

A qualitative exploration of parents' views  
following attendance at a Webster Stratton  
Incredible Years Parenting Programme

Juliet Dash

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the University of East London for the  
degree of Professional Doctorate in Applied Educational and Child  
Psychology

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This research is being submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the Doctorate in Applied Educational and Child Psychology.

This dissertation is the result of my own work and investigation, except where otherwise stated. Other sources are acknowledged by explicit references in the text. A full reference list is appended.

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## **Abstract**

Parenting plays a vital role in determining children's future life opportunities and irrespective of the skills and resources parents bring to the task all parents can find parenting challenging on occasions. This study explored the views of parents who attended a Webster Stratton Incredible Years Parenting Programme for parents of pre-school children at a local Children's Centre. Families living in known socially deprived areas of a local outer London borough were targeted. The group parenting programme was delivered over a period of ten weeks focusing on positive behaviour management strategies using praise and rewards with an emphasis on developing play and communication skills. A home visit to support the development of play skills was offered to some families.

A qualitative design methodology was used to elicit parents' views about their reasons for attending the programme and any changes they perceived in their own and their children's behaviour as a result.

Thirteen parents were interviewed in their homes approximately six months after the completion of the programme. The data from the interviews was analysed using thematic analysis. Six key themes and a number of sub-themes were identified. Parents cited a number of practical, emotional and social reasons for attending the programme. Parents reported substantial changes in their behaviour and a greater awareness of the link between these and their children's behaviour. They reported a

greater sense of self-efficacy and valued being part of a group. For these parents participating, a group parenting programme was viewed as a positive experience. A number of parents thought the programme needed to be extended to incorporate support after the completion of the programme. The research also highlighted parental views of how their own upbringing and childhood experiences had impacted on them as parents.

Limitations of the research and future research ideas are discussed in relation to the potential role for educational psychologists in facilitating group parenting programmes within the community. These programmes would specifically focus on developing and extending the interactive play and communication skills of parents of pre-school children. Ways of building on parental feelings of self-efficacy in relation to parenting skills within a socially supportive environment are also discussed.

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# Chapter 1: Introduction

## 1.1 Overview of this chapter

“Parenting is the toughest job in the world.....because instructions aren’t included” (Parentline Plus Leaflet, 2010). There is a growing acknowledgement that refutes, “the current belief that parenting is taught by a process of osmosis” (Field, 2010 p. 19). There is now a recognition that parents play a central role in the development and well being of their children and that this role can often be a challenging one (Department for Education & Skills [DfES], 2005a). Parenting is a lifelong occupation and while the majority of adults require little or no training in the art of being a parent, for some adults, parenting can be difficult and many families benefit from some support.

This study is based on exploring parental views about attending a Webster Stratton Incredible Years Basic Parenting Programme: Toddler version (WSIYPP). This programme is based on the original programme that was developed in 1982. Webster-Stratton (2001) devised a number of programmes with two long term goals. The first of these was to develop comprehensive ‘treatment’ programmes for young children demonstrating the early onset of behavioural difficulties, while the second was to develop cost effective universal preventative programmes.

The theoretical lens of this study is located within a social constructionist framework which views language and social interactions at the heart of the process of change. The theoretical basis of this study is underpinned by a number of psychological theories and fields. Social Learning theory (Bandura, 1977) provides the theoretical basis for many parenting programs such as the Incredible Years, the Webster-Stratton, the Triple P and Helping the Non-Compliant Child programmes although this is not always explicitly acknowledged in the research literature.

Scott and Dodds (2009) provide an explanation of the practical application of Social Learning Theory to parenting programs. They suggest that it is the underpinning social learning theory that provides the “theoretical and strategic tools to improve relationships through training parents in a range of techniques” (p. 1448). In addition other theories and psychological fields also underpin both the content and the style of delivery of parent training programmes. Most parenting programmes draw on an eclectic mix of theoretical frameworks. These include attribution theory (Weiner 1986), Cognitive Behavioural Psychology (Beck, 1976), Developmental Psychology (Piaget 1963, Vygotsky, 1978), Attachment theory (Bowlby, 1982), Motivation (Maslow, 1968) and Behaviourism (Skinner, 1953). Piaget and Vygotsky’s views on child development and importance of children learning through play are also reflected within parenting programmes such as Webster Stratton. The importance of attachment to

emotional well being (Bowlby 1982) is also reflected within the development of the Webster Stratton Parenting Programmes. The overall style of delivery of parenting programmes is based on research on effective learning strategies. Most parent programmes espouse approaches that allow for positive engagement and flexibility. This enables engaging those parents who might not respond to an approach that rigidly uses theoretical and strategic tools to improve relationships through training.

This chapter provides an outline of the context, origins, and rationale of the study, together with its distinctive contribution and relevance to professional practice. It also provides the underlying epistemological stance and the importance given to reflexivity within the research process. The next section describes the context of this research.

## **1.2 Context of the research**

The context of the research is addressed in two sections. Section 1.2.1 provides the political context for the research including changes in legislation and policies. Section 1.2.2 provides the context for parenting programmes in the United Kingdom (UK).

### **1.2.1 Political context**

Following the 1997 Labour government's landslide election victory in the UK a cornerstone of their policy was to eradicate child poverty by 2020 and to reduce social inequality. These aims drove developments through a series of early childhood policy measures which in turn shaped the support for parents of pre-school children. Initiatives included the launch of Sure Start in 1998 which eventually established more than 500 local programmes in some of the most socially deprived areas of the country (Tunstill, Allnock, Akhurst & Garbers, 2005). Sure Start Local Programmes (SSLPs) were devised as part of a seamless range of support for children at the risk of social exclusion. Sure Start delivered integrated family support and early learning, and play experiences for children under the age of four years. Sure Start aimed to reduce social exclusion and enhance the life opportunities for youngsters growing up in disadvantaged families and communities. It was locality based and all pre-school children and their families living in a prescribed area were targeted irrespective of the degree of deprivation (Rutter, 2006). Evaluation of sure start effectiveness programmes have encountered many methodological issues that have impacted on the validity of the findings, (Melhuish et al, 2007; Tunstill, et al, 2005).

However, despite these limitations, positive outcomes far outweighed any negative ones. The National Evaluation of Sure Start team (NESS 2010) found, for example, that children growing up in SSLP areas had better physical health

and lower body mass index (BMI) than those growing up in non SSLP areas (Department for Education [DfE] 2010). Furthermore, a number of positive impacts were reported by mothers such as providing their children with a more stimulating home learning environment and using less punitive forms of discipline. Some negative effects of the Sure Start programmes that this evaluation noted were that parents living in SSLP areas were more likely to have some depressive symptoms and less likely to attend school meetings. The overall conclusion was that the government's initial aim to support children and families through locality based support had, at least to some extent, achieved its aim.

Sure Start Local Programmes were replaced with Children's Centres in 2003. Children's Centres are community based centres providing a variety of services for families of pre-school children. It was envisaged by the then government that Children's Centres would exist throughout the country but there would be more services in areas identified as having higher social and economic deprivation. These Children's Centres were initially known as Sure Start Children's Centres. Their aim was to provide a range of services for pre-school children and their families (DfES, 2005b). By 2009, some 3000 Sure Start Children's Centres, providing services for 2.3 million children were in operation. Legislation in the UK, (Crime and Disorder Act, 1998) for example, has lent further weight to the notion that parenting programmes can lead to the development of more effective

parenting skills. Under this Act parents can be directed to attend parenting programmes through 'Parenting Orders' thus highlighting the belief that for some families, participation in parenting programmes can lead to more effective parenting skills.

Support from multi-agency services was based around a 'core offer' of integrated early learning, childcare, family support, health services, outreach services and access to training and employment advice. Part of the core offer included parenting support at both the universal and targeted level (Department for Children, Schools and Families [DCSF], 2010). Following the change of government in 2010, the new government planned to retain Children's Centres providing a core universal offer but focusing on vulnerable families through providing evidence based early intervention programmes to support families with the greatest need.

### **1.2.2 Parenting programmes**

Since the 1990s, in the United Kingdom, there has been a proliferation of support for parents through parenting programmes, delivered by both the voluntary and state sector. Examples include the Triple-P Programme (<http://www8.triplep.net/>), Strengthening Families Strengthening Communities

(<http://www.strengtheningpractice.org.uk/>), **Mellow Parenting** (<http://www.mellowparenting.org/>) and **Incredible Years** (<http://www.incredibleyears.com/>).

Research has shown that parenting programmes are one of the most powerful and cost-effective interventions available to assist young children at risk of developing emotional and behavioural difficulties (Sanders, Calam, Durand, Liversidge & Carmont, 2008). Parenting programmes are viewed as providing a preventative approach to behavioural difficulties in children (Field, 2010). Recommendations have been made that parenting support should be available across the UK (Lindsay et al. 2008). Internationally a similar picture has evolved with many of the programmes cited having originated in other countries. Many programmes have been translated and used cross culturally (Lau, Fung, Ho, Liu, & Gudiño, 2011). In terms of evaluating the effectiveness of the Webster Stratton Incredible Years Basic Parenting Programme, research undertaken in both English and Non-English speaking countries has demonstrated its effectiveness (Birk-Olsen & Horsted, 2008; Reid, Webster-Stratton & Beauchaine, 2001).

The WSIYPP is aimed at parents with children between the ages of two to eight. The toddler version is a slight modification aimed at the younger age range. The programme can be used with families with children who have or have not been identified as having social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. The programme

aims to teach parents how to foster positive social behaviours in children as well as providing parents with effective techniques for dealing with behaviours often cited by parents as ones they would like to reduce. The programme emphasises positive parenting skills that aim to promote self-confidence and co-operation in young children. It is worth noting that Graham Allan, Member of Parliament in the recently published document: 'Early Intervention: The Next Steps' (2011) cites the WSIYPP as one of a number of effective early intervention preventative programmes.

A lack of positive attention coupled with inconsistent and inappropriate discipline by parents has been recognised as a causal factor of anti-social behaviour, behavioural difficulties and delinquency (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000; Stewart-Brown, 2005). Parents are a pre-school child's primary agents of socialization and parent training programmes can therefore provide an important element of early intervention which is believed to be more cost effective than dealing with antisocial offending behaviour (Scott, Knapp, Henderson & Maughan, 2001a). The importance of parenting programmes as an effective preventative service has been recognised both nationally and internationally as shown by the substantial body of research based on the evaluation of parenting programmes (Desforges & Abouchar, 2003).

Barlow, Parsons and Stewart-Brown (2005) suggest there is a high prevalence of children under the age of three demonstrating emotional and behavioural problems and parenting practices have shown to be strongly associated with the development of these problems. Parenting programmes have been perceived as one of the most powerful and cost-effective interventions available to assist young children at risk of developing emotional and behavioural difficulties (Sanders et al., 2008). Systematic reviews have pointed to the effectiveness of group based parenting programmes in improving the emotional and behavioural adjustment of children under the age of three (Barlow et al., 2005). Since the ability of young children to self-regulate their emotions and behaviours is a prerequisite for school readiness and social and academic success, it is important that improving the emotional and behavioural adjustment of children is addressed.

There is also a substantial body of research on the effectiveness of parenting programmes which suggests that parenting interventions that target cognitive behaviour can prevent and address social, emotional and behavioural difficulties (SEBD) (Hutchings et al., 2007). It should be noted at this point that although the literature refers to conduct disorders as opposed to SEBD, the researcher uses the latter term throughout this research as it is less pejorative, and does not imply a 'within child disorder.' Furthermore the term SEBD is one that is commonly used and understood by early years professionals. Based on the wealth of

research evidence (Barlow & Stewart-Brown, 2001; Hallam, Rogers, Shaw & Ramie, 2007 & Scott et al. 2001b) a number of national and professional initiatives have been devised for supporting and promoting effective parenting skills. The government led organisation, the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE), guidance published in 2006, advocated group based training programmes for the management of children with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. In addition they provided recommendations as to the structure and style such group based programmes should follow. Most parent training interventions that are targeted at children with behavioural difficulties focus on improving the quality of interactions between parent and child (Danforth, Harvey, Ulaszek & McKee, 2006; Hutchings et al., 2007). The next section addresses the origins of this research.

### **1.3 Origins of the research**

This research evolved out of the researcher's work as an applied psychologist in an outer London Borough. The researcher holds a pre-school specialist post that is funded through the Sure Start Local Programmes to support the delivery of a positive parenting service. This specialist post entails substantial multi-disciplinary work as well as the provision of varied and extensive training and supervision. The researcher is a strong advocate of early intervention working in this area in both a preventative and supportive way. The preventative aspect of the work involves supporting children and families while the supportive aspect

focuses on minimising the impact of disability on children and families. The Green Paper, Support and aspiration: A new approach to special educational needs and disability (DfE, March 2011) lends additional weight to the idea of early identification and intervention. The researcher's post initially included supporting a home based parenting service known as 'Positive Parenting.' Positive Parenting provided families with support in the home as well as encouraging participation in parenting programmes based at the Children's Centres. These programmes aimed to develop parental confidence in using positive behaviour management strategies.

As the SSLPs were main streamed and the decision to build children's centres across the country was taken, guidance on the services children's centres should provide was produced (DfES, 2005b). In relation to parenting programmes, this guidance encouraged the use of evidence based nationally recognised parenting programmes. This led the Children's Centre within the borough to fund and train the researcher to deliver the WSIYPP. The rationale for choosing the WSIYPP was that it fulfilled the recommendations provided within the guidance. This research was therefore rooted in the researcher's professional practice as an applied psychologist specialising in supporting children and families in the early years.

More recently there has been an expectation on Local Authorities to devise policy based on evidence (Percy-Smith., et al 2002). All Local Authorities were directed to devise a parenting strategy that should reflect local context and be needs and evidence based (DfES 2006). Since this research was aimed at exploring parental views on attending a particular parenting programme, the Webster Stratton Incredible Years Basic Parenting Programme, which was used within the Local Authority, the findings from this research would provide the Local Authority with a body of evidence as to its effectiveness. This research would therefore be useful in informing the Local Authority's policy making in relation to devising and implementing an effective Parenting Strategy. It would not only reflect local context but also be needs and evidence based. As an Applied Psychologist and Local Authority Officer, the researcher was in a position of providing the Local Authority with evidence based findings. These would not only inform the Local Authority on effective practice nationally but also on implementing a parenting strategy that took into account the needs that were pertinent to parents within the local community.

#### **1.4 Epistemological position and reflexive thinking**

Epistemology refers to how we know what we know. In this section, a discussion of the assumptions underlying the adopted world view and how they shaped the approach to this research will be addressed. The researcher was interested in exploring the language and meanings that parents deploy in their accounts of

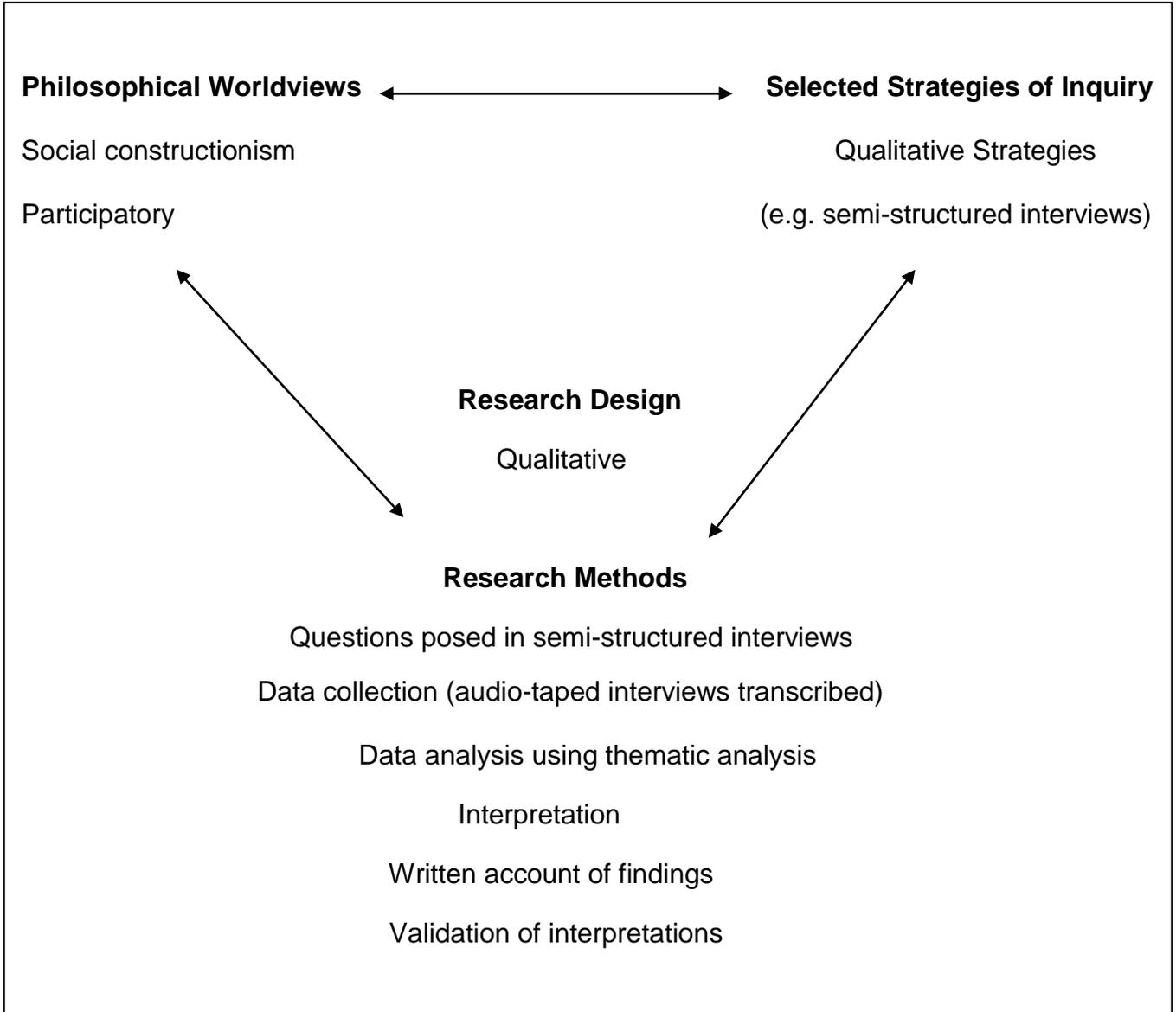
attending a parenting programme such as the WSIYPP. Too frequently, evaluations of parenting programmes concentrate on the efficacy of the programme with an empiricist and positivistic emphasis. The researcher's qualitative approach, with its emphasis on language and meaning, is grounded in the epistemological position of social constructionism. Burr (2003) suggests that the analysis of language is at the heart of social constructionist research methods. Clark and Jenner (2006) postulate that social constructionism is a broad approach which includes a range of perspectives ranging from personal construct psychology to discursive psychology. It focuses on meaning and power. It recognises that discourses underpin interactions and are a major influence in constructions of meaning and reality and that language and social interactions are central to the processes of change. Social constructionism assumes that as individuals interact with the world around them they construe meanings and make sense of it through the deployment of available discourses. This research is interested in the rationale that parents construct for attending a group parenting programme, and how they account for any changes in their and their children's behaviour.

Burr (2003) suggested that the social constructionist position has a number of key assumptions. The first is a critical stance towards taken-for-granted knowledge. This leads to a questioning of assumptions that are typically held. For instance, is there one way that is better to parent than another? The second

assumption is that understandings are historically and culturally specific. This means that notions of parenting, including what is or is not acceptable, may change over time and significant cultural differences may exist. Knowledge, Burr (2003) suggests, is sustained by social processes and as such parents' notions of parenting programmes will have been influenced by the society around them including the powerful media and the values it espouses. Finally, there is an assumption that knowledge and social action go together. The constructions parents hold about parenting and parenting programmes will inevitably influence their response to them.

Moore (2005) argues that social constructionism highlights social relationships as paramount to the process of construction of social reality. Moore (2005) further suggests suppositions which characterise social constructionism, including reflexivity in expert practice, interpersonal relationships, value of dialogue and interchange, human reality and the systemic presence of the expert. As such, social constructionism will enable those taken for granted notions such as parenting courses being for 'the good' of those who attend to be further explored and considered. Figure 1 provides a framework for the design of the study, illustrating the interconnection of the researcher's worldview, strategies of inquiry and research methods adopted in this research

**Figure 1: The interconnection of world views, strategies of inquiry and research methods**  
 (Adapted from Creswell, 2009, p.5)



Reflexivity refers to “an awareness of the researcher’s contribution to the construction of meanings throughout the research process, and an acknowledgement of the impossibility of remaining ‘outside of’ one’s subject

matter while conducting research.” (Willig, 2008, p. 10). This has been one, if not the most challenging area during the research. Although the research has been written in the objective third person this particular section is written in the first person as a reflection of the subjective nature of the research.

I was not only the researcher, but also the programme facilitator and a practicing educational psychologist. The combination of all these roles meant that at times it was difficult to clearly separate them. This may well have impacted on the research in terms of the interpretations as well as the relationships between the parents and myself. During the process of facilitating the programme a positive and trusting relationship had developed between the parents and myself. I was particularly concerned about how the parents’ views of this relationship may have influenced their responses during the interviews and used a time interval of six months between the programme and interview in an attempt to minimise the impact of this.

During the interviews I reiterated my role and the context of being a researcher as opposed to the programme facilitator or educational psychologist and how the parent’s responses might be used to influence further programme delivery. During the programme the participants were keen to understand my perspective and wanted to ascertain if I (as a facilitator as opposed to a researcher) was

myself a parent. There was the need to whilst acknowledging my role as a parent and mother to carefully limit the information provided by reflecting questions back to the parent. However, this was clearly of significant interest to the parents. At the time of the interview one parent explicitly commented on how she would like to meet my children to see, *“what your children are like, like just to see how it’s worked.”* This could be interpreted as a reflection of the parent wanting further evidence to substantiate the use of ideas promoted by the programme.

The parents were informed that I was an Educational Psychologist and an employee of the Local Authority. I was aware that my own relationship with the ‘system’ (trainer for these parents, co-trainer, employer and connection with other professionals) was quite entwined and that this required stepping back and reflecting on my engagement with the ‘system’. My role as a trainer, a researcher, an educational psychologist, a parent and female did affect the social relationships between myself and the parents and therefore inevitably contributed to how social reality was constructed. Therefore, when considering the interpretation of the findings, I was careful to bracket out my own beliefs and perceptions from the analysis of the findings to provide a more trustworthy account of the parents’ views through the use of a research diary.

The broad headings proposed by Silverman (2005) were used to record my views in a research diary. Reflections were recorded from the very beginning of the study right to the interpretation of the findings. The reflections included my initial ideas about the topic for research, the personal and local context of the study, the philosophical underpinnings of the study, notes about ideas gleaned from the literature on parenting programmes, the highs and lows encountered while undertaking the research and what I would change if the study were to be replicated. The practical relevance of this research diary helped to inform appropriate modifications such as increasing the amount of role play used during the programme.

### **1.5 Rationale and aims of the research**

'The Foundation Years: preventing poor children becoming poor adults' report (Field, 2010) included the suggestion that Local Authorities should ensure all new parents had early access to a parenting course initially targeting those most likely to benefit. The possible benefits of using the WSIYPP as a preventative approach for vulnerable families was further cited within the 2011 report, 'Early Intervention the Next Steps' (Allen 2011).

The Parenting Support guidance (DfES, October 2006) suggested that local authorities develop a strategic and joined-up approach to the design and delivery

of parenting support services, ideally through a parenting support strategy. This strategy would inform the Children and Young People's Plans and take account of parents' views, seeing support for parents along a continuum, from early intervention and preventative services to the use of enforcement measures. Further guidance was issued by the DfE in March 2010. This guidance stated that research had shown that the use of parenting programmes with a proven theoretical base was an effective way to support the development of parenting skills and improve life chances for young children through delivering services locally. "Programmes can be used to address a range of needs. Mothers, fathers and carers attending need not be in crisis and parenting programmes should be an integral part of any early intervention strategy." (DCSF March 2010 p19).

In addition NICE guidance issued in July 2006 produced similar recommendations for the most cost effective parent training programmes in the management of children with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. They recommended the use of evidence based group parenting programmes and provided guidance on what needed to be included in the programme as well as citing effective parent training programmes such as the WSIYPP.

Research into the effectiveness of the WSIYPP has suggested that this is a cost-effective intervention for reducing anti-social behaviour (Scott et al., 2001a). This research has, however, tended to rely more on standardised and validated instruments (Hutchings 2007). There has been very little in the way of eliciting

parental views on the effectiveness of group parenting programmes such as the WSIYPP. The rationale for this research was therefore to address this gap in the published literature on the WSIYPP and add to as well as complement existing research on parental views of the effectiveness of group parenting programs.

In the context of this research, the WSIYPPs were delivered as part of a preventative programme although some of the parents who participated had expressed concerns about their children's behaviour and were invited to attend.

This research explored the views of parents' of pre-school children about the perceived impact on their own and their children's behaviour following attendance at a Webster Stratton Incredible Years Parenting Programme (WSIYPP). Two programmes were delivered at community based Sure Start Children's Centres from September 2008 until December 2008 in different geographical locations. Both areas were deemed deprived areas (Havering Children's Trust, 2010) within the Local Authority. The researcher believes that engaging parents in participation and involvement in their learning should involve eliciting their views on the process of participating in such a programme and what aspects of the programme are meaningful for them as parents.

Although there is published research on the effectiveness of parenting programmes (Sanders, Calam, Durand, Liversidge & Carmont, 2008; Doubleday & Hey, 2004), effectiveness is frequently measured through the use of standardised measures. There is less research on the qualitative aspects of effectiveness as seen through a parental lens. There is a paucity of information on how parents actually feel about attending such programmes and whether they feel that they and their children have changed following their participation in parenting programmes.

Five research questions were therefore formulated to explore parental views of participating in the WSIYPP. These were:

1. What reasons are given by the parents of pre-school children for attendance/non-attendance and completion or non-completion of the WSIYPP?
2. What advantages and disadvantages do parents identify following attendance at the WSIYPP?
3. What changes have parents noticed in their own and their children's behaviour since attending the WSIYPP?
4. What factors informed parental decisions to take or reject offers of

support at home? Did parents who received home support a) acknowledge that home support made a difference and b) state in what ways it made a difference?

5. What changes have parents noticed in their confidence in managing and understanding their pre-school children since attending the WSIYPP?

## **1.6 Original and distinctive contribution**

Recent research has not only considered the effectiveness of parenting programmes for children identified as having social, emotional and behavioural difficulties but also as a universal preventative approach when used with families providing a 'prevention curriculum' (Webster-Stratton, Reid & Stoolmiller, 2008). Webster-Stratton et al. (2008) showed how the adaptation of the Incredible Years Dinosaur Social Skills and Problem-Solving Child Training Programme, by pre-school staff and teachers working in Early Years settings as a 'prevention curriculum' served to increase the social, emotional, and academic competence, and decrease problem behaviours of all children in the classroom.

NICE (2006) suggests that parenting programmes should be used as the standard 'treatment' for children identified as having what they term 'conduct disorders. Hahlweg, Rogers, Shaw & Rhamie (2010) concluded that, "universal

prevention is worth the effort” (p. 13). Parenting programmes when used as a preventative approach are frequently targeted at areas of social deprivation and target families considered at ‘high risk’. Disadvantage is often associated with poor parenting practices (Heckman, 2006). In the United Kingdom areas with higher incidence of socio-economic deprivation have been targeted for support and interventions offered through the Sure Start Programme. Hutchings et al. (2007) reported that the WSIYPP can act as a preventative intervention when delivered in areas of social deprivation.

The originality of this research lies in firstly providing evidence to inform the local parenting strategy based on parental views. It is thus a community based study within a local context. The research focuses not on perceived objective measures of change in children’s behaviour but rather how the parents of young children view the changes in their own and their children’s behaviour. This research focuses on why parents made the decision to attend such a programme. Some parents were offered additional outreach support and parents’ views of this as a supportive mechanism for providing reinforcement in practicing the strategies discussed during the training will also be explored. Although within a local context the transferability of the findings in relation to programme content and delivery as well as enhancing the group aspect of the programme may have broader implications.

Secondly, it is anticipated that the Local Authority will use this research to assist in their planning and commissioning of early years support and specifically that those plans will have been informed by the views expressed by parents who have attended the WSIYPP. The views of parents will also serve to inform ways of improving programme delivery so as to ensure greater parental involvement during future programme delivery and maintenance of skills after the programme.

Finally, the qualitative nature of the research in relation to this particular group parenting programme is unique and therefore will add to the body of evidence specifically in relation to the WSIYPP and more broadly to evidence on group parenting programmes.

This research will contribute further to obtaining parental views about the WSIYPP. This study has particular relevance to professionals involved in delivering parenting programmes. The role of the Educational Psychologist is constantly evolving. There is currently a significant move away from a school based psychological service to a community based service (Stringer, Powell, & Burton, 2006). This warrants consideration about the effective use of an educational psychologist's time to deliver preventative community based interventions such as parenting programmes.

## **1.7 Summary**

The focus of the present study was to use interviews to explore parents' views following attendance at a group parenting programme, the WSIYPP. Parents' views on why they attended, what they considered were the strengths and weaknesses of the programme and more importantly how they accounted for any changes in their and/or their children's behaviour was gathered.

Since the late 1990's parenting has been a government priority in the United Kingdom. Parenting programmes have been one of the support mechanisms used to address concerns about the rise in anti-social behaviour. Given the current budgetary constraints for many Local Authorities, parenting projects are increasingly being run through time limited grant funding. The efficacy of such programmes to families will therefore come under greater scrutiny in terms of continued viability and evidence based research could support the continued viability of parenting programmes.

This chapter has outlined the origins, aims of the study and its distinctive contribution within the field of Educational Psychology practice in the early years phase. The researcher's epistemological stance and reflexive thinking in relation to the research process have also been addressed. The next chapter provides a critical review of the relevant literature.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

### **2.1 Overview of this chapter**

This chapter presents a brief overview of some of the psychological theories which underpin parenting programmes such as WSIYPP. The chapter then provides a critique of the literature on parenting programmes for parents of pre-school children. A detailed account of the search procedures is provided. The literature review was organised into four sections. The first section focused on psychological theories underpinning parenting programmes. The second section of the review focused on an analysis of literature on Parenting Programmes based on the stipulated aims of the Programmes. The third section of the review focused on studies evaluating three Parenting Programmes (the Webster Stratton Programme, The Triple P Programme, and the Nobody's Perfect Programme.) The final section focused on parent's views of parenting programmes and research relating to Sure Start and Children's Centres. The review showed an increasing use of programmes such as Webster Stratton and Triple P which have been evaluated over time and shown to be cost effective interventions. The review highlighted the predominant use of quantitative methodologies in evaluating programme efficacy. Many of the reviewed studies using this methodology demonstrated limitations in terms of their design and the generalisability of their results.

There was a dearth of studies that used qualitative methodology to obtain parents' experiences of attending parenting programmes. Research has predominantly focused on the reactive rather than the preventative aspect of providing parental support for addressing children's social emotional and behavioural difficulties. The review also suggested that encouraging a more positive style of parenting through strategies such as emotional coaching and encouragement had a positive effect on parenting. The implications of these findings are discussed in terms of how they helped to inform the methodology employed in this research.

## **2.2 Psychological theories underpinning parenting programmes**

Parenting programmes tend to espouse a somewhat eclectic approach to their theoretical underpinnings. Most parenting programmes would acknowledge that the development of the content of the programmes is based on a number of psychological theories and models of early child development. A number of these, considered of particular relevance to the WSIYPP as well as the researcher's theoretical framework and epistemological stance are specifically discussed to provide the theoretical basis of the parenting programme used in this study as well as parenting programs more generally.

### **2.2.1 Attachment theory**

Attachment theory (Bowlby, 1969) which has been further developed by Ainsworth and colleagues (Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters & Wall, 1978) is based on the social and emotional bond between an infant and a carer. Bowlby argued that there was a biological basis to this relationship that could be best understood through an evolutionary context. He maintained that the development of a close reciprocal relationship between a baby and an adult which he termed attachment is vital for an infant's subsequent social and emotional development. Over the years there has been a substantial body of research to substantiate this theoretical position (Waters, Wippman & Sroufe., 1979; Grossman 1995; Slater 2007) particularly in relation to building connections and emotional closeness between parents and their children. Since attachment is about relationships, many parenting programs (such as the Reflective Parenting Program) focus on building parents' reflective capacity to help their children to feel more secure and develop trusting relationships with their parents and carers.

### **2.2.2 Social Development theory**

Vygotsky views social learning as preceding (i.e. coming before) development. Vygotsky's (1978) theoretical framework views social interaction as crucial to cognitive development. There are two aspects to Vygotsky's Social development theory. The first is that all aspects of a child's development, notably attention, concept formation, language and memory occur firstly on a social level between

other peers and adults (interpsychological level) and then within the child (intrapsychological level).

The second aspect of Vygotsky's theory is the notion of the potential for cognitive development. This depends on the 'zone of proximal development' (ZPD). This is defined as a level of development that is achieved when children engage in social behaviour. Development of the ZPD depends upon social interaction and can be attained when an adult or peer's support makes it possible for a child to exceed his or her attainment in comparison to what the child could attain alone.

Vygotsky considered play as crucial for child development and learning. He believed that play provided children with the opportunity to participate in learning at a higher level than the children's own development. Vygotsky believed strongly in the central role that the community played in the process of 'making meaning.' Vygotsky placed importance on sociocultural influences such as language and interactions with other people. Vygotsky believed that talk and language are used by children to formulate plans that serve to guide future behaviour. Initially this language or talk is vocalised and only as children get older is it moved to 'inner speech.' The social development theory underpins instructional concepts such as 'scaffolding' and 'apprenticeship' in which an adult or more advanced peer helps to structure or arrange a task so that the learner (a novice) can work on it

successfully. Many of these instructional concepts are embedded within parenting programs where parents are provided with the opportunity to observe and practice.

When translated to the context of a group parenting program, adult support with practice is provided within the safety of the group before the parent then practices the targeted skill at home. Skills are broken down into small steps and parents practice each step and only when they are confident in this do they move on to the next one. This approach can be seen within the area of play where parents initially practiced following a child's lead before practicing using descriptive commentary and then carrying out both of them together. Vygotsky's theory is complementary to Bandura's (1977) social learning theory.

### **2.2.3 Social Learning Theory**

The majority of parenting programmes notably, the WSIYPP specifically attribute their theoretical basis, at least in part to Social Learning Theory (Bandura 1977). According to social learning theory, learning occurs through observing the behaviour of others, through imitating the behaviour of others and through modelling from observing others' behaviours. Human behaviour is thus explained by continuous reciprocal interaction between cognitive, behavioural and

environmental influences. For modelling to be successful, the following are necessary: attention, retention, reproduction and motivation.

One of the key components of Social Learning Theory is that of expectancy. Expectancy refers to an individual's belief that a specific consequence will follow a specific action. Thus, behaviour will be affected by the expected outcome. These expectancies enable individuals to learn through a modelling approach. Bandura (1982) also considers self-efficacy, the expectation of success in a given situation, as an important determining factor in attempting to make changes. Thus the whole notion of parental self empowerment which is the objective of most parenting programmes, including the WSIYPP, is based on Bandura's notion of self-efficacy and the exercise of control.

#### **2.2.4 Cognitive-behavioural theories**

Cognitive-behavioural theories are a general group of theories that are based on the work of psychologists (e.g. Bandura, Beck, Watson, Skinner & Ellis, to name a few) interested in both behaviour and cognition and their importance in understanding individuals. The 'cognition' aspect of these theories looks at changes observed in behaviour and cognition. The 'behavioural' aspect of these theories provides a way of understanding the functional relationship between an individual's thoughts, feelings and behaviour, or to put it simply the emotions

behind the behaviours. Interventions that are underpinned by cognitive-behavioural theories target both the cognitive and behavioural aspects of difficulties by attempting to integrate both cognitive and behavioural strategies. Parenting programs such as the STAR (Fox & Fox, 1992) is an example of a parenting program that integrates cognitive-behavioural theories, social learning theories and developmental theories and is an example of what is termed as a 'psycho-educational' parenting program.

### **2.2.5 Situated Learning Theory**

This theory puts forward the idea that learning is unintentional and situated within authentic activity, context, and culture. Lave and Wenger (1990) argue that learning is situated; that is, it takes place in normally occurring situations and is therefore embedded within activity, context and culture. Social interaction and collaboration are seen as key to situated learning. The basic premise of this theory is that learning takes place in real and naturally occurring contexts and settings. Learners learn in the context of their community's views of behaviours (to be acquired) and cultural practices. Knowledge and learning is thus very much seen as socially constructed and occurring in authentic situations. Those parenting programmes that involve paraprofessional home visits (e.g. Parenting Plus) have this theoretical basis very much in mind although this is rarely made explicit in the programmes.

## **2.2.6 Theory of cognitive development**

In contrast to Vygotskian thinking, Piaget (1963) believed that children's development must necessarily precede their learning. Piaget's theory of cognitive development is based on the constructivist theory of knowing. Piaget presented a series of developmental stages that children pass through. These stages are hierarchical and all children pass through these universal stages in the same sequence. A child's thinking and understanding at different stages will affect their ability to understand and be dependent upon the stage that they are at. Individual children will vary in terms of when they reach stages. At certain stages children will still be egocentric. This means they will only understand the world from their viewpoint and be unable to understand that other people may see things differently (perspective taking skills). Piaget also believed that children have natural curiosity and will learn through experiences arising from this natural curiosity. As such, learning should be about the opportunities children are provided with to work out their own solutions. Piaget's view that children learn from actions reinforces the value of play as the learning mechanism in early years.

Whilst there are many criticisms of Piaget's theory of cognitive development, his work continues to influence the field of educational practice. In terms of its underpinning of parenting programmes, the concept of readiness as outlined by

Piaget's developmental levels is built into the content of most parenting programmes.

### **2.3 Introduction to the literature review**

There are currently a large number of parenting programmes used in a number of countries. Two of the most extensively researched and translated parenting programmes used both internationally and in the UK context are The Incredible Years programme and the Triple P. Their continued popularity possibly relates to their having been cited as both intervention and cost effective in a number of high profile publications. (Children's Centres Practice Guidance, (DFES) 2005; Field, 2010; Allen 2011; NICE 2006). Both these programmes have a variety of modules that address identified needs.

In terms of parenting programmes used in England, Hallam, et al. (2007) carried out a research exercise to map provision. This mapping exercise showed that whilst a large range of programmes were used, most frequently used was the Webster Stratton programme. In addition they found all but one of the parenting programmes used were based on "group work and the facilitation of discussion relating to parenting issues" (p. 321). Furthermore Hallam et al. (2007) noted that there was a great deal of similarity in relation to the topics the programmes

focused on and many included the opportunity for parents to practice skills and learn from the way children responded to particular strategies.

Further support for the use of parenting programmes was provided in July 2006 by the National Institute of Clinical Excellence (NICE). They provided guidance on parent-training/education programmes in the management of children with conduct disorders. The guidance was aimed at managing children who were chronologically or developmentally aged 12 years or younger. NICE included the label of 'oppositional defiant disorder' (ODD) when describing children displaying 'conduct disorders'. According to NICE, conduct disorders are "characterised by a repetitive and persistent pattern of antisocial aggressive or defiant conduct" (p. 5). This behaviour is described as "more severe than ordinary childish mischief or adolescent rebelliousness and it goes beyond isolated antisocial acts" (p. 5). Further definitions of conduct disorders using both the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual, (DSM-IV) and the International Classification of Diseases (ICD-10) were provided by NICE.

The NICE committee stated that parent education programmes resulted in substantial and sustained changes in behaviour in children with 'conduct disorders' when:

- they were structured,
- they had a curriculum informed by social learning theory

- they included relationship-enhancing strategies
- they offered sufficient sessions (8 -12)
- they were not didactic
- they incorporated role play during sessions, home work between sessions
- they were delivered by appropriately trained and skilled facilitators
- they adhered to the programme developer's manual

The NICE committee noted that the 'Webster Stratton Incredible Years Programme' and the 'Triple P – Positive Parenting' were both examples of programmes that incorporated these criteria. In addition recommendations for future research were made and the guidance was to be reviewed in September 2007. This review was postponed due to lack of new evidence. Consultations are currently being held about the need for updated clinical guidance.

Puckering (2009) raised a number of issues when considering intervention for children under the age of three, particularly, since these children were identified as a priority for early intervention by recent UK governments. At this age it is unlikely that children will have been identified as having disruptive behaviour. However, Puckering suggested that it is likely that the risks for 'conduct disorder' can be identified before behaviour becomes entrenched.

Although the majority of parenting programmes have relatively similar content (Hallam et al.,2007), years of professional practice by the researcher suggest that the success of parenting programmes may have less to do with the content and more to do with the approach. The latter can lead to a higher rate of parental engagement. This anecdotal opinion is supported by the recommendation that facilitators should be appropriately trained and skilled and be able to engage in a “productive therapeutic alliance with parents” (NICE 2006 p. 29). Although evaluations of what works in parenting support show outcomes for parents, children and families (DfES, 2004), in terms of parental satisfaction few intervention studies evaluated in this review were able to demonstrate substantial impact. Kendall and Bloomsfield (2005) argue that when evaluating parental interventions in terms of their immediate and long-term effect to inform improved practice and the best outcomes for parents and children, there needs to be greater rigour in terms of scientific criteria used in evaluations.

The next section describes the search procedures employed for the literature review.

## **2.4 Search Procedure**

Initially, the key words parenting programmes and pre-school were identified to generate the search. Over time and to make sure no relevant journals were

omitted searches also included additional key words such as 'long term' and 'Webster Stratton'. In order to generate a comprehensive list of potentially relevant journal articles and books the electronic database EBSCO was used. Searches were undertaken regularly over a six-year period with the most recent search undertaken in February 2011. Electronic data bases used included ERIC, CINAHL, PSCYC Article, and Psyc Info. In addition free online databasis such as Google scholar were also utilised. The search was limited to peer reviewed, journal articles published in English after 1978. The search resulted in the retrieval of a total of 361 studies ( $N=361$ ). Relevant studies cited in retrieved studies were also located so as to broaden the coverage of studies and ensure studies had not been missed. The inclusion criteria used for selecting articles for this literature review is addressed in the next section.

#### **2.4.1 Inclusion criteria for studies included in the review**

The inclusion criteria applied in selecting the studies were used to ensure specificity (Petticrew & Roberts 2006) which took into account the aims of the research. The inclusion criteria that were adopted were:

- Studies confined to Parenting Programmes focusing on parents of pre-school children.
- Sufficient information provided in terms of the design of the study, participants, data collection and analysis.
- The inclusion of an outcome or outcomes and recommendations.

- Published in a refereed journal.
- Studies that were culturally relevant
- Programmes delivered over a number of weeks

Articles were excluded for the following reasons:

- Studies carried out in a residential setting
- Studies that referred to children with specific disabilities such as Autism
- Studies related exclusively to adoptive families
- Studies related to specific interventions e.g. music therapy
- Studies that were culturally specific e.g. aboriginal families

An application of the inclusion criteria led to the identification of 15 studies for this review. Further information on each research study is provided in Table 2 (appendix 1.) These studies have also have been identified in the references section by an asterisk.

#### **2.4.2 Discussion and critical review of studies**

The focus of the literature review was organised into three parts. The 15 studies identified in Table 2 (appendix 1) are included within the first two parts of the review. The final part of the review includes studies that are relevant but that do

not fulfil the inclusion criteria specified in section 2.4.1. The first part of the review (research focus one) focused on an analysis based on the stipulated aims of the Parenting Programmes. Therefore, the studies were reviewed on the basis of them addressing: (i) a preventative intervention, (ii) a means of providing home support, (iii) a means of providing literacy support and (iv) a means of providing emotional coaching for parents. A checklist using the headings by Fink (2005) was adapted to critically appraise the selected research. Each study was appraised in terms of the following:

- Key research goals/questions and hypothesis
- Methodology
- Participant/sample selection
- Reliability/validity
- Findings
- Conclusions/recommendations

The second part of the review (research focus two) focused on studies evaluating three Parenting Programmes (the Webster Stratton Programme, The Triple P Programme, and the Nobody's Perfect Programme). The third and final part of the review refers to parent's views of parenting programmes and research relating to Children's Centres and Sure Start.

Parenting programmes began in the 1960's with a move to the use of groups during the 1970's (Gavita & Joyce 2008). Over the last thirty years, Doctor Carolyn Webster Stratton has developed, researched and reviewed a series of programs collectively known as the Incredible Years Series.

One of the major considerations with parenting programmes is who or what group are being targeted. Parenting programmes have been targeted at a wide range of client groups. These have included parents of children displaying:

- Social, emotional and behavioural difficulties (Conduct Disorders) (Webster-Stratton, 1984)
- Attention deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) (Jones, Daley, Hutchings, Bywater & Eames, 2008)
- Developmental and intellectual disabilities (Whittingham, Sofronoff, Sheffield & Saunders , 2009)
- Teenagers with drug and alcohol problems (Catalano, Kosterman, Haggerty, Hawkins & Spoth, 1999).

Parenting programmes have also targeted parents from low socio-economic groups as well as parents of new-born infants (Bunting, 2004; Nicholson, Anderson, Fox and Brenner, 2002). In terms of relevance to this research, were families that Bunting termed 'low socio-economic groups' as children of parents

from this group have been identified as being at an increased risk of developing later social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. The WSIYPP has frequently been targeted at children who are described as having 'conduct disorders' which the researcher would describe as social, emotional and behavioural difficulties (SEBD) and so studies where the WSIYPP has been used with this group will also be considered. The more recent development of Sure Start Local Programme's (SSLP) and the subsequent move to Children's Centres have led to Parenting Programmes being offered to all families in a given locality. The design of geographically targeted interventions means that programmes are offered to families irrespective of whether they display difficulties. However, since localities are targeted on the basis of social and economic deprivation this is in itself suggestive of an increased risk of subsequent difficulties.

