Early Years Learning (EYL) and embodiment: a Bersteinian analysis

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Early Years Learning (EYL) and Embodiment:
A Bernsteinian Analysis

By

Julie Stirrup

A Doctoral Thesis
Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Award of

Doctor of Philosophy of Loughborough University

November 2014

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Abstract

This thesis is concerned with developing our understandings and knowledge of children within Early Years Learning (EYL) and the importance of movement and play in processes of social class and cultural (re)production. The ways in which parents from different social classes are involved and invest in their children’s education and physical activity have been researched quite extensively. This research therefore looks at the nature of transactions and interactions within EYL settings and the influence social class and parental investment has on children’s embodiment, knowledge construction and learner identities. The study pays particular attention to how social inequalities are produced and reproduced within EYL through differences in its organisation, curriculum structures, pedagogical interactions and transactions. Data were collected over a ten month period of sustained critical ethnography in three socially and culturally diverse EYL settings in central England through observations and informal conversations. The collected data were first analysed ethnographically to determine the organising categories and concepts of the setting, while second order analyses brought into play the researcher’s sociological interests in questions of equity, social reproduction and control, imposing another layer of questions on the study. A Bernsteinian theoretical lens was adopted to interrogate the transactions within EYL settings in relation to power and control, while those of others (namely ‘habitus’, ‘physical capital’ and the ‘corporeal device’ - pace Bourdieu, Shilling, Evans and Davies respectively) were used to embellish such understandings and bring processes of embodiment to the fore. The findings illustrate the complexity of the discourses and practices that children negotiate when re-contextualising knowledge and constructing their learner identities within EYL settings. They also reveal how children learn about their own and others’ bodies through the various forms of play that feature in EYL settings and that these processes are profoundly class related. At the heart of the thesis lies the claim that
extant social class hierarchies and ‘ability’ differences are sustained rather than eroded or lessened through the structure, organisation and transactions of EYL settings. Finally, recommendations are made as to how UK Government policy relating to EYL might begin to promote pedagogies that enhance the potential for greater social mobility in the UK.
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Chapter One: An introduction to Early Years Learning (EYL) and Embodiment

1.1 Introduction

In this thesis I set out to explore and heighten understandings of children’s learning within Early Years Learning (EYL) settings, and the importance of physical activity (or more broadly movement and play) in processes of social class and cultural (re)production. In recent years there has been a renewed interest in early childhood internationally for several reasons. In the UK these include, Government policy addressing social mobility and educational achievement; increased academic and social interest in obesity; and the media’s focus on health and the “ideal” body. From a sociological perspective, I am interested in the educational and health opportunities available to young children and, how identities and potentially social class inequalities are produced and reproduced through ‘physical play’ in the early years (discussed in chapters two and five). To address both my personal interest and what I claim is a knowledge gap within the research literature (see chapter two) I set out to conduct an ethnography within three EYL settings focusing on the experiences of twenty six children aged between 3 and 4. These children’s experiences within their EYL setting were captured through observations and ‘informal conversations’ (over a period of a year) with both the children and fifteen practitioners. This thesis, through interpretive analysis of the data generated, provides new insight into the ways in which both the structure and organisation of young children’s EYL impact, and are impacted by, their social class and culture. Furthermore it highlights how young children embody knowledge and learner identities, and the impact of social class on this process. This introductory chapter discusses the background to the thesis before providing an outline of the structure and content of the main chapters.
Increased Government interest in EYL has been paralleled by a boom in the provision of infant enrichment activities by private companies (e.g. ‘Water Babies, ‘Shakers Music’ and ‘Jo Jingles’). A number of researchers have pointed out that (some – mainly middle class) parents in the UK, as indeed in many other countries (see Saul, 2005; Mol, 2007; Nairn et. al, 2012), are now investing huge amounts of time and money in the early years education of their children (see Holloway and Pimlott-Wilson, 2014), but are increasingly operating within a market of educational services which is no longer simply a matter of choice and competition between publicly funded ‘state’ provided educational institutions and the different forms of PE and sport which they provide (Vincent and Ball, 2005; Evans, 2014). In these ‘new’ conditions, the acquisition of corporeal capital is provided by a combination of transmissions at school, in families, and from those ‘bought in’ from the market (Evans and Davies, 2010: 772). Access to these resources is often dependant on a family’s access to social and financial resources (Vincent and Ball, 2005). EYL has therefore become a crucial stage in the education of the nation’s children, with governments increasingly seeing it as a way to addressing issues of social mobility and the widening gaps in education attainment in society (Waldfogel, 2004).

Some years ago, Turmel (2008) argued that it was important to explore briefly the history of childhood, child welfare and education policies in the UK if we were to properly understand how past practices have influenced current policy on EYL. In the UK, the child welfare system has evolved as a reflection of changing public beliefs and attitudes about the role of Government in educating and protecting children. Thus in the 1930’s, post- war British government interventions were characterised by practical concerns about meeting the
physical and nutritional needs of children rather than addressing the wider social and emotional needs which feature in current Liberal/Conservative (Lib/Con) government legislation. Indeed it is important to note that the concept of ‘childhood’ itself is fluid and an ever-changing social convention (Hoyle, 1979, Postman, 1994). Numerous perceptions of what it means to be a child have been produced, but can only be understood in historical context with reference to how different generations have responded to social, economic and political changes during their era.

Within the thesis I explore the complex nature of childhood and its construction within education and welfare policy (see chapter two) by drawing on a variety of theoretical and methodological perspectives to explain how children are defined and positioned in UK society today. Additionally, I explore previous policies on education and welfare to gain a heightened understanding of how current UK Lib/Con government policy on early learning and childhood has been influenced by previous legislation. Against this backdrop, the thesis first explores some specific themes which include generational perspectives on childhood, UK Government education policy, and theoretical perspectives within psychology and sociology which address early childhood. This is done in an attempt to understand present legislation and perspectives on education, early learning and children. I then focus on the micro level of the EYL classroom setting and how policy is emplaced and enacted differently within them in relation to and as expressions of social class and culture. Furthermore, once emplaced, I consider how this policy is then embodied through practice and by children in relation to the structure and organisation of the curriculum, pedagogies and discourses utilised within each setting.

1.3. Education Policy and childhood
In chapter two education policy is discussed in greater detail but with a distinctive focus on the 1990s. This provides a condensed overview of the significant policy issues which shape this thesis. Throughout the twentieth century, policy focused on child welfare and education has shifted variously from the social and education welfare reforms of the post war Labour government (1946) through repeated Conservative (1975 – 1990) cuts (and relative disinterest in early years education) to New Labour in 1997 when education (including that of the early years) became a key manifesto pledge. New Labour propagated the view that increasing equality of opportunity for children at the preschool stage would improve social cohesion. Pledging to improve both nursery and primary schools and to tackle educational disadvantage New Labour initiated its focus on early years learning by reforming early learning within the UK. Several Government funded initiatives were introduced, including: (i) *Sure Start* (1998); (ii) the establishment of *Birth to Three Matters* (2003); and (iii) *The Foundation Stage* (DFEE/QCA, 2000) - the latter being a curriculum framework aimed at children aged three to five as they then enter reception. Both *Birth to Three Matters* and *The Foundation Stage* were combined to create a new curriculum, the *Early Years Foundation Stage* (EYFS) in 2008 (*education.gov.uk*). *Sure Start*, launched in 1998, was part of the Labour government’s policy to prevent social exclusion by targeting preschool children and their families in disadvantaged areas. It had several aims (addressed in chapter two) although the general focus was on improving children’s social and emotional development which included developing young people’s ability to learn (Roberts, 2000). Initially, the concept derived from the American version, *Head Start* (1965) which focused on bringing about higher levels of social competence in children from low income families (McKey, Condelli, Ganson, Barnett, McConkey, and Plantz 1985).

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) comprised a comprehensive education framework which replaced all existing statutory guidance on preschool children (discussed further in
chapter two). This is the focal point of my thesis and provides the foundations from which to develop an understanding of the pedagogies, transactions and interactions which take place within EYL settings. EYFS provides the curriculum which practitioners then emplace and enact within their own settings and it is this dynamic which provides the focus for the analysis and discussion chapters (eight and nine). Notwithstanding current economic austerities, the current (2011 ff) Lib/Con coalition has retained a focus on the early years putatively as a means of reducing the attainment gap between the ‘social classes’ by improving wellbeing and literacy levels in pre-school children through better childcare and support for families/parents (Siraj-Blatchford, 2004). Academic research and publications have further reflected this view (see chapter one). Currently the coalition Government has seemingly adapted and adopted New Labour’s focus on raising standards within education and fostering economic competitiveness in an attempt to achieve the ‘big society’, wherein individuals putatively have more control and take more responsibility for their own lives, free of state regulation and control. Whilst ‘big society’ rhetoric is not the only factor contributing to and validating the changing attitudes and perceptions of parents in relation to gaining the ‘best education’ for their offspring. However, some especially amongst the middle classes (see Hayes, 1996; Lareau, 2000; 2003) perceive a heightened need to improve their offspring’s opportunities in life by investing heavily in pre-school activities and creating the ‘correct’ Home Learning Environment (HLE), consequently turning pre-school education into a marketable commodity, an outcome of which is increasing inequalities and social reproduction (Ball, 2010). Similar processes are occurring elsewhere e.g., in Australia (see Davies and Bansel, 2007) and New Zealand (see Duncan, 2007). Issues of intensive (or rather, the outsourcing of) mothering are dealt with in greater detail in chapter two.
1.4 Sociology and EYL

This thesis is informed by sociological perspectives on social class and equality. Within social sciences, sociology has until recently paid relatively little regard to children in the early years leaving research in this field to psychology, or more specifically, developmental psychology. Within this latter field, research has highlighted the importance of early learning, for example, on cognitive development and the positive impact of early interactions between children and adults in providing children with the cultural structure that underpins their intellectual schemas (Campbell, Pungello, Miller-Johnson, Burchinal and Ramey 2001). However, despite the dominance of psychology, over the past twenty five years or so there has been increased sociological interest in children and childhood (e.g., James 2000; Christensen, 2000) partly due to a rise in constructivist and interpretive theoretical perspectives in the field which have offered new sociological ways of viewing children (e.g., Prout, 2000). Such theoretical perspectives tend to view children as active participants in the social construction of childhood rather than as passive ‘consumers’ of cultures established by adults or significant others. It is a perspective reflected throughout this thesis and outlined in great detail in chapter five.

Traditionally, the sociology of education has focused on issues of class, race, gender and social economic status (Willmott, 1999). What constitutes the social, however, is part of an on-going debate within sociology often articulated as a relationship between ‘agency’ (individual – free will) and ‘structure’ (society - determinism). The negative influence of this dichotomised debate is reflected within the sociology of education, as Shilling (1992, p.70) argues,

“Probably the largest obstacle to the integration of macro- and micro-perspectives … is the dominant conceptions of structure and agency in educational research.
Not only are the respective conceptions of structure and agency found in macro and micro-level work deficient in their own right, they also contribute to an unresolved dualism which has characterised the sociology of education”.

Much of the current research within sociology of education derives from social perspectives which have been influenced by this structure/agency debate and arguably may be classified as either deterministic, constructivist or post positivist, at least in theoretical emphasis. For example, a deterministic perspective might view the child as playing a passive role in society while a constructivist perspective would recognise the child as playing an active role. From a ‘structure’ versus ‘agency’ perspective it might be argued that deterministic perspectives focus too much on the ‘structure’ and constructivist’s too much on ‘agency’.

In this study, the structure/agency debate is fundamental to our understandings of the body culture (biology/culture) relationships. As discussed in chapters four, five and throughout my analyses chapters, I try to address this dichotomy via the use of Bourdieu’s concept of ‘capital’, Basil Bernstein’s concept of the Pedagogic Device (PD) and Evans, Davies, and Rich (2009) concept of the Corporeal Device (see chapter eight). In chapter four I argue that Bourdieu provides a flexible approach to the structure/agency issue through his concepts of ‘habitus’ and ‘capital’ incorporating the idea that structure and agency are implicit within each other. In Bourdieu’s perspective, the social agent ‘enacts’ through the embodiment of social structures (Harker and May, 1993), whereas Bernstein’s code theory (Sadovnik, 1991; Atkinson, 1995), suggests that meaning is produced and reproduced through class culture. His concept ‘PD’ facilitates examination of the relationships between social class, family and the reproduction of meaning systems. In Bernstein’s view social class differences in communication codes of the classes reflect the different class and power relations in the social division of labour, family and schools. Within his theory, pedagogic
discourse is a recontextualising discourse which allows discourses to move from one site (e.g. from public servants or agents in the’ official recontextualising field’ producing Government white papers) to another (e.g. to academics or publishers recontextualising EYL policy in the ‘pedagogical recontextualising field’ – Bernstein, 1990), consequently space is created and within this, the discourse can become recontextualised by the agent. The strengths and limitations of these concepts and their application in this research are discussed in more detail in subsequent chapters.

As will become evident in chapter two, within sociology, academic research into the early years has tended to centre the importance of parental influence, social class, ethnicity and the effects of these processes on children’s learning and opportunities during pre-school and formal education (primary and secondary school). The importance of class and social issues within education is reflected in the volume of research currently conducted in the field (Lareau 2003; Hinkley Crawford, Salmon, Okley, and Hesketh, 2008; Trost Sallis, Pate, Freedson, Taylor, and Dowda, 2003; Reay, 2006). However, much of this research has focused on children’s literacy levels and how those with better cognitive development within reception (age 5 years old) and years one and two (age 6/7 years old) of primary school, have higher chances of succeeding academically within the current education system in the UK (www.c4eo.org.uk).

Education policy in recent years has also centred on academic achievement (literacy, mathematics) and, to some extent, ignored the physical/physically active development of the child. Several researchers claim that it is essential to foster, encourage and provide play and physical activity opportunities within the first five years of a child’s life (Hall et al 2009, Kato 2006). However, within the literature, there is limited data in respect of early childhood
physical activity levels (Hinkley et al 2008) and a paucity of research addressing how early childhood affects a child’s physical capital and embodiment.

Whilst there is a current lack of attention given to ‘physical play’ both by government and sociological research communities, this was not always the case. During the early twentieth century philosophers and educators such as Froebel, Dewey and Montessori offered various theories relating to the nature of childhood and the role of play in education. Their work, along with that of psychologists such as Piaget and Vygotsky, collectively focused on how children learn and in particular the need for the child to be actively involved in his/her learning. Consequently, a child centred approach to learning became a prominent (if always contested) discourse and practice during the 1960s and 1970s. Child centred ideologists believed that children needed to play to learn and in doing so reveal their on-going needs which then shape the curriculum. In other words, a direct relationship between learning and play was assumed (Wood, 2007). Thus play became a significant factor within education and was brought to the political fore in 1968 with the publication of the Plowden Report, which legitimised a child centred approach to learning, not only in British primary schools but primary schools worldwide.

The child centered approach placed educational focus on activities rather than outcomes. However, despite the empirical evidence (Frost, Wortham and Reifel, 2005; Johnson, Christie, and Wardle, 2005; Wood 2007) that children learn through play and the significance of play in child development (Issacs, 1933) there has been much debate since as to whether play provides a coherent framework to guide practice and curriculum development (Bennett et al 1997). Even amongst its founding protagonists (Frobel, Montessori and Steiner) there were conflicting views as to how to define and classify play; should it be structured or ‘free’ play? Certainly within much of the contemporary child development literature, the focus is on
‘free’ play (Siraj-Blatchford and Sylva 2004; Hohmann and Weikart 1995) and its importance in children’s learning. The Rumbold Report (1990) sums up the significant role which play has previously occupied in education:

“For young children, purposeful play is an essential and rich part of the learning process...Through play, children explore, apply and test out what they know and can do” (DES, 1990, p.7)

Several contemporary researchers (Johnson et al 2005) have struggled to define the term play, but a number of studies agree that it constitutes a way for children to make sense of their world; it allows them to create knowledge (Dau, 1999).

Over time the discourse of play has shifted towards extrinsic aims of developing a child’s knowledge through play rather than play being the intrinsic factor guiding and shaping a child’s learning (Wood, 2007). In other words, play is seen as the medium i.e., a curriculum or pedagogy through which to learn ‘counting’ or literacy. As we shall see in this thesis the concept of play along with residual principles of child centeredness, are embedded in early year’s policy. How they intersect with social class in EYL settings to structure the organisation of different forms of play within them will be the focus of discussion in chapters six, seven and eight.

1.5.Key concepts addressed by this thesis

1.5.1Physical play and physical activity

Physical activity is a complex social process which occurs in a variety of social settings (Evans and Davies, 2006). Within the context of EYL, several terms are used to refer to many forms of play and games. As an ethnographer I ‘bracketed’ (i.e., made problematic) my own notions of physical activity in order to explore how different forms of activity were labelled
and defined at different levels and within different EYL settings. For example, UK government policy (e.g. EYFS statutory framework, 2012, p.5) uses the term ‘physical development’ to include ‘moving and handling’. Nurseries often adopt this language in their formal documents, while staff tend to refer to ‘play’ or ‘PE (Physical Education) lessons’ when discussing informal and formal physical activity. I set out to explore the place and significance of ‘physical activity’ in children’s lives in three socially and culturally diverse EYL settings in order to gain an understanding of how different forms of ‘play’ (the umbrella term I used to define the curriculum with the three EYL settings) were defined within them and the consequences of these definitions for childrens’ identities. Throughout this thesis, the term ‘physical play’ will be used to embrace a variety of engagements in physical activities, often child initiated (e.g. chases, riding a bike, using a climbing frame- see chapter five) but which have different meanings and value in different settings (see chapters six and seven).

1.5.2 Social Class

Social class is an equally challenging concept to define as it has different meaning and expression in different countries and context and over time. Fundamentally, however, it encompasses more than a person’s occupation and finances, such as social and cultural factors (Gilles, 2006). As a concept, it underpins much of my study and I refer to it throughout in relation to participants and the structuring of the three EYL settings (see chapter three specifically). Furthermore, as Gilles (2006) points out it is a complex concept and one which I return to in my conclusion to explore its usefulness and challenges. Sociological concepts of social class informed by theories of Karl Marx and Max Weber are generally in agreement that ‘classes have an economic base’ with individuals’ class position depending primarily upon their occupations (Roberts, 2009). However, the work of Bourdieu and Bernstein (amongst others) has encouraged us to look beyond the economic and consider the social and cultural dimensions of class. Previous research (see Vincent and Ball, 2006) on
child care and social class exploring the spatial dimension to class identified classes through locality and tenure, whilst other such research has defined class in terms of ‘relational’ and ‘normative’ attributes (see Ball, Vincent, Kemp and Pietikainen, 2004). Building on Bourdieu’s approach to class Ball et al (2004) used indicators of individuals’ belonging to a certain group (relations within) and being different from others (relations between), and of shared ways of acting and thinking among groups of individuals (norms), to determine class lines. In the UK there is ample evidence (e.g. Anthias, 2013; Tomlinson, 2013; Skeggs, 2004; Savage, 2000) to suggest that social class continues to constitute social hierarchies as it intersects with other social categories of age, race, gender and ability. It is also evident (see Heckman, 2011) that inequalities emerge and are established during early childhood and remain into adulthood. In the UK, significant research has been carried out focusing on the ways in which parents from different social classes invest in their child’s early years’ education and care, the implications of which for EYL are addressed in some detail in chapter two.

In this research the two main social classes (see chapter five table 4) which emerged as dominant categories of and for analyses are tentatively described as ‘middle class’ and ‘working class’. Social class is often defined in terms of occupation (Chandola, 2000). However, within this study I broach the difficulties of exploring particular social categories, which are difficult to conceptualise within sample groups, acknowledging that social class is a complex term and cannot explicitly be defined by occupation. Recently, Savage et al. (2013) offered a new class scheme in the UK based upon measures of economic, cultural and social capital. Drawing upon data from the BBC’s Great British Class Survey (GBCS, BBC, 2013) and a parallel national representative survey (Savage, Devine, Cunningham, Taylor, Li, Hjellbrekke, Le Roux, Friedman, and Miles, 2013), they observed seven social classes: elite; established middle-class; technical middle-class; new affluent workers; traditional working
class; emergent service workers; and precariat. The classes distinguish between the amount and composition of capital that individuals possess. At one extreme are the elite who have high economic, social and (high-brow) cultural capital, and at the other is the precariat who lack a significant amount of any economic, social or cultural capital. Significantly, when developing this class scheme Savage et al. (2013) found that although a ‘traditional’ middle- and working-class existed, the former was ‘secure and established’ while the latter was (in his debatable view) ‘fading from contemporary importance’. Following this view, throughout this thesis the terms ‘middle’ and ‘working’ class will be described as;

Middle class – those with relatively high economic capital as suggested by their profession, and have access to a range of social contacts and resources (Savage et al 2013, p.234)

Working class - those with moderately poor income and employed in ‘traditional’ working class occupations such as bus driver, shop assistant (Savage et al, 2013, p. 240)

Evidently these are slippery and amorphous concepts and so throughout this thesis they will be used with caution as organising concepts rather than as definitive statements of a person’s status, value and social standing. Further discussion of social class is offered in chapter five (p. 99) with reference to parental occupation using the Office for National Statistics, NS-SEC occupationally based classification.

1.5.3 Early Years Learning (EYL)

The term ‘early years’ is also difficult to define as it has many alternatives such as preschool education, preparatory education, pre-elementary education and early childhood
education. However, most international research journals on early childhood focus on birth to eight years and refer to Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) as being interdependent during these years. In this thesis I will use the term EYL to refer to children within nursery and preschool settings, aged 0-4 although my specific focus is children aged 3-4 years. Ball, Vincent, Kemp, and Pietikainen, (2004) suggest that childcare settings have two main impacts: (i) they determine children’s socialisation experiences; and (ii) set children on educational trajectories. In relation to socialisation experiences, it has been found (Melhuish, Romaniuk, Sammons, Sylva, Siraj-Blatchford, and Taggart, 2004) that child-child and child-adult interactions vary significantly between nursery settings (e.g., in terms of the time children have with practitioners) and that state and private nursery settings afford different ‘social mixes’ for children (Ball et al., 2004). With regard to educational trajectories, there is evidence of different pedagogical regimes in nurseries, with some placing more emphasis on formal learning than others (Ball and Vincent, 2007). It is also evident that in the UK pre-school nursery provision and consumption has increased substantially in recent decades (Holloway, 1998). As mentioned, New Labour significantly increased the level of funding available to improve the quantity and quality of pre-school nurseries. This research aims to add to growing understandings of educational inequalities and EYL by exploring, how at the micro level, EYL policies (specifically the EYFS) are enacted, emplaced and embodied through practices which have social class and culture implications (see chapters six, seven and eight).

1.6 The Aim of this research

In light of the above, the primary aim of this research is to explore and illuminate the nature of social class and cultural reproduction within Early Years Learning (EYL) with an
emphasis on learning opportunities, body pedagogies and embodiment in EYL settings. Specifically, the research will address several questions;

First, those addressing issues of access, opportunity and social inequalities will ask:

- *Are social class inequalities reflected in the pedagogies of Early Years Learning?*

- *If so, how are these social inequalities produced and reproduced within Early Years Learning across different settings?*

- *What role might class and culture play in children’s Early Years Learning opportunities?*

Second, those addressing issues of embodiment;

- *How does play in EYL contribute to young children’s understandings of themselves and their corporeality?*

- *What role might discourse and language (symbolic and non-symbolic) have in children’s learning and construction of their identities in EYL settings?*

- *How are bodies ‘constructed’ by children and practitioners within EYL settings?*

- *How are ‘physical play’ and health designed, defined, constructed and experienced as pedagogy in EYL settings?*

1.7 Structure of the Thesis
Chapter two locates the thesis in the context of existing literature pertaining to social class and cultural reproduction, the body and EYL. A number of salient issues and concerns are highlighted around social class and cultural reproduction, ‘intensive mothering’ and the role of the family in children’s early development. The analysis addresses the complex interplay between childhood, education, social class, the home learning environment (HLE) and physical development, going beyond description and assertion to provide insight into the nature of these relationships.

Chapter three provides a brief review of those UK politics and public policies from the 1990s onward which have had an impact on children, specifically within the early years (0-5 years). Two strands dominate this chapter. The first centres the neo-liberal leanings of current coalition Lib/Con government policy and its impact on opportunity and access. The second focuses on the ‘ideal imaginary child’ as set out implicitly in the current Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), but arguably shaped and influenced by previous New Labour Government policy. Whilst, the main focus of the chapter is on the development of political policies within EYL from “Sure Start” (1998) to EYFS (2012), it also acknowledges the complex processes of interpretation and translation that policies go through when enacted in specific institutional settings (also see Braun, Maguire and Ball 2010; Braun, Ball and Maguire, 2011). Exploring how the EYFS sets out an ‘imaginary learner’ enables me to then explore in chapter seven how this policy facilitates different sorts of learner identity as practitioners consume, produce and enact their idiosyncratic versions of the EYFS.

Chapter four provides an overview of the theoretical perspective that has informed this study, focusing essentially on the work of Basil Bernstein and that of others (e.g. of Foucault and Bourdieu) which add to his conceptual schema. It explores, in detail, key aspects of Bernstein’s theory, including criticisms levelled at it, before highlighting the potential
benefits of utilising his concepts over others for the study of relationships between EYL, education and social and cultural reproduction.

Chapter five outlines the methodology of the research and the epistemological and ontological assumptions and beliefs which underpin it. The benefits of using ethnography with young children are brought to the fore. At the same time I raise a number of important ethical issues, pointing out some of the challenges when working with this particular age group of participants. The chapter also highlights the methods and techniques which were utilised to understand physical activity, EYL and children’s embodiment from the participants’ perspective.

Chapters six, seven and eight report findings on three major areas emerging from the data: (i) the classification and framing of learning in EYL; (ii) the classification and framing of health discourse in EYL; and (iii) the intersection of the CD–PD. Chapter six foregrounds how teaching and learning is structured through play, focusing on the classification and framing of space, time and resources in EYL settings. The analyses illustrate how each setting differently enacts the EYFS framework and the influence of social class and culture on this process. Initially this chapter centres the structure and structuring of each context using the concepts classification and frame to explore how various forms of ‘play’ are transmitted in each setting in relation to space and time. It then goes on to explore the culture of the three settings as defined through the use of instructional and regulative discourse, highlighting the general ‘therapeutic identity’ (see Bernstein 1996) which is nurtured across each of the contexts.

Chapter seven looks specifically at how health discourse is framed by EYFS policy imperatives and subsequently how practitioners across three socially and culturally different EYL settings recontextualise health knowledge. The analyses illustrate how the different
organisational and curriculum structures, pedagogical interactions and transactions within each setting cultivate distinctive relationships to health knowledge and, therefore, toward the body. These relationships, in turn, play their part in social class and cultural reproduction.

Chapter eight explores how the intersections of the PD and CD influence children’s embodiment and identities. It foregrounds how ‘knowledge of the body’ produced, transmitted and received through various forms of play within EYL is related to educational, social class and cultural inequalities. The analyses specifically explore how intersections of the pedagogic and corporeal devices (PD~CD) give shape to policy and pedagogy when mediated through practitioners’ (value laden) interpretations of children’s families and the knowledge they believe they bring to the setting. The data suggest that social interactions and transactions that characterise teaching/learning contexts at the micro level of EYL classrooms are expressions of power (classification) and control (framing) relations between subjects, discourses and spaces. The analyses prompt discussion as to how intersections of the ‘pedagogic’ and ‘corporeal’ device shape the corporeal realities of young children and their developing sense of self in relation to social class and culture.

Chapter nine draws together the findings of the research, highlighting in particular the complexity of the interactions between official EYL policy and its enactment in and through the pedagogies at play within EYL settings. The final chapter (ten) returns to the questions that have structured, directed and underpinned this research and examines whether the findings facilitate understandings of how social class inequalities are produced and reproduced within EYL settings. Key issues identified through the analysis of data are examined, conclusions are drawn, limitations of the research (methodological and theoretical) are discussed, and recommendations for future research addressed.
Chapter Two: A Review of Literature: Childhood, Social Class, Education and Embodiment

2.1 Introduction

This chapter locates the thesis in the context of existing literature. In it I explore the major research pertaining to social class and cultural reproduction, the body and EYL. As a starting point, a brief overview of how childhood is conceptualised in society is provided, followed by a detailed account of research already carried out in the field of young children and early learning. A number of current issues and concerns are highlighted, pointing towards issues around social class and cultural reproduction, ‘intensive mothering’ and the role of the family in children’s early development. The analysis addresses the complex interplay between childhood, education, social class, the home learning environment and physical development, going beyond description and assertion to provide insight into the nature of these relationships. In so doing, the analyses offered illustrate how this thesis will attempt to address some of the caveats identified in the literature.

2.2 Childhood conceptualised

For children, childhood is temporary, but for society, it is a permanent category which never disappears despite its members continuously changing and its meaning varying from era to era (Prout and James, 1997). Childhood is an integral part of British society and its various roles can be traced throughout civilisation. Several historians (e.g., Stearns, 2006; Turmel, 2008) have researched the changing faces of childhood. Their narratives highlight how children actively contribute to societal productions as well as creating their own child cultures (Corsaro, 2000). Within social sciences, childhood has often been conceptualised through the lens of psychology, although over recent years, sociology has begun to focus on
the importance of parental influence, social class and ethnicity on children’s learning and opportunities during pre-school and formal education.

Within many western (and westernised) countries across the globe public discourses have portrayed childhood as in “crisis” (Furedi, 2001; Palmer, 2006). Media headlines point to a “crisis of obesity”, “anarchy” and “mob rule” (after the ‘England riots’ 2011) portending danger and general doom and gloom around children and youth. It has been argued that socio-cultural changes of recent decades have had significant impact on childhood (Palmer, 2006). Neo-liberal ideals have nurtured a consumer culture among adults and children alike, leaving parents in the UK as in many other countries (e.g. Australia, New Zealand) in these ‘new’ market based conditions (see chapter one, p.2), with access to resources increasingly dependent upon the amount of economic capital available to families to exploit the opportunities available. Furthermore, persistent media attention to ‘poor parenting’ has led to some parents becoming paranoid about their child’s safety and future wellbeing (Furedi, 2001). This ‘fear’/‘risk’ culture is reflected in government legislation (e.g., Every Child Matters, DfE, 2003 and the Children’s Act, DfE 2004) which (amongst others things) centres on improving children’s wellbeing and reducing risks (e.g. of child abuse). There is now in the view of Ball and others ‘a seething and swarming of official discourse around parenting’ exacerbated by a plethora of media and public policy messages intended to convey to parents that they and their offspring face imminent danger and ‘risk’ (Ball, 2010, p. 160). Risk in this sense means not simply being subjected to lowered educational standards and of falling behind in the educational market place but also falling prey to contemporary maladies, such as obesity, drug abuse, deviant behaviour and so on, unless they take steps to intervene actively to counter and guard against them. Against this backdrop, educational intervention and investment in the ‘early years’ has become a political priority.
‘Education’ was central to New Labour’s (1997-2010) early year’s policy (DfE, 2008). Provision for the early year phase was no longer to be considered only for the advantaged few, but increasingly something for all and a potential solution to inequality (Skeggs, 1997) and economic disadvantage. By placing such emphasis on education, children were increasingly perceived as human capital within the educational market place and became a central plank in government policy. Some analysts argued that ideological focus shifted under New Labour from the traditional social democratic concern for equality within childhood, to one of creating equality of opportunities, which ultimately began to overshadow the existing concerns for structural divisions of class and race (Dobrowolsky, 2002). Hendrick (2005) for example, claimed that structural divisions of socio-economic status and class among children were reframed within New Labour’s neo-liberal assumptions as personal responsibilities which must be overcome through equality of opportunity. In this respect there was little to separate New Labour ideology from earlier (or subsequent) Conservative party ideals (Evans and Davies, 2010).

2.3 Current research on children and education

2.3.1 Social Psychology Research

Social psychologists have tended to explore how individuals are socialised and develop over the life-course (McCarthy and Edwards, 2011) and much of their research has focused on the ‘transmission mechanisms’ involved in parent-child socialisation (i.e. parenting aspirations, styles, strategies and practices). Two central themes have been widely explored;
• Parental influences on children’s cognitive development

• Parental involvement in children’s education

2.3.2 Parental influences on children’s early cognitive development

Much of the research on this theme indicates that parents have a significant impact on how children spend their time during their early years. Parents shape the environments that set the scene for children’s time-use (Caldera, Huston and O’Brien, 1989; Dearden, Sibieta and Sylva, 2011), determine the number and type of activities that children are involved in (Baxter, 2010; Baxter and Hays, 2007; Bianchi and Robinson, 1997; Sandberg and Hofferth, 2001) and the toys they play with (Caldera, Huston and O’Brien, 1989; Eisenberg, Wolchik, Hernandez and Pasternack, 1985; Freeman, 2007; MacDonald and Parke, 1986). Since the 1990s, there has been considerable research focused on children’s time-use, for example, Bianchi and Robinson’s (1997) explored pre-school children’s reading time and cognitive development, while more recently, Baxter and Hayes (2007) found that Australian children who spent more time doing achievement-related activities had higher cognitive development score, while those children who spent more time watching television had lower cognitive development scores.

2.3.3 Parental involvement in children’s education

Since the publishing of the Plowden Report in 1967 (Central Advisory Council for Education, 1967) parental ‘involvement’ has received particular recognition as a central determinant of children’s educational outcomes. There is now a large body of empirical evidence confirming the significance of parental involvement (Desforges and Abouchaar, 2003; Hill and Taylor,
2004; Hornby and LaFaele, 2011; Nye, Turner and Schwartz, 2006), for example, through monitoring homework, providing educational resources such as books and reading with their child. Most studies associate parental involvement with positive outcomes for their children’s educational attainment (Desforges and Abouchaar, 2003; Hartas, 2011; Kloosterman, Notten, Tolsma and Kraaykamp, 2011; Verboord and Van Rees, 2003). Hoover – Dempsey et al.’s (2001) study exploring parents involvement in their child’s homework concluded that there were two main categories of practice; (1) basic practices, which included establishing a timetable for homework completion and interacting with children’s teachers; and (2) enhancement practices, which included engaging in the homework process with children and monitoring their learning. Parental involvement in homework was seen to positively influence children’s academic achievement through three mechanisms: role-modelling, reinforcement, and instruction. However, parents not only influence their children at home, but also in the school environment. Hill and Taylor (2004) suggest that there are two main ways through which parental involvement at school promotes children’s academic achievement: (1) parents gaining knowledge regarding the learning process that can help them to enhance their children’s learning at home; and (2) parents and teachers sharing standards for learning and behaviour that can create more consistent home and school environments for children.

With few exceptions (e.g., Bernstein, 1971) social and developmental psychology has historically been at the forefront of research into childhood, with the work of Piaget and Vygotsky often dominating ideas around childhood and cognitive development (Bianchi and Robinson, 1997; Baxter and Hays, 2007; Baxter, 2010). Much of the above social psychology literature does offer valuable insight into the role and importance of parents and families on children’s behaviour, attainment, opportunities and access. However, to explore the qualitative aspect of social class and the cultural dimensions of the pedagogical
transactions which produce these outcomes within educational settings, we need turn to the sociology of education literature which of recent years has begun to address the ways in which parents’ ‘investments’ in their children impact learning outcomes in school, sports and other activities.

2.4 Sociology of Education Research

Five central themes can be identified in the current research into how children learn and develop (Reay, 2001; Whitehead, 2001; Lareau, 2003; Melhuish Romaniuk, Sammons, Sylva, Siraj-Blatchford, and Taggart, 2006; Vincent and Ball, 2007; Siraji-Blatchford, 2008);

- Parental Investment
- Social Class
- Socio economic status and financial resources
- Culture, parenting and academic attainment
- Educating Bodies and Identities

2.4.1 Parental investment in children’ education – an overview

Much of the research focused on parental investment utilises the work of Pierre Bourdieu and his concepts of habitus and capital (Reay, 2006, and Chapter five). For example, Lareau’s (1987; 2000; 2003) work in the US has focused on the potential educational advantage of certain parental practices. Specifically her research has focused on (1) language use; (2) interactions between families and institutions; and (3) the organisation of daily life. She argues that parental questioning and intervention in educational settings to ensure their
child’s progression, afford children the skills that are conducive to educational and occupational success. Similar research in the UK focusing on the parent – school relationship (Crozier, 1997; 1998; 1999; 2008) observed comparable findings. Crozier’s research found that parents’ intervention in their children’s schooling was largely determined by their habitus and capital; parents with knowledge of the education system and positive experiences of school themselves were more able and inclined to get involved. Crozier also observed that parents’ intervention served as a means of ensuring that social and cultural capital was reproduced, they were ‘overseeing the product-process’. Ball and colleagues (Ball, 2003, 2010; Ball et al, 2004; Ball and Vincent 2005, 2007) have extensively researched parenting strategies and practices in relation to the education market and, similar to Crozier (1999) and Lareau (2003), observed that having large amounts of capital (not least financial and cultural) provides parents with more opportunities to acquire educational opportunities for their children. For example, economic capital enables parents to buy their children ‘better’ schools and supplement their children’s formal education with private tuition while social capital significantly influences the school selection process.

