressed by the student with the guidance of her supervisor and the two research committees from the North-West University.

Signature of prospective participant:

Date:

Signature of student:

Date:

ANNEXURE B:

INFORMED CONSENT: PROSPECTIVE RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

Ingeligte toestemming: Voornemende deelnemers

Hiermee gee ek, ………………………………., toestemming om deel uit te maak van die navorsingsprojek van:

Sharelda Kemmies

Studentenommer: 232 88 469

ID-nommer: 870126 0175 083

Ek verstaan dat die bogenoemde student besig is met die navorsingsprojek as deel van haar meestersgraadstudies en dat sy nie die navorsing in haar hoedanigheid as maatskaplike werker by die Departement van Maatskaplike Ontwikkeling verrig nie. Ek verstaan dat die navorsing deur haar studieleier en twee afsonderlike komitees van die Noordwes-Universiteit nagesien en goedgekeur sal word as deel van haar studievereistes.

Die volgende informasie is met my bespreek en ek verstaan dus dat:

- Die doel van die navorsing is om die persepsies van ouers in die Langkloofplaasomgewing, rondom vroeë kinderontwikkeling te eksploreer, te verstaan en te beskryf.

- Al die ouers van kinders wat ingeskryf is by 'n vroeë kinderontwikkelings-fasiliteit in die Langkloofgebied, vorm deel van die populasie van die studie. My naam is deur middel van 'n steekproefproses geselekteer.

- Die navorsing gaan gedoen word met behulp van fokusgroepe en sal opgevolg word deur onderhoude indien nodig, in 'n poging om alle relevante inligting in te samel.

- Die student gaan gebruik maak van video-opnames en bandopnames as data-insamelingsmeganismes.

- Ek mag my op enige stadium van die navorsing onttrek sou ek voel dat dit nodig is.

- Die student het die verantwoordelikheid om alle ingesamelde data so konfidensieel en anoniem as moontlik te hanteer.

- Die student onderneem om die ingesamelde data so getrou moontlik in die finale verslag te reflekteer.

- Die student onderneem om altyd oop en eerlik te wees en geen inligting van my te weerhou om my deelname te verseker nie.

- Enige ander etiese aspekte wat te voorskyn mag kom, sal hanteer word deur die student, haar studieleier en die twee navorsingskomitees van die Noordwes-Universiteit.

Handtekening van die voornemende deelnemer:

Datum:

Handtekening van die student:

Datum:

ANNEXURE C:

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO MAKE USE OF THE CLIENT SYSTEM OF THE DEPARTMENT FOR RESEARCH PURPOSES

Office Manager

Department of Social Development

42 Courtenay Street

Renzburghof

George

6530

Re: Permission to make use of the client system of the Department for research purposes

I, Sharelda Kemmies, student number: 232 88 469, would hereby like to request the permission of your office to make use of the parents of your early childhood development client system in the Langkloof farming communities.

I will attach the protocol for the planned research project, as well as the informed consent letters that will be distributed to the prospective participants before the implementation of the research project, should permission be obtained from your office.

The overall purpose of this project aims to help social workers working in the ECD field with guidelines to contribute to more effective service delivery and to contribute to more sustainable, self-reliant societies. The research project will thus contribute to service delivery by your office.

Kindly consider this request.

Thank you

Sharelda Kemmies

Student

ANNEXURE D:
INFORMED CONSENT:
DRAFT DISCUSSION GUIDE

Tentatiewe besprekingsgids/Draft discussion guide:

1) Vertel my meer van wat jou kind elke dag nodig het om gesond en gelukkig te wees.

2) Wat dink jy is jou rol en verantwoordelikheid in die gesonde ontwikkeling van jou kind?

3) Vertel my meer van wat jy vir jou kind gee om gesond en gelukkig te wees.

4) Hoe help die goed wat jy vir jou kind gee jou kind om op sesjarige ouderdom gereed te wees om skool te gaan?

5) Watter hulpbronne, talente en gawes het jy wat tot voordeel van jou kind en die kinders op die plaas se ontwikkeling aangewend kan word? Sou jy dit wil beskikbaar stel in 'n vroeë kinderontwikkelingsentrum op die plaas? Hoe sal jy ander ouers kan help in die ontwikkeling van hulle kinders?

