ANGLIA RUSKIN UNIVERSITY

FACULTY OF HEALTH, EDUCATION, MEDICINE AND SOCIAL CARE

NURTURING PROSOCIAL DEVELOPMENT IN VERY YOUNG CHILDREN: A MULTIPLE CASE STUDY IN EARLY CHILDHOOD SETTINGS

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ABSTRACT

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NURTURING PROSOCIAL DEVELOPMENT IN VERY YOUNG CHILDREN: A MULTIPLE CASE STUDY IN EARLY CHILDHOOD SETTINGS

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This study aims to explore the role of early childhood curricula and pedagogies in promoting and nurturing prosocial behaviours in infant and toddler provision. Research has predominantly explored prosocial behaviours across older age groups. Studies pertaining to prosocial development across the birth to three years age group in formal early childhood settings are limited. This is despite the sector playing an integral role in supporting young children's social and emotional wellbeing. My research aims to address this gap and provide new insight into early years prosociality.

Working within a Deweyan pragmatist paradigm, a multiple-case study approach was adopted across seven early childhood and education settings located in England. Each setting subscribed to different curricula frameworks and pedagogical philosophies. Data was collected through a mix of child-centred observations, semi-structured interviews with practitioners and teachers and analysis of documents and artefacts. These were supported by a reflective journal to document further examples of prosociality through the researcher's interactions with the children.

The findings indicate that curricula and pedagogical approaches provide an array of opportunities for infants and toddlers to demonstrate a diverse range of prosocial behaviours and actions. These are promoted through adult modelling, imitation and early learning experiences. The mixing of age groups and peer relationships are integral to prosocial development, demonstrating how prosociality can enhance and develop children's agency within a social environment.

In conclusion, prosocial behaviours across the birth to three years age group are not separate entities but interlink and diversify into more complex behaviours as children naturally mature. This is informed by social interactions, setting practices and different contexts. Despite prosociality being a poorly understood concept in the settings, it underpins practice and values. Future research exploring how curricula and pedagogical approaches can promote prosocial behaviours within the home environment is recommended.

Key words: Early Childhood; Birth to Three; Prosocial Development; Curriculum; Pedagogy; Case Study

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

CACHE	Council for Awards in Care, Health and Education
DAP	Developmentally Appropriate Practice
DCSF	Department for Children, Schools and Families
DfE	Department for Education
DfEE	Department for Education and Employment
DfES	Department for Education and Skills
EPPE	Effective Provision of Pre-school Education
ER	Emotion Regulation
EYE	Early Years Educator
EYFS	Early Years Foundation Stage
EYP	Early Years Professional
EYPS	Early Years Professional Status
ELG	Early Learning Goal
FBV	Fundamental British Values
FSL	Forest School Leader
HM	Her Majesty's
KDI	Key Developmental Indicator
KS	Key Stage
NNEB	National Nursery Examination Board
NICE	National Institute of Clinical Excellence
NVQ	National Vocational Qualification
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
Ofqual	Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation
Ofsted	Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills
ONS	Office for National Statistics
PSE	Personal, Social and Emotional
PSED	Personal, Social and Emotional Development
PVI	Private, Voluntary, Independent
QCA	Qualifications and Curriculum Authority
QTS	Qualified Teacher Status
REA	Reggio Emilia Approach
RIE	Resources for Infant Educarers
SEED	Study of Early Education and Development
SWE	Steiner Waldorf Education

Copyright Declaration

PART I - Introduction

Chapter One: Background to the Study

1.1 Introduction

This thesis explores how early childhood settings promote and nurture prosocial development across the birth to three years age group. Using a multiple case study approach, seven settings from the private, voluntary and independent (PVI) sector in England, were recruited to take part in my study. Each setting was located in a different county or region and, with the exception of one nursery, had adopted at least one additional curriculum framework or pedagogical approach. This was in addition to delivering the statutory Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) curriculum. The rationale behind the selection of settings was to explore how differing methods and modes of practice contribute to very young children developing and applying prosocial behaviours. Chapter One introduces my research topic and the aims and questions at the centre of my investigation. It provides contextual information pertaining to why this subject is of importance and its implications for practitioners and teachers working in the early childhood sector. The chapter concludes with an overview of the thesis.

1.2 Background to the Initial Exploration of Prosociality

My initial interest in the subject of prosociality stemmed from research I carried out as part of a publication on leadership in early childhood. I encountered the term '*prosocial'* while writing about the traits, behaviours and actions that support the development of children's leadership skills (Davis and Ryder, 2016). Within the context of children's leadership development, several studies drew attention to the potential impact prosociality has on a child's wellbeing, relationships and academic achievement (Fukada, Fukada and Hicks, 2001; Chang, 2003; Scharf and Mayseless, 2009). This included exhibiting confidence and having positive self-perception. Beyond studies on children's leadership, prosociality is considered a means of advancing equality and social inclusion (Villardón-Gallego et al., 2018).

The promotion of prosocial behaviours in very young children is often explored within the context of attachment and children's relationships with parents, carers and the culture they are raised in. This suggests that a mix of informal childcare and wider societal factors play a key role in supporting and nurturing early prosocial development (Berkowitz, 1964; Kohlberg, 1984; Feygina and Henry, 2015). Societal changes have led to an increase in the use of formal childcare provision, predominantly due to more mothers entering or returning to the workforce (OECD, 2017; DfE, 2019; ONS, 2019).

Early childhood practitioners and teachers therefore play a more pivotal role in providing environments, opportunities and conditions in which children can develop prosocially (Honig, 2004). This includes adults responding in a kind and consistent manner to children's needs, fostering young children's social and emotional development through role-modelling, and providing a caring environment (Inness, 2015).

Staub (1978, p.2) defines the term prosocial as '*positive social'*, denoting behaviour that benefits others. Prosociality is a concept that is sometimes considered, in relation to early childhood provision, in England. The Study of Early Education and Development (SEED) report set out to measure the short- and long-term benefits of early childhood education, which included social and behavioural outcomes. The report measured five socio-emotional strengths which covered *sociability, prosocial behaviour, behavioural self-regulation*, *cognitive self-regulation* and *emotional self-regulation.* Using a *prosocial behaviour scale,* several behaviours considered prosocial were listed, including cooperating, helping, sharing and empathy. For children up to the age of three-years, group-based settings such as day nurseries, were reported to promote higher levels of prosociality when compared to individual providers (childminders) (Melhuish, Gardiner and Morris, 2017). However, subsequent findings were dependant on the age a child first attended the setting, the number of hours attended per week and the quality of provision (Melhuish and Gardiner, 2020).

In comparison, reviewing the current EYFS framework revealed that there are less detailed explanations about the positive behaviours and qualities that children demonstrate from birth to five years old. However, concepts pertaining to confidence, resilience and forming positive relationships are discussed within the Personal, Social and Emotional (PSE) area of development (DfE, 2017a). These traits corresponded with my own research findings into children's leadership, suggesting they connect to prosociality (Davis and Ryder, 2016). Similar behaviours were documented within the National Curriculum for England, through its programme of citizenship for Key Stage (KS) 1 and 2 (covering the five to eight years age group). This included playing and working cooperatively, consideration of social and moral dilemmas and looking after the environment and animals (DfE, 2015a). This positions prosociality as something applied within local and wider societies. However, the quality of citizenship education in the latter key stages is variable, with calls by the Select Committee on Citizenship and Civic Engagement (2018) for the Conservative Government to create a statutory entitlement from primary to the end of secondary education. This is of particular relevance given that the citizenship programme is compulsory for KS3 and 4, but non-

statutory for KS1 and 2 (DfE, 2013b). This may limit opportunities for young children to broaden their experiences of developing and applying prosocial behaviours in different contexts. My next step aimed to refine my understanding of prosociality and consider what it looked like in the context of early childhood provision and practice.

1.3 Defining 'Prosocial'

In *Leading in Early Childhood* by Davis and Ryder (2016, p.32), I described the term prosocial as:

> '*A means of developing a more positive sense of citizenship*.'

This took into account how prosocial development could make a positive contribution to society as a whole. As I neared the proposal stage of my doctoral studies, I conversed with colleagues, early childhood professionals and students to determine what their understanding of '*prosocial'* was within the field of early childhood and education. Their responses suggested a lack of familiarity and knowledge of the term, but several individuals felt there was a connection to social and emotional development. I reviewed the early childhood curriculum frameworks for England dating back to 2000, to find out whether they provided further information pertaining to the concept of prosociality.

Upon initial review of *Birth to Three Matters*, the *Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage* and all versions and revisions of the EYFS, the specific term '*prosocial'* was not used (QCA, 2000; DfES, 2002; DCSF, 2008c; DfE, 2012; 2014; 2017). Literature reviews by David et al. (2003) (Birth to Three Matters) and Evangelou et al. (2009) (early years learning and development), discuss prosociality in the context of attachment and emotional development, with some reference to sharing, comforting and self-regulation. I decided to consult six online dictionaries to find out whether '*prosocial'* was a common term and if there were further behaviours, or other potential key words, associated with it.

The terms *'prosocial'* and '*prosociality'* were searched for, with the former presented in different formats, e.g. *pro social, pro-social*. '*Prosocial'*, along with variations in spelling, returned no results in the Cambridge, Chambers, Merriam-Webster dictionaries and Dictionary.com. The term '*prosociality'* also presented no results in any of the dictionaries. This showed that it was a term not common in everyday usage and may explain why it was unfamiliar to my colleagues and associates. The search was repeated several months later to determine whether '*prosocial'* had been incorporated

into newer editions of the dictionaries or used more frequently. The only occurrences of '*prosocial'* on both occasions were through the Oxford and Collins dictionaries. However, there were variations in terms of definitions.

The Oxford dictionary positions '*prosocial'* within the field of psychology, stating that it relates to or denotes behaviour:

> *'…which is positive, helpful, and intended to promote social acceptance and friendship'* (Oxford Dictionaries, 2017).

The emphasis was on behaviours which sought to produce some form of positive social outcome. In contrast, Collins defined '*prosocial'* as an adjective, stating it as an:

> *'Action to the benefit of society in general'* (Collins, 2017).

Mugglestone (2011) stresses that dictionaries will be developed for different audiences, meaning that the content of terms being defined, will be affected by differences in language and contexts of use. From this initial exploration, there appeared to be no single agreed definition from these two sources. Pring (2015) stresses that certain words can rarely be defined in a manner which attracts universal agreement, adding that to get to the meaning of a word, close examination of its usage is required. A fuller exploration of prosociality through an academic and research inquiry followed and is the focus of Chapters Two and Three.

1.4 Intended Contribution to Knowledge and Research Aim

To date, the majority of studies on the prosocial behaviour of children and young people can be categorised into one of the following groups:

- Parental and family influences on prosocial development (e.g. attachment, morality, cooperation) (see Hay, 1979; Malti et al., 2009; Gross et al., 2017).

- Observations and experiments conducted in controlled and / or natural environments (see Hay et al., 1999; Dunfield et al., 2011; Drummond et al., 2017).

- Peer and self-assessments pertaining to different prosocial characteristics and actions (see Knafo and Plomin, 2006; Paulus and Moore, 2011; Rajhans et al., 2016).

Research participants are predominantly aged four-years and above, with many studies focusing on primary or secondary school-aged children and adolescents (see, for example, Carlo et al., 1996; House et al., 2013; Foulkes et al., 2018). In comparison, the birth to three years age group is generally under researched and has received less attention in relation to studies on prosociality in formal early childhood settings (Goouch and Powell, 2013; Brazzelli, Grazzani, and Pepe, 2021). Therefore, this makes it a promising area for further research, to determine how prosocial behaviours can be nurtured in the context of very young children's unique needs (Bryson et al., 2012; Mathers et al., 2014; Shohet et al., 2019). This is of particular importance considering that high quality early childhood provision can be a means of enhancing social and emotional wellbeing (NICE, 2012). This promotes a child's capacity to learn, with the role of the teacher recognised as integral to nurturing prosocial development.

Eisenberg (1992) proposes that researchers should seek to identify the elements of practice which are effective, such as activities designed to promote social understanding, and procedures for cooperative learning. This supports Dewey's concept of educational settings being social institutions, which deepen and extend values bound in home life, and promote democracy through social processes (Dewey, 1897; Hickman, 2009). This requires a well-balanced curriculum which promotes prosociality through experiential learning, but for infants and toddlers, there is less focus on the contribution curricula frameworks and pedagogical approaches make in supporting opportunities for prosociality (Dewey, 1937; Straub, 2012; Wentzel, 2015).

In the case of my research I have opted to focus on existing, rather than new practices, currently being delivered across a range of settings in the PVI sector. My study aims to contribute new knowledge in relation to provision for the birth to three years age group; supporting practitioners and teachers in recognising and understanding the importance of prosociality within the context of early childhood development and practice. The complexity of England's early childhood sector means that in addition to practitioners and teachers planning and delivering the statutory EYFS curriculum, many are incorporating additional curriculum frameworks, methods and pedagogical philosophies into provision. Taking into account the diverse range of play, activities and learning opportunities this presents, my research will explore how prosocial behaviours are being promoted and nurtured within the context of setting-wide approaches.

1.5 Research Questions

To support my research aim, three research questions were devised and are presented as follows:

> Question One: What is prosociality within the context of infancy and early childhood provision?
>
> Question Two: How do very young children demonstrate prosocial behaviours and actions through play and activities in early childhood settings?
>
> Question Three: In what ways do early childhood practitioners and teachers use pedagogy and curricula to promote and nurture prosocial behaviours in very young children?

These questions are revisited in Chapter Five (section 5.2) to provide further context pertaining to their formulation. Chapter Eight (section 8.2) explains how the questions have been answered in the context of my research findings, and their implications for future research and practice.

1.6 Outline of the Thesis

The subsequent chapters for this thesis are outlined as follows. Part II comprises of Chapters Two and Three, where I review existing literature on prosocial development and behaviours. Chapter Two explores the concept of prosociality in the context of early childhood and considers its implications for children's future wellbeing and development. Theoretical perspectives and debates pertaining to the dispositions, behaviours and actions considered to be prosocial, are explored. In Chapter Three, the roles of the curriculum, pedagogy and the early childhood setting, in promoting and supporting prosocial development in young children, is considered and critiqued. In this chapter, I draw on the curriculum frameworks and approaches to learning which are central to my research.

Part III, Chapter Four, uses critical reflection to explore key issues pertaining to ethical research and methods used to ensure validity and trustworthiness. This is explored in the context of an initial exploratory study, conducted prior to commencing my doctoral research. This is followed by Chapter Five, in which a rationale for the chosen paradigm and the methodology selected for the research design, are presented. The use of a multiple case study and mixed method approach to research are discussed and an overview of the settings and participants partaking in the study is presented.

Part IV consists of Chapters Six and Seven, with the former presenting initial findings and themes from the data. Chapter Seven provides a critical evaluation and discussion of the research findings, with an emphasis on how each settings' approach to learning and development promotes and nurtures children's prosocial development. Findings from the research project are considered and contrasted with the extant knowledge of prosociality presented in Chapters Two and Three.

Part V, Chapter Eight presents my conclusions and recommendations pertaining to the original research questions. Here, I clarify the contributions to knowledge and early childhood practice that are claimed from my research. Possible future directions for research are also considered, along with reflections on my professional and personal learning as a researcher.

1.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter has provided some context pertaining to my research topic and the aims and questions which outline my study. Initial definitions have been explored to present an emerging theme on behaviours considered to be prosocial, with some gaps in research identified and my intended contribution to knowledge, articulated. A more detailed exploration and critique on the topic of prosociality and the behaviours and actions associated with the term will be the focus of next chapter of this thesis.

PART II Review of the Literature

Chapter Two: Prosocial Development - Implications for Early Childhood

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of Chapter Two is to deepen and expand upon the initial definitions offered in Chapter One. Further reading on the concept of prosociality revealed that it is not exclusive nor limited or attributed to a specific field of study. It acts as a complex umbrella term which encompasses a range of behaviours, traits and actions. These are deeply rooted within both human and non-human societies and cultures, presenting a diverse range of prosocial typologies. Typologies are described by Bailey (1994) as multidimensional and conceptual forms of classification, commonly used in social science research. Prosociality is perceived to be a '*multifaceted construct'*, which covers social, moral, affective and cognitive domains (Capara et al*.,* 2000, p.304). This contrasts with the initial responses from those I spoke to, who positioned the term '*prosocial*' mainly with reference to social and emotional development (see Chapter One, section 1.3).

Chapter Two commences with an explanation of the approach to the literature review. This is followed by further discussion on a typology of prosociality and how early prosocial behaviours are nurtured through the child's family, culture and society. Further discussion and critiques commence from section 2.7 onwards, exploring how specific behaviours and traits are nurtured and the context to which they are applied to. The intention is to address my first research question on what prosociality is within the context of infancy and early childhood. This sets the scene for Chapter Three, about how these prosocial behaviours and traits are applied and nurtured in the context of curricula and pedagogy.

2.2 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria for the Literature Search

This literature review is divided into two chapters as a means of organising themes, discussions and critiques. A variety of resources were identified through a mix of internet and library searches, with Anglia Ruskin University, the University of East London, the British Library and ResearchGate used to access academic texts, conference papers, theses and journal articles. Further resources were accessed through early childhood organisations, sector-specific publications and the United Kingdom (UK) Government website. This included archived literature pertaining to

empirical research, legislation and consultations. I conducted my literature search in three phases:

2.2.1 Phase One

This comprised of key search terms starting with '*prosocial'*, '*prosocial behaviour'* and '*prosociality*'. This allowed for the identification of research fields, key studies and alternative terms and spellings, i.e. *pro-social*. Authors were selected on the basis of their citation scores, number of publications relating to prosocial behaviours and mentions within the work of other authors and studies. Several core authors were identified as integral to my research interests. These were Nancy Eisenberg, Dale F. Hay, Kaye V. Cook, Harriet L. Rheingold and Hans Werner Bierhoff. Their works provided me with the foundations to extend my literature search.

2.2.2 Phase Two

Following the identification of core authors, a mix of their earliest and most recent publications were scrutinised to identify broader themes, categories and key words linked to the concept of prosociality. The most frequent terms and research themes, e.g. *infants helping*, were collated and then conducted as separate literature searches through databases such as EBSCO, JSTOR and SAGE Research Methods. This comprised of combining key words to ensure search results were specific to my research interests. For example, '*prosocial helping',* '*helping prosocial behaviours'*, '*morality prosocial behaviour'*. Further authors were identified who had researched specific prosocial behaviours, notably Marian Radke-Yarrow, Carolyn Zahn-Waxler, Kristen Dunfield, Felix Warneken, Michael Tomasello and Minsun Shin.

2.2.3 Phase Three

In the final phase of the literature review, prosociality was further explored in combination with curricula and pedagogy (as reported in Chapter Three below). Initial key word searches were extended to include specific age groups, curricula and pedagogical approaches. For example, '*infants comforting*', '*Reggio Emilia prosocial behaviour'*, '*Montessori helping behaviour'*. The latter search terms identified literature covering a diverse age range, so I refined this further, adding '*early childhood'.* This allowed me to identify resources specific to the early childhood sector and birth to three years age range.

2.3 Age Group Definitions and Descriptions

The definition of what constitutes an infant or toddler varies in literature, with some studies categorising infants as birth to 12-months and toddlers as 12- to 36-months (Hay et al., 1999; Purdy, 2019). Other studies extend the infants category to include children up to the age of 18-months (Warneken and Tomasello, 2015). Preschool Rooms or 'Kindy' may accommodate children between 36-months to six-years. This is dependent on school starting ages which may be six-years in countries such as Australia, compared to five-years in the UK (Sims, Guilfoyle and Parry, 2006). From my own experience as a former early childhood practitioner, infants and toddlers are often organised into broader categories in settings; dependent on the minimum age group that providers accept and the space or layout of the building. Baby Rooms may accommodate children as young as three-months and as old as 24-months. Toddler Rooms may host children from as young as 18-months and Preschool Rooms from 36-months up until five-years old.

For the purpose of my study, the following categories will be used to represent the age groups I am studying:

- *Infants* – covering the birth to 24-months age group
- *Toddlers* – covering 24-months to 36-months
- *Preschoolers* – covering 36-months to 60-months (five-years).

Preschoolers have been included as there are more studies on prosocial development across this age group, compared to infants and toddlers. Children older than five-years and adolescents have been included in the literature searches. This is when studies provide further insight into how prosociality changes as children mature, or in cases where specific prosocial behaviours were under-researched with younger children.

2.4 Introducing a Typology of Prosociality

Through the core authors identified in Phase One and Phase Two of my literature search, I identified the work of Hammond and Brownell (2015), who provide a detailed explanation as to what constitutes prosociality within early childhood. Prosocial behaviours are considered to be voluntary acts which grow in complexity across the lifespan. In infant and toddlerhood, prosociality is demonstrated through helping, sharing and caring. As cognitive processes become more sophisticated in childhood, this may expand through morally informed activities and reflection on the self (Eisenberg, Eggum-Wilkins and Spinrad, 2015).

Hay and Cook (2007) describe prosociality as three general strands of development. The first, *feeling for another,* comprises of traits such as friendliness, affection and empathic concern. The second strand, *working with another,* centres around cooperation as a means of solving problems, sharing resources or helping another accomplish tasks. The third strand of *ministering to another*, encompasses nurturing, comforting, responding to the needs or wishes of others and providing the resources they require. For infants and toddlers, these strands are promoted through a mix of serious and playful contexts and activities with other people. The children's behaviours are determined through their responses to different situations, requiring a level of understanding in the context of circumstances, needs and the explicit requests of others.

The strands presented by Hay and Cook (2007) correlate with earlier works carried out by Eisenberg (1982) and Miller et al. (1991). Hay and Cook (2007) assert that most studies on prosociality are centred around an interest in voluntary and intentional behaviours. However, not all prosocial behaviours are motivated by internal factors, such as feeling concern for others. Here, cognition plays a key role in allowing children to understand the emotional states of others and resolve moral dilemmas. Young children's social understanding becomes more sophisticated and they learn to regulate their emotions (Denham, 1998; Hammond and Brownell, 2015). This is dependent on a child's age and stage of development. For example, while toddlers demonstrate behaviours considered to be prosocial, they are not expected to help, share or comfort in the same way as older children (Bronson, 2000). Prosociality in adolescence also differs as there is more emphasis on the importance of affiliations and changes arising from puberty (Lee et al., 2012). New prosocial behaviours therefore emerge in the form of civic engagement and volunteering, stemming from the convergence of brain development, social development and psychological investment in interpersonal connections (Alacón and Forbes, 2017).

The challenge I was presented with was identifying prosocial behaviours which would fit my research aim and questions. The most frequently researched prosocial behaviours were identified through Phase Two of my literature search. The first two were helping and cooperation; behaviours associated with altruism and morality. Further searches resulted in studies on sharing, caring and comforting behaviours, with some making reference to friendliness and affection (Hay and Rheingold, 1983; Bronson, 2000; Capara et al., 2000). Several of these studies focus specifically on infants and toddlers, suggesting these were behaviours relevant to the age group of interest in this study. More recently, the concept of prosociality has diversified to

include a growing body of literature on personal traits and characteristics. Amongst these studies are those which explore sympathy, alongside empathy, to determine what motivates children to behave prosocially towards others (Eisenberg, Eggum-Wilkins and Spinrad, 2015). A further subject pertains to group membership, which explores the impact of favouritism towards in-group members, i.e. children from the same language group (Over, 2018). These studies focused on a more diverse mix of age groups and were dependent on contexts, e.g. children's reactions to the distress of others.

From these findings, I selected the following behaviours on the basis that they have been researched in the context of early childhood and development: *helping, cooperation, sharing, caring, comforting* and *friendliness.* Most studies focusing on these behaviours have been within controlled, rather than social settings. This provided an opportunity to explore what these behaviours look like in early childhood settings, which would ideally present young children with a more diverse range of opportunities to develop prosocially. I additionally selected four traits which have been studied as potential instigators of prosociality. These are *altruism, empathy, motivation* and *morality*. The next section discusses and critiques early prosociality through the context and family and culture. This aims to explain how children's early experiences and socialisation can affect early prosocial development.

2.5 Consideration of the Role of Contexts

Through the review of the literature, I learned that prosocial development is influenced by a range of different contexts and factors. In early childhood, child rearing practices play a role in inducing or dissuading prosocial behaviours and actions. This is encompassed within the culture and society in which children are raised (Smith et al*.,* 1983). These, combined with a child's temperament, levels of motivation and perception of the social world, may lead to an overlap of factors and diversify the variables which constitute prosociality. This consequently makes a general definition of prosocial behaviour problematic (Bronson, 2000; Yagmurlu and Sanson, 2009; Eisenberg and Spinrad, 2014). However, Martí-Vilar, Serrano-Pastor and González Sala (2019) stress that understanding these variables is crucial in preventing anti-social behaviours and promoting prosociality. This can support the development of suitable early intervention programmes for individuals at risk of social exclusion. The emphasis on pedagogical approaches within formal early childhood provision, to support young children considered to be at risk, is considered further in Chapter Three.

2.6 Exploration of the Role of Family, Culture and Community

Prosociality is perceived to be a precondition of cultural development, which is affected by environmental and social conditions (Feygina and Henry, 2015). At a macro level, societies are often categorised as individualist or collectivist systems and this can have implications for the type of prosocial behaviours and actions which are expected, accepted and applied (Gilbert et al., 2019). Studying prosociality at a macro level is considered to allow researchers to understand cross-cultural differences in prosocial motives and processes (Luria, Cnaan and Boehm, 2015). This in turn provides further insight into what prosociality looks like in the context of the family.

Individualist societies are described as valuing personal control and autonomy, and putting rights above duties. Personal achievements are attached to social status and political systems are considered democratic (Kyriacou, 2016). However, there is risk that these societies can become overly competitive, which can lead to failure, alienation and social inequality (Triandis, 1995). Individualist societies comprise of nuclear or single parent families. Children and their siblings are raised by one or two adults, with extended family members living externally to immediate family members. Individualist societies often associated with parts of the United States and Western Europe (Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov, 2010).

In comparison, collectivist societies are described as more cohesive and mutual obligations are imposed in the context of in-groups (Kyriacou, 2016). Family units live together with extended family members, housemates and servants (Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov, 2010). These family set ups are more common in Asian, African and South American countries and communities, and depending on the level of freedom and equality, Israeli kibbutz (communal living) and communist societies may also be considered to be collectivist (Singelis et al. 1995). The following section considers the impact families have on early prosocial development, in the context of the society children are raised in.

2.6.1 Families and Early Prosocial Development

Tamis-LeMonda et al. (2008) articulate that the role of parents and carers is to support their children in acquiring the necessary skills to function adaptively within their local community. Their beliefs and values shape the way in which children view social relationships and structures, which have implications for the type of prosocial behaviours exhibited (Padilla-Walker, 2014). Parents' beliefs are shaped by four key values, which centre around a desire to help children develop into autonomous beings.

The first, *personal choice,* aims to emphasise individualism, providing opportunities to establish unique identities and enhance motivation and achievement. Within individualist societies and cultures, children may be socialised at a very young age by their parents and carers. This often starts with the child's upbringing, with early prosocial behaviours stemming from a mix of maternal sensitivity and attachment (Hastings, Utendale and Sullivan, 2007).

The quality of parent-child relationships during the first two years of life has implications for the child's future neurological, physical, emotional, behavioural, cognitive and social development. When maternal attachments are secure, they may result in toddlers showing more concern and positive social orientation (Eisenberg and Mussen, 1989). Children who are insecurely attached may still engage in prosocial behaviours, but there may be differences in motivation. For example, sharing may be used to avoid confrontation and helping used as a means of pleasing others (Gross et al., 2017). Attachment therefore plays a key role in shaping a child's perception of security, self-belief, regulation and trust in themselves and others (Bailham and Brinley Harper, 2004). Positive and secure attachments also have implications for peer relations in early childhood settings, with fewer withdrawn behaviours, less hostile aggression and more engagement in complex play. Without early secure attachments, children's mental health may be compromised, leading to anti-social behaviour, low self-confidence or a negative perception of their abilities (Glazzard and Bostwick, 2018).

Parents and carers encourage and model prosocial behaviours, such as empathy, and provide young children with explanations pertaining to requests made and more pleas and questions when assigning tasks (Hastings, Utendale and Sullivan, 2007). This is considered to act as a deliberate form of scaffolding which structures tasks to foster the child's understanding of their own social role (Köster, Schuhmacher and Kärtner, 2015; Köster et al., 2016). Children are therefore more likely to develop prosocial skills if their parents make expectations clear, rather than force them to behave in a socially acceptable manner (Hyson and Taylor, 2011). In circumstances where parenting and caregiving is harsh, neglecting or abusive, children are more likely to respond negatively towards their siblings and peers. This may take the form of fear, anger or aggression and can lessen empathy and prosocial behaviours towards others (Bråten, 1996; Padilla-Walker, 2014).

The second value of *intrinsic motivation* is considered within an educational context and can be achieved through the provision of cognitively stimulating experiences in the home environment (Tamis-LeMonda et al., 2008). Experiential learning acquired through tasks, such as household chores, is considered to promote higher levels of helping and cooperative behaviours (Padilla-Walker, 2014). This requires children to understand the needs, desires and goals of others in order to fulfil them (Staub, 1978). Homes which promote higher levels of cognitive stimulation additionally promote higher levels of academic intrinsic motivation from the age of nine-years (Gottfried, Fleming and Gottfried, 1998). If the expectations from the home environment and early childhood settings match each other, there is the potential for parents to understand the aims of the curriculum and provide a sound learning environment. This can improve children's attitudes to learning and increase academic achievement (Fitzgerald, 2004; Sylva et al., 2004).

This supports the child in developing competencies and becoming self-reliant and assertive, which links to the third value of *self-esteem.* This centres around the achievement of goals and happiness, which are fostered by parental care, in the form of affection, emotional warmth and age-appropriate discipline (Herz and Gullone, 1999; Hay, 2019). Parents from individualist societies consider self-esteem to be an important factor in supporting healthy development (Tamis-LeMonda et al., 2008). The relationship between self-esteem and prosocial behaviour is explored further by Fu, Padilla-Walker and Brown (2017). Their longitudinal study on adolescents reported that individuals with higher levels of self-esteem are more likely to be competent in assisting others, whereas those with lower self-esteem may lack satisfaction in basic psychological needs, such as autonomy. Furthermore, the relationship between prosocial behaviour and self-esteem is considered bidirectional, as acting prosocially is also considered a means of raising self-esteem. Within collectivist societies, this may be fostered through exposure to collective participation which promotes cooperation and sophisticated prosocial reasoning skills (de Guzman, Do, and Kok, 2014).

The final value of *self-maximization* is described by Tamis-LeMonda et al. (2008) as the realisation of reaching one's full potential. This is influenced by a child's personal skills, mastery, knowledge and assertiveness (Wang and Tamis-LeMonda, 2003). For young children, self-maximization may be an aspiration of their parents. In Harwood et al.'s (1999) interview with white American mothers, the participants reported that they modelled positive behaviours and provided children with opportunities, which would allow them to learn for themselves and optimise their own agency and autonomy. This indicated that the mothers indirectly structured their child's learning experiences and

generated long-term socialisation goals. In contrast, some collectivist cultures may value a *proper demeanour*, in which their child is obedient, respectful and accepted within the larger community (Harwood et al., 1996). The role of socialisation means that children learn to conform to expectations and rules, internalising the norms and standards of society (Kohlberg, 1981).

2.6.2 The Role of Culture and Society

Prosocial actions in individualist societies may stem from a self-serving purpose, such as when voluntary activities are pursued as a means of enhancing career prospects, or as a mandatory requirement in employment (Sibicky et al., 1992). However, statistics collated through studies by Allik and Realo (2004) and Luria, Cnaan and Boehm (2015), revealed that individualist societies have higher levels of social capital and were very high with regards to most prosocial issues, such as donating. Kemmelmeier, Jambor and Letner (2006) state that this may be due to personal choices being an expression of moral character, with some individuals favouring communal and altruistic goals over selfish ones. Higher rates of volunteering and donating may be more evident amongst individuals who hold higher economic and social status. In comparison, some collectivist societies may comprise of lower disposable incomes, due to higher rates of tax. However, a further explanation may be a result of individuals in collectivist societies having so many obligations to their in-groups. This would consequently lead to a lack of time or interest in voluntary pursuits (Triandis, 1995). Altruistic tendencies may therefore differ and be motivated by social responsibility (Feygina and Henry, 2015; Luria, Cnaan and Boehm, 2015).

Collectivist societies are described as placing greater emphasis on loyalty, duty and social obligations; maintaining that the family is the basic unit of society, rather than the individual (Herz and Gullone, 1999). Cultures are socially oriented and considered to be more fluid and flexible, with social harmony deemed to be of great importance (Soosai-Nathan, Negri and Fave, 2013). Interdependence, group connectedness and the sharing of resources are prominent and governed by rules and social norms. This can limit opportunities for children to develop autonomy, as parents and elders may make decisions on their behalf, which includes predetermining their friendships (Tamis-LeMonda et al., 2008). Parenting styles may also be more authoritarian or overprotective as a means of maintaining harmony, with less overt expression of affection (Herz and Gullone, 1999; Hofstede, 2001).

These forms of parenting are evident in rural communities, such as those located in Brazil and the Amazon, where assertive scaffolding is promoted. Desired behaviours are consistently requested via a serious and insistent manner. This means that very young children comply with tasks, as hesitant or irrelevant behaviour is not tolerated (Köster, Schuhmacher and Kärtner, 2015; Köster et al., 2016). Prosocial behaviours such as helping and caregiving, may therefore arise from expectations placed upon children by families and societies. This suggests that prosociality may be imposed or learned in a different way, when compared to individualist societies (Whiting and Whiting, 1975). This contradicts the individualist view that prosocial behaviours are voluntary and intrinsically motivated, raising the question as to whether these helping and caregiving behaviours can be considered genuinely prosocial (Hawley, 2014; Eisenberg, Eggum-Wilkins and Spinard, 2015).

This analysis of society and families has allowed me to understand how capacities for prosocial learning are influenced and channelled by societal and cultural norms and institutions. However, Tamis-LeMonda et al. (2008) stress that separating societies as either individualist or collectivist is simplistic, as immigration, political, economic and technological trends and advances make it more complex to classify cultures into these two groups. This has consequently led to the composition of sub-populations being transformed over time, which in turn have changed prosocial practices, ideas and culturally acquired beliefs and values (Boyd and Richerson, 1990). Feygina and Henry (2015) add that this has contributed to the development of functional societies, in which cooperative groups acquire a greater capacity for sharing knowledge and resources within these multifaceted social structures. This has additionally led to educational goals, values and practices changing in response to modernisation, globalisation and demographic changes (Rosenthal, 2003).

While my research is being conducted in a country historically considered to be individualistic, I am aware that the aforementioned socialisation practices and childhood experiences may present challenges for practitioners and teachers promoting prosocial behaviour in settings. In collectivist cultures and societies, the relationship between the adult and child is hierarchal, with children accepting decisions and acting obediently, respectfully and submissively. There is restraint in terms of a child's self-expression and assertiveness to avoid conflict or offending others, although negotiation is used to settle disagreements (Rosenthal, 2003). The emphasis on assertion and independence is considered integral to social relationships and achievement in individualist societies, with the child perceived to be an independent academic achiever, with high levels of self-esteem.

For children from collectivist cultures living in individualist societies, this may present challenges as parents may see the home and educational environment as separate, rather than conjoined entities (Rudy and Grusec, 2006). This in turn has implications for the work of early childhood practitioners and teachers, as parents from some cultures may reject attempts from practitioners to promote learning in the home environment. This could limit opportunities for the development of prosocial behaviours which are valued in individualist societies, such as empathy (Greenfield, Quiroz and Raeff, 2000). This is problematic considering that there is a statutory requirement for settings in England to work in partnership with parents and carers (DfE, 2017a). However, parenting behaviours and cultures are not the only factors with implications for prosocial development. Children's temperaments, along with the socialisation behaviours and teaching practices of adults, also need to be taken into consideration (Yagmurlu and Sanson, 2009). These factors will be considered as influences affecting the prosocial behaviours and traits that are explored in the sections that follow.

2.7 The Role of Empathy and Morality

The role of early socialisation and child rearing are influential in the development and application of two traits commonly associated with prosociality. Empathy and morality act as foundations for prosocial behaviour by motivating altruism and promoting responses to the distress or desires of others (Dunn, 1987; Hastings, Utendale and Sullivan, 2007). From a sociobiological and anthropological perspective, empathy is perceived to be genetically determined or refined through generations of evolutionary processes (Wilson, 1980). This may have arisen through the nurturing and care of offspring, as a means of ensuring the survival of a kinship group. Foley (1996) articulates that the development and maintenance of human social systems is likely to be an anciently embedded biological trait. This means that coordinated parental care and reciprocity in social groups may have led to the emergence of prosocial behaviours, such as altruism (Hawley, 2014). Feygina and Henry (2015) support this concept, by stressing that prosocial practices were adopted as a survival advantage, which were then channelled by cultural norms and institutions.

However, the concept of prosociality being a natural phenomenon is considered a controversial explanation, as it is based on assumptions and lacks empirical verification (Hawley, 2014; Barclay and van Vugt, 2015). In comparison, behaviourists maintain that prosocial behaviours such as morality, are environmentally determined and shaped by parents and social norms (Berkowitz, 1964; Turiel, 1983; Hamburg and Hamburg, 2004). In addition to empathy being an evolutionary product, it is also a trait

that can be nurtured in the context of developing emotional and social competencies (Weare, 2000).

As a concept, Quann and Wien (2006, p.22) define empathy as:

> '…*the capacity to observe the feelings of another and to respond with care and concern for that other*.'

According to Maibom (2017, p.22), there are two main categories of empathy, which are dependent on age and stage of development. *Affective empathy* relates to the range of emotional responses to the situation or feelings of another (Miller et al., 1991). Gopnik (2009) articulates that empathy is evident in infants, with newborns experiencing vicarious emotional responses such as crying, in response to the cries of another. These early emotional responses are therefore considered to be a form of empathic distress and may be experienced up to the age of nine-months. Infants recognise that their own feelings are shared by others and have the capacity to identify with them. As they reach 12-months of age, they may demonstrate behaviours considered to be genuinely altruistic (see section 2.9, below). Prosocial responses undergo dramatic changes in toddlerhood, with young children orienting to a child in distress and aiming to intervene positively (Eisenberg, 1982). The acquisition of language leads to the child becoming more capable in dealing with a wider range of complex emotions, such as disappointment (Hoffman, 1989).

This can be supported further through the use of children's literature, which provides opportunities for adults to assist young children in discussing prosocial behaviours (Cress and Holm, 2000). A study by Brazzelli, Grazzani and Pepe (2021) used a combination of prosocial stories and guided conversations with toddlers to explore emotional states from the story. This included making links between their own feelings and the feelings of others, as a means of increasing their propensity to engage in prosocial actions. As children mature, they develop a greater understanding of the emotional states and perspectives of others. This is referred to as *perspective-taking* or *cognitive empathy*, in which the reactions of others are known and experienced (Underwood and Moore, 1982; Miller et al., 1991; Maibom, 2017; Spaulding, 2017). Empathetic arousal therefore varies in degree, depending on how perception and cognition are involved (Eisenberg, 1982; Hoffman, 1982). However, there are other forms of emotional responses which may be mistaken for empathy and should therefore be differentiated accordingly (Eisenberg, 1986).

The first is considered to be a '*pure*' form of empathic responding, which is most common in very young children and constitutes a non-cognitive response. The child feels the emotions of another, but these are neither highly other-oriented or self-concerned. This is in contrast to *sympathy* or *sympathetic distress,* which occurs when the child responds with a different emotion compared to that being expressed by another. For example, a child may feel concern for another child who is sad, but does not express sadness themselves (Eisenberg, 1986). This is considered to motivate altruistic behaviours and derives from an increase in self-awareness and the realisation that others are distinctly different from the child (Hoffman, 1989). *Personal distress* is often mislabelled as empathy but occurs when a child's reaction to another is negative and self-oriented. A child may express anxiety in response to another child's emotional state, rather than act sympathetically (Eisenberg, 1986).

Empathy is considered to be a construct that grounds morality, but the concept of moral development goes further than this. Moral reasoning encompasses counterfactual and hypothetical thinking. This extends emotions and develops prosocial tendencies through a mix of *moral identity* and *moral elevation* (Gopnik, 2009). Aquino and Reed (2002) position moral identity within a socio-cognitive model, in which self-regulatory mechanisms are emphasised. This entails a person pursuing moral ideas, such as a desire to help another. This differs from Kohlberg's cognitive-developmental model of morality, which focuses more on the processes in which people resolve dilemmas (Kohlberg, 1979; Ding et al., 2018). High levels of moral identity and strong internalised codes promote a stronger motivation to act prosocially. This can lead to happier and more fulfilling lives, compared to individuals who weigh-up all actions against personal costs and benefits (Gintis, 2003; Winterich et al., 2013).

Developmental models assume that moral identity is absent in pre-adolescent children (Kingsford, Hawes and de Rosnay, 2018). Gibbs (2014) articulates that while preschoolers can act prosocially, mature morality is required to deepen this concept. Emde (1992) presents a more appropriate term for younger age groups, referred to as the *moral self.* This acts as a precursor to future moral identity. Early moral development is based on procedurally organised knowledge. Infants act in accordance with moral rules. The quality of their experiences of early relationships leads to the development of empathy and helping behaviours (Emde et al., 1991). These are influenced by cultural rules and values, with parents playing a role in shaping their child's moral judgements, or teaching them to evaluate certain situations (Berkowitz, 1964).

The concept of moral elevation is described as a positive emotional state which can be experienced as a warm and uplifting feeling (Haidt, 2000). The observation of unexpected acts of human goodness, kindness and compassion can trigger prosocial behaviours, goals and positive moods. This experience may encourage observers to emulate similar behaviours, which promote feelings of admiration, awe and gratitude. (Harris, 1977). However, there is also the risk of a detrimental effect if the observer experiences moral inferiority by comparing themselves negatively to the donor (Pohling and Diessner, 2016). The factors and situations which drive morality therefore need to be considered and this is explored within the context of the role of motivation.

2.8 Motivation and Helping Behaviours

The role of motivation is viewed by Eisenberg and Spinrad (2014) as a critical component that contributes to underlying prosocial behaviour. It is considered to start as an instinctual process, commencing in infancy through an impulse to connect socially with others. Motivation can be modified, guided and deliberated as individuals enter adulthood (Vernon, 1969). Internal phenomena determine whether a person may be driven to help another out of self-interest, or from an emotive response (Eisenberg, 1986; Miller et al., 1991). The challenge of defining what constitutes prosocial behaviour has implications for motivation, when internalised moral values, relationships, security or success are taken into consideration (Eisenberg, 1982; Hofstede, 2001; Eisenberg and Spinrad, 2014). Motivation acts as a construct in understanding how and why individuals choose one course of action over another (Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov, 2010). This is affirmed by Schunk, Meece and Pintrich (2014, p.5), who define motivation as:

> '…*the process whereby goal-directed activities are instigated and sustained.'*

They articulate that activities may be physical or mental, with the former comprising of persistence and overt actions and the latter encompassing organising, monitoring and making decisions. Goal-directed behaviours may be extrinsically motivated to reach a desired outcome through a reward or praise. When a behaviour is intrinsically motivated, the individual partakes in the activity for pleasure (Carlton and Winsler, 1998).

With regards to young children, Warneken and Tomasello (2015) question whether motivation is genuine, arguing that it may be a consequence of parental coercion or a desire to receive an extrinsic reward or praise. The concept of intrinsic or extrinsic

motivation has been studied to determine the impact rewards have on young children's helping behaviours. Hepach, Vaish and Tomasello (2013) report that toddlers given a material award for helping were less likely to help an adult a second time, suggesting that material rewards undermined intrinsically motivated behaviour. In contrast, newborns' interactions with their environment provides them with a sense of control, which supports essential components of intrinsic motivation, such as curiosity and surprise. This occurs through the development of visual exploration, such as gaze and visually tracking objects (Schlesinger, 2013). An infant's emotional response to an achievement, such as smiling when completing a shape sorter, can generate a growing sense of competence. This may lead to further exploration and experimentation as a result of actions affecting self-evaluation. Competence plays an additional role in motivating prosocial behaviours, notably instrumental helping (Stipek, Recchia, McClintic, 1992; Carlton and Winsler, 1998; Eisenberg, VanSchyndel and Spinrad, 2016).

Instrumental helping is one of the earliest prosocial behaviours observed in very young children. Infants as young as 12-months may provide helpful information through non-verbal communication, by pointing to an object an adult has dropped or is reaching for. This may be a form of early motivation and differs from declarative pointing, which is only used as a means of interacting with others (Liszkowski et al., 2006; Warneken and Tomasello, 2015). This is because infants will not gain anything by providing information, as instrumental helping requires a lower level of emotional understanding and perspective-taking when compared to cooperative tasks (Tomasello and Vaish, 2013; Eisenberg and Spinrad, 2014).

A further factor pertains to the relationship between the helper and the recipient. Fultz and Cialdini (1991) position a helper as someone who sees another person as an object, evaluator or individual. The response to recipients as objects stems from the helper's basic physiological, safety or psychological needs being met. This is often positioned within the context of instrumental helping, acting as a means of self-benefit. This contradicts Liszkowski et al. (2006) and Warneken and Tomasello's (2015) perception that instrumental behaviour is prosocial. However, Hepach, Vaish and Tomasello (2013) assert that there may be a lack of clarity in determining whether children are genuinely other-oriented or helping out of self-concern. They acknowledge that, through their research, having different people providing material rewards may have impacted on a child's level of helpfulness. This would ideally provide more insight into whether behaviours were altruistic.

The second perception of the recipient as an evaluator centres around higher-order psychological needs, such as the helper wanting a sense of belonging, acceptance or self-esteem. Prosocial actions performed by the helper are positively received, which enhances their social esteem. The final perception of the recipient as an individual is genuinely altruistic. The helper acts to enhance the welfare of another, recognising their own rights, needs and goals or desires. An element of care differentiates the second and third perceptions from the first, linking them to the concept of empathic helping. This is described as a form of responding to another out of other-oriented concern (Fultz and Cialdini, 1991). Empathic helping requires a higher level of socio-cognitive function so children can differentiate their own distress from the distress of others. This makes it a more complex process when compared to instrumental helping. While empathic helping is more limited in 18-month-olds, by the time they reach 30-months, children have become more skilled in this area (Svetlova, Nichols and Brownell, 2010). They are capable of helping in emotion-related situations, with a concern for others acting as a means of motivation (Eisenberg and Spinrad, 2014). This promotes altruistic behaviours, which are explored in more depth in the next section.

2.9 The Role of Altruism and Cooperation

The concept of altruism has been studied across different research fields and disciplines. Within the biological context, it is applied to both human and non-human species; explored through the lens of genetics, reproduction, sacrifice and survival. Behaviourists discuss altruism within the context of prosociality, emphasising the role of the environment and emotional connections (Turiel, 1983; Barclay and van Vugt, 2015). In some literature, altruism is considered to be a sub-type or component of prosociality. Whereas helping constitutes different forms of interpersonal support, altruism comprises of higher levels of cognitive functioning which encompasses perspective-taking and empathy (Eisenberg and Mussen, 1989; Bierhoff, 2002; Eisenberg and Spinrad, 2014). As a separate entity, altruism can take the form of different types of behaviours and intentions. This includes psychological altruism (aiding others for moral reasons), reciprocal altruism (cooperation between unrelated individuals) and directed altruism (helping or comforting another in distress) (Hawley, 2014).

This leads into discussions pertaining to the role of cultural rules and values in shaping altruistic behaviours. These are considered to impact on a person’s level of motivation to act prosocially, connecting altruism with the concept of moral obligation, concepts of

the self and human nature (Krebs, 1978; Scott and Seglow, 2007). The context in which altruistic behaviours and actions are applied are considered to be a form of extrinsic motivation, which aims to increase the welfare of another. However, concerns for the welfare of others may also be self-beneficial, a concept referred to as *egoism* (Batson, 2011). While a single motive cannot be both altruistic and egoistic, the concepts may exist at the same time if an individual has a number of goals, which may evoke different behaviours and responses (Batson and Shaw, 1991). This positions altruism as a motivational state, rather than a disposition or behaviour.

Krebs (1978) asserts that cognitive developmental theory views altruism as a product and tool of reasoning, rather than something that symbolises social phenomena. Further exploration highlights that altruism is not an isolated phenomenon, considering the role that empathy and morality play. However, more complex emotional states, such as sympathy are argued to make it more challenging to determine whether prosocial behaviours are altruistic, or whether they denote another form of behaviour (Miller et al., 1991). In the context of early childhood, Svetlova, Nichols and Brownell (2010) articulate that prosocial behaviour precedes altruistic behaviour, as toddlers are considered to be initially poor at sharing possessions. This is because altruism is considered to require some form of self-sacrifice.

Altruism as a form of helping behaviour is most common in research on children, often explored through a social-learning lens (Bierhoff, 2002). This is considered problematic as it minimises differences between personal characteristics, upbringing and moral outlook. Krebs (1978) states that altruistic behaviour is determined by situational forces. This requires an understanding about specific incidents before deciding whether they are truly altruistic. This is of particular relevance as Roth-Hanania, Davidov and Zahn-Waxler (2011) consider emerging altruistic behaviours to be accompanied by an understanding of actions being intentional or unintentional. Children who have greater perspective taking abilities are more likely to be altruistic. However, this is dependent on their ability to successfully predict the responses of others, i.e. whether another child would be pleased by the behaviour demonstrated (Fishbein, 1984).

Whereas helping comprises of understanding the goal of another person, cooperation centres around the concept of shared goals and relationships. This requires two or more people motivated to mutually support one another through an interdependent role (Feger, 1991; Warneken and Tomasello, 2007). Cooperation is not limited to giving help. It can cover wider societal engagement, such as voting, recycling and food

sharing (Henrich and Henrich, 2006). Cooperative behaviours may therefore act as a means of promoting and fine-tuning social understanding and social skills (Brownell, Ramani and Zerwas, 2006). Humans are deemed more cooperative and sociable when compared to other mammals, with studies suggesting that prosocial tendencies developed in response to the rapid growth of the prefrontal cortex region (Helliwell et al., 2018). This area of the brain plays an integral role in cooperative behaviour as it enables emotional competence and facilitates higher order thinking, such as problem-solving and impulse control (Conkbayir, 2017). However, along with other parts of the brain, its growth is dependent on the early experiences of the individual (Gerhardt, 2015). Hay and Rheingold (1983) state that for prosocial actions to be effective, children must be able to coordinate sharing objects and executing caregiving acts with the actions and words of others in addition to their other abilities.

Children are considered to be biologically predisposed to be cooperative, but this is often reinforced by society with rewards or punishments attached, depending on the level of compliance or disobedience (Warneken and Tomasello, 2015). Early cooperation is evident through Dunn's (1988) observations of very young children at play. This is demonstrated through games which comprise of imitation, the alteration of turns and repetitive actions. In addition to acting as prosocial encounters, peek-a-boo, hide and seek or give and take, are indicative of emerging interactive skills (Hay and Rheingold, 1983). Toddler's cooperative behaviours and activities may include collaborative problem solving as well as game playing (Hay and Cook, 2007). Broadhead (2004) adds that cooperative play increases the likelihood of children being able to connect with and understand others. This provides exposure to scaffold their own learning experiences and that of their peers. This is explored further in a study by Brownell, Ramani and Zerwas, (2006), who identified sharing toys and negotiating desires and goals as other social skills associated with cooperation. The concept of sharing and its implications for young children's relationships is discussed below.

2.10 Sharing and Friendliness

Compared to the previous prosocial behaviours, sharing is considered an area which warrants further investigation. Laible and Karahuta (2014) state that the need to understand how sharing is applied in different contexts and how barriers impact on this, is under-researched. The concept of sharing is described as playing an important role in the formation and maintenance of relationships (Paulus and Moore, 2014). In the context of prosociality, Nava, Croci and Turati (2019, p.2) describe sharing as a '*prototypical prosocial behaviour.'* This is because it requires sacrificing a personal

possession without the guarantee of reciprocation, connecting sharing behaviour to altruism (Warneken and Tomasello, 2009). Zaki and Oschner, (2016, p.871) expand on this concept, articulating that sharing is part of a '*powerful empathic process*.' This statement is supported by Guo and Wu's (2020) study in which empathy was identified as moderating the emotions of preschoolers. Children with higher levels of empathy demonstrated increased instances of sharing when happy, with sadness only decreasing sharing occurrences in children with lower levels of empathy.

The earliest form of conventional sharing occurs in the neonatal period, through the mimicking of facial movements. Imitative facial expressions broaden during the first year of life and are initially used as nonverbal means of achieving interaction. This diminishes as children mature and discover alternative methods of sustaining interaction (Hay et al., 1991). These sharing interactions are considered to be a form of primitive behaviour, which later leads to developing concern for others. Sharing progresses to showing and giving objects to different recipients, ranging from mothers to siblings and unacquainted infants (Hay and Rheingold, 1981). Sharing resources becomes a challenge for young children, due to sacrificing something of value, such as transferring the ownership of a toy (Brownell et al., 2013). When ample resources were supplied in Hay et al.'s (1991) study, toddlers were less likely to share toys which their peers were interested in. When resources were scarcer, sharing was used strategically to resolve and avoid sustained conflict. Compared to conventional sharing in infants, sharing with the toddler age group is a more rational and informed decision-making process. The behaviours studied by Hay et al. (1991) were spontaneous and not directed or guided by adults, mirroring the findings of an earlier study by Rheingold (1973).

Rheingold (1973) observed that infant and toddler sharing behaviours were initiated without prompting from an adult. This would entail actions such as showing, pointing to and giving a toy to unfamiliar adults as well as mothers and fathers. A later study by Rheingold, Hay and West (1976), comprised of a larger number of toddlers, presented similar findings. In cases where children placed a toy or object in the lap or hand of an adult and then took it back, this was still considered to be an act of sharing. Hay (1979) reproduced and extended Rheingold, Hay and West's (1976) study to explore sharing and early manifestations of cooperation within the second year of life. Her findings revealed an increase in these behaviours in toddlerhood, concluding that they act as contemporary prosocial functions.

Brownell et al. (2013) add that sharing behaviours between toddlers vary, depending on their social understanding. They state that successful sharing can be achieved by adult intervention, in which young children are supported to understand another child or adult's needs. In contrast, preschool children are more selective and do not share in every situation to the same extent. This is influenced by a number of factors, such as the history of collaboration, friendships and the gender of the other person (Paulus and Moore, 2014). While sharing is often discussed within the context of material possession in early childhood, the concept extends beyond possessions.

Companionable learning relates to a shared preoccupation, when an adult and child are exploring something unfamiliar (Roberts, 2010). This is considered to act as a mutual state of intersubjectivity, where a child along with an adult, sibling or peer are learning together. Intersubjectivity is a key component in social competence and is described as a shared intellectual and emotional state. From birth, infants seek engagement with familiar persons using non-verbal means, such as eye contact and imitating vocal expressions (Trevarthen and Aitken, 2001). As they grow older, they gradually become sensitive to the identity of those who wish to play and may demonstrate shyness towards strangers (Hay and Rheingold, 1981; Trevarthen, 2011). For early childhood practitioners, there is a need to understand how young infants communicate their intentions and feelings. Providing children with interesting environments, which they share with affectionate companions, presents opportunities for free and purposeful learning (Trevarthen and Delafield-Butt, 2017). The concept of companionable learning utilises equal and reciprocal dialogue between children, their peers and adults. In preschoolers, this may be demonstrated through meaningful social activities, allowing them to collaborate and cooperate successfully during play. This entails coordinating their social, emotional and conversational behaviours (Garte, 2015).

The relationships that children build with adults and peers are considered to promote a sense of belonging. Niland's (2015) study on infants and toddlers, reported that the early childhood setting is a form of community, promoting social continuity through routine activities. Shared play was incorporated through songs and rhythmic movements, with the practitioner fostering each child's sense of belonging. These observations support Roberts' (2010) concept of companionable learning as a means of active engagement and reciprocity. Reciprocal relationships between children are formed voluntarily, suggesting that friendships begin to form. This differs from 'prescribed' relationships, which are planned and driven by the practitioner, such as pairing children together as 'buddies' (Dunn, 2004a). In young infants, affection is considered to be a precursor to friendliness and is demonstrated through a child's

ability to behave in special ways towards familiar persons, i.e. by smiling. From around six- to 12-months, infants become objective individuals by feeling and accepting more responsibility, leading to a sense of guilt (Winnicott, 1963). While this may be perceived to be a negative emotional state, Markman Reubins and Reubins (2014) report that without guilt, children lose the capacity for affectionate feelings.

Affection is just one of a multitude of dimensions which denote infant friendships. This includes relationships which are caring, playful and humorous. These peer interactions are exhibited more competently when positive peer contact is encouraged by caregivers, who provide very young children with safe, stimulating and social classroom environments (Shin, 2010). Hay and Rheingold (1983) stress that infant friendships scaffold future prosocial behaviours and, without harmonious relationships with others, it is less likely children would share, help or cooperate. Shin (2010) asserts that caregivers must not underestimate infants' capabilities in forming close relationships with themselves and their peers. She adds that the construct of relationships should be prioritised in early childhood curricula. Considering that the literature stresses the importance of the link between relationships and prosociality, I was particularly interested in exploring the implications that social connections and relationships have on prosocial behaviours across the birth to three years age group.

2.11 Care and Comforting

While prosocial behaviours such as helping and cooperation have been extensively researched, the concept of caring is argued to have received less attention, in the context of natural studies (Chase-Lansdale, Wakschlag and Brooks-Gunn, 1995). Care is considered to be a multi-dimensional construct, situated in the affective domain. This comprises of emotions, feelings and personal traits (Shin, 2015). The emergence of care in child development is considered by Winnicott (1963) to be a component of showing concern. The way in which children cope with negative emotional states, such as their response to a crying baby, is reliant on their ability to regulate their emotions (Zahn-Waxler et al., 1992).

The process of self-regulation consists of several components, which includes behavioural regulation and emotion regulation (ER) (Broekhuizen et al., 2017). The latter is described as controlling, modifying and managing the experience and expression of emotions. Children and young people adopt strategies which allow them to facilitate and regulate empathy-related responses (Fabes et al., 1994). In situations where a negative affect, such as fear or sadness is experienced, ER can lead to a

display of positive behaviours. Hence the promotion of prosocial behaviour and empathy-related responses should be tailored to ER (Hein, Röder and Fingerie, 2018). This may be supportive for children who respond negatively to the distress of others and require help from an adult in adopting suitable coping mechanisms. The links between ER and comforting are investigated by Fabes et al. (1994), who report that children with low levels of arousal and personal distress are expected to respond in a more socially appropriate way. They demonstrate higher levels of comfort and constructive instrumental helping when exposed to the distress of another. Recent research on self-regulatory components, include studies on socially shared regulation; an interdependent form of regulation which centres around a shared outcome (Zachariou and Whitebread, 2019). While socially shared regulation is considered to be a relatively new phenomenon, with research focusing mostly on children aged six-years upwards (Panadero and Järvelä, 2015), Zachariou and Whitebread (2019) assert that younger age groups should be provided with opportunities to collaborate through prosocial activities, i.e. those which involve cooperation and intersubjectivity.

The concept of care extends to caregiving, with Hay and Rheingold (1981) suggesting that these behaviours can begin from as young as eight-months old. Their studies report care-related behaviours demonstrated by infants, which ranged from feeding dolls to feeding a dog. This develops into caregiving routines once the children reach toddlerhood, which mirror the behaviours of adults. Hay (2019) articulates that affection provided by a loving caregiver may lead to children imitating similar behaviours. This is observable through imaginative play when young children kiss toys goodnight or wash them. Caring behaviours directed at toys were initially considered to be a component of play, but this is disputed by Hay and Rheingold (1983), who stress that the provision of care to inanimate objects is an indicator of prosocial knowledge.