Smith and Pugh (1996) identified three main groups of parents who attend parenting programmes. Firstly, there were parents who wanted to do a 'good enough job'. Secondly, were parents of children that displayed behavioural difficulties and finally there were parents who were experiencing multiple problems and a low sense of self-esteem. The majority of parenting programmes appear to be aimed at families where children are identified as having SEBD. Much of the research has been aimed at measuring a reduction in what is termed 'conduct behaviour' in school and at home using pre and post measures by

teachers and parents. Few studies have adopted a qualitative approach towards eliciting parents' views of the programmes.

When reviewing existing literature three significant areas of methodological concern are immediately apparent. The first of these is related to the sample selection, the second to the conflicting interest of the researcher and the final one the lack of transparency with regards to the researchers' epistemological position. With regards to the sample there are a number of key issues that must be considered when evaluating research on parents who have participated in parenting programmes. Firstly, the selection of the participant sample, in other words which parents actually participated in the parenting programme is a key issue. Participation varies considerably from a court order directing parent's attendance to those who actively seek out support from such a programme. Parents attending voluntarily may or may not have concerns about their child's behaviour. The sample of parents will be affected by where and how the programme is advertised. It can be difficult to interview parents who either choose not to participate in a programme or those who do not complete it. Those who complete the programme and those who agree to being interviewed may lead to a skewed sample which in turn will compromise the reported findings.

The second concern relates to the number of researchers who are also involved in the delivery of the programme and may have some financial interest either directly or indirectly in the success of the programme. This can lead to a lack of objectivity during all stages of the research and influence the research outcomes. The final concern relates to the lack of transparency provided by the researchers in terms of their epistemological stance. The methodology frequently omits explicit information of the researcher's epistemology, although the researchers may argue that the nature of the quantitative research will predict a post positivism stance.

## **2.5 Research Focus One**

The selected studies were grouped together and critiqued on the basis of their stipulated aims. Thus studies where parenting programmes were used as a preventative intervention were grouped together for the purposes of this review. Similarly studies where parenting programmes aimed at providing parents home support, support for promoting literacy and as a means of emotional coaching were grouped together and analysed separately. The next section provides a critique of studies where parenting programmes have been employed as a preventative intervention.

### **2.5.1 Parenting Programmes as a Preventative Intervention**

Barlow and Stewart-Brown's (2001) qualitative research aimed to understand parents' views about the Family Links Nurturing Project. This two part programme consisted of a ten week parenting programme offered to all parents in the participating school and a second part offered to children by their trained teachers. The aim of the parenting program was to "help parents develop appropriate expectations, self-awareness and self-esteem, a positive approach to discipline and empathy" (p. 118). A large proportion of parents were from what could be termed as high risk backgrounds and over half the parents perceived their children to have 'borderline' or 'abnormal' behaviour. The aims of the school based programme included raising children's self-esteem, increasing self-awareness, increasing empowerment of choice and decision making, improving concentration and learning as well as social skills and developing a positive value system.

Barlow and Stewart-Brown's (2001) research was aimed at evaluating the parental programme and not the school based intervention. Their research revealed that parents expressed very positive views about the programme. The authors provided three main areas of the programme that the parents had found beneficial. Firstly, parents identified support from other parents. Secondly, they identified a sense of regained empowerment as parents and thirdly they identified the ability to empathize and identify with their children. Barlow and Stewart-

Brown further suggested that based on their findings, brief interventions such as parenting programmes can have a long-term beneficial effect for parents and they stressed the importance of programmes which combined affective and behavioural strategies. Limitations of this study related to the sample. Only a third of the parents who took part in the programme were interviewed. Despite the population being from a mixture of social backgrounds and minority ethnic groups this was not reflected in the participant sample. In addition the time delay between the intervention and interviews (nine to ten months) may have affected the recollection of some of the participants.

The effectiveness of a psycho-educational parenting program with at-risk parents of young children was examined (Nicholson et al., 2002). In this study, 'at-risk' referred to parents from low-income backgrounds who used excessive verbal and corporal punishment. The parents were supported for ten weeks either individually or in very small groups. A pre-post intervention programme design was used incorporating the use of a number of quantitative measures. This study used a control group who were placed on a waiting list for the program. Results showed a significant decrease in parents' use of punishment and a reported reduction in parental levels of anger and stress with an accompanying decrease in their children's behaviour difficulties. Although generalisability of the results was limited given the small sample size, the findings were consistent with other

research on the effectiveness of the parenting program particularly with other groups of low-income parents.

There is a dearth of published research on preventative interventions for young children in the 12 to 36 month age range (Niccols, 2009). Niccols undertook an intervention in Canada designed for parents of children in the 12 to 36 month range. The COPEing with Toddler Behaviour (CWTB) program focused on preventing challenging behaviour for children in the 12 to 36 month age range. This was carried out through eight two hour weekly sessions focusing on large and small group discussions. Training in skills and peer support was provided through home work activities and discussions. A critique of the findings of this study showed a lack of long term follow up and the authors suggested that the findings were limited to the group of mothers who had registered. Nevertheless these findings did suggest short term gains.

A much larger scale evaluation was carried out by Hutchings, et al. (2007). They investigated the effectiveness of the WSIYPP delivered to parents with children between the ages of three and five who were described as 'at risk' of conduct disorders. This evaluation was carried out in eleven Sure Start areas in Wales. The intervention was targeted at socially disadvantaged families with a child aged three or four who was identified as being at risk through the Eyberg Child

Behaviour Inventory<sup>1</sup>. This evaluative study included a control group and Hutchings et al., suggested that child behaviour could be mediated through parent behaviour and the learning of key parenting skills. Although rigorous in terms of the methodology employed, the study did use parental reports of children's behaviour as the primary measure. This could have led to some lack of objectivity. Furthermore, the first researcher was on occasions employed by the Incredible Years Programme as a trainer which could have led to a conflict of interests. Never the less this large scale evaluation did succeed in pointing out the mediating role of parental behaviour and the application of key parenting skills in addressing the needs of children at risk of social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. This use of non-targeted preventative programs supported the Sure Start philosophy with its aim to prevent stigmatisation of children and families by offering a universal service within targeted high risk areas.

## **2.5.2 Parenting Programmes and Home Support**

A number of existing projects combine a parent training programme with support workers. These support workers usually work in the home with the family but in some interventions such as the Fast Track Project (Conduct Problems Prevention Research Group 2002) and Scallywags (Broadhead, Hockaday, Zahra, Francis, & Crichton, 2009) they work in the school.

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<sup>1</sup> The Eyberg Child Behaviour Inventory is a rating scale designed to assess the frequency and severity of disruptive behaviours in the home and school.

Sallywags was aimed at children between the ages of three to seven with emotional and or behavioural difficulties who were attending an educational provision. Referral to the project had to be agreed by both a parent/guardian and a professional directly involved with the child. The scheme ran for six months and on entry targets were formulated for the child and an individual programme developed. A support worker was assigned to work in the home and the educational setting in implementing the programme. In terms of parent support, a group runs for ten weeks comprising two hourly sessions. During these sessions problem behaviour and strategies and techniques for dealing with it are discussed. The evaluation included 411 out of the 694 parents who the service had worked with. Data from 273 families was missing. Families not included in the evaluation either had not completed the six month intervention (ten children) or did not have full pre-post and follow up scores from both parents and teacher outcome measures. The evaluation concluded that a significant reduction in child behaviour problems as rated by parents and teachers was reported and was maintained at a six month follow up.

Programmes such as Sallywags and Fast Track aimed at both home and school provide a far higher level of intervention and whilst positive effects are seen, they are more reactive than a proactive or preventative programme. In terms of the findings these quantitative evaluations whilst showing statistically significant

changes do not “convey the personal transformations and positive outcomes scallywags achieves” (Broadhead, et al. 2009, p. 174). One could therefore argue that evaluative studies such as these fail to provide a ‘rich picture’ of parental views of the impact on themselves and their children.

### **2.5.3 Parenting Programmes and literacy support**

Scott et al. (2010a) carried out a twenty-eight week randomised intervention known as the SPOKES project. Parents had to agree to participate in this randomised study to access the intervention. This intervention combined a twelve week Incredible Years school age programme for parents with a literacy programme for their children. The rationale for combining the interventions was based on the association between poor reading ability and antisocial behaviour (Trzesniewski, Moffit, Caspi, Tylor & Maughan, 2006). The trial ran in eight schools in a deprived London borough. Screening of all children in the school year followed by an assessment enabled families to be specifically targeted if their children were identified as having behavioural (‘conduct’ disorders) difficulties.

The parents of all these identified five to six year olds were eligible with certain caveats, namely their ability to understand English and their children not displaying developmental delay. 128 families were offered the opportunity to

participate. This study found a reduction in antisocial behaviour as reported by parents at interview. A questionnaire completed by school staff a year after the intervention found no reported reduction in antisocial behaviour. There are a number of limitations to this study. Firstly there were parents who did not respond to the initial screening opportunity. Rates of uptake could have been reduced as parents had to agree that they would participate in this randomised study. In addition there was no flexibility on when the intervention was offered which could have led to a lower uptake from the very families the intervention was aiming to target.

As a follow on to the SPOKES project, Scott et al. (2010b) carried out a project they called the PALS trial. This differed from the previous research as it was offered to families of children both with and without behavioural difficulties and was for a shorter duration. The rationale for this was to explore if the intervention was as effective for families with fewer difficulties. The research was conducted in four ethnically diverse primary schools in what was considered a highly disadvantaged inner city London Borough. Those excluded from participating were families with limited knowledge of English and children displaying developmental delay. In addition to the basic twelve week Incredible Years school age programme families were also offered a six week literacy programme. The programme was offered within the school premises and during the school day. Sustaining attendance was clearly an issue with a mean attendance of 7.3

out of the 18 sessions. The actual figure was considerably lower when considering all who were offered the programme.

Although Scott et al. reported significant positive changes in parent-child relationships, the outcomes did not lead to any reported improvements in either child behaviour or reading. One major limitation within this quantitative based study using standardised measures was that it did not employ any qualitative methodology to gain a deeper understanding of parental views. The two projects differed in that SPOKES targeted children presenting with SEBD as opposed to PALS which was offered to families of children with and without SEBD. In terms of measuring outcomes motivation of parents in the second study may have been lower. In addition if there were no concerns about behaviour then the likelihood of improvement may well have been reduced.

The following section will review literature on parenting programs that focus on emotional coaching.

#### **2.5.4 Emotional coaching programmes**

A study in Australia undertaken by Havighurst, Wilson, Harley, and Prior (2009), taught emotional coaching skills to parents of pre-school children over six sessions. Parents were recruited through pre-schools in what were considered to be culturally and linguistically diverse lower to middle class socioeconomic

regions. Although information was distributed to all parents there was an emphasis on encouraging parents whose children were having emotional or behavioural difficulties.

Data was collected using a variety of questionnaires and scales that measured parental emotional competence and general psychological well being. The Eyberg Child Behaviour Inventory was used to assess children's behaviour through parental responses. The study found that parents who participated in the 'Tuning in to Kids' program reported greater competency in responding to their children's emotions immediately after the intervention (when compared with a control group).

Whilst many parenting studies report the use of observations as well as parental self- reports, Havinghurst et al.'s (2009) study limits changes in behaviour to those reported by parents.

As a follow up to their study, and to address some of the limitations, further research was carried six months post intervention. (Havighurst, Wilson, Harley, Prior & Kehoe 2010). Havighurst et al. (2010) found that six months after the program "parents in the intervention condition showed improvements on targeted aspects of parenting, and their children had better emotional knowledge and

fewer behaviour problems” (p. 1348). These results suggest that active applications of parenting skills led to changes in both the parents and children’s behaviours.

## **2.6 Research Focus two**

The second part of the research review focused on reviewing the effectiveness of the three most evaluated and used Parenting Programmes for the under fives. The next section describes the first of these, the Webster-Stratton Programme.

### **2.6.1 Webster-Stratton**

One of the larger scale UK evaluations carried out by Hutchings, et al. (2007) has already been discussed in section 2.5.1. and will not be repeated here. Patterson, Mockford and Stewart-Brown (2005) concluded that the Webster Stratton parenting programme was useful for both parents of children whose behaviour is in the ‘clinical’ range of ‘below average’ as well as parents of what they defined as ‘normal’ children. All parents with children between the ages of 2 and 8 years who were registered with one of three General Health Practices in Oxford were invited to complete the Eyberg Child Behaviour Inventory. Following this, parents of children whose scores fell into the highest 50% (excluding those already receiving intervention and those with learning difficulties) were invited to take part in the research. Of those who joined the research, 75% had children

whose behaviour scores fell within the 'normal' range. 'Normal' children for the purpose of this study referred to children whose scores following parent completion of the Eyberg Child Behaviour Inventory did not fall into the clinical range.

This qualitative research study had a relatively high dropout rate (40%) and although a triangulation approach was used and 31 parents provided qualitative data there was variation in what individuals provided. Further limitations when considering how the results relate to the families who were not offered the chance to participate in the program as their children's scores fell in the lowest 50% and there was significant variation in the time scale between the completion of the programme and the conducting of the interviews. In spite of these limitations, this research was carried out by researchers independent of the programme deliverers. The researchers suggested positive benefits from the programme could be seen in parents having developed a more rewarding relationship with their child, that parental competence was enhanced and finally that parents benefited from support from both the leaders and other participants. Patterson et al suggests their results support the use of parenting programmes as a universal preventative measure.

Further support for the use of parenting programmes as a preventative measure can be seen through adoption studies which have suggested that children raised in what is termed as dysfunctional families are more likely to develop psychiatric or criminality than those raised in well functioning families, (Tienari et al. 1994 & Bohman 1996).

Evaluations of more targeted use of the WSIYPP for families whose children have been assessed as having emotional and behavioural difficulties have been carried out by many including Scott, Spender, Doolan, Jacobs and Aspland (2001b) and Gardner, Burton and Klimes, (2006). Scott et al. (2001) used the programme within a clinical setting for children between the ages of three and six described as having 'anti-social behaviour.' They concluded that the children of parents allocated to the parenting groups showed a large reduction in anti-social behaviour which was not seen amongst the control group. This randomised control study was carried out in a clinic setting, the authors suggested moving the groups into community settings could increase accessibility and reduce stigma.

In 2006, Gardner et al investigated the effectiveness of the WSIYPP for reducing children's emotional and behavioural difficulties when delivered within the community. A randomised control trial methodology was used where the control group families were offered the intervention six months later. This study also

attempted to look at the longer term effects and the researchers suggested that the changes were maintained eighteen months after the initial programme. They concluded that this programme could be successfully transferred in to the UK and that it could help socially disadvantaged families with children displaying emotional and behavioural difficulties. It can be argued that in an attempt to provide a more ethically sound design, no long term comparisons of skill maintenance and changes in children's behaviour could be made between the control and the intervention group as both were ultimately offered the intervention.

### **2.6.2 Triple P Programme as a Preventative Strategy**

Hahlweg., et al (2010) aimed to evaluate the long term impact of using the Triple P intervention as a universal preventative strategy. It should be noted however, that no crèche was offered and evening attendance may have contributed to the lower rate of attendance by single mothers. This quantitative study used multi-source assessment, including questionnaires by mother and father, mother-child interaction, and teacher evaluations. The authors suggested that Triple P can be used in non-English speaking countries like Germany or Switzerland.

In terms of the findings some surprises were apparent. For instance single mothers who attended the intervention showed no significant change in parent

and child measures at pre and post intervention and at the one and two year follow up. The researchers suggested this may have related to sample size. However, surprisingly mothers in the control group showed an increase in parenting competencies and a decrease in child behaviour problems over the two years! When considering two parent families, the hypothesis of an increase in positive parenting behaviour and a decrease in dysfunctional parenting behaviour was supported by mothers but only partially in the case of fathers. However, only 7% of fathers attended.

The authors, whilst concluding that further research was necessary, argued that rather than future research focusing on new interventions it would be more helpful for research to focus on recruiting and engaging parents in preventative programmes. The sample size prevented statistical significance from being calculated from behavioural observations and teachers ratings thereby identifying some concerns that conclusions were based on self-reports as is frequently seen within the literature.

### **2.6.3 Nobody's Perfect Program**

The majority of parenting programmes target children who have been identified as having difficulties. In addition there are some that target groups who have been identified as being at an increased risk of developing difficulties. One such

example is the Canadian 'Nobody's Perfect' Program (Chislett & Kennett, 2007). This is a national education and support program developed and used in Canada. It targets parents who are young, single, socially and geographically isolated with limited formal education or income. It is aimed at parents who have a child or children under the age of five and aims to increase their parenting knowledge and skills and promote the healthy development of their children. As such it may be termed a preventative approach targeting families whose children are at higher risk of developing difficulties.

The study design utilised pre and post rating scales. The study demonstrated increases in a number of areas including parenting resourcefulness, parenting competency, parenting satisfaction and positive parent child interactions.

The study made several recommendations which included a suggestion that the program should move to between ten to twelve sessions, that the sessions which were parent led should consider which topics would be most helpful for parents to cover and the sessions should incorporate effective child management while providing opportunities for situation specific skill building. Further recommendations around attendance and effects of punitive parenting were also suggested. This evaluation was carried out using pre, post and six monthly follow ups but no control group was used.

A number of limitations were apparent in this research. Measures of parenting were gained through self-reports on scales and were not supported with the use of observations. The research was based on parents attending programs varying in session length between six and eight sessions. Furthermore, facilitators were different for each program which could have impacted on fidelity of the training sessions in terms of the consistency of the approaches used in each session. The recommendations made about changes to the programme structure require further investigation in terms of their efficacy.

## **2.7 Long term research into the effectiveness of WSIYPP**

Research into the long term effectiveness of parenting programmes is somewhat limited. However, a recent study carried out by Webster Stratton, Rinaldi, and Reid (2011) assessed the long term effectiveness by looking at the social emotional adjustment of adolescents whose parents had participated in the WSIYPP when their children had been between three and eight years old. Webster Stratton et al. suggested that these findings were encouraging when comparing the participants with the majority of teenagers.

There are many limitations to this study. If the researchers were following an experimental paradigm then they would be concerned by the limitations caused by not using a parallel control group. A large discrepancy existed in the time span

between attending the programme and the research being undertaken between individual families. Some families had five years longer than others between intervention and follow up. This also meant that the age of the children at follow up varied considerably and how this was accounted for was unclear. Furthermore as is the case with a number of the studies citing the benefits of the Webster Stratton one of the authors of this article and other published work had a financial interest in the programme. In addition no measures of the impact of alternative interventions accessed after the initial programme were explored which could have impacted on the long term effectiveness reported by Webster Stratton et al (2011).

Drugli, Larsson, Fossum, and Morch (2010) evaluated the long term use of the WSIYPP with a group of Norwegian children. The children were between the ages of four to eight and referred because “of serious conduct problems” (p. 563). 54 families (54.5% of the original sample) completed a telephone assessment between five and six years after the programme had finished. Drugli et al. who were investigating the prevalence of a diagnosis five to six years later found at this time that two-thirds of the children were free of such a diagnosis, thus supporting the claim of long term positive effects of parenting programmes. There are many limitations to carrying out telephone interviews including difficulties in establishing rapport and the lack of visual cues therefore the impact of these on the validity of the data needs to be considered.

## **2.8 Research Focus Three**

The final part of the research review focus contains two sections, firstly research more pertinent to parent's views and secondly an overview of the difficulty in research focusing on children's centres and sure start.

### **2.8.1 Parents' Views of Parenting Programmes**

Parents' views of Parenting programme tend to be based on either outcome measures in terms of changes in their own and their children's behaviour (Drugli et al, 2010) or their views of the parenting programme following attending one (Patterson, Mockford, & Stewart-Brown, 2005).

One study which was different in its focus in that it explored a wide range of parent's perceptions of parenting needs as opposed to parents' views of parenting programmes was that undertaken by Miller and Sambell (2004). The age of these parents' children varied from pre-school to teenagers and some of the parents were themselves teenagers. The majority of the parents in the study had not participated in a formal parenting education programme but had accessed a range of universal services and informal parenting support. This research identified three distinct views of the types of support parents wanted. Firstly a dispensing model where by parents were asking what they could do to change their child, secondly a relating model where by parents were asking how they felt about the situation and finally a reflecting model where by parents were

asking why it was happening. Of particular interest was the finding that only those parents who had participated in a formal parenting education programme with a trained facilitator identified a reflective model as their preferred style.

### **2.8.2 Children's Centres and Sure Start**

Sure start Local Programmes (SSLP's) were established in 1999 and were aimed at eliminating child poverty and social exclusion by targeting families with children aged between nought to three years (Rutter, 2006). Sure Start was an area based initiative for all families with children living in a designated area with no prescribed curriculum. Areas were chosen on the basis of high deprivation and by including all who lived in the area they attempted to minimise stigma.

Evaluations of the outcomes of SSLPs have been problematic. Rutter (2006) suggested the government's choice (or lack of choice) not to use a randomised control trial (RCT) had compounded research into the effectiveness of the initiative. He postulated that the rationale for not carrying out a randomised control trial was suggestive of some uncertainty about the effectiveness of the intervention. However, Rutter's assertion that not using a RCT may have led to uncertainty in measuring the effectiveness of an intervention is to minimise the usefulness of other research methods in evaluating the effectiveness of any research (Fox , Martin & Green, 2007).

## **2.9 Summary**

This review has highlighted the extensive use of quantitative methodology in evaluating parenting programmes. There appears to be a general move towards utilising programs such as Webster Stratton and Triple P which have been evaluated over time, translated into many languages, used in a number of countries and recommended as cost effective interventions. However, this review showed the lack of qualitative data about parents' experiences of attending parenting programmes which this research study will address in relation to attending the WSIYPP.

Research has predominantly focused on self-reported improved social and emotional behaviour for those children identified as having difficulties. In addition a move toward programmes to support the child's social emotional development and encouragement of a more positive style of parenting through strategies such as emotional coaching and encouragement have been seen to have a positive effect on parenting skills (Havinghurst et al 2009). This can be seen through increased parental empowerment and empathy with their children. The limitations of existing research into parenting programmes include limited information on the maintenance of skills, once the intervention had ceased.

Most research on parenting programmes is targeted at children who have been identified with emotional and behavioural difficulties and is aimed at school aged children. Although research has demonstrated changes in children's behaviour, much of this has been based on structured interviews, observations of changes in parent and child interactions with little research on parental views. There has been a lack of information on the theoretical and epistemological basis that the research is built on. Some researchers have had vested financial and professional interest in the programmes they were evaluating which could have influenced their objectivity.

There is a gap in the literature on the use of qualitative research methods with parents of pre-school children who have not been identified as having difficulties but who have voluntarily attended parenting programmes. In other words there is a gap in research on eliciting the views of parents who have voluntarily participated in preventative parenting programs. These perceived limitations in the reviewed literature helped to inform the research questions and the methodology of the study.

## **2.10 Research Questions**

Five research questions were framed to address the aims of this study. They are listed below.

1. What reasons are given by the parents of pre-school children for attendance/non-attendance and completion or non-completion of a WSIYPP?
2. What advantages and disadvantages do parents identify following attendance at a WSIYPP?
3. What changes have parents noticed in their own and their children's behaviour since attending the WSIYPP?
4. What factors informed parental decisions to take or reject offers of support at home? Did parents who received home support a) acknowledge that home support made a difference and b) state in what ways it made a difference?
5. What changes have parents noticed in their confidence in managing and understanding their pre-school children since attending the WSIYPP?

This research study adopted a social constructionist perspective using a qualitative approach to collect data through semi structured interviews. The theoretical models upon which this study was based included a mix of theories that underpinned the particular parenting program that was used. These included attachment theory, social development theory, social learning theory, situated

learning theory and the theory of cognitive development. Analysis of parents' experiences of and views about attending a group parenting programme, the WSIYPP were undertaken using thematic analysis. The next chapter addresses the methodology adopted in this study.

## **Chapter 3 Methodology**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter describes the methodological approach taken within this research. It starts by providing an explanation of the research paradigm and design before moving on to discuss the location of the study. Information on the WSIYPP and session format is provided followed by the research procedure. The method is then described in terms of data collection and analysis. The final section discusses some of the ethical and practical issues that were identified during the research and specifically the reflective aspects of the researcher's thinking during the process of undertaking the research in the triple roles of the programme deliverer, the researcher and an educational psychologist.

### **3.2 Research Paradigm and Design**

This is a qualitative research study that aims to obtain the views of parents following them attending a WSIYPP. Qualitative research fits the epistemological position of the researcher, the nature of the research and the intended sample size. Qualitative research allows the researcher to explore, describe and interpret the experiences of the participants. A qualitative approach lends itself to an exploration of parental views and has been used to explore the full richness of human experience. Qualitative research is not an approach that is necessarily reliant on large numbers of interviews (Potter & Wetherell, 1987). Furthermore, Potter and Wetherell (1987) suggest that a few interviews are generally adequate

for investigating a range of phenomena. Specifically, they suggest that success is not dependent on sample size but the specific research questions.

In order to match the purpose of the research, the design of this study was exploratory in nature. This allowed for the adoption of an interpretative approach, thereby enabling the researcher to make interpretations based on the responses provided by the parents. The researcher was also actively encouraged to reflect upon her role within the research. Researching aspects of parenting programmes benefits from being undertaken within a qualitative framework as it seeks to uncover what the parents experienced, what they felt and how this then influenced their behaviour.

The semi structured interview, where the questions are focused on themes rather than strictly structured questions allows the parents to talk candidly about the areas under exploration. This helps the researcher to understand the world from the participant's point of view. An interview is a conversation that has a structure and purpose (Kvale & Brinkman 2009). Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) describe the research interview as literally an "inter-change of views between two persons conversing about a theme of mutual interest" (p. 2).

### **3.3 Context and Location of the Study**

The study took place in an Outer London Borough. An estimation of the socio-economic deprivation of the area was originally planned through accessing the National Statistics Data held at <http://www.neighbourhood.gov.uk>. However, following a change of government in May 2010, this web page was no longer active by November 2010. It was thus necessary to use an alternative means to provide information about the area. The diversity of the borough can be seen through data collated through the Lower Super Output Area (LSOA). LSOAs are a geographical hierarchy designed to improve the reporting of small areas statistics in England and Wales which involves the ranking of each Lower Super Output Area with all others in England and Wales (nearly 35,000). Whilst the borough as a whole was ranked 180<sup>th</sup> out of 354 Local authorities in England and Wales, placing it close to the middle, there are significant differences in areas of need within the borough. For example, the highest ranking LSOA is in the top 2% within England and Wales but this can be contrasted with the borough's lowest ranking LSOA which is within the bottom 3% of all LSOA's in England and Wales.

This discrepancy supports the use of what can be termed 'targeted support.' Targeted support involves identifying specific areas felt to have a need and offering interventions within these areas. The two WSIYPP were run in two Children's Centres in different geographical areas of the borough (area A and

area B.) Both of these areas are designated as deprived areas within the borough and both are within the bottom 10% of child wellbeing as shown by the 2009 Department for Communities and Local Government child wellbeing index, (Havering Children's Trust, 2010).

Attendance at the WSIYPP was free as was the crèche provided. The WSIYPP was run for 10 weeks from September 2008 until December 2008 with each session lasting approximately two hours. The length of the sessions related to timing restrictions based on the availability of the crèche. The session length and number of participants was determined not just by the availability of the crèche but also the number of places available in the crèche and the ages of the children. Crèche numbers related to the ages and number of children for which it was registered.

The programmes were publicised through Children's Centres which targeted parents of pre-school children. The WSIYPP was promoted as a general approach to parenting rather than specifically targeting parents of children displaying emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Area A had been financially supported for a number of years through Sure Start Local Programmes Funding. Sure Start Local Programmes had been the

foundation of the Labour party's drive to tackle child poverty and social exclusion (Eisenstadt, 2002). This had included funding for specific projects planned and driven by local need. Within this area a specific project had been developed known as 'Positive Parenting.' This project had funded part of an Educational Psychologist post and had employed two family workers. The family workers, with support from the Educational Psychologist, offered vulnerable families with pre-school children a series of supportive home visits. In addition to these home visits the Educational Psychologist ran parenting programmes which families accessing 'Positive Parenting' were encouraged to attend. These were also open to other families living in the local community.

As the funding was time limited 'Positive Parenting' had ceased in July 2008. However, families who had had recent involvement with Positive Parenting and those who had not been able to attend previous parenting programmes were offered the WSIYPP. Their children were prioritised for places in the crèche. Area A had been part of the Sure Start Local Programmes Initiative. This government driven initiative supported area based initiatives. The availability of some additional funding in area A enabled the provision of home based support. This support was intended to assist parents in participating in non-directive play and in the use of descriptive commentary when playing with their children. Delivery of previous WSIYPP had identified non-directive play and descriptive commentary as the areas parents appeared to be less confident in carrying out within their

homes. As area B had not been part of the Sure Start Local Programmes initiative no such funding was available to enable this to happen.

### **Participants<sup>2</sup>: Area A**

In area A five parents (from four families) failed to complete the WSIYPP and whilst the researcher aimed to include them in the sample of parents for interviews none of them gave their consent to being interviewed.

Of the five parents three had originally signed up following significant involvement from Social Care who had made very strong recommendations that they should attend such a parenting programme. Two participants were a married couple with a large family with high levels of involvement from social care. Another participant had children who had been on the 'at risk' register and in care prior to being returned to parental custody. This particular parent participant had attended two sessions but contact could not be made to gain an interview with her. A fourth participant attended four sessions but then missed sessions and contact could not be made. The final participant initially attended with his wife who completed the WSIYPP. He attended five sessions as he subsequently gained employment. He consented to being interviewed making a total of eight parents interviewed from area A.

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<sup>2</sup> The word 'participant' is used rather than parents in this section of the thesis. In the remainder of the thesis the word 'parent' is used.

## **Participants: Area B**

In area B, five participants attended week one. One did not return and two new participants attended from week two leading to seven participants. The participant who did not return after week one could not be contacted for interview. One participant who attended approximately half the sessions did not respond to requests to be interviewed. Five participants were interviewed and the data from four of them was used in the analysis. The fifth participant had English as a second language and struggled considerably during the interview to understand and express herself adequately in English. The interview was extremely difficult to transcribe accurately and therefore had to be excluded as part of the data collection process.

To summarise this was a convenience sample which compromised a total of twelve parents from areas A and B. Section 3.5.1 provides more detailed information

### **3.4 The Webster Stratton Incredible Years Parenting Programme**

The WSIYPP is a group parenting program that is carried out over a series of 10-14 weeks and describes itself as supporting parents in learning skills and strategies. The WSIYPP uses a collaborative or partnership approach to delivery. Group discussion, videotape modelling and rehearsal intervention techniques are

all used based on social learning theory (Bandura 1977). The WSIYPP states that it can be used for children with early 'onset conduct disorders'. However, it also aims to be a community based preventative program teaching parents to interact through play and improving relationships. The WSIYPP consists of a series of topics. Within each topic parents are shown video clips of parents and children depicting 'right' and 'wrong' ways of playing, interacting and managing behaviour. Parents discuss their own and their children's behaviour and are supported to practise alternative ways of managing it. Each week activities are set for parents to carry out at home.

### **3.4.1 Format of the Sessions**

The session format prescribed by the WSIYPP and followed within the sessions was as follows:-

- I) Welcome
- II) Ground Rules
- III) Report on Home Activities
- IV) Topic of day - Discussion  
Vignettes  
Key Concepts  
Role Play

- V) Review home activities
- VI) Parent evaluation
- VII) Closing

This format was generally adhered to. Each session had a different focus and specific key concepts were covered in each session. The toddler version of the basic programme was used. The WSIYPP can be divided into four main topics, play, praise and rewards, effective limit setting and handling misbehaviour. A more detailed description of the sessions is provided within appendix 2.

Refreshments were provided before and in the middle of each session. This enabled the participants to continue discussion with their peers in a slightly less formal situation.

## **3.5 Research Procedure**

### **3.5.1 Participants**

The sample used in the research was drawn from parents who had attended the WSIYPP which could best be described as convenience sampling. Although attendance on the WSIYPP was voluntary, some of the participants had been encouraged by social care professionals and health visitors to attend the WSIYPP.

The WSIYPP based in area A started in week one with twelve participants from ten families. All the participants except one were White British. The non-British participant was of European extraction and had English as a second language. There were ten female and two male participants.

Participants in area B were more ethnically diverse. Two of the participants were of Afro-Caribbean origin and one was of Asian, Bangladeshi origin. The participant from the Asian background had English as a second language and lacked fluency with both her understanding and use of English. One of the participants from an Afro-Caribbean background had literacy and learning difficulties. The five participants (all female) attended week one and two new participants joined the group in week two. One of the participants, whose origin was White/British, from week one did not return taking the overall number of

parents who attended the programme to six. One of the issues that affected attendance was the availability of the crèche. Three of the mothers had twins. This led to these parents utilising a higher number of the crèche places than may have been expected. The partner of one of the women also attended one session.

At the beginning of the WSIYPP participants were informed that an evaluation of the programme was to be carried out. Verbal consent to participate in this evaluation was sought at the start of the programme. Six months after the completion of the programme, verbal consent to interview participants was sought again through directly contacting parents by telephone and subsequently gaining written consent (Appendix 4).

Drop-out rates are inevitably an issue to be considered within parenting programmes. Rates of parental participation are well documented. Lindsey et al (2008) in their evaluation of the Parenting Early Intervention Pathfinder reported a drop out rate of 27 per cent with only 12 per cent of participants listed as fathers. The demographic details of the participants who attended the parenting programme and were interviewed are provided in Table 3.

**Table 3: Participants interviewed**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Venue</b>	<b>Children</b>	<b>Step Children</b>	<b>Sessions missed out of 10</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>Home Visit offered</b>	<b>Home Visit taken</b>
<b>Diane</b>	area A	5	0	2	Female	White/British	Yes	No
<b>Elaine</b>	area A	1	1	2	Female	White/British	Yes	No
<b>Jack</b>	area A	2	0	5	Male	White/British	Yes	Yes
<b>Kirsty</b>	area A	3	0	0	Female	White/British	Yes	Yes
<b>Lauren</b>	area A	1	1	1	Female	White/British	Yes	Yes
<b>Lucy</b>	area A	2	0	2	Female	White/British	Yes	Yes
<b>Sarah</b>	area A	2	0	2	Female	White/German	Yes	Yes
<b>Nadia</b>	area A	1	2	1	Female	White/British	Yes	Yes
<b>Tracy</b>	area B	1	0	1	Female	Afro-Caribbean	No	No
<b>Jasmin</b>	area B	1	0	0	Female	Bangladesh/Asian	No	No
<b>Valerie</b>	area B	1	0	1	Female	White/British	No	No
<b>Kate</b>	area B	2	0	2	Female	White/British	No	No
<b>Linda</b>	area B	6	0	1	Female	White/British	No	No

Note: Participants names have been anonymised

More detailed information on the participants is provided below and in appendix 6. This is to provide the contextual information used in the subsequent analysis of the data.

**Diane (area A)**

Diane had five children aged between one and seventeen. When the WSIYPP commenced she was living with her husband. However, when the interview commenced Diane was very distressed as she mentioned she had recently separated from her husband of twenty years. She described her own childhood as not particularly happy with involvement from Social Services. She had had limited support from her family. Diane had attended a number of previous parenting courses and described attending the WSIYPP as a mistake as she had been looking to attend one for older children. During the sessions she frequently referred to her reasons for attending the parenting programme which was to pass on the information to a neighbour. She did not socialize with the participants outside the group and missed a session.

**Elaine (area A)**

Elaine worked as a nursery nurse at a pre-school group. During the course of the WSIYPP, she and her partner moved in together. At the time of interview she was living with her three year old daughter and partner. She had a step son who lived in Scotland but visited during the school holidays. Elaine's childhood had been difficult. Her parents had separated, and she had had to cope with living with an alcoholic step father. She spoke of promises of visits from her father not being followed up. Elaine did not socialize with other participants outside of the WSIYPP.

### **Jack (area A)**

At the time of the interview Jack was a full time stay at home father, looking after his daughter but he was hoping to start a plumbing course. He left attending the WSIYPP half way though as he gained employment. He was living with his partner Lauren (who also attended) and their daughter Samantha who was two and a half. Jack had a 10 year old daughter from a previous relationship who lived locally but tensions existed between her and Lauren. Jack described his own childhood as strange because he was an only child. He described himself as intellectually advanced for his age, adding that he had had problems at school that led to him being suspended and moved to a special school. Jack's partner suggested he had had some drug dependency problems in the past. Jack did not socialize with the group outside of the sessions although Lauren his partner did.

### **Kirsty (area A)**

Kirsty was 28 years old and lived with her husband who worked nights. She had three children aged seven, four and 18 months. Her eldest child lived with his grandmother. Kirsty was very anxious during the interview about how what she said might be interpreted. Kirsty described her own childhood as one where she always felt left out and of being bullied at school. She had had her first child at the age of 21 and stated the reason she decided to have a child was because she wanted to get a council house. Kirsty had received support from the Positive

Parenting Home Visiting Service. She had also had involvement from other agencies due to concerns raised by care and health professionals about her ability to look after her family. Kirsty had attended previous Positive Parenting courses and was extremely keen to socialize outside the group with participants.

### **Lauren (area A)**

Lauren who lived with her partner Jack and had one child Samantha who was two and a half years old. She worked as a school nurse and at the time her partner was a full time father. Lauren described her own childhood as one where she had been exposed to violence until her parents separated when she was about seven years old. She described herself as having given her stepfather “hell” although she said they now had a really good relationship. Lauren wanted to be a different type of mother to her daughter and not base her role of a mother on her own childhood experiences. Lauren had a difficult relationship with her step daughter and this appeared to be a strong contributory factor to her attending the WSIYPP. Lauren socialized with other participants outside the WSIYPP.

## **Lucy (area A)**

Lucy was married with two children. Her husband was in employment. She described her own childhood as 'not very good'. She suggested that her siblings were out and about causing trouble and she would be the one at home having to clean up and stay in her room. She described herself as not really having many friends and having a close relationship with her father but not getting on at all with her mother. She felt that this had influenced her as a parent so that she never wanted to be late for picking up her child and she did not believe in any form of punitive punishment. During her time on the WSIYPP Lucy shared with others how house proud she was and that she spent significant amounts of time tidying the house. Her children were always extremely well presented and of a high priority to her. Her husband was financially stable. He had a good salary and frequently spent large amounts of money on Lucy and the children. One of the difficulties that Lucy had had particularly with her son related to buying him presents every single day whenever they went shopping as this was the only method that she felt she could use to make him behave. Lucy had had involvement with the Positive Parenting Service for both her children. However, this appeared to have had little impact prior to her attending the WSIYPP. Lucy socialized with other participants outside the WSIYPP.

### **Sarah (area A)**

Sarah was of German nationality, twenty-nine years old and had two children aged three and six. She had recently relocated to England because of her husband's job. He worked full time. Sarah described her own childhood as enjoyable. She had grown up in the countryside where she had had unlimited freedom. She stated that although her parents were divorced she had a good relationship with both of them. Sarah did not socialize with the other participants outside the WSIYPP. This may not have been down to personal choice but rather due to a confusion with telephone numbers.

### **Nadia (area A)**

Nadia was living with her partner, two stepchildren aged fourteen and seventeen and her four year old son from a previous relationship. Her partner worked and although Nadia was unemployed during the duration of the course, she was in employment by the time the interviews occurred. Her son had contact with his biological father. Nadia described her own childhood as 'awful'. Her parents separated when she was about eight years old. Nadia mentioned being abused as a child. When Nadia was in her thirties, she attempted to share this with her mother but reported that her mother took little notice. Nadia grew up in Zambia and felt her mother was very unsupportive. However, Nadia maintained contact with her mother who was suffering from dementia. Nadia felt that this made her

stronger and she was very close to her sister. Nadia had had regular home visits from the Positive Parenting Service as she had concerns about her son's behaviour. Nadia raised anxieties relating to being a stepmother to two older children. Prior to attending the WSIYPP she used to cook different meals for every member of her family. Nadia socialized with other participants outside the WSIYPP.

### **Linda (area B)**

Linda was thirty-one years old and had six children varying in age from nineteen years to twins of three years. Linda had a very difficult childhood. She was abused and raped by her stepfather, resulting in the birth of her first child. She had ongoing social care involvement and her children had been on the child protection register. Linda had been directed by a Court order to attend a parenting programme. Linda did not socialize with other participants outside the program.

### **Tracy (area B)**

Tracy was twenty-nine years old, born in Britain to Nigerian parents. She had a two year old daughter. Her husband worked and she herself was looking for counselling work. Significant people in her life were her husband's family and friends from the Church. Throughout the WSIYPP Tracy spoke about the

conflicting messages she was getting from her Church and from the WSIYPP, particularly in relation to discipline. Her husband attended one session. Tracy socialized with other participants outside the program.

### **Valerie (area B)**

Valerie who lived with her parents, was a twenty-eight year old mother of a three year old boy. She was not working at the time of the WSIYPP but planned to attend a course. During the interview she spoke of herself as a single parent. However, whilst attending the WSIYPP her son's father was also living with her at her parents' house. Valerie talked about her childhood as a happy experience. She socialized with the participants outside the WSIYPP.

### **Kate (area B)**

Kate was a forty-seven year old mother of one year old twin boys and worked as a Personal Assistant. She lived alone with the boys but the care was shared with her partner. Her father had recently died. Kate was on antidepressants due to post natal depression and her father's illness and subsequent death. Kate was brought up by her mother and grandmother and reported having limited contact with her father as he served in the merchant navy. Kate said that during her childhood her mother had not encouraged her to socialise with other children. This Kate felt had led to problems with interacting and socialising with other

children. As a result Kate had been sent to see a child psychiatrist. She therefore wanted to make sure that things were different for her twins. Kate did not join the Webster Stratton WSIYPP until the second session. Half way through the course Kate returned to work from maternity leave but took days off work to continue to attend. Kate socialized with the other participants who arranged to meet around her non-working days.

### **Jasmine (Area B)**

Jasmine was in her late 30's and a mother of an eight month old baby at the start of the WSIYPP. Jasmine had English as a second language and at times struggled to understand and express herself in English. Jasmine attended all the parenting group sessions and was interviewed but transcribing the interview was extremely difficult due to the issues around the intelligibility of her verbal responses. The interview was therefore not used in the analysis. Jasmine formed a close friendship with Tracy and continued to meet frequently and socialise after the Webster Stratton Incredible Years Parenting Programme. Jasmine also socialized with the other parents in the group.

### **3.5.2 Method of Data Collection**

Data was collected through the use of semi-structured interviews carried out approximately six months after the completion of the WSIYPP. During those six months no contact was made with the participants. The research explored parents' reflections on the WSIYPP as opposed to their immediate thoughts. A six month gap was therefore chosen to allow for a sufficient interval of time to have elapsed before the interviews were undertaken.

Telephone contact was used to arrange interviews. These were carried out in the participant's home on a day and at a time that was convenient for them. As the participants all had pre-school children the choice of time was particularly important. Ideally this was when the child/children would be in a pre-school group. When this was not an option and no other person was available to supervise the children attempts were made to conduct the interview during the child's nap time. Thus in some cases interviews were interrupted by the participant's children. On other occasions, participants' responses could be overheard by other members of their family. Despite these difficulties all the arranged interviews took place.

Semi-structured interviews were chosen as a method since they enable researchers to talk to participants about a particular aspect of their life or experiences (Willig, 2008). They were "a conversation with a purpose" (Kahn &

Cannell, 1957 p. 149). Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) suggest that interviews are a natural pathway within a society where people are able or willing to talk about themselves. It was important to consider contextual features during the interviews particularly the role of both myself as interviewer and the interviewees (Potter & Hepburn, 2005). Potter and Wetherell (1987) suggest that interviews should be generated in such a way that allows for, rather than restricts, the diversity of participants' accounts. They argue that this will happen if questions that allow a simple yes or no response are avoided. If questions are asked in a number of different ways this may avoid participants being unable to answer, or giving what they perceive is the 'correct answer', or the answer the researcher wants. An example of this was when asking participants the question, "What are the main strategies you use at home when things get difficult?" On occasions where the participants had found it hard to answer this question, the researcher reframed the question by specifically using their child's name and asking the participant what they would do if their child behaved in a way they were unhappy with.

### **3.5.3 Design of the Interview Schedule**

Semi structured interviews provide the interviewer with the freedom to vary the wording and the order of the questions. The researcher used open ended questions and considered the interview schedule as a guide. This approach was felt to be appropriate as it allowed for a measure of flexibility during the interview, allowing the researcher to empathise with the participant when considered

necessary. It was hoped that the approach would lead to a better quality of data (Robson, 1993).

The format of the interview included the gathering of base line information, introductory comments, list of topic headings and key questions, associated prompts and closing comments (Robson, 1993).

In designing the interview, the seven stages of an interview inquiry outlined by Kvale and Brinkman (2009) were used initially. These were used as a guideline and the researcher's own intuitive professional expertise and experience of conducting interviews as well as knowledge of the participants were also used in designing the interview. The first stage in designing the interview involved clarifying the *why* and *what* of the questions in terms of the purpose of the interview and the areas of interest or themes to be investigated prior to the interview. The *how* of the interview involved deciding which interview technique and method of analysis to use in order to obtain the required information. The second stage involved planning the design of the study and taking into account ethical considerations. The third stage involved designing an interview schedule and using it as a pilot to conduct the interviews. This was subsequently amended following the pilot. During this stage the interpersonal relation of the interview situation and the adoption of a reflective approach to the information that was

sought were utilised. The remaining four stages of transcribing the interview data, analysing it and verifying and reporting it are described in greater detail in Chapter 4.

The design of the questionnaire needed to initially enable the parents to feel relaxed and comfortable during the interview. Once this had taken place the interview questions could be asked to provide information needed to answer the research questions. The interview questions aimed to act as a trigger to encourage the participants to talk (Willig 2008). As such they addressed specific areas that would support in the gathering of data appropriate to the research questions. The researcher subscribed to the view of Willig that the interview agenda should consist, “of a relative small number of open ended questions (p25).”

The interview started by gathering background information, how things currently were for the family and information about the interviewees own childhood. Following this, questions were asked relating to nine areas of interest. The relationship between the research questions and the questions posed in the interview is detailed in table 4.