6) Vertel my meer van die goed wat jy graag vir jou kind wil gee en doen in die lewe, maar wat jy nie het of kan doen nie.

7) Hoe kan die Departement van Maatskaplike Ontwikkeling jou ondersteun in die ontwikkeling van jou kind?

ANNEXURE E

INFORMED CONSENT:

EMPLOYER OF PROSPECTIVE RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

I, ……………………….………………………………………., in my capacity as ……………………………………………… at the .... (Farm / Organisation) hereby consent that four (two mothers and two fathers) may be identified to form part of the research project of:

Sharelda Kemmies

Student number: 232 88 469

ID number: 870126 0175 083

I understand that the abovementioned student is doing this research project as part of her master's degree studies and not as a social worker employed at the Department of Social Development. I understand that for study purposes this project will be read, scrutinised and approved by the student's supervisor and two separate committees from the North-West University.

The following information has been discussed with me and I thus understand that:

- The purpose of this research project is to explore, understand and describe the perceptions of parents in the Langkloof farming area with regard to early childhood development;

- My employees form part of the population of parents of children in the ECD phase in the Langkloof area and their names will be chosen by means of purposeful sampling.

- The research will be conducted by means of focus groups and followed up with interviews if needed in order to try and ensure that the student collects all the relevant data;

- The time frames in which these focus groups will be conducted will not influence the participants' work negatively and will be communicated to me in writing if necessary.

- The student will make use of a voice recorder and a video camera as mechanisms of data collection during the interviews and with the focus groups;

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- Participants may withdraw from the research project at any stage, should they feel the need to do so;

- The student has the responsibility to handle all gathered information confidentially and anonymously;

- The student undertakes to reflect all collected data as honestly as possible in the final report;

- The student undertakes to be honest and not to withhold any information from me in order to gain my participation; and

- Any other ethical issues that may surface will be addressed by the student under the guidance of her supervisor and the two research committees from the North-West University.

Signature of the employer of the prospective participant:

Date:

Signature of student:

Date:

ANNEXURE F:

INFORMED CONSENT:

EMPLOYER OF PROSPECTIVE RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

Ingeligte toestemming: Werkgewer van voornemende deelnemer

Hiermee gee ek, **...**, in my hoedanigheid as **eienaar** van... (Plaas of Organisasie) toestemming dat vier ouers (twee vaders en twee moeders) van kinders wat by ons fasiliteit ingeskryf is, deel uitmaak van die navorsingsprojek van:

Sharelda Kemmies

Studentenommer: 232 88 469

ID-nommer: 870126 0175 083

Ek verstaan dat die bogenoemde student besig is met die navorsingsprojek as deel van haar meestersgraadstudies en dat sy nie die navorsing in haar hoedanigheid as maatskaplike werker by die Departement van Maatskaplike Ontwikkeling doen nie. Ek verstaan dat die navorsing deur haar studieleier en twee ander komitees van die Noord-wes-Universiteit nagesien en goedgekeur sal word as deel van haar studievereistes.

Die volgende informasie is met my bespreek en ek verstaan dus dat:

- Die doel van die navorsing is om die persepsies van ouers woonagtig op plase in die Langkloof, rondom vroeë kinderontwikkeling te ondersoek, te verstaan en te beskryf.

- Al die ouers van kinders wat ingeskryf is by 'n vroeë kinderontwikkelingsfasiliteit in die Langkloof area, vorm deel van die populasie van die studie. Die ouers se name word deur middel van 'n steekproefproses geselekteer.

- Die navorsingsprojek sal nie inbreuk maak op die werkstyd van my werknemers nie, indien wel sal dit skriftelik met my gekommunikeer word en my goedkeuring moet wegdra.

- Die navorsing gaan gedoen word met behulp van fokusgroepe en sal opgevolg word met onderhoude indien nodig, in 'n poging om alle relevante inligting in te samel.

- Die student gaan gebruik maak van video-opnames en bandopnames as data-insamelingsmeganismes.

- Deelnemers mag op enige stadium hulself van die navorsing onttrek sou hulle voel dat dit nodig is.