The development of communication skills and a more comprehensive vocabulary allow children from the age of three-years to use more instructive interactions. For example, encouraging dolls to ‘speak’ or telling them how to behave. Caring behaviours extend to real-life interactions, where older toddlers help younger toddlers and show concern for the wellbeing of adults (Hay and Rheingold, 1983). Role-modelling is a further component amongst peers and siblings which may promote caregiving behaviours. This presents younger children with a means of learning about other’s needs and caring effectively for others (Eisenberg, Fabes and Spinrad, 2006).

There are circumstances in which care may be an expectation, rather than something conducted spontaneously or through intention. This is predominantly in cultures where family members are chronically ill, disabled or elderly, and healthcare is limited or

inaccessible. Evans' (2010) literature review articulates that in parts of Africa, socio-cultural expectations mean that children and young people are called upon to care for family members. Most roles were domestic, comprised of caring for younger siblings and supporting personal hygiene. This extended to emotional support, with children giving advice, reassurance and offering hope and comfort. Understanding children's comforting behaviours is dependent on two factors: whether the child is a bystander to the distress of another, or whether the child is the cause of distress. If the child is a bystander and aids or comforts another in distress, this is considered to demonstrate altruistic behaviour (Zahn-Waxler, Radke-Yarrow and King, 1979).

Consideration also needs to be given to the context in which comforting is applied. Evans (2010) reports that cultural expectations can have negative implications on the wellbeing of children and young people. They may feel a sense of responsibility and a moral obligation to undertake a caregiving role. This may have an impact on their physical and emotional wellbeing, with children as young as nine-years reporting issues, such as controlling their emotions, having trouble sleeping and worrying when caring for a relative with HIV (Evans and Thomas, 2009). This reveals that prosocial actions may not always lead to positive feelings and outcomes. Instead, they may have a detrimental impact on a person's wellbeing, particularly if they bring about substantial burdens or a personal cost (Nantel-Vivier et al., 2014).

A child's ability to interpret the emotional state of another and determine the most appropriate response differentiates comforting from helping and sharing. Roberts (2010) states that caring dispositions involve a degree of self-knowledge and act as a component of agency. Caring and comforting responses are also dependent on the skills and resources a child has available at the time (Hay and Rheingold, 1983). For example, a child may use verbal expressions, such as saying 'I'm sorry', or give hugs, provide comfort objects or make the other person laugh (Hay and Rheingold, 1981; Clark, MacGeorge and Robinson, 2008). Toddlers are aware of their own agency and may demonstrate empathy-based guilt in response to provoking distress in others, which denotes self-attribution (Garner, 2003; Hay, 2019). There may be an attempt to 'repair' the distress of another or the child may confess to what they have done (Drummond et al., 2017).

A sympathetic response to a person in distress may motivate the child to comfort another, an action intending to alleviate an emotional need (Dunfield et al., 2011). In Radke Yarrow et al.'s (1976) study, comforting was measured through two activities. One where an experimenter cried over a sad story and another where they appeared

to have injured themselves. The findings revealed that a failure to respond to another's distress was dependent on different motivations, such as feeling intrusive. This did not imply a lack of sensitivity as some children were able to demonstrate empathy, even when they did not comfort or provide assistance. In addressing another's distress, young children may offer comfort through the sharing of toys or resources. This may act as a strategy to alleviate the emotional distress of another (Hammond and Brownell, 2015). This indicates that prosocial behaviours are not separate, but often work in a conjoined manner.

2.12 Chapter Summary

In Chapter Two, the concept of prosociality has been explored through a review of literature. The subject of prosocial behaviour has been presented with some relevant arguments and critiques pertaining to what the concept is and its implications for early childhood development. Several studies have identified discrepancies with regards to definitions of key prosocial behaviours, such as altruism. This appears to be dependent on the field of study and discipline exploring the behaviour. For example, definitional terms in sociobiology and evolutionary theory differ from those in behaviourism and constructivism. This highlights the complexity and breadth of prosocial behaviours, which are diversified further when explored in the context of topics such as family and society.

In relation to the birth to three years age group, there are fewer studies on prosocial behaviours within formal early childhood settings. The literature review identified more studies centred around prosocial behaviour in older age groups in school settings, reiterating Bryson et al. (2012), Mathers et al. (2014) and Shohet et al.'s (2019) commentary on younger age groups being under-researched. This appears to be partly due to the data collection methods and methodologies used, notably self-reporting questionnaires and interviews with primary and secondary school-age children and young people. This is explored and critiqued further in Chapter Five in the context of my own research design. Furthermore, studies on very young children are often reliant on parental perspectives and observations in controlled, rather than natural environments. My study therefore aims to address this gap in research and consider alternative means of collecting data on prosociality, which are more suited to the age group I am studying.

A further theme pertains to traditional prosocial typologies diversifying in recent years to include a wider range of traits and personal characteristics, such as emotional

intelligence, temperament and empathy. These traits are influential in the development of prosocial behaviours and sub-components, such as altruism, moral development and other associated social and emotional concepts. For example, relationships with peers, sympathy and self-regulation have contributed to a shift in understanding pertaining to prosocial development in infants and toddlers over the decades. This is predominantly due to advances in neuroscience and an increased focus on children's rights and their role as social actors. However, there are still key concepts which are relevant, notably the role of attachment, culture and the impact of age and stage of development when researching prosociality. These factors and areas are given further consideration in Chapter Three, where prosociality is explored within the context of early childhood and education pedagogy and curricula.

Chapter Three: Prosociality, Curriculum and Pedagogical Approaches

3.1 Introduction

The exploration of prosocial behaviours of young children continues in Chapter Three, within the context of different early childhood curricula and pedagogical approaches and methods. Key descriptions and differences in the definitions of pedagogy and curriculum are considered. This is followed by critical summaries of seven curricula and pedagogical approaches at the centre of my study, comprised of the EYFS, the Montessori method, the Reggio Emilia approach, Steiner Waldorf education, the Pikler approach, Forest School and HighScope. Due to the breadth and scope of the frameworks and methods being explored, the emphasis will be on how they promote and nurture prosocial behaviour.

3.2 Pedagogy Definitions and Implications for Research

In the educational context, '*pedagogy*' is considered to be the act of teaching, which is supported by theories, values, justifications and evidence. It is described as a conscious activity conducted by one person to enhance learning in another (Simon, 1981; Watkins and Mortimore, 1999). In practise, it is comprised of adult guidance and carefully defined goals, which are framed and informed by a shared and structured body of knowledge. The curriculum is perceived as one of the central domains, with pedagogy working to support practitioners and teachers in articulating what they do and how to teach (Alexander, 2004; Pollard, 2010). Pedagogy is positioned as an art, science or craft, depending on the methods deemed most dominant. For example, an emphasis on pedagogy being systematic and utilising evidence, may position it as a science. In contrast, the adoption of more practical and creative approaches may emphasise a focus on art or craft (Eaude, 2011).

Pedagogy in England is commonly associated with formal education and classroom practices. This differs from parts of Europe, where it covers a broader range of services, such as youth work, family support and parenting (Petrie et al., 2009). Within the classroom environment, teachers and practitioners navigate and manage a complex and dynamic system of events and multiple activities. For early childhood practitioners, pedagogy informs their engagement with children and the way in which activities are planned (Watkins and Mortimore, 1999). This is referred to as the '*pedagogical approach'*, described by Anders (2015, p.9) as:

> '*…the overall perspective used to plan and implement one or more instructional strategies.'*

This encompasses a mix of ideas and models from research findings, policy requirements, debates on effective practice and practitioners' own experiences of children and childhood (Duffy, 2014; Papatheodorou and Potts, 2016). This culminates in a diverse range of practices, with variations between didactic and child-centred approaches. The former comprises of a mix of prompting, reinforcing and feedback. The latter encompasses questioning, modelling, scaffolding, sustained shared thinking and nurturing children's dispositions to learn (Siraj-Blatchford et al., 2002; Stephen, 2010; Berger, 2015a). Furthermore, pedagogical approaches take into consideration a teacher's professional development, the classroom environment and the wider implications for children and families (Scottish Executive, 2005).

While England does not adhere to one specific pedagogical approach at a national level, there are numerous theorists and pioneers who are integral to shaping early childhood and education curricula frameworks (Wall, Litjens and Taguma, 2015). Friedrich Froebel's ideas on education have become integral to early childhood pedagogy. He asserted that children should be actively involved in their learning experiences, with play forming the highest level of child development. This enables children to develop self-awareness and creativity (Swiniarski, 2017; Bruce, 2021). Froebel considered education and life to be interconnected, contrasting John Dewey's perception of a child-centred, purposeful curriculum derived of subjects. Dewey perceived education as a fostering and nurturing process, which promotes growth through the remainder of a child's life (Dewey, 1916; Hickman, 2009; Bruce, 2021). Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky elaborate that a child's construction of knowledge is dependent on a mix of experiences, social influences and the environment (David et al., 2003; Evangelou et al., 2009). This complements Uri Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, which denotes the interconnectedness between children, their environments and wider social contexts (Page, 2000).

In the context of infant and toddler provision, pedagogy is considered by Dalli and White (2015) to be particularly challenging. They assert that understanding the unique characteristics and developing competencies of this age group is essential. With very young children attending more formalised educational settings, the concept of an infant pedagogy is relatively recent and requires approaches centred around their needs. This includes higher levels of physical care, intimacy and emotional nurturing, which take into account communication skills and sensory-based learning to promote a sense of belonging (Goouch and Powell, 2013; White, Peter and Redder, 2015). The emphasis on viewing the child as a whole person and focusing on their wellbeing promotes an inclusive approach, centred around children's rights (Petrie, 2001;

Cameron and Moss, 2011). This shifts the concept of pedagogy from one that solely focuses on education, to one that embraces social responsibility.

3.3 Curriculum Definitions and Relevance to Early Childhood

While integral to some types of pedagogical approaches and practices, the concept of curriculum differs in terms of definitions and contexts. Siraj-Blatchford et al. (2002, p.27) describe it as:

> '*…the knowledge, skills and values children are meant to learn in educational establishments.*'

While it is often comprised of specified goals and targets, a curriculum also incorporates attitudinal, emotional, moral and social learnings. These may be developed through a *hidden curriculum*; a concept involving the educational environment and its organisation as a means of influencing attitudes and perceptions (Czajkowski and King, 1975). Other educational and non-school settings, such as scouts and summer camps, can also play a role in developing skills and provide children with new experiences for personal growth (Martin, 1976).

The curriculum is not solely about the teaching and learning of subjects, rather it encompasses a broader range of influences which have implications for learning outcomes and life chances. This can include situational factors such as resources, school / setting values and teachers' values. Interventions and programmes which support transitions and consistency between early childhood services and primary schools are also considered (Yan and Kember, 2003; OECD, 2017). Page (2000) asserts that a curriculum should place value on a child's cultural and social background, in addition to their individuality and interests. This entails a community of inquiry in which early childhood practitioners co-construct knowledge and meaning with parents, carers and children through discussion, negotiation, questioning and hypothesising. However, a growing emphasis on developmentalism is argued to have created a culture of assessment and testing, which deviates from holistic approaches and restricts children's potential and achievement (Wagner, 2009).

This contradicts responses from the *Birth to Three Matters* consultation in the early 2000s, which stated that an infant and toddler framework should focus on child-initiated and play-based activities. Langston and Abbott (2005) added that the promotion of health, social and emotional growth should be emphasised, with curriculum and subject

headings avoided. Leach (2011) asserts that while play can be facilitated, it cannot have a learning goal attached. Wood (2020) adds that in the case of the EYFS curriculum, early learning goals (ELGs) define curriculum progression and bring into question how much freedom practitioners have in the way early childhood programmes are organised. Gerber's (1979d) perspective on infant programmes was that they prioritise cognitive development and specific achievement and comprise of observation, empathy, sensitivity and respect for the infant. This means that infants' everyday experiences should be incorporated into teaching plans, which evolve.

Furthermore, with the exception of Steiner Waldorf, Montessori and Forest School, other curricula and pedagogical approaches incorporated into early childhood practice are seldom present in primary and secondary education. Edwards, Gandini and Forman (1998) explain that this is because alternative pedagogies do not mix well with traditional school methods. I would echo Wood's (2020) statement that the emphasis on delivering the statutory curricula is also a likely factor, alongside how invested senior management are in incorporating new models and modes of practice. The argument against additional curricula and pedagogical methods may arise in light of limited research on specific approaches or inconclusive evidence on measurable outcomes (Wall, Litjens and Taguma, 2015). Hence the adoption of other methods and approaches into practice would need careful consideration pertaining to their suitability.

3.4 Choice of Definitions for the Research

In view of the above literature, I will use the term c*urriculum* to represent the EYFS and the following alternative curricula: the Montessori method, Steiner Waldorf education and HighScope. The alternative curricula have their own curriculum frameworks and methods of instruction, with Montessori and Steiner delivered by teachers who hold an accredited qualification, e.g. NCFE Council for Awards in Care, Health and Education (CACHE) (Crossfields Institute, 2021). Practitioners working at the HighScope setting have completed specific training to support the delivery of the approach.

The term *pedagogy* will be used to represent other philosophies, approaches and practices that have been adopted by early childhood settings in the PVI sector. They comprise of educational movements and evidence-based approaches. The pedagogies at the centre of my study are the Reggio Emilia approach, the Pikler approach and Forest School. Practitioners at the Reggio and Pikler settings have completed recognised professional development training as part of a study group or certified course (Pikler, 2021; Reggio Children, 2021). Forest School Leaders at the Forest School and Reggio Emilia settings have completed accredited Level Two and Three

training, respectively, through a Forest School Association registered and endorsed trainer (FSA, 2021).

The following sections offer descriptive and critical summaries of each of the aforementioned curricula frameworks and pedagogical approaches, with reference to prosocial behaviour across the birth to three years age group. This includes studies which investigate how prosocial development is underpinned by different methods and theories, and the conceptualisation of prosociality within early childhood practice.

3.5 The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

The first curriculum to be discussed is the early childhood statutory framework for England. The National Curriculum has been an integral part of England's primary education sector since the late 1980s, introduced as part of the Education Reform Act 1988. In 2000, the *Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage* was introduced, providing a 'loose', formalised national curriculum framework for early childhood provision. The assessment of Foundation Stage's ELGs became statutory in 2002, for settings in receipt of government funding. This was accompanied by the *Birth to Three Matters* guidance for younger children, an informal framework (DfES, 2002; *Education Act 2002*). The aim of the Foundation Stage was to provide nursery and reception-aged children with a well-planned and resourced curriculum to underpin all future learning, providing them with opportunities to succeed and feel valued in an atmosphere of care (QCA, 2000).

The Foundation Stage framework placed value on emotional wellbeing, developing respect for others, social competence and developing positive attitudes and dispositions to learn. The recognition of parents as the child's first educator drew on the importance of their positive impact on development and learning, complementing the role of the family (discussed in Chapter Two, section 2.6.1). Practitioners were expected to develop partnerships and use the knowledge and expertise of parents and other family members, to support learning opportunities and explore relevant learning and play activities in the home environment (QCA, 2000).

The guidelines stated that practitioners were required to plan:

> *'…Experiences that promote emotional, moral, spiritual and social development alongside intellectual development'* (QCA, 2000, p.28).

Prosociality was encompassed within the framework, with explicit reference to the development of sharing, empathy and motivation, alongside self-esteem and self-

confidence. In comparison, *Birth to Three Matters* focused on aspects of self-assurance, a sense of belonging and an expression and sharing of feelings, experiences and thoughts. This was framed within the context of attachment theory, with recognition of the role of secondary attachments between practitioners and other children. The components of *belonging, interactions and relationships, choice and rights and responsibilities*, encompass quality interactions and relationships (Macfarlane and Cartmel, 2008). The guidance acknowledged the impact these factors had on future development, specifically self-esteem and self-regulation and their links to the concept of agency (David et al., 2003; DfES, 2002).

Despite both frameworks focusing on a mix of knowledge, skills and attitudes that children require for learning, issues with transitions and the continuity of assessment presented problems for providers (Male and Palaiologou, 2021). In 2006, both frameworks were brought together alongside the *National Standards for Under 8s Daycare and Childminding*; a series of documents setting out quality outcomes for different types of providers, i.e. childminders, out of school provision and crèches (DfEE, 2001; Sure Start, 2003). The aim was to develop a single and more comprehensive framework, to ensure continuity and consistency of practice between all Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) registered early childhood settings and schools (HM Treasury, 2004). This would provide a '*firm foundation'* to build '*future academic, social and emotional success'* (DCSF, 2008b, p.10).

The five outcomes of *Being Healthy, Staying Safe, Enjoying and Achieving, Making a Positive Contribution,* and *Economic Wellbeing,* set out in the 2003 *Every Child Matters* Green Paper, became aligned with the new EYFS framework in 2006 (Chief Secretary to the Treasury, 2003; Sheppy, 2009). This curriculum was influenced by constructivist / interactive theoretical underpinnings, similar to the HighScope approach founded in the United States. The latter had been part of a longitudinal study to determine its impact on the lives of disadvantaged children, who took part in the HighScope Perry Preschool Project in the 1960s. The findings revealed that in adulthood, when compared to individuals who took part in other early childhood programmes, HighScope group members reported less anti-social behaviour, greater educational and employment outcomes, and higher levels of some prosocial behaviours; notably volunteering (Schweinhart and Weikart, 1997; Schweinhart et al., 2005).

The *Effective Provision of Pre-School Education (EPPE)* research study in the UK by Sylva et al. (2004), drew attention to the birth to five years being a crucial stage of

development, particularly in relation to future social skills and a child's ability to learn (DCSF, 2008a). Later findings revealed that the positive benefits of preschool education persisted into secondary education, which included prosocial behaviours. However, this was mostly influenced by medium to high quality settings, with studies centring on children aged three-years and above (Sylva et al., 2014; Taggart et al., 2017). While specific types of prosocial behaviours are not specified in these reports, early childhood settings made a valuable contribution to positive outcomes for disadvantaged children. The EYFS recognised the importance of personal, social and emotional capabilities and their links to wellbeing, educational attainment and future employability. Skills associated with these capabilities were developed through ELGs which related to the knowledge, skills and understanding that young children should acquire by the end of their Reception year (DfES, 2006; DCSF, 2008d).

A diverse range of pedagogical approaches available for practitioners included child-centred, teacher-directed, play-based, sustained shared thinking and scaffolding (Wall, Litjens and Taguma, 2015). The aim was to provide flexibility in how provision was adapted to meet individual needs, as well as addressing different rates and paces of development (DCSF, 2007). However, the framework was criticised for being too descriptive and technocratic, which limited opportunities for practitioners to be innovative, creative and adaptable to children's individual needs (Papatheodorou, 2010). A further issue pertained to a focus on regulatory procedures and policies, such as health and safety. Practitioners and teachers claimed new practices to record development detracted from quality interactions between children and adults, a factor which is important in extending cognitive development and supporting children in managing conflict (Brooker et al., 2010; Siraj-Blatchford, 2010; Penn, 2011).

Following an independent review by Dame Clare Tickell in 2011, the EYFS was revised in 2012 and the ELGs were reduced in number and simplified from 69 to 17 (Tickell, 2011a; Wall, Litjens and Taguma, 2015). A further change pertained to the six areas of learning and development, which originally comprised of *Personal, Social and Emotional Development* (PSED)*; Communication, Language and Literacy; Problem Solving, Reasoning and Numeracy; Knowledge and Understanding of the World; Physical Development, and Creative Development* (DCSF, 2007; 2008d). These areas were initially viewed as being of equal importance, but the revised EYFS determined that *Communication and Language; Physical Development* and *PSED* should be categorised as prime areas of development. They were considered '*crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive'* (DfE, 2017a, p.7). Additional areas of learning and

development aimed to strengthen the application of the prime areas within four specific areas of *Literacy; Mathematics; Understanding the World and Expressive Arts and Design* (DfE, 2012).

The revisions to the EYFS also had implications for the inclusion of prosocial behaviours. The original framework comprised of fourteen ELGs within the area of PSED, which included statements such as '*Maintain Attention, Concentration and Sit Quietly When Appropriate*', '*Form Good Relationships with Adults and Peers'* and '*Understand What is Right, What is Wrong and Why*' (DCSF, 2008d). These statements included a mix of behaviour management, positive relationships and moral development. The ELGs from the 2012 EYFS were simplified to '*Self-Confidence and Self-Awareness*', '*Managing Feelings'* and '*Making Relationships'*, remaining unchanged during further revisions in 2014 and 2017. The statements for each ELG incorporated prosocial behaviours, such as cooperation and taking turns, and included self-regulation (through adjusting behaviours in different situations). Other behaviours which were evident, but not referred to by name, included empathy (sensitivity to others needs and feelings), collaboration (working as a group) and help (in terms of asking for, rather than providing).

At the time of writing, a new version of the EYFS is being delivered by early adopters in primary education, with a full rollout across the early childhood sector in Autumn 2021 (DfE, 2020c). Changes to PSED have received particular attention in several reports and consultations. The replacement of the ELGs with new ones, comprised of *Self-Regulation, Managing Self* and *Building Relationships* (DfE, 2018a; 2020c) has caused controversy. *Self-Regulation* has been criticised by Early Education (2018) for being difficult to differentiate from the new ELG of *Managing Self.* They add that the concept is too abstract and the initial 2020 draft EYFS guidance presented a poor and muddled understanding of the concept. The Early Years Alliance (2020b) agreed, adding that the complexity of the concept combined with breaking it into a series, undermines the emphasis on holistic development. However, both reports acknowledged self-regulation as important, a view originally shared by Tickell (2011b). She proposed positioning self-regulation as an integral part of PSED, which acted as the motivation or will in developing attitudes and dispositions for learning, alongside the ability to negotiate and plan with others.

The Conservative Government's response to a consultation on the new EYFS stressed that the revisions would remain as intended, although the addition of self-care and healthy eating would be added to PSED. They added that a more detailed

curriculum guidance was being developed, alongside a revised *Development Matters* guidance (DfE, 2020b). This has been criticised as shifting towards a rigid framework comprising of a '…*narrow and overly formal approach to early years practice*' (Early Years Alliance, 2020a). The campaign group Keeping Early Years Unique (KEYU) add that revisions to the EYFS focus on activities aimed at the older age-groups and largely ignore the birth to three years, in favour of formal learning. This contradicts the emphasis on play and exploration as outlined in earlier curricula frameworks, with calls for the priority to be placed on emotional wellbeing, resilience and motivation to learn (Gaunt, 2020), elements of prosocial development which were discussed in Chapters One and Two.

The revised *Development Matters* does, however, make some reference to high-quality play being promoted through creating an enabling environment; providing some examples of games, activities and resources which support independence and social skills (DfE, 2020a). An alternative view is shared by Pilcher (2019), who asserts that rather than revising ELGs, the emphasis should be on the curriculum itself. She adds that the lack of input and feedback from the early childhood sector has attributed to the flaws exposed in the draft guidance and scrutinised by the aforementioned organisations and campaign group. In response, the Early Years Coalition, comprised of 16 early years sector organisations, developed a non-statutory guide named *Birth to 5 Matters* to support practitioners in implementing the 2021 EYFS. They state that the guidance is underpinned by research and supports practitioners in developing their pedagogy and curriculum to reflect contemporary issues, e.g. sustainable development. Prosocial behaviours, i.e. sharing, are considered through age-appropriate activities (Early Years Coalition, 2021); expanding on the content of the new *Development Matters* and EYFS.

3.6 An Introduction to Alternative Curricula and Pedagogical Philosophies and Approaches

This section provides an overview of each curriculum and pedagogical approach central to my research, followed by an exploration as to how each one promotes prosociality through practice. Steiner Waldorf education, the Montessori method, Reggio Emilia approach and Pikler approach emerged from their respective founders' experiences of war, fascism and social inequality in Europe. The HighScope approach also recognised social inequality as a prevalent issue in American society and has measured and published the impact of its early childhood programmes over several decades. England's Forest School, as a more recent addition to pedagogical

approaches, works on the premise of outdoor learning and its implications for mental health and wellbeing. The ideologies derived from these different curricula frameworks and pedagogies are considered to be progressive in light of their insight into child development and children's rights. Their aims are to reconstruct and develop a more peaceful and democratic society (Edwards, 2002; Soler and Miller, 2003).

The development of these curricula and pedagogies stem from theories and philosophies on early childhood development, care and education. In the case of Italian physician, Maria Montessori, she was influenced by the works of several educational reformers including Rousseau, Pestalozzi and Froebel. Montessori's educational plans were based upon scientific child observations and measurements carried out across different countries and diverse cultures. This allowed her to develop pedagogical innovations which were universal to human behaviour, rather than named after her own discoveries (Lillard, 1996). The opening of the Casa dei Bambini school (Home of the Children), for children in the working class area of Rome in 1907, became the prototype for Montessori's method in early childhood education; gaining international attention. Teacher training programmes became established, and a global educational movement saw Montessori schools open outside of Italy (Feez, 2010; Aljabreen, 2020). Montessori's work is credited for being the foundation of other theories, notably the works of Piaget and Vygotsky. They held similar beliefs on the role of observation and the importance of meaningful work on children's development. Montessori's ideas on pedagogy include sensitive periods of development, a structured environment, the close observation of children and positive behaviour management (Mooney, 2013; Isaacs, 2018).

Another approach with its roots in Italy, emerged in the aftermath of World War Two and Fascism under Mussolini. The citizens of Villa Cella set out a vision to build and run a school for young children, with the aim to create democratic conditions in which children could become creative, independent and critical thinkers (Roberts-Holmes, 2017). This new form of education was supported by educator Loris Malaguzzi, who offered to help the community in creating an approach which combined theories from pioneers, such as Dewey, Piaget and Bruner (Schroeder-Yu, 2008). The first Infant-Toddler centre (Asili Nido) was set up in the 1970s following Law 1044, which instituted social and educational services for the under-threes. Similar services grew as employment opportunities for women expanded and ensured continuity and pedagogical coordination across the birth to six years age group (Edwards, Gandini and Forman, 2012; Moss, 2016).

Over the years, further influences have shaped practice, including the works of Bronfenbrenner and Gardner. The expansion of schools initially adopting this new practice culminated in the approach being named after its place of origin, Reggio Emilia (Malaguzzi, 1998). Reggio teachers reflect on and question the content and methodology of their practice, placing emphasis on socially constructed inquiry. This is through the use of long-term, creative projects and child-initiated learning (Grieshaber and Hatch, 2003; Stremmel, 2012). Teachers and settings outside of Reggio Emilia have adopted the pedagogy and principles, often referring to themselves as Reggio-inspired (Emerson and Linder, 2019).

The emphasis on creativity is a key feature within Steiner Waldorf education, which places importance on children being able to 'naturally unfold' and develop their own natural talents. The first Waldorf School was set up in the aftermath of World War One in Stuttgart, Germany. It became the first truly comprehensive, non-selective and non-denominational school, with the first pupils being the children of workers at the Waldorf Astoria cigarette factory. Its founder Rudolph Steiner, a social philosopher, named the school in honour of the factory's owner, Emil Molt (Uhrmacher, 1995; Nicol, 2007; 2016). Steiner's philosophy represented a body of knowledge pertaining to the spiritual man and the universe, which became known as *anthroposophy* (Nielsen, 2006, p.248). This is defined as the '*wisdom of the human being*.' While it was not taught as a subject, it became the basis of the principles and teaching philosophy of the approach (Wilkinson, 1993; Nicol and Taplin, 2018). After Steiner's death, Elisabeth Grünelius and Klara Hatterman continued with his work, developing Waldorf teacher training and setting up international Steiner Kindergartens (de Souza, 2012; Nicol and Taplin, 2018). The Steiner curriculum is adapted to meet the changing needs of children as they pass through each of three psychological and physical phases of childhood.

Steiner's philosophy on natural unfolding and undisturbed play is a feature of an Eastern European approach founded by Emmi Pikler, a Hungarian paediatrician. Following World War Two, Pikler received an invitation from the Hungarian government to take over a residential nursery home, which became known as Lóczy, after the street it was located in. The setting cared for young children left as orphans through the death of parents or abandonment. Pikler's innovative approach to working with infants and very young children derived from her earlier paediatric work with families. This emphasised the importance of children needing space and time to develop, along with the pivotal role of caregiving routines and the relationship between the child and caregiver (Weber, 2010). Pikler's methods were refined and expanded on by her colleague Magda Gerber who, along with Thomas Forrest, developed the Resources

for Infant Educarers (RIE). This was a humanistic-therapeutic approach, used as part of a preventative mental health programme in the United States for parent-infant groups and parents / carers (Triulzi, 2009). Due to a limited amount of research on Pikler's approach being available in the English language, I shall be referring to the works of Gerber to provide further insight into the Piklerian philosophy.

The approaches discussed so far also share a common theme, in terms of the role the environment plays, particularly outdoor areas. This is also the basis of a form of outdoor learning developed in England, 1993, by staff from Bridgwater College in Somerset. Following an exchange visit to Denmark, the staff were inspired by the principles of outdoor activities provided by schools. The Danish *udeskole* or outdoor school is reported to be influenced and supported by numerous international theorists, including Pestalozzi, Piaget and Goleman. As a pedagogy, Forest School is considered to link more closely to philosophy and is carried out in familiar local environments. This differs from other outdoor programmes, which may be used as an elective subject or practiced some distance from where children live (Bentsen and Jensen, 2012; Williams-Siegfredsen, 2012). The Danish and English Forest School models share some commonalities in terms of child-led learning and the emphasis on physical, social and emotional development (Bentsen and Jensen, 2012). However, the English model is led by a Forest School Leader rather than classroom and subject teachers (Maynard, 2007a). Other parts of the UK have also adopted Forest School, but there are differences pertaining to training, policy and practice in each of the home nations (Knight, 2018). The Forest School philosophy in England will be the focus of my thesis, with reference to prosociality in other Forest School models, where appropriate.

The final curriculum was initially named the Cognitively Oriented Curriculum to reflect its emphasis on cognitive development. However, this was later changed to HighScope after the original HighScope Perry Preschool Program in Ypsilanti, Michigan (Schweinhart, 2013). Its founder, David P. Weikart, recognised the importance of high-quality early childhood provision and its implications for academic and life outcomes. Unlike the aforementioned curricula and pedagogies, HighScope was set out as a part of a social experiment, evaluated by a random assignment method. Its aim was to enhance the life chances for children, notably African American families from poor socio-economic backgrounds or disadvantage (Heckman et al., 2010). The findings from the study were achieved through an active learning model which prioritised intellectual and social development and self-regulation. The HighScope curriculum incorporates partnerships with parents and works with high adult to child ratios (Parks, 2000; Belfield et al., 2006; Schweinhart, 2007). The approach has been adopted at an

international level and shares commonality with the original EYFS, in terms of its principles (Wiltshire, 2019).

Despite their different roots and philosophies, some common features are shared by the various curricula and pedagogical approaches highlighted here. These relate to the perception of the child, family partnerships, the learning environment and the role of the adult. The remainder of this chapter will explore how each of these individual approaches integrate prosociality and how this is demonstrated through early childhood provision and practice.

3.7 The Montessori Method

The first alternative curriculum discussed is the Montessori method, a scientific pedagogy that children engage with through self-directed activities. These comprise of specific sets of sensory and self-correcting materials, which require and train executive functioning (Denervaud et al., 2019). Executive functioning is described by Hughes (2011, p.251) as an '*umbrella term'* that encompasses higher order processes. These processes are required to perform goal-directed behaviours and self-regulate responses, such as attention (Hofmann, Schmeichel and Baddeley, 2012). Children with greater levels of executive functioning are perceived to be better at adapting to social situations which, in turn, may promote prosocial development (O'Toole, Monks and Tsermentseli, 2017).

Montessori's belief was that children are capable of optimal development, and this is shaped by knowledge formed from their continuous experiences of reality. This included Practical Life exercises, comprised of Caring for the Self, Caring for the Environment and Grace and Courtesy (Giardiello, 2014). The emphasis on activities constructing knowledge and intelligence and, transforming the child's environment, positions the Montessori method as a pedagogy of constructivism (Elkind, 2003).

Montessori theorised child development across a series of stages or planes, with each lasting six years. The first plane is divided into sub-stages covering the birth to three years and three to six years, respectively (Holland, 2017a). The first three-years were considered by Montessori to be characterised by the child:

> '…*unconsciously collecting impressions from the environment and by the formation of intellect'* (Gustafsson, 2018, p.1448).

This phase in development is referred to as the *absorbent mind*, in which the child's sensitivity to their environment is characterised by exploration, movement and order (Kirkham and Kidd, 2015). Montessori argued that an education which developed individuality and independence, was the basic requirement for a scientific educational programme. She added that this should apply to all stages of development, with school environments permitting children to develop their personal lives freely (Montessori, 1949; Montessori, 1988).

Montessori asserted that children should be educated as soon as they are born and provided with surroundings that meet their needs and enable them to act freely within their environment (Montessori, 1948; Montessori, 1972). For infants, furnishings and objects should be chosen on the basis of their sensorial appeal. A Montessori teacher, referred to in this chapter as a *directress*, uses observation as a means of adjusting the environment; enabling each child to discover new interests and challenges (Feez, 2010).

Montessori classrooms for toddlers comprise of an academic programme or a developmental approach. The former supports academic transition, by modifying traditional early childhood didactic materials. For example, instead of the pink tower's ten blocks, this is adjusted to three or five blocks for this age group. In comparison, the developmental classrooms work with the premise of being developmentally appropriate. The directress supervises the employment of specific objects, to ensure their safe use (Miller, 2011). There are several key principles of the Montessori pedagogy which are considered to make a significant contribution to the child's self-construction. This includes *freedom, control of error, scaffolding* and the *promotion of self-discipline*.

The principle of freedom is perceived by Montessori to be an essential component of emerging self-regulation and social responsibility. However, it is also considered to be the most misunderstood element of practice (Isaacs, 2018). A case study on an Australian Montessori early childhood centre, reported the importance of the directress' role in building children's social capacity through learning experiences (Carter and Ellis, 2016). These experiences of reality form knowledge, which is the foundation for mental growth and mental health. The encouragement and nurturing of prosocial behaviours at the centre included a component of discussion and reflection on moral issues. This allowed the children to learn to empathise with others and see different and diverse viewpoints. Further behaviours comprised of sharing, taking turns, moving carefully and working productively. In the context of freedom, these behaviours would be facilitated

through self-activity and individualised learning. Children make choices pertaining to the activity or work they wish to engage with, through their own interests and level of development (Gustafsson, 2018). Some of these activities require children to engage in problem-solving skills of trial and error. This requires them to seek an appropriate solution to a specific challenge. This is referred to as the *control of error* and supports maximum cognitive-motor growth. Through appropriate scaffolding and guidance, the child learns to self-regulate their own thoughts and actions. The concept of control of error is considered to contribute to the development of executive functioning; comprised of working memory, inhibition and cognitive flexibility (Phillips-Silver and Daza, 2018; Pascal, Bertram and Rouse, 2019).

Montessori's emphasis on peace education promotes prosociality through shared peer play, problem-solving spaces and Grace and Courtesy lessons. The directress sets effective limits and provides meaningful on-the-spot guidance to nurture children's self-esteem and peaceful behaviours. In relation to sharing, the directress asks the children whether they are ready to share and respects their wishes, depending on their response (Isaacs, 2018). Older children may act as 'teachers' and work as positive role-models to younger children. Carter and Ellis (2016) reported that children who were confident, peaceful and happy were able to model and demonstrate prosocial behaviours. Younger children observed and replicated these behaviours, learning important skills in interaction and collaboration. Furthermore, older Montessori children demonstrate higher levels of perspective taking when dealing with social conflicts (Lillard, 2013). Addressing social problems is achieved through the use of positive and assertive responses, with children free to discipline each other (O'Donnell, 2007).

A further means of supporting social development is through imaginative play activities, which offer clear intellectual, social and emotional benefits to children. However, Montessori's belief was that imagination develops through real-life and sensorial experiences. This means that children's experiences should be grounded in reality, rather than fantasy (Soundy, 2012). Therefore, role-play resources tend to be lacking and imagination is instead promoted through heuristic play, which allows for object manipulation and exploration. This has led to criticism that the Montessori method limits the development of children's imagination and creativity (Gustafsson, 2018). However, in England, Ofsted registered Montessori early childhood settings follow the EYFS alongside their own curriculum. This has implications for practice as one of the learning outcomes for *Expressive Arts and Design* is *'Being Imaginative',* which makes reference to role-play; an aspect of imaginative play (DfE, 2017a). Soundy (2012, p.28) adds that young children's inclinations towards imaginary play

must also be respected. The directress therefore needs to consider how Montessorian methods can be implemented alongside statutory curriculum guidelines.

Soundy (2009) provides further insight into how imaginative play can be incorporated into a Montessori setting. Preschool and primary-aged children used visualisation and auditory outputs as a means of engaging in socio-dramatic play. Following a storytelling session, the children engaged in spontaneous imaginative play. They did not, however, lose sight of Montessorian philosophies. They took care of their environment through careful navigation, to avoid disturbing the work of other children, and demonstrated cooperation, sharing and compromise in a controlled manner. Hence, while the Montessori method provides opportunities for prosocial development, the addition of imaginative play opportunities may further social learning and allow for a more expansive range of prosocial behaviours to be developed. However, the effectiveness of the Montessori method is conditional on high fidelity in implementation, and the extent to which pedagogical practices and philosophies are delivered (Wall, Litjens and Taguma, 2015).

3.8 The Reggio Emilia Approach

While inspired by the works of Montessori, the Reggio Emilia approach (REA), does not adhere to a national, predetermined or formalised curriculum framework or policy. It is considered to be an approach or educational system, with an emphasis placed on pedagogy and *how* a child is taught, rather than *what* a child is taught (Soler and Miller, 2003; Papatheodorou, 2009). This encompasses the everyday experiences and values of children, parents and teachers within the local and wider communities (Papatheodorou, 2010). Soler and Miller (2003, p.64) position the REA as the:

> '…*progressive, learner-centred end of the continuum of beliefs that shape early childhood curricula'*.

The term *progettazione* is used in this context to describe a flexible and emergent curriculum; a relational concept shaped by collaboration, time, space, active participation and observation (Moran, Desrochers and Cavicchi, 2007; Arseven, 2014). The REA is therefore referred to as a relational pedagogy, in light of the interactions between children and their teachers. This is articulated by Brownlee (2004, p.6) as a means of encouraging learners to include their personal beliefs and experiences. These are supported in an atmosphere of care and trust, with mutual respect fostered through cognitive and emotional support. The role of the teacher is considered complementary and not separate from the fundamentals of the approach and learning processes (Bredekamp, 1993). The image of the child is integral, as it denotes how

their capabilities, development, motivations and agency are perceived within the context of education and society. This is taken into account when teachers and practitioners reflect on their own image of the child, to support the daily decisions they make in practice (Hewett, 2001; Martalock, 2012).

Children enter learning environments with prior experiences and knowledge, which Papatheodorou (2009) claims act as lenses to filter through new knowledge, information and experiences. Teachers and practitioners work empathically and act as a partner in learning; nurturing, guiding and researching (Bredekamp, 1993; Holland, 2017b). Dahlberg and Moss (2005, p.106) state that in Reggio Emilia, there is a preference to use the term '*project'*, rather than '*curriculum'* and this is embedded within the child's interests. Visitors may try and fit the approach within a curriculum model, but the authors stress that various forms of curricula and related terms, i.e. emergent, framework and lesson planning, are considered too 'normative' and not suitable in representing the understandings and knowledge of Reggio Emilia. The term '*project'* is therefore perceived to be more reflective of the complex nature and unpredictability of practice. However, the detailed recording of this process opens up practice to criticism and scrutiny. Critics argue that a lack of a written curriculum suggests a lack of accountability (Soler and Miller, 2003). Rinaldi (2006) asserts that concepts and theories have been reflected upon and experimented with, allowing Reggio educators to create their own meanings and consider the implications for pedagogical practice; with criticality and questioning playing a key role in the Reggio Emilia philosophy.

Communal spaces and opportunities for free roaming around the school, provide opportunities for children to mix. This may entail older children visiting younger siblings or infants and toddlers joining activities (Smidt, 2013). The practicing of social and communication skills and taking responsibility for oneself are considered to demonstrate early citizenship and democracy (Christensen et al., 2006). This in turn seeks to reinforce each child's sense of identity by developing a sense of belonging and self-confidence (Gandini, 2012). This occurs through recognition from adults and peers, suggesting that empowerment plays an additional role. This correlates with Roberts' (2010) concept of companionable learning, considering that the REA approach focuses on intersubjectivity. This is where the child is an active participant in their own development, seeking out support and structure from others (Lanphear and Vandermaas-Peeler, 2017). Furthermore, there is evidence that intersubjectivity is encompassed by prosocial behaviour, as outlined below.

Inquiry-based learning at a Reggio Emilia-inspired preschool in the United States, identified empathy, helping and cooperation as prosocial behaviours, arising from a mix of play-based and expression (art-based) events. An increased frequency of reciprocal conversations through play-based learning was noticeable when the three- to five-year olds were mixed. The older children took on a leadership role during communications and negotiations, with less involvement from the teacher (Lanphear and Vandermaas-Peeler, 2017). This connects to a further aspect of Reggio practice referred to as a pedagogy of listening. This comprises of listening, talking and understanding with agency; referred to as *partecipazione* (participation) (Mantovani, 2010). Listening is a prosocial act encompassing the sharing of thoughts, ideas and feelings. It promotes an awareness of the role of turn-taking when communicating with others (Smidt, 2013). Rinaldi (2012) states that listening entails sensitivity through the use of all senses, recognising the many languages, words, gestures, movements, symbols and codes that are used by individuals as a means of expression, communication and representation of ideas. This is referred to as the '*hundred languages of children'* (OECD, 2004).

Listening is generated by and stimulates emotions, allowing individuals to recognise and become open to the value of other people's perspectives and interpretations (Rinaldi, 2006). Through negotiation, conflicts can be muted and a willingness to change and exchange ideas can lead to pleasure and satisfaction (Gandini, 2012). The act of listening and child-led learning is supported through the use of pedagogical documentation, which is an integral part of the REA. This comprises of a wide range of media to document children's ideas, activities and representations. Roberts-Holmes (2017) states that this brings visibility to children's learning, centring around their voices and understanding. Through the use of methods, such as cameras, photocopiers and computers, documentation provides children with a visual memory of what they have said and done. Children and adults can repeatedly return to documents to draw on significant points or develop new ideas (Copple, 2003; Grieshaber and Hatch, 2003). This collaboration extends to parents contributing to the collection and use of documentation, denoting the close, cooperative working partnerships between the setting and the home (Schroeder-Yu, 2008).

As with the Montessori method, children have the opportunity to master different techniques and in the context of the REA, this often relates to creative activities such as clay work, painting, drawing and learning together. An *atelierista* (artist) works closely with groups of children on different projects, helping them realise their unique ideas and playing a secondary role in helping teachers understand how children learn

(Vecchi, 1998; Nutbrown and Abbott, 2001). Artistic experiences are considered ideal in developing sensitive, creative and prosocial attitudes in young children. This is evidenced through a study by Kroflič (2012) in which preschoolers demonstrated compassion, cooperation and empathic imagination when exposed to impressionist paintings and constructing artistic installations. A pedagogy of listening and radical dialogue is considered by Edmiston (2008) to be a characteristic associated with an ethical pedagogy. This promotes children's agency and allows them to take responsibility for their actions.

The role of relationships and listening plays a further role in shaping the physical environment, allowing for optimal growth and learning. The environment plays a key role in allowing children to feel safe, which promotes risk taking and the extension of learning (Robson, 2017). It is referred to as the '*third teacher'*, providing spaces that are rich and stimulating. This includes cooking, listening to stories, block play, socio-dramatic play and opportunities for outdoor learning (Katz, 1998). For infants and toddlers, the emphasis is on a welcoming environment, with supportive transitions between the home and setting. This promotes attachment links, with the adult maintaining a positive emotional climate and supporting the motivation of activities. Hence, children's social and emotional development is prioritised and interwoven into everyday activities and routines, rather than being set out as a standalone area of development as in the case of the EYFS (Musatti and Mayer, 2001; Moreno, Nagasawa and Schwartz, 2019).

To summarise, the REA is considered be difficult to understand and implement outside Reggio Emilia, in light of differences pertaining to its origins, culture and emphasis on children's rights. Moss (2001) perceives it to be an important but not generalisable experience. He states that political and ethical choices, rather than models of good practice, are responsible for the selection of programmes that early childhood settings adopt. Early childhood settings should therefore construct their own local cultural projects within their own context (Moss, 2015). Gandini (1993) asserts that the work of educators in Reggio Emilia should be considered an educational experience, comprised of practice and careful reflection, rather than a model to be copied in other countries. Stremmel (2012) stresses that discourses on being Reggio *inspired*, rather than being a Reggio school or implementing a Reggio approach, is a better way to create settings in which meaningful relationships are developed between children and adults. Kantor and Whaley (1998) add that the approach is not something that can be learned, but something that needs to be incorporated into existing classroom cultures. The consensus is that the Reggio Emilia approach should therefore not be viewed as a

blueprint for best practice, but instead should be considered a philosophy (Stremmel, 2012).

3.9 Steiner Waldorf Education

The creative element of the REA has commonality with Steiner Waldorf Education (SWE), with collaboration between the two approaches demonstrated when the 'One Hundred Languages' touring exhibition came to Cambridge, in 1997. Steiner teachers in attendance made a contribution through the use of puppetry, storytelling and play; methods which promote language and moral development in SWE (Schmitt-Stegmann, 1997; Nicol and Taplin, 2018). The emphasis on creativity draws heavily on socio-dramatic play, a concept which encompasses different modes of imaginative play, such as fantasy, pretend play and make-believe. The philosophy on play and fantasy is considered to be a pedagogy of imagination, which allows children to play and work using creative experimentation. Steiner believed that early learning should be conducted in a meaningful, expressive and holistic way.

A healthy imagination is considered as the foundation for the growth of creative adult thinking; with more cognitive and formal content introduced in the latter years of Steiner school (Shell, 1992; Nielsen, 2006; Stehlik, 2008; Parker-Rees and Rees, 2011). Frödén and Rosell (2019, p.197) define imagination as a means of promoting '*openness and curiosity towards new ways of being or acting*.' Imaginative play is considered an intersubjective activity in which children negotiate roles, narratives and storylines through shared knowledge. Göncü (1993) identifies three planes associated with pretend play which correlate with aspects of prosociality. The first plane is defined as *affective*, in which emotionally significant experiences are shared with peers. The second and third planes of *metacommunication* and *communication* occur when children create agreements or joint understandings pertaining to the nature of their pretend play. This involves actions and language to construct playful representations of experience. While these planes are evident in preschoolers, for infants and toddlers, intersubjectivity can be promoted through the use of sharing rhymes, action games and melodies (Trevarthen and Delafield-Butt, 2017). Children construct shared meanings through their own shared knowledge within an imaginary context.

From a Piagetian perspective, pretend play emerges through symbolic activities in infants and is often self-referenced, i.e. feeding themselves with play objects. This develops into other-referenced pretend play in which behaviours mimic those carried out by familiar adults, such as care giving and cooking (Fein, 1981). This correlates with Steiner's concept of the first stage of childhood as the *imitation phase,* which

occurs from birth to seven years. This is considered to be a phase in which children learn by a mix of empathy and doing (Uhrmacher, 1995). This stage is split into three phases comprised of birth to three, three to five and five to seven. The unfolding of the birth to three years age group is through imitation and physical development. Provision is described by Nicol and Taplin (2018, p.32) as '*intimate*' with an emphasis on sensory development, notably light, sound and touch. As the children enter the three to five years phase there is more emphasis on imagination through socialisation, before an immersion in more real-life activities in the five- to seven- phase. The child is reported by Nicol and Taplin to engage in empathy play, in which 'being the other' takes place and rules and boundaries are put in place. The concept of imagination and its links to emotion are considered to play a role in developing memory and inform decision-making in the present and future. Hence imagination is not a separate entity, but one which binds to both cognitive development and perception (Waite and Rees, 2011).

A study of Steiner Kindergartens in England by Waite and Rees (2014), reported that children adopt different roles in their play, acting out their own observations and exercising control over positions of power. The portrayal of real-life experiences in an imaginary context may allow children to empathise with characters they or their peers portray, within a shared imaginative space. The incorporation of simple toys, i.e. plain dolls and wooden building blocks, are provided along with other play materials. Rather than use conventional toys, children are encouraged to create their own or use every day or natural objects as symbolic representations, such as shells and sticks. The Steiner philosophy considers this form of play to be free flowing, open-ended and experiential. This culminates in a dream-like consciousness with unlimited possibilities (Frödén and Rosell, 2019). Steiner's belief was that a child's inner potential and holistic development were promoted and enriched by imaginative teaching and learning. As children reach the second stage of development from the ages of seven to fourteen, imagination is prioritised through feelings and experience, before independence and intellectual thought become paramount from fourteen-years to adulthood (Kirkham and Kidd, 2015).

The Steiner Waldorf curriculum predominantly follows a *Will-first pedagogy*, described by Oldfield (2011, p.182) as one which:

> '*…recognizes, respects and welcomes the active nature of the young child in the first seven years of life'*.

This encompasses child-initiated learning, with unnecessary interactions eliminated. This is to allow the child to naturally unfold and learn. De Souza's (2012, p.51) description of will as a '…*kind of mental power that moves us to do what needs to be done…*', suggests that it acts as a form of motivation, mirroring Tickell's (2011b) discussion on self-regulation. However, De Souza (2012) stresses that the concept of will in a Steiner Waldorf context can mean different things, such as a '*want'*. The Steiner curriculum is designed to strengthen will, which includes manual and artistic work, such as making toys, singing, reciting poetry and preparing snacks. These incorporate a multiple symbols approach and the use of portfolios to document learning (Kirkham and Kidd, 2015), an approach which appears to echo that of Reggio Emilia. The emphasis on rhythm is used to discipline will and actions and avoid engaging in activities in a chaotic and superficial way. The environment is therefore deliberately ordered, with social and cultural contexts carefully managed (Waite and Rees, 2014).

Teachers model positive behaviours, engaging in purposeful work which includes domestic tasks such as cleaning, sweeping and cooking (To, 2012). This is referred to as *co-regulation*. In the Kindergarten, the teacher adjusts their behaviours to allow their actions to become imitable by a particular child, by observing their cues (Parker-Rees and Rees, 2011). This could be considered contradictory to Montessori's philosophy that adults should provide what children need to carry out domestic tasks, such as cleaning, independently. If adults do too much for children, Montessori believed this would undermine children's competence (Mooney, 2013). However, Steiner's perception was that during the first few years of life, children perceive and process human acts through imitation. This is considered a means of developing deeper forms of communication; enabling the child to actively experience the behaviours and actions of another (Mathisen and Thorjussen, 2016). This promotes prosocial development as a child may immediately and freely cooperate by joining in to help the teacher. This stems from their interest and enthusiasm of an activity. Some children may prefer to observe the teacher and imitate behaviours at a later stage, while others become 'imprinted' with attitudes, habitual responses and moral values over a period of time (Oldfield, 2001).

During Steiner's first stage of development, young children notice and respond to everything and everyone. This level of sensitivity and receptiveness means that connections with the environment are formed and there is a transference from one experience to the next. Steiner teachers and practitioners recognise the importance of time and space which allow infants to move freely, in order to explore the world around them. This age group uses their whole being and senses to reflect and perceive the

environment around them. This is another component of the Steiner pedagogy, which emphasises sensing, movement and play (Steiner and Trostli, 1998; Mathisen and Thorjussen, 2016).

Provision for the birth to three years is through Parent and Child Groups, which work on the Steiner foundations for the first three years of development. This comprises of slowing down and simplifying family life. The home-like environment mirrors that of the Steiner Kindergarten, with natural materials made available and emphasis placed on free movement and play. Storytelling and arts and crafts are offered, with seasonal festivals celebrated. The parent and their child can engage in these activities together, with adults modelling positive behaviours with the support of a Class Leader (Nicol and Taplin, 2018). There are benefits for parents attending these classes, as it nurtures a sense of belonging and developing friendships with other families. The importance of community is integral to the routine, with families coming together for snack and using song to highlight the importance of sharing (Marlen, 2019). An inclusive environment is promoted through children's involvement in food preparation, cooking and cleaning (Nicol and Taplin, 2018).

To conclude, Steiner Waldorf provision is considered to be a collectivist approach, due to its emphasis on community. Prosocial development is promoted and nurtured by adults through the use of imitation and play. The use of rhymes, rituals and songs play a role in supporting transitions but these, along with the dress of adults, may be mistaken as 'essentials', risking a dogmatic approach. At the other end of the spectrum, the freedom provided by SWE may be misinterpreted as an '*anything goes'* approach as teachers determine their own early childhood practices (Howard, 2006, p.6). These one-sided views and approaches may neglect to consider the needs and developmental realities of the child. Hence observation, meditation and working consciously aim to provide a middle ground for practice for Steiner Waldorf teachers and practitioners. The majority of studies on SWE have centred around the Kindergarten and Lower School, with less research available on Parent and Child Groups. However, the literature (see Nicole and Taplin, 2018; Marlen, 2019) does state that Steiner schools include these groups as an additional service for the birth to threes, with an additional pedagogy applied which complements Steiner's philosophy. This is discussed further in the next section.

3.10 The Pikler Approach

Section 3.8 discussed relational pedagogy within the REA, a concept which is expanded on by Bussey and Hill (2017). They consider a further component specific to working with infants and toddlers. The component of care acts as a form of curriculum between children and their caregivers. The role of care-based activities, such as dressing, provides educational opportunities through daily routines and secure attachments. This promotes children's autonomy through their relationship with their caregiver, who is actively present and attentive to their cues (Gilbert, 2001; Belasko, Herrán and Anguera, 2019). This nurtures a trusting, repetitive, consistent and predictable approach; allowing infants and toddlers to anticipate what comes next, prepare themselves and cooperate with the adult (Gonzalez-Mena, 2004).

The concepts of attachment, care and reciprocity are integral to the philosophies of Emmi Pikler and Magda Gerber, who emphasise the importance of the relationship between the child and their caregiver. For Pikler, caregivers were early childhood practitioners, referred to as 'nurses' who cared for the orphans and abandoned children at Lóczy; now known as the Pikler Institute (David and Appell, 2001). Gerber in contrast used the term '*Educarers*' to refer to parents, carers and other professionals to highlight how care is used as a means to educate (Gerber, 1979b). While the majority of curricula and pedagogical approaches explored in this chapter have been influenced by key theorists in psychology, philosophy and educational movements, Pikler was able to use her paediatric experience with families and observations on infants to develop her ideas and train caregivers (Weber, 2010). This means that her approach, along with RIE, was not derived from theoretical underpinnings (Horm, Goble and Branscomb, 2012). While this may raise questions into the validity of Pikler and Gerber's methods as credible approaches, in 1971, David and Appell (2001) carried out empirical research as Lóczy. This was to determine what impact Pikler's approach had on the development and wellbeing of the children in attendance.

The findings led to the formulation of four basic principles, based on observations. First is the value of *independent activity*, which permits the development of attitudes to deal with life and experimentation (David and Appell, 2001). Tardos (2000) connects this to a child's ability to explore and learn by freedom of movement and self-discovery. This correlates with earlier discussions in this chapter on the child being an active participant in their learning (see section 3.8). At Lóczy, free exploration and manipulation were promoted through a safe and carefully designed environment, which provided ample space, non-restrictive clothing and opportunities for gross and sensory-motor development (Gerber, 1979a). Caregivers used observation as a means of

tuning into each child's unique needs, providing the correct conditions and environment for learning and development (Weber, 2003). The emphasis on sensorimotor development is considered to complement the philosophies and pedagogies of Montessori and Steiner, hence Pikler's approach has sometimes been adopted into their infant and toddler practice (O'Donnell, 2007; Nicol and Taplin, 2018).

The perception of children as competent learners extended to their ability to guide their own gross motor development, such as rolling and crawling. As with Steiner's philosophy, the emphasis on movement creates a space which allows the child's psyche to unfold, leading to them becoming aware of their own capabilities and sense of self (Mathisen and Thorjussen, 2016). Infants therefore take the initiative of their own movements, contrasting with traditional approaches which regarded infants as '*helpless*' (Gerber, 1979b; Konicheckis, 2010). Adults would historically urge movement, place infants in positions they were unable to get into themselves or teach young children how to play (Tardos, 2000; Gonzalez-Mena, 2004). The environment at Lóczy, in contrast, was set up to encourage self-initiated motor exploration. Toys were placed around the infant for them to reach for if they were interested in them (Swain, 2011a). The emphasis on competence, autonomy and relatedness suggests that Pikler's autonomy-supportive approach reflects ideas presented in self-determination theory (Deci and Ryan, 2000; Sagastui, Herrán and Anguera, 2020). Hence at this point, a pedagogy of self-determination would appear to be the most appropriate means of describing Pikler's approach to learning and development.

The value of a *special, favoured, affective relationship* was identified as the second principle by David and Appell (2001). Institutions for children were considered to be environments which attachment theorists, such as John Bowlby, felt would deprive infants and toddlers of maternal love. Pikler wanted to provide an environment that was not just physically and emotionally safe, but supported children's wellbeing (Chahin and Tardos, 2017). The nurses perceived a child to be an individual who had rights and was an active participant and partner within a reciprocal, consenting, attentive and nurturing relationship (Weber, 2010; Marlen, 2015). As discussed earlier, this relationship is established through care-based daily routines, which promotes the third principle of *fostering the child's awareness of themselves*.

A caregivers' training ensures they are competent in interacting collaboratively during routines such as diapering (nappy changing) and getting dressed (Ferris Miller, 2011). They are tasked with maintaining the child's autonomy and are vigilant and acutely aware of the child's behaviour. This is achieved through a mix of expressive and

responsive language, which includes *anticipatory talk* (what is going to happen), *parallel talk* (commentary on what is happening), *explanatory* (reasons for activities, social interactions and emotions) and *decontextualized* talk (referring to a person, object or activity not visually present or in the room). This type of interaction is considered to motivate infants and toddlers through pleasure and agency (Laurin and Goble, 2018). Approaches are authentic, calm and responsive to the child's individual preferences and movements. Caregivers never act forcefully when dressing infants and they limit direct interventions; observing and reading the children's cues and responding accordingly (Penn, 1999; Swain, 2011b; Gonzalez-Mena, 2013a).

These routines develop prosociality by becoming a shared and cooperative task, facilitated by the caregiver's verbal and non-verbal communication (Chahin and Tardos, 2017). Cooperation is an essential part of the child's relationship with the adult, but this can only develop through reciprocation (Vincze, 2007). A high level of attention provided to the child means they feel secure and not deprived, which promotes their confidence and independence during play-based activities. With the child's needs being met, they are free to explore on their own and experiment individually or as part of a group. This further links the importance of feelings of emotional security to self-initiated exploration and play; demonstrating how care connects to educational opportunities (Gonzalez-Mena, 2004; Marlen, 2015).

As with the resources used in Steiner Waldorf settings, toys provided in Pikler and RIE settings are simple and open-ended (Gerber, 1979a; Marlen, 2017). Objects made from cloth, wood and metal invite sensory exploration through grasping and mouthing. For infants, this aims reduce their sensory threshold and avoid too much stimuli (Gonzalez-Mena, 2013b; Tardos, 2013). There is minimal interruption to the children's play, with the child's development and stability attributed to a fourth principle of *good physical health*. This includes regular access to the outdoor environment, which promotes further learning opportunities (David and Appell, 2001).

At the time of their 1971 study, David and Appell (2001) reported that the Pikler approach succeeded in guaranteeing sound development and relationships. They stressed that measures adopted by other types of settings would only succeed if implemented with the same '*scrupulous care, vigilance, deliberation and searching spirits as at Lóczy'* (p.147). As with other methods and curricula discussed in this chapter, Pikler and Gerber's approaches have been adopted by other types of early childhood providers, such as day nurseries and playgroup leaders. With Parent and Child Groups, the management of Piklerian caregiving tasks may be more challenging

as it requires a non-traditional parental attitude towards infants. Part of the role of a Class Leader is to discuss potential moments of conflict which may occur at home and to address potential issues of power, i.e. the parent dominating the child, or the potential for the child to dominate the adult (Varnos, 2010).