**Table 4: A visual overview of the relationship between the research questions and interview areas**

Areas explored	RQ1	RQ2	RQ3	RQ4	RQ5
Attendance	X				
Advantages/disadvantages		X			
Parenting style			X		X
Parent's Behaviour			X		
Children's Behaviour			X		
Play				X	
Parents Confidence					X
Group Impact		X			
Home Visits				X	

Questions around attendance were used to find out about both how parents had heard about the WSIYPP as well as what motivated them to attend. Parents who did not attend or ceased to attend were also to be questioned about this.

Parents were specifically asked what they felt were the advantages and disadvantages of the WSIYPP. This information would support in answering research question 2.

To support addressing research question 3 and 5 questions were asked of the parents about their style of parenting, the strategies they used and any particular strategies they used as an outcome of having attended the WSIYPP. Parents were also questioned about their own behaviour as well as their children's behaviour.

Questions about play and home visits were used to find out information that would address research questions 3, 4, and 5.

Following the pilot interviews the importance of the group became apparent. To respond to this specific questions relating to the group and ongoing contact with other parents were incorporated into the interview schedule. The responses to these questions also contributed to research question 2 which explored the advantages and disadvantages of the programme.

The detailed description of the questions asked is provided in appendix 4.

#### **3.5.4 Pilot interviews**

Prior to the interviews being carried out the interview guide was piloted on two parents who had attended an earlier WSIYPP (appendix 3). These pilot interviews identified the fact that the participants placed significant importance on the impact of being in a group and the subsequent support and friendships they had formed.

Following these findings specific changes were made to the schedule to enable information about friendships and being part of a group to be gathered during the interviews (see appendix 5).

### **3.5.5 Interview Procedure**

Parents had provided contact details when they first expressed an interest in attending the WSIYPP. They were provided with confirmation letters and telephone follow ups. During the first session confirmation of addresses and phone numbers was made. The participants were all aware of the nature of the research which had been provided both verbally and in writing (appendix 4). During the final session of the parenting program consent to contact them to arrange interviews was sought and gained. Contact was made by telephone and interviews were arranged around the needs of the participants.

During the interviews and analysis it was necessary to be aware that participants tend to 'orient towards the interview situation' and the researcher was concerned that participants' responses may have been a reflection of the responses the researcher wanted (Willig 2008, p. 97.) It was therefore necessary for the transcription to include the researcher's comments as well as those of the interviewees.

All participants who were interviewed had met the researcher when the WSIYPP had been delivered. Prior to the start of the interview participants were asked to provide signed consent of their agreement to participate in the interview and for any resulting data to be used for the research (appendix 4). They were provided with information on confidentiality and what would happen to the data. Permission to use a digital audio recorder was also obtained. Rapport was established with the participants through some general talk. To enable them to relax, the interview initially started with requests for factual information. Following this came a question about how they were currently finding things leading to more specific areas outlined in the interview schedule.

### **3.5.6 Method of Analysis**

The interviews carried out were transcribed verbatim. Once this had been completed Braun and Clarke's (2006) guidance on undertaking a thematic analysis was used. The six phases they describe are as follows:-

Phase 1 – Familiarizing oneself with the data

Phase 2 – Generating initial codes

Phase 3 – Searching for themes

Phase 4 – Reviewing themes

Phase 5- Defining and naming themes

## Phase 6 – Producing the report

Thematic analysis is subjective and interpretive and some researchers suggest there are not any real conceptual tools to guide the analysis. Braun and Clarke (2006), however provided detailed descriptive guidelines for use during the analysis. Appendix 8 provides a diagram representing the six stages involved in developing the themes. Appendices 9 to 13 illustrate the steps involved in the analysis and the terminology used by the researcher during phase 4. The following sections provide a clear description of the process during analysis. This provides transparency of how the themes were formulated from the initial data. Although these are presented as a linear step-by-step procedure, it should be stressed that the analysis by the researcher was both a reflexive and an iterative process.

### **3.6.1 Phase 1 – Familiarizing oneself with the data**

As the researcher had collected the data through semi-structured interviews as well as having some knowledge based on her role as programme deliverer and educational psychologist she also had some initial thoughts. The transcription of the data included relevant non verbal utterances such as laughter. Once the data was transcribed, immersion and familiarization off it was carried out through repeated reading prior to any attempts to code the data.

### **3.6.2 Phase 2 – Generating initial codes**

A hybrid approach (Fereday and Muir-Cochrane, 2006) that involved using both inductive and deductive approaches was used in the analysis of the qualitative data. The deductive approach was based on the researcher's prior knowledge, preliminary scanning of text, the research questions and the theoretical framework employed in the study. In a deductive approach the conclusions are logically derived from the available facts or premises. In this research, the parents were asked a set of questions and the data was coded around these questions. Initial codes were generated through data driven codes and can be clearly seen in the initial themes emerging within attendance and home visits. The coding was carried out using the pre-specified research questions.

The inductive aspect of the analysis involved moving from the specific questions to looking at the emerging themes through considering the data set in its entirety, an inductive approach. Parental views were thus analysed using an inductive approach to identify the broader main themes and sub-themes.

Each research question was considered separately. For each research question all the transcriptions were read. All the parts of the data that were relevant to the research question were manually highlighted. This highlighted data was then typed on to an excel spread sheet (appendix 7 – 7d). This exercise was repeated

for each of the research questions. The data was then coded. Coding was carried out across the entire data set with the focus initially on the research questions. Thus, for example, the entire data set was treated as a single data set and used to label segments of information that pertained to issues around parent's reasons for attending the programme, which was the first research question. This was done for all the research questions. The codes were constructed codes at this stage as opposed to *in vivo* codes.

The coded data was grouped into 46 initial themes encapsulating the five research questions. There was inevitably an overlap which led to similar pieces of data being coded for different research questions. So for instance, some of the advantages parents may have stated in relation to having attended the WSIYPP would then become strategies that they had started to use with their children. In the case of play, this again may have been coded in a number of different ways such as citing increased play as an advantage of having attended the WSIYPP. Parents also described changes in play as perceived through their own and their children's behaviour. Changes in understanding may have been expressed as a changed opinion about the value of play. Parents may also have described play as one of the outcomes of having received a home visit.

### **3.6.3 Phase 3 – Summarising data and identifying initial themes**

Whilst the data had been coded using a deductive approach, the researcher wanted to use a more inductive approach to generate the themes. This involved moving from the specific expressed perceptions to broader key themes and sub-themes. As such, each piece of coded data was transcribed by hand from the excel spread sheet on to a 'post it' sticker. The stickers were then placed randomly on a large surface. Time was spent considering the codes on the stickers. They were then grouped together by the researcher with other codes that shared relevant concepts and formed initial themes (appendix 9). For example, some parents specifically talked about using the strategy of counting one, two, three where others would talk more generally about preparing their children for the ending of an activity through providing a verbal warning. All these referred to the same idea of preparing or warning their children about what was to happen next and were therefore collapsed under the same theme, theme 19 'developed strategies.'

### **3.6.4 Phase 4 – Reviewing themes**

Forty-six initial themes emerged. These themes were generated by an analysis that focused on the research questions. These initial themes needed to be refined to reduce overlap and redundancy of themes. This led to some themes identified in Phase 3 being removed because they were redundant or being clustered with themes that were previously identified. For instance in the case of

the theme 'changes in parents and children's behaviour' the increased use of 'verbal praise' was initially put under the theme 'changes in the nature of rewards being used' but on reflection it was moved to 'changes in the language being used'. The reason for this was that, a further re reading of the data and on further reflection the researcher believed that rather than changes in parents' language (which was cited as a specific reward), what the parents were actually expressing was a fundamental change in the way they were communicating with their children.

During the process of reviewing the themes, some were found to be too narrow. For example in relation to research question one, 'reasons for attending the parenting programme', theme 1.1 'encouragement: it would be good for you' was initially two themes, one relating to encouragement by family members and the other encouragement by professionals. These were merged into one broader theme 'encouragement: it would be good for you.' Themes were not merged on the frequency of similarly expressed views but rather on the importance that they held for the researcher. For example, although only one participant felt there was 'no change' in their behaviour following their attendance on the programme, this remained a theme. Since content analysis was not the aim of the data analysis, therefore this single view was considered as important a view (even though it was expressed by only one parent) and worthy of further consideration as those views that were more frequently expressed.

At this stage the previous stages were revisited to ensure that the clustered themes were representative of the initial data analysis.

This process of reviewing themes was ongoing through the entire analysis and themes were developed and reduced as part of this process.

### **3.6.5 Phase 5- Defining and naming themes**

Themes were further clustered into 'super themes' where appropriate. Pictorial representations of these super themes are provided in appendices 10a – 10g. Themes were assigned succinct phrases to describe the meaning that underpinned the themes. Whenever possible the researcher wanted the names of the themes to show and best describe the meaning of the text. This provided a clear relationship between the words and the data. For example, in research question four which looked at home support, the theme 'loneliness' showed that one of the reasons parents decided to have a home visit was because they felt lonely. Attempting to show a clear relationship between the words in a theme and the actual views expressed by the parents can also be seen in research question one. The super theme, 'practical reasons' included reasons such as timing and availability of crèche i.e. practical reasons as to why participants attended the programme (appendix 13 - final themes). The final stage involved the process of

further clustering the themes resulting in six main themes and accompanying sub-themes.

### **3.6.6 Phase 6 – Producing the report**

In terms of this research phase 6 can be seen within the writing of the thesis and specifically the findings reported in Chapter four. This chapter shows the relationship between the themes and the research question using a thematic map. Definitions of the content of each theme and examples that illustrate the theme are provided before further analysis from the researcher's perspective.

## **3.7 Reflexivity, Ethical Considerations and Power Relations**

These three points will be discussed together under the following headings: triple role of researcher (3.7.1); informed consent and free choice (3.7.2); interviewing in the home (3.7.3); and representing the other (3.7.4).

### **3.7.1 Triple Role of Researcher**

The researcher had three roles, firstly as an educational psychologist, secondly as a deliverer of the parenting programme and finally as a researcher.

### **3.7.1.1 Researcher as an Educational Psychologist**

As an Educational Psychologist the researcher was employed by a Local Authority that combines educational and social care services. Some of the families participating in the research had had previous direct involvement from the researcher in her role as an Educational Psychologist. Other families had had involvement from other Educational Psychologists from the same team who were undertaking work with their children at their child or children's schools. Specific involvement for some of the families had included home visits following concerns that they may have been having difficulties managing their children's behaviour and extending their development within the home context.

The researcher's role as an Educational Psychologist was to carry out an initial home visit with a family worker and to identify areas that would be appropriate for the family worker to support the family. As part of the supervision of and support for the family worker, the researcher (as an Educational Psychologist) would have requested the parent and the family worker to sign a partnership working contract that clearly stated the expectations for both the family worker and the parent. These included issues such as time keeping, working together and confidentiality. Within confidentiality the issues of child protection and a professional's duty of care in this area were always discussed.

There had been child protection issues with at least one of the families which had led to the Educational Psychologist informing the family that a child protection

referral would be made which was subsequently made. Although at that time limited further action took place, the children of the family are now on the child protection register. This parent was interviewed but expressed caution at providing any information that she felt could lead to negative consequences. This situation serves to accentuate the power imbalance that Finlay (2002) suggests can exist between participant and researcher who in this case also happened to be an educational psychologist.

### **3.7.1.2 Researcher as a Programme Deliverer**

In line with the programme content of the WSIYPP, the programme began by asking parents to talk about themselves and their families. As the deliverer had already had contact with some of the families, she may have had information about them that the family did not wish to share in a group context. Previous knowledge about the family could have conflicted with the view parents presented. Great care was taken during the WSIYPP to refer only to information that was provided during the sessions. Any additional information that was held was deemed to be confidential and treated as such. Confidentiality is part of the everyday work of this researcher. Information provided by parents during the programme was taken and acted upon at face value. The WSIYPP was presented over a number of weeks and so it was inevitable that a relationship developed with the parents and knowledge about their families was shared by parents. It was clearly explained to the families that research would be carried

out after the programme had been completed and it was also clearly explained that participation in this was optional and entirely voluntary.

### **3.7.1.3 Researcher as a Researcher**

During the interviews with families, the researcher conducting the interviews may have visited them as an Educational Psychologist. In addition, there was the duality of role as a deliverer/trainer of the programme and the researcher.

It is likely that a person delivering a programme has an assumption that it is an effective intervention. In addition, delivering a programme to the same group over a number of weeks leads to the development of a relationship between the participants and the deliverer who is subsequently going to become the researcher. This could understandably result in parents assuming a lack of impartiality from the researcher. This relationship could also lead to parents feeling more able to talk easily about how their behaviour had changed.

Having acknowledged a relationship between the researcher and the participants could have led to subjectivity during the interviews. Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) suggest that knowledge produced through interviews will be dependent on the social relationships between the interviewer and interviewee. Furthermore, they

argue that it is the interviewer's responsibility to provide an environment in which the interviewee feels safe to talk about personal events. However, the researcher's role as an Educational Psychologist could prevent this from happening. Educational Psychologists follow an ethical code of practice and as such have a duty of care regarding child protection which could prevent the interviewee from feeling safe about sharing personal events.

All the parents participating in both the WSIYPP and the research knew that the researcher was a practicing Educational Psychologist within the Borough where they lived. In addition, the question of confidentiality had been discussed as part of the content of the WSIYPP. Issues around the possible disclosure of any information that constituted child protection were also discussed.

The husband of one of the interviewees had left her and she needed to spend considerable amounts of time talking about this. It seemed necessary to switch off the tape recorder whilst this conversation was going on and it was quite difficult finding the appropriate time to switch it on again. Consequently the extremely personal nature of this information led to this data not being used. Many of the participants talked about their own childhoods, how difficult these were and how this was impinging on the type of experiences they wanted to give their own children. One of the participants wanted to talk about some close

family members who had died and the impact this was having on her child who had witnessed some of this. Again a significant amount of time was spent with the recording device switched off. During this time the participant was signposted to where she could receive appropriate support for her and her family. It was very difficult then to focus back onto aspects pertinent to the research. This was accomplished through gently leading the conversation back to answering the questions.

In order for the relationship to weaken no contact had been planned by the researcher between delivering the programme and interviewing the participants. This was not totally possible as one participant had gained employment as a receptionist in a child development centre which the researcher visited on a regular basis. In addition to this participants had contacted the researcher to find out when interviews would take place. This time delay may well have contributed to difficulty in making contact with some of the participants whose attendance had been somewhat sporadic.

Whilst undertaking the research, the researcher was aware of parents trying to provide responses they perceived the researcher wanted to hear. This was due to the fact that the researcher had delivered the WSIYPP training. For some questions the parent may have provided responses or expressed views that were

those discussed during the group sessions. For instance, when questioning parents about home visits, parents who did not agree to take up this offer were asked why they had not by the same person who had initially promoted the home visit. To address this, parents were informed at the start of the interview that the focus of the research was not about the deliverers of the programme but rather about the perceived impact the WSIYPP had on them and their children.

As a practicing Educational Psychologist ethical consideration is central to the researcher's work. The BPS Code of Ethics and Conduct (2006) was adhered to at all times.

### **3.7.2 Informed consent and free choice**

Ethical clearance was sought and provided through the University of East London. At the start of the WSIYPP the research was discussed with participants and this was referred to a number of times during the programme and specifically at the end. No pressure was placed on participants to agree to take part in the research. It was made absolutely clear to all WSIYPP attendees that they did not have to agree to participate in the research as a condition to continuing to attend the WSIYPP. Furthermore, the only mechanism used to contact families was by telephone and parents had willingly provided their phone numbers, When unable to contact participants who failed to complete the WSIYPP no requests for additional contact details from colleagues in social care were made as it was felt

that this would have been unethical and would not have provided the participants with free choice.

Participating in the WSIYPP was a matter of free choice. However, some participants had been actively encouraged to attend by other organizations such as social care. This appears to have been a very significant factor in the attendance on the WSIYPP. Three of the participants in area A, who did not complete the programme, had been encouraged to attend.

Confidentiality was discussed at the start of the WSIYPP in terms of parents' attendance and contribution. All participants were asked to join in as much as they felt comfortable with and to respect the confidentiality of all present. They were told that all information they disclosed would be treated as confidential. However, if any information disclosed was felt by the programme deliverers to relate to child protection issues then this information would be passed on. Ethically the researcher would have to pass information on even if divulged at interview. This was not specifically made clear to the participants at interview and on reflection should have been.

Although the research was explained at the start of the WSIYPP, a commitment was not required until the end of it. Further agreement was sought twice more,

firstly at the time of arranging the interview by telephone and secondly before the interview began within the home context. At this point once verbal agreement had been received participants were also requested to provide written consent (Appendix 4).

Once interviews had been transcribed they were anonymised to address issues of confidentiality. All data was stored electronically. Participants were informed that once the research has been completed the electronically stored transcriptions would be deleted.

### **3.7.3 Practical Issues around Interviewing in the home**

Interviews were carried out in the family home. This meant that each interview was conducted in a different environment from the others. The time of interview was negotiated with participants as far as was possible. There was no funding to enable a room away from home to be used or to provide child care during the interviews. Participants were asked to try to identify a day and time when they would be able to be interviewed with minimum distractions. However, this was not always possible. On a number of occasions children were present at home, sometimes in the room where the interview was taking place. On other occasions they were in another room watching a DVD, or being supervised by another member of the family. This raised issues around privacy. In one case there was

no door to the living room and one interviewee frequently lowered her voice during the interview suggesting she did not wish her partner to hear all her responses. Bushin (2007) interprets ethical research as trying not to cause tension between children and parents. This could be extended to not wishing to cause tension between partners. The offer to return on another occasion was provided but the interviewee did not take up this option, preferring to continue.

Within the family home background noise during the interviews was a problem. English as a second language could have been an issue with a number of participants both in their understanding of the WSIYPP and their comprehension of the semi-structured interview questions and also the researcher's interpretations of their responses. During delivery of the programme as much modelling as was possible was used to address this. One interview was not used as it became clear that the participant neither fully understood the questions nor the reframing of the questions.

#### **3.7.4 Representing the other**

The researcher did not pretend to be party to the experiences of many interviewees. The researcher was not part of the same social background as the participants. Whilst the researcher was a woman and a parent she was unable to share the social and economic experiences of the participants. The researcher

worked and did not live in an area of social deprivation. As a mother and a woman it was possible for some degree of empathy to take place. Hurd and McIntyre (1996) perhaps sum up this idea when they state that “we experience moments of unspoken connection with our participants that seem strikingly similar” (p. 78). The researcher was able to use real life scenarios, such as shopping at a supermarket with children who are having a tantrum, to support the delivery of the WSIYPP and empathise with some of their issues specifically those relating to their children. This included conversations about strategies such as tactical ignoring and rewards and discussions around judgements made by others.

Finlay (2002) raises concerns in relation to a power imbalance between researcher and participant. It cannot be ignored that this would have prevented an equal relationship existing between the participants and researcher with the researcher continuing to occupy the perceived position of authority and power. This therefore needs to be acknowledged in relation to the interviews.

### **3.8 Conclusion to the Chapter**

This chapter has described the method used in this research. The chapter began with a brief introduction and the research paradigm and design before moving on to the research questions and context and location of the study. The method of collecting the data was described followed by an explanation of the phases

involved in using a thematic analysis approach to the data analysis. The chapter concluded with consideration as to reflexivity, ethical considerations and power relationships that existed between the researcher's triple roles of programme deliverer, researcher and Educational Psychologist.

The next chapter will address the findings from the research.

## Chapter 4: Findings

### 4.1 Overview of the Chapter

The previous chapter described the preparation of the data and the process of the analysis. The findings presented here provide an insight into the parents' understandings and views of their participation in the WSIYPP. This insight is important in extending understanding of not only *why* parents participated in the programme but also *what* parents felt they got out of their participation.

This chapter provides a description of the findings obtained from the analysis of the data gathered during the interviews. The chapter is organised into two sections. Section one provides the justification for the chosen method of analysis. A combined deductive and inductive approach was used to explore the parents' views of their participation in the WSIYPP. Section two describes changes they perceived either in their own or their children's behaviour following attendance at the WSIYPP. Details of themes and sub-themes are reported. These are supported by excerpts from the data to ensure that the interpretation of the data is directly linked to the words of the parents. All the quotes from the parents are reported verbatim, and are accompanied by some interpretations of their responses which are discussed in greater detail in Chapter 5. The chapter concludes with a summary.

#### **4.2.1 Section 1**

The data was analysed using thematic analysis adopting a social constructionist paradigm. In thematic analysis a search for themes is undertaken. Themes that were important to the description of the parents' views of their participation in the WSIYPP were identified (Daly, Kellehear, & Gliksman, 1997). The process of the identification of themes involved a thorough and "careful reading and re-reading of the data" (Rice & Ezzy, 1999 p. 258). Patterns were recognised within the data in the form of developing themes and these were used as the category for analysis.

The method of analysis chosen for this study incorporated a data driven 'bottom up' approach. An inductive approach was used to link the themes strongly to the data (Patton, 2002). The data driven approach involved organising the parents' responses to each research question. The rationale for this was to identify any consistencies and differences across all parents' responses to each question. The entire data set was initially treated as a single data set and used to label segments of information that pertained to each research question.

In line with thematic analysis, a set of meaningful themes was identified and used to describe the parents' responses by putting 'like with like' across the entire data set (Morse & Field, 1995). Adopting an inductive approach allowed the

development of themes from the interview data while taking into account the contextual aspects that were pertinent to the study. This approach complemented the research questions by allowing the tenets of social constructionism to be integral to the process of inductive analysis by allowing the themes to be developed directly from the data.

According to Boyatzis (1998, p. 1), a “good code is one that captures the qualitative richness of the phenomenon”. Coding the data involved identifying those words, phrases or passages from the data that were examples of a thematic idea such as the phrase *‘thinking I’m not the only one that’s had that problem’* and then developing categories of themes from them. The final analysis involved collapsing these categories into key themes. The rationale for this was to identify and establish key themes which could be understood contextually. An example of this can be seen with the phrase *‘wasn’t long enough.’* This phrase developed into theme 21, ‘The ending’ (appendix 8) and was then aggregated into theme 18b, ‘Lack of ongoing support’ (appendix 10) before finally emerging as theme 6: ‘There’s still no-one there for me’. It was also helpful to categorise the parents’ responses in this way as it highlighted changes that might need to be considered both in relation to programme content and delivery which could become a precursor to action.

The use of sub-themes was not a reflection of the perceived importance of the themes but a mechanism for making the number of themes that materialized more manageable. Whenever possible, the names of the themes and sub-themes reflected the participants' actual phrases (in vivo). A mixture of in vivo and constructed coding was employed. Extracts to support or illustrate the main themes are reported verbatim and no attempt has been made to change the grammar or language used. This thus captures the authenticity of the responses. The next section addresses the main themes and sub-themes from the data.

#### **4.2.2 Section 2**

This section provides a description of the six themes and associated sub-themes. Table 5 provides an overview of this. The analysis of the data was based on the interviews undertaken six months after the parents had attended a 10 week group parenting program, the WSIYPP. An interpretative reporting model is used which provides a summary description of the key themes and associated sub-themes followed by illustrative codes (quotes and excerpts from the data) and the interpretation. Reading and reporting the data interpretatively involved reporting a version of what the researcher thought the data represented and what could be inferred from the data by the researcher. Reporting the findings reflexively, therefore involved not only acknowledging the role of the researcher as part of the data generation and exploration process but also in the process of the

generation and interpretation of the data and in the expression of these relationships.

The parents who were interviewed ranged in age from their early twenties and thirties to some in their forties. All of them expressed to varying degrees the desire to improve their parenting skills. When the researcher explored their motivations for participating in the programme it became apparent that their experience of parenthood influenced these motivations. Many of the parents felt overwhelmed by the responsibilities associated with parenthood. The metaphor 'better parent' aptly described either directly or indirectly a need for reassurance in relation to their parenting skills. Some parents attended the programme to avoid social isolation. They had experienced some social exclusion closely related to their children's behaviour or in some cases because they were new to the area or lacked a supportive network within the community. The next section will discuss each theme in turn.

**Table 5: Main themes and sub-themes**

<b>Main themes</b>	<b>Sub-themes</b>
<b>Main theme 1:</b> Practical reasons for getting involved.	(1.1) Encouragement: it would be good for you. (1.2) Organisation: it suited me. (1.3) Knowledge: I wanted to know more.
<b>Main theme 2:</b> Parenting, am I doing it right?	(2.1) Need for reassurance. (2.2) Lack of confidence: I'm not sure. (2.3) Loneliness: It's nice to get out.
<b>Main theme 3:</b> My child's behaviour, a reflection of me?	(3.1) My child's behaviour: Help! (3.2) I want to be a better parent. (3.3) My child's behaviour has changed.
<b>Main theme 4:</b> When it comes to play let him lead.	(4.1) My child plays differently. (4.2) No changes in play.
<b>Main theme 5:</b> Relationships have got better.	(5.1) My behaviour has changed. (5.2) I understand my child's behaviour.
<b>Main theme 6:</b> There's still no-one there for me.	(6.1) I'm not the only one. (6.2) I developed skills. (6.3) There is only me.

### 4.3. Theme 1

#### **Practical reasons for getting involved**

Parents expressed a number of practical reasons that made their attendance at the WSIYPP more or less likely. These reasons ranged from being encouraged to attend the programme by others to a desire to improve their parenting skills. Within this theme, three subthemes were identified which related to parents'

views on what made it more or less likely for them to attend the programme. These are described below.

#### **4.3.1 Sub-theme 1.1**

##### **Encouragement: It would be good for you**

The first sub-theme 'It would be good for you' referred to the encouragement the parents had received to attend the programme. Many parents reported being encouraged to attend the programme by others. In all but one case the 'others' referred to professionals. The exception was the parent who was actively encouraged to attend by his partner who was also attending the programme.

The involvement of professionals ranged from informing parents about the existence of the programme and how it might help them, to specifically directing or recommending parents to attend the programme. These were often social care professionals, health visitors or home visitors who had visited the parents as part of the Positive Parenting Project. A number of parents who started but did not complete the programme or did not consent to being interviewed had been directed to attend the programme by external agencies. There was a clear difference in the views expressed by those parents who wanted to attend and those who were directed to attend. Some parents viewed attendance as being

supportive while others expressed feelings of resentment at being directed to attend the programme by professionals.

Linda            *“the social services that was where it come from, they said to me Oh they’ve got this parenting course we would like you to do it to see your skills and everything.” (503)<sup>3</sup> “I felt like well I’m not doing right or who are you to tell me I’ve got to go on a course to be a parent and so I had this hatred towards all of it.” (510)*

In terms of free choice to attend Linda and Valerie were at contrasting ends of the spectrum. Valerie, who was desperate for help requested support and saw attending the programme as supporting her in overcoming her problems. In contrast, Linda felt she had no choice but to attend and at the start of the programme this led to her attitude being far more negative than other parents.

Valerie            *“I was in tears in the end; I thought what am I going to do. Um and it was at that point I rang up my Health Visitor and I said look I’m having real problems.” (427)*

Prior to delivering the programme the researcher was aware that the parent, Linda, had attended the same programme some months previously and had only completed half of it. Linda certainly felt that she had originally attended the programme because she had been directed to do so as part of a court order and by doing so she hoped it would enable her to cease having involvement from

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<sup>3</sup> (503) refers to the line number on the transcript

Social Care. This type of direction imposed by external agencies can lead to resentment from the parents and impact on the extent of their co-operation and willingness to engage with such a programme.

Jack, a parent attending the programme, had an older child. His attendance had been the direct result of a request by his partner in relation to their child who was Jack's second child. Jack had fathered another child with a previous partner. He tended not to talk much about his older child. This was in marked contrast to his partner who cited the reasons for her attendance as relating to the difficulties they both had with Jack's older child and not wanting this to be repeated with their child. It was difficult to clarify the importance of Jack's older child for Jack and his partner, Lauren. There were very few references to Jack's first daughter during the programme and neither Jack nor Lauren had mentioned her as someone important in their lives. However, during the interview Lauren's responses suggested resentment of Jack's older daughter as exemplified by her comment, "*.....and she's not even my kid and I have to pay for her every time.*"

(296)

From Lauren's perspective attendance at the WSIYPP was partly because of concerns about Jack's older daughter. Although her partner participated in the sessions during the weeks he attended, he did not interact with others at break

time, preferring to read his newspaper. This may have related to gender issues or feeling he had little in common with the other parents.

#### **4.3.2 Sub-theme 1.2**

##### **Organisation: It suited me**

The second sub-theme 'it suited me' referred in some cases to parental views about what had either facilitated or hindered parents' attendance at the programme. Some parents were able to attend the WSIYPP due to the facilities on offer and the timing of the programme. The WSIYPP was offered at no cost with free refreshments and a crèche. In addition the timing of the sessions was carefully planned to enable parents of pre-school children to deliver and collect their children from pre-school settings. The following extracts illustrate how the organisation of the programme, in relation to the timing and provision of additional facilities, had affected attendance.

Tracy            *"I think to be honest partly because of the free crèche, that was a big and a sort of ah I can do something. I can learn something and be (laughs) away from (daughter) for some time, so that was a big help." (227)*

Elaine            *"There was a space for little one at the crèche. It was nice just to get out of the house for an hour or two in the morning." (301)*

The organisation of the course had been carefully considered to maximise attendance by parents. The researcher felt that during the interviews some parents appeared to feel guilty or embarrassed, as could be seen by Tracy's laughter, when citing reasons for attending which were related to having time away from her children. Some parents justified their use of the crèche as being a chance for their children to socialise with other children as opposed to providing them with some time away from their children. This could perhaps have been a reflection of their not wanting to admit to wanting time away from their children and the perception that admitting this might be viewed by some as being synonymous with 'bad' parenting, especially if their attendance had been the result of recommendations by external agencies. Being a parent is arguably one of the most challenging roles in people's lives and parents justifiably feel that they need time for themselves too. In reality this may be easier for working parents than non-working parents.

Some parents did not take up the offer of home visits as the visits didn't fit in with the demands and logistics of managing a large family or other personal and family issues in their lives.

Elaine            *"Um just time really for me um because I was at placement at college, it just didn't fit in with my....I would have liked to have done it but it just didn't fit in with my actual life at the time."* (1065)

Elaine's attendance was slightly erratic and she did not socialise with the rest of the parents. During the interview she mentioned her reservations and what she perceived as the stigma attached to attending parenting courses. She had expressed her reason for attending the course as a means of increasing her knowledge with a view to developing her career. However, as the course progressed, she did discuss issues around her own childhood and issues in relation to her partner that had affected her views about parenting and parenting programmes.

Some parents expressed the view that aspects of the programme content did not reflect the age or developmental level of their child and others felt the content did not reflect the logistics of life in a large family. The following extracts provide examples of this.

Linda            *"It's simpler if... these course yes, when a person has got one or two [Linda is referring to the number of children she has and whether the content of the WSIYPP reflected this.] they're lovely but when you've got a mix between so many of them and put everyone in the place and everyone in an order and of course when it come to [child]." (813)*

Diane            *"I didn't feel that I needed it. Yeah because as I say the ages of what my children were at the time of doing the course there wasn't a need." (1108)*

Diane explained that she did not take up the offer of home visits because her youngest daughter was still a baby during the duration of the programme and there was a large gap between the age of the baby and all her other children. Diane also chose not to socialise with the other parents but although she missed a couple of sessions she did return and attended the final sessions.

The WSIYPP was aimed at parents of children between the ages of two and five years. The programme did provide scenarios with examples of parents with one or two children but Linda had seven children. She was quick to raise her children as the reason that she was unable to do the homework tasks or try out suggested strategies. Linda's personal circumstances as well as her current context helped to provide some insight into her views about the programme content. Linda had no support at home and one of her children had significant special educational needs which may have made it harder for her to complete the homework tasks or implement strategies. In addition having had her first child at the age of fourteen would have limited Linda's access to educational opportunities. This may have led to her negative views about the homework tasks. Being directed to attend the WSIYPP and the ongoing involvement of the court and social care systems with her children may have led to Linda's feelings of loss of control. Not completing homework tasks may therefore have given Linda some small measure of exercising control and power over what for her was a generally disempowering role as a parent.

Some parents referred to the time the sessions commenced and the length of the sessions as aspects of organisation which affected their attendance on the programme. The following extracts provide examples of this.

Sarah            *“because it was a bit early for me to get everything done.”* (334)

Kate            *“It was just difficult for me to get there on time.”* (302)

Some parents found the nine-thirty start time of the session too early. Others felt that the individual sessions needed to be longer as stated by Lucy *“If...even the time, the time slot could have been longer because like we always felt like we were just rushing off at the end”* (292). Some parents wanted the programme to run for longer. The timing of the session was chosen to fit around the hours of morning pre-school sessions. The length of the sessions was roughly the time the crèche was available. As most pre-school sessions were two and a half hours, this allowed parents fifteen minutes at the beginning and the end to take and collect their children from pre-school. For most parents this could easily be achieved as the pre-school groups were local to the children’s centre. The parents whose children were attending a pre-school group located further away used cars to transport their children as well as attend the WSIYPP so perhaps timing was not an issue for all parents.

One parent specifically raised the lack of involvement of her extended family in terms of the organisation of the programme. She expressed the view that it would have been useful for the programme deliverers to have had the opportunity to meet all the family members.

Nadia        *“the people that ran the course I would have liked them to sort of met the family and like just have like a general questionnaire for each member of the family, just to find out um to get some feedback. Like it would be nice to know your positive points and your negative points.” (277)*

Nadia seemed to be asking the researcher to find out from her family what they saw as her positive and negative parenting skills. In addition to this she seemed to want the whole family to be involved but wanted someone from outside the family to facilitate this. Nadia had two step children in their late teens and she had moved into their family home. Although she had a good relationship, particularly with her step daughter, this may have reflected her insecurities with the different members of the family and her need for further reassurance.

### 4.3.3 Sub-theme 1.3

#### **Knowledge: I wanted to know more**

The third sub-theme, I wanted to know more within the key theme of practical reasons for getting involved, referred to some of the parents' reasons for attending the programme which were to gain knowledge, to learn and develop their parenting skills.

In section 4.3.2 Nadia had looked to external agencies to involve her family and provide the reassurance she needed. Another parent, Tracy, sought the involvement of her partner to make sense of the tension she perceived between her religious beliefs and the message from the group discussions. Tracy chose to bring her husband to one of the sessions. She had expressed the view that she found some conflict between the messages put out by her church and the message obtained from the group discussions. She wanted her husband to attend one of the sessions to provide the opportunity to further discuss and perhaps resolve this tension. When asked what difference it had made for her by having had her husband attending a session she responded:

*"I really liked it, um I think for him, I think I'm in between, it's difficult because he could obviously see the benefits but it took quite a while to convince him that all this stuff made sense." (275) [She elaborated further saying,] "...and it was working because he grew up with very strong*

*parents and very disci you know, they're just very good at parenting and all that so he has sort of a set way of thinking.” (278)*

It was interesting to note that Tracy started to use the word ‘discipline’ and then stopped mid way perhaps reflecting a change in her understanding of the word. Both Tracy and her husband acknowledged using a punitive approach in managing their daughter’s behaviour which reflected a style of parenting they had experienced and which they equated with ‘good’ parenting. The following extract illustrates Tracy’s acknowledgement that her frustration at what she perceived as a disrespectful attitude on her daughter’s part led to the adoption of a more punitive style of managing her daughter’s behaviour:

*“and because I need to calm down, because I used to get really frustrated like just the shock of her disrespect. Um so I put her by the door, you know tell her what she’s done and um then I come back and you know we’ll... mummy’s not happy because you did what ever and she’ll sit and she says sorry so easily um and we’ll pray together um and say I forgive you, God forgives you, you know that stuff and so....and then that’s it really.” Tracy. (417)*

Tracy’s husband’s attendance led an added dimension to the group discussions around the issue of using a physical chastisement such as smacking. Smacking is discussed in greater detail within theme five in which parents reported a change in their behaviours following the programme.

Lucy *“I wanted to have views on the way other people brought up their children because I had no one to guide me and um he was having a lot of temper tantrums.” (235)*

Nadia *“It was very good for me because I felt there is help out there, I’m not alone, I’m not the only parent that sits here thinking we’re doing such a bad job. Um I enjoyed the sessions, I enjoyed meeting other people in the same position as you um and it also taught you to think a bit more different like....like the guilt thing, its okay to feel guilty, that.....you know that is part of being a parent. I think you know, you do carry the guilt with you”. (183)*

Over the weeks Lucy had shown a greater desire to share the many difficulties in her life. She had experienced a difficult childhood and had left school with limited literacy skills. Her literacy difficulties had persisted and she was concerned about her inability to read stories to her children. She was worried that as they grew older, she would be unable to help them with their school work. During the interview the researcher interpreted Lucy’s responses as showing a desire to accomplish something which probably related to the difficulties she had experienced with completing and accomplishing other things in her life.

A number of parents had expressed the view that their reason for attending the programme was to gain clear guidance on the best way of bringing up their children. Several parents clearly lacked confidence in their parental role. For some it may have related to their own experiences of a lack of good parental role models and so their reasons for attending the WSIYPP were to gain knowledge

and feel confident as parents. If parenting is not an innate skill but a skill parents acquire through their own experiences of being parented, then there will be many parents who need support to enable them to break the negative cycle caused through their own limited and perhaps negative experiences of being parented as children.

#### **4.4 Theme 2**

##### **Parenting, Am I doing it right?**

Many participants attributed their attendance to underlying emotional reasons. Within this theme there were three sub-themes which ranged from a sense of loneliness, opportunities for socialisation and 'me time' that the programme enabled, to a need for reassurance that they were using the 'right' approach in their interactions with their children.

##### **4.4.1 Sub theme 2.1**

###### **Need for reassurance**

Some parents' responses suggested that their attendance may have been to reassure themselves and provide confirmation that they were doing well as a parent. Elaine talked about having never been a mother and needing reassurance. There appeared to be a contradiction between Elaine's initial reason

for attending the WSIYPP which had been, she said, to support her career and her subsequent reason of needing reassurance for her role as a parent. She specifically appeared to use the group to reassure herself that she was doing a good job as a parent. The following comments illustrate this.

*Elaine*            *“So yeah it was just reassurance really that you know you’re on the right path.” (338)*

*Tracy*            *“it was reassuring to know that here were some things that I guess I am doing well.” (243)*

The researcher believed that this need for re-assurance confirmed the low confidence and low self-esteem many of the parents appeared to have.

This need that parents expressed showed itself in a variety of ways. For some parents it was the awareness that other people had similar concerns, or that they had the same difficulties with their children’s behaviour and that they were no worse a parent than others. Some parents found that associating with others within the group who were also step-parents enabled them to feel safe to discuss their concerns. Lauren had a difficult relationship with her step daughter and although both Elaine and Lauren’s partners had children from previous relationships they also had a child with their current partners. These mothers

appeared to gain reassurance from being able to discuss the dynamics of the step-mother and step-child relationship with others in a similar situation.

Many parents did not describe their own childhoods as being positive experiences. They often had a limited extended family so there were few people to re-assure them that they were doing the 'right thing'. For them, the parenting group aspect of the WSIYPP appeared to fulfil this role.

Those parents who took up the offer of a home visit expressed the view that this was to re-assure themselves outside of the group and confirm and validate their parenting skills within the home context as illustrated by the comment, "*to make sure I was doing it right*" Lauren. (947)

*Sarah*            "*Like before I just played because I wanted to, I liked to but now I know the importance of it you know. So it gives me a kind of, 'its okay, go ahead' feeling you know.*" (710)

The WSIYPP actively encouraged parents to play with their children in a non-directive way. During role play and subsequent discussions it was apparent that some parents found this was a new approach. They wanted reassurance that they were indeed following their child's lead and becoming more flexible in the way they were playing with their children.

Some parents wanted more in the nature of general as opposed to specific reassurance. Jack, for example, expressed the view that his child's cognitive development was advanced for her age and he was seeking reassurance about this. Sarah seemed to feel that confirming the importance of play in the programme content and delivery legitimised the time she was already spending on play. For some parents it involved a completely new way of thinking about play.

Lauren        *“Make sure I was doing it right, like the play and things like that because it felt a bit alien at first, like letting Scarlett lead because it felt...like just with the example of the house, like oh no you've got to have the bath in the bathroom do you know, it just felt...I wasn't...I don't know I've never been....never that's the way it's got to be do you know”. ( 947)*

Lauren appeared to have changed not only her understanding of what play was all about but also her expectations of what her daughter's play could entail. Lauren previously held a rather rigid view of how to 'play' with toys and would support her daughter in placing, for instance, toy objects in the 'correct' place. It may have reasonable to expect Lauren, who was a school nurse by profession, to have a greater understanding about play but her worries about being a 'good' mother and assisting her daughter to achieve in what she perceived as the best possible way could at times have led to her being very directive.

Lauren        *“I wanted to guide her to make better choices and push her...I want to push her to do the best that she possibly can possibly do and not just be left you know. I want her to thrive and that was...that’s what I wanted to do, that’s why I done the Webster Stratton course because I wanted to make sure I was putting her on the right route because I was always very unsure.” (144)*

During this extract Lauren may have reflected her own thoughts about her upbringing and her desire for her daughter to make better choices than those she thought she had made for herself. Lauren was also acknowledging her feelings of always feeling ‘unsure’ which reflected her lack of confidence. Her use of the phrase “*not just be left you know*” in relation to her daughter’s ability to achieve may have reflected what she perceived as her own lack of achievements and what she wanted her daughter to achieve when compared to her own perceptions of what she felt she had achieved.

#### **4.4.2        Sub-theme 2.2**

##### **Lack of confidence - I’m not sure!**

Lack of confidence in their abilities as parents often emerged either overtly or as a sub-text throughout the views expressed by the parents. Parents often spoke about feeling unsure of how to respond to their children’s behaviour and not being sure about the best way to deal with their children’s behaviour. These parental insecurities are not uncommon and many, if not all, parents feel these from time to time. However, for many of the parents attending the programme,

the lack of extended family support or a supportive network within the community could have contributed to their attending a programme such as the WSIYPP. This programme provided the support they felt they needed to develop their skills on how best to bring up their children. The following extract provides an example of this.

Elaine        *“To see other ways I could perhaps deal with situations as [daughter] gets older and she gets a bit more challenging.” (267)*

As has been already discussed Elaine’s initial reasons for attending related to her career. Her partner had an older child who whilst he lived some distance away did visit and stay with them during the holidays. He was mentioned when discussions around step children occurred. When talking about her daughter as she got older Elaine may also have been referring to her relationship with an older step son.

#### **4.4.3        Sub-theme 2.3**

##### **Loneliness - It’s nice to get out**

The third sub-theme related to parents’ expression of feelings of loneliness and a wish to expand their social circle by forming friendships. There was the social aspect of being part of a group and this was a contributory factor for many parents continued attendance at the programme. Some parents talked about

having decided to take up the offer of home visits as they were lonely. The following extract from Sarah provides an example of this.

Sarah        *“I like to have her company around” and “it was a nice thing to have her.” (975)*

Sarah was new to the country and felt isolated. She had ended up living in a highly socially deprived area. The home visit in her case had also enabled her to be supported in developing more knowledge of some of the facilities and resources within the community.

The sub-theme of loneliness and the desire for company appeared across the data set in terms of parents’ responses during the interview. Interestingly there was an alternative view offered by some of the parents who did not take up the offer of home visits, citing lack of time as the reason. It could be that for these parents socialisation was not a paramount issue and these parents were the ones who chose not to meet up with the rest of the group. They may have felt less isolated and had a supportive network within their community.

The majority of parents found the group supportive and non-judgemental. Views expressed during the sessions suggested that the parents had often felt judged

by others and found the lack of judgement by each other and the feeling of being in it together very supportive. Some parents formed friendships during the course of the programme and at the time of interview were still in contact with each other. The following extracts illustrate this sub-theme of loneliness and opportunities to meet and socialise with others.

Kirsty        *“Um it got me out, it got me doing something, um it got me meeting new people.” (270)*

Sarah        *“just be with some other mums and have like yeah some chat and yeah and learn yeah that’s why I came back.” (289)*

A number of the parents were clearly lonely and lacked a social network. For some the group appeared to meet this need.

Valerie        *“We all had the same problems when we came to the course....we’re not going to shout at each other if one of us rings the other up and say look we’ve got a problem.” (1264)*

The feeling of being part of a group and the reassurance gained from each other led to some of the parents feeling very happy about the non-judgemental nature of the others attending the programme. The researcher felt that Valerie had in the past been judged negatively about her child’s behaviour. Her attendance also

related to concerns she had about her child's behaviour which are addressed further in sub-theme 3b.

For some parents, attending the WSIYPP addressed their feelings of loneliness and isolation while for others attending the sessions provided time for themselves. These different emotional reasons are illustrated by the extracts below.

Nadia        *"It was like going to a therapy session and having release and it was great having their support, whether it was laughter, claps or a sticker." (652)*

Lucy         *"I think because it was something for me to be doing like I'm here on my own all day and I just go and pick the kids up from school and I think it was my time. That was my ...you know everyone has their own little hour, that was my time, that I got alone." (309)*

Time for one self was something that parents almost seemed to feel guilty about admitting. There was some overlap between sub-themes 1b but this sub-theme was more about the opportunities for socialisation that the group provided. Parents expressed the view that it was not just time to spend on their own or away from their children but time to spend with other parents which they viewed as important. A forum to share their concerns with each other seemed to enable some parents to leave the sessions feeling happier. This was reflected in the

way they interacted and communicated with their children which in turn affected their children's behaviour. These mothers clearly did not have time without their children. The ages of the children meant that they would be at home or attending a pre-school group for only a couple of hours a day. Possibly the lack of extended family (including a lack of baby sitters) and the socio-economic status of the families in the area where WSIYPP was run may have led to financial constraints for many of these families in terms of availing themselves of alternative modes of child care.

For many parents spending all their time in the role of 'parent', can lead to others identifying them primarily as a parent or specifically a 'mother.' If these mothers see their whole identity as 'mother' and then find they have to go on a parenting programme because they are not a 'good enough mother' then it is not surprising that their self-esteem and self-efficacy is low and that they see their child's behaviour as resulting from their belief of not being a 'good enough mother'.