Focusing specifically on sport, there is an emerging body of research which suggests that socialisation in the family influences children’s sports participation over their life span (Evans and Davies, 2006; Birchwood, Roberts and Pollock, 2008; Wheeler and Green, 2012; Wheeler, 2012). As Green (2010) points out, parents transmit cultural (physical) capital to their children, passing on sporting tastes, skills and abilities to family members. Green, Smith and Roberts, (2005, p. 36) for example, note;

‘Middle class parents are not only more likely to possess the material resources or economic capital to enable their off spring to engage in sport….they are also more
likely to be in a position to transfer their social and cultural capital by virtue of being already actively involved themselves and inclined to pass on their ‘love of sport.’”

As well as physical capital, Wheeler (2012) talks of ‘sporting habituses’ being transmitted within families. The development of a sporting habitus appears to be important for long-term participation in sport. A plethora of studies, (Kuh and Cooper, 1992; Mota and Silva, 1999; Sallis, Prochaska and Taylor, 2000; Boreham and Riddoch, 2001; Robertson- Wilson, Baker, Derbyshire and Côté, 2003; Tammelin, Näyhä, Hills and Järvelin, 2003; Fraser-Thomas and Côté, 2006; Scheerder, Thomis, Vanreusel, Lefevre, Renson, Eynde and Beunen, 2006; Engström, 2008) have indicated that sport and physical activity habits developed during childhood are associated with sport and physical activity habits during adulthood. Against this backdrop, there is a growing body of literature which suggests that ‘middle class’ parents are consequently increasingly likely to devote resources (time, money and energy) to ensuring their children are advantaged (Chambers, 2012). This is reflected in a proliferation of privatized enrichment activities for the under-fives and the emergence of what Evans (2014) refers to as ‘physical education, PLC’. For Vincent and Ball (2006, p.158) such activities serve two purposes; firstly to form the ‘beginnings of a curriculum vitae’ and secondly enhance ‘school readiness’ in the growing trend of the ‘scholarisation of childhood’.

2.4.2 Social Class and Parental Investment

Social class encompasses more than simply material goods, rather it relates to the cultural practices and social values embedded within society. Although the concept of class is no longer seen by some as “a major source of…identity and group belonging” (Savage, 2000, p.

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1 Sets of beliefs and behaviours in relation to sport with historical and social dimensions (Wheeler, 2012)
it still holds relevance within contemporary society. As Savage (2000) suggests, rather than people explicitly identifying with class groupings, in contemporary society class identity is implied in cultural practices which are associated with reproducing hierarchy, consequently class becomes encoded in practice. The following section highlights research that has explored the relationships between social class, parenting practices and the educational and physical opportunities made available to young children.

One of the early aims of the New Labour (1997-2010) funded Effective Provision Preschool Education (EPPE 3-11) project (Melluish et al 2006 – see chapter one) was to investigate the effects of pre-school education on children’s attainment and social/behavioural development (Siraj-Blatchford, 2008). It explored how children can become disadvantaged on several grounds including, socio-economic status, class and culture (Siraj-Blatchford, 1994; Ball, 2003). Researchers have documented that the social class position of a child’s parents matters greatly in relation to both school and career success (Lareau, 2003; Bradbury, Corak, Waldfogel and Waskbrook 2010; Waldfogel and Washbrook, 2010). Therefore, the attitudes certain classes and parents hold towards education and children is significant. Lareau’s (2003) research on inequality, identified two distinct parenting styles which she attributed to different classes, the first being ‘concerted cultivation’ parenting which she associated with middle class parents, and the second, ‘sustaining natural growth’ which she associated with the working class. Within a North American context the idea of ‘concerted cultivation’ parenting has led some commentators to regard middle class children as (uniformly) ‘overscheduled’ and leading rushed lives (Ginsberg, 2007). However, one might speculate that there is a continuum rather than a bipolarity of attitudes toward child rearing, bearing in mind that class itself is a highly differentiated category and differences within a class may be as pronounced as those between them.
This concept of ‘over scheduling’ a child’s free time is visible in many western countries including the UK. Enrichment activities (music, sport, and art related activities for young children) have been described as a ‘booming’ area, with provision and consumption increasing significantly over the last three decades (Vincent and Ball, 2006). The market place is saturated with franchises offering, often expensive (at least £5 per session) provision for pre-school children, e.g., from ‘Tumble Tots’ established in 1979, to more recent activities including ‘Water Babies’, ‘Little Shakers Music’ and ‘Jo Jingles’. Vincent and Ball (2007) highlight the class divisions evident in child rearing, and how, in an attempt to reproduce their cultural capital, middle class parents often enrol their children into several of these enrichment activities simultaneously, to develop their talents and abilities. For the ‘middle class mother’ (acknowledging again that Vincent and Balls’ categorisation of ‘class’ is like mine, rather undifferentiated), these enrichment activities are an indicator of “good” parenting. There is a focus on moulding and developing the child in particular social and educational directions, for example, with trips to the museum or theatre or extra academic work set at home, resulting in the home becoming a site of pedagogy (Vincent 2012). In effect, theirs is an active endorsement of neoliberal subjectivity, as they assume (ironically by increasingly outsourcing) responsibility for their (dependent) child’s/children’s educational, social, cultural and physical ‘success’. Constant comparison and heightened feelings of guilt are, inevitable outcomes of such processes as parents take on responsibility for and angst about ensuring that their children develop the ‘right’ skills and abilities at appropriate times. Documentary TV shows in the UK such as “Pushy and Proud” (Sky Living, 2011) and “Chinese Tiger Mums” (BBC, 2012) further exacerbate such ‘fears’ as they

2 https://www.waterbabies.co.uk; http://littleshakersnt.com; http://www.jojingles.com

3 There is an increasing influence from government for personal agency and decision making. Children participation in ‘extracurricular’ activities, resonates with a neoliberal economic and political environment which prioritises individualism and fosters children subjugation through self-governance (Raby, 2014)
illustrate how some parents devote enormous amounts of time, money and energy into “pushing” their child to fulfil their potential. Such messages about ‘good parenting’ circulate and are therefore given currency in the public domain (the latter programme sparking debate around issues of super intensive parenting and cultural differences between Western and Chinese parenting models). Of course, such ‘guilt by comparison’ may be equally evident amongst working class parents, if they share such aspirations for their children. However, not having the financial wherewithal to pursue them, their sense of ‘guilt’ and inadequacy may be seriously heightened.

This concept ‘concerted cultivation’ or ‘intensive mothering’ (Hayes, 1996) resonates with Bourdieu’s (1986) conceptualisation of cultural capital and the embodied state. In his view, cultural capital manifests itself in three states, the embodied (dispositions of the body and mind), the objectified (cultural goods) and the institutionalised (educational qualifications). The concept cultural capital has been widely used to explain the unequal achievement of children from different classes and socio economic status within school contexts (Sullivan, 2001; Lareau and Weininger, 2003; Reay, 2004; Clegg, 2011; Andersen and Hasen, 2012). Lareau’s (2003) concept of “concerted cultivation”, signals that cultivation coupled with embodiment in the interest of producing cultural capital, requires a commitment of time and money from parents. In essence, ‘embodied capital’ allows a parent to convert their external, material wealth, into an integral part of their child (it is literally ‘embodied’) in the hope it provides them with advantage and the best opportunities in life.

Lareau (2003) draws clear distinctions between the practices of the working and middle classes; however, she also argues that if the former had the resources, more parents (from both classes) would adopt a concerted cultivation style parenting. Others (e.g. Melhuish et al
2004) however, contradict Lareau’s argument, their research on HLE highlighting that regardless of class background and resources, some parents do not value education or allocate resources (time, money, etc.) to it. Within her research, Siraj-Blatchford (2008) concluded that some parents from working class backgrounds do have the capacity to provide educational support in the form of the home learning environment, but sometimes choose not to, suggesting that decisions may rest as much on cultural as financial considerations. It is apparent that certain confounding identities (for example, eastern European/ lower working class/ English white male) can lead to lower educational outcomes in the UK because of expectations held by children, adults and peer groups around them. In relation to gender, to assert their masculinity some boys may prefer to engage in gross-motor activities over reading. Similarly some girls may identify more strongly with home-corner play and nurturing activities over construction choices. Class, gender, ability and ethnicity differences are all visible at this level often leading to underachievement (Siraj-Blatchford, 1998). The gender differences Siraj-Blatchford (2004) reported in her study are significant in expressing how the construction of identity can lead to inequality. Her research found that significantly fewer boys (across all classes) experienced an effective\(^4\) HLE which may explain why some boys (largely white working class) continue to underachieve in education.

It is clear from the aforementioned research that certain social classes and cultures have the desire and the capacity to invest more resources into education for their children than others. Thus we might consider if such processes are evident in EYL with regard to physical development? Do parents actively choose not to invest in their child’s physical capital through physical activity or is this choice made for them? A large scale survey of parents’

\(^4\) Effective HLE refers to a measurement taken during the EPPE (3-11) study based on the HLE Index. The study found that thirty seven per cent of boys experienced a HLE that scored below twenty on the HLE Index which ranges from zero to forty five.
involvement in their child’s education (Peters et al, 2007) commissioned by the Department for Education (formerly, the Department for Children Schools and Families) found that throughout the early years (0-5 years old) fifty one per-cent of parents felt ‘very involved’ in their child’s education and that overall, twenty eight per-cent of parents thought that their child’s education was wholly their responsibility (a figure which had risen from twenty per-cent in 2001). At first glance, this small increase suggests a change in parental attitudes but when explored more closely, the figures are small, leaving half the population not feeling very involved in their child’s education and suggesting that just over seventy per-cent do not value their child’s early education. Furthermore, the small increase in figures may not reflect a positive change in parental views, but rather be a reflection of the ‘social investment state’ (Lister, 2006) era of the New Labour Government when political policies heavily regulated economic, social and educational realms within society and increased social control over parents and their children.

2.4.3 Socio – Economic Status and Parents Attitudes

Access to financial resources and human capital accumulated through academic qualifications influences the ways in which parents interact with their children, the type of activities they promote and the attitudes, beliefs and values they express towards learning (Hoff et al, 2002). Therefore, socio economic status is a significant factor in a child’s development, opportunities and access to resources (Sameroff and Chandler, 1975; Scott-Jones, 1984; Yeung et al, 2002). McLoyd’s (1998) examination of the extensive literature on the impact of socio-economic disadvantage on children’s development concluded that poverty status and SES are predictive of children’s early cognitive and language functioning, their academic achievement, and their social competence and emotional and behavioural adjustment.
However, despite successive Conservative and Labour Government interventions to promote equality of opportunity within education, the evidence suggests that this has not been achieved (Roberts, 2001). Reay (2001) and Ball (2003) argue that the current education system in the UK remains vested in the middle classes and does not value working class cultural capital. The research of Aldridge (2004) together with government surveys (ONS, 2005) certainly suggests that within secondary education, the attainment level differential is growing between the working and middle classes. Therefore, we might reasonably ask, is this difference initiated in early years learning?

Much of the current research into the frequency with which parents from different socio-economic backgrounds engage with their pre-school children has focused on home learning, for example, reading and writing (e.g. Hartas, 2011; Siraj-Blatchford, 2010, 2004; Sammons, Sylva, Melishuh, Siraj-Blatchford, and Taggart, 2003). Hartas (2011) examined the relationship between parents’ SES and home learning at age three to five and its impact on child literacy levels and socio-emotional competence. Findings suggest that across socio-economic groups, a small difference was found in parent’s involvement in telling stories, teaching the alphabet, etc. There was, however, a more significant difference in relation to reading; seventy nine per cent of university educated mothers helped their children with reading, compared to only thirty three per cent of mothers without any educational qualifications helping their child read aged three. This suggests that parents’ level of education/qualifications impacts their attitudes towards education and ultimately their child’s attainment levels. Siraj-Blatchford, (2010; 2004) and Sammons et al (2003) reported similar findings of low SES and parental academic qualifications (particularly mothers) as having a negative relationship with academic attainment as well as reporting cultural differences in attainment (particularly language and reading) (Sammons et al 2003). However, there is little
research on parents’ engagement with their children’s physical development between the ages three to five years old, an area which this thesis will address.

Given the aforementioned research into the HLE, in relation to numeracy and literacy, the apparent lack of current literature on physical development is both noteworthy and surprising, particularly given government and media attention to obesity and sedentary behaviour in the UK, and the number of schemes, e.g., the supermarkets ‘active kids’ school schemes, available to parents. All of these reflect the inordinate amount of attention given in public discourse to health, especially, weight, diet and the need to increase children’s physical activity levels. A plethora of academic research across the globe relating to obesity, overweight children and falling levels of physical activity among young people (Trost et al, 2003; Hinkley et al, 2008) has precipitated several Government and media led campaigns to increase healthy eating, for example, Change4life (2010), Jamie’s School Dinners (2005) and the introduction of Health Related Fitness (HRF) into schools with an emphasis on fitness testing (Gard and Wright, 2001). However the focus of the former two campaigns is on diet, size and healthy eating, with little if any direct link to physical activity and play in the early years and its associated health benefits.

There remains a lack of focus on physical activity within the early years despite current UK Government white papers’ (Department of Health, 2011; DfE, 2013) recognition of the benefits of physical activity and need to nurture it within the first five years of life (Hall, Sylva and Melhuish 2009; Kato, 2006) in order to benefit individuals’ and society’s health. New Labour’s attention to the early years centred numeracy and literacy skills largely ignoring the benefits of improving children’s physical development. The current Lib/Con government has also paid little attention to physical activity, making only passing comment
on it within EYFS (2012). Internationally there has been specific research into the opportunities children have to enjoy physical activity within various different day care settings (child minders, public and private EYL). In Australia, Cashmore and Jones (2008) found similarities in the potential barriers pre-school children face to physical activity in both ‘family’ day care settings (child minders) and ‘long day’ child care settings (private provision). Both studies found that practitioners see more developmental value in non-organised, child initiated physical activity and highlighted several practitioner perceived barriers to physical activity, including resources, training, health and safety and weather. Similar findings were highlighted by van Zandvoort, Tucker, Irwin and Burke (2010) in their Canadian study on the barriers to physical activity in day care. Furthermore, van Zandvoort et al (2010) also suggest that child initiated ‘play’ is not necessarily always physically active (e.g. computer play) and suggest the need for more structured play. Whilst the aim of this thesis is not to advocate structured or unstructured physical activity it will explore social attitudes towards the concept of ‘play’ and ‘movement’. Initial observations across the three centres (see chapter six) highlighted that spontaneous movements by children were often seen as ‘poor behaviour’ by some practitioners. In some settings there appeared to be a culture of civilising children’s bodies for ‘school readiness’ processes which either negated or undervalued certain forms of ‘physical play’. These processes and their social consequences will be explored in detail chapters six and seven.

2.4.4. Ethnicity, parents and academic attainment

Within sociology, ethnicity refers to groups who share similar cultures, languages, and ways of dress and food preferences (Roberts, 2009). There are differences in education attainment according to culture and ethnicity, with UK Government reports suggesting that levels of
educational attainment are highest among individuals from Asian backgrounds and lowest among black individuals, while white individuals fall in the middle (DfE, 2013a). Furthermore, research indicates that parents from different cultures vary in their parenting practices and styles.

Research indicates that middle-class parents’ engagement with concerted cultivation varies according to culture (Lareau, 2003; Levine-Rasky, 2009; Bodovski, 2010). For example, Bodovski (2010) observed that the middle-class black parents in her study engaged in concerted cultivation to a lesser degree than the middle-class white parents. Furthermore, there is a considerable amount of research on the impact of ethnicity, culture and geography, on parenting styles. Western industrialised nations tend to be associated with an individualised culture, while an authoritarian style is prominent in Eastern (Zervides and Knowles, 2007) with Asian parents viewed as particularly authoritarian (Steinberg et al., 1992a, 1992b). However, the relationship between culture, parenting and educational attainment is complex (Pong, Hao, and Gardner, 2005). Research indicates an authoritative style of parenting is associated with higher academic achievement and more positive developmental outcomes among children. However, (notwithstanding the reductive overgeneralization of these claims) it has also been observed that black young people tend to come from authoritative homes but do poorly at school, while Asian young people tend to come from authoritarian homes but do well at school (Steinberg, Dornbusch and Brown, 1992a; Steinberg, Lamborn, Dornbusch and Darling, 1992b). This has led some academics to conclude that factors beyond parenting style must explain cultural differences in educational attainment (Steinberg et al., 1992a, 1992b). For example, Steinburg (1992) attests that different cultural beliefs rather than parenting styles may account for cultural attainment.
differences, claiming that Asian families more than others place a huge emphasis on achievement and believe a good job can only come after a good education (Li, 2008).

To date, this sociological and social developmental psychology research illustrates the importance of family involvement and investment in young children’s learning and development, as well as the influence of social class and culture. However, what it does not explore is the nature of transactions which occur within the early years in pedagogical settings. This raises the following research questions which this thesis aims to address:

- *Are social class inequalities reflected within the pedagogies of Early Years Learning?*
- *If so, how are these social inequalities produced and reproduced within Early Years Learning across different settings?*
- *What role might class and culture play in children’s early years learning opportunities?*

### 2.5 Educating Bodies and Identities

Central to this thesis is the question of how children develop knowledge of their own and others’ bodies (see chapters six and seven). The concept of the body is important within early childhood settings because often these are the first institutions other than the family where children’s bodies are constituted and regulated through discourse and power relations (Wells, 2001). As previously discussed, Reay (1998, 2007) and Vincent and Ball (2007) suggest that some middle class factions are more able to take advantage of education and physical activity opportunities which allows them to invest in their child’s academic and physical capital. Middle class families’ access physical activity facilities without the same financial restraints
working class families may encounter (Vincent and Ball, 2009). Furthermore, Nunn, Johnson, Monro, Bickerstaffe and Kelsey (2007) suggest that as middle class families try to retain their social advantage by using resources such as physical activity opportunities, they help increase the cost of such opportunities which further reduces working class children’s access to them. Whilst few studies have explored the role of the body and the nature of transactions within EYL settings, several have addressed issues around health and young children (Humberstone and Stan, 2011; Paechter, 2011), with many focusing on obesity discourse and body image. Evans et al (2008) suggest that specific images of the body relating to size, shape and weight are privileged within contemporary culture and formal education. In Bernstein’s (2000, p. xxi) terms;

‘A school metaphorically holds up a mirror in which an image is reflected. There may be several images, positive and negative. A school’s ideology may be seen as a construction in a mirror through which images are reflected. The question is: who recognises themselves as of value? What other images are excluded by the dominant image of value so that some students are unable to recognise themselves? In the same way, we can ask about the acoustic of the school. Whose voice is heard? Who is speaking? Who is hailed by this voice? For whom is it familiar?’

In other words, schools reflect images valued by dominant social class values (Humberstone and Stan, 2011). In recent years, a growing body of literature has been concerned with young people’s experiences, interpretations and negotiations of health imperatives in schools. Much of this research is located in primary or secondary school education and has suggested that within these contexts, ideas around body image are linked to social and cultural values alongside a health concern (Gard and Wright, 2005). For example, in the UK, Evans, Davies,
Rich and De Pian, (2012) and De Pian (2012) have highlighted the different ways in which health education privileges certain body images reproducing class and cultural hierarchies and differences in the process. In Australia and New Zealand, Burrows and Wright (2004) similarly suggest that children’s identities and health are influenced by dominant cultural narratives. Their research suggests that parents are increasingly held responsible for their child’s body size, shape, with single parents or those with low income being marginalised by the dominant ‘normalising’ health discourses which require parents to regulate and monitor their child’s eating and television watching behaviours.

*Are these reductive concepts of health and ways of regulating the body evident within EYL? If so, how are they recontextualised by practitioners, parents and children?*

Paechter’s (2011) research in secondary schools suggests that children are continuously being trained in bodily control both within the family and formal education setting. She (like Evans et al, 2009) argues that children are increasingly subjected to a totally pedagogised society wherein they are constantly under surveillance. Their bodies are highly regulated, and have to conform to embodied ‘norms’, for example, wearing a certain uniform or displaying a passive body while indoors.

*Are similar processes evident in EYL? Are EYL settings totally pedagogised micro societies? Are social class and cultural differences evident across the settings in how bodies are regulated?*

There is a complex relationship between social equality, sports participation and the transmission of cultural capital within and through families (Birchwood et al, 2008). Evans
and Davies (2010, p.769) for example, attest that “patterns of development (involving particular forms of physical ability/literacy and embodiment) may be in large part set prior to starting formal education”. If this is the case, how do parents provide for such physical development, are these opportunities available to all, and with what implications for how children learn in EYL? Learning how to become appropriately embodied in today’s society is starting earlier, and, outside the realm of formal education.

The literature on identity and the body discussed above again raises a number of issues around the influence of social class values and cultural narratives, however, most of this research has focused on the formal school environment and has not explored the nature of transactions within culturally diverse EYL settings, or the impact such transactions have on childrens’ sense of identity and embodiment. These lacunae presage the following research questions which will be addressed in chapters six, seven and eight:

- How does play in EYL contribute to young children’s understandings of themselves and their corporeality?
- What role might discourse and language (symbolic and non-symbolic) in EYL settings play in children’s learning and construction of their identities?
- How are bodies ‘constructed’ (by children, practitioners) within EYL settings?
- How are ‘physical play’ and health designed, defined, constructed and experienced as pedagogy in EYL settings?

2.6. Conclusion
In this chapter I have attempted to provide an overview of some of the key research pertaining to social class and cultural reproduction within education and in particular EYL. Overall, three dominant strands of research have been discussed; research from the field of sociology of education, social psychology, and health and sports pedagogy. Much of the current research has focused on class and socio-economic status and the importance of parental attitudes towards education, child development, parental influence and subjectivity within formal school years. Research (Lareau, 2003; Siraj-Blatchford, 2004) suggests that class and cultural differences widen the educational gap as ‘the middle classes’ appear to place more value on education, and consequently, invest more in it as a way of reproducing their social class position by providing their offspring with economic and physical capital. Furthermore, some research (Sameroff and Chandler 1975; Yeung, Linver and Brooks-Gunn, 2002) suggests that these differing attitudes stem from differing economic contingencies, often children from low socio economic status families have fewer opportunities and access to resources.

Socially and politically two themes dominate UK Government legislation and research in relation to children, education and health. Within education, there is a focus on increasing equality by raising standards. There is acknowledgement that physical activity is important but within early years, numeracy, literacy and creating a good home learning environment are overwhelmingly prioritised. Health is also a major concern, with the focus on reducing “obesity” and encouraging health eating but not strongly linked within policy or indeed attitude to physical activity as a means of achieving these goals. Whilst there is much research on the benefits of physical activity especially for the cognitive development of children (Biddle and Goudes, 1996; Bjourklund and Brown, 2008), there is a gap in research and policy on early years and physical activity in relation to children’s embodiment.
The above literature highlights the significance of social class within EYL (see Reay, 2005; Vincent and Ball, 2007) but what it does not explore is how social class is enacted through the pedagogical transactions which occur within EYL settings or what these transactions look like. The critique presented in this chapter highlights the need for the continued development of research which employs theoretically sophisticated frameworks that can assist in uncovering the subtleties and complexities of social class and cultural (in)equalities within early childhood education and play. Analysis of the current literature therefore raises three major research questions;

- **How are social inequalities produced and reproduced within Early Years Learning across different settings?**

- **What influence does (physical) play and EYL have on children’s sense of embodiment?**

- **What role does social class and culture play in children’s access to opportunities within EYL?**

The next chapter will discuss contemporary politics and policies in EYL.
Chapter Three: Contemporary Politics and Policy on Early Learning and Child Welfare

3.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to review the politics and policy of early years learning (0-5 years) from 1990s onwards. The analyses will shed light on several issues relating to accessibility, equality and socio-economic status within early years education specifically focusing on play. The important question is what provisions have UK policy makers made for children in the early years to ensure that all have access to services and education to help them develop and learn? Five strands dominate this chapter, firstly the neo-liberal nature of current Lib/Con Government policy and its impact on opportunity and access. Accordingly, consideration will be given to the factors (social, economic, ideological) which influence government policies and have transformed education from a social ‘good’ to a marketable commodity. These factors also impact accessibility and equality of education. There is evidence to suggest that currently, economic prosperity is the primary driver of educational policies in the UK, across Europe and elsewhere, and a reduction in inequality is at best a consequence of this (Perry and Francis, 2010). The second strand focuses on the notion of the ‘ideal imaginary child’, as set out in the current EYFS documentation. By exploring previous UK government policies (such as Sure Start) in relation to Early Years it may be possible to establish whether there is a consistency of approach, or if this is ‘the Cinderella’ sector of education plagued by arbitrary policies with little overall improvements for children and their development in the early years stage. Whilst the main focus of the chapter is on political policies, it is

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5 Preschool provision and policies differ across the UK in terms of curriculum criteria and ages ranges. In Northern Ireland, the ‘Early Years Strategy’ operates for 0-6 year olds, in Scotland; the ‘Curriculum for Excellence’ operates for 3-18 year olds. In Wales the ‘Foundation Stage’ encompasses 3-7 year olds, while in England the EYFS focuses on 0-5 year olds.
acknowledged that social and economic factors influence political policy creating an intricate matrix, where each factor influences and is influenced by each of the others.

3.2 Early years learning and the Conservative Government (1990-1997)

During the 20th century it became increasingly apparent that differences in children’s individual circumstances had lasting effects on their educational attainment. Consequently, welfare reforms since 1996 (revised 2007 and 2012) aimed at reducing social inequality has been a priority for successive political parties, particularly during Prime Minister Tony Blair’s New Labour Government (1997-2010).

In 1989, the then Conservative Minister of State for Education, Angela Rumbold, initiated an enquiry into the quality of educational experiences offered to 3-4 year olds, focusing on the continuity of education from preschool to secondary school. Two main reports arose from this, firstly, the ‘Education of Under-fives’ (DES, 1989) report, which outlined examples of good practice and secondly, and The Rumbold Report ‘Starting with Quality’ (DES, 1990) which stressed the importance of quality in early years education. Whilst these initiatives acknowledged wider issues of social inclusion and inequality, they focused on ‘education’ as a means of addressing these concerns, and central to this, was the ideology of free – market enterprise and the expansion of nursery education through the private sector to compete with the state.

3.2.1. Changing Political Discourse under New Labour and Early Years Initiatives (1997-2010)
The election of New Labour in 1997 saw a paradigm shift in Labour ideology from a concern with equality, traditionally addressed in terms of redistributing wealth, to a new focus on inclusion and equality of opportunity (Lister, 1998). Geoff Mulgan, former director of policy under the New Labour Government, argued (invoking a dangerously reductive and insensitive stereotype), a generous benefit system made it ‘easy for them (parents) to dump their children onto the responsibility of the state and left the state to pay for their upbringing’ (Mulgan, 1997, p. 227). In Skeggs’ (1997) view, this represented a shift from a politics of redistribution to a politics of recognition, which had a significant impact on the politics of class. A ‘politics of recognition’ meant that rather than increase benefits, providing equality of opportunity within and through education became New Labour’s driving force.

To decrease poverty, increase inclusion and provide equality of opportunity, successive New Labour governments enacted a number of policy initiatives, such as *Sure Start* (DfE, 1998), *Birth to Three Matters* (DfE, 2002), *The Foundation Stage* (DfE, 2008). Similarly, National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies (part of the government National Strategies policy 1997-2011) were introduced in an attempt to ‘raise educational standards’ and consequently, increase equality of opportunity and social mobility. However, both the concept and existence of poverty in UK society were politically and socially contested. The Conservative government pre New Labour deemed poverty to be at a minimum, suggesting that those struggling to live contributed to their circumstances through their lack of commitment to work or non-nuclear family situation and that the responsibility for children fell solely on parents and not the state. Others, however, took a contrary view arguing that Conservative neo-liberal’ strategy of inequality’ served only to increase the gap between the rich and poor (Walker and Walker, 1997), best illustrated in the increase in child poverty between 1979, when it was ten per cent, to 1994, when it was thirty two per cent (Mortimore and Whitty, 1997). Hatcher (1998) claimed that addressing standards without also addressing inequality is
problematic for several reasons. Not least, if standards alone are raised then schools which
are deemed (e.g., in Ofsted reports and league tables) as academically ‘good’ will improve at
the same rate as ‘underachieving’ schools. As other critics have pointed out, this can result in
the achievement gap widening between schools rather than closing it causing a continuation
of social and educational inequality (Mortimore and Whitty, 1997). The attempt to raise
standards via an ideology of equality of opportunity has therefore produced a polarising
effect which serves to widen the gap between schools’ standards even further. In Gorard’s
(2000) view, polarisation within education is increasing, not only between pupils, but also
between schools, consequently creating a system of ‘winners and losers’. Others (Lucey and
Reay, 2002b) have argued that as a result of heightened competition within education, inner
city schools and their predominately minority and working-class ethnic students are
becoming positioned along classed, gendered and ethnic lines and labelled as socially
undesirable. These social attitudes, driven by political and economic policy, raise questions,
about the implications for children who attend such schools (Lucey and Reay, 2002b).

If the concerns raised by Lucey and Reay (2002a; 2002b) are valid, then does competition, or
more generally, the inducement of a ‘performative culture’ (see Ball, 2003; Evans et al, 2008)
and social differentiation within education, begin in pre-school? If so, are ‘disadvantaged’
children who receive EYL and later attend inner city or any other school (as those referred to
by Lucey and Reay, 2002b) labelled even before they attend formal education? If so, then
surely early education policies and opportunities are central to a child’s future. The need for
research on EYL to address such processes, therefore, becomes pressing.

3.2.2 The Liberal/Conservative Governments Education / Child Welfare policies (2010-
present)
At the time of writing (2014), EYL policies continue to unfold but not without inconsistency. In the early months of the new Lib/Con government (2010-present) it appeared that the coalition would continue the legacy of previous governments in relation to improving education and child welfare in the early years. In 2010, the EYFS (2008) was reviewed to ensure it ‘focused on children’s learning and development’ and all 3 and 4year-olds became entitled to fifteen hours a week of state-funded early education. Subsequently, the EYFS has become the framework which sets the standards for learning, development and care of children from birth to five, building on and replacing all existing statutory guidance. All providers of EYL in England and Wales are now expected to operate within this framework, and are subject to Ofsted inspection. Recent political developments have led to the establishment of a ‘foundation years vision’ (DfE Nov, 2011) within which the governments’ ‘aim is to put into place a coherent framework of child services for families from pregnancy through to five years old with the intention of promoting children’s development’ (DfE, 2014). To date (DfE, 2014), the following steps have been proposed to achieve this;

- In Sept 2010, early education was increased for all three to four year old to fifteen hours per week

- By 2013, all 2 year olds from ‘disadvantaged backgrounds’ were to receive fifteen hours free education and this is to be extended to other families by Sept 2014. It is to be noted, throughout the data collection process, practitioners across all three settings voiced scepticism over this policy due to staffing and resource (financial, space) issues, with many voicing their inability to offer places to two year olds.

- A network of Sure Start Children’s Centres are to remain open to all families, but the focus will be on those in greatest need.
• From Sept 2014, a new revised EYFS policy has been in place – although in relation to learning and development, aspects are largely unchanged from the 2012 EYFS policy.

The current EYFS aims to provide the foundations for children’s ability to learn and develop by focusing on three key areas. These are (EYFS 2012):

• Personal, social and emotional development;

• Communication and language; and

• Physical development

Providers must also support children in four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied. These are (EYFS 2012):

• Literacy;

• Mathematics;

• Understanding the world; and

• Expressive arts and design.

The prime areas of physical development focus on:

1. Moving and Handling – children’s ability to show good control and co-ordination in small and large movement, moving confidently in a range of ways.

2. Health and self-care – children know the importance of good health of physical exercise and a healthy diet and talk about ways to keep healthy and safe.
With physical development endorsed in Policy as a key area in children’s development, this research asks, how does the current EYL landscape accommodate and provide for physical development? How does it recognise the differences and predisposition that children bring to EY learning and address issues of culture and class? What impact does it have on children’s sense of embodiment, particularly, when we reflect on previous research (Vincent and Ball, 2007; Lareau, 2003 and chapter two) which suggests that enrichment activities provided outside EYL settings are dominating the lives of under-fives but are often only accessed by middle class families. The neoliberal ideal of creating a society of individuals who are self– responsible, self-actualising, self-governing (Rizvi and Lingard, 2011) and free of state interference, encouraged within current Government policy, has resulted in parents having to operate within an increasingly diverse and hybridised education system (Ball 2010) involving state and private providers (in the case of EYL often ‘integrated’ in one physical setting; see chapter five).

3.3 Neo-liberalism and education as a market place

“Parental choice is one of the keystones of current education policy in the UK. A combination of open enrolment, per-capita funding and deregulated admission procedures is encouraging competition between schools for student enrolment.”

(Gewirtz, Ball and Bowe, 1995, p. 89)

Over the last thirty years in the UK, as elsewhere, changes within education have been characterised by a shift, viewed by many as part of a global neo-liberal reform agenda (e.g. Apple, 2000, 2001; Harris, 2005, 2007; Olssen, 2008, 2009), to change schools from central government organizations, to devolved systems of education; introducing degrees of autonomy and a variety of school-based management and administration (Whitty, Power and
Within a neo-liberal education system, it is assumed that students, teaching and teachers need to be positioned more effectively within the economic, capitalist hierarchy (Olssen, 2008), as schools are required to compete against each other in terms of exam results, league table positions, facilities and reputation within the community.

Within the sociology of education, a significant body of critical literature has theorised and critiqued privatisation (e.g., Ball, 2007; Rizvi and Lingard, 2008; Evans, 2014) and the rise of marketising school economies (e.g. Gewirtz et al, 1995; Whitty Power and Halpin, 1998; Hardman and Levačić, 1997). Much of this research has addressed social, class and racialised divisions (e.g. Hargreaves, 1994; Garcia, 2008) as well as the impact neo-liberal reforms place on children and how these fit with the established restrictions of gender, class and race (e.g. Lucey and Reay, 2002a, 2002b; Reay and Lucey, 2003). Furthermore, this research suggests that neo-liberal policies aimed at improving education have had little impact on social mobility as a means of reducing inequality. For example Hardman and Levačić (1997) suggest that competition does not necessarily lead to a raising of standards, a claim endorsed by subsequent research (Levin and Riffel, 1997; Lauder and Hughes, 1999; Saltmarsh, 2007). Yet the firm belief of both New Labour and Coalition Governments is that competition within a performative culture (Ball, 2003) improves performance both within the sector and among pupils.

Furthermore, whilst the intention of Lib/Con policies is to provide personal opportunities to young people through new discourses of “equality of opportunity”, research (Lucey and Reay, 2002a) suggests that these opportunities are very limited. Reay (1998) argues that a neo-liberal discourse of limitless choice and endless possibilities within education ignores established constraints of gender, class and race. In her view, the means through which social class is constructed and given ‘value’ within a culture, to be played out immeasurably within the context of schools, is produced through educational texts which invariably take middle-
class values and practice as standard. Measuring all students against white middle-class academic standards facilitates an increase in inequalities of attainment in relation to social class and ethnicity (Reay, 1998).

Within neo-liberal ideology and policy, the acquisition of cultural capital is brought to the fore. The assumption is made that as the wealthiest prosper and provide their children with increasing amounts of appropriate educational resources there is a ‘trickle down’ of wealth benefiting poorer members of society, thereby improving the economy as a whole. The aforementioned claims (i.e. education is essentially middle class and neoliberal) are not unproblematic; however, they are to be acknowledged when exploring access and opportunity in EYL for children from diverse socio economic and disadvantaged backgrounds. Do middle class practices, resources, values, expectations and behaviours dominate preschool education across all settings? If so, what impact does this have on children’s identity, embodiment and opportunity for achievement?

3.3.1 International perspectives on EYL and the Impact of Neoliberalism

The renewed focus on early years learning is not confined to the UK and neither is Neoliberalism (Saul, 2005); it is also visible within Australia, New Zealand and elsewhere across the globe. Davies and Bansel (2007) have argued that neoliberalism aims to encourage people to become ‘productive economic entrepreneurs’ (2007, p. 248) and to achieve this, education and educational institutions must be reformed to produce such individuals, hence, schools become a ‘marketplace’ (Peters, 1999, p.2). For example, within New Zealand, neoliberal discourses have positioned education as a private good which should be paid for by the individual and hence, there has been a shift from free kindergarten for all to a market of competition between kindergardens and alternative private early childhood centres. In
contrast, the Nordic Welfare State has remained largely socially democratic in its underlying goals of equality (Earles, 2011). Within Sweden, access to reliable childcare is seen as a basic requirement within society, with a universal childcare system marked by low fees and a high level of accessibility (to all regardless of gender, SES – Sweden. SE 2012).

