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Understanding Family Experiences As A Means For Developing Relevant Curriculum

For Children In A Pre-Kindergarten Classroom

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Understanding Family Experiences As A Means For Developing Relevant Curriculum  
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Abstract

This study examined the households of three preschool students and their families. The study consisted of three main areas of study. One area of investigation was the personal interviews relating to family histories, educational histories and work histories of the families (three lower middle income families). Another area was the sociodramatic play development of the children. The last area of investigation was the HOME Inventory of the living environment of the children. The information gathered from this study was then used to help create a more appropriate child centered curriculum for these students.

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The purpose of this ethnographic study is to discover the funds of knowledge of four-year-old children in a pre-kindergarten classroom and to analyze the funds of knowledge data for potential impact on classroom instruction. Gonzalez, Andrade, Civil, and Moll (2001) define funds of knowledge as, "...the historically accumulated bodies of knowledge and skills essential for household functioning and well-being." Research using the funds of knowledge perspective indicates that children's learning in the classroom setting is enhanced when teachers know more about their students outside the classroom context (Andrews & Yee, 2006; Gutierrez, 2002; Civil, 1994; Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992).

All children come to school with prior knowledge. They acquire this knowledge through their experiences with family, friends, and individuals within their community (Gonzalez, Moll, & Amanti, 2005). Many teachers fail to recognize the presence of and/or the value of knowledge children and their families bring with them to the educational setting. Teachers typically experience only one aspect of a student's life and that is the performance within a classroom context (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 2005).

Teachers rarely use children's prior knowledge in the classroom context. Teachers regularly have a predetermined grade-level appropriate curriculum that will be implemented prior to knowing the educational level of each student (Berry & Allen, 2002). In addition, children are often passive learners in the school context (Gonzalez, Moll, Floyd-Tenery, Rivera, Rendon, Gonzales, & Amanti, 1993). Children are not often

allowed to utilize knowledge acquired through their home and communities in the school setting because it is not deemed important for instructional purposes. The information children gain through their home and communities can be used in the classroom to create a curriculum that integrates and makes the best use of all of the children's knowledge (Gonzalez, Moll, Floyd-Tenery, Rivera, Rendon, Gonzales, & Amanti, 1993).

Utilizing the previous knowledge children have acquired outside of the classroom and school setting can enhance the academic learning of these often educationally disenfranchised children. According to Berk (1994), Vygotsky believed that children learn by connecting previously constructed knowledge to new experiences and new information, therefore, building on prior knowledge and creating a knowledge base for further learning. It is important to integrate a child's prior knowledge with the curriculum developed for the classroom. Early childhood development includes building on the information children have already learned. It is easier and more likely for a child to retain new information for a longer period of time if they have old information to connect with the new information. It is also important to recognize and build on prior knowledge so the children can see the relevance of the information they need to learn. It is easier to increase self-motivation and meaningful learning when the curriculum is based on things the children are already interested in and want to learn more about.

The lack of recognition and use of prior knowledge creates a disconnection between children's lived experiences and the classroom context. This disconnect becomes even broader when there is a lack of trust between families and teachers (Gonzalez, Moll, Floyd-Tenery, Rivera, Rendon, Gonzales, & Amanti, 1993). The use of a families' knowledge within a classroom can unite families and teachers together and

create a better learning environment for the children. By using knowledge valued and shared within families in the classroom for instructional purposes, a teacher can create a bond between students, families, and the school, which in turn enhances student learning.

Working class families and minority groups have been considered to be cognitively deficient by individuals in the education field (Gutierrez, 2002; Velez-Ibanez & Greenberg, 1992). Some individuals within the education system feel working-class minority students do not have the background knowledge that is needed to enter school at grade level (Gonzalez, Moll, Floyd-Tenery, Rivera, Rendon, Gonzales, & Amanti, 1993). Some educational institutions stereotype children from working-class minority families and begin to list off all of the areas of weakness the students will have to overcome with the help of their teachers. Many of these identified “weaknesses” are biased and interfere with the recognition of a vast variety of educationally relevant resources from the families that, when brought into the classroom, can help create a better curriculum and learning environment for the students.

Funds of knowledge come from many areas such as social, labor, and educational histories accumulated by families over time and across generations. The social history of households includes information such as their origins and development. The labor history of the families is important because this reveals the ‘accumulated’ bodies of knowledge of the households (Velez-Ibanez & Greenberg, 1992). The educational history of the families can give teachers an insight into the educational belief system the family already has in place. Every student and his or her family have funds of knowledge that can help create a more complete and child-benefiting curriculum.



The purpose of this research is to identify the “funds of knowledge” or unique types of knowledge children acquire in the home and community setting, which is not often identified by the schools. Understanding family experiences helps teachers establish respectful and reciprocal relationships with families and create relevant curriculum for young children. The research problem derives from the following questions. What kind of information can be obtained in focused home visits? What “funds of knowledge” can be obtained by observing the home environment? How can the identified “funds of knowledge” be used to create relevant classroom curriculum for a pre-kindergarten setting? What changes does a teacher-researcher experience as a result of gathering “funds of knowledge” information?

## Chapter 2 Review of Literature

*Funds Of Knowledge*

The original definition of funds of knowledge was the “interconnections bonding families to their social environments of kin, friends, neighbors, co-workers and acquaintances” (Milardo, 1988). Throughout the years the definition has changed very little to include the exchange of knowledge (Greenberg, 1989; Velez-Ibanez, 1988). Today the definition of funds of knowledge has evolved to “...the historically accumulated bodies of knowledge and skills essential for household functioning and well-being” by Gonzalez, Andrade, Civil, and Moll (2001).

Over the last twenty years many people have studied funds of knowledge using several different methods. Studies have been focused on different ethnic groups, different subjects and different age levels, but all of the studies focused on identifying what students already know and determining how to use that knowledge to create a better curriculum and learning environment for the children.

Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez (1992) utilized an ethnographic research design to investigate the many different non-school experiences from which students within a Mexican community in Tuscan, Arizona developed knowledge. The researchers were interested in creating teaching methods that would use these funds of knowledge to better educate the students of that specific community. They found the knowledge children had constructed through engaging with the work world within the community could be utilized in the classroom. Many of the children had extensive knowledge about the exchange rates of money between countries. They had knowledge about raising plants and animals for consumption. Some children had learned aspects of the construction field

through watching and helping older children and parents. The study showed there is a vast amount of information children have already obtained through life experiences before attending school that can be used as building blocks for further education.

In 1993 Gonzalez, Moll, and Amanti collected additional data from the writings and reflections of four teachers. They discussed the home visits they made and how these visits affected the children, the families and their own personal views of Mexican-American families. One teacher talked about her first meeting with the family she studied. The teacher stated the parents came to the school to inform the teacher and the children how important school was to them. All four of the teachers spoke of the knowledge they gained by getting to know these families and how this knowledge was used within the classroom to improve curriculum.

Civil (1994) studied the connections needed between math skills in school and home activities that can support these skills. She found that students could perform almost perfectly while completing real life relevant math problems. Students do much better in every aspect of education if the material can be directly related to themselves or something they need to accomplish.

Civil continued her work with Gonzalez, Andrade, and Moll (2001) extending the concept of connecting school math skills with home math skills. They wanted to look at multiple definitions of math and find more real life cases of math in the home. They were interested in bringing more real life cases of math into the classroom for the purpose of making math more relevant to students.

The researchers decided it was necessary to have first hand experience with real life math. They formed a literature circle in which one activity was that of making a

three-piece dress from the measurements of each individual involved. This project was a higher-level math activity that some individuals do on a regular basis without any trouble at all. The point is these same individuals may or may not be able to pass a math class in school, but they still have extraordinary math skills that can be beneficial to students within the school system especially when the school values and integrates their knowledge, skills, and life experiences in the classroom.

Civil continued her work in 2006 with Bernier. They were investigating the concept of teachers as facilitators. The teachers created math workshops for the community to help engage families in the math process. Teams of people that included teachers and parents taught the workshops. This allowed the parents to teach topics they felt very comfortable teaching. It helped show the teachers that the parents had something beneficial to provide the class. This experience also helped the parents and families feel like they were part of the education process.

Hammond (2001, 2003) wrote about the experience of a middle-class American culture would consider at risk for educational failure. In Hammond's study they used children, teachers and student teachers to identify the funds of knowledge of a community and bring these subjects back to the classroom for study. The funds of knowledge in the community were then intertwined with the curriculum requirements to create a more appropriate curriculum. They used the building of a Mien-American garden house to reconnect families with a part of their heritage and connect home experiences with school experiences. The researchers were interested in integrating the knowledge of the students and families with a science curriculum.

Andrews and Yee (2006) used two case studies to investigate what and how children learned outside of school. They noticed that children learn many different things in a variety of ways. The investigators found that the children's ideas and methods of learning needed to be integrated with the curriculum to make it easier and more interesting for the children to learn. They found that children are able to contribute to the creation of an appropriate curriculum.

Dworin (2006) studied fourth-grade bilingual students and their reading and writing abilities. He had the students collect information about their families and write stories relating to their past. The stories were originally written in Spanish. The students were required to work in a group of four students writing, correcting and rewriting their stories. The stories were also translated into English, so they not only had the writing experience, but they also experienced the Spanish to English translation.

Street (2005) did a similar study in which he allowed the students to pick their own writing topic. This helped him to learn more about the families and their funds of knowledge. He could use this information later to support his curriculum and increase student interest. Street discussed the growth of one of his students through this writing project. She wrote about elevators that were extremely dangerous in her apartment building. Street convinced her to start a letter writing campaign to the management. She did and within three weeks families had written over forty letters and work began on fixing the elevators. Connecting life experiences to the school curriculum gives purpose and relevance to the educational experience for the learner and, in addition, has the potential to empower them outside of the school setting.

The ethnographic research by Riojas-Cortez (2001) looked at the sociodramatic play of preschool students in rural southern Texas. She was originally interested in the cultural base of the Mexican population. She was dealing with the stereotypes teachers and administrators hold to be true about their students and families within her school system. She wanted to improve the cultural education of her peers, thereby improving the education of the students. Her research moved in the direction of identifying the funds of knowledge in relation to cultural traits. She used sociodramatic play as a tool to identify some of the student's language development. She was able to identify some of the different aspects of family life by observing students while they were involved in play. Children use what they know in the creation of their play, therefore play is one area where funds of knowledge could be identified.

#### *Funds of Knowledge Generated Curriculum*

Moll, Amanti, Neff and Gonzalez (1992) discussed their use of the funds of knowledge obtained from the families during their study. The teachers in this study used the funds of knowledge observed to develop thematic units. One unit was based on candy, after learning a couple of their students were selling homemade candy to their friends for a little extra money. Another teacher found out one of the parents was an expert at making many different kinds of candy. The teachers worked together with the students to create a 'candy' unit.

The first thing the teachers decided to do was to get everyone involved by doing some brainstorming about candy. Then, they discussed and created a definition for the word candy. After the corroborated effort on the definition they made a chart of what the children knew, what they wanted to know, and what they had learned. After these

activities they graphed the student's favorite candies. This unit continued with the students doing research on specific things they wanted to learn about candy. The study continued with the student's interests and parent activities (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992). The out-of-class experiences of the children was used to facilitate their literacy development, math, and active inquiry. In addition, the candy theme was self-motivating to the students while engaging and involving the parents. Research has clearly shown that parent involvement has a positive impact on student learning (Espinosa, 2005).

There are several thematic units that can be created from the funds of knowledge gathered from households. A few of the areas Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez (1992) identified as household funds of knowledge are ranching and farming, business, household management, construction, repair, medicine, and religion. These are just a few of the areas in which they found significant knowledge that could be used to create curriculum units similar to the one above.

### *Play and Funds of Knowledge*

Play is an important medium for children's learning and provides an arena for identifying prior knowledge. It is also an area in which teachers and parents can carefully interact with the children to help further their education. Play, by definition, is intrinsically motivated; therefore it has to originate with the children (Rogers & Sawyers, 1995). If a child shows an interest in a particular theme, an adult can help elaborate on the idea, yet it is necessary for the adult to follow the child's lead. Otherwise, the activity may no longer be considered play by the child (Perlmutter & Burrell, 1995). It is also important that adults do not try to place rules on the activity the children initiate; the rules

need to be created by the children if they feel it is necessary to have rules for the activity. Another aspect of play that is important is that the focus should be on the process rather than the final product (Rogers & Sawyers, 1995). Children are not as likely to concern themselves with the finished product as they are with the experience itself.