#### **4.5 Theme 3**

##### **My child's behaviour reflects on me**

If a parent's identity is primarily that of a parent or mother and if their child's behaviour is seen to be 'challenging' then this can be seen as a reflection of them and as such they may well see themselves as a 'bad parent/mother'. This theme

reflects the parents' expression of the issues relating to managing their own and their child's behaviour. Some parents viewed their children as an extension of themselves and therefore felt their children's negative behaviours reflected on themselves and their parenting skills.

Within this theme, three sub-themes were identified. One related to parents' concerns about their children's behaviour, another related to parents expressing the desire to behave differently making them a 'better' parent, and the third described the changes they observed in their children's behaviour after having attended the WSIYPP. Sub-theme 3.1, referred to parental concerns about their children's behaviour and the need to develop parenting skills. This differed from theme 2.1 the need for reassurance which reflected parental needs for confirmation of their parenting skills. The former related less to their need for reassurance and more about their need to develop practical ways to enhance their parenting skills. My child's behaviour – Help! referred to their feelings and emotional needs as parents.

#### **4.5.1 Sub-theme 3.1**

##### **My child's behaviour – Help!**

This sub-theme reflected parents' views about wanting support with managing specific concerns about their children's behaviour. In Sarah's case there were

concerns about sleep. Others expressed more general concerns about their child's behaviour as the following quotes illustrate:

Lucy            *"I was having a lot of temper tantrums with Callum and I just wanted to see if there was things I could do to help with the temper tantrums really at home and out."* (237)

Valerie        *"boisterous boy."* (202) *"Could not control him"* (226) and *"vicious with other kids."*(406)

A number of parents had received regular home visits from Positive Parenting. These visits had been established following concerns by the parents or other professionals about the children's behaviour or their own parenting skills. Valerie was candid in her reason for attending the programme which was to do with specific concerns about her son's behaviour.

Valerie        *"We weren't on our own going through these tough times what does this mean and God knows when you've got a kid you cannot control that is a tough time."* (1276)

This parent was expressing how hard she was finding her life at this time. She may also have been referring to a lack of personal control in her life at the time as she and her son were living with her parents. Her use of the word 'we' suggested that she thought the other parents in her group were finding things equally difficult and were attending the WSIYPP for similar reasons to her. She

was clearly expressing the view that she found having other parents, who had similar concerns about their children's behaviour as she did very supportive.

#### **4.5.2 Sub-theme 3.2**

##### **I want to be a better parent**

This sub-theme reflected parents' awareness and acknowledgement of what they perceived as their limited parenting skills. They also expressed a desire to want to become better parents as the following quotes illustrate.

Valerie        *"My parenting skills were very limited."* (469)

Sarah         *"I wanted to learn also how to be a better mum because I was feeling sometimes overwhelmed from the problems with the children."* (445)

Valerie was quite candid about what she perceived as her 'limited' parenting skills. She lived with her parents who were very involved with her son. Valerie needed to develop confidence in her own parenting skills to enable her to assert herself in managing her son's behaviour within the context of living in an extended family.

Being a 'better' parent or better mother was not always overtly discussed but often implicitly implied in parents' narratives. The metaphor 'better parent' aptly described what lay behind the motivations for attending the programme. Some parents reflected on their own upbringing and their desperate desire for things to be different for their children. Lucy, for example, said, "*I don't....I don't ever want to be late for Callum for school*" (180) referring to collecting him from school. Kirsty also exemplified this when talking about her relationship with her mother and concluded by saying. "*I wouldn't want my daughter to grow up hating me like I hate my mum*" (155).

For some parents, their own childhoods may have led to receiving limited support from their own parents. The researcher felt that Lauren's use of language and the repeated use of 'I want' contained an underlying subtext about what she did not want for her daughter. Her anxieties, the difficulties with her step daughter and her own perceived low self-esteem as a child and later as a parent seemed to suggest a desperate desire for none of this to be repeated with her own daughter. By attending the WSIYPP, she may have felt more able to stop the cycle.

Parents saw the home visits as an opportunity for direct teaching, for them to be 'taught' how to play with their children and be a 'better' parent to their children.

The home visitor would model non-directive play and descriptive commentary during the home visit. The following extracts illustrate this.

Nadia            *“Um I was struggling with Sam’s behaviour um and I...I... I had um we were watching videos on descriptive play and I was struggling because it was....it was like a change in something you’ve done and I was having difficulty dealing with the change and it was good err for [home visitor] to come in and um she brought an imagination out of Sam that I probably had never let him bring up if that makes sense, yeah.” (711)*

Kirsty            *“She showed me how to play with [daughter] and [son] more effectively and that and um stuff.” (767)*

During the sessions it was clear that some parents had found the non directive play and the use of a descriptive commentary quite difficult. This difficulty was observed by the researcher during role play sessions through the embarrassed giggles or silence of the parents. The researcher felt that many of the parents lacked confidence and this way of ‘playing’ may have been unfamiliar to them because they had not experienced it with their parents. The home visits provided the extra reassurance that some parents needed. Despite the parents’ view of the group as supportive and non judgmental, some parents may still have found it difficult and embarrassing to express that they were unsure of what they were doing. Visiting these parents at home, without the rest of the group, may have allowed them to feel safe to try out something that they found difficult and uncomfortable. The parents may have had less anxiety about making mistakes in

private rather than in the group situation. For parents the opportunity provided by a home visit enabled them to observe their child playing with a skilled adult, observe how their child responded to this approach and then practice it themselves within the safety of their own homes.

### **4.5.3 Sub-theme 3.3**

#### **My child's behaviour has changed**

Within this sub-theme was the desire to share strategies that had been successful. There were differing views as to whether changes in their child's behaviour were due to developmental changes or whether they were due to a change in parental behaviour. Some parents had expressed significant concerns about their child's behaviour. However, when interviewed, they talked about how from one week to the next they could see the strategies they tried working, and they wanted to come back to share their successes and hear about others' successes.

Valerie        *"If you ignore him and if you walk away he soon comes running back to you, which is brilliant because he never did that before.....now it really does work." ( 563)*

The parents' responses suggested that some were initially sceptical about the strategies introduced during the sessions. Possibly the parents had not expected

to see any changes at home. This scepticism appeared to be dispersed by the successes parents experienced individually once they observed the effect of the strategies within the home context.

Tracy            *“When you tried something it actually worked, Oh that’s quite nice. So it was nice to actually see things work.” (248)*

A contrary view was expressed by some parents who having attended the WSIYPP reported no changes in either their own or their child’s behaviour.

Kirsty            *“I wouldn’t really say I’m any different, I might be a little bit tougher sometimes you know but I wouldn’t really say it’s changed me but I know what you’re meant to be doing and how you’re meant to be doing it but sometimes I..I find it hard to do that so.” (392)*

This mother’s responses were inconsistent as on the one hand she was reporting little or no change in her own approaches but on the other hand, she appeared to be acknowledging that she felt there was an alternative way she could do things. Kirsty’s responses suggest ambivalence and may reflect her troubled childhood and relationship with her parents as illustrated by the extracts below.

Kirsty            *“I just stayed out... out of my parents’ way a lot because you know. Not a very good childhood but there you go. I had my son when I was like 21, because I went to get the house and the council*

*wouldn't help me but if you've got a kid then they give you a place so I had a kid you know [laughs]... just for all the wrong reasons and then when my son was about five months old I met [partner], moved in with him um my mum said I couldn't look after my son so I wanted to prove to my mum that I could like get on and do things because I did have a string of boyfriends every week, so I left him there thinking I'd get him one day but then that day never come and he's been there ever since. So yeah, that's my childhood". (128)*

Kirsty *"I hate my mum and I wouldn't want my kids to hate me so if I do the opposite maybe then that's right you know, which means I don't always tell my daughter off and I let her to do what she likes and she does rule me [laughs] but I wouldn't want my daughter to grow up hating me like I hate my mum so there you go" [laughs]. (151)*

Kirsty's own childhood was impacting on her as a parent. Her desire to be different from her mother appeared to be preventing her from wanting to change as, in her view, change could lead to becoming more similar to the mother she was so keen to be different from.

Kirsty's reported rationale for attending the WSIYPP did not reflect concerns about her children's behaviour or her skills as a parent but rather expressed a deep need for company and friendship. The researcher's role as an Educational Psychologist had led her to get to know Kirsty and her family circumstances (Kirsty's children are currently placed on the Child Protection Register). Her own relationship with her mother and the desire for her relationship with her daughter to be different prevented her from wanting to implement positive and effective boundaries for her children. She expressed a desperate need to be 'liked' by her daughter and equated being 'liked' with letting her daughter 'rule' her.

Some of the parents reported the changes in their children's behaviour as being linked to their growing awareness that this was a result of a change in their own behaviour. This will be discussed further in theme 5. The following extracts illustrate this perceived connection by parents.

Diane *"It's a lot calm...I mean they were fairly calm before but it's a lot calmer now um I've noticed since using the positive praise I don't ....I now don't get so much of the 'oh do I have to' if I ask them to do something. Um I'll get it occasionally un again as I say like with [son] coming in of an evening, if I say to him no sorry you've got to be at nine tonight, 'oh, oh alright then' and there's less of the arguments. With it as well um and they're a lot more polite towards each other. "* (793)

Valerie *"I didn't realise the effect it would have on....on him. I knew he would change slightly but I didn't realise it would change this much, which is good because it means that whatever I'm doing right is kind of rubbing off on him...."* (976)

This WSIYPP had not specifically been aimed at parents of children with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties but a number of the parents who attended had had concerns about their children's behaviour. The parents whose children had been described as presenting with some degree of SEBD all reported a change for the better as can be seen by Valerie and Lucy's comments.

Lucy *"he now plays with other kids....like other kids lovely".* (497)

Lucy was clearly reflecting pleasure at seeing her child playing in what she perceived as the way other people's children played.

Some of the changes parents talked about related to developmental changes in their children's social, emotional and behavioural development as their children grew older. Whilst Tracy stated that her daughter's understanding of praise and discipline had changed, Tracy's own behaviour had changed too. Instead of using her previous punitive approach she had started using a more positive approach and this was probably reflected in the changes she saw in her daughter's behaviour. Tracy also appeared to have changed her expectations of her child's behaviour to more realistic ones.

Tracy        *“What I notice is she understands praise and she understands um discipline, so she responds very well to praise and I think because that's increased her behaviour changes a lot quic...like it's a lot easier to convince her to do something if you say oh you'll get a sticker or um so I don't know if she's actually changed but I think because we've gotten into a system, easier to change behaviours of certain things whereas before I wouldn't ...I wouldn't really know how to do that. Um so like brushing her teeth she really hates that it's such a big fuss, but now because its like oh you'll get a sticker afterwards, she'll let me brush her teeth and it's just an easier process.” (619)*

Tracy actively acknowledged that not only had her expectations changed but also as an outcome of attending the WSIYPP she now understood how to change her

child's behaviour. The time between the parents deciding to attend the programme, attending the programme and being interviewed constituted a significant length of time in a young child's development. Therefore some parents like Valerie reported a number of aspects such as the developing language of her child and changes in her own behaviour as having led to a change in her child's behaviour.

Valerie        *"his behaviour has changed twofold in the last year a) because I was able to change myself and how I felt with him myself as a parent because of the Webster Stratton course and the power it gave me back and b) because he has developed and his language is now coming on tenfold um which has kind of had a direct result in...in pre-school."* (887)

Whilst Valerie acknowledged that developmental changes had happened, she gave this as the second part of the reasons she thought her son's behaviour had changed. She was clearly aware of how she could influence and change her child's behaviour. She attributed this awareness to having attended the WSIYPP. Valerie appeared to be suggesting that she felt more effective and in control as a parent in her relationship with her son.

The researcher felt that whilst some of the changes in children's behaviour reported by the parents could be attributed to developmental changes, parents

more frequently attributed changes in their own behaviour leading to changes in their children's behaviour. This is illustrated by these quotes:

Elaine        *"come on in leaps and bounds but then I think some things as well it's the way I perhaps react to things."* (812)

Lauren        *"because I'm laying boundaries down, I'm um being more firm with her, I'm not letting her get away with things".* (571)

*"interacting more so she responds more to me and I'll respond more to her now".* (575)

Lauren clearly attributed the changes in her child's behaviour to changes in her own interactions with her child. This was seen in both boundary setting but also in the positive interactions she was initiating with her daughter leading to her receiving positive feedback.

Theme three, 'my child's behaviour a reflection of me', was discussed with reference to three sub themes. The first referred to concerns parents had about themselves as a parent, the second referred to concerns about their child's behaviour and the final sub-theme considered parents' perceptions of the changes in their children's behaviour following attendance on the WSIYPP. Changes in parents' behaviour became apparent both during the duration of the

program as well as after the programme had ceased and is discussed further within theme five.

## **4.6 Theme 4**

### **Importance of play: when it comes to play let him take the lead**

This theme referred to parents' growing awareness and understanding of the importance of play. This included not only understanding *why* play was important but also *how* to play with their children.

Lucy *"I didn't realise [play] was a big thing"* (678)

#### **4.6.1 Sub-theme 4.1**

##### **My child plays differently**

This sub theme refers firstly to a change in how play was seen by the parents, secondly a change in parents' priorities in relation to their children's play and finally their observations of changes in their children's play. Following attendance on the WSIYPP, the parents talked about actively playing with their children, participating in child led non-directive play and using descriptive commentary. The following extract provide an example of this.

Valerie        *“If I knew then what I know now I would have made a conscious effort to be quite different in my way of playing with him. (1023)*

As parents' views on the importance of play changed so did the way they played with their children. Prior to this, for most of the parents, play was an incidental activity for their children which gave parents time to do other things.

Lucy            *“I did play with them but not as much as I should have, I was more interested in keeping the house tidy and making sure everything was all perfect like.” (631)*

Nadia          *“before I did the course I'd probably show him something and then walk away not realising that really you should stay to encourage it”. (477)*

Many parents reported that initially they felt it was important for their children to play with things the 'correct way' and felt that by doing this they were supporting their child's development. This may have been a reflection of their own low self-esteem, the aspirations they held for their children or how play had been modelled (or not modelled) to them as children.

Lauren        *“I'd get more involved I'd say now. Before I'd just give her something....like horrible to think that you didn't play with your daughter properly and that but now we get down and play and it doesn't matter whether the bath goes with the house and it doesn't matter we'll play together.” (508)*

Once parents were aware that playing with a toy in a more child-led way was not going to hinder their children's development, they seemed to feel comfortable in supporting and encouraging rather than discouraging more imaginative and unconventional play. A number of the parents actively started making time to play with their children. This again appeared to relate to parents' growing understanding of the role of play in a child's development. This contrasted to parents' views prior to the programme where they viewed their children playing quietly as a chance for some 'me time' or time to do house work.

Generally the parents perceived that their children's play had changed as had their own approach to how they played with their children. In particular parents who had received Home visits reported changes in their children's play following the home visit. The following extracts provide examples of this.

Kirsty        *"Um I improved on my play, um but um yeah I suppose I did, I learnt to play with the kids a lot better and not be so controlling, like descriptive play." (770) "Yeah more descriptive play because that's quite hard to do like descriptive play like the kids pushing their car, you're pushing it fast you know". (774)*

Nadia        *"I'd say [son] gets 10 minutes of my time every day, um [elder step-son]...well you don't play with [elder step-son] but you do things with him." (510)*

The change in parents approach and attitude to play may have related to observing their children playing with a skilled home visitor. The home visitor was able to reinforce many of the concepts discussed during the programme in the context of the parent's own house and to enable the parents to learn in context. Although parents had been asked to play with their children as a specific home activity, to see this modelled in their home was a means of showing them how they could be flexible with what was available within their own home.

For some, the home visit legitimised ways of playing that some parents may have felt uncomfortable with and enabled parents to be more aware of how play could develop and extend their relationship with their children. Not all the changes can be attributed to the home visit and the programme. Lauren also attributed her changed attitude to an increase in self-esteem which had grown when she went back to work. Some parents such as Nadia and Lucy, had begun to dedicate set amounts of time for playing with their children. For both these mothers the amount of time they spent playing with their children was only ten minutes each day suggesting that prior to their attending the WSIYPP, very little time had been spent in playing with their children.

One of the reasons that parents gave for deciding to have home visits or the result of having had the home visits was either to develop skills and knowledge or

seek re-assurance. They expressed a desire for the affirmation that they were now helping their children to progress and therefore being a 'good parent.' The following extracts illustrate how they developed their understanding and knowledge to enable them to extend the play skills of their children.

Jack            *"Let her initiate play more, you know you probably don't know you're doing it half the time but you know you're really sort of initiating their play for yourself and play how you want it to be done um rather than"* (534)

Diane           *"Before it would be no you don't put the doll in the buggy like that, it's up this way round and the same doing the jigsaw puzzles."* (897)

Parents seemed to start to value play and therefore encouraged their children to develop their play whilst allowing them to take the lead. However, Lauren acknowledged that she had found it difficult. Her responses suggested she was now more comfortable playing with her daughter and I feel this may have related to equating playing with learning. This was highlighted by Lucy who at the time of interview had begun giving each of her children daily play opportunities with her. A number of the parents had also become less directive in their play. This also appeared to reflect a change in their understanding of how children learn.

Parents reported an increase in their awareness of their child's imagination brought about by imaginative play. The following extracts provide examples of this.

Lucy            *“When she came round It was like a whole new world, like I...I just...I'd never seen the kids, like it was the first time I'd actually seen them light up as much.” (933)*

Nadia           *“Catherine [home visitor] came round and she sat down with Sam and I realised what an imagination this 4 year old had of his own, he was on about dinosaurs and space ships and his story was so fascinating but I'd never let him have that much imagination because I'd say oh now we will play with the.” (440)*

Both Nadia and Lucy were referring to the play they saw their children engaging in when the Home visitor was playing with their children. The opportunity to observe their child playing with a skilled adult had surprised them in terms of the imaginative play they saw.

#### **4.6.2            Sub-theme 4.2**

##### **No changes in play**

This sub-theme refers to the views of those parents who reported no change in the way they played with their children following the home visit. Some parents perceived no change either in their children's play or the way they, as parents, played with their children.

Sarah [When asked did anything change?] *"I don't think so I don't think that changed no, no but it was a nice thing to have her."* (979)

Jack *"I wouldn't say anything sort of changed but...um yeah sort of reinforcing that what we were doing was ok."* (742)

When considering a reported lack of change some parents like Sarah stated that they were already playing with their children and using techniques such as descriptive commentary. Sarah had recently moved from Germany and described her own childhood as free and happy. Her attendance on the programme may have related to the isolation of relocating to a new country and area. This may also have been a reflection of what she gained from the home visit. Jack, in contrast, found the visit reinforced his view of his daughter's development although he initially attended the programme at the request of his partner who had also requested the home visit. I felt that without his partner's encouragement, Jack would not have participated or agreed to attend the programme or take up the offer of home visit as he did not really perceive he would gain anything.

#### **4.7 Theme 5**

##### **Relationships have got better**

This theme referred to parents' comments about an improvement in personal relationships within their families as an outcome of having attended the WSIYPP.

These improved relationships were reflected in the two sub themes, 5.1 'my behaviour has changed' which referred to parents' reports about changes in their own behaviour and had a bearing on the sub-theme in sub-section, 5.2 'I understand my child's behaviour' which referred to parents' improved understanding of their children's behaviour. Parents' reports of improved relationships are reflected in these extracts:

Lucy            *"it's because I've been able to control the tantrums from the kids I've not got uptight much more and even me and [husband] don't argue like we used to, which I used to blame him" (470). "Maybe it's because we're happier." (593)*

Elaine            *"listening to [Partner] more um helped, we sort of like talk more now and I listen to his views, whereas I used to get a bit protective like no its my daughter he was like yeah but she's mine as well you know, I was like well I want it done this way and he was like well I don't agree with you [laughs] so now its like well what do you think then and he'll say something and its like oh yeah okay we'll try that or if I still don't think ...well okay we'll... we'll try it but I think this way would be better um." (424)*

*"I think doing the course has made me realise I have got to be a little bit more um open and honest with him." (470)*

Jack            *"so she was sort of praising me, I suppose we learnt that on the course as well, we was praising each other." (613) ".....It's nice to have her support." (642)*

Individual relationships had clearly changed. The language used by parents to describe these improved relationships (such as, 'listening, honest, open, praising, blame') demonstrated more positive relationships in the parent's life as a whole. This generalisation of the language used in the parenting program sessions, suggests that it had been internalised by parents who were using it in their interactions with their children in their day to day lives.

Some parents reported using the approaches with all members of their family. Nadia used strategies with her elder step-son and Jack acknowledged receiving positive praise from his partner. Elaine felt she had become more tolerant and able to listen to other's views particularly those raised by her partner following her attendance of the WSIYPP. Many of these behaviours may well be a reflection of a happier and more confident group of parents.

#### **4.7.1 Sub-theme 5.1**

##### **My behaviour has changed**

This sub- theme referred to parents' reports about the changes in their own behaviours following the programme. Not only did their comments reflect a meta-awareness of what had happened before and what had subsequently changed but also an awareness of the change in their use of language and communication styles. The following extract is an interesting illustration:

Tracy *"I think that's one thing definitely that I got from the course is noticing my own anger and realising look I'm really upset now and I need timeout myself."* (461)

This mother had acknowledged her feelings of anger and developed an awareness of the need for time to deal with her feelings rather than respond to her child in a negative ways.

Diane *"Um and as I say, I'd walk in and the kids would have done stuff and I wouldn't see they'd done it because I'd only see the stuff they hadn't done."* (737).

Parents described how they had changed their behaviour as a result of attending the WSIYPP. The parents were very aware of this change in their behaviour. The following extracts provide examples of this.

Linda *"I started to talk to them more instead of" [shouting]. (888) "My behaviour towards them changed as well, not so much of oh get this, stop doing that, don't do that, you're not looking at them more."* (913)

Nadia *"I think he used to like punch me and kick me but because he did it so often I don't think I took any notice. (355) "He knows that some rules have been set in place now and he tries to push his barriers but he doesn't get a lot of leeway whereas before he got so much leeway, so much leeway". (400)*

Both these parents spoke about changes. For Linda the change led to more talking and less shouting. Nadia acknowledged that the setting of boundaries for her four year old had led to improved behaviours. Parents reported a reduction in the use of negative strategies to manage their children's behaviour particularly in relation to smacking. They spoke about reducing their use of smacking as a strategy and described what it had been replaced with. Lauren, for example noted that, *"every time she was naughty I'd smack her bum but now I use 1,2,3."* (396) One parent spoke about no longer having a naughty step or using the word 'naughty'. The following extracts provide some examples of this reported reduction in negative strategies as a change in the way parents' behaviour management approaches had changed.

Lucy            *"Or I would smack their hands and I ....it just...I think that's what teaches them to smack in the first place um er yeah."* (439)

For one parent, adopting a 'no smacking' strategy conflicted with her religious beliefs as shown by this extract.

Tracy            *"I think from a religious point of view it was very difficult for me to sort of try and figure out okay with my beliefs um how does it... I was always torn between is this right , you know am I getting too relaxed in my beliefs and taking on something else, so that divide was hard because I felt guilty should I smack, should I not."* (337) [her husband] *"he will still do the flick um but I'd say that since the course we're both."*(480) *"but um yeah I'd say he's its it he doesn't*

*do it as often. We used to do it literally every day at some point in the day, but now I'd probably say once a week or he yeah" (489)*

In terms of the WSIYPP the question of smacking was raised by the parents rather than the programme presenters. When smacking was raised the majority of parents became reticent about contributing to the discussion, suggesting that this was an emotive issue. Parents appeared to be embarrassed at talking about smacking. The programme presenters had strong views about not using smacking and these were shared with parents. Sensitivity was taken into account. The programme facilitator used questions to support the parents in exploring this issue further. Following discussions facilitated by the researcher, the parents were left to make their own decisions about smacking as a strategy to manage their child's behaviour. The interview data indicated that far more parents had used smacking as a strategy than was apparent during the delivering of the WSIYPP making their reticence to discuss the issue understandable. The Children Act (2004) attempted to clarify the law around smacking. However, smacking in terms of 'reasonable punishment' is still vaguely defined with any punishment that leaves a mark on a child being deemed as 'unreasonable punishment.' Cultural and societal agents (family, teachers, the media) have been responsible for promoting smacking as physical punishment and therefore unacceptable and this too could have contributed to reluctance on the parents' part to acknowledge that they used this as a strategy or to discuss it within the group.

Some parents, however, had had very strong views about smacking as was apparent with Tracy. Tracy found her views on smacking at odds with those espoused by her church, husband and in-laws. Her responses during the interview suggested a strong reduction in the use of what she termed 'flicking'. This use of flicking rather than smacking did suggest that she and her husband were aware of the negative connotations associated with smacking. Another parent, Lauren had asked to speak in private with the presenters after the session to share her views on why she thought smacking was an effective strategy and why she would therefore continue to use it. Her request to speak alone with the presenters in the absence of other parents suggested some degree of embarrassment and perhaps possible censure from other parents at using smacking. Although she expressed the view that she thought there was a role for smacking and she would continue to use it her desire to justify her stance perhaps indicated some underlying doubts about its use. By the time of interview Lauren appeared to have changed her views. Some parents reported having replaced smacking with other strategies.

Valerie        *"and of course then having done the course the ignoring thing has replaced the tapping on the hand thing and been so much more effective." (685)*

Following attendance at the WSIYPP parents' views on the use of smacking to manage their children's behaviour appeared to have changed for the better leading to them reporting of a significant reduction in negative behaviours.

#### **4.7.2 Sub-theme 5.2**

### **I understand my child's behaviour**

This sub theme reflected parents' views about how the programme had led to a change in their understanding of their child's behaviour. This in turn had led to an increased sense of confidence in applying their knowledge. In Diane's words, *"Recognising now what is actually naughty behaviour um to what isn't....what is child behaviour."* (1000)

Tracy *"What I've learnt is if I prepare her before rather than on the spot then that's.... if I think about the problems ahead of time yes I feel I am more confident, but if when I'm not prepared um I think it's harder in public."* (712)

Some parents changed their expectations and behaviour to better reflect the developmental levels of their child.

Diane *"I'm now recognising some of their behaviour is just child like behaviour."* (778)

Diane had become more tolerant of her children's behaviour and this could be seen through the way she responded "*A few months ago I would have done (had a go at her daughter for knocking a drink over) um but because I've now realised accidents happen.*" (863)

Parents reported developing more realistic expectations. For example, Diane talked about how she was more relaxed over situations such as the children knocking drinks over, and how aware her children were of these changes. During the interview Diane reported not being able to remember much of her own childhood. She was unsure if it had been happy. Her mother had died when she was four and a half and the family had been supported by Social Services. It is possible that Diane's initial concerns about minor accidents such as knocking drinks over were a reflection of her own childhood and upbringing.

Tracy had strong views on discipline and obedience that seemed to be rooted to some extent in her religious beliefs. She equated misbehaving with disrespect. Over the time she attended the WSIYPP she became more aware of her daughter's behaviour as developmentally appropriate. She also spoke of the need to teach her daughter alternative behaviours as opposed to just praying if she did not like how her daughter was behaving.

An outcome of attending the WSIYPP was that many parents changed their expectations of their children's behaviour. Some became more tolerant and others developed more appropriate boundaries enabling their children to understand behaviour expectations and adjust their behaviour accordingly.

Valerie        *"I've actually learnt to just say okay, whatever, its fine and walk away from a situation, which is then obviously...its allowed me to be more patient and say to him look if your having a hissy fit that's fine, you get on and have a hissy fit, I'll talk to you when you calm down. Whereas before I would have got worked up with him." (233)*

Diane         *"Without too many rules, too many regulations but they know that there is some and where they are." (310)*

Changes in their own behaviour was something that most of the participants reported. This showed an awareness of how they could deal with situations themselves and suggested an increased use of preventative approaches. This had generalised across other contexts, with Nadia, for instance, talking about using the approaches with her 14 year old stepson.

An increased awareness and knowledge led many parents to report a growing sense of confidence and self-efficacy in managing their children's behaviours and enabling them to be what one parent termed a 'better parent'.

They believed in themselves and their ability to behave in a different way. The following extracts provide examples of this.

Lucy            *“now I will just ignore him and I don’t really care if people are looking at me saying oh look she’s ignoring him, I’m not bothered what other people think about it now whereas before I did.” (722)*

Lauren        *“I’m laying boundaries down, I’m um being more firm with her, I’m not letting her get away with things.” (571)*

As the parents started to believe that what they were doing was ‘the right thing’ they began to trust their own judgment. Over the weeks Lucy’s strength in facing situations and turning round her home situation was very apparent. Poor literacy skills and education was something she was very aware of and this seemed to have impacted on her confidence. The programme increased her confidence and she talked about having calmed down and being better able to control her child’s tantrums and be less argumentative with her husband.

Parents reported what they had learnt from attending the programme and how this had helped them to apply their knowledge. The following extracts provide examples.

Valerie, *“Um but it has really has taught me to just take a lot more things in my stride. Um and I think ....I’d like to think I’m one of those parents that sits on the road quite happily, I will let him do so many things but there is a line and once he crosses the line then I’ll step and say.” (243)*

Lauren *“Your course guided me, it was a guide to being a better parent and um .....I wanted to do better, I wanted to be a bet....I wanted to be the best mum for Samantha.” (519)*

The parents appeared to have developed a clearer awareness about what could be a more effective way of responding although not all of them were able to utilise this as could be seen by Kirsty, *“I wouldn’t really say it’s changed me but I know what you’re meant to be doing and how you’re meant to be doing it but sometimes I..I find it hard to do so.” (392)* For other parents this clearly happened sometimes as well although there was an awareness about how difficult this was as illustrated by this extract.

Tracy *“I’m just more aware. There’s more alarm.....there’s more bells going in my head when things.....I mean I still slip up as you do but I think I’m just more aware. Some of the things on the course will just come back in certain situations.” (541)*

For some parents an overt acknowledgement of increased self-awareness and confidence was seen and shown during the interview by providing examples of changes in their own thinking.

Valerie        *“It’s just its helped gain more confidence in my abilities to say you know I can do this and if it goes wrong fine, it goes wrong and you just figure out what went wrong and work from there and he’s not going to be harmed. That’s the one thing that really did worry me, my god what am I going to bring up here, because of my own failings how is he going to be affected, which was my main concern. But because of the courses, um its given me the chance to just really look at what I am able to do myself and think you know, if I did something wrong one day I can put it right the next day, he’s not going to be affected too much, the important bit is whether I actually see what I’ve done wrong and whether I can put it right for the future.” (669) “So now I think no, I’m the adult here, I can....” (930)*

Both Valerie and Lauren now seemed to be saying that they believed in themselves as ‘good enough parents.’ This had enabled them to accept that if they made a mistake it could be rectified and it was not going to be detrimental to their child’s development.

The parents seemed to have developed a sense of empowerment, self efficacy and confidence in themselves as parents. They had started to believe in themselves as individuals in their own right and this enabled them to apply firm

boundaries. This increased confidence appeared to have empowered them to provide consistent appropriate responses to their children which in turn provided them with a feeling of control in terms of managing their children's behaviour. These parents had had such low self-esteem prior to attending the WSIYPP that opinions of other people had been more important to them than their own belief in themselves.

Elaine, for example, had seemed to feel empowered by comparing herself to other parents.

*Elaine*        *“and thinking well no actually I’m I’m quite good compared to.” (32)*

She was able to use this to reassure herself that she was a 'good' parent.

The general area of how children behave in public and scenarios such as a child having a tantrum in a supermarket and how other adults around may respond was discussed. This discussion related to both the feelings and impact it may have on the behaviour as well as how it may be inadvertently reinforcing the behaviour leading to an increase in it. The parents had developed sufficient confidence in their abilities to be able to ignore judgemental views of others. Lucy shared with the group the fact that previously every time she took her children into a shop she would buy them something. She was proud of herself

when later on during the programme she was able to share with the group the good news that she had ceased doing this. Parents reported a change not only in the language they used with their children, Nadia *“It’s”* (naughty) *not a word we use these days.”*(461) but also how they communicated with them.

Parents reported changes in the language they used to communicate with their children. This could be seen in terms of a move to more positive interactions with their children and an acknowledgement of the types of interactions they had previously had with their children.

Nadia            *“talking to them as opposed to snapping at them and thinking about as I say something what it actually means to the child um I don’t think I did that before.”* (592)

Linda            *“They had a shock to the system when I started talking to them more instead of... They were oblivious to that when the talking came, I wasn’t shouting anymore, I wasn’t like just going off into one.”* (888)

Kate,            *“rather than saying the word no.”* (361)

Many of these parents may have been using ways of communicating and language that had been modelled to them when they were children. Without the

benefit of direct intervention, such as offered by the programme, to see alternative ways of communicating and interacting modelled, it is possible that these parents may have continued with using language and communicative styles that maintained negative behaviours. These parents had changed to using more positive language and ways of communicating effectively with their children.

Diane            *“I don’t tell them that they’re naughty but what they are doing is naughty um or wrong. (686) “I thank them for it.” (806)*

Elaine            *“Learning to say things in a way that is not telling somebody.” (495)  
[talking about her partner]*

Not only had the parents changed the language that they used but also the knowledge to think strategically. This could be seen for instance by their awareness of the benefits of thinking before responding and thereby making an informed decision about how they would respond.

Diane            *“more wary about fights I pick.” (776)*

Nadia            *“whereas before I probably exploded without.” (583)*

Valerie        *“take a lot more things in my stride.”* (243)

For some parents their own awareness of how they would have behaved before as opposed to how they reported behaving at the time of interview suggested that they had changed their behaviour. This demonstrated an increased sense of self-efficacy in terms how they could deal with situations themselves suggesting that they had moved on from a more reactive to a more proactive approach in managing their children’s behaviour.

#### **4.8            Theme 6**

##### **There’s still no-one there for me**

This theme reflected what parents saw as the strengths of the programme as well as aspects they were less keen on. Within this theme the researcher has emphasised the group based nature of the programme and the role this appeared to play. Sub-theme 6.1, I’m not the only one, referred to the views provided by the parents of the power of the group as well as its disadvantages. Sub-theme 6.2, I developed skills referred to the skills the parents perceived they had acquired and could be contrasted with theme 5.1 my behaviour has changed as it specifically referred to the development of parenting skills. The final sub theme 6.3 raises the concerns of parents about the lack of ongoing support once the programme had ended.

#### 4.8.1 Sub-theme 6.1

### I'm not the only one

This sub-theme reflected parents' views about aspects of the group that had contributed to their attendance and participation with the programme. The following extracts provide examples of this.

Lucy            *"I wanted to finish it and I wanted to.... I wanted to get the views on everyone else and what they had done throughout the week and if it had worked for them and then let everyone else know what I had done to give them." (251)*

The group dynamics appeared to encourage some parents to want to come back. In the case of Lucy, it was a desire to want to hear what others had done and to share her progress in not buying her child a toy every time they went to the shops. In Valerie's case, being in a similar position to others in the group made her feel safe in that she felt they would not judge her. *"It was just nice to be able to talk with the girls because I knew they wouldn't judge me."* (1360) In reality the other parents did not have the individual specific difficulties that Valerie had with her child. However, they were tolerant of her difficulties and non-judgemental which contributed to her continued attendance on the programme.

Being part of the group with individuals who had the same concerns and issues as them was a view expressed by many parents. The social aspect of meeting

new people and making friends was deemed as important as the supportive nature of the group. The following extracts illustrate this.

Valerie        *“I’m also missing the social aspect of the group and just being able to bounce ideas off each other and nobody was holding grudges and nobody would look at you and think God you should be ashamed of yourself. We’re all in the same boat and it was such a relief to find people who were in the same amount of trouble with control as you were.” (636)*

Valerie’s expression of feeling ‘ashamed’ was her perception of others judging her on account of her son’s behaviour. She felt no one in the group attached any blame or attempted to ‘judge’ her. It is likely that she felt relief at not being the only parent who had doubts about her perceived parenting skills and the behaviour of her child.

Diane        *“I think is more helpful as a group.....because you bounce off each other.....Um it happened a few times where one person will say well I’m having a problem with whatever and someone else will turn round and say well what I’ve tried it. Um and I know not every....one thing will not work for everybody so its handy having different people who have had the same experience but tried different methods um being able to sit there and say well have you tried this, have you tried that um that, in that aspect I think its brilliant having a group.....You sit there thinking I’m not the only one that’s had that problem I mean as well, um and not only that you don’t feel as though you’re the only person if that makes sense.” (1012)*

The group supported parents by making them feel there were others in a similar situation perhaps reducing their feelings of guilt and self blame. They were able to reason that if others were experiencing similar problems then the cause may not lie with themselves or within their children. In addition some parents saw other parents within the group as experiencing greater difficulties than them. This provided these parents with a chance to reassure themselves that they were not doing such a bad job as parents as discussed within theme 2.

The parents expressed the view that the interactive nature of the sessions was something they particularly enjoyed. This was mentioned in relation to role play in particular. Role play was an integral part of the programme. Although some parents had found this helpful and enjoyable other parents had found it difficult. Three parents explicitly raised role play as an aspect of the programme they had not enjoyed.

Diane            *"I could see for some people the role play um if you're not comfortable with doing role play and that." (625)*

This anxiety at joining in role play is perhaps not surprising given the low self-esteem of many of the parents. The focus on wanting to be a 'better parent' did not necessarily mean that all parents enjoyed participating in role play activities geared at encouraging positive interactions with their children. For some parents,

role play in public could have added to their insecurities about their parenting skills and the idea of role playing in front of others could have been seen as a challenging experience.

In contrast, some parents specifically cited role-play as something they particularly enjoyed (Sarah and Kate.) Tracy stated that not only had she enjoyed the role play but she felt it had enabled her to develop empathy with her daughter

Tracy        *“Um I think the... I liked the role plays because that really helped me to empathise again like just sort of be in her shoes and think oh okay so this is how it feels when I do certain things, um that was really helpful.” (317)*

Role play tends to be something that people either really enjoy or strongly dislike. The rationale for including role play was to enable parents to practice skills and encourage feelings of empathy in relation to how their children might feel. Some of the parents who had stopped attending the WSIYPP had found the role play very uncomfortable and chosen not to join in, preferring instead to watch others.

Parents also expressed the fact that they liked the opportunity the group provided for forming friendships which were sustained outside the context of the WSIYPP. This differs from sub-theme 2.3. Sub-theme 2.3, loneliness, It’s nice to get out

which referred to why parents decided to attend the WSIYPP. This sub-theme however, refers to the unplanned outcome of the programme and also what sustained and maintained parents' attendance.

The 'programme style' was something that one parent particularly identified as something she did not like.

Diane *"It was very Americanised...um very happy clappy as I call it. Um and I think that you couldn't take it seriously when you was watching it and I think that was the only downside."* (617)

Some parents reported that they did not like the American scenarios. Diane also did not like the role play and during the sessions she had talked about attending the WSIYPP 'by mistake'. However, she continued to pass the information on to her neighbour who was unable to attend. This seeming denial of the need to take aspects of the problem 'seriously' was frequently mentioned during the sessions but during the interview a different view came across. Diane was older than many of the other parents and did not see a need to socialise outside the sessions with them. She had older children and was shortly to become a grandmother. During the sessions Diane presented as having few concerns and almost a feeling of not being sure why she was attending although a different view was expressed during interview. This view needs to be contrasted with that of other parents who said they found the scenarios and the subsequent discussions particularly helpful

which made them want to continue to attend the programme. In terms of the programme delivery, Linda had attended the same programme before and expressed her views about how she felt the personality and style of the programme deliverers could contribute to the success of the programme: *“It depends on who the instructors are.”* (661)

Another aspect that parents cited in terms of programme content was the homework which formed an integral part of the programme.

Linda [talking about a previous programme she had attended], *“if not you used to get double home-work next week, you do have to do the homework, it was like you do have to do the homework. Someone telling you you do have to do the homework, you do have to do the homework and I’ve got six of them like oh you’ve got to be kidding me, I have to do the homework.”* (582)

The programme deliverers were flexible in their approach, accepting verbal formats. Linda’s strong views should take into account her experience of having attended a previous WSIYPP. She reported that she had found a lack of flexibility by those deliverers. An integral part of the WSIYPP is practicing at home (home work). Linda’s strong views need to be contrasted with Lucy who liked being set homework tasks. Lauren had chosen to attend the WSIYPP and enjoyed the learning opportunities that the programme provided, which she had not had during her childhood.

Some parents raised what can be termed as 'group dominance' as a disadvantage of the WSIYPP. They perceived that some parents in the group were more vocal and tended to dominate the discussions at the expense of the others.

Kirsty *"Um I don't think we always got to cover things because everyone wanted to talk and then when they was talking obviously they'd go to a different subject and we kind of like got off the track sometimes and...but that's not really a disadvantage but you know you're meant to talk about one thing you know and as women do they change it to something completely different [Laughs] you know, so maybe if everyone stayed more on track maybe you might be able to cover more or go in depth a bit more of the answers and stuff".*  
(281)

During the delivering of the programme the dominance of some members was apparent to the programme deliverers particularly in area B.

However, for some of the parents, such as Linda, (who had already attended the same course but left half way through stating a lack of flexibility in the previous course) the need to be allowed to be a very vocal participant appeared to enable her to enjoy the interactions within the group and maintain her attendance. To overcome this, the group was frequently divided into two for activities. The explanation provided to the group was that this related to the age of the children

and since the three more dominant members all had older children they could be placed in a group together.

#### **4.8.2 Sub-theme 6.2**

##### **I developed skills**

This sub-theme refers to seeing the development of parenting skills through the application of appropriate strategies. The parents' construction of social approval was tied to learning and implementing strategies from the programme. This desire to develop these skills was one of the reasons the parents gave for attending the programme. This can be particularly seen in the way parents contrasted previous interaction and communication styles with their current ones. The extracts below illustrate this.

Tracy            *"That there's solutions thing that I couldn't really think about outside the box or any situations seemed that when you tried something it actually worked, oh that's quite nice. So it was nice to actually see things work."*(246)

When describing what made her come back each week Valerie also spoke about using specific strategies with her son such as praise and ignoring and talked about how she felt..... *"I then regained control"* (553). She also stated that *"which was exactly what the course said and it worked a treat"* (555). This

confirmed for her that these strategies were effective and supported her continued attendance.

Inevitably, as parents came to believe that they had developed better skills so their confidence and sense of self-efficacy increased. Lucy shared the difficulties she had experienced at school and her difficulties with completing studies and courses in the past. Her continued attendance seemed to relate to her desire to complete the WSIYPP and she was one of the participants who felt she would like the sessions to continue for much longer. This seemed to relate to wanting to share her successes with the group and to both maintain and continue to develop the confidence she was increasingly feeling.

Parents referred to specific strategies they had used as part of their development of new skills. These included using rewards, providing verbal praise, using positive language, being consistent, giving their children time as well as using ignoring, distraction and warning to pre-empt negative behaviours. The following extracts provide examples of the range and variety of skills and strategies parents used.

Lauren        *“I didn’t realise the impact um just the praise has on a child and the smile afterwards and I don’t think I had that at home, do you know I don’t think a lot of people are aware that constant praise is better*

*than a sweet or you know. I think it's just amazing and as you say it's so simple as well, you don't um...you don't realise and I really like that."* (496)

Linda            *"stickers, sticker programmes, I started, I get stickers every week".*  
(623)

Valerie         *"the ignoring strategy so works, its been a miracle cure."* (208)

Sarah           *"Distract them.....distraction usually very much helps."* (198)

Parents appeared to be able to implement the use of specific strategies. The opportunity to practise was provided within the sessions. Positive praise, a cost free effective strategy, seemed to have been a new idea for many of the parents. For some parents this may have related to their own difficult childhoods. This strategy was generalised to partners and older children.

Jack            *"Yeah I did say to Lauren, you know Lauren said you dealt with that really well and I was, you know I was like... so she was sort of praising me".* (613)

Jack and Lauren had internalised and generalised this strategy. Strategic ignoring was another strategy described by many parents as one which worked well. These strategies were easy to implement and showed that with a little guidance parents could be empowered to try something new that showed quick and effective results.

### 4.8.3 Sub-theme 6.3

#### There is only me

This sub-theme referred to the parents' views about the conclusion of the programme and the perceived lack of ongoing support. There was also a view expressed by some parents that the programme needed to be of a longer duration.

Nadia *“That once you’d left the programme um it...it seemed to come to an end and if you’d had a bad week with the children it was nice to be able to go somewhere and explain the problem and sort of know the right approach to do it and um I would have liked if possible, I know it’s difficult but that once the course has finished, like in three months time like just to have a one...oh we did, we had a one day refresher didn’t we?” (238)*

Nadia had also clearly discussed her feelings with some of the other parents about the need for the WSIYPP to continue.

Nadia *“I’m still in contact with a few of the other ladies and I think they feel the same, that um..um.. I don’t know like maybe once every three months or just um... just sort of a get together um to discuss what you’ve been doing in the last few months and how you’ve been coping sort of thing I think, I don’t know, I don’t know whether that’s feasible or.....”(248)*

Tracy *“Um It obviously can’t be endless but I think afterwards you still feel oh like something else or um and I actually started going to strengthening families and strengthening communities. Yes and that’s been really nice and I think...I think I like it, apart from the input and everything it’s just being in it because it’s so easy to forget a lot of these things in the heat of the moment um and um I think it’s just the ongoing support is really nice.” (850)*

Some parents seemed to feel that they still needed ongoing support and advice. The WSIYPP was a time limited intervention. Programmes such as this are considered cost effective as they are designed to be time limited (NICE 2006). The WSIYPP aimed to empower parents so that they felt able to deal with situations themselves thereby avoiding the need for long term interventions. This may well not have been achieved by all as some parents such as Tracy attended additional courses. It could be that attending the WSIYPP had empowered her to attend other courses. In terms of follow up sessions each group received one and most of the parents in area B were still meeting on a regular basis. Some of the parents in area A had started meeting but this did not include all the parents. One parent who had been keen to make friends ended up being excluded from this parent-led follow up group. This was because the other group members were concerned about how she was parenting her child and suggests an element of judgemental behaviour when there were no programme deliverers to mediate and facilitate parental involvements and discussions. This will be discussed further in chapter 5.