Swadner et al (2006) suggest that internationally, governments are viewing Early Childhood Education (ECE) as a key medium through which to ameliorate social and educational inequalities. Within Europe, it has been suggested that ECE tends to focus on the care of young people while parents are at work and the development of skills and attitudes associated with success in formal school settings (Cochran, 2011). For example, within Sweden and Italy, ECE focuses on the whole child’s development or ‘partecipazione’ – “it links the daily life of children, family and school together through practices” (Mantovani, 2007, p.1112). In contrast, within France, education and care are implemented separately, with separate settings for under threes and three to school aged children run and organised by different government departments. The figure below, illustrates an adapted continuum scale for ECE depicting how education and care are delivered in several European countries (Cochran, 2011, p. 70);

*Figure 1: Continuum scale for ECE*

| Norway, Denmark, Belgium, France |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Sweden, Italy, Germany          | Netherlands, UK                |
| **Integrated Development**      | **School Related Learning**    |
| (Education and Care)            | (Education and Care)           |

ECE is evident beyond Europe, for example, *Yochien* and *Hoikuen* is a program in Japan that promotes children’s health, social relations, environment, language and expressions. The
Yochien, or pre-schools, are primarily private programs designed to prepare children for primary school and the Hoikuen, or child care programs, are government-subsidized programs for children of all ages from families deemed in need by government authorities. Within the USA, Head Start and K-12 programmes are run throughout many states, with the aim of addressing educational inequality issues early in a child’s life.

Table 1: A brief overview of the current landscape of EYL internationally (see Bertram and Pascal, 2002);

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Starting age for formal Education</th>
<th>Publically funded EYL provision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3-4 Yrs.</td>
<td>4-5 Yrs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>6 (most states)</td>
<td>Some pre-school funding for 3-4 or 4-5 year olds, state depending</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Some publically funded kindergarten attached to elementary schools for 4-5 year olds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Structured pre-school provision based on age. Either kindergarten education or care orientated child care centres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Scuola Dell’infanzia – fully funded for 3-6 year olds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>All municipal authorities offer nursery or pre-schools although income</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.4 The effectiveness of current early year’s initiatives in the UK

3.4.1 The private sector

Prior to New Labour policy to improve early year’s childcare and education, the private sector had been the main beneficiary of women returning to work. Within the past twenty five years in the UK, private sector childcare (for example, private nurseries, day care, fee paying clubs), especially corporate childcare, has increased substantially in response to anticipated market demand (Penn, 2007) which was expected to arrive in the form of the middle classes who were once attracted to state nursery schools. However, the route of private nurseries to private schools for middle class children has now become increasingly embedded in middle class culture (Vincent, 2006). The sector was supported by a range of New Labour government measures, but also more tightly regulated. This has resulted in high fees, approximately twenty eight percent of a households disposable income, which the private sector itself suggests is too high for the low socio economic status families and therefore, places few business in such areas (Penn, 2007).

As previously mentioned (see chapter one) enrichment activities (music, sport, and art related activities for young children) have been described as a ‘booming’ area, with provision and consumption increasing significantly over the last three decades (Vincent and Ball, 2006). Vincent and Ball (2007) have illustrated how, in an attempt to invest their children’s habitus
and capital, middle class parents often enrol their children into enrichment activities outside of EYL nursery settings to develop their talents and abilities. The average (middle class) family spends annually over one thousand pounds per child between the ages of six months and eight years on additional classes and activities (Vincent and Ball, 2007). We might then ask, what are the effects of investments such as these on the actions of children inside EYL settings and how are they perceived by practitioners?

3.4.2 The public sector

The Sure Start initiative was established by New Labour in 1998 as a public sector strategy to improve childcare and education and reduce social inequalities. The aim of Sure Start Local Programmes (SSLPs) was to work with parents-to-be, parents and children to promote the physical, intellectual and social development of young people, particularly those in disadvantaged backgrounds to break the cycle of disadvantage (NESS, 2005) and was therefore dubbed by many as the ‘jewel in New Labour’s crown’ (Toynbee, 2004). But to what extent has Sure Start been successful?

The key strength to SSLPs was their attempt to involve parents/carers in the delivery of activities (Glass, 1999); the success of these programmes, led to an extension of the policy in 2002/2003 with the introduction of Sure Start Children Centres (SSCCs). Children centres were seen as a way to make the programme universal and not solely for the disadvantaged areas as was the case of SSLPs (Lewis, 2011). Therefore the aim and objectives of these new centres was on the one hand similar to SSLPs, but on the other had a number of notable differences. The National Evaluation of Sure Start (NESS, 2005) heavily criticised several aspects of the SSLPs particularly because it was felt they failed to meet the needs of ethnic minorities (Tunstil, Allnock, Akhurst and Garbers, 2005) or engage with the most ‘socially excluded’ individuals (Belsky, Melhuish, Barnes, Leyland, Romaniuk, and National Evaluation of Sure Start Research Team, 2006), a finding which was similarly found in an American evaluation of early Headstart programmes (Love et al 2002).

In 2001, the focus of Sure Start started to shift to formal childcare when the Neighbourhood Nursery Initiative (NNI, DfE, 2007) was introduced. Its goals were to establish thousands of new full-day care places for the under-fives and to narrow the gap in childcare provision
between the most disadvantaged areas of England and more affluent areas. Care was to be high quality, accessible and affordable (Sure Start 2001). Glass points out that Sure Start’s aims had been recast to increase “the availability of childcare for all children…supporting parents as parents and in their aspirations towards employment” (Glass, 1999, p. 258).

In light of the criticisms of SSLPs and then ‘new direction’ Sure Start children centres focused on engaging with those ‘hard to reach’ parents and children through the following objectives (Pemberton and Mason, 2008):

- Provide a greater role for local government in managing SSCCs
- Include and serve all neighbourhoods across England
- Place a greater emphasis on increasing parental employment through full day-care.

The latter of these objectives stemmed from a gradual change in political policy which saw childcare firmly tied to the aim of getting parents into employment (Lewis, 2011). However, this increased attention on education and employment for parents has been described by some researchers as disengaging parents. Pemberton and Mason (2008) found that the majority of parents who got involved with SSCCs did so to increase their offspring’s confidence and enhance their opportunities. Furthermore, research has found that despite children centres being pledged as making early years’ childcare and learning universal, this is not the case. Lewis, Roberts and Finnegan (2010) conclude it was difficult to describe a “typical” SCC. Within their research, they found that child centres differed in aims and attitudes towards early year’s childcare and learning depending on their location, for example, one of the centres they studied placed low priority on childcare and education because there was a low demand for it within their neighbourhood.

Overall, the research to date on the effects of Sure Start as an early year’s initiative not only highlights some discrepancies between centres and the programmes they offer (NAO, 2004) but also provides an overview of the aims behind the programme. Certainly, the concept of having a universal child care system has several benefits that targeted schemes cannot offer as research from America would suggest (Barnett and Ackerman, 2006): it becomes well-established, well-known and accessible; everybody knows what is on offer and how it works in every area. Under the current Coalition government, the future of Sure Start remains
ambiguous as does the long term benefit of universal children’s centres. Recent research suggests that those most in need of children’s centres are not using them; rather the middle classes are (Coughlan, 2011). During the duration of my research, one setting changed from a Sure Start centre to an academy run nursery. Conversations with practitioners’ within this setting revealed they considered that with the introduction of government funded nursery places, fewer families utilised Sure Start centres. In their view, Sure Start was predominantly utilised by expectant parents and those with children under two years of age.

3.5 The current EYFS ‘Imaginary Child’

Reflecting on previous policy, the influence of neo-liberal ideology and the effectiveness of current EY provision we might ask: what is a child expected to be and achieve through/by the end of their EYFS experience? This section, examines how education policy in the form of the EYFS statutory assessment system – Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP) and EYFS (non-statutory) guidance for practitioners – defines the ‘imaginary learner’ as children progress from nursery to reception and beyond. In Bernstein’s terms, the ‘imaginary learner’ is determined in the recontextualisation of knowledge as it moves between sites or groups of people, e.g., the imaginary child in the EYFS policy may be recontextualised by practitioners as they translate policy to practice and thus it (the imaginary child) may differ between EYL settings. As Government discourse around the early years is moved from one pedagogic site to another (i.e. from government white paper to policy in EYL settings), a space is created in which ideology can ‘play’. Bernstein argues that in this space (e.g. in the making of the EYFS) pedagogic discourse creates ‘imaginary subjects’ (Bernstein, 1996). So what are the imaginary subjects of the EYFS and how are they enacted in EYL settings? The latter question is addressed in chapter eight, so here I set out how the ‘imaginary’ subject is envisaged (brought into play) albeit implicitly in the EYFS framework.

In an education system dominated by neo-liberal principles of choice and performativity (Ball, 2003, 2008), where knowledge content and assessment are of paramount importance, the EYFS sets out a model for the ‘imaginary learner’ through 17 ‘early learning goals’ (ELG’s). These set specific ideals of the stages of development a child should reach at various ages.

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6 Although EYFSP is completed as children turn 5 years old and leave reception for Year 1, practitioners in all EYL settings are required to assess children’s development and in the case of the three research settings, these assessment were required by the child’s reception school to form part of their EYFSP
Looking specifically at the age range 3-50 months, table 2 highlights (some of) what is expected of children across the prime and specific areas of; physical development, literacy and mathematics.

Table 2: Adapted from Non statutory guidance material support for practitioners in implementing the statutory requirements of EYFS (Early Education, 2012, p.24, 29 and 33)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physical Development – Moving and Handling</th>
<th>Literacy – Reading</th>
<th>Mathematics – Numbers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Moves in a range of ways, such as slithering, jumping, running</td>
<td>• Shows awareness of rhyme and alliteration</td>
<td>• Recites numbers in order to 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Runs skilfully and negotiates space successfully</td>
<td>• Listens to stories with attention and recall</td>
<td>• Knows that numbers identify how many objects are in a set</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Can catch a large ball</td>
<td>• Looks at books independently</td>
<td>• Sometimes matches numeral and quantity correctly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Holds a pencil with fingers and thumb</td>
<td>• Recognises familiar signs and words such as own name</td>
<td>• Realises not only objects but anything can be counted, including steps, claps or jumps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Can copy some letters</td>
<td>• Holds books the correct way up</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Implicitly then, within the EYFSP is an assessment process of disciplinary power that defines some children as ‘normal’ and others as ‘failing’ (McNaughton, 2005) or in the words of EYFS ‘emerging’. As table two highlights, by age 3 or 4, it ‘expects’ children to achieve a certain level of development which for some may be unrealistic for various reasons (biological or physical development, social class etc.).

The EYFSP is unique in its breadth of assessment, ranging from formally assessing if children can dress themselves, ‘maintain personal hygiene’ to demonstrating an awareness of
rhyming words. Within this framework, ‘development’ (although never defined) is a key phrase, suggesting the EY child is a work-in-progress, a child becoming a learner and at the end of the EYFS (Year 1 in England) it assesses to what extent the child has transformed into this ideal, ‘imaginary child’. Three aspects of effective learning are identified: (i) playing and exploring; (ii) active learning; and (iii) creating and critical thinking. Key aspects of effective learning characteristics include children (Early Years Foundation Stage Handbook, 2013, p. 20):

- finding new ways;
- being willing to have a go;
- being involved and concentrating;
- enjoying achieving what they set out to do;
- having their own ideas; and
- choosing ways to do things;

3.5.1 Playing and Exploring – Engagement

The EYFSP text, describe a child who has ‘a ‘can do’ orientation, being willing to take a risk in new experiences’, and blends enthusiasm for learning with inquisitiveness. In a free play context at nursery, this is a child who displays an interest often initiating activities and is able to make rational choices about what activities to engage in and how. The EYFSP points on the Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED) ELG’s demand a child who is:

‘Confident to try new activities, and say why they like some activities more than others; confident to speak in a familiar group, will talk about their ideas, and will choose the resources they need for their chosen activities’ (EYFS, 2012, p. 8)

The free choice play aspect of EYL enables such characteristics, however, as Tobin (1995) suggests, this process of choice mirrors practices of consumption that are valued in neoliberal discourses. In this context, children are assessed on their ‘motivation’ and ‘excitement’ in engaging with these forms of learning, encouraged to select one and show ‘involvement’. The ‘good learner’ takes responsibility for their learning by making choices about what they
spend their time on and what resources they need for their activity, they must be flexible in their choices and also industrious, prepared to try out unfamiliar activities and work hard at them.

3.5.2 Active Learning - motivation

The EYFSP implies that the ‘good learner’ demonstrates good listening skills, is attentive to others and responds appropriately. The good learner must also be flexible in terms of recognising what is required in different classroom situations. Within enjoying achieving what they set out to do, children are required to; ‘meet one’s own goals, building on the intrinsic motivation which supports long-term success, rather than relying on the approval of others’ (EYFS Handbook, 2013, p. 20).

Thus, within EYFSP value is placed on the child being independent and socially engaging and able to initiate play. The child is able to understand how to behave and what is required (purposeful play) of them; he/she is not taught what to do. In this way, the discourse reflects neo-liberal ideas of individual responsibility and self-improvement. It is assumed that much of this learning has already being ongoing in the family home.

3.5.3 Creating and critically thinking

The third element of effective learning is creating and critical thinking. As well as engaging in various forms of play, children in the early years are required to demonstrate creativity and an ability to solve things, whether it is how to draw or how to build a bridge;

A unique child at the age 30-50 months should ‘use various construction materials, being to construct, stack blocks horizontally, vertically, make enclosures and creating spaces’ (EYFS non statutory support guidance, 2012, p. 44)

Whilst processing such thinking is good, it is not enough, children need to make use of and seek out opportunities to demonstrate this critical thinking in order to be constructed as a successful, ‘imaginary learner’ in the eyes of practitioners and EYFSP. All assessment is carried out through observation so children need to choose how and when to make visible to practitioners their creativity and critical thinking.
The EYFSP and its associated practices describe and define the specific characteristics of an ideal learner within the early years; this ideal is based on discourses of individual responsibility, flexibility and self-regulation – ideas that encompass several elements of education policy, but are important in relation to judging children through the EYFSP ELG’s. This model, however, does not displace established notions of what a ‘good learner’ might be in relation to academic achievement. Previous research has suggested that in formal schooling, students tend to get viewed as ‘appropriate’ or ‘inappropriate’ subjects based on academic achievement (Youdell, 2006). EYFSP show signs of consistency and also values academic skills, such as forming letters or reading simple words – as illustrated in table 2.

Ultimately to be a recognisable ‘good learner’ the EYFS requires children to perform a complex array of characteristics in the right way at the right times. Children are under constant surveillance and assessment, being classed as ‘emerging’ if they are not achieving or exceeding the ‘expected’ levels of development. This raises questions as to who becomes included or excluded within this framework; who is able or not able to achieve this ‘imaginary learner’ status. Previous research (e.g. Ball, 2010 see chapter two) has highlighted that middle class children tend to be exposed to ‘enrichment’ activities which in turn goes someway to preparing them for the EYL setting and the behavioural (listening, sitting, being independent) requirements of the ‘imaginary learner’;

> Enrolling under 5’s in activities of these kinds ensures children develop a complex set of physical, social and intellectual skills and embodiments which leave them in a state of ‘learning readiness’ (Ball, 2010, p.161)

It seems reasonable to therefore assume that children who have not been exposed to these ‘enrichment’ activities may not possess ‘learning readiness’ and therefore may struggle to achieve the ‘imaginary learner’ enacted by the EYFSP.

Whilst the EYFSP is not ‘formally’ assessed until the end of reception year when children are aged 5, within the final year of nursery (children aged 4), schools required nursery practitioners to complete ‘learning journeys’ and provide observations which are used for assessment of the children’s ability. Consequently, although children are unaware of this assessment, the EYFSP is potentially a significant determinant of a child’s educational

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7 Across all three settings, practitioners explained how as the children moved to reception year, they took with them their ‘learning journey’ and that practitioners were required to write a review of the each child’s progress during their time at the nursery. Schools then used this to make their initial assessment on children.
trajectory; it assesses the extent to which they are recognised as an ‘able’ learner across a wide range of aspects. The values inherent in the EYFSP thus implicitly refract and help reproduce neoliberal ideology of choice and individual responsibility. Not meeting ‘expected’ targets could potentially have a negative impact on children’s educational lives prior to them starting formal school.

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter has documented the political ideologies and values of governments in relation to early year’s education since the 1990s. What emerges is a political landscape that has been characterised by continuity represented through the political ideology and the main tenets of neoliberalism (e.g. Perryman, 1996). Despite, Tony Blair’s New Labour Government, adopting ‘third way’ ideology, some suggest it still reflected an ingrained neo liberal/Thatcherite ideology (Gamble, 1994). Its education policies demonstrated a commitment to the policies of the previous Conservative Governments which had created a market for education based upon expansion of the private nursery sector. On its election, New Labour made clear its intention to continue with specialist early years provision initially through Sure Start, but also in line with some of the more divisive Conservative education policies of a market-led system, such as parental choice, teacher accountability and assessment within early years through a formal EYFS framework. Education was the Blair Government's stated number one priority and unlike the previous Conservative Governments of Margaret Thatcher and John Major, there was a significant increase in the share of national income spent on education (McAuley, 2003). New Labour believed that key to the country's economic performance and its wider social agendas was education. Whilst the New Labour Party Manifesto of 1979 had allocated only three pages to education, in 1997 the phrase 'Education, Education, Education' signalled the Blair Government's commitment to make education a key policy priority. The New Labour agenda for education was to enforce a step-change in the structure and organisation of schools supported by substantial government investment (Giddens, 1998).

Consequently, from the 1990s, there has been a gradual emergence of EYE as significant within Government policies, with a clear neo-liberal ideology of independence and individual responsibility at the forefront of EYFS policy documents. EYL policy is firmly focused on preparing children for school and providing a flexible child care service for working parents.
in an attempt to get people, particularly women, off state benefits and economically more active by providing better childcare. As previously mentioned, this is an early learning policy predicated on neo-liberal ideology of achieving ‘the big society’, where individuals are less dependent on the state, become responsible citizens, contributing to society un (or) less aided by the state. Within the EYFS the ‘imaginary child’ is, it seems, a neoliberal child (already) made ‘able to be active and independent’ through aspects of effective learning and the implicit neo-liberal discourse of independent play. Chapters six to eight will explore in detail how the EYFS is enacted across the three socially and culturally diverse settings which featured in this study with reference to the nature of transactions therein and how these impact a children’s opportunities, identities and embodiment, further elaborating on the ‘imaginary learner’.

The next chapter will explore the theoretical concepts of Basil Bernstein and how they were used to address the research questions (chapter two).
Chapter Four: Theoretical Perspectives

4.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the theoretical perspectives that have informed this research and are used to analyse the data. Many sociological theories have been used to study the relationships between children, education and social inequalities (see literature review and Wheeler, 2012). This research however, presents a rationale for the primary use of the British sociologist Basil Bernstein’s theoretical schema while acknowledging that those of others’ (e.g., of Pierre Bourdieu and Michel Foucault) could also be adopted to further enhance the analyses. The chapter begins with a brief incursion into the work of Foucault and Bourdieu to highlight the potential they offer to understanding such relationships, if suitably elaborated with the work of Basil Bernstein. Moving on the chapter explores in detail key aspects of Bernstein’s theory including criticisms levelled at it before highlighting the potential benefits of utilising his concepts over others. It illustrates how his concepts have variously been applied in empirical work seeking understandings of relationships between education and social and cultural reproduction.

4.2 Foucault, the body and power

Foucault’s work has had a profound impact on contemporary sociological approaches to the body, control and the relation of power to knowledge. In particular, his concepts ‘governmentality’, ‘biopower’ and ‘technologies of the self’ have enabled researchers (notably in the fields of critical health and sport pedagogy - see, Webb et al, 2008; Wright et al, 2006; Burrows and Wright, 2004; Tinning and Glasby, 2002) to explore ideas around power, knowledge and surveillance in relation to health and obesity discourse (e.g. Burrows and Wright 2004). For Foucault, institutions (e.g. schools or EYL settings) act as specific sites where particular techniques of power are brought to bear on individuals’ (self), disciplining and regulating their behaviours often in subtle, non-obvious or aggressive ways. The concepts ‘biopower’ and ‘technologies of the self’ are of particular interest to this thesis. ‘Biopower’ refers to the governance and regulation of individuals (Cliff and Millei, 2011). Wright (2009, p. 2), has elaborated Foucault’s initial concept using the term ‘biopedagogies’ to describe the ‘normalising and regulating practices’ within a school context that place children under constant surveillance and promote self-monitoring with particular reference to the ‘obesity epidemic’. Foucault’s ‘technologies of the self’ refers to the (most sophisticated
of four\textsuperscript{8}) methods and techniques through which individuals constitute their identities. In his terms, ‘technologies of the self’,

‘permit individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality’. (Foucault, 1988, p.18)

The concept ‘technologies of the self’ has been widely used within research on physical activity and health (e.g., see Thorpe, 2008; Wright, O’Flynn and Macdonald, 2006) to explore how discourse shapes young people’s subjectivities, going beyond overly simplistic notions of socialisation to address the complexities of power. Grosz (1994) for example, suggests that ‘technologies of the self’ acknowledges that the body is a site where cultural meanings are inscribed through the size and shape of the body and the way it moves.

Foucault’s work provides profound insight into the ways in which knowledge and discourse shape consciousness, but it is insufficient of itself to fully articulate the relationships involved in this process. It could be argued that, criticisms levelled by others (Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1993, 1999; Harker, Mahar, Wilkes, Barnard, Codd, Snook and Duncan, 1990; Laberge and Kay, 2002 and later in this chapter) at Bourdieu’s key concepts might also reverberate in Foucault’s work given its attention essentially to discursive practices, knowledge fields and ‘effects’ rather than those processes which shape and define their enactment, emplacement and encoding in situ. I will suggest that Bernstein’s conceptual lens provides the linguistic framework to not only better articulate the transactions which define the nature of body pedagogies, in this case in EYL settings, but also describe and analyse them in ways which connect and integrate (without dissolving) micro and macro processes, while foregrounding issues of power and control.

4.3 Bourdieu’s Socio-cultural theory

Bourdieu's socio-cultural theory provides a useful conceptual tool-kit with which to interrogate and examine, either individually or collectively, many aspects of the social world (Jenkins, 1992). For Crossley (2001, p. 91), Bourdieu’s work places embodiment at the

\textsuperscript{8} The other three are: (i) technologies of production, which permit individuals to produce, transform, or manipulate things; (ii) technologies of sign systems, which permit individuals to use signs, meanings, symbols, or signification and (iii) technologies of power, which determine the conduct of individuals and submit them to certain ends or domination, an objectivising of the subject.
forefront of analysis and in doing so, identifies a “central interplay between body and society”. Whilst Foucault’s work provides us with a discourse to explore consciousness, it does not go as far as to explain consciousness embodied. Bourdieu’s work lends itself through the concept of habitus to talk about the body and how individuals come to develop a physical sense of self. Central to Bourdieu’s theory are the concepts field, habitus, and capital, as is the relationship between family and social position. Bourdieu theorised that members of different classes and class fractions have and transmit different amounts and types of ‘capital’, as well as different ‘habituses’.

4.3.1. Habitus and Embodiment

Habitus is a concept that orients our ways of thinking; it asks how social structure and individual agency can help to shape each other. Formally, Bourdieu defines habitus as a property of actors that comprises a ‘structured and structuring structure’ (1994, p. 170). It is structured by ones past/present, it is helping to structure one’s future and it is structured in that it is systematically ordered (Maton, 2008). Habitus does not solely comprise mental attitudes, but is expressed via the material, physical body, through walking, speaking, feeling and thinking (Bourdieu, 1990). ‘Habitus is located within the body and affects every aspect of human embodiment’ (Shilling, 2003, p. 113). It is ‘a bridge-building exercise’ (Jenkins, 2002, p. 74) that immerses the relations between structure and agency by incorporating society into the body. Habitus, then, serves to address the binary of structure and agency by (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 2002). For Bourdieu, social life can only be understood as the embodiment of individuals within particular fields through their habitus. When individuals participate in fields they become ‘endowed with the habitus’ (Bourdieu, 1993, p. 72) and are judged accordingly on their ability to deploy the relevant habitus within a particular field. Therefore, if an individual's social action is compatible with the style, manner and customs of other participants within the field, they are likely to be accepted as a member. By conforming and accepting these practices, individuals within a field reproduce these conditions.

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9 The definition of capital is very wide for Bourdieu and includes material things (which can have symbolic value), as well as 'untouchable' but culturally significant attributes such as prestige, status and authority (referred to as symbolic capital), along with cultural capital (defined as culturally-valued taste and consumption patterns) (Maher, 1990, p.13).

10 Bourdieu’s concept field allows us to look closely at the relationship between agents and structures (Robbins, 1991). We can begin to see society as a multidimensional space comprising of a number of spaces (fields) each with their own rules but part of society as a whole (Bourdieu, 1985).
Individuals bring embodied dispositions to social settings, (consciously and unconsciously) and these in part regulate behaviours within them; these dispositions become a resource of the body. In Bourdieu’s (1990, p. 86) view habitus is invariably ‘linked to individual history’ (Bourdieu, 1990b, p. 86). It is an objective base for regular modes of behaviour and practice acquired in early childhood through the family and continually re-structured by individuals’ experiences (Di Maggio, 1979). Bourdieu also suggests that habitus is an ‘open system of dispositions that is constantly subjected to experiences, and therefore constantly affected by them in a way that either reinforces or modifies its structures’ (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 2002, p.133). The nature, degree and possibility of significant change, however, are constrained by a ’system of circular relations' that will not lead to transformation. Habitus then might be considered as an embodied social, physical and cultural mind-set that influences and guides (but does not totally determine) the behaviour and actions of individuals.

Bourdieu's concepts of habitus and capital are useful for several reasons. Firstly, habitus provides a means of conceptualising the interrelationship between individual and society without simplifying or reducing this relationship to a false dichotomy. Secondly, the notion of multiple capitals provides a means by which we can understand and explore social relations while considering the economic, social and cultural value of particular social actions. However, Bourdieu’s work is susceptible to the criticism of cultural reductionism through a disproportionate focus on the means of (knowledge/cultural) production, when explaining the nature of social action (Alexander, 1995; Jenkins, 1982). Although there are similarities between Bourdieu’s and Bernstein’s work with comparisons often made between ‘code’ and ‘habitus’ (see Bernstein, 1990, p.46), Bernstein himself (2000, p.13) acknowledged a fundamental difference;

‘How it (habitus) comes to be is not part of the description, only what it does. There is no description of its specific formation. We cannot replace habitus by X, that is by the description of its internal relation… putting it crudely there is no necessity between the concept or what counts as its realization’ (Bernstein, 2000, p.13).

In other words (Moore, 2006, p. 34), ‘Bernstein’s concept of code re-writes habitus as a constitutive process, a progressive pedagogy which can be described through classification (C) and framing (F), the strength of which can alter and change’. However, habitus can only be represented (statistically) in terms of those things assumed to be the realization of habitus.

Furthermore, Maton (2008) argues that when compared to a Bernsteinian mode of theorising,
Bourdieu’s concepts/theory suffers from a flat ontology. He suggests that beyond the initial abstraction of concepts there is limited scope to extend them i.e. there is nothing beneath habitus, fields or capital which relate horizontally rather than vertically. In contrast Bernstein’s theory contains tight and explicit abstraction – condensation chains created vertically between concepts e.g. elaborated and restricted codes have been ‘subsumed under higher order concepts’ (Bernstein, 2000, p.207). Despite the limitations of Bourdieu’s work, I draw on the concept of habitus and capital where appropriate in this thesis to enhance and embellish data analysis. However, I will also suggest that Bourdieu does not provide a language to discuss the processes of habitus and embodiment (any more than Foucault’s ‘technologies of self-does’). I suggest that Bernstein’s concepts, particularly the ‘pedagogic device’ (PD) go some way toward providing a language to discuss pedagogic consciousness, but not completely its embodiment. For this, we need also look to the ‘corporeal device’ (Evans et al 2009) as means of better focusing the relationships between the body, pedagogy and society (expressed initially as PD/CD intersections).

4.3.2. Shilling and Physical Capital

For Bourdieu, ‘embodied’ capital was a sub division of cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986). However, Shilling (1991) has argued that the ‘physical’ is too important to be considered a mere component of cultural capital. He therefore elaborated Bourdieu’s initial concept of physical capital, capturing the importance of the body as a form of capital in its own right. Bourdieu argued that the body had become a commodity within contemporary society and as a form of physical capital, a status symbol which is crucial to the acquisition of other forms of capital (Shilling, 2003). Certainly within contemporary western and westernised societies, much value is placed on body size, shape and appearance (Shilling, 2003) with a focus in schools on educating children to aspire to a ‘healthy’ body (Evans, Davies and Wright, 2004; Gard and Wright, 2005). Physical capital requires the body to develop in a way which others recognise as having value within social fields (i.e., family, school, work place) as this facilitates the transferal of physical capital into economic, social and cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1978, 1984, 1986). For Bourdieu (1984) acts of labour are required to transform bodies into social beings (i.e., one is constantly required to ‘work on’ the body). These acts influence how people present their bodies and represent social differences learnt within the early years of childhood. In essence, the expectations of one’s social class and culture are imprinted on the body. Bourdieu argues there are three reasons for this; first, habitus and taste
are developed through social location (Bourdieu, 1984); secondly the habitus provides individuals with class dependant ways of relating to situations (Brubaker, 1985); and thirdly, taste (food, education, clothes) influences the decisions individuals make. For instance, the so called ‘obesity crisis’ affecting many westernised societies is often associated more with ‘working class’ members of society than the ‘middle classes’ (Evans et al, 2011 and 2012).

Foucault and Bourdieu have made invaluable contributions to research on pedagogy and social class (e.g., Webb, Quennerstedt and Öhman, 2008, 2004; Reay, 2006; Lareau, 2003) and physical education, sport and health (Burrows, 2010; Evans et al 2008; Evans and Rich, 2011). This thesis builds on that contribution by providing further insight into the detail of knowledge transmission and the construction of pedagogy in society and schools. In particular, I acknowledge the usefulness of Bourdieu’s concept habitus and Shilling’s focus on the body, the following section illustrates why Bernstein’s theory provides a more searching and comprehensive framework through which to analyse the data. Bernstein’s work prompts exploration of the implicit/inherent ‘rules’ (and principles) of the educational process and their links to wider structural conditions, and the placing of these processes into the larger context of educational policy (Bernstein, 1990).

4.4. Why Basil Bernstein’s Conceptual Tools

Bernstein’s concepts are like butterflies, not easily pinned down or defined, not least because he intentionally sought to rework and redefine them over time. For example, in Codes, Class and Control, (vol3, 1975) Bernstein sought to develop his code theory from its sociolinguistic roots, refining and applying it to the education process, schools and their connections with social class reproduction. Often viewed as providing a structuralist approach to the sociology of education (Sadovnik, 1991), his sociology variously drew on the work of several key theorists in the field, notably Durkheim, Weber and Marx. Bernstein’s work has been described as having three phases;

i) The study of language (codes);

ii) Attention to classification and framing and the organisation of knowledge; and

iii) Work on pedagogical discourse and educational transmission as pedagogic text (pedagogic device) (Haavelstrud, 2001).
These key concepts (codes, classification (C), frame (F), pedagogic device (PD)), outlined in greater detail below, will be used throughout this thesis to explore the ways children construct and ‘embody’ their identity through language and the classed/cultured nature of pedagogies within early years learning. First however, we might note some of the criticisms levelled at Bernstein’s work.

4.4.1. Bernstein criticisms and critiques

Early critics of Bernstein (e.g. Gordon, 1984; Jackson, 1974) argued that the continual ambiguity, inconsistencies and change within his papers and terminology caused problems with his theory from the outset. Or, as Jackson (1974, p. 71) suggests, “superficial wooliness in Bernstein, is actually a rather clever device for masking a fundamental confusion of ideas”. In addition, there was much criticism over Bernstein’s style of writing, with many finding it dense and difficult to comprehend (Walford, 1995), although this claim could be and was levelled at other sociologists of the time; notably Pierre Bourdieu and Jacques Derrida. As Laberge and Kay (2002, p. 261) suggest, “Bourdieu's writing style is tortuous. His sentences are often long and abstract, and charged with polemic, paradox, multiple negation and pun”. More fundamental criticisms were voiced, notably by Harker and May (1993) who suggested that Bourdieu’s habitus provided a more flexible concept than code by which to address the structure/agency debate. In their view the concept ‘code’ overemphasises the determining force of ‘rules’. Perhaps the most common criticism of Bernstein’s work focuses on issues of deficit. Many critics (Bennett and LeCompte, 1990; Boocock, 1980) ‘(mis)interpret’ Bernstein’s theory as a deficit one, for several reasons, including its apparent suggestion that;

1) Lower class children may be restricted to one ‘code’ (‘restricted’), middle class children have access to two (‘restricted’ and ‘elaborated’)

2) ‘The paired language modes are defined relationally [] is that the ‘codes’ are defined through a relationship of relative deficiency; ‘deficit’ is inherent to the model’ (Jones 2013, p. 164).

Bernstein (1996, p. 147-156) strongly rejected this interpretation, arguing that rather than being deficient, restricted codes were functionally related to the social division of labour where context dependant language was necessary. He stated:

‘The code theory asserts that there is a social class regulated unequal distribution of privileging principles of communication …and that social class, indirectly, effects the
classification and framing of the elaborated code transmitted by the school so as to facilitate and perpetuate its unequal acquisition. Thus the code theory accepts neither a deficit nor a difference position but draws attention to the relations between macro power relations and micro practice of transmission and evaluation and the positioning and oppositioning to which these practices give rise’ (Bernstein, 1990, p.118-119).

Despite Bernstein’s rejection of the label ‘deficit theory’ and his exception to the concept of ‘compensatory education’ (see Bernstein, 1974) arguing it implies that the family and consequently children are lacking something, some critics (Jones, 2013, Edwards, 2010) continued to cite this as an argument against utilising his work. However, the view taken in this research is that Bernstein offers a theory of difference (or rather how difference is socially contingent) rather than deficit. The value attributed to different linguistic modes is a second order process (independent of the theoretical schema). If we accept this view, then it becomes important to acknowledge that the concept code (as discussed below) offers a means of focusing on how individuals interact with their environments, and shape, and are shaped by them. The concept code, in this way (constitutive of principles which both facilitate and regulate action) highlights the relevance and importance of using Bernstein’s work as the conceptual lens through which to explore data.

4.4.2. Codes

It has been argued (Hasan, 2001) that individuals’ learning capabilities are always and inevitably restricted by their social location, and in this research one of the primary aims was to explore how social inequalities are (re)produced within early years learning. To this end I considered it important to adopt a theoretical approach which acknowledged the complexity of interactions between language, culture, class and the individual. Learning after all is accomplished by the individual but facilitated through society (Sriprakask, 2011). The concepts, codes, pedagogic discourse and the pedagogic device provided an initial framework through which to analyse data and explore issues around social class inequalities and how these are (re)produced within Early Years Learning.

Bernstein, (1958) in his early work demonstrated that there were social class differences in the communication codes of the working and middle classes and these differences reflected class and power relations in and between the social contexts of employment, family and education (Power and Whitty, 2002). These code differences were articulated as the ‘restricted code’ of the working class which is ‘context dependant’ and the ‘elaborated code’
of the middle classes which is context independent and universal. As mentioned above, Bernstein (1996) was eager to point out that the restricted code did not mean that working class language was deficient, but rather schools celebrate the elaborate code and subsequently the working class child becomes disadvantaged within the social context of school. Many researchers have used Bernstein’s code theory to explore children’s thinking and language. For example, Holland (1981) and Heath (1983) in the UK have illustrated the constraining nature of the restrictive code within formal education. Heath (1983) argued, that middle class parents when teaching their children emphasise reasoning and discussion, ask their children questions which subsequently allows the child to develop ways of decontextualising their knowledge. On the other hand, working class parents focused on telling and showing their children what to do, encouraging them to become passive learners unable to decontextualise knowledge. However, neither study explored intra-class differences nor the capacity of individuals to switch, move between, or adopt new codes, something which Bernstein himself foresaw. How children from different backgrounds relate to the pedagogies of EYL and how such pedagogies are encoded within the UK is explored in greater detail below.