In summary, Pikler's approach is argued to present a high-quality, consistent and cost-effective method for infants and toddlers (Chahin, 2008; Marlen, 2015; 2017). However, while the approach is becoming better known in the UK, there are currently fewer Pikler settings when compared to Europe. Specialist Pikler training is supporting practitioners in learning how to better care for infants and toddlers and develop an ethos on respectful relationships with children. This could potentially address concerns about the forthcoming 2021 EYFS having less coverage on the under-threes age group by bringing back a focus on care (Gaunt, 2020). As Gerber (1979b, p.xv) reminds us in *The RIE Manual '…to really care is to educate and the two are inseparable*.' Hence the role of care needs to be considered as an important element of prosocial development within early childhood provision.

3.11 Forest School

Pikler's recognition that physical development promotes and supports social and emotional development is a concept shared by Forest School. The physicality of Forest School activities provide children with opportunities to engage in cognitive, social and emotional risk-taking and self-expression. This may entail the use of gross motor skills to perform movements such as stamping feet in anger or skipping for joy. Communication and language skills enable children to cooperate and negotiate as activities grow in complexity (O'Brien and Murray, 2007; O'Brien, 2009; Cooper, 2015; Harris, 2017; Yildirim and Özyilmaz Akamca, 2017; Cooke, Wong and Press, 2019). The provision of this '*emotional space'* is reported to provide physical space and time for children to express their emotions and to be themselves. From a child's perspective, this provides an exciting and calming atmosphere; connecting physicality with emotional and mental wellbeing (McCree, Cutting and Sherwin, 2018; Bal and Kaya, 2020).

These findings correlate with other studies on the benefits of outdoor environments, which centre around experience-based explorations, creative inquiries of nature and the development of autonomy (Klaar and Öhman, 2014). However, McCree and Cree (2017) state that Forest School differs from other forms of outdoor learning as it comprises of four main distinctive characteristics. These are termed as *learner-centred, play-based, long-term* and *within a wooded area*; all which correlate with the Forest

School Association's (FSA) six guiding principles. These principles cover the frequency and planning of sessions; the Forest School environment; qualifications and professional practice of practitioners and pedagogy (FSA, 2020).

The Forest School ethos is positioned within a social constructivist paradigm, with aims and philosophies centred around carefully designed activities and some free play. Children construct their understanding and meaning making through activities completed with others or by themselves (O'Brien, 2009; Knight, 2018). Learning objectives are delivered through the use of particular methods. This includes learning how to use specialist tools and mastering achievable tasks (O'Brien and Murray, 2007; O'Brien and Lovell, 2011). McCree, Cutting and Sherwin (2018) liken Forest School to the Aesop Fable '*The Hare and the Tortoise'*, as the emphasis on restorative and affective learning processes occurs at the child's own pace (the tortoise). Lessons are therefore adapted accordingly and children experience learning in an outdoor environment (Waters and Begley, 2007).

The approach is considered to be informal or alternative but can be blended with curricula, such as the EYFS and National Curriculum. The fostering of observation and the use of natural and sustainable resources means that Forest School complements other pedagogical approaches and philosophies; notably the Montessori method, the REA and SWE (Knight, 2009; Coates and Pimlott-Wilson, 2019). This includes the fostering of resilience, confidence, independence and creativity, which are underpinned by Forest School principles. The prosocial aspect of practice is also facilitated through opportunities to develop a learner's motivation and positive attitudes (FSA, 2020).

Empirical research provides more insight into how prosocial behaviours and skills are promoted though Forest School principles and practise. Harris' (2017) interviews with Forest School Leaders (FSLs) reported that experiences in the outdoor environment developed turn-taking, negotiation, listening to each other, helping and cooperation. However, one interviewee commented that '*children were encouraged…*' (p.278), suggesting that not all behaviours were child-initiated. A plausible explanation arises from a participatory evaluation of Forest School, conducted by O'Brien and Murray (2006). They report that an unfamiliar environment may lead to some children needing more time to adjust and become comfortable, before developing the confidence to participate. The FSL therefore facilitates the relationship children build with nature by encouraging their engagement with activities and scaffolding their learning (FSA, 2020).

While research on Forest School provides evidence pertaining to prosocial development, it should be noted that the majority of research has focused on preschoolers and primary school aged children, with very few studies carried out with infants and toddlers. White (2014) claims that there is limited knowledge and evidence pertaining to the experiences of the birth to three years in outdoor environments and its contribution to their wellbeing and development. She adds that risk aversion and avoidance, and the vulnerability of very young children, may contribute to decisions regarding appropriate environments for this age group. Hence, if few settings are providing Forest School sessions with the under-threes, it could be argued that this limits opportunities for researchers to fill this gap in research and inform the sector's understanding of the benefits of Forest School with infants and toddlers.

Considering that infants require sensory-rich experiences to support cognitive development, as asserted by Montessori in section 3.7, Forest School provides an ideal environment for sensorial stimuli. Horvath (n.d.) articulates that for infants, Forest School sessions mirror those of regular programmes in terms of frequency and routine. Sessions may be shorter and require appropriate ratios and adult attention to address concerns raised about risk. Gerber (1979c) asserts that adults should use their judgement when considering whether it is suitable to take infants outside, taking into account the importance of providing appropriate clothing and protection, such as sunscreen and umbrellas.

Concerns pertaining to risk aversion are challenged in a study by Partridge and Taylor (2011), who provide a rare insight into a Forest School session for infants, toddlers and their parents. This study was conducted through a Sure Start children's centre, with an emphasis on activities and parent feedback. In addition to the positive outcomes promoted by the programme, findings also made reference to prosocial skills and behaviours. These were observed during child-led activities which promoted turn-taking, sharing and being sensitive to the feelings of others. A further outcome, which is absent from other Forest School studies, related to how the sessions and prosocial engagement promoted attachment between parents and their children. As previously discussed, early attachments play a pivotal role in the development of prosocial behaviours, hence Forest School can provide early childhood practitioners and teachers with the opportunity to enhance those bonds outside the confines of the indoor setting. This research demonstrated that the context and setting which pedagogical and curricula approaches are delivered in may provide different outcomes, depending on the parties and age groups involved.

While Forest School was initially set up for early childhood provision, it has since been employed across wider age groups and providers. This includes primary and secondary schools, adult learning, rehabilitation and provision for senior citizens (Knight, 2011; Waite and Goodenough, 2018). Its popularity has led to concerns pertaining to its adoption and the skills and expertise of those delivering the sessions. This was raised in a study by Mackinder (2017) in which the outcomes of Forest School lessons were impacted by the training levels and pedagogical knowledge of teachers. A teacher who had undertaken full FSL training, placed greater emphasis on autonomy, sensitivity and stimulation in her planned sessions. In comparison, a colleague who attended day courses on Forest School had a more limited understanding of the Forest School ethos and principles. This resulted in missed opportunities for effective learning. Leather (2018) warns that the commodification of Forest School and utilising lower skilled practitioners to deliver standardised activities, may lead to a lack of awareness of the cultural context of Forest School. This may consequently limit opportunities for children to fully engage with the Forest School experience.

In summary, McCree, Cutting and Sherwin (2018) note that the success of Forest Schools is dependent on settings embracing a cultural change. In their project, this resulted in a more dedicated and sustainable approach in incorporating an affective outdoor ethos. However, there is a risk of some Forest School programmes being short-term and tokenistic rather than long-term, with aspects of the approach being diluted or developed rapidly (Tiplady and Menter, 2020). Hence, while this section has considered the holistic benefits of Forest School and its implications for prosocial development, unless the principles and philosophies are fully embraced and supported by highly skilled and trained FSLs, there is a risk that provision will not reflect the genuine ethos and pedagogy of Forest School.

3.12 The HighScope Approach

The final curriculum explored in this chapter is the HighScope approach. It is conceived as an integrated, holistic and comprehensive curriculum, which addresses all areas of learning and is tailored to the child. As with the REA, HighScope is informed by several theorists and philosophies. The first is Dewey's philosophy on children following their own interests and learning from doing. This supports Piaget's belief on children's experiences shaping their knowledge and understanding of the world, with an emphasis on active learning (Holt, 2007; Epstein and Schweinhart, 2018). This constructivist approach is similar to the Montessori method, in terms of practitioners

and teachers preparing the environment and placing the child at the centre of the educational programme. However, whereas Montessori settings have well defined curriculum materials, HighScope provides a wider variety of materials and places more emphasis on assessment (Elkind, 2003), meaning it shares commonality with the EYFS (DfE, 2017).

HighScope additionally draws on a socio-cultural understanding of learning, through direct experiences with social, cultural and material environments. Children are participants and co-constructors of knowledge; provided with opportunities to explore and manipulate materials, choose activities which are of interest to them and integrate new experiences into existing knowledge (Michael-Luna and Heimer, 2012; Epstein and Schweinhart, 2018). For the birth to three years age group, the concept of active learning gives consideration to all their needs. This includes security, companionship and movement. As with Montessori, Steiner and Pikler approaches, there is an emphasis on learning through the whole body and its senses, with infants and toddlers learning in an environment comprised of trusting relationships (Cró, Pinho and Andreucci, 2011).

HighScope shares some similarities with the REA in terms of its use of pedagogical documentation and observation. While the REA works on the premise of long-term projects, HighScope focuses on a short-term approach through the sessional *Plan, Do, Review*. The practitioner or teacher meets with small groups of children and each child presents a plan relating to what they wish to do during their work time. Depending on the age of the child, this may be through pointing to an area or describing the materials they plan to use and explaining what they will do with them. Children's plans are documented through different methods, such as drawing, photography and writing. The adult may use questions for clarification and support the connection of ideas and plans through reflection. This might include discussions on why different plans were made, what resources will be used or how the child plans on completing an activity (Copple, 2003). The role of reflection promotes higher level processes and develops self-regulation and executive functioning, which in turn act as foundations for future academic learning (Epstein and Schweinhart, 2018).

The *'Do'* stage (work time) comprises of child-initiated activities, with the practitioner or teacher spending some time interacting with the children. In recent years, scaffolding has promoted individualised learning and through the use of observation, adults can extend a child's learning to their next developmental level. This may incorporate a mix of encouragement, modelling and helping children to reflect, which leads into the

'Review' or '*Recall'* stage of the approach (Epstein and Schweinhart, 2018). This follows clean-up time, when work time concludes. In small groups, children may bring something they played with or describe what they did with materials, providing details on how they solved problems encountered during the activity and who else was involved. The *Plan, Do, Review* routine creates an interdependent and reflective relationship between the adult and child (Epstein and Schweinhart, 2018). The practitioner or teacher is considered to be capable and confident, guaranteeing children one-to-one interaction to support their progress. Rather than telling them what to learn and how to learn, adults use empowerment and challenging questions. Patience and encouragement are used to explore natural openings to converse with children and solicit problem-solving ideas. This enables children to develop self-confidence and consider multiple perspectives when faced with material challenges or social conflicts. This gives the child control over their learning and positions adults as supporters of development (Hohmann and Weikart, 1995; Gourd, 2014; Epstein and Schweinhart, 2018).

A further departure from the REA relates to HighScope having a curriculum framework. This comprises of developmentally appropriate practice (DAP), centred around five principles of *Active Learning; Learning Environment; Daily Routine; Adult-Child Interaction* and *Assessment* (Wiltshire, 2012). Within this are four domains of development: *Social-Emotional; Physical; Cognitive* and *Language* (Michael-Luna and Heimer, 2012). These domains, with the exception of Cognitive, mirror the prime areas of development in the EYFS (DfE, 2017a). However, there are differences between the Infant and Toddler Wheel of Learning and the Preschool Curriculum key developmental indicators (KDIs); HighScope's version of ELGs.

For infants and toddlers, there is more emphasis on caregiving routines and transitions, particularly with arrivals and departures. A precursor of the preschool *Plan Do Review* is presented as a *Child-Initiated Choice Time*, with group time matching developmental needs by being more fluid and adult-led (Wiltshire, 2012). Learning is centred around six content areas: *Approaches to Learning; Social and Emotional Development; Physical Language and Health; Communication, Language and Literacy; Cognitive Development; Creative Arts*. Within these content areas are eight interdependent KDIs. These cover *Distinguishing Self and Others; Attachment; Relationships with Adults; Relationships with Peers; Emotions; Empathy; Playing with Others* and *Group Participation* (HighScope, 2017). These support several key developmental milestones comprised of *Regulating Behaviour, Forming Attachments with Caregivers, Seeing Themselves as Capable* and *Being Able to Differentiate*

Themselves from Others (Epstein, 2009 cited in Epstein, 2014). The KDIs and developmental milestones support young children with developing prosocial dispositions through active learning and their relationships with others (Wiltshire, 2019).

Once children transition into preschool, the curriculum includes *Mathematics; Science and Technology* and *Social Studies* with *Communication,* with *Language and Literacy* changed to *Language, Literacy and Communication* (HighScope, 2020a; 2020b). The KDIs also differ, covering *Self-Identity; Sense of Competence; Emotions; Community; Building Relationships* and *Conflict Resolution.* Three further KDIs are specific to prosocial behaviours and traits, covering *Empathy, Cooperative Play* and *Moral Development*. The latter area refers to the development of '*ethical behaviour*', i.e. moral principles (Epstein, 2014). From reviewing the HighScope curriculum, it would appear that prosocial development follows a developmental trajectory, which grows in complexity as children's cognitive, communication and social skills mature. This means that the KDIs are relevant to the age group being worked with, rather than remaining the same across all age groups as in the case of the EYFS ELGs.

The meaningful interactions between children and adults occur through real-life activities, arising from *Plan Do Review* (Epstein and Schweinhart, 2018). Further prosocial behaviours are evident within descriptors of KDIs, such as *Conflict Resolution*, which uses cooperation as part of a negotiation process. Cognitive development is clearly intertwined within personal, social and emotional development. This provides children with opportunities to problem-solve, resolve social conflicts, create and experience collaborative play and express their choices, plans and decisions (Holt, 2007). Practitioners play a key role in promoting a positive sense of self within the children, working as a facilitator.

As with other approaches discussed in this chapter, HighScope has also been adopted by early childhood settings internationally. The first HighScope pilot project was carried out in the UK in 1984 and was seen to be 'cutting edge' in light of its emphasis on active learning (Wiltshire, 2019). While in 1990, London became the first international setting outside of the United States to deliver HighScope, Schweinhart (2010, p.164) stresses that programmes which have been inspired by the HighScope Perry Preschool program have '*seldom if fully replicated it'.* This is due to several influential factors, notably inadequate funding, changes to social conditions and various conceptions of early childhood programmes. HighScope also works on the premise of teachers and assistant teachers engaging in extensive parent outreach, having small classes of no more than sixteen children and having relevant training and a validated

curriculum model in their programmes. This may present challenges for practitioners in other countries, who may be unable to access relevant training and funding to ensure they are delivering HighScope programmes effectively or may be more restricted, due to policy and legislation. HighScope is therefore another curriculum approach which needs to be considered within local and national contexts.

3.13 Chapter Summary

To conclude this chapter, the exploration of prosociality within the context of early childhood curricula and pedagogy, has drawn attention to several significant points. Firstly, there are some gaps in research on specific types of infant-toddler provision, including Forest School and the Pikler approach in other types of settings. Provision in early childhood promotes child-initiated learning activities and opportunities, with adults playing a supportive role. A further finding pertains to the role of context, in relation to how settings may adopt or subscribe to an additional curriculum or pedagogical approach. The tools provided by teachers can create classrooms which flourish in prosocial interactions, such as helpfulness, caring and modelling kindness (Honig, 1999). However, teachers and practitioners need to be prepared to understand why some practices may work in specific contexts and others do not (Nganga, Madrid Akpovo and Kambutu, 2020).

Furthermore, the early childhood sector in England is shaped by a statutory curriculum, which sets out pre-determined targets and expectations as to what children should be working towards. While this ideally allows for the identification of areas of development that might require more support, concerns about a growing emphasis on formal learning have been raised by early childhood experts and campaign groups (as discussed in section 3.5, above). This additionally raises the question as to whether the development and nurturing of crucial prosocial behaviours, such as cooperation, risk being side-lined in favour of a greater emphasis on self-regulation and behaviour management.

My study provides an opportunity to address the gap in research pertaining to the birth to three years age group, particularly in relation to Steiner, Pikler and Forest School provision. Furthermore, my intention to explore how prosociality is promoted and nurtured within the context of different curricula and pedagogies, will contribute new knowledge as to how early childhood settings utilise more than one approach to learning and development. Part III, below, will discuss and critique research paradigms and methods that will enable me to investigate these under-researched areas.

PART III Research Design

Chapter Four: Critical Reflection and Ethical Considerations

4.1 Introduction

The focus of Chapter Four is the importance of ethical research in relation to my study. In the sections that follow, I analyse the concept of insider-outsider research and key issues pertaining to the concepts of assent and consent when working with very young children. Consideration is given to the challenges of conducting research with the birth to three years age group, through the presentation of an initial exploratory study. This supports my selection of a suitable research methodology and data collection methods. The findings from this initial study provides context, pertaining to how it shaped and finalised my research focus.

4.2 Insider or Outsider Researcher: My Positionality

Scholars undertaking professional doctorates often conduct research within their own establishments as a means of exploring and developing pedagogical knowledge (Saunders, 2007; Burton and Bartlett, 2009). This decision may be due to convenience or a desire to investigate an aspect of one's own practice or institution (Mercer, 2007). This form of inquiry positions the doctoral scholar as an insider-researcher, with Pring (2010) warning that the privileged position of the researcher may impact on their ability to be objective and impartial. As a Senior Lecturer in Early Childhood working in a Higher Education Institution, my research interests were external to my day-to-day practice. I was interested in the practical side of early childhood provision, which stemmed from my former role as an early childhood practitioner working in the PVI sector. Initially, I had considered continuing my postgraduate research on the graduate-led workforce in early childhood (see Appendix X i and ii, Papers 1 and 2). However, as outlined in Chapter One (section 1.2), the research for my publication provided me with an opportunity to explore a different aspect of provision.

In this context, my work setting was not suited to my study, and I therefore needed to identify and contact settings which were able to meet the aims and criteria of my research topic. At the start of my doctoral journey, I considered myself to be an outsider-researcher. I based this on the fact that I had no prior employment or consistent professional connections with the nurseries, playgroups and schools at the centre of my study. Bonner and Tollhurst (2002) consider outsider-researchers to be more objective, allowing them to identify subtle differences in practice. Further reading

and reflection on the subject of positionality, challenged my assumptions as to the type of researcher I was. Dwyer and Buckle (2009) define an insider-researcher as someone who shares a characteristic, role or experience relating to the study subject. This meant that my prior knowledge and experience of early childhood practice, and understanding of setting hierarchies and policies, positioned me as an insider-researcher. Unluer (2012) stresses that working in this capacity can result in insider-researchers making assumptions, affecting their ability to see the bigger picture. Furthermore, the researcher must remain alert to avoid projecting their own experience and using it as a lens to view and understand the experiences of research participants (Berger, 2015b). Bonner and Tollhurst (2002) acknowledge that researcher bias is an issue but add that insiders have the advantage of finding it easier to gain acceptance, trust and cooperation, and are less inclined to construct stereotypes.

During the first visit to one of the research settings, the nursery manager disclosed that she had accepted my invitation for the setting to be a case study, once she learned I was an experienced National Nursery Examination Board (NNEB) Nursery Nurse. She said having information about my professional background made her feel confident that I would not be judgemental about the setting's practice. This reflects Dwyer and Buckle's (2009) statement that a benefit of membership to a group is gaining acceptance. Persons considered to be 'outsiders' may be more closed off, in terms of gaining entry to settings. For those who do gain access, their presence in the setting may be seen as obtrusive and this can have an impact on data collection (Papatheodorou, Luff and Gill, 2013).

Breen (2007, p.165) articulates the complexities of moving between an insider and outsider identity, presenting a further concept referred to as '*in the middle'.* According to Kersetter (2012), this is a means of occupying different spaces which are dependent on the context of the research. The 'space between' (Kersetter 2012, p.101) creates a multidimensional space encompassing researcher identity, cultural backgrounds, the type of research setting and the relationship with research participants. Hellawell (2006) adds that the notion of insider-outsider research means that in some circumstances, individuals can be considered an insider and others, an outsider. My prior knowledge and experience enabled me to understand the different contexts in which behaviours were applied, something that may be more challenging for an outsider researcher (Papatheodorou, Luff and Gill, 2013).

4.3 Researching Prosocial Behaviour

The study of prosocial behaviour and development may be conducted as research *about* children or research *with* children. The former positions children as 'objects', with research controlled and influenced by adults. This may raise ethical issues as the children may be unaware that they are being researched, raising a further issue pertaining to consent (Penn, 2014). Research which positions children as 'subjects' ensures they are integral to the research design. This means that children are aware that they are being researched but the study remains adult-led and adult-designed (Bolshaw and Josephidou, 2019). To support the planning of my research, I had to consider how the children would be involved and how my research could be conducted ethically.

For studies that involve children, Shaw, Brady and Davey (2011) advise conducting a pilot with age groups similar to those partaking in the final study. This acts as a valuable means of pre-testing instruments during the design stage of a research project. It provides researchers with a means of identifying potential design flaws and practical problems (van Teijlingen and Hundley, 2001; Gallagher, 2009). Prior to finalising my data collection methods and receiving confirmation from settings agreeing to be case studies, I carried out a short activity at a local early childhood setting. This was an exploratory study to determine whether young children could be active co-researchers in my study, or whether an adult-led approach was more suited to researching prosociality.

4.4 Initial Exploratory Study

The exploratory study was carried out with a random sample of children aged between 24- and 36-months. The aim was to provide them with some simple research tools and determine whether they could collect data independently. The children were asked to take photographs or draw pictures of activities they could do by themselves, such as washing hands. This method is considered suitable in accessing children's views and documenting their experiences (Bruce, Louis and McCall, 2015; Clark, 2017). Observing the process and making notes allowed me to reflect on whether having children as co-researchers would benefit my research on prosocial behaviour. I presented the findings during a doctoral workshop, with my colleagues acting as critical friends. This enabled me to formulate the final research methods and start to consider how data would be analysed (see Appendix X iii, Paper 3, for the full account of the exploratory study).

One question presented by a colleague, related to what contribution the use of images and creative media would make in answering my research questions. Several challenges were identified through the exploratory study, notably children having difficulty using a digital camera and not being able or willing to discuss their photographs with me. I reflected on these issues and rationalised that the methods I had considered may not be suited for a study investigating prosociality. Alternative approaches to data collection were therefore considered and the use of observation appeared to be suited to the age group I was researching. Borgers, de Leeuw and Hox (2000) articulate that observations are more suited to younger age groups, particularly when they are still developing cognition, language and literacy. Given the focus of my research, I felt observations alone would not provide enough information about prosocial development. I sought out literature to determine how prosocial behaviours and development have been researched and reported. The aim was to consider alternative data collection methods more suited to answering my research questions. The choice of research methods would also impact on potential engagement and interactions with the children, so I needed to consider how they could safely participate in my doctoral research.

4.5 Young Children's Consent and Assent

A further complexity of conducting research with very young children relates to how informed consent and assent can be attained. Through my review of the literature, two key issues emerged that would require consideration when planning the data collection stage of my study. The first relates to the issue of gaining assent from the children. While parents may permit their child to participate in research, this does not necessarily reflect the child's desire to participate. The second issue pertains to infants becoming distressed in the presence of an unfamiliar adult.

Informed consent from adult participants comprises of a formal contract of agreement between the researcher and participant, whereas assent pertains to an alternative form of agreement when formal consent cannot be provided. In the case of young children, assent may be a more suitable means of seeking their permission to participate. Pre-verbal children articulate their enthusiasm or refusal to participate in a different way compared to children who are more verbal (Loue, 2002). Alderson and Morrow (2011) state that children need to be made aware of their right to refuse or drop out. However, very young children may have difficulty articulating their need to withdraw from studies (Dockett, Einarsdottir and Perry, 2009; Hammersley and Traianou, 2012).

Ericsson and Boyd (2017, p.309) stress the importance of researchers adopting an 'ethics of care', which ensures they maintain informed assent to obtain naturalistic data. This comprises of providing options for the child to opt-in and opt-out on a partial, rather than full basis, and not recording interactions if it goes against the children's wishes. For a study involving children who are pre-verbal, there has to be more reliance on their interactions and non-verbal communication. Gestures and facial expressions are considered means of supporting the consent process for children who fall under a pre-verbal or non-verbal category (Alderson and Morrow, 2011). This requires the researcher to carefully observe and monitor responses, as changes may indicate that a child either no longer wishes to participate, or may wish to become involved (Alderson, 2005).

In the case of toddlers, their cognitive and language levels are variable, which can make voluntary assent challenging (Brown et al., 2017). Researchers need to be flexible and respectful, particularly in cases where toddlers express a refusal to participate. If not addressed, there is a risk that a child participant may become distressed, with their feelings and emotional expressions denied (Langston et al., 2004). Hence, to ensure research is ethical with infants and toddlers, the child's age and nature of the inquiry therefore needs to be considered as to whether their participation in a study is appropriate (Lansdown, 1995). The researcher's response to non-verbal cues requires them to be respected, acknowledged and acted on. This means that the interests of the child are paramount and take priority over the research (Green, 2012; Nolan, Macfarlane and Cartmel, 2013).

For children who are more verbal, it is important to seek their assent every time an observation takes place. Respecting their decision not to be observed, even if a parent consents, supports their right to voice their views (Papatheodorou, Luff and Gill, 2013). This was of particular relevance when I collected data from one of the case study settings. A toddler confidently told me I could not join her and her friends outside for a Forest School activity. This confirmed her right to refuse to be observed and I respected this decision and made arrangements to observe another group of children, who were agreeable to me carrying out research. This approach to assent was consistent across all settings, where I would ask individuals or groups of children if I could watch them play or work and write down what they did. This complemented earlier explanations by the setting staff, who had prepared the children for my visit, by explaining what I would be doing and why. I supported this by talking to the children about my study, in the context of learning more about what they did and how they played together. In the majority of cases with older infants, toddlers and preschoolers

were welcoming and often keen to show me things, start conversations or engage me in play once they knew I would be documenting this.

4.6 The Stranger-Researcher: Implications for Studying Infants and Toddlers

Carrying out research *with* young children, rather than *about* them may entail talking to and playing with them (Penn, 2014). I was aware that as a visitor to the setting with no prior contact or relationships with the participants, my presence and potential interactions could affect their responses and behaviours (Anderson, 2010). Sargeant and Harcourt (2012) describe a visitor researching in a setting as a '*stranger-researcher'*. Working in this capacity can promote a range of emotional and social responses in very young children. This can range from positive non-verbal communication, such as smiling to displays of anxiety, distress, withdrawal and clinginess (Ainsworth, Bell and Stayton, 1971; Thompson and Lamb, 1983; Woodhead and Faulkner, 2000; Holmes, 2014).

Children's responses have been attributed to studies exploring mother-infant attachments, rather than formal early childhood settings. They are considered to comprise of mostly negative responses and wariness towards others (see Ainsworth, Bell and Stayton, 1971 and Woodhead and Faulkner, 2000). However, Greenberg and Marvin (1982) state that wariness comprises of avoidant behaviours that do not necessarily constitute concern. Sroufe (1977) argues that responses are only negative if a stranger acts intrusively, i.e. invading an infant's space. An example of these reactions is evident in Blaisdell's (2012) study, which was set in a local authority nursery. She reported that when she was in close proximity to one infant, they displayed non-verbal, avoidant behaviour. This response could indicate a child's unwillingness to participate in research and reaffirms the importance of considering how very young children communicate their agreement or refusal to participate in research studies.

4.7 Ethical Considerations During Data Collection

Following the consolidation of research methods, I opted to use observations as a means of capturing children's experiences. The aim was to record their daily play, activities and interactions and then analyse instances of potential prosocial behaviours and actions from the data. The observations allowed me to record incidents of minor conflict and disagreements, such as children taking ownership of another's possessions. This provided insight into how children resolved disagreements or were supported by adults in responding more prosocially towards

others. However, in some cases, aggressive conflict between children and challenging behaviour presented me with an ethical dilemma. I felt that ethically it was inappropriate to record these incidents. Firstly, the situations led to the distress of others and secondly, I felt they did not add anything relevant in the context of my study. This supports Palaiologou's (2019) advice that ethical considerations should include what information is collected, with unnecessary information on children avoided or limited. While I am aware that recording these incidents could have highlighted a typology of unwanted behaviours and contrast the prosocial behaviours, I was mindful to keep the focus on my research aims and questions. I added comments on my observation notes to indicate why specific observations were paused, and time-stamped when they were able to resume. This was in cases where children re-settled and continued with their activities or I opted to observe elsewhere, while the unwanted behaviours were being dealt with.

4.8 Chapter Summary

Carrying out research with children can be an ethical minefield in the absence of critical reflection. Taking this into account, this chapter has explored and reflected on some key ethical dilemmas of studying the birth to three years age group. My researcher positionality and identity has been scrutinised in light of the importance of having a 'middle ground', to allow for flexibility and adaption when studying across a diverse range of settings. Consideration has been given to ensure an ethics of care is utilised to make the children feel secure and respected. The importance of understanding when it is and when it is not appropriate to conduct research with very young children has also been explored. Further issues pertaining to the collection, analysis and dissemination of research findings are considered further in Chapters Five, Six and Seven.

Chapter Five: Methodology and Methods

5.1 Introduction

Chapter Five articulates the methods and approaches used in the preparation, delivery and analysis of my research project. It revisits the aims and objectives of the study and presents a contextualised evaluation of the research methods used to investigate prosocial development in other studies. This leads the exploration of my own choice of research paradigm and data collection methods. The identification of suitable early childhood settings and sampling methods are described, followed by summaries of the settings at the centre of my study and details about the participant groups.

5.2 Research Aim and Questions: Revisited

As discussed in Chapter One, this research sought to explore how prosocial behaviours are promoted and nurtured across the birth to three years age group. Hyson and Taylor (2011) articulate that research about prosocial development predominantly focuses on children at home with their families, rather than early childhood settings and programmes. They recommend further exploration of the effects of variations in classroom practice, as a means of establishing their effects on children's prosocial outcomes. This corresponds with the views of Solomon et al. (1988) and Bergin (2014), who state that research has placed more emphasis on academic and intellectual growth through classroom characteristics and teacher behaviours; rather than considering how social skills, attitudes, values or behaviours can be supported. My study aims to address this gap by understanding what practitioners and teachers currently do to promote and nurture prosociality across their settings and what implications this may have for future child development and practice. My thesis will address the under-researched area of prosocial development within formal early childhood provision and the birth to three years age group, in the context of pedagogical approaches and curricula frameworks (Mathers et al., 2014).

Through processes of literature reviews, academic discussions, and the outcomes of the initial exploratory study, the research questions to guide this study were proposed, reviewed, critiqued and redefined (see Chapter One, section 1.5 above). The final questions are confirmed as:

> Question One: What is prosociality within the context of infancy and early childhood provision?

Question Two: How do very young children demonstrate prosocial behaviours and actions through play and activities in early childhood settings?

Question Three: In what ways do early childhood practitioners and teachers use pedagogy and curricula to promote and nurture prosocial behaviours in very young children?

5.3 Researching Prosociality: Quantitative Research Methods

Studying prosociality requires the selection of appropriate tools and consideration as to whether these will encompass quantitative or qualitative methods. The study of prosocial behaviour in quantitative studies often uses traditional 'paper and pencil' measures, such as surveys and questionnaires (Lavrakas, 2008). These are used as a means of measuring emotional and behavioural difficulties and strengths or detecting child psychiatric disorders (Goodman et al., 2000). The most frequently used methods comprise of self-ratings, peer ratings, teacher ratings and / or parent ratings (see Carlo et al., 1996; Yagmurlu and Sanson, 2009). These scales often form part of the Prosocial Orientation Questionnaire or Self-Report Altruism Scale (see Eggum et al., 2011). Further instruments include the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ); Prosocial Behaviour Scale, Prosocial Self-regulation questionnaires and the Prosocial Reasoning Objective measure (see Hartas, 2011; Lam, 2012). While these methods provide insight into rates, trends and patterns, they do not provide explanations as to how or why individuals partake in prosocial activities, such as volunteering (Brookfield, Parry and Bolton, 2018).

The classification of prosocial behaviour falls into one of two categories. The first category, referred to as *global prosocial behaviour measures,* focuses on the personal tendances and social competencies which exhibit prosocial behaviours across a wide range of motives and contexts. However, this measurement does not always consider that different prosocial behaviours have differing personal and situational correlates, e.g. some individuals may help spontaneously, and others help when asked. This may have implications for the validity of research findings as it could limit an investigator's ability to address conceptual questions (Carlo and Randall, 2002). In comparison, the second category of *situation-specific prosocial behaviours* is considered more useful in addressing specific conceptual questions, particularly those which explore the development and correlates of different types of prosocial behaviours. For example, children's reactions to stories which entail a moral dilemma (Richaud, Mesurado and Cortada, 2012). The emphasis on observational and behavioural assessments are considered by Carlo and Randall (2002) to be more ecologically valid when compared

to paper and pencil measures. An example of this type of assessment was explored in the context of infant helping behaviours, which were experimental studies pertaining to picking up and passing dropped items to adults (Liszkowski et al., 2006) (see Chapter Two, section 2.8). However, Carlo and Randall (2002) stress that these measures are susceptible to observer and coding biases. Bergin, Talley and Hamer (2003) add that acts deemed prosocial may also be subject to interpretation by the recipient, which is applicable to both quantitative and qualitative studies. This is something I needed to take into account when approaching my analysis to data.

Overall, quantitative methods are perceived to enhance the comparability of findings across studies (Carlo et al., 1996). However, there have been some concerns raised regarding the validity and reliability of quantitative methods as a measurement of prosociality. Firstly, there is a risk of questionnaires being subjected to exaggeration or prejudice. In the case of socio-metric surveys, children asked to rate or report their peers' prosocial behaviours and attributes may lead to unreliable findings. Augoustinos and Rosewarne (2001) report that younger children will exaggerate differences between themselves and others who are dissimilar, a trait that declines as they grow older. The authors add that cognitive capacity plays a role here, with young children being less able to reconcile different perspectives. Their responses may therefore be inconsistent with social codes. Children deemed more popular or intelligent are more likely to be named in favourable descriptions, even if there is no evidence of a friendship between them and the study participant (Eisenberg and Mussen, 1989).

A further issue concerns studies which explore children's behaviours from the perspectives of parents and teachers, which may produce different results. This is due to variations in children's behaviour, which are influenced by the environment in which they are being studied. For example, a child may be extrovert in the home environment, but more introverted in a classroom. Further investigations into behavioural fluctuations therefore need to be considered and take into account the impact of family socio-economic backgrounds and academic demands posed by schools or the home (Hartas, 2011). One approach is to use qualitative methods, such as open-ended and probing interview questions. This allows for more in-depth content pertaining to lived experiences and personal narratives (Brookfield, Parry and Bolton, 2018). The benefits and limitations of using qualitative methods to study prosocial behaviours are considered in the next section.

5.4 Researching Prosociality: Qualitative Research Methods

Qualitative data plays a role in providing rich descriptions and leading to more in-depth understandings of individual differences and experiences. Leech and Onwuegbuzie (2007) acknowledge that qualitative methodology allows for the study of phenomena in natural settings and can be attached to the experiences of both individuals and groups. It can address process-oriented questions and in educational environments, the validity of interventions or programmes can be explored through cultural and contextual factors. The findings from qualitative studies often complement research which use quantitative measurements (Galambos and Leadbeater, 2000). Examples of this are evident through studies by Eisenberg and Miller (1987) and Furman and Sibthorp (2013), who use mixed methods approaches combining surveys, rating scales and interview questions to determine prosocial behaviours in children, adolescents and adults. However, qualitative methods may be used without quantitative data, such as in Curry et al.'s (2009) study on the altruistic behaviours and attitudes of senior citizens. This research was primarily qualitative, using a phenomenological approach to capture the participants' views and experiences.

The aim of qualitative research is to generate understanding, with an emphasis on reflection. For researchers, a pre-understanding comprised of prior experience, knowledge, insight and / or practice in the sector is considered valuable in gaining access to research phenomena and addressing obstacles associated with it (Stenbacka, 2001). This is a means of ensuring quality by adding a level of transparency to the study and supporting the researcher's reflexive processes and meaning making. The quality of research is heavily dependent on the skills of the researcher, hence there is a risk the data and findings can be influenced by their personal agenda (Anderson, 2010).

As a doctoral researcher, to ensure that my conduct and practice was ethical and credible, it was important to acknowledge my own positionality and its implications for my study. The role of reflexivity is important as it supports the researcher in becoming more self-aware during the research process. It acts as a means of legitimacy and validity in qualitative research by raising questions pertaining to the problems of doing research. It takes into consideration issues such as power, subjectivity and the research process; commencing from the development of research questions to the collection and analysis of the data (Pillow, 2010; Berger, 2015b). Throughout the data collection phases, I kept a journal of any incidents and experiences that occurred during the setting visits. This is referred to by Mukherji and Albon (2015) as an *aide-memoire* and for my study, this comprised of reflections on possible explanations

behind behaviours observed. I also included comments on observations, documents and artefacts notes and interview transcriptions, to support my analysis of the data and identify emerging themes and patterns.

5.5 Adopting a Deweyan Pragmatist Paradigm

The concept of *paradigm* is described by Hartas (2010) as a cognitive structure, which facilitates our understanding of the world. Studies may draw on one or more paradigms to clarify and organise thinking about the research, and these may shift during the research process (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2018, p.9). When used as a qualitative inquiry framework, pragmatism aims to seek practical and useful answers that can solve problems or provide direction and valuable insights to inform action (Patton, 2015, p.152). Patton (2002, p.72) refers to this as '*methodological appropriateness',* adding that not all research questions are theory based, as there is a very practical side to qualitative methods which entail the exploration of real-world settings. Badley (2003, p.307) argues that, in the case of educational research, pragmatism offers a '*working point of view or perspective',* rather than providing a 'recipe' for research or teaching practice. He adds that this paradigm can support both teachers and researchers in becoming more thoughtful and reflective about their teaching activities or research.

As a concept, pragmatism is not easily defined and comprises of different types and perspectives. Classical pragmatists such as Pierce, James and Dewey formulate pragmatism as an alternative to abstract and rationalistic science; fully acknowledging a mutual permeation between knowledge and action (Goldkuhl, 2004). The focus is on experience, realism, anti-scepticism and reflection, with neither scientific knowledge nor common-sense knowledge privileged (Dewey, 1925; Webb, 2007). Biesta and Burbules (2003, p.107) assert that in an educational context, pragmatism allows for '*an understanding of human interaction and communication in thoroughly practical terms*.' Dewey's philosophy on pragmatism was that a more dynamic view of social life, through experiencing, knowing and acting, was required to understand inquiry (Kelly and Cordeiro, 2020). The structures of reality are constructed by interactions of events and the knowledge of themes, with meanings derived through socially shared behaviours (Garrison, 1994). Through my readings on Deweyan pragmatism, I deduced that this paradigm is in itself prosocial, as there is an emphasis on sharing knowledge to improve society and promote democracy (Biesta and Burbles, 2003; Hall, 2013).

Biesta (2014) adds that, for Dewey, education was about establishing a productive and meaningful connection between the child and the curriculum. In the context of pedagogy, a shift in understanding knowledge and curriculum from a domain of certainty to one of possibility is required. Deweyan pragmatism centres around clarifying the meaning of terms or ideas (Norwich, 2020), which would support my first research question in understanding prosociality in the context of infancy and early childhood provision. The emphasis on the child and curriculum resonates with my own research interests, hence I considered adopting a Deweyan pragmatist paradigm. Prior to my decision, I reviewed further literature on other well-known pragmatists and came across neo-pragmatism. The works of Davidson, Rescher and Rorty, extend the work of Dewey and Pierce, but place greater emphasis on the role of linguistics (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Webb (2012) argues that Rorty's version of pragmatism was antithetical to Dewey's, characterising pragmatism as a series of choices between alternatives, such as constructive or therapeutic. Webb (2012) adds that recent versions of pragmatism fail to incorporate the insight and value of classical pragmatism. This reiterated my initial thoughts that my doctoral research was suited to Deweyan pragmatism.

Weaver (2018) claims that pragmatism does not commit to a singular system of philosophy or reality. Instead, the reality is created by individuals in an ever-evolving world. It is considered a worldview or philosophy in which researchers have freedom in their techniques and research procedures (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). Pragmatism is therefore commonly associated with mixed methods research, considering its flexibility in choosing methods that meet the purpose of the inquiry and, sometimes, the needs of the setting being researched (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011; Creamer, 2018). Denscombe (2003) asserts that the choice of research problems, methods and meanings arising from findings are dependent on the context in which they occur. This means that knowledge is provisional and a product of the times, hence reflexivity is needed to ensure researchers are able to avoid naive assumptions. The complexity of studying a range of settings following different pedagogical philosophies and curricula, provided an opportunity to consider how I could utilise a mixed methods approach. This is given further consideration in section 5.11.

5.6 A Multiple Case Study Approach

One of the challenges studying prosocial behaviour within formal early childhood provision, pertains to the diversity and breadth of the sector. Upon deliberation of research methods available to me, I opted to select a case study approach which is used extensively in educational research as a means of capturing or interrogating the 'real world' (Atkins and Wallace, 2015). A case study considers a setting to be an integrated unit and studies it holistically (Check and Schutt, 2012). It is considered flexible enough to explore complex research questions, within a variety of contexts and situations (Darke, Shanks and Broadbent, 1998; Atkins and Wallace, 2012).

Multiple case studies centre around a specific issue or contemporary facet, which are generally bounded. This bounding may relate to an organisation, person or other social phenomena. It is perceived to be an 'all-encompassing' method, which embraces different epistemological orientations and methods of data collection (Yin 2012; 2014). They can be used to illustrate a particular issue from different perspectives, such as exploring a particular programme of study (Creswell and Poth, 2018). Considering that I was exploring more than one type of curriculum and pedagogical approach, using multiple settings would allow me to explore differences in practice and the contexts in which prosocial behaviours are promoted and nurtured (Bassey, 1999; Denscombe, 2014).

Multiple case studies also allow for the cross-case analysis and comparison of specific phenomena in diverse settings (Darke, Shanks and Broadbent, 1998). Gustafsson (2017) adds that they provide opportunities for the researcher to understand similarities and differences between the cases. However, Stake (2006) contrasts this view, stating that multiple case studies are not designed for comparing cases. Instead, they aim to produce a better understanding of the phenomena being studied. For pragmatists, case studies provide valuable practical details for identifying a mix of distinctive features, commonalities across cases and evaluating personal and social choices (Jacobs, 2012). However, case studies can also present problems, notably the quantity of data collected. Researchers therefore need to consider the best strategy to analyse their findings (Yin, 2014).

5.7 Identification and Sampling of Suitable Settings

Following the selection of the multiple case study approach, I was tasked with identifying settings to take part in my research. For the purpose of this study, I opted to approach early childhood providers located within the PVI sector. With the exception of childminders, the majority of settings in this part of the sector are group-based and include day nurseries, preschools and children's centres (Rutter, 2016). Compared to settings in the maintained sector, the PVI sector has a higher percentage of two and three-year olds in attendance, with many settings offering provision for the under-twos (DfE, 2015b). While some maintained schools offer places for two-year olds, this is subject to families meeting eligibility criteria to receive early education funding (Cory, 2015; Greene et al., 2015; Panayiotou et al., 2017; UK Government, 2021).

Taking into consideration the scope and breadth of the PVI sector, I used a process of elimination and criterion sampling to ensure that the settings, pedagogical approaches, curricula and children's ages correlated with the aims and objectives of the research. This form of purposeful sampling allows researchers to select cases which meet specific criteria and illuminate the questions under study (Patton, 2002; Bailey, 2007). Settings were identified through a mix of existing professional contacts, registered charities and internet searches. This ensured that I included settings with whom I had no prior connection, reducing the risk of preconceptions. To ensure that settings were suited to my study, I set out inclusion and exclusion criteria which are presented in Table 5.1.

Criteria	Inclusion / Exclusion Decisions
Infant Provision	Settings had to provide childcare or activities for infants under the age of two-years. Provision had to be on-site or within local walking distance from the main nursery (in cases where settings had an annex or additional building). **Note:** the youngest age accepted by settings was 14-weeks (three-months).
Group-Based Setting	Day nurseries, independent schools and playgroups were considered due to higher numbers of children in attendance. These had to be on non-domestic premises and inspected by Ofsted and / or the Schools Inspection Service (SIS)[1]
Located in England	Settings located in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland were not considered for this study in light of devolution. Each of these regions have adopted different early childhood frameworks, legislation and curricula. These would have presented a more complex system of provision and practice to explore. All settings selected for my research were therefore located in England with other parts of the United Kingdom considered for future research, post-doctoral study.
Curriculum and Pedagogical Approach	Settings subscribing to other curricula and pedagogical approaches needed to be registered under appropriate professional bodies (where appropriate) and have staff qualified / trained in the approach being delivered. • Setting delivering the Montessori method to be registered under Montessori St Nicholas Charity and / or Montessori Evaluation and Accreditation Board (MEAB). • Setting delivering Steiner Waldorf education to be registered with the Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship. • Forest School setting to have a Forest School accredited award achieved via a Forest School Associated (FSA) registered and endorsed trainer. • HighScope, Reggio Emilia and Pikler staff to have undertaken relevant training and certification. This was confirmed via setting websites and from discussions with managers and owners during the recruitment stage.

Table 5.1: Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria to Support Sampling of Settings

[1] The SIS closed in 2019 and all inspections are now conducted by Ofsted.

5.8 Gatekeeping and Confirmation of Setting Participation

Following the identification of settings, the next step was to acquire expressions of interest to participate in the study. Negotiations with gatekeepers, i.e. managers and setting owners, took place between September 2016 and June 2017 via telephone. The intention was to discuss the aims of the study, answer initial questions pertaining to the research and to determine whether the setting was interested in receiving more information, to make an informed decision on whether to be used as a case study. A letter containing information on the research and how data would be collected and anonymised was then mailed / emailed to the settings (see Appendix IX i). Further opportunities for gatekeepers to ask questions and spend time consulting with the colleagues and teams was also provided. A copy of my letter of approval, which was sent to the case study settings, can be located in Appendix I.

Dockett and Perry (2011) state that several levels of gatekeeping may need to be negotiated, which can either hinder or facilitate the researcher's access to settings. For example, proprietors may give permission and then delegate further permission through the setting managers. I ensured that managers and owners were aware that I would need to seek further consent from parents and carers for the first part of my study, and then from practitioners and teachers for the second part. As someone who was not working at the setting or known to the families, one challenge that may have affected my study related to settings being reluctant to participate. This could be due to concerns about children being vulnerable, or fears that reports on services and provision may be critical or negative (Smith, 2011). It was therefore important to disclose how the data would be collected and used and to ensure settings were clear about my research aims, questions and approaches. This was to ensure that they were aware that my study was not aiming to judge practice and workplace culture, as the emphasis was on children's prosocial development within the context of curriculum frameworks and pedagogical approaches (see Appendix IX ii; iii; iv).

5.9 Contextual Background on the Early Childhood Settings

Written gatekeeper permission was received by the early childhood settings agreeing to participate in the study as case studies. Settings were located in six counties across four regions, comprised of private day nurseries, playgroups and an independent school. The characteristics of the settings were diverse, with some situated in rural or coastal areas and others in towns and villages. Some settings had been providing their services for more than 20-years, with several members of staff employed for over a decade. Other settings were relatively new to the sector, having been in operation for

seven years or less. All settings had been rated as Good or Outstanding by Ofsted or the School Inspection Service (SIS) at their most recent inspection.

The composition of staff varied, representing a diverse range of roles and levels of experience. Staff qualifications also reflected different levels of expertise, with practitioners who had worked in the sector for over 25-years holding older or discontinued awards, such as the NNEB Diploma in Nursery Nursing. Younger practitioners and those who had joined the sector in more recent years, had completed or were in the process of completing a qualification through Further Education Institutions or as a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ). These ranged from Level 2 to Level 3 courses with the former level providing practitioners with the basic knowledge and skills relevant to their area of work, and the latter level developing skills and knowledge further (Ofqual, 2015). This included the Early Years Educator (EYE) qualification, introduced in 2014 to address disparities pertaining to the quality of training (Nutbrown 2012a; 2012b; DfE, 2013a). A smaller number of practitioners had studied or were completing Higher Education courses, ranging from Foundation degrees (Level 5), full Bachelor of Arts in an early childhood specialism (Level 6) or a Masters (Level 7). This reflects a general trend in the early childhood sector in England, in which staff in group-based settings and childminders are less likely to be qualified to degree level, when compared to school-based nurseries and reception classes (DfE, 2018b; Bonetti, 2019).

Table 5.2 presents each of the settings, along with the approximate numbers of children and staff at the time of data collection. All settings were on the Early Years Register and, with the exception of the Pikler setting, delivered the EYFS, with the majority additionally subscribing to one or more other curricula or pedagogical approaches (DfE, 2017a). An overview of each setting follows Table 5.2., which has been arranged according to the core approach or curriculum which informs their practice and values.

Core Curriculum / Pedagogy	Location	Approximate Number of Children on Roll	Minimum – Maximum Age of Children (inc. holiday clubs)	Number of Staff
EYFS	Essex	103	3 months – 10 years	19
Montessori Method	Suffolk	173	3 months – 5 years	26
Reggio Emilia Approach	East Midlands	224	3 months – 12 years	38
Steiner Waldorf	Berkshire	64	3 years – 6 years (Kindergarten) 6 years – 14 years (Lower School)	5 10
Pikler Approach	Berkshire	20[2]	3 months – 36 months	1
Forest School	Norfolk	42	3 months – 5 years	8
HighScope	Lancashire	45	6 months – 10 years	12

Table 5.2: Summary of Settings Participating in the Research

5.9.1 Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) (Essex)

The EYFS setting is a private day nursery, based in a rural part of Essex. It caters for children aged between three-months and five-years attending on a full-time or part-time basis. It additionally runs holiday clubs for children up to the age of 10-years. The setting is solely focused on delivering the EYFS, with no additional pedagogical approaches or influences integrated into practice. To differentiate this setting from the others included in this study, it shall be referred to as the mainstream EYFS nursery. The staff have varying levels of experience and qualifications, ranging from Level 2 trained apprentices to degree level graduates, including an early years teacher. The Preschool Room receives weekly visits from a primary education teacher, who holds qualified teacher status (QTS). The setting works closely with other professionals who make a valuable contribution to provision, such as a sports coach.

[2] Figure comprises of children from both the Pikler Parent and Child and Steiner Family Groups

5.9.2 Montessori Method (Suffolk)

The Montessori setting is a private nursery and preschool situated in a town in Suffolk. It works as a traditional Montessori school and caters for children from the age of three-months to five-years. It is part of a small group of Montessori settings and the staff comprise of qualified Montessori trained teachers and early childhood practitioners. Their qualification levels range from Level 2 to undergraduate or postgraduate qualifications and awards. The majority of staff have been trained or are receiving training in the Montessori method. Provision for infants comprises of age-appropriate equipment and activities to scaffold their development and support their transition into the toddler classroom. At the time of the research, the setting was introducing Forest School sessions. This allowed for more structured activities to take place in the local woodland and outdoor area and was reported to complement Montessorian principles and the EYFS framework.

5.9.3 Reggio Emilia Approach (East Midlands)

The Reggio Emilia setting is a large private day nursery, situated in a town in the East Midlands. It has a neighbouring site located in another part of the region and caters for children aged between eight-weeks to five-years old. Additionally, it runs a holiday club for children up to the age of 12-years. The setting is inspired by the principles and philosophy of the Reggio Emilia approach, with a consistent focus on project work and reflection across all age groups. The setting staff vary in experience and levels of qualifications, ranging from Level 2 apprentices to a senior member of staff studying for her Masters. In addition to following the EYFS and adopting the Reggio Emilia approach into practice, the setting also runs Forest School sessions. At the time of the research, these were delivered by a Forest School Leader, who was in the process of completing his Level 3 qualification in Forest School Leadership. Forest School experiences were also being rolled out to the Baby and Toddler Rooms and these were run on-site at the nursery. The Preschool Room attends Forest School off-site in the local public park and woodland area and engage in the full Forest School experience, which includes den making and using the fire pit.

5.9.4 Steiner Waldorf Education (Berkshire)

The Steiner Waldorf Education setting is an independent school located in a civil parish in Berkshire. The school caters for children aged between three-years and 14-years and hosts a weekly Family Group, which works by the Steiner Waldorf principles. This playgroup is for infants and their siblings covering the three-months to 36-months age range. At the time of the study, the Class Leader had made an allowance to have four-year olds in attendance. Unlike other settings partaking in the research, parents and carers attend the sessions with their children. The group can host up to eight families and sessions last for approximately two-hours and fifteen minutes, with some elements replicating the routine of the Kindergarten. Children attending this group may have siblings in the Kindergarten or Lower School, or parents may wish for their child to join the school when they are older. For my study, I conducted research in the Family Group and Kindergarten, as the latter covered the three- to six-years age group in a mixed-age classroom. The Kindergarten delivers the EYFS, but with negotiated exemptions. These take into account the older age range and the principles and philosophies of Steiner Waldorf education, i.e. formal literacy skills are introduced at age six-plus (Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship, 2009; DfE, 2017b). The children transition into the Lower School at the end of their time in Kindergarten and commence the full Steiner Waldorf curriculum.

5.9.5 Pikler Approach (Berkshire)

The Pikler setting is a Parent and Child Group for infants and toddlers, which is held on the premises of the Steiner Waldorf school. As with the Family Group, up to eight families can be hosted and sessions run for one-hour and thirty minutes. The emphasis is on physical development, free-flow play and discovery for children aged three-months to 30-months. Parents in attendance learn about respectful, caregiving relationships with their child / children and seek support from each other and the Class Leader. The Class Leader runs both the Family Group and Parent and Child Group. She holds a Foundation degree qualification in childhood studies and accredited training in the Pikler approach. Unlike the other settings in the research, the school and playgroups are term-time only, with both playgroups requiring families to commit to a set number of sessions.

5.9.6 Forest School (Norfolk)

The Forest School setting is a small private day nursery located in a town in Norfolk. It caters for children between three-months and five-years and delivers both the EYFS and Forest School, with the latter running over a period of weeks on a termly basis. The Forest School sessions last approximately two and a half hours and are scheduled on a rota-basis, two days a week. This ensures that all children in attendance have access to Forest School sessions during their time at the nursery. Forest School takes place in the local woodland and the setting have their own dedicated space to run the sessions. At the time of the research, sessions were led by the Nursery Manager who held a Level 2 Forest School qualification and aimed to complete her Level 3. Due to the size of the setting, the toddler and preschool age groups are combined into one playroom. A mixed-age group therefore attends the Forest School sessions, with the youngest child at the time of the observations aged 26-months and the eldest aged over four-years. The Baby Room children do not attend Forest School. Instead, they participate in a range of outdoor learning opportunities, having access to part of the woodland which is nearer to the setting and more accessible. The setting staff are trained from Level 2 to degree level and are supportive of the Forest School philosophy.

5.9.7 HighScope Approach (Lancashire)

The HighScope setting is a small private day nursery located in coastal Lancashire, catering for children between the age of six-months to five-years. At the time of the research, a holiday club for children up to the age of 10-years had been introduced. The setting subscribes to the HighScope approach and use it as their core pedagogy, alongside the EYFS. While the setting is not fully accredited by HighScope, the management team have received HighScope training and adopted the approach across all age groups. There is an emphasis on encouraging the age-groups to mix and follow the children's interests through the use of Plan, Do, Review. This approach has been adapted to suit each age group, with pre-school children drawing and writing their activities, toddlers using a tour to indicate the activities that interest them and the Baby Room using photos of toys and equipment to support activity choices. Most setting staff have long-term experience in the sector, with many practitioners having been with the setting for over a decade. Their qualification levels vary from Level 3 to degree level.

5.10 Identification and Selection of Child and Adult Participants

Once gatekeeper permission had been received from the case study settings, children, practitioners and teachers were invited to take part in the research. In the first instance, parents and carers acted as a further level of gatekeeping. The setting practitioners and teachers were responsible for distributing information and consent forms to families. From an ethical perspective, while this meant I was unable to influence the recruitment process, there was a risk that practitioner and teacher relationships may be exploited if parents felt obliged or were coerced into giving consent (Flewitt, 2005). To address this, I provided an email address for parents and carers to contact me directly with questions or concerns relating to the project. I received a couple of emails from parents to learn more about the study, allowing them to make an informed choice as to whether they would be willing to consent to their child being observed.

Settings supported child participant recruitment by discussing the project with families and initiating opt-out schemes for families, who may change their mind about their child participating in the study. Spare consent forms were available on the day of the observations for parents who had forgotten to return forms or agreed verbally but needed to confirm in writing. The selection of adult participants was dependent on practitioner and teacher availability and whether they were at work on the day of the interview. In cases where a setting had received more than four consent forms, selection took into account those no longer able to take part on the day. This was due to practitioners covering other staff who were on leave or unwell or carrying out special duties, such as outings or supporting children with room transitions. Further details regarding the numbers and characteristics of child and adult participants are provided in Chapters Six (section 6.4 and 6.5).

5.11 Data Collection Methods

Decisions pertaining to how data is collected takes into consideration how useful methods are in addressing a specific question, issue or problem (Denscombe, 2014). In case study research, data collection is eclectic and comprised of the most practical and appropriate means of investigation (Bassey, 1999). Mixed methods approaches may be adopted, as they combine or integrate a variety of quantitative and qualitative data collection and data analysis methods (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). The concept of mixed methods research is complex, as it may be used interchangeably with other terms, such as mixed research, blended research and multimethods (Johnson, Onwuegbuzie and Turner, 2007; Creamer, 2018). Anguera et al. (2018) argue that

unless terms are differentiated and accurately defined, there is a risk of confusion and a lack of clarity. Johnson, Onwuegbuzie and Turner (2007) assert that while 'mixed methods' remains the most popular term, the word 'methods' should be broadly interpreted to include philosophical issues and data collection strategies and concerns. Tashakkori, Johnson and Teddlie (2020) add that mixed methods researchers may adopt pragmatism as a philosophical lens, to identify the best approaches to answer and analyse their research questions. From this point onwards, I shall be using the term *mixed methods*, considering that it was the most common phrase used when I reviewed literature on research methods. This term will also reflect the different qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis methods and strategies that I have adopted for my study.

To support my choice of mixed methods approaches, I reviewed key studies (i.e. Dunn, 1988; Hay et al.,1991; Shin, 2010; Svetlova, Nichols and Brownell, 2010) to identify the most appropriate means of exploring prosociality within the context of pedagogy and curricula frameworks. As previously articulated (see Chapter Four, section 4.7), I decided that a method of observation would be suitable for data collection with the birth to three years age group. This was selected on the premise that interviews and questionnaires are likely to be impractical when used with young children, and to address the methodological challenges arising from my initial exploratory study (See Appendix X iv, Paper 4).

As a solo researcher working across multiple settings, it was not possible to observe all activities, so I needed to be selective as to who and what was observed. This had implications for the validity of my findings and required a further means of addressing my own assumptions and potential biases. Deweyan pragmatists perceive observation to be part of a comprehensive and complex intellectual operation. The construction of knowledge by the researcher is initially through their individual perspective. Dewey's view was that the successful interpretation of findings should be intersubjective, through face-to-face communication with others who have wider experience (Biesta and Burbules, 2003; Reich, 2009). Considering that practitioners and teachers in my study would know the child participants well, and understand their developmental needs, this provided me with an opportunity to explore whether they had observed and recorded prosocial behaviours in contexts and circumstances similar to those I observed.

I deduced that using semi-structured interviews would allow myself and the adult participants to engage in a dialogue, using findings from my observations and their

experiences in practise, as a means of jointly understanding the concept of prosociality in formal early childhood settings. Including an analysis of documents and artefacts would allow me to synthesise the findings from the observations and interviews, to inform the case studies and further understand the contexts and practices which promoted and nurtured prosociality. In the forthcoming sections, I explain the phases of data collection and mixed methods approaches used to explore prosociality within the context of pedagogy and curriculum frameworks.