Through play, children learn how to cooperate, communicate, and interact with other children and adults. Preschool children use sociodramatic play to incorporate their prior knowledge into the classroom (Riojas-Cortez, 2001). Teachers can use the information gathered from observations of children's play to develop a deeper understanding of children's lived experiences and ways of thinking. Teachers could then use this understanding of children's lived experiences to develop curriculum units that are meaningful to children thereby increasing student engagement and student learning (Gonzalez, Moll, & Amanti, 2005).

Gutierrez (2002) conducted a study about a five year-old child who was being arrested for breaking into a neighbor's house. The child was placed on an Individualized Education Plan because of his classroom behavior and educational level. She realized that she would have to find some connections between his education and things that were important to him. So, she began by finding out that he loved to play soccer and was willing to write about it. This became his turning point to a more successful education. Once he had a few successes and became somewhat interested in his schoolwork she was better able to help him. She also realized that the four hours out of her classroom that he spent in another classroom was not giving him the benefits that he needed to succeed, so that was changed. She felt it was important for him to be in her classroom because she was able to create successful scenarios for him. The time and attention she spent with this



child to find out what was important to him and connect it to literacy made all the difference.

*Play, Learning, and Best Practice in Early Childhood*

Play is an important part of children's learning. Pretend play gives children many opportunities to be someone and somewhere else. They can also use objects to help improve their imagination. They use these play scenarios to develop and improve their language, memory, and motor skills (Berk, 1994).

Vygotsky discussed the zone of proximal development, which he defined as, "...a range of tasks that the child cannot yet handle alone but can accomplish with the help of adults and more skilled peers" ([1933] 1978). Vygotsky made this statement about play and the zone of proximal development:

Play creates a zone of proximal development in the child. In play, the child always behaves beyond his average age, above his daily behavior; in play it is as though he were a head taller than himself. As in the focus of a magnifying glass, play contains all developmental tendencies in a condensed form and is itself a major source of development (Vygotsky,).

Vygotsky believed that play gave children the opportunity to practice using skills that may not have been fully developed. Play environments give younger children a place to learn from adults and older children. He also found that children abided by their personally constructed rules and behavior expectations in their pretend play and as a result were better able to understand the rules and expected behaviors of society earlier than children that did not have the same opportunities to play (Vygotsky, [1933] 1978). Children's personally constructed rules for pretend play are a part of their prior

knowledge and another aspect of play that would provide funds of knowledge information for teachers.

Play allows children physical and emotional space and time to practice and learn new skills. Play gives children opportunity to explore new things without the threat of failure. Children use their prior knowledge to create more complex play scenarios. Play also makes it possible for children to learn through their own natural curiosity. Play permits children to explore their environment while making mistakes and figuring out why something did or did not work (Rogers & Sawyers, 1995).

Children need to be able to help create their own learning. They need to be allowed to have some input into their education and the things they will learn about in the classroom. Rushton and Larkin (2001) discussed the classroom environment of a developmentally appropriate curriculum according to the National Association for the Education of Young Children's position statement. One of the points they discussed was that learning is a social event, so it is important to allow children extensive opportunities to communicate with each other and the teacher. High-quality learning environments empower children by allowing them to make decisions about their education. The curriculum should give children the choices that will allow them to work at or above their academic level. The academics should be presented in a manner that the children are able to use along with their prior knowledge to create new knowledge and then be able to generalize to broader concepts.

Marcon (1994) began a study of the Washington D.C. area in 1987. Her interest was in the different types of pre-kindergarten and Head Start programs children were attending in the area. After she created and sent a survey to every pre-kindergarten and

Head Start teacher in D.C., she was able to identify three types of schools within the area. The first she called 'child-initiated', the second she called 'academically-directed' and the third was called 'middle of the road.' She received information on over 250 students at 39 different schools. She found that children in the child-initiated classrooms actually were able to master more basic skills than either of the other two groups of students. She also found that children in the middle of the road classrooms were "significantly lower in language, social, and motor development, as well as overall adaptive functioning and mastery of basic skills." Another important finding from this study was that children in the child-initiated classrooms scored significantly higher than their peers in the academically-directed school settings through the fourth grade (Marcon, 1994). It is important for children to have opportunities to make choices within the educational setting and to have their interests valued for addition to the academic curriculum.

Students come to school every day with different levels of academic knowledge and teachers are able to help children achieve their educational goals. It is important for teachers to realize that every child is at a different point and to start there and move them as far forward as possible in the time allotted. Identifying and using student's funds of knowledge in the curriculum may enable learners to achieve at a higher level and increase their interest in school and in learning.

#### *Education and At-Risk Students*

Schweinhart presented a paper at the 2003 Biennial Meeting of the Society for Research in Child Development about his longitudinal study that was called High/Scope Perry Preschool Study showing that teachers could educate students considered high risk for school failure. The study began in 1962 and included 123 African-American students

considered at high risk of failing in school. By giving these students a high-quality preschool program the teachers were able to show significant long lasting differences between students that attended this program and students that did not receive a preschool education. This study is consistent with current constructivist theories in which students are allowed to help create classroom activities, carry them out, and then reflect on the successfulness of the activities. Students are more likely to be involved and learn from such activities if they also have input on the creation and development of the lessons (Fosnot, 2005).

The study showed that children involved in a high quality preschool program were less likely than students not enrolled to commit a crime later in life. This longitudinal study also had strong correlations between being enrolled in a high quality program and a higher income level later in life. Schweinhart discussed the financial benefits to a community that is able to have a high quality preschool program. He said, "...the program yielded public benefits of \$105,324 per participant..." This figure is derived from the money saved from potential crimes that were never committed and the court costs related to those crimes. The dollar amount also comes from lower justice system costs, welfare costs, reduced special education costs, and increased money brought in by higher taxes because of the increase in incomes of the preschool participants.

Espinosa (2005) stated that it is extremely important for teachers and administrators to create high quality methods of teaching young children from economically, linguistically and culturally diverse background. She felt there were five different areas that are extremely significant in the development of a developmentally

appropriate classroom. Espinosa further said that teachers should research the cultural and linguistic background of their children. They need to know how to create a reciprocal relationship with families from different cultural backgrounds. Teachers need to know how poverty can affect children's learning. They need to have access to specific strategies for all students that will give the children the best opportunity to grow academically. Finally, teachers need to have the knowledge and ability to access students that come from non-English speaking and culturally diverse backgrounds.

Espinosa (2005) stated that creating a high-quality educational environment for all children is extremely important, but economically disadvantaged children absolutely have to have a high-quality educational environment to have the best chance at success.

Espinosa listed seven basic requirements to meet the high-quality standards needed for low-income students to be successful. She felt one of the most important aspects of the educational process of low-income families is a positive and supporting relationship between the student and the teacher. Sometimes all it takes is someone expressing to the child that they care about their well-being and educational level.

Another strategy Espinosa listed is modeling language skills. Low-income students are less likely to have had a parent that has mastered the English language. The curriculum needs to include academic skills such as the ABC's and 123's, phonemic awareness, story time, and basic academic knowledge. Small class sizes are important for the child to have as many teacher/student interactions as possible. It is important for teachers to be well-trained and have access to other highly qualified teachers to talk with about best practices for each student. Finally, it is important for teachers to create a

respectful, reciprocal relationship with the families. This can help the families learn how to help their children grow academically.

Duncan and Brooks-Gunn (2000) reported a low-income level would adversely affect child development in several different ways. They studied the adverse affect of the home environment, quality of child care, economic pressure, parental mental health, the relationship between the parents and the child, and the neighborhood environment. All of these areas can negatively affect the physical and academic achievements of the children in low-income families. The relationship between the mother and child, the physical environment of the home, and specifically the academic opportunities for academic learning within the home are the top three predictors of a positive or negative academic outcome for the children. These aspects of the child's life can easily be assessed by the teacher when making a home visit.

### *Parental Involvement*

The field of early childhood education emphasizes the value of respectful relationships with children and families (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997). It is important for teachers to create and nurture a relationship with each child and his or her family to increase family participation and enhance children's learning (Gonzalez, Moll, Floyd-Tenery, Rivera, Rendon, Gonzalez, & Amanti, 1993). Families may feel left out of their children's educational experience. Parents and families feel more appreciated and connected to their child's school when they are directly included in their child's education. Research indicates that parental involvement impacts student learning (Epstein, 2001; Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992).

Students are more likely to do better in school when their parents are involved with their education. Parental involvement can be enhanced by respectful, reciprocal relationships between the teacher and the families (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992). Many parents enjoy helping in the classroom or doing things for teachers that is beneficial to the education of the students. Many parents want to help they just need to know what they can do to be helpful.

Parent involvement is important for the success of the students, one way to get parents involved in their student's education is to allow them to be the experts on a topic (Lunenburg & Irby, 2002). Bringing a parent or family member into the classroom that knows and can talk about engine work or body repair can spark an interest in the children to learn more about this line of work. Children can learn many things in the areas of reading and math when studying the topics of engine and body repair. It is also important to let the families know how important they are in their child's education.

### Chapter 3 Research Design

This study is a form of qualitative research identified as critical educational action research conducted by a teacher researcher in her public school classroom. The research methodology is a phenomenological ethnographic study (Goodwin & Goodwin, 1996) with features such as a naturalistic orientation, nonintervention, valuing the perspective of the participants, and researcher as the primary instrument of data collection using direct and personal means. McKernan (1991) identifies Carr and Kemmis as the primary advocates of critical educational action research and describes their notion of action research, “as self-reflective inquiry with the intent to improve the rationale for and the social justice of the teacher researcher’s own practice.” He also writes that Carr and Kemmis argue that the three aims of action research are to improve practice, improve the practitioner’s understanding of his or her practice, and to improve the situation in which the practice takes place. “Critical educational action researchers seem determined to expose the unjust constraints which thwart teacher’s work and impede rational action and equality in schools” (McKernan, 1991, p. 314).

#### *Participants and Demographics*

Participants included three Caucasian children and the families of those three children. Using a *convenience sampling* process (Goodwin, 1996), families were asked to volunteer to participate in the study. A note and Informed Consent Form were sent home via students that explained the study, asked for family volunteers, and solicited permission to videotape children in sociodramatic play. All three child participants are enrolled in the half-day, pre-kindergarten classroom of the researcher. The classroom is in a public school in a suburban district located in the Oklahoma City metropolitan area.



The school serves pre-kindergarten through sixth grade students. The clientele in this school are of low socio-economic status. According to the school's website, in 2006 75% of the children in this school were eligible for free or reduced lunch compared to the district rate of 54% and the state rate of 55%.

The teacher/researcher describes the community characteristics in the following way: housing in the area consists of older, small (two bedrooms and one bath), and mostly rundown homes. The nearby business area is populated with a plethora of fast-food restaurants and other local businesses. Crime is common in the area. For example, within ½ mile of the school, two households had car windows shot out. Drug use is a pattern in the area.

Children in the pre-kindergarten classroom are four and five years old. The classroom consists of 20 children. The ethnic demographics of the pre-kindergarten classroom includes 48.7% Caucasian, 28.2% African-American, 12.8% Hispanic, 5.1% Asian, 2.6% American Indian, and 2.6% listed as other. Family living patterns vary for the children in the classroom. Eleven children live with both parents, three with a single parent, two with grandparents, one is in a foster home, one is in Department of Human Services care, and the home situation of two is unknown to the teacher/researcher. There was 100% participation in parent conferences as a result of the teacher completing some conferences through a home visit.

#### *Data Collection Procedures*

Multiple methods were used to collect the data. These qualitative methods included focused interviews of the families, Home Observation for Measurement of the Environment (HOME) Inventory observations (Caldwell & Bradley, 2003), videotaping

children's pretend play within the housekeeping center of the classroom, and teacher/researcher journaling. Triangulation, the use of multiple data sources, (Denzin, 1988) is important in qualitative research studies to corroborate the data gathered in one format with that gathered in additional formats (Goodwin & Goodwin, 1996).