In Bernstein’s (2000) view, the education system plays a key role in the transmission of dominant social ideologies through the reproduction of (dominant or privileging) language forms and the transmission of cultural and national identity. Pedagogies are expressions of instructional and regulative discourses (the regulative always and inevitably being embedded in the instructional) and subsequently, social class reproduction becomes central to the education system. Code theory allows us to explore if and how, class and cultural reproduction (and attendant inequalities) occur during pre-school education. To explain the pedagogical relationships within schools through which knowledge and cultural reproduction take place, he suggests that we must observe the social interactions which occur in schools. Within code theory, formal educational knowledge is realised through three message systems: i) Curriculum- what counts as valid knowledge; ii) Pedagogy – what counts as the valid transmission of knowledge; and iii) Evaluation – what counts as the valid transmission of this knowledge by the taught. These three messages can be classed as expressions of educational knowledge which is thought to be ‘worthwhile’. The concepts classification (power) and framing (control) thus lie at the heart of his work and play a significant role in the analysis of the research data collected in this study. They will be used to explore how power relations translate through pedagogic discourse to impact an individual’s or social groups’ learning and identity in EYL.
4.4.3. Classification and Framing

Classification refers to ‘the degree of boundary maintenance between contents’ (Bernstein, 1973, p. 205). For Bernstein (2000), dominant power relations establish boundaries between categories, therefore, classification announces the relations between categories, whether that is between agencies, agents, discourses or practices.

Table 3: Ways of categorising pedagogy - Classification, adopted from Bernstein (1990) and Hoadley, (2006).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>Relations between Discourses</th>
<th>Inter-disciplinary (strength of boundary between the subject area and other subject areas)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Inter – discursive (strength of boundary between the subject area and everyday knowledge)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relations between spaces</td>
<td>Practitioner- Child (strength of demarcation between spaces used by teachers and learners)</td>
<td>Space for learning (strength of boundary between space, internal and external, to the classroom and learning)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relations between agents</td>
<td>Practitioner – Child (strength of demarcation of pedagogic identities)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Between different categories there may be social divisions of labour and of discourse (Bernstein, 2000). If these discourses are specialised differently they develop a ‘space’ between themselves, each having a unique voice and identity (for example, school subjects). Central to classification, therefore, is the space (or insulation) created between these categories. Focus on boundary strength enables the structure of the curriculum (and the meanings derived from such ‘ordering of relationships’) to be analysed. Strong classification (C+) occurs when contents (e.g., areas of knowledge or subject disciplines) are well insulated from each other with strong boundaries; in contrast, weak classification (C-) is depicted by a reduction in insulation between contents and a blurring of the boundaries:
‘In the case of strong classification, we have strong insulation between the categories. In the case of strong classification, each category has its unique identity, its unique voice, and its own specialised rules of internal relations. In the case of weak classification, we have less specialised discourses, less specialised identities, less specialised voices. But classifications, strong or weak, always carry power relations’ (Bernstein, 1996, p.21).

The concept of classification, establishing and constructing social space, identities and voice, will be crucial to the analysis and discussion of data (see chapters six, seven and eight), as will framing. Framing determines the structure of the pedagogy (message system). It refers to the range of options available to the practitioner and the child and the level of control available to them over what is transmitted and received in the pedagogical relationship. Strong framing (F+) results in reduced options while weak framing (F-) depicts a range of options available to the practitioner and child. There are two aspects to the boundary relationship which framing explores (Bernstein, 1977). First, framing refers to the degree of control the practitioner and child possess over the selection, organisation, pacing and timing of knowledge transmitted and received in the pedagogical relationship (see table 3.1). Secondly, to the boundary relationship between the everyday knowledge practitioners and children bring to the EYL setting and the educational knowledge transmitted in the pedagogical relationship. We can therefore consider the strength of the boundary between the everyday and educational knowledge and the variations in the strength of frames between the two forms of knowledge as they feature in EYL settings.

Table 3.1: Ways of categorising pedagogy- Framing, adopted from Bernstein 1990 and Hoadley, 2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Framing</th>
<th>Discursive Rules</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Extent to which teacher controls selection of content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Extent to which teacher controls sequencing of content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Extent to which teacher controls pacing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Extent to which teacher makes explicit the rules for evaluation of learners’ performances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Extent to which teacher makes formal or</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Hierarchical Rules | informal the social relations between teacher and learners

Within the pedagogical relationship (between the teacher and the child), the relationship between the cultural knowledge of the teacher or taught and the educational knowledge transmitted in the pedagogical relationship is critical. As McFadden and Munns (2002) point out, this relationship (between teachers and students’ cultural knowledge and the transmitted educational knowledge) is significant because it influences whether classroom practices are ‘authentic’ and ‘productive’ engaging all students, including those from working class backgrounds, in learning. The assumption here is that if educational practices fail to take a students’ culture into account, then it can result in learners developing negative attitudes and identities within education. Terms such as ‘authentic’ and ‘productive’ are, however, ill-defined in much of the abovementioned literature (see Gard, Hickey-Moodey and Enright, 2013, for critique), but more often than not refer to the cultural ‘lay’ knowledge and practice that children engage with outside school and its relationships with ‘official’ school knowledge and learning. Abowitz (2000) for example, suggests that one common student response to educational practices which they feel are not ‘authentic’ to their ‘real world’, is resistance to education. A plethora of studies (e.g., Ennis, 1999; 2000; Ennis, Solmon, Satina, Loftus, Mensch, and McCauley, 1999) focused on disengaged students in secondary education have suggested that cultural dissonance is indeed the reason for their disengagement. In the case of EYL, we might then consider, as children engage in learning and play, do such settings make connections, intentionally or otherwise, between children’s worlds/cultures outside of nursery and those of the nursery? Does it matter if they don’t? What is the relationship between the culture of EYL settings and the cultures of the family and home?

Questions such as these require a focus on transactions and interactions at the micro level of the EYL classroom. At this level, classification relates to the relations between categories (e.g., forms of play, knowledge forms, and children), and framing to the control that practitioners and children have over various aspects and relationships of learning. Bernstein, saw the purposes of schooling as specialising learner’s ‘voices’ into ways of organising and making meaning in terms of ‘school code’ (Taylor, Muller and Vinjevold, 2003). In his view, school pedagogies are oriented toward encouraging learners into ‘school’ ways of ‘organising experience and making meaning, via the transmission and acquisition of context-independent...
knowledge coupled with person-centred, reason based, guilt oriented control modalities’ (Bernstein, 1975, p. 194). The specialising of the ‘voice’ (consciousness) occurs through two key mechanisms; classification (control) and framing (power), which are dialectically linked, “power and control are analytically distinguished and operate at different levels of analysis. Empirically we shall find they are embedded in each other” (Bernstein, 1990, p.13).

4.4.4. Pedagogic discourse

Pedagogic discourse specialises time, text and space with all three being transformed through pedagogic practice (Fitz, Davies and Evans 2006) (see figure 2). Time is transformed into arbitrary age categories which is then transformed into acquisition; text transforms into content and then evaluation while space transforms onto a specific context (school, EYL) and then into transmission. Key to this process of pedagogic practice is evaluation; teachers/practitioners are continually choosing content (text) which is recontextualised and turned into its ‘school’ version. Morais and Neves (2001) demonstrated that pedagogic codes and practices within schools favour children whose processes of primary socialisation (in the family) are regulated by similar pedagogic codes to that of the schools and that such children tend to be of dominant ethnic groups and higher social class. However, at the same time, Morais and Neves also claim that this class disadvantage can be altered if school pedagogic practices are changed to allow access to school coding orientation, a responsibility schools have to their students, to ensure educational equality. Moreover they suggest, that to facilitate this change, teachers need knowledge of primary socialisation (family/community) discourses if they are to work efficiently within classrooms to improve children’s learning regardless of social disadvantage. In Bernstein’s, words, “if the culture of the teacher is to become part of the consciousness of the child, then the culture of the child must first be the consciousness of the teacher” (1970, p. 347). This aphorism highlights Bernstein’s belief that schooling could make a difference to children from working class backgrounds, but needs to acknowledge their culture and embrace it, to ensure children become engaged in the learning process and see its value in their world outside of school (Bernstein, 1970).
Figure 2 compels examination of the educational and pedagogical practices of early years learning and their relationship to wider societal influences of which they are part. Bernstein (2000) argued that ‘visible performance based pedagogies’ dominate UK secondary schools, a viewpoint subsequently endorsed empirically by many researchers (see Moss, 2002; Reay, 2006; Lingard, 2013; Evans, Rich, Davies, Allwood, 2008). Specifically, Evans et al (2008) discuss how these visible performance based pedagogies play out in health, reducing it to measurements of fitness, body size, weight and shape. In UK secondary schools, performance based instructional discourse has been strengthened over recent years through the publication of exam results, league tables and OFSTED (official body for inspecting schools in England) inspections. Increased pressure on teachers has resulted in a strengthening of regulative discourse; teachers taking more control over the selection, sequencing and pacing of knowledge. Teachers, especially in the secondary sector, are under pressure to increase the pace of their lessons to ensure examination syllabuses’ are taught on time (see Ball, 2003). Notwithstanding difference in the pedagogies adopted within primary and secondary education, increased parental and government expectations as to what children should be achieving at each age and stage of schooling, has ensured that such pressures are evident and
pervasive in both sectors of education (see DfE, 2014 Reforming assessment and accountability for primary schools). Are such processes and pressures evident in EYL? (see chapters two, six and eight).

4.4.5. Visible and Invisible Pedagogies

Bernstein’s (1975) endeavour to characterise the modalities of education led him to introduce the notions of invisible and visible pedagogies, with the difference between the two relating to the manner in which knowledge is transmitted. Invisible pedagogies feature weak frames and weak classification. This reduces the teacher’s overt authority and blurs the boundaries between every day and school knowledge. Some researchers (Morais and Neves 2001) have documented how invisible pedagogies can disadvantage marginalised children, for example Lubienski’s (2004) research on decoding maths instructions suggested that (6th grade/Year 7) students who were classed as low SES encountered difficulties with invisible pedagogies due to the blurring of knowledge boundaries and inexplicit hierarchy of authority. However, she goes on to suggest that that low SES pupils can benefit from invisible pedagogies, because the weak framing of invisible pedagogies allows for the everyday experiences of children to become part of the classroom (Bernstein, 1975). We might then consider how pedagogy is constructed (classified and framed) and realised in EYL and with what effect on children’s identities and opportunities to learn?

Invisible pedagogies (grounded in constructivist epistemologies of Vygotsky and Piaget; see Esland, 1971) are particularly associated with early childhood pedagogies because of the way in which they centre the concept of play. For Bernstein (1977), play allows children to externalise themselves to teachers which in turn allows teachers to comprehensively evaluate their learning (e.g. via observation logs evident in EYL settings). The weak framing of play activates a fluid learning environment for children, allowing them to learn individually with practitioners acting as facilitators. As we shall see, although EYL settings are highly structured in terms of their daily operational running, most are dominated by an invisible pedagogy with movement towards a visible pedagogy evident only during specific times and for the purpose of carrying out specific tasks (e.g. group work, registrations, singing etc. - discussed further in chapter six).
**Time**

Invisible pedagogies are implicit; they construct the child as being able to acquire competences (putting on coat, washing hands etc.) and consequently promote embedded time management in relation to curriculum content and the progression of individual learning. Time is not linked to age or performance (in relation to exams) rather it is about the individual child’s unique development. In contrast, visible pedagogies are performance and age related, so children are expected to develop in and by a specific period of time, often represented within schools through formal examinations.

**Space**

Invisible pedagogies are characterised by the weak classification of space allowing freedom of movement between spaces (rooms) and supporting children’s creativity to use various spaces and imagination. Visible pedagogies require fixed spaces (desk, chair, corner of the room) as a result of strong classification and boundaries of space.

**Social Control**

Invisible pedagogies promote implicit social hierarchies which reduce the control teachers have (are perceived to have) over the activity and transfer it to the children. Control is still maintained however, through the practitioner acting as a facilitator and using what Bernstein terms the “process of inter-personal communication” (Bernstein, 1977, p. 520). In comparison, visible pedagogy environments are strongly regulated and explicitly controlled, often through reward schemes or punishments for failure to adhere to rules.

**4.4.6. Pedagogic Device – the relay of knowledge**

Bernstein’s attention to pedagogic discourse and use of classification and framing, provide a model for understanding how social class and power become shaped within a given institutional context. His ‘pedagogic device’ (PD) sets the scene for understanding the sets of rules through which knowledge is converted into classroom talk (Singh, 2002) and transaction. Bernstein conceptualises the PD (see Turner, 1993), as a means by which three hierarchically inter-related rules (distribution, recontextualisation and evaluation) create i) categories of legitimation; ii) social relations of order and identity; and iii) the forms through which these are relayed. The PD assists in the explanation of how text (in Bernsteinian terms, communication, verbal and non-verbal) which conveys an informative message within a
context) is constituted and transmitted. The distributive rule regulates the distribution of knowledge and relationship between power and social groups. In doing so, it creates boundaries between contexts which become regulated by the distribution of power. The recontextualising rule constructs the social (regulative discourse) and educational discourse (instructional discourse – both are discussed in detail later) while the evaluation rule takes these discourses and translates them into pedagogic practice.

The pedagogic device thus makes the transfer of power possible through the distribution and regulation of ‘knowledge’; such changes occur as the device and regulation of knowledge conflict with the social field from where the power is derived (Singh, 2002; Bernstein, 2000). Therefore, the education system becomes a field of cultural reproduction, with the curriculum regulated by what is believed to be most useful to benefit society and the school itself aiming to reproduce the society within which it is located. Within education, the recontextualising principle is active at several levels. Through the official recontextualising field (ORF e.g. EYFS Framework), the state operates at a generic level to legitimise official pedagogic discourse. This discourse is recontextualised through the pedagogic recontextualising field (PRF) when the policy is interpreted by teachers/schools and in turn this is further recontextualised when it is ‘learnt’ by children (Neves and Morais, 2001).

Identity and Subjectivity

In light of Bernstein’s and Bourdieu’s work, we can begin to see how identities are formed through the intersections of the PD, habitus and field. In this thesis, the concept of identity will be understood to refer to a person’s sense of belonging (Ball and Ellis, 2007; Hall, 1996), a process inextricably linked, for example to the way individuals interact, learn and teach. In this perspective identity is perceived as a socially constructed process formed as part of our social relations. Marked out by difference (male/female, healthy/unhealthy), identities are produced at particular points in time and often differ according to the ‘fields’ in which we are acting. Subjectivity on the other hand refers to being ‘subject to someone else by control and dependence and tied to [our] own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge’ (Foucault, 1982, p.212). How children’s subjectivities are formed within EYL settings, as a result of power relations will be discussed in chapter seven. Bernstein argued that;

‘The bias and focus, which inheres in different modalities of reform, constructs different pedagogic identities. From this perspective, curricula reform emerge out of a struggle between groups to make their bias (and focus) state policy and practice. Thus,
the bias and focus of this official discourse are expected to construct in teachers and students a particular moral disposition, motivation and aspiration, embedded in particular performances and practices’ (Bernstein, 2000, p. 65).

Any educational reform (e.g., the making of the National Curriculum or of EYLF policy) can then be regarded as ‘the outcome of the struggle to produce and institutionalise particular identities’ (Bernstein, 2000, p. 66). These identities are subsequently tied to pedagogic transactions and how children construct knowledge. Using Bourdieu’s and later Shilling’s work we can explore the body and its role in these identities. Bourdieu’s theory of social reproduction views the body as a bearer of symbolic value and therefore a site for identity construction. In his view, bodies bear the imprint of their social class, they are the product of: (i) social location; ii) formation of habitus; and (iii) tastes. People thus develop bodies (identities) which are valued differently and are given different symbolic values.

I will argue that exploring the intersections of the PD, habitus and field allows for a better understanding of the body, identity and subjectivity (e.g., how children view themselves in relation to power and hierarchies in EYL settings). However, as discussed earlier, although habitus is a useful concept for exploring bodily dispositions and identity, it has been criticised for focusing too much on external culture codes and not enough on ‘lived experiences’ (see Turner, 1992). The concept is, as Maton observed, ontologically flat (Maton, 2008). Following (Evans and Davies and Rich, 2009) the CD is therefore used in subsequent analysis to address this limitation because it provides a semantic depth that allows us to reach both into the body and outward simultaneously.

4.4.7. The Pedagogic Device ~ Corporeal Device (PD~CD) intersections

Bernstein’s attention to pedagogic discourse and use of classification and framing provide means for understanding how social class and power relations become shaped within given institutional contexts. In this view, knowledge is to be considered as neither fixed nor ‘natural’, therefore, it is important to explore what knowledge and whose knowledge is valued within education (Bernstein, 1975; Young, 1970; Kirk, 1992). Acknowledging that what counts as knowledge is never arbitrary helps us to understand patterns of achievement within education. As Evans (2004) argues, knowledge considered ‘official’/high status inevitably positions the social and cultural capital of some children as ‘ability’ (Evans, 2004) and that of others as ‘inability’ or lack of interest or motivation to invest in their own education. The PD thus constitutes a process whereby rules for communication and
acquisition of school knowledge regulate consciousness in the classroom, and by extension, legitimate specific identities within pedagogic discourse (the sum of communication and acquisition of knowledge at the EYL room level). The PD can then be used to explore and explain how knowledge (official or local) converted into pedagogic communication acts upon the potential meanings made available for transmission and acquisition (Singh, 2002).

However, whilst the PD offers a way to explore the relationships between recontextualised knowledge, organisations, identity and pedagogy, it underestimates the role of embodiment in the process. Arguing that discourses are mediated for individuals through their material bodies, Evans et al (2008, 2012) invoke the notion of a corporeal device (CD) to focus on the body not only as a relay of messages ‘other than itself’, but as a voice ‘of itself’. The CD draws attention to how biology, culture and class intersect to create “an internal grammar or syntax” (Evans et al, 2009, p. 393) which regulates but cannot control embodied action and consciousness.

Figure 3: The Corporeal Device (adapted from Evans et al, 2009, p. 394)

| A | Draws on biological aspects of corporeality |
| B | Relates to meaning potential of the body via the social context |
| C | The contextual rules and power relations which determine them |

Figure 3 (from Evans et al, 2009): A highlights the biological and social internal rules which regulate the body’s rational, social, emotional and kinetic resources. B illustrates the meaning potential created by the body’s location in time, space and place which activates the CD and resulting embodied communication. The rules of the CD reflect social and cultural hierarchies and as such the symbolic/semiotic encoded communication is regulated by such
hierarchies, resulting in communication through embodied action (point C). Neither point can be viewed independently of the other, but rather as an interminable process inevitably and always involving all three.

Like habitus, the CD points to the historically habituated embodied dispositions and propensities that individuals bring to social settings consciously and unconsciously and which, in part, regulate behaviours within them. However it is not to be reduced to an inherent quality or resource of the body (as in habitus) but rather a process; an interminable dialect of biology and culture in which embodied dispositions and propensities both shape and are shaped by the intersections of biology and culture (hence CD/PD). Indeed in later articulations Stirrup and Evans (2014) suggest the CD/PD intersections are better represented as CD~PD, the ‘squiggle character’, unlike a forward slash [individual/society/agency/structure] representing a separation, indicating the inextricable complementary relationship between inner and outer/ the body and culture. The ‘squiggle’ hereafter represents the relationship between parts and wholes, the dynamic of the CD~PD relationship.

The body, of course, is ever present in social transactions, but often implicit in practitioners’ instructions and children’s learning. Whilst Bernstein’s pedagogic device allows us to explore pedagogy through the distinction between code, realisation and recognition rules, it does not fully allow us to explore the body’s presence in this process. The CD echoes Bernstein’s PD, but provides clearer focus on the productive role of (material, thinking, feeling) bodies in pedagogic practice. The notion of the CD therefore takes up the challenge of reuniting the somatic with the semiotic. Corporeal codes find parallel with Bernstein’s speech codes and can be imagined as historically encoded bodily habits (predilections, predispositions, propensities) represented in bodily practices, competencies and routines brought into learning settings from children’s homes/peer groups/communities. As we shall see in chapters six, seven and eight, due to their social positioning in primary socialisation children arrive at EYL settings already manifesting different bodily demeanours, rituals and routines (e.g., in relation to eating and personal hygiene). Some of these rituals/routines are expected and endorsed within the EYL setting. Some children arrive with an understanding that indoor spaces require a passive body and outdoor is for the active body. Others do not arrive able to manifest this distinction, signifying a gap (a dislocation) between ‘lay’ cultures (sign and significance) and those of the EYL setting (discussed in detail in chapter seven).
The CD–PD facilitates the investigation of embodiment in EYL; centering agency, materiality and a ‘bottom up approach’ involving exploration of the perspectives and predispositions children bring into the EYL context. The PD–CD foregrounds the principles which regulate teaching and learning. At the intersection of the PD–CD, research questions around the role gender, class and culture play in children’s early years learning opportunities and how EYL physical activity may contribute to young children’s understandings of themselves and their corporeality.

As mentioned earlier (p. 59) the term embodiment in this thesis refers to the way in which policies (when recontextualised as curriculum, pedagogy and assessment) both affect and effect a child’s sense of being somebody in the social world, in relation to time and space (Evans and Davies, 2012). However, following Pink (2011) the investigation also assumes the fluid nature of embodiment and argues that enactment, the process of locating the body within time, space and place, is equally important to consider. Pink suggests that shifting from a theory of embodiment to one of emplacement allows us to see the body in relation to other bodies and other representations, rather than as a singular (isolated) identity. Others, e.g., Quennerstedt et al (2011) have used John Dewey’s concept of transaction to explore embodiment within physical education. They are not however able to show how or why transactions are shaped in particular ways. In Evans et al (2009) view, processes of embodiment, emplacement and enactment (see Braun et al 2010; Braun et al 2011; Maguire, Hoskins, Ball and Braun, 2011) are shaped and formed in a never-ending (interminable) cycle expressing the connections between the PD/CD.
Figure 4: Emplacement, Enactment and Embodiment (from Evans and Davies, 2012, p.10)

Emplacement relates to how ‘policy/discourse’ and the body is placed and positioned in context. It acknowledges that the body is formed in relation to others and always “part of the ecology of things in progress” (Pink, 2011, p. 354). Policies/ discourses are located and positioned in context through and by bodies interacting with others in time and space (figure 3 – B). Enactment refers to how policies are interpreted and reconstructed through talk, texts and actors in different contexts (figure 3 – C). Embodiment is therefore a visceral expression of how policy affects and effects individuals’ sense of ‘being’. Individuals are meant to ‘become’ expressions of policy and represent the population policy maker’s envisage through their policy. Chapter seven in particular explores such relationships in relation to healthy eating and EYL and documents how young children become appropriately embodied inside and outside of nursery, for example, by eating the ‘right food’ e.g., fruit and vegetables, drinking water and not consuming too many fatty/sugary foods. The above concepts will be used to explore how Government policy on ‘physical development’ within the EYFS is
enacted within each setting and the influence this has in relation to children’s identity construction.

At the heart of all subsequent analyses then lies the notion that children experience learning and understanding not just ‘intellectually’ or cognitively but through their bodies’ (play/movement) actions and those of significant others (peers, family, EYL practitioners). Neither the CD nor the PD is dissolvable to the other and both are generative of boundary (classification and framing) relationships (Evans, Davies and Rich 2009). Together these concepts offer a means of articulating the interminable dialogue of culture and biology. Consequently, it becomes important to move beyond merely the discursive aspects of knowledge construction and include the lived experiences of the body. As Shilling (1993, p. 16) states, ‘the body is the outcome of social forces and relations’, and it is during childhood that the body is ‘finished’ (embodied) through action in society (James, 2000).

4.5 Conclusion

In essence this chapter has outlined a variety of concepts from Bernstein’s work and that of others who might usefully enhance his theory. Subsequent chapters draw on these concepts to explore the ways in which participants who inform this research make sense of their bodies and health, construct their identities and subjectivities and the role physical activity plays in these processes within their pre-school experience. Bernstein’s concepts presage understanding of the transactions within EYL settings in relation to power and control, while those of others (namely ‘habitus’, ‘physical capital’ and the ‘corporeal device’) usefully embellish such understandings. In the following three chapters I draw upon these concepts first to centre attention on the regulating principles of the PD. In chapter six I explore the structure and culture of the three EYL in relation to various forms play. In chapter seven, drawing on the concepts classification and framing I investigate how practitioners’ recontextualise health knowledge across the three settings. In chapter eight I explore how identities are constructed within these EYL settings via intersections of the pedagogic and corporeal devices (PD/CD) and how these intersections give shape to policy and pedagogy when mediated through practitioners’ interpretations of children’s families and the knowledge they bring to the setting. Overall, the concepts highlighted in these chapters are sensitising devices alerting to the premise of certain processes and relationships within EYL. In chapter nine I return to these concepts to reflect on their merits in shedding light on EYL, physical activity and social and cultural reproduction.
The next chapter, however, will detail the methodology of the study and how it endeavoured to address the research aims and concerns.
Chapter Five: The Research Process

5.1. Paradigm Justification

This chapter outlines and analyses the research process, the methodology\(^\text{11}\) and methods\(^\text{12}\) used within the research. The first half of this chapter discusses the methodological principles underpinning this study and goes on to discuss the data collection itself. There will be a focus on (i) the research paradigm; (ii) critical ethnography as a methodology; (iii) data collection techniques; (iv) ethical issues; (v) the research settings; and (vi) how the data was analysed.

Within social research, as with any process of formal inquiry, the collection and subsequent analysis of data is shaped by a set of beliefs and conventions which “influence what should be studied, how research should be done, how results should be interpreted” (Bryman 2012: 30). These beliefs underpin the form of inquiry and are shaped by three questions; i) what is the nature of being (ontology), ii) what is the relationship between the researcher and knowledge (epistemology) and, iii) how should the inquirer go about finding out knowledge (methodology). This belief system or paradigm influences how the researcher sees the world and consequently is reflected in the methods employed within the research as a reflection of the researcher ontology and epistemology.

Grix (2010) argues that ontology is the starting point for any research and the building block from which ones epistemological and methodological positions can follow. Ontology is concerned with what exists (Kivinen and Piirainen, 2004), it “refers to the claims or assumptions that a particular approach to social enquiry makes about the nature of social reality” (Blaikie, 1993, p.6); or in other words, whether there is one external reality or whether reality is an individual construction. Consequently, ontology is important because in order to engage in thinking about the social or political world, it is necessary (implicitly or explicitly) to acknowledge/commit to some form of ontology since trying to conceptualise the social or political involves adopting an understanding of the nature of being human (Lewis, 2001). In other words, we all have a view on the world and how it is made up.

If ontology is concerned with what we know, then epistemology deals with how knowledge is acquired (Gratton and Jones, 2004) and is concerned about how one might begin to

\(^{11}\) The term methodology refers to the process by which data are produced and provides a rationale for the methods used. It provides a framework for thinking about knowledge and how ‘reality’ has come to be (Payne and Payne, 2004)

\(^{12}\) Research methods are the techniques used for data collection e.g. observations, interviews (Payne and Payne, 2004)
understand the world and communicate this knowledge to fellow human beings. There are several conflicting epistemological beliefs, but as a researcher, I would endorse Bryman’s (2012) epistemological position, which advocates the subjectivity of social meaning. Ontology and epistemology are therefore closely related and important starting points for all research since they underpin the researcher’s methodological approach. Whilst the methodological approach being adopted in this study will be discussed late in the chapter, it is important to note that the term methodology in the context of this research refers to the researcher’s paradigmatic assumptions which influence the choice of methods being used. In turn then methods refer to the techniques used to collect data.

Two paradigms commonly referred to within social research are a positivist approach and an interpretative approach to research (Popkewitz, 1984; Sparkes, 1992). From a positivist perspective, “the social world exists as a system of variables, these variables are distinct and analytically separable parts of one interacting system” (Popkewitz, 1984, p.37). Consequently, positivist perspectives claim to be objective and aim to prove the “truth”, believing that objective accounts of the real world can be pursued (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). However, by contrast this research aims to access multiple subjective accounts and assumes that there are multiple ‘truths’ from differing culture, gender and class backgrounds, not one view of childhood and Early Years Learning. Therefore to achieve the aim of better understanding how children and practitioners within Early Years Learning construct identity, an interpretive approach will be adopted largely because of its fit with the researcher’s paradigmatic beliefs. Within an interpretive paradigm, it is posited that there are “multiple realities and that the mind plays a central role, via its determining categories, in shaping or constructing these” (Sparkes, 1992, p.27).

Set within an interpretive paradigm this research adopted a critical ethnographic methodology (discussed later in the chapter) to develop an understanding of children’s perspectives on their body and physical activity. Multiple methods were employed to gain a comprehensive understanding of the social environment. These methods included observations (participant and nonparticipant), ‘informal’ conversations, structured interviews and visual imagery, all of which were guided by critical ethnographic principles.

5.2. Exploring ways of doing social research with young children

Often, researchers undertaking qualitative research with children see them as part of the larger structure of the family or school. Therefore, researchers often follow the tradition of
doing things ‘to’ children (de Winter, Baeveldt and Kooistra, 1999; Sandbaek, 1999) while focusing almost exclusively on the responsibilities of adults. There is much support for seeing children in this light, for example, Burman (1994) and Walkerdine (1993) maintain that children lack the capacity for abstract thinking that characterises the ‘maturity’ of adulthood and consequently would fail to meet the criteria of ‘good research respondents’ (Scott, 2000). Similarly it is thought that children are often incapable of understanding and responding correctly to certain research methods such as interviewing (Scott, 2000). These arguments are particularly apposite with young children (under eight years old; see Dockett and Perry, 2003) and as a result, it is often under this assumption that adults may believe that because they were once children they know what childhood is all about, a belief which Mouritsen (2002, p. 35) refers to as ‘the childhood baggage of adults’.

However, over the last decade a body of literature has emerged which has focused on the ethical, methodological and epistemological concerns and challenges of researching children’s worlds (Thomas and O’Kane, 1998) and has coincided with the growing recognition of children’s rights in some political quarters. Specifically within the UK, the focus on children having rights, views and opinions is noticeable through recent policies and practices within the field of health and education (Department of Health, 2002; Department for Education, 2008). Recent literature has concentrated on designing research projects that are ‘by’ and ‘with’ rather than ‘on’ children (for example, Clark and Moss, 2001; Cobb, Danby and Farrell, 2005). Each of these studies has emphasised young people’s competence within the research context and have used several methods of data collection. For instance, Clark and Moss (2001) developed the Mosaic Listening Approach to studying children which focuses on listening to children’s lived experiences and treats children as ‘experts’ in their own lives, asking them to reflect on the meanings behind drawings, etc. Cobb et al (2005) focused on children’s lives within a school context and in doing so, used video-recorded episodes of naturally occurring interactions among children in a preparatory classroom.

In light of the projects mentioned above; this research used several methods to promote children’s active participation in the study. These included observations (participant/ non participant), visual methods (posters/still pictures and video) and informal conversations with the participants. By using a variety of methods it was hoped that all the participants would be actively engaged in the research. Given the young age of participants, it was anticipated that there could be language barriers and perhaps insecurities in relation to the research, both of
which might cause the children to act in uncharacteristic ways. Therefore, by engaging the participants over time and creating a rapport with them it was hoped that participants would feel safe and secure; consequently acting as they normally would (Thomson, 2008). However having discussed the ‘recent’ focus on researching ‘with’ rather than ‘on’ children, it is noted there is still an ambiguity in how ‘childhood’ is conceptualised. On one hand children are still seen as being in need of protection and on the other as being autonomous individuals, which is also evident in writings on research methodology (Jans, 2004).

5.2.1. Exploring Ethnography and ethnographic ways of conducting social research

Ethnography plays a complex and shifting role within the world of social sciences (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). Having its origins in nineteenth century Western anthropology, it has been recontextualised and reinterpreted by several disciplines, including sociology. Concerned with investigating the social world it involves researchers entering a given culture and using a variety of methods in an attempt to make sense of “public and private, overt and elusive cultural meanings” (Goodley, Lawthom, Clough, and Moore, 2004, p. 56). Ethnography, is regarded by some (James et al 1998) as a key research method in exploring the social worlds of children, however, in this research it will be more than a method, rather, ethnography will provide the methodological framework (i.e., the guiding principles) for data collection. The methodology chosen to shape the research sits within the epistemological and ontological assumptions which frame the researcher’s beliefs. Ethnography as a methodology is concerned with the subjective reality of the experiences of those within the social world, in this case, young children, their parents and Early Years Learning providers.

Ethnography has often been interpreted as a particularly effective way of researching children because, children are often seen as “different” to adults, having different social cultures, cultural rules and ways of communicating (James et al 1998). Ethnography is useful because irrespective of whether we see ourselves as ‘similar’ to our participants, we all differ (e.g., by class/culture or attitude) and even then, those researchers who are accepted by participants as ‘insiders’ because they are deemed to be the same culture, class, gender etc. may have problems to negotiate (Gregory and Ruby, 2011). Within their research Gregory and Ruby (2011) refer to the “outsider and insider dilemmas” they experienced. They discuss the outsider as a researcher who is culturally or socially different to the participants and how
making assumptions about a culture, from the position of an outsider can impact on the data collected. Similarly, being an insider has problems; just because you are the same ethnicity or gender as participants does not necessarily mean they will open up to you, building trust and rapport are still essential priorities. Therefore, to understand any culture/society, it is necessary to spend time researching those people/communities within the setting to gain greater understanding of their views and experiences (Fetterman, 1998) and in this way ethnography is important.

5.2.2. Approaches to Ethnography

Hammersley and Atkinson (2007, p. 1) refer to ‘ethnography’ as a term or label having “fuzzy semantic boundaries”, often overlapping with other terms, for example, case study or cultural studies. This lack of ‘certainty’ over ethnography’s definition is perhaps due to its complex history and transferability into several research fields. Initially located within anthropology and the study of comparative cultures, the Chicago School of thought during the nineteen twenties and thirties (see Mead, Dewey and Park) transformed ethnography by adopting anthropological methods and applying them to the study of cultural groups within the USA (Pole and Morrison, 2003; Creswell; 2005, Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). Consequently, as ethnography developed, various ‘types’ or ‘schools’ have developed, for example, Creswell (2005) talks about critical approaches to ethnography, suggesting that critical ethnography focuses on inequality and marginalised groups within society in an attempt to uncover sociocultural knowledge about these groups and highlight social inequalities. In Creswell’s (2005) view, the following characteristics are synonymous with critical ethnography:

- Critical ethnographies study social issues around power and inequality
- Participants are often actively involved in critical ethnographies to ensure they are not further marginalised
- Reflexivity is crucial to critical ethnographies
- Critical ethno-graphic reports are often messy and involve several social layers (race, class, culture)

Whilst it is acknowledged that there are other ‘types’ of ethnography, for example realist and feminist (see Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007) ethnographies, all ethnographies share common principles in that they all study a culture or community in depth in order to develop
a greater understanding of the cultural-sharing behaviours and beliefs within the community/culture using some form of observation ‘in the field/fields’. Critical ethnography allows the researcher to look at marginalised groups and develop a greater understanding of their cultural behaviours. This research focuses on young children within early years learning, a group which could be viewed as marginalised within the context of physical activity for several reasons. Firstly, there is little previous knowledge on how children develop, engage and become embodied through physical activity at this age. In the context of this research the terms embodied and embodiment refer to how policies (curriculum, nursery or playschool rules, culture etc.) affect and effect a child’s sense of being some-body in the social world, in relation to time and space (Evans and Davies, 2012). This concept will be addressed in more depth in relation to Bernstein’s pedagogic device later in the thesis. Secondly, until recently (physical activity guidelines for children under five, Department of Health, 2011) the focus for physical activity promotion within the public domain has centred on teenagers and overweight adults, neglecting children aged zero to five years old. Furthermore, as Willis (1977) points out, within ethnographic research, we need to contextualise the research within wider societal hierarchies. By doing so, we are attending to the social hierarchies and power relations, questioning inequalities and making the ethnography critical.

5.2.3. Why ethnography with children?

Reflecting on the origins of ethnography and social anthropology, there are copious examples of ethnographic work with children, for example; Kidd, (1906) carried out work on children’s play and social lives; Mead, (1930) conducted research on childhood in New Guinea. Certainly in recent years there has been a plethora of classroom studies on young people in schools, for example, Schweinhart and Weikart (1997); Nash (2001); Sammons et al (2003); Siraj-Blatchford (2004; 2008;2010); Azzarito and Sterling (2010); Paechter (2011). Qvortrup (2000) suggests that it is the nature and traditions of ethnography as a methodology which strengthens the argument for using it to research children. From its origins, it has provided a framework which allows children to have a voice and express their experiences and cultures (albeit, this voice is influenced by parents/carers and then mediated through the researcher’s voice). This methodological strength is twofold, firstly, it enables children to become and be seen by the ethnographer as competent informants and interpreters of their own social worlds. Secondly, it allows researchers to explore many aspects of children’s lives through a child’s perspective rather than an adults perspective. Various researchers have gained insight into a
variety of childhood settings and across a number of themes through the use of ethnography, for example, Alderson (1993) carried out child research within a hospital setting, McNamee (1998) conducted research in children’s homes, Mayall (1996) explored the nature of children’s health knowledge and Connolly (1998) gained an insight into gendered identities in childhood, all information and research which may not have been possible through any other methodology.