- Die student het die verantwoordelikheid om alle ingesamelde data so konfidensieel en anoniem as moontlik te hanteer.

- Die student onderneem om die ingesamelde data so getrou moontlik in die finale verslag te reflekteer.

- Die student onderneem om altyd oop en eerlik te wees en om geen inligting van my te weerhou om my deelname te verseker nie.

- Enige ander etiese aspekte wat te voorskyn mag kom, sal hanteer word deur die student, haar studieleier en die twee navorsingskomitees van die Noordwes-Universiteit.

Handtekening van werkgewer:

Datum:

Handtekening van die student:

Datum:

ANNEXURE G:

INFORMED CONSENT: ECD FACILITY FROM WHICH PROSPECTIVE RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS WILL BE IDENTIFIED

I, ……………………………………………………………….………., in my capacity as ………………………………………… at the .... (ECD facility) hereby consent that four (two mothers and two fathers) may be identified to form part of the research project of:

Sharelda Kemmies

Student number: 232 88 469

ID number: 870126 0175 083

I understand that the abovementioned student is doing this research project as part of her master's degree studies and not as a social worker employed at the Department of Social Development. I understand that for study purposes this project will be read, scrutinised and approved by the student's supervisor and two separate committees from the North-West University.

The following information has been discussed with me and I thus understand that:

- The purpose of this research project is to explore, understand and describe the perceptions of parents in the Langkloof farming area with regard to early childhood development;

- This facility forms part of the universe of ECD facilities in the Langkloof area. All parents of enrolled children at ECD facilities in the Langkloof area form part of the population. The chosen participants' names will be chosen through a purposeful sampling process;

- The research will be conducted by means of focus groups and followed up with interviews if needed in order to try and ensure that the student collects all the relevant data;

- The student will make use of a voice recorder and a video camera as mechanisms of data collection during the interviews and with the focus groups;

- Participants may withdraw from the research project at any stage, should they feel the need to do so;

- The student has the responsibility to handle all gathered information confidentially and anonymously;

- The student undertakes to reflect all collected data as honestly as possible in the final report;

- The student undertakes to be honest and not to withhold any information from me in order to gain my participation; and

- Any other ethical issues that may surface will be addressed by the student under the guidance of her supervisor and the two research committees from the North-West University.

Signature of the representative of the involved ECD facility:

Date:

Signature of student:

Date:

ANNEXURE H:

INFORMED CONSENT:

ECD FACILITY REPRESENTATIVE

Ingeligte toestemming: Verteenwoordiger van die crèche waar voornemende deelnemers geïdentifiseer sal word.

Hiermee gee ek, **...**, in my hoedanigheid as **..............................**by .... (crèche) toestemming dat vier ouers (twee vaders en twee moeders) van kinders wat by ons fasiliteit ingeskryf is, deel uitmaak van die navorsingsprojek van:

Sharelda Kemmies

Studentenommer: 232 88 469

ID-nommer: 870126 0175 083

Ek verstaan dat die bogenoemde student besig is met die navorsingsprojek as deel van haar meestersgraadstudies en dat sy nie die navorsing in haar hoedanigheid as maatskaplike werker by die Departement van Maatskaplike Ontwikkeling doen nie. Ek verstaan dat die navorsing deur haar studieleier en twee afsonderlike komitees van die Noordwes-Universiteit nagesien en goedgekeur sal word as deel van haar studievereistes.

Die volgende informasie is met my bespreek en ek verstaan dus dat:

- Die doel van die navorsing is om die persepsies van ouers woonagtig op plase in die Langkloof, rondom vroeë kinderontwikkeling te ondersoek, te verstaan en te beskryf.

- Al die ouers van kinders wat ingeskryf is by 'n vroeë kinderontwikkelingsfasiliteit in die Langkloofarea, vorm deel van die populasie van die studie. Die ouers se name word deur middel van 'n steekproefproses geselekteer.

- Die navorsing gaan gedoen word met behulp van fokusgroepe en sal opgevolg word met onderhoude indien nodig, in 'n poging om alle relevante inligting in te samel.