#### *Protocols/Family Interviews*

Data was gathered through focused interviews conducted in the homes of the participant families. The home visits consisted of three, one to one-and-a-half-hour interviews per family. The interviews were tape recorded and later the tapes were transcribed by the teacher/researcher. The interviews took place during the second semester of the school year. These home visits were different from other home visits in the sense that information was obtained from the families and the environments, rather than given to the families (Gonzalez, Moll, Floyd-Tenery, Rivera, Rendon, Gonzales, & Amanti, 1993). This was a big change because parents are accustomed to the teacher coming into the home and telling them what they need to do and how they need to achieve the goals set by the teacher. These interviews are for the purpose of gathering information about the families that can benefit everyone involved by using the information to create relevant curriculum for young children (Gonzalez, Andrade, Civil, Moll, 2001).

The Focused Interview Protocols were a set of open-ended questions designed to solicit information about work history, educational experiences, and family dynamics. These three topics are especially relevant to understanding the families and the many funds of knowledge each family has access to in their lives (Civil, 1994). The protocols

solicited historical and current information so as to increase student learning and academic success.

To minimize any differences between interviewing techniques the teacher/researcher conducted all interviews. The interviewer had been teaching the students for one semester and, therefore, had basic knowledge of the families as well as an already established relationship. This is important and has the potential for more open sharing by families because of the trust already established between the families and the teacher/researcher. (Appendix A)

#### *HOME Inventory*

An Early Childhood Home Observation for Measurement of the Environment (HOME) Inventory was conducted during one of each family's interviews (Caldwell & Bradley, 2003) (Appendix B). The researcher formally observed the home environment and asked parents the interview questions on the inventory regarding whether or not educational materials, types of media, variety of toys, and other educationally relevant objects are present. Identifying the different kinds of toys and educational materials found in the homes significantly adds to the study as representations of what the family's value. Other items on the inventory address pertinent educational issues. Many aspects of the home environment are relevant for understanding the funds of knowledge for each family in the study.

The HOME Inventory is a screening instrument created and modified by Caldwell and Bradley to describe various types of stimulation in the home environment that foster cognitive development (Boehm, 1985). It consists of eight sub-scales with a range of item numbers from four to eleven per scale. The first subscale is learning materials. This

subscale has eleven individual items that relate to the availability and accessibility of learning materials within the home. There are four items that ask about the availability of toys, books, and games that help the child learn different things related to colors, sizes, shapes and numbers. There are three items that refer to toys or games that require fine motor skill development, availability of puzzles, and access to a CD or tape player with at least five children's CD's or tapes that the child is able to use. The last four items of this subscale relate to the family's habits pertaining to reading, whether or not there are books visible in the home, whether the family subscribes to magazines or the daily newspaper and whether the child owns at least ten books.

The second subscale on the Early Childhood HOME Inventory is Language Stimulation. This subscale relates directly to how much the parents encourage language development through conversation, modeling and direct instruction. This subscale has seven individual items designed to identify the parent's strengths and weaknesses in this area. Four of the individual items include the child being encouraged to learn the alphabet and simple manners such as please and thank you, giving the child choices such as what they want to eat for breakfast or lunch, and providing toys that teach the names of different animals. The parent also allows the child time to talk and makes a point to listen to what they are saying. The parents also need to use correct grammar and pronunciation while communicating with the investigator and the child. The parent's communication also needs to be kind and positive while speaking about the child and to the investigator.

The third subscale on the Early Childhood HOME Inventory is Physical Environment. This subscale has seven individual items relating to the condition of the home environment. Items identify factors such as cleanliness, indoor and outdoor safety,

home lighting, overcrowding with furnishings, living space (at least 100 square feet per family member) and aesthetically pleasing neighborhood.

The fourth subscale on the Early Childhood HOME Inventory is Responsivity. This subscale also has seven individual items that relate to the parent's emotional and verbal responsiveness to the child. This gives an overall picture of the relationship between the parents and the child. These items relate to the child being held, cuddled, caressed, or kissed during the visit. This section also looks at the communication between the child and parent. It identifies whether or not the parent talks to the child during the visit or listens to the child and answers his or her requests verbally. Two of the items ask if the parent praises the child or 'shows off' some achievement the child has accomplished.

The fifth subscale is Academic Stimulation. This subscale has five items relating to parental involvement with the child's academic learning. These items include encouraging their child to learn colors, numbers, and spatial relationships, helping them learn patterned speech, (nursery rhymes and/or songs), and helping them learn to read certain words.

The sixth subscale is Modeling. This subscale has five items that relate to the parents showing the children what is appropriate behavior. Are the children allowed to snack whenever they wish, or do they have to wait for dinner? Is the television on the majority of the day or is it somewhat regulated? Did the parent introduce the visitor to the child? Two of the items relate to negative feelings and behavior and how the children are allowed to express these issues.

The seventh subscale on the Early Childhood HOME Inventory is Variety. This subscale has nine individual items that relate to the family's lifestyle particularly

providing variety and opportunities for experimentation, for example, the child has a musical instrument or toy and is encouraged to put their toys away without the help of a parent after play time has concluded. Three of the items relate to family activities such as going on an outing at least every other week, taking a trip out of town of more than fifty miles in the last year, and going to a museum in the last year. Two items identify whether or not the child eats at least one meal with one of the parents each day and if the child gets to select foods at the grocery store. The last two items in this subscale are whether or not the parent uses more complex sentence structure than yes or no answers to the child's questions, and if the child's artwork is displayed in the house.

The eighth and final subscale on the Early Childhood HOME Inventory is Acceptance. This subscale has four individual items regarding the parent's behavior in response to the child. These items identify if more than one instance of physical punishment has occurred in the past week, and, during the observation visit, whether or not the parent scolds or yells at the child, slaps or spansks the child, or physically restrains the child.

The data on the HOME Inventory is analyzed in a qualitative manner to determine what funds of knowledge can be identified so the purpose of using this instrument is somewhat different than that for which it is designed. However, information on the validity and reliability of the inventory is reported here to support use of the inventory data even if analysis is not done in a statistical manner. The internal consistency for the subscales ranged from  $r=.53$  to  $r=.88$ , the overall test consistency was  $r=.93$ . There was a positive relationship between the total HOME Inventory scores of children between the ages of three and five years of age and the SRA Achievement Test scores for Reading,

Language Arts, Mathematics, and Composite obtained between the ages of six and ten (Boehm, 1985). According to Boehm, content validity for the HOME was supported by an extensive review of the literature.

#### *Classroom Video Observations*

Children were observed and videotaped three times for approximately 45 minutes each time while playing in the housekeeping/dramatic play center in the teacher/researcher's classroom. The video camera was set up to run for the full period and recorded only the children within the experiment. Half of the children within the teacher/researcher's classroom were at centers in a conjoined classroom with the teacher's classroom assistant. The other five to seven children were at a center with the teacher researcher, while the three students were being videotaped for this study. Videos were viewed and analyzed multiple times to determine the funds of knowledge represented in the children's play.

#### *Teacher Journaling*

Upon completion of each family interview session, the teacher researcher wrote a reflective statement regarding her personal impressions and observations while conducting the interviews. These reflections were directly related to the research topic and to how the interviews transformed her perceptions of the families and their children. These reflections were reviewed and analyzed multiple times to identify patterns and themes consistent with the other data collected and with the current literature on funds of knowledge.

#### Chapter 4 Data Analysis for Family A

The data collected from the three focused interviews and the Early Childhood HOME Inventory are reported separately by family in Chapters 4, 5, and 6. Chapter 6 also includes Table 1 which summarizes the HOME Inventory data for the three families. Chapter 7 describes the data collected through the videos of the three children from these families at play in the preschool classroom and the journal entries of the teacher researcher.

##### *Family History*

Family A was the first family the teacher/researcher visited. The family reported taking their children on outdoor activities, such as camping and fishing. They discussed how children should act at home and how they should act in school and in public. Children were allowed more freedoms at home. They were allowed to run around and play outside or inside as long as a parent knew where they were. In public, they were expected to show more control and respect for their parents. The children were expected to be focused and controllable within the school setting. Even with these expectations the parents wanted their children to have fun and enjoy school. The child in family A had previously been enrolled in sports but he reported not enjoying it so they pulled him out after a short time.

This family has close ties to the mother's parents, but the father's parents were not and are not really involved in their lives. When the parents were growing up their parents believed that spanking a child was the appropriate discipline for their children, now as parents they have tried to avoid spanking their own children. They stated that spanking was always a last resort and only when they were not extremely upset. Both



parents reported being involved in their child's life and that was one of the things they felt was important to consider before having children. They discussed the difficulties of raising children on one paycheck to enable the mother to be home with the children.

Dad was unemployed at the time of the interview and that was one of their most serious family issues. They felt their family strengths were the close relationships and love between family members. They also felt that family involvement was extremely important to their success. Family involvement was high on their list of priorities, any chance they got to spend time doing things together that was the choice they would make. The parents felt that spending time together was one of the best things they could do for their family.

#### *Educational History*

The second visit with Family A centered on the family's educational histories, values, and ideas. Mom enjoyed home economics because in home economics she learned 'real life skills'. She enjoyed history because it seemed easy to memorize facts. Dad said he didn't really enjoy school much, but when picking his favorite subject he chose science, because of the hands on experiences. Both parents graduated from high school or later received their GED. Three of the four grandparents graduated from high school or received their GED while the fourth grandparent did not complete high school. One of the grandparents furthered his/her education with two or three years of college. Both parents stated they were interested in continuing their education, but have not yet been able to find the time or money necessary to do so.

One of the most important things to these parents in relation to their child's first year of formal education was that the child enjoys school. The family felt it was

important for their children to love school and have fun while they were in school. They felt there should be multiple opportunities for children to play. The areas and activities within the classrooms should be stimulating and fun. Both parents felt it was important to read to their children every day and they enjoyed reading bedtime stories. They also made sure to help with any homework the child received from school. Mom helped the child learn by integrating the necessary information into the daily routine, for example she stated if they were making rice crispy treats she would have him put the marshmallows in groups of ten. Dad liked to help his son learn mechanical things, for example how to change the oil on the vehicles or how to work on an engine.

### *Job and Work History*

The third visit examined the work history of the family. The mother in family A quit working when she found out she was pregnant with their first child. Both parents agreed that it was important for someone to be home with the children rather than have them in a childcare setting. The father admitted the reason he chose his job was for the money they were able to earn. When discussing what they needed to know or be able to do for their jobs, they reported needing to be self-motivated, able to multi-task, and able to pay close attention to detail.

When asked about their knowledge of their parent's jobs they said they had very little knowledge of what their parents did for a living. They went with their parents on the job a few times, but not regularly and they reported not really paying attention to what their parents were doing. The father said he remembered that his dad's job was dirty and he knew he did not want to do that for a living. The parents agreed they learned responsibility from their parents and felt it was important to teach their children about

being on time to a job, dressing appropriately, and being respectful. They also felt it was important for children to learn the value of doing a good job and earning a paycheck, rather than just collecting a paycheck.

### *HOME Inventory*

The Early Childhood HOME Inventory has eight subscales and family A scored above the median score on all the subscales. The first subscale is Learning Materials, with items that relate to the availability and accessibility of learning materials within the home. The family had toys that taught colors, sizes, and shapes. They had educational toys, books and games that were easily accessible to the child. The child had more than three puzzles. He had access to a tape recorder with multiple children's tapes and was allowed to listen to them when ever he wanted. The family did not have books out in the open on a bookshelf or otherwise and the family did not subscribe to a magazine.

The second subscale is Language Stimulation. This subscale relates directly to how much the parents encourage language development through conversation, modeling and direct instruction. The child had toys that would help teach the names of different animals. He was encouraged to learn the alphabet. The parents spoke to the child very positively during the visit. They listened to the child and expect simple manners such as please and thank you. He was also allowed to decide what he wanted for breakfast.

The third subscale is Physical Environment, which includes the home environment and whether or not it is safe, large enough, clean, and free of extreme clutter. In this home, the physical environment is clean and nicely kept, the children can go in their room and play with toys or bring them to the living room, but when they are finished their toys are put away. The neighborhood is aesthetically pleasing and the house

has more than 100 square feet of living space per person. The rooms in the house are set up very nicely and nothing is crowded in the house.

The fourth subscale is Responsivity. The parents are both responsive to the child, they hold and talk and read to their child daily. The child was allowed and encouraged to ask questions during the visit. The parents praised the child's abilities to do multiple activities throughout the visit. He was allowed to show how good he could ride his bike before the visit was concluded.