Traditionally, participant observation is the dominant research technique adopted within ethnography and is often seen as the most appropriate tool to engage children actively within the research (James, 2008 cited in Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). However, what constitutes participant observation has varied within and across much of the research. Mayall (2000) suggests that within child research, there are generational issues between the child and the researcher which cannot be ignored, but rather are negotiated by the researcher. These generational issues are brought about by adults and can be seen through the social order each group (children and adults) adheres to in relation to provisions, rights, constraints and responsibilities, which in turn express and bring into play, power relations. Much in the same way that gender has been significant to understanding the treatment and place of women within the social order, generational issues (according to Mayall, 2000) are key to understanding childhood. Consequently, as Throne (1993) argues, researchers often try to adopt the least adult like role; opting to sit with the children, ask for their help and subsequently enter the child’s world. However, Pollard and Filer (1996) contest this, claiming that children find it ‘strange’, especially when an adult is at school or nursery but not a teacher, parent or classroom assistant. This concept of power relations and overcoming being an adult in a child’s world will be explored further later in the chapter (see ‘ethics and research with children’ section).

5.3. Data Collection Methods

In selecting an appropriate research method for the study certain fundamental concerns emerged around the practical and ethical considerations of doing research with young children in EYL settings. I needed particular tools and techniques and a methodology which would be sensitive to the complexities of individual lives and social contexts. In attempting to understand the complex world of pre-school children and the seemingly disordered (at least on the surface) life of nursery, I firstly needed research tools, which could be used to
collect rich and in-depth data in order to explore the multiple, complex and often contradictory voices of my research participants, whilst also remaining reflexively aware of my own position within the research. I therefore employed an ethnographic approach, which involved immersing myself in the participants’ lives (specifically their EYL lives, initially to build trust, rapport and understanding) whilst utilising a number of qualitative tools and techniques to explore what the children had to say about their lives at nursery and in particular, their physical activity and development. In keeping with the tradition of ethnography, I used direct observations, along with semi structured interviews and some activity-based tasks – e.g. poster making, photography and games, designed in line with growing trends in childhood studies to encourage the active involvement of the research participants in the generation of data (see Oliver and Lalik 2000, 2001, 2004; Christensen and James, 2008). Therefore, by engaging the participants over time and creating a rapport with them it was hoped that participants would feel safe and secure; consequently acting as they normally would (Thomson, 2008). Before proceeding to describe and discuss these methodological tools and techniques, I will provide a brief outline of the research settings and the participants.

5.4. Background to the research

The research is set within three Early Years Learning settings which were given the pseudonyms Busy Buzzy Bees, Little People and Little Stars (one nursery, one Academy nursery and one pre-school). Whilst there are numerous different types of EYL providers, these settings were selected on the basis of their social setting, geographical location, and source of funding (private or state funded). Each setting was chosen because of its class and cultural demographic which was needed to address the research questions. The three settings together provided a broad and balanced mix of backgrounds with which to explore issues of access, opportunity and equality raised in the first research question (see chapter one). The purpose of the research was explained in general terms to each EYL setting and access to each was gained through the centre managers. As part of an on-going ethnographic study, the research was split into two phases. Phase one (which lasted three months) set out to explore methods of data collection which engage young children, while phase two (over ten months) focussed on detailed observations of transactions, curriculum, pedagogies and assessments. Throughout phase two, I spent one morning (8:30/9am-12pm) per week in each setting which accumulated to 180 hours of observations in each setting (540 hours in total).
5.4.1. The Three Settings

‘Busy Buzzy Bees’ (nursery)

‘Busy Buzzy Bees’ is a publicly funded EYL provider set within a local college campus, in a large Midlands town. Housed in three mobile classroom units, the setting consists of one unit, divided up into four separate sections; one for each age group (ages 3 months -1, 2-3 and 3-5 years).

The other two units were mostly used as office space. The outdoor facilities consist of a large playground which each group uses at different times of the day. The nursery provides sixty childcare places for children aged three months to five years old and is commonly utilised by students at the college and/or staff. In addition to providing care for pre-school children, the nursery is also linked with after school clubs for primary school children, offering a range of activities including games, craft, pool, imaginary play, toys and ball games. Busy Buzzy Bees was selected because many of its children are from professional middle class families and this provides a contrast to ‘Little Stars’. Consequently, it allowed comparisons between the opportunities available to children from different social classes and cultures and exploration of parental influence in children’s development (see table 5).

Little People (academy nursery)

‘Little People’, is located within a large housing estate on the outskirts of a large town within the Midlands area. Housed in a large building, the setting consists of four rooms, one for babies, one for 2-3 year olds and then two rooms for 3-5 year olds. Of these two rooms, one accommodates those children who only utilise the government funded sessions (where my research is situated), while the other is for children whose parents pay for additional childcare. It serves the local community, providing childcare for children aged three to five years olds, with provision of nursery education funded places for children aged three to four year old. ‘Little People’ was chosen because; firstly it is part of a primary school academy\(^\text{13}\) and therefore allowed me to explore the pedagogy delivered within an academy. Additionally, ‘Little People’ was chosen because it is located within a working class area and allowed the

\(^{13}\) *Little People* is a nursery situated within a recently formed primary school Academy. Previously it was part of a Sure Start centre. Sure Start centres were set up in 1998 under the Blair Labour government as a public sector strategy to improve childcare and education and reduce social inequalities. An academy is school, independent of Local Education Authority control but publicly funded, with some private sponsorship
researcher to explore the opportunities available to working class children and the access they have to EYL (see table 5).

Little Stars (pre-school)

The pre-school ‘Little Stars’, is located within a market town in the Midlands, offering Nursery Education Scheme (NES) places for three to four year olds. Housed in one large building, it caters for a number of ethnic groups (mainly Asian children - first and second generation Indian and Pakistani) within the community and aims to provide children with ‘opportunities to learn in a safe, welcoming child centred environment’ (‘Little Stars’ website). Little Stars was selected because of its cultural diversity, with approximately eighty per cent of children on the roll being from ethnic minorities, and of that, forty-five percent speaking English as an additional language. Consequently, it allowed me to explore and foreground various elements of the research questions, including, the role culture plays in children’s early learning opportunities and the (re) production of social class and cultural inequalities within EYL (see table 4).

Table 4: An overview of the demographic of each setting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Busy Buzzy Bees</th>
<th>Little People</th>
<th>Little Stars</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age of children</td>
<td>3-4years</td>
<td>3-4years</td>
<td>3-4years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Class status</td>
<td>Working (employed)</td>
<td>Mostly unemployed</td>
<td>Working class and multicultural parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of those who use the</td>
<td>Middle Class parents</td>
<td>Working Class parents</td>
<td>parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>settings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SES score</td>
<td>18112</td>
<td>8521</td>
<td>1180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SES Score educational attainment</td>
<td>28597</td>
<td>3628</td>
<td>7556</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fee Paying Childcare</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

14 SES was based on parental occupation using the Office for National Statistics, NS-SEC occupationally based classification. Data on parental occupations was gathered from conversations with practitioners, children and in some cases the parents themselves.

15 The SES score was calculated using the Office for National Statistics indices of deprivation measure. A score of 1 indicates the most deprived neighbourhood in England and a score of 32,482 indicates the least deprived neighbourhood in England.
(childcare provision outside the government funded session at a cost to parents)

| Government Funded places (3-4 year olds) | Yes | Yes | Yes |

Table 5: The structure of the day in each EYL setting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Busy Buzzy Bees</strong></th>
<th><strong>Little People</strong></th>
<th><strong>Little Stars</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:00-9:30 children arrive and play outside</td>
<td>9:00-9:30 – children arrive</td>
<td>8:30-9:00 – children arrive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:30-10:00 – registration, song time, letter of the week, show and tell and toilet</td>
<td>9:30 – 9:50 – ‘gathering’ (registration) followed by a group song</td>
<td>9:00 – 11:20 – play time. The children choose an activity indoors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:00 – snack – all together</td>
<td>9:50 – 11:20 – play time. The children choose an activity indoors or outdoors</td>
<td>10:30-11:20 – the outdoor area is opened up for children to play in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:15 – 11:20 – play time. The children choose an activity indoors</td>
<td>10:00-10:15 – snack table open if children want to eat.</td>
<td>10:00-11:00 – snack bar open if children want to eat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:20 – tidy time</td>
<td>11:20 – tidy time</td>
<td>11:20 – tidy time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:30 – story time</td>
<td>11:30 – song time</td>
<td>11:30 – story or singing time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:45 – lunch time</td>
<td>11:45 – home time</td>
<td>11:45 – home time</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5 shows nuances and differences in the use of time and space within and between these settings and will be explored in some detail in later chapters.

5.4.2. The Participants
Acknowledging that defining social class is complex and multifaceted (Chandola, 2000), a range of young children, reflective of social differences in ethnicity, class, gender and culture, were identified to take part in the study. The identification of each setting’s social class is qualitative, referring first to the researcher's knowledge of each setting and surrounding socio-economic context (supplied by the Office for National Statistics Indices of Deprivation measure based on the settings postcode) and secondly, the practitioner's knowledge and articulations of the settings and their clientele. It was not possible to gain more substantive data on social economic status because, as explained in detail later in this chapter, parents were reluctant to participate in questionnaires and unlike at secondary school, there is limited public data on indicators of social class within EYL (e.g. no free school meals provision, funded places are available to all (although there are some criteria these are often context dependant). The SES score information gathered was based on the EYL settings postcode. This was deemed appropriate because each setting was described by OFSTED as catering for the local and surrounding area. The interactions between class and family culture and how these processes influence participants (children’s) understanding of their bodies and their transactions within an EYL context are explored later. The understanding of social class (see chapter one – introduction) referred to within this research is primarily influenced by Basil Bernstein’s theory of social class (see chapter five), which maintains that different contexts of socialisation and learning generate different (linguistic/symbolic) codes which in turn regulate and influence access to different forms of knowledge. However it is acknowledged that social class is complex and to view it as a binary divide between the ‘working’ and ‘middle’ class is too simplistic a view (Vincent, 2012). The research will be as eager to document differences ‘within’ as ‘between’ social classes with respect to processes of learning and embodiment in EYL settings, however, later (chapter ten) it is acknowledged that this was not entirely achievable and so remains a potential area for future research.

Across the three settings, fifteen practitioners and eighty children, aged 3-4 years old, participated and throughout this thesis, pseudonyms are used to protect their identity. All eighty children were observed and of these twenty-six were ‘selected’ for further detailed investigation because they opted to participate in informal conversations with the researcher on a regular basis. Often this form of self-selection is seen as not being representative (Bryman, 2012), however, in this research, those who participated were representative of all the communities within each setting (see table 6). Additionally, a further seven children from this twenty six were used to represent children of similar abilities and identities (see chapter
eight) and were chosen because they were representative of a category of ‘ability’ that had emerged from observation and data analyses (see table 6.1).

The National Statistics Socio-Economic Classification (NS-SEC) is the official government and most widely used class scheme (Savage et al., 2013) placing individuals into seven classes based upon their occupation and employment status. Throughout this research the NS-SEC categories based on parental occupation were used to identify two main social classes which emerged from the data.

The following illustrates the percentages of the parental/guardian occupations, of the participants in my sample, which fell into each of the social class classifications, as defined by the NS-SEC:

- Social Class 1: Higher Managerial and Professional Occupations 26.9%
- Social Class 2: Lower Managerial and Professional Occupations 3.8%
- Social Class 4: Small employers and own account workers 11.5%
- Social Class 5: Lower Supervisory and Technical Occupations 7.7%
- Social Class 6: Semi-routine occupations 26.9%
- Social Class 7: Routine occupations 19.2%
- Social Class 8: Never worked and long-term unemployed 3.8%

*Table 6: Demographics of the participating children*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Child’s Name</th>
<th>EYL Setting</th>
<th>Gender (M/F)</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>SES based on parental occupation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>James</td>
<td><em>Busy Buzzy Bees</em></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>White British</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tom</td>
<td><em>Busy Buzzy Bees</em></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>White British</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ian</td>
<td><em>Busy Buzzy Bees</em></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>White British</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adam</td>
<td><em>Busy Buzzy Bees</em></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>White British</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amy</td>
<td><em>Busy Buzzy</em></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>White British</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Club</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Race</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Height</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chloe</td>
<td>Busy Buzzy Bees</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>White British</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simona</td>
<td>Busy Buzzy Bees</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Eastern European</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jenny</td>
<td>Busy Buzzy Bees</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>White British</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patryk</td>
<td>Little People</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Eastern European</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duane</td>
<td>Little People</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>White British</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liam</td>
<td>Little People</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>White British</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Callum</td>
<td>Little People</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>White British</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suzie</td>
<td>Little People</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>White British</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Livi</td>
<td>Little People</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>White British</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clara</td>
<td>Little People</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>White British</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hannah</td>
<td>Little People</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>White British</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rihanna</td>
<td>Little People</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>White British</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kim</td>
<td>Little People</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>White British</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David</td>
<td>Little Stars</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Bengali</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dennis</td>
<td>Little Stars</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Eastern European</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gurpreet</td>
<td>Little Stars</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Bengali</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mohammad</td>
<td>Little Stars</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Bengali</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kelly</td>
<td>Little Stars</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>White British</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rebecca</td>
<td>Little Stars</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>White British</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Priya</td>
<td>Little Stars</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Bengali</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fatima</td>
<td>Little Stars</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Bengali</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 6.1: Seven case study children

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Childs Name</th>
<th>Setting</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Character</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>James</td>
<td>Busy Buzzy Bees</td>
<td>White British</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Small in stature but confident and outgoing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adam</td>
<td>Busy Buzzy Bees</td>
<td>White British</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Small in stature, younger looking than his peers. He demonstrates a shortened concentration/attention span.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhianna</td>
<td>Little People</td>
<td>White British</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Respected and well-liked by peers and practitioners. She often takes the lead in games.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patryk</td>
<td>Little People</td>
<td>Polish</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Tall and large for his age, often coming across as disruptive and aggressive towards peers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liam</td>
<td>Little People</td>
<td>White British</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>A shy, slender boy, smaller and less outgoing than the others at Little People. He is often found</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In addition to the children as participants, practitioners and parents also participated through informal conversations, questionnaires and semi structured interviews. To gain a more rounded and complete ethnographic understanding of physical activity in the early years, it was considered important to get practitioners’ views on EYL and physical activity. Similarly, distributing questionnaires to and interviewing parents, would allow me to learn more about their home contexts and explore the ways in which ‘physical activity’ messages were being interpreted at home and how their discourses were shaping what their children were bringing to their EYL context. However, despite several attempts (questionnaires, flyers) to engage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rebecca</td>
<td>Little Stars</td>
<td>White British</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>A small and quiet child who prefers ‘academic’ play over ‘physical play’. Often found in the reading area asking practitioners to read to her.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td>Little Stars</td>
<td>White British</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Much taller, bigger and louder than her peers although less developed in terms of her listening skills, often made to sit next to practitioners during singing and reading time.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
with parents, I was unable to conduct anything like ‘formal’ interviews with them and after a low return rate of questionnaires (less than ten per cent), choose not to include this data in my research. It was decided that due to the low response rates, any data that was collected would not be suitable for deriving conclusions about the total population within each of the three settings (Bryman, 2012).

Of the fifteen practitioners, all participated in ‘informal conversational interviews’ throughout the period of study, although often the needs of the children and low staffing numbers restricted the length of these conversations. As table 7 highlights’, the majority of practitioners were qualified in childcare (level 2 and above) and most perceived themselves to be ‘middle class’ (practitioners alluded to the social class they perceived themselves to be part of during interviews). Across the settings, the relationship between practitioner and child differed in term of the labels given to practitioners. For example, at both Busy Buzzy Bees and Little People children used practitioner’s first names, while at Little Stars, the relationship was more ‘school like’ with children using practitioners surnames.

Table 7: Practitioners training and self-perceived social class

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setting</th>
<th>Name used by children</th>
<th>Qualifications</th>
<th>Self-perceived social class</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Little People</td>
<td>Jane – Room Leader</td>
<td>Level 3 Diploma in Childcare and Education</td>
<td>Middle Class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lyn – SEN specialist</td>
<td>Level 3 Diploma in Childcare and Education</td>
<td>Middle Class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Claire</td>
<td>Level 2 Diploma in Childcare and Education</td>
<td>Middle Class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sarah</td>
<td>Level 2 Diploma in Childcare and Education</td>
<td>Working Class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Level of Education</td>
<td>Class</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stacey (Trainee)</td>
<td>Level 2 Diploma in Childcare and Education</td>
<td>Working Class</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dave (Volunteer Trainee)</td>
<td>Working towards Level 2 Diploma in Childcare and Education</td>
<td>Middle Class</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Busy Buzzy Bees</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helen – deputy manager</td>
<td>Level 3 Diploma in Childcare and Education</td>
<td>Middle class</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alice</td>
<td>Level 6 Early Years Professional Status</td>
<td>Middle class</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laura</td>
<td>Level 3 Diploma in Childcare and Education</td>
<td>Middle Class</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Little Stars</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs Robinson – deputy manager</td>
<td>Level 3 Diploma in Childcare and Education</td>
<td>Middle Class</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs Anderson</td>
<td>Level 3 Diploma in Childcare and Education</td>
<td>Middle Class</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs Hunter</td>
<td>Level 3 Diploma in Childcare and Education</td>
<td>Middle class</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Smith</td>
<td>Level 3 Diploma in Childcare and Education</td>
<td>Middle Class</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sally – part time</td>
<td>Level 2 Diploma in Childcare and Education</td>
<td>Working Class</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.4.3 Ethics and Research with Children

The cohort of participants in this study are considered to be a vulnerable group (EAC, 2006), based on their age. As such, ethical issues were of particular concern when planning and carrying out the collection of data for this study. Three ethical issues were of particular concern; (i) informed consent; (ii) power relations, and (iii) confidentiality. Whilst these issues are not unique to researching children, it has been argued that they present important and different challenges when researching with children (Mauthner, 1997; Thomas and O’Kane, 1998).

I) Informed Consent

Consent is usually seen as given as part of a ‘one off’ procedure at the start of the research. It is based on the assumption that the presentation of adequate information allows participants to ‘understand’ what they are being asked to do and is sufficient for them to make an informed decision to consent or not (David, Edwards and Alldred, 2001). However, seeking informed consent is an on-going process (Flewitt, 2005; Hill 2005) and is often more difficult to gain from children for the reason that to be informed a child must understand the nature of the study (what is expected of them and what the study involves) and this may be a problem if the child has no experience of what the research entails (Greene and Hogan, 2005). For example, if a child is not familiar with what an interview is, how can he/she give informed consent to participate in one? Furthermore, children, like adult participants, need to know and understand how any data collected (verbal, visual etc.) will be used.

It has been suggested that, ideally, consent should be obtained from a child in person following the presentation of written or verbal information about the research. Previous research has illustrated that this can be achieved even with pre-school children (see Fine and Sandstorm, 1988) albeit with the explanation of the research having been simplified to its limits (for example; ‘the researcher is going to play with and watch you and your friends to see what you do in nursery’). In summary, Greene and Hogan (2005, p.69) argue that children should be told the following in order for valid consent to be given;
• The aims of the research (this was explained to the children by asking them prior to the researcher interacting with them; (i) if they would like to talk about what they do at nursery; (ii) what they understand about being healthy and; (iii) if it was ok for the researcher to watch them play.);
• The time commitment;
• Who will know the results;
• Whether confidentiality is promised.

In light of these issues around informed consent, there are differing views on how and by whom it should be obtained. For example, the National Children’s Bureau (NBC) (Greene and Hogan, 2005) accepts the ethical stance of the British Sociological Association, but argues that research must make greater efforts when working with children in relation to informed consent. Furthermore, the NBC states that extra care must be taken to ensure all children participating have given consent and understand the nature of the study. In contrast, the Society for Research in Child Development (2007) accepts that ‘assent’ by the child rather than ‘consent’ may be sufficient. For the purposes of this study, participants (aged three to five) gave assent and parents gave informed consent before partaking in the study. ‘Assent’ was gained from the children rather than consent because it was believed (after discussions with practitioners) that the children may not be able to give full consent due to their age. Furthermore, prior to the research being conducted, it was important that ethical clearance was granted by the University in accordance with their ethical policies.

II) Power Relations

As previously stated, it has been argued that the power relations within society between adults and children are often replicated in the research process (Morrow and Richards, 1996). Consequently this raises issues over how ‘free’ children feel not only to participate, but also withdraw and provide their own opinions within the context of research. For example, Gallagher (2009) refers to several issues he faced when researching with children; in particular, he refers to using stickers as a means of getting informed consent from the children (blue = willing to participate, red= not willing to participate). The children themselves began to associate the red sticker with naughtiness because as David et al (2001) suggest, complying with adults is often seen by children as a sign of good behaviour. A second issue which may arise due to the young age of participants is related to parental
influence. Parents or gatekeepers as they are referred to in the literature, can often prevent or coerce a child from/into participating (Tisdall et al, 2010) which can have significant consequences for the research. In light of these issues, several methods to manage the power relations between children and adults within research have been proposed and are outlined below;

• Using methods that allow children to feel part of the research process (drawings, cameras etc.);
• Involving children as part of the research process;
• Checking on children’s willingness to participate throughout the interview;
• In interview studies giving children control over tape recorders.

(Alderson, 1995; Morrow and Richards, 1996; Thomas and O’Kane, 1998; Greene and Hogan, 2005; Thomson, 2008- see phase one below for details on which of these methods were utilised).

III) Confidentiality

Within much of the literature on child research, the issue of confidentiality arises because there is the potential for a child to disclose certain information which may suggest that they or another child is at ‘risk’ (Gallagher 2009). Consequently, the concept of total confidentiality is not always possible. Although the issue of confidentiality did not arise at any point during data collection in relation to children disclosing such information, it was important to bear this in mind.

5.4.4. Phase One (April – June 2012) Creating and Representing Knowledge

In phase one of the study, the EYL settings were selected and letters and introductory information sheets were given to all parents providing some detail about the researcher and the purpose of the research (see Appendix i and ii–information letters and consent forms). The letters included: (i) an outline of the research aims; (ii) in broad terms the issues being explored; (iii) clarification of issues around confidentiality and anonymity; and finally (iv) asking parents if they would like their child to take part in phase two of the research (in-depth ethnography) and or if they themselves would be willing to take part in interviews. Phase one
set out to explore methods of data collection and issues around access, opportunity and equality within the pre-school physical activity. It constituted a period of familiarisation with the research contexts and their personnel.

In situ (across all three settings) I was able to explore different research methods with the children, all of which had varying degrees of success. The following examples highlight some of the challenges faced and some issues which arose in each setting.

At *Busy Buzzy Bees*, of particular interest was the nursery tour. With the use of child friendly video recorders and cameras, I asked two children at a time to take me on a tour showing me their favourite areas and where they did physical activity. The more important finding taken from this task was the potential benefit of using visual methods with young children to collect data. Whilst initially the children appeared distracted by the cameras and more interested in playing with them rather than taking part in the task, after a while, the initial excitement wore off and the cameras seemed to focus some of the children’s attention on physical activity and showing me where they ran/jumped/played etc. Research in this context revealed that there are several disadvantages to using still photography (such as only capturing one moment in time or multiple interpretations of the picture). However, it also revealed the benefits available from using such cameras if they were to be: (i) introduced over several weeks to overcome initial excitement; (ii) used in conjunction with a more structured task; and (iii) used with one child at a time (initially anyway). In addition to the still photography, a video camera was used to capture the tour and, again, whilst initially some children were either nervous or over excited in front of the camera, it provided insight into children’s perspectives on nursery and captured conversations/movement other methods may not have been able to achieve. In particular, it suggested that using the video camera during phase two (when it could be introduced gradually) may be the most appropriate method to collect information on children’s use of space and language. If nothing more it acted as a good familiarising technique.

At *Little People*, in relation to physical activity, there were several different play areas including various climbing frames, grass to dig/run around on, a soft play area, and a garden where children could learn about nature. Initially, the focus was on children receiving free childcare and who within this particular setting were of low socio-economic status (as implied by practitioners). Within this group, a child centred approach was taken to the curriculum; children were given the option of choosing what they did in the morning
although there were several areas laid out with tasks to encourage the children. Within this setting, trialling different data collection methods proved challenging; staff were reluctant to alter the children’s routine or allow me to complete ‘one off tasks’ with them as they felt the children were not able to cope with such situations. Much of my time was therefore spent observing the children and collecting data using long hand notes. Despite not being able to trial my data collection methods, from my observations, I gained insight into the kind of methods staff use to aid children’s learning, for example, staff often worked with children in small groups in a separate room. Therefore, observations in this context, suggest that interactions with groups rather than individuals would be a good approach to adopt when collecting data in this setting.

As with the other two settings, during my initial visits to Little Stars, I engaged the children in some tasks (poster making, health questions and taking pictures) to establish useful data collection techniques. The first task was poster making, with the children being asked to cut out images of people being active. The children, for the most part, clearly understood the task and what it means to be active. They selected a range of pictures (e.g. people hula hooping, people playing football, animals flying) and when asked why they had selected that picture, were able to explain how the person/animal was being active. There were a few language issues, (usually dealt with by drawing on the practitioner, Davinder, who spoke the child’s first language and was therefore able to translate the task for them) where some children did not understand the task or were disinterested, but as a method of data collection, poster making worked well. Research in this situation highlighted that in phase two, further work would need to be carried out with the children to provide an opportunity for them to explain their pictures in more detail. This may be achieved through interviews with the children about their poster.

4.5 Phase two (Oct 2012- June 2013) Data collection techniques

Using observations
Observation is the backbone of ethnographic research (Ely, 1991; Bogdan and Taylor, 1975), allowing researchers to gain a broad description and understanding of the workings of a social group. Observations can take several forms, including participant observer (participating in the daily activities of the social group while conducting observations) and observer participant (mostly observing but with minor participation), both of which were utilised throughout my data collection. Krane and Baird (2005) however, argue that complete
observation may be the best way to gather data particularly in a situation where the researcher is visibly different from members of the social group, e.g. young children. As the researcher I found that in order to develop and build up a rapport with the children and staff, it was important to initially take on the role of a participant observer. This role meant taking part in each start of day or session ‘gathering’/registration and at times playing games with the children. Butts (2001) stresses the importance of participant observation, explaining that it is only through participation a researcher can learn and represent the complexities of a culture. Although the children did not see me as a child, neither did they see me as a practitioner and gradually, over time, my role changed allowing me to participate less and observe more in each setting as the children and staff became used to my presence.

EYL settings are vibrant, busy contexts within which to conduct research and as such, the question of what to observe becomes important. Observation involves focusing on the many actions occurring all at the same time; participants’ movements, subtle eavesdropping, asking questions (Taylor and Bogdan, 1975) and in the EYL context responding to children’s questions/comments/problems. It was important to observe and record as much detail as possible, including the environment and social interactions, conversations and events both between staff and children. Although initially it was difficult to decide what data was important and what was not, a period referred to by Lofland and Lofland (1995) as ‘mucking about’, over time the focus of the observations began to narrow as common themes were identified (see below) and explored in greater detail.

Questionnaires and Informal Interviews

During Phase two, it became important to develop a greater understanding of the policies enacted and the structure of activities and/planning which materialised in each context. A questionnaire (n=14) was distributed to the practitioners working within the three settings with children aged 3-4. The purpose of the questionnaire was to gather information on the importance of physical activity and physical development within each setting and the role of assessment within EYL. Whilst it is acknowledged that the questionnaires were only distributed to a select few, I felt that this would provide more detailed information on the specific groups I was observing and working with, rather than distribute the questionnaire to all staff, which, whilst providing more detail on the setting as a whole, may not have provided such detailed information on the children aged 3-4 being observed.
However practitioners seemed reluctant to take the time to fill in the questionnaires and none of the questionnaires were returned. Practitioners indicated they did not have an opportunity to complete them and despite persistent encouragement, it was finally decided that informal interviews would be utilised to develop a greater understanding of the issues e.g., physical activity, and planning and assessment (broached in the questionnaire). Such ‘informal conversational interviews’ took place in the field, i.e. as casual conversations and often related to observational data evident at the time. Practitioners responded positively to this, providing further insight into their planning and assessment procedures as well as their personal attitudes towards aspects of EYL and their setting. Ely (1991, p.58) suggests, interviews “are at the heart of doing ethnography because they seek the words of the people we are studying…so we can understand their situations with clarity”. In hindsight and after reflecting on Ely’s argument, informal interviews may have been the better approach from the outset because they are less time consuming, occurring at a specific moment in context and are of conversational nature, which is helpful in building a rapport with participants (Berg, 2001).

Informal conversational interviews were selected over formal interviews with practitioners because it became evident through informal conversations with them that they did not have time to complete the questionnaires or participate in a formal interview during working hours. Additionally, informal interviews (framed as casual conversations) were conducted with children during their ‘free choice’ or ‘choosing’ time because, they allowed the researcher to gain more information on specific moments.

*Parental Questionnaires*

A questionnaire (n= 60) (see appendix v) was distributed to parents across the three EYL settings. The purpose of the questionnaire was to gather demographic information on individuals who accessed each EYL setting and what organised activities their children did outside of the nursery, as well as the nature of these activities (whether publically funded or private). The questionnaire was divided into four sections:

- Demographic information;
- Parental reasons for selecting the nursery that their child attended;
- Formal/organised activities that their child attends or has attended (e.g. Tumble Tots and Jo Jingles); and
• Informal activities provided for their children (e.g. walking, trips to the park, cycling).

At the end of the questionnaires, parents were invited to take part in an interview which was intended to explore further the relationships between socio-economic status, parental attitudes towards physical activity, and the provision of physical development opportunities, ideally through a small number of case study telephone interviews. However, there was less than a ten per cent return rate on the questionnaires (3 from Busy Buzzy Bees, 5 from Little Stars and 1 from Little People) which made them not representative of the sample. On discussion of this low return rate, two of the three settings suggested that their parents are “just not the type to return forms…often we have to ring them up to get consent forms for things….photographers, dentists visits etc…signed”. Facing several barriers when trying to explore parents’ attitudes (questionnaires not returned, parents not having the time to chat with me when collecting their children from EYL setting etc…), to gain greater demographic information and information around parents’ attitudes towards physical activity, I utilised informal conversational interviews with staff and children to explore, the ‘extracurricular’ activities children participate in and what opportunities children have for physical activity development at home.

5.5. Data collection, transcription, analysis and representation

“In ethnography…you learn something (collect data), then you try to make sense out of it (analysis), then you go back and see if the interpretation makes sense on light of new experience (collect more data), then you refine your interpretation (more analysis).” (Agar, 1980, p.9)

Once the data was collected through various methods (observation and informal conversational interviews), the data was transcribed prior to analysis taking place. All interviews, group discussions and informal conversations recorded during the various observations were transcribed verbatim. Where possible, data was transcribed as soon as possible after it had been collected. The transcribing of data was deliberately seen as an ongoing process because not only did I want to address the data while the event was still fresh in my mind, but also, it allowed me to go back to the setting and develop any issues/comments raised in the data which I felt important to explore further. Additionally, this
on-going process of transcription encouraged greater reflexivity, allowing me to develop my
own understandings of discourse used within each setting and reflect upon my methods and
methodology, and the apparent ways in which the participants were responding to the process.
Furthermore this also helped to develop an awareness of any themes emerging within the data,
and ways in which subsequent interviews and observations could be modified accordingly.
There are a variety of different methods which can be used for encoding speech (see Taylor,
2001; Wood and Kroger, 2000). These differ in terms of the particular details about the
speech. For example, there are transcription symbols which can be used to indicate; the pace,
volume, and tone of speech, the length of pauses, non-verbal activities, speaker emphases,
unclear fragments of speech, and contiguous utterances (Taylor, 2001).
For this study I have chosen to use ethnographic analysis which can be described as the
systematic expansion of data beyond description. It identifies patterns in the data and looks at
the descriptions between these patterns (Wolcott, 1994). Ethnographic analysis goes beyond
the data in an attempt to reach for understanding outside the study and find some broad
application and meaning (Wolcott, 1994). Using such analysis in this study allowed for the
exploration of how participants were positioned within each setting across culture and social
class and the impact of this on their access to EYL.
Peacock (1986) suggests that the analysing process of ethnographic data can be compared to
a camera; ethnographers use harsh light to see behind things and soft focus to change and
bring in aspects previously deemed irrelevant. In this way, ethnographic analysis is inductive
rather than deductive. When using ethnographic data, O’Reilly (2005) suggests there are
three necessary steps which need to be followed, however this is not a linear process and the
stages are often used interchangeably, as highlighted through Agar’s (1980) statement above.
These three steps are:

1) Sorting data- Initially, data (field notes, transcriptions etc.) is collected in
chronological order, it is important to sort the data into categories (thematic or
descriptive) as this allows for the data to be looked at closely and any emerging
themes/patterns spotted.

2) Description and Analysis - In qualitative research, the researcher is often seen as a
storyteller (Wolcott, 1994) and consequently, there are several ways to represent the
“story” (data). Critical ethnography is concerned with exploring marginalised groups,
with a focus on inequality (race, gender, class). Consequently, the data collected was described using a combination of critical key event and researcher order, which allowed for reflexivity. Presenting the data through critical key events involves acknowledging that it is often difficult to tell the whole story but by highlighting several key stories, it is hoped that the overall story is revealed in essence (Wolcott, 2001). Using researcher order allows the researcher to tell the story in the way it has been revealed to them, often allowing the researcher greater insight into the meaning of the story when compared to chronological order which is restricted/dominated by time. Researcher order allows the researcher to be reflexive and take into account other factors (aside from time) which may influence the participant. In addition to this, Wolcott (1994) suggests there are several general rules when analysing data;

- Highlight your findings - whilst traditionally, ethnographies are concerned with highlighting the context, how things are and how they got that way, the focus here needs to be centred on specific relationships and facets

- Identify patterns of regularity in the data

- Contextualise on a broader analytical framework – draw connections with previous work in the field

3) Concepts – Once steps one and two have been completed, step three is to look through the data for concepts which help make sense of what is going on (themes/patterns/inconsistencies). These concepts provide ways of thinking about complex ideas and are often influenced by theory.

Overall, some have compared ethnographic analysis as similar to grounded theory (O’Reilly, 2005) although less prescriptive, but given its flexible framework, it is perhaps best to think of ethnographic analysis as continual analysis (Becker, 1970) whilst the data is still being collected allowing for reflexivity and the re-visiting of ideas whilst still in the natural setting.

In light of O’Reilly’s (2005) steps the data collected was analysed at several levels; firstly through analysis of the settings in relation to pedagogies used and/including physical development strategies, secondly by looking at the broader patterns and interactions which
had emerged from the data to provide a landscape of interactions within each setting. The third level of analysis explored transactions within each setting at a micro level through case studies, detailing interactions between staff/children and children/children, all contextualised within time, space and place, to provide insight into the social hierarchy and the opportunities children have to participate in physical activity. (See discussion chapters six, seven and eight where these are illustrated)

5.5.1 How the data was organised

All observations were recorded in the researcher’s field notes diary, providing concise accounts of each day’s observations including descriptors of participant’s movements, conversations and actions (Taylor and Bogdan, 1975), diagrams of the settings/activities and timings throughout the observation period. These notes were often in shorthand and once out of the research setting were fully typed up into the researcher’s log (Berg, 2001). Ely (1991), suggested that analytical notes should be logged within the researcher’s log, allowing for an inner dialogue about the research and providing reflections on themes, conversations etc. At times reflecting on the notes and observations made, it was necessary and important to reflect on them and think about certain events in one setting, in relation to others. These reflections were always made in different colour font to avoid confusion between reflections and observations (Krane and Baird, 2005). Once observations were logged, the data was then organised, while still immersed in the research settings, using Nvivo Software to store all the data and provide a space in which to explore the emerging themes and look at data across the three settings at the same time (see appendix iii for examples). This was a slow, overlapping and continually evolving process taking me back and forth between collecting, organising and returning to collect more data. The data were first analysed ethnographically (discussed in detail above) to determine the organising categories and concepts of the setting, i.e., analyses were loosely coupled with the researcher’s theoretical frame. However, second order analysis brought into play the researchers sociological interests/frame of reference, in questions of equity, social reproduction and control, imposing another layer of questions on the study. Once all the data was collected and coded (using nodes) I selected key episodes, issues and themes that appeared to be emerging as indicative of physical activity, social class and culture and the EYL context. Therefore, the data presented in this final analysis albeit explored in relation to Bernstein’s pedagogic theory throughout the discussion chapters, highlights the unique perspective and experiences of participants (children, staff and parents)
within the pre-school setting, offering insights into the pedagogic discourse, role of physical activity and children’s embodiment within EYL.

5.5.2 An illustrative example of data analysis

The thematic analysis began with the simple use of codes. Initially, this involved the identification of data that related to five themes labelled; ‘physical activity’, ‘academic activities’, ‘culture’, ‘children’s interactions’, ‘power and control’- as shown below.