- Die student gaan gebruik maak van video-opnames en bandopnames as data-insamelingsmeganismes.

- Deelnemers mag op enige stadium hulself van die navorsing onttrek sou hulle voel dat dit nodig is.

- Die student het die verantwoordelikheid om alle ingesamelde data so konfidensieel en anoniem as moontlik te hanteer.

- Die student onderneem om die ingesamelde data so getrou moontlik in die finale verslag te reflekteer.

- Die student onderneem om altyd oop en eerlik te wees en om geen inligting van my te weerhou om my deelname te verseker nie.

- Enige ander etiese aspekte wat te voorskyn mag kom, sal hanteer word deur die student, haar studieleier en die twee navorsingskomitees van die Noordwes-Universiteit.

Handtekening van die verteenwoordiger van die crèche:

Datum:

Handtekening van die student:

Datum:

ANNEXURE I:

INDEMNITY FORMS: RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

I, THE UNDERSIGNED (NAME AND SURNAME IN

FULL):

…………………………………………………………………………………………

DO HEREBY ON BEHALF OF MYSELF AND ALL MY DEPENDANTS:

HUSBAND/WIFE/GIRLFRIEND/BOYFRIEND:

…………………………………………………………………………………………

CHILDREN:

…………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………

OTHER
DEPENDANTS:………………………………………..……………………………………

WHO ARE NOW ENTIRELY OR PARTLY DEPENDENT UPON ME OR WHO MAY IN THE FUTURE BE DEPENDENT UPON ME, DECLARE THAT I AM CONVEYED AT MY OWN RISK.

REGISTRATION NUMBER OF VEHICLE:

TYPE OF VEHICLE:

THE DRIVER OR THE OWNER OF THE SAID VEHICLE SHALL NOT BE LIABLE TO ME OR MY DEPENDANTS FOR ANY DAMAGE ARISING OUT OF LOSS OF LIFE OR BODILY INJURIES SUFFERED BY ME AND OR / MY DEPENDANTS. FUTHERMORE, I DECLARE THAT EXCEPTING MAJOR DEPENDANTS AS NAMED HEREIN, NO OTHER MAJOR PERSONS ARE DEPENDANT UPON ME.

SIGNED AT:

ON THE………………………………………………….DAY

OF…………………………………………..2013

WITNESSES:

ANNEXURE J:

INDEMNITY FORMS: RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

VRYWARINGSVORM: NAVORSINGSDEELNEMERS

EK, DIE ONDERGETEKENDE (VOLLE NAME EN VAN):

……………………………………………………………………………………………

VERKLAAR HIERMEE NAMENS MYSELF EN MY AFHANKLIKES:

EGGENOOT/VRIEND/VRIENDIN:

………………………………………………………………………………............

KINDERS:

…………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………

ANDER
AFHANKLIKES:……………………………………..……………………………

WAT TEN VOLLE OF GEDEELTELIK VAN MY AFHANKLIK IS OF IN DIE TOEKOMS SAL WEES, DAT EK VERVOER WORD OP MY EIE RISIKO.

REGISTRASIENOMMER VAN VOERTUIG:

TIPE VOERTUIG:

DIE BESTUURDER VAN DIE BOVERMELDE VOERTUIG SAL NIE VERANTWOORDELIK GEHOU WORD VIR MY OF ENIGE VAN MY AFHANKLIKES, VIR ENIGE VERLIES OF SKADE WAT VOORTSPRUIT UIT STERFTE OF LIGGAAMLIKE BESERINGS OPGEDOEN DEUR MY OF MY AFHANKLIKES NIE.

EN VERDER VERKLAAR EK DAT BEHALWE DIE BO VERMELDE AFHANKLIKES, DAAR GEEN ANDER PERSONE VAN MY AFHANKLIK IS NIE.

GETEKEN OP:

OP

DIE……………………………………DAG
VAN…………………………………………………………………..2013

GETUIES:

ANNEXURE K:
TRANSCRIPT

Researcher: "Ok, I'm going to sit now."

Participant: "But we want to see the papers… See, they don't give us R20 a day, they are lying, they haven't even shown us papers and proof, that they are working with our money…"

Participant: "Yes, I also do not understand… the subsidy."