The fifth subscale is Academic Stimulation. This subscale has five items that relate to the parental involvement with the child's academic learning. The family encourages the child to learn colors, numbers and spatial relationships. He is also encouraged to practice learning a few new words every week. The child regularly learns nursery rhymes and songs from books that his parents read to him.

The sixth subscale is Modeling. This subscale has five items that relate to the parents showing the children what is appropriate behavior. The child was required to wait until lunch or dinner time to eat rather than snacking throughout the day. The teacher researcher was introduced at her arrival to the child. The family does not watch a lot of television together or separately. They will occasionally sit down as a family and watch a movie. The child is allowed to express negative feelings without harsh reprisal, but they are not allowed to hit a parent without harsh reprisal.

The seventh subscale is Variety and has nine individual subscales that relate to the family's lifestyle providing variety and the opportunities for experimentation. The child was frequently taken to a museum in Norman, Oklahoma. They also took family trips out of state to see other relatives. The child has a toy musical instrument and he is

encouraged to put his toys away when he is finished playing. Dinner is at the table as a family almost every day and the child frequently is allowed to choose part of the dinner from the grocery store. The parents use complex sentence structure and language to speak to the child rather than talking down to him. His artwork is posted on the refrigerator and in his bedroom.

The eighth subscale is Acceptance and has four individual items that relate to the parent's ability to accept negative behavior from the child. The parents did not scold, yell at, slap or spank or even physically restrain the child during the visit. The week prior to the visit there was no more than one instance of physical punishment. The parents were extremely loving and firm towards their children during the visit.

## Chapter 5 Data Analysis for Family B

The focused interview data and HOME Inventory data for Family B are described below.

*Family History*

During the first visit with Family B, mom and both children were present but dad was at work. Mom shared that when she was a child her mom and step-father would take family trips fishing and camping. She said this was one of her favorite memories because when they were in Stratford, Oklahoma their family did not fight as much. They also took their children to the park to ride bikes.

She remembers her childhood being extremely hard because everyone was fighting. Her parents felt it was appropriate to punish their children by screaming or yelling and spanking, which she said would be considered beating by today's standards. Mom said that she tries not to make the same mistakes with her children if they are in trouble and need to be disciplined. She stated that she has them put their noses in the corner. She also stated that she does tend to yell at them too much. She said that sometimes they get spankings but they are never as severe as the ones she received as a child.

Family B has had several medical issues that have affected their life. The oldest child has been in and out of the hospital most of her life. The second child was diagnosed with ADHD the year this study began. Mom felt this diagnoses made things a little easier because at least now she knew why she acted the way she did. The maternal grandmother survived cancer and this struggle affected the family dynamics. Mom said they got to

spend some time at least every couple of weeks with an extended family member usually mom's father and step-mom.

Mom likes to play dolls with her children, read books and sometimes they bake cookies. Most of the time they spend outside if the weather allows. They like to ride bikes and throw a ball. Mom is not ready for the children to play extra-curricular activities, she said the girls have been asking about it and maybe later she will let them, but not yet. Mom reported spending time renting and watching movies with the children. She also discussed their goal of buying one movie a week for the family to watch together.

### *Educational History*

The second interview with Family B mom said she enjoyed math, science and most of all socializing. She enjoyed math because she could do math in her head and it seemed easy to her. She liked science because she wanted to be a doctor and was curious about the human body. She and her husband both finished high school. Her mother completed eighth grade and her father graduated from high school. Her mother dropped out of school to help with the family financial issues. Mom stated she was interested in getting a college education, but that would not be possible because she had two young children and one on the way.

Mom reported her children's education was important to her. She stated that she helps her children every night with some form of homework even if it is just something like having the preschooler practicing writing her name. She said they read at least three books a day to their children. Mom wanted her children to have a great relationship with their teachers, because she didn't feel she had the best teacher/student relationships when she was in school. Mom said that she wanted her children to be at least average and she

did not want them to be below average and have to struggle like she did. She wanted her children to have hands-on experiences within the classroom. She wanted the classroom to be stimulating to help them learn better.

#### *Job and Work History*

The third interview was related to work history. Mom is not currently employed, but had previously worked in several minimum wage jobs. Her most recent job was dispatching for the local police department. She commented that this was probably her most exciting and interesting job. She liked this job because she felt she was able to help people. She was laid off and later fired from this job and she felt the boss had personal issues with her. She said being fired wasn't so bad because she was able to spend more time with her children and be more involved in their school. She stated that her parents taught her to get along with everyone and that you had to have good work ethics and that you couldn't just come and go as you pleased.

#### *HOME Inventory*

The first subscale in the Early Childhood HOME Inventory is Learning Materials. The family had tapes and CD's for the child to play with in the bedroom or in the living room. She also had access to toys and books and games that would help teach numbers and she was encouraged to learn the alphabet and shapes. There were no toys that taught colors, sizes, and shapes. There were also no puzzles or books visible in the house. The family does get several magazines at the grocery store every week, but does not subscribe to the daily newspaper.

The second subscale is Language Stimulation. The family did not encourage verbal manners and allow the child time to talk, while they listened. Everyone spoke



when they wanted to even if it interrupted the other. The parent spoke negatively to the child and about the child multiple times during the interview. The child was encouraged to learn the alphabet. The parent did use correct grammar and pronunciation during the visit. The child also regularly chose her own breakfast or lunch.

The third subscale is Physical Environment. Although, the interior of the home was well lit and had more than 100 square feet per person the physical environment was untidy. The living room was crowded with a television that was three foot by three foot and a couch that took up the rest of the room. The house was small and crowded with furniture. There were toys and backpacks and clothes and dishes everywhere. The outside play area seemed safe and free of debris.

The fourth subscale is Responsivity. The mother consistently held and hugged her child multiple times during the visit. She would answer questions the child had, even when the child was interrupting a conversation. The parent did not praise the child or talk positively about the child during the visit. The child did not demonstrate an achievement during the visit.

The fifth subscale is Academic Stimulation. The child was encouraged to learn colors, numbers and letters. Patterned speech and spatial relationships were not part of the mother daughter educational discussions. The child was also not expected or encouraged to learn how to read new words.

The sixth subscale is Modeling. The television was a central part of their life. It was left on the entire time during every interview. The mother did introduce the teacher interviewer to the child at the beginning of the interview. The child did not have to wait at all for something to eat and was allowed to get into the refrigerator or the pantry at any

time during the day. The child was not allowed to express negative feelings without being yelled or screamed at. The child was also not allowed to hit the parent without being hit in return.

The seventh subscale is Variety. The children did get to see extended family members at least once a week. They did not take regular trips out of state or go to places other than the snow cone stand down the street on Sundays. The child did not have a musical instrument or toy and was not required to pick up any toys even with the help of a parent. The toys were scattered all over the house and the bedrooms. The father works all day and the family rarely eats a meal together. When they did eat it was usually in front of the television. The child's artwork was displayed on the refrigerator and was sitting on the coffee table.

Finally the eighth subscale is Acceptance. Mom reported that she did not spank or physically punish the child in the week prior to the interview. The mother did not physically restrain, spank or hit the child during the visit. She did yell and scream at the child from the living room. She rarely got up to discipline the child it was more frequently from a distance.

## Chapter 6 Data Analysis for Family C

The focused interview data and HOME Inventory data for Family C are described below. Table 1. HOME Inventory Summary follows the information on Family C.

*Family History*

Mom was also the only one present during the interviews of Family C. She remembered when her family was going through some extremely difficult financial problems. The mother and her parents had to move in with her grandparents when she was six because her parents lost everything.

Mom stated that her immediate family is different than her extended family because she felt her mother had favorites and she does not. She also said that her children are the most important things in her life. She felt the families were similar because of the minimum wage jobs and the amount of hard work they have to do for very little gain. She did say if she ever needed anything that her parents would be there to help her. The children see their grandparents between one and three times a week.

Family time is spent doing yard work and planting flowers. They like to spend time cooking and most meals are spent together. They also like to watch movies. Mom likes to take the children to the park and play hide and seek or chase. Although, the parents like playing ball with the children they do not participate in any organized sports.

When mom and dad were children they received regular spankings from their parents. Mom stated that dad agrees with this form of discipline, but she does not. So dad spanks the children if necessary, but mom tries time out, grounding and sometimes removes toys from the children's rooms. If none of this works than mom does spank if she has to.

*Educational History*

The second interview mom talked about how she enjoyed the social part of school. Her favorite subjects in school were science and chorus. She said her science teacher made the class fun. Mom completed 9<sup>th</sup> grade and dad graduated from high school. The maternal grandmother completed 10<sup>th</sup> grade and the maternal grandfather graduated from high school. Mom said that she really wanted to go to college but having children and the hours she worked had kept her from doing so. She stated that not going to college is what has kept her from getting a better paying job.

Mom said in her ideal classroom for her children the teachers would be fair to all children and make sure they had fun. Mom helps her children with their homework at least three days out of the week on the other days her husband helps the children. She reads books to the children at least four days a week. She really wanted the children to get the best possible education so they did not have to work as hard as she has all her life.

*Job and Work History*

Mom described her work history as many different minimum wage jobs. She worked as a housekeeper for a motel and a hospital. She worked as a carhop, laundry aide, dishwasher, factory worker and a secretary. Her current job is doing laundry and she is able to take the children sometimes and they can help fold the laundry. She enjoys working with elderly people at the nursing center. Her parents taught her she would 'appreciate it more if she had to earn it,' in relation to money. Her parents taught her to be friendly to everyone she came in contact with during the day.

*HOME Inventory*

The first subscale in the Early Childhood HOME Inventory is Learning Materials. The child had educational tapes and CD's in her bedroom. She had some toys and several books in her room. She had at least three puzzles in her room. There were no books or magazines out in the home and they did not subscribe to the daily newspaper.

The second subscale is Language Stimulation. The child did not have any toys that taught animal names. The child was encouraged to learn the alphabet and was expected to use verbal manners such as please and thank you. The child was allowed to speak while the mother listened. The mother's voice was always nice and sweet sounding to the child and she used proper English when speaking to the child. The child was regularly allowed free choice for breakfast and sometimes lunch.

The third subscale is Physical Environment. The physical environment was in perfect condition, the house appeared safe and hazard free. There was plenty of room to move about in the house without feeling like you might step on something. The house had more than 100 square feet of living space for each family member and the rooms were not overcrowded. The neighborhood was aesthetically pleasing.

The fourth is Responsivity. The parent was extremely affectionate towards the child, she also allowed her to speak while she listened. When the child had a question during the visit the mother focused her attention on the child and responded appropriately to the child. She praised her for her academic abilities multiple times during the visit. She spoke highly of the child during the visit. The child did not show off a prior accomplishment during our visit.

The fifth subscale is Academic Stimulation. The parents encouraged learning colors and numbers. The child was not encouraged to learn songs or nursery rhymes or spatial relationships such as up and down or in and out. She was also not required or encouraged to learn to read new words.

The sixth subscale is Modeling. They family frequently watched television and the television was on a good deal of the time. Although, the child was not allowed to hit a parent without severe consequences, the child was allowed to express negative feelings without getting into a lot of trouble. The child was expected to wait until lunch or dinner was ready to eat, she was not allowed to snack frequently in between either meal.

The seventh subscale is Variety. The family did not take trips out of state or to extended family member's homes regularly. The family had not gone to a museum in the last year. The child did not have a real or toy musical instrument and she was expected to clean up her toys after she was finished playing. Her artwork was displayed on the refrigerator door in the kitchen. The family usually ate dinner together and the child was allowed to choose a couple of different things from the grocery store for herself. Her parents tended to use complex sentence structure and proper English.

Finally the eighth subscale is Acceptance. The mother did not yell or scream at the child at all during the visit. She never had to restrain the child, nor did she slap or spank the child during the visit. She reported that she did not spank the child within the last week and did not like to use this form of discipline.