#### **4.9 Summary**

This chapter has considered the themes that developed from the analysis of the data. The first section of this chapter provided a justification for the method of analysis. The second section described the six key themes that emerged from the analysis of the interview data and the related sub-themes. Theme one

outlined the practical reasons parents cited for attending the programme. These included encouragement to attend the programme, the organisation of the programme and a desire to increase their knowledge in relation to their parenting skills. Theme two highlighted the emotional reasons many parents gave for attending the programme which were related to their sense of isolation, need for reassurance and a lack of confidence. For many parents the programme provided an opportunity for socialisation and for forming friendships and a time to socialise with other parents in the absence of their children.

Theme three highlighted the comments expressed by many parents of wanting to become a 'better parent' by developing the skills that they perceived equated with being a better parent. Parents reported a growing awareness and understanding of the importance of play and how to develop and extend this. Many parents reported a change in the time they gave to playing with their children and the way in which they played. However, some parents did not report any changes in play. An improved relationship with family members was reported by many parents as a result of attending the programme. These changes were linked to a perceived change in their own and their children's behaviours as a result of changing their language and the way they communicated with their children. Parents both demonstrated and reported an increased sense of confidence and self-efficacy in their own abilities as parents. The final theme highlighted how the group had contributed to the parents

continued attendance. These included the supportive and generally non-judgemental nature of the group. The theme expressed parents' views about aspects of the programme itself and concluded by discussing how some parents still felt a need for the group to continue. The following chapter will discuss these findings in greater detail.

## **Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions and Recommendations**

### **5.1 Overview of the Chapter**

This research was based on exploring parent's views approximately six months after attending the WSIYPP, a group parenting program. The program was based on a number of theoretical frameworks. These included Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977); Cognitive Behavioural Psychology (Beck, 1976); Developmental Psychology (Piaget 1963; Vygotsky's, 1978) Motivation theory (Maslow, 1968); Behaviourism (Skinner, 1953) and Attribution theory (Weiner, 1986).

The epistemological position espoused was that of social constructionism. Parents were interviewed in their homes and interviews were transcribed and analysed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke *ibid*). Six themes and associated sub-themes were identified. The analysis identified parents' desire to improve their parenting skills often motivated by their own experiences of being parented. Parents reported changes in their own and their children's behaviours and an improvement in family relationships six months after having attended the group parenting programme. Social isolation was a factor identified by a number of parents as was the lack of ongoing support following the termination of the programme.

This chapter discusses the overall findings through summarising the extent to which each research question was answered and the key findings. Following this further discussion of each theme and its relationship with the research questions and literature is provided. A critique of the methodology with particular reference to the sample selection, data collection and analysis, is addressed in relation to the strengths and limitations of this research. The researcher's role is discussed particularly in relation to this study and to ethical and reflective aspects. The chapter concludes with reflections, programme fidelity and implications of the findings in relation to educational psychology practice as well as suggestions for how these can be developed further.

## **5.2 Findings in relation to the Research Questions**

This section considers to what extent each of the research questions were answered and identifies areas for further research.

### **5.2.1 Research Question 1**

What reasons are given by the parents of pre-school children for attendance/non-attendance and completion or non-completion of a WSIYPP?

The findings clearly identified the reasons parents gave for having attended this WSIYPP. These included being encouraged by others, usually professionals working with the family and in the case of one parent by their partner. Some parent's attendance was due to the organisation of the WSIYPP in terms of time and the availability of a crèche. Other reasons related to a desire by the parents to increase their knowledge and confidence and the need for reassurance. Others reported attending the programme in order to seek solutions to some specific worries about their child or children's behaviour. The reasons parents reported for their continued attendance frequently related to their enjoyment of the programme. They felt they were learning and for some parents continued attendance was linked to a perceived change in their children's behaviour.

These findings clearly provided reasons parents gave for continuing to attend the WSIYPP. The researcher was less successful in finding out why some parents ceased to attend or refused to attend at all.

### **5.2.2 Research Question 2**

What advantages and disadvantages do parents identify following attendance at a WSIYPP?

The findings identified what the parents believed were the advantages of the WSIYPP. One of the most powerful advantages parents cited was the changes seen in both their and their children's behaviour as well as the skills they gained. The parents were also particularly keen on meeting other parents who shared similar concerns.

A small number of parents identified disadvantages as relating to the programme content, such as not liking role play or the 'Americanisation' of the programme. The most frequently cited disadvantage was the ending of the programme and the lack of ongoing support. This research question was fully answered.

### **5.2.3 Research Question 3**

What changes have parents noticed in their own and their children's behaviour since attending the WSIYPP?

Most parents reported substantial changes in both their and their children's behaviour and an improvement in relationships both with their children and in some instances with their partners. Of particular interest and relevance was the reported change in not only their children's play but also an increased awareness of the importance of play and changes to the way they played with their children. This research question was fully answered.

#### **5.2.4 Research Question 4**

What factors informed parental decisions to take or reject offers of support at home? Did parents who received home support a) acknowledge that home support made a difference and b) state in what ways it made a difference?

The reasons the parents provided for having taken up the offer of home visits was to gain reassurance. This referred to either general re-assurance about them as a parent or for some more specific reassurance about their child's development. The home visit linked to the area of play with the underlying rationale being to support parents in playing with their children. In terms of the second part of the question the responses can be linked to play. Most of the parents who received the home visits did refer to play. A number of them acknowledged that observing their child playing with a home visitor was an enlightening experience. This research question was fully answered by parents that received home visits.

#### **5.2.5 Research Question 5**

What changes have parents noticed in their confidence in managing and understanding their pre-school children since attending the WSIYPP?

Most parents identified and acknowledged changes in their confidence and understanding of their children. Included within this was an overt acknowledgement by them of a change in their perceptions of the importance that they now attributed to play. Some parents also reported understanding their children differently in terms of parental expectations in relation to stages of child development. This research question was fully answered

All the research questions were answered, at least partially, the majority being fully answered. The need for further research was identified from some of the findings and will be further discussed in section 5.6, under the heading of the distinctive contribution of the research and implications for future research.

The following section discusses in greater detail the identified themes in relation to the both the research questions and the literature.

### **5.3 Identified themes and their relationship to the research questions and literature**

This section discusses in more detail the relationship between the themes, the research questions and the literature. Table 6 shows how the Key themes relate to the research questions. As described in chapter 3, although data was initially organised for the purposes of analysis around the research questions, the

subsequent refining of themes was data driven. Thus the data does not easily map onto the individual research questions and there is an inevitable overlap.

**Table 6: A visual overview of the relationship of themes to the research questions**

<b>Research Questions</b>	<b>Themes</b>
<p><b>Research Question 1:</b> What reasons are given by the parents of pre-school children for attendance/non attendance and completion or non completion of a WSIYPP?</p>	<p>Theme 1 - Practical Reasons for getting involved Theme 2 - Parenting, am I doing it right? Theme 3 - My Child's behaviour, a reflection of me?</p>
<p><b>Research Question 2</b> What advantages and disadvantages do parents identify following attendance at a WSIYPP?</p>	<p>Theme 5 - Relationships have got better Theme 6 - There's still no one there for me.</p>
<p><b>Research Question 3</b> What changes have parents noticed about their own and their children's behaviour since attending the WSIYPP?</p>	<p>Theme 3 - My Child's behaviour a reflection of me? Theme 4 - When it comes to play let him lead. Theme 5 - Relationships have got better</p>
<p><b>Research Question 4</b> What factors informed decisions to take/reject support at home? Did parents who received support at home a) acknowledge that it made a difference and b) state in which ways?</p>	<p>Theme 2 - Parenting, am I doing it right? Theme 3 - My Child's behaviour, a reflection of me?</p>
<p><b>Research Question 5</b> What changes have parents noticed in their confidence in managing and understanding their pre-school children since attending WSIYPP.</p>	<p>Theme 3 - My Child's behaviour, a reflection of me? Theme 4 - When it comes to play let him lead. Theme 5 - Relationships have got better</p>

### **5.3.1 Research Questions**

The following subsections provide more detailed discussion of how the themes relate to the research questions and the literature.

### **5.3.2 Theme one- Practical reasons for getting involved**

This theme emerged in relation to the **first research question** which explored the reasons parents of pre-school children gave for attendance or non-attendance and completion of the WSIYPP. Some parents reported being encouraged by professionals who they had contact with, usually as a consequence of concerns about their child's behaviour or their own parenting skills. Another reason parents gave for attending the programme related to organisation of the programme which included suitability of the course, timing or the availability of a crèche. Parents also referred to a desire to learn more and enhance their parenting skills. There thus appeared to be both personal and organisational aspects of the programme that determined attendance. Personal gains in attending parenting programmes have been cited by many researchers. Barlow, Coren and Stewart-Brown (2003) for example, found that group based training programs not only improved the mother's self-esteem in the long term but in the short term improved her relationship with her partner. It also reduced maternal depression and anxiety/stress and raised self-esteem. The findings in this study concur with those cited in Barlow et al's., study which found that

parents identified personal benefits as a reason for attending the group parenting programme.

Attendance continues to be an ongoing issue for all parenting programmes; this can be seen both in terms of appropriate targeting and attendance and maintenance of attendance from parents who would gain from such interventions. Sheppard, MacDonald and Welbourne (2008) suggested that at times Children's Centres could become somewhat exclusive leading to the exclusion of groups with the highest need. This exclusivity could be seen as referring to staff in the Centre's perhaps, "being more responsive to new attendees who were most similar to them" (p. 69) These authors went further than this and suggested that the Children's Centres in their study had become friendship centres with no expectation to meet the needs of families identified as having 'high needs'. The authors suggested that those with the highest need, "were most likely to feel alienated" (p. 69). An interesting view is put forward by Irvin and Elley (2011) in their study on parenting values, education and class diversity. They suggest that there is a great deal of diversity in parental views about their children's education both within as well as across social classes. This diversity, based on different circumstances can have implications on inequality.

Although parents with the 'highest need' may share high aspirations for their children, their views about education, their own often limited and negative experiences and their varied circumstances as well as how others might perceive them can affect how they view attendance on parenting programs. Certainly the findings in this study demonstrated that a number of the parents who failed to continue to attend and could not be accessed for interviews were parents with 'high needs' who did not necessarily appear to 'fit in' with the rest of the group. Kirsty, whose attendance had been about her own desire to make friends and whose needs at the time of interview were yet to be met and who experienced some degree of ostracism by the group voiced, the view that perhaps the rest of the group viewed her values as being different from theirs. Whilst there were many issues in terms of Kirsty's parenting skills that could have led to a parenting programme supporting her, her primary need in her opinion was that of forming friendships. This may have better been addressed through an alternative intervention that overtly focused on developing her social and friendship skills. Alternatively, a more overt acknowledgement by the group of her needs through the possibility of an alternative approach, such as the principles that underpin the circles of friends approach (Newton & Wilson 2003) might have been more effective.

Generally parents found it easier to talk about what they liked about the WSIYPP as opposed to what they disliked. This may have related to the relationship

between the parents and the researcher built up over the course of the programme and discussed at some length in section 5.6. The parents identified few limitations which could have affected attendance. A couple of parents had found the timing difficult, one had not liked the 'Americanism' of the programme and one had also commented on the group dynamics with the observation that some participants had adopted a more dominant role in the group discussions.

Parents who missed a few sessions cited ill health as a reason. Only one of the parents did not complete the programme in its entirety. This was due to gaining employment half way through the programme but interestingly the participant's partner continued to attend the programme signifying the importance these parents placed on what they were gaining from the programme. The parents who dropped out of the programme and were unavailable for follow up interviews frequently had high levels of involvement from social care services. These parents were directed to attend by social care in marked contrast to other parents who were simply encouraged and supported to attend. This perceived coercion and lack of real free choice may likely have influenced these parents' initial attitude to the programme. It is therefore unsurprising that this led to resentment which was reflected in poor attendance by these parents. During the first session of the programme, the researcher did attempt to address this issue by acknowledging that whilst parents may feel they have been encouraged or ordered to attend the parenting program, the choice to attend or not to was one

they were free to make. Spoth and Redmond (1995) suggest that parents who are generally disinclined to attend parenting programs are more likely to cite convenience factors and the programs being of little value for them than those parents who are less disinclined. Spoth and Redmond advocated that more research was needed of the possible 'pre-dispositional and attitudinal factors' that influenced attendance at parenting programs.

Interviewing parents who dropped out or failed to attend would have been particularly valuable when considering the reasons parents gave for attendance or non-attendance. This was raised as an issue by one of the parents who did complete the programme but had been directed to attend the programme. She had started the same parenting programme previously and stopped attending half way through. In spite of repeated attempts to contact these hard to reach parents, they chose to disengage. Research by Patterson et al. (2005) found that up to 40% of parents who failed to attend parenting programmes could be classified as 'drop outs.' In this study, it was difficult to determine whether those parents whose attendance was sporadic or who cited practical reasons such as jobs or medical appointments as a reason for non-attendance could be genuinely classed as drop outs. However, unlike the findings in this study, Patterson et al. reported that some parents felt their needs had not been met by the programme content. The information Patterson et al. obtained from parents who dropped out was, with the exception of one parent, gleaned through questionnaires and

descriptive statistics. A richer picture might have been obtained through collecting parental views through the use of qualitative methods on these parents' reasons for dropping out. Thus an opportunity to delve deeper into which needs had not been met by the programme content was lost. It should be noted though that the current researcher was no more successful in gaining agreement from these parents to participate in interviews to discern their reasons for not attending the parenting program.

Research by Nicholson, Anderson, Fox and Brenner (2002) has shown that some parents identified with 'high needs' (such as low-income, single parents with limited access to resources and support, limited educational backgrounds and inconsistent schedules) may not be successful in integrating aspects of what they learn in group parenting sessions to their interactions with their children. For these parents, group parenting sessions may fail to meet their needs. Nicholson et al. showed that at-risk parenting behaviour could be reduced through parenting programs that took into account these parents' unique circumstances through individualised parent education programs.

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### **5.3.3 Theme two - Parenting, am I doing it right?**

This key theme emerged in relation to not only the **first research question** as to why parents had chosen to attend the parenting programme but also the **fourth**

**research question** which focused on eliciting parental views on what factors had influenced them to accept or reject home support. This theme referred to needing re-assurance both about developing and extending play with their children and promoting their child's development. Parents expressed the need for reassurance in relation to their parenting skills and a lack of confidence and insecurities about how to be a 'better' parent. There was some overlap between this theme and theme three, 'My child's behaviour is a reflection of me' and the sub theme within theme three, 'I want to be a better parent'. The researcher believed that these two themes although inter-related referred to two different views. The first referred to parents' views of being judged by others in relation to their child's behaviour and the sub-theme within theme three was a reflection of parental aspirations of wanting to be a 'better' parent. Parents voiced that the programme was seen by them as an opportunity to help develop, for example, their children's play skills.

This overlap of themes in relation to the research questions is evident throughout the research. For instance, the need to seek re-assurance emerged in relation to a number of different research questions. Some parents referred to feelings of loneliness and the desire to form friendships and thus extend their social network as reasons for attending the programme. This also influenced their decision to either accept or reject the offer of home support from paraprofessionals such as a family worker. When considering the reasons parents gave for their attendance

from one week to the next it was the 'group' aspect of the programme and the new 'friends' they had made. Parents specifically mentioned the non-judgmental nature of the group, the sharing of personal narratives and the feeling that sharing problems with others who were experiencing similar problems in a group context was an aspect of the programme that they particularly valued. Parents who wanted reassurance felt they had gained it. The strategies they had been introduced to were working and they wanted to find out more and share their success with others as illustrated by this parent's observation:

Lucy            *"I wanted to get the views on everyone else what they had done throughout the week and if it had worked for them and then let everyone know what I had done."* (251)

These findings were similar to those of Barlow & Stewart-Brown's (2001) who also found that parents valued the experience and supportive nature of being in a group with other parents who had similar issues. They found this bond was maintained after the programme had finished. These findings are substantiated by this research as parents continued to meet as a group following the completion of the programme. It would appear that parental attendance and the decision to seek home support as well was determined by a range of underlying social and emotional factors and that the group aspect of the parenting

programme was also a determining factor in parents continuing to attend the programme.

Literature on group parenting programs (Borden, Schultz, Herman & Brooks, 2010) suggests that the development of group processes may be a contributing factor to the effectiveness of parenting programmes. They suggest that “powerful group dynamics that evolve during the training of several parents/participants enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of the Incredible Years curriculum” (p. 233). They describe the stages of the development of the group and how this enhances and supports group cohesion, subsequently leading to increased engagement. The findings from the current research study were similar with regard to group cohesion and support. However, although the supportive nature of the group was viewed as a positive feature of the programme by many parents, for some the ending and their reflections of this were not so positive. In reality, perhaps the neediest parent who most needed the support of the group had been ousted as illustrated below:

Kirsty            *“maybe they do like secretly have meetings and just leave me out.”*  
(733)

Sheppard, MacDonald and Welbourne (2008) suggested that parents as service users can create their own culture. This can then prevent the function of organisations from fulfilling their roles. This observation was confirmed by the experiences of Kirsty in this study who herself experienced the same ostracising that the parents complained they had experienced from others. The group cohesion and the supportive nature of the group did not extend as far as Kirsty who the rest of the group felt had different values and expectations to them. This leads to questioning what it is that leads to some parents not benefitting as much as others from group based parenting program.

#### **5.3.4 Theme three - My child's behaviour a reflection of me?**

This key theme was reflected within a number of research questions, particularly **research questions one, three, four and five**. Within this theme parents expressed two reasons for attending the programme. One was due to explicit concerns about their child's behaviour and the other was an acknowledgement of their perception of their limited parenting skills. Parents aspired to be a 'better parent'. A reason parents cited for returning every week, was due to the changes they noticed in their children's behaviour and their desire to share this with the group. The group in this context played an important role in reaffirming parental confidence. The literature supports these findings of increased parental confidence and self-esteem. Gavita and Joyce (2008) when reviewing the

effectiveness of parenting programmes found that “cognitively enhanced parenting programmes improved the mental health of parents.” (p. 197)

The importance of the facilitator in developing parental understanding of the situations parents face should not be minimised. Whilst parents want and benefit from strategies, this dispensing model needs to be supported by providing parents with the confidence to ask why behaviour is happening. Miller and Sambell (2003) found that parents who attended parenting programmes felt that the facilitator had a role to play in determining the efficacy of parenting programmes. Miller and Sambell go on to suggest that the group relationship and the knowledge of “Knowing I’m not the only one” (p. 37) is frequently raised by parents as one of the benefits of group parenting programmes. This was very much a finding in this study as parents reported that having other parents in the group with similar concerns about their own parenting skills and about their children’s behaviours was supportive.

### **5.3.5 Theme four - When it comes to play let him lead.**

This key theme emerged in relation to the **third** and **fifth research questions** which explored what changes parents had noted in their own and their child’s behaviour as well as any changes in parental confidence towards their understanding and management of their children after having attended the

programme. Theme four reflected parents' changed awareness of letting children take the lead when it came to play. This change in the approach and value placed on play had been identified in response to a number of research questions and was also reflected within a number of different themes. All parents had changed their approach to play to some extent, with some more than others.

Lucy *"that's when we started playing"* *"Yeah, that's when I could realise that it wasn't stupid to dress up in front of the kids and things like that (laughs), put on what they wanted me to put on or make stuff or....it doesn't matter. Like he wanted....like he after then, he wanted me to make a um a train out of a bottle so I it looked rubbish to older people's eyes but he thought it was brilliant. (960)*

Parents reported joining their children in play, following their lead and using descriptive commentary. Parental reports of changes in their own behaviour and specific examples of these provided by the parents such as change in their language and the use of different strategies such as positive praise and selective ignoring indicated that the parents had noticed changes in their own and their children's behaviour post programme. These were also reported on six months after the programme suggesting the maintenance of the perceived and reported changes. A number of the parents openly acknowledged how changes in their

behaviour had led to changes in their children's behaviour. Parents had developed a meta-awareness of how changes in the way they interacted with their children had led to changes in their children's behaviour as illustrated by Lucy's comment.

Lucy           *".....before I'd scream and shout and then they'd just scream and shout back at me. Or anything like that. ....would shout back at them or I would smack their hands and I...it just...I think that's what teaches them to smack in the first place um err yeah."* (434)

Studies such as those by Barlow and Stewart-Brown (2001), Rogers-Wiese (1992) as well as national evaluations such as those undertaken by Lindsay et al. (2010) support these findings that changes in parental behaviour lead to changes in the children's behaviours. The findings from this research show that as parents were taught effective behaviour management strategies and cognitive behavioural strategies for changing the way they responded to their children, there was less reported parental anger and aggression and consequently a reported improvement in their child's behaviour.

The importance and value of play in the early years as a tool for developing children's thinking, reasoning, learning, language and socialisation skills is readily

acknowledged as can be seen through the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) which states that every child should have 'The right to play'. The importance of play within the early years can also be seen through the emphasis placed on play within the Practice Guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage (DfES 2007). As play is so fundamental and was raised by a number of parents it deserves a specific mention. Not only did parents report on how they now made regular opportunities to play with their children but also on how this joint play had changed becoming far less directive and more child-led. Research focusing on parenting programmes has not overtly measured or reported changes in play and it is possible that the researcher placed a greater emphasis on this than is generally the case within parenting programmes. If that is the case then these findings provide support for the inclusion of the importance of play and strategies for its development and extension in parenting programmes designed for parents of pre-school children.

The two parents who did not take up the offer of home visits from paraprofessionals related this to time constraints, the age of their children and not feeling they would benefit from it. For a couple of parents the opportunity to watch their children playing appeared to be an enlightening moment and changed the value they placed on play. When considering parents who did and did not take up the offer of home visits, there did not appear to be differences in

the value they placed on play as illustrated by this parent who did not take up the offer of home visits.

Sarah        *“If I played with them it’s so important to them you know.”* (618)

The aim of the home visit was to reinforce the strategies learned in the sessions in relation to play by providing parents with the opportunities to observe the practical application of these strategies and then providing them with an opportunity to practice. The paraprofessional would model using descriptive commentary whilst following the child’s lead. The importance of modelling as a learning strategy (Bandura 1977) is firmly established and can be seen in parenting programmes provided with the highest quality rating from the National Academy of Parenting Programmes (Lucas, 2011). Research on the use of paraprofessionals and home visits (Mykota, 2008) undertaken in a Canadian context in relation to the Parenting Plus intervention program provides some interesting insights. It suggests that areas that may need to be looked at in terms of effectiveness are how the characteristics of the home visitor can best effect change and what level of experience and education of the home visitor or professional is best matched to a particular parent population.

### 5.3.6 Theme five - Relationships have got better

This key theme emerged in relation to **research questions two, three and five**. The **second research question** explored the advantages and disadvantages that parents identified following their attendance of the WSIYPP and the **third research question** explored the changes parents had noticed in their own and their children's behaviour since attending the WSIYPP. The **fifth research question** considered the changes parents noticed in their confidence and understanding of their pre-school children as an outcome of having attending the WSIYPP.

This key theme referred to the perception of parents that relationships had improved. Parents reported changes in their own behaviour and in their understanding of their child's behaviour. These findings are consistent with the literature. For instance, Miller and Sambell (2003) in considering what support parents felt they needed found that parenting programmes provided parents with the ability to reflect on why their children behaved the way they did. Although there were methodological limitations in the Miller and Sambell study the findings support the view that enabling parents to understand their children's behaviour differently leads to them being able to reflect on why the behaviour is occurring.

This view on developing parental meta-cognition and thereby enhancing parental competency is supported by the literature. Havinghurst, et al. (2009) found that developing parents' philosophy of accepting and valuing their children's emotions led to a change in parenting practice to one that was more supportive of responding to children's emotions. According to Webster-Stratton (2004), as parents learn and are consistent in their application of nurturing strategies and effective communication skills, they foster pro-social child behaviour which in turn serves to strengthen the parent-child relationship.

This theme highlighted a change in parental attitude and behaviour. The interviews revealed the enjoyment parents received from the 'group' and the importance of this should not be underestimated. Despite many parents reporting change there were some who reported only limited changes. For one vulnerable parent little change was reported in her or her children's behaviour. This parent had chosen to attend the program for her own social needs and although others cited concerns about the behaviour of her children, she herself did not.

Parents spoke about the advantages that had been identified in terms of improved relationships. There was an explicit acknowledgement that the parent's own behaviour had changed and also that their understanding of their child or children had increased. This increased awareness had also led to improved

relationships within the family in terms of understanding others perspectives and improved communication.

Elaine: *“I think doing the course has made me realise I have got to be a little bit more um open and honest with him.”* [referring to her partner] (470)

The development of their own skills and the differences they were seeing in their and their children’s behaviour was viewed positively by the parents. Role play with the exception of one parent, was reported by many as a useful experience. Role play as a strategy can be seen as supporting parents in practicing the skills they are being introduced to use with their children. In addition, the use of role play also facilitated parents’ ability to empathise with their children.

Titi *“it really helped me empathise more with.....”* (256)

Havinghurst et al. (2009) found parents reported an increase in their ability to empathise with their children. Although they reported limitations to their study relating to expectancy bias the findings in this research support the view that enabling parents to understand behaviour differently will enable reflection about

the causes of behaviour thereby supporting the use of a cognitive behavioural approach (Beck 1976). Role play is an extremely effective means of providing this in terms of enabling parents to consider how their children may be feeling. The power of role play has also been cited by Law, Plunkett, Taylor and Gunning (2009) who suggested that parenting groups that incorporate role play were more effective than those that focused on general discussions. For some parents participating in role play can be difficult and may affect attendance. The married couple who ceased to attend had been very uncomfortable during role play and had on occasions chosen not to participate. Some parents, whilst acknowledging they also found it hard, joined in but for some it is possible that this aspect of the programme content may have contributed to their non-attendance.

This theme reflected the final research question which considered the changes parents noticed in their confidence and understanding of their pre-school children as an outcome of having attending the WSIYPP. This key theme showed that parents reported changes in their children's behaviour. This finding is substantiated by research literature on parenting programmes as an intervention for children with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties (Webster-Stratton, Rinaldi & Reid, 2011.)

The wider impact of parenting programmes and the improvements in relationships within the family was also highlighted by Barlow and Stewart-Brown

(2001) and are reflected in the findings in this study. Barlow and Stewart-Brown suggested that empathy in particular was important in relation to developing effective parenting skills. Many parents in the current study reported an increase in their ability to empathise, leading to improved relationships not just with their children but also with improving overall family relationships.

### **5.3.7 Theme six - There's still no one there for me**

This theme 'there is still no-one there for me' referred to the frequently identified limitation cited by the parents of the lack of ongoing support following the completion of the programme. For some this related to a desire to continue to learn and the need to feel there was support available as their children got older and their needs as parents in relation to managing their children changed. For many parents, however, it appeared that the end of the facilitation of the group was the main identified disadvantage. These parents had the feeling of still being alone. This finding is mirrored within the literature. Patterson et al (2005), for example, also found that parents in their study expressed the wish for the programme to continue for a longer period as a result of having found the group support helpful.

Aspects of the programme that the parents liked were also reflected within the sub- theme 'I'm not the only one.' Parents liked the supportive nature of the

group and the sharing aspect of the group with people with similar concerns and issues as illustrated by this view:

Diane:           *“I think its brilliant having a group.”*           (1023)

Theme six, ‘There is still no one there for me,’ merits further consideration. Whilst parents expressed the positive aspects of the programme in terms of the skills they had gained and an awareness of others in a similar position some parents also identified a social need that had been unfulfilled. Parent programmes are time limited. The aim is to support parents in developing skills and these programmes do not in themselves provide the follow up of emotional and social support that the vulnerable parents in this study felt they needed. The aim of the programme was to facilitate support between the group members and to empower parents to provide this support themselves. As has already been stated for at least one parent this did not happen.

### **5.3.8           Conclusions derived from the themes, research questions and literature**

Taking into account the views of many of the parents who wanted further ongoing involvement will need to be considered in future parenting programmes. One of the long term aims of early intervention is to provide the skills that will enable

parents to deal with future challenges. If they are still in need of this intervention then maybe this has not been achieved. Possibly what these parents needed was a gradual reduction in the support offered and the knowledge that regular follow up sessions were available if required. If the prime outcome for some parents is just the social side of the programme then any social intervention could provide this. What the parents seemed to be voicing was the shared concern about their children which may have led to them forming a support group after the end of the programme.

Sharac, McCrone, Rushton, and Monck, (2011) considered the cost effectiveness of providing parents of adoptive children with home based parenting programmes. Whilst they concluded that the programmes were not cost effective as measured by a reduction in children's problem behaviour, it was noted that the parents reported improved satisfaction with parenting.

The findings from this research share many similarities to Patterson et al (2005) who concluded that the WSIYPP was useful for both parents whose children were showing behaviours that were in the clinical range of problematic and those that were not. Patterson et al (2005) also found that parents who had found specific strategies helpful were more confident. Parents gained both from the course facilitators but also the support provided by the other parents. Some

parents had also felt they would have liked the duration of the programme to be longer.

Patterson et al (2005) found the programme was most effective if it targeted parents before their child “reaches the age of four” (p. 62). Interestingly this study found one of the few things the parents disagreed with was the ‘no smacking’ policy and they still disagreed with this afterwards. On one level similarities with this can be seen. However the parents interviewed by the researcher appeared to have moved away from smacking as a strategy they used to manage their children’s behaviour.

During group discussions of this emotive issue it was noted that some parents contributed less than was usual. This suggested perhaps an acknowledgement that societal norms may have influenced the views of parents and consequently their use of smacking as an acceptable strategy. As has been discussed earlier, parents acknowledged that they had used smacking but that they had reduced if not stopped using it and this did appear to be attributable to the WSIYPP. Another possible explanation of the reported reduction in verbal and punitive discipline (often characterised by inconsistent discipline) could have been that as parents reported using proven behaviour management strategies there was a decrease in their negative interactions with their children. This led to the reporting

of less verbal and punitive behaviour management strategies resulting in children reciprocating by displaying fewer behaviour problems. This finding supports that of Nicholson et al (2002) who reported significantly decreased levels of verbal and corporal punishment by parents after participating in a psycho-educational parenting program with at-risk parents of young children.

Reflecting on the overall findings it would appear that for these parents attending a parenting programme provided them with significant benefits. The opportunities to develop skills and apply strategies enabled parents to change the approaches they used with their children and develop confidence to discuss areas of difficulty such as whether to use or desist from using smacking as a behaviour management strategy.

As a facilitator of a parenting programme one of the researcher's underlying aims was for parents and children to develop a relationship that enabled the parents to enjoy their children and their children to flourish in line with the Every Child Matter's Agenda (DCSF 2004). These parents' experiences contributed to this and specifically enabled them to develop parenting self-efficacy, which Sevigny and Loutzenhiser (2009) argue, "has been shown to be a major determinant of competent parenting behaviours and as such closely linked to healthy child development." (p. 188). The fact that parents reported feelings of self-efficacy in

relation to their parenting skills six months after the programme concluded provides evidence that for these parents participation in the group parenting programme had been effective.

#### **5.4 Findings in relation to the theoretical framework**

Bandura (1977) suggests that learning occurs through observation, imitation and modelling. The session format of the WSIYPP not only allows but actively encourages this style of learning. Interestingly, role play was something that a number of parents raised during interviews. Many expressed strong views as to whether they enjoyed or did not enjoy taking part in this. Despite their reservations and anxieties some parents felt that role play had assisted them with empathising with their children to a greater extent.

From a social constructionist paradigm there is the belief that knowledge is constructed through interactions between individuals. This approach acknowledges the subjective and interpretive nature of any research. Throughout this research there has been an acknowledgement of the researcher's role in the research. This needs to be questioned further as not only may the parents have changed their constructions to reflect those of the researcher but the researcher would also have made her own constructions based on her interpretations. As parents deconstruct and reconstruct their reality their behaviour will change to

reflect this. Parents had clearly changed and developed their understanding and use of language with their children. This appeared to have developed through their facilitated interactions with each other.

This leads the researcher to question whether these findings would be similar if the programme content was not prescribed. Programme fidelity is cited within the guidelines and research but a move to a more flexible approach can be seen. Lindsay et al (2011) asserts that “Fidelity is important as deviation from the manual runs the risk of the programme in practice no longer being that which has been demonstrated to be efficacious. However, some degree of flexibility is inevitable, and is accepted by programme designers” (p. 85). The researcher, while adhering to the ‘principles’ of the programme, took into account the need for flexibility.

The strength of the programme perhaps was more about enabling parents to change by experiential learning through sharing experiences with a group they were able to identify with. The powerful nature of the group was identified by many as a considerable factor in what made them return and what they felt they gained from attending. This was perhaps one of the less expected outcomes. When considering the impact and possible therapeutic role of the group, findings from the fields of health and social research add further support to this. For

instance Goodwin et al. (2001) researching women with breast cancer found that supportive expressive group therapy, whilst not improving the survival rate did improve mood and the perceptions of pain. Beech and Hamilton-Giachritsis (2005), in the case of sexual offenders, found a relationship between group cohesion and freedoms of action and expression of feeling. It is possible to extrapolate that the parents in this study may have experienced the same sense of group cohesion and freedom of action and expression.

Lauren        *“we all had the same issues and the same problems at home and they weren’t exactly the same but they were along the same lines and we could all relate to each other’s problems” (864)*

Concerns about the WSIYPP raised by one parent related to the nature of the vignettes used. These vignettes, whilst providing the basis for discussions did not perhaps reflect the shared experiences of the parents in this particular context.

The general paradigm and structure underlying the programme is one of behaviourism. However, the process of change appears through a social learning process. Parents understood not only the *what* to do aspect but also the *why* to do it. The aim was to enable them to understand why a strategy may work,

leading to an increase in their confidence and belief in the intervention. Being able to return each week and share successes provided a more subtle way of modelling skills, thereby supporting other parents in using a strategy. Once parents heard from other parents that something worked they may well have developed greater confidence in hearing it 'from one of their own' rather than just the facilitator. The social constructionist paradigm allows for opportunities for change as a result of parental discourse, the articulation of thoughts, the interactions and discussions, all of which in this study supported the parents in understanding why the taught and modelled techniques would work.

## **5.5 Critique of the methodology**

The methodological criticisms highlighted in the literature review in chapter two apply to some extent to this research as well. The methodological limitations of the research will be discussed under the four headings; role of the researcher (5.4.1), sample selection (5.4.2), data collection and analysis (5.4.3) and finally ethical considerations (5.4.4.)

### **5.5.1 The role of the researcher**

The epistemological position of the researcher acknowledges the interpretive nature of the analysis. The researcher's role in the study was that of an insider (Robson, 1993). This could lead to potential conflicting roles and considerable

bias within the research. To minimise this effect the validity of the themes was carefully considered through critical conversations with supervisors and work colleagues. Increased validity within the research was provided through the use of the participants own words (Patton 2002; Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). Transcriptions were not only repeatedly read, but also listened to, enabling immersion in the research. Baxter and Eyles (1997, p. 509) contend that immersion “is a traditional way of lending credence to the theories that emerge from qualitative interviews.”

Immersion enabled the researcher to gain insight but there was an acknowledgement of the need for balance and caution. Baxter and Eyles (1997) go on to suggest that this can lead to the researcher identifying with the group. Inappropriate over identification could lead to a lack of objectivity. The researcher was aware of the need for vigilance and utilised the research diary. It could also be argued that the researcher’s training and experience of working with children and families led to an increased awareness of the importance of maintaining professional boundaries. Although the data was coded and the themes were identified by the researcher allowing for consistency of the method used, a limitation could be a failure to provide multiple perspectives from the parents themselves through discussions after the analysis of the data.

Re-visiting parents could have been one way to increase transparency. Whilst additional visits were not made, clarification techniques were undertaken during the interviews. Clarification had to be carried out carefully to ensure it did not influence the parent's responses by leading questions and comments. The transcription of both the interviewer's comments and questions as well as the interviewees responses provided transparency within this area. The relationship between the researcher and the parents will be discussed in greater detail in the next section.

### **5.5.2 Sample selection**

Limitations concerning generalisability of the findings need to be borne in mind. The geographical and cultural composition of the group needs to be taken into consideration. Although reflecting many inner and outer London boroughs it might not perhaps be reflective of the wider UK population. In addition the process of recruitment was limited to small specific geographical areas within an outer London borough. These areas had been identified as having a higher level of social deprivation and associated difficulties. Parents' attendance on this WSIYPP was for some a way of meeting their own emotional needs rather than as a response to specific concerns about their children's behaviour.

Greater insight would have been obtained through interviewing the parent who initially signed up but never attended and those who stopped attending after a few sessions. This would have assisted in identifying what factors contributed to a parent's non-attendance particularly in cases where some initial interest had been shown in the programme. Retrospectively the use of an interpreter for the parent for whom English was an additional language and whose proficiency was limited would have allowed her equally important and valuable views to have been expressed. Interestingly, this parent's attendance was exemplary and she maintained contact with participants after the programme. The issue of use and understanding of language in terms of programme delivery within a multi-cultural context needs further consideration.

With the exception of one parent, all these parents had chosen to attend. As such, their expectations were that the intervention would be effective and this could have affected their attitude towards it leading to the findings being a reflection of a self-fulfilling prophecy (Rosenthal & Jacobson 1968). The anticipated or expected outcomes of an intervention and the subsequent perceived success (the placebo effect) are well documented and usually attributed to Beecher (1955) and equally apply to interventions such as this.

### **5.5.3 Data collection and analysis**

Parents were not interviewed prior to attendance thus preventing a post intervention comparison of whether their perceptions and expectations in relation to the programme had been met. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews.

Focus groups would have provided an ideal method for documenting in greater depth the interactions between the parents and may have enabled them to comment on and respond to each other's contributions. Many of the practical and ethical issues would not have been a problem when applied to this research. There was a ready available group of participants as the group would have been the same as those who had already participated in the WSIYPP. Ground rules and confidentiality had already been discussed during the WSIYPP. The main reason for not using focus groups was the lack of an available crèche. The age of the children of the parents to be interviewed meant a crèche was a pre-requisite to such a process. Thus practical reasons pre-empted the use of focus groups.

The use of semi structured interviews fulfilled the aims of this research which were "to understand themes of the lived daily world from the subjects' own perspective" (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009, p. 24). The advantages of using semi-structured interviews to gather data was that it allowed for an interview agenda

that would enable the researcher to address those questions pertinent to the research.

Reliability, Boyatzis (1998) suggests, can appear in two forms, “consistency of judgement among various viewers and consistency of judgement over time, events and settings” (p.147). However, rather than considering reliability, as the methodology and data is qualitative it may be more appropriate to consider commitment, rigour, transparency and cohesion (Yardley 2000). Commitment to the topic by the researcher can be seen both in the narrow sense of providing the intervention as described but also through the wider application and the role of the researcher in working with parents.

Huberman and Miles (1994) suggest transparency can be achieved through the detailing of every aspect of data collection and analysis. The stages of data collection and analysis are clearly described in Chapter 3 which would, as suggested by Fereday and Muir-Cochrane (2006), enable a replication to be carried out by future researchers. In the case of the coding, the researcher chose not to use inter-rater reliability or independent coding, preferring to espouse the view of Yardley (2000) who suggests that attempts to reduce subjectivity by the coding of data by two people simply becomes, “an interpretation agreed by two

people” (p. 218). The researcher did however use in depth consultations with work colleagues and her Director of Studies.

#### **5.5.4 Ethical considerations**

From the start of the research ethical issues have been of paramount importance. The research was carried out within the British Psychological Society (BPS) guidelines. Ethical approval for the research was provided by the University of East London. Informed consent was gained at all times and participants were aware of their rights to withdraw at any time. Issues of confidentiality and anonymity were adhered to. Furthermore, during sensitive times such as when one parent was talking about a number of recent deaths within her family, the recording device was switched off as the participant’s well being was of prime concern to the researcher and overrode the need for data collection. The researcher felt the process of switching off the recording device showed participants that their personal needs were considered over and above the need to obtain data. In addition to this the researcher was able to provide information on appropriate organisations that would be able to provide ongoing support if necessary. The researcher would argue that this ‘missing data’ does not influence the validity of the data as these related to personal circumstances such as a husband leaving the family home as opposed to the content of the programme and the parent’s subsequent behaviours.

The researcher's concern that agreement from the parents to participate in the research may have been influenced by their relationship with the researcher, was addressed through repeated discussions and the distancing of the researcher from the programme delivery. This was also used to safeguard against participants 'wanting to please' the researcher. At each stage participants were provided with the option of withdrawal. This relationship, whilst providing some concerns, may also have been a strength as it could have increased participation and supported the participants in being more at ease with the researcher during the interview process.

## **5.6 Reflexivity**

The subjectivity of the researcher has been an issue of ongoing concern. In addition the researcher was aware that to some extent the interviewees might have been attempting to provide what they considered the 'correct response.' This was minimised through the use of the researcher distancing herself from the programme delivery.

Participating in a programme delivered over a number of weeks can enable a relationship of trust to be developed. The researcher acknowledged that during the delivery of the programme a degree of trust developed between the researcher and the participants. This may well be necessary for effective

programme delivery. Miller and Sambell (2003) suggested that the relationship between participants and facilitators will influence the outcome. Intrinsic to such programmes as the WSIYPP is the cultivation of a sharing and trusting relationship. Parents were keen to know about the researcher's own children. Furthermore during the interview one participant explicitly raised the wish to meet the researcher's children to see how they 'had turned out' as this to her would have been a reflection of the particular style of parenting espoused during the programme. This can produce tension as the relationship during interview can change to one of power asymmetry as described by Kvale and Brinkmann (2009).

The researcher constantly needed to be aware of her own social identity and background which was one that few of the parents had experienced. It was with some sadness that the researcher reflected upon the overt acknowledgment by some of the parents of the effects that their difficult childhoods had had on them as mothers.

During the research a reflective journal was kept. This was used during the programme delivery to record the thoughts and feelings identified during and after individual sessions as well as during the process of analysing the research data and writing the thesis. This enabled the consideration of the power

relationships between the participants and the programme facilitators as well as the vested interest the researcher had in the outcome of the research. The researcher utilised this diary to record her own thoughts and feelings but also pertinent comments by parents such as the parent who justified the use of smacking when she perceived her child to be in a dangerous situation (near a road). The diary enabled the researcher to reflect upon how this issue could best be considered in future sessions and enabled her to reflect on her own thoughts of how she would deal with this situation, record this and move on to consider it from the parent's view point.

The reflective journal has been used both to inform the writing of this research and to continue to act as a reflective tool to inform the researcher in relation to the parenting group the researcher is currently facilitating. The use of the research diary during the sessions allowed for some collaboration. This for instance could be illustrated by one parent who asked to discuss the use of smacking after the session and then during the interview acknowledged a change of strategy.

## **5.7 The Importance of Programme Fidelity**

In research, fidelity in terms of delivering an intervention as planned and prescribed in the same way to all participants while adhering to the theory and

goals underpinning the research are an important consideration. The Webster Stratton Programme provides clear aims, content to be covered and format of each session. However, in its directive the programme allows for flexibility in delivering the programme recognising that when it comes to parenting programmes one size does not fit all.

Whilst acknowledging that fidelity is an important methodological requirement of any sound intervention, the researcher believes that the importance of this relates primarily to the skill, knowledge and expertise of the facilitator in adhering to the theory and goals underpinning the parenting programme. The need to adhere to the programme directives was based on the importance of providing balanced evidence based information to parents in a manner that was easily accessible to them and that took into account local knowledge and circumstances. The programme directives allowed for flexibility. The skill of the facilitator will be of prime importance when considering the efficacy of the intervention. It is possible for a facilitator or practitioner to adapt a programme or approach whilst still maintaining the fidelity of the programme but the facilitator would need to understand the theory of change which the programme espouses, and know which parts of the programme need to be included. Knowledge of the particular needs of parents within a socially and economically disadvantaged community is crucial to how the programme is delivered if it is to meet the needs

of parents. A skilled facilitator is able to use a consultative approach to lead the direction of the sessions thus preventing the need to follow a prescribed script.

The researcher, an Applied Educational Psychologist, with a specialism in early years, had the skills and knowledge to use the programme flexibly whilst maintaining the underlying ethos of it. In order to enable parents to feel listened to, the need to respond at a local level was seen as paramount. Skilled facilitators can adapt the programme whilst retaining the key aims providing they are aware of the underlying aim of the sessions. Therefore in terms of ensuring fidelity the researcher adhered to the theory and goals underpinning the Webster Stratton Parenting Programme.

## **5.8 Distinctive contribution and Implications for future research**

The distinctive contribution of this research lies firstly in its local relevance. This research is specific to one small geographical area. This research explored the views of parents who had attended a particular, locally situated parenting programme. There was no attempt to measure changes in children's behaviour but rather the focus of interest was on how the parents own confidence and knowledge changed. If changes were found how would they manifest themselves in the parent's own behaviour? The research identified the impact on the parents

of their own childhoods and experiences of being parented and the subsequent impact this had on them as parents.

It is possible to hypothesise that the majority of parenting skills frameworks will have a positivist slant. This will influence findings and can lead to research looking at cost effectiveness and perceived changes in children's behaviour identified as problematic when measured by parents, schools etc. This contrasts with this research which was preventative in nature, aimed at working with families before such concerns were identified by agencies. Preventative programmes aim to empower parents through providing them with the skills and competencies to feel confident as a parent. These skills and competencies will enable parents to approach future difficulties and feel confident at attempting solutions. This approach can be compared to the Parent Adviser Model as described by Davis, Day and Bidmead (2002).

While acknowledging some of the methodological limitations, particularly the potential conflicting role of researcher and programme deliverer, this study has allowed some insight into parents' perceptions of a particular parenting programme.

Future research could perhaps address this by ensuring a clearer delineation of the roles of the facilitators and researchers. It would be beneficial to follow up these parents to explore the maintenance of strategy use and feelings of empowerment over a period of time thus enabling a longitudinal study. This research would be able to consider if the changes in parents' approaches, confidence and increased self-efficacy are maintained over time. The power of the group and its impact has continued to be of interest to the researcher in terms of the way group dynamics influence the programme.