Figure 5 – An abstract from observations made at Little People showing the initial codes employed in the analysis of data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physical Activity</th>
<th>Children climbing frame indoors April “Boys are you playing carefully?”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Power and control</td>
<td>Alex (Polish) crying, upset because mummy is not here. Ms Smith says to me “He’s my key child, I sometimes just observe him rather than talk to him…it’s easier…he’s just one that cries”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children’s interactions</td>
<td>Mrs Hunter says “Gurvinder walking please…now go and play nicely please”- shouts this – group of 4 active boys, running around and play fighting as superheros, again “Gurvinder if you run again, you will have to sit on the chair” (softer more gentle voice)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power and control</td>
<td>Ms Smith at cutting table with Abdula “Shall we put that in your learning journey?” – he has made a plate mask</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical activity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic activities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The next level of analysis provided more detail to these initial codes as well as formulating new ones. Initial categories were often divided into sub categories, for example, ‘children’s interactions’ was divided into; ‘interactions between children and staff’ and ‘interactions between children’. This was then further divided into ‘interactions between children of various cultures/ethnicities’. Similarly, ‘power and control’ was further divided into ‘actions’, ‘behaviour’, ‘consequences’. As the analytical process developed further, I was able to progress to another level of analysis allowing me to build up a theoretical understanding of
the data. The following is intended to provide an illustration of the analytical process utilised, adopting a Bernsteinian analysis (see chapter five). Table 8 represents the theoretical concepts of the various possible strengths of the classification of boundaries between health and common sense knowledge. The examples below represent data collected during observations at *Busy Buzzy Bees* and *Little People* to explain how the theoretical ideas in table 8 have been applied to the empirical data collected.

*Table 8: The inter-discursive relations between health knowledge and common sense knowledge*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>C++</th>
<th>C+</th>
<th>C -</th>
<th>C - -</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High level of abstraction</td>
<td>Some level of abstraction</td>
<td>Low level of abstraction</td>
<td>Very low level of abstraction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialised language used. Health knowledge is clearly demarcated/very different from the everyday experiences of learners.</td>
<td>Some specialised language used but still adopts local/personal knowledge as reference points.</td>
<td>Health knowledge is mostly focused on local knowledge familiar to learners. Very little specialised/abstract knowledge/language.</td>
<td>All content is familiar to learners and grounded in their everyday lives.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Examples*

C+ It is raining outside and too wet for the children at Busy Buzzy Bees to go outside to ‘do their exercises’ Helen tells the children they can do some exercise inside instead – the children copy Helen as she sings a song with actions;

“I like to reach up tall tall tall, as tall as the sky (Children stretching up tall), reach reach up high, bend bend touch my toes (Children bend down to touch
their toes), touch touch touch my nose, knee knee touch my knees (children do high knees), stand stand tall (children return to normal)”

Helen: “Let’s do our exercise again, this time faster…..”
James: “I’m hot” as he takes off his jumper
Helen: “Well that’s what exercise does, makes you hot”

In the above extract, there is strong classification (C+), as Helen applies her knowledge of ‘exercise’ during the session and broadens the children’s understanding of the term ‘exercise’ and the effect it has on their bodies. This illustrates a strong boundary (C+), moving the children from the ‘thinkable’ to the ‘unthinkable’.

C- Jane gets the children at Little People them to line up and run to the goal posts, collect some snow and run back as fast as they can calls it the Winter Olympics. She links it to London 2012.

Jane: “Run really fast like you do when you’re playing chases with your friends…”

In this extract Jane does not broaden the children’s understanding, but relates the activity and idea of ‘exercise’ to their daily life “like you do in chases”. This illustrates weak boundary maintenance (C-) between health and common-sense knowledge within Little People.

Further analyses of this nature reflecting the relationships of social theory to data are presented in chapter four and throughout discussion chapters (six, seven and eight) in relation to health, subjectivity and embodiment

5.6 Conclusion

This chapter has traced the epistemological and ontological beliefs which underpin this research and the role of an ethnographic study. It has focused on the benefits of using ethnography with young children but at the same time raised a number of important ethical issues, pointing out some of the challenges when working with this particular group of
participants. It has also highlighted the methods and methodological techniques which have
been utilised in order to try to understand physical activity, EYL and children’s embodiment
from the participants’ perspective. I will offer further retrospective thoughts on the research
process as a whole in the conclusion to this study (chapter ten).
Chapter Six: The structure of teaching and learning in EYL Contexts

6.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on how teaching and learning is structured through play, focusing on the classification and framing of space, time and resources in EYL settings. The chapter serves as a backdrop to the remaining analysis chapters (seven and eight) by outlining the curriculum and context of each EYL setting in this research. The analyses illustrate how the different settings enact the EYFS framework (DfE, 2012) and the influence of social class and culture on this process. In doing so the chapter initially centres the structure and structuring of each context using the concepts ‘classification’ and ‘frame’ to explore how various forms of ‘play’ are transmitted in each in relation to space and time. It then goes on to explore the culture of the three settings as defined by their instructional and regulative discourse, highlighting the general ‘therapeutic identity’ (see Bernstein, 1996) which is nurtured across the contexts.

In his work on codes and modalities, Bernstein (1990) considers how the relationship between the social class of the child, indicated by classification (C) and framing (F), influences children’s forms of consciousness and pedagogic identity (see chapter eight). Consequently how the pedagogic communicative context of the EYL setting is structured (in terms of C and F) will influence children’s opportunities, identities and educational attainments. Using Bernstein’s concepts of classification and framing (see chapter four and seven) this chapter will offer insight into nursery room interactions, models of pedagogic practice and the social implications of such practices within EYL.

6.2 The Structure of play

As outlined in chapter three, the EYFS framework contains an implicit social ‘imaginary leaner’ that advocates viewing a child as an individual whose needs must (and can) be met essentially through play, which may be both child and adult initiated. Consequently, play is to be the medium (or rather the pedagogical mode) through which learning takes place, although how that learning occurs and the pedagogy adopted varies between settings as we shall see. Furthermore, the EYFS framework outlines the ‘competencies’ within each ‘prime area’ children are expected to develop and ultimately display through play;

‘Each area of learning and development must be implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activity. Play is essential for children’s development, building their confidence as they learn to
explore, to think about problems, and relate to others. Children learn by leading their own play, and by taking part in play which is guided by adults. There is an on-going judgement to be made by practitioners about the balance between activities led by children, and activities led or guided by adults. Practitioners must respond to each child’s emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction’ (DfE, 2012 Statutory Framework, 2012, p. 6).

As Esland (1971) points out, teaching involves directing children’s consciousness towards the acceptance of the realities marked out in the curricula. As such, children are presented with ‘bodies of knowledge’ through the (EYFS) curriculum with the practitioner making critical choices about how children should acquire this knowledge (different forms of play). Furthermore Esland (ibid) like Becker (1952) and a good many other researchers since, suggest that processes of teaching and learning are influenced by practitioner/child interactions and the degree to which practitioners perceive children to be the ‘ideal’ child in relation to ‘official’ knowledge constructions. In the case of EYL, the ‘competencies’ outlined in the EYFS are ‘ideally’ realised through a curriculum enacted within each setting as play. Since play is the primary medium for learning, the activities within each setting constitute a curriculum defined as and by different forms of play. Therefore, in each of the EYL settings the ways practitioners respond to each child is likely to be influenced by their subjective view of children’s potential and achievement.

This research involved observations of over 540 (180 in each setting) hours across different forms of play which are categorised in figure 6 below:
Figure 6: Play in EYL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work Play</th>
<th>Physical Play</th>
<th>Practitioner Led Physical Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher initiated time</td>
<td>Gross motor movements such as running,</td>
<td>Formal physical activity e.g. children learn different ways to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dedicated to learning</td>
<td>riding a toy car, jumping, dancing or</td>
<td>move. This is something that has been planned and is led by</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>numeracy and literacy</td>
<td>rough and tumble play.</td>
<td>practitioners. It is usually delivered in a separate room/area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>skills.</td>
<td></td>
<td>to the EYL setting room.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Play</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child initiated involvement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in play focused on learning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>skills e.g. jigsaws, practicing writing, reading.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spontaneous Movement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moving to and from</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>activities and between</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>areas to see what is going</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>on.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Whilst acknowledging the idealised form of play as represented in the EYFS, academic research on EYL (Broadbent, Howard and Woods, 2013; Brooker and Edwards, 2010) and literature addressing theories of play (Takhvar, 1988; Mellou, 1994; Wood and Bennett, 1998), my analyses by contrast documents how play actually materialises in EYL settings. Using concepts drawn from the work of Basil Bernstein (1975-2000 – see chapter five), I delve beneath surface appearances to describe five forms of play which variously featured in the settings of this research. These play forms were embedded within data collected over 180 hours of observations in each of the three settings. As we see in figure 6, ‘play’ is not homogenous, but rather takes many forms all of which were present within each of the three EYL settings. However, in each setting ‘play’ was differently distributed and had a different emphasis and meaning given by classification and framing.

Table 9 highlights the types and frequency of play observed within each setting. (Not all forms of play were experienced by children every day, e.g. practitioner led physical activity only occurred at Little Stars on a Friday). Children attended each setting for three hours and time was generally structured as follows: 20 minutes registration (except for Little Stars
where children went straight into ‘physical play’), followed by play time, 15 minutes allocated to snack time (although this was fluid at Little People and Little Stars and children came to the snack bar as they pleased), followed by 20 minutes allocated to singing or some other practitioner led ‘play’ activity etc., and at the end of the session 15 minutes ‘tidy time’ (see methodology chapter for more detail). However, as we see in table 9, despite the similarity in the organisational structure of the day, forms of play were differently distributed in each setting and had different value and meaning attached to them. Different sorts of opportunities for and experiences of learning were thus made available in each setting as were the socio-cultural resources needed to access them. This, as we shall see in chapter six, has class and cultural significance for the children concerned.

Table 9: Play differences within EYL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time spent on each form of play during a typical day</th>
<th>Work Play</th>
<th>Academic play</th>
<th>Physical Play</th>
<th>Practitioner led physical activity</th>
<th>Spontaneous movement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Busy Buzzy Bees**</td>
<td>20 minutes (1:1 ratio and sometimes group if science orientated)</td>
<td>45 minutes</td>
<td>20 mins in morning</td>
<td>5 minutes (not daily)</td>
<td>15 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little People</td>
<td>20 minutes (1:5 ratio)</td>
<td>10 minutes</td>
<td>50 minutes</td>
<td>5 minutes (not daily)</td>
<td>30 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little Stars</td>
<td>15 minutes (1:5 ratio)</td>
<td>10 minutes</td>
<td>40 minutes</td>
<td>45 minutes (weekly)</td>
<td>40 minutes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Acknowledging that play has many forms and practitioners structure the experiences of young children by acting upon the contexts of learning (i.e., ‘academic or physical play’ etc.,) as well as their content (e.g., in ‘work play’ – a focus on numeracy, literacy, or science), this
chapter focuses on some of the key features of each context in relation to these forms of play. Firstly I will explore the different types of pedagogic models adopted during ‘play’ and the structural differences between settings before moving on to document the cultural differences reflected through the use and distribution of instructional and regulative discourse in each setting.

6.3. The Nature of the Pedagogy Enacted in EYL

Dominant preschool pedagogy has been characterised as an ‘invisible pedagogy’ (Bernstein, 1977, p.51), with practitioners’ control over children being implicit and children having control over the selection, pacing and timing, as well as regulating their own movements and social relationships. Consequently the criteria for knowledge transmission is through interpersonal forms of control. Developing these notions of invisible and visible pedagogies further (see chapter four) Bernstein (1996) discussed models of pedagogic acquisition with a principle focus on transmission and acquisition in terms of models of competence and performance. These models, which incorporate his previous theoretical concepts (visible/invisible pedagogies; Bernstein, 1975) shall be used to explore the nature of the pedagogy across the three settings.

In Bernstein’s view, the ‘performance mode’ tends to dominate formal education systems and features, amongst other things, strong boundaries between curriculum subject discourses (Bernstein, 1975, p. 88). So, for example, different subject specialists teach Mathematics and Geography, each using their own specialized language. In addition, knowledge acquired within school tends to be dissociated from that which pupils acquire outside of school. Prescriptive curricula and rigidly structured division of time and space leave teachers and pupils with very little control over the selection, organization and timing of knowledge transmitted (Bernstein, 1975, p. 89). Within a performance mode learners are required to reproduce a pre-specified text and are assessed on the deficit in their output. This includes the acquisition of skills, such as literacy and numeracy, necessary to reproduce the text or knowledge.

By contrast, Bernstein associates the ‘competence mode’, which is more commonly found in early year’s education, with a range of theoretical developments that emerged within the social sciences during the 1960s and 1970s, including Chomsky’s concept of linguistic competence, Piaget’s cognitive competence and Garfinkel’s members’ competence (Esland, 1971). These approaches share in common a view of subjects (i.e., children) as ‘active and
creative in the construction of a valid world of meanings and practice’ (Bernstein, 2000, p. 43). In contrast to the performance mode, boundaries between subjects are weak, so time and space are less rigidly structured. Control is shared through interpersonal relations between the learner and the teacher, giving learners greater apparent control whilst subjecting them to ‘invisible’ pedagogic practice, regulated by implicit rules that are largely unknown to them (Bernstein, 2000, p. 13–14). Evaluation is oriented towards celebration of what is present in the learner’s output rather than pointing out what is absent. Consequently, evaluation criteria are not made explicit and the teacher requires an extended education in competence based educational theories. Therefore, both models have different conditions for acquisition, transmission and evaluation, and they specialise the roles of acquirers and transmitters in different ways (see table 10).

Table 10: Pedagogic Models (adapted from Bernstein, 2000, p. 45)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Competence</th>
<th>Performance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Space</strong></td>
<td>Weakly classified</td>
<td>Strongly classified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Time</strong></td>
<td>Weakly classified</td>
<td>Strongly classified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Discourse</strong></td>
<td>Weakly classified</td>
<td>Strongly classified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Evaluation Orientation</strong></td>
<td><strong>Presences</strong></td>
<td><strong>Absences</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pedagogic Text</strong></td>
<td>Competence read through performance</td>
<td>Graded performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Autonomy</strong></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Costs</strong></td>
<td>resource intensive - Less efficient with larger classes</td>
<td>Can deal with large numbers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.4. Distributive rules of space, time and discourse during ‘Work Play’

As figure 6 highlights, learning within all three settings took place through various forms of play. ‘Work play’, took the form of regular practitioner led sessions with small groups of children in specific areas focusing on numeracy and literacy. Across the three settings, ‘work play’ in relation to time, discourse and space was strongly classified (see table 11), although there were nuanced differences in the strength of the boundary maintenance particularly in
relation to space between *Busy Buzzy Bees* and the other settings. At *Little People* and *Little Stars*, children did ‘work play’ in rooms that were strongly bounded and separate from the areas they used to take part in other forms of play. In contrast, ‘work play’ at *Busy Buzzy Bees* took place at the snack table, in the midst of other children playing.

Table 11: The classification and framing of ‘work play’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Column number</th>
<th>busy buzzy bees</th>
<th>little people</th>
<th>little stars</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Knowledge boundaries between home and EYL setting(^\text{16})</td>
<td>C-</td>
<td>C+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Knowledge boundaries between work play and other forms of play</td>
<td>C+</td>
<td>C+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Space boundaries between ‘work play’ context and other learning contexts</td>
<td>C-</td>
<td>C+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Sequencing and selection of the knowledge transmitted</td>
<td>F+</td>
<td>F+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Pacing of the ‘play’ session and knowledge transmission</td>
<td>F+</td>
<td>F+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Evaluation of learning</td>
<td>F+</td>
<td>F+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Hierarchical relationship between practitioner and child</td>
<td>F+</td>
<td>F+</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

\(^{16}\) It is acknowledged that the researchers understandings of children’s home life is predominantly based on practitioners perceptions of children’s home life and conversations with children conducted throughout the ethnography.
As illustrated in table 11, there was strong classification of time, space and discourse, during ‘work play’. In all three settings, throughout the daily 15/20 minutes ‘work play’ sessions, discourse was strongly framed in terms of specialised skills and language used by practitioners and expected from the children. For example, at Busy Buzzy Bees and Little People, children regularly took part in science ‘experiments’ learning terms such as ‘float, sink, light, heavy’. Furthermore, as the examples below highlight, practitioners controlled the pace of the lesson through questioning, often aimed at certain children, to evaluate learning.

Example 1 ‘Work Play’ at Busy Buzzy Bees – Field notes

Its Tuesday morning, Helen tells me she has planned to do a science experiment with the children today. She gathers them and their kites around the table area and tells them they are going to test if their kites are heavy or light.

Helen: “What do you think might happen if they (kites) are light?”

James, Amy and Ian: “They’ll fly”

Helen: “That’s right, let me get my air machine, Adam would you like to have a go….do you think yours will fly?”

Adam: “Yes its light”

Helen: “Agh….now that didn’t fly did it? Why do you think?”

The example highlights not only the control Helen has over the pacing and sequence of the session, but also the knowledge that is being transmitted within the interaction. Similar episodes were observed at Little People.

Example 1: ‘Work Play’ at Little People – field notes

Jane has taken her group into the ‘group time’ room to learn about floating and sinking objects. She asks the children to line up quietly outside and when they enter the room, to sit in a circle around the tank of water.

Jane: “Right today we are going to see which of these objects floats. We have a boat, a duck, a car and a Lego block. So if I give you all one, and you can have a go and see if yours floats in the water or sinks to the bottom. Rhianna, do you want to go first, what happens to your boat?”
Rhianna: “It floats”

Jane: “Yes, well done, Callum what about your car?”

Callum: “It goes to the bottom”

Jane: “Does anyone know why it sinks to the bottom? That’s what we call it Callum when it goes to the bottom (No response) – well it’s because the car is too heavy”

Again, the example illustrates a visible pedagogy at play. Jane controls the space (tells the children where to sit) and evaluates the children’s knowledge – explains to Callum that sinking is how he should describe his car. When asking the open ended question ‘why it sinks to the bottom’ the children did not respond and rather than prompt further, Jane provides the answer for them. In this sense the ‘school’ knowledge was both strongly framed (in the sense that the practitioner guides the children to the correct answer/knowledge) with strong classification of a correct answer (i.e., specialised language is used with a high level of abstraction). Similar observations were made during ‘work play’ at Little Stars, although the focus tended to be on reading;

Example 1: ‘Work play’ at Little Stars – field notes

Ms Smith takes her key\(^\text{17}\) children into the book room – “my group lets line up nicely then before we go in” - and closes the door as a sign that other children are not to disturb the session (although some often peek in through the glass windows). She has asked the children to sit in front of her- “let’s sit down quietly and nicely then”- as she is going to read them a story. The children listen to the story and every so often, Ms Smith asks them if they can guess what happens next.

Ms Smith: “OOO, can anyone guess what happens next?”

All: “He get eaten”

Ms Smith: “Is that what we think? Who eats him?”

David: “The Gruffalo”

Ms Smith: “Let’s turn the page and see shall we”

\(^{17}\text{Each member of staff across all three settings had a number of ‘key’ children who they were responsible for in terms of recording their development and writing their EYFSP and communicating with parents about the child’s learning.}\)
In contrast to the other two settings, ‘work play’ at Little Stars has slightly stronger framing in terms of sequence and selection of knowledge, since the children sit and listen rather than actively take part, and the series of question-answers conducted with the whole class did not allow for individual responses. Furthermore, similarly to Little People, there was a stronger boundary maintenance created by the door; children are aware that the space is for reading with the practitioner and when the door was shut, they were not allowed in. Here there is recognition that ‘work play’ is a distinctive activity marked out by the space, resources and presence of the practitioner. This was made evident (i.e., announced symbolically) in Little Stars through the closing of the door. In this setting the realisation rules for children (i.e. how they might acquire the pedagogic code and participate in ‘work play’) related to keeping to the pacing and sequencing of the session, engaging and displaying some level of attention and knowledge through their answers.

In the case of ‘work play’, practitioners evaluated children on what was missing, particularly within the ‘weaker’ groups at Little People and Little Stars where practitioners noted what children could not do but should, for their age and in line with the EYFS, be able to do. They then used this to inform the next ‘work play’ session. Evaluation was a constant and often dominated the child/practitioner interactions during this form of play. Practitioners, as the above examples illustrate, questioned children on an individual and group basis, always checking for anyone struggling or not demonstrating an understanding. Whilst their responses even to the wrong answer were always positive to the child, practitioners between themselves discussed those not meeting the EYFS or in house evaluation criteria and mooted alternative ways of covering the same topic again;

Claire (Little People): “Duane and Isla struggle with their numbers, the rest are OK but they get confused, I often have to count with them”

Jane: “Have you tried taking Duane outside and counting with him, he likes the outdoors so maybe that might help him”

During ‘work play’ then, the pedagogy across all three settings was highly visible; control was maintained through explicit ordering and structuring of time, space and discourse. A performance mode was in operation promoting individual child attainment, with progress being recorded in children’s ‘learning journeys’. Knowledge during these sessions was strongly classified as school related and both regulative and instructional discourse was strongly framed. As the examples illustrate, at Little People and Little Stars, the children
were told to line up outside the door and sit in a certain place, the behavioural (RD)
expectations were public and explicit.

6.5. Distributive rules of space, time and discourse during ‘Physical and Academic Play’

‘Academic and physical play’ dominated children’s time across all three settings, (although
there were significant differences in the amount of time spent on each when we compare
Busy Buzzy Bees to Little Stars and Little People). Through both forms of play, space and
time were weakly framed (that is to say, children were free to use all the space and were in
control of the time they choose to spend on these forms of play- see table 12) with children
working collaboratively at self-chosen activities. As a result of this weak framing, children
were expected to self-regulate in the absence of explicit sequencing or tight time boundaries;
control and evaluation occurred through personalised forms focused on intentions,
dispositions and relationships. Occasionally practitioners intervened to evaluate the learning
taking place through informal conversations and observations.

Table 12: The classification and framing of ‘academic and physical play’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Column number</th>
<th>Busy Buzzy Bees</th>
<th>Little People</th>
<th>Little Stars</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Knowledge boundaries between home and EYL setting</td>
<td>C-</td>
<td>C+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Knowledge boundaries between ‘academic play’ and other forms of play</td>
<td>C+</td>
<td>C-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Knowledge boundaries between ‘physical play’ and other forms of play</td>
<td>C-</td>
<td>C-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Space boundaries between ‘physical play’ context and other learning contexts</td>
<td>C-</td>
<td>C-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In contrast to ‘work play’, there is no obvious (at least not to the children) or distinguishing end outcome required during ‘academic and physical play’. Recognition rules (e.g., defining appropriate behaviour) are thus difficult to identify and acquire, and not every child is deemed ready to do this particularly those considered ‘less able’ (see chapter eight) at Little People and Little Stars. Such children tend to spend most of their time doing ‘physical play’ which is in stark contrast to Busy Buzzy Bees where children appear predisposed and ‘able’ to recognise that ‘academic play’ is valued more highly. The realisation rules related to participation, exploration, choice and playing with others signified an invisible, competence pedagogy at work during ‘academic and physical play’. Bernstein (1975) attests that within invisible pedagogies, practitioners observe children’s ‘readiness’ (their stage of development) with reference to their ‘busyness’ (external behaviour) and in this way assess if they demonstrate ‘appropriate’ competence (realisation rules). ‘Busyness’ within each of the settings was depicted as a ‘good thing’; children being busy meant they had acquired some level of social/situational competence and were able to learn and play in accordance with the practitioners and settings social/cultural perceptions, as the extracts below illustrate;

Example 1 – ‘Busyness’ at Busy Buzzy Bees

At Busy Buzzy Bees, most children choose to engage in ‘academic play’ regularly, particularly when given the option of doing ‘experiments’ such as building kites and
testing to see if they are light enough to fly. Jane suggests that such ‘busy’ behaviour is encouraged at home as well.

Jane: “We try to encourage them to do ‘experiments’ and certainly I think it’s good for them, to prepare them for school. But some parents want even more academic focus, they want us to teach their children how to spell and read and write. They are very driven some parents and you can see it in the children. They come with so much knowledge already. It’s great for us, we can do lots of fun stuff then, such as building those kites and using the air machine to test them”

Example 2 – ‘Busyness’ at Little People

Sarah (practitioner) is sitting with Clara in the reading corner “are you ready to do your homework? We will do ‘k’ today ok, ‘k’”

Sarah to Jane (practitioner): “I’m reading this with Clara…it’s her homework, we call it her homework” (1:1 reading to help her for school)

Clara copies what Sarah reads and after ten minutes, Sarah says: “excellent reading Clara, you have been practising, you can go and play with your friends now”

Example 3 – ‘Busyness’ at Little Stars

As Mrs Jones explains, the children are always busy, moving round, rarely sitting still but some are more productive than others.

Mrs Jones: “As you can see, we have lots of children in this session and they never sit still! Although some you can tell are more sensible and engaged than others. I mean look at those boys, they love to play Power Rangers and we can do so much with that, we bring in the theme tune for them to dance to and make posters in art. Others just wander from activity to activity, never really engaging. At times those children can be very disruptive”

In each of these extracts, the practitioners make judgements based on what they perceive as acceptable in terms of ‘busyness’. But their judgments are not arbitrary; they are influenced by their individual interpretation of the EYFS and cultural belief about how a child should behave. At Busy Buzzy Bees, ‘acceptable’ busy behaviour is that displayed through ‘academic play’ (playing quietly with jigsaws, looking at books or building an object with
friends) and the practitioners considered that there are similarities between the value placed on this form of play at nursery and at home. Similarly, at *Little People* children are viewed as busy if they engage in ‘productive’ meaningful play – which can be academic as illustrated in the example above or creative (often art or pretend play). Similarly, at *Little Stars* children are viewed by practitioners as being busy if they are engaging in ‘meaningful’ play, rather than ‘randomly’ moving from activity to activity. In all three settings, busyness was defined by what was visible to practitioners – what they could see a child doing (or not doing). There was, in effect, total invisible surveillance of children within the early years. Furthermore, practitioners evaluation of whether the child was appropriately busy, or not, and therefore whether play was productive or not had critical significance in that it influenced how children were then identified and labelled, i.e., as ‘able’ or ‘school ready’ or not, as we shall later see (chapter eight).

6.6. What counted as learning: Regulative and Instructional Discourse

Within all three settings children were required to understand and follow recognition rules, e.g., knowing how and when to behave and demonstrate their skills and knowledge ‘appropriately’. In the practitioners’ eyes, to become an effective member of the setting children had to actively display and perform social and situational competence. At *Little People* and *Little Stars* the dominant discourse focused on regulating children’s behaviour. Children were constantly being reminded how to be polite, behave and share with others, and how to sit and listen. At *Busy Buzzy Bees* instructional discourse dominated the setting and being and becoming a successful learner across the settings meant actively showing you knew how to behave appropriately in the classroom.

6.6.1. Discourse at Little People and Little Stars

In both these settings, the role of the practitioner was to ‘educate children both socially and academically, however, the former took precedence, with little time being spent on ‘work or academic play’ in either setting (see table 5). At *Little People* and *Little Stars*, demonstrating listening skills was important in relation to demonstrating competence. However, the rationale for developing listening skills had more to do with social control (regulation of immediate behaviour) than with (projected) school readiness, as highlighted by Ms Smith’s comment to a group of boys who were rolling around on the floor during song time;

Example 1- regulative discourse at *Little Stars*
Ms Smith: “Boys! You must sit a listen while we sing our song….everyone else is sat nicely. I you don’t need to do the actions or sing but you must sit nicely.”

Example 2- regulative discourse at Little People

Patryk is standing up at the computer playing; he asks for Jane’s help because he can’t get the game he wants on

Jane: “Patryk, sit down and play the computer properly, what game do you want? (he picks the numbers game)….no not that one, let’s do a nice easy football game, you will like that.”

The relative paucity of instructional discourse in these settings was evident within several transactions between practitioners and children. As the above examples illustrate, practitioners were more concerned with cultivating social behaviours as opposed to ‘academic play’ and the children being engaged in singing, numbers games etc., and consequently, the settings were dominated by regulative discourse. However, as we see in chapter eight regulative discourse was not evenly distributed amongst the pupils in these settings, some needed more of it than did others.

In contrast, whilst regulative discourse was used within Busy Buzzy Bees, instructional discourse dominated the context and there was a strong emphasis on ‘specialised’ knowledge construction in child/practitioner and child/child interactions. Children largely shared and brought with them from home the same behavioural expectations as those valued in nursery. This perhaps explains why regulative discourse when used, reached out to a wider context, emphasising the need to make children in this setting school ready. For example, within Busy Buzzy Bees, children were required to be aware of the importance of listening (quietly and attentively) during registration and displaying (what practitioners deemed) ‘school appropriate’ manners. However, example 1 suggests, that even during regulative discourse, practitioners made sure there was also a ‘school’ purpose.

Example 1 – Regulative discourse at Busy Buzzy Bees

Laura: “Right, James and Tom tell everyone why it’s important to listen at register time…we have to make sure everybody’s inside …”

James: “And we don’t left anybody outside”
Laura: “We don’t leave anybody outside, so I just ask that you listen for TWO minutes ok and then I can do it quick. It’s very important and when you go to school you do a register at school as well, so you have to get used to doing it and it takes longer at school because there is more children.”

Furthermore, children at Busy Buzzy Bees were encouraged to bring home artefacts into nursery and participate in show and tell, giving children a sense that their home experiences were valued within nursery. The weak knowledge boundaries between home and nursery were evident, with many children proudly saying they had the books they were reading at nursery at home and therefore were already becoming familiar with the academic knowledge they met in nursery. To some extent then, what counted as learning was children practicing and demonstrating what they already knew from home, whether it was personal experiences, linguistic or cultural knowledge. The following are representative examples of such interactions;

Example 1:
Laura took out ‘Winnie the Witch’ to read to the group
James: “I have that book at home”
Amy: “Me too, mummy read it last night to me”
Adam: “And me I have it too”

Example 2:
Helen: “Sam has brought this in (shows them a toy windmill flower) does anyone know what it is?”
Adam: “It’s a flower”
Ian: “It blows in the wind”
James: “It’s a pretend flower it moves when it’s windy”

Example 3:
Helen is back from holiday and tells the children about it.
Helen: “I had a lovely holiday; I went away in my caravan does anyone know what a caravan is?”
Amy: “It’s a big car but you can sleep in it”

6.6.2. The use of questioning to structure learning

Questions formed an important part of the nursery room pedagogic discourse and socialization, particularly at Little People and Busy Buzzy Bees where practitioners used them to guide children’s thinking and ideas. The examples below illustrate the practitioners using challenging questions to develop children’s learning.

Example 1: Field Notes from Little People:

Jane (practitioner) and a group of children were playing outside with remote control Bee called ‘Busy’. Jane draws a rectangular box with chalk.

Jane: “We want busy to stay on the line, Justin which button do you think will make him go forward? Think about the way you would walk if you were Busy”

Jane: “Kim which way do you think we need to make him go, forwards or backwards?

Kim: “Forwards”

Jane: “Oh now (Busy is at the end of the long straight line) Rhianna which way now? Forward, backwards…”

Example 2: Helen guiding children’s learning through questioning at Busy Buzzy Bees

Helen: “What day is it today? Yesterday was Monday and tomorrow is Wednesday so today is?”

Amy: “I went to gymnastics yesterday”

James: “I got to ‘Little Ninjas’ tonight”

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Helen: “Right James what night do you go to ‘Little Ninjas’? Can we remember our song….Its Sunday and its Monday, its Tuesday and its Wednesday……Which day do we need to put our hands up to?”

James, Amy and Adam: “Tuesday”

In example one at *Little People*, Jane uses questions to firstly evaluate children’s knowledge but secondly to build up shared experiences in the classroom. Through strong framing over the pacing and sequence of knowledge, Jane uses relevant daily experiences for the children (‘think about the way you would walk?’) to help them get the right answer and develop as an individual learner in accordance with the EYFS requirement; “children learn by leading their own play, and by taking part in play which is guided by adults” (EYFS 2012, p. 6). Similarly, at *Busy Buzzy Bees*, Helen’s questioning again evaluates and consolidates children’s knowledge but also requires them to use their knowledge from home and nursery to answer the questions. She tries to link the day of the week to James activities at home to help him remember, illustrating strong control over the pace, selection and sequence of knowledge in her attempt to encourage/guide him to think independently.

This use of questioning, particularly evident during ‘work play’ to encourage children to develop as autonomous learners, is indicative of what Bernstein termed a ‘therapeutic’ pedagogic identity. Bernstein proposed a fourfold pedagogic identity typology comprising retrospective, prospective, decentred (market) and decentred (therapeutic) pedagogic identities. Each typology constitutes;

> ‘an official arena … for the projecting of pedagogic identities, through the process of educational reform. Any one educational reform can then be regarded as the outcome of the struggle to produce and institutionalize particular identities’ (Bernstein, 2000, p. 66).

Retrospective and prospective pedagogic identities are generated by centring resources managed by the State. Retrospective identities are restricted, ‘shaped by national religious, cultural and grand narratives of the past’ (Bernstein, 2000, p. 66). Prospective identities are neo conservative, constructed to deal with cultural, economic and technology changes (Bernstein, 2000). Both can be found in the official discourse of the education system. In
opposition, the two decentred pedagogic identities are likely to be generated by institutions with some autonomy over their resources, e.g. ‘Decentred resources are drawn from local contexts or local discourses and focus upon the present, whereas centred discourses focus upon the past’ (Bernstein, 2000, p. 66).

The structure and child centred nature of each setting, evident through the weak classification and framing of ‘physical and academic play’, illustrates ‘therapeutic pedagogic’ identity construction, a process in which;

“... the concept of self is crucial and the self is regarded as a personal project. It is an internally regulated construction and can be relatively independent of external signifiers” (Bernstein, 2000, p. 73).

A therapeutic pedagogic identity creates the appearance that the child is a self-regulating subject, but as Graham (2007) suggests, this is only an illusion of freedom, and children are guided by practitioners to achieve the desired pedagogic identity. As Sriprakash (2011, p. 9) points out, “the therapeutic turn individualises students’ success or failure in school, leaving the relations and contexts which produce social hierarchies and inequality unchallenged”.

From the structure and culture of the three settings, illustrated through C and F, and discourse, it is clear that through the structuring of teaching and learning, practitioners enact different pedagogic identities on children across the settings. What qualities an independent, ‘good’ child should display differs. For example, as table 5 suggested Busy Buzzy Bees valued academic play over other forms and practitioners’ differentiated children with reference to their perception of each individual’s ability to meet these EYFS criteria. This affected their transactions with them, for example, they gave extra attention to those children they felt were ‘more able’;

Helen: “So when we do activities like talk about camouflage with the children, I only talk about it with the more able ones, not all the children, with the others I just briefly mention it. I mean I have high expectations, if they are too low, not all the children are challenged, with some children (points to two boys) they already do a lot of work at home, so for me guidelines are for what children should achieve as a minimum.”
Similarly, at Little People, those children deemed ‘more able’ (determined by practitioner’s perceptions of the child) were given more opportunities to display their learning and knowledge. These children embodied a therapeutic identity; they tended to be those who routinely engaged in ‘academic play’ rather than ‘physical play’ during ‘choosing time’. They gained more freedom and opportunities to interact with practitioners compared to those who could not (or would not) display such traits;

Jane: “Right Duane, you have played all morning on the soft play (i.e. one element of ‘physical play’, see p.122), it is time for others to have a go. Justin and Callum have done lots of drawing this morning and been really good boys, come off and let them have a go. Boys (directed at Callum and Justin), how many are allowed on the soft play at once?”

Callum: “Four, one, two, three…” (counts the children currently on it)

Jane: “Well done, so when Duane gets off, and you and Justin get on how many will there be?”

Justin: “Four”

The impact of practitioners’ structuring of time and the subsequent value placed on certain types of play, will be explored further in relation to children’s subjectivity in chapter eight.

6.7. Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the different contexts in which children experience EYL and the dominant forms of play and discourse in each setting. There were clear differences between each of the three settings. It was evident that children from Busy Buzzy Bees brought with them to the EYL context the benefits of their families’ social and economic capital in the form of books, experiences, and enrichment activities. Practitioners recognised the elaborate code children brought with them and this knowledge was both validated by and valued within the nursery setting. Across the three settings, various play forms were experienced differently in relation to space, time and discourse. During ‘work play’, there was evidence of performance pedagogy, with strong boundary maintenance over space and time and control firmly with practitioners, although nuanced differences were observed. At Little Stars, practitioners did not expect children to bring the same level of knowledge from home as did those at Busy Buzzy Bees; instead, the focus was on developing children’s behaviour and
listening skills through stories. In contrast, the ‘academic and physical play’ observed, adopted a child centred-competence model with weak classification and framing across the three contexts. Again differences were evident across the settings in relation to the amount of time children choose to spend on these forms of play and the value given to them by practitioners. For example, at Little People and Little Stars, ‘physical play’ was given more time compared to Busy Buzzy Bees where ‘academic play’ was valued more by practitioners and parents alike. Further differences between the settings, were observed in the practitioner-child interactions.