**Table 1. HOME Inventory Summary**

HOME Inventory Subcategory	Family		
	A	B	C
<b>I. Learning Materials</b>			
1.Child has toys which teach colors, sizes, and shapes	+		
2.Child has 3 or more puzzles.	+		+
3.Child has a record, tape, or CD player and at least five children’s records, tapes, or CD’s.	+	+	+
4.Child has toys or games permitting free expression.	+	+	+
5.Child has toys or games requiring refined movements.	+	+	+
6.Child has toys or games which help teach numbers.	+	+	
7. Child has at least ten children’s books.	+	+	+
8. At least ten books are visible in the apartment or home.			
9.Family buys and reads a daily newspaper.	+		
10.Family subscribes to at least one magazine.		+	

**Table 1 (continued). HOME Inventory Summary**

HOME Inventory Subcategory	Family		
	A	B	C
<b>Learning Materials (continued)</b>			
11.Child is encouraged to learn shapes.	+	+	+
<b>II. Language Stimulation</b>			
12.Child has toys that help teach names of animals.	+		
13.Child is encouraged to learn the alphabet.	+	+	+
14.Parent teaches child simple verbal manners (please, thank you, I'm sorry).	+		+
15.Parent encourages child to talk and takes time to listen.	+		+
16.Child is permitted choice in breakfast or lunch menu.	+	+	+
17.Parent uses correct grammar and pronunciation.	+	+	+
18.Parent's voice conveys positive feelings about child.	+		+



**Table 1 (continued). HOME Inventory Summary**

HOME Inventory Subcategory	Family		
	A	B	C
<b>III. Physical Environment</b>			
19. Building appears safe and free of hazards.	+		+
20. Outside play environment appears safe.	+	+	+
21. Interior of home or apartment is not dark or perceptually monotonous.	+	+	+
22. Neighborhood is aesthetically pleasing.	+		+
23. House has 100 square feet of living space per person.	+	+	+
24. Rooms are not overcrowded with furniture.	+		+
25. House is reasonably and minimally cluttered.	+		+
<b>IV. Responsivity</b>			
26. Parent holds child close 10-15 minutes per day.	+	+	+

**Table 1 (continued). HOME Inventory Summary**

HOME Inventory Subcategory	Family		
	A	B	C
<b>IV. Responsivity (continued)</b>			
27.Parent converses with child at least twice during visit.	+	+	+
28.Parent answers child's questions or requests verbally.	+	+	+
29.Parent usually responds verbally to child's speech.	+	+	+
30.Parent praises child's qualities twice during visit.	+		+
31.Parent caresses, kisses, or cuddles child during visit.	+	+	+
32.Parent helps child demonstrate some achievement during visit.	+		
<b>V. Academic Stimulation</b>			
33.Child is encouraged to learn colors.	+	+	+
34.Child is encouraged to learn patterned speech.	+		

**Table 1 (continued). HOME Inventory Summary**

HOME Inventory Subcategory	Family		
	A	B	C
<b>V. Academic Stimulation(continued)</b>			
35.Child is encouraged to learn spatial relationships.	+		
36.Child is encouraged to learn numbers.	+	+	+
37.Child is encouraged to learn to read a few words.	+		
<b>VI. Modeling</b>			
38.Some delay of food gratification is expected.	+		+
39.TV is used judiciously.	+		
40. Child can express negative feelings without harsh reprisal.	+		+
41. Child can hit parent without harsh reprisal.			
42.Parent introduces Visitor to child.	+	+	+
<b>VII. Variety</b>			
43.Child has real or toy musical instrument.	+		

**Table 1 (continued). HOME Inventory Summary**

HOME Inventory Subcategory	Family		
	A	B	C
<b>VII. Variety(continued)</b>			
44.Child is taken on outing by a family member at least every other week.	+	+	
45.Child has been on a trip more than miles during past year.	+		
46.Child has been taken to a museum during past year.	+		
47.Parent encourages child to put away toys without help.	+		+
48.Child eats at least one meal on most days with mother and father.	+		+
49.Parent lets child choose certain favorite food products or brands at the grocery store.	+	+	+
50.Parent uses complex sentence structure and vocabulary.	+		+
51.Child’s art work is displayed some place in house.	+	+	+

**Table 1 (continued). HOME Inventory Summary**

<b>HOME Inventory Subcategory</b>	<b>Family</b>		
	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>
<b>VIII.Acceptance</b>			
52.No more than one instance of physical punishment occurred during the past week.	+	+	+
53.Parent does not scold or yell at or derogate child more than once.	+		+
54.Parent does not use physical restraint during visit.	+	+	+
55.Parent neither slaps nor spansks child during visit.	+	+	+

Note. A plus sign (+) indicates the behavior was observed during the visit or the parent reported that the conditions or events were characteristic of the home environment.

## Chapter 7 Data Analysis: Play Videos and Teacher/Researcher Journal

The three classroom play observation videos and the teacher/researcher journal are analyzed in the following chapter. Each classroom play observation session included only the three student participants and each lasted a minimum of 45 minutes. The videos were reviewed multiple times and written notations were made of the activities and language of the students. The teacher/researcher reflected and wrote reflections regarding each focused interview.

*Play Videos*

*Video One.* In the initial video observation the children spent the majority of their time in pretend play. They pretended to call Ariel on the phone and ask her over. At one point one of the children said, "I am a mermaid." They continued this theme for a period of time. The phone was central to many things they did throughout the video. They scheduled a slumber party that evolved into a birthday party that entailed calling all their friends real and imaginary to come over with presents. They baked a cake for the birthday girl and lit the candles with a pretend lighter. They later informed me that an adult had actually lit the candles. The children fixed dinner and set the table for three people to eat at the table. They had a time period where Student B had a baby in her shirt and she was telling everyone she was pregnant. All three children engaged in feeding, rocking, loving and hugging on multiple dolls throughout the play episode.

The following is a scene from part of the first classroom video of the children engrossed in pretend play about having and caring for a baby, the children's names have been changed for the purpose of anonymity.

Student C: You're the dad and you're the mom

Student B: Oh, I'm fixing to have a baby in my tummy.

Holding her tummy, walks over to a baby doll and puts it under her shirt. John looks at her and hands an apple to Jennifer.

Student C asks Student A: Is this a boy or a girl?

Student B: Feel it, I think I have a baby in my tummy, get it out.

Student A walks around Student C to talk to Student B. Student B pulls the baby out of her shirt and holds it up.

Student B: Oh!

She is rubbing the face of the baby and holding it up and cooing to the baby. She puts the baby on her shoulder and holds it. John gets a baby out of the sink.

Student A: What about this?

Student A is handing Student B another baby. Student C takes the baby and rocks it back and forth while she is sitting. The girls prepare to feed the babies by dressing them with bibs and rocking them back and forth. Student A stands watching the girls and getting anything they need. This continued for about ten minutes and the process of having a baby began again.

*Video Two.* In the second video observation the majority of the time was also spent pretending. They washed dishes, took a nap, and had a food fight. The children made coffee, tea, cupcakes and ordered pizza from Pizza Hut. Amanda grabs for the phone.

Student B: I wanna call the doctor.

Student A has the phone: Call Pizza Hut, Pizza Hut, call Pizza Hut.

Student B gets the phone.

Student C: Yah, for pizza.

Student B starts dialing the phone.

Student C: I want cheese and pepperoni.

Student B: They have, they have cookies.

Student C: She is calling pizza place for some pizza.

Student B: I am calling Pizza Hut.

Student C: I want some cheese.

Student B: Yep!

Student A: Cheese pizza for me.

Student B: They have, they have. Cheese pizza for me too. Hello, Pizza Hut it is me, my little girl and my little boy want all cheese pizza.

Teacher: Did he say how much that cheese pizza was going to cost?

Student B: Yep, \$5

Student C: Let me check and see if I have five dollars in my pocket, yep there is five dollars in my pocket, here is five dollars.

Student B: Thanks.

Student C: Give me some pizza.

This pizza discussion continued on throughout the 45 minute time frame and I talked to them about how much the pizza was going to cost and one response was five dollars, another was four dollars, and the last was 102 dollars. This brought up the discussion of spending a million dollars on a rug and spending a lot more to get a four-wheeler.

The children spent a lot of time in a repetitive behavior of drinking water out of cups, pans, shoes, and bowls while saying they did not want anything else to drink. After



they finished a drink the cup or bowl would end up on the floor behind the child.

Towards the end of the time the children were role playing. The children were in trouble and the mom (Student C) said they were to go to their room because they were grounded. She locked their bedroom door and told them to go to bed.

In the play scenarios the children were creating relationships similar to that of a family. They created roles including mom and dad, brothers and sisters. The children discussed these roles and what each role meant and they talked about how each person should act within each role. If one child did not wish to play that role they had to work together to either convince the child to play that role or create a new role for the child. Student B pretended to be pregnant and went through her perception of having a baby multiple times. The children experimented with the role of caring for a baby. They rocked, fed, and cared for the babies a large portion of a couple of the video segments. Through the family interviews it was discovered that child's mother (Family B) was expecting a child. This child brought her knowledge and prior experiences to the classroom and role played with the other children.

During the classroom videos the children displayed punitive approaches to discipline. This behavior was supported also by the family interviews and the HOME Inventories, when the parents discussed their methods of discipline. The parents tried to use developmentally appropriate methods, but if that did not work they resorted to spankings or yelling at their children.

*Video Three.* In the third video observation the children were involved in pretend play. They pretended mom (Student B) was sick and needed some medicine and soup, so

someone had to go get it and cook some soup for her. They pretended that someone was going to jail for breaking out of their room when they were grounded.

Student C: Go to your room, Now stay in there!

Student B comes jogging out of the 'bedroom', giggling. While Student B is laughing Student A jumps up and leaves the 'bedroom'. He comes to the table where the two girls are.

Student C: I said stay in there!

She has her fingers in her ears. Student B is giggling still. Student C is pointing at Student B.

Student C: You're in trouble.

Student C tries to tip the table over and then puts it back on the floor. Student A runs back to his 'room'.

Teacher: Will you fix the table so that it does not fall over and hurt somebody?

Student C: You're in trouble, go to your room and don't ever come out. I said don't come back. You're in trouble for that, go to your room.

Student B goes back to her 'room'. They all began giggling and started to pretend to be killed. Amanda did not want to be killed so she got up and started making coffee. They role played they were married and that someone got fired and had to go work at Crest, then someone got fired from school. They were rocking and singing to the baby. They began to pretend drink sea water and throwing the pans and cups again. They ordered pizza that cost \$48 and \$79. They began eating and drinking off the table.

*Teacher/Researcher Journal*

After each family interview the teacher researcher reflected on and wrote about her personal perceptions and reflections on the verbal and non-verbal data the families provided during the interviews. The following are the main ideas in that from those reflections.

*Family A.* This family has specific behavioral ideas that children should behave in a certain way. They seem to be fairly strict on behavior in public and a little more relaxed when others are not watching. The house is in perfect condition in that everything is put away and nothing is on the floor or the couch. The kitchen is clean and the dishes are put away. The parents seemed to be extremely concerned about their family. The family made a point to spend time together doing regular activities. I realized after the first interview I need to work extremely hard every single chance I get on my listening skills. Sometimes I do not hear what is being said because I am already thinking further down the line.

I am not sure if they just do not remember or if they didn't have a significant experience in school, because school was just another 'have to' thing in their life. The father had a rough life so school was just another pain in the neck. Neither parent had a parent really pushing them to get a college education when they were young. They have definite goals for their children. Behavior is a very important thing to Dad. Mom is more relaxed about behavior but education seems to be more important to Mom.

They seem to be worried about giving the 'right' answers. I tried to explain there wasn't a right answer and that I wanted to get answers from everyone to compare and see if there were similarities and differences that could help me be a better teacher. I tried to explain to them it was less about them as individuals and more about creating better

teaching strategies. They seem self conscious of their abilities as parents. They want to do everything right and not mess up. This is important to both parents. They both share a lot of information/knowledge with their children about work and different adult activities, for example cooking and fixing the vehicle.

*Family B.* The house is probably less than 1,000 square feet. The TV is three feet by three feet and takes up the majority of the living room. The couch is about three feet from the TV because of the size of the living room. There is a coffee table between the couch and the TV. The whole time I was there the TV was on and was the center of attention with a remote in a child's hand and fairly loud. The house is extremely cluttered and unkept. Overstimulation!

Mom had an extremely abusive childhood and at the time survival seemed to be a more serious concern than an education. She did make it through high school but did not enjoy much of her education. She is interested in furthering her education, but doesn't really seem to have a plan for accomplishing her goals. She doesn't seem to have a realistic idea about furthering her education and becoming an RN. She said that she and her husband have been trying to get pregnant and she just found out that she was. It seems that her goals are not very static they seem to change frequently. One minute she wants to be an RN and the next she wants to have a third child.