The WSIYPP provides a structured format that was closely adhered to, hence providing programme fidelity. However, it is questionable as to what extent the outcomes are independent of the specific content and the instructional techniques of the programme. Is the change down to the therapeutic effects of group participation? This would be an area worth investigating further and an area of research for those interested in what brings about changes in those participating in group parenting programmes

The researcher's reflections led to personal research interests in three specific areas. Firstly, the impact of child led play and supporting parents in using descriptive commentary during this. The researcher believes that one of the most potent elements of the course is the change in parent-child relationships as an

outcome of shared play and in considering how this could be measured. Linked to this, but an area in its own right, is how parents can be effectively supported in the way they communicate with their children and the type of language they use. A third area of interest that arose directly from the findings of this study is the effect of loneliness on some parents and their interactions with their children. Possible ways forward could entail facilitator supported or led sessions to be held on a regular basis. Another possibility would be to devise a social friendship group for parents.

Some consideration needs to be given to whether parents need their children's behaviour to trigger or justify their attendance at a group such as this or whether having universal groups that are not contingent on children's behaviour might be a way forward, much as was the aim of Sure Start in the first place. In the recently published document supporting families in the foundation years the government recommends that Children's Centres should refocus on their original purpose to provide targeted support to help the most disadvantaged (DFE & Department of Health [DoH], 2011). This same publication also recommends the continued use of evidence based parenting programmes.

When considering the rigour of the research approach in future, the use of control groups as well as pre and post child behaviour measures may be worth

considering, perhaps using a mixed methods approach to data collection and analysis to provide a rich source of data. This is not without its own ethical challenges. Control groups prevent parents being provided with an intervention at the time they request it. If later they are offered the intervention this prevents long term follow up as both groups have received the intervention. Pre and post child behaviour measures are problematic in themselves, in terms of the who and where of the targeted behaviour being measured. Randomised Control Trials (RCTs) are considered by many as strengths of a study or the 'gold standard' of research (Carter et al., 2011). Systematic reviews of RCTs with parenting programmes have been carried out by many including Dretzke et al. (2009) However, a criticism of RCTs is that they can impact negatively or even destroy the relationship of the psychologist to the client/s (Walker & Sofaer, 2003). It can be argued that a research design that does this reduces the benefits of the intervention by reducing the meaning that the participant/s bring to the intervention. Fox et al. (2007) strongly refute the view that unless a researcher is involved in RCTs there is no point in researching practice.

Future research could consider how best to provide ongoing rather than time limited support for parents or the possibility of facilitating a support group that allows them continued access to some form of support. The measurement of parental confidence both immediately after attending a parenting programme and

longer term to see if there is any sustained change is another area that merits future investigation.

Two further specific areas of interest for future research could be firstly around analysing the language used by parents and secondly researching the impact of how parents play with their children through observational data, diary keeping and a longitudinal approach.

## **5.9 Implications for Educational Psychology Practice**

At a time of uncertainty about the future for many Educational Psychologists and a time of serious financial constraints, there is a need to prevent long term chronic social, emotional and behavioural problems and the subsequent financial cost of addressing these. The government acknowledges the current high level of mental health needs amongst children as well as adults and the need to address these through effective interventions (DoH 2011). Interventions such as WSIYPP are considered financially cost effective (NICE 2006). The unmeasured costs of not intervening for these families cannot be overestimated.

One could argue that in recent years there has been a plethora of early years consultants, advisors and super nannies, all of whom could easily deliver parenting programs. However, Asgary-Eden and Lee (2011) make a strong

argument for the uniqueness of what psychologists have to offer in relation to parenting programs and by extrapolation for EP practice. These strongly resonate with the researcher.

Firstly they contend that psychologists can play a key role in ensuring that these programs are offered to families. The EP continues to have a pivotal role in supporting parents through early identification and intervention as recommended in the 2011 Green Paper, Support and Aspiration: a new approach to special educational needs and disability. The researcher would argue that EPs are therefore well placed to identify which parents might benefit from parenting programmes.

Secondly, Asgary-Eden and Lee (2011) argue that psychologists are uniquely placed to advocate the use of evidence-based interventions and given their skills and training in communication, consultation and research should be at the forefront of the implementation of parenting programs. EPs extensive knowledge of child development, evidence based practices and 'translating' research into practice as well as facilitating group and individual interaction can provide a unique and value added dimension to this role.

Thirdly, Asgary-Eden and Lee (2011) suggest that psychologists can encourage attendance and reduce resistance by organising and leading focus groups, information sessions and drop-in sessions before the implementation of the parenting programs to allay any anxiety parents might have. EPs can also work with parents individually to anticipate factors that might interfere with parents completing the course and use any number of problem solving frameworks at their disposal (e.g. solution focused approaches) to address these.

The issue of dependency and the relationship between parents and professionals is one that is often considered within the role of the Educational Psychologist (EP). The support and supervision EP's provide directly and indirectly to families and paraprofessionals working with families takes into account issues around boundaries and empowerment. The long term and unmeasured aim of an intervention such as the WSIYPP is to provide parents with the skills and confidence to feel able to cope with life's challenges. EP's are well aware of the need for vigilance in regard to parents becoming dependent rather than empowered.

Psychologists can increase what, Asgary-Eden and Lee (2011), term as 'preparedness' for the parenting programs by looking at avenues for funding and applying for these in relation to space and materials.

Psychologists can set up training and supervision and peer support networks. One area where EPs have an important role to play is advising on the mode of service delivery in relation to parenting programs and the training, supervision and continuing professional development of paraprofessionals such as home visitors. In what is currently being evaluated and described as a national first (Hill 2011), the eight- week 'being a parent course' perhaps utilises the current Governments' aims of the big society. This parenting course is delivered by local parents who have been on the course and then been trained as facilitators by a psychologist. The evaluators are already citing the uniqueness of this way of harnessing and mobilising local parents as well as the innovative aspects of reducing the financial cost. Educational Psychologists are well placed to be not only highly effective in training parents as facilitators but also in providing ongoing support and supervision that such a role would entail.

Psychologists can also devise evaluation frameworks to measure outcomes. They can analyse data on, for example, the reduction of social, emotional and behavioural problems in children as well as the use of more appropriate parenting practices. This is particularly important given the current importance of providing impact and outcome measures.

The role of the facilitator in parenting programmes is imperative. Cotton, Reynolds and Apps (2009) identified and criticised the number of staff facilitating group work with parents who were not trained in providing adult education or trained in facilitating group work. In the present study, one of the parents who had attended the same programme but with different facilitators and failed to complete it appeared to suggest that some parenting programmes lacked flexibility.

One of the strengths of using EPs as facilitators is, as stated previously, their in-depth understanding of child development, group dynamics and adult behaviour and organisational factors. The ability to apply this knowledge leads to a flexible approach that enables parents to feel comfortable, listened to and valued. This supports continued attendance. It is interesting to note that Spoth and Redmond (1995) stated how important organisational factors and the program deliverers beliefs about implementing a parenting programme were and how these factors could have an impact on the effectiveness of the programme.

The Webster Stratton interventions are frequently aimed at families with children who have been identified as having social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. In addition the programmes are frequently used with families whose children have been identified as having neuro-developmental conditions such as Attention

Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). Community based EPs frequently work with families of children with disabilities whose behaviour has also been identified as an issue. The adaptation and the use of programmes with parents of children with special educational needs is one in which the skills of the EPs are well suited to the taking on of a leading role. Their knowledge and expertise will enable them to tailor parenting programmes to meet individual and group needs. The researcher, for example, is currently facilitating a programme targeted at a universal population but where half of the parents attending have children with significant special educational needs.

The EP's role in intervening to prevent children and young people from developing social, emotional and behaviour difficulties can be carried out at both an individual level and a systemic (school) level. In addition to supporting and delivering programmes for parents EPs can assist with the application of this knowledge within early years settings to support them in supporting children and their families.

The varied role of the educational psychologist and the move to becoming more of a community psychology service has been cited by many and research such as this would support the values of this continued broader role. (Davis & Cahill, 2006; Stringer, Powell & Burton, 2006). The researcher believes and applies

many of the principles encapsulated within this research at a far wider level. The researcher has the opportunity to supervise and offer support too family workers who can raise the profile of child led play and foster and develop increased parent child interaction. Through extensive training, which the researcher provides, these philosophies can be developed and their practical application encouraged. The Green Paper, Support and aspiration: A new approach to special educational needs and disability (DFE 2011) and the review of Educational Psychology training are both indicative of a broader and more innovative role for Educational Psychologists in the future.

Reflecting back on the interviews with the parents, one salient feature was how many wanted a different experience for their children. Interventions such as this can support them in changing their own children's experiences and future life chances. This view is expressed by Field (2010) in his observations of what some families may need. "For other families, support is needed to improve the quality of relationships in the home and ensure that the children grow up with a model of positive and nurturing parenting which they can pass on to their own children" (p. 34).

So what are the future implications for EP practice in relation to parenting programs? They can best be summed up by Asgary-Eden and Lee (2011). "As

psychologists, we have the ability and responsibility to promote evidence-based parenting programs and facilitate their successful implementation to effectively serve the children and families in our communities” (p. 174).

### **5.10 Reflections and Conclusions from the research**

The study set out to gather the views of parents who had attended a parenting programme. The findings highlighted ways in which parents expressed how they had benefited from their attendance and participation in a group parenting programme, the WSIYPP. The parents reported valuing the support for their parenting role as a consequence of attending the group, a sense of self-efficacy in relation to their parenting role and the ability to use newly learned strategies in their parenting role. They also reported an increase in their awareness and ability to understand their children’s behaviour and empathise with their children. A reduction in the use of inappropriate strategies such as shouting and smacking was also reported by some parents.

Parents provided some reasons why they chose to attend a parenting programme and how attendance for them increased their confidence and enabled them to apply new skills and strategies to effectively support their children’s development.

Reflecting on the parental interactions, both during the parenting programme and the subsequent interviews, a number of key areas have resonance to the researcher as powerful factors affecting feelings, thoughts and behaviour. These are parents' experiences of being parented, loneliness, and the effectiveness of parent groups in supporting parents in the development of feelings of self efficacy in their role as parents.

Some of the parents' own childhoods and the subsequent memories and reflections were not positive ones. The subsequent impact on the parents' parenting style, led to different hopes and aspirations for their own children.

Kirsty: *"because you know I hate my mum and I wouldn't want my kids to hate me so if I do the opposite maybe that's right you know."* (151)

These difficult childhoods inevitably contributed to a lack of support from their extended family leading to loneliness and the need for friendship. For some friendship was an outcome,

Lauren *"yeah, definitely I class them as friends."* (918)

Tracy            *“She is definitely becoming a really good friend.”* (841)

For others feelings of loneliness persisted. Attendance for at least some of the parents provided them with the strength, confidence and belief in themselves as parents to make a difference for their children.

### **5.11            Summary of this chapter**

This chapter has drawn together the themes and research questions and considered how these reflect both current literature and the theoretical framework adopted in this research. This research reflects what a very small group of parents gained from attending a group parenting programme, the WSIYPP. The methodological approach has been reflected on and concerns have been identified. Despite these, this small group of parents provided evidence of how attending the parenting programme had led to a change in their views and behaviour in relation to themselves and their children which continued six months after attending the parenting program. The distinctive contribution of the research lies in its qualitative, contextualised, community approach. However, the implications for future research and specifically for future educational psychology practice can be extrapolated more widely.

The relationship between the researcher and the participants has been discussed. The acknowledgment of the subjective role of the researcher, while contributing to a relationship of trust, may have contributed to methodological challenges thereby affecting the validity of the findings. This study was about giving parents of pre-school children a 'voice' through exploring their views about attending a particular parenting programme. It would therefore be fitting to conclude this research by giving the parents the final say.

Valerie        *"They have to do this course because it will give them the knowledge to just think I can do this." (648) "It literally has changed the way I think as a parent." (516)*

Nadia         *"It makes me realise how much I think I learnt from the course and I'm not just saying that to you know butter it up or anything but no I did, I learnt..." (804)*

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**Table 2 (appendix 1) - Studies for critical appraisal**

<b>Research Study</b>	<b>Key research goals/questions/ Hypothesis</b>	<b>Methodology</b>	<b>Participant Sample selection</b>	<b>Reliability/ Validity</b>	<b>Findings</b>	<b>Conclusions/ Recommendations</b>
<b>Study 1:</b> Barlow & Stewart-Brown (2001) <i>Understanding parenting programmes: parents' views</i>	This study aimed to compliment the quantitative data gathered so as to gain a better understanding of parents experiences of the 'Family Link Nurturing Programme.'	Programme Pilot cluster randomized controlled trial. Semi-structured interviews	<i>n</i> = 11 All parents in school children aged 4-7years offered Family Link Nurturing Programme	Limited no of participants interviewed. Limited no of fathers and parents from ethnic minority groups	Brief interventions can have a long term beneficial effect. Parents felt support by the other parents. Parents regained control and increased their ability to empathise and identify with their children.	Further research with ethnic minority groups and the views of fathers who take part in parenting programmes.
<b>Study 2:</b> Broadhead, Hockaday, Zahra, Francis & Crichton (2009) <i>Scallywags – an evaluation of a service targeting conduct disorders at school and at home</i>	To evaluate the effectiveness of the 'Scallywags scheme' in reducing conduct problems in school and at home	Multi-component early intervention programme. Two behaviour inventories completed by Parents & Teachers pre, post & six month post intervention.	<i>n</i> = 411 Parents of children aged 3- 7years identified as having conduct disorders	Action research. Research limited to a Caucasian semi-rural community.	Children showed significantly reduced conduct problems	Future research could use a matched randomized control trail. Longitudinal research needed.
<b>Study 3:</b> Chislett & Kennett (2007). <i>The effects of the nobody's perfect program on parenting resourcefulness and competency</i>	Does completing the programme improve parenting resourcefulness, parenting practices, confidence in the parenting role and knowledge and use of community resources?	National Education and Support Programme. Pre-test, post test and follow up 2 months post intervention. Parent-Child Interaction Scale. Parent Resourcefulness Scale.	<i>n</i> = 71 Parents of children under 5 years who were young, single, socially isolated or had limited formal education and income	Lack of control group. No observations used.	Increased levels of parenting resourcefulness, better parent-child interaction, more effective child management skills.	Recommendations to be made to the programme suggested. Larger Sample and longer follow up recommended.

<p><b>Study 4:</b> Drugli, Larsson, Fossum, &amp; Morch, (2010). <i>Five to six year outcome and its prediction for children with ODD/CD treated with parent training.</i></p>	<p>What is the prevalence of ODD, CD and co-morbid diagnoses at 5-6yr follow up? Which predictors at baseline, post-treatment &amp; 1yr follow up are associated with persistent diagnosis?</p>	<p>WSIYPP. 50% also offered child therapy. Pre, post and 1 yr follow up. Multiple measures including ECBI, Child Behaviour Checklist (CBCL), Parent Stress Index.</p>	<p><i>n</i> = 54 Parents of children aged 4-8years with severe conduct problem diagnosed ODD and or CD.</p>	<p>Randomised waiting list control group. 54% completed telephone assessment 5-6years after intervention.</p>	<p>Positive long term results for children offered intervention. Characteristics of children and families likely to need more support identified. Two parent families may benefit more from parent training.</p>	<p>Future research should focus on long term outcome aspects of parent training.</p>
<p><b>Study 5:</b> Gardner, Burton, &amp; Klimes, (2006). <i>Randomised controlled trial of parenting intervention in the voluntary sector for reducing child conduct problems: outcomes and mechanisms for change.</i></p>	<p>How effective is a parenting intervention delivered in a community based voluntary-sector organisation in reducing conduct problems in clinically referred children?</p>	<p>WSIYPP Pre-intervention, 6 and 18 months follow up Observations of parent-child interaction Measures of child behaviour, ECBI and observations. Measures of parenting skill, confidence and mood. Randomised controlled trial using a computer generalised list.</p>	<p><i>n</i> = 76 (Intervention <i>n</i> = 44) (control <i>n</i> = 32) Parents of children aged 2-9years with conduct problems.</p>	<p>No randomised comparison available at 18months follow up</p>	<p>Reduces conduct problems. Enhances Parenting skills.</p>	<p>The findings suggest intervention can be translated across cultural groups.</p>
<p><b>Study 6:</b>Hahlweg, Heinrichs, Kuschel, Bertram, &amp; Naumann, (2010). <i>Long- term outcome of a randomized controlled universal prevention trial through a positive parenting program: is it worth the effort?</i></p>	<p>To evaluate the efficacy of the group triple P parenting program administered universally for the prevention of child behaviour problems.</p>	<p>Triple P Self-report measures by parents. Interview with primary carer Child Development Test Parent child interaction</p>	<p><i>n</i> = 280 (Intervention <i>n</i> = 186) (control <i>n</i> = 94) Universal – Parents of all children aged 3-6years</p>	<p>Relied on self report measures. Observations and teacher ratings resulted in non-significant findings. Sample size too small with regard to statistical significance</p>	<p>90% participants satisfied with training &amp; reported it as helpful.</p>	<p>No benefits from parenting programmes found for single parents when  Further research needed</p>
<p><b>Study 7:</b></p>	<p>Does the TPK programme</p>	<p>Tuning into Kids</p>	<p><i>n</i> = 218</p>	<p>Parents reports of</p>	<p>Parents reported</p>	<p>Naturalistic observations</p>

Havinghurst, Wilson, Harley, & Prior (2009). <i>Tuning in to kids: an emotion-focused parenting program – initial findings from a community trial.</i>	lead to:- a reduction in parent emotional dismissiveness and an increase in parent emotion coaching? Does it lead to an increase in parent emotional competence & wellbeing and a reduction in pre schoolchildren's behaviour problems?	Questionnaire data pre and post intervention using validated scales including Parent Emotional Competence and General Health Questionnaire, ECBI	(Intervention $n = 107$ ) (control $n = 111$ ) Universal parents of children aged 4-5.11years	change (expectancy bias)	greater competence in responding to children's emotions. Improvement in reported child behaviour.	within the home needed. Need to find out if changes in parenting persist over time (maintenance).
<b>Study 8:</b> Havinghurst, Wilson, Harley, Prior & Kehoe. (2010). <i>Tuning in to kids: improving emotion socialization practices in parents of preschool children findings from a community trial.</i>	Evaluation of 'Tuning into Kids Programme.'	Tuning into Kids. Questionnaire data pre, post & 6monthly. Observations. Child Measures.	$n = 216$ (Intervention $n = 106$ ) (control $n = 110$ ) Universal parents of children aged 4-5.11years	Control group used. Self-report measures. No independent measures	Increase in parent emotional awareness and regulation. Children had better emotional knowledge and fewer behaviour problems.	Supports the efficacy of parenting interventions that target parents' emotions and socialisation practices. Need to gain some independent measure of change.
<b>Study 9:</b> Hutchings, Bywater, Daley, Gardner, Whitaker & Jones, Edwards. <i>Parenting intervention in Sure Start services for children at risk of developing conduct disorder: Pragmatic randomised controlled trial,</i>	To evaluate the effectiveness of a parenting programme as a preventative intervention with parents of pre-school children considered to be at risk of developing conduct disorder	WSIYPP ECBI Parental questionnaires and parents self reports. Observations of parent child interactions. Randomised control design	$n = 153$ (Intervention $n = 104$ ) (control $n = 49$ ) Preventative Targeted parents from socially disadvantaged areas with children aged 36– 59 months considered at risk of developing conduct disorders.	Randomised controlled trial design. Inter-rater reliability used within observations	Reduction in antisocial behaviour and hyperactive behaviour and increased self-control compared to control group.	Findings have influenced policy. Future research to establish if this works with different levels of severity of behaviour and depression and stress in parents.
<b>Study 10:</b> Niccols, (2007). <i>Immediate and short-term outcomes of the</i>	Would children whose mothers participated in the CWBT programme have fewer behaviour problems	COPEing with Toddler Behaviour(CWTB) ECBI Observations of parent	$n = 79$ (Intervention $n = 49$ ) (control $n = 30$ ) Universal/ Preventative.	Control Group Not a screened clinic sample Self referral	Short term improvements in child behaviour and parenting	Long term follow up needed Study supports the efficacy of the CWTB

<i>COPEing with toddler behaviour' parent group.</i>	and show less negative behaviour with their mothers? At post test and follow up would mothers who participated in CWBT engage in more positive behaviour when compared with the waiting list control group?	child interactions Parenting behaviour and depression using scales and measures	Parents of children aged 12–36 months		found.	
<b>Study 11:</b> Patterson, Mockford & Stewart-Brown. (2005). <i>Parent's perceptions of the value of the Webster-stratton parenting programme: a qualitative study of a general practice based initiative</i>	Study was complementing a quantitative study. To gather information about parents experiences of the programme and its effects.	WSIYPP Interviews with parents Open ended parental questionnaires Tape recordings of supervision sessions between programme facilitators and clinical psychologist. Grounded theory	<i>n</i> = 31 Universal parents of children aged 2–8 years	Validity addressed in discussion. Grounded Theory used as a measure of analysis. Eighteen invited to complete interviews & questionnaires. Only eight interviews and five questionnaires completed.	Positive benefits Enhanced parent/child relationship Increased parental competence Increased. Parental support during and after the programme	Time between programme finishing and interviews varied. Parents of children who both did and did not fall within the clinical range valued the programme.
<b>Study 12:</b> Scott, Spender, Doolan, Jacobs, & Aspland. (2001) <i>Multicentre controlled trial of parenting groups for childhood antisocial behaviour in clinical practice.</i>	Is a behavioural based group parenting programme delivered in a clinic setting an effective treatment for anti-social behaviour in children	WSIYPP Semi-structured parent interviews and questionnaires about anti-social behaviour Observation of parent-child interaction Controlled trial but sequential block design..	<i>n</i> = 141 (Intervention <i>n</i> = 90) (control <i>n</i> = 51) Parents of children aged 3-8 years referred due to anti-social behaviour	Controlled trial Sequential block design by date of referral. Follow up assessments carried out by different researchers.	Reduction in anti-social behaviour. Increased use of praise and more effective use of instructions by parents	Parenting groups reduce serious antisocial behaviour in real life conditions.  Follow up needed to see if poor prognosis is improved and criminality prevented
<b>Study 13:</b> Scott, Sylva, Doolan, Price, Jacobs, Crook, & Landau. (2010). <i>Randomised controlled trial of parent groups for child antisocial</i>	What proportion of parents of anti-social children will take up the intervention? Does the intervention improve levels of major risk factors predictive of long-term outcomes? What is the cost of the	WSIYPP (12 weeks) followed by 10 week literacy programme, followed by a 6 week revision programme. Multiple Measures used. Teachers & parents Pre and 12mth follow up	<i>n</i> = 112 (Intervention <i>n</i> = 61) (control <i>n</i> = 51) Parents of children aged 6years showing anti-social behaviour	Randomised controlled trial. 25% did not respond to initial screen.	Parents showed increased use of play, praise, rewards & time out and less harsh discipline compared to control group.	Early population based intervention is feasible by targeting multiple risk factors. Long term follow up needed.

<i>behaviour targeting multiple risk factors: the SPOKES project</i>	intervention?	Observation, Questionnaire & interview including ECBI BAS II reading scale. Randomised control trial.			Conduct Problems reduced. Reading age improved. Programme cost £2,380. per child.	
<b>Study 14:</b> Scott, O'Connor, Futh, Matias, Price, & Doolan, (2010). <i>Impact of a parenting program in a high-risk, multi-ethnic community: the PALS trial</i>	What proportion of parents would attend in a highly deprived inner city area? Would the take-up and acceptability rate be equal across minority and white ethnic groups? Program cost? Would the intervention improve parenting? Would parenting change be shown equally across ethnic groups? Would children's antisocial behaviour and reading improve and would there be differences based on ethnicity?	WSIYPP(12 week) followed by 6week literacy programme Pre and 12mth follow up Observation and Questionnaires BAS reading scale. Randomised control trial.	<i>n</i> =174 Universally offered to parents of children aged 5-6 years living in a socially deprived area	Group randomised control trial by class group. Multiple measures used.	Sig improvement in parent-child relationship. No reduction in child behaviour problems. No improvement in reading.	Early childhood prevention is not always effective. Further research considering how best to maintain attendance. Would targeting most severely affected be more cost effective/
<b>Study 15:</b> Webster-Stratton, Rinaldi, & Reid, (2011). <i>Long-Term Outcomes of Incredible years Parenting Program: Predictors of Adolescent Adjustment.</i>	What is the long term outcome of children treated in terms of adolescent emotional, social and behavioural adjustment? What are the risk and protective factors associated with long term outcome? Do post treatment levels of parent-child coercion predict adolescent antisocial behaviour? What threshold level needs to be achieved for a positive outcome?	WSIYPP Many measures including ECBI, Parenting Stress Index, Child Behaviour Checklist. Parent interview about specific questions (e.g. expelled from school.)	<i>n</i> = 78 Parents of children aged 3-8 years with early onset conduct disorders	No control group Wide age range of sample No information on interventions used during the intervening period.	Some maintenance of positive outcomes 8-10 years later	More long term research needed and ideally the use of a control group. Need to maintain intervention until coercion is reduced.

## **Appendix 2 - Content of the sessions for the Toddler Version of the Webster Stratton Incredible Years Parenting Program**

### **Session 1 Welcome and Introduction to program**

Parent's Goals

How to Play with your child

"Promoting Your Child's Self-esteem and Encouraging Co-operation"

Play Part 1: Vignettes 1-6

### **Session 2 Play Part 1 continued**

Vignettes 7-16, 23

### **Session 3 Helping your child Learn through Play**

"Promoting your child's thinking skills"

Play Part 2: Vignettes 1,2,5-8, 12 and 22

### **Session 4 Effective ways to Praise and Encourage your children**

"Bringing out the best in your child."

Praise Part 1: Vignettes 2,3,5,6,7 11-18

### **Session 5 Praise and Rewards Part 2**

"Motivating Your Children."

Tangible Rewards Part 2: Vignettes 2-12

### **Session 6 Effective Limit Setting**

"The importance of being Clear, Predictable and Positive"

Limit Setting Part 1: Vignettes 3-16, 19-28, 32,33

### **Session 7 Effective Limit Setting and Ignoring**

“Decreasing annoying Misbehaviours”

Limit Setting Part 2: Vignettes 1-3, 6-15, 17-19

**Session 8 Handling Misbehaviour**

Handling Misbehaviour Part I: Vignettes 1-14

**Session 9 Handling Misbehaviour continued**

Handling Misbehaviours Part 2: Vignettes 1-9, 14-19, 21

**Session 10 putting it all together/transition**

Plans/celebrations

Review of group list of behaviours' to decrease &  
Strategies

Party

## **Appendix 3- Interview Protocol: Guidance for the Researcher for the Pilot Interview**

### **Introduction**

Describe in brief the project, sharing with the interviewee (a) the purpose of the study, (b) what will be done with the collected data, (c) what will be done to the data to ensure the interviewee's confidentiality and (d) duration of the interview.

### **Background Information**

Who lives in your house/flat?

Gender

Age

Age and Number of children

Do you have a job?

Partner – do they have a job?

Ethnicity

Married/ Cohabiting/ single parent

Who are the significant people in your child/children's life?

### **Ice Breaker**

Tell me a little bit about how things are for you and your family now

### **Own Childhood**

Tell me a little about your own childhood

How do you think this influenced your parenting style?

## **Areas explored in relation to the research questions**

### **1 Attendance**

1a) Parents who attended programme

How or where did you first hear about the Webster Stratton Programme. What did you think about when you decided to attend it?

What made you come back each week?

Did you miss any sessions and if so why?

How did missing the sessions make you feel?

1b) Parents who signed up but showed poor attendance or failed to complete

This is likely to be carried out over the telephone

How or where did you first hear about the Webster Stratton Programme? Why did you decide to attend it?

What was it that stopped you from coming back to the sessions?

### **2) Advantages/Disadvantages**

Having attended the WSIY Parenting Programme what benefits did you find?

Having attended the WSIY Parenting Programme what did you feel were the disadvantages?

### **3) Key concepts/home strategies/parenting style**

How would you describe your parenting style?

(Possible follow up concept of good and bad parent)

What are the main strategies you use at home when things get difficult?

Did you think there were any particular ideas that the programme introduced to you? If so what were they?

Are you using any of them at home?

### **4) Parent's Behaviour**

Do you think you have changed the way you behave since attending the programme and if so in what way? Why do you think you have changed your behaviour in this way and why has that change been important to you?

If there have been no changes in your behaviour why did you feel it was ok not to change?

### **5) Children's behaviour**

Tell me a bit about your child's behaviour now

Have you noticed any changes in their behaviour since you attended the parenting programme?

How do you feel about this?

What reasons do you think led to these changes happening?

Were you expecting any changes?

### **6) Play**

Do you play with your child/children regularly now?

Did you play with them before you attended the programme?

Tell me a bit about your play

Can you tell me the type of time you have to play, how often and how long?

Has the play changed since attending the programme? Why do you think it has changed?

**7) Parent's confidence**

Do you feel more confident when dealing with issues around behaviour with your child? Why do you think this is?

Do you feel that you understand your child's behaviour differently to before you attended the course? Why do you think this is?

Have you changed the way you manage your children's behaviour since attending the course? Why do you think this is so?

**8) Home based support**

Did XXXX come and visit you at home? What made you decide to have her visiting at home?

**Did anything change as a result of her visiting and if so what?**

## Appendix 4 - Participants Agreement Letter

Dear Mrs S.....

As part of my current post as an Educational Psychologist in ..... I have been running Webster Stratton Incredible Years Parenting Groups. You expressed an interest in attending one of these groups and were invited to attend one in the Autumn 2008.

I am currently conducting a piece of Doctorial research as a registered student at the University of East London. This research is supported by my manager the Principal Educational Psychologist in the .....

The topic of the research relates to parents' experience and views of attending a Webster Stratton Incredible Years Parenting Group. I hope that his research will provide insight into parent's views and help inform future groups.

The research involves inviting you to take part in an informal interview with me which will provide you with an oppotunity to share your thoughts of the parenting group. The interview will be carried out at either your home or the children's centre where you attended the Parenting Group. It will last approximately 1 hour and the day and time of the interview will be flexible to fit in with you.

There is no requirement on you to participate in this interview. If you agree to be interviewed then there will be no identification of yourself, confidentiality will be adhered to and contributions will remain anonymous. At the end of the research participants will be offered feedback of the findings. If you agree to take part in this research you will be free to withdraw from the research at any stage without needing to explain your reasons.

If you are willing to take part in this then please sign the slip below to confirm your agreement to take part in the research and return the slip to me in the enclosed envelope. If you have any questions you would like to ask please contact myself, ..... Senior Educational Psychologist. Tel: .....

.....

..... Research Project, Spring 2009

I agree to participate in the research.

Signed Parent -----

## **Appendix 5 – Interview Protocol: Guidance for the Researcher for the actual Interviews**

### **Introduction**

Describe in brief the project, sharing with the interviewee (a) the purpose of the study, (b) what will be done with the collected data, (c) what will be done to the data to ensure the interviewee's confidentiality and (d) duration of the interview.

### Background Information

Who lives in your house/flat?

Gender

Age

Age and Numbers of children

Do you have a job?

Partner – do they have a job?

Ethnicity

Married/ Cohabiting/ single parent

Who are the significant people in your child/children's life?

### **Ice Breaker**

Tell me a little bit about how things are for you and your family now

### **Own Childhood**

Tell me a little about your own childhood

How do you think this influenced your parenting style?

## **Areas explored in relation to the research questions**

### **1 Attendance**

1a) Parents who attended programme

How or where did you first hear about the Webster Stratton Programme? What did you think about when you decided to attend it?

What made you come back each week?

Did you miss any sessions and if so why?

How did missing the sessions make you feel?

1b) Parents who signed up but showed poor attendance or failed to complete

This is likely to be carried out over the telephone

How or where did you first hear about the Webster Stratton Programme? Why did you decide to attend it?

What was it that stopped you from coming back to the sessions?

### **2) Advantages/Disadvantages**

Having attended the WSIY Parenting Programme what benefits did you find?

Having attended the WSIY Parenting Programme what did you feel were the disadvantages of it?

### **3) Key concepts/home strategies/parenting style**

How would you describe your parenting style?

(Possible follow up concept of good and bad parent)

What are the main strategies you use at home when things get difficult?

Did you think there were any particular ideas that the programme introduced to you? If so what were they?

Are you using any of them at home?

#### **4) Parent's Behaviour**

Do you think you have changed the way you behave since attending the programme and if so in what ways have you changed? Why do you think you have you changed your behaviour in this way and why has that change been important to you?

If there have been no changes in your behaviour why did you feel it was ok not to change?

#### **5) Children's behaviour**

Tell me a bit about your child's behaviour now

Have you noticed any changes in their behaviour since you attended the parenting programme?

How do you feel about this?

What reasons do you think led to these changes happening?

Were you expecting any changes?

#### **6) Play**

Do you play with your child/children regularly now?

Did you play with them before you attended the programme?

Tell me a bit about your play

Can you tell me the type of time you have, how often and how long?

Has the play changed since attending the programme? Why do you think it has changed?

**7) Parent's confidence**

Do you feel more confident when dealing with issues around behaviour with your child? Why do you think this is?

Do you feel that you understand your child's behaviour differently to before you attended the course? Why do you think this is?

Have you changed the way you manage your children's behaviour since attending the course? Why do you think this is?

**8) Group Impact**

Tell me a bit about the other people who were on the programme with you

How did it feel discussing behaviour in a group?

Was it helpful/ supportive?

If no explore feelings and how it made parents feel

If yes in what way did you find it helpful and supportive?

Are you still in contact with any of the other parents? If yes explore further about the friendships.

**9) Home based support**

Did XXXX come and visit you at home? What made you decide to have her visiting at home?

**Did anything change as a result of her visiting and if so what?**

**Appendix 6: List of all parents from areas A and B who began attending the WSIYPP**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Venue</b>	<b>Children</b>	<b>Step</b>	<b>Attend</b>	<b>Encouraged</b>	<b>HV</b>	<b>Interviewed</b>
Diane	Area 1	4	0	8/10	No	No	Yes
Elaine	Area 1	1	1	8/10	No	No	Yes
Jack	Area 1	2	0	5/10	No	Yes	Yes
Kirsty	Area 1	3	0	10/10	PP	Yes	Yes
Lauren	Area 1	1	1	9/10	No	Yes	Yes
Lucy	Area 1	2	0	8/10	PP	Yes	Yes
Sarah	Area 1	2	0	8/10	No	Yes	Yes
Nadia	Area 1	1	2	9/10	PP	Yes	Yes
Doreen	Area 1	1	0	4/10	PP	No	No
Charlotte	Area 1	3	0	3/10	SC	No	No
Kate	Area 1	5	0	3/10	SC	No	No
Brian	Area 1	5	0	2/10	SC	No	No
Linda	Area 2	6	0	9/10	SC	No	Yes
Tracy	Area 2	1	0	9/10	No	No	Yes
Valerie	Area2	1	0	9/10	HV	No	Yes
Kate	Area 2	2	0	8/10	HV	No	Yes
Jasmine	Area 2	1	0	10/10	No	No	Yes
Maria	Area 2	1	0	6/10	No	No	No
Joyce	Area 2	5	0	1/10	School	No	No

(Note: PP = Positive Parents, SC= Social Care, HV = Health Visitor)  
(Anonymised Names)

## **Appendix 6a: Brief biographies of parents who were not interviewed**

### **Doreen (Area 1)**

Doreen had one child aged four who was described as presenting with behavioural difficulties. Doreen's partner had intermittent involvement with the family. Doreen had received home visits from Positive Parenting but these were not as regular as others. Doreen was encouraged to attend the parenting programme by Positive Parenting. When Doreen missed some parenting group sessions some initial telephone contact was made by the programme facilitators. However, contact ceased to be made after a while due to difficulties with contacting Doreen. Doreen attended four sessions in total and could not be contacted for interviews.

### **Charlotte (Area 1)**

Charlotte was a young mother with three children aged under four. She was referred to the Positive Parenting programme by Social Care. Charlotte had recently regained custody of her children but the children remained on the Child Protection register. Charlotte did not wish to attend the Positive Parents programme but had agreed that she would like to be offered the chance to attend the parenting programme. Charlotte's partner and the father of her children had regular contact with the family but due to his anger management issues was prevented by a court order from living with the family. Charlotte attended three of the Webster Stratton Incredible Years Parenting Programme Sessions. Attempts

to establish telephone contact with her were made but no direct contact was made.

### **Kate (Area 1)**

Kate was in her 40's and had five children. Concerns about her youngest child had led to home visits being made by Positive Parenting. Kate was not keen on attending the Webster Stratton Incredible Years Programme. She had learning needs of her own. Kate presented as an extremely loving parent but ongoing concerns from Social Care had led to a recommendation that she and her husband attend. During the sessions she was clearly uncomfortable and despite attempts at telephone contact did not return after session three and could not be contacted to arrange an interview.

### **Brian (Area 1)**

Brian was Kate's husband. He was in his late 40's and the father of five children. Concerns about his youngest child's development had led to home visits being made by positive parenting. Brian was not keen to attend the Webster Stratton Incredible Years Programme but ongoing concerns and encouragement from Social Care led to him attending two sessions. Telephone contact was unsuccessful and he could not be contacted to arrange an interview.

### **Maria (AREA 2)**

At the start of the programme, Maria had one child aged nine months. Maria was of Afro-Caribbean origin and presented with some learning needs. Maria was supported by staff from the Children's Centre. Attendance was encouraged and initially phone calls were successful. Maria missed sessions either due to confusion about dates or other appointments. Maria missed the final three sessions of the parenting group programme and attempts to contact her by telephone were unsuccessful.

### **Joyce (Area 2)**

Joyce attended the first session only. She had four children including pre-school twins. During the session she raised concerns about her teenage son and stated that she thought she was attending a programme targeted at parents of teenagers.

## Appendix 7 - Initial Coding of data based on research questions

### Attendance

<b>Words and Phrases</b>	<b>line no</b>	<b>part ID</b>
Too scared to develop own view	186/187	Valerie
parents views	185	Valerie
boisterous boy	202	Valerie
re-look at parenting	203	Valerie
out of my power	225	Valerie
out of control	226	Valerie
could not control him	226	Valerie
felt low	227	Valerie
failing him	227	Valerie
doesn't always work	189	Valerie
different personalities	191	Valerie
vicious with other kids	406	Valerie
nasty look mothers	412	Valerie
nasty comments	413	Valerie
how am I suppose	416	Valerie
felt so powerless	417	Valerie
frightening feeling	420/421	Valerie
can't control	421	Valerie
asking mum for help	422	Valerie
never had this problem	423	Valerie
Powerless	427	Valerie
out of control	427	Valerie
Tears	427	Valerie
health visitor	429	Valerie
I'm having real problems	429/430	Valerie
I don't know	433/434	Valerie
I had no idea	437	Valerie
Your suppose to know these things	440	Valerie

told about a parenting group	444	Valerie	
opened my eyes	447	Valerie	
my parenting skills were ltd	469	Valerie	
ashamed to admit it	470	Valerie	
turning point	476	Valerie	
how would you implement	478/479	Valerie	
sad to admit	480	Valerie	
parent should know what doing	485/486	Valerie	
why aren't they controlling kids	491	Valerie	
I felt so bad	499	Valerie	
felt bad couldn't control	500/501	Valerie	
that's good what's next week?	528/529	Valerie	why come back
Gutted	617	Valerie	missed sessions
a really good group	618	Valerie	why come back
nice sit down	619	Valerie	why come back
listen to others	619	Valerie	why come back
not on own	620	Valerie	
other people same problem as you	621/622	Valerie	
bounce ideas of other mums	623	Valerie	
professionals (not trusting them)	625	Valerie	
real mums saying what works	628	Valerie	
gutted couldn't go	634	Valerie	
helpful hints of course	635/636	Valerie	
social aspect of group	636/637	Valerie	
nobody holds grudges	638	Valerie	
nobody looks at you	638	Valerie	
relief same people with control as you	640/641	Valerie	
had problems when came on course	1264	Valerie	
attended group for same reasons	1292	Valerie	
bad parent -	1293	Valerie	
things done wrong	1294	Valerie	
didn't have control	1340	Valerie	
was always judged	1363	Valerie	
looks and comments	1364	Valerie	

thinks children's centre	221	Tracy	how found out about programme
free crèche	227	Tracy	
learn something	228/229	Tracy	
away from Nia	229	Tracy	
first child	232	Tracy	
professional help on parenting	233/234	Tracy	
more professional than church	236	Tracy	
reassured doing well	243/244	Tracy	why come back
found things could improve	245	Tracy	
think outside box	247	Tracy	
see things work	249	Tracy	
missing out	266	Tracy	if missed sessions
what had I missed this time	270/271	Tracy	
social services	504	Linda	
who are you to tell me	510	Linda	
I'm not doing it right	510	Linda	
hatred towards all of it	511	Linda	
told got to take parenting course	513	Linda	
Forced to do it	518	Linda	
didn't enjoy it	518	Linda	
do it if you want to keep your kids	516	Linda	previous course
done slowly	532	Linda	this course
not long hours	533	Linda	this course
emotional time, court case	529/540	Linda	previous course
pushed into doing it	541	Linda	previous course
kids getting taken	546	Linda	previous course
threatening take children	547	Linda	previous course
Enjoyed	576	Linda	this course
own experiences	578	Linda	previous course
double homework if don't do	585	Linda	previous course
Freedom	594	Linda	this course
enjoyed it	600	Linda	this course
enjoyed coming along	601	Linda	this course

involve everything	602	Linda	this course
missed it	607/608/609	Linda	when missed this course
feel comfortable	1417	Linda	why come back
form parenting skills	351	Jack	
for support (partner)	360	Jack	
Lauren's 1st child	359	Jack	
learn about play and stuff	361/362	Jack	
Interesting	364	Jack	why come back
interacting scarlet in terms of what seen	365/366	Jack	
had to go to work	372	Jack	why stopped coming
opportunity for job	379	Jack	
took priority	381	Jack	
Lauren telling me	382	Jack	having stopped
ask about	383	Jack	having stopped
expand their knowledge	773	Jack	why attended
expand their minds	775	Jack	why attended
channel energy	779	Jack	why attended
didn't want them go through same	798	Jack	why attended
sure start or children's centre	248	Elaine	
done previous courses	251	Elaine	
psychology side of it	259	Elaine	
space crèche	261	Elaine	
always follow through	290	Elaine	why came back
liked the people	290	Elaine	
same issues as me	292	Elaine	
not a bad mum	293	Elaine	
nice group	294	Elaine	
open and honest	295	Elaine	
shared ....problems	297	Elaine	
adult company	298	Elaine	
stuck at home	300	Elaine	
nice to get out	301	Elaine	

nice to get out	304	Elaine	
never been a mum	311	Elaine	stepchild
need re-assurance	312	Elaine	
reassured that	330	Elaine	
Reassurance	338	Elaine	
what have I missed	362	Elaine	
			where heard about
children's centre	227	Sarah	it
on my own	236	Sarah	
don't get much support	236	Sarah	
being with other mums	240	Sarah	
their difficulties	241	Sarah	
similar problems	241	Sarah	
liked company	270	Sarah	
liked you as teacher	270	Sarah	
hear the problem	275	Sarah	
hear what you can do	275	Sarah	
try it	278	Sarah	
makes me happy	280/281	Sarah	
free time	286	Sarah	
Crèche	289	Sarah	
be with some other mums	289	Sarah	
missing out	304	Sarah	when missed sessions
learn a lot	305	Sarah	
being with other members	306	Sarah	
other mums	306	Sarah	
gave me hope	320	Sarah	
contact with other people	444	Sarah	
better mum	446	Sarah	
Overwhelmed	447	Sarah	
have the time	452	Sarah	
going to help me	453	Sarah	
I pick up that book ..reminds you again	459/461	Sarah	
before I used to get stressed	493	Sarah	

because you felt should have done this	496	Sarah	
screaming kind of he wanted to get attention	554	Sarah	
kind of fighting for attention	557	Sarah	
sleeping problem	560	Sarah	
helped me be aware	608	Sarah	
you understand how the children feel	613	Sarah	
I really understand them more	824	Sarah	
sure start	228	Lucy	
moved 2 and a half yrs ago	227	Lucy	
no one to guide me	236/237	Lucy	
having lots of temper tantrums	237	Lucy	
if things I could do re temper tantrum	239	Lucy	
because never finished anything	244/248	Lucy	why continued to attend
view on everyone else	252	Lucy	
what done though week	252/253	Lucy	
if had worked	253	Lucy	
let others know what had done	254	Lucy	
Annoyed	267	Lucy	missing sessions
neighbours wd hear me screaming	521/522	Lucy	
it was a awful	543	Lucy	
already smashed half the room up	602	Lucy	b4
it was like a screaming match	721	Lucy	course
problems at home	865	Lucy	
leaflet – midwife	224	Kate	
learn best way bring children up	236	Kate	
views of other people	237	Kate	
I enjoyed it	245	Kate	had twin babies
seen mum done and determined not that way	138	Lauren	
want to be friends	142	Lauren	
respect me	143	Lauren	
me guide her	143	Lauren	

her make better choices	145	Lauren	
want her be independent	155	Lauren	
enable her anything she wants	183/184	Lauren	
sure start centre	222	Lauren	
problem with his 1st child	227	Lauren	no mention of problems by Jack
couldn't have them problems	228	Lauren	
was horrendous	229	Lauren	
be a good parent	349	Lauren	
appropriate discipline	350	Lauren	
not get away with everything	351	Lauren	
united front	352	Lauren	
me not bad all time	353	Lauren	
bit nervous in groups	360	Lauren	
isolated me from others	363/364	Lauren	having partner with her
really interesting	377	Lauren	
could see how it worked	377	Lauren	
right thing to do	378/379	Lauren	
really wanted him to finish it	385	Lauren	partner finished attending
united front	387	Lauren	
she was a real handful	390	Lauren	
wanted ideas reinforcing	585/586	Lauren	
problems his 1st daughter	603	Lauren	both attending
united front	604	Lauren	
going off the rails	604	Lauren	R
anxious about what other people say	792	Lauren	
by mistake	475	Diane	attendance on course
never too old to learn	480	Diane	
home start/ toddler group	467	Diane	
third course	482	Diane	
different techniques	526	Diane	
see if could relate it home	528	Diane	
getting me to rethink	543	Diane	
never too old to learn	545	Diane	

do again cause helpful	238/239	Kirsty
sure start centre	246	Kirsty
might understand better	254	Kirsty
refresh memories	255	Kirsty
forget things	256	Kirsty
tried to make friends	264	Kirsty
meeting new people	271	Kirsty
Crèche	272	Kirsty
social time for child	273	Kirsty
got me out	271	Kirsty
sure start	170	Nadia
positive parenting	176	Nadia
doing a bad job	185	Nadia
enjoyed the sessions	186	Nadia
I enjoyed meeting other people in same position	186/7	Nadia
inspired me 2 go back	205	Nadia
they wanted to know	207	Nadia
same temper tantrums	334	Nadia
others do the same	338	Nadia
so that's one big thing I learnt	451	Nadia
I feel more positive more confident	553	Nadia
I like the results	609	Nadia
Beneficial	610	Nadia
husband sort of supported	611	Nadia
he felt I lacked confidence as a parent	613	Nadia
being from a dysfunctional family	628	Nadia
other people on course..step children	629/30	Nadia
we were all very supportive	632	Nadia
like going to a therapy session	651	Nadia
having release	652	Nadia
having their support	653	Nadia
struggling to be a parent	662	Nadia
struggling with s .. Behaviour	710	Nadia