5.12 Phase One: Observations

The first phase of data collection comprised of using a narrative observation method to write a detailed account of what I saw and heard, while children participated in their day-to-day play, activities and routines. This method of data collection, also referred to as naturalistic observation, enables the recording of children's actions and the contexts in which they occur (Papatheodorou, Luff and Gill, 2013). Greig and Taylor (1999) and Dunn (2005) add that children's social interactions, conversations and relationships should be observed within real situations that are emotionally meaningful to them. This provides opportunities for real world research, providing greater contextual information and an improved knowledge and understanding of individual and group behaviours. Despite requiring more time and effort, the findings from narrative observations are considered dependable and provide accurate and comprehensive recordings (Eisenberg and Mussen, 1989; Palaiologou, 2019). This presents researchers with a myriad of social, cultural and solitary actions and inactions pertaining to children's agency and experience, which they have the challenge of capturing in a written record (Tudge and Hogan, 2005).

The flexibility of the approach is considered to be less disruptive to children's everyday activities and fits around the day-to-day routine (Gallagher, 2009). To ensure that I had no influence over the selection and delivery of the activities carried out on the day of the research, I ensured that settings were aware of my desire to observe naturally occurring phenomena. The risk of controlling observations can lead to observers manipulating the environment to achieve specific results (Greig and Taylor, 1999). A further concern pertains to the level of the researcher's involvement during observations. I would define my role as a passive participant, described as a researcher who is present in a specific social context, but not actively involved in activities (Siegel, 2018). Undertaking this role allows researchers to get to know people and the environment and learn how to act appropriately in the setting. Due to settings' different philosophies and practices, I changed my approach as a means of fitting in.

This meant that in some settings (i.e. Steiner and Pikler), I had very limited interactions with the children and just observed. In other settings (notably Forest School and HighScope), I became more of an active participant, in light of children initiating interactions and engaging in conversations.

While observations as a method allow researchers to answer questions and understand human behaviours (Palaiologou, 2019), narrative observations produce an unstructured mass of data. This may lead to uncertainty as to the quantity of data required and which areas of investigation should be focused on (Fawcett, 2009). To address this, I planned to observe for approximately the same amount of time per setting. Due to different routines and activities at the settings, I planned the order of observations while at the settings, so I could be flexible and schedule in the analysis of documents and artefacts, which is discussed in the next section.

5.13 Phase One: Collection of Documents and Artefacts

As previously discussed (see section 5.11), I was mindful that using observations as a sole research method would raise questions pertaining to the credibility of my findings. Bailey (2007) asserts that researchers cannot see everything in settings, adding that first-hand accounts will be partial and filtered. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) add that this risks inference based only on what is seen or heard, without considering other rationales. Hence other evidence should be used to explain intentions, reasons and causes behind participants' behaviours. As with other research methods, the collection of documents requires both time and consideration as to how useful they will be (Stake, 1995). For my study, this method provided further context pertaining to how prosocial behaviours were supported and nurtured through different learning and play opportunities.

The term '*document'* is described by Coffey (2013) as material that can be categorized as official documents, private papers or everyday documents. The former comprises of large data sets and public records, with the latter covering diaries, records and routine documents. Advances in technological, digital and social media have contributed to the expansion of documentation, including SMS text messaging, websites and social networks. The use of websites and online servers were supportive in helping me access documents and information that were not available as paper copies and to analyse archived materials, such as children's learning journals. This was particularly supportive in the Montessori setting, as I was able to see how their use of curriculum and documentation had changed over the years.

The early childhood sector uses documentation as a means of assessment and monitoring children's progression, but it can also be used as a tool for practitioners to better understand concepts of learning and teaching and to involve children in early childhood education decision-making processes (Rintakorpi and Reunamo, 2016). Nind, Curtin and Hall (2016) state that pedagogical documentation requires attunement and attentiveness to what is observed, providing a tool for generating evidence from the many aspects of pedagogy. This includes the curriculum, pedagogical relationships, pedagogical practises and underpinning theories. For researchers, the analysis of pedagogical documentation is criticised for being atheoretical, i.e. content that is significantly theoretically or important is missed in favour of quantifying data into predetermined categories (Bryman, 2012). One challenge I experienced was collecting data in settings that had a minimalistic approach to documentation. I therefore considered alternative artefacts, such as props and photographs on displays. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) stress that some visual materials are more difficult to interpret than others, and this became the case for items that had little description or information attached. I was therefore reliant on acquiring explanations from practitioners and teachers when analysing these resources, which is discussed further in Chapter Six (section 6.8).

5.14 Phase Two: Practitioner and Teacher Interviews

The second and final part of the data collection was scheduled two-to-four months after the first round of visits, so that settings could be visited in the same academic year, and the same children and staff were ideally still in attendance. This timeframe ensured that I could review the findings from Phase One of the data collection and formulate suitable questions for interviews. The addition of interviews served two key purposes. Firstly, they complement direct observations when seeking answers to research questions, providing a framework in the absence or occurrence of the phenomena being observed (Vasconcelos, 2010). Secondly, they allow for multiple realities to be explored within case studies, which is particularly supportive as the researcher cannot observe everything that is happening at a given time (Stake, 1995, p.64).

Taking into consideration that the adult participants would have varying levels of training, education and spoken English, semi-standardised interviews were used for this study. This allowed for flexibility in terms of how questions were worded and adjusted to the level of language used (Berg and Lune, 2014). It provides interviewers with opportunities to answer questions provided by participants and to make clarifications. This was important in the first part of the interview, to determine what

knowledge the interviewees had relating to the concept of prosociality. Following an early question on the interviewee's understanding of '*prosocial*', I provided a brief overview of the term. This consequently supported later questions, where interviewees provided examples of prosocial actions and behaviours from their own observations, experiences and interpretations. I adopted an open-ended approach to interviewing, which provided opportunities to check whether participants had understood the questions or needed them articulated in a different way. I could also check whether I had correctly interpreted the answers provided, or if I needed to provide additional questions, to expand on specific points raised by the interviewees.

As with other research methods, interviews also present problems and limitations. The relationship between the interviewer and interviewee can be influenced by factors such as rapport, coercion and bias. In the case of coercion, this can arise if there is an inequality of power between the interviewer and interviewee. This may include their educational or professional background. Consequently, this may lead to the refusal of questions being answered or the interviewer's lines of questions restraining the interviewee's responses (Anyan, 2013). Atkins and Wallace (2012) recommend that interviews are conducted in a comfortable and informal setting, avoiding confrontational questioning methods. As this was the second phase of my research, I had built some rapport with the practitioners and teachers during Phase One. For adult participants who I had not previously met or had less initial contact with, at the beginning of the interview I reassured them that all answers would be valuable in supporting my research findings. They were also reminded of their right to ask questions, seek clarification or refuse to answer questions they were unsure of or uncomfortable with.

In terms of anonymity and confidentiality, while this had been addressed in terms of the storage and coding of raw data, ensuring full anonymity of the participants is a challenge. Some settings were the only ones in their area or region who followed the curricula and pedagogical approaches being investigated. There is a risk that future publications and the presentation of findings at conferences, or through the media, may unwittingly lead to settings being identified by others familiar with their practice. I was transparent about this with settings and participants by informing them that while all efforts would be made to anonymise findings, there may be occasions where full anonymity could not be guaranteed.

5.15 Interview Questions

Here I present the interview questions for Phase Two of the study, which were arranged into three categories:

- Interviewee Information
- Contextual Questions
- Setting Specific Questions

The questions from the first two categories were provided to all adult participants, with the third category comprised of bespoke questions. These related to specific findings from the observations and analysis of documents and artefacts and included some questions on aspects of practice. These were presented as open-ended questions, allowing for a discussion about prosocial behaviours. This provided opportunities to collect examples from the participants' practice and expand on their perspective and understanding of prosociality. Table 5.3 provides further details regarding the interview categories and the types of questions that were asked; with a more detailed interview schedule, along with sample questions, presented in Appendix VII.

Question Categories	Type of Question
Interviewee Information	• Participant's role in the setting • Qualifications and training • Age group(s) worked with
Contextual Questions	• Personal understanding of the term 'prosocial' • Whether the setting supports / promotes children's prosocial behaviours and actions. • Whether the curriculum / approach followed or used supports / promotes children's prosocial behaviours and actions. • How important it is to promote prosocial behaviours and actions in the age group(s) worked with. • The impact / influence prosocial behaviours and actions might have on a child's development and wellbeing.
Setting Specific Questions	• Questions specific to the setting, e.g. relating to the curriculum and / or pedagogical approach followed (to understand specific aspects of practice). • Questions related to findings from the observations, queries relating to the curricula / approaches used or aspects of practice observed and / or documented.

Table 5.3: Interview Categories and Types of Questions

5.15.1 Interviewee Information

The first category of questions provided some background information pertaining to the participant's role, qualifications and age group worked with. This was to reflect the diversity of the sector and questions were used as a means of building rapport with the interviewee. The findings from this section scaffolded later questions, as the third category had questions for each age group. Hence it was important to know who the participant worked with so that questions relevant to their practise were asked.

5.15.2 Contextual Questions

The second set of questions were contextual to determine each participant's understanding and interpretation of the term 'prosocial' and how prosocial behaviour was promoted, supported and nurtured in their setting. Further questions related to curricula and pedagogical approaches and how these developed prosociality. Participants were able to reflect on the importance of prosocial development in the context of their setting and age group they worked with. Practitioners and teachers shared examples from practice, providing insight into how important they felt prosocial development was, and its implications for children's future wellbeing and life chances.

5.15.3 Setting Specific Questions

The third and final set of questions were developed for each setting and participant. The rationale was to contextualise the findings, primarily from the observations. This was to determine whether certain behaviours and actions were typical amongst the children or in response to specific phenomena occurring on the day. For example, changes in weather conditions leading to different activities and learning opportunities being provided. This provided an open dialogue for the interviewees to reflect on and explore possible motivations and explanations for the behaviours and actions observed. Additional questions explored elements of practice in relation to the curriculum and / or pedagogical approaches. These were used as a means of complementing information acquired from the document and artefact analysis and to understand the practical side of each setting's preferred methods of learning and teaching. This allowed me to develop a deeper understanding as to how theoretical underpinnings and philosophies were utilised in a practical context.

5.16 Chapter Summary

This chapter has provided a rationale behind my research paradigm and methodological choice. I have considered the benefits and limitations of using quantitative and qualitative methods to study prosociality and have chosen a mixed methods approach to address my research questions. My choice of pragmatism, as a research paradigm, I feel provides me with more flexibility and freedom to adopt different methods to explore curricula and pedagogical approaches in the case study settings. Part IV of my thesis will discuss my approaches to data analysis, followed by the presentation and discussion on my research findings.

PART IV - Data Analysis, Presentation and Discussion of the Findings

Chapter Six: Data Collection, Analysis and Findings

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I present an analysis of the findings from both Phase One and Phase Two of my research. This includes demographic information pertaining to the research participants and my approach to the organisation, categorisation and analysis of data. From my stance as a pragmatist, I articulate the methods and strategies employed, which took into account each settings' philosophies, practices and availability of suitable resources. Where applicable, alternative means of recording and analysing data and findings are discussed and rationalised. The chapter concludes with a breakdown of the key themes identified through the data, which will be discussed and consolidated further in Chapter Seven.

6.2 Researcher Positionality and its Implications for Data Collection and Analysis

During the data collection phases, I recognised that I was on a continuum, in which I was neither an insider nor outsider. My positionality shifted, as I changed my approach to fit in with the settings' different philosophies and practices. At the Steiner Kindergarten, the teacher requested that I did not engage with the children, as this could affect the flow of the session and interrupt their play. To support the setting's pedagogy, I was a passive observer, and this allowed me to capture more of the children's dialogue and collate rich descriptions of their interactions. I felt more like an outsider due to observing in this manner, but the teaching staff invited me to join in at mealtimes and with the welcome and farewell routines. In contrast, across the majority of settings, being a passive participant observer was a challenge, as the children were naturally inquisitive and would approach me to ask questions about my research or to engage briefly in playful activities. While this made me feel more of an insider in these environments, I was mindful that this could affect the amount and quality of data I collected.

Gallagher (2009) warns that with these interactions, comes the risk that changes to children's behaviour may potentially harm them, or unduly influence the knowledge produced. To address this, I ensured that when observing, I was aware of children's cues which indicated assent or dissent. For example, if infants wanted to show me toys or became distressed in my presence. I additionally captured my research experiences through my reflective journal and the comments I made on my observation notes. This

was to ensure I was challenging my own biases and assumptions and reported on situations where my presence impacted on the observation. For example, some preschoolers would attract my attention before carrying out an activity or action; whereas some infants and toddlers would bring me items or approach me to help them put on shoes or a coat.

Being transparent about my background was also important, so that practitioners and teachers understood the rationale behind my study. This also allowed for informal dialogue relating to my current work role and research interests. For the majority of settings, it was unusual to have a researcher on site and this promoted excitement and interest amongst the practitioners and teachers. Several adult participants commented that partaking in this research had provided them with an opportunity to consolidate and reflect on their own practise. This was disclosed informally following the interviews and arose from discussing some of the findings from the observations and conversations, pertaining to their understanding of prosociality. Hence, being an outsider at some settings provided new and different perspectives, relating to the pedagogical practices of the settings. This resonates with Bonner and Tollhurst's (2002) notion of an outsider-researcher discovering something of value, due to a lack of over-familiarity with their participants.

6.3 Research Participants: Categories

For this study, research participants were arranged into two categories: child participants aged between 12-months and eight-years; and adult participants. To ensure consistency with the data collection, I split the child participants into four sub-categories:

- *Babies* – covering the birth-to-24-months age group
- *Toddlers* – covering 24-months to 36-months
- *Preschoolers* – covering 36-months to 60-months.
- *Older Children* – covering 60-months and up to eight-years old

The term '*Babies*' has been used to represent the infant category during the data collection stage. This was to ensure that adult participants did not confuse '*infant*' with a similar term used to describe children in lower-primary school classes. The organisation of the sub-categories was in response to settings having different playrooms and classroom layouts. Smaller settings combined toddler and preschool age groups into one room and provision in Family Group / Parent and Child Group comprised of diverse age ranges. Larger settings had more than one room per age

group and some settings ran holiday clubs to accommodate older children. The Steiner Kindergarten comprised of preschoolers and older children, as formal education commenced from the age of seven-years in the Lower School. These different layouts provided me with flexibility when observing, as I could record interactions between different age groups and develop a more informed understanding as to how curricula and pedagogical approaches change or evolve as children grow older.

The adult participants were divided into two categories:

- *Practitioners* represent early childhood professionals who held post-16 qualifications or were undertaking training through vocational courses, further education or higher education at the time of the research.

- *Teachers* represent those with a recognised teaching qualification or award, such as qualified teacher status (QTS), early years teacher (non-QTS, but with Early Years Teacher Status) and early years professional status (EYPS). This category includes teachers trained in specific curricula and pedagogical approaches, such as Montessori and Steiner Waldorf education.

6.4 Child Research Participants

For Phase One of the research, the invitation for child participants was made available to all families attending each setting. I had not requested information on children's gender, ethnicity or whether they had a disability or special educational need, which meant there were no pre-requisites for taking part. This was to ensure that the study was inclusive to all children. Following the sampling of participants, (see Chapter Five, section 5.10) a total of 155 signed parent and carer consent forms were collected across the seven settings. From this total, 110 children, who were in attendance at the settings on each day of the observations, took part in the study. This comprised of 27 infants, 32 toddlers, 48 preschoolers and three older children (see Appendix II for a full breakdown of ages).

A further breakdown of participants revealed that, across the child age groups, there was a higher number of male participants compared to females. This averaged at 56% boys and 44% girls, respectively. There were several factors which may have contributed to these figures. Firstly, some settings had higher male to female ratios across the whole setting at the time of the research. Secondly, for the larger early childhood settings with more than one classroom or playroom per age group, I opted to

observe in rooms which had received the highest number of returned consent forms. This meant higher numbers of males in some rooms compared to others. Finally, several children whose families had consented to them being observed, were not in attendance at the setting on the day of the research. This was due to being on holiday or because they attended the setting on a part-time basis.

6.5 Adult Research Participants

For Phase Two of the research, the sampling of adult participants had one pre-requisite, which was that potential participants should be working with children directly on a regular basis. This was because the composition of staff also included those employed in domestic roles such as food preparation, cleaning or administration, who were not directly involved in the children's development and learning. A total of 28 signed practitioner and teacher consent forms were collected across the seven settings in person or through email. To ensure that interviews and the transcription and analysis of findings were manageable, the maximum number of adult participants interviewed per setting was capped at four. The final total of practitioners and teachers interviewed was 20. Out of this figure, 19 interviews were conducted face-to-face at the setting and arranged to fit around staff rotas and ratios. One interview was carried out by telephone, due to the participant's setting being closed for the school holidays.

The adult sample represented a diverse range of qualification levels, roles and experience. This comprised of:

- Four trainees / apprentices working towards a Level 2 or 3 qualification
- Two Level 2 qualified practitioners
- Eight Level 3 qualified practitioners
- One Level 5 qualified practitioner
- One Early Years Professional (EYP) working towards a Level 7 qualification
- Two managers qualified at Levels 5 and 6, respectively
- Two teachers. One teacher held qualified teacher status (QTS) and a Montessori teacher qualification. The other was a qualified teacher of Steiner Waldorf education.

Five of the Level 3 qualified practitioners were working in a senior role, such as leading a team or working in another leadership or coordinator capacity. The majority of participants disclosed the length of time they had worked at the setting or in the

early childhood sector. This included mature practitioners who had pursued a new career working with children, following employment in a different sector.

The highly gendered nature of the early childhood workforce meant that the interview sample predominantly comprised of women. Only two settings at the time of the study had male practitioners working directly with the children, with one male trainee volunteering to be interviewed. This mirrors the staff composition across private and school-based providers, with male early childhood practitioners and assistants making up approximately 1.8% of the workforce (Bonetti, 2019). While information on age and ethnic background was not collected for this study, there was evidence of diversity across the whole adult sample. This comprised of a mix of younger and more mature practitioners and teachers, with varying degrees of experience. Some participants originated from other parts of the UK or Europe, representing different regions and cultures. A further breakdown of the composition of practitioner and teacher participants is available in Appendix III.

6.6 Introduction to Data Analysis Approaches and Complexities

Chapter Five (section 5.5) articulated my choice of using a pragmatist paradigm and its relevance to my research topic. In the context of data analysis, one of the complexities of working with a pragmatist paradigm, is whether findings from the research are generalisable or context bound. Morgan (2007) articulates that the transferability of findings is dependent on how knowledge may be used or applied in a new set of circumstances. In my study, there were variations in the way early childhood settings applied their pedagogical approaches, philosophies and curricula learning outcomes. These were identified through a mix of observing children engaging in play, activities and routines and through the use of documents and artefact analysis, to further understand the practice aspects of provision.

Further reference to variations in approaches were articulated in the interviews, with some adult participants revealing that rather than fully subscribing to their chosen approach(es), they used it / them as a source of inspiration. This was mostly due to changing or adapting approaches to complement the EYFS and other statutory regulations, or to mirror the values, ideologies and culture of the setting. This reflected the comments of Kantor and Whaley (1998) and Stremmel (2012) in Chapter Three (section 3.8), which highlighted how pedagogical approaches can be incorporated into existing provision.

Another area for consideration pertains to analysing and interpreting data from multiple sources and settings. Miles and Huberman (1984 cited in Darke, Shanks and Broadbent, 1998, p.285) categorise data analysis into three activities. The first comprises of selecting, simplifying, abstracting and transforming raw case data. Considering that preschoolers and older age groups were included in the child participant sample, it was important that I did not digress from my focus on the birth to three years age group. However, I also needed to acknowledge whether the over-threes were influential in terms of how younger children behave. The data collected from observing preschoolers and older children allowed me to understand how prosocial behaviours change with age and are demonstrated in different contexts, i.e. friendship groups and through different pedagogical approaches and activities. This links to Miles and Huberman's second aspect of analysis, in which information is assembled as a means of drawing conclusions. This may be through the use of narratives, charts and tables, which lead to conclusion drawing, the final analytical category. This centres around making meaning from the data to formulate theory and identify patterns and repeatable regularities via the data. Chapter Seven extends on this concept by presenting findings in different formats as a means of articulating and critiquing content.

For case study research, Hood (2009) advises analysing data from the outset, in light of the amount of data that is accumulated. He adds that at a macro level, field notes, interviews and documents should be coded and dated for ease of access. This leads to micro level analysis in which data is sorted into categories, themes and phenomena. In the first instance, I ensured that my observations were accurately written up within 24-hours, so I could clarify any specific findings through my notes and check for errors. The observations were reviewed one-week later so that I could re-visit the content and start to highlight key words and themes. Comments were added to the write-ups and transcripts relating to specific theories or patterns of behaviours that correlated or contrasted findings from the literature. This included my own reflections pertaining to my understanding of the findings and whether my presence may have been influential during the data collection phase.

A similar approach was adopted for the interview data, with transcription completed within a 48-hour timeframe and checked for accuracy. Key words and themes were highlighted and supported by comments and reflections. For example, areas requiring further analysis within the context of the literature review chapters; similarities and differences in responses across the interviewee sample and reflection on my own assumptions, bias and understanding.

6.7 Bricolage as a Research Approach

As discussed in Chapter Five (section 5.6), Yin (2014) advises researchers develop a strategy for analysing large amounts of data, collated through case study settings. One strategy used to improve the validity of research is methodological triangulation, which uses multiple methods to examine a social phenomenon (Mathison, 1988; Leech and Onwuegbuzie, 2007; Tracy, 2013). As a pragmatist, it was important for me to select approaches to the analysis and presentation of my data and findings, which would be suited to this specific study. After reviewing and consolidating literature on data analysis, I came across bricolage; another approach to social inquiry developed by Lévi-Strauss. Considering that bricolage is used predominantly in qualitative research (Rogers, 2012), I felt it would be supportive in helping me interpret my data, which itself was mostly qualitative.

Eaves and Walton (2013, p.118) describe the position of a researcher-as-bricoleur (one who uses bricolage) as '…*fostered through an innovative range of data collection, analysis and bridging techniques*.' Kincheloe (2005) adds that bricoleurs direct their attention to the processes, relationships and interconnections among phenomena. The recognition of social, cultural, psychological or pedagogical objects of inquiry, are perceived as inseparable from their context. Bricoleurs are concerned with the theoretical and philosophical notions of a variety of elements encountered through the research and operate in the domains of cognition and pedagogy. This promotes new insights and ways of thinking, seeing, being and researching (Kincheloe, 2001; 2004a; 2004b). This shares commonality with pragmatism, in light of multiple methods and a diverse range of settings being used in research. However, Lévi-Strauss' concept of the bricoleur centres around enlarging the conception of cognitivity, whereas Deweyan pragmatism focuses on the wider concept of experience, referred to as *instrumentalism* (Metz, 1969; Wyschogrod, 2006). Lévi-Strauss (1962, p.11) describes the bricoleur as someone who '*makes do with whatever is at hand.'* In the context of my study, I decided to analyse my findings using methods I was familiar with, but additionally explore creative ways of presenting my findings to synthesise key themes from across all settings. This was important considering I needed to refine large quantities of data, so that I focused on findings relevant to my research questions and the age group at the centre of my study.

6.8 Phase One: Observations and Analysis of Findings

Phase One of the data collection commenced in March 2017 and concluded in December 2017. Each setting participating in the study was visited over a two- to three-day period, which took into account its location and the type of provision offered, e.g. full-time or sessional. This provided me with time to observe across all age groups and to identify and analyse documents and artefacts. The total time observing across all settings was 58.75 hours, which averaged 8.39 hours per setting. The individuals and groups I observed were selected from those who I had received consent and assent from. The range of activities and routines taking place at the time meant that the number of children observed ranged from one child to larger groups of around 12. This took into account children who joined and departed activities or the immediate location. For example, during routine transitions or when larger numbers of children mixed outdoors. Each age group (Babies, Toddlers, Preschoolers) was observed for a minimum of half-a-day (approximately four hours), with the order of observations varying between settings. This was to ensure that they fitted around the children's routines and took into account parts of the day where observing would not be appropriate, such as nap time. Observations were recorded on a tablet device for ease of editing and adding additional notes.

When I visited the Steiner Waldorf and Pikler settings, I decided to change my approach to data collection and use a pen and paper method. The Steiner philosophy is that electronic technologies counteract the development of imagination, human relationship and the cognitive capacities nurtured through physical learning. Children are therefore not exposed to programmable toys or electronic technology, such as computers, until later in the school curriculum. This has led to Steiner settings being exempt from or modifying several ELGs in the EYFS (Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship, 2009; Nicol, 2016). The Parent and Child Group's emphasis on uninterrupted play and a small, calm environment, meant that toys and objects considered to be too stimulating were not included as activities (Gerber, 1979a; Gonzalez-Mena, 2013b; Tardos, 2013). To respect these philosophies and ensure that the tablet device did not interrupt the children's play and activities, I opted for an alternative means of recording data.

To respect anonymity and organise the data collected from observing the child participants, I developed a system of coding. This comprised of an abbreviation of the settings' curriculum or pedagogy followed by the age group. The gender of the child and the first letter of their name completed the code. In cases where children shared

the same first letter in their name or shared the same first name, the code included the second or third letter of their name (see Table 6.1).

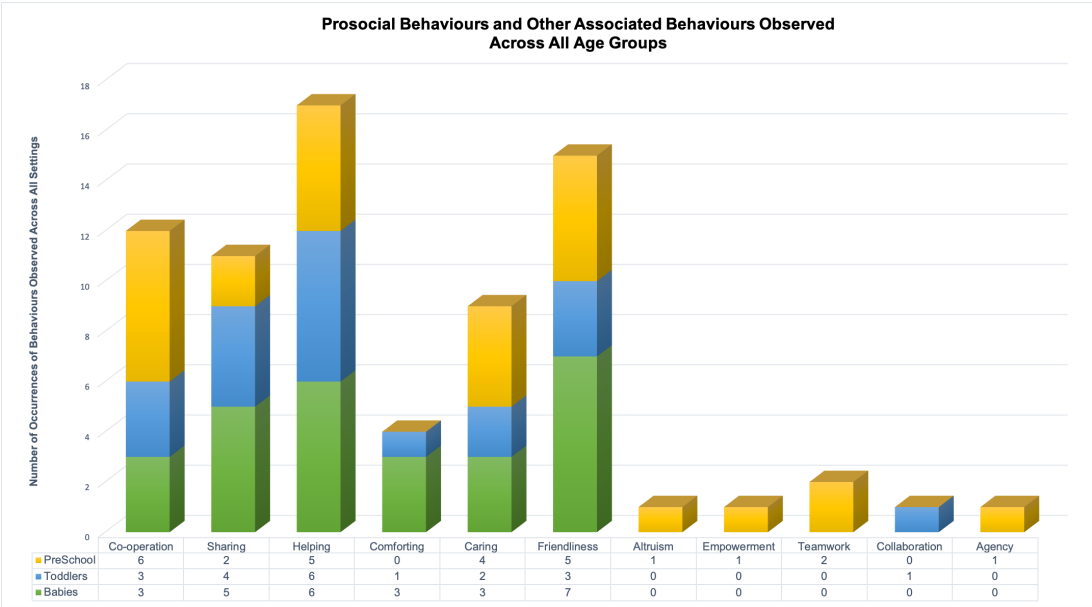
Some observations included the presence of adults, comprised of practitioners, teachers and parents. Consent was sought from setting staff prior to my visit and again before observations took place, in case there were circumstances in which I was unable to observe. For the Parent and Child and Family Groups, I created a separate consent form where parents could consent or dissent to being observed alongside their child(ren) (see Appendix IX iii). Due to the number of adults present at any one time, I developed a simple coding system to represent the adult's role, e.g. Practitioner (shortened to Prac), supported by a number. This enabled me to keep track of staff who worked between rooms with different age groups and organise the coding of families attending the playgroups.

Setting	Age Group	Gender	First Letter of Child's Name
Reggio Emilia	Babies	Male	H****
Participant Code: REBMH			
Montessori	Toddlers	Female	L******
Participant Code: MTFL			
Montessori	Toddlers	Female	Lu**
Participant Code: MTFLu			

Table 6.1: Explanation and Exemplification of Coding for Child Participants

Following the completion of each set of observations per setting, I commenced the first level of analysis to identify occurrences of potential prosocial behaviours and actions and possible traits. This took into account behaviours which I personally witnessed and conversations that I had documented, in which a person made a specific reference to a prosocial action or behaviour by name. For example, if a practitioner witnessed a behaviour and acknowledged it, e.g. '*Thank you for sharing*.' Additional comments and reflections were added using an interpretivist approach as a means of considering a rationale behind a behaviour. This included times where a child approached another in distress, when the children interacting were siblings and when there were clear links to the setting's philosophy, e.g. children engaging in Practical Life sessions in the Montessori setting or engaging in Plan, Do, Review at the HighScope setting (see sample from Forest School in Appendix IV).

The prosocial behaviours and traits were then categorised via Microsoft Excel and tallied across each age group in each setting (see Appendix V). This was to determine whether there was a pattern with regards to specific prosocial behaviours demonstrated more or less frequently across a specific age group. The spreadsheet also included other behaviours and actions that linked to prosociality but were not part of the initial six behaviours selected. These behaviours were identified from the activities observed and recorded on the basis that they complemented the prosocial behaviours being studied (see Figure 6.1). The findings from the observations supported the development of the third set of interview questions, as they formed the basis of a dialogue to gauge more information about the behaviours I had observed.



	Co-operation	Sharing	Helping	Comforting	Caring	Friendliness	Altruism	Empowerment	Teamwork	Collaboration	Agency
PreSchool	6	2	5	0	4	5	1	1	2	0	1
Toddlers	3	4	6	1	2	3	0	0	0	1	0
Babies	3	5	6	3	3	7	0	0	0	0	0

Figure 6.1: A Breakdown of Prosocial and Other Associated Behaviours Per Age Group Across All Settings

6.9 Phase One: Collection and Analysis of Documents and Artefacts

During periods when I was unable to observe, I used this as an opportunity to start identifying and analysing documents and artefacts. I reviewed and recorded content from a total of 43 different resources using a mix of purposive and random sampling chosen by myself, practitioners, teachers and children. This aimed to minimise researcher bias and provide a more diverse range of documents and artefacts. The number of items reviewed and analysed varied, as several settings had a minimalistic approach to paperwork. Lévi-Strauss' concept of the bricoleur is that they consider which materials they have access to that might be useful (Hatton, 1989). In the context of my research, I considered what other available resources I could use as evidence. This meant artefacts, such as toys, posters and learning props were selected as an alternative form of data. This required a different approach to record how they were

relevant to my research and used in practice. Verbatim accounts were used as a means of collecting information about artefacts, with practitioners and teachers verbally explaining the rationale and purpose behind their use. I carefully documented what had been said and checked for accuracy by reiterating key points and repeating dialogue back to the member of staff.

For documents and resources containing written content, I noted as much information as possible; describing the item and key features such as the age group or audience the item was for, how the item is used and when it was created and by whom. The documents included behaviour policies; activity plans and evaluations; information pertaining to approaches to learning and teaching with the settings and children's learning journals. These provided me with insight into curriculum, pedagogy and practice in each setting. For online documentation, such as children's learning journals, these were reviewed and discussed in the presence of a practitioner or teacher who had administrative rights and access.

Through the documents and artefacts, I recorded terms and phrases that denoted prosocial behaviours and actions. This included precursors to prosocial behaviours, such as turn-taking, which is connected to cooperation (Hay and Rheingold, 1983; Dunn, 1988). Other behaviours associated with emotional and social development were also recorded to explore their relationship with prosociality. The dialogue between myself and setting staff when appraising the artefacts, provided a richer account of the practices and philosophies which underpinned learning and teaching, providing real life examples which could be linked to knowledge and understanding gained from the literature reviews. The initial findings and notes were copied and pasted into an Excel spreadsheet as a means of organising the data from each setting into one document (see Appendix VI).

6.10 Phase Two: Interviews with Practitioners and Teachers

Following the Phase One analysis of observations, documents and artefacts, I returned to the majority of settings for an additional day to carry out face-to-face interviews and made arrangements for the telephone interview. For the interviewees, I developed a coding system similar to the one used for child participants, comprised of an abbreviation of the setting's curriculum or pedagogy. This was followed by the age group(s) the adult participant worked with and their qualification and role. For interviewees in non-senior positions, i.e. trainees, their code included the qualification level they had achieved or were working towards (see Table 6.2). A full list of adult participants can be found in Appendix III.

Setting	Age Group	Qualification / Role
Forest School	Toddlers / Preschool	Level 2 / Trainee
Participant Code: FSTPT2		
HighScope	Toddlers	Level 3 / Team Leader
Participant Code: HSTTL		

Table 6.2: Explanation and Exemplification of Coding for Adult Participants

The interviews provided opportunities to explore practitioners' and teachers' understanding of prosociality and its level of importance in early childhood. Further questions considered how different curricular frameworks and pedagogical approaches were designed to nurture prosocial behaviours; with a final set of bespoke questions allowing for an open dialogue pertaining to the findings from Phase One. The interview responses additionally allowed me to reflect on my own assumptions and biases on prosociality. From a Deweyan perspective, this aims to establish credibility through the reflection on inquiry and evaluation practices (Hall, 2013). In the context of this phase of data collection, it opened me up to other possible explanations relating to what I had seen, heard and experienced during the setting visits. As an infrequent visitor collecting data over a short period of time, it was important to understand whether the observed behaviours were frequent occurrences or anomalies. I was mindful that some observations may have captured moments where a child was reaching a specific developmental milestone or had discovered a new means of interacting with others. The interviewees were able to confirm or confute the observation findings through their own experiences as observers. Dewey claims that knowledge acquired from those with wider experience regarding similar past situations, allows for observations to be successfully interpreted through open and honest exchanges (Reich, 2009). The examples provided through the interviews provided further insight into what prosocial behaviours looked like across the birth to three years age group.

My approach to reviewing and interpreting the interview data correlated with Brinkmann and Kvale's (2018, p.132) discussion on analysing interviews. They assert that bricolage '*implies a free interplay of techniques...*', which may comprise of an initial reading through interview transcripts and then referring back to specific passages. Upon transcribing each interview, I re-read the content to check for errors and accuracy and then began to highlight text and add comment boxes to draw attention to key words and phrases, examples of practise that provided insight into prosociality and the setting's practice. I compiled summaries of findings into a table, which included a column containing key words and phrases used by the interviewees. I cross-referenced

the findings across all interview participants within a specific setting, before extending this to other settings partaking in the research. This allowed me to determine whether specific prosocial behaviours observed in children, examples of practice and comments on prosociality were common or uncommon across the adult participants (see Appendix VIII).

6.11 Approaches to Analysis Across All Data Collection Methods

Following the completion of data collection and initial analysis, I commenced data analysis at a micro level; using thematic analysis to identify key words, phrases and themes pertaining to prosocial behaviours and development (Hood, 2009). From a pragmatist perspective, the process of categorising is considered to be a work in progress (Farjoun, Ansell and Boin, 2015). I adopted a cross-case synthesis approach, which can be used in the analysis of multiple case studies (Yin, 2018). This commenced with the division of data-by-data source, a method which allows unique insights to be exploited from different types of data (Eisenhardt, 2002). Each data source (e.g. observations) was analysed and categorised manually, with content arranged into Microsoft Excel spreadsheets and tables on Microsoft Word. These were colour coded for ease of identification. Table 6.3 provides a breakdown of each stage of analysis, presenting some of the findings in relation to key words and phrases and examples from the data.

Description	Key Words / Phrases	Examples from Findings
Stage One Analysis To identify prosocial behaviours and traits (as listed in Chapter Two, section 2.4) through observations on children's play, activities, learning and routines; in setting documents and descriptions of artefacts; from comments made by practitioners and teachers in the interviews and journal entries from the research reflective journal	**Prosocial Behaviours** Cooperation Sharing Helping Comforting Caring Friendliness **Traits** Altruism Empathy Motivation Morality	**Observation:** **Toddler Room – HighScope** MLE has woken up and sitting with Manager1. FS is sitting on a chair and FEI is helping do the buckle up on her sandal. She carefully threads the strap through the buckle while FS sits and watches. **Journal Entry:** While walking to Forest School, a young child began to tell me about out of bounds areas they were not allowed to play in; stressing that it was not safe for me to go to those areas – suggestion of care or concern?

Stage Two Analysis To identify other terms and phrases identified through the interviews, documents and artefacts which directly correlate with the prosocial behaviours and traits.	**Examples:** *cooperation,* *turn taking* *empathy, empathetic* *help, helped,* *self-help* *share, shared* **Examples of other terms and phrases:** *kind, thinking of others, valuing each other, working together* and *affection* within the context of friendship	**Interview with HSBTL (HighScope Setting)** "You know, I think also as well, *we help promote* the *affectionate* side, so if they become upset, we *cuddle* them, so I think the little ones watch and they *observe* and then they see us doing it." **Extract from Montessori setting Behaviour Management Policy** 'We believe that children who acquire the ability to be *self-disciplined* learn to balance their needs with those of others.' '…consistency is important in giving children a feeling of *trust* and *security.'*
Stage Three Analysis Aimed to explore the links between observation data and practitioner and teacher experiences or their observations in practise of actual or similar behaviours witnessed	For this level, the third part of the interview presented specific examples from observations as mini case studies. Potential behaviours observed by the researcher (myself) were discussed with the interviewee.	**Observation on potential sharing behaviour between twins BMH and BMJ** ***Interviewee (REBSP):*** Confirmed these twins do not always share. Refers to adult role-modelling and adults praising when they see a positive behaviour.

Table 6.3: Stages of Data Analysis Across All Data Collection Methods

The findings from this analysis allowed me to compare all seven settings and determine whether specific prosocial behaviours and themes were common or different. This was considered within the context of the age groups being researched and the curriculum and pedagogical approaches adopted by the settings. This led to a further stage of analysis in which key themes were identified.

6.12 Identification of Key Themes

From my analysis across all data streams, I was able to identify several common themes and findings arising from the observations, documents and artefacts and interviews. Several additional findings were identified through my reflective journal, which corresponded with those from the observations and interviews. These themes centred around the practitioners' and teachers' understanding and application of prosociality in practice; how prosocial behaviours are demonstrated, promoted and nurtured across the different age groups; the implications of mixing age groups on prosocial development; the socialisation of the youngest children in the settings; how prosociality is supported within the setting and in relation to pedagogical and curricula approaches and the multi-faceted role of the adult, which includes reference to parents' contributions. Figure 6.2 provides a diagrammatic breakdown of the process of identifying key findings and emerging themes across all data streams, culminating in the final themes to be discussed in Chapter Seven.

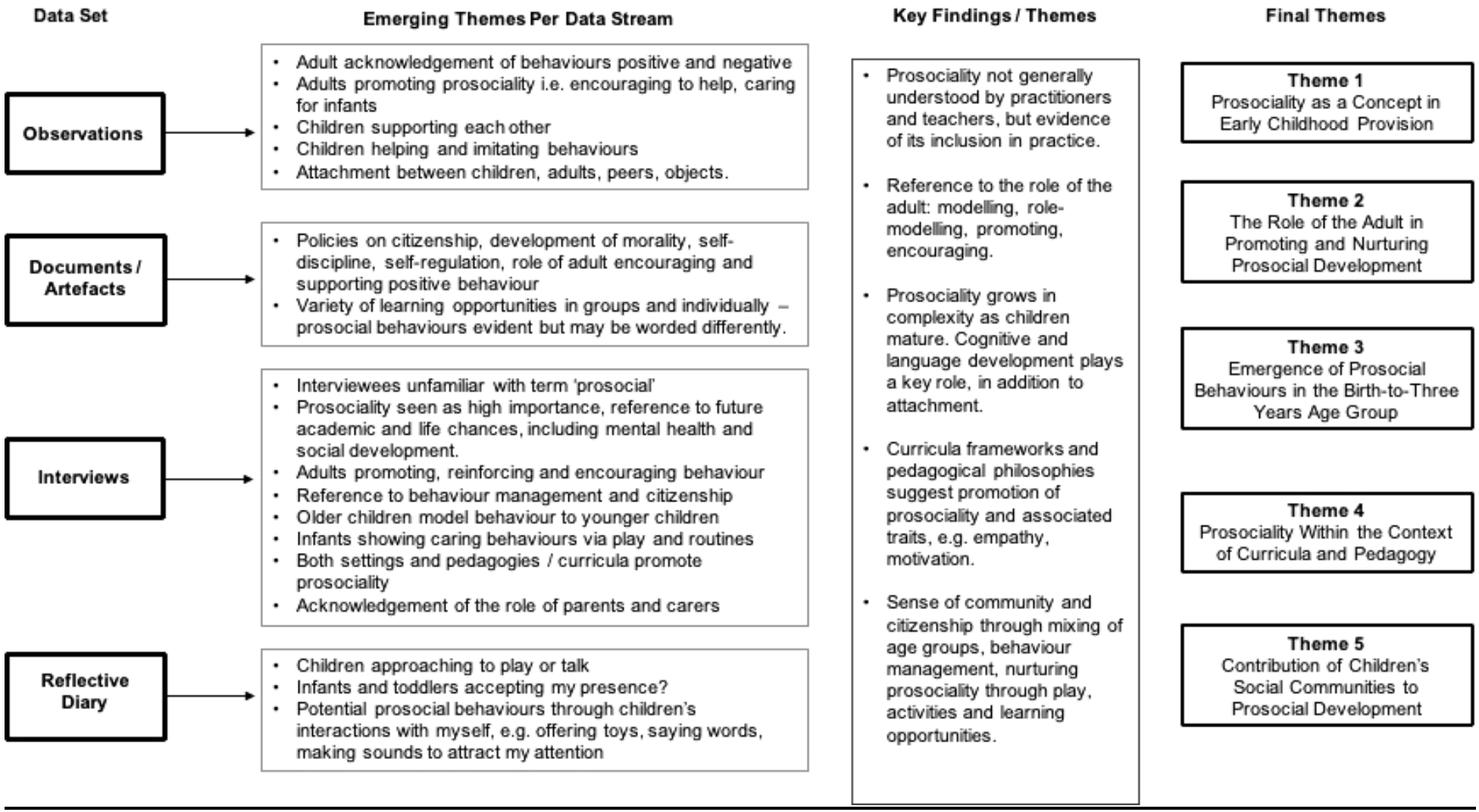


Figure 6.2: Process of the Identification of Themes from Research Findings

6.13 Chapter Summary

To summarise, this chapter has presented an account of the methods and processes undertaken to identify, organise and analyse data from different research methods and approaches. It has disclosed general findings pertaining to the research participants and phases of the research; with consideration given to my own positionality and influence during the data collection stages. A more detailed exploration of key themes and findings are critiqued in Chapter Seven.

Chapter Seven: Discussion of the Research Findings

7.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I present a detailed account of the key themes and sub-themes emerging from the data. Each sub-theme was developed following a process of review, analysis, categorising and consolidation of the main themes (see Chapter Six, Figure 6.2).

This aims to provide answers to my three research questions:

> Question One: What is prosociality within the context of infancy and early childhood provision?
>
> Question Two: How do very young children demonstrate prosocial behaviours and actions through play and activities in early childhood settings?
>
> Question Three: In what ways do early childhood practitioners and teachers use pedagogy and curricula to promote and nurture prosocial behaviours in very young children?

Table 7.1 presents an outline of Chapter Seven with regards to the order key themes and sub-themes are discussed and the research questions they answer. Each section is supported by evidence from the data, which are presented as vignettes (for observations and reflections), quotes (from the interview participants) and a table and figure (for setting behaviour policies / reference to combined data findings).

Theme	Sub-Themes	Research Questions Addressed	Evidence from the Data
1. Prosociality as a Concept in Early Childhood Provision	**7.2.1 Subtle Prosociality: Findings from the Documents and Artefacts**	Question One Question Two Question Three	Documents and artefacts Interviews
	7.2.2 The Role of Prosociality on Children's Development and Life Chances		
2. The Role of the Adult in Promoting and Nurturing Prosocial Development	**7.3.1 Adults as Role-Models, Models and Subjects of Imitation**	Question Three	Observations Interviews
3. Emergence of Prosocial Behaviours in the Birth to Three Years Age Group	**7.4.1 Helping Behaviours in Infants and Toddlers**	Question One Question Two Question Three	Observations Interviews Documents and artefacts
	7.4.2 Helping Behaviours, Altruism and Motivation in Preschoolers		
	7.4.3 Caring Behaviours Through Friendship and Play		
	7.4.4 Caring in the Context of Attachment and Empathy		
	7.4.5 Perceptions on the Concept of Sharing		
4. Prosociality Within the Context of Curricula and Pedagogy	**7.5.1 Differences and Commonalities Across Settings**	Question Two Question Three	Observations Interviews
	7.5.2 The Development of Early Pretend Play		
	7.5.3 Pretend Play and Creativity in the Outdoor Environment		

5. Contribution of Children's Social Communities to Prosocial Development	**7.6.1 Making Friends with Unfamiliar Adults**	Question One	Reflective Journal Observations Interviews
	7.6.2 Prosociality Within a Community of Mixed Age Groups		

Table 7.1: Outline of Chapter Seven

7.2 Theme One: Prosociality as a Concept in Early Childhood Provision

To understand more about the concept of prosociality within early childhood practice, the analysis of documents and artefacts provided some context pertaining to what prosociality looked like across each setting. This was further supported by the interview responses, which provided examples of activities and interventions used to promote and nurture prosocial behaviours. During the first part of the interviews, it became evident that practitioners and teachers were generally unfamiliar with the term '*prosocial'* and their interpretations commonly linked it to social development and, in some cases, behaviour management. This was very similar to the comments I received from colleagues, prior to conducting research (see Chapter One, section 1.3). The following sub-themes discuss the concept of prosociality through the findings from both phases of the data collection. This commences with an exploration of each settings' practise through the use of documentation and artefacts, followed by findings from the interviews on the importance of prosocial development in young children.

7.2.1 Subtle Prosociality: Findings from the Documents and Artefacts

The analysis of documents and artefacts during Phase One provided some insight into the promotion of prosocial behaviours. Several types of resources, notably children's learning journals and individual child observations, referred to specific prosocial behaviours and the contexts in which they were applied. For example, '*holding younger children's hands'* (suggesting care), '*passes a container*' (sharing). Further written examples were in the form of captions and reflections from wall displays, which were accompanied by photographs of children engaging prosocially with activities. These comprised of images of indoor and outdoor learning opportunities, outings and group games. To understand the context of these activities, some of the activity plans and evaluations provided insight into the objectives of the session. Some were linked to seasonal activities, such as collecting leaves and acorns, while others had a purpose to develop social and language skills. All of these were linked to the EYFS areas of learning and development and ELGs, but formats varied to consider the different

approaches to planning and the pedagogical philosophies. For example, the Montessori setting connected EYFS learning to the Montessori curriculum, e.g. Creativity.

Each setting's behaviour policy explained how unwanted behaviours or behavioural concerns were managed. This included children who were showing signs of a special educational need, had a disability or were behaving out of character. The policies also set out expectations pertaining to positive social and emotional development, with some making reference to specific prosocial behaviours such as caring and sharing. These also encompassed broader behaviours and traits, such as self-regulation, self-discipline, respect, kindness and knowing right from wrong (linked to morality). Across most policies, terms were taken directly from the statutory EYFS guidance (DfE, 2017a). However, policies also referred to the setting's pedagogical philosophies and alternative curriculum. Table 7.2 presents some examples of policy content which directly or indirectly linked to the settings' principles and practice.

Setting	Policy Title	Example of Reference to Curriculum / Pedagogy
Montessori	Policy Statement Behaviour Management	*'… believes in practicing an approach which support's children's development of self-discipline in accordance with Montessori philosophy'.*
Reggio Emilia	Behaviour Management Policy	*'Highly important children feel their own discoveries and contributions are valued'.* Importance of children expressing feelings and experiences through play.
Steiner Waldorf	Positive Behaviour Policy	Teaching staff recognise socially appropriate behaviour. Role models worthy of imitation, behaviour of staff includes self-control and respect.
Forest School	Behaviour Policy	Environment where children learn to respect self, others and environment.
HighScope	Behaviour, Control and Sanctions Policy	Refers to '*all members of our nursery community'.*

Table 7.2: Setting Behaviour Policies and their Reference to Pedagogical Philosophies

In contrast to the documents, artefacts provided insight pertaining to social and emotional development. While prosociality was harder to identify through the initial descriptions and verbatim accounts, when analysed alongside the activity plans, activity evaluations, learning journals and interviews, it became clearer that their usage promoted prosocial behaviours. For example, the Montessori setting's *Please and Thank You Ball* linked to the Montessorian philosophy of Grace and Courtesy, used as a means of developing manners (Carter and Ellis, 2016). This was often in the context of a small group activity, where children took turns to pass the ball to each other, suggesting early sharing skills were being developed. However, it should be noted that these actions and behaviours were facilitated by adults, rather than the children.

Posters on feelings and emotions were also used with groups to support children in understanding their feelings. This could be considered a further form of sharing, but it is also likely to support emotional regulation and the development of empathy (Fabes et al., 1994). This would also support Hein, Röder and Fingerie's (2018) claim that prosocial behaviour should be developed through empathy-related responses. In this case, children learning about and recognising their emotions and the emotions of others supports the development of other prosocial responses, such as caring and cooperation.

Managing feelings and behaviours and self-regulation are also outlined in the current and forthcoming versions of the EYFS; making them statutory requirements (DfE, 2017a; 2020). The absence of practitioner guidance pertaining to how these also connect to wider prosocial behaviours and links to cognitive and language development, may explain why the concept of prosociality was poorly understood from the perspective of the interview participants. This supports arguments by Marlen (2017) and Early Education (2018) that ELG descriptors are too vague and place less emphasis on holistic development and more on a checklist approach. Whilst the documents and artefacts provided some context pertaining to the settings' curriculum and pedagogical approaches, a key flaw is that resources of this nature do not provide sufficient details to answer research questions (Bowen, 2009). Hence, I was reliant on the other data collection methods to enable a more holistic approach to practice, to consider how the environment and role of the adult are utilised in the context of prosocial development. Through the observations, I was able to record instances where the policies had been incorporated into practice. This was noticeable through the encouragement of manners and adults listening to children's views and needs and responding accordingly. Within the policies, this connected to the importance of being

respectful, with reference to positive behaviours being role-modelled by both adults and children.

7.2.2 The Role of Prosociality on Children's Development and Life Chances

Following the analysis of documents and artefacts, the interviews provided further opportunities to contextualise prosocial behaviour. The second set of interview questions (see Chapter Five, section 5.15) provided responses on the importance of promoting and supporting prosocial behaviours. All adult participants were in agreement that it was an integral part of development, with some responses using terms such as '*vital*', '*massively*' and '*invaluable*' to stress its significance. Despite the settings' different approaches to practice, there were a number of common responses and themes that emerged. All participants made some reference to the impact prosocial development had on children's social skills, with a few answers giving consideration to negative outcomes if this area was not supported. This suggested that children would be at a disadvantage, with some responses stating that children may experience increased anti-social behaviours, difficulties with relationships and mental health challenges.

Inadequate social and emotional functioning is considered to present a number of challenges, with some of these considered by the interviewees, above. Jones, Greenberg and Crowley (2015) have determined that noncognitive skills, such as emotion regulation, motivation and social skills should be improved in young children, as this can have an impact on multiple areas in the future, e.g. crime, educational attainment. Teachers monitoring prosocial skills in early childhood is seen as a means of identifying whether children are at risk of having deficits upon school entry. This provides further justification on the importance of promoting and nurturing prosocial behaviours in early childhood, as practitioners and teachers could potentially mitigate problems and provide opportunities to promote prosociality. However, measuring prosociality as discussed in Chapter Five (see section 5.3) can be problematic and other factors such as home life, culture, a child's personality and health would also need to be taken into consideration as to how they impact on life chances and future academic attainment.

A further finding from the research interviews pertained to the concept of citizenship, with several participants discussing Fundamental British Values (FBVs) and children as members of society. This was often in the context of children making a contribution, denoting social responsibility. A study on FBVs by van Krieken Robson (2019a) also draws on prosociality within the context of early childhood pedagogy. Practitioners in

her research promoted children's values through care towards plants, empathy and an appreciation of diversity in the community. This mirrors the suggested activities outlined in the programme of citizenship for KS1 and 2 (DfE, 2015a). The emphasis on values education in van Krieken Robson's (2019a) study was reported to reflect a moral pedagogy, pertaining to moral values and practices. This connects to Dewey's vision of schools being social environments and communities that promote social intelligence. This is through the provision of activities and materials tailored to children's interests, which promote moral values and future prosocial behaviours, i.e. cooperation and sharing (Dewey, 1897; 1909; 1916). In the context of my research, morality was not referred to by name, but findings across the data streams suggested that it was reflected in cases where children stood up for their rights, understood right from wrong or helped another child in difficulty.

Within the EYFS, FBVs are positioned within the area of PSED. The first two fundamental values relate to managing feelings and behaviours, understanding the importance of rules and for the child to understand how to treat others in the way the child wishes to be treated. This is followed by a third and fourth value relating to making decisions together, being self-aware and self-confident (Farini, 2019). In practice, these are considered to promote democracy, fairness and equality. Prosocial behaviours are integral to concepts of mutual tolerance and respect, through taking turns, cooperating and shared responsibility, where children help each other out (Sargent, 2016). However, it is argued that while FBVs are genuinely educational, there may be limited space for children's agency (Farini, 2019).

The concept of children's agency is argued by Sirkko, Kyrönlampi and Puroila (2019) to be tightly connected to moral and political ideas about what kinds of agency are appropriate, within specific cultural contexts. In an educational context, children's experiences are framed by the institutional and pedagogical cultures of the school. In the case of FBVs, the moral foundations of British citizenship are considered to be presented as learning outcomes which are adult-led and adult-centred (Farini, 2019). This clashes with the emphasis on child-centred learning, which is commonplace in values education, and is a key philosophy across the early childhood pedagogies I was researching (see Chapter Three, above). The concept of agency was reflected across some interviews in the Forest School, HighScope and Reggio Emilia settings, with reference to children making their own decisions and choices. This demonstrated the emphasis practitioners and teachers placed on children having opportunities to choose what to play with and who to play with.

To address the aforementioned issues of FBVs, van Krieken Robson (2019b) proposes that practitioners place more emphasis on relational pedagogy and reflect on their epistemic beliefs on children's competencies and how they learn. This would correlate with the pedagogy of Reggio Emilia and Hewett (2001) and Martalock's (2012) recommendation of practitioners and teachers engaging in reflective practice to support daily decisions. While the exploration of FBVs was not an initial area for consideration in my study, it is evident that it relates to the concept of citizenship and is perceived a means of promoting future democracy; ensuring young children can articulate their views on matters which affect them. Providing opportunities for children to freely choose their own prosocial actions is reported by Chernyak and Kushnir (2018) to facilitate them in making similar costly prosocial actions again. I postulate that this would also signify a more ethical pedagogy, seeing that the concepts of listening and radical dialogue are components in promoting children's autonomy (Edmiston, 2008). The role of prosociality could therefore have wider implications, not just for children's social skills, but also their basic human rights and democracy.

7.3 Theme Two: The Role of the Adult in Promoting and Nurturing Prosocial Development

The findings from the observations and interviews provided insight into the second research theme, centring around the role of the adult in the promotion and nurturing of prosocial behaviours. As with family and home environments, which were discussed in the context of early prosocial development in Chapter Two, practitioners built secondary attachments to the children and provided them with a secure base (Macfarlane and Cartmel, 2008). This was not specific to a particular pedagogical approach or curricula, it was instilled through a mix of policy, values, understanding of child development and commitment to democracy and future citizenship. The principles of attachment interactions are reported by Page and Elfer (2013) to have been widely advocated in UK nursery policies. This is reflected in the current key person system, in which a practitioner is responsible for tailoring learning and care to a child's individual needs and offer a 'settled relationship' (DfE, 2017, pp.22-23). In the context of my study, the majority of settings had a key person system, with the exception of the Pikler and Steiner Waldorf playgroups and Kindergarten, due to the nature of their provision (i.e. sessional and term time only).

While the settings' key person system supported children's transitions and monitored their learning and development, the concept of the key person does present a multitude of issues. Firstly, there is a risk that children may become too attached to

their key person, with case studies by Elfer, Goldschmied and Selleck (2012) revealing that young children could become distressed if their key person was absent. Secondly, considering that England's early childhood sector is reported to experience high staff turnover rates (NDNA, 2019), this risks disrupting the continuity of care, especially if a child's key person decides to leave the setting. The continuity of care was initially raised by Honig (1998), who stressed that when a small number of infants are assigned to a specific caregiver, the children should remain with them until they reach 36-months. However, this may be unrealistic, given that some settings in my study had staff working different shifts, would use bank staff to cover absences or had practitioners who worked across different age groups. I observed that settings with a key person system, would encourage children to build relationships with other members of staff, and this appeared to alleviate potential instances of distress if the key person was away. These relationships are considered in the next section in the context of developing prosociality.

7.3.1 Adults as Role-Models, Models and Subjects of Imitation

During several observations, practitioners and teachers were engaged in activities which demonstrated their own prosocial skills and behaviours. This included helping colleagues or another child and comforting and showing concern to children who were upset or in distress. The modelling and scaffolding of prosocial behaviours varied depending on the age group. For infants and toddlers, the emphasis was on providing care, comfort, reassurance and supporting them with basic tasks. When delivering the curriculum or applying different pedagogical philosophes and methods, practitioners and teachers would use a more scaled down version with infants and toddlers. For example, at the Montessori setting, infants had access to traditional Montessori equipment such as the pink tower, but with less pieces. This allowed them to become familiar with the objects, which they would also have access to when they transitioned into other classrooms. Older infants and toddlers were sometimes guided through a task verbally, allowing them to complete it with minimal help. This was observed on several occasions at the Montessori and HighScope settings, which promoted independence through opportunities involving cooperation and helping others, as outlined in Vignette 7.1.

Prac1 sits with MTAr and MTArc and 2 boys and they have glasses and plates. She asks if they would like water and encourages them to say, "Yes please."

She passes MTAr a small pitcher and he pours his water. It is refilled and he passes it to M sat next to him.

Prac1 to MTAr - "Good boy, that's lovely sharing."

MTAr then takes the pitcher round the other side of the table and offers it to MTArc. Prac1 offers children some fruit. MTAr goes to wash up a plate at a small washing up bowl located next to the table. He then places it in the dish rack. MTArc takes his glass over and empties the remaining water into the washing up bowl and leaves the glass in there. He fetches his leftover fruit and places it in the bin next to the washing up bowl. He leaves the table and is then called to have his nappy changed.

The children then head to different activities- toy animals on the carpet, plants and trays of small toy animals.

Vignette 7.1: MTAr (30-months) and MTArc (25-months) Demonstrating Independence in the Montessori Toddler Room

Similar behaviours and responses were observed in preschoolers and older children, who would offer physical or emotional support to their peers (Taumoepeau and Ruffman, 2008; Whitington and Floyd, 2009) In other cases, children required more adult support and intervention when dealing with a challenge or conflict. This required practitioners to settle disputes or verbalise expected behaviours, such as sharing and turn-taking. Epstein and Schweinhart (2018) articulate that the use of patience and encouragement in cases of social conflict enable self-confidence and perspective-taking. I observed this in action, noting when practitioners encouraged specific behaviours, e.g. "*Can you share with your friend?", "His turn now, you had your turn*."

During the interviews, the Steiner Waldorf Kindergarten Teacher (SWKT) and Forest School setting manager made reference to how stories were incorporated to help

children understand behaviours such as kindness. This was deemed a means of supporting the positive behaviours they modelled. The use of storytelling and prosociality is considered a means of supporting moral development in Steiner Waldorf education, and appeared to be used in a similar manner in the Forest School setting (Schmitt-Stegmann, 1997; Nicol and Taplin, 2018). Whereas the Kindergarten and Steiner Family Group were observed promoting prosociality through traditional folk songs (EYFS exemptions mean books are introduced in the Lower School), the Forest School setting used children's literature during the woodland sessions (Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship, 2009; DfE, 2017a; 2017b). The use of song was also observed in the Reggio Emilia setting as a means of promoting positive behaviours. I observed one practitioner in the Preschool Room talking the children through their classroom rules. This included reference to using '*kind hands and kind feet'*, in addition to good hygiene and safety. This was then followed by a song which was centred around these rules and behaviours, which the children joined in with.