At Little People and Little Stars, practitioners concerned themselves with children’s social behaviour, spending considerable time encouraging children to behave through the use of regulative discourse. In contrast, at Busy Buzzy Bees, practitioners implicitly assumed children would share the behaviour patterns of the nursery as they did, and therefore socialisation was not a central concern, rather practitioners used regulative and instructional discourse to ensure children were ‘school’ ready. In terms then, of social class and inequalities, it is clear those children at Busy Buzzy Bees, due to the continuity between nursery and home knowledge and behavioural expectations (C-), arrived at nursery with a more developed understanding of social expectations and realised the value placed on ‘academic play’ over other forms of play. Consequently, they are socialised into a state of ‘school readiness’ both at home and nursery. In contrast, children at Little Stars and Little People through nursery are socialised into ways of behaving in the moment rather than focusing protectively on ‘school readiness’. Although given the same opportunities to choose ‘academic play’, children do not realise its value, and practitioners do not have the same expectations that children will/should engage in this form of play when compared to Busy Buzzy Bees practitioners. How these initial observations around social class differences play out in the EYL setting is further explored in relation to health discourse, in chapter seven.

Across all three settings, therapeutic identities were valued through the weak knowledge boundaries established during ‘academic and physical play’. This therapeutic identity can be generalised across the settings, however, how ‘ability’ is valued and recognised and how this influences children’s identities in the eyes of practitioners will be elaborated in chapter eight. The next chapter, focuses on the classification and framing of health discourse in each setting, exploring how data was analysed in relation to C and F and how children’s prior knowledge influenced the way practitioners’ reconceptualised health discourse.
Chapter Seven: Health and Early Years Learning

7.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on health knowledge, social class and cultural reproduction within the early years, addressing three primary research questions (see below and chapter one, p.13) while looking specifically at how health discourse is framed by EYFS policy imperatives and subsequently how practitioners across socially and culturally different EYL settings recontextualise health knowledge. The analyses illustrate how the different organisational and curriculum structures, pedagogical interactions and transactions within each EYL setting cultivate distinctive relationships to health knowledge. These relationships in turn play their part in social class and cultural reproduction. Focusing on the pedagogic device (PD), classification and framing, the following research questions are addressed:

- How is physical activity and health designed, defined, constructed and experienced as pedagogy in EYL settings?

- What role might gender, class and culture (ethnicity) play in children’s early years learning opportunities?

- Are social class inequalities reflected within Early Years Learning?

Subsequent discussion chapters will address other related research questions.

Previous research (e.g., Ball, Vincent and Kemp, 2004; Ball and Vincent, 2007, and chapter two) has explored several aspects of EYL (including parents’ investments in, attitudes towards, and choices of childcare), however, few sociological studies have researched the nature of social transitions and transactions within EYL and how these may differ between settings in relation to social class and culture. EYL contexts, as with all other educational settings, are complex assemblages of several discourses (i.e. academic, cultural, social, moral) that together are constructed by and play their part in constructing practitioner and child subjectivities. The focus of this chapter, however, will be largely upon health discourse, mindful that the knowledge and transactions which this discourse effects cannot be adequately understood outside of its relationship to all other discourses prevailing within each setting. Firstly, the chapter considers the principles of the PD in relation to the nature of EYL and the role of health discourse within EYL policy. Moving on, it addresses the curriculum enacted in each setting, exploring through classification and framing, practitioners’ enactment
of health messages and addressing the ‘classed’ nature of practitioners’ recontextualisation of health discourse within EYL.

7.2. Principles of the Pedagogic Device... Early Years Learning and health

There are several reasons for the renewed interest in early childhood in England and elsewhere over recent decades, as outlined in chapter two. The EYFS sits within a wider neo-liberal education agenda aimed at transforming both the structure and content of educational provision in England, e.g., through the development of free schools and academies and a ‘back to basics’ curriculum (Hatcher and Jones 2011). Rather than development and learning only taking place within the EYL settings, practitioners are now encouraged to direct parents on how to develop their child at home, As we saw in chapter two, within the current EYFS Framework (DfE, 2012), play is essential for children’s development, building their confidence as they ‘learn to explore, to think about problems, and relate to others’ (EYFS Statutory Framework, 2012, p. 6 and chapter six). Specifically, with regard to physical development, the prime areas of focus are;

I. Moving and Handling – children’s ability to show good control and coordination in small and large movement, moving confidently in a range of ways.

II. Health and self-care – children know the importance of good health of physical exercise and a healthy diet and talk about ways to keep healthy and safe.

(EYFS, 2012, p. 5-8)

Within this framework, EYL settings have been identified as key sites to address health issues by teaching children from an early age about ‘the importance for good health of physical activity and a healthy diet’ (EYFS, 2012, p. 8). The realisation of these health imperatives is set out in relation to; (i) age (e.g. by the age of 3, children should be ‘drinking well without spilling’, Early Education, 2012, p. 26); (ii) play, (child and practitioner led); and (iii) in relation to the following three key themes (EYFS, 2012, p. 3);

• A unique child
• Positive relationships

• Enabling environments

The EYL framework then brings to each EYL setting a complex set of expectations, constituting what Bernstein (1996, p. 25) would refer to as the ‘pedagogic device’; regulating principles (distributive, recontextualising and evaluative rules) that underpin and help shape the context and content of learning. Together they invoke an ideal imaginary child (see below and chapter two, p.58). The pedagogic device (see chapter four for a more detailed discussion) provides an analytical framework for understanding how discourses and practices within EYL settings reproduce inequality through the selective regulation and distribution of different forms of knowledge, forms of identity and consciousness. The PD explains the regulation of consciousness in EYL settings as an extension of socio economic power relations that exist outside EYL settings. It demonstrates how knowledge (official or local) is converted into pedagogic communication which in turn acts on the potential meanings made available for transmission and acquisition (Singh, 2002). The pedagogic device works through three hierarchically inter-related rules. Distributive rules act to distribute different forms of knowledge thus creating different orientations to meanings, for example, chapter six explores how different forms of play are distributed in relation to time in each setting. Recontextualising rules regulate the formation of specific pedagogic discourse (a discourse which has been reassembled so that it may no longer represent the original) and evaluative rules which constitute specific pedagogic practice (i.e. what is seen as valid in terms of both context knowledge (instructional) and regulative text (Singh, 2002). The mediation and realisation of knowledge by practitioners in the EYL settings studied in this research and the consequences of such processes for practitioners’ enactment and embodiment of health discourse is the foci of subsequent analyses.

7.3. Theoretical concepts used to analysis the data

Significant attention has been given to the way in which health discourse has impacted the lives of young people (Burrows, 2008, 2010; Evans et al, 2008; Evans and Rich, 2011) utilising the work of Foucault (see chapter four). This chapter builds on the important contribution of Foucault’s understandings of health knowledge, governmentality and technologies of the self by providing further insight into the detail of knowledge transmission and the construction of pedagogy in society and schools. It does so with the use of Bernstein’s concepts: restricted and elaborate codes, pedagogic device, classification and
framing will be central to the analyses of such processes (see chapter five for examples of this analysis).

7.3.1. Classification (C) and Framing (F)

In Bernstein’s (1977, p. 28) view, ‘how educational knowledge is selected, distributed, transmitted and evaluated by society reflects the distribution of power and principles of social control’. Pedagogic social contexts are therefore defined by specific power and control relations between subjects, discourses and agencies/spaces. Bernstein uses the concepts classification and framing to analyse pedagogic contexts and transactions within them.

Classification refers to ‘the degree of boundary maintenance between contents’ (Bernstein, 1973, p. 205), while framing determines the structure of pedagogy (the message system) (see chapter four). Two aspects of the boundary relationship which framing explores (Bernstein, 1977) are of interest here. Firstly, framing refers to the degree of control the practitioner and child possess over the selection, organisation, pacing and timing of knowledge transmitted and received in the pedagogical relationship and secondly, to the boundary relationship between the everyday knowledge that practitioners and children bring to EYL settings and the educational knowledge transmitted in their pedagogical relationships. We can, therefore, consider the strength of boundaries between every day and educational (health) knowledge and variations in the strength of frames regulating access to the two forms of knowledge as they feature in EYL settings.

Understanding how children within different (in relation to funding and catchment area) EYL settings construct and embody health knowledge requires analysis of pedagogic discourse as a set of rules which regulate the transmission and acquisition of health knowledge. Pedagogic discourse refers to ‘what’ is transmitted (instructional discourse) and ‘how’ it is transmitted (regulative discourse). Within the context of EYL, practitioners distribute knowledge and evaluate children’s development in relation to what they are expected to have acquired. For example, across all three settings, children were expected to know how to share toys (and were instructed how to ‘share’ if they didn't – i.e., regulative discourse), and count up to ten (instructional discourse – although expectations varied across the three settings and children (discussed in detail below). The use of criteria (e.g. being told, ‘we all need to have kind hands at nursery’) made children aware of what was considered legitimate knowledge and means of enacting it within the setting. However, children’s level of achievement in relation to this legitimate text relied on their knowledge, understanding and acquisition (within the
home learning environment and EYL setting) of realisation and recognition rules. These are the principles which permit distinctions between contexts and lead to the correct production of texts (e.g., language and behaviour) within different contexts. Recognition rules create the means to distinguish between contexts and therefore recognise what constitutes knowledge and context while realisation rules regulate the creation and production of specialised relations within texts. For example within an EYL context, children may recognise fruit as being a healthy snack but may not be able to realise why it is healthy. At the micro interactional level of the EYL room, the transmission and reproduction of pedagogic discourse is realized through pedagogic practice as defined by the distributive, recontextualisation and evaluative rules of the PD.

Rose (2004) and Morais (2002) suggest that evaluative\textsuperscript{18} criteria are central to identifying pedagogic practice which promotes success in schooling especially for the ‘working classes’, since evaluative criteria specify the requirements for children’s production of legitimate school text. In light of this, the evaluation criteria have been expanded in (table 13.1) to provide examples of how control might be characterised within EYL settings whilst children are exploring the concept of health.

\textit{Table 13: Discursive rules; evaluation criteria}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>F++</th>
<th>F+</th>
<th>F-</th>
<th>F--</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evaluative criteria are clear and explicit to the child. Children have no control over the criteria – they are set out by EYFS framework.</td>
<td>Evaluative criteria are less clear and explicit to the child.</td>
<td>Evaluative criteria are unclear and rarely made known to the child.</td>
<td>Evaluative criteria are ambiguous and unknown to the child. The criteria are fluid and negotiable.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{18} Acknowledging that evaluation within normally refers to areas of the curriculum which are accessed formally, within EYFS, children are assessed on all aspects of learning – regulative and instructional, not through ‘formal exams’, but continual observation and learning journeys in preparation for their EYFS profile – The profile describes each child’s attainment against the 17 early learning goals together with a short narrative about their learning characteristics.
Classification and framing determine specific modalities of code and it is these modalities which regulate specific pedagogic practices. Classification regulates the recognition rules which at the level of the acquirer, allow individuals to recognise the speciality of the context they are in. Therefore changes in the strength of classification (+/-) impacts on the recognition rule. Framing shapes the form of pedagogic communication, with different strengths (+/-) impacting on realisation rules, which allow the acquirer to speak, ‘breathe in’ legitimate text. For Bernstein (1990), text production, in a given context depends on the possession of specific coding orientation to that context. In other words, children need both recognition and realisation rules to produce legitimate text (and act ‘appropriately’) within EYL contexts. Previous research (Morais et al, 1992) has suggested that children may acquire recognition rules but may not be able to realise this legitimate text for example, when asked which is healthier/better for you, sitting watching TV or running around, a child may be able to say running (recognition) but may not be able to explain why (realisation). As mentioned above, children’s ability to acquire the realisation rules of their EYL setting may be related to the continuity or lack of continuity between family and EYL setting codes and pedagogic practices. Bernstein argues (1990) that schools feature elaborate orientations, when there is continuity or no interruption between the learning of the home and the learning of the EYL or school, then children are able to acquire the necessary recognition and realisation rules to facilitate elaborate orientations to learning.
While space prohibits further articulation of the nuanced development of these specific concepts in Bernstein’s work (see Morais et al, 2004), throughout this chapter use of the terms will draw on Bernstein’s initial conceptualisation of codes and social structure. He argued that different social structures generate different and distinctive linguistic codes, and these codes regulate discourse; ‘every time the child speaks or listens, the social structure of which he [or she] is part is reinforced and his [or her] social identity is constrained’ (Bernstein, 1964, p.57). Therefore, these linguistic codes, e.g., the ‘elaborated’ (of the ‘middle class’) and ‘restricted’ (of the ‘working class’) impact on children’s access to knowledge. To understand transactions within EYL settings, however, we must first understand how those in which they occur are shaped by classification and framing in relation to space, time and language.

7.4. Shaping Subjectivity and the acquisition of elaborate codes

7.4.1. Policy Mediations: distribution of knowledge

Following Bernstein I now want to consider the social transactions in each of the settings, that characterised teaching and learning as expressions of power (classification) and control (framing) relations between subjects, discourses and spaces. In all three settings the regulating principles of EYL (i.e. play, see chapter six) were mediated through practitioners’ interpretations of features of children’s families and the knowledge that children brought to the setting. These mediations shaped transactions within each setting giving rise not only to different emphases on, but also relationships between each form of play. Children in each setting enjoyed varying lengths of access to different forms of play (see chapter six), e.g., those at Busy Buzzy Bees (essentially an environment catering for ‘middle class children’) experienced far more ‘academic play’ than others. Differences, most apparent in time allocations given to ‘physical and academic play’ across settings, are significant because of their potential impact on children’s understandings of knowledge and subjectivity. Such differences (e.g. the distribution/allocation of ‘academic play’ across all three settings) were clearly intended to influence their construction of knowledge and ‘school readiness’. The significance of such differences in classification (boundary insulations between forms of play) and framing (control over them) are discussed below in more detail with respect to one aspect of learning within EYL, health discourse.

7.4.2. Health discourse in EYL as Pedagogic text
The EYFS framework invokes play as the primary medium through which learning takes places in EYL. However health knowledge in each of the three research settings did not materialise in this way. Instead, health knowledge was embedded in the culture and ethos of the setting while occupying a specific space clearly separated (i.e., strongly classified) from all other curricular contexts and learning activities.

*Image A – the ‘milk bar’ at Little Stars

*Image B – the healthy eating wall behind the milk bar

*Image C – the behind the snack area at Little People*
The above images illustrate the specific space (the ‘milk bar’) that health knowledge occupied at *Little Stars* and was representative of similar spaces in *Busy Buzzy Bees* and *Little People*. Health space (the ‘milk bar’) served as a location expressing a specific discourse and purpose as a snack area ‘incidentally’ reinforcing healthy choices, such as eating the ‘right food’, to children. This reinforcement occurred not only through each setting’s choice of snack but also via incidental pedagogical transactions between practitioners and children. On one level, health discourse was a constant in children’s lives. Pictures on walls, snack on the tables assembled in relation to other discourses aimed at developing the ‘independent child’ invoked and imagined by the EYFS. However, on another level, it was also compartmentalised and strongly bounded from all other curricula and, in this respect, was afforded less importance. On the surface, all appeared to have access to the same health discourse but when we look at the settings in detail, there were differences between them. With these transactions in mind, how then might we begin to make sense of the notion and nature of health/education in these contexts? Focusing on classification, we can explore the relationship between discourses, space and agents. Within the EYL context, for example, we can explore:

- The boundary strength between different forms of play (subject knowledge)
- The boundary knowledge between specific EYL/official knowledge (i.e. when you do exercise you get hot), and everyday knowledge.
- The strength of the boundary between spaces used for different types of play and how practitioners and children negotiate the use of space

The above conceptual categories offer a starting point for discussing pedagogy but needed to be refined further when contextualised and brought closer to the data. An ‘external language of description’ (Bernstein, 1990) was therefore developed which allowed both for the structuring and analysis of data. Table 8 illustrates the indicators developed for the classification of health knowledge in each setting. The Bernsteinian notation of C++ signifies the strongest classification (boundary maintenance) between categories and C - -the weakest. We might then first look at the inter-discursive relations between health knowledge and common sense knowledge and secondly, the classification of health knowledge and physical activity.
Table 87: The inter discursive relations between health knowledge and common sense knowledge (see chapter four)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>C++</th>
<th>C+</th>
<th>C -</th>
<th>C - -</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High level of</td>
<td>Some level of</td>
<td>Low level of</td>
<td>Very low level of</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>abstraction</td>
<td>abstraction</td>
<td>abstraction</td>
<td>abstraction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialised</td>
<td>Some specialised</td>
<td>Health knowledge is</td>
<td>All content is</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>language</td>
<td>language used but</td>
<td>mostly focused on</td>
<td>familiar to learners and</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>used.</td>
<td>still adopts local</td>
<td>local knowledge</td>
<td>grounded in their</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>和个人 knowledge as</td>
<td>familiar to learners.</td>
<td>everyday lives</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>reference points</td>
<td>Very little</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>specialised/abstract</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>knowledge/language</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health knowledge is clearly demarcated/very different from the everyday experiences of learners</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 14 (below) provides an overview of the classification of health knowledge and physical activity across all three settings. The strength of the boundary maintenance was explored using the classificatory categories discussed in table 8.

Table 14: The classification of health knowledge and physical activity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Column number</th>
<th>Busy Buzzy Bees</th>
<th>Little People</th>
<th>Little Stars</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Knowledge boundaries between home and EYL setting</td>
<td>C-</td>
<td>C+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Knowledge boundaries between common sense and privileged health knowledge</td>
<td>C+</td>
<td>C-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Knowledge boundaries between work play and</td>
<td>C+</td>
<td>C+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The analysis below explores some of these classifications in more detail; in particular focusing on columns 1 and 2 (the other columns have been discussed in chapter six).

7.4.3. Boundaries between school, family and ‘lay’ or ‘popular’ knowledge (table 14, columns 1 and 2)

Across all three settings, visual images were used to reinforce messages about healthy choices; the importance of drinking water and eating ‘good’ foods, such as fruit, cheese and crackers. However, the voice of ‘health’ varied significantly across settings.

Images D, E and F: healthy discourses reinforced throughout each setting
When practitioners in each of these settings were asked ‘what do you think children know and understand about health?’ several referred to children’s home life as having greater influence on children's knowledge than what they are taught at nursery. This was particularly so at Little People and Busy Buzzy Bees; for example (examples 1-3 are taken from Busy Buzzy Bees),

Example 1:

Researcher: “What do you think the children know and understand about health?”

Alice (at Busy Buzzy Bees): “I think it’s quite in the news, I think quite a few parents kind of have a bit of an influence now, it’s kind of, you know, sometimes depending on what they eat and stuff they’ll sort of make comments about whether it’s healthy or not healthy, so I think they are quite aware.”

Example 2:

James: “I’m going ‘Little Ninjas’ today, I need to eat this fruit don’t I Helen, so do exercises? Mummy said so”

Helen: “Yes James, eat up all your banana, it’s good for us isn’t it….what are your favourite fruits?”

Example 3:

Amy is showing Helen what she learnt at gymnastics (tuck jump, forward roll)

Adam (watching Amy): “That's exercise, I can do exercise, running and football….mummy does exercise, it’s good for us isn’t it”

Helen: “Yes Adam it is, would you like to show me some exercises?”

Adam touches his toes with his hands

At Busy Buzzy Bees, boundaries between school and home knowledge were weak (C-). As illustrated in the above examples, the children engage in activities at home which provide them with the knowledge the EYL setting encourages children to have and develop, and, as such, there was no interruption between the elaborated codes of the EYL setting and those of the home. Learning appeared to be contiguous and context independent showing little sign of
discontinuity between home and nursery. This is in direct contrast with the other two settings. At Little Stars, for example, Mrs Hunter (practitioner) commented:

“We encourage them to eat healthy at snack time, we take the opportunity at the snack bar to talk to them but it’s a bit much, it’s difficult when it is not their culture at home”
(Mrs Hunter)

Here, because ‘healthy’ eating (defined by Mrs Hunter in terms of eating fruit and vegetables) is perceived as being unimportant within children’s homes, practitioners found it difficult to routinely address health matters. Consequently, Mrs Hunter, like others in the setting, questioned the need to raise healthy eating issues with children so young.

7.5. Space, time and discourse: the coding of framing of health discourse at Busy Buzzy Bees

In this first transaction, located in Busy Buzzy Bees, Laura (the practitioner) was observing children at snack time. She stood near the snack table, making sure the children ate their snack, listening to their conversation around ‘what is healthy’. She entered the conversation, asking children questions and challenging their knowledge;

Amy is telling Tom how milk comes from cows (field note)

Tom: “Yes but not all milk…not my milk”

Laura: “Yes you are both right, now who is not drinking their milk? Who knows what milk is for? (Question opens to the whole group)”

Amy: “Makes your bones strong”

Laura: “Yes it makes your bones nice and strong…”

Amy: “And your teeth”

Laura: “Yes and it makes your teeth strong, that’s very good Amy”

In this extract, the coding of the evaluation criteria was strong (F++); Laura listened to children’s conversation and then questioned their knowledge and in the process assessing their understanding as a group. Laura controlled both the transaction (albeit initiated by the children’s discourse) and the nature of the knowledge to be transmitted. This strong framing and classification of knowledge through Laura’s control and questioning was indicative of an elaborated code; children were encouraged to develop and demonstrate understandings that
were not context dependent but universalistic, progressing beyond the ‘technique’ of ‘yes milk is healthy’, to discuss the reasons why.

Another example of elaborated ‘health’ knowledge at Busy Buzzy Bees could be seen as Helen (practitioner) observed children at snack time and listened to them talking about what they did at the weekend. James was telling Tom and Ian about going to a local forest park with his family. Helen entered the conversation asking James what he did there and then encouraged others to demonstrate their knowledge of physical activity:

James: “When I when to the forest, we got the train there and then walked and ran through the trees…and… we saw the water wheel and poured water on it”

Tom and Ian: “I’ve been there too…”

Ian: “Did you go on the train James?”

Helen: “What did you do at the forest James? Did mummy and daddy go too?”

James: “We when [sic] walking and running and played in the park”

Helen: “Very good, I walked into work today because it is lovely weather and it's good to exercise…did anyone else do any exercise this weekend?”

Amy: “I went gymnastics [sic] yesterday”

Matthew: “I played football in my garden”

Helen: “Very good, does anyone know why it’s good to do exercise?”

Ian: “It’s good for you, to run around because it’s fun”

Chloe: “My daddy goes gym to get big muscles”

Similarly, in this extract, the coding of evaluation criteria is strong (F++); Helen listened to the children’s conversation and then questioned their knowledge, in the process assessing their understandings as a group. She controlled both the transaction (again, albeit initiated by the children’s discourse) and the nature of the knowledge to be transmitted. The dynamic, between the strong framing and strong classification (strong knowledge boundary between common sense and privileged health knowledge) is again suggestive of an elaborated code. Children were encouraged to develop and demonstrate understandings that were not context
bound but universalistic, going beyond the mundane knowledge ‘of exercise is good for you’ (or indeed, just fun and necessary to get from A to B) to discuss possible reasons why.

Children were expected to learn to interpret appropriate and desirable health behaviour in ways similar to that which they were held to encounter at home where they were socialised in ‘the school way’ or, in the vernacular of the practitioners, made ‘school ready’. As Antonio Gransci (1971, p. 31) wrote, some;

‘children find in their family a preparation, a prolongation and a completion of school life; they ‘breath in’ as the expression goes, a whole quantity of notions and attitudes which facilitate the educational process properly speaking.’

7.5.1. The coding of framing of health discourse at Little People and Little Stars

In contrast, at Little People, practitioners rarely talked to children about eating ‘healthy foods’ or exercise. They believed that healthy eating was not something that was promoted at home. Stacey practitioner at Little People, for example, suggested;

“We try to after dinner, we will ask what the children have had, with McDonalds just at the corner, lots of them have that, some are still eating it when they come in… it’s quick and easy for parents! We don’t say McDonalds is bad but we try to tell them other things are better. So if they have had a sandwich, we praise them, say oh that’s good and encourage it… But it’s hard, sometimes it depends on the child and what the parents let them eat, if they let them eat what they want or if they encourage them to eat healthy. Like at snack we eat fruit because it’s healthier, lots of children don’t like it when we have tomato and cucumber but we try to say it’s good for you. I suppose it’s hard to understand healthy.”

Similarly, John and Jane (practitioners) suggest that health eating is not a priority for many of the children at home:

“For some of the children, snack (at 10:30) might be the first food they have for the day; many come to nursery without breakfast. So we give them healthy foods at snack, like fruit and milk and cheese. They won’t even understand the word healthy.”

In this context there was discontinuity and interruption between home and ‘official’ school knowledge (C+) with regard to diet and health. Where there is a strong boundary between family and school knowledge, in the case of regulative discourse, children are less likely to
become socialised in ways that encourage readiness for formal schooling where ‘elaborate’ health knowledge prevails. They are thus likely to become ‘less able’ to enact the imperatives of contemporary health discourse if and when required to do so in later school life.

At Little People and Little Stars, health discourse tended to focus more on the immediate and specifics, e.g., hygiene and increasing children’s technical skills of independence for carrying out the act of drinking milk. For example, during snack time at Little People, the following interaction was a common occurrence;

Suzie: “I want some milk please”

Stacey (practitioner): “We need to pour our own drinks, you can do it…Oh Liam you must be careful that’s the second time you have spilt your milk, be careful when you pour”

Similar observations were made at Little Stars;

As a group of children sit down to have snack, Ms Smith checked they have washed their hands, ‘It’s not nice not to wash our hands before snack, I’m glad you remembered to wash your hands’.

This is copied by the children as other’s join them at snack. When Rebecca joins the table, Gillian tells her ‘Must wash hands’

Both extracts feature strong framing (F+) of the evaluation criteria. The children were made fully aware of what was expected of them but offered no further explanation as to why it was important to wash hands prior to eating or pour their own drink. Furthermore, when presented with the opportunity to discuss healthy food choices, practitioners in each setting focussed on asking children if they liked certain foods rather than reinforcing or elaborating messages about other ‘healthy’ choices. At Little Stars for example:

Lola and Kelly are seated at the snack table eating apples

Sally (practitioner) approaches and asks: “Is that nice girls? Do you like the tomato?”

Kelly: “No”

Lola: “Just the apple I eat [sic]”

Sally: “Apple is nice isn’t it; sometimes they can be a bit …mmm…sour can’t they”
The evaluative criteria in this extract suggest weak framing (F- -); Sally did not make any attempt to elaborate the discourse, say, by making reference to tomatoes being a ‘healthy food choice’, opting instead to focus solely on the girls’ expressed likes and dislikes. Weak framing, together with the weak knowledge boundary between common sense and privileged health knowledge, is suggestive of a restricted code, as practitioners appear disinclined to regulate, question or elaborate children’s lay understandings.

Together the above examples begin to highlight the importance of the ‘home learning environment’ (HLE) in practitioner discourse in relation to young children’s development of ‘health’ knowledge. Health discourse was mediated somewhat differently by practitioners, those at *Busy Buzzy Bees* endeavoured to build on and enhance what was taken to be that children already knew and responded to, illustrating elaborated code at work. In comparison those at *Little People* and *Little Stars* reacted to what they perceived, correctly or otherwise, as being absent (a pathology) in children imputed to lack of ‘correct’ health discourse at home.

Definitions of health and health promotion were simultaneously constructed and consolidated in relation to practitioner expectations of the social class intake of their settings. At *Busy Buzzy Bees* practitioners considered children to be already aware of ‘healthy’ and ‘unhealthy’ distinctions by virtue of their middle class backgrounds and hence focussed on elaborating and enriching children’s knowledge of dominant health discourse around foods and exercise. In contrast, practitioners’ at *Little People* focussed on children lacking appropriate health knowledge and the making of poor lifestyle choices at home e.g.,

“We don’t say McDonalds is bad but we try to tell them other things are better. So if they have had a sandwich, we praise them” (Stacey, practitioner).

Here health was being read through what was considered to be absent from children’s working class homes. Practitioners at *Little People* and *Little Stars* thus take on the role of providing ‘compensatory’ education. The nature of the health knowledge transmitted in each of these contexts further consolidated, rather than eroded, extant ‘restricted codes’ as we see above.
7.6. Conclusion

The above analysis has begun to characterise the nature of body pedagogy across three different EYL settings and illustrate the types of knowledge and meanings around health exchanged in each of them. However, the data highlight that some children, predominately those from middle class families who attend Busy Buzzy Bees, were expected to and are considered able to display more elaborate understandings of health discourse in contexts where it is also assumed that their families are investing heavily in their child’s physical culture and development outside ‘school’. Practitioners make this elaborate code available in the setting, and the next chapter will explore how children use the recognition and realisation rules to acquire this elaborate code. Busy Buzzy Bees’ classification and framing modalities encourage children to go beyond the common sense thinkable (C+ between knowledge boundaries). For Bernstein (1977, p. 9) ‘strong frames are more likely to produce a reproduction of previous knowledge on the part of the student than encourage the student to go beyond what has been’. Therefore, weak framing provides children with the opportunity to choose, in the hope that they will choose correctly, within this process of internalising the rules and expectations of elaborate codes within their social setting. As a result of the C and F dynamics within Busy Buzzy Bees, and perhaps most importantly, the C- between EYL and home knowledge; children who attend, are engaged in the process of developing elaborate orientations towards the body and health knowledge. Although relatively space restricted, these are transferable and can be displayed in multiple contexts (e.g. home and EYL setting and swimming/gymnastics class). These children therefore, are socialised in socially classed environments where play talk is purposeful and outreaching. Enacted policies replicate family life ensuring there is a continuous pedagogy at play.

By contrast, at Little Stars and Little People, health policy is enacted and embodied differently, in and through a restricted discourse, reflecting the assumed (pathological) backgrounds of children within the setting and wider community. Within both of these settings, the nature of knowledge transmission from common sense to specific health knowledge, is strongly classified; practitioners do not encourage children to go beyond the ‘expected’ (e.g. I like this, but don’t like that) knowledge of food and health. In these settings children do not necessarily arrive with and so are not routinely able to display ‘appropriate’ health knowledge, which requires parental investment (financial, time, knowledge). Consequently, at Little Stars, practitioners understandably spend time developing the ‘basic’ physical skills the children require for formal education rather than ‘privileged’ health
knowledge. This is not to suggest that children who attend *Little Stars* or *Little People* are less able to display the ‘right’ form of embodiment or elaborated understandings for participation in ‘officially privileged’ physical activity and health, rather that the children who attend *Busy Buzzy Bees* have more opportunities to develop, refine and display their ‘elaborate’ sense of embodiment due to the weak C and F of the family environment they experience. As Ball (2009) argues, many early years’ influences lie outside the range of public policy and are greatly associated with the family dynamics, parenting and home environment. However, it is important to note that it has not been the intention of this chapter, or any other to infer or assume that practitioners at *Little People* and *Little Stars* are only actively encouraging a restricted code. Rather it is acknowledged that practitioners’ are reactive, responding to the knowledge and manifest behaviours children bring with them to the EYL setting. This chapter has barely begun to illustrate how the body ‘pedagogies of EYL influence, shape and ‘class’ the corporeal realities of young children and their developing sense of self. In the following discussion chapter, the concept of subjectivity and the Corporeal Device (see chapter four) are therefore elaborated, specifically looking at the ways in which the PD–CD intersect.
Chapter Eight: EYL, Social Class, ‘Ability’ and the Corporeal Device

8.1. Introduction

This chapter centres on how ‘knowledge of the body’ is produced, transmitted and received through various forms of play within Early Years Learning and how this is related to educational, social class and cultural inequalities. It explores how children’s identities are constructed within EYL settings via intersections of the pedagogic and corporeal devices (PD~CD) and how these intersections give shape to policy and pedagogy when mediated through practitioners’ interpretations of children’s families and the knowledge they bring to the setting. Following Bernstein I illustrate how social interactions and transactions that characterise teaching/learning contexts at the micro level of EYL classrooms are expressions of power (classification) and control (framing) relations between subjects, discourses and spaces. The analyses will prompt discussion as to how intersections of the ‘pedagogic’ and ‘corporeal’ device shape the corporeal realities of young children and their developing sense of self in relation to social class and culture. In particular the chapter focuses on the corporeal device (CD) and the realisation and recognition rules of the PD to address the following research questions;

- What role might discourse and language (symbolic and non-symbolic) in EYL settings play in children’s learning and construction of their identities?
- What role might class and culture (ethnicity) play in children’s early years learning opportunities?
- How are bodies ‘constructed’ (by children, practitioners) in ‘physical education’ environments provided within EYL settings?

By addressing these questions, I hope to heighten understandings of the body’s role in cultural reproduction and how the corporeal realities of children influence their sense of position, value and self within EYL and beyond.

Lee and Anderson (2009, p. 181) argue that “questions of identity are especially critical [in education] because the development of education practices and policies are grounded in different ways of understanding who learners are or should be”. They say, how individuals interpret their identities, is shaped by aspects of their social context. How the three settings of this research shape and help to construct children’s ‘identities’ will be discussed in some
detail below. Each setting created a different learning environment, guided by staff beliefs, training, Government policy requirements and the ethos of the setting and its resources. It appeared from observation that the initial bases for categories related to practitioner’s own social and cultural perceptions of how children should behave, past experience with a child’s family (siblings etc.) and the expectations set out by the context in policy documents and the nursery ethos. Furthermore, within each EYL setting, ‘pedagogic sub-cultures’ formed within and between each of the ‘groups/rooms\(^{19}\)’, through the interactions between staff, children and their parents.

Acknowledging that physical activity occurs formally and informally both within the EYL setting and home environment encourages us to see pedagogic practice as a process wider than the practitioner/child relationship. It perhaps goes without saying that the amount of time and money parents invest in their child’s physical activity (physical capital), outside EYL settings influences how their child’s corporeality is recognised and developed by practitioners and, in turn, how children approach ‘physical play’ within EYL. Previous research (see Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977; Ball and Vincent, 2007; Evans and Davies, 2010; Wheeler, 2012; Stirrup, Duncombe and Sandford, 2014; and chapter one) suggests that social class influences parental investment, but how does it influence children’s relationship to their bodies?

8.2. The PD, Play and the EYFS Framework

Although the UK Government (and its agencies and individuals in the Official Recontextualising Field (ORF)) have determined and control (through Ofsted) the content of the EYFS Framework, its emplacement and enactment within EYL settings is also in part regulated and controlled by practitioners. As chapter six revealed, ‘academic play’ was allocated most time within Busy Buzzy Bees. For children at Busy Buzzy Bees legitimate (high status/value) knowledge is therefore, created through and defined mainly as ‘academic play’. By contrast at Little Stars and Little People, legitimate knowledge is created through ‘physical play’. The majority of the children’s time is spent in ‘physical play’. In addition to regulating what counts as ‘legitimate’ knowledge, distributive rules regulate the types of pedagogy enacted within settings. For example, at Busy Buzzy Bees, ‘academic play’ dominates the ‘curriculum’ (see table 9, p. 112), during which time, practitioners often work

\(^{19}\) Settings were split into rooms or groups based on ages, for example, at Busy Buzzy Bees, orange group was for 3-4 year olds, blue group for 2-3 year olds etc…
on a one to one basis with children, to develop their understanding and knowledge. Children were being observed at all times, with a focus on individual development, for example, whilst Tom and James were ‘reading’ ‘The Hungry Caterpillar’ in the reading corner, Helen began to ask the boys questions;

Helen: “Why do you think animals need camouflage?”

Unable to hear response

Helen: “Yes why do think they don’t want to be seen?”

Tom: “Cos they want to be invisible”

Helen: “Yes they don’t want to be eaten by other animals”

Tom: “I wish I was a super hero so I couldn’t see anybody”

Helen: “Ah now there’s a point, right ok if you go like this (close eyes, hands over eyes) and you can’t see anybody, can they see you?”

James: “No”

The interaction above is illustrative of Busy Buzzy Bees child centred, individual pedagogy in action. Helen uses questions to discover the boy’s prior knowledge and guide and develop this knowledge towards more abstract understandings. Instructional discourse dominates the above interaction at Busy Buzzy Bees, preparing the boys for school, encouraging them to move beyond the ‘thinkable’ and to realise what counts as legitimate knowledge and understanding.

At Little People and Little Stars practitioners tended to focus on groups of children rather than individuals. In contrast to Busy Buzzy Bees where children received 1:1 (or 1:2) attention from practitioners during academic and work play, within the other settings, children, particularly during work play, were grouped in relation to ‘ability’ (determined by practitioners interactions with the child and based on their observations of the children’s ability in relation to the EYFS ‘imaginary child’– see chapter three). In these ability groups which consisted of 5/6 children per group, they learnt numeracy and literacy skills, but in a much more practitioner controlled, strongly framed way compared to Busy Buzzy Bees. Field note (1) provides an overview of group work and illustrates the strong framing of the pedagogical transaction in practitioner Claire’s language and actions;
Field note (1) – Group work at Little People

Claire’s group of children are working on numbers, upon entering the room, all sit facing Claire and they take it in turns to say ‘hello’ to everyone. The children sit quietly as Claire picks out four animals (cow, sheep, pig and cat). When asked, the children say what the animal is, the noise it makes and then pass it to each other so they can feel the texture of the animal.