I was struggling

712

Nadia

### Appendix 7a - Initial Coding of data

Advantages/disadvantages

**Word and Phrase**

	<b>Line no</b>	<b>participant ID</b>	<b>benefit</b>	<b>disadvantage</b>
(ignoring) miracle cure	209	Valerie	x	
(mum)afraid do something wrong	211/212	Valerie	x	
learnt to control feelings	230	Valerie	x	
I can do this	231	Valerie	x	
learnt...walk away	234	Valerie	x	
more patient	235	Valerie	x	
taught me...	243	Valerie	x	
take in stride	244	Valerie	x	
regain control	279	Valerie	x	
feel much better in myself	279	Valerie	x	
look things more than one way	310/311	Valerie	x	
last yr kept harping on	319	Valerie	x	
I've got power	339	Valerie	x	
I did think	377	Valerie	x	
an eye opener	453	Valerie	x	
opened my eyes	458	Valerie	x	
different ways of doing things	459	Valerie	x	
gave me confidence	503	Valerie	x	
more laid back	505	Valerie	x	
Empowerment	510	Valerie	x	
Knowledge	511	Valerie	x	
I regained control	553	Valerie	x	
he learnt.....	554	Valerie	x	
it really did work	562/3	Valerie	x	
it really does work	566/67	Valerie	x	
it was kind of explained	570	Valerie	x	
I'm more in control	598	Valerie	x	

helpful hints of course	635	Valerie	x	
social aspect	636	Valerie	x	
people the same	641	Valerie	x	
changed way I think	648	Valerie	x	
gain more confidence	669	Valerie	x	
opened my eyes	660	Valerie	x	
look at what I do	677	Valerie	x	
put it right	678	Valerie	x	
not going to affect him	679	Valerie	x	
I've done wrong	680	Valerie	x	
I can put it right	681	Valerie	x	
ignoring replaced tapping and more effective	686/7	Valerie	x	
really works	691	Valerie	x	
learnt from course	691/2	Valerie	x	
turning pt control & confidence	693	Valerie	x	
did not like role play	704	Valerie		x
never liked role play	705	Valerie		x
couldn't get naughty seat right	708	Valerie		x
course allowed me regain control	749	Valerie	x	
allowed me think how do things differently	853/4	Valerie	x	
it's been brilliant	854	Valerie	x	
settled down a lot more	859	Valerie	x	
behaviour has changed	887	Valerie	x	
I was able to change myself	888	Valerie	x	
how I felt as a parent	889	Valerie	x	
power it gave m back	890	Valerie	x	
I am the adult here	930	Valerie	x	
I can keep my cool	930	Valerie	x	
learnt from course	958	Valerie	x	
didn't realise effect would have on him	976	Valerie	x	
a better mum 4 it	1008	Valerie	x	
play consciously now	1022	Valerie	x	
wasn't that informed before	1038	Valerie	x	
my eyes opened play important	1039/1040	Valerie	x	
let me sit back a bit	1059	Valerie	x	

learnt from course.....	1119/24	Valerie	x
confidence has come	1160	Valerie	x
more in control	1161	Valerie	x
learnt.....	1170/1171	Valerie	x
being more confident	1178	Valerie	x
more laid back	1179	Valerie	x
willing look at other things	1189	Valerie	x
responding to me more now	1201	Valerie	x
think on their level	1217	Valerie	x
communicate on his level – learnt	1225-8	Valerie	x
child gets to socialise other kids	1263	Valerie	x
all had same problems on course	1264	Valerie	x
same level as each other	1265	Valerie	x
ring other with problem	1267	Valerie	x
nice meet other mums	1268	Valerie	x
share problems	1270	Valerie	x
social group	1275	Valerie	x
weren't on our own	1276	Valerie	x
friends in area with kids	1288	Valerie	x
meet people who know what's like	1295/1308	Valerie	meeting with kids others who kn
come from same place	1315	Valerie	x
be able talk with girls	1360	Valerie	x
wouldn't judge me	1361	Valerie	x
not going to judge me	1367	Valerie	x
bounce ideas	1368	Valerie	x
not judged	1369	Valerie	x
not looked down...	1370	Valerie	x
all relaxed around each other	1375	Valerie	x
kids happy	1376	Valerie	x
changed my mindset	83	Tracy	
more peace in the house	84	Tracy	
empathise more with (child)	256	Tracy	
seeing that it did work	255	Tracy	
group support	313	Tracy	

liked role play led empathise	317/8	Tracy			
Scenarios	322	Tracy			
Crèche	324	Tracy			
papers, notes, refrigerator notes	328	Tracy			
religious views	337	Tracy			x
torn is this right am I too relaxed	340	Tracy			x
should I smack should I not	342	Tracy			x
people who spoke a lot more	345	Tracy			x
sometimes I felt frustrated	346	Tracy			x
that was a disadvantage	351	Tracy			x
noticing my own anger	462	Tracy	x		
I'm really upset	462	Tracy	x		
I need time out	463	Tracy	x		
now 4 me I wd say not	508	Tracy	x		
helped other mums see differently	514	Tracy	x		
more confidence in influencing people	526	Tracy	x		
more aware	541	Tracy	x		
things from course come back in certain situations	544/5	Tracy	x		
give her quality time	555	Tracy	x		
she's just different	556	Tracy	x		
list of different activities	560	Tracy	x		
more creative	563	Tracy	x		
easier to change behaviour	625	Tracy	x		
b4 I wouldn't know how to do that	626/7	Tracy	x		
nice to meet new people	795	Tracy	x		
people going through same thing	796	Tracy	x		
share experience	800	Tracy	x		
becoming a really good friend	842	Tracy	x		
still feel like something else	851	Tracy			x
ongoing support is really nice	859	Tracy			x
depends on instructors	661	Linda			x
homework	663	Linda			x
open everyone wd talk	676	Linda	x		
course deliverers		Linda			x

talking about experiences	578	Linda		x
courses when person has more children	814	Linda		x
trying to talk differently	845	Linda	x	
I started to talk to them more	888	Linda	x	
my behaviour towards them changed	913	Linda	x	
warnings for it now	1065	Linda	x	
makes you feel confident	278	Lucy	x	
Not a right or wrong way	280	Lucy	x	
Better way	280	Lucy	x	
Meet new people	282	Lucy	x	
Wasn't long enough	286	Lucy		x
Could have went on for a year	288/9	Lucy		x
time slot longer	293	Lucy		x
rushing off at the end	294	Lucy		x
I could have (carried on 4 ever)	304/6	Lucy		x
now take a breath & walk away	315	Lucy	x	
b4 I'd scream & shout	433/4	Lucy	x	
b4 wd shout back	439	Lucy	x	
b4 wd smack their hand	439	Lucy	x	
ignoring it worked instantly	452/3	Lucy	x	
I've been able to calm down	461	Lucy	x	
just wanted to disappear but since course...	463/4	Lucy	x	
I've been able control the kids tantrums	468	Lucy	x	
I've not got uptight...	469	Lucy	x	
me & dean don't argue like we used to	470	Lucy	x	
I used to blame him	471	Lucy	x	
when started...isolated	474	Lucy	x	
getting out	476	Lucy	x	
meeting new people	477	Lucy	x	
doing right things has helped	478	Lucy	x	
he now plays with other kids	498	Lucy	x	
now..since course...I'd actually take him home	525/6	Lucy	x	
..big change in him	572	Lucy	x	
we're happier	593	Lucy	x	

seen changes in them since started playing	682/3	Lucy	x	
...got brighter... Learnt stuff	684	Lucy	x	
learnt colours	685	Lucy	x	
I feel more confident	714	Lucy	x	
I can deal with it	715	Lucy	x	
b4 I would never...too embarrassed	716	Lucy	x	
I know why they're.....	735	Lucy	x	
I've changed everything	798	Lucy	x	
I still get in contact	902	Lucy	x	
I class them as friends	918	Lucy	x	
I always do that (praise)	267	Kate	x	
time slot longer	269	Kate	x	
do things with them	271	Kate	x	
get there on time	302	Kate		x
good to see...making him aware	387/88	Kate	x	
meeting other mothers with children..	556	Kate	x	
more aware of why children do things	613	Kate	x	
I wd smack her bum...now I use...	396/7	Lauren	x	
try to distract her	398	Lauren	x	
really useful	399	Lauren	x	
it was really good	402	Lauren	x	
do activities (role play)	406	Lauren		x
it was like your course guided me	519	Lauren		
it was a guide to being a better parent	520	Lauren		
it wd show me the right way & it did	580/1	Lauren	x	
b4 I'd be so anxious about other people	792/3	Lauren	x	
now I just ignore or...	794	Lauren	x	
distract her	795	Lauren	x	
I say to him remember the course	820	Lauren	x	
other people have same kind of problems	850	Lauren	x	
got to know people more	857	Lauren	x	
sounding board could come back to	844/45	Lauren	x	
it was nice	851/859	Lauren	x	

I'm still in contact with	865	Lauren	x	
guilt for not contact 1 person)	881 +	Lauren		social imp
different techniques and things like that	526	Diane	x	
could relate with at home	528	Diane	x	
getting me to rethink	542/3	Diane	x	
actually did help me	544	Diane	x	
learn new ways of doing things	545	Diane	x	
realised..slipped into the role of you aren't....	585/6/7	Diane	x	
realised..fallen into the trap of....you haven't....	594/5	Diane	x	
and going you haven't done				
tried to switch that round	598	Diane	x	
I'm trying	598	Diane	x	
remembering to let her play rather than me	601/2	Diane	x	
tell the other (children) not to correct her	608	Diane	x	
Americanised	615	Diane		x
happy clappy	617	Diane		x
couldn't take it serious	618	Diane		x
role play	626	Diane		x
do I really want to do this	630	Diane		x
more positive praise	727	Diane	x	
hadn't realised how much negative speech...	733/4/5	Diane	x	
wouldn't see they'd done it..see what hadn't done	738/9	Diane	x	
kids starting to notice that I've..	743/4	Diane	x	
he's realising that sort of thing is happening	752/3/4	Diane		
give more positive praise	760	Diane		
recognise that things	761	Diane		
bad things kids doing is not its childish	762/3	Diane		
I've got calmer	772	Diane		
the kids have noticed	773	Diane		
I'm not on their backs	775	Diane		
wary about what fights I pick	776	Diane		
recognised some behaviour is childlike behaviour	778/9	Diane		
lot calmer now	794	Diane		

don't get so much of the oh do I have to	795	Diane
less of the argument	799	Diane
lot more polite towards	800	Diane
it's all just rubbing off	803	Diane
effect....them being positive to each other	822/3	Diane
erm, oh its lovely now	842	Diane
my attitude has	844	Diane
I've got more relaxed over situations	846	Diane
didn't jump on her back straight away	854/5	Diane
I've now realised ..accidents happen	864	Diane
more confident within myself on how I speak	934	Diane
now with the positive speak I'm more confident	940/1	Diane
recognising naughty behaviour to what isn't	1000/1	Diane
child behaviour	1003	Diane
more helpful as a group	1012	Diane
bounce off each other	1014	Diane
brilliant having a group	1023	Diane
thinking I'm not the only one	1025	Diane
don't feel the only person	1027	Diane
letting Scarlett initiate the play	386	Jack
now I've started to you know discipline her	331	Jack
didn't smack her or nothing	258	Jack
praising each other	616	Jack
we learnt that on the course	641	Jack
it's nice to have her support	642	Jack
after the course we made a pt of it(praise)	655	Jack
thinking I'm quite good compared...	324	Elaine
reassured doing things the right way	330/1	Elaine
different ways of playing with Karris	377	Elaine
understanding how her little mind works	378	Elaine
it's ok to play with something not conventional	379/80	Elaine
letting her lead the play	381	Elaine
we try to do a lot more playing with her	389/90	Elaine

incident wi

listening to (partner) more	425	Elaine	
talk more now	425/5	Elaine	
listen to his views	425	Elaine	
I used to get a bit protective	427	Elaine	
now...what do you think	430	Elaine	
we'll try it	431/2	Elaine	
made me realise...more honest & open with him	471/2	Elaine	
talk a lot more now	480	Elaine	weren't livi
learning how to say things	498	Elaine	
think before you actually go whatever	498	Elaine	
wouldn't say anything was unhelpful	504	Elaine	
some wasn't relevant at the time	505	Elaine	
in the future might need to draw on	507	Elaine	
just not relevant	513	Elaine	
involving her in everything	618	Elaine	
it got me out	270	Kirsty	
got me doing something	270	Kirsty	
Child could go in the crèche	272	Kirsty	
(Child) social time with other babies	272	Kirsty	
so it gave us some free time	277	Kirsty	
don't think we always got to cover things	282	Kirsty	x
they'd go to a different subject	283	Kirsty	x
got off track (not really disadvantage)	284	Kirsty	x
might be able to cover more	289	Kirsty	x
go in depth	289	Kirsty	x
a bit more of the answers and stuff	290	Kirsty	x
basically it's all commonsense anyway	370	Kirsty	
don't get too involved with their play	378	Kirsty	
let them play their way and not your way	382	Kirsty	
I know what your meant to be doing and how	395	Kirsty	
when she's good I praise her.. I remembered that yeah	567/8	Kirsty	
I might have changed the way	590	Kirsty	
I'm not so much in there	590	Kirsty	
I let them do the playing	591	Kirsty	

I follow	591	Kirsty	
I did meet new people but.....	712	Kirsty	
I wouldn't say I've made any lifelong friends .....	724/5	Kirsty	
I walked out and I felt good	161	Nadia	
it was very good for me	183	Nadia	
there is help out there	184	Nadia	
I'm not alone	184	Nadia	
I'm not the only parent that sits here thinking.....	184/5	Nadia	
enjoyed the sessions	186	Nadia	
enjoyed meeting other people	186	Nadia	
taught you to think ...different	188	Nadia	
I'm more approachable	222	Nadia	
I don't say...	224	Nadia	
I say to him	225	Nadia	
I do it with the 14yr old as well	228	Nadia	
which is one thing I've learnt	235	Nadia	
once you left the programme	238	Nadia	x
it seemed to come to an end	238	Nadia	x
if had a bad week	239	Nadia	x
it was nice to go..and explain the problem	240	Nadia	x
know the right approach to do it	241	Nadia	x
would have liked if possible	242	Nadia	x
more of them (refreshers)	248	Nadia	x
they feel the same (others want more)	249	Nadia	x
once every 3 months	251	Nadia	x
he's coming up to the older stage .....	264	Nadia	x
course presenters not meeting family	278	Nadia	x
feedback from family members	280	Nadia	x
others perspective of child's behaviour	289	Nadia	x
was fantastic to meet parents.....	333	Nadia	
I feel more positive as a parent	346	Nadia	
nothing wrong with the way I'm doing things	348	Nadia	
it's not right so one thing I put a stop to	348	Nadia	
me feel more confident	409	Nadia	

want progr

them more confident to	411	Nadia
it just changed things to me	430	Nadia
I'd never let him have that much imagination before	443/4	Nadia
I'll input rather than leading	446	Nadia
I used to think.....	448	Nadia
so that's one big thing I learnt	451	Nadia
we don't have the naughty step any more	458	Nadia
it's (naughty) not a wd we use these days	461	Nadia
not realising should stay 2 encourage	478	Nadia
it's not such a bad thing to be a parent be in control	542	Nadia
I feel more positive , more confident	553	Nadia
I think its thinking before exploding	580/1	Nadia
talk to them as oppose to snap at them	592	Nadia
think about as I say something	593	Nadia
I like the results	609	Nadia
beneficial	610	Nadia
I could see	610	Nadia
other people on course...step children	629/30	Nadia
they go through same thing as me	631	Nadia
we were all very supportive	632	Nadia
like going to a therapy session	651	Nadia
having release	652	Nadia
having their support	653	Nadia
how much I think I learnt from the course	805	Nadia
it was to help me a lot because being new	55	Sarah
trying to figure out where things are	57	Sarah
trying to get into pre-school	58	Sarah
it improved, it really improved	69	Sarah
I had a sleeping problem and its better now	76	Sarah
he's not making so much fuss like he did before	79	Sarah
it got sorted out yeah	81	Sarah
it was good especially the role play	261	Sarah
you hear also the problems	275	Sarah
what you could do in some (situations)	275	Sarah

you learn what to do and you could try it	277	Sarah
maybe it does not work the 1st time but maybe 2nd, 3rd	279	Sarah
I keep trying it gave me hope and faith	280	Sarah
it made me happy	281	Sarah
my little free time	286	Sarah
learn a lot	305	Sarah
being with other members.. The other mums	306	Sarah
knowing you can learn to be a better mum	318/9	Sarah
that you can improve	319	Sarah
it also gave me hope	320	Sarah
it really gave me also faith	322	Sarah
too early for me to get everything done	334	Sarah
just also give a distraction	380	Sarah
I know it's wrong to give +attention when they are misbehaving	384	Sarah
I just try to ignore them	391	Sarah
I learned a lot	406	Sarah
like a training	407	Sarah
or you can get them to behave in a different way	408	Sarah
I didn't know ..ignoring ...could be used a teaching way	409/411	Sarah
I really learned	416	Sarah
I also see they are much happier	421	Sarah
give them time and play ...everything is fine...day is lalala	421/23	Sarah
I pick up that book, I read a few lines like a refresher	459-461	Sarah
I used to get stressed (dishes not washed)	493	Sarah
learn to take some things easier	499	Sarah
I don't worry so much about some things	500	Sarah
I try to stress myself less	501	Sarah
try to relax with them	504	Sarah
just ignore whether you have to wash up	510	Sarah
use the time with them	512	Sarah
has improved	552	Sarah
was kind of fighting for attention - no longer	557	Sarah
sleeping problem is solved	560	Sarah
becoming very much happier	561	Sarah
I should only use 1 strategy	581	Sarah

I attended to it quickly	582	Sarah
it got less frequent until near gone	584	Sarah
I wasn't really aware..until the course	589	Sarah
maybe I'm not consequent (consistent) enough	602	Sarah
the course really helped me be aware	608	Sarah
understand how the children feel	613	Sarah
aware that its (play) more important	711	Sarah
I try not to lead	766	Sarah
I hold myself back	766	Sarah
I used to do it b4 the programme but now	767	Sarah
I let them create	789	Sarah
let them have their fantasy more	790	Sarah
I really understand them more	823	Sarah

### Appendix 7b - Initial Coding of data

#### Use of Strategies

words and phases	line no	id	
ignoring	210	Lucy	
walking away	210	Lucy	
don't use naughty step	211	Lucy	
just ignoring them	215	Lucy	
end up shouting	215/6	Lucy	
go into front room for 5 minutes	220	Lucy	
ignoring them	221	Lucy	
Shout	405	Lucy	
deep breathes really	408	Lucy	
used to shout and huff and puff	416/7	Lucy	
the ignoring definitely	417	Lucy	
tried sitting on the step	418	Lucy	(but didn't like)
um like playing	425	Lucy	

the play....10 minutes each day	428	Lucy
b4 I'd scream and shout	434	Lucy
I wd smack their hands (past)	439	Lucy
tried using it didn't wk for me (time out)	449	Lucy
ignoring....worked instantly	452	Lucy
I changed mine (behaviour)	517	Lucy
now I'd actually take him home	525	Lucy
if he misbehaves we go straight home	528/9	Lucy
he gets one change and...	531	Lucy
he'll get one chance and then he'll go home	523	Lucy
I think he knows....	534	Lucy
he knows he'll go home	555	Lucy
he gets his first warning	566	Lucy
I praise him a lot	604	Lucy
I praise him with everything now	609	Lucy
every little thing he does he gets praise for	610	Lucy
because he's getting praised he does it more	611	Lucy
actually sitting down with them	665	Lucy
whatever they want to do in that 10 minutes is up to them	698	Lucy
now I'll look at it if he comes and shows me	741	Lucy
I'll do that now when there in bed	772	Lucy
dinner time is a set time	790	Lucy
bed at half seven	829	Lucy
praise them	254	Kate
important to give them praise	257	Kate
praising your child	267	Kate
giving them a lot of time	269	Kate
rather than saying the word no	362	Kate
doing things	398	Kate
making more time for them	510	Kate
try and do things when there asleep	516	Kate
I was quite hands on with scarlet	395	Lauren
I'd smack her bum but now	396	Lauren

I use 1,2,3	397	Lauren	
we try to distract her	398	Lauren	
descriptive commentary	400	Lauren	
ignore it now	434	Lauren	
or distract her	435	Lauren	
not give in, not give in	436	Lauren	
then he wd just give in	437	Lauren	
remember ....ignore it or go straight away	440	Lauren	
he does give in but he's a lot more sterner	449	Lauren	talking about Jack
sometimes he follows through sometimes he doesn't	446/7	Lauren	talking about Jack
whether he follows through when I'm not here	483/4	Lauren	talking about Jack
positive praise	492	Lauren	
that must be the best one (positive praise)	494	Lauren	
impact..the praise	496	Lauren	
the smile afterwards	497	Lauren	
constant praise is better than a sweet	499	Lauren	
just amazing ...so simple	500	Lauren	
I really like that (praise)	502	Lauren	
descriptive commentary	502	Lauren	
um the ignoring	503	Lauren	
I'd get more involved I'd say now	508	Lauren	
now we get down and play	510/11	Lauren	
doesn't matter we'll play together	512	Lauren	
just lay and we do the imagination	513	Lauren	
firm with her	544	Lauren	
I'm laying boundaries down	571	Lauren	
more firm with her	572	Lauren	
not letting her get away with things	572	Lauren	
very firm with her	574	Lauren	
just being more firm	575	Lauren	
interacting more	575	Lauren	
I'll respond more to her now	576	Lauren	
we needed a united front	604	Lauren	
now I just ignore it	794	Lauren	
distract her and that	795	Lauren	

either ignore it ....or give in straight away	820	Lauren
know where the boundaries are	299	Diane
know what will happen if over step boundaries	300	Diane
know that there is some (rules) and where they are	311	Diane
allowing them to be children	312	Diane
removing them away from situation	433	Diane
they'd get a warning	434	Diane
Ian ..fond of smacking..I've never approved	435	Diane
removing them	440	Diane
removing whatever it is they're playing with	440	Diane
again it was removal	444	Diane
removal more than anything	461	Diane
descriptive play	553	Diane
It did pull me up (parent playing rather than the child)	541	Diane
getting me to rethink	543	Diane
positive remarks rather than negative	584/5	Diane
tried to switch that round (-ve to +ve)	598	Diane
remembering to let her play rather than me	601	Diane
tone of voice	674	Diane
don't tell them they're naughty....what they're doing	686	Diane
I've got my chart up	702	Diane
positive praise	727	Diane
hadn't realised negative speech	734	Diane
kids starting to notice (+ve praise)	743	Diane
positive praise	760	Diane
recognising things not bad...childish	762	Diane
I've got calmer	772	Diane
not on their backs	775	Diane
wary about what fights I pick	776	Diane
thank them for it	806	Diane
more relaxed over situations	846	Diane
the positive speak I'm more confident	941	Diane
introduction of positive speak	974	Diane
recognise not on purpose ...a child like thing	990	Diane

recognising what is naughty behaviour to what isn't	1000	Diane	
it was their fault	84	Kirsty	holds grudges re mum
opposite from what my mother done	148	Kirsty	
I hate my mum	151	Kirsty	
I wouldn't want my kids to hate me so I do the opposite	152	Kirsty	
I don't always tell my daughter off	154	Kirsty	wants daughter to like her own relationship with mum
I let her to do what she likes	154	Kirsty	
I don't smack my kids with a slipper	201	Kirsty	
the naughty step works but that about it really	224	Kirsty	
naughty step	225	Kirsty	
that's the only thing that works with her	229	Kirsty	
she will sit on it and stay on it so that's what I like	230	Kirsty	
can't really do anything except sit and cry	347	Kirsty	
I can't walk out or anything	359	Kirsty	
basically it's all just common sense anyway	370	Kirsty	
just like different ways of doing it you know	373	Kirsty	
like making them stay on the naughty step	376	Kirsty	
giving them time out	377	Kirsty	
asking your child to do something	377	Kirsty	
don't get to involved with their play	378	Kirsty	
let them play their way and not your	382	Kirsty	
yeah I use the naughty step	385	Kirsty	
when she plays I try not to get like too involved	386	Kirsty	
we have stuck to the naughty step	388	Kirsty	
and that so I think that the naughty step	338	Kirsty	
no I just let her do what she likes	412	Kirsty	
because then she's happy isn't she	414	Kirsty	
at least your staying out of my way	416	Kirsty	
I can do what I want sometimes	417	Kirsty	
have time to myself	418	Kirsty	
calm down	418	Kirsty	
if she's happy then I'm happy	421	Kirsty	
he will punish them rather than me	446	Kirsty	
he's the main person that gives the discipline	452	Kirsty	

she knows she'll have to sit on the naughty step  
 but she's still naughty  
 when she's good I praise her  
 I've remembered that yeah  
 when she's naughty I put her on the naughty step  
 I ignore her you know  
 she's not getting the attention when she's naughty  
 I let them like do the laying and I follow  
 I just sit her on the naughty step  
 I threaten her with her father  
 I won't put her on their (Naughty step)  
 it's a last resort the naughty step, it's not the first thing  
 give her a warning,  
 and then give her another warning  
 and another....  
 end of my tether I will...put her on it  
 we did use it (b4 programme) but wasn't working as good

533 Kirsty  
 534 Kirsty  
 567 Kirsty  
 568 Kirsty  
 569 Kirsty  
 570 Kirsty  
 571 Kirsty  
 591 Kirsty  
 633 Kirsty  
 634 Kirsty  
 641 Kirsty  
 646 Kirsty  
 649 Kirsty  
 649 Kirsty  
 650 Kirsty  
 652 Kirsty  
 661 Kirsty

quality family time together  
 showing kids loved every single day  
 more approachable  
 you've got 10 more minutes  
 assertive  
 continuity  
 important to continuity  
 can't do 1 thing 1 night then another  
 consistency  
 routine  
 just like to be structured  
 like a routine  
 disciplinary to be consistent  
 more positive as a parent  
 nothing wrong with the way I do things  
 and they accept it  
 he used to punch me and kick me

81 Nadia  
 136 Nadia  
 222 Nadia  
 225 Nadia  
 304 Nadia  
 304 Nadia  
 305 Nadia  
 306 Nadia  
 308 Nadia  
 324 Nadia  
 324 Nadia  
 325 Nadia  
 325 Nadia  
 346 Nadia  
 348 Nadia  
 349 Nadia  
 356 Nadia

give warnings

boundaries put in

I realised it's not right and put a stop to it	359	Nadia	
me being assertive	360	Nadia	
used to throw little tantrum and I ....	362	Nadia	
I don't do that anymore	364	Nadia	
he doesn't eat in his room any more (nor do the others)	367/8	Nadia	boundaries and consistency
it's not right I put a stop to it	376	Nadia	
he knows some rules set in place now	400	Nadia	
he tries to push ..but doesn't get a lot of leeway	401/2	Nadia	
my behaviour towards them (has changed)	416	Nadia	
I'll input rather than leading (play)	446	Nadia	
I don't believe the naughty step does any justice now	455	Nadia	
we don't have it any more ( naughty step)	456	Nadia	
I don't like the wd naughty either	460	Nadia	
it's (naughty) not a wd we use these days	461	Nadia	
we play as a family	473	Nadia	
I dedicate 10 minutes ..to (child)	474	Nadia	
b4 I'd walk away not realising should stay to encourage	478/9	Nadia	
I don't interrupt him I let him waffle on..	488/9	Nadia	descriptive commentary
gets 10 minutes of my time every day	510	Nadia	
felt I didn't have the right..	548/9	Nadia	
mark go to your room	550	Nadia	tell them what she wants them to do
approach mark in a different way	568	Nadia	
put my words differently	569	Nadia	
instead of saying....	570	Nadia	communication and language
before I just use to snap	579	Nadia	
its thinking before exploding	581	Nadia	
whereas before I probably exploded without...	583	Nadia	
talking to them as opposed to snapping	592	Nadia	
thinking about as I say something what it means to the child	593/4	Nadia	
carry on the routine as I'd set it up	50	Valerie	consistency
the ignoring strategy so works	208	Valerie	ignoring
it's been a miracle cure	209	Valerie	ignoring
if you ignore him	210	Valerie	ignoring

just ignore him, he will be ok	215	Valerie	ignoring
control my own feelings	230	Valerie	
learnt to just say ok	233	Valerie	
walk away from a situation	234	Valerie	
more patient	235	Valerie	
Take a lot more things in my stride	244	Valerie	
sit on the road quite happily	245	Valerie	
there is a line	246	Valerie	
crosses the line	247	Valerie	boundaries
now take the toy away	249	Valerie	boundaries
throws a hissy fit let him get on	249	Valerie	ignoring
firm but fair	251	Valerie	
I play with him	269	Valerie	
make the effort to play with him as well	270	Valerie	
ignoring tactics	278	Valerie	
strike one	288	Valerie	
physically move him away	289	Valerie	
he gets a warning	289	Valerie	
another warning	290	Valerie	
I'll take the toy off him	291	Valerie	
in the hall shut all doors	293	Valerie	time-out
put him in the hall	299	Valerie	
count to 3	299	Valerie	
you calm down	300	Valerie	
we'll talk about it	300	Valerie	
learnt to look at things in more than 1 way	311	Valerie	
I won't mention it anymore	317	Valerie	
I kept harping on the point (Not any more)	319	Valerie	
that's the end of it move on	325	Valerie	
a verbal	331	Valerie	
ignore him	332	Valerie	ignore
Praise	334	Valerie	praise
thumbs up	335	Valerie	praise
not going to put up anymore	338	Valerie	
I've got power	339	Valerie	

verbal warning	353	Valerie	
out in the hall	354	Valerie	
distract him	371	Valerie	
move his attention	372	Valerie	
calm him down	374	Valerie	
distract him	374	Valerie	
not praising him for being naughty	383	Valerie	
distracting him enough so he'll calm down	383/4	Valerie	
praise the good	531	Valerie	
ignore the bad	531/2	Valerie	
more I ignored him....	549	Valerie	
ignored him when having hissy fit...didn't get any attention	554/5	Valerie	
ignore him	563	Valerie	
ignoring went into the hall	578	Valerie	
take away the need to be told of	585	Valerie	avoid situation
try and prevent	596	Valerie	
damage limitation	597	Valerie	
changed way I think	648	Valerie	
what you can or can't do	661	Valerie	
willing to be flexible	662	Valerie	
learn new things	663	Valerie	
tweaking it	666	Valerie	flexibility
routine	667	Valerie	
ignoring thing has replaced tapping	686	Valerie	
praising	691	Valerie	
routine and knows where he stands	751	Valerie	
you think no wait now	761	Valerie	
take a step out of the situation	762	Valerie	
you just need to calm down	764	Valerie	
I will ignore you	766	Valerie	
the ignoring thing	768	Valerie	
the praising thing	769	Valerie	
just having fun with them	769	Valerie	
I'll start tidying up	822	Valerie	modelling
mummy do the rest	824	Valerie	realistic expectations

praised him	827	Valerie	
put toys away b4 we do anything else (examples of changed language and adult changed expectations)	831	Valerie	expectations language
think of how to do things differently	813-843	Valerie	
I was able to change myself	853	Valerie	
I'm the adult I can keep my cool	888	Valerie	
say the same thing	930	Valerie	
told what he did wrong and why	949	Valerie	consistency
conscious that I do now (play)	954	Valerie	language
we'll play	1022	Valerie	play
I have to play pirates with him	1044	Valerie	
let him take the lead	1097	Valerie	
I'll follow suit	1120	Valerie	
I'll sit back	1121	Valerie	
give him some warning	1131	Valerie	
give him a couple of warnings	1139	Valerie	warning
count to 3	1152	Valerie	
they just don't think like an adult	1153	Valerie	
didn't understand how to communicate with him	1219	Valerie	communication
I'll rephrase it	1225	Valerie	
it's important for him to understand	1237	Valerie	
I'm making the effort	1238/9	Valerie	
look at other ways of doing things	1239	Valerie	language
lay down the rules	1401	Valerie	
I'll ignore him	1405	Valerie	
just going to ignore him	1429	Valerie	
mummy's ignoring me again	1436	Valerie	
	1437	Valerie	
special times	253	Tracy	
describing what they're doing while playing	254	Tracy	
ignoring	254	Tracy	
discipline side difficult	377	Tracy	conflict with church
time out	415	Tracy	
I need to calm down	417	Tracy	
frustrated shock of her disrespect	418	Tracy	

pray together		422	Tracy	
ignore and praise		428	Tracy	
catch her doing something and I praise her		432	Tracy	
stopped flicking		435	Tracy	
smacking as a last res..like you know		437	Tracy	
time-out or ignore her		451	Tracy	
flick - impulse - not in control		452	Tracy	smacking lose control
time out		460	Tracy	
noticing my own anger	....I need time	462	Tracy	
I need time out myself		463	Tracy	
try the other things		472	Tracy	
distraction		477	Tracy	
he doesn't do it as often		489	Tracy	flicking
we used to do it literally every day		490	Tracy	flicking
I would ignore it		508	Tracy	
discipline...not beating...teaching	523/4		Tracy	
I give her quality time		555	Tracy	
sticker		623	Tracy	
(play) ..when I remember		673	Tracy	
used to be more directed	701/2		Tracy	
I let her initiate more		704	Tracy	
prepare her before		712	Tracy	
hadn't shown her or trained her	726/7		Tracy	
gets a sticker		729	Tracy	
look into situations not react...and think		730	Tracy	
train and model		743	Tracy	
distracting		758	Tracy	
distraction techniques		765	Tracy	
distract her		779	Tracy	
rewarding or praise		780	Tracy	
how to talk to them		482	Linda	communication
a way to talk to them		482	Linda	communication
which way you should put the words		483	Linda	communication
when I talked to them	618/9			communication

stickers	623	Linda	
you've got a £1 each	630	Linda	
you walk nicely with mummy then.....	634	Linda	first/then/expectations
bribing them	716	Linda	
if you don't do that then you don't get that	718	Linda	
bribery system	767	Linda	
work out a system	772	Linda	
help me today tomorrow you can....	777	Linda	
does what he's suppose to...then	780/1	Linda	
I didn't say that properly	805	Linda	
which way can I put the words	810	Linda	
if you want your stickers you have to-do something	821	Linda	
trying to talk different	845	Linda	
(gaining attention )	857-860	Linda	eye contact etc
look at him and tell him what to do	860	Linda	
started talking to them more instead of.....	888/9	Linda	
I wasn't shouting any more	892	Linda	
not so much of ... go get this,..stop that....	914	Linda	
talk to them and have the communication with them	928/9	Linda	
everyone's listening	937	Linda	
I've actually swiped the box and started building it(Lego)	948	Linda	
spend a bit of time now	1055	Linda	
warnings for it now	1065	Linda	
little bit of quality time	1078	Linda	
say I can't do it right now but one minute	1095	Linda	
I come and do it	1097	Linda	
I let them	1110	Linda	
I'm not playing with the Lego any more	1118	Linda	
you're aware of it (play)	1126	Linda	
don't have to smack them	1198	Linda	
time out	1200	Linda	
taking the privileges away from them	1201	Linda	
sit on the floor where I can see them	1258/9	Linda	
time out	1261	Linda	

letting (child) initiate the play	386	Jack	
taking away privileges	447	Jack	
if she doesn't tidy up...then no swimming	455/6	Jack	
sort of bargaining with her	460	Jack	
let them initiate it	466/7	Jack	
let her initiate	553	Jack	
let her initiate play more	554	Jack	
sat down and explained to her	647	Jack	
I do praise her a lot	650	Jack	
after the course we made a point of it	655	Jack	praise
we don't smack	192	Elaine	
we use timeout	192	Elaine	
we do let a lot of things go over our heads	193	Elaine	
Timeout	225	Elaine	
no film at bedtime	234	Elaine	
there's no treats	236	Elaine	
I don't punish her	237	Elaine	
different ways of playing	377	Elaine	
ok to play with something not conventional	379	Elaine	
letting her lead the play	381	Elaine	
try to do a lot more playing	389/90	Elaine	
learning to say things in a way that is not telling	495/6	Elaine	
ignore the negative	526	Elaine	
promote the positive	527	Elaine	
Timeout	539	Elaine	
time-out	559	Elaine	
talking to her	560	Elaine	
boundaries and if breaks them time out	570	Elaine	
(general language use moved to positive at work)	630-650	Elaine	
focus more on (+ve) than shouting at her	652	Elaine	
don't let things phase me as much as they used to	707	Elaine	
don't shout as much as what I did	737	Elaine	
listening to her when she wants me to	739	Elaine	
I don't react like	818	Elaine	

instead of shouting	820	Elaine
instead of snapping I just listen	989	Elaine
I don't bite anymore	991	Elaine
distract them	198	Sarah
distraction usually very much helps	199	Sarah
put their attention to something else	200	Sarah
focus on something else	209	Sarah
do something with them	374	Sarah
give a distraction	380	Sarah
ignore it	391	Sarah
ignoring part	409	Sarah
positive attention	417/8	Sarah
devote your time and play with them	421	Sarah
learn to take things easier	499	Sarah
don't worry so much about some things	499/500	Sarah
ignore whether you have to wash up	510	Sarah
attended to it quickly	581	Sarah
Consistent	606	Sarah
try not to lead	766	Sarah
let them have their own imagination	767/8	Sarah
try to follow them	768	Sarah
le them um create, let them have their fantasy more	789/90	Sarah
if important to him I let him have it	833	Sarah
I can let him you know	845	Sarah

## Appendix 7c - Initial Coding of data

Changes

### Words and Phrases

	Line No	ID	parents behave	child behave	play	confiden
makes you feel confident	278	Lucy				x
not a right and wrong	280	Lucy				x
the better way to deal with it	280	Lucy				x
b4 the course I did have a short temper	314	Lucy	x			
now I could just take a breath and walk away	315	Lucy	x			
feel like I'm a good parent at the moment	371	Lucy				x
deep breathes really	408	Lucy	x			
I used to just shout and huff and puff	416	Lucy	x			
the ignoring definitely I took that from their	417/8	Lucy	x			
I tried the sitting on the step but I didn't like that	418	Lucy	x			
um like playing	425	Lucy	x		x	
I give them 10mins each day...	427/8	Lucy	x		x	
before I'd scream and shout	434	Lucy	x			
they'd just scream and shout back at me	434/5	Lucy		x		
or I would smack their hand and I...	439	Lucy	x			
the ignoring it worked instantly	452/3	Lucy	x	x		
I've been able to um calm down big time	461	Lucy	x			
used to get thoughts in my head that I ...to disappear	463	Lucy				x
I've been able to control the tantrums from the kids	468	Lucy		x		x
me and dean we don't argue like we used to	470	Lucy	x			
used to blame him but probably me to be honest	471	Lucy	x			x
I probably laugh more than tell them off now	482	Lucy	x	x		
with punching, fighting...he now plays with other kids	497/8	Lucy		x		
I changed mine I think	517	Lucy	x			
the way I dealt with him at the beginning just made him worse	518	Lucy	x	x		
since the course I'd actually take him home	525	Lucy	x			

he gets 1 chance and then...	531	Lucy	x				
he'll get one chance and then...	533	Lucy	x				
b4 we go somewhere tell him where going	535	Lucy	x				
people tell me how good he's been	538	Lucy			x		
b4 the course it was awful	543	Lucy			x		
he knows he'll go home	555	Lucy	x				
he doesn't really misbehave when we're out	565	Lucy			x		
quite a few people have (noticed change in his behaviour)	570	Lucy			x		
yeh definitely	590	Lucy					x
because were happier	593	Lucy			x		
(play) not as much as I should have	631	Lucy				x	
it (play) makes them happier	635	Lucy				x	
it (play) makes me feel better	635	Lucy				x	
I get to know them better as well	636	Lucy				x	
actually sitting down with them	665	Lucy				x	
it wasn't every day	667	Lucy				x	
finish doing what I'm doing	667	Lucy	x				
I didn't realise (play) was a big thing	678	Lucy	x			x	x
I didn't realise (play) wd help them improve in everything	680	Lucy	x			x	x
seen changes in them since I've started playing	682/3	Lucy	x		x	x	x
Connor's got a lot brighter	684	Lucy			x	x	
learnt a lot more stuff	684	Lucy			x	x	
learnt colours and things like that	685	Lucy			x	x	
just by me sitting down with her	686	Lucy	x		x	x	
I've just got to sit back and watch	694	Lucy	x			x	
or they just tell me what I've got to do	694	Lucy	x			x	
whatever they want to do in that 10 minutes is up to them	698	Lucy	x			x	
I feel more confident	714	Lucy					x
I'm aware I can deal with it	715	Lucy	x				x
before I'd be too embarrassed	716	Lucy					x
now I will just ignore him	722	Lucy	x				
I don't really care if people are looking at me saying....	722/3	Lucy					x
I'm not bothered what other people think about it now..	724/5	Lucy					x
whereas before I did	725	Lucy					x
because I know why they're.....	735	Lucy	x				x