She does not really have a lot of knowledge about what to expect for her children's education. She seems to depend on the school and the teachers to know and do the right things. She wants her children to be average and nothing more is necessary. Her English skills are low and sounding literate is not something that she worries a great deal about.

*Family C.* I noticed how parents still tend to do what their parents did even though their life seemed hard for them. Mom really didn't seem comfortable discussing during the interview, but later in between classes talked to me at length. Mom stated that her parents were quite regular when it came to extreme spankings. Her mom dropped out of school early because of a pregnancy and she did also. They both were pregnant and having children at a very young age which affected their education and continues to affect the jobs and how hard they have to work for so little. I hope they are educating their children about the difficulties they have had due to these issues. I truly believe mom understands the hardships that having children and quitting school have caused her and her family.

Her job choice is based on the specific hours she has to work because she has to take care of the responsibilities of the house and children also. It is amazing to me how people with so little get used to it and their goals in life seem impossible, but to others those insurmountable dreams are not something another person would even want to experience. For example some people are used to minimum wage and others would die before lowering their standards to minimum wage.

## Chapter 8 Data Interpretation

Upon completion of the data collection, coding procedures were used to further analyze and interpret the descriptive information obtained in the family interviews, HOME Inventory results, and play videos. An open coding procedure was utilized in which the data from each interview narrative, inventory report and play video was examined, broken down, compared, and general categories identified. This was followed by axial coding procedures in which the categories previously identified were further analyzed in terms of the context, conditions and possible causes to identify any connections among them. Finally, selective coding was used to further refine, reorganize, and ultimately identify the major themes or core categories embedded in the data.

Through this process four major themes were identified. These themes include: 1.) Household Knowledge and Experiences, 2.) Family Orientation Toward Scholastic Achievement, 3.) Human Relations and Interactions, and 4.) Parent Traits. Curriculum themes like these exist in several areas of the children's daily lives and the homes of the families. Several of the activities within these themes include deeper issues that also need to be identified. Once identified these themes can be analyzed for potential use within classroom instruction

*Household Knowledge and Experiences*

The shared knowledge and experiences within households provided an abundant number of topics appropriate for curriculum in the preschool classroom. When included in the classroom pedagogy these curriculum themes would come from multiple content disciplines and could, most likely, be implemented in such a way that content areas would be integrated. Through these learning experiences the children could make

connections enabling them to create new knowledge including the math, science, reading, and writing skills the state requires children to learn within school. While these shared household knowledge and experiences are important to the families they are also important to the academic development of the children when implemented into the classroom curriculum and used to connect their interests to the learning content.

There were 22 curriculum topics that emerged from the funds of knowledge data. The curriculum topics fell into five categories including daily living and family, outdoor and physical activities, mechanical knowledge, social development, and economics. The family interviews, HOME Inventories, and play videos all served as data sources for the topics and some topics were evident in more than one data source. The curriculum topics encompassed different disciplines or content areas. Table 2 illustrates the curriculum topics' relationships to the five categories, data sources, and content areas.

Some topics are more conspicuous as curriculum content such as cooking and mechanics while others might be less conspicuous and require more thought before they could be implemented into the curriculum effectively. Curriculum units on cooking and mechanics would be fairly easy to create and implement.

*Mechanical Knowledge.* In the first interview with Family A the father discussed teaching his son about the importance of car maintenance. He specifically discussed working on engines and changing oil and tires. Family C also had mechanical knowledge in the family work history. A grandfather “worked on cars” and was a welder. In one play video, the child from Family A was talking about using his money to buy a four wheeler. Gonzalez and others (2005) reported one of the themes persistent in their research was that of auto mechanics. This type of knowledge is scientific knowledge

which has the potential to interest children in science topics as well as to engage boys in literacy experiences on topics that appeal to them. Dramatic play centers such as “garage” and “auto mechanics” could be created. Materials such as interlocking gears, simple engines, and physics activities with cars and ramps could be incorporated into the science curriculum to connect with the children’s funds of knowledge in this area.

*Outdoor and Physical Activities.* All three of the families reported involvement in outdoor activities. The children in Family A and B get to go to the park regularly. Family C allows the children to help plant flowers around the house and do yard work together. The father in Family A takes the children fishing and sometimes shooting a gun. Family B reported allowing her children to ride their bicycles in the driveway. Sometimes she takes the children on a picnic.

The outdoor activities the children were experiencing within their family setting could be reinforced with science experiences through field trips or hands on classroom activities. The parents reported enjoying science and math, which was reinforced by the children in the videos. Science tends to lend itself quite well to young children, their natural curiosity and need for hands on experiences (Basile &White, 2000). The children were reenacting a cartoon and pretending to drink seawater. They spent several days engaging in this activity. Bringing in live animals would create a hands-on experience for the children (Yoon, Onchwari, 2006). Creating a research team within the classroom that would visit the library to learn more things about their topic and then report back to the class about what they had learned would also increase their vocabulary and communication skills (Gelman &Breneman, 2004; Basile &White, 2000; Yoon, Onchwari, 2006).



*Daily Living and Family.* In the family interviews all three families reported allowing their children to help with the dinnertime cooking. Two of the mothers interviewed reported making cookies with their children. Moll, Amanti, Neff, and Gonzalez (1992) discussed the importance of using topics the children initiated and creating of activities within the classroom. The children were continually cooking during the videotaped play episodes. The children watched their parents cook and were even involved in some of the cooking at home. The children used this prior knowledge from their homes to create a similar setting within the classroom. In the classroom the children made a birthday cake and had a complete celebration including this cake with lit candles and place settings for each child. The children fixed breakfast, ordered pizza, and even fixed chicken soup for their sick mother.

During the interview the mother in Family C identified her job as one that requires her to do laundry daily. The children are able to come to work with her sometimes and they get to help her fold the laundry. Implementing a unit on laundry would incorporate social studies and environmental science. Some children's books could be used along with this unit to incorporate literacy and language arts. Creating dramatic play areas along this theme could engage children in folding clothes, zipping, buttoning, and other large and small motor activities.

*Economics.* Economics themes prevailed in the play videos and family interviews. Economics are an integral part of the social studies and are typically also inclusive of math concepts. Families reported having had multiple jobs, the father in Family A had recently lost his job, and children played "getting fired" in the play scenarios. In video three, toward the end of the play scenario one child states, "I'm fired."

Gotta find a job.” Another child responds, “I’m fired from school.” Later in the play the pretend phone call is from the boss who has called to “fire” them. Several careers were introduced in the play videos also. In video one, while playing house watching the news for tornados was introduced which brings in media jobs such as news anchors and meteorologists. Pizza Hut was played numerous times.

Ordering pizza, shopping and buying items, and use of money were very prevalent in the play videos. In video two, children are playing and talking about jobs and money. At one point during the sea water drinking and birthday party episode a child notes that there is “not enough money.” When pretending to order pizza a child asks, “How many dollars?” The response is “48.” In another part of the play after phoning in a pizza order the play talk moves to money. Children discuss “buying a million dollar rug” and a four-wheeler.

*Social Dispositions.* The HOME Inventories, focused family interviews, and the classroom videos provided themes related to social dispositions that are relevant to curriculum in early childhood education classrooms. The topics include negotiation, conflict resolution, and parent-child relations. Social and emotional development, social competence, and children’s social relations are known to contribute to academic achievement and success (Kostelnik, Whiren, Soderman, & Gregory, 2009). Social learning takes place in all the environments in which children function. Family relationships and patterns of behavior greatly influence children’s social development. In addition, social competence is also displayed and influenced by the school and classroom environment and curriculum.

In the focused interviews Family C reported negotiating with her husband in relation to the discipline of the children, she said, "...me and my husband don't see eye to eye on discipline matters." The father in Family A reported that he did not like to help the children with their school work, but his wife was much better in that area. He enjoyed teaching the children about the mechanics of a vehicle. They reported making these adjustments within their family. In the classroom videos the children regularly negotiated their roles during the play scenarios. For example, if there were two children that wanted to be the mother they discussed the problem and negotiated a solution. Implementing children's literature with negotiation, cooperation, and compromise themes can enhance curriculum units and support children's abilities in this area of social development.

Conflict resolution was found to be significant because the parents in Family A and B both had significant family issues of this type when they were children. The father in Family A reported experiencing a range of extreme behaviors within his home as a child. He said that his mother would just 'snap' for no real reason sometimes, but that most of the time they were free to go and do whatever they wanted. He was never really taught how to deal with conflicts or problems and issues. The mother in Family B experienced much of the same in her childhood. She reported that her family was constantly fighting and objects were being thrown and broken. She also did not learn conflict resolution from her family and this learned behavior carries on in her household today. She said that when she gets upset with the children she tends to scream at them first.

Implementing conflict resolution as a part of the socio-moral environment and guidance system of the classroom would provide children with an alternative method of

dealing with conflict. In addition, practices such as a peace table, children's books with themes of conflict resolution, and social studies units developed on themes of conflict resolution would be valuable to support the children's development in this area.

Parent-child relations was a topic found in all three data collection procedures. The family interviews provided information about the disciplinary behaviors of all three families. Although they all reported attempting to discipline their children without including spanking, all three families agreed they would resort to spanking their children if prior attempts had failed. A desire to be a better parent, especially in terms of discipline, was reported by all three families. Family C reported that discipline in the family-of-origin was "being told once" and then "we would get a swat." This happened at school as well as at home. The mother reported that she disciplined her kids by "time outs, groundings, or by taking things away from them." She added that if that doesn't work, "a swatting on the rear is what I do." She noted that she did not have to do that often.

The families reported they also had been spanked as children, some more severely than others. One report from a parent in Family A was that "I remember lots of everything from belts to vacuum cleaner hoses...when she snapped whatever she had in her hand." The other parent reported that she was always disciplined by spanking with a hand by her mother. A parent in Family C reported that as a child she received "whoopings – severely." She listed "belt, fly swatter, flip flop, dog leash" and added "...it was bad but back in them days you could do that and it would be okay."

Punitive approaches were seen in many of the children's play scenarios. In the classroom videos the children yelled at each other when they were role playing family

activities and the pretend children in the play were not behaving appropriately. In one scenario the children even threatened each other when they did not stay in their room as they were told. One of the children told the other two they were “locking the door to the bedroom” and they would be “sent to jail if they did not stay in their room.” In another video a child stated, “You’re in trouble, your grounded, go to bed.”

The HOME Inventory provided information about the harsh reprisals if the children were to hit a parent. The child in Family B was not allowed to express negative feelings or hit a parent without harsh reprisals. The children in Family A and C were allowed to express negative feelings, but not allowed to hit a parent without harsh reprisals. Parent-child relations based on punitive discipline was a generational pattern from the children’s grandparents to their parents and then down to them. The families in this study did indicate a desire to improve as parents in relation to discipline and clearly indicated a desire for their children to do well. There was a pattern of caring and wanting good for their children. Parenting practices which are authoritarian have been noted to have a negative impact on children’s social and emotional development (Katz & McClellan, 1997). Development and implementation of social studies units on family, parents, and caring relationships will build on these funds of knowledge.

