



Educators' Perspectives On Transitions To Professional Care

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Overview



- Study
- Theoretical Background
- Research Questions
- Results
- Contribution



Qualitative Case Study



- Descriptive case study approach (Stake, 2005)
 - *purposeful qualitative sampling of a typical case* (Creswell, 2009, 2012)
- Participants
 - four families and four educators



Data gathering tools

- Questionnaire, weekly teacher inquiry circles (16-months), teacher interviews, parent interviews, video recordings and observations on a child, group video discussion with teachers

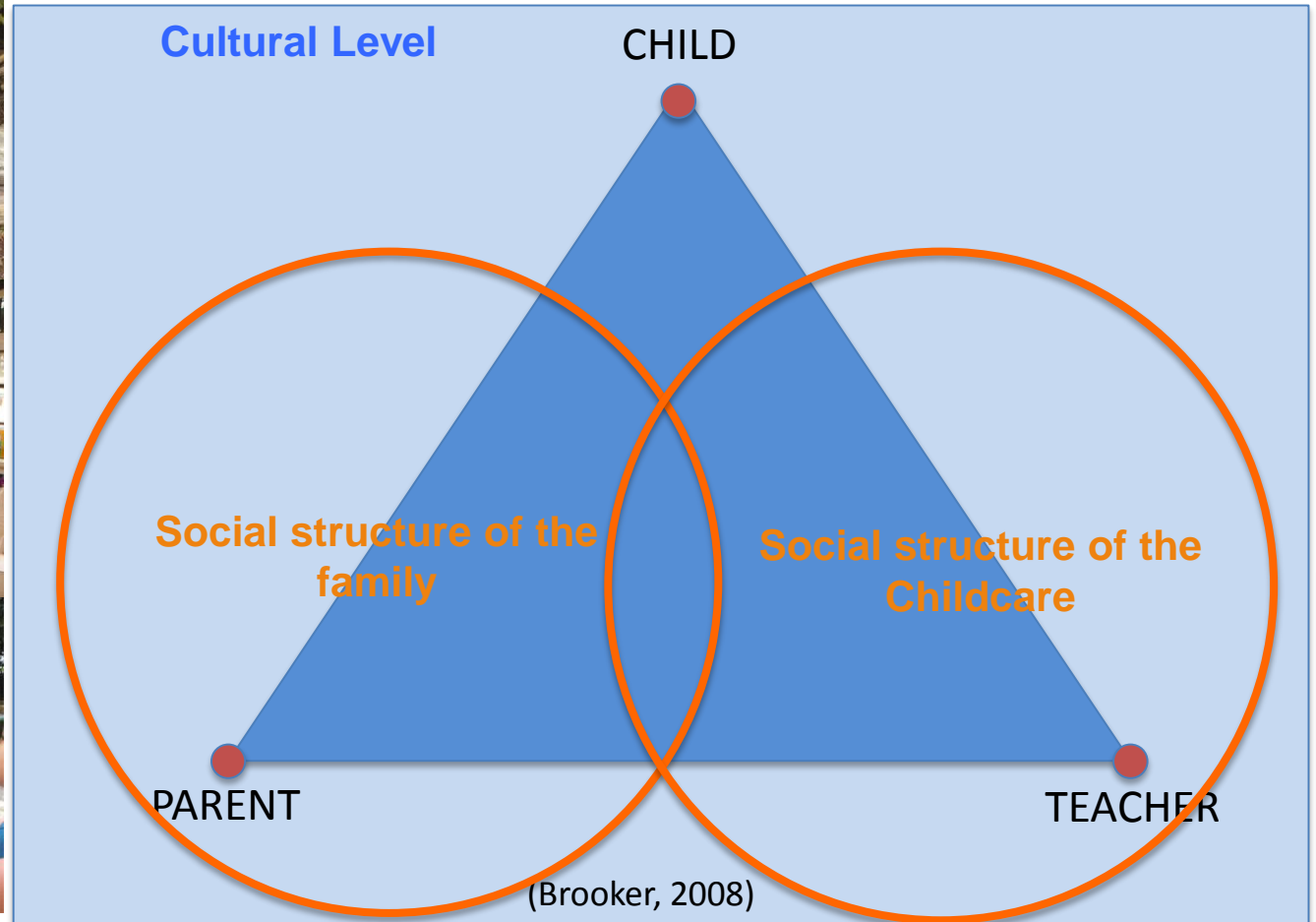


Transitions



- Transitions to childcare are about building relationships among children, parents and childcare teachers (Brooker, 2008; Goldschmied & Jackson, 2004; Liebermann, 1993).