I'd smack her bum but now I use 1,2,3	396	Lauren	x		
we try to distract her	398	Lauren	x		
descriptive commentary like every time we see a bus	400	Lauren	x		
ignore it now	434	Lauren	x		
distract her	435	Lauren	x		
not give in, not give in	436	Lauren	x		
b4 with Jack.... He wd just give in and then....	437	Lauren	x		
remember the ignoring bit, ignore it or go straight away	440	Lauren	x		x
positive praise	492	Lauren	x		
descriptive commentary	502	Lauren	x		
ignoring	503	Lauren	x		
I get more involved I'd say now	508	Lauren	x	x	
now we get down and play	511	Lauren	x	x	
doesn't matter whether the bath goes with house	511/2	Lauren		x	
doesn't matter we'll play together	512	Lauren		x	
we do the imagination	513/4	Lauren		x	
your course guided me	519	Lauren		x	x
a guide to being a better parent	519	Lauren			x
I wanted to do better	520	Lauren			x
I wanted to be a bet	521	Lauren			x
I wanted to be the best mum for Scarlett	522	Lauren			x
yeah 100% she's not so erratic now	552	Lauren		x	
she's more.....	554	Lauren		x	
I'm laying boundaries down	571	Lauren	x		
I'm being more firm with her	571/2	Lauren	x		
I'm not letting her get away with things	572	Lauren	x		
serious things have to be very firm with her	574	Lauren	x		
being more firm more interacting	575	Lauren	x		
she responds more to me and I'll respond more to her	576	Lauren	x		
I don't think I really done it properly	683/4	Lauren		x	
(play changed) yes, yes	694	Lauren		x	
she said how it went	696	Lauren		x	
we'd probably sit and play	737	Lauren		x	
not as much as now	749	Lauren		x	

because I've sat down and let her initiate it	765	Lauren	x		x	
she's not so erratic now	762	Lauren		x		
we've guided her into sitting down and playing	768	Lauren		x		
she feels more confident.....play with her toys	769	Lauren		x		
use her imagination	770	Lauren		x		
b4 I'd be so anxious about what other people would say	792	Lauren				x
now I just ignore it or I give her something to distract her	794	Lauren	x			x
she's learning herself	799	Lauren				x
she know what pushes my buttons	800	Lauren				x
she tries to push the boundaries so she can get what she wants	801/2	Lauren				x
makes it a lot clearer	805	Lauren				x
what you're taught	806	Lauren				x
you can see her actions	806	Lauren				x
she expects a certain outcome	807	Lauren				x
I have to make that outcome change	808	Lauren				x
she knows she won't get it with me	812	Lauren				x
she don't cry that much with me	813	Lauren		x		
either ignore it all the way or give in straight away	820	Lauren				x
I was really uncomfortable playing with scarlet	971	Lauren			x	
I feel really comfortable, I feel I can do it any time	975	Lauren			x	x
frame of mind b4 I went back to work	976	Lauren			x	x
the parent playing rather than the child	541	Diane	x		x	
getting me to rethink	543	Diane			x	x
tried to switch that round	598	Diane	x			
remembering to let her play rather than me	601/2	Diane			x	
positive praise	727	Diane	x			
rather than negative all the time	731	Diane	x			
I hadn't realised how much negative speech ...	734	Diane	x			
even the kids are starting to notice	743	Diane	x			
he realising that sort of thing is happening	753	Diane		x		
positive praise	760	Diane	x			
recognising bad things kids doing are childish	762/3	Diane	x			
I've got calmer	772	Diane	x			
I'm not on their backs	775	Diane	x			

more wary about fight pick	776	Diane	x			
kids noticed	773	Diane	x			
recognising behaviour is childlike behaviour	778/9	Diane	x			
a lot calmer now	794	Diane			x	
don't get so much of the ...	795	Diane			x	
less of the arguments	799	Diane			x	
more polite towards each other	800	Diane			x	
all just rubbing off	803	Diane	x		x	
thank them for it	806	Diane	x			
not having the fights	815	Diane			x	
going to get praised	817	Diane	x			
me being positive to them	822	Diane	x			
them being positive to each other	823	Diane			x	
my attitude has	844	Diane	x			x
hold back more	893	Diane				x
I've changed (less directive in play)	908	Diane				x
more confident with myself on how I speak to the children	934	Diane				x
positive speak I'm more confident	941	Diane				x
recognise it's a child like thing	990	Diane				x
recognising what is actually naughty behaviour to childlike	1000/1	Diane				x
um don't like get too involved with their play	378	Kirsty				x
let them play their way and not your way	382	Kirsty				x
I might be a little tougher sometimes	393	Kirsty	x			
I wouldn't really say I'm any different	393	Kirsty				
I wouldn't really say it's changed me	394	Kirsty				
I'm not so much in there	590	Kirsty				x
I let them like do the playing and I follow	591	Kirsty				x
instead of me saying....	592	Kirsty				x
I'll let them choose what they want to do	593	Kirsty				x
so I suppose the play has changed a little bit	594	Kirsty				x
I just play with him whenever the chance comes up	599	Kirsty				x
every day, all the time everything	619	Kirsty				x
I still don't know why she does it like	656	Kirsty				x
I learnt to play with the kids a lot better and not be so controlling	770/1	Kirsty				x







he hit 3 he seemed to have this explosion	939	Valerie		x	
seemed to develop	940	Valerie		x	
physically got bigger	941	Valerie		x	
pre-school	942	Valerie		x	
secure environment	943	Valerie		x	
if you don't know what you're doing wrong	959	Valerie			x
me change my behaviour	975	Valerie	x		x
improve my skills	975	Valerie	x		x
didn't realise the effect it would have on him	976	Valerie		x	
I knew he would change slightly	977	Valerie		x	
didn't realise it would change this much	977	Valerie		x	
whatever I'm doing right is rubbing off on him	979	Valerie	x		
helped me figure out where I'm going wrong	985	Valerie	x		x
not that black and white	988	Valerie			x
(play) it was hit and miss	1014	Valerie		x	
used to play with him	1021	Valerie		x	
not with the same amount of consciousness	1022	Valerie		x	
if I knew then what I know now	1023	Valerie		x	x
If I knew then what I know now I wd have made a conscious effort.....	1024	Valerie		x	x
to be different in my way of playing with him	1025	Valerie		x	x
it wasn't so much of a conscious effort	1028	Valerie		x	x
then I wd block him off in his play area	1030	Valerie		x	x
I'd get on and do something else	1032	Valerie		x	x
I wouldn't be thinking whatever I'm doing has a direct result to him	1035	Valerie		x	x
he's small he won't really notice	1036	Valerie		x	x
I wasn't that informed	1038	Valerie		x	x
play is quite an important factor of developing	1040	Valerie		x	x
I will engage with him and we'll play	1043	Valerie	x	x	
something else I learnt from the course	1119	Valerie		x	x
let him take the lead	1120	Valerie	x	x	
let him do what he wants to do	1120	Valerie		x	
I'll just follow suit	1121	Valerie	x	x	
that's the only time.. he gets to tell me where to go and what to do	1124	Valerie		x	
I'll sit back and say ok what do you want me to do	1132	Valerie	x	x	
I'll let him tell me what to do	1132	Valerie		x	

give him some warning	1138	Valerie	x	
give him a couple of warnings	1142	Valerie	x	
on the count of 3	1144	Valerie	x	
I've learnt if I give him a couple of warnings	1152	Valerie	x	x
the confidence has come from the fact ...	1160	Valerie		x
I feel more in control of the situation	1161	Valerie		x
with confidence comes the ability to realise ....strengths & weakness	1171	Valerie		x
let's just chill	1176	Valerie	x	x
being a little bit more confident	1178	Valerie		x
more laid back in some respects	1179	Valerie		x
amazing how little you know when 1st have a kid	1211	Valerie		x
think on their level	1217	Valerie	x	x
didn't understand how to communicate with him	1225	Valerie	x	x
something that I've learnt to think well it's ok	1230	Valerie		x
I'll rephrase it 2 or 3 times	1237	Valerie	x	
I'm making the effort because I want him to understand	1239	Valerie	x	
I'm a mother in my own right	1371	Valerie		x
I was always being judged...	1363	Valerie		x
I will look at other ways of doing things	1397	Valerie	x	x
given me the ability to be a better parent	1396	Valerie		x
changed so much about my parenting in a good way	1410	Valerie		x
ability to look at other things and other ways	1400	Valerie		x
empowers you	1423	Valerie		x
I'm the adult here I don't care I'll ignore him	1429	Valerie		x
quite scary how quickly I learned to zone him out	1430	Valerie		x
changed my mindset	83	Tracy		x
a lot more peace in the house	84	Tracy		
when you tried something it actually worked	248	Tracy		x
it was nice to actually see things work	249	Tracy	x	x
special time	253	Tracy	x	x
describing what they're doing	253	Tracy	x	x
ignoring input	254	Tracy	x	x
seeing that it did work	255	Tracy	x	x
helped me empathise more with Nia	256	Tracy		x

changed my reactions and my responses to her as a result	259	Tracy	x		
the sort of ignore and praise	428	Tracy	x		
as soon as she does something right praise	431	Tracy	x		
I'll catch her doing something and I'll praise her..	432	Tracy	x		
I'm a lot more aware of that	433	Tracy	x		x
my instinctive reaction wd be to give her a flick but I've stopped that	435	Tracy	x		
seeing smacking as a last res...	437	Tracy	x		x
I think the other things work	445	Tracy	x		x
it's ...you know I'm not really in control	453	Tracy	x		x
noticing my own anger and realising look I'm really upset now	462	Tracy			x
I need time myself	463	Tracy			x
let's try the other things	472	Tracy			x
deal with ourselves	473	Tracy			x
then we can deal with her	474	Tracy			x
doesn't do it as often	489	Tracy	x		
used to do it literally every day	490	Tracy	x		
now...I wd ignore it and then I wd come back to lit later	508/9	Tracy	x		
it's not beating, it's not you know it's just teaching	524	Tracy			x
confident in influencing people in that way	526	Tracy			x
I think I think differently	530	Tracy			x
god doesn't... say beat people he says discipline which is teach	533	Tracy			x
yeah definitely	541	Tracy	x		
I'm just more aware	541	Tracy	x		
there's more alarms	542	Tracy	x		x
there's more bells going in my head when things	542	Tracy	x		x
I still slip up but I think I'm just more aware	543	Tracy	x		x
some of the things on the course com back in certain situations	545	Tracy	x		x
respond to her when she's upset is different	547	Tracy	x		
I didn't really enjoy being with her	552	Tracy	x		
I give her quality time	555	Tracy	x	x	
you know the play time she's just different	555	Tracy	x	x	
I'm more conscious	557	Tracy		x	x
I need to do something with there so she feels we're engaging	558	Tracy		x	x
list of different activities	560	Tracy	x	x	x
I'm a bit more creative	563	Tracy		x	x

I have more prompts as to what she likes	568	Tracy	x		x	x
because I want to give her the best ..parenting	580	Tracy				x
she understands praise	619	Tracy		x		
she understands um discipline	620	Tracy		x		
she responds very well to praise	620/1	Tracy	x			
because that's increased (praise) her behaviour changes a lot	621/2	Tracy	x	x		x
easier to convince her to do something	622	Tracy	x	x		x
because we've got into a system	625	Tracy	x			x
easier to change behaviours of certain things	625	Tracy	x	x		x
b4 I wouldn't really know how to do that	626	Tracy	x			x
it's just an easier process	630	Tracy	x	x		x
I think she responds	633	Tracy		x		
when I remember	673	Tracy			x	
no no	681	Tracy			x	
I just assumed we were doing things	682	Tracy			x	
I didn't make a conscious decision	683	Tracy			x	
I used to be more directed	702	Tracy			x	
I'd sort of allow her	702	Tracy			x	
I let her initiate a lot more than I would have	704	Tracy			x	
I let her initiate and I just go with it	706	Tracy			x	
a lot more now yes um in public its difficult	710	Tracy				x
what I learnt is if I prepare her	712	Tracy	x			x
if I think about the problems ahead of time	714	Tracy	x			x
I feel I am more confident	714	Tracy				x
when I'm not prepared um its harder in public	715	Tracy				x
I could look and think we haven't really shown her	726	Tracy	x			x
so um we started in the house just with a neighbour	727	Tracy	x			x
so I can look into situation & not react & think well I need to train her	730	Tracy				x
I'm learning now to okay well let's take a week and teach her	735	Tracy	x			x
less of a disobedient thing to train	743	Tracy	x			x
sort of modelling um behaviour	743	Tracy	x			x
So I don't expect things I sort of analyse myself first.....	744	Tracy	x			x
whereas before	745	Tracy	x			x
I think a lot more about what I'm doing and how I'm training her	748/9	Tracy	x			x
definitely, definitely um we're a lot different	755	Tracy	x			



if I'm giving them something to get something back	935	Linda	x	x			x
they're enjoying it and I'm enjoying it	936	Linda	x	x			x
Everyone listening, everyone's being....	937	Linda	x	x			x
I've actually swiped the box (Lego) off them and started building	948	Linda	x			x	
I'm more aware now	1053	Linda				x	
that I need to do it	1053	Linda				x	
I've got to spend a bit of time now	1055	Linda				x	
I do have the warnings for it now	1065	Linda				x	
I spend a little bit of quality time each time I have that moment	1078	Linda				x	
I spend that little bit of extra time with that one	1075	Linda				x	
I can't do it right now but one minute	1095	Linda				x	
I come and do it	1097	Linda	x			x	
they've actually gone and ruined (jigsaws) & I didn't say nothing	1108	Linda	x			x	
I try to avoid it	1114	Linda	x				
I'm not playing with the Lego anymore	1118	Linda	x			x	
you're aware of it, you're aware if you don't do it	1126	Linda	x			x	
yeah, I do feel more confident about that	1169	Linda					x
I don't feel like it's such of a big thing	1170	Linda	x				x
you're not so much or its all out of proportion	1171	Linda	x				x
more confident in punishing them	1179	Linda	x				x
lost control...afterwards I gained it, I started gaining how I could	1183/4	Linda					x
so I became confident with myself	1196	Linda					x
being able to give a punishment if its needed	1197	Linda					x
you don't have to smack them	1198	Linda	x				x
they don't need smacking	1200	Linda	x				x
pass through the social services saying their happy	1210/11	Linda					x
I've got my own confidence back on myself	1213	Linda					x
I've got my own confidence now that I'm	1215/6	Linda					x
you're able to communicate with them better	1221	Linda					x
you're more aware of it	1222	Linda					x
I don't go crazy at their behaviour	1234	Linda	x				x
I don't go and tell them off straight away	1235	Linda	x				
try to ask them questions more as well	1237	Linda	x				
b4....have given them a slap, put them to bed	1244	Linda	x				
going to their room doesn't work	1249	Linda	x				

The Webster Stratton because on the thing they always said...	1252	Linda	x			x
the web Stratton on we had a thing sending a child to their room	1255	Linda	x			x
letting Scarlett initiate the play rather than you know	386	Jack			x	
let them initiate it if you can	467	Jack	x		x	x
let her initiate as I said	533	Jack	x		x	
let her initiate lay more	534	Jack	x		x	
probably don't know you're doing it half the time	534/5	Jack				x
Rather than letting her play on her.....	537	Jack			x	x
become more imaginative	551	Jack		x		
I thought what I was doing was correct you know	570	Jack	x			x
I was probably initiating the play more than she was	574	Jack	x		x	x
she'll tell me what she wants to do	594	Jack			x	
she's definitely more imaginative	601	Jack		x		
Probably didn't do it as much but um after the course we.....	654/5	Jack	x			x
I do praise her a lot	650	Jack	x			
we make a point of it	655	Jack	x			
different ways of playing with (child)	377	Elaine	x		x	
understanding how her little mind works	378	Elaine				x
okay if she wants to play with something not the conventional way	379/80	Elaine			x	x
letting her lead the play	381	Elaine	x		x	
we try to do a lot more playing with her	390	Elaine	x		x	
I think well the housework can wait	390/1	Elaine	x			x
different ways of looking at things now	419	Elaine				x
Everything's not black and white you know	420	Elaine				x
it doesn't really matter if they do something not the right way	421	Elaine	x			x
as long as she's having fun	422	Elaine	x			x
learning from it in some way	422/3	Elaine	x			x
listening to (partner) more	425	Elaine	x			
we sort of talk like more now (partner)	425	Elaine	x			
I listen to his views	426	Elaine	x			
I looked at myself	457	Elaine	x			x
little things that were said	457/8	Elaine	x			x
come home and think oh I am a little bit unfair	459	Elaine	x			

I thought not just my responsibility it's a little thing	464	Elaine	x		
course made me realise a little bit more open and honest	472	Elaine	x		x
we do talk a lot more now	480	Elaine	x		
learning to say things in a way that is not telling someone	495/6	Elaine	x		
playing because I used to just tend to let her play on her own	575	Elaine	x	x	
we've changed her bedroom so it's a bit more user friendly	578	Elaine	x	x	
can get out her toys	579	Elaine	x	x	
do a little more structured	582	Elaine	x	x	
I take more time out like the other	584	Elaine	x	x	
I try to do different things	588	Elaine	x	x	
we do family days out	589	Elaine	x	x	
getting her involved in more of what we do	599	Elaine	x	x	
letting her join in	600	Elaine	x	x	
it's not a bad thing if she sits there with.....mud	600	Elaine			x
Whereas b4 .....you know that's messy	602/3	Elaine			x
she does everything really	608	Elaine	x	x	
it's fun even though its house work	612	Elaine	x		x
she's having fun with mummy and daddy	613	Elaine	x		x
involving her in everything	618	Elaine	x		
if I focus more on that than shouting at her	652	Elaine	x		
it's helped me um and listening to other people	683	Elaine			x
I'm a lot calmer, a hell of a lot calmer	698	Elaine	x		
Andrews influence as well	699	Elaine			x
I'm a lot more laid back	706	Elaine			x
I'm a lot calmer, a hell of a lot calmer	707	Elaine			x
I don't let things phase me as much as they used to	707	Elaine			x
bits of the course	711	Elaine	x		x
not a problem if there's a mess	711/2	Elaine	x		x
there playing you know	712	Elaine	x		x
it can be tidied up	712	Elaine	x		x
Whereas I would avoid playing certain things	713	Elaine	x		x
I'm more relaxed	721	Elaine			x
I'm not as stressed out as what	721	Elaine			x
karris is um progressing nicely	722	Elaine		x	
bigger mixture of things she can and can't do	723	Elaine	x		

nothing she can't do really	724	Elaine	x		
I wouldn't stop her doing anything (unless harm)	724	Elaine	x		
I let her try everything now where as b4 I wouldn't just in case	726	Elaine	x		
I look now and I think well no I am a good mum you know	728	Elaine			x
I get such pride	729	Elaine			x
I don't shout as much as what I did	737	Elaine	x		
I don't pull my hair out and like arhh	738	Elaine	x		
I just think listening to her what she wants	739	Elaine	x		
I used to worry too much about everything else	740	Elaine	x		
and what everyone else thought instead of enjoying	741/2	Elaine	x		x
we are quite good at that	778	Elaine			x
that's come on in leaps and bounds	807	Elaine		x	
eating's a lot better which I was having problems with	810	Elaine		x	
her not listening she's a lot better now	811	Elaine		x	
I think....it's the way I perhaps react to things	813	Elaine	x		x
some of the changes are I don't react like if she	818	Elaine	x		x
I'll go up instead of shouting get back upstairs	820	Elaine	x		x
Before I'd be like no....where as now I will just say...	832/4	Elaine	x	x	
I did but not to the extent	856	Elaine			x
I used to start playing and then leave her to it.....housework	856/7	Elaine			x
I'm like ok no worries where as b4	877/9	Elaine	x		x
it don't matter how because in time she'll learn	880/1	Elaine	x		x
I just let her do whatever she wants really	883/4	Elaine	x		x
it did use to bother me (playing properly)	888	Elaine	x		x
I'm a little bit more , no it doesn't necessarily have to be	893	Elaine	x		x
yeah..it did used to bother me (playing properly)	896	Elaine	x		x
yes, yeah I do I do feel (more confident)	899	Elaine			x
a lot of it is frustration um they can't get their self across	938/9	Elaine			x
they can't communicate so they lash out	941/2	Elaine			x
behavioural issues....no....it's just frustration	943/4	Elaine			x
picked up a lot from the course .. children do things for a reason	952/3	Elaine			x
not because want to be naughty or misbehave...for a reason	954/5	Elaine			x
I look now & think ...wonder why doing that...	955	Elaine			x
obviously a reason	956	Elaine			x
I now think there's a reason behind that behaviour	960/1	Elaine			x



becoming very much happier	561	Sarah		x		
better now, very much happier about that	574/5	Sarah		x		
you said I should just use one strategy.....	580	Sarah	x			
I sometimes give him like err undivided attention	586/7	Sarah	x			
I wasn't really aware of that until the course	590	Sarah				x
I just play with him	592	Sarah	x		x	
if I just play with him.....it makes him happy and he's relaxed	595/6	Sarah	x		x	
the course really helped me be aware	608	Sarah				x
going on the course you understand how the children feel	612/3	Sarah				x
and also how they (children) understand	613/4	Sarah				x
sometimes they see things differently	616	Sarah				x
didn't know if I played with them that it's so important to them	618	Sarah				x
or if a little attention sometimes	619	Sarah				x
sometimes they just want to show you something.....now	620	Sarah				x
it's really important to them	622	Sarah				x
in some ways I understand my children more	626	Sarah				x
sometimes you're not aware your behaviour would reflect on the child	646	Sarah				x
something you said wd have such deep impact on the child	648	Sarah				x
now with the course I know it was so important	670	Sarah				x
it was taken away from him so he was feeling insecure	672	Sarah				x
maybe I cause the behaviour	680	Sarah				x
I play with them both	692	Sarah			x	
just being more aware that it is more important	711	Sarah			x	
b4 I played because I wanted to	711/2	Sarah	x		x	x
I liked it (play)	712	Sarah			x	
now I know the importance of it (play)		Sarah	x		x	x
so it gives me a kind of its ok go ahead feeling you know	713/4	Sarah			x	x
play one game then another game so it could be for some hrs	750/1	Sarah			x	
now I have more like the go ahead (to play)	762	Sarah			x	x
I try not to lead	766	Sarah			x	
I hold myself back	766	Sarah			x	
I used to do it before the programme	766/7	Sarah			x	
now I'm really letting them have their own imagination	767/8	Sarah			x	
just try to follow them	768	Sarah			x	
I just let them	775	Sarah			x	

I'm just trying to get myself only a little role	775/6	Sarah		x	
trying to let them tell sometimes you know what to do	776	Sarah		x	
I let them uhm create	789	Sarah		x	
let them have their fantasy more	790	Sarah		x	
in those fantasy games it doesn't matter..just fun	798	Sarah		x	
still not confident as such	810	Sarah			x
sometimes I still feel so bad	811	Sarah			x
like I cannot get control over it	811	Sarah			x
but I think I'm on the right way	812	Sarah			x
I'm still trying to improve	812	Sarah			x
I'm not yet knowing really um what to solve it so quickly	813	Sarah			x
sometimes I'm still battling on that	814	Sarah			x
I always say you can still learn you can still improve..	819/20	Sarah			x
I really understand them more yeah	824	Sarah			x
sometimes you don't realise as an adult	825	Sarah			x
sometimes that little things can..can really upset them	826	Sarah			x
I felt it's important to him I just let him have it	833	Sarah			x
it makes it so much easier and he's enjoying it	839	Sarah			x
important to him	839	Sarah			x
gives him maybe some confident	841	Sarah			x
so I understand that all that is important for him	842	Sarah			x
so I just let him do that	844	Sarah			x
it doesn't really do so much harm	844	Sarah			x
I can let him you know	845	Sarah	x		
b4 it would have been like oh no like that	847	Sarah	x		x
I understand them more	883	Sarah			x
I didn't even know I was already doing those things	998	Sarah		x	
not aware until you ...hear it ....until course	1003/4	Sarah		x	x
learn to understand the children maybe better	1033	Sarah			x

## Appendix 7d - Initial Coding of data

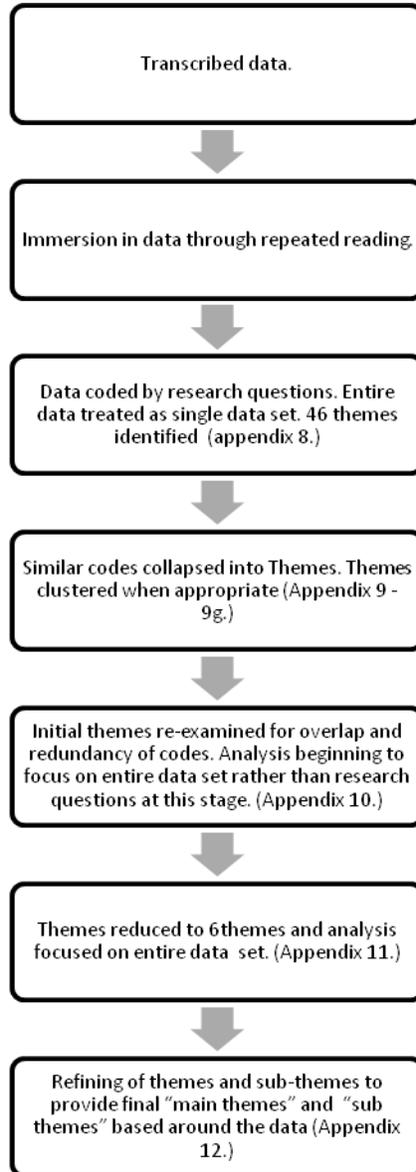
### Home Support

Words and Phrases	Line No	ID	visited	didn't visit
getting feedback from the other person		729 Jack	x	
to say we're doing ok		733 Jack	x	
I wouldn't say anything sort of changed but.....		742 Jack	x	
the main thing was that scarlet was um ok and developing well	747/8	Jack	x	
um just time really for me		1065 Elaine		x
it just didn't fit in with my		1066 Elaine		x
I wd have like to have done it but		1066 Elaine		x
just didn't fit in with my actual life at the time		1067 Elaine		x
it was offered from the course		961 Sarah	x	
felt like maybe it could help		962 Sarah	x	
(in the course) you don't have the children		965 Sarah	x	
she could see him and also how he reacts	968/9	Sarah	x	
I liked to have her company around so yeah it was good, yeah	975/6	Sarah	x	
(did anything change) I don't think so		979 Sarah	x	
maybe it should have been more than once		981 Sarah	x	
I don't think that changed no		984 Sarah	x	
it was a nice thing to have her		984 Sarah	x	
I didn't even know that I was already doing these things		998 Sarah	x	descriptive commentary was using
I wanted her to see what I was doing with the kids with the play	930/1	Lucy	x	
it was like a whole new world		934 Lucy	x	
it was the 1st time I'd seen them light up		936 Lucy	x	
play at home in the front room		936 Lucy	x	

we sat back		938	Lucy	x	
we were told what to do		938	Lucy	x	
made up this whole pirate ship		939	Lucy	x	
the 1st time seeing Connor's imagination go		943	Lucy	x	
I'd just not noticed		951	Lucy	x	
I've been upstairs cleaning		952	Lucy	x	
too busy to realise what he's actually been doing		953	Lucy	x	
the 1st time sat down and watched him play		957	Lucy	x	
that's when we started playing		960	Lucy	x	
I could realise it wasn't stupid to dress up....		964	Lucy	x	
it didn't matter		966	Lucy	x	
so it looked rubbish...he thought it was brilliant		968	Lucy	x	
make sure I was doing it right		947	Lauren	x	
it felt a bit alien at first		948	Lauren	x	
like oh no you've got to have the bathroom in the bathroom		951	Lauren	x	
I wasn't		952	Lauren	x	
I don't know I've never been		952	Lauren	x	
never that's the way it's got to be do you know		953	Lauren	x	
and to you know get Jack involved as well		959	Lauren	x	
I didn't feel that I needed		1108	Diane		X
the ages of what my children were at the time of doing the		1112	Diane		
course					
there wasn't a need		1115	Diane		
to see that I was using right techniques		755	Kirsty	x	
that were taught on the course		756	Kirsty	x	
using them in the correct manner		756	Kirsty	x	
sometimes easier to put into practice if.....showing		757	Kirsty	x	
showed me how to play with k & J more effectively and	767/8		Kirsty	x	
I improved on my play		770	Kirsty	x	
I suppose it did		770	Kirsty	x	
I learnt to play with the kids a lot better		771	Kirsty	x	
not be so controlling		772	Kirsty	x	

like descriptive play		772	Kirsty	x
yeah more descriptive play		774	Kirsty	x
because that's quite hard to d		774	Kirsty	x
descriptive play like the kids pushing their car		775	Kirsty	x
so yeah she taught me that a bit better		778	Kirsty	x
was struggling with Sean's behaviour		710	Nadia	x
watching videos on descriptive play and I was struggling		711	Nadia	x
like a change in something you've done		713	Nadia	x
I was having difficulty dealing with the change		714	Nadia	x
brought an imagination out of (child)		715	Nadia	x
I had never let him bring up		716	Nadia	x
made me realise he's capable of his own imagination	739/40		Nadia	x
diff to pick up on course how to do descriptive play	740/1		Nadia	x

## Appendix 8 Model of the stages in the Coding process leading to the development of the themes



## **Appendix 9 Initial Themes generated from Coded Data**

The data was transcribed. Following repeated reading of the data and immersion in the data, the data was then coded. Coding was carried out across the entire data set with the focusing initially on the research questions. Thus, for example, the entire data set was treated as a single data set and used to label segments of information that pertained to issues around parent's reasons for attending the programme, which was the first research question. This was done for all the research questions. The codes were constructed codes at this stage as opposed to in vivo codes.

The coded data was grouped into 46 initial themes encapsulating the five research questions and these are presented below.

### **Research Question 1 - Parent's reasons for attending**

- Theme 1 Encouraged to attend
- Theme 2 Lack of confidence
- Theme 3 Needed reassurance
- Theme 4 Wanted to be a better parent
- Theme 5 Organisation suited attendance
- Theme 6 Wanted to gain more knowledge
- Theme 7 Child's behaviour
- Theme 8 Wanted company

### **Research Question 1 - Why parents continued to attend**

- Theme 9 Liked the group
- Theme 10 Was developing skills
- Theme 11 Could see changes in behaviour

### **Research Question 2 - Advantages from attending**

- Theme 12 Knowing what to do
- Theme 13 Like the group
- Theme 14 Child's behaviour had changed
- Theme 15 Time for themselves
- Theme 16 Used less smacking
- Theme 17 Believed they could do it
- Theme 18 Own behaviour had changed
- Theme 19 Developed strategies
- Theme 20 Improvement in relationships

### **Research Question 2 - Disadvantages identified**

- Theme 21 The ending
- Theme 22 Age of own children and relevance to them
- Theme 23 Home-work
- Theme 24 Role play
- Theme 25 Group dominance
- Theme 26 Lack of involvement of extended family
- Theme 27 American Programme
- Theme 28 Timing of the sessions

### **Research Question 3 - Changes in parent and child behaviour**

- Theme 29 Language
- Theme 30 Play

- Theme 31 Rewards
- Theme 32 Approaches used
- Theme 33 Child's behaviour
- Theme 34 Nothing has changed

**Research Question 4 – Why parents took or rejected home support**

- Theme 35 Re-assurance
- Theme 36 To Learn/be taught
- Theme 37 Loneliness
- Theme 38 Time for play
- Theme 39 Play has changed
- Theme 40 No changes in play
- Theme 41 Increased imagination

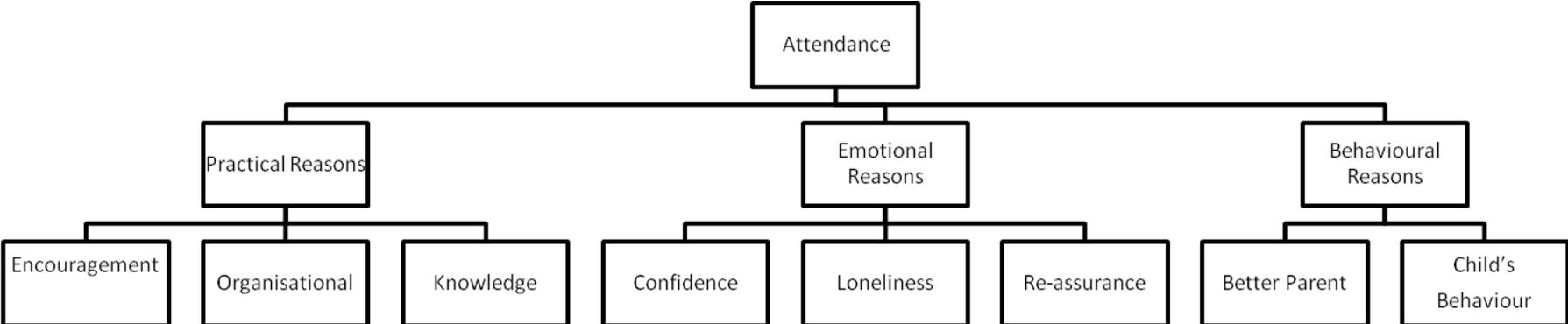
**Research Question 5 - changes in parents' confidence**

- Theme 42 Play has changed
- Theme 43 Childish behaviour is ok
- Theme 44 I can do it
- Theme 45 I have changed
- Theme 46 Language

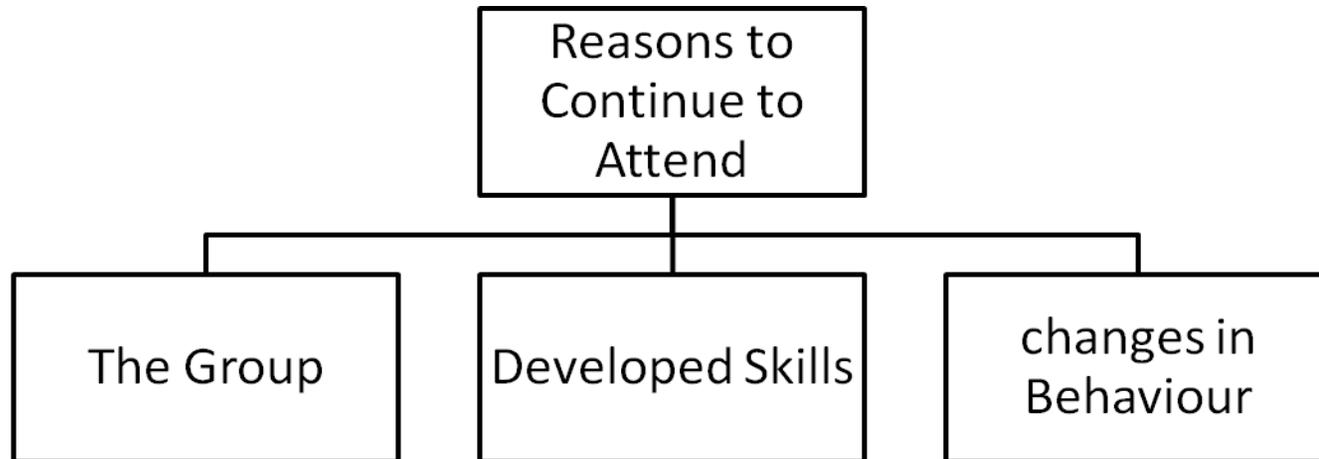
## **Appendix 10: Themes and Super Themes**

Forty-six initial themes emerged. These themes were generated by an analysis that focused on the research questions. These themes were clustered into “super themes” where appropriate. Pictorial representations of these super themes are provided in appendices 9a – 9g.

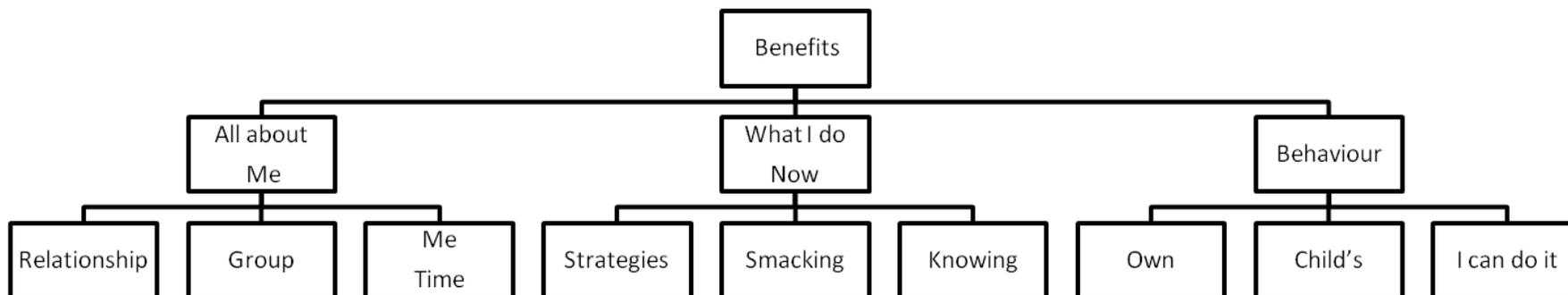
**Appendix 10a : Themes reflecting Parents' views on their reasons for attending the programme**



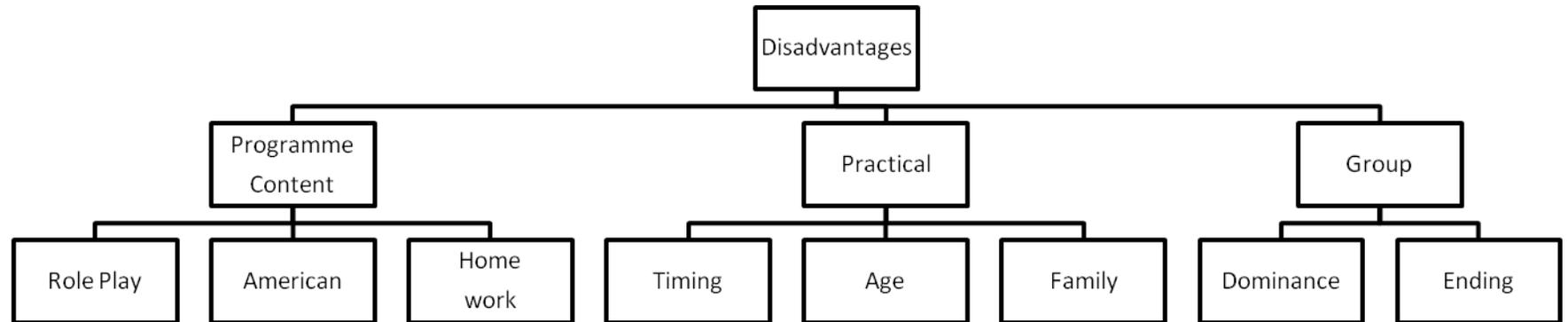
**Appendix 10b : Themes reflecting parents' views on why they continued to attend the group parenting programme**



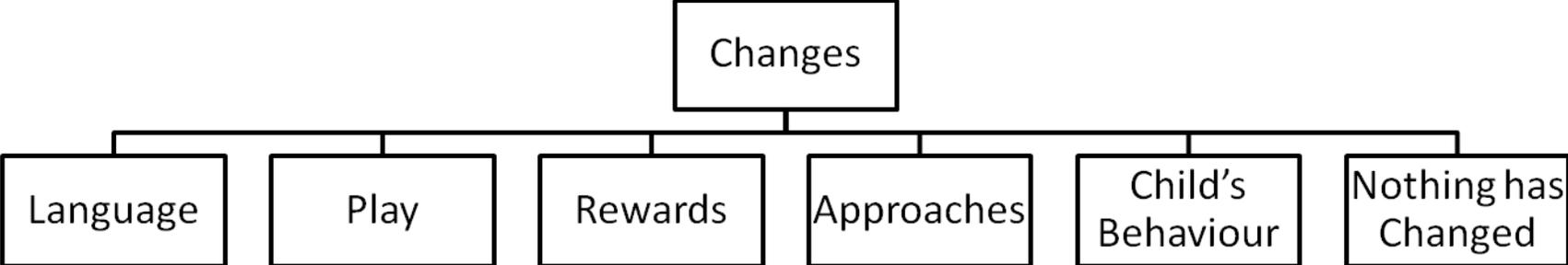
**Appendix 10c : Themes reflecting parents' views on the benefits of attending the group parenting programme**



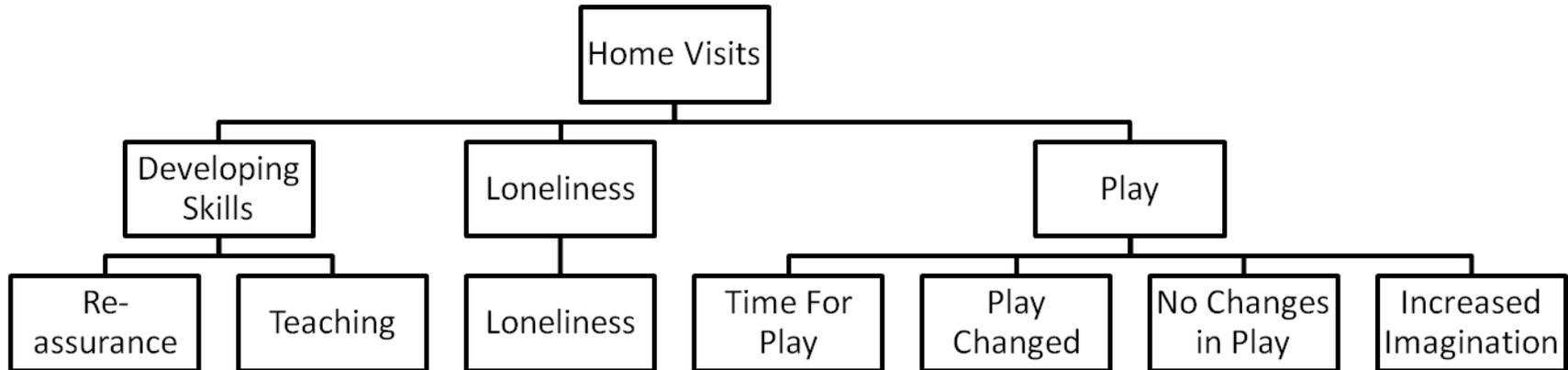
**Appendix 10d : Themes reflecting parents' views about what they did not like about the group parenting programme**



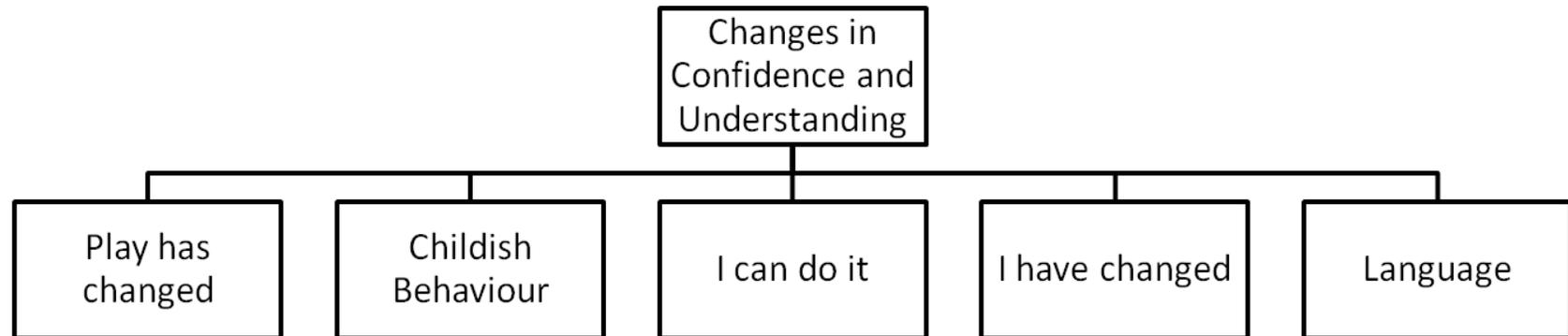
**Appendix 10e: Themes reflecting changes or lack of changes post-parenting group sessions**



**Appendix 10f : Themes reflecting parental views on home support provided by home visits**



**Appendix 10g: Themes reflecting parents' views on their confidence post-programme attendance**



## **Appendix 11: Themes collapsed and merged into Super themes**

The identified themes revealed areas of overlap. This stage therefore, involved a reduction in the overlap and redundancy of the themes. This stage reflected a move away in the analysis from focusing purely on the research question driven data.

The specific themes relating to attendance and home visits were maintained. The remainder of the themes were considered across the total data set.

Themes were grouped into clusters and were termed “super themes” and given a label. The labels of the themes generally reflected the content as opposed to the exact words of the parents although in a few cases they were the parents’ actual words e.g. “I wanted to know more”.

### **Themes identified reflecting attendance**

Super Theme 1: “Practical reasons”

Theme 1a: “Encouragement: It would be good for you.”

Theme 1b: “Organisation: It suited me.”

Theme 1c: “Knowledge: I wanted to know more.”

Super Theme 2: “Emotional Reasons”

Theme 2a: “Lack of confidence: I’m not sure.”

Theme 2b: “Need for reassurance: Am I doing it right?”

Theme 2c: “Loneliness: It’s nice to get out.”

Super theme 3: “Behaviour.”

Theme 3a: “I want to be a better parent.”

Theme 3b: “My child’s behaviour – Help!”

Super Theme 4: “Reasons to continue to attend.”

Theme 4a: “I liked the group.”

Theme 4b: “I developed skills.”

Theme 4c: “My child’s behaviour changed.”

### **Themes reflecting home visits**

Super Theme 5: “Developing skills.”

Theme 5a: “Re-assurance – I am doing it right aren’t I?”

Theme 5b: “I need to learn – direct teaching.”

Super Theme 6: “I was lonely!”

Super Theme 7: “Play.”

Theme 7a: “Play has changed.”

Theme 7b: “No changes in play.”

Theme 7c: “My child’s imagination has increased.

Super Theme 8: “It wasn’t the right time.”

### **Themes reflecting parent’s views of the WSIYPP**

Super Theme 9: “Relationships have got better.”

Super Theme 10: “I like being in a group.”

- Super Theme 11: "Time for me."
- Super Theme 12: "Nothing has changed"
- Super Theme 13: "Play is important."
- Super Theme 14: "My child's behaviour has changed"
- Super Theme 15: "How I have changed as a parent."
  - Theme 15a: "strategies I use."
  - Theme 15b: "My behaviour has changed."
  - Theme 15c: "No more smacking."
  - Theme 15d: "I know what to do."
  - Theme 15e: "I understand my child's behaviour differently."
  - Theme 15f: "I can do it."

**Themes reflecting what Parents did not like about the WSIYPP**

- Super theme 16: "Programme content"
  - Theme 16a: "Role play."
  - Theme 16b: "Programme style."
  - Theme 16c: "Homework."
- Super theme 17: "Practical issues."
  - Theme 17a: "Timing of the sessions"
  - Theme 17b: "Age of children"
  - Theme 17c: "Extended family."
- Super theme 18: "Group Programme."
  - Theme 18a: "Group Dominance."
  - Theme 18b: "Lack of on-going support."

## **Appendix 12: Themes identified across entire data set**

At this stage of the analysis, the emerging themes continued to be derived from the entire data set as opposed to focusing on the research questions. Thus segments of information that described one idea or that could be grouped together because they fit together were assigned a theme. Thus, for example, super theme 6, “I was lonely” reflected emotional reasons for attending the programme and was accordingly grouped under the theme “Emotional Reasons’. The use of the term “super theme” was discontinued and the terms themes and sub-themes was adopted instead.

Further collapsing of the themes was undertaken, reducing the 17 themes to six main themes and 17 sub themes as detailed below.

### **Theme 1: “Practical reasons”**

Sub-theme 1a:” Encouragement: It would be good for you.”

Sub-theme 1b: “Organisation: It suited me.”

Sub-theme 1c: “Knowledge: I wanted to know more.”

### **Theme 2: “Emotional Reasons”**

Sub-theme 2a: “Lack of confidence: I’m not sure.”

Sub-theme 2b: “Need for reassurance: Am I doing it right?”

Sub-theme 2c: “Loneliness: It’s nice to get out.”

### **Theme 3: “Behaviour.”**

Sub-theme 3a: “I want to be a better parent”

Sub-theme 3b: “My child’s behaviour – Help!”

Sub-theme 3c: “My child’s behaviour has changed”

### **Theme 4: “Reasons to continue to attend.”**

Sub-theme 4a: "I liked the group

Sub-theme 4b: "Group Dominance."

Sub-theme 4c: "Lack of on-going support."

Sub-theme 4d: "I developed skills."

**Theme 5: "Play."**

Sub-theme 5a: "Play has changed."

Sub-theme 5b: "No changes in play."

Sub-theme 5c: "My child's imagination has increased."

**Theme 6: "Relationships have got better."**

Sub-theme 6a: "How I have changed as a parent"

Sub-theme 6b: "My behaviour has changed"

### Appendix 13: Final 'Main Themes and Sub Themes'

Minor refinements led to the final six, "Main Themes" and 16, "Sub-Themes."

Main themes	Sub-themes
Main theme 1: Practical reasons for getting involved.	(1.1) Encouragement it would be good for you. (1.2) Organisation it suited me. (1.3) Knowledge I wanted to know more.
Main theme 2: Parenting, am I doing it right?	(2.1) Need for reassurance. (2.2) Lack of confidence- I'm not sure. (2.3) Loneliness – It's nice to get out.
Main theme 3: My Child's behaviour a reflection of me?	(3.1) My child's behaviour help. (3.2) I want to be a better parent. (3.3) My child's behaviour has changed.
Main theme 4: When it comes to play let him lead.	(4.1) My child play's differently. (4.2) No changes in play.
Main theme 5: Relationships have got better.	(5.1) My behaviour has changed. (5.2) I understand my child's behaviour.
Main theme 6: There's still no-one there for me.	(6.1) I'm not the only one. (6.2) I developed skills. (6.3) There is only me.