**Table 2. Household Knowledge and Experiences Curriculum**

<b>Curriculum Category</b>	<b>Curriculum</b>	<b>Data Source</b>	<b>Content Area</b>
<b>Daily Living and Family</b>	Pregnancy and Childbirth	Video 1 Student 1 Interview 3 Family C	Life Science Health
	Infant care	Video 1 Students B &C	Life Science Health Social Studies
	Talking on phone	Video 1, 2, 3 Students A, B, C	Reading Writing
	Dishes	Video 1, 2, 3 Students A, B, C	Math Social Studies
	Cooking and Baking	Video 1, 2, 3 Students A, B, C	Science Math
		Interview 2 Family A	
		Interview 1 Family B &C	
	Serving Meals	Video 1, 2, 3 Students A, B, C	Reading Writing
		HOME Family A, B, C	
	Intergenerational Living	Interview Interview 1 Family C	Social Studies

**Table 2. (continued). Household Knowledge and Experiences Curriculum**

<b>Curriculum Category</b>	<b>Curriculum Topic</b>	<b>Data Source</b>	<b>Content Area</b>
<b>Daily Living and Family</b>	Extended Family Visits	Interview 1 Family A &B	Social Studies Socialization
(continued)		HOME Family A	Communication
	Laundry	Interview 3 Family C	Social Studies Environmental Science
<b>Outdoor and Physical Activities</b>	Camping and Fishing	Interview 1 Family A	Life Science Social Studies Physical Ed.
	Baseball	Interview 1 Family A	Physical Ed. Physical Science Math
	Track	Interview 1 Family A	Physical Ed. Physical Science Math
	Swimming	Interview 1 Family A	Physical Ed. Physical Science Math

**Table 2. (continued). Household Knowledge and Experiences Curriculum**

<b>Curriculum Category</b>	<b>Curriculum Topic</b>	<b>Data Source</b>	<b>Content Area</b>
<b>Outdoor and Physical Activities</b>	Park Outings	Interview 1 Family B	Life Science Physical Ed.
(continued)		HOME Family A & C	
	Gardening	Interview 1 Family C	Science
<b>Mechanical Knowledge</b>	Work on engine	Interview 1 Family A	Math Fine Motor Skills
	Change oil and Tires	Interview 1 Family A	Math Fine Motor Skills
<b>Economics</b>	Take-out pizza	Video 2 & 3 Students 1, 2, 3	Science Math
	Shopping	Video 2 Students 1, 2, 3	Math
	Money	Video 2 & 3 Students 1, 2, 3	Math
		Interviews 1 Family A, B, C	
	Being fired and new jobs	Video 3 Students B & C	Social Studies
		Interview 1 Family A	
		Interview 3 Family B	



**Table 2. (continued). Household Knowledge and Experiences Curriculum**

<b>Curriculum Category</b>	<b>Curriculum Topic</b>	<b>Data Source</b>	<b>Content Area</b>
<b>Economics</b> (continued)	Careers	Video 3 Students B & C Interview 3 Family A, B, C	Social Studies
<b>Social Development</b>	Negotiation	Video 1, 2, 3 Students 1, 2, 3 Interview 1 Family A, B, C HOME Family A, B, C	Social Studies
	Conflict resolution	Interview 1 Family A, B, C	Social Studies
	Punitive discipline	Video 2 &3 Students B & C Interview 1 Family A, B, C HOME Family A, B, C	Social Studies

*Family's Orientation toward Scholastic Achievement*

Data indicated that all of the families had a positive orientation toward scholastic achievement despite the educational and economic backgrounds from which they came. They had educational aspirations for themselves that they were unable to achieve because of their economic conditions. Each parent identified intellectually challenging subjects as his or her favorite subject area in school. They also indicated personal desires for their children to do well in school and they all provided some learning materials and teaching experiences for their children at home to support the children's academic achievement.

Through the home visits there was information obtained about the children, the parents, and their extended family. Information was gained about their childhood and their beliefs about how their children should behave. For example one family had a set of rules about how their children should act in public and a different set of rules about how they were allowed to act in the house. Another family just wanted to make sure her daughter was happy because she was secure in the fact that she would do the right thing. There was information obtained about the families' beliefs about how important different aspects of school were to each family. One family was extremely academic oriented and the other two families were more concerned about the socio-emotional development of their children in the early school years.

All four parents who were interviewed described their aspirations of attaining additional education or attending college to get an education that would enable them to have a better paying job. Two mothers indicated a desire to be neonatal intensive care nurses, the other indicated a desire to further her education and become a unit clerk, and the father wanted to become a computer security specialist. Of the four parents, three

identified science as one of their favorite subjects and one also identified math as a favorite. The fourth parent identified history. All of these are topics that would be characterized as requiring high intellectual capabilities.

One parent indicated that she didn't want her child to have the same struggles in school that she had experienced. Family A stated that they wanted their child to enjoy school, have fun, think school was interesting and that it was important for him to get a college education. In addition, this family specifically stated the desire for the child to enjoy learning and reading. Family C expressed the desire for the children to get a good education so they would have opportunities for higher paying occupations. She further stated that "every aspect of their education is important to me." On the HOME Inventory all three families had at least ten children's books, children's CD's or tapes and allowed the children the opportunity to learn through the use of these items. All three families encouraged their children to learn their alphabet, numbers and colors.

Gonzalez, Moll, & Amanti (2005) discussed the negative opinions that some individuals had of people from different cultures. For example, a Texas law professor said that some individuals come from a culture where it is not a negative thing to fail and that these cultures did not encourage achievement. Although the families in this study were low income families they were all extremely interested in the academic development of their children. They were interested in returning to school and getting a college degree and better jobs, but their financial situation at the time prohibited this. The parents wanted their children to go to college so the children would not have to work a minimum wage job all their lives. The parents had goals for themselves and their children they just didn't always have the means to accomplish those goals.

*Human Relations and Interactions*

Socialization and communication surfaced as a theme that still has curricular and educational implications even though they are not directly related to reading, writing, and arithmetic. The National Council of Teachers of Mathematics listed communication as one of the top five most significant things children needed to be able to do to be successful in the math department (Cooke & Buchholz, 2005). Cooke and Buchholz (2005) reported it was important in math to make the connection between language and math.

The parents agreed in the interview that it was important for children to learn how to self-regulate. Conflict resolution and punitive approaches to discipline were both significant within the classroom observations and the interviews with the families. During the early years of education children should be allowed time in small and large group activities so they have the opportunity to learn how to work well with other children within their classroom (Espinosa, 2002).

During the classroom observations the children were interacting with each other and creating roles for each child. When one child did not want to play the assigned role the children had to either create a different more suitable role or come to a compromise about the roles. Classroom activities require children to self-regulate several times a day. Children have to decide things like abiding by the classroom rules rather than doing something they might rather.

In the family interviews all three families reported when they were children their parents felt it was appropriate to spank their children as a form of discipline. Three of the four parents said these spankings would have been considered abuse by today's

standards. They were spanked with anything from a belt to a vacuum hose depending on the parent and the situation. The fourth parent reported she was spanked but only by her mother and it was always with her hand. All four parents also stated that if previous discipline did not work they would resort to spanking their own children. During the classroom observations the children were involved in punitive approaches to discipline when one of the children got in trouble they were locked in their bedroom. One of the children got out of the room and was told he was going to jail because he was not listening. In the HOME Inventory all three families reported they did allow their children to express negative feelings without harsh reprisal, but all three agreed they would not allow their child to hit them without receiving a harsh reprisal.

#### *Parent Traits*

The data shows there are many parental traits that can assist in the academic education of their children, but some of these traits can also hinder the education of their children. Sometimes parents just need a little education themselves so they are better able to help their children. Parenting skills or parenting style is an important part of the children's prior knowledge. When the parents are affirming and responsive towards their children, the children are better able to respond in a positive manner to other individuals whether it is to children or adults. All of the parents felt good work ethics and responsibility were significant things for their children to learn from their parents. It is also important for educators to help parents know what academic information is expected of their children for each grade level.

The children in the classroom videos demonstrated their prior knowledge of parenting skills during the housekeeping center time. One child was the mother, another

the father, and the third was usually a child. In the video the children would act out a scenario for example the child would get in trouble and be sent to their room and the 'parents' would say they were grounded and the child would run in and out of their room and get in more trouble. A couple of times the discipline became more severe when a 'parent' would say the child was going to jail if they did not stay in their room. In the family interviews all of the parents agreed if time-out or grounding did not work they would spank the children for misbehaving. The family interviews also revealed that all of the families interviewed received extreme punishment and even abuse at the hands of their parents with the idea that it was discipline.

In the HOME Inventory all of the parents received high marks for being affirming and responsive. All three sets of parents reported holding their children and having conversations with their children regularly during the day. During the visits all four parents responded to their children's questions and requests verbally. When the children came into the room the parents would give them a hug or pick them up and hold them until the child was ready to move on to another activity.

In the family interviews Family A reports multiple times that it was always extremely important to them that their child knows how much they love and believe in them. The family reports before even having children that mom being able to be home with the children was a big priority for them. Dad spends a great deal of time teaching his son about car maintenance and other outdoor activities. In the first interview Dad's statement relating to this was, "If we can't take the kids we really don't need to do it."

In the family interviews the father in Family A stated he learned the importance of working hard and earning a paycheck from his father. He said that his father was always

talking about doing the best you can at whatever job you did, he felt it was important to stay at a job rather than change jobs all the time. Mom stated that her parents taught her that it was important to be on time, dress appropriately and be respectful to your boss. She felt it was important to 'live up to whatever expectations your employer had for you.' In Family B mom stated that her parents taught her that good work ethics were important and that you needed get along with everyone. The mother in Family C stated that her parents felt you would appreciate the paycheck or money more if you had to earn it and that it was important to work hard and support your family.

The parent's need for academic knowledge is clear through the HOME Inventories. All three of the families make sure the children have access to children's books and CD's or tapes that can increase their academic knowledge. All the parents reported encouraging their children to learn their alphabet, numbers, and colors, but beyond that Family B and C do not really relate to any other academic areas. Family B and C did not report teaching their children about patterned speech or spatial relationships and they did not report trying to teach their children to read even a few words. Family B and C did not take their children to a museum or take a trip of more than 50 miles in the last year.

### *Teacher Journaling*

Analysis of the brief journal entries made after each family interview session resulted in the identification of themes that are consistent with the literature on funds of knowledge and parent-teacher relationships. The interactions with the parents through visiting their homes and conducting the interviews promoted a deeper level of trust from the parents toward the teacher/researcher. One mother shared with the researcher after

the interview some intimate details of her own childhood that she had been uncomfortable sharing during the interview. Another family told her that they had been unsuccessfully trying to get pregnant for a while. This was information that was not directly derived from any of the interview protocols. This was freely shared by the parent implying the willingness to be vulnerable. The teacher/researcher also noted that another family seemed self-conscious of their abilities as parents. So, if the perceptions of their self-consciousness are accurate, they continued to openly share information in the interviews in spite of this, which would imply a deepening trust toward the teacher/researcher. The fact that the researcher was the teacher of these parent's children and had already established a relationship with them prior to the interviews possibly laid the foundation for further trust to be established. Tenery (2005) writes about the teacher as a mediator between home and school. She states the following:

Ethnographic home visits are designed to establish a relationship of mutual trust while eliciting personal narratives from members of households. Both the relationships established and the information gathered in households are useful for teachers in designing instruction based on strengths found in the homes to better fit the needs of minoritized students and facilitate formal intellectual development. (p. 128)

Another theme that evolved through the journal writings of the teacher/researcher was feelings of hopelessness and frustration. The teacher/researcher described feelings of hopelessness and frustration due to the repetition of patterns from generation to generation that possibly put the children at risk for low academic achievement. The original feeling was frustration over recognizing the repeated patterns but the frustration



turned into hopelessness after reflecting upon how hard I am working to educate and improve the lives of these children who might possibly end up following those same family patterns. One mother reported becoming pregnant prior to graduating high school and not graduating and her mother had also become pregnant before high school and did not graduate. Two families reported severe discipline in their childhood and they had made the decision not to use spankings as a form of discipline, yet they did if it was viewed as necessary to them. One mother reported her childhood was riddled with screaming, spanking, hitting, and throwing things and she vowed not to follow in their footsteps, yet in the interviews she openly admits that she screams at the children to much. The teacher/researcher began to have a sense of hopelessness when she reflected on the students and their future and the impact of her work with them.

In contrast to the feelings of hopelessness, the reflection notes indicate that I developed a better understanding of and empathy for my children and their families. Learning their histories and the struggles they have in life while also recognizing that they care about their children and want to be good parents and have their children be successful had an impact on me. My perspectives have been adjusted by getting to know my parents better, causing me see more from their eyes and viewpoints what their lives are like and how much they do care about their children and their children's education. I can understand what they expect from me and from their children in relation to the education process. My personal opinion of my children and their families has changed so that I see the children more holistically. Teachers come into a class with personal beliefs that affect the way they teach and interact with students and these beliefs can be incorrect or stereotypical which can adversely affect the way a teacher teaches and interacts with

the children (Anyon, 1995). It is an injustice to children and families for teachers to hold to beliefs that because they are poor or live on a certain side of town they do not want the best education for their children. Being poor is not equivalent to being stupid and failing. I recognize that knowing more about the children and their families changes me as a teacher. Learning about their funds of knowledge prepares me to teach them in a way that better utilizes what they know and are interested in to enhance their academic achievement while in my classroom.

## Chapter 9 Conclusions

The purpose of this research study was to identify the “funds of knowledge” children acquire in the home and community setting, which are not often identified by the schools. The following questions were central to this research. What kind of information can be obtained in focused home visits? What ‘funds of knowledge’ can be obtained by observing the home environment? How can the identified ‘funds of knowledge’ be used to create relevant curriculum for a pre-kindergarten setting? What changes does a teacher/researcher experience as a result of gathering ‘funds of knowledge’ information?