Triangle Of Care



Research Questions



1. What are parents' expectations, concerns, and fears regarding the start of childcare for their child?
 - *How do the parents' expectations match their experiences?*
 - *What settling-in strategies/techniques are regarded as most effective by the parents?*
 - *What personal experiences help in or prolong the transition?*
2. What are the teachers' perspectives on orienting children to childcare?
 - *What settling-in strategies/techniques are used to assist the parent and child in the transition?*

Findings - Educators



Cultural Level

- **being professionals**



Social Structure of the Childcare

- **individual interpretations of philosophy, policies, and regulations (shifts and schedules)**

Individual Level (Relationships) – with Parents

- **trusting, professional relationships**
- **open-door policy**



Findings - Educators



Cultural Level

- **being professionals**

Social Structure of the Childcare

- **individual interpretations of philosophy, policies, and regulations (shifts and schedules)**



Individual Level (Relationships) – with Parents

Quote

... you know, we always say: call if you want or email if you want, but we never actually think that they are gonna do it (laughs)... so when she started doing that we were like: oh my god, why is she calling so much! He is fine! But I guess cause we offered it, so... I mean we have to take it, right?

(Andrea, June 5, 2013)



Teacher-Child Relationship: Child-Selected Care



- Child picks his/her preferred caregiver and offered an opportunity to form an attachment
- Child is encouraged to interact more flexibly with other caregivers
- If “over-attachment” is perceived (by other team members), teachers hand-over the responsibility for the child to other educators



Educators' Arguments Contra Primary Caregiving



1. Frequent absences (structural level)
2. Over-attachment/Favouritism

Quote:

At some points, sometimes I had the impression that the child is so attached for example to me, (inaudible) to myself, that it is almost like mother-son or mother-daughter relationship. It shouldn't be. So it's also important for the team members, like co-workers to point it out too. Because sometimes we do not know (Jamie, November 13, 2012).



Educators' Arguments Contra Primary Caregiving



1. Frequent absences (structural level)
2. Over-attachment/Favouritism
3. Missing reciprocity

Quote:

I really dislike that feeling. I feel guilt and so when it happened a few times, in all the years, so I just ask my colleagues, like I need a little bit of a break from this child, to work on my feelings. Because it is not fair. Slowly, in small steps, I involve this child with little things. Not maybe jump over this child because he or she chose me. But for me I think like separate myself, calm down, it's so not fair, because they can read us (Jamie, October 2, 2012).



Educators' Arguments Contra Primary Caregiving



1. Frequent absences (structural level)
2. Over-attachment/Favouritism
3. Missing reciprocity
4. Parents choose another teacher



Quote:

Sometimes when I am opening and [CHILD]'s mom will come up to me, she won't ask me any questions, she will wait until Emma [LEAD TEACHER] gets here. Even though Emma will be like: "Oh, we will talk about it in the group and then we will get back to you". Emma always says that and this mom always goes right to Emma (Andrea, November 27, 2012).



Educators' Arguments Contra Primary Caregiving



1. Frequent absences (structural level)
2. Over-attachment/Favouritism
3. Missing reciprocity
4. Parents choose another teacher
5. Parents do not want close relationships



Quotes:

You can sense that, when parents come in, you know, the little sly comments about:

"Oh yeah, he was talking about you all weekend!"

Or:

"I think maybe he should be your baby"

(Emma, October 2, 2012).



Triangle Of Care In Practice



Shared responsibility for all children explains why teachers felt the triangle of care model was very abstract compared to their practice:

- when four educators have relationships with the child and his/her mother and father, there are multiple connections between them
 - the triangle of care model does therefore not sufficiently depict all relationships



My Contribution - 1

Educator professionalism

Educators wished to be respected, valued, and appreciated as professionals and continuously adapted their practice to fit their understanding. Educators clearly distinguished their professional from their personal self.



My Contribution - 2



Educator attachment assumptions => over-attachment

As educators' strived towards professionalism they sought harmony across the whole group and to balance the tension between the needs of an individual and the needs of the group. To be professional in their relationships with children, these educators sought a child selected care model, where relationships that are too individually focused were actively avoided or re-routed toward whole group involvement.



My Contribution - 3



Complexity of relationships

Relationships in a Triangle of Care Model were not easily interpreted by educators in interest of professionalism: there seemed to be ambivalence towards a true parent-teacher partnership. Educators saw themselves as experts and not partners of parents.



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Pictures:

www.sfuchildcare.ca