Participant: "That is what I am saying…"

Participant: "I rarely hear of that… I also pay the money you pay, so we must know what is going on, right? We must know…"

Participant: "Die boer werk mos met daai subsidy…"

Researcher: "I would like to tell you that I cannot give you answers here today. I came to find out how you feel, what you think and what you want to know. Sharing your feelings and what you would like to know is good, but I cannot give you any answers today. So I'm only going to ask and listen. You must remember that today I am here as a student and not a social worker, so I am an outsider, do you understand?... So, what I am hearing is that parents would like to know what is happening with the crèche's subsidy and what the amount is?"

Participant: "And where it goes…"

Researcher: "And where it goes. Okay, okay… Any other feelings?"

Participant: "And like now… At the crèche, the people working there… When I

help out when it is needed, there are days when I seen there is not enough for the children to eat. She must write down what she needs from the shop, food for the children but it never comes for the whole week."

Participant: "Monday there is no food. It works the same here she cannot write what she wants in the book."

Participant: "That's true, they write."

Participant: "We cannot get what we want for our children."

Participant: "And after we paid that money. We pay the money ourselves."

Researcher: "Tell me, how much do you pay?"

Participant: "Now we want to know, this is how we feel about it… The food that we give, we must pack in mornings, it helps for in the mornings and we get off work only at six and that food cannot be enough for the whole day."

Participant: "And not the whole week."

Participant: "A little bit of bean soup, a little macaroni, that is what the children eat, there is no hhhhmm mm, a packet of vegetables for a lot of children and the shop has enough."

Researcher: "How many children are there at the crèche?"

Participant: "We have 9 here."

Participant: "We have four."

Participant: "No, but 5 altogether, right?"

Participant: "And the primary school children?"

Participant: "And the primary school children, also come there."

Researcher: "Must the primary school children also eat?"

Participants: "Yes they must also eat, because they pay for it."

Researcher: "So they also pay R40?"

Participants: "No, they pay R20, because they go half-day, so it is R20."

Researcher: "So they pay and then they only eat for the afternoon?"

Participants: "Yes"

Researcher: "So your concerns are that… The children does not eat enough and you are not sure where you money goes. Tell me what do you as parents feel is necessary at a crèche?"

Participant: "If we can say, I'm making an example, If we as the parents collected that R40, there would have been enough. We would have written what we wanted, that which is good for the children and there would have been enough for every day. Now when they by 3 breads, it cannot be expected to last until the end of the month."

Participant: "They already get it the Monday."

Participant: "They already get it the Monday and it cannot be expected to last until the Friday, because it can get old. If they get flower it is only on small packet and then it must be shared between all the children. It is seldom that there is meat."

Participant: "See, I expect a healthy meal for my child."

Participant: "Because sometimes the child is…."

Participant: "Because anyone will expect it from anyone to have a healthy…"

Participant: "In the morning porridge, the afternoon this, and so on…"

Participant: "Yes, you must get all your meals."

Participant: "Because if we did not work, we would have given our children those three meals for the day. But because we are working, and we are paying, we feel it must also happen at the crèche…"

Participant: "It must be done at the crèche."

Researcher: "Tell me what would you imagine happen at a crèche if everything was as you would want it?"

Participant: "Easier…"

Researcher: "Easier for whom?"

Participant: "For us."

Researcher: "For the parents?"

Participants: "Yes, we as the parents."

Researcher: "Who do you feel and what can that person do to make it easier for you??"

Participant: "We as parents can also do it."

Researcher: "What do you think can you do?"

Participant: "Like having a function and using the money from the function to buy them stuff, like vegetables and so on."

Participant: "Or make a garden for them."

Participant: "Or make a vegetable garden for them; that would also help."

Participant: "That can help a lot."

Researcher: "Okay, because I just wanted to ask, what can you do to teach your children? Also the mums, what can you do, what the fathers can do, that you want to teach to your children. Or that you can give to the children?"

Participant: "I don't want my child to look at me when I come from work like I did not look after her the whole day. They must understand that I am the parent and that is the practitioner. That is the person that looks after me during the day. I just want us to talk about what she did at school for the day and share; do you see what I mean?"