The home visits provided a wealth of information about the children, their families and their environment. The home visits provided information about the parent’s childhood and what their home life was like. The visits provided information about the families beliefs about discipline and how that affected the children. The visits also provided information about the parent’s academic desires for themselves and their children. The teacher/researcher also found out what kinds of activities the families and their children were able to do on a regular basis.

The home environment provided the teacher/researcher with information about the academia of the family’s homes. The families had educational materials that would help their children learn their letters, numbers, and colors. The visit to the homes allowed the teacher/researcher to see first-hand the kinds of materials the families and children had access to within their homes.

Identifying the funds of knowledge within the family interviews and the home visits informed the teacher/researcher of the topics useful for creating a curriculum that would be individually tailored to the children’s prior knowledge and still integrate the

state standards. By identifying the children's funds of knowledge the teacher would be able to create a more accurate starting point for the children's learning.

After examining and comparing the interviews, HOME inventories, classroom videos and researcher notes it is clear that funds of knowledge can be identified and that these identifications have the potential to be incorporated into the curriculum. The HOME Inventory identified the educational materials the children had access to within their home. It also identified the physical home setting of the families and children. The family interviews, the HOME Inventory, and classroom videos separately provided a great deal of information that directly related to the curriculum. When these data collection procedures were examined more closely there were areas that were consistent across all three tools. The connections between the interviews and the videos strengthen the importance of these funds of knowledge within the classroom curriculum.

My perceptions of the families and their children changed over the duration of the interviews and videotaping. We became a team helping the children learn. Initially I was the teacher and they were the parents, and there was a great separation between teacher and parent. By doing these home visits and interviews I got to know the parents and they got to know me better. Therefore, for me the parents changed from those people that dropped their children off and did not really do anything to help with the education of their children, to part of a caring and loving team interested in the best learning environment for their children.

While this qualitative study has a limited generalizability, the experience of gathering funds of knowledge in my own classroom has caused me to reflect on my teaching techniques, classroom curriculum, and teacher-student-parent relations which is

consistent with the purpose of action research. The funds of knowledge are available to teachers and are useful in providing multiple topics for curriculum development. Using the funds of knowledge obtained from the families and the children seems to be a better starting point for the creation of my curriculum than a predetermined 'grade' appropriate curriculum.

### *Implications*

The research on funds of knowledge has focused on minority families and classrooms. The families in this study were all Caucasians of low socioeconomic status but the data provided ample funds of knowledge to create multiple curriculum units to enhance the learning of these students. Poverty is one of the risk factors for low academic achievement (Espinosa, 2005). Gathering funds of knowledge from low income families may have the potential to impact children's achievement in much the same way as it has done for culturally diverse children. Using funds of knowledge in low socioeconomic classrooms is an area for future research.

The need for parent education in terms of parenting and facilitating the children's cognitive development emerged as a factor in this study. While the funds of knowledge research emphasizes the inappropriateness of a deficit view of children and families, when the need to assist, support and educate parents becomes evident through the data collected, providing those services would seem to enhance the use of funds of knowledge in the classroom and support children's academic achievement.

All three data sources were useful in gathering funds of knowledge from the families. However, the least useful for curriculum development was the HOME Inventory. While it provided some data triangulation, most of the information gained was

identification of academic materials and skills the parents were interested in teaching their children. The play episodes provided an abundance of funds of knowledge and are a data collection opportunity available to teachers in their own classroom. The additional value of the focused interviews with the families was the relationship development between the teacher/researcher and the families.

### *Study Limitations*

There were several limitations to this study that need to be mentioned. The number of subjects in the study was three. Additional subjects would provide more data which would most likely influence in some manner the themes that emerged. Subjects were only Caucasian which may be a result of the convenience sampling process used. A different sampling process might have created a more culturally diverse sampling of subjects that better matches the diversity of the classroom. Another limitation to this study was the fact that two of the families were represented by the mother only. Having both parents participate in the interviews would provide a more complete funds of knowledge family background experienced by the children. Despite these limitations the funds of knowledge can be identified and used to create a more developmentally appropriate curriculum for young children.

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## APPENDIX A

## **Focused Interview Protocols #1 Family Histories, Child-rearing Practices and Values, and Family Activities**

Tell me about a favorite family story you remember.

Tell me about when you were born.

What was your family like when you were growing up?

How is your family now different from the family you grew up in?  
How is it like the family you grew up in?

Does your extended family help and support each other? If so,  
how do they help and support each other?

How many people live in your home? How are they related? How  
often do extended family members visit?

What are some of the difficulties your family has experienced?

What do you consider to be the strengths of your family?

As a child, how were you disciplined? How do you discipline your  
children?

How do you think preschool children should behave?

What activities does your family do together?

Describe how you and your children play together?

What after-school sports or activities does your child/children  
participate in?

## **Focused Interview Protocol #2 Education Histories, Values, and Ideas**

What did you enjoy about school?

What were your favorite subjects in school? What do you think caused you to like these?

How did your teachers impact your appreciation of learning?

How did your teachers impact your life?

What grade level did you complete in school?

What grade level did your spouse complete?

What grade level did your parents complete?

Would you like to further your education? If so, what has interfered with you not being able to do so?

How has your educational level affected what jobs you have been able to attain?

How much and how often do you help your child with their school work and learning?

How much and how often do you read to your child and let them read to you?

What kinds of things are important to you regarding your child/children's education?

Describe your idea of a perfect kindergarten classroom?

## **Focused Interview Protocol #3 Job and Work Histories**

Tell me about the different kinds of jobs you have had?

How many jobs do you currently have? How many hours do you generally work a day?

What is your current job? What made you decide to do the work that you currently do? What do you like about it?

What knowledge and skills are needed to do the job you currently do?

Have you experienced any work related prejudice or stereotypes? If so, what were they and how did you deal with it?

What knowledge does your child have of your work? Do they ever go to work with you? If so, what do they do?

Did you ever go to work with either of your parents? What knowledge did you have of your parents' work?

What did your parents teach you about the importance of work?

If you could have any job that you wanted, what would it be?



## APPENDIX B

**Early Childhood HOME**  
**Betty M. Caldwell and Robert H. Bradley**  
**Summary Sheet**

Family name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Visitor \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
 Child's name \_\_\_\_\_ Birth date \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_ Sex \_\_\_\_\_  
 Interviewee \_\_\_\_\_ If other than parent, relationship to child \_\_\_\_\_  
 Family composition \_\_\_\_\_  
(persons living in household, including sex and age of children)  
 Family ethnicity \_\_\_\_\_ Language spoken \_\_\_\_\_ Maternal education \_\_\_\_\_ Paternal education \_\_\_\_\_  
 Is mother employed? \_\_\_\_\_ Type of work when employed? \_\_\_\_\_ Hrs/Wk \_\_\_\_\_  
 Is father employed? \_\_\_\_\_ Type of work when employed? \_\_\_\_\_ Hrs/Wk \_\_\_\_\_  
 Current child care arrangements \_\_\_\_\_  
 Summarize past year's arrangements \_\_\_\_\_  
 Other person(s) present during visit \_\_\_\_\_

**SUMMARY**

Subscale	Possible Score	Median	Actual Score	Comments
I. LEARNING MATERIALS	11	8		
II. LANGUAGE STIMULATION	7	6		
III. PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT	7	6		
IV. RESPONSIVITY	7	6		
V. ACADEMIC STIMULATION	5	4		
VI. MODELING	5	3		
VII. VARIETY	9	8		
VIII. ACCEPTANCE	4	4		
<b>TOTAL SCORE</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>40</b>		

**Early Childhood HOME Record Form**

Place a plus (+) or minus (-) in the box alongside each item depending on whether the behavior is observed during the visit, or if the parent reports that the conditions or events are characteristic of the home environment. Enter the subtotals and the total on the Summary Sheet. **Observation (O), Either (E), or Interview (I) is indicated for each item.**

<b>I. LEARNING MATERIALS</b>	24. Rooms are not overcrowded with furniture. <b>O</b>	
1. Child has toys which teach colors, sizes, and shapes. <b>E</b>	25. House is reasonably clean and minimally cluttered. <b>O</b>	
2. Child has 3 or more puzzles. <b>E</b>	<b>IV. RESPONSIVITY</b>	
3. Child has a record, tape, or CD player and at least 5 children's records, tapes, or CDs. <b>E</b>	26. Parent holds child close 10-15 minutes per day. <b>I</b>	
4. Child has toys or games permitting free expression. <b>E</b>	27. Parent converses with child at least twice during visit. <b>O</b>	
5. Child has toys or games requiring refined movements. <b>E</b>	28. Parent answers child's questions or requests verbally. <b>O</b>	
6. Child has toys or games which help teach numbers. <b>E</b>	29. Parent usually responds verbally to child's speech. <b>O</b>	
7. Child has at least 10 children's books. <b>E</b>	30. Parent praises child's qualities twice during visit. <b>O</b>	
8. At least 10 books are visible in the apartment or home. <b>E</b>	31. Parent caresses, kisses, or cuddles child during visit. <b>O</b>	
9. Family buys and reads a daily newspaper. <b>I</b>	32. Parent helps child demonstrate some achievement during visit. <b>O</b>	
10. Family subscribes to at least one magazine. <b>I</b>	<b>V. ACADEMIC STIMULATION</b>	
11. Child is encouraged to learn shapes. <b>I</b>	33. Child is encouraged to learn colors. <b>I</b>	
<b>II. LANGUAGE STIMULATION</b>	34. Child is encouraged to learn patterned speech. <b>I</b>	
12. Child has toys that help teach names of animals. <b>E</b>	35. Child is encouraged to learn spatial relationships. <b>I</b>	
13. Child is encouraged to learn the alphabet. <b>I</b>	36. Child is encouraged to learn numbers. <b>I</b>	
14. Parent teaches child simple verbal manners (please, thank you, I'm sorry). <b>I</b>	37. Child is encouraged to learn to read a few words. <b>I</b>	
15. Parent encourages child to talk and takes time to listen. <b>I</b>	<b>VI. MODELING</b>	
16. Child is permitted choice in breakfast or lunch menu. <b>I</b>	38. Some delay of food gratification is expected. <b>I</b>	
17. Parent uses correct grammar and pronunciation. <b>O</b>	39. TV is used judiciously. <b>I</b>	
18. Parent's voice conveys positive feelings about child. <b>O</b>	40. Child can express negative feelings without harsh reprisal. <b>I</b>	
<b>III. PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT</b>	41. Child can hit parent without harsh reprisal. <b>I</b>	
19. Building appears safe and free of hazards. <b>O</b>	42. Parent introduces Visitor to child. <b>O</b>	
20. Outside play environment appears safe. <b>O</b>	<b>VII. VARIETY</b>	
21. Interior of home or apartment is not dark or perceptually monotonous. <b>O</b>	43. Child has real or toy musical instrument. <b>E</b>	
22. Neighborhood is aesthetically pleasing. <b>O</b>	44. Child is taken on outing by a family member at least every other week. <b>I</b>	
23. House has 100 square feet of living space per person. <b>O</b>	45. Child has been on a trip more than 50 miles during past year. <b>I</b>	



46. Child has been taken to a museum during past year. <b>I</b>		<b>VIII. ACCEPTANCE</b>	
47. Parent encourages child to put away toys without help. <b>I</b>		52. No more than one instance of physical punishment occurred during the past week. <b>I</b>	
48. Child eats at least one meal on most days with mother and father. <b>I</b>		53. Parent does not scold or yell at or derogate child more than once. <b>O</b>	
49. Parent lets child choose certain favorite food products or brands at grocery store. <b>I</b>		54. Parent does not use physical restraint during visit. <b>O</b>	
50. Parent uses complex sentence structure and vocabulary. <b>O</b>		55. Parent neither slaps nor spansks child during visit. <b>O</b>	
51. Child's art work is displayed some place in house. <b>O</b>			
<b>TOTALS</b>			
<b>I</b> _____ <b>II</b> _____ <b>III</b> _____ <b>IV</b> _____ <b>V</b> _____ <b>VI</b> _____ <b>VII</b> _____ <b>VIII</b> _____ <b>TOTAL</b> _____			