The children additionally appeared willing to challenge behaviours and reiterate rules and directions initially provided by the adults. This was evident when I observed a preschooler reminding their younger peer of a rule, when they appeared to break it. Katz, Evangelou and Hartman (1990) state that when older children act as rule enforcers to younger children, this enhances their self-regulation. This is due to them obeying rules and learning to control their own behaviour. This appears to be particularly supportive to older children who are resistant to adult authority. Providing them with a responsibility to support younger children in observing setting rules and routines is reported to encourage compliance.

I observed that this had an impact on the way children behaved and responded to others. In the Steiner Waldorf Kindergarten, a six-year-old boy who demonstrated high levels of energy, was delegated a responsibility to support a four-year old boy with a craft activity. Whereas he had initially been loud and active in the classroom, his persona changed when working with his younger peer. He appeared calmer and demonstrated care and affection; supporting the routine of handwashing, putting on an apron and talked his peer through the activity and what he needed to do. When this observation was discussed in the interview, the SWKT reported that she made conscious decisions to pair children up, especially with peers who were new. She believed this supported social learning, and this appeared to be the case in other settings, where preschoolers were provided with opportunities to help younger peers. This was mostly observed at mealtimes, when a preschooler would dish up food onto a toddler's plate or would sit with a younger child at circle or story time. On some

occasions, toddlers would spontaneously imitate adult actions, such as rocking an infant to sleep or trying to put the beds away.

Further evidence revealed that some children imitated and modelled words and phrases used by practitioners and teachers. One Montessori practitioner expanded on this in her interview:

> *"She's helping me put away the beds, because that is what we do and then she's going 'Let's get your slippers on', and she's trying to help other children and then she sits there and goes 'You can do it!' 'cause I always go 'You've got two hands, you can do it' and so she has now started to say 'Come on, you can do it'."* (MTP5)

This example demonstrated children role-modelling learned behaviours and responses to their peers. In some cases, the role-modelling amongst children was linked to caregiving or through 'teaching', as previously discussed in Chapter Three (Eisenberg, Fabes and Spinrad, 2006; Carter and Ellis, 2016). This had been the case with the six-year-old boy observed in the Steiner Waldorf setting helping his younger peer. A further example emerged from the Montessori Preschool Room, where a three-year old directed her peer through an art activity. In this case, the peer was the same age and the child at the centre of the observation adopted a leadership role. These observations demonstrated a mix of collaboration and cooperation, with one child actively offering support or giving direction, and the other acting as a willing recipient.

Several interview participants across the settings commented that adults acting as positive role-models was deemed a means of supporting social development, corresponding with Inness' (2015) findings. This highlighted the importance of practitioners and teachers being aware of their own behaviours and actions, as these could quickly be picked up and modelled by young children themselves. This was a perspective shared by participant SWKT, who placed emphasis on the role of consciousness, self-development and reflection. She explained how Steiner teachers worked on being thoughtful to each other and being someone worthy of imitation, as set out in the Steiner philosophy (Mathisen and Thorjussen, 2016; Aljabreen, 2020). She expanded on this concept, stating:

> *"…We believe that they [children] learn the things that they need to learn; skills through copying and being aware of the things that are around them and the environment, which includes the people. So we teach a lot by just giving example and modelling and in many ways, the social learning will come through."*

This view was also articulated by the Pikler and Steiner Waldorf Class Leader (PSWCL), who clarified how the emphasis on imitation extended to the parents and carers attending her groups. She stated that she provided an environment where parental struggles and difficulties experienced could be shared with other parents. This acted as a 'safe space' for parents to observe different ways of listening and responding to their child(ren) (modelled by the PSWCL), which could then be tried out in the home environment.

This appeared to echo Marlen's (2019) commentary on Parent and Child Groups creating a sense of belonging and friendship. From my experience as an observer within these intimate groups, it was evident that the parents were invested in the setting philosophies. This comprised of observing and tuning into the needs of the children, allowing for undisturbed sensory exploration of play items (Weber, 2003). The predictable routine, which structured each play session, also meant that the parents could collaborate to initiate a transition to another routine without waiting for the PSWCL. This further demonstrated an internal, supportive community built on collaboration; mirroring other pedagogical philosophies such as Reggio Emilia and HighScope (Papatheodorou, 2010; Gandini, 2012; Epstein, 2014). From the research findings, it became evident that whether adults were practitioners, teachers or parents, they played a key role in promoting prosociality through their own behaviours. As reported, several participants engaged in reflection and were fully aware of the impact they had or could have on the behaviours of children. To further support early childhood professionals to understand the concept of prosociality, a starting point could be to encourage them to reflect on their own positive social behaviours and consider how they model these to young children.

7.4 Theme Three: Emergence of Prosocial Behaviours in the Birth to Three Years Age Group

When considering prosociality, within the context of infancy and early childhood, the importance of attachments and early experiences in the family and care-based pedagogies (such as the Pikler approach) are prominent (see Chapter Two, section 2.6 and Chapter Three, section 3.10). The emphasis on attachment as integral to practice was evident through my observations, supporting Elicker and Fortner-Wood (1995) and Rolfe's (2004) claims that practitioners provide children with opportunities for learning and personal growth, through empathetic responses and positive, supportive relationships. Attachment acted as a basis for the modelling of behaviours (discussed in the previous section), as very young children appeared to imitate siblings and older

peers, in addition to primary and secondary carers. The latter were often the key person, parent or classroom teacher who provided the conditions and opportunities for young children to explore and interact with others.

Hence the emergence of prosocial behaviours and the developmental trajectory they followed through my own study, were investigated through the conditions and contexts in which they were promoted and nurtured. The findings from observing the birth to three years age group provided some interesting and unexpected results. The most frequent prosocial behaviours observed amongst infants across all settings were *helping, caring* and *friendliness*, with other prosocial behaviours demonstrated across the sample (see Appendix IV). Upon reflection on the observations, there are several plausible explanations behind these findings. Firstly, the type of activity the children were engaging at the time presented different opportunities for prosociality, e.g. doll and toy play denoted more care and helping was more evident during routine-based activities, such as tidying up. Secondly, the age and stage of development is a likely factor as all infants partaking in the study were twelve-months or older.

For Baby Rooms with toddlers, their physical mobility and communication and language skills played a role in their interactions with adults and ability to engage with or adopt prosocial behaviours. A final influence related to the mixing of age groups, based on the size and structure of the setting. This was noticeable in the case of the Steiner Family Group, comprised of infants and preschoolers, with the latter modelling behaviours which younger siblings or children then attempted to imitate. In comparison, the Forest School setting was a small nursery and limited to two base-rooms, one for infants and one for toddlers and preschoolers. This meant there were broader ages and stages of development, with older children demonstrating more complex prosocial behaviours. This resonates with the works of Hoffman (1989), Fabes et al. (1994) and Bronson (2000), which draw on the role of cognitive development and emotion regulation in advancing behaviours, such as altruism and sharing.

A diagram summarising my analysis of age-related prosocial behaviours and traits observed and referred to, during both data collection phases, is presented below (see Figure 7.1). This includes some additional behaviours identified across the age groups, with brief descriptors as to what each one comprises of at different stages of development. My findings correlated with existing research in terms of reference to the development of more complex prosocial behaviours in light of maturing socio-cognitive development and self-regulation (see Shin, 2010; Barclay and van Vugt, 2015; Eisenberg, Eggum-Wilkins and Spinrad, 2015; Maibom, 2017; Spaulding, 2017). The

following sections explore the contexts in which prosocial behaviours were demonstrated across the child samples, which includes how play, activities, relationships and the environment also play a role in the development and nurturing of different prosocial behaviours and traits.

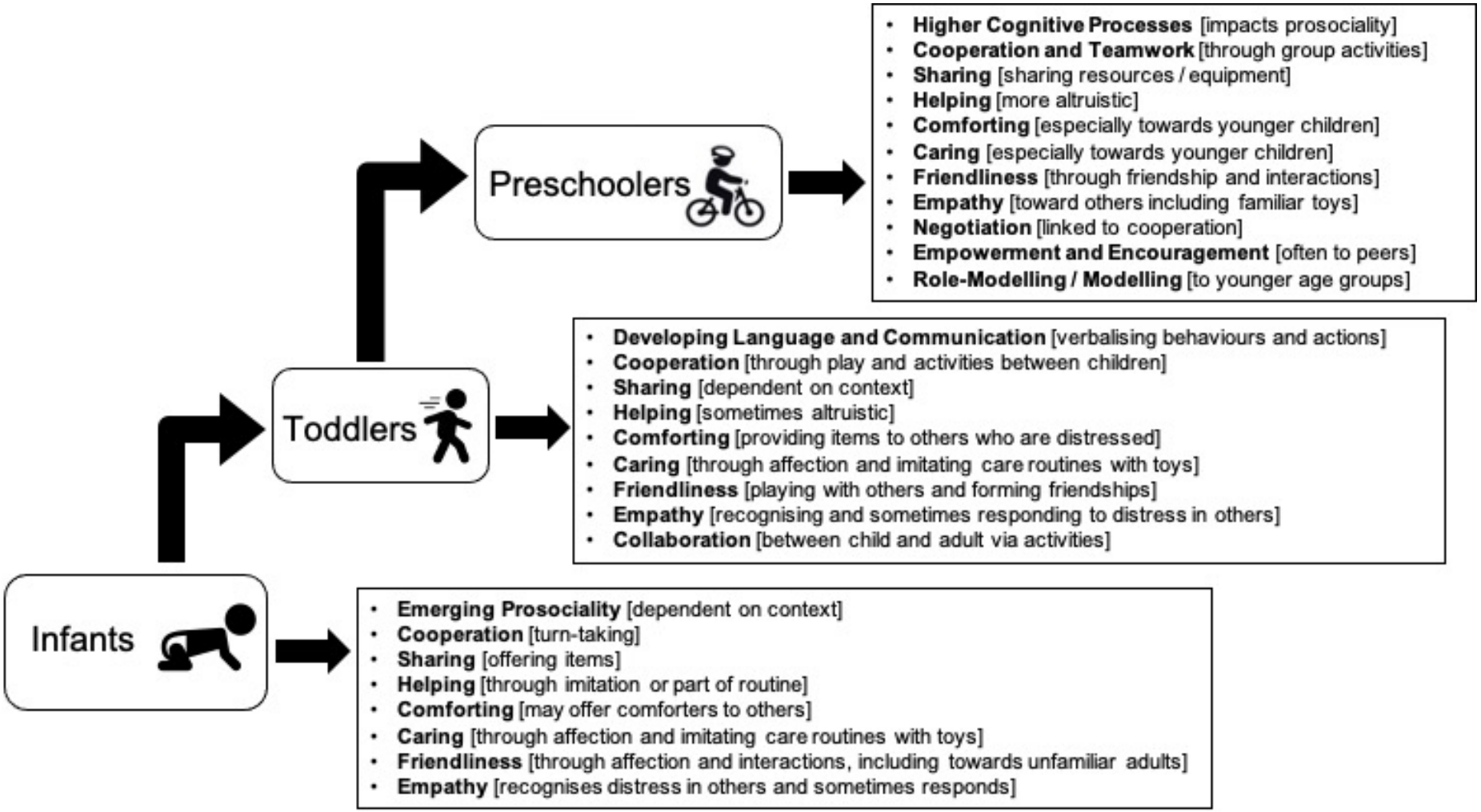


Figure 7.1: Development of Prosocial Behaviours Across the Age Groups Across All Research Settings

7.4.1 Helping Behaviours in Infants and Toddlers

As the most common prosocial behaviour observed across the infant sample, helping was evidenced through a variety of activities. This comprised of tidying up or supporting an adult or peer, which included helping another child in distress. Taking into account that each setting comprised of multiple children and adults, as a researcher I had to determine whether behaviours were instrumental, altruistic or constituted another form of helping. This was a challenge considering that other studies have comprised of experimental and controlled conditions to isolate specific prosocial behaviours (see Liszkowski et al., 2006 and Warneken and Tomasello, 2007). Furthermore, what ascertains helping behaviours in the early childhood settings differed, as behaviours ranged from spontaneous to those facilitated by instruction.

The majority of helping incidents observed occurred as part of the daily routine, such as putting toys and equipment away in preparation for another activity, or when getting ready for a meal. Initially, instrumental helping is described by Tomasello and Vaish (2013) and Hammond and Brownell (2015) as a means of assisting adults complete '*thwarted tasks',* often through pointing or reaching for objects. The behaviours I observed differed, as some children were proactive in collecting items or taking them directly to adults, often without prompting. Some children would start to tidy if they saw an adult beginning to put items away and these behaviours were often acknowledged by practitioners or parents, with many praising them or expressing gratitude. This could suggest that there is some intrinsic motivation attached to children helping, however this is difficult to measure, as the behaviours may be linked to routines and activities as outlined below (Warneken and Tomasello, 2015).

Each setting's planning followed a specific structure and I questioned whether the helping behaviours were more reflective of cooperation, due to the repetitive and predictable routines, as asserted by Gonzalez-Mena (2004). These behaviours could therefore be habitual, due to children's familiarity with routines and from observing adults partaking in routine activities. As with the forthcoming section on caring behaviours, I postulate that this presents further insight into adults modelling behaviours, which are then replicated by the children (Siraj-Blatchford et al., 2002). This was deliberated by Oldfield (2001) in the context of Steiner Waldorf education, but my observations have highlighted that the emphasis on behaviours being potentially 'imprinted' on children is not exclusive to this particular philosophy.

Furthermore, older infants and toddlers were demonstrating agency by taking responsibility for their of objects of play; an outcome previously considered in Harwood et al.'s (1999) study on parents modelling positive behaviours. However, during some of my observations, there was more emphasis on interdependence, as children were reliant on other children or adults helping them carry larger boxes or finding specific items to go into specific storage (Feger, 1991; Warneken and Tomasello, 2007). This provides further evidence pertaining to the link between helping and cooperation, with children and adults working towards a shared goal (Feger, 1991).

The descriptions of helping behaviours from the literature led me to consider a different model of helping, which I felt was more reflective of the observation findings. I have named this *transitional helping* in light of the majority of behaviours occurring during changes to the routine. This form of helping often encompasses imitation and cooperation, as the youngest children may be mirroring adult behaviours and shift between making an independent contribution, or through supporting another child or adult. Considering that prosociality is considered a voluntary behaviour (see Eisenberg, Eggum-Wilkes and Spinrad, 2015), I questioned whether helping was child-initiated. Upon review of the observations, the occurrence of children initiating tidying up behaviours coincided with adults getting out boxes for toys. The actions of the adults may therefore have been a cue for children to put play items away, rather than through the children's own motivations.

I sought clarification through the interviews, asking adult participants what would denote helping behaviour from their own observations and experiences. Considering that at least half of infants and toddlers were pre-verbal or developing communication and language skills, it was important to understand the context behind these behaviours. The interview responses revealed that adults were often instigators of helping behaviours, reaffirming their position as role-models. This was either through encouraging children to help, delegating tasks to specific children or from initiating a task, which led to some children joining in. At this stage, the findings indicated that the development of helping behaviours was something promoted by practitioners and teachers. This was particularly relevant in the Steiner Waldorf and Pikler settings, where helping behaviours are modelled by the Kindergarten Teacher, Teaching Assistant, Class Leader and parents. This complements the earlier discussion in section 7.3.1 on the contribution that adults make in promoting and nurturing prosocial behaviours.

7.4.2 Helping Behaviours, Altruism and Motivation in Preschoolers

In the context of the Preschool classrooms and Steiner Waldorf Kindergarten, there appeared to be some evidence of early altruistic helping. Several children over the age of three years would offer to help an adult or another child, often with a domestic task or an activity linked to the daily routine. While altruistic helping is mostly associated with the welfare of another, in the context of my study I am referring to children voluntarily offering to help without adult prompting or direction (Fultz and Cialdini, 1991). Examples of these behaviours were also evident in the Montessori and HighScope settings, with older toddlers and preschoolers helping another child do up their coat when going out to play, or by putting shoes on a child after sleep time.

During the Montessori interviews, one practitioner discussed helping in the context of the '*Perfect Montessori Child'*. When asked about this concept, it was described as a child helping others to do things themselves. Although this was an aspect of the Montessori philosophy, there was evidence of similar behaviours and actions at other settings. This was often an older or more capable child supporting another, by showing them how to do something. In some cases, helping extended into forms of motivation and empowerment as highlighted in Vignettes 7.2 and 7.3.

F comes over and struggles to climb the tractor tyre and MPSFE tells her she will show her how to do it and climbs up. Prac4 comes over and MPSFE asks if she can help F. She says she will help F and stands behind her, pushing her bottom as she climbs. After a couple of attempts and help from Prac4, F gets to the top and MPSFE shouts, "You did it!" F smiles and lowers herself down on the other side.

F tries again and MPSFE stands behind saying she will "Catch her."
She says, "You did it!" when F gets to the top again.

Vignette 7.2: MPSFE (37-months) Helping Another Child During Outdoor Play at the Montessori Setting

In this observation MPSFE and another child (F) were trying to climb a large tractor tyre in the outdoor play area. While MPSFE was initially observed to be successful, her peer struggled, which led to MPSFE intervening. I questioned whether this form of help extended into early altruism. Eisenberg and Spinrad (2014) define altruism as a prosocial behaviour motivated by a concern for another. In this case, F's difficulty

prompted MPSFE to adopt different approaches to help her, ranging from physical help to words of encouragement. This appeared to empower F, who was evidently successful to the point where she climbed the tractor tyre again, more confidently. A further example of children providing verbal support was recorded during a trip to the Forest School area at the Reggio Emilia setting.

The FSL starts to clear a path to the wood, i.e. pushing down stinging nettles. He gives instructions for the children to come one at a time when called and keep their hands up [so not to touch the nettles]. The children have to climb up a steep, hilly path.

One boy climbs up the path and a girl calls out, "You can do it!"
As the remaining children climb, the rest of the children shout encouraging words and chant their names, along with "Come on! Come on!"

Vignette 7.3: Children Motivating Each Other En Route to the Reggio Emilia Forest School Session

Here, a larger group of preschoolers demonstrated their collegiality, when having to physically climb up a very steep path. One child initially started the chanting to encourage their peers, with others joining in. This part of the observation concluded with the majority of children at the top of the path clapping, shouting out and cheering on the others. This observation provided greater insight into the concept of community in the Reggio Emilia philosophy, demonstrating a mix of empowerment and belonging (Christensen et al., 2006; Gandini, 2012). This forms the basis of the fifth research theme, explored in section 7.6. The insight into these helping behaviours also demonstrated how they link to caring, which is discussed below.

7.4.3 Caring Behaviours Through Friendship and Play

Observations presented insight into the relationships infants and toddlers formed with others across the setting. On several occasions, this age group demonstrated affectionate behaviours towards each other. This ranged from kissing and cuddling, to stroking hair and potential acts of kindness, such as helping to rock another child to sleep. Upon witnessing these behaviours, practitioners would often offer praise which led to some children repeating the behaviour again. These observations correlate with

Shin's (2010) statement on caregivers encouraging positive peer contact, a concept further elaborated on during one interview with a practitioner:

> "*They've been cuddling, they've been smiling, they've been playing really nice, been kissing each other and going 'Ahhhhhh', and then we're going 'Awww, you being nice giving cuddles?' and then they cuddle each other again and kissing, and it just helps them build that relationship with the other babies*." (HSBTL)

According to Chernyak and Kushnir (2018) adults labelling prosocial actions can internally motivate children to be more prosocial. The same applies if an adult refers to a past prosocial action the child has performed or focuses on the child, e.g. if they have been helpful. This is considered to support the development of prosocial identities and from my observation, the children repeated the cuddling behaviour, once it was acknowledged. The affection observed denotes an early precursor to friendliness, with a correlation between affection and care demonstrated (Hay and Rheingold, 1981). This was not restricted to children's interactions with each other but extended into their play and activities. The following vignettes provide examples of doll play across two different settings in the Baby Rooms, through a mix of cooperative and solitary play.

HSBFLa starts to play with a doll and HSBFa comes over and takes another doll. She has it is a blanket and passes another blanket to HSBFLa. HSBFa sits on a chair with her 'baby' wrapped in a blanket. Manager1 is watching the children, while Prac2 changes nappies. HSBFLa approaches Manager1 and passes her the blanket. Manager1 folds the blanket and gives it back to her. HSBFLa crawls away with the doll into the role-play area.

Vignette 7.4: HSBFLa (13-months) and HSBFa (20-months) Doll Play in the HighScope Baby Room

This observation from the HighScope setting demonstrated how caring behaviours extended into other forms of prosociality. HSBFa offering HSBFLa a blanket for her doll appeared to indicate early sharing behaviour. Upon receiving the blanket, HSBFLa approached Manager1 to fold her blanket, so she could swaddle her doll in it, something that HSBFa had done. This also showed developing relationships between the children, as the two infants played near to each other after the observation.

…She [MBFB] returns to the garden area and picks up a doll, taking it to the sand table and rocks it. Prac4 asks if she is caring for the baby. Prac2 and Prac4 briefly discuss between them MBFB playing with the dolls, commenting that she [MBFB] has seen the staff 'do the same' [caring for the babies].

Vignette.7.5: MBFB [20-months] Doll Play in the Montessori Baby Room

Following the practitioner's remarks about MBFB, I felt this presented an opportunity to explore whether the caring behaviours observed were common occurrences and what contexts they were applied to. Practitioners from different settings reported that there had been a recent emergence of caring behaviours amongst the infants and young toddlers. They perceived this to be partially due to children imitating adult behaviours and then replicating these with their toys or peers. This took the form of bathing and putting dolls to bed or responding to a peer in the same manner as an adult, as reported by MBA3:

> *"They [older babies] like to come and sit with us; the ones that don't go to sleep, and they help us rock them [referring to other babies]…"*

In some cases, practitioners reported that they had observed infants and toddlers playing cooperatively and providing joint care for dolls and toys:

> "*They like to take turns with the dolls so it could be, like, say one child has a soft doll, and one has a hard doll and they take it in turns."* (HSBTL)

> *"I had a few little girls in the room and they go straight over to the dollies and they all work together to look after and bath and bed the dollies."* (HSTT2/3)

The response from HSTT2/3 was the first time an interviewee had provided a gender specific answer, whereas other responses had remained more gender-neutral and specific to ages and stages of development. I added a follow up question in my interview with HSTT2/3 to determine what prosocial behaviours she had witnessed in boys. She provided a further example of caring behaviour, but in a different context. A small group of boys had been playing with some small rabbit toys, as part of an Easter interest tray; acting out rabbit behaviours such as hopping. As the rabbit toys were limited, one boy had to play with a chick instead. His friends had been observed by the practitioner reassuring the boy that he was '*a different colour bunny'* and continued to include him in their play, demonstrating empathy.

Miller et al. (1991) stress that boys and girls are socialised to think and act in stereotypical ways. Their initial findings and review of the literature indicated that for sharing, cooperation, comforting and helping behaviours there are no consistent gender differences. However, when differences have been found, they have favoured girls due to some evidence suggesting they are more responsive and nurturing. Some of these perceptions are considered to originate from cultural stereotypes (Dunn, 2004b), with Hine and Leman (2014) adding that links between gender and prosociality in more recent research may not be as 'clear-cut'. They add that variables pertaining to gender differences in prosocial behaviour may comprise of the type of behaviour, recipient, age of the child and the research methodology. This is particularly in the case when self-reports (i.e. those completed by parents, teachers and children) provide larger effect sizes, when compared with observations.

In the case of my study, some of the interview replies suggested that there was some potential underlying gender bias, i.e. one interviewee described some boys as '*boisterous'*, before describing them as '*softening*' when they were with the infants. Another practitioner in a different setting reported that a few boys were '*rougher'*, with a colleague referring to a girl's caring behaviour as '*motherly'*. More interestingly, if gender was discussed in the context of prosocial development, there was a tendency for practitioners to discuss caring and helping behaviours in the girls. This is despite the majority of settings at the time having a higher ratio of boys compared to girls.

However, it should be noted that many responses only referred to the age of the children rather than their gender. This supports Dunn's (2004b) argument on stereotypes being culturally embedded. While the adult participant sample for my study is small, it raises the question as to whether other practitioners and teachers would report prosocial behaviours in the context of gender. It could be that girls have frequented activities which allow them to express caring behaviours, when compared to boys. Therefore, additional research questions could be considered in future studies to draw out more information as to whether boys also regularly engage in doll play either alone or with peers of either sex.

7.4.4 Caring in the Context of Attachment and Empathy

While the majority of cases pertaining to care were reflected through early pretend play, observations and interviews revealed links to other prosocial behaviours and traits; notably empathy, comforting and helping. During a visit to the Forest School Baby Room, I observed FSBV (aged 26-months) becoming distressed. One of the practitioners attempted to comfort her and find out what was wrong. It was only when

FSBL (aged 25-months) returned to the room after having her nappy changed that the source of FSBV's upset became apparent, as detailed in Vignette 7.6.

FSBFV begins to cry as FSBFL comes in the room. She cries for FSBFL [saying her name] and Prac2 asks if she would like to give her a cuddle. FSBFV goes over and hugs FSBFL, who hugs back. FSBFV is taken to the toilet and when she returns, FSBFB [playing nearby] turns to her and says 'Hi' and smiles at her.

Vignette 7.6: Attachment Between Toddlers in the Forest School Baby Room

Following the observation, I learned from the practitioners that FSBFL and FSBV had started nursery around the same time and formed a close bond. This was evidence of a secondary attachment, which was discussed by Macfarlane and Cartmel (2008) as including other children as well as practitioners. FSBV's distress had been triggered by the realisation that FSBL was no longer in the room. Upon her return, the reunion between the two children showed a mix a care, affection and comfort, which was facilitated by Practitioner 2 (Prac2). This appeared to reassure FSBV who stopped crying and hugged her friend tightly. The attachment between FSBFL and FSBV had been taken into consideration for their imminent move to the 'bigger room', with the two due to transition together.

Children's responses to the distress of others, was evident in other observations and interviews. This was often in the form of empathic helping, with another child passing their peer a comforter either directly or indirectly, i.e. via a parent or practitioner. Offers to comfort were not always welcomed, with one child striking out at another when he attempted to put a dummy in their mouth, after seeing them crying. However, in the majority of cases, the provision of comfort was accepted. Although the infant participants observed were aged 12-months and over, during one interview, REEYP reported how she had observed early prosocial behaviours in infants under the age of 12-months:

> *"…the baby was sad and the baby [referring to another child] with the dummy took the dummy out of her mouth and give it…and put it into the other baby's mouth. At the time the baby with the dummy was about eleven-months and the other baby was about eight-months, so it may not have been that it was sharing, but it was that affection that she showed towards the other baby. That was amazing to watch".*

This concept of care was observed to extend beyond peers and dolls and included toys and props which were deemed meaningful to the children. During a woodland session at the Forest School setting, the Nursery Manager produced a small toy prop named Dolly the Deer. This was used as part of several activities, including hide and seek with the toddlers and preschoolers. During one observation, Dolly was placed in a small tree and the children noticed she was laying on one of her legs. They began to ask the adults if Dolly had 'hurt herself', showing concern for her welfare. Concern plays a prevalent role in care as it involves feeling and accepting responsibility (Winnicott, 1963).

Whereas Denham (1998) and Zahn-Waxler et al. (1992) state that concern is derived from children using affective and cognitive empathy to deal with a negative state in others, this was not the case in my observation. As an inanimate prop, Dolly the Deer had no features or interactive components to denote negative emotions. However, the children behaved as if she was real and articulated their feelings about Dolly's presumed needs and welfare. This also extended to Dolly being part of the group, with the children asking if she could have milk and a snack. The provision of care to inanimate recipients is considered to require a substantial amount of prosocial knowledge, with the preschoolers demonstrating a more complex level of care. This related to a greater sense of awareness and sympathy, but also extended into the concept of belonging (Hay and Rheingold, 1983). The acceptance of Dolly the Deer as an important figure in the Forest School community also highlighted that children could become attached to inanimate objects.

For infants and toddlers, attachment to objects has been studied in the context of security. Objects such as blankets and soft toys may provide comfort when very young children face new situations. These are often referred to as *transitional objects* and may become an important item during sleep routines, times of loneliness or low mood (Winnicott, 1953). However, the association between an attachment to an object is not necessarily due to negative emotions or insecurity. It can be consistent with satisfactory relations with people, with some attachments continuing throughout childhood (Bowlby, 1969). Some children may develop a transitory attachment where they quickly become attached to an object, but the attachment may be short-lived as they seek out 'better' objects. This can denote materialism as children grow older (Richins and Chaplin, 2021). While the children in the Forest School observation demonstrated some form of attachment, they were accepting when Dolly the Deer had to be put away.

However, one three-year old boy became distressed when Dolly was packed away for the return trip to nursery. Prior to this observation, he had been looking and calling for her, appearing to express concern when he could not see her. During an interview with one of the Forest School practitioners, I discussed this observation and the response confirmed that children did form attachments to certain toys or objects, which would promote different responses. Although these responses were not elaborated further, the interviewee stated that object attachment had been recognised at the setting as a potential area of conflict, notably when children brought in toys from home. This had caused issues with sharing amongst the children, which had led to the setting discouraging families from bringing in personal possessions from home. The findings from this interview highlighted sharing as a further behaviour, linked to prosociality, which is explored further in the next section.

7.4.5 Perceptions on the Concept of Sharing

On some occasions, I witnessed behaviours that were more negative. While the most challenging of these were not observed, for reasons outlined in Chapter Four (section 4.7), there were occasions where some behaviours were note-worthy. As discussed by Brownell et al. (2013), sharing is perceived to be a challenge for young children during the transference of ownership. Through my observations, I saw this first-hand as there were occasions when there was minor conflict over a specific toy or piece of equipment. This would often result in the item being taken, either when the item had been dropped, put down momentarily or through the use of force, i.e. being pulled away. In the majority of cases, children would attempt to claim back an object or seek out a replacement. On a few occasions, conflict over toys and equipment escalated and required adult intervention, as in the case of 21-month old twins in Vignette 7.7.

PBMR holds the clothes brush out to PBFA, who takes it and then starts to brush her hair with it. She returns to Parent3 and looks at her, while brushing her hair. She then starts to brush Parent3's hair.

PBFCI tries to take the brush out of PBFA's hand and PBFA says, "No!" to her and runs away.

PBFCI says, "Mummy" several times and starts to cry.

Parent3 encourages her to wait until her sister has finished playing with it. PBFCI continues to cry and eventually heads over to her mother and is comforted.

Vignette 7.7: Parent Intervention During Sharing Conflict in the Pikler Parent and Child Group

Following this particular observation, I concluded that the behaviours witnessed were typical of this age group. This appeared to match similar discussions pertaining to the role of cognition and emotional regulation in supporting sharing behaviours (Fabes et al., 1994; Brownell et al., 2013). However, some important information came to light after the observation, which changed my perception. I learned that the twins had both experienced hearing problems at different stages of development. Although there had been improvement and the children were using baby sign language to support the communication of their needs, there were spoken language delays. Upon reflection, the behaviours witnessed could also have been a consequence of frustration and difficulties expressing needs through verbal communication. I had not collected any specific background information for the child sample, mostly due to the number of children taking part. However, this has raised a further area of investigation as to how specific learning needs and disabilities may impact on prosocial development when compared to children on a normative developmental trajectory.

I was interested in learning more about the contexts in which sharing was applied, promoted or affected. The settings' documents only provided vague information, such as specific activities referring to sharing behaviours after they had occurred via learning journals and activity evaluations. As outlined by the Forest School practitioner (in

section 7.4.4, above) difficulty with sharing was recognised as being problematic by some other settings. This was reported as a source of emotive responses, such as crying or children 'snatching' objects. The adults in these cases would often intervene and encourage sharing behaviours, an approach which had also been adopted by some preschoolers when the age groups mixed. However, two specific interviews challenged the perspectives presented by the majority of adult participants about the promotion of sharing.

The PSWCL asserted that within the Parent and Child / Family Groups, sharing was sometimes an action parents felt obliged to encourage in their children:

> *"Usually, it's with parents who are coming in for the first time if they are not used to this approach [referring to Pikler pedagogy]. They will feel because of the pressures out there, that their children should be sharing, because everyone is always going on about sharing, sharing, sharing, but for children up to two, two and a half, three; sharing is really, really hard and actually unnecessary."* (PSWCL)

The use of the term '*unnecessary*' by the PSWCL appeared to contradict other interviewee responses on positively promoting and using praise to encourage sharing behaviours. This statement was articulated further in the interview and linked to the Pikler and Steiner philosophies of play being uninterrupted and with minimal interference (Gerber, 1979a; Marlen, 2017). The PSWCL made reference to the process of play, in which the child collects objects they want to play and engage with through repetitive actions or exploration, until they have finished. If another child desires the objects and these are taken away, this distracts the process of exploration.

A similar response was provided by the Montessori Teacher (MT), but in the context of preschoolers respecting each other's workspace. She made reference to children having autonomy over whether to work independently or cooperatively:

> *"…If they're working with it and they are choosing to work with it, then we will leave them with it for as long as they want to be with it and the work mat denotes their personal space, so nobody else can come in and encroach on their work unless they're invited in, so the children learn that they have some control over their environment."* (MT)

From these interview responses, the concept of respect appeared to underpin the contexts in which sharing and cooperation were applied. My analysis had identified documents and artefacts which made reference to respect, often through the behaviour

policies. However, they only discussed the term when outlining behavioural expectations, rather than through explanations pertaining to what respect looked like in practice. To understand the concept of respect, I referred back to the literature and identified empathy and morality as two traits that encompassed respectful relationships (Berkowitz, 1964; Bredekamp, 1993). These additionally expanded into the concept of agency, something I had observed across the settings. This often took the form of responsibility, with children either delegated a task or, in some cases, seeking out another peer to help accomplish a task. The data from these sub-themes provided insight into how settings plan, consolidate and deliver the frameworks and approaches across the whole setting. Observing the preschoolers enabled me to understand how pedagogy is adapted as children move to different playrooms and classrooms, following their age and stage of development.

7.5 Theme Four: Prosociality Within the Context of Curricula and Pedagogy

The fourth theme explores prosociality within the context of curricula and pedagogy, which addresses research questions two and three. The first section draws on some key differences and commonalities across the settings in the context of practice, which leads into two sub-themes arising from similar aspects of practice observed. The first sub-theme explores pretend play and creativity in the outdoor learning environment, which appeared to demonstrate the most instances of prosocial behaviour. This is followed by the second sub-theme on the development of pretend play, in the context of the role of practitioners in scaffolding learning.

7.5.1 Differences and Commonalities Across Settings

When I commenced this research, the selection of the curricula frameworks and different pedagogical philosophies made me question whether there would be any commonalities between the approaches being investigated. Much of this I had considered in the context of the historical backgrounds to the approaches, different cultural and societal factors and how learning opportunities are planned, delivered and supported. Writing Chapter Three allowed me to understand some key similarities between different curricula and associated pedagogies, but I was also mindful that what I read and what I observed and learned about from being *in* the settings would likely differ. Furthermore, considering that the reviewed literature is not all derived from the UK and comprises of studies conducted internationally, I was also aware that the findings would have taken into account different policies, procedures and legislative requirements. This in turn may also mean that what I observed was not typical. For example, the HighScope approach in the United States places higher emphasis on the

importance of home visits, with teachers and caregivers conducting a least one home visit per family, per year (Schweinhart, 2007; CDC Office, 2019). In comparison, home visits do not take place in all areas of the UK and are affected by time and a lack of training on working with parents (Greenfield, 2012).

The Pikler setting was also very different compared to the studies on Lóczy, as rather than being a day care setting, it was a weekly Parent and Child Group. As articulated in Chapter Three (section 3.10), there are few Pikler settings in the UK and I found it challenging locating research specific to Parent and Child Groups. Therefore, I feel that the time spent in the Pikler Parent and Child Group and the Steiner Waldorf Family Group provided some unique insight into pedagogy and practice. The structure and facilitation of the Parent and Child Group meant that key parts of the caregiving routine were not observed. This is partly due to the length of the sessions, but also for the purpose of safeguarding and to respect family privacy. While I did not observe children's toileting or nappy change routines, I was able to observe sensorial play and the snack routine. This provided me with a deeper understanding of the interactions between the children, their peers and the adults.

Both Pikler and Steiner Waldorf groups shared a lot of similar components, in terms of songs being used to support routine transitions and an emphasis on free and uninterrupted sensorial play. A key difference was that snack time in the Family Group mirrored the ritual I had observed in the Steiner Waldorf Kindergarten, in which a table was laid and a lantern used to guide the children to the table. In comparison, the Pikler Parent and Child Group collected mats and sat on the floor, before washing their hands and being offered a choice of snack. During the interview the PSWCL explained that she had initially taken over the Steiner Family Group, but found it became adult-led by the parents and therefore, incorporated Pikler's approach. This eventually led to two groups being run, one which subscribed to the philosophies of Emmi Pikler and Magda Gerber, and the other which followed a simplified version of the Steiner Waldorf Kindergarten experience.

A further area of commonality pertained to partnerships with families, with several interviewees stressing the important role parents play in early development and the promotion of prosocial skills. The PSWCL and Montessori Teacher both made reference to sharing ideas with parents for things they could try at home, mostly centred around their relationship with their child and positive behaviour management. This included introducing listening skills and alternative words and phrases; omitting negative terms perceived to label the children, such as the word 'naughty'. While the inclusion of families is built into the EYFS guidelines, the settings also recognised the

importance of effective partnerships. Considering that all settings were based in the PVI sector, some interviewees made reference to parents making conscious decisions to send their child to that particular, playgroup, nursery or school. This suggested that parents were very much invested in their child's early learning experiences and practitioners and teachers worked to ensure the parents were involved as much as possible.

For other settings, with the exception of the mainstream EYFS nursery, their differences pertained to combining more than one curriculum or pedagogical approach. The interviews provided an opportunity to understand how these approaches worked together, with several practitioners commenting that they were chosen as a means of complementing or enhancing their practice. For example, the Montessori setting was adopting a Forest School approach to complement Creativity in their Montessori curriculum. Each setting delivered opportunities and activities to provide cognitively stimulating experiences to each age group. Underpinning philosophies, such as Montessori, Reggio Emilia, Steiner Waldorf and Pikler was an emphasis on curiosity and exploration, which develop competencies and mastery (Gottfried, Fleming and Gottfried, 1998). Despite differences in methods and frameworks, the settings' planning, discussions in the interviews and my observations presented two specific forms of play and activities which were integral to developing prosociality. I have categorised these into sub-themes, with pretend play discussed below. This links to the second sub-theme of outdoor learning, which settings identified as beneficial to children's development. Considering that the majority of settings had access to local woodland, beaches or spacious grounds, this meant learning could be extended into the outdoor environment to provide an alternate, yet engaging experience for children.

7.5.2 The Development of Early Pretend Play

The literature in Chapter Three provided several discussions pertaining to pretend play and creativity as activities which promote different prosocial behaviours. The review of the documents and observations on the children, presented some further context pertaining to how behaviours; notably cooperation, teamwork and collaboration are developed and nurtured. As discussed above (see section 7.4.3) the emergence of pretend play was noted through the observation of infants and toddlers caring for dolls and other toys. While this form of play is likely to involve very young children imitating adults, the emergence of role-play and other forms of activities, which provide a creative or imaginative outlet, also present further insight into different forms of prosociality.

During my visits to the Pikler and EYFS settings, I observed adults engaging in pretend play with the children. Considering that the majority of imaginative play activities and opportunities had been from observing children playing solitarily, in pairs or small groups, witnessing adult interactions was a unique experience for me as a researcher. The philosophy of independence and self-exploration meant that at the Pikler Parent and Child Group, the adults would interact if a child initiated play or they had to respond to a need, such as changing a nappy (Weber, 2003). At other times, adults observed, and a similar approach was conducted in the Steiner Waldorf Family Group. When children approached their parent, another parent, or the Class Leader the adults would play if invited to do so. There was evidence of sharing and cooperation, with toddlers making 'tea' or brushing their mother's hair. This was through the use of real items, such as metal teapots and wooden hairbrushes.

In contrast, my observation at the EYFS setting saw a practitioner initiate and facilitate the play activity. The emphasis on practitioners leading play is set out in the EYFS guidance, as a means of guiding children's capabilities and responding to their interests. This is in addition to children having opportunities to lead their own play (DfE, 2017a). Weisberg, Hirsh-Pasek and Golinkoff (2013) describe guided play as remaining child-directed but incorporating adult-scaffolded learning. This is considered to support socio-emotional development through the promotion of self-regulation and self-efficacy. From reviewing my observation notes from the Parent and Child and Family Groups, it would appear that the adults were very much guiding the children's learning, with some parents initiating play, but then allowing children to direct it.

The observation recorded in Vignette 7.8 demonstrates how the practitioner (Prac3) at the mainstream EYFS nursery engaged in pretend play with the infants. Part of this activity appears to be more directed by the adult, rather than guided, as the following account demonstrates.

Prac3 finds a toy phone and EYBMS raises his hand to his head

Prac3 to EYBMS: "Do I put it to my ear?"

She holds the toy phone to her ear and says "Hello?"

She passes the phone to him and he holds it to his ear and starts interacting with it. He calls over to me "Phone" and I reply, "Have you go a phone?" He replies "Phone" before continuing to play.

Prac3 picks up a toy screwdriver and demonstrates to the children.

Prac3: "Screwdriver…fix the cupboard door."

EYBFP watches and Prac3 asks if she would like a go. EYBFP takes the screwdriver, walks to the cupboard and touches it with the screwdriver and starts to turn it. Prac3 praises her, saying "You fixed the cupboard door," and tells Prac1 what EYBFP has done.

Prac1 repeats: "You fixed the door."

Vignette 7.8: Practitioner (Prac3) Engaging in Pretend Play with EYBMS (19-months) and EYBFP (15-months) at the Mainstream EYFS Nursery

This activity comprised of plastic toys to represent real tools and utilities, unlike the aforementioned settings which used natural materials and real items, in line with their pedagogical philosophies (Kirkham and Kidd, 2015). EYBMS communicated that he understood the purpose of a telephone and alerted me, as I observed, to tell me what it was. The demonstration of using the toy screwdriver by Prac3 was followed by EYBFP attempting to 'fix' other furniture. While the context of this pretend play differed from the doll play (see section 7.4.3), adults modelling pretend play and engaging with it on a regular basis, is reported to have potential positive outcomes for infant and toddler cognitive development. Perren et al. (2019) report that adults can stimulate young children's social pretend play through modelling and promoting. For early childhood practitioners, their interventions can scaffold and model the symbolic use of objects and extend play scenarios (Loizou, 2017). Trawick-Smith and Dziurgot, (2011) suggest that practitioners hone their observational skills and develop a broader repertoire of

play interactions, allowing them to determine when to be more direct or indirect during pretend play sessions with young children. Through the observation in Vignette 7.8, the modelling of the toy screwdriver led to the infants and toddlers trying to 'help', with two young children playing together with the toy toolkit after the observation. The advancement of cognitive and social development through scaffolding has implications for the type of prosocial behaviours experienced as children mature, which is explored in the next section.

7.5.3 Pretend Play and Creativity in the Outdoor Environment

Whereas the infants and toddlers were developing early prosocial skills via pretend play, behaviours observed amongst preschoolers demonstrated a wider and more complex variety of prosocial behaviours and social skills. These were often initiated by the children themselves, with the Forest School and Steiner Waldorf settings providing some insightful results. In these settings, children aged four- to six-years would discuss and organise different roles and responsibilities through their play. There was often a child undertaking a leadership role who would delegate tasks or roles to others. Those children sometimes sought consent or returned back to that individual to negotiate and discuss ideas. This resonates with findings from my earlier research on children's leadership skills, in which I discussed some children undertaking a participatory leadership role. This utilised prosocial behaviours, such as cooperation and advanced communication skills (Davis and Ryder, 2016). These behaviours are common when children engage in meta-communication; described by de Haan et al. (2020) as the coordination of roles, which may be categorised under intersubjectivity or negotiation. This more complex form of communication is also reported to increase prosocial skills, which includes to planning, negotiation and maintenance of play (Robertson, Morrissey and Moore, 2020).

The observations on pretend play across the settings identified a number of behaviours and actions, which correspond with the work of Fukada, Fukada and Hicks (2001). Their quantitative study on children's leadership skills reported preschool children setting out rules, adding new play ideas and giving permission to play; behaviours which I witnessed in both indoor and outdoor environments. When playing together, the preschoolers would create ideas using small-world toys, props and natural resources, such as sticks. The ideas shared would be accepted or rejected, although not in the context of conflict. Instead, the children would spend time negotiating and exploring alternative ideas, as demonstrated in Vignette 7.9.

They place their Forest School friends and REPSFF says one could be 'Mummy' and the other, 'Daddy'. REPSFF passes REPSFC a stick and she finds somewhere to put it.

REPSMH brings a stick over and REPSFF says, "Thank you."

REPSFH and REPSFJ remain at the large stick pile and bring over more sticks.

REPSFC to REPSMH: "Is it all right if we put a big stick in your living room and it could be the chair?"

REPSMH says: "Yes."

REPSFV and REPSMH a small piece of wood: "Is it all right if this could be the telly?"

REPSMH: "That's too small to be the telly."

Vignette 7.9: Preschoolers Building a Home for the Forest School Mascot at the Reggio Emilia Setting

Whereas cooperative behaviours in the Baby Room (see section 7.4.1) showed infants and toddlers taking turns and playing together, preschoolers demonstrated other skills, such as teamwork and joint problem-solving and skills denoting self-regulation (Tickell, 2011a; 2011b). The observation during the Forest School session at the Reggio Emilia setting provided children with more space and different learning experiences. Additionally, this allowed me to witness prosocial behaviours applied in a different learning context. While this activity was initially planned by Forest School Leader (FSL) rather than the children, the preschoolers did have the autonomy to choose the items needed to use to build their houses. This often revolved around making joint decisions pertaining to the size, shape and purpose of items such as sticks and leaves. Furthermore, there was no adult intervention while I observed, with children problem-solving cooperatively and negotiating with each other. The interactions between the children suggested they were fully engaged in reciprocal conversations (Smidt, 2013; Lanphear and Vandermaas-Peeler, 2017). The creative aspect was evident through

their ability to replicate familiar items, based on those found in their own family homes. This again demonstrated the trajectory of prosocial development from Figure 7.1, above, with prosocial behaviours advancing alongside cognitive and communication and language development.

7.6 Theme Five: Children's Social Communities and Prosocial Development

The concept of community is an integral feature across the majority of pedagogical philosophies at the centre of my study, which mostly entail the importance of family partnerships. The initial aim of my research was to explore prosociality within the context of early childhood curricula and pedagogy across the birth to three years age group. However, as the research progressed, a pattern emerged across all of the settings, despite their different locations, working practices and approaches to learning, teaching and care. I noticed that the children were very much part of their own internal community. These findings led to the development of the fifth and final theme, which I refer to as *Children's Social Communities and Prosocial Development.* This concept is not specific to one specified age group, playroom or classroom but is a whole setting-wide approach, which reflects the interactions and relationships across the age groups.

These in turn revealed some further findings pertaining to the contexts in which prosocial behaviour is applied. While reference was made to family and communities through the interviews, and from observing parents in the Parent and Child / Family Groups, the scope and timeframe of the study meant that I was unable to explore this aspect in depth. However, considering that early discussions have highlighted how families can support early prosocial development (see Chapter Two, section 2.6), there is a gap in research pertaining to how early childhood settings can use their pedagogical knowledge and approaches, to provide parents and carers with ideas and strategies to promote prosociality in the home environment. This is an area that could be explored further in future research.

7.6.1 Making Friends with Unfamiliar Adults

An interesting discovery within the research settings related to infants' and toddlers' responses to unfamiliar adults. Historical studies have presented mixed findings regarding very young children's responses to unfamiliar adults. This ranges from more avoidant behaviours towards strangers from children attending day care (Blehar, 1974) to Bowlby's (1973) discussion on substitute care. His study referred to the impact stable or unstable maternal attachment had on children's emotional development at six-years of age. More recently, studies have focused on the relationship early

childhood practitioners have with infants and toddlers. This has centred around a primary caregiver or key person in early childhood settings and the importance of building trusting and authentic relationships with the children in their care (Recchia, Shin and Snaider, 2018). Degotardi and Pearson (2009) argue that attachment is just one component that makes up the relationship between the early childhood practitioner and child. They add that the facilitation of socialisation, modelling and scaffolding are features of professional practice, taking it beyond the security-focused features of the attachment relationship.

Positive attachments can allow for more engagement in complex play and positive social orientation (Eisenberg and Mussen, 1989; Glazzard and Bostwick, 2018). Children who have a secure relationship with an attachment figure are deemed to have a secure place to explore, master new experiences and develop their competencies and self-confidence (Turner, 1991). From my experience as a stranger-researcher, during my visits to the settings, the children did not appear distressed or concerned about by presence, despite not having met me before. This contradicts findings from early research by Ainsworth, Bell and Stayton (1971) and Greenberg and Marvin (1982), that reported negative responses and wariness towards strangers from infants and toddlers. However, whereas this was due to the absence of parents in these studies, in the settings I was researching, the children had familiar adults and peers with them. The infants therefore appeared to demonstrate a level of comfort and potential self-confidence, as they were the ones who initiated contact. This comprised of calling for my attention, bringing over toys and other objects to show or offer to me or attempt to engage in some form of play. This was even the case in the Steiner Waldorf Family Group, when an infant approached me, while their mother was supporting the tidy up routine. At this point I was finishing an observation, due to moving to another part of the room, so the area I had been sitting in could be set up for snack. Instead, I wrote some notes of the following incident as a reflective journal entry.

REFLECTION: As I was observing on the sofa (moving from my original location on the other side of the room so PCGL could set up for snack), SWBMR came over and was playing with the metal pots, he kept offering me a metal teapot and I began to pretend to drink from it. He smiled and repeated this a few times saying 'Ta' as he offered the teapot. A small milk jug had got stuck inside and he tried to remove it but couldn't get it out. He offered me the pot and I removed the jug and gave it to him. He then put the jug back into the teapot.

Vignette 7.10: A Reflection on My Interaction with SWBMR (14-months) in the Steiner Waldorf Family Group

In this reflection, SWBMR offered me a metal pot he had been playing with before the change of routine. An exchange of the pot between him and myself occurred. After several turns, I realised that this interaction may have been a non-verbal request to help him remove a small metal milk jug, which was inside the pot. I removed the milk jug and handed it to SWBMR, who then proceeded to place it back inside the pot and shaking it to make it rattle. Whereas he could have sought out his mother to help him, instead he had approached me, a stranger in his setting, and initiated the exchange. This may have derived from his sense of security being amongst familiar adults and peers or from being in an environment which was in alignment with Steiner Waldorf principles; providing him with a calm, open and stimulating space to explore (Degotardi and Pearson, 2009; Mathisen and Thorjussen, 2016).

A further spontaneous interaction occurred in the HighScope Baby Room, with an older infant initiating contact with me, while I observed. As with the Steiner Waldorf Family Group, there was an exchange of toys and items, with HSBMA keen to show me several play objects available to the children at the time. Vignette 7.11 presents the recorded observation of this encounter.

HSBMA brings me over 2 toy boats and says, "Red" and "Geen" (green) which are the colours. I say, "Thank you" and he goes off to play. He then brings me over an orange shape (from the shape sorter), hands it to me and says "Ar-ang" (orange). He brings me over a book and presses a button and it makes monkey noises. He takes the book to Prac2 who starts to read it to HSBFLu, who is now playing on the floor.

HSBFLa sits and listens and HSBFLu looks over at the pages. HSBMA comes over to me and sits next to me on the cushions. He hands me 2 books and then goes off to play.

Vignette 7.11: HSBMA (21-months) Providing Researcher with Toys During an Observation at the HighScope Setting

The moment when HSBMA came and sat next to me, showed a level of comfort. I learned during some of the interviews that settings often had a high turnover of visitors, notably students on work experience and in some cases, bank staff. This meant the infants were exposed to many different people and may have become used to seeing different faces in their playroom and socialising with a range of individuals. Considering that familiar adults were present at all times, this not only demonstrated security, but also the children feeling confident in expressing friendly behaviours. This was not limited to the infants, as toddlers and preschoolers expressed curiosity behind my visit and appeared to accept me into their environment. This even extended to being welcomed into the nursery community, as I recall in a reflection of my visit to the Montessori setting in Vignette 7.12.

REFLECTION: M introduces himself to me and says he wants to show me his friends- I follow him and he takes me to some play areas and tells me who is playing there.

Reflective Note: I had not been in this child's room, so this was a new meeting and he approached me. Strong example of friendliness. Review of the literature suggests this is part of the Montessori philosophy (links to grace).

Vignette 7.12: Reflection on a Four-Year Old Boy Taking the Researcher on a Tour of the Outside Area at the Montessori Setting (name of child not known)

The experience with M was note-worthy as I had not observed in his classroom during my visit, and he had not initially seen or met me. In addition to showing me around the outside area and where he played, he also introduced other children, who he referred to as his friends. Part of this interaction may be connected with the Montessorian philosophy on Grace and Courtesy (Isaacs, 2018). Through these interactions, it provided insight into how the children navigate and partake as members of setting, a concept explored in the next section.

7.6.2 Prosociality Within a Community of Mixed Age Groups

As articulated throughout this chapter, one area that stood out in particular, was how the children had developed their own internal community within their setting. This was particularly evident when age-groups had opportunities to mix, which showed several wider prosocial behaviours. All settings participating in the study saw the benefits of mixing age groups, with several interview responses highlighting the role that the preschool and older children played in promoting prosociality. This was often through a mix of role-modelling and modelling, with the former relating to acting as an exemplar of positive behaviours, such as offering to help and using manners. The latter appeared to link more to practical actions and activities, such as showing a younger child how to lay a table for a meal, serve food or how to dress themselves. While these behaviours were particularly evident in the Montessori and Steiner Waldorf settings; reflecting the approaches' philosophies and values, other settings presented opportunities for children of different age groups to interact. Degotardi and Pearson (2009) assert that changes in sociocultural diversity promote children's early relationships with wider social networks and teachers' belief systems. This consequently allows for a more inclusive and informed view of early relationships within the context of early childhood settings.

Mixing age groups provides a multitude of benefits for children attending early childhood and education settings. Katz, Evangelou and Hartman, (1990) state that this allows older children to create more complex play opportunities for younger children to engage in, which is reported to enhance early communication and literacy skills. This means that preschoolers and primary-aged children can work well in younger children's zones of proximal development (ZPD). Younger children may become more motivated when observing older peers engaging in different activities, such as reading and risky play. They may integrate these activities into their own play and pursuits, even in the absence of an older playmate (Gray, 2011).

Younger children may view older peers as leaders and those who they can turn to for help. In contrast, older children may see younger children as requiring help and instruction (Christie and Stone, 1999). This may allow them to nurture more caring and supportive attributes, which I observed on several occasions between preschoolers or older toddlers and their younger peers. Further benefits to older children include patience, tolerance and nurturing. However, Katz (1993) stresses that there can be risks from multi-age grouping, as younger children may become a burden to their older peers or feel overwhelmed in the presence of more competent older children.

From my time spent in the settings, this did not appear to be the case as the preschoolers appeared to enjoy the company of their younger peers, to the extent where some would request a 'visit' to the infants in their Baby Room or offer to help look after them. An observation, recorded at the HighScope setting in the early morning, provided insight into the sense of community between the children when the age groups mixed. On this occasion, two preschoolers conversed about making a young infant a treehouse made of Duplo. There was a lot of discussion about what it should look like and what parts should be used. The two children cooperated and worked together to construct the treehouse, before presenting it to the infant as outlined in Vignette 7.13.

The children are engaged in some free-flow play. Prac2 is sitting with one of the babies. HSPSMJ and HSPSFSe decide they will build the baby a treehouse and they rummage through the Duplo box for some bricks. They create a tall construction out of the bricks, which is mounted on a small green board.

HSPSMJ to the baby: "XXX here is your treehouse."

HSPSMJ passes the Duplo construction to the baby and she takes it and smiles.

Vignette 7.13: Preschoolers (aged four-years) Building a Duplo Treehouse for an Infant in the HighScope setting

During the interview at the HighScope setting, I was curious to know more about the relationships between the infants and preschoolers, following on from this observation. The practitioners reported a multitude of prosocial behaviours between the age groups, such as helping, caring and sharing. They also highlighted how interactions between the younger and older children, built confidence, by supporting the children during transitions to other rooms. During the *Plan, Do, Review* time, toddlers could choose to join preschoolers in their classroom and engage with different and more challenging activities. This was something which did not occur in other settings, unless classrooms and playrooms joined together to partake in activities, such as Sports Day. This may have been due to HighScope's pedagogy, but a further factor may relate to the setting layout. Some settings had annexes or rooms on different floors, which meant children could not freely access these or visit other playrooms or classrooms without an adult. In contrast, the HighScope setting kept the gates / doors open between the Toddler and Preschool Rooms, which meant children could freely move between rooms and adults would make a note of who was visiting and from which room. Children would then return to their 'base' room when *Plan, Do, Review* ended.

A further theme which emerged from the interview data centred around the concept of inclusion, something that became evident from the discussion on caring (see rabbit activity in section 7.4.3). While several practitioners discussed the importance of inclusion as part of their setting's values and philosophies, some examples of behaviours and observations from the interviewees' practise provided insight in terms of how children included their peers. One interview example from the Reggio Emilia setting centred around a child with autism who found social situations challenging. The practitioner (REEYP) reported how the child's initial limited language meant other children began to determine his needs through non-verbal means, such as body language. This allowed them to respond to his needs before he communicated them. She stated that he left the settings with a '*big group'* of friends and verbal language skills. Their recognition of the other child's perspective and how he was using different means of communication, demonstrated how the setting's pedagogy of listening was encouraging children to listen to each other (Rinaldi, 2006; 2012). The children's ability to 'read' others was also reported to extend to the infants, with older children getting down to their level and promoting a calm environment. This was particularly the case for more active children, who adjusted their behaviours; something I had previously observed in the Steiner Waldorf Kindergarten (see section 7.3.1).

The Montessori setting also drew on the importance of inclusivity, with one practitioner stating that they tried to avoid '*best friends'.* She rationalised that this was because some children would be happy, but others would be unhappy because they were not

part of that friendship circle. Hence the setting worked on promoting an inclusive atmosphere where all children could join in with a game or activity to promote a social environment. While the HighScope setting did not discuss the concept of best friends, they also made reference to promoting positivity and enabling children to interact with everyone, as a way of building confidence and self-assurance. This was seen as a means of encouraging children to try and do things, often with the support of friends. The emphasis on inclusion led me to reflect on my own experiences as a visitor. As discussed above (see section 7.6.1) the children had welcomed me as an unfamiliar adult into their space. This highlighted that the early childhood settings were not just spaces for children to learn, develop and socialise. They provided opportunities for children to welcome from others outside into their playgroup, nursery or school and ultimately become part of that community.

7.7 Chapter Summary

In summary, this chapter has discussed and critiqued the five key themes and 13 sub-themes, which were identified through the data (see section 7.1, table 7.1). The findings have shown that prosociality is not just linked to social and emotional development, but is developed through a broad range of activities, play opportunities and routines which supports other areas of development (e.g. cognitive, language and communication) (Theme Two). For infants and toddlers, they are capable of demonstrating a range of early and emerging prosocial behaviours, which grow in complexity as they naturally mature. These behaviours are supported by both adults and peers, who play a key role in modelling and role-modelling (Theme Four). The social environments provided by settings are hugely influential in providing opportunities for children to mix across the age groups and form attachments and relationships with others, including visitors to the setting (Theme Five). While practitioners and teachers are less familiar with the concept of prosociality, they recognise its importance for children's life chances (Theme One). The settings' different ideologies highlight that their underpinning philosophies are influential, in the way in which prosocial behaviours are supported and nurtured. This was particularly evident in Themes Three and Four, which present examples of the activities and interactions which demonstrated the prosocial behaviours and traits I was researching.