Participant: "No, but at the crèche, it works like this… The practitioners are alone, they look after the babies and the children must be taught. It does not work like that."

Participant: "It won't…"

Navorser: "Ok, ek gaan nou sit"

Deelnemer 1:   "GEE 'N STOEL VIR NAVORSER OM OP TE SIT…"

Deelnemer 2:   "Maar ons wil die papiere sien… Sien, hulle gee ons nie R20.00 'n dag
                nie, hulle jok, hulle het nog nie eens vir ons papiere of bewyse gegee nie,
                dat hulle met onse geld werk…"

Deelnemer 3:   "Ja, maar nou, ek weet ook nie so mooi van dit nie …daai subsidy"

Deelnemer 2:   "Nou dis mos nou wat ek sê…"

Deelnemer 3:   "Dis maar min wat ek hoor van dit… ek betaal ook daai geld wat jy betaal,
                so ons moet weet wat gaan vir wat, isit nie so nie? Ons moet weet…

Navorser: "Ek wil net gou vir julle sê ek kan nie vir julle antwoorde gee hier vandag
                nie. Ek wil net kom kry hoe julle voel, wat julle dink, wat julle wil weet,
                enso. Is goed dat julle sê, hoe julle voel en dat julle dit wil weet, maar ek
                kan nie vandag vir julle antwoorde gee nie. So ek gaan luister en ek gaan
                vra en so aan, maar ek het ongelukkig nie antwoorde vandag nie. Julle
                moet onthou ek is vandag hier as 'n student, ek is nie hier as 'n
                maatskaplike werker nie, so ek is hier as 'n buitestaner, okay? So, so wat
                ek hoor is ouers voel hulle wil weet watter subsidie kry die crèche en
                hoeveel is dit?"

Deelnemer 2:   "En waarnatoe gaan dit…?"

Navorser: "En waarna toe gaan dit. Okay, okay… Enige ander gevoelens?"

Deelnemer 1: "En soos mevrou, soos nou… Ons by die crèche neh, wat nou daar werk neh en aan die kinders kyk... Daar is baie dae wat ek ook nou sien… want ek help ook somtyds uit by die crèche. Tensy dit nou nie nodig is nie. Dan is daar baie dae wat ek sien, daar is nie genoeg soos kos vir die kinders om te eet nie en soos ons moet, sy moet soos kos op skryf vir 'n bedrag wat sy kry by die kafee, om die kinders om die kos te koop. Maar daai kos kom dan nie uit die heel week vir daai kinders om te eet nie."

Deelnemer 2: "Maandag is daar nie kos nie, by ons werk dit ook so en die juffrou kan nie in daai boek skryf wat sy wil nie."

Deelnemer 3: "Is, ja 'hulle' skryf dit op."

Deelnemer 1: "Ons kan nou nie kry wat ons nou wil hê vir ons kinders nie."

Deelnemer 2: "En nadat ons daai geld betaal het. Ons betaal mos nou self die geld."

Deelnemer 3: "Nou ons wil net, ons voel nogals so daaroor… want daai kos wat ons gee, ons moet soggens 'n bakkie gee, dit help nou net vir soggens en die kind kom maar eers, ons val halfses uit en daai kos hou mos nou nie heeldag nie."

Deelnemer 2: "En die heel week nie."

Deelnemer 3: "Bietjie bonesop, bietjie macaroni so eet daai kinders, daas nie hhhhmm mm, 'n pakkie groente vir 'n klomp kinders en die winkel het klomp, genoeg."

Navorser: "Hoeveel kinders is daar by die crèche?"

Deelnemer 2: "Hier by ons is nege."

Deelnemer 4: "Vier by ons."

Deelnemer 5: "Nee, maar altesaam is mos vyf, neh."

Deelnemer 2: "En die laerskoolkinders?"

Deelnemer 3: "En die laerskoolkinders kom ook hiernatoe."

Navorser: "Dan moet die laerskoolkinders ook eet?"

Deelnemers 5: "Ja, hulle moet ook eet, want hulle betaal daarvoor."

Navorser: "So julle bekommernisse is… Die kinders eet nie   genoeg nie en julle weet nie waarnatoe gaan die geld nie. Sê vir my wat voel julle is nodig by 'n crèche? Wat voel julle as ouers is nodig by 'n crèche?"

Deelnemer 3: "As ons dit nou kan sê, ek maak nou 'n voorbeeld, sê nou ons as ouers het nou daai geld bymekaar gegooi dan was hier genoeg gewees. Dan sou ons geskryf het wat ons wou gehad het, vir die kinders wat goed is vir die kinders en dan was daar genoeg vir elke dag. Nou kry hulle brood dan word daar miskien drie brode opgeskryf en dit kan mos nie hou tot die einde van die maand nie."

Deelnemer 1: "Hulle kry dit die Maandag al."

Deelnemer 3 : "Hulle kry dit die Maandag al, dan kan dit mos nou nie hou tot Vrydag toe nie, want dit kan mos nou nog oud ook raak. As hulle meel kry, dan is dit net een pakkie meel en nou moet hy mooi gedeel raak om geknie te raak vir die kinders, daar is ook nie 'n stukkie vleisie by nie, is weinig is daar 'n braaipakkie op is. Kyk ek   verwag 'n gesonde dieet, maaltyd van my kind af."

Deelnemer 2: "Want sommige kere, dan is die kinders…."

Deelnemer 3: "Want enige een sal dit verwag van enige een af, om 'n gesonde."

Deelnemer 2: "Vanoggend pap, die middag dit, so…"

Deelnemer 3: "Ja, jy moet jou maaltye, jy moet dit kry. Want as ons nou nie gewerk het nie, sou ons nou ons kinders daai drie maaltye vir die dag gegee het. Maar omdat ons in die werk staan, en omdat ons die geld betaal, sien ons dit moet by die crèche ook mos nou…"

Deelnemer 2: "Dit moet ingesien raak, ja... daar by die crèche."

Navorser: "Sê gou vir my as ons nou bietjie kan onsself verbeel dat dinge is soos ons wil hê dit moet wees, hoe sou dit gewees het?"

Deelnemer 3: "Makliker…"

Navorser: "Makliker? Makliker vir wie?"

Deelnemer 3: "Vir ons."

Navorser: "Vir die ouers…?"

Deelnemers 3: "Ja, ons as die ouers."

Navorser: "Hoe, wie kan wat doen om dit vir julle makliker te maak, voel julle?"

Deelnemer 5: "Ons self kan dit ook doen, ons as ouers."

Navorser: "Wat dink julle wat kan julle doen?"

Deelnemer 3: "Soos 'n funksie miskien hê vir die kinders en daai geldjie wat ons maak, uit die funksie se geld uit, vir hulle iets aankoop, soos groente, daai dinge aankoop."

Deelnemer 4:   "Of vir hulle 'n tuin maak miskien."

Deelnemer 3:   "Of 'n groentetuin vir hulle bou, en so aan, dit gaan ook help."

Deelnemer 5:   "Dit kan baie help."

Navorser: "Okay, want ek wil nou reeds gevra het, uhm wat is daar wat julle kan doen wat julle die kinders dalk kan leer, watse goed wat julle, selfs die ma's wat kan julle ook doen, wat kan die pa's doen, wat julle graag vir die kinders wil leer? Of wat julle vir die kinders wil gee?"

Deelnemer 3:   "Ek wil hê as my kind… moet nie as sy uit die crèche uitkom, dan soek sy vir my, aankyk asof nee maar ek was nie die heeldag by haar nie, sy kyk die heeldag aan haar ek wil hê sy, hulle moet verstaan, ek is die ouer en dit is die opvoeder, dit is die een wat aan haar vir die dag kyk en ek is die ouer. Ek wil net hê sy moet, ons moet met mekaar kan deel wat het jy vandag gedoen by die crèche, sy moet vir my kan sê, sien jy, waarvan ek praat?"

Deelnemer 2:   "Nee, maar hier by die crèche, werk dit nou so… Dis dan… Die juffrou is allenig hier, sy kyk aan babatjies en sy moet nog die kinders opvoed ook. Dit werk nie so nie."

Deelnemer: "Dit gaan nie…"