In some settings, such as Reggio Emilia, Montessori, HighScope and Pikler, there is more emphasis on children's rights, choices and agency. In comparison, the Forest School and Steiner Waldorf settings acknowledged their subscription to a more adult-led approach. The Forest School practitioners recognised there needed to be more balance, to allow for more child-initiated opportunities in their practice. While the

mainstream EYFS nursery did not subscribe to additional philosophies or methods, there was an emphasis on democracy and balancing adult-led and child-initiated activities and learning opportunities. Chapter Eight provides an overall conclusion, which summarises how these findings have answered my research questions, and what this means for my future research and practice.

PART V – Conclusion

Chapter Eight: Conclusion

8.1 Introduction

This final chapter concludes the thesis by revisiting my research aims and questions presented in Chapters One and Five and summarising key findings from the study. Consideration is given to the implications of the research for practice in formal early childhood settings, which includes reference as to what the findings might mean for other types of early childhood provision. The contribution my research makes to knowledge, pertaining to the topic of prosocial development with the birth to three years age group, is discussed. I additionally consolidate and reflect on my personal and professional learning as a researcher, with reference to current and future practise.

8.2 Research Questions Addressed

This study, titled '*Nurturing prosocial development in very young children: A multiple case study in early childhood settings',* aimed to explore how prosocial behaviours and actions in the birth to three years age group are promoted, supported and nurtured within different curricula frameworks and pedagogical approaches. This was addressed through three research questions, which are listed below and accompanied by a summary as to how each of these has been answered.

8.2.1 Question One: What is prosociality within the context of infancy and early childhood provision?

The findings from my research revealed that prosociality, in the context of infancy and early childhood provision, is a complex phenomenon. It encompasses a range of interlinking behaviours, which evolve in line with a child's age and stage of development (see Chapter Seven, figure 7.1). While the term is generally unfamiliar to practitioners and teachers, specific behaviours such as sharing, are recognised and evident through documents and artefacts and from the interviews. My study has provided insight into how prosocial behaviours complement each other and become more complex and evolved as children mature. For example, affection and cooperation develop into more complex behaviours, which are reliant on cognitive, communication and language skills. These were evident through my observations on infants and toddlers engaged in doll play, and preschoolers working together to build and create natural or artificial constructions (see Chapter Seven, sections 7.4.3; 7.5.3 and 7.6.2). The building of early friendships developed into working as a team, negotiating and

sharing ideas. These are promoted and nurtured through different philosophies, methods and approaches to learning and development; with each setting not only following different curricula frameworks and pedagogical philosophies, but also having their own set of values and modes of delivery. The difference between my research and studies which have previously studied prosociality in infants and toddlers, relates to examining a wider range of behaviours and traits within the context of a natural, social environment.

8.2.2 Question Two: How do very young children demonstrate prosocial behaviours and actions through play and activities in early childhood settings?

My observations provided opportunities to record how children demonstrate prosociality in different contexts. The range of activities, learning opportunities and environments planned and provided, allow children to develop and carry out behaviours which may be prosocial (see Appendix V). This ranged from playing cooperatively to helping another child or adult. Providing older children with more responsibility allowed them to demonstrate a wider range of behaviours and actions, such as caring for another (see Chapter Seven, section 7.4). The mixing of age groups provided the children with opportunities to form relationships and, for preschoolers and older children, there appeared to be more emphasis on independence and the modelling of behaviours towards younger peers and siblings (see Chapter Seven, sections 7.3.1 and 7.6.2). The contexts in which prosocial behaviours and actions were applied differed, and were dependent on where the children were, and who they were with. For example, the outdoor environments provided preschoolers with more opportunities for cooperative activities. This meant they used more cognitive and communication processes to negotiate, reflect and decide on their actions in a larger space (see Chapter Seven, vignette 7.9). In comparison, the infants and toddlers demonstrated early prosocial skills, such as helping and care, in a more intimate environment indoors; supported by practitioners and parents. The findings therefore suggest that children's prosocial behaviours and actions are adaptable, depending on their social environment.

8.2.3 Question Three: In what ways do early childhood practitioners and teachers use pedagogy and curricula to promote and nurture prosocial behaviours in very young children?

Practitioners and teachers have access to a wide range of different tools, methods and philosophies; with some settings identifying additional approaches that are complementary to their core principles and practice. Prosocial behaviours are promoted and supported within the context of the curriculum and pedagogy being delivered, and are often encompassed within specified areas of development, ELGs and curriculum outcomes (see Appendix V). For settings using two or more curricular and pedagogical approaches, these had been consciously chosen to complement and expand on existing provision. For example, the Montessori setting had introduced Forest School to extend their outdoor provision, and discovered it was complementary to Montessorian philosophies.

Approaches to promote prosociality in infants and toddlers are often an 'entry' point to scaffold children throughout their time at the setting. In the Montessori, Steiner Waldorf Family Group and HighScope settings, I observed practitioners and teachers providing a more simplified version of their chosen curriculum and adapt materials and resources accordingly (see Chapter Seven, section 7.3.1). In the context of the Forest School setting and the Reggio Emilia Forest School sessions, there was greater emphasis on providing shorter sessions which promoted sensorial experiences. While methods are adopted to suit different ages and stages of development, there is a lot of emphasis on social skills. Practitioners and teachers would often role-model behaviours and use a mix of adult-led and child-initiated approaches to support young children's development. For example, providing children with tasks that developed independence and cooperation at an age and stage appropriate level (see Chapter Seven, vignette 7.1).

While my findings for question three demonstrate broad and diverse opportunities for prosocial development, it should be noted that prosociality was sometimes acknowledged through the settings' behaviour policies; positioning the concept in the context of behaviour management (see Chapter Seven, table 7.2). Furthermore, interview responses and other documentation (i.e. learning journals) associated prosociality predominantly through the EYFS, in line with its learning outcomes, which outline expected skills and behaviours under PSED (DfE, 2017). This would appear to position prosocial behaviours in the context of policy and legislation, hence there could be more emphasis on exploring wider prosocial behaviours (i.e. caring, empathy) and how they can be promoted and nurtured outside the confines of statutory frameworks and requirements.

8.3 Opportunities and Limitations: Implications for Future Research

The exploration of prosocial development has presented some insightful examples of very young children engaging in a range of prosocial behaviours. It has offered opportunities for several key findings to be explored in future research, notably prosociality in the context of gender, disability and special education, and links between prosocial behaviours and agency, citizenship and democracy. As articulated in Chapter Six (section 6.6), I considered my research to be context bound, due to variations in practise and how frameworks and philosophies were planned and delivered. Furthermore, considering that for this study I had selected one setting to represent each of the curriculum and pedagogies represented, I question whether my findings would be different if settings following the same approaches had been selected. For example, selecting several Montessori settings would allow findings to be compared in the context of the Montessorian curriculum and pedagogical philosophies. This could determine what aspects of practice are key to the nurturing of developing prosocial behaviours across similar types of settings.

Furthermore, it should be noted that the settings participating in this study had the space and facilities to provide a wider range of learning opportunities to promote and nurture prosociality. These settings comprised of well qualified and experienced practitioners and teachers, who were focused on delivering high quality early childhood provision. Another notable feature is that I had no settings located in more urban areas and cities, which would likely have a more ethnically diverse population of children, families and early childhood staff. The settings who opted to take part in my study had a majority of white British children and staff, from different socio-economic backgrounds. Conducting research into more ethnically diverse settings may also allow for engagement with participants, who are originally from a more collectivist culture or society. This would enable studies to determine whether prosociality and behavioural expectations differ across more diverse ethnic and cultural populations (discussed in Chapter Two, section 2.6.1 and 2.6.2).

The research has also identified some limitations when conducting research of this scale. Firstly, the concept of prosociality and associated behaviours are not clearly defined and there was limited understanding of the term from the interviewees. I would therefore argue that the concept of prosociality is open to interpretation. For some practitioners and teachers, they positioned the concept within the context of behaviour management. Prosociality could therefore be misinterpreted as a means of mitigating or ‘fixing’ potential, or actual anti-social or unwanted behaviours, due its generic definition of being a ‘positive social behaviour’ (Staub, 1978, p.2.).

In contrast, the literature portrays prosocial behaviour as a multifaceted concept, which encompasses a wide and complex range of influences and factors, such as children's quality of attachment, culture, gender and individual personality traits and characteristics (Capara et al*.,* 2000; Hastings, Utendale and Sullivan, 2007; Gilbert et al., 2019). It is therefore important for practitioners and teachers to look at the bigger picture, by giving consideration to what prosociality is within the context of their practise and how they can promote this within the context of children's agency, democracy, personal growth and development. Further consideration on the implications my research may have on the practice of practitioners and teachers is deliberated further in the section that follows.

8.4 Contributions to Knowledge

In the opening chapter, I articulated my intended contribution to knowledge, arising from my research. Here, I have summarised three main areas that I considered central to my research; positioned in the context of prosocial behaviour:

- Birth to Three Years Formal Early Childhood Provision
- Pedagogical Practices and Curriculum Frameworks
- Implications for the Practice of Practitioners and Teachers

Following the discussion of the findings in Chapter Seven, I have revised these areas to better reflect how the research has contributed new knowledge and insight into my chosen topic. Each of these areas are discussed in the forthcoming sections.

8.4.1 Birth to Threes: An Under-Researched Age Group

Although previous studies have conducted research on prosocial behaviours across the infant and toddler age group, these have predominantly been through a mix of controlled and experimental studies or explored within the context of home environments (i.e. the works of Hay and Rheingold, 1983; Harwood et al.,1999; Eisenberg, Fabes and Spinrad, 2006). These studies have often focused on one or two specific prosocial behaviours, with activities predetermined and set conditions provided. My research in contrast has studied multiple prosocial behaviours in natural environments, i.e. conditions and activities were not predetermined, or controlled to receive specific results. With each setting having different facilities, space, routines and activities, this meant prosocial behaviours could be observed and studied in different contexts. The research findings have highlighted the complexity of prosociality, as very

young children are presented with a wide range of activities, types of play and learning opportunities; underpinned by different philosophies, methods and values.

Furthermore, the presence of a higher number of children, the mixing of age groups and multiple adults, provided opportunities to collect data on a broader range of social and emotional behaviours. These included kindness, teamwork, agency and responsibility. These additional behaviours were inseparable from my study as they are complementary to the six prosocial behaviours and four traits I had initially selected. For example, social activities demonstrated children undertaking some form of responsibility, such as tidying up. This in turn promoted a number of prosocial behaviours, notably helping and cooperation. The study has provided some interesting findings pertaining to the diversity of prosocial behaviours in very young children, with opportunities to consider how these behaviours evolve as children mature. However, it should be noted that a child's personality, culture and setting they attend also play a role, which may make it challenging to interpret whether a behaviour is genuinely prosocial (Bronson, 2000; Yagmurlu and Sanson, 2009; Eisenberg and Spinrad, 2014).

8.4.2 Pedagogy and Curriculum as Drivers of Prosociality

In educational and early childhood contexts, the focus on prosocial development has been through the teacher themselves, with the emphasis on their classroom practice and behaviours (see Honig, 1999; Rosenthal, 2003). These are not always connected to a specific curriculum or pedagogical approach and, for those which are, these may centre around one or two types of practice. The inclusion of a wider range of different pedagogical philosophies and curricula frameworks, particularly in settings which use two or more approaches, has therefore not previously been researched.

My research has adopted a setting-wide exploration to determine how curriculum frameworks and pedagogical approaches support and nurture prosocial behaviours and development. While there are studies on pedagogical practices which refer to specific prosocial behaviours, this is often within the context of other modes of inquiry, e.g. role-play, older age groups, rather than centring specifically on prosociality as a main area of investigation (see Waite and Rees, 2014; Carter and Ellis, 2016; Isaacs, 2018). My findings present new insight into the types of play and activities that promote prosociality, in the context of formal early childhood provision. Each setting had adopted different approaches, in relation to the delivery of their curriculum and pedagogy. There are similarities in the way in which very young children engage in activities which are common across all settings. This appears to be dependent on the

resources and activities themselves, such as doll or cuddly toy play, outdoor play and role-play.

8.4.3 Implications of the Study for Adult Participants

As in previous studies, adults are found to play a key role in promoting and nurturing prosocial behaviours in the early years. Studies have predominantly considered the role of parents and carers, shifting to a focus on teachers as children mature (see Macfarlane and Cartmel, 2008; Yagmurlu and Sanson, 2009). There is a considerable gap in research which addresses the 'in between', i.e. early childhood practitioners and teachers working with younger age groups in formal early childhood settings. While there are some similarities to other studies, in relation to the role of attachment and adults modelling prosocial behaviours, my study has presented new insight in relation to the practise of early childhood practitioners and teachers. Their role is very much informed by a mix of knowledge on child development, pedagogy and key working practices. This includes policies, setting values and being an advocate for children's future wellbeing and achievement. The context in which adults are working in early childhood and educational settings therefore differs, but all emphasise the importance of social skills and relationships.

A further discovery, from several adult participants, relates to how participating in this study has presented opportunities to reflect on how they are actively promoting or could be providing more opportunities for prosocial development. Hence, while my study has been to explore prosociality across different settings, there was emerging evidence that the research had an impact on the way in which practitioners and teachers perceived prosociality within their settings. A few adult participants commented that the dialogue, pertaining to what I had observed, had made them reflect on how they could provide further opportunities to support prosocial behaviours. This was noticeable when I discussed with one practitioner an observation of a toddler helping a younger toddler down some stairs. The practitioner replied that perhaps this was something they should encourage, once the realisation came about how the child had taken the initiative to help and care for a peer. Hence, there is the potential for this research to allow practitioners and teachers to reflect on their observations as to what prosociality is and consider further opportunities to scaffold and to nurture children's developing prosocial skills.

A final area for reflection pertains to some interview responses from participants and findings from the literature, which suggest gender-bias in the context of prosociality. Practitioners and teachers would benefit from examining whether specific prosocial

behaviours, such as caring, are more ascribed to girls. If this is the case, consideration needs to be given as to how provision can be made more inclusive, to promote prosocial behaviours in boys. This paves the way for a bigger conversation pertaining to unconscious bias and how prosociality can be nurtured in a more gender-neutral manner. Practitioners and teachers can address this by using observation and their pedagogical knowledge, to explore how alternative types of play and activities can promote specific prosocial behaviours and associated traits, such as empathy. For example, caring dispositions can be nurtured through the care of plants and animals, and not just doll play. Therefore, I argue that it is important for early childhood settings to develop their understanding of the concept of prosociality, and its implications for children's agency and citizenship. Prosocial development is not a separate entity and comprises of a broad range of behaviours which are inseparable and complementary to other areas of learning and development.

8.5 Reflections on Professional and Personal Learning as a Researcher

Upon reflection, this study has enabled me to investigate curricula frameworks and pedagogical approaches, which I was only familiar with through reading academic literature and guidelines. On a professional level, I have developed a more confident understanding of different philosophies and modes of practice, which I have incorporated into my own teaching. This has included discussing my research journey with undergraduates and postgraduates and introducing curriculum concepts and pedagogical philosophies to Level 3 foundation students and primary education teacher trainees. Furthermore, the research findings have presented me with a range of options pertaining to other areas of investigation at postdoctoral level. Using the recommendations and ideas from this chapter will enable me to collaborate with colleagues who have expertise in areas that complement my own research interests, such as social justice.

On a personal level, I feel I have been able to reconnect with my original roots as an early childhood practitioner and engage in familiar aspects of practise, notably carrying out observations and appraising documents. This has reinforced the importance of practice-informed research as a means of investigating how early childhood provision contributes to learning and development outcomes for children. For many of the settings, having a doctoral researcher on site was a new experience and prompted much curiosity about my study. Several practitioners and teachers commented that they did not know much about research but appeared keen to incorporate it into provision. As the data collection phases concluded, several managers and senior members of staff informed me that I had made an impact on the setting, with my visit

being the topic of discussion and excitement. Consequently, this has led me to consider how my expertise as both a practitioner and researcher can be utilised to support early childhood settings in becoming more research active. This is an area I will give further thought to as my research activities progress.

8.6 Concluding Remarks

At the beginning of my study, I set out to explore how prosocial behaviours are promoted, supported and nurtured within different curricula frameworks and pedagogical approaches. Through my findings, it is evident that regardless of the curriculum framework and pedagogical approaches, prosociality is perceived to be an important component in supporting children's future life chances, mental wellbeing and academic success. The practitioners and teachers appear very much invested in providing opportunities for children to develop age-appropriate social skills, which encompass a range of opportunities to promote prosocial behaviours. While the adult participants did not fully understand the concept of prosocial behaviour from its terminology, prosociality is very much embedded in practice often through specific behaviours such as helping and sharing.

I have learned that prosociality is not limited to the behaviours and traits selected for my research. It constitutes much broader concepts and aspects of practice, including children's agency, citizenship and democracy, which warrant further exploration. While prosocial behaviours are more developed and apparent in preschoolers, there is evidence of infants and toddlers being supported in developing the social and emotional skills that scaffold prosocial behaviours, including opportunities to help and care for others and make independent choices. Furthermore, observing children partaking in their natural day-to-day routines and activities has highlighted the context in which prosocial behaviours are developed and applied. This is through naturally occurring interactions between children, their peers and adults. My study has offered glimpses into the day-to-day lives of seven types of early childhood settings with rich and valuable insights into prosocial development, in context, across the birth to three years age group. The findings have highlighted the importance of a thriving setting-wide community as a hub of prosocial activity, with infants and toddlers very much at its heart.

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Appendix I

Letter of Ethical Approval

13 September 2016

Anglia Ruskin University

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Dear Gemma,

Re: Application for Ethical Approval

Principal Investigator(s)	Gemma Ryder
Project Number:	16_17 001
Project Title:	How do early childhood philosophies support the development of prosocial behaviour and dispositions in the 0 - 3 years age group?

Thank you for submitting your documentation in respect of your application for ethical approval. This has been reviewed by the Chair of the Faculty (of Health, Social Care & Education) Research Ethics Panel (FREP) in advance of the next scheduled meeting in November.

I am pleased to inform you that your ethics application has been approved by the Faculty Research Ethics Panel (FREP) under the terms of Anglia Ruskin University's Research Ethics Policy (Dated 23/6/14, Version 1).

Ethical approval is given for a period of 2 years from 30 September 2016 to 30 September 2018.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you comply with Anglia Ruskin University's Research Ethics Policy and the Code of Practice for Applying for Ethical Approval at Anglia Ruskin University, including the following:

The procedure for submitting substantial amendments to the Panel, should there be any changes to your research. You cannot implement these amendments until you have received approval from FREP for them.

The procedure for reporting adverse events and incidents.

The Data Protection Act (1998) and any other legislation relevant to your research. You must also ensure that you are aware of any emerging legislation relating to your research and make

any changes to your study (which you will need to obtain ethical approval for) to comply with this.

Obtaining any further ethical approval required from the organisation or country (if not carrying out research in the UK) where you will be carrying the research out. Please ensure that you send the FREP copies of this documentation if required, prior to starting your research.

Any laws of the country where you are carrying the research and obtaining any other approvals or permissions that are required.

Any professional codes of conduct relating to research or requirements from your funding body (please note that for externally funded research, a Project Risk Assessment must have been carried out prior to starting the research).

Completing a Risk Assessment (Health and Safety) if required and updating this annually or if any aspects of your study change which affect this.

Notifying the FREP Secretary when your study has ended.

Please also note that your research may be subject to random monitoring.

Should you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me. May I wish you the best of luck with your research.

Yours sincerely

Dr Sarah Burch
For the Faculty (of Health, Social Care & Education) Research Ethics Panel

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cc: Dr Lyndsay Baines (Sponsor)
Dr Paulette Luff (Supervisor)

Appendix II

Child Participants: Age Groups and Gender

Setting	B (M)	B (F)	T (M)	T (F)	PS (M)	PS (F)	O (M)	O (F)
EY	BMS	BFP	MM	FA	MCh	FJ		
	BMSt		MT		MA	FP		
	BMR		MC		MO	FR		
			MHe		MR			
			MHa		MK			
			MW		MG			
M	BMT	BFB	MAL	FL		FE		
	BMH		MAS	FLu				
			MAr	FZ				
			MArc	FE				
			MJ					
SWK					MA	FC	OMP	
					ME	FSR	OMJa	
					MJo			
					MB			
					MH			
					MBl			
SWFG	BMR	BFN			MT	FM		
						FF		
P	BMR	BFCl	BME					
	BMC	BFA						
		BFN						
		BFE						
RE	BMT		MC	FE	MA	FC		
	BMH		MJO		MJ	FA		
	BMJ				MH	FK		
					MLe	FI		
						FAm		
HS	BMJ	BFLa	MLS	FRo	MUw	FLR		OFD
	BMA	BFLu	MOs	FS	MH	FSe		
		BFA	MT	FEl	MThe	FP		
				FLi		FB		
				FLo				
				FRu				
FS	BMB	BFL	MD	FRo	MA	FA		
	BMN	BFV	MAu		MC	FM		
					MJ	FMo		
					MO	FT		
					MB	FV		
					MAl			

Appendix III

Adult Participants: Roles and Qualifications

Interview Number	Order of Interview	EYFS (EY) – 9th Feb 2018	Codes for Interviewees
1	1	Level 3 Practitioner (Babies)	EYB3
2	2	Level 3 Preschool Room Leader	EYPRL
3	3	Level 3 Officer in Charge (Toddlers)	EYTOC
		MONTESSORI (M) – 12th Feb 2018	
4	1	Montessori Teacher (QTS) (Preschool)	MT
5	2	Level 3 Apprentice (Preschool)	MPA3
6	3	Level 3 Apprentice (Babies)	MBA3
7	4	Level 5 (Toddlers)	MTP5
		STEINER WALDORF (SW) – 26th Mar 2018	
8	1	Level 4 SW Kindergarten Teacher	SWKT
		PIKLER (P) – 23rd Feb 2018	
9	1	Level 5 PC Group Leader (P and SW)	PSWGL
		REGGIO EMILIA (RE) – 17th Nov 2017	
10	1	Level 3 Senior Practitioner (Babies)	REBSP
11	2	Level 6 / EYP Senior Practitioner (Toddlers / Preschool)	REEYP
12	3	Level 2 Practitioner (Preschool / Older)	REPO2
13	4	Level 2 Practitioner (Toddlers / Preschool)	RET2
		HIGHSCOPE (HS) – 28th Mar 2018	
14	1	Level 3 HS Coordinator (Preschool)	HSPC
15	2	Level 3 Team Leader (Toddlers)	HSTTL
16	3	Level 3 Trainee (Toddlers)	HSTT2/3
17	4	Level 3 Team Leader (Babies)	HSBTL
		FOREST SCHOOL (FS) – 24th Nov 2017	
18	1	Level 3 Practitioner (Babies)	FSB3
19	2	Level 2 Trainee (Toddler/Preschool)	FSTPT2
20	3	Manager (FSL) (Whole setting)	FSM

Appendix IV

Sample of Key Themes from Observations (Forest School Sample)

Setting	Participant Details	Evidence
FS	Baby / Toddler Room **13 months – 2 yrs 2 months** **BB, BL, BV, BN**	That's Not My Lamb- pictures of lamb and Prac2 as what the body parts are and babies recognise the nose and verbalise this. Prac2 asks questions 'is your nose soft or hard?' BL kisses BN on the head and strokes his hair. Prac2 asks if BB has soft hair (similar to lamb in the story). BV begins to cry as BL comes in the room. She cries for BL (saying her name) and Prac2 asks if she would like to give her a cuddle. BV goes over and hugs BL, who hugs back. BV is taken to the toilet and when she returns, BB turns to her and says 'Hi' and smiles at her. Prac2 asks if they should tidy the cosy area and asks for help. Prac2 asks BL and BV (who are telling me their folders are on the table) if they can pick up the instruments under the table. They each get an instrument and bring it over and put it in the box. BL picks a cushion up and stacks it on top of the cupboard (open top with instruments and toys). BL says 'hold hand' to one baby (walker) and reaches for her hand. Takes her hand as they walk through the door and baby stops to hold it and they walk to the stairs and are helped down the stairs by Prac2. FT goes to the swing and BN is being pushed by the adult. FA stands in front and pushes him in the swing and then slows the swing down until it stops BN laughs. FA asks if she can go on the swing and BL (who was on the swing) is helped to get off. FA climbs on and then calls Prac4 for help so she can push her. Prac4 comes over and pushes FA on the swing. BL pushes another baby who is in swing (same baby that she held hands with before tea). Does this for a few turns before heading off to play with something else. BL plays on a climbing frame and BV joins her- BL strokes her hair and Prac4 says 'that is very kind'. BV goes over to prac3 BL calls her saying about her playing on the seesaw. BL runs back to the swing and continues to push the baby. BV stands with her. BL to baby 'ready steady go' and pushes her- baby smiles and laughs.

Gemma Ryder
Possible friendliness and caring

Gemma Ryder
Here there was evidence of friendship- BV became upset when BL had her nappy changed and left the room. She couldn't see where she had gone. When BV returns, there was a cuddle between the two- potential evidence of care and possibly empathy?

Gemma Ryder
Babies were babbling to me and pointing to the folders.

Gemma Ryder
Clear evidence of helping and care here. BL is a toddler and helping a younger child to go down stairs. Other baby did hold her hand and it appeared to be willingly.

Gemma Ryder
Evidence of helping

Gemma Ryder
Child recognises need for adult support.

Gemma Ryder
Again, possible care for a younger child.

Gemma Ryder
Adult recognition of 'kind' behaviour.

Gemma Ryder
Positive relationship between these two children.

FS	Toddler / Preschool Room **FV - 2 yrs 4 Months** **FL - 2 yrs 3 months** **FM - 3 yrs 3 months** **FRo - 2 yrs 11 months** **FA – 4 yrs 1 month** **MD - 2 yrs 6 months** **MAl - 4 yrs 8 months** **MC - 3 Yrs 7 months** **MJ - 3 Yrs 1 months** **MAu - 2 Yrs 6 Months**	FSL says she can't open the egg MA offers to help and FSL gives it to him and he pulls it apart. An egg is passed around- MD drops his cup and MB picks it up and hands it back. Egg is passed around for children to explore MA and MO decide to build a den and fetch large branches and lay them against a tree. MA says 'Oh did you collect them sticks?' MO says 'yes' MO fetches large branches and adds them to the den. MA joins FSL to draw. MO continues to build the den and prac2 helps. FSL says she will hide Dolly the deer and asks them to go with prac1 and 2 to clearing and count to 20. Children return after counting and MAl finds Dolly. FSL asks him to hide it- all children return to seats and count again MJ doesn't want to go and FSL asks if he would like to help MAl. Finish counting and children call for Dolly. The children find Dolly and FSL chooses a small group to hide Dolly supported by Prac1. FA and MD hide Dolly. MAl asks if he can help, FSL says he has had a go so this time the others will hide Dolly. Children offered cups and offered milk. Prac1 pours milk and encourages children to say 'thank you'. FA asks FSL what is for snack and FSL says it is breadsticks and raisins and she will bring it round when they finish their drinks. MAl asks if Dolly the deer can have some snack. FSL says she thinks Dolly is full from breakfast. They ask if Dolly can have milk and FSL says Dolly is having a rest (she has been placed on the branch of a tree). FSL goes round and offers snack to the children. MAl mentions Dolly's leg and FSL says Dolly is laying on her leg. MJ asks if Dolly has hurt her leg (says 'ouch') and FSL explains Dolly hasn't hurt her leg, she is resting on it laying on her branch. At the clearing MD tells me he has Dolly and he cuddles the toy deer. FSL asks is she can have Dolly back and says Dolly is going home. The children wave and say goodbye to Dolly. FSL encourages them to have another 'big drink' and the children drink some of their water from their cups / flasks. MJ starts calling for Dolly and FSL explains Dolly has gone home. MJ continues to call for her and then begins to cry. FL asks where Dolly is and FSL repeats that Dolly is resting and gone home. FSL	**Gemma Ryder** Here the help is initiated by the child, rather than the adult. **Gemma Ryder** POSSIBLE EXAMPLE THAT MATCHES THE EXPERIMENT ON BABIES AND YOUNG CHILDREN RETURNING DROPPED ITEMS **Gemma Ryder** Evidence of co-operation and teamwork **Gemma Ryder** Pairing children up **Gemma Ryder** Child initiated offer to help **Gemma Ryder** Interesting observation as the children showed a lot of concern for Dolly the Deer, who was a very small fabric deer, which acts as their mascot, according to FSL. Shows that children can become attached to non-living objects, such as toys and their responses of care and concern reflected that of a real creature. **Gemma Ryder** Demonstrates care for Dolly. **Gemma Ryder** MJ became distressed at Dolly not being visible- attachment to the toy.

		says she is going to read a story (10 wriggly caterpillars) – MJ continues to ask for Dolly and FSL says they are going to have a story now and Dolly has gone to rest. FL then fetches a doll and places it in a baby chair and attempts to do up the straps (clicking it into place) prac3 says 'can you do it?' And when FL does, prac3 says well done. She tries to do the other strap and appears to struggle. Prac3 says 'shall I help you?' FL says yes and prac3 helps her strap the dolly in. Both FL and FV rock the baby in the chair saying 'wheeeeee, steady…wheeee' FV returns to playing with the driving set and FL continues to rock the baby. FV tells prac3 'baby in the swing'. FL tries to unstrap the dolly, prac3 helps and FL says 'no' prac3 apologises, but FL wants help. Prac3 assists doing the state up and the game continues- rocking the dolly. FV helps rock the dolly saying 'wheeeee'. FV says 'poor dolly, FL poor dolly'. FV fetches a dolly and says 'my dolly sleepy too' she pretends to walk the dolly on the carpet, while FL continues to rock her doll in the swinging doll chair. FV takes doll back to where the others are and swaps in with another doll and puts it in the chair on top of the other doll. FL has a nappy and opens it up. FV talks to FL' the two have a conversation and FV fetches her original mot and says 'poor dolly'. Plays with it briefly and gets a purse out and put the dolly on the chair with another doll, fetches items out of the dolly cot- bib, clothes and bottle. Calls 'dolly' and FL asks for the bib and FV passes it over and DL puts it in the chair. . FL tells me 'dolly is asleep' and plays with another dolly- wipes doll with a cloth and tries to put clothes on it prac3 helps. She tries to get other dolly out of the chair and says 'she stuck!' She manages to get dolly out of the chair and sits her on a chair at a table. FV walks around with dolly bibs and says 'bibs' girls try and put bibs on the dolls. One of the dolls slides off the chair and FL keeps trying to sit it up. FL picks up a dolly saying 'baby's sad'.

Gemma Ryder
Child acknowledging ned for assistance from an adult

Gemma Ryder
Could be possible caring behaviour, may have mimicked from adults

Gemma Ryder
Evidence of care

Gemma Ryder
Co-operation

Gemma Ryder
Evidence of role play

Appendix V

Potential Prosocial Behaviours Observed

Setting	Cooperation	Sharing	Helping	Comforting	Caring	Friendliness	Totals: Age Groups	Other Behaviours
Early Years								
Babies	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	**5**	
Toddlers	✓	✓	✓			✓	**4**	
Preschool	✓		✓			✓	**3**	
Montessori								
Babies	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	**6**	
Toddlers		✓	✓				**2**	
Preschool	✓		✓			✓	**3**	**Empowerment**
Forest School								
Babies / Toddlers	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	**5**	
Toddlers / Preschool	✓		✓		✓	✓	**4**	**Teamwork**
Reggio Emilia								
Babies		✓				✓	**2**	
Toddlers			✓				**1**	
Preschool	✓				✓	✓	**3**	**Empowerment**

HighScope								
Babies		✓	✓		✓	✓	**4**	
Toddlers	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		**5**	**Collaboration: adult & child**
Preschool	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	**5**	
Steiner Waldorf								
Babies / Preschool	✓	✓	✓			✓	**4**	**Teamwork**
Preschool / Older	✓	✓	✓		✓		**4**	
Pikler								
Babies			✓			✓	**2**	**Affection (touching head)**
Toddlers		✓	✓			✓	**3**	
Totals: Behaviours	**12**	**11**	**16**	**4**	**8**	**14**		

Appendix VI

Documents and Artefacts: Sampling, Categorising and Evidence

Item Number	Setting Code	Date of Research	Sampling	Sample Selected By	Category	Title / Description (Age Group)	Evidence of Prosocial Behaviours / PSED	Evidence / Reference to Curriculum / Pedagogy
1	**FS**	20/3/2017	**Purposive**	**Manager**	Activity Plan	**Sticks and Music** (Toddlers)	Cooperates with rules & boundaries; managing feelings and behaviour (self-regulation)	EYFS PSED and Forest School philosophy
2	**FS**	20/3/2017	**Purposive**	**Manager**	Individual Child Observation	**Introduction to Spring Term** (Toddlers & Preschool)	Confidence; resilience; team building (evident through activities)	EYFS PSED and Forest School philosophy
3	**FS**	20/3/2017	**Purposive**	**Manager**	Individual Child Observation	**Musical Instruments** (Preschool)	Care and concern for younger children; role-modelling (correct way to behave); holding younger children's hands (supporting their first time at FS)	EYFS PSED and Forest School philosophy
4	**FS**	20/3/2017	**Purposive**	**Manager**	Individual Child Observation	**Maths – Leaves: colours, weight and size** (Toddler)	Self-awareness; learning with others	EYFS PSED
5	**FS**	20/3/2017	*Random*	**Researcher**	Activity Plan	**Mud Kitchen** (Toddlers & Preschool)	Working collaboratively; developing independence	EYFS PSED and Forest School philosophy

6	**FS**	20/3/2017	*Random*	**Practitioner**	Activity Plan	**We're Going On A Bear Hunt** (Babies)	Show affection and concern; taking care younger peers; playing in pairs.	EYFS PSED
7	**FS**	20/3/2017	*Random*	**Practitioner**	Activity Plan	**Pancake Making** (Babies)	Working together in a group	EYFS PSED
8	**FS**	20/3/2017	*Random*	**Researcher**	Information Sheet	**Benefits of Forest School and its links to the EYFS** (For Parents / Carers)	Take responsibility for self and others; building confidence, self-esteem and resilience; empathy	EYFS PSED and Forest School philosophy
9	**EY**	12/4/2017	**Purposive**	**Practitioner**	Continuous Planning	**Continuous Provision Planning: Daily Activities** (Babies)	Comprised of group activities, e.g. Vtech, Duplo – may suggest cooperation	EYFS areas of development
10	**EY**	12/4/2017	**Purposive**	**Practitioner**	Activity Plan	**On the Farm** (Babies)	PSED listed – practitioner commented this may be due to it being a group activity	EYFS areas of development
11	**EY**	12/4/2017	*Random*	**Researcher**	Activity Plan	**Free Play and Easter Activities** (Babies)	Plan not fully complete due to Easter. Pending routine changes relate to mixing age groups. May support social development	EYFS areas of development
12	**EY**	12/4/2017	*Random*	**Researcher**	Display	**Forest Fun Wall Display** (Preschool)	Learning Outcome for EYFS: 'Making relationships' - can play in a group extending and elaborating play ideas	EYFS areas of development

13	**FS**	12/6/2017	**Purposive**	**Manager**	Behaviour Policy	**Behaviour Policy** (Whole Setting)	Terms used: positive, caring and polite behaviour encouraged; promote non-violence and peaceful conflict resolution; recognition of age-appropriate behaviours	EYFS statutory guidance and areas of development
14	**RE**	20/6/2017	**Purposive**	**Practitioner**	Individual Child Observation	**Analysis of My Month and Spontaneous Activities** (12-month old Baby)	Photos and descriptions relate to attachment with familiar adult; child responding to self in the mirror; exploring clay with another child.	Reggio Emilia activities and EYFS areas of development
15	**RE**	20/6/2017	*Random*	**Researcher**	Activity Plan	**Weekly Activity Plan** (Babies)	'Encourage small interaction'; mixed-age group activity with preschool children	EYFS areas of development and Reggio Emilia principles (reflection)
16	**RE**	20/6/2017	*Random*	**Researcher**	Display	**Water Wall Display** (Toddlers)	Group interaction; cooperation; helping, children observing others	Reggio Emilia principles (project)
17	**RE**	21/6/2017	**Purposive**	**Practitioner**	Learning Journal	**Analysis of My Month** (Preschool)	Social development e.g. smiling upon receiving a container; making friends: Child with EAL – evidence of non-verbal interactions	EYFS areas of development and PSED
18	**RE**	22/6/2017	**Purposive**	**Manager**	Behaviour Policy	**Behaviour Management Policy** (Whole Setting)	Terms and phrases used: confident, competent learners; socially acceptable, positive, caring, polite behaviour; respect	Reggio Emilia principles evident and

							themselves, others and their surroundings; kindness; willingness to share; sense of belonging	EYFS PSED terms included
19	**RE**	22/6/2017	*Random*	**Researcher**	Planning Board	**Planning Board** (Preschool)	Evaluating and sharing with each other; staff reflection on whether children are leading their own learning.	Reggio Emilia practice (provocative questioning, project)
20	**RE**	22/6/2017	**Purposive**	**Researcher**	Information Sheet	**Using Natural and Reclaimed Resources** (Guide for Staff)	Children 'test own theories'; 'children take responsibility'	Reggio Emilia terms used (third teacher, open-ended provocations). Links to Forest School
21	**EY**	30/6/2017	**Purposive**	**Manager**	Behaviour Policy	**Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy** (Whole Setting)	Terms and phrases used: 'difference between right and wrong'; self-reflection; respect others	Terms mirror those in the EYFS, e.g. managing behaviour
22	**EY**	30/6/2017	**Purposive**	**Practitioner**	Activity Plan	**Planning: Monthly, Weekly, Continuous Provision Planning** (Toddler)	Activities provide evidence of group activities and children's interests- participation; role-play. Suggests possible cooperation and turn-taking involved	Planning reflects EYFS in terms of areas of development

23	**EY**	30/6/2017	*Random*	**Researcher**	Routine	**Meal Time Routine** (Babies & Toddlers)	Independence; developing confidence; recognising self and others; self-help skills	EYFS PSED
24	**EY**	30/6/2017	**Purposive**	**Researcher**	Activity Plan	**Activity Mind Map** (Preschool)	May be group activities, but not specified on plan – circle time; den making suggests cooperation involved	EYFS various areas of development are represented
25	**M**	4/7/2017	**Purposive**	**Manager**	Behaviour Policy	**Policy Statement Behaviour Management** (Whole Setting)	Terms and phrases used: '…believes in practicing an approach which support's children's development of self-discipline in accordance with Montessori philosophy'; self-disciplined	Terms clearly state links to the Montessori philosophy
26	**M**	4/7/2017	*Random*	**Researcher**	Long Term Planning	**Long Term Planning for 2017** (Babies)	Recognition of children's culture and identity	Links to the EYFS PSED
27	**M**	4/7/2017	**Purposive**	**Practitioner**	Learning Journal	**Individual Child Learning** (10-month old Baby)	Social interaction with other babies; showing affection; next steps relate to showing feelings	EYFS PSED
28	**M**	4/7/2017	*Random*	**Practitioner**	Display	**Spring Display** (Toddlers)	Children's interests	Links to Montessori curriculum and EYFS PSED

29	**M**	4/7/2017	**Purposive**	**Practitioner**	Prop / Artefact	**Please and Thank You Ball** (Toddlers)	Verbatim: 'Promotes courtesy, grace, speech and confidence'. Resource encourage 'please' and 'thank you' – used in a group.	Relates to Montessori philosophy on manners and links to EYFS PSED
30	**M**	4/7/2017	*Random*	**Practitioner**	Prop / Artefact	**Date and Weather Board / How Do You Feel Today?** (Preschool)	Discusses feelings (emotional development)	Links to the EYFS PSED
31	**M**	4/7/2017	**Purposive**	**Manager**	Learning Journal	**My Learning Journey** (Individual Child from Baby to Preschool)	Conduct: saying 'please' and 'thank you', independence and confidence, helping via supporting staff and cleaning; show affect; expression of feelings	Links to Montessori curriculum on manners and practical life
32	**HS**	8/8/2017	**Purposive**	**Manager**	Behaviour Policy	**Behaviour, Control and Sanctions Policy** (Whole Setting)	Terms and phrases used: 'all members of our nursery community'; '…develop the highest standards of self-discipline and positive self-image in the children who attend nursery'	HighScope principle of community; HighScope EYFS terms evident
33	**HS**	9/8/2017	**Purposive**	**Practitioner**	Display	**HighScope Display** (Babies)	Babies to use photos of toys and resources to choose activities	Simplified Plan, Do, Review

34	**HS**	9/8/2017	*Random*	**Other**	Next Steps	**Nursery Bus Display: Next Steps** (Babies)	'Cooperates with caregiver'. Evidence of social development	Links to EYFS PSED
35	**HS**	9/8/2017	**Purposive**	**Researcher**	Activity Plan	**Our Big Plan** (Toddlers)	Evidence of child-led and autonomous practice- toddlers tell staff their preferences	Plan, Do, Review via a tour of the playroom and verbal explanation of activities
36	**HS**	9/8/2017	*Random*	**Researcher**	Display	**How Do You Feel? / Fish Display** (Toddlers)	Pictures of emotions (happy, sad, excited, angry).	EYFS PSED
37	**HS**	9/8/2017	**Purposive**	**Researcher**	Display	**HighScope Wall Display** (Preschool)	Mixed aged groups holding hands in circle; group time	HighScope Plan, Do, Review; small / large group time
38	**HS**	9/8/2017	**Purposive**	**Researcher**	Activity Plan	**Summer Plan** (Preschool)	Team games; activities following children's interests	HighScope curriculum and EYFS areas of development
39	**HS**	9/8/2017	*Random*	**Manager**	Learning Journal	**Child's Drawings** (Created over a 3-year period) (Child currently in Preschool)	Social skills via calling another child's name and cuddling them; expression of emotions	Reference to Plan, Do, Review; EYFS evident via examples of PSED

40	**SW**	9/11/2017	**Purposive**	**Manager**	Behaviour Policy	**Positive Behaviour Policy** (Whole Setting)	Terms and phrases used: school sets out measures to promote good behaviour; self-discipline and respect;	Steiner emphasis on adults as 'role models worthy of imitation'
41	**SW**	9/11/2017	*Random*	**Researcher**	Information Sheet	**Life and Work in Kindergarten Information**	Photos of group activities; Words include: "like living and working in a large family", 'can offer to help' 'welcome but not required to help'	Steiner emphasis on family / community and children helping without expectation to do so
42	**SW**	1/12/2017	*Random*	**Researcher**	SIS Inspection Report	**Inspection Report** (Whole Setting)	Reference to prosocial behaviours: collaboration; self-confidence; self-esteem; adults as positive role models	Steiner emphasis on adults as positive role models
43	**P**	1/12/2017	**Purposive**	**Manager**	Website	**Information on Playgroups and Family Groups** (For Parents / Carers)	Information includes terms 'mirroring' and refers to transitions i.e. goodbye song.	Terms and phrases reflect both Steiner and Pikler philosophies

Key:

B = Babies
BT – Babies / Toddlers
T = Toddlers
TP = Toddlers / Preschool

P = Preschool
PO = Preschool / Older Children
Other = Documents relating to the whole setting, e.g. policies, inspection reports

Appendix VII

Interview Schedule and Sample Questions (Reggio Emilia Sample)

Interview Questions [ECEC Practitioners / Teachers]

Setting:	Reggio Emilia
Date:	16th November 2017
Interview Number :	1
Interview Start Time:	
Interview Finish Time:	
Interview Conducted Face-to-Face / Phone / Skype	Face-to-Face
Code Name for Interviewee:	RE
Interviewee Info (role / job title, qualification, number of years worked at setting)	

Introduction:

Thank you in advance for your time and for volunteering to take part in this interview. Just a few reminders before we begin: This interview is split into 3-parts and the first 2-parts are generic questions being asked to all interview participants across all the settings taking part in the study. The third part is specific to you setting and is based on the findings from the documents analysed and the observations carried out earlier in the study.

There are no right or wrong answers for the questions, they are merely to provide me with more insight regarding the setting's practice and approach to learning and teaching, which link to my theme on prosocial behaviour. Your answers will additionally fill in any gaps of knowledge and understanding that I might not have acquired from the documents / resources and observations, so any answers are valued no matter how long or short they may be. As I expect to get a lot of information from the interviews, I will also be using some of the findings for other purposes, such as conference papers and publications. As with all data collection for my doctorate studies, responses will be kept anonymous.

If you do not understand a question, please let me know and I can repeat it or present it in another way. Before we begin, do you have any questions relating to the interview or research that you feel require further clarification?

[If yes, answer interviewee's questions. If no, inform them that the interview will begin with estimated length of time. Emphasise that the interview can be paused should there be any urgent matters that the interviewee needs to attend to].

Part 1 : Interviewee Information [findings to be added to Excel stats]

Info to interviewee: These first few questions are being asked to all interviewees, so that I have a record of the different types of practitioners / educators / teachers taking part in the interviews. This will support comments I have made in my thesis about the workforce being diverse. As with all my research, false names will be used to respect anonymity and confidentiality, so your real name will not be used in any write ups.

1. **Can you tell me a bit about yourself and your role within your setting?**

2. **What qualifications / training do you have that supports you in your role? (if not covered in the first question)**

3. **Which age group(s) do you work with the most within your setting? (if applicable)**

Part 2 : Contextual Questions

Info to interviewee: Thank you, so this is the second set of questions and again, these are being asked to all participants in all settings. Please feel free to pause or ask me to repeat questions if you need to time to think. These questions relate to the theme of my research study. If you refer to people and organisations in your answers, please do not worry as I will anonymise them in any write-ups to protect their identity.

4. **How would you describe your own personal understanding of the term / word 'prosocial?'**

5. **From your own experience, do you feel that your setting supports and / or promotes children's prosocial behaviours and actions?**

   If so, do you have any examples or evidence of practice that you would be willing to share? [prompt: What sort of behaviours or actions have you personally witnessed?

   What activities / opportunities have supported prosocial development?]

6. **Following on from the previous question, do you feel that the Reggio Emilia approach supports / promotes / encourages children's prosocial behaviours and actions?**

   If so, how do you feel it achieves this? [prompt: from their knowledge / further examples of practice]

7. **From your own views and experience, how important do you feel it is to promote prosocial behaviours and actions in the age group you work with?**

8. **What impact or influence might prosocial behaviours and actions have on a child's development and wellbeing?**

Part 3 : Setting Specific Questions [linked to findings from Content Analysis and Observations]

Info for Interviewee: Thank you for all your response so far. This is the final set of questions and they relate to what I have found so far, from the observations and documents / resources analysed from my previous visit. These questions will also be asked to other participants who are taking part in the interview from your nursery / school. Other settings will have different questions relating to what I have found so far from my previous research visit.

Questions on Reggio Emilia observation (toddlers and preschool)

9. **During my previous visit, I noticed that your setting also runs Forest School as well as the Reggio Emilia approach. Could you tell me more about how these two different approaches work together?**

10. **When I observed the preschool children, I noticed actions and behaviours that suggested co-operation, teamwork and helping taking place (e.g. one toddler asked another if they dropped a toy car and they offered it to them, some pre-schoolers at Forest School working together to build a den). From your own knowledge / experience, how would you recognise these prosocial behaviours /actions with the toddlers / preschoolers?**

Questions relating to baby room:

11. **In the Baby Room, I observed behaviours and actions which may have indicated the children sharing (twins: one offering bread roll to the other). From your own knowledge / experience, how would you recognise sharing behaviour in the Baby Room?**

Closure:

Thank you, that concludes our interview. I would like to thank you again for your time and contributions to my research. What will happen next is that once I have completed all interviews, I will analyse the responses from each setting first and look at all responses together, so it will help me identify any themes / patterns coming through from the answers. The interviews will also be compared and analysed alongside the documents and observations. Each setting will receive a summary of overall findings from their nursery / school and then there will be an overall summary which will show results from my whole study.

Appendix VIII

Key Themes from Interviews

Setting	Understanding of 'Prosocial'	Importance of Prosociality	Key Terms / Phrases	Reflections / Notes
EYFS	Positive behaviour Being social positively	Supports confidence Important for skills such as sharing Important for social skills (may become shy) Well-rounded individual (makes reference to children as a member of society)	Appreciation of other people's culture Being a good role model Being kind Being nice British Values [promoting] Build together Come over to me [adult] Confidence Cooperation Cooperative Encourage Encouraging Friendly *Friendships are important* *Give friends a hug* *Give the child a cuddle* Interact Interaction Laughing Listening to our friends Member of society Negotiate	

			Not nice behaviour *Other children's point of view* Play alongside Playing alongside friends Please Praise them Praise Positively promoting Promoted Promoting Reinforcing Role model Rules Share Share [Learn to] Sharing *Sharing is caring* Take Turns Taking Turns Thank you *They came up with ideas* Tidying Up *Valuing each other's opinions* *Valuing each other people's ways of life* Well-rounded individual	

Montessori	Being social with everyone (inc adults) Positive and social Socialising	Connections with others, supports transitions British Values and socially acceptable behaviour Socialising Developing a sense of self	British Values Buddy Builds relationships Calming Child-led Confidence Cooperated Cooperation Cooperating Encourages Encouraged Equality Feeling Friends Friendship Help Helping Imaginative play [more focus on] Inclusive Independent learners Independent thinkers Join In Interact Interaction Modelling Older children help younger children *Perfect Montessori Child*	Montessori philosophy was evident across all interviews- reference to independence. Some responses provided examples of socialisation and also imaginary play Clear references relating to older children supporting the younger children often through role-modelling.

			Physical Promote Promoting Respect Respecting Right to choose Role modelling [older to younger] Show Showing [older to younger] Social attitude Socialise *Socially acceptable behaviour* Supporting Take control [child] Taught by peers Together Transfer Valuing Valued Work Working alongside Working with	
Steiner	Opposite of anti-social 'actively positively' Not something that's really come into Steiner Waldorf language.	Having high values and contribute to society through how they [the children] are themselves.	Accepting Acknowledge *Actively positively* Attitude Behave Care Community	

		It's really being able to be tolerant, open-minded, accepting, compassionate human beings.	Compassionate Conscientious *Contribute to society* Deliberate Expect Expectations Family Help [older to younger] Helper High values Human Being Imitation Open-minded Partner Partnered Promote Respect *Secure emotionally* Social learning Supported Thoughtful Tolerant Undesirable behaviour Value Working together	
Pikler	Having a situation [in the setting] where children are	[emphasis on relationship with adults and role modelling]	Acknowledged Balanced Building relationships	Comments from the Group Leader made reference to both

	allowed to explore their own sociality	You end up with children who are 'balanced' It allows them as a human being to really flourish and unfold. Children have a sense of themselves	Calm Capable Deciding Deeper understanding Discovering Explore Express Flourish *Follow their own interest* Guide Handled Homely Human being Independence Kind Language Learn Listen Listening Loving Model Modelling Observe Peaceful Respectful Role model See Transitions	Steiner and Pikler approaches.

			Trusting Understood Unfold	
Reggio Emilia	How children gain interactions with each other and how they are in terms of making relationships (consideration given to role of the setting and provision) An action or interaction that child does to form some kind of engagement with somebody else Positive behaviour, like social skills Doing something for others; Support other people, being empathetic towards them	Interacting and being solitary (links to development) Children being able to navigate the world and interact with others Promoting goodness and 'amazing abilities' Wellbeing Need to be school ready Feeling safe Self esteem	Achieve Action Affection *Amazing abilities* *Boisterous* Calm Care Character Children's Interests Choice Choices Come to me Comfortable Comforted Communication Community Concern Confidence Confident Control their emotions Cooperating Copying Cuddles Decisions *Develop own character*	

			Dolls Empathetic Emulating Encourage Encouraging Engage Engagement Experience Family oriented Family unit Friendships Golden Rules Help Helping Imagination Imitate Independence Independent Individuals Influence Interaction Interactions Interacting Kind hands *Make their own decisions.* Making relationships Manners Manipulate	

			Mimicked Mistakes Navigate Nice Open ended Open-endedness Play alongside Politeness Praise Praising Promote Promoted Relationship Reward Role model Role-models Role modelling Self-esteem Settling Share Sharing Sibling Solitary play Steer Strive Support Supported Supporting	

			Swapping Take their turn Taking turns Teaching Teamwork Think Think of Others Trial and error Turn Turn taking Unwanted behaviours Voice Watching Waiting Wellbeing Willing	
HighScope	Positive behaviour- using positives rather than negatives Helps they socially and academically; having the confidence to try and do things whether they fail or not Encouraging social interaction (adults and children etc)	Encouraging children to be social and independent Making friends Resilience Recognition of feelings and emotions	Affectionate Automatically *Be sure of themselves* Bond Build relationship By themselves Calm Care Careful Caring Choose Chosen	

			Communication Confident Copy Cuddling Dollies Empathise Empathy Encourage Encouraging Equal Excited Experience Help Include included Independent Interact Interactions Kind Kissing *Learning from each other* Look after *Look Up To Older Children* Love Make friends Manners Mix Nice behaviour	

			Observe Observed Observing Passing Please Positive Positive behaviour Praised Promote *Promoting positive behaviour* Responsibility *Role of adult: very big influence; encouragement* Role-models Share Sharing Show Them Showing Social Speaking nicely Spontaneous Spontaneously Support Swap Take turns Taking turns Teach Tell an adult Thank you	

			Transitioning Transitions Turn taking Understanding Watch Work together	
Forest School	Observing children in social situation Nursery getting children ready for the future Socialising and communicating (considers this between adults) Partnerships, interactions with others	Children will raise their self-esteem, their confidence, their language, their friendship, learning to manage their feelings Setting right examples, promoting Role of the adult	Adult-led Affection Behave Boundaries Care Child led Choices Comfort Communicate Communicating Communications Confidence Decisions Empathy Encourage Encouraged Experience Explain Feelings Friendly Friendship Good relationships	

			Happy Help [older to younger] Imagination Imitating Interacting Kind Kissing Language *Leading their own play* Learning Looking after *Mirrored role-play* Misbehave Mood Negative behaviour Observant Observe Observing Partnerships Passing Play alongside Positive talk Promoting Relationship Role models Routine Rules Self-care	

			Self-directing Self-esteem Self-exploration *Setting right examples* Share Sharing Showing concern Socialise Socialising Spatial awareness Spontaneously Structure Support Supporting Team Team collaboration Transition Turn-take Understand Understanding Wellbeing Working together	

Appendix IX:

Research Information and Consent Forms

(i) Permission Letter for Settings

Gemma Ryder
Ed.D candidate
Anglia Ruskin University
Email: gemma.ryder@pgr.anglia.ac.uk
Telephone: [redacted]

Date: 24th April 2017

Dear [redacted]

Following my initial email last month, I am pleased to provide further information regarding my research project for my professional doctorate in education studies.

The study will be exploring the concept of prosocial behaviour, and your setting has been selected as I would like to include a Steiner School, which includes a Parent and Child and Parent and Baby Group. I aim to compare research findings with other settings who follow a different approach.

There are three research methods that I will be using, to ensure that I can develop a valid and detailed account as to how your setting promotes and supports prosocial behaviours and dispositions.

- **Document Analysis**- with your permission, I would like to review samples of documents, such as activity plans and evaluations and your setting's approach to learning and teaching. If you do not have such documents, if there are posters, schedules / routines or parent information, these will be most useful. This will be used to support the findings from the observations and allow me to develop further questions for the interviews. No documents will be removed from the premises or copied, as I will be analysing the content on site. Any names of children, families or staff on the documents or identifiable information will be omitted and the document analysis will be carried out a time that would not interfere or disrupt the running of the group.

- **Narrative and Event Sampling Observations (children)**- One of the main areas of my study is to explore how children demonstrate prosocial behaviour in practice. The best way will be for me to observe them in their natural day-to-day activities. No special activities or provision is required. I would like to observe with each of the 0-6 years age groups and will focus on small groups of between 4-8 children (depending on the activity). This will allow me to observe their interactions and engagement in their play and learning. In some cases, I may (if appropriate) ask the children to tell me more about their activities or play, if I feel there is something that is of particular interest or importance, relating to the study. I would like to observe over 2-3

days, which could be full-days or half-days, depending on the age group and what is being observed. Each room will only require one observation and this will not interfere with the work of the setting's staff. Suitable dates will be negotiated with yourself and setting staff.

- **Semi-structured Interviews (staff)-** The final part of the research will be carried out at a mutually agreeable time, to avoid affecting rotas and ratios. Following the document analysis and observations, I would like to interview 1-2 members of staff who are based in each of the rooms observed. The staff do not have to have a specific qualification or position, but they must be working with the children on a regular basis. The questions will focus on their understanding of the topics I am exploring and the findings from the other two parts of the research will also discussed and reflected on. These questions will be unique to each room and allow me to find out more about how the activities, practice and philosophies of the setting support, foster and promote prosocial development. Interviews are expected to last between 45 mins – 1 hour maximum and may be carried out on a one-to-one basis or in pairs / small groups, depending on scheduled interview times and staff ratios. This will be negotiated with yourself / yourselves nearer the time. In cases where there is a high demand from staff to participate, names will be drawn randomly. Due to time constraints and the number of participants involved in the study, the maximum number of staff to be interviewed per setting will be 4.

All participants will be anonymised through coding and findings from the setting will remain confidential and not shared with anybody, except for myself and, if necessary, my research supervisors Dr. Paulette Luff, Dr. Geraldine Davis and Mrs Mallika Kanyal (adviser).

I have included a mini biography about myself and have also attached a permission form for you to complete, should you be satisfied with this information and are happy for me to use your setting as a base for my research. Please note that I will require written consent from practitioners / teachers wishing to participate in the interviews and consent from parents and carers regarding the child observations. I will forward these documents in early 2017, with the aim to complete observations and interviews between February and August 2017.

May I thank you once again for your time and should you require further clarification or have any further questions on this study, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Kind Regards,

Gemma Ryder
Professional Doctorate in Education (Stage 2 Candidate)

Appendix IX:

Research Information and Consent Forms

(ii) Parent Information and Consent Form

CHILD PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET GUIDANCE

Section A: The Research Project

1. **Title of project: 'Pedagogical Prosocialisation: A multiple case study exploring the promotion and support of prosocial behaviours and dispositions across the 0-3 years age group.'**

2. **Summary of the research**
   This study will explore how young children's play and activities support and develop prosocial behaviours. Prosocial behaviours are positive behaviours that include caring, co-operating and supporting others voluntarily. The researcher wants to explore whether this also supports children's wellbeing in the future and what the staff at your child's nursery / school do to help children develop prosocial behaviours. The findings and recommendations from the research will help other early years settings understand the importance of prosocial behaviour and share some of the best ideas relating to planning and carrying out play-based activities and learning.

3. **Purpose of the study**
   This research is organised and carried out by Gemma Ryder (the researcher). She is currently studying for her Professional Doctorate in Education (Ed.D) at Anglia Ruskin University in Chelmsford, Essex.

4. **Supervisory Team**
   This study is being supervised by Dr. Paulette Luff and Mrs Mallika Kanyal, from the School of Education and Social Care at Anglia Ruskin University.

5. **Why should my child take part?**
   Most studies on prosocial development focus on what the teachers and staff do. This study will instead look at what the children do when playing or completing activities that demonstrates prosocial behaviour. Studies have already been carried out on school aged children by other researchers, but very young children have not been studied. Your child taking part in this study will therefore fill a gap and ideally help nurseries and schools plan new and exciting opportunities to help your child, and children attending the setting in future, learn and develop these important behaviours and skills.

6. **How many children will take part?**
For this study, a total of 6 early years settings have been invited to take part. Small groups of approximately 4 - 8 children will be observed from each room or age group in each setting. Some settings may carry out different activities with children older than 3 years, so they may also be observed alongside younger children. Smaller groups make it easier for the researcher to focus on what the children are doing and record a lot more information.

7. **What are the likely benefits from my child taking part?**
The benefits from this study will be from the research findings. These findings will be written as a summary and shared with your child's nursery / school and other settings. The researcher hopes that the research will raise awareness of the importance of prosocial behaviour and its role in child development and learning.

8. **Can I refuse to let my child take part?**
Participation in this study is voluntary and there is no obligation to participate. You can accept or decline this invitation. Children not taking part will not be observed by the researcher.

9. **Has the study got ethical approval?**
The School of Education and Social Care's ethics committee at Anglia Ruskin University has approved this study. This research meets strict ethical procedures and guidelines set out by the British Education Research Association (BERA).

10. **Has my child's nursery / school where you are carrying out the research given permission?**
Your child's nursery / school has given written permission for research to be carried out on site. If you agree to your child taking part, you will need to complete the Child Participant Consent Form that comes with this information.

11. **Is this research project being funded?**
No, this research has not received any funding, as it is part of the researcher's academic studies.

12. **What will happen to the results of the study?**
The results from this study will be written up as part of the researcher's thesis. The findings and recommendations from the study may be published in journals, research blogs and trade magazines. The findings may also be shared at national and international academic and practitioner conferences.

Further information about this research project can be obtained from Gemma Ryder by email at gemma.ryder@pgr.anglia.ac.uk

Date 1st September 2016
V1.1

Section B: Your Participation in the Research Project

1. **What will my child be asked to do?**
   If you permit your child to take part in this study, they will not be expected to anything special or different for this research. The researcher will be observing them as they participate in their usual daily routine, play and activities. Observations will be carried out for one day in your child's classroom / playroom. Your child will only be observed on one or two occasions. There will be no further observations carried out on your child or in their room after these occasions, unless unforeseen circumstances mean that the observation has to be rescheduled / continued at a later stage. The date of the observations will be communicated, once this has been agreed with your child's nursery / school.

   The children will be observed when they play and learn in small groups, as this allows the researcher to 'capture' their natural interactions and behaviours. Depending on what is observed, the researcher may ask your child to tell them more about what they are doing and why. This may support key findings from other parts of the study, which includes interviewing staff and reviewing activity plans. Before the observation takes place, older children will be read a special letter that explains what the researcher is doing at their nursery / school in a way in which they will understand. Your child may decide they do not want to take part, even if you give consent, and this decision will be respected.

2. **Will my child's participation in the study be kept confidential?**
   For this study, no real names will be used, so your child will remain anonymous throughout the observation and given a code, such as a letter or a false name. This will ensure they cannot be identified from other children taking part. No background or personal information will be required about your child, with the exception of their age on the day of the observation and their gender. This will help the researcher produce statistics about the mix of children taking part across each setting and to compare findings across all settings. Observations that are typed will be stored as password protected and encrypted files. Handwritten observations will be stored in a combination safe within the researcher's home.

   During the write-up stage of the study, quotes from the children may be used to highlight key findings. In these cases, false names will be used and identifiable information, such as names of other children and staff, will not be included. Once the findings have been generated and the thesis has been completed, the original observations will be destroyed by deleting computer files or shredding paper copies.

3. **Are there any possible disadvantages or risks to taking part?**
   The researcher does not anticipate any direct risks from being involved in this project. If your child becomes upset or decides not to participate on the day, the researcher will not observe them. Older children who change their mind later, will be welcome to take part, providing that parent / carer permission has already been given. The researcher is aware that babies and young toddlers may become upset or distressed in the presence of an adult who is a stranger. The researcher will be visiting your child's room before they observe, so that your child becomes more familiar with them.

Babies and young toddlers may not be able to tell the researcher that they do not want to be observed. The researcher is a qualified early years practitioner and is aware of body language and non-verbal communication in very young children. She will therefore be monitoring for changes in behaviour that may indicate your child does not wish to take part. Agreement allowing your child to participate in this research does not compromise your legal rights should something go wrong.

4. **Can I or my child withdraw at any time and if so, how**?
   You can withdraw your child from the study at any time and will not need to provide a reason for your decision. If withdrawing, please complete the tear off section on the attached consent form and return it to Gemma Ryder at the email address provided.

   Please note that due to the number of children taking part and being anonymised, it will not be possible to identify each child and withdraw their contribution to the study. If you withdraw your child before the observation has taken place, they will not be observed on the day of the research. Any received withdrawal slips will be stored securely in computer encrypted files.

5. **Are there any special precautions my child must take before, during or after taking part in the study?**
   There are no special precautions to take before, during or after taking part in the study.

6. **What will happen after my child has been observed?**
   After the observations in your child's classroom / playroom has been carried out, the researcher will analyse the findings alongside observations from other rooms and settings. These findings will then be used with other research methods, such as interviews with teachers and staff and reviewing documents.

   The storage and destruction of data will follow the guidelines set out by the Data Protection Act (1998). Consent forms will be kept separately from other data and will only be accessed by the researcher. Consent forms received by email will be stored as computer encrypted files and paper copies will be stored in a combination safe at the researcher's home. Digital recordings and computer files from the interview shall be password protected and encrypted. Data will only be accessed by the researcher and their supervisory team. Once the findings have been generated and the thesis written, all the recorded interviews will be deleted and original data destroyed.

   Following the completion of the study. All settings and participants will be provided with a summary of the research findings. For child participants, they will be sent a letter, thanking them for taking part and telling them what the researcher has learned. This will include the key findings from the study, any significant discoveries and the recommendations. A request for copies of future publications and research updates can be discussed with the researcher after the completion of the study.

7. **Contact details for complaints.**
   If you have any complaints about the study, please contact Gemma Ryder through her email address or you can contact Dr. Paulette Luff at Paulette.Luff@anglia.ac.uk or Mallika Kanyal at Mallika.Kanyal@anglia.ac.uk

   Further contact details relating to complaints are detailed below:

   Email address: complaints@anglia.ac.uk
   Postal address: Office of the Secretary and Clerk, Anglia Ruskin University, Bishop Hall Lane, Chelmsford, Essex, CM1 1SQ.

PLEASE KEEP THIS INFORMATION SHEET TOGETHER WITH THE CONSENT FORM ON THE NEXT PAGE

Please keep this copy of the consent form for your records

Anglia Ruskin University
Cambridge Chelmsford Peterborough

CHILD PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

NAME OF CHILD^:

CHILD'S AGE:

CHILD'S CLASS / ROOM:

Title of the project: **'Pedagogical Prosocialisation: A multiple case study exploring the promotion and support of prosocial behaviours and dispositions across the 0-3 years age group.'**

Main researcher and contact details: **Gemma Ryder, Anglia Ruskin University**
Email: gemma.ryder@pgr.anglia.ac.uk

1. I agree for my child to be observed as part of this research project. I have read the Child Participant Information Sheet V1.3 (dated 1st Sept 2016) for the study.

2. I understand what will happen during the observation and all my questions about the study have been answered to my satisfaction.

3. I am free to ask any questions at any time before and during the study.

4. I understand what will happen to the data collected from the observation.

5. I have been provided with a copy of this form and the Child Participant Information Sheet.

6. I understand that comments made by my child during the observation may be quoted in the write up of the research. I understand that in this case, a false name will be used, so my child cannot be identified.

7. I understand that my child will only be observed as part of a small group for this study.

8. I understand that I am free to withdraw my child from the research at any time, without giving a reason.

9. I understand that decisions to withdraw my child from the study must be made before the day of the observation. I understand that after the observation has taken place, the research will be used and cannot be withdrawn, due to the number of children taking part anonymously.

Data Protection: I agree to the University[1] processing personal data which I have supplied. I agree to the processing of such data for any purposes connected with the Research Project as outlined to me*

[1] "The University" includes Anglia Ruskin University and its Associate Colleges.

Date 1st September 2016
V1.1

^Please note that your child's name is only needed on this form for consent. In the study, their real name will not be used and they will remain anonymous.

Name of participant (print)……Signed……..….Date……

Name of person witnessing consent (print)…….Signed……..

Date……

I WISH TO WITHDRAW MY CHILD FROM THIS STUDY.

If you wish to withdraw your child from the research project:

'Pedagogical Prosocialisation: A multiple case study exploring the promotion and support of prosocial behaviours and dispositions across the 0-3 years age group'*.*

Please copy and paste this section in an email to Gemma Ryder (researcher) at: *gemma.ryder@pgr.anglia.ac.uk*

In the email subject bar, please write: 'Withdrawal Request EY Study (G Ryder)'. This will make it easier for the researcher to locate your email and respond to your request.

You do not have to give a reason as to why you would like to withdraw you child.

If you decide that you wish to withdraw your child from the study, please note that only data collected from you up until the point of withdrawal will used. Your child will no longer take part in the study once the researcher has received your notification to withdraw.

Date 13th February 2017
V1.3

Please remove this page and return it to your child's school / nursery

Date……

Date 1st September 2016
V1.1

Appendix IX:

Research Information and Consent Forms

(iii) Parent Consent Form (Parent and Child / Family Group)

Anglia Ruskin University

Cambridge Chelmsford Peterborough

Please return this copy to your child's Parent and Child Group

CHILD PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

NAME OF CHILD^:

CHILD'S GROUP (e.g. Monday, Friday):

CHILD'S AGE*: Years Months

Title of the project: **'Pedagogical Prosociality: A multiple case study exploring the promotion and support of prosocial behaviours and dispositions across the 0-3 years age group.'**

Main researcher and contact details: **Gemma Ryder, Anglia Ruskin University**
Email: gemma.ryder@pgr.anglia.ac.uk

1. I agree for my child to be observed as part of this research project. I have read the Child Participant Information Sheet V2.1 (dated 19th Oct 2017) for the study.

2. I understand that the set-up of the Parent and Child group means I can also choose to be a participant or to opt out. I understand that my opting out does not mean my child cannot take part in the study.

3. I understand what will happen during the observation and all my questions about the study have been answered to my satisfaction.

4. I am free to ask any questions at any time before and during the study.

5. I understand what will happen to the data collected from the observation.

6. I have been provided with a copy of this form and the Child Participant Information Sheet.

7. I understand that comments made by my child during the observation may be quoted in the write up of the research. I understand that in this case, a false name will be used, so my child cannot be identified.

8. I understand that my child will only be observed as part of a small group for this study.

Date 1st September 2016
V1.1

9. I understand that I am free to withdraw my child from the research at any time, without giving a reason.

10. I understand that decisions to withdraw my child from the study must be made before the day of the observation. I understand that after the observation has taken place, the research will be used and cannot be withdrawn, due to the number of children taking part anonymously.

Data Protection: I agree to the University[2] processing personal data which I have supplied. I agree to the processing of such data for any purposes connected with the Research Project as outlined to me*

^Please note that your child's name is only needed on this form for consent. In the study, their real name will not be used and they will remain anonymous. For parents and carers happy to be observed, you will also be anonymised to protect your identity.

*Children's ages allow the researcher to compare findings across the appropriate age group across all settings and to report how many children from different age groups participated in the study

I am happy with the information provided and consent to my child taking part in this study.

Name of child participant

(print)…….. Signed……..….Date……

I am

Name of adult

(print)…….

YOU WILL BE GIVEN A COPY OF THIS TO KEEP,
TOGETHER WITH A COPY OF YOUR INFORMATION FORM

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[2] "The University" includes Anglia Ruskin University and its Associate Colleges.

Appendix IX:

Research Information and Consent Forms

(iv) Adult Participant Information and Consent Form

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET GUIDANCE [for teachers / practitioners / managers]

Section A: The Research Project

1. **Title of project: 'Pedagogical Prosociality: A multiple case study exploring the promotion and support of prosocial behaviours and dispositions across the 0-3 years age group.'**

2. **Summary of the research**
   This study explores how early childhood settings promote behaviours that are described as being 'prosocial'. This will be achieved by observing how young children's play and activities encourage prosocial development and how practitioners and teachers support this in practice. The researcher aims to develop recommendations from the research findings to enhance practice in early childhood settings.

3. **Purpose of the study**
   This research is organised and carried out by Gemma Ryder (the researcher). She is currently studying for her Professional Doctorate in Education (Ed.D) at Anglia Ruskin University in Chelmsford, Essex.

4. **Supervisory Team**
   This study is being supervised by Dr. Paulette Luff and Dr. Mallika Kanyal, from the School of Education and Social Care at Anglia Ruskin University.

5. **Why have I been asked to participate?**
   You have been invited to take part in this study, because you work as a practitioner or teacher with the 0-5 years age group or are part of the management team with knowledge and experience of all age groups.

6. **How many people will be asked to participate?**
   For this part of the study, a maximum of 30 early childhood practitioners / teachers / managers from different settings, are invited to take part in an interview.

7. **What are the likely benefits from taking part?**
   There are no direct benefits to you from taking part in this study. Your contribution will support the researcher in sharing examples of good practice across the early childhood sector.

8. **Can I refuse to take part?**
   Participation in this study is voluntary and there is no obligation to participate. You can accept or decline this invitation.

9. **Has the study got ethical approval?**
   The School of Education and Social Care's ethics committee at Anglia Ruskin University has approved this study. This research meets strict ethical procedures and guidelines set out by the British Education Research Association (BERA).

10. **Has the organisation where you are carrying out the research given permission?**
    Your setting has given written permission for research to be carried out and for the researcher to contact potential participants. So far, the researcher has visited the setting to carry out the first part of their study, which involved observations on the children and analysing samples of documents and resources. All interested persons wishing to take part in this phase of the study will need to complete a participant consent form. This form is attached to this information sheet.

11. **Is this research project being funded?**
    No, this research has not received any funding, as it is part of the researcher's academic studies.

12. **What will happen to the results of the study?**
    The results from this study will be written up as part of the researcher's thesis. The findings and recommendations from the study may be published in journals, research blogs and trade magazines. The findings may also be shared at national and international academic and practitioner conferences. All participants and identifiable information, e.g. name of the setting, names of colleagues, will be kept anonymous.

Further information about this research project can be obtained from Gemma Ryder by email at gemma.ryder@pgr.anglia.ac.uk

Section B: Your Participation in the Research Project

1. **What will I be asked to do?**
   If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will be taking part in an individual or group interview. This will take place at a mutually agreeable time in your setting. The interview questions will explore themes relating to prosocial behaviour and mental wellbeing in young children. The researcher is interested in how practitioners / teachers and their settings support and promote prosocial behaviour.

   You will only be required to attend one interview. Interviews are expected to last between 45 minutes to 1 hour. All interviews will be digitally recorded. There will not be any right or wrong answers to the interview questions.

2. **Will my participation in the study be kept confidential?**
   The information collected from you will be anonymised immediately after the interview has taken place. Each interview will be given a code, so that it will not be possible to identify you. No personal or sensitive information will be required from you for this study. Only information regarding your role at the setting will be required. This will allow the researcher to compare answers from groups of participants, such as those working in baby rooms.

   Content from the interviews will be treated in the strictest of confidence. Data will only accessed by the researcher and their supervisors. Transcriptions of interviews will be anonymised and coded. During the write-up stage, quotes may be used from the interview to highlight key findings. In these cases, false names will be used and identifiable information, such as the location of the setting, will not be included. Once the findings have been generated and the thesis has been written, all the recorded interviews will be deleted. Please note that while every attempt will be made to ensure anonymity, the researcher cannot guarantee complete anonymity.

3. **Are there any possible disadvantages or risks to taking part?**
   The researcher does not anticipate any direct risks from being involved in this project. You will be free to stop the interview at any time if you decide you do not want to continue. You may also request rest breaks during the interview if required. In the case of unforeseen circumstances, the interview may be stopped and rescheduled. Where possible, interviews will be held in a location with minimal disturbance or with little disruption to the work of your colleagues, children and families.

   All interview responses will be treated in the strictest of confidence and will not be shared with other settings or people not named in this study. Interview questions will focus on the themes discussed earlier (see Section A). There will be no questions relating to other aspects of practice, unless they relate directly to the topic. Agreement to participate in this research does not compromise your legal rights should something go wrong.

4. **Can I withdraw from the study at any time and if so, how?**
   You can withdraw from the study at any time and will not need to provide a reason for your decision. If withdrawing, please complete the tear off section on the attached consent form and return it to Gemma Ryder at the email address provided. After the data has been anonymised, it will not be possible to identify your data from that of others, so it will not be possible to withdraw the data you provide. All data collected up

to the point of withdrawal will therefore be used in the study. If you choose to withdraw, no further data or information will be collected from you. Any received withdrawal slips will be stored securely in computer encrypted files.

During the interview, you have the right to refuse to answer specific questions. In these cases, the researcher will move on to the next question. If interview answers contain information that suggests the participant is at risk, reveals anything of an unprofessional nature or relates to an illegal matter, the researcher would need to disclose this information to another professional.

5. **Are there any special precautions I must take before, during or after taking part in the study?**
   There are no special precautions to take before, during or after taking part in the study.

6. **What will happen to any information that is collected from me?**
   The information collected from you will be analysed alongside other interviews from other research participants. These will produce the research findings, which will then be analysed alongside other data collection methods, such as observations.

   The storage and destruction of data will follow the guidelines set out by the Data Protection Act (1998). Consent forms will be kept separately from other data and will only be accessed by the researcher. Consent forms received by email will be stored as computer encrypted files and paper copies will be stored in a combination safe at the researcher's home. Digital recordings and computer files from the interview shall be password protected and encrypted. Data will only be accessed by the researcher and their supervisory team. Once the findings have been generated and the thesis written, all the recorded interviews will be deleted and original data destroyed.

   Following the completion of the study. All settings and participants will be provided with a summary of the research findings. This will include the key findings from the study, any significant discoveries and the recommendations. A request for copies of future publications and research updates can be discussed with the researcher after the completion of the study.

7. **Contact details for complaints.**
   If you have any complaints about the study, please contact Gemma Ryder through her email address or you can contact Dr. Paulette Luff at Paulette.Luff@anglia.ac.uk or Mallika Kanyal at Mallika.Kanyal@anglia.ac.uk

   Further contact details relating to complaints are detailed below:

   Email address: complaints@anglia.ac.uk
   Postal address: Office of the Secretary and Clerk, Anglia Ruskin University, Bishop Hall Lane, Chelmsford, Essex, CM1 1SQ.

YOU WILL BE GIVEN A COPY OF THIS TO KEEP,
TOGETHER WITH A COPY OF YOUR CONSENT FORM

PLEASE RETURN THIS COPY TO THE OFFICE / MANAGER

Date 1st September 2016
V1.1

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

NAME OF PARTICIPANT^:

AGE GROUP(S) WORKED WITH / ROOM:

Title of the project: **'Pedagogical Prosociality: A multiple case study exploring the promotion and support of prosocial behaviours and dispositions across the 0-3 years age group.'**

Main investigator and contact details: **Gemma Ryder, Anglia Ruskin University**
Email: gemma.ryder@pgr.anglia.ac.uk

1. I agree to take part in the above research. I have read the Participant Information Sheet V2.1 (dated 19th Oct 2017) for the study.

2. I understand what my role will be in this research, and all my questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

3. I am free to ask any questions at any time before and during the study.

4. I understand what will happen to the data collected from me for the research.

5. I have been provided with a copy of this form and the Participant Information Sheet.

6. I understand that quotes from me may be used in the dissemination of the research and that in this case, a false name will be used to respect my anonymity.

7. I understand that the interview will be recorded and that my contributions to the research will be treated in confidence.

8. I understand that I am free to withdraw from the research at any time, without giving a reason.

9. I understand that should I choose to withdraw from the study, only data collected up until the point of my withdrawal will be used. I understand that no further information or input will be required from me, should I decide not to continue as a participant in this study.

Data Protection: I agree to the University[3] processing personal data which I have supplied. I agree to the processing of such data for any purposes connected with the Research Project as outlined to me*

^Please note that your name is required on this form to provide consent. Your real name will not be revealed in this study and your contributions will remain anonymous.

Name of participant (print)……Signed……..….Date……

Name of person
witnessing consent (print)…….Signed…….. Date……

[3] "The University" includes Anglia Ruskin University and its Associate Colleges.

Date 1st September 2016
V1.1

YOU WILL BE GIVEN A COPY OF THIS TO KEEP,
TOGETHER WITH A COPY OF YOUR INFORMATION FORM

I WISH TO WITHDRAW FROM THIS STUDY.

If you wish to withdraw from the research project:

'Pedagogical Prosociality: A multiple case study exploring the promotion and support of prosocial behaviours and dispositions across the 0-3 years age group'*.*

Please copy and paste this section in an email to Gemma Ryder (researcher) at:
gemma.ryder@pgr.anglia.ac.uk

In the email subject bar, please write: 'Withdrawal Request EY Study (G Ryder)'. This will make it easier for the researcher to locate your email and respond to your request.

You do not have to give a reason as to why you would like to withdraw.

If you decide that you wish to withdraw from the study, please note that only data collected from you up until the point of withdrawal will used. No further information or input will be required from yourself once the researcher has received your notification to withdraw.

Date 19th October 2017
V2.1

Date 1st September 2016
V1.1

Appendix X

EdD Stage One Papers

(i) Paper One

Unit 1: The Professional Practitioner

Workplace Study

As I reflect on my own experience and practice, I am aware of the varying roles I have undertaken over the past two years. I have adopted the role of student, academic and researcher and although each facet differs individually, they are primarily synergistic; complementing my professional development. As an academic, I am also a student; learning through practice and furthering my education to enhance my knowledge and expertise. As an academic, I am also a researcher; sharing that knowledge with a wider audience. Initially, each of these roles was confined to a specific higher education institution (HEI), but over the past few months, my work situation has changed. This means I now engage with my research and studies in one environment and focus my academic skills in another. The first setting is a post-1992 university based in East London. I am part of a growing early childhood team and work as a lecturer on two early childhood undergraduate programmes, which cater for students studying between levels three and six. The second setting is also a post-1992 university, comprising of several campuses located across the East of England. I have worked here as a lecturer on the early childhood and education studies programme and the Early Years Professional Status (EYPS) and Early Years Teacher Status (EYTS) courses. The latter role incorporated mentoring and training to guide students with their learning and professional development. In addition, I liaised with numerous early childhood settings to arrange practical training and assessment for trainees. The second site additionally acts as my base for my postgraduate studies, including the doctorate in education (Ed.D). During the first two years of teaching in higher education, I undertook a dual-role as an academic-researcher. Initially, I was concerned that these roles would be

difficult to separate, but I was fortunate to combine the two and carry out insider research within my own establishment (Oliver, 2010).

Since commencing my Doctoral studies, I have started recording my learning journey in a reflective journal, a method perceived to provide transparency to research processes and 'capture' professional practice (Ortlipp, 2008; Emira and Wilde, 2011). When considering my own professional practice, I feel it correlates with Bleach's (2014) interpretation that professionalism combined with reflective practice is a marker for high quality provision. The benefits of reflection with educational research act as a gateway to collaborate with other researchers and engage in dialogue across institutions or through self-reflection (BERA, 2013). For doctoral study programmes, it is viewed as an educative process supported individually or through a group (Bolton, 2010). Its significance for my research is that it provides a valuable outlet for exploring the ideas, challenges and cognitive processes that each stage of my research presents. Furthermore, it ensures that I comply to academic standards and develop research that is ethical and legitimate (BERA, 2011). At present, my journal entries have focused on my own thoughts through internal dialogues, as a means of understanding how I can 'shape' my research to match my aims and objectives. While my thoughts have so far been explored individually, I predict that as my learning progresses, I shall be able to engage with other research colleagues and openly discuss and critically reflect on any matters arising that may interfere or change the nature of my investigation (Glaze, 2002; Gorman (2007).

Upon reviewing the entries so far, three emerging themes have been identified through my thoughts, discussions and interactions with colleagues through my workplace and doctoral studies: knowledge, interest and relationships (see Appendix I). This paper will use these themes as a basis to critique my own professional context and consider how policy and practice will inform my forthcoming thesis. This will include exploring the key issues my research hopes to address and the advantages and challenges of undertaking research within my own workplace.

One of the challenges I foresee as a researcher relates to finding a compromise between my studies and professional practice. Furthermore, partaking on a highly demanding and challenging course of study leads me to question what doctoral studies will mean for my professional identity. Doring (2002) states that increased workloads and student numbers impact on the amount of time that can be dedicated to research. At present, my work situation is undergoing furthers changes, as I am faced with additional responsibilities. A number of colleagues have commented that teaching and assessment demands reduce the amount of time they can dedicate to research and their own studies. Seeing that research is pivotal in underpinning the quality of teaching and learning, I will need to address how I balance my responsibilities (Murray and Lawrence, 2000). A key solution is exploring how my research can link to my own practice and this will be explored in more depth within this paper.

Many individuals enter doctoral studies to consolidate their professional knowledge or as a means of instigating change to policy and / or practice (Thomson and Walker, 2010). As it stands, economic growth, sustainability and a healthy society are very much reliant on research and innovation (Vitae, 2014).

Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) programmes are traditionally viewed as the 'gold standard', providing early career researchers with an opportunity to pursue roles in research and academia (Park, 2007). The status of this training is highly regarded and sets a benchmark against which other doctoral programmes are measured (Ellis and Lee, 2005). However, disparities between differing doctoral programmes and their perceived value are somewhat contentious and the subject of international debate. Compared to the PhD programme, DProfs have often been seen as a 'lesser' counterpart. In some cases, students pursuing an alternative doctoral programme have been dissuaded, either through the belief that it is 'second rate' or due to lack of recognition in their home country (Taylor, 2008).

Research by Gill and Hoppe (2009) identified that specific professional doctorates, i.e. business, are non-existent in U.S. universities. Claims made by these institutions argued that this absence was due to a lack of demand and concerns regarding costs and student attrition. Gill and Hoppe dismiss these findings and argue that on an international scale, there has been a rapid growth and demand for such programmes. While this study is specific to a particular industry, the U.S.was the first country to introduce professional doctorates outside of the medical field, in the form of the Ed.D. Gill (2009) adds that differentiating between PhD and DProf routes is another cause for concern, as greater value may be placed on one particular programme. However, some countries embrace DProfs, valuing the collaboration between theory and practice.

Furthermore, these programmes are appealing to mature, professional candidates who aim to address real-world, work- based challenges (Fulton et al, 2012). As someone who is combining my teaching practice with research, I feel confident that undertaking a professional doctorate is a positive move, as it will allow me to explore the issues that matter within my own working environment and the wider community. However, I am mindful that others may not see the true value in what I do, particularly if they share the belief that the Ed.D poses little value to the world of research. When discussing my studies with colleagues at work, there is the presumption that I am studying for a PhD and I find myself explaining what the Ed.D is and how it compliments my own professional practice. Brennan et al (2006) dispute negative perceptions of DProfs, claiming that these programmes have workplace learning at their very core. I feel that undertaking this programme of study will therefore allow me to explore issues relating to practice, not just in my own workplace, but across the early childhood sector.

The pressures of academia can have a detrimental impact on a researcher's professional conduct. Stressors relating to funding conflicts, publication pressures and competition between researchers can lead to unethical

research behaviour (Howe and Moses, 1999). I am mindful that although the demands of work and study require much planning and organisation, I also need to consider any potential risks to myself, participants or any organisations that I am associated with. Hence, recording my own research journey will support my learning and development, by demonstrating professional autonomy, decision-making and informed professional judgement (Morrison, 1996). I have begun to question where my research 'fits' not only in academia, but also within the early childhood sector. While I have previously used reflection to explore my own learning needs, I am finding that my focus is becoming more holistic, drawing attention to how it links to my teaching practice, personality and perspectives on professional development. This is evident through my responses to conversations and meetings conducted at work linked to my own epistemology (see Appendix I).

Pillow (2010) explains that reflexivity allows for increased attention to research subjectivity in research processes. This compliments the concept of phenomenology, which seeks to explore the relationship between the noema (what is expected) and the noesis (experience) using a range of perspectives, such as reflection, the co-creation of meaning and perspectivity (Sanders, 1982). Despite being a complex methodology, researchers may use this approach to articulate the essential insights that occur during investigations, rather than provide solutions to individual problems (Becker, 1992). I have found during my research to date, that this approach allows me to acquire a mix of understanding relating to motives, values, limitations and possibilities centred within the discourse of professional development.

My forthcoming thesis will act as a continuation of my Master's dissertation, which explored the learning needs of trainees undertaking the EYTS programme via the Graduate Entry Pathway (GEP). Using an interpretivist perspective provided me with the opportunity to explore the 'lived' experiences of students; tracking changes to their professional development and learning over a seven- month period. In turn, I was able to obtain valuable data, relating to the personal interpretations of participants' understanding and application of pedagogical and reflective skills (Howe

and Moses, 1999; Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011).

While the objective of the research was to explore how knowledge was acquired and applied to practice, participants indicated that their early childhood setting was a major influence in being able to successfully utilise their skills and lead change. A key part of the research was incorporating a phenomenological approach to draw out the viewpoints, beliefs and thoughts through reflective questioning (Lukenchuk, 2006). From their personal feedback, the majority of study participants had embarked on the programme of study with limited experience working with the birth-to-five age group. This was perceived to be a disadvantage when having to demonstrate knowledge and understanding to their more experienced colleagues. Furthermore, a high number of responses highlighted issues with the setting environment itself. This ranged from staff being unsupportive or not understanding the nature of the training programme, to being treated as a 'student' on a lower-level course rather than a graduate (Ryder, 2014).

Issues pertaining to HLL training are not exclusive to my own research. Other studies have identified issues and challenges for early childhood practitioners undertaking some form of study within their own work setting. Research into Fds identified that some trainees felt unsupported by colleagues, emphasising a lack of understanding or experiencing negative attitudes. While most reported positively about the support received, there were other challenges relating to the practicality of training, such as taking study leave or attending additional placements and building rapport with staff and children in an unfamiliar environment (Knight et al, 2006). In comparison, Hilton's (2009) evaluation of learners on the same course of study concluded that despite similar concerns raised, the higher level of study greatly enhanced practitioners' ability to critique and question theory and policy in relation to practice. Similarly, studies on the EYPS highlighted that professionals often feel they have developed heightened reflective skills, which support their understanding and ability to apply theoretical knowledge to practice (Hadfield et al, 2012; Davis and Capes, 2013). However, demonstrating and delivering the benefits of the training were marred by a lack of understanding and

recognition by parents, staff and other professionals. In some cases, Early Years Professionals (EYPs) reported that they had become overqualified or were treated with suspicion by their own colleagues (Willis, 2009).

The professionalisation of the early childhood sector has seen it undergo numerous transformations over the past fifteen years in response to policy-driven initiatives. The concept of professionalism is complex, with variations pertaining to its meaning and application. Hordern (2014) conceives it as the relationship between social and epistemic factors, combined with varying degrees of professional knowledge. From this description, it would suggest that professionalism is adaptable and interchangeable, rather than a static process. This is particularly true when applied to the aforementioned changes, which have been rapid and consequently, impacted on the organisation and management of working practices. In some cases, this has led to complexities around the interpretation and implementation of different frameworks and initiatives (Brooker et al, 2010).

Therefore, this could provide a rationale behind the experiences of students from the aforementioned studies, as courses such as the EYPS and Early Years Initial Teacher Training (EYITT) exclude those who wish to train as early years leaders / teachers, but do not have a degree as a pre-requisite to the programmes (Payler and Locke, 2013). This has been partly responsible for feelings of resentment amongst staff, who claim that those lacking established expertise in the sector are 'fast-tracked' into senior positions and devalue those with long-term experience (Osgood, 2009; Whalley, 2011). While I can empathise with these views, it is important to understand that the early childhood sector has a long history as being perceived as a low status profession, aimed at those with low levels of educational achievements (Rolfe et al, 2003).

Research has therefore played a pivotal role in providing evidence pertaining to raising standards and quality within the sector, which has in turn led to the introduction of HLL programmes and a statutory early childhood curriculum. These changes emerged through landmark studies, such as the Effective

Provision of Pre-School Education (EPPE) project, which drew attention to the impact highly qualified and skilled staff had on children's achievement, particularly those deemed to be disadvantaged (Sylva et al., 2004; Siraj-Blatchford, 2010). These findings correlated with international studies, highlighting increased literacy levels and reduced levels of academic failure when children were taught or supported by qualified early childhood teachers and professionals (European Commission Network, 1996; Croninger et al, 2007).

More recently, the Working Group on Early Childhood Education and Care (2014) claims that qualifications are not solely sufficient in predicting positive outcomes for children. They add that the content of training, supported by a range of methodologies to deliver course content, are equally important. This statement supports findings by Nutbrown (2012), who acknowledged that there were inconsistencies in the quality and delivery of early childhood training at both practical and pedagogical levels. Her review of early childhood qualifications led to a number of initiatives, which included: overhauling the existing level three course and raising entry standards onto the programme; ensuring that only settings rated 'Good' or 'Outstanding' could provide practical training for students and a requirement for all tutors to be trained to a level higher than the course they teach on. A criticism of the review relates to the noticeable absence of content relating to courses at levels four and five. While the EYPS, a level six course, was included in the review and additionally overhauled to become the EYTS, there was little reference to undergraduate early childhood studies programmes (DfE, 2013). I find this interesting, as it does not consider the transition from level three to level six and how HEIs may adapt undergraduate course content to act as a continuation of further education (FE) studies. Considering that statistics indicate is a gradual increase in graduates across the early childhood sector, there should ideally be more guidance in relation to how higher education can support career progression across all study levels (Brind et al, 2014).

As an academic working in higher education, my role comprises of supporting

undergraduates in acquiring the theoretical knowledge and pedagogical skills required to inform their personal practice. While subject knowledge is of great value in pursuing graduate roles, student experience is playing a greater role in supporting employability. This may be undertaken as extra-curricula activities, such as volunteering and work experience; allowing students to demonstrate transferable skills and competencies, such as organisational skills (Tomlinson, 2008; BIS, 2011; Kandiko and Mawer, 2013). Work-based learning (WBL) itself is becoming increasingly important in establishing collaborative partnerships between HEIs and local or regional employers, within a rapidly evolving labour market (Roodhouse, 2010a). It allows students to consolidate traditional academic knowledge and develop the transferable skills required to adapt to a diverse range of roles (Dearing, 1997; ASET, 2009). However, the range of undergraduate pathways, combined with a diverse student population, means that having a compulsory practical training element across all courses may not be possible.

Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are predominantly self-governing and independent, resulting in widespread variations between the delivery of teaching, learning and assessment (QAA, 2012; 2014). There are concerns that this makes provision fragmented, and with more professions becoming based in higher education, there will be further expansion in future and a need to determine what learners and employers require from HLL (UKCES, 2008). Furthermore, Roodhouse (2010b) claims that WBL is not as well developed in higher education as it could be, due to a lack of sustained engagement in workforce development. In the past year, greater emphasis has been placed on diversifying higher education, by introducing Higher Vocational Education (HVE) courses as alternatives to university-based study (Davy, 2013).

Although the programmes are not aimed at early childhood studies, this could strengthen the case for more ‘advanced’ national vocational qualifications (NVQs), which could see less students apply for undergraduate courses and more seeking employment and training whilst working. This

could potentially be of interest to the ‘rejected’ practitioners unable to apply to the EYITT programme, but seeking another route to specialise in early childhood leadership. England’s early childhood sector already has an established vocational route to learning with Parha (2014), articulating that the term ‘vocational’ refers to occupations comprising of manual, practical or technical activities (Siraj-Blatchford et al, 2002). The idea of ‘placement’ refers to a trainee’s place of work, as they are primarily learning while they work. However, as with the disparity between the DProf and PhD, it has often been viewed as a ‘safety net’ for those deemed to lack the intellect to pursue academic study, when compared to traditional routes in higher education. Medwell (2007) defends that notion that placements, regardless of their type, comprise of the same professional demands when compared to other professional roles. In light of this statement, it would appear that misconceptions relating to vocational training are being challenged, with business supporting moves to collaborate more with alternative HLL programmes.

Billet (2009) believes that building ‘mature’ relationships between academic institutions and practice settings is a way forward, placing greater emphasis on vocational learning. Crowley (2014) adds that growing interest in vocational pedagogy is paving the way for frameworks as a means of incorporating a higher percentage of practical learning. Both warn that relationships between institutions and employers are essential, but these can be difficult to develop and maintain. Part of the issue is due to differing perspectives between goals and priorities between the two. Some universities work to integrate a practical element of training within existing modules, in the form of placement experience, compulsory internships or sandwich courses (BIS, 2011). This is not, however, a mandatory requirement and raises the question as to whether this should change; depending on the industry learners wish to work in (Holmes and Miller, 2000). The introduction of course evaluation and the National Student Survey (NSS) is leading to students holding HEIs accountable and pressing for changes to policy (Butcher, Davies and Highton, 2006; Callender, Ramsden and Griggs, 2014). However, these annual surveys centre on

teaching and learning and there are calls for them to include student experience (Ramsden and Callender 2014). Providing this addition would ideally allow HEIs to better cater for students at local and regional level and explore how WBL may be integrated across the establishment.

At the time of writing, discussions have commenced within my workplace to explore the possibility of re-introducing practical experience as an integral part of early childhood programmes. Originally the course I teach on, comprised of low student numbers and although a practice-based module existed, other modules eventually took precedence. Since then, increased demand for early childhood courses has seen the faculty expand, with the 2014 cohort comprising of approximately four-hundred students across all available pathways. Over the course of the first semester, students have approached me to enquire about opportunities to gain hands-on experience with young children.

The absence of a practice-based module could have repercussions for those requiring a specific number of placement hours as a pre-requisite to further study, such as the postgraduate certificate in education (PGCE) or EYITT (DfE, 2014). Therefore, designing and delivering a suitable form of training would ideally ensure that students who do not have access to paid or unpaid work experience, will not be at a disadvantage when competing for places on teaching programmes, postgraduate study or senior level job roles. From the employment perspective, experience is highly valued and perceived as a means of complimenting traditional academic skills (Rolfe et al, 2003). According to Tomlinson (2008), increasing numbers of graduates are seeking employment with similar aspirations and profiles. A more competitive approach to job hunting is leading to a greater need for graduates to add value to their credentials. Hence, student experience is seen as a means of becoming more employable.

The complexity of setting up a suitable practice-based module requires several factors to be addressed. Firstly, would the module be optional and if

so, what year group would it be offered to? Secondly, who would be accountable in terms of arranging and monitoring the placements and finally, how could prospective providers be encouraged to support students on HLL programmes? Toohey (1999) articulates that course development teams may undertake independent research as a means of informing course content. In support of this statement, I have recently met with the Subject Area Head to discuss how my own research could support the development of future placement provision. While most of the questions raised will be discussed and developed in collaboration with the early childhood team, one of the key issues will be sourcing suitable practical placements, willing to host students and provide them with opportunities to develop as professionals.

Shobrook's (2014) account of her own vocational learning experiences is an example as to how relationships within a specific industry can inform course development. Her knowledge and understanding of the needs of employers and demands of the work role supported her in developing a new Foundation degree (Fd) programme. This mirrors my own experience as I have worked closely with early childhood providers to support their needs in hosting students studying FE and higher education programmes. Starting my career as a Nursery Nurse provided me with first-hand experience of working with children, parents and other professionals. Throughout my first few years in practice, I was able to guide and mentor students into valuing the role they played in providing for the needs of young children. Even though my practical experience these days is more limited, my connections with the industry will allow me to support programme developments within my workplace. While I am aware of the common issues faced by settings when hosting students, it is an area that I haven't fully researched, as my focus has related more to student experiences relating to their programme of study. Upon reviewing the literature, it would appear that this is a vastly under- researched area, as the focus has primarily been on the needs of HLL in relation to pedagogical development, reflection and leadership.

While working on the EYPS / EYTS programmes, I undertook an additional

role as a placement co-ordinator and assessor. This aspect of my work comprised of liaising with early childhood providers to arrange placements and review students' progress. During trainee reviews and course-related discussions, senior staff and management disclosed the challenges they faced in adequately supporting the learning and professional needs of the trainee teachers. The most common response related to a lack of understanding of training criteria and how the setting could adequately support trainees, particularly if the setting had limited experience of hosting students from higher education programmes. Furthermore, in my dealings with undergraduates on Fds and Bachelor of Arts (BA) studies, similar issues were discussed during taught seminars, also linked to a lack of support and understanding within the setting. Therefore both trainees and educators alike faced differing challenges relating to various HLL programmes of study.

Considering that the issue of placements has become an integral part of my research and reflection so far, it is logical to explore this area in more depth. My forthcoming thesis will therefore act as a means of exploring how sustainable relationships could be developed with early childhood providers, by exploring the issues and challenges that settings face when hosting HLL. One of the challenges I would face if undertaking a phenomenological approach, would relate to the structure of questions posed to organisations and individuals. Phenomenological researchers use large, structured questions and interpret the data through the response of others. While this provides a detailed insight into specific issues, there is a risk that for my own research questions this may lead to responses becoming 'wide open' and encourage answers that would be difficult to categorize or become irrelevant to my own research interests (Becker, 1992). Furthermore, I would not be looking a small sample of individuals, as I am interested in obtaining data through different organisations. A large-scale study of this nature would likely become unmanageable, unless some boundaries and structure were provided. Although I wish to encourage participants to provide open and honest answers, I additionally need to ensure that my study remains focused and obtains the content I wish to analyse. Therefore, while phenomenological

concepts would greatly benefit and compliment my thesis, undertaking the research solely through this methodology would likely digress from my original aims and objectives.

Furthermore, early childhood research comprises of personal interactions, requiring a degree of sensitivity when questioning participants and interpreting data (Aubrey et al, 2000). Unlike my Master's dissertation, which comprised of studying my own student cohort, my thesis will explore a specific aspect of early childhood training identified through my findings. Therefore, my research will expand beyond the confines of my workplace and encompass early childhood settings and possibly other HEIs. The professional relationships built with early childhood settings over the past few years, provides me with a vast choice of potential participants. However, it additionally raises a number of questions relating to how I will ensure my studies are ethical. Gorman (2007) claims that the quality of relationships is an indicator as to whether research will stand or fall. I interpret this as referring to the validity of acquiring data, which is relevant to my studies. Considering that some settings may feel obliged to support my research, without fully considering the potential risks or options, it is my obligation to ensure that the nature of the research and how the data will be used is fully communicated (Hammack, 2007; Gorman, 2007; Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011).

A further consideration relates to whether familiarity with settings could impact on my research in a negative manner. Considering that research questions will revolve around challenges and issues relating to hosting HLL students, there is a likelihood that familiar settings may disclose information that could be detrimental to the HEI or the students they are working with (Humphrey, 2012). Issues relating to organisation, communication and support, have acted as the foundations of negative feedback during my own experiences from working with early childhood settings and schools. While such responses are helpful in drawing out issues if linked to programme design and delivery, I

need to remain impartial and consider their validity and benefit in terms of my own investigation (Pring, 2010). This would include deciding which data is relevant to my studies and which could potentially cause harm, by damaging the reputation and relationships between settings, individuals and HEIs (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011; Hammersley and Traianou, 2012). Further considerations to ethics will therefore need to be explored in a future paper.

In summary, research has played a pivotal role in addressing the discourse of professional development within the early childhood and higher education sectors. From an early childhood perspective, it has led to a revolution in terms of qualifications and roles becoming more recognised. In turn this has led to greater opportunities for pursuing HLL. Inconsistencies pertaining to the provision of practical experience is an issue that requires addressing, particularly in light of HVE programmes likely to diversify higher education further. This is something that cannot be ignored in view of growing demand for student experience to support employability. Within my own work setting, the need to provide practice- based learning is recognised as an integral part of learning, within a sector that is highly practical; providing an opportunity to combine my academic practice with my research interests.

As stated in my introduction, my roles as student, academic and researcher, provide the opportunity to combine the three as a means of conducting my investigation. As a student, I aim to study and understand the impact practice- based learning has on the early childhood workforce, particularly in relation to professionalism. As an academic, I aim to determine the needs of the learners I work with and understand the issues and challenges they may face, when undertaking practical training. As a researcher, I aim to connect with a wider community, through my links with early childhood settings and other HEIs.
Hence when reviewing my original question, where my research 'fits', I now perceive it to be one component of a larger, integrated model of learning and professional development stretching across the whole of

early childhood and education.

Word Count- 5000

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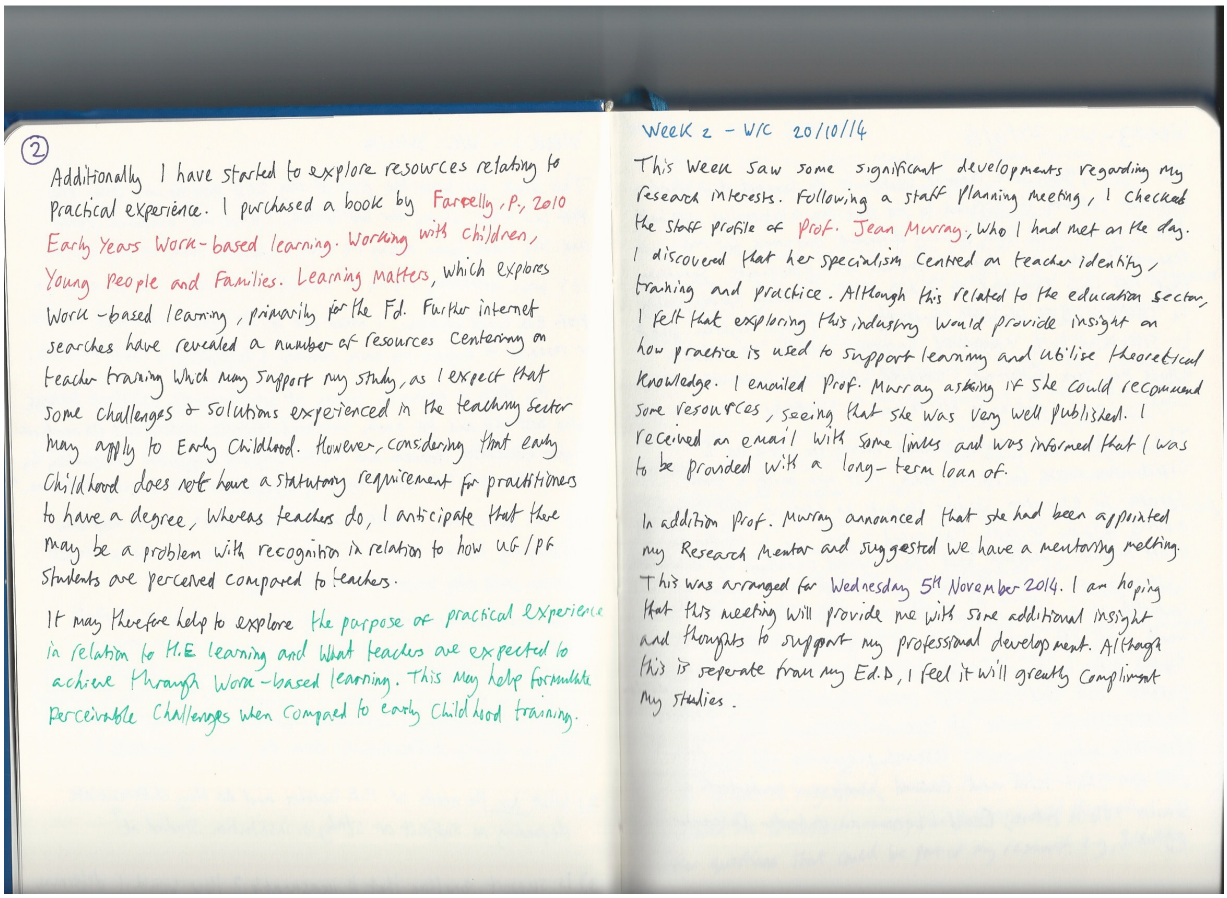
Appendix A



(2)

Additionally I have started to explore resources relating to practical experience. I purchased a book by Farrelly, P, 2010 Early Years Work-based learning. Working with children, Young People and Families. Learning Matters, which explores work-based learning, primarily for the Fd. Further internet searches have revealed a number of resources centering on teacher training which may support my study, as I expect that some challenges & solutions experienced in the teaching sector may apply to Early Childhood. However, considering that early Childhood does not have a statutory requirement for practitioners to have a degree, whereas teachers do, I anticipate that there may be a problem with recognition in relation to how UG/PG students are perceived compared to teachers.

It may therefore help to explore the purpose of practical experience in relation to H.E learning and what teachers are expected to achieve through work-based learning. This may help formulate perceivable challenges when compared to early childhood training.

Week 2 - W/C 20/10/14

This week saw some significant developments regarding my research interests. Following a staff planning meeting, I checked the staff profile of Prof. Jean Murray, who I had met on the day. I discovered that her specialism centred on teacher identity, training and practice. Although this related to the education sector, I felt that exploring this industry would provide insight on how practice is used to support learning and utilise theoretical knowledge. I emailed Prof. Murray asking if she could recommend some resources, seeing that she was very well published. I received an email with some links and was informed that I was to be provided with a long-term loan of.

In addition Prof. Murray announced that she had been appointed my Research Mentor and suggested we have a mentoring meeting. This was arranged for Wednesday 5th November 2014. I am hoping that this meeting will provide me with some additional insight and thoughts to support my professional development. Although this is seperate from my Ed.D, I feel it will greatly compliment my studies.

Notes: Reflections link to exploring possible resources to support knowledge on work- based learning. Demonstrating my own knowledge and linking it to further literature searches.

Appendix B

Week 5 - W/C 10/11/14

This week was busy at work so I had more limited time to devote to my reading. However, at a staff meeting, we were discussing postgraduate studies (EYITT) and the complexities surrounding its perceived equality to QTS. Many staff did not know that QTS was not equivelant to EYITT training as the latter is a step to QTS according to the DfE. It was clear that if academics were unaware of discrepancies between the two programmes, how would the sector itself know any different? After the meeting I reflected on this conversation and understood that a lack of clarity regarding the nature of HE programmes and outcomes relating to employability are likely to be a considerable barrier for both students and settings hosting them as part of their practical experience. The example of the DfE seeming to 'misselling' the EYPS & EYITT clearly reflects the importance of accurate information being provided to EY establishments, students & academics. From my own research, if HEI provide settings with information on expectations & HE programmes, does this information clearly represent what the students do and what they need? If not, then like the DfE there is the risk of misinterpretation and settings being unable to provide the necessary support and experience for UGs & PGs.

Notes: Reflections linking to my own professional development.
Discussions with work-based mentor led to considering how the education sector may link to my study. Opportunity for new knowledge.

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Appendix X

EdD Stage One Papers

(ii) Paper 2

Unit 2: Extending Professional Practice

A Review of the Literature

Introduction

Early childhood provision is continuing to expand at a global level, with a wider variety of services available to parents and carers who choose to use them. As from April 2015, new legislation allowed parents to share parental leave following the birth or adoption of a child (HM Government, 2011). In addition, extensions to free entitlement have been implemented as a means of delivering more affordable childcare for working parents and families from disadvantaged backgrounds;; with hours set to double in 2016 from fifteen to thirty for working parents and three and four year olds (Ben--Galim, Pearce and Thompson, 2014;; Prime Minister's Office, 2015). Traditionally, childcare has been provided mostly by women through informal arrangements, a trend that still continues to the present day (Penn, 1998).

After the Second World War, childcare training became professionalised, paving the way for further education courses providing successful candidates with the Nursery Nurse Examination Board (NNEB) Diploma in Nursery Nursing (Holden, 2013). The perception of early childhood care and education being an easy, undemanding and low--skilled vocation has been challenged

over the past twenty--years, in response to evidence--based research;; recommending that the early childhood sector addresses the issue of low--level training, by ensuring that adults working with young children are suitably qualified and specialised (Cameron, Mooney and Moss, 2002;; Rolfe et al, 2003;; EACEA and Eurydice, 2009).This had culminated in the development higher level qualifications at Level 5 (Foundation Degree) and Level 6 (Bachelor's Degree) and professional courses, such as the Early Years Professional Status (EYPS) and Early Years Initial Training (EYITT) (Tomlinson, 2013;; Jones, 2014). However, despite increasing numbers of practitioners obtaining higher--level qualifications, discourses of care and education still persist. Graduates are predominantly being deployed to work with the preschool age group, i.e. three to five years, while the birth to threes age range are continuing to be supported by practitioners holding a Level 3 vocational or further education diploma (OECD, 2006;; Smith et al, 2007;; Mathers et al, 2011).

With demand for early childhood provision continuing to grow and services for families expanding, the need for a highly skilled and qualified workforce continues to be at the heart of early childhood policy and practice. At the turn of the century, Bertram and Pascal (2000), stated that there was a shortage provision for under--threes, which was becoming the fastest growing sector across early childhood services. This is despite mixed views questioning the suitability of formal care for infants (birth to twelve--months) and toddlers (twelve--months to three years). This debate continues to remain unresolved, but there is evidence that high quality provision is highly beneficial for the under-- threes age group (Ball, 1994;; 1999;; Dex et al, 2005). However, with a

lack of graduate leaders based in infant and toddler rooms, there is a risk that it will produce a vicious cycle, setting back the progress that has been made in addressing the needs of the birth to five age group. Without graduate leaders, it is difficult to measure the impact they are having on children's outcomes and whether they are producing the same level of high quality provision as their preschool--based counterparts. In turn, a lack of evidence prevents the development, renewal and amendment of policies and procedures to ensure practice best reflects the needs of very young children and their families. Considering that statistics point to an increased demand in provision for the under--threes, the need for more highly--skilled and qualified practitioners, research pertaining to this gap in the sector requires urgent attention (Brind et al, 2013).

This literature review therefore aims to discuss two key themes pertaining to workforce development and provision for the birth to three age range. Firstly, it will explore the professionalization of England's early childhood sector, with a focus on the development of the graduate workforce and its implications for provision and practice. Secondly, this paper will decipher the rationale behind limited numbers of early childhood graduates and teachers working with infants and toddlers. The findings from this study will support the formulation of a research plan to investigate the emergent themes that arise from existing research.

The Professionalisation of England's Early Childhood Sector

Research focusing specifically on provision for the birth to three age group has received little attention in national policies and childcare strategies, despite it having wider implications across the whole education system (Dex et al, 2005;; Rayna and Laevers, 2011). Rockel (2009) argues that this gap in research needs to be addressed as a means of exposing new ways of 'seeing' infants and understanding the significance of key issues, such as social justice and identity. The recognition that early intervention plays a critical role on future outcomes and academic achievement, particularly for the most disadvantaged families, is well documented through longitudinal studies by Schweinhart and Weikart (1997) and Schweinhart et al (2005). Both studies draw attention to the importance of the role of high quality provision in tackling social inequality and deprivation. Their findings from the US HighScope Perry Preschool study, articulate that preschool programmes of a high quality have positive and lasting implications on intellectual and social development, academic and economic performance.

This combined with a reduction in criminal behaviour has been documented to extend beyond young adulthood and into midlife. These studies were followed by the UK--based Effective Provision of Pre--School Education (EPPE) Project, which explored different types of early childhood provision, including private day nurseries and playgroups. They noted differences between the quality of provision, with educational settings providing better outcomes, particularly when settings were led by staff qualified to at least Level 5 and /or with qualified teacher status (QTS). The project's findings correlated with

those from HighScope studies, with children making more progress and gains at cognitive, social and emotional levels (Sylva et al, 2004). At the time of EPPE project, there was no graduate equivalent to a qualified teacher within the early childhood workforce and provision within private, voluntary and independent (PVI) settings was generally of a lower or variable quality due to a lack of highly qualified practitioners (Calder,1999;; Carter, 2009). Furthermore, there was no comparable study for the under--threes of this scale and this still remains an under researched area (Siraj--Blatchford, 2010;; O'Sullivan and Chambers, 2014).

The New Labour government strove to develop a 'world class early years and schools workforce', as a means of improving the quality of frontline practitioners across the sector (Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2007). However, several barriers needed to be addressed, in light of their impact on the sector's ability to be recognised as a high status profession. Firstly, degree-- level qualifications were more prominent amongst staff working with three to six year olds in maintained setting, with private settings comprising mostly of staff with low--level qualifications (Hargreaves and Hopper, 2006;; OECD, 2006;; Jones, 20014).

Furthermore, where graduate--level training existed it was not necessarily deemed appropriate for all provision and services within early childhood, particularly for working with the under--threes (Fawcett and Calder (1998). The Children's Workforce Strategy envisaged a radical reform of the early childhood workforce to address these issues, proposing 'fit for purpose' graduates, such as 'new' teachers or pedagogues to work within full day care

settings (HM Government, 2005). The aim to replicate the level of practice experienced by the maintained sector into private, voluntary and independent (PVI) settings was deemed to be a costly, but valid option in light of the findings from the EPPE project. The Early Years Sector--Endorsed Foundation Degree (EYSEFD) was launched in 2003 as a vocational qualification, providing experienced early childhood practitioners with a flexible means of study;; culminating in a professional practice level known as Senior Practitioner.

The Foundation Degree was perceived as a pathway to progress onto teacher training or the Early Years Professional Status (EYPS), a new graduate--level programme that was piloted in 2006 (CWDC, 2006;; Snape, Parfrement and Finch, 2007;; Teaching Agency, 2012). The EYSEFD, EYPS and the Early Years Teacher Status that followed, comprised of a combination of key government policies which were incorporated with a focus on early childhood curricula (Ingleby and Hedges, 2012). While the EYSEFD provided trainees with a study focus, i.e. Foundation Stage, birth to eights or teaching assistant;; the EYPS / EYITT focus on the delivery of the new Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) curriculum across the birth to five age range.

A series of evaluations exploring student experiences on the EYSEFD, noted that despite the stressful nature of the programme and issues with time management, participants' expectations were being met and having a positive impact on their professional identity and practice. Levels of confidence, reflective practice and knowledge and understanding of early childhood were enhanced and the authors and early childhood providers reported a marked improvement in the delivery of provision. Senior

Practitioners were actively engaged in initiating changes to practice, particularly in relation to mentoring, planning and training (Knight et al, 2006;; Snape and Finch, 2006;; Taylor, Brown and Dickens, 2006;; Harvey, 2009). Thus far, it would appear that the EYSEFD provided a much needed boost in providing opportunities for further study and career progression. However, Miller (2008) states that the EYSEFD was marred by government initiatives and spending, leading to a programme that was hastily developed and implemented. The successive execution of the Early Years Professional Status (EYPS) evidently led to the Senior Practitioner no longer being recognised and since the roll out of the Early Years Teacher Status (EYTS), the EYPS itself has been replaced, all within the space of seven years (KIngdon, 2014).

The Early Years Professional Status was set up to produce a graduate workforce to work within the private, voluntary and independent (PVI) sector, leading the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) across the birth to five age range (CWDC, 2006a;; Teaching Agency, 2012;; Department for Education, 2013). Several training pathways were offered which were dependent on the level of qualifications and skills. This ranged from short, validation pathways to fast--track the most experienced practitioners, to longer routes for practitioners requiring experience with specific age groups. Despite being marketed as the early childhood equivalent of QTS, successful candidates were only provided with a status, rather than a teaching qualification.
Early Years Professionals (EYPs) were therefore restricted to work with the under--fives, signifying that they would be unable to work with older children (Hevey, Lumsden and Moxon, 2007). The course was criticised for

exacerbating pre--existing institutional divides, as successful practitioners could not be employed to work in the maintained sector. This restriction was evidently lifted in 2012 in response to funding changes, allowing individuals working in in education to pursue the award as part of their continuing professional development (Lloyd and Hallett, 2010;; CWDC, 2012).

The original aim of the EYPS was to have a graduate leader in post in every children's centre by 2010 and every PVI setting by 2015 (HM Government, 2005;; Department for Education and Skills, 2006). Given that qualification levels within the sector were well below graduate level, these targets were overly ambitious. The 2005 Childcare and Early Years Providers Survey reported that only four--percent of all paid staff in full day care and sessional day care settings held a relevant Level 6 qualification, suggesting a significant shortfall in the number of eligible practitioners who would be able complete the EYPS (Clemens, Ullman and Kinnaird, 2006).

To address this issue, a twelve--month intensive full--time training pathway was developed, as a means of attracting graduates with unrelated degrees wishing to develop a career in early childhood (Payler and Locke, 2013;; Tomlinson, 2013). This was deemed a controversial move and criticised for devaluing the work of experienced practitioners, by offering leadership training to individuals with no former experience and early childhood specific knowledge. (Osgood, 2009;; Wraight, 2010). When the Coalition Government came into power, the original targets proposed by New Labour were abandoned, as as a means of moving away from a 'target--driven approach' (Gaunt, 2011). In addition to the lack of parity between the EYPS and QTS, a further barrier pertained to a lack

of recognition (Nutbrown, 2012;; Faulkner and Coates, 2013). The Early Years Initial Teacher Training (EYITT) programme was developed as a means of building on the successes of the EYPS and utilising a universally recognised title. Furthermore, the programme was parallel to primary teacher training, requiring the same entry requirements, assessments, but with birth to five centric teacher training standards. As with the EYPS, Early Years Teachers (EYTs) were still not eligible QTS, which was deemed unnecessary, hence reigniting the division between care and education (Department for Education, 2013).

Hevey (2014) adds that claims the with the development of the EYITT there is greater emphasis on 'school readiness' and less emphasis on play and care. Concerns have been growing in recent years regarding the formalisation of early childhood provision, claiming that specific skills are expected to be acquired at ever--earlier ages (Early Childhood Action, 2012). This issue was raised during the consultation of the early years teaching standards in 2013, with ten--percent of respondents reporting that the standards appeared to be aimed at children aged four--years and above and sixteen--percent claiming the proposed standards disadvantaged the under--twos age group, due to the focus on teaching and learning (NCTL, 2013). TACTYC (2013) agreed, adding that the focus on group learning across some of the standards was inappropriate for babies and toddlers, noting that the inclusion of care routines would have provided the age group with idea learning opportunities.

Furthermore, TACTYC questioned the validity of findings from the consultation, stating that organisations had been counted as one response,

despite representing hundreds of individual members. This flaw in the study design was hence viewed as not fully representative of the strength of feeling across the sector. Initially, the 2010 EYPS standards made reference to aspects of care, with professional standards covering routines, wellbeing and personalised provision;; correlating with Rockel's (2009) claim that pedagogical approaches to teaching and learning should be inclusive of care. This was additionally supported by case studies demonstrating examples of good practice and detailed amplifications differentiating provision for babies, toddlers and preschoolers (CWDC, 2010). However, in 2012, the standards were streamlined to test how they supported the concept of teaching in early years (Department for Education and Department of Health., 2011;; CWDC, 2012). This move consequently omitted the amplifications, with the aim to avoid a 'checklist' approach and bring the EYPS in line with other graduate professions;; providing organisations with a greater level of autonomy (Teaching Agency, 2012).

Hordern (2013) opposes this view, claiming that greater influence from teaching professionals would contribute to a greater distance between the realities of early years practice and professional norms. Critics further argue that some teaching standards are inappropriate to children's age and stage and development and the move towards formal learning deviates from early childhood pedagogy (Dent 2013;; National Union of Teachers, 2013).

Deployment of the Birth to Twos: Practice, Challenges and Proposed Solutions

Graduate leaders are still a relatively new concept across the early childhood sector, but there is evidence that their presence is having a positive impact on provision and professional identity. The OECD (2012) acknowledge that the role of the early childhood graduate goes beyond the confines of working with children and families. An additional benefit pertains to the dissemination of pedagogical knowledge and expertise, which is reported to have a significant impact on the professionalism and practice of practitioners with less experience and lower level qualifications (Siraj--Blatchford et al, 2002).

As with the EYSEFD reports, Hadfield et al (2012) and Davis and Capes (2013) reported positive outcomes pertaining to professional identity and provision of EYP. Research participants relayed there had been positive changes to self--perceptions of professional identity and a higher level of knowledge pertaining to child development and pedagogy. While the latter study worked with a smaller study sample, it provided detailed insight into how graduate leaders measure outcomes in the long term;; hence continuously working to improve provision. Davis (2014) adds that the status of graduate leader is empowering, allowing practitioners to deliver high--quality provision with a greater level of confidence. This is in contrast to findings at the turn of the millennium, that drew attention to a lack of self--confidence, self--esteem and professional knowledge across the sector (Moyles, 2001). Despite the positive findings, there is a marked difference between which age groups benefit the most from a graduate leader.

This statement arises from the findings of the Graduate Leader Fund evaluation, carried out by Mathers et al (2011). They reported that while Early Years Professionals were improving provision with the thirty--months to five--years age range, data pertaining to children below this age were inconclusive. They proposed three possible explanations: staff deployment;; opportunities for professional development and the EYPS programme being better suited to preparing practitioners to work with pre--schoolers. The first explanation was supported by evidence directly from the study highlighting that the majority of professionals observed devoted more working hours within the pre--school room, with 18.4 hours per week spent with the older children, compared to just 4.7 hours in baby / toddler rooms. Similar results emerged from Snape and Finch's (2006) evaluation of the EYSEFD, but in relation to the focus of training. Only two--percent of trainees on the Foundation Degree has a specific focus on the birth to three age group, compared to a much larger cohorts working with the three to fives age group and age four and above.

In comparison, Goouch and Powell's (2013) study revealed that not only were there a lack of qualified teachers working in baby rooms, but input from graduate leaders was a rare occurrence. Participants added that this made them feel isolated, particularly as policies and procedures appeared to be more directed at children aged three-- years and above. TACTYC (2012) assert that low numbers of graduates working with infants and toddlers reflect the sector's history of under--valuing and under--prioritising care and education for this age group. O'Sullivan and

Chamber (2014) stress that more evidence is required to determine whether graduates are leading across the full birth to five age range. In light of these findings, this would not be the case.

McDowall Clark and Baylis (2012) claim that working with preschool children is perceived within the UK as being of higher importance, compared to working with babies and toddlers. Gibbin (2015) adds that the early childhood sector is still perceived by teachers, parents and some career advisors as an 'easy option' for low achievers and that individuals pursuing a career in the industry lack aspirations or the academic ability to study at degree level. Furthermore, high achievers with the right aptitude and passion, are perceived to be dissuaded from working with young children. Contrary to political and societal beliefs, working with infants is the most challenging environment to work in, which warrants a greater level of recognition and status.

Nutbrown comments that the early childhood workforce does far more than "changing nappies and wiping noses";; acknowledging the immense responsibilities placed on those working in the sector (Department for Education, 2012). Dalli et al (2011) proposes that quality education for the under--twos should allow very young children to express themselves and be supported by a sensitive and responsive caregiver, who is able to buffer children against stress. Learning and Teaching Scotland (2010) agree that relationships are an integral part of provision, not just for children, but their families as well. They add that a creative approach to learning greatly benefits and compliments the naturally creative predispositions babies and young

children are born with. South Korean infant--toddler teachers comment that aspects of provision relating to care, i.e. eating and washing, facilitate very young children's social and emotional development;; not just physical needs and desires (Park, Wee and Yang, 2014). The complexities pertaining to being attuned to babies' needs, being emotionally literate and diversifying practice to meet greater variations in ages and stages of development, therefore require a sound pedagogical knowledge base and commitment to professional development (Dalli et al, 2011;; Whalley, 2011). Furthermore, practitioners require a skilful level of negotiation to balance the complexities of parental needs and wishes and abiding by setting policies and procedures (Powell and Goouch, 2012).

Gambaro (2012) claims that there is an acute lack of professional training for those working with infants and toddlers, with Recchia and Shin (2010) adding that teacher preparation programmes do not adequately cover the earliest years;; leaving student knowledge and understanding of infancy at a theoretical, academic and superficial level. This raises the question as to what this professional training should look like for practitioners working with this age group and whether it would effectively meet the needs of very young children. The physicality and functionality of the infant--toddler role, combined with child protection concerns relating to physical contact, risk dissuading graduates from working with very young children (Dearnley and Elfer, 2007). Jones (2012) asserts that the most experienced and highly qualified staff should be deployed in baby rooms, but highlights a lack of experience and access to appropriate training acting as a barrier. These factors can ultimately lead to a lack of confidence, as reported in studies by Recchia and Shin (2010) and

Fairchild (2012). Their research on pre--service and qualified teachers reports that despite having a wealth of theoretical knowledge and understanding of child development, its transference to practice greatly differs.

Practical training with infants and toddlers is not mandatory on all early childhood training programmes, which can leave practitioners unprepared and self--doubting. The responses from these studies recommend specialist programmes are developed to support practice with the under--threes. Infant--toddler teachers in the US reported that they received no pre--service training specific to working with the age group they were deployed with, adding that they had to learn 'on the job'. Their experiences of working with very young children stressed that the care aspect of provision was routine and monotonous, supporting Nutbrown's (2012) comment that working with babies is perceived as 'boring'. Formal learning was regarded more highly, providing greater levels of satisfaction when leading group activities. This lack of stimulation was an additional factor impacting on decisions to find alternative roles in the future (Williams, 2012).

Feedback from England's private sector claimed that settings are being used as career 'stepping stones', as a means of allowing graduates to progress into different sector (CWDC, 2012b;; Kendall et al, 2012). Similar findings have been reported by infant--toddler teachers in the US., with some describing their work with very young children as a 'starting job';; stating that wages and future ambitions may lead them to seek employment in other roles within or outside of the early childhood sector. Hence the majority of respondents dismissed the idea of working with infants and toddlers in the long term future

(Wiliams, 2012). Herzenberg, Price and Bradley (2005) add that more opportunities are emerging for female graduates, culminating in greater financial aspirations. Low levels of pay are evidently having an impact on the recruitment and retention of staff in England, with staff qualified to Level 3 and above leaving to work in the maintained and public sectors. In some cases, practitioners are leaving the early childhood sector altogether, to seek employment in other sectors such as retail which provided more flexibility and better pay (Cooke and Lawtone, 2008). For practitioners with EYTS, the PVI sector struggles to compete with higher wages and less working hours, (NDNA, 2015). In some areas across England, concerns relating to recruitment has led to a number of private settings adding written clauses in staff contracts, as a means of preventing them from leaving to work in another local setting (Gaunt, 2015).

Nutbrown's (2012) review on early childhood qualifications called for more graduate leaders to work with babies and very young children, to ensure they were also provided with same level high--quality provision as observed with the three to fives. The issue of graduate deployment had previously been raised by Smith et al (2007), who conveyed that within children's centres, only two--percent of qualified teachers were working for a minimum of ten hours with the under--threes age group. In contrast, the NDNA Workforce Survey (2015) reports that thirty--one percent of graduates are working with two--year olds, but these are predominantly undergraduates / graduates without EYITT / EYP status. This would suggest that EYTs / EYPs are continuing to be deployed with preschool children and practitioners working toward other qualifications, such as Foundation and Bachelor degrees are being based with younger

children. This still leaves a gap in relation to whether the aforementioned undergraduates / graduates are working with the under--twos and whether they are in receipt of specialised training.

The Wave Trust (2013) claim there is a rapid growth regarding the number of two--year olds attending settings, due to the two--year free entitlement. However, in contrast, a recent report by Ofsted (2015) revealed a shortfall of eligible families taking up funded places, amounting to figure of fifty--eight percent as of the end of January 2015. Part of this issue may be linked to inspection outcomes, which impact on settings being able to provide funded places. The Coalition Government specified that only settings rated 'Good' or Outstanding' would be eligible to accept funded two--year olds. Mathers et al (2014) respond that current provision may not be of the standard required to improve outcomes for children, recommending that delaying the expansion of the programme, as a means of addressing the shortfalls and providing more time to tighten eligibility criteria and build capacity.

Concerns regarding perceived shortfalls were initially raised at consultation events, with Local Authorities and providers claiming that a low interest in formal early childhood services would lead to a low take up amongst eligible families (4Children, 2012). It is postulated that the increase in graduate numbers is in response to the expansion the free early education entitlement, aimed at supporting the most disadvantaged two--year olds. For providers wishing to participate in the scheme, they had to meet a number of quality standards and conditions set out by the local authority. One of the prerequisites was to have a graduate leader in the setting, which was a barrier

for some private and smaller voluntary providers. Although this was not perceived to be a barrier to participating in the scheme, some local authorities strictly applied this criterion, which could potentially lead to a shortage of high--quality providers (Gibb et al, 2011). In light of the literature thus far, although there is clear evidence pertaining to research centred on three--to--fives and emerging evidence focusing on two--year olds, there is very little relating to the under--twos who additionally have access to early childhood provision. Funding is primarily aimed at the two--to--four age group and to date, there are no plans for an equivalent system for children under the age of two. Stewart and Obolenskaya (2015) reveal that tax credit reforms and the abolishment of the Child Trust Fund, have led to infants losing the most in terms of financial support.

A plausible explanation pertaining to the challenge of recruiting graduate leaders refers back to the issue of pay and status across the PVI sector. An article by Murray (2009) reported that private and voluntary settings were finding it challenging to compete with better levels of pay or career opportunities provided in maintained settings. Where an increase in salary existed, it was unclear how sustainable this would be in the long--term. Higher--level qualifications such as Foundation Degrees and the EYPS were perceived as a means of gaining higher status and pay, but in reality there was a lack of parity between those trained in early childhood specialist courses and those trained as teacher with QTS (Faulkner and Coates, 2013;; Jones, 2014). Increasing the level of pay was perceived by the Coalition Government to be achievable through the relaxation of ratios, allowing the current adult--child ratios of 1:3 and 1:4 for infants and toddlers respectively, to be increased to

1:4 and 1:6;; providing that practitioners were suitably qualified (Department for Education, 2013). Adult: Child ratios are significant predictors of process quality and concerns were raised that changes would undermine the quality of provision, leading to increased costs rather than savings (Phillipsen et al 1997;; Nutbrown, 2013;; Roberts, 2013). A further issue neglected during the debate, relates to infant and toddler rooms being unable to implement changes to ratios if there is no suitable person posted with the age group. The backlash over this proposal led to former Deputy Prime Minister, Nick Clegg stepping in and vowing the block the movement, leading to the Coalition Government scrapping the plan (Watt, 2013). At the time of writing, the issue of improvements to pay and status for early childhood graduates continues to remain unresolved, which may impact on the sectors ability to retain talented and highly qualified individuals.

Conclusion

The literature reviewed in this paper has acknowledged the pivotal role graduate leaders play across the whole of the early childhood sector. However, it is evident that discourses of care and education still persist, particularly in relation to who receives the high--quality provision that governments strive for. Several studies have indicated a number of factors acting as a barrier to ensuring the birth to two age group receive the same high standards of care and education as children over the age of two. These range from ongoing issues of pay and status to a lack of visibility and understanding as to the roles and practice (Faulkner and Coates, 2013). Furthermore, there is a growing need for specialist training relevant to the

birth--to--twos age group, to instil confidence in graduate leaders wishing to work with very young children (Recchia and Shin, 2010;; Fairchild (2012. However, even if this issue of training is addressed, a further concern pertains to professional identity and attitudes of those working with infants and toddlers. Several studies keep referring to misconceptions and the devaluation of roles and responsibilities, which undermines the work of highly qualified practiioners.

Furthermore, the original aims of the EYPS and EYTS to lead across the whole birth to five remit is being unfulfilled, with graduate leaders deployed with older children either through choice or in light of pay restrictions and lack of flexible working patterns (OECD, 2006;; Smith et al, 2007;; Mathers et al, 2011. Further investigation into training needs and practice will be the first step to support the ongoing professionalization of practitioners working with the birth to two age range.

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Appendix X

EdD Stage One Papers

(iii) Paper 3

Unit 3: Developing a Professional Research Approach

Presenting Research in Context

Research in early childhood has seen a considerable shift in recent decades, generating more engaged discussions between social researchers, in relation to studies research with children, rather than on children (Christensen and James, 2008). The growing emphasis on children's rights, as set out by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), states that children should have a say in matters that affect their lives (UK Government, 2015). However, concerns have been raised regarding the implications this has for adult and child relationships (Lansdown, 1995). Considering that the majority of research undertaken aims to develop a better understanding of childhood and child development, Lundy et al (2012), report that participatory methods must be adopted to ensure that they are age appropriate and reflective of children's evolving capacities. In recent years, research has moved towards a more participatory approach, with children and young people acknowledged as equal partners, playing an increasingly active role in relation to planning research and collating and analysing data (Kanyal et al, 2014).

Ethnographic methods have traditionally allowed researchers to explore child care practice at a micro and macro level. Studies incorporating this method have previously revolved around care-centred research, mother-centred research, the societal perspective and more recently, child-centred research. Their aim is to provide a more intimate understanding of learning environments and cultural organisation (Buchbinder et al, 2006). For practitioners and teachers, this form of research can have positive implications for early childhood practice, as it presents new ways of engaging with children and

promote a more participative and democratic culture (Shaw, Brady and Davey, 2011). Ethnography is therefore predominantly focused on making meaning through the use of a range of different research methods, notably observations and interviews. This constructivist epistemology is subjective, centring on constructing, rather than absorbing

knowledge (Lincoln, Lynham and Guba, 2011; Branscombe et al, 2014). In relation to early childhood, it is perceived as learning developed from inside the child (Kamii and Ewing, 1996). In turn, they are constructing meanings, which provide insight into their world and the social phenomena found within it (Greig, Taylor and MacKay, 2013).

This paper aims to rationalise and reflect on the methods and methodology considered for a research thesis, centring on the development of leadership dispositions in the 0-3 ½ age group. A small scale pilot was undertaken in a private day nursery, with the permission of the setting's management team. The aim was to test a participatory research method and analyse its suitability as a means of data collection. This activity comprised of children aged between 2-3 years acting as joint researchers and taking photographs of the activities that they participated in during their morning play session. The findings and reflections from the study were presented to colleagues on the Stage 1 professional doctorate workshop as a PowerPoint presentation, which were then critiqued in the form of peer feedback. The comments from the workshop will be analysed and discussed in relation to their implications in relation to the future planning and development of my thesis.

At the time of writing, I am reviewing the ideas and topics that will form the basis of my thesis. This process has been supported through conducting the aforementioned pilot, providing valuable insight into my own journey as a researcher. The value of a pilot study is that it can pre-test methods and instruments at the design stage of a research project,

providing the researcher with a means of identifying potential flaws and practical problems (van Teijlingen and Hundley, 2001; Gallagher, 2009). For studies that involve children, Shaw, Brady and Davey (2011) advise that pilots are conducted with children, who are the same age as potential participants. This ensures that research language and terminology is appropriate for the age and stage of development and that timings can be refined if necessary.

The first phase in planning the pilot comprised of selecting an appropriate focus area and research method, that would be suitable for use with young children over a short period of time. Murchison (2010) advises researchers to make use of a wide range of resources to locate topics that may warrant further investigation, such as conversations and using a range of media. My own research interests have predominantly focused on leadership and workforce development, with the undergraduate and postgraduate students who wish to work in the early childhood sector being central to my studies. In recent months, my involvement in a separate research project has raised the question as to whether young children have opportunities to develop leadership skills in day nurseries. My discussions with practitioners within the sector highlighted that they are providing a range of learning experiences to nurture and support skills and attributes that allow children to lead. Upon further investigation, it emerged that leadership has primarily been explored within the context of peer relationships, aggression and adjustment, with the majority of studies centring on children aged 4-years and above (Lee, Recchia and Shin, 2005). Hillman and Smith (1981) assert that leadership skills can be demonstrated in children as young as six-months old, but there is limited research with the under-3s to support this claim. Hence, this is an under-researched area that warrants further investigation.

The concept of leadership is predominantly a diverse and complex field, encompassing a range of sub-topics, such as leadership models, approaches and theories, traits, education and training (Brungardt,

1996; Daft, 2015). Furthermore, despite being one of the most observed phenomena, Burns (2010) claims that it is the least understood. This is demonstrated in Winston and Patterson's (2006) review, which comprised of seeking a definition or construction of the term. They concluded that greater insight into the concept would produce a more suitable definition. In consideration of these facts, exploring the subject as a whole would be an impossible task. The dilemma of producing effective research is that for novice researchers, they may plan an overly ambiguous project that becomes unworkable. Considering the breadth and depth of the specialist are, Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) stress that fine-tuning and honing down research into a smaller focal area, allows for greater academic rigour.

This led to me carrying out some research to determine whether there was a specific aspect, attribute or skill pertaining to leadership in early childhood and education, that could be used as a focal point. Currently, the Conservative Government's policies and initiatives aim to promote prosocial behaviour and citizenship at Key Stage 1 and 2, which was previously applicable to Key Stages 3 and 4. According to the Department for Education (2015), pupils at these educational stages, should be provided with opportunities to be responsible, make choices and participate. Although the Early Years Foundation stage (EYFS) framework does not have the same focus on citizenship, its statutory guidelines state that the 0-5 age groups should be provided with opportunities and experiences that develop confidence, independence and allow children to lead their own play (Department for Education, 2014). Several of the skills and attributes referred to the the curricula, i.e. confidence, are perceived to be qualities that support children throughout their education (Hillman and Smith, 1981). I decided to select 'independence' as a focus for the pilot, considering that it is consistently featured in the early years Development Matters as a means of promoting positive relationships and personal, social

and emotional development (Early Education, 2012).

When reporting my pilot to my colleagues, they acknowledged that the term ‘leadership’ could present some issues, due to the complexity of the concept. Their feedback provided suggestions relating to more specific topics which centred more on the context rather that just a component, for example, how leadership is demonstrated through play (see Appendix B:1;5). This provided me with some more ideas in relation to how to develop my initial research question. The characteristics of good research should pose any important question that contributes to a knowledge base (NAEYC, 2013). I initially had the idea to explore a specific component of leadership, but this has proved challenging, consider that skills and traits are contrasted and debated across the board. At the present time, I am giving consideration to exploring leadership dispositions within various pedagogical philosophies, e.g. Montessori, Steiner; with the aim to determine whether there are any similarities in terms of opportunities and approaches. The pilot study while providing me with some valuable insight, has also highlighted a number of challenges and issues that may impact on undertaking study at a larger level and these need to be taken into consideration during the final planning stages.

One of the challenges encountered during the pilot pertained to the children’s levels of engagement and interactions with myself. Although professional connections had already been established with the setting managers and staff, my contact with the children had been very limited up until this point. As an infrequent visitor to the nursery, I undertook the role of an outsider working with children who I had not previously met. Sargeant and Harcourt (2012) define an individual working in this capacity as a ‘stranger-researcher’ (SR), which has potential implications for my future work with infants and toddlers. Firstly, practitioner-researchers have the advantageous position of being able to investigate a specific aspect of their work, often as a means of exploring and developing pedagogical knowledge and practice (Saunders, 2007; Burton and Bartlett, 2009).

The presence of a stranger has been reported to promote a range of emotional and social response in very young children. These can range from displays of anxiety, distress, withdrawal and clinginess to positive non-verbal communication, such as smiling (Ainsworth, Bell and Stayton, 1971; Thompson and Lamb, 1983; Woodhead and Faulkner, 2000; Holmes, 2014). Although these findings are derived from studies exploring mother-infant attachments, the negative behaviours are often perceived as a form of wariness. This raises the question as to whether the aforementioned responses would be replicated, if an unfamiliar adult approached a very young child to partake in a study. Sroufe (1977) argues that that an infants' responses are only negative when a stranger acts intrusively, i.e. makes physical contact. In Blaisdell's (2012) study, entering a baby's physical space resulted in the child displaying non-verbal, avoidant behaviour. Several studies perceive this type of reaction to be linked to fear, but Greenberg and Marvin (1982) state that wariness comprises of avoidant behaviours that do not necessarily constitute that level of concern.

In the case of my study, the children displayed an element of caution upon my initial arrival, avoiding eye contact or shying away. During the first hour of my visit, I spent time engaging with the children, while they participated in a range of play activities; asking then open-ended questions regarding what they were playing with and what they were planning to do next. Building a gradual rapport led to a breakthrough, with some children talking directly to me and sharing their toys and equipment. Irwin and Johnson (2005) articulate that building rapport takes time and researchers cannot expect that this will be established through first-time meetings, but Harden et al (2000) asserts that consideration needs to be given to what rapport aims to achieve. They add that in the majority of cases, it is expected that building rapport leads to a more relaxed environment, in which participants can communicate more freely.

Punch (2002), adds that building rapport is not restricted to children, it is

also a means of connecting with adult gatekeepers. This rapport has already been built with the pilot setting, but in light of using nurseries who I have no current professional connections with, I will need to ensure that I contact them as early as possible and spend some time conducting visits and getting to know the staff, prior to conducting my research.

The ethics pertaining to working with young children indicates some potential barriers that need to be addressed, when planning my thesis. Receiving informed consent from young children is challenging, in light of how pre-verbal children can articulate their enthusiasm or refusal in taking part. Such barriers need to be addressed to ensure that the project can move forward, as it is vital that participants understand what the research entails (Loue, 2002). Accessing research participants through gatekeepers is potentially problematic for practitioners wishing to study the children in their care. Dockett and Perry (2011) state that several levels of gatekeepers may need to be negotiated, which can either hinder or facilitate the researcher's access. This includes managers who may permit researchers to use their setting, but cannot provide consent for the children. This leads to another gatekeeping level: the parents. For practitioners undertaking research, there is a risk that their relationship may be exploited if parents feel obliged or are coerced into giving consent (Flewitt, 2005). For those external to the setting, reluctance to participate may centre around concerns of children being vulnerable, or fears that services and provision may be critical or negative (Smith, 2011).

As an outsider-researcher, I intend to use a mix of familiar settings and those who are not currently part of my professional network. On both occasions, I will still need to build rapport, as I have had more contact with management and less with the practitioners who work directly with the children and families. From personal experience, settings who show an interest are more likely to agree to partaking in future studies; however, parents still need to be contacted and provided with relevant information pertaining to the nature of the study as a further stage of

seeking consent.

A further area for consideration pertains to what constitutes informed consent when working with children. While parents may permit their child to participate in research, this does not necessarily reflect on whether the child themselves wishes to partake. Unlike consent, which is a formal contract of agreement between the researcher and participant, assent pertains to an alternative form of agreement, when formal consent cannot be provided. In the cases of young children, this may be a more suitable means of agreeing to participate, but researchers also need to be mindful that children may have difficulty articulating their need to withdraw (Dockett, Einarsdottir and Perry, 2009; Hammersley and Traianou, 2012). Alderson and Morrow (2011) state that children need to be made aware of their rights to refuse or 'drop out'. They recommend that children are given time to consider their options and to talk about it with a friend or another person.

For the under-3s, this might pose more of a challenge, depending on their level of understanding, hence a means of providing them with on-going opportunities to participate and withdraw may be a possible solution. A further matter relates to whether it is appropriate for a child to participate and this may be influenced by age and the nature of the enquiry (Lansdown, 1995). In these cases, continued consent comprises of researchers being observant of non- verbal cues, that may indicate that the child no longer wishes to participate (Alderson, 2005). During the pilot, the children were asked verbally and although some did not vocally voice their desire to participate, they used non-verbal communication, i.e. nodding, as a means of consent.

According to Thomas and Kane (1998) effective methodology and ethics go 'hand- in-hand', as approaches which provide children with control over the research process and methods with are suited to their ways of seeing and interpreting the world around them. The power balance between adults and children may prevent full participation.

However, referring back to the earlier statement by Kanyal et al (2014), the aim of participatory research is that the adult and child are both equal partners.

The adult plays an integral role in facilitating the research process, so that children can express their views (Punch, 2002). This is achievable through engagement with the children and this reinforces the need to develop rapport (O'Kane, 2000). Research methods must therefore ensure that the children can make a contribution and for the researcher to be aware that without some power sharing, genuine participation cannot take place (Kellett, 2005). The following research method was hence selected, as a means of providing young children with the opportunity to act as research participants in a setting which is not currently research-active.

The Mosaic approach is an epistemological methodology, comprising of a multi- method, participatory process, which documents children's lived experiences (Clark and Moss, 2011). Several studies have used this as the basis of their research, as a means of 'capturing' children's thoughts, feelings and views. Hulm (2010) and Coleyshaw et al (2012) explore how children can make a valuable contribution to the development and delivery of services and provision, through the use of observations, photographs and child-guided tours. In comparison, Beresford et al (2004) and McLeod and Daniel (2005) have incorporated the approach into studies centred on children with special educational needs and disabilities, which included art and craft- making activities and interviews. Despite different aims and purposes, all of these studies are part of a growing movement to involve children as active research participants, instead of passive bystanders. Considering the views of children can feel threatening to adults, as it challenges their roles and beliefs (Clark, 2010). However, listening to children through the aforementioned methods, provides insight into a child's capabilities and can potentially shape future provision (Pascal and Bertram, 2009).

As part of the pilot one method, digital photography, was selected in light of its use across the aforementioned studies. Photographs allow children to ‘freeze’ the activities of a classroom and enter into the practice of observation. Ideally, the children will then discuss and analyse the photos, as a means of elaborating on the purpose and meaning of the images (Bath, 2009). Due to the children’s daily routine, I was only able to incorporate one research method at this time, although I had considered the use of drawings as a further means of data collection.

During the pilot, it became evident that the selected data collection method had limitations. The majority of early childhood settings in my professional network use digital cameras to support child observations and track learning and development, with many allowing the children to take photographs to document their experiences (Bruce, Louis and McCall, 2015). For the sample group, the majority had difficulty with coordination, in terms of holding the camera steadily and taking photographs at the same time. This led to myself and an early years practitioner having to offer support. Only one child was able to experiment and figure out how to take the photographs independently.

These findings correlate with the challenges Blaisdell (2012) faced, when using digital cameras with infants and toddlers. In her study, her intervention in supporting the children with using cameras, led to less children wanting to participate; which led to her distancing herself and letting the children explore the technology for themselves. The developmental maturity of children has implications in relation to whether they have the knowledge and experience of using cameras. Younger children are more likely to produce photos that are unrecognisable and may have challenges articulating the meaning behind their images (Hulm, 2010). One of the comments arising from the presentation queried the value of using photographs as a data collection method, particularly in light of the sample group requiring so much support with the equipment (see Appendix B:4).

I considered whether the method chosen had been appropriate for use with the 2-3 year age group and questioned the validity of the findings, considering that the majority of children had required some level of support. One of the children, who was capable of using the camera independently took several photographs, which provided some insight as to what activities she was partaking in independently; which included observing other children at play. Despite having more success with producing some recognisable images, she shied away from any discussion relating to what her pictures represented, reiterating the need for me to build rapport with the children prior to carrying out research. Punch (2002) states that while children can feel more at ease when researchers adopt methods that are more sensitive to their interests and competencies, traditional 'adult' research methods can still be used effectively.

Observations allow for the study of specific and narrowly defined areas of inquiry or can remain open-ended, i.e. in cases of on-going assessment. The tools, despite being time-consuming, are a simple means of collecting data (OECD, 2015). Incorporating observations into my research is advantageous, as it could provide insight into young children's curiosities, interests and abilities; hence complementing and enhancing their own discoveries (Dunn, 2005). On a final note, Waller and Bitou (2011) state that it is relationship and the design of the research that enable children's participant and engagement, rather than the tools used and this needs to be taken into consideration when planning my thesis.

In summary, the pilot study has provided valuable insight regarding the complexities of carrying out research with very young children. It is evident that a multi-method approach is needed, with the aim to capture as much of the children's experiences as possible. Incorporating observations with participatory methods, provides the researcher with more scope to analyse and interpret findings; particularly in the cases of

pre-verbal children, for who participation may prove a challenge in light of their age and stage of development. The peer feedback has confirmed some of the issues and considerations that arose before, during and after the pilot study. The most valuable comments pertained to the need to refine me research area further and its significance for early childhood care and education. It is evident that from this point onwards, more reflection is needed to develop a workable project that stimulates my professional interests and is of value to the children and practitioners alike.

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APPENDIX A PRESENTATION PAPER 3

Studies that have used the Mosaic Approach

- McLeod and Daniel (2005) – Interviews, Likert Scale, children's drawings. Aimed to provide a voice to children with communication impairment.
- Pascal and Bertram (2009) – Map making, listening posts, film making. Exploring children's voices and participation across different projects
- Hulm (2010) – Observations, Children's voices and children's photographs. Aimed to 'capture' young children's thoughts and feelings about early years provision in Bristol.
- Coleyshaw et al (2012) – Child-guided tours (including photographs), conversation with children. Part of the Longitudinal Study of Early Years Professional Status (EYPS) to determine how Early Years Professionals (EYPs) use and respond to children's perspectives to inform their practice and quality of provision.

Things I Do By Myself

Research carried out by children aged between 2 – 3 ½ years (with some adult support)

- The pilot research took place in the children's classroom, in a private day nursery, during a morning session.
- The children were initially asked the
- *'When you are at nursery, what do the grown-ups let you do all by yourself?'*
- The children took photographs of areas, toys, routines and activities they were participating in at the time.

APPENDIX A PRESENTATION PAPER 3

Washing Hands

A 2-year old, washed his hands independently

Snack Time

A child photographs the snack table.

APPENDIX A PRESENTATION PAPER 3

Snack Time

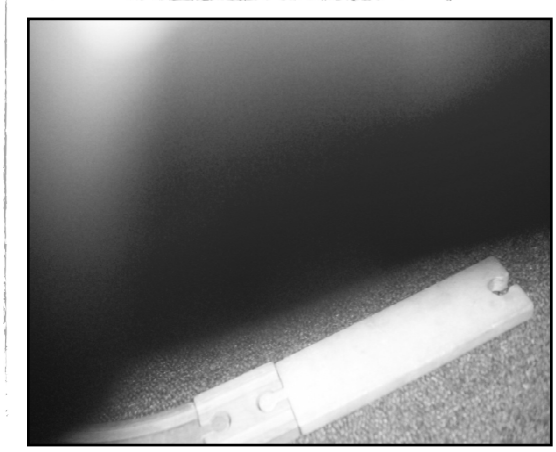
The children pour their drinks independently and choose their fruit.

Building Train Tracks

A child is playing independently and building a train track.

APPENDIX A PRESENTATION PAPER 3

Building Train Tracks



Anotherchild takes a photo of the train tracks by herself.

Building Train Tracks

Another photo of the train tracks.

APPENDIX A PRESENTATION PAPER 3

Putting on my shoes

A child puts his shoes on, ready to go outside. He does it by himself with no adult assistance.

Limitations and Challenges

- The children were not too clear when asked the question and had some difficulty with answering, even when the question was asked differently.
- The children were initially reluctant to interact with me, as I was a 'stranger' to them. To address this, I sat with them and they invited me to join in with their play.
- The age and stage of the children will need to be taken into account when selecting research methods. Observations would be more suited to the the under- 2s.
- Some children needed help using the cameras as they are not always provided with the opportunity to use them in the setting.
- The research takes much patience as the children can easily be distracted or more engaged with other activities.

APPENDIX A PRESENTATION PAPER 3

Reflections

- Awareness that certain questions may not be suitable for specific age groups.
- Children's consent as well as adult consent needs to be obtained whenever possible.
- Will need to look at definitions of leadership and consider selecting a specific focus.
- The use of observations will allow me to explore leadership skills in babies and young toddlers.

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APPENDIX B - PRESENTATION FEEDBACK

Maybe a focus on 'independance' or 'confidence' rather than leadership?

Presenter Name Leanne

Photo's are nice but what do they add? They need so much help to do it so I'm not sure what analysis this will add to your data?!

PTO

Be careful in terminology 'leadership'

You will need to communicate to the reader what you mean by 'leadership' in this age group.
Possible considerations - how do children lead? What opportunities do children have to demonstrate/develop leadership.

Appendix X

EdD Stage One Papers

(iv) Paper 4

Unit 4: Designing and Developing a Research Proposal

1. Research Proposal

This research proposal aims to provide the context, rationale and research design to the proposed doctoral project entitled:

'How do early childhood philosophies support the development of pro-social behaviour and dispositions in the 0-3 ½ years age group?'

Consideration will be given to the proposed methodology and methods, the benefits and limitations of data collection approaches and ethical considerations when carrying out research with young children. For this proposal, the term 'the researcher' will relate to the person undertaking the research. The term 'infant' shall relate to a child aged between 0-18 months and 'toddler' for children aged between 18 months – 3 years.

Context

High quality provision in early childhood, is evidenced as having a positive impact on children's learning development and well-being, that can last well into their teens and adulthood. Studies by Barett (1995) and Sylva et al (2004) recognise that social and emotional skills are on par cognitive development, with noticeable improvements to achievement, self-esteem, grade retention,

socialization and a reduction in developing risky problem behaviours (Payton et al, 2000; Field, 2010; Jollands et al, 2016). This emphasis on well-being is deemed essential, as social and emotional development act as foundations for healthy development, learning and positive attitudes to relationships (Tickell, 2011; Department for Education, 2012; 2014). The skills and dispositions acquired, such as self-management, resilience, volunteering and communication are becoming more integral to the labour market. Hence, social and emotional development is often placed within the remit of mental well-being,

Zero to Three (2012) argue that despite rapid advances in neuroscience, public policies have been slower in reflecting social and emotional development within early childhood learning and development systems. This is a relevant statement, considering that recent statistics NSPCC (2015) the ONS (2015) and Place2Be and NAHT (2016) highlight that across the 0-11 years age group, there is an increase in cases of anxiety, depression and anti-social behaviour; with 1 in 5 children experiencing some form of mental health difficulty at least once. Persistent mental health conditions, can lead to higher accounts of risky behaviour, such as alcohol and drug abuse, sexual behaviour, criminal activity or suicide (Department of Health, 2015; Weare, 2015).

Furthermore, children and young people experiencing mental health problems do not always receive appropriate interventions at an early stage (Mental Health Foundation, 2015). This is recognised as a growing area of concern, with the Department of Health (2015) proposing to tackle the issue through initiatives, including child development and mental health training for Professionals working

with children and young people. Early intervention is critical in improving long-term health and life-chances for children, particularly infants and toddlers and those who are vulnerable or disadvantaged (Chief Secretary to the Treasury, 2003). The early childhood sector has made a vital contribution to identifying children and families in need through home visits, parenting classes and teaching interpersonal skills (Department for Education and Skills, 2001; Department for Education and Skills, 2001; Nutbrown, 2012).

However, these initiatives specifically relate to children's centre services, with little reference to other private, voluntary and independent (PVI) early childhood settings. Considering that many children's centres have closed or had services reduced, there is an opportunity for other early childhood providers to play a more integral role in supporting children's well-being; particularly as they continue to outnumber children's centre services. This is likely to become more crucial in light of insecure or short-term funding and the discontinuation of early intervention initiatives (Abdinasir, 2015). Hence the timing of the proposed research will take into consideration the implication the findings will have on future training and practice for practitioners working across the sector.

Past and current UK Governments recommend that professionals support positive mental health, through the promotion of good mental health, resilience and improving emotional wellbeing (NHS England, 2015; Department for Education, 2016). However, strategies proposed by the House of Commons Health Committee (2014) are predominantly aimed at those working within a health or social work capacity, with the role of education applying to primary and secondary schools. Any references made to early childhood practitioners

focus on professional development, multiagency partnerships and services. The role of play and learning and mental well-being with young children is overlooked and under-researched within this context, despite it allowing children to experiment, learn, share and develop as individuals (Albon, 2014). Play supports the recognition of emotional states and how to regulate them; developing the dispositions as discussed in the aforementioned reports (Play Wales, 2015). This should therefore be considered as equally important as the focus on practitioner skills and resources.

The term 'prosocial' defines voluntary actions that benefit other individuals or groups (Eisenberg, Eggum-Wilkins and Spinrad, 2015). Altruism is just one component of prosocialness, with others comprising of spontaneously-emitted (sharing), compliant (sympathy, social responsibility) and moral reasoning (Eisenberg and Spinrad, 2014). Several of these behaviours correlate with the existing Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework, which stresses that practitioners support the development of self-awareness, confidence and resilience; which support school readiness and life-long learning (Department for Education 2008; 2012; 2014). Caprara et al (2000) articulate that educational programmes in which prosocialisation is a prime focus, produce supportive learning communities that foster mutual caring and social engagement. This is viewed as highly desirable in education, with the potential to mitigate negative emotions, promote better educational outcomes and support the development of 'good mental health'. Hence early childhood practitioners could play a more integral role by providing learning opportunities that encompass prosocialisation alongside personal, social and emotional evelopment; perceived as the foundation for emotional and

intellectual growth (Fraser and Blishen, 2007l Hyson and Taylor, 2011; Wentzel, 2015).

The Child Psychotherapy Trust (2002) articulate that a combination of child-focused educational programmes and parent-child interaction patterns and relationship building have the greatest impact on the mental wellbeing of young children. Fauth and Thompson (2009) add that mental health, emotional and social well-being comprise of the actions, behaviours and feelings of children; which includes their ability to self-regulate and communicate the feelings experienced. It is recognised that a complex range of factors can have implications for the social and emotional development of young children. For children classed as vulnerable, or with special educational needs, there is greater emphasis on promoting positive mental well-being through the provision of healthy child development and readiness for school (NICE, 2012).

In light of the literature, mental health and well-being is becoming an integral part of policy and practice, but in light of austerity measures, it is unlikely that services and provision will be sustainable in the long-term; which may lead to shortfalls in training and resources. There is an opportunity for the early childhood sector to play a greater role, by developing a more informed awareness of prosocialisation and its implications for positive mental well-being. The diversity and fragmented nature of England's early childhood sector makes it challenging to provide a one-size fits all approach. However, the pedagogies and philosophies used by settings to promote mental well-being through social and emotional development, provide valuable opportunities to explore how prosocial behaviours, dispositions and skills are acquired through

play and activities, which act as precursors to school readiness. Furthermore, with play being readily available, a further implication for this research relates to cost- effective. If specific methods and approaches to developing prosocial behaviour are identified, the researcher hopes that these can be implicated across the sector with little impact of setting budgets.

Research Aim and Questions

The researcher is mindful that the proposed research covers a broad and diverse area, and has therefore considered three specific lines of questioning to guide the aims and objectives of the study. This section comprises of the proposed focus questions and a summary of their relevance to the study.

Question One: How does prosocial behaviour in the early years support children's mental well-being in education?

This aspect of the research will comprise of literature, pertaining to how the development and acquisition of prosocial behaviours and dispositions support children in the education system. Through observation and interviews, the research aims to identify which of the behaviours and dispositions identified in the literature are demonstrated in practice with the 0-3 ½ age group.

Question Two: How do different early childhood philosophies support the development of prosocial behaviours and dispositions?

Early childhood provision is diverse, comprising of a wide range of settings and

services that support the learning, development and wellbeing of young children and their families. These include childminders, children's centres, playgroups, pre-schools, nannies, day nurseries and maintained nursery schools (Family and Childcare Trust, 2016). In addition to following the statutory guidelines set out by the EYFS, settings may adopt specific educational philosophies and pedagogies into existing educational systems, e.g. Montessori method. The proposed research aims to select some of the key philosophies supported in a selection of settings, to determine how these ideologies specifically support, promote and develop prosocial behaviours and dispositions through play and learning. A further aspect of this question will determine whether these different philosophies share common goals or similarities, which could be promoted in other early childhood settings.

Question Three: In what ways do very young children demonstrate prosocial behaviours through their play and activities?

Existing research has predominantly focused on prosocial behaviours and actions in children based in preschool, primary and secondary school environments (Chang, 2003; Sharf and Mayseless, 2009; Mawson, 2011). Children under the age of 3-years are identified as a vastly under-research group, particularly in relation to supporting their peer relationships (Mathers et al, 2014). The proposed research will address this gap by considering which attributes and skills acquired through prosocialisation support the development of positive relationships. This will be achieved by focusing on the children's play and daily activities, i.e. routines.

Methodology

The researcher's epistemic stance is based within an interpretivist paradigm, with the aim of understanding how very young children develop and nurture prosocial behaviours and dispositions within early childhood settings.Interpretivist approaches to research aim to make sense of the phenomena being studied, taking into account the fluidity of situations and acknowledging that findings will comprise of multiple interpretations and perspectives (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011). From an early childhood perspective, interpretive research can provide valuable insight into the children's world; taking into account their social and cultural routines, intentions and practice (Wood, 2015). This is often achieved through the use of an ethnographic methodology; defined as studying people in their naturally occurring settings, with the aim of capturing ordinary activities and their social meanings (Brewer, 2000; Pole and Morrison, 2003).

A researcher's role is considered to be more active within this context, as they conduct direct observations and capture the conversations from the participants. Hammersley and Atkinson (2007, p.3), stress that ethnographic research comprises of the following features: participants' actions and accounts are studied within everyday contexts; data is collaed through a range of resources and is relatively unstructured; comprises of the interpretation of meanings, functions and consequences of human actions and institutional practices. Within an early childhood context, ethnography recognises that children are active contributors to their own lives; with studies often centred around children's experiences of or within particular services (Konstantoni and Kustatscher, 2015). In the context of the proposed research, the services, in

this case, will be early childhood settings, that cater for children aged between 0-5 years.

While this methodology fits with the aims and objectives of the proposed research, it also brings to light some specific limitations. Ethnographic research is deemed highly subjective, in terms of being sensitive to the researcher's attitudes and actions; particularly when they are working very closely with participants. Furthermore, findings are impossible to generalise, as smaller samples tend to be used (Gobo, 2011). Qualitative research can produce an unstructured mass of data, and the researcher may be uncertain regarding the quantity of data required and what areas of investigation to focus on (Fawcett, 2009). The issue of subjectivity is also perceived to be a risk to qualitative research, as a researcher's intensive personal involvement may impact on the validity and reliability of the findings and evaluation (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011). There is a risk that the researcher may influence the actions and behaviours of the children. In comparison, the non-participant conducts unobtrusive and covert observations, to avoid such influence (Papatheodorou, Luff and Gill, 2011). Angen (2010) states that validity is heavily reliant on the research method to ensure that there is adequate distance between the researcher's subjective biases and the object of the study. A researcher should also engage with reflection as a means of monitoring and controlling their biases (Burke Johnson, 1997). The next section will therefore consider how the role of the choice of methods impacts on the validity and reliability of the research.

Methods

The proposed research will use qualitative data collection methods, as a means of identifying how prosocial behaviours and dispositions are acquired and supported through early childhood provision. Considering that each setting's pedagogical philosophy will differ, this approach will allow for richer contextual data to be gained, which can be compared and contrasted across all settings and against findings from theory and literature. It is predicted that while the majority of data will be qualitative in nature, it is likely that some results may be measurable and quantifiable. For example, when analysing the number of occurrences in which a particular behaviour is demonstrated.

As part of the review of suitable research methods, a participatory method, the Mosaic approach, was initially tested as part of a small-scale pilot; to determine whether very young children could act as co-researchers on the proposed project. The aim of the approach is to use visual and verbal methods that allow children to communicate their views and needs (Clark and Moss, 2011). For the pilot, the views and experiences of a small group of 2-3 year olds, were documented using photography and informal questioning. Following the small- scale study, it became evident that there were challenges pertaining to the children's level of comprehension and their ability to use the cameras independently. This correlates with Blaisdell's (2012) findings in which infants and toddlers were unable to use digital equipment to full effect, which limited their ability to fully engage with the research.

In response to these preliminary findings, a further challenge to consider for future research, relates to the physical setting and its cultural environment (Punch, 2002). This risks further limiting the types of data collection methods that can be used on site. For example, the use of digital equipment and technology for collecting data and documenting children's views, would be incompatible with the Steiner approach, in light of its stance on computers for the under-5s age group (Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship, 2016b). Furthermore, statutory safeguarding policies pertaining to the use of cameras, mobile phones and portable devices are likely to vary at each setting, i.e. whether such devices are permitted in playrooms / classrooms (Department for Education, 2014).

One final matter arising from the pilot pertains to the validity of data. This was initially raised by colleagues on the professional doctorate programme, who queried whether the Mosaic approach would provide enough credible data for this level of study. Although a single method had been tested at this stage, it brought attention to the need to identify data collection methods that could be used across all of the intended age groups. It was decided that the complexity of adapting the Mosaic approach for infants and toddlers, combined with the time it would take to 'train' children in using specific equipment independently would be best suited to a smaller-scale study. Upon reflection, it became evident that alternative methods of data collection would be needed to take into account the age and stage of development of the children participating in the study and to address the issues raised above.

The researcher has since selected triangulation as the most appropriate method for the proposed research. This comprises of a multi-method approach to data collection, which fits the objectives and design of an ethnographic study. In addition to observations, informal and formal interviews may be used, along with documents (Brewer, 2000). The combination of these three methods are utually supportive and perceived to provide a more holistic view of educational outcomes and ensure good research practice and improving the validity of research findings and evaluation (Mathison, 1988; Green, 2000; Shenton, 2004; Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011). However, Interpretivists may view triangulation as problematic, due to a loss of context and the likelihood of inconsistence or contradictory evidence. This is not the case for all researchers, as others find it beneficial to elicit a more divergent account of phenomena (Angen, 2010).

The proposed research methods will comprise of observations, semi -structure interviews and document analysis, respectively. Observations are often selected on the premise that interviews and questionnaires are likely to be impractical when used with young children (Green, 2000). Unlike controlled observations where the observer can manipulate the environment to achieve specific results, naturalistic observations allow for 'real world' research. This can provide researchers with greater contextual information and an improved knowledge and understanding in relation to specific social and cultural groups, individual and group behaviours and relationships within a natural setting; which support the rationale behind ethnographic research (Greig and Taylor, 1999).

For the proposed study, the observations will focus on the children's experiences and interactions during their play and daily activities. Due to variations pertaining to the size of each setting and number of children on roll, at least one smaller group of children shall be observed with each age group per setting. It is estimated that no more than 4-8 children will be part of a group at any one time; although this will be dependent on the activity and type of play taking place at the time. Where appropriate, informal discussion with the children will take place to provide further insight into their learning experiences, behaviours and their own interpretation of their actions and interactions.

Following the analysis of the observations, semi-structured interviews will be carried out with a sample of practitioners and teachers working in the settings. This will provide further clarification and contextual information regarding the children's play and activities. The third research method will comprise of document analysis, with a focus on the settings' activity plans. Document analysis is often combined with other qualitative research methods, as a means of validating data and reducing bias. Furthermore, it provides contextual information and supplements data from other resources, such as observations and interviews (Rapley, 2007; Bowen, 2009). However, McCulloch (2011) stresses that understanding the meaning of documents and the context in hich it applies is of great importance. For educational documents, he adds that the reliability of such resources may be questionable, depending on how the data is interpreted.

This will allow the researcher to explore whether practitioners and teachers actively plan for the development and promotion of prosocial behaviours and skills, or whether these occur spontaneously through the children's play. This will also determine how the philosophies and ideologies proposed by the pedagogies' founders are delivered in practice, linking theory with practice.

Sampling

The selection of participants will be through purposive sampling, to ensure that the pedagogical approaches and philosophies adopted by early childhood settings, correlate with the aims and objectives of the study. All settings will be based in England, due to variations and differences in curricula and educational policies across other parts of the United Kingdom. To respect confidentiality, pseudonyms shall be used to protect the identify of the setting and all participants.

Group-based settings based in the PVI sector will be the focus of this study, due to a higher percentage of 2-3 year olds in attendance and many offering places for children under the age of 2-years (Department for Education, 2015). Maintained settings in comparison predominantly provide for children over the age of 3-years, with limited or no provision for the under-3s (Brind et al, 2014). Childminders were also considered as possible participants, given that a high percentage offer services for infants and toddlers (Otero and Melhui sh, 2015). However, there are variations relating to adult-child ratios and many

practitioners care for mixed-age groups. This could potentially limit

opportunities to observe children in the same age group, especially in cases where there is a very small number of children being cared for. On this occasion, this type of provision was not deemed suited for this study, but consideration will be given as to whether the findings from the study could impact on a childminder's practice.

Additionally, there are fewer maintained settings that follow at least one of the following approaches to learning: Montessori, Steiner Waldorf, Reggio Emilia, HighScope or Forest School (Forest Schools Education, 2016; Montessori Schools Association, 2016; Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship, 2016a). Considering that these philosophies will be central to this study, there is a greater abundance of PVI settings using these methods. This is of particular importance in cases where a setting may refuse to participate in the study, as another following the same approach could be invited to participate. As a means of comparison, an additional early childhood setting shall be used that solely follows the EYFS. This will bring the total number of settings required for this study to 6.

The settings will be located through a mix of existing professional relationships and networks, internet searches and recommendations from colleagues who have links within the early childhood sector. The researcher is mindful that the main gatekeeper for this study, will be the setting's proprietor and / or management team. Green (2000) states that managers and Headteachers are held in loco parentis, i.e. in place of the parent; meaning that they have a legal obligation to the welfare of the children in their care.

Contact shall be made by telephone to gage interest and to explain the nature

of the study and answer any questions that may arise. Further details, including the participant information and consent forms shall be forwarded to the setting by email and, where possible, the researcher shall seek to meet interested parties in person to build rapport and meet the rest of the setting's staff. While rapport building is deemed important in creating a more relaxed environment to carry out research, at the early stages of participant recruitment, it is important for the researcher to develop positive professional relationships and trust; which in turn promotes ethical research practice (Harden et al, 2000; Macintosh, 2009).

It is important at this stage to recognise that the proprietor / management team's role is to provide access to the children and practitioners, who will act as the research participants. Miller and Bell (2012) highlight that the differences between access and consent may be unclear, hence it is important to consider who is responsible for providing the latter. For this study, a participant consent form shall be provided to the setting, to draw attention to issues such as confidentiality and withdrawal from the study. The latter is of parti cular importance, if circumstances prevent the setting being able to continue to take part, i.e. moving premises, new management structure etc. In these cases, only data collected up until the point of withdrawal shall be used, and this shall be clearly communicated in the consent form. This will ensure that the researcher can work with any data collected to support their evaluation.

Once consent has been provided by the settings, voluntary consent shall be sought by the parents/carers, whose children attend the setting. This will be through posters and information provided to the setting to use on parent

information boards and participant consent forms, to confirm whether they are satisfied with their children being observed. Due to the age of the children, consent / assent shall be gained through age appropriate resources, i.e. voting cards, picture chart.

Ethical Considerations

Carrying out research on very young children presents several specific challenges pertaining to risk and safeguarding. The presence of a stranger-researcher, i.e. when there is no pre-existing relationship between the research and child, is very likely to impact on the way children behave and interact during the observation period (Sargeant and Harcourt, 2012). Infants and toddlers in particular may demonstrate insecure behaviours in the presence of an unfamiliar adult. This can range from signs of anxiety, distress and clinginess to withdrawal, which risks invalidating data as the children will not be engaging naturally with their daily activities and play (Ainsworth, Bell and Stayton, 1971; Thompson and Lamb, 1983; Woodhead and Faulkner, 2000). Sroufe (1977) and Blaisdell (2012) claim that these negative behaviours are the result of the researcher acting intrusively, with Greenberg and Marvin (1982) adding that avoidant responses may be linked to wariness rather than fear.

A further issue pertains to the concept of informed consent, in light of some participants being at the pre-verbal stage of development. In these cases, infants and toddlers may be unable to fully express their desires to participate, refuse of withdraw voluntarily through oral communication. Hence, the

researcher's experience as an early childhood professional equips them with a grounded knowledge and understanding of child development and the importance of identifying non-verbal communication as an alternative means of expression. Alderson and Morrow (2011) articulate that the use of gestures, facial expressions and visual / technical aids may support the consent process for children who fall under a pre-verbal or non-verbal category. This supports the previous section's discussion on consent / assent

2. Research Journal

Over the past two years, my journey from Masters student to doctoral candidate, has taught me that higher level learning is a process that amalgamates academic rigour and expertise with personal and professional development. Since commencing my professional doctorate in education (Ed.D) in 2014, I have kept a research journal as a means of tracking and reflecting on my ideas, thoughts and experiences pertaining to my research interests. The following account consolidates some of the key journal entries that have allowed me to question, challenge and identify the focus on my thesis.

Prior to enrolling on my programme, I aimed to continue with the research I had selected for my Masters dissertation; which focused on the learning needs of graduates completing Early Years Initial Teacher Training (EYITT). However, I questioned whether using this as a longitudinal study would be sustainable, in light of changes at Government and sector level. Therfore, upon commencing Stage One, I opted to explore an area that connected to my research interests on leadership and workforce development. During a conversation with an experienced professor in my workplace, I documented my thesis proposal as:

"…looking at whether early childhood settings, who host undergraduate and postgraduate early childhood students understand the needs of higher education learners and whether they are supported adequately by institutions regarding expectations and learning outcomes…" (13th Oct 2014).

As my first year progressed, I questioned the content of this entry, as to whether the question was too vague for a sector which was so diverse. I wondered whether this research focus could become more complex in terms of selecting an appropriate research method and paradigm. Upon the completion of my Papers 1 and 2, I identified that I had a lot of knowledge on this subject area,but conducting research that added something new was becoming a challenge. Following the completion of an alternative research project, I identified another area of investigation that still maintained my interests and expertise and connected to my specialism in early childhood leadership. As with my initial entry in 2014, I considered how I would explain my project to another person and after several attempts, I settled with this description:

'The idea is to explore how long children develop leadership skills. This will comprise of using four early childhood settings, which use different philosophical approaches and determine what they have in common in relation to opportunities that allow children to develop leadership within two contexts. At present these contexts are as follows-whether the children participate to the development of provision within the setting and what skills they are developing that will contribute to leadership.' (18th Oct 2015).

In comparison to my entry in 2014, it was evident that this idea was less vague and had a more specific and focused context. Searching for a suitable data collection method was easier, as I felt I had more choice. One of these methods was the Mosaic approach, which would allow children to share their views through various creative outlets. As part of my Paper 3, I piloted this

method with a small group of young children at an early childhood setting. The photography aspect became a challenge, as the children were unfamiliar with using the equipment. Furthermore, upon presenting my findings to my Ed.D colleagues, their feedback drew attention to two further issues. The first being whether the Mosaic approach would provide valid data, and the second pertaining to the complexity of leadership as a focus area.

As with my initial idea on early childhood undergraduates and postgraduates, the issue of methods continued to be problematic, so I used my journal to reflect on how the feedback from my presentation could help me progress with my project: *'From this activity, I feel I can fine tune the idea and start working on a specific focus…What I do need to consider is how I would incorporate the Mosaic approach and observations. Would this be the best method, or are others worth considering?' (28th Nov 2015).*

This entry allowed me to consider other research methods and I decided to omit the Mosaic approach in favour of narrative observations and interviews. As I moved into the final term on my Stage One, I reflected on my research from the previous year and questioned whether it could support me in refining the focus of my thesis further:

'One of the themes discussed in the book I have written linked leadership to prosocial behaviour. This has become of increasing interest…I consulted with a colleague at work, and her personal stance was that the prosocial behaviour idea would be more interesting to her, if she was making that choice…' (9th Jan 2016)

After consulting my colleague, I felt more assured that I was making the right choice with my research focus, with my journal entry adding:

'…I decided to focus on prosocial behaviour in relation to how different early childhood philosophies support and develop such behaviours. This would allow me to extend this research at a later stage, post-doctorate and I could ideally use it as a basis to then explore its links to leadership in more depth.' (9th Jan 2016).

During my first year on my Ed.D, I had not considered life beyond my doctoral studies, but as I approached the end of Stage One, it occurred to me that my thesis was merely a stepping-stone to future research. This reflected my original idea to use my Masters dissertation as a precursor to my doctoral research, but in this case, it was my thesis that would lead to further research; pending the outcome of my findings.

In summary, I feel that my research journal has supported me in challenging and organising my ideas and approaches as a researcher. As I progress onto Stage Two, I feel that engaging with my reflections has instilled me with confidence and allowed me to explore what it means to study at this level of academia. This reinforces my opening statement that higher level learning is a process.

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Appendix A : Timeline

Stage 1 [Year 2]

Jun 2016 - Jul 2016
- Submission of Paper 4 and Ethics form
- Stage 2A Presentations training
- Commencement of literature review

Stage 2 [Year 3]

Sept 2016 – Dec 2016
- Commencement of data collection

Dec 2016 – Feb 2017
- Draft 1 of literature review (first half)

Mar 2017 – Jun 2017
- Draft 1 of literature review (second half)
- Analysis of Data (Phase 1 – observations)

Jul 2017
- Completion of Data Collection
- Draft 1 of methodology chapter

Stage 2 [Year 4]

Sept 2017 – Dec 2017
- Confirmation of Candidature
- Analysis of Data (Phase 2– Interviews and Document Analysis)

Dec 2017 – Feb 2018
- Completion of literature chapter
- Draft 1 of findings and discussion chapter

Mar 2018 – Jun 2018
- Completion of findings and discussion chapter
- Stage 3 training – Thesis production and Examination preparation
- Proof-read second draft literature review and methodology chapters

Jul 2018
- Completion of abstract and introduction
- Completion of acknowledgements, contents page and references

Stage 3 [Year 4 / 5]

Jul - Sept 2018
- Final Proof-read and edits
- Submission of Thesis
- Preparation for Viva
- Viva
- Response to Viva [amendments to thesis as instructed]