Claire then asks the children to place the four animals in front of the plates she has laid out, “its feeding time!” One at a time, Claire asks the children to feed the animal she has chosen for them, they must sit quietly and listen as she tells them the number of sausages and potatoes to give their animal. Once each child has given the animal their food, Claire counts the food with the child individually and the others sit quietly and listen.

Praise is given to the children even if they get the number wrong e.g. – “Well done Duane, good try”. Once all the children have had their go, they tidy up the equipment, guide the children’s learning. The discourse centres on a story (the farm yard) but does not encourage the children to go beyond the thinkable with all children working at the level of their peers.

8.2.1. The relay of Knowledge

Distributive rules distribute child and practitioner identities, establishing that those children who ‘fit’ practitioners’ expectations are more successful (see below for more discussion on this). The above data illustrate a broad link between distribution and selection of classroom discourse and the distribution and selection of classroom identities (Bernstein, 1999). The recontextualising rule constructs the ‘thinkable’ and the ‘what’ and ‘how’ of pedagogic discourse and is active at several levels (Morais and Neves, 2001). The pedagogic discourse within each setting differed. Children arrived to each setting with different capacities to access instructional and regulative discourses and were therefore differently positioned in relation to the acquisition of pedagogic discourse. A hierarchy of children was formed in each setting each ‘grouping’ differentiated by ‘levels of knowledge’. Those at the top of the hierarchy at Busy Buzzy Bees and Little People readily engaged with instructional discourse. In contrast, the pedagogic relationships between practitioner - child and child- child at Little Stars is characterised by frequent displays of disruptive behaviour. The pedagogic discourse constructed by practitioners at Little Stars focused on inculcating the children into the social
world of the English speaking cultural habits of the practitioners. Practitioners’ planning focused on helping those children who struggled with English to develop their spoken language sufficiently to enable them to achieve when they entered ‘big school’. As the extract below highlights, ‘work play’ for these children at Little Stars focused on ‘practising spoken English’ and learning to recognise words through story books;

Ms Smith to Mrs Jones: “Shall I take these three in with me as well, so they can practice their English? We can have a look at the picture book again”

Mrs Jones: “Yes, right, Eryk, Mohammad and Lola, off you go with Ms Smith, not you two (Rebecca and Priya) you don't need to practice”

In contrast, *Busy Buzzy Bees* was characterised by a lack of ‘disruptive’ behaviour. The pedagogic mode was orientated towards academic and work play to help children become ‘school ready’ in terms of knowledge. The other two settings also aimed to make children school ready but in terms of discipline. During academic and work play explicit instruction was provided in terms of the ‘what’ (instructional discourse) and the ‘how’ (regulative discourse) of learning. For example, during registration;

Laura: “This is nursery school, so preparing you for school so we practice listening because we need to listen to our teacher at school...”

Laura calls the children’s names out, when she gets to Finn, she asks Finn “what letter does your name begin with?”

Finn: “F”

Laura: “Well done, and F is our letter of the week isn’t it…can anyone remember our other words that begin with ‘fff’”

The children put their hand up if they have an answer, Laura asks the children with their hand up;

Finn: “Fish”

Ian: “Fish”

Sam: “Fangs”

Amy: “Fish Fingers”
It is through the distribution of different knowledge forms, recontextualisation of pedagogic discourse and evaluation at the classroom level that social relations and hierarchies are made manifest in classroom practice. In this way, the PD limits and regulates consciousness itself through the regulation of the pedagogic discourse.

8.3. Children’s Social Structuring and Identity

The PD centres the principles regulating the classification and framing of embodied consciousness. As detailed in chapter six, those regulating each EYL context are defined by the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS, DfE, 2012) and realised as various forms of ‘play’;

> ‘Each area of learning and development must be implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activity. Play is essential for children’s development, building their confidence as they learn to explore…’ (EYFS, 2012, p. 6)

In effect, the ‘ideal imaginary child’ of EYFS policy (see chapter three) is a child who already possesses or quickly develops the recognition rules which would allow them to take part in the different forms of play which featured in each context, hence, demonstrate ‘ability’ and become an effective member of the setting. In the practitioners’ eyes children had to manifestly display social and situational competence. Within EYL the body (in motion) is therefore seen as a fundamental learning resource. The type of play learning that took place and the culture of the setting impacts how children are expected to use their bodies and learn. In each setting, practitioners tried to accommodate and build on the knowledge which children brought to the EYL settings. To achieve this they needed to adopt pedagogical practices which bridged the gap between the principles regulating formal knowledge (PD) and the lay culture children have already embodied (CD).

**Table 15: Boundary maintenance between forms of play**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Busy Buzzy Bees</th>
<th>Little People</th>
<th>Little Stars</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Space boundaries between ‘physical play’ and other forms of play</strong></td>
<td>C+</td>
<td>C-</td>
<td>C-</td>
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As table 15 illustrates there is strong boundary maintenance (C+) between the space used for academic and ‘physical play’ at Busy Buzzy Bees. Children only engage in ‘physical play’ outside and ‘academic play’ inside this setting. In contrast, a Little People and Little Stars, most of a child’s time is spent engaging in ‘physical play’ and as such there is weak boundary maintenance between space and knowledge. Children learn predominantly through ‘physical play’. Table 9 illustrates that each form of play, has different symbolic value and meaning attached to it by each setting and is indicative of what counts as valid/valued knowledge within each setting.

8.4. The Good, the Odd and the Difficult

Social hierarchies were clearly evident in each of these settings. Children learned and experienced their ‘place’ and status amongst their peers in relation to their body, as part of being identified in the practitioner’s eyes as either, ‘good’ (able), ‘odd’ or ‘difficult’, albeit, each identity being defined slightly differently in each setting.

The majority of children at Busy Buzzy Bees were identified as ‘good’, i.e. displaying positive attributes, responsive to practitioner expectations, for example, of tidying up toys, sharing, being independent (putting shoes and coats on, etc. by themselves), displaying ‘manners’ at snack and lunch. These manifest behaviours (knowledge /abilities to recognise and realise in situ instructional and regulative codes) were deemed to have significance beyond the EYL context as skills and dispositions children would be required to demonstrate later within formal education and wider society. They were considered context independent and provided evidence of ‘good parenting’ and wider family influences at play. By contrast Little People was characterised by a diversity of pupil identities: ‘good’, ‘odd’ and ‘difficult’, with the ‘good’ child being in the minority. Practitioners often held different views of different children based on their own interactions with that child and pre-conceptions of his
or her family background, often suggesting that parents did not (and could not) ‘invest’ in their child through enrichment activities outside EYL. In contrast to Busy Buzzy Bees, there appeared to be less uniformity of opinion, perhaps because the greater number of children (almost double the number) and the more confined space and longer time children spent at Busy Buzzy Bees made it ‘easier’ for practitioners to observe and get to know all the children personally rather than positionally (i.e. as consociates rather than contemporaries, Shultz, 1967). At Little Stars, as at Little People, the categorisation of children was also more fluid and less certain than at Busy Buzzy Bees, with children slipping between ‘good’ and ‘difficult’ depending on their engagement with the pedagogic discourses of the setting. Due to the high percentage of English as an Additional Language (EAL) children and those from low SES backgrounds, practitioners tended to tolerate poor/difficult behaviour initially (for the first weeks of attendance) until they deemed children had attended long enough to understand the disciplinary expectations of practitioners. For example, Dennis (a Polish child aged three who had only recently moved to the UK) ‘difficult’ behaviour (e.g., not listening, being aggressive to others) was initially given leeway due to his lack of English, but towards the end of the year, practitioners began to view him as inherently ‘difficult’ in a similar way to Jordan (see discussion below). The analysis below adds further detail to these identities, highlighting in the process their situational specificity as reflection of the dynamic of the PD–CD.

8.4.1. The Good

The ‘good’ child across the three settings was characterised as having good listening skills, demonstrating an interest in ‘academic’ play and displaying appropriate behaviour at nursery. To achieve the status of ‘good’, children had not only to recognise these characteristics but express them appropriately through their bodies (how they moved, communicated and in some instances, how they dressed – appropriate clothing for being outdoors or at the art table). Children able to embody, recognise and effectively ‘play’ within the discursive spaces available to them gained more practitioner time both within Busy Buzzy Bees and Little People (but not at Little Stars -see below). For example, James is described as ‘bright’ within the Busy Buzzy Bees context; he listens, follows instruction and works well with the other children despite being smaller in height than most of the boys. He is outwardly confident and

20Through socialization individuals take for granted the existing social structures and definitions that come to constitute their natural attitudes towards the world of their everyday life. Schutz (1967) divided the life world into two major realms: the realm of consociates made up of individuals sharing a community of space and a community of time and the realm of contemporaries made up of individuals sharing neither a community of space nor a community of time. Schutz showed that people in different realms of the life world came to interact with each other in different ways and, as a result, form relationships of different kinds with one another.
inquisitive and always first to put his hand up to answer questions or ask questions of practitioners and even questions the ‘sillyness’ of storybooks (e.g. ‘Why does the duck have wellies on inside? They are for outdoors’). He has been at the nursery since he was a baby and conforms to the setting’s concept of being ‘school ready’ and as such is often asked first if he would like to take part in a task, and at times is given more ‘difficult’ tasks to perform. For example, when talking to Helen (practitioner) about the children and the theme camouflage, she comments;

“I mean, I don’t explore the meaning of camouflage with all the children just the more able ones like James, with the rest I just mention it… I think the able ones need (to be) pushed more to achieve their maximum”

Furthermore, James appeared to be one of the few children interested in having books read to him, which practitioners were frequently happy to do, consequently he spent more time with practitioners than many other children and so could further develop and demonstrate his ‘ability’. James is deemed one of the most ‘able’ amongst a majority of other children similarly defined as ‘able’. However, he was not only seen as ‘academically able’ by staff, but also physically able, having an understanding of when to demonstrate a physically active body and when to be passive (in effect he had already acquired quite sophisticated play skills and play sense – instructional and regulative codes);

Example 1:

While the children are having snack Helen (practitioner) is demonstrating to another member of staff the exercises she has been doing in the gym after work. The children overhearing Helen’s conversation stop talking and begin to watch her as she demonstrates abdominal exercises,

James: “Helen, exercise is for outside”

Helen: “Yes James, running around is, because we don't want to fall into something and hurt ourselves inside do we…”

James: “I can do press up too, look (he gets up and shows Helen his press up)….daddy taught me that, he does them at the gym”

Example 2:
At snack time James and Amy are sitting together at the snack table, James is counting his raisins and talking loudly to Amy about how he spells his name;

James: “Mines J, A, M, E, S (says it phonetically) and yours is A, M, Y” (says it phonetically)

Helen (practitioner): “Well done James, that's very good, did mummy teach you that?”

Adam: “That is good James isn’t it, we’re best friends Helen, James and me…”

In the second example, James clearly demonstrates an ‘ability’ not only to engage with instructional discourses which are highly valued in this EYL setting (in this case orientated toward language development), but also perform such actions in appropriate ways; his transactions with peers (in this case, Amy) are disciplined and ‘educative’. Such orientations are perceived by practitioners to be reflective of his parents’ investment in his academic development outside the EY context.

Rhianna

Rhianna is regarded by all Little People practitioners as a ‘lovely chatty child’ very ‘able’ and mature compared to some of the other children’ (John- practitioner). She is one of the few so defined in this setting, although being considered ‘able’ within Little People does not necessarily mean Rhianna is afforded the same parental investment that James at Busy Buzzy Bees enjoys. When asked if she took part in any activities outside nursery, Rhianna commented, “I’m not allowed to go to dance, mummy doesn’t let me”. Rhianna often assists practitioners with tasks such as tidying up, telling the other children when it is tidy up time and is often rewarded for her ‘good behaviour’ (more than other children), by being allowed to pick songs to sing or numbers to count up to during ‘gathering’. Whilst most of the children participate in these ‘helping’ tasks, Rhianna does them more frequently and consequently receives higher amounts of practitioner contact. Claire (practitioner) describes her “like another little member of staff isn’t she”, while John, sees her as “in control, other children listen to her”. Her dominance over others and ‘teacher’ like persona was evident in her interactions with other children;

Example 1:

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21 Gathering at Little People is similar to registration at Busy Buzzy Bees, but happened in the morning and just before the children leave for the end of the day.
During play time, Rhianna decides to play the ‘honey bear’ game. She gets her friends (three other girls) to sit in a circle and Rhianna pretends to be the teacher and says ‘good morning’ (replicating gathering time). Upon starting the game, three other children join in. Rhianna takes on the role of the teacher; she asserts her dominance by standing in the middle of the circle and picking (by pointing) one child to be the bear and one to collect the bear’s honey. Rhianna controls the game by ensuring she always picks herself or a close friend (one of the three original girls). When her dominance is challenged by Patryk, Rhianna demands the honey off Patryk in a similar manner to the practitioners “Patryk, give me the honey, you’re not playing” (holding one hand out, the other on her hip)

Example 2:

John (practitioner): “Well those two (Rhianna and Hannah) are the ones everyone listens too and they argue a lot over who is in charge, look see…Rhianna well she should really be in school, she’s ready, she’s the brightest but parents want her to be five before she goes…there they go, pretending to be one of us”

This display of recognising and enacting official instructional and regulative codes of practitioners affords Rhianna high social status not only among her peers but also among practitioners who are then more willing to indulge her requests to pick songs or ensure the toy she is playing with is given back to her, because she is seen as a helpful, co-operating child. Physically taller and outwardly more mature, through her appearance (often wearing ‘lipstick’, painted nails and carrying a handbag), Rhianna uses her physical presence and mimicking of practitioners’ body language to assert her authority among peers.

Rebecca

Unlike Busy Buzzy Bees and Little People where the ‘able’ child could be perceived as spending the most time interacting with practitioners, at Little Stars, the ‘able’ child, Rebecca, is deemed so because she requires (and receives) very little attention from practitioners unless it is praise related. Rebecca is considered a quiet, unassuming child who blends into the background; able to listen, manage her own personal hygiene, put on her own coat and shoes and play with others co-operatively; a stark contrast to the ‘difficult’ child. She is described as “such a quiet, lovely girl, so well behaved” (Ms Smith). At Little Stars, children are deemed ‘able’ because they do not require constant practitioner intervention and
consequently receive little time with practitioners, unlike those deemed ‘difficult’ who are allocated a member of staff during singing time i.e., occasions when disruption was felt most likely to occur.

These different ‘good’ identities begin to illustrate the dynamics of the PD~CD. Clearly each version of ‘good’ cannot be understood other than as a relational effect of EYFS policy principles enacted uniquely within each setting, and the embodied dispositions of the children brought to those contexts from the family and home. Children at the top of the social hierarchy at *Busy Buzzy Bees* and *Little People* readily engaged with and accepted the instructional and regulative discourses of these settings. They arrived at the EYL context already predisposed with an appropriate embodied consciousness. James, one of many able children at *Busy Buzzy Bees* is required to demonstrate legitimate (high status/valued) knowledge by engaging (quietly) in ‘academic play’. The focus of practitioners is on his play skills/competencies (e.g., reading or writing) rather than his already attuned (and regulated) play sense. In contrast to *Busy Buzzy Bees* and *Little People*, at *Little Stars*, the pedagogic discourse constructed by practitioners privileges the realisation of regulative rather than instructional codes and centres on inculcating the children into the social world of the English speaking middle class cultural habitus of the practitioners. As such, ‘able’ in this context meant meeting social (regulative codes) following instructions while requiring little attention from practitioners (see the example from *Little Stars* on p.153).

**8.4.2. The Difficult**

*Patryk*

*Patryk* is a Polish child at *Little People* who struggles to speak English and consequently finds it difficult to communicate with staff and children, often speaking in Polish to them but without getting a response. Small in height but athletic in build, *Patryk* engages in more rough and tumble play than the other boys, demonstrating his strength by lifting ‘heavy’ blocks (sometimes two at a time) while others carry one between two during ‘physical play’. He is seen by staff as a ‘problem child’, not because he is Polish but rather because his listening skills are perceived as poor and they believe he wilfully pretends not to understand when being told off, often finding it funny to have staff chase him round. *Claire* (practitioner) describes *Patryk* as; “naughty, he knows what he is doing, and finds it funny and he’s aggressive with the other children”. This opinion is shared by other practitioners. John
describes him as “one to watch out for” when playing with others on the soft play area and Sarah labels him;

“A funny child, one on one he can be really sweet and good but with other children or during gathering he just wants to do his own thing. He takes toys away from others and can become too boisterous and aggressive. Obviously language can be a barrier between him and us, that’s why we often use gestures and sign.”

Field Notes 1:

Patryk is on the computer playing quietly; the boys (Justin, Callum and Duane) come inside and decide to play a ‘game with him – they begin poking him in the back and running away. Initially Patryk is engaged in his game on the computer but after the third time, he gets up and chases the boys, kicking and punching. The boys scream and laugh running away.

As Patryk is fighting with the boys, Clara begins to play on the computer. Patryk sees this, leaves the boys, goes back to the computer and pushes Clara off saying, “no my computer”.

Clara runs over to Sarah (practitioner) and tells her what happened;

Clara: “Patryk pushed me off the computer, he’s not playing with kind hands, he never does”

Sarah goes and speaks to Patryk

In this example Patryk is seen as an ‘outsider’ by his peers; he is inside the EYL setting but outside its culture. He is not only positioned as such and attributed negative identity by virtue of his physical stature (stronger and more aggressive), but also how he uses his body i.e., his failure to recognise and appropriately enact the regulative rules of the PD. Rather than ‘telling the practitioner’ that the boys were annoying him and Clara had taken his seat at the computer, Patryk becomes violent.

Jordan

Jordan is taller and ‘bigger’ than the rest of her peers. Often the first child you notice within the setting, she is very loud with a distinctive scream, overpowering some of the smaller, less vocal girls. She is viewed by staff at Little Stars as a ‘difficult’ child whose behaviour is very
poor, often aggressive and rude to other children. She is one of three girls viewed in this light and is considered as the worst of them. She was frequently observed ignoring practitioners, scaring other children and disrupting singing time, behaviour practitioners believe to be accepted at her home, as Mrs Jones commented;

“She just doesn't listen, not even to mum when its home time. Mum doesn't seem bothered by it; she just waits until Jordan is ready to leave. Not very helpful when we’re trying to tell her off for this behaviour at nursery!”

On one particular occasion, Jordan and another ‘difficult’ girl were playing ‘tickles’ – they began tickling each other and then started to tickle a child nearby. The child shrieked, curled up into the corner and began to cry. Although spoken to by Ms Smith “play nicely, Priya doesn’t like being tickled so don’t do it to her”, Jordan ignored this and continued to tickle her. Ms Smith, makes the comment to me; “you can tell she (Priya) is intimidated by her, if I was that age, I definitely would be!” It is clear that the staff deem Jordan to be a threat to others, a view not helped by the fact she is bigger and taller than most of the other children and much more outspoken (i.e. her appearance belied her immaturity).

As a result of her challenging behaviour, Jordan spends much of her time under the practitioner’s gaze especially during singing time when she is allocated a seat next to a practitioner in an attempt to control her behaviour. Despite this high volume of surveillance and interaction with practitioners, she is given very little opportunity to alter the view they have of her.

Difficult children such as Jordan and Patryk are defined as such (i.e., deviant) because they either cannot or will not display desired behaviours (e.g. sitting still, talking quietly) which lead to negative interactions with practitioners and peers. They either do not or cannot recognise the appropriate regulative rules for behaviour and interaction in situ, in part due to cultural (as illustrated by Patryk) and class differences between the home and EYL learning environments.

8.4.3. The Odd

Adam

At Busy Buzzy Bees Adam is considered ‘a complex’ child who occasionally engages with staff and other children but for the most part remains on the outskirts of the group, often
playing by himself or with one or two other children of similar social status as himself within the group. Physically he is small in comparison to the other children, immature in relation to sharing toys and sitting still, and, unlike most of the others enjoys playing with bags, especially carrying bags around with him and playing ‘mummies and baby’, which in the practitioners’ view, highlights what they consider to be his ‘alternative’ personality. He is one of the few children viewed as ‘odd’ by practitioners and one of only three children who occupy such a low social position compared to his peers.

Practitioners describe him as “very hands on” in relation to his learning style and “a bit of a wanderer”. He uses his body to express his interests and understanding, for example, during ‘show and tell’, Adam ‘beat boxes’ and dances to demonstrate his understanding of the sounds letters make;

Helen: “Well done Adam, that's good dancing isn’t it”

Adam: “I like to dance and move around”

Helen to the researcher: “Adams mum used to be a DJ, he’s very into music and dancing, that how he learns best.”

To some extent, Adam blends into the background, occupying a low social position amongst his peers and in the perspective of the practitioners because he tends to wander aimlessly from activity to activity and often his only contact with practitioners is when he is in their terms, ‘poorly behaved’.

Liam

At Little People Liam is considered a well behaved child who listens to practitioners; however he seemed to find it difficult to form relationships with other children, especially the boys. On several occasions, he was observed on the periphery of the boys’ games, always looking on but never being accepted into the game. He was physically slight and looked ‘delicate’, often crying if someone bumped into him as they moved around the setting. Consequently, whilst neither dominant nor difficult, staff deemed him ‘odd’, finding it hard to talk to him especially when he was upset because often there was no apparent reason for it. Consequently Liam became increasingly anonymous within the setting, his lack of confidence meant that unlike other children he was unable to assert himself within activities and, due to the number of children and the ‘demanding’ nature of some children, he never
really registered onto the practitioner’s radar. Liam therefore occupied a low position within the social structure of the setting due to his inability to interact with staff and children. Liam’s physical body has presence but little authority; it is out of kilter with the contextual rules and meaning systems – communication with other bodies and does not easily fit in. Failing to meet both ‘formal’ (practitioner) and ‘informal’ (peer) expectations of propriety Liam suffers the associated alienation. Whilst playing honey bears, Rhianna tells Liam, he is not ‘on’ because he is not sitting still, Liam begins to cry;

Sarah (practitioner): “Liam, its Rhianna’s game, you must listen to her”

Liam continues to cry

Jane (practitioner): “He just cries when he doesn't get what he wants, he is not able to share and doesn't like playing with others, Rhianna, just play on and ignore him….Liam, will you come and sit next to me?”

Liam ignores Jane and continues to cry

8.5 Conclusion

Many studies utilising the PD focus on the importance of text and language in the production of identity and consciousness, however, this chapter has foreground how ‘the body’ is implicated in children’s developing sense of self. The empirical data go some way to highlighting the complex assemblages of pedagogic practice within EYL settings and the role of the body in children’s experience of learning. We need again to be mindful of the class and cultural dynamics at play in each of these settings (Reay, 2001; Gulbrandson, 2003). Little People and Little Stars catered for families of very similar working class background, notwithstanding, there were nuanced differences between the two settings in the ways they categorised children, perhaps best illustrated through a continuum. At one end there is Busy Buzzy Bees which caters for middle class children predominately identified as ‘good’ by practitioners (i.e., they approximated the ‘imaginary child’) because parents were deemed to have invested in their children’s academic and work play through enrichment activities. They had already acquired the recognition and realisation rules of the setting. At the other end is Little Stars catering for employed and unemployed working class families where the majority of children were deemed to arrive unable to recognise and display the appropriate play behaviours (e.g., sitting still, listening, and ‘kind hands’) for learning. Here there is cultural difference and dissonance between home (predominately Eastern European or Bengali) and
the white British middle class rules and codes of practitioners in the setting. In the middle sits *Little People*, (which also caters for employed and unemployed working class families). Here ‘good’ children are those able to recognise and realise in situ discipline rules and codes and demonstrate some interest in ‘academic’ play. These subjectivities are therefore situationally specific and if adjudged by *Busy Buzzy Bees* standards (also the ideal imaginary child of EYLF policy), the ‘able’ child at *Little People* is more ‘able’ than a child at *Little Stars*, but never quite as ‘able’ as those at *Busy Buzzy Bees*. For example, Rhianna is seen as ‘able’ at *Little People* but if compared to James (*Busy Buzzy Bees*), she is less able and less well-resourced in terms of parental investment in enrichment activities. Furthermore the ‘good/able’ child at *Little People* and *Little Stars* was in the minority, a stark contrast with *Busy Buzzy Bees*, where the ‘good’ child, amongst whom James was the most ‘able’, was in the majority.

In *Busy Buzzy Bees*, there appeared to be no discontinuity between the instructional and regulative codes of the home and those of school. Characteristics (e.g. body movements, manifest dispositions) valued by both the children and practitioners – i.e., displays of ‘academic knowledge’ were privileged. James displayed such characteristics in the way he moved and behaved, demeanours which manifestly demonstrated his ability to act (e.g., through spelling his name) in a manner which practitioners valued and subsequently praised. Meanwhile at *Little People* both practitioners and children recognised and valued the regulative discourse displayed by the ‘good’ child. As the data reveals Rhianna was listened to by her peers because of her capacity to enact privileged disciplinary codes, which also meant she received positive attention from practitioners. In contrast, at *Little Stars*, children’s physical stature influenced their social status in the eyes of both practitioners and peers. As illustrated in the data above, Jordan was at the top of the peer hierarchy because she was physically the tallest and seen as an intimidating presence by many of her peers. In all three settings the body as a physical presence was a message system in and of itself in social interaction, but given specific meaning by the culture of the setting. Clearly children’s embodiment is the experience of presence in place and time (James, 2000); their size, in terms of height and weight, often a feature over which they have little control, is ‘used’ either consciously or unconsciously to influence how others view them. Across the three settings, children like Jordan who are seen as ‘intimidating’ and ‘outsiders’ by others, are not only positioned as such and attributed negative identity by virtue of their physical stature, but
also how they use their body i.e., their failure to recognise and appropriately enact the regulative rules of the PD.

The above analyses therefore begin to illustrate how children experience their bodies in relation to peers, practitioners and social status at the intersection of the CD–PD, illustrated in chapter four (figure 4) through enactment, emplacement and embodiment. The identities described are inherently relational categories, constructed consciously and subconsciously through actions and perspectives of practitioners and children (see also Svahn and Evaldsson; Thompson and Bell, 2011; Roberts, 2012; Sondergaard, 2012). At the intersection of the CD–PD, these children are inducted into socially classed, self-regulating modes of behaviour, which leaves those who cannot/do not adhere being classed as ‘difficult’ which could lead to potential educational difficulties as the children progress into ‘formal’ education.

The next chapter will provide further discussion of the implications of these analyses, highlight the emerging dominant messages from this research and explore the need for further investigation.
Chapter Nine: Discussion

9.1 Introduction

The previous analysis chapters have charted the terrain of the EYL social world and explored the experiences of children as they navigate their way through such complex environments. This process has identified differences in the organisation and structure of ‘play’ and the transmission of knowledge across three EYL settings which are suggestive of social class and cultural inequalities. This chapter aims to draw together the findings from chapters six, seven and eight, highlighting the complexity and nature of the interactions, from policy to practitioners’ enactment of policy and consequently the pedagogy at play within each setting. In this chapter I therefore return to the CD~PD~ enactment, emplacement and embodiment–model introduced in chapter four (figure 4, p. 84) to not only summarise and highlight the main findings but also to discuss the merits of the model and concepts that have been used. I use this model to highlight how policy is realised and emplaced within each setting and in turn how it is enacted and embodied through practices (pedagogies, structure, organisation of various forms of play) and by children (learner identities). Chapter six illustrates how each setting structures and values types of play differently, which in turn influences the knowledge recontextualised within the settings and practitioners’ perceptions of what the ‘able’ ‘imaginary child’ should look like in situ. Furthermore, chapter seven illustrates how practitioners’ enactment of policy and interpretations of children’s ability are influenced by their own experiences, social class and culture. The following discussion is framed around exploring these research questions (see chapter one);

- Are social class inequalities reflected within the pedagogies of Early Years Learning?
- How are these social inequalities produced and reproduced within Early Years Learning across different settings?
- How does play in EYL contribute to young children’s understandings of themselves and their corporeality?

9.2 Social Class Differences, Pedagogies and EYL

In chapter two I illustrated how current UK government education policy has aimed to reduce the attainment gap between working and middle class children through a renewed focus on
EYL and the funding of EYL places to all three year olds in England and Wales. To a degree, such policy initiatives echo Reay (2006) and Roberts’ (2001) (amongst many others’) concerns that despite (social) reforms of the last fifteen years or so to widen opportunities for working class children, education still demonstrably serves middle class interests in what has been described as ‘one of the greatest illusions of modern time...consistently failing to deliver a more open society’ (Roberts, 2001, p. 215). This focus on equality and reducing the attainment gap goes someway to highlighting the political and ideological nature of early years pedagogies (and of the debates surrounding them) and their link to broader social forces and structures. There are of course complex interrelations between pedagogies (formal and informal) and broader culturally bound ‘ideas and values, habits and customs, institutions and world views’ (Alexander, 2000, p. 5). Bernstein (1996) sought to articulate such relationships essentially as those between selection, classification, distribution, transmission and evaluation of education knowledge and broader social structures. For him, pedagogic practice was best understood as ‘a relay, a cultural relay: a unique human device for both the reproduction and production of culture’ (Bernstein, 2004, p. 196). A plethora of research (see chapter one) over many years has since highlighted the continuing significance of inequalities of wealth and income in neo-liberal societies as a determining factor in relation to social class differentiated student outcomes from education (e.g. Condron, 2009, 2011; Lynch and Moran, 2006). In this research I therefore sought to use Bernstein’s concepts to both organise and interrogate data as objectively as needs must in a PhD project. In doing so, I have drawn attention not only to the ways in which EYL settings differ in the access they provide to children to different forms of knowledge, opportunity and subjectivity but also the connections that exist between social class, family and the influence of the pedagogies of EYL settings.

Across all three settings, different types of pedagogy were utilised depending on the form of play being enacted (see chapter five, figure 4, p. 107). Chapter six provided evidence that across all three settings performance pedagogies were evident and dominant during ‘work play’ while competence pedagogies dominated ‘physical’ and ‘academic’ play. However despite these broad similarities, the nuanced differences between settings and the pedagogies enacted were reflective of the settings social class and or culture. In chapters and six and seven I argued that based on practitioners perceptions, there is a suggestion of a distinctive interruption/or dislocation between the ‘formal’ knowledge and discourse of the EYL setting and home environment at Little People and Little Stars but continuity for children who attend...
**Busy Buzzy Bees.** This goes someway to explaining how social inequalities are reproduced within EYL and UK society more broadly. The continuity between home and EYL for children at *Busy Buzzy Bees*, privileges expectations/behaviour codes and culture they have acquired within the family from birth. These children embody the same CD codes at home as the ones valued within *Busy Buzzy Bees* and enacted through the EYFS within this context. Those at *Little People* and *Little Stars* however, have to ‘learn’ and ‘perform’ the culture of EYL settings which is different to that of their home. Although it is important to express some caution here, practitioners particularly those at *Little Stars* and *Little People*, where children often only attended for one year, may have been acting on stereotypes, making assumptions about children (perhaps not always correct assumptions) and therefore treating children as contemporaries (i.e., stereotypically) rather than consociates (as unique persons) (Schutz, 1970). Previous research (see chapter one) including a pilot for this study (see Stirrup, et al., 2014) has emphasised how middle class parents furnish their children with the skills and behaviours which are valued and endorsed by the EYFS ‘imaginary learner’ and subsequently enacted within EYL settings. As such the pedagogy adopted within *Busy Buzzy Bees* encouraged and valued ‘academic play’ and practitioners use of ‘guiding’ questions encouraged children to display their knowledge and ‘school readiness’ through an elaborated code, much like the one valued in formal education.

In contrast, working class children such as those at *Little People* and *Little Stars*, do not necessarily arrive with the ‘ability’ (or willingness) to display such skills (listening, co-operative play, acceptable behaviour) highlighting a potential discord between home and the EYL environment. Practitioners thus spend a great deal of their time socialising children in these settings as well as trying to facilitate their learning through ‘work play’. For example, at *Little People* and *Little Stars*, prior to ‘work play’ children were instructed to ‘line up’ (“my group lets line up nicely then before we go in”, p.117 chapter six) and wait until asked to sit down (“let’s sit down quietly and nicely then”, p.117 chapter six), they then must say hello to ‘all their friends’ again before beginning to ‘learn’, illustrating the strong classification of space and strong framing of regulative discourse and behaviour. At *Busy Buzzy Bees*, children were expected to know how to sit and behave without such strong framing from practitioners. Furthermore, children within these working class settings tended to display and experience more behavioural issues which had a negative impact on the time they had available to positively engage with practitioners, thus hindering their ‘achievement’ (see chapter seven). We therefore, see that pedagogies which make implicit cultural
assumptions instantiating pedagogies of sameness benefit those with the requisite knowledge and behaviour obtained through socialisation within the family and home. They simultaneously disadvantage those who have socially and culturally different family environments and this often results in misrecognising children’s ability (as we saw in chapter seven).

Competence and performance, the two models of pedagogic discourse observed within each setting represented and reflected distinctive political ideologies, versions of EYL and social control. Competence pedagogies, explicit during ‘academic and physical play’ were profoundly child-centred reflecting the education orientations and narratives of government EYFS policy. This former element of the EYFS, i.e., its child centeredness, expressed as child initiated ‘choosing play’ is celebrated by practitioners and during such play, weak C and F signalled a relative absence of overt evaluative rules generating a context in which children were seen as individuals and judged by what they had in common rather than what made them different (as was the case in performance pedagogy during ‘work play’). For example, during ‘choosing time’ at *Little People*, most children opted for ‘physical play’ and in particular the soft play area – practitioners watched the children and made comments such as ‘well done’ or ‘good try’ even if the child could not balance or roll like his/her peers. There was no explicit judgement of he/she cannot do this/that. Rather all children were praised for playing. In contrast, during ‘work play’ the use of performance pedagogies, orientated practitioners to monitor, assess and make judgments on the children creating ability hierarchies and acute notions of difference. Children were judged on the knowledge they had not yet, but should, have acquired according to the EYFS. The ‘imaginary child’ enacted by the EYFS (see chapter two) along with practitioners’ prior assumptions and expectations constructed discourses which valued certain children while positioning others as in ‘deficit’ or ‘disadvantaged’ because they do not or could not perform/play or behave in the correct ways, a process infused with social class and cultural overtones (see Burrows and Wright, 2001). Children learned their place in an ability hierarchy (see chapter eight), a process inextricably linked to the knowledge and skills they brought with them to the setting from their home environment. Here then illustration par excellence of the intersections of PD~CD; to reach the top of the hierarchy, children were required to bridge the gap(suggested by the data) between the principles regulating formal knowledge of the EYL setting (PD) and the lay culture they have already embodied from home (CD).
There is a vast amount of research revealing that children can be disadvantaged by virtue of their culture, language and social class (Siraji – Blatchford, 1994; Gillborn, 1995; Ball, 2003; Ladson –Billings and Gillborn, 2004; Chapter one). For example, Siraji-Blatchford (2004) attests that practitioners should have high expectations of all children regardless of their social class or ethnicity and, furthermore be aware of their own effectiveness in supporting the achievement of disadvantaged children in order to reduce the likelihood of underachievement continuing. Notwithstanding acknowledgement within the literature that social class plays an important role within education, Tawney (1931) and Reay (2006) suggest that practitioners’ lack of knowledge around the importance of social class historically haunts the UK education system. Many years ago Bernstein (1970) made the observation that teachers/practitioners must embrace the culture of the child if the school’s culture is to become part of the child’s consciousness (and the other way around).

Practitioners across all three settings had similar training and qualifications, yet their expectations of children and how children should behave differed significantly across settings (see chapter six). The children attending Little Stars and Little People were predominantly of working class background while those at Busy Buzzy Bees were middle class. However, of the fifteen practitioners participating only four (26.6%) classed themselves as working class (two from Little People and two from Little Stars), furthermore, only one practitioner within Little Stars was of the same (Bengali) culture as the children despite a high percentage of children attending coming from a Bengali background. There was therefore already the potential for discontinuity between practitioner’s culture and that of the children they were caring for within Little Stars and Little People and, indeed, this seemed to influence their perceptions of what children aged 3-4 should know, the knowledge children should bring to the setting and their home lives. Practitioners at Busy Buzzy Bees perceived children to come equipped and predisposed to behave at nursery and recognise its instructional and regulative discourse, leading to an elaborated orientation towards knowledge construction. (Whether the practitioners were accurate in their assessments is another matter – their expectations were self-fulfilling). Practitioners at Little Stars and Little People perceived children to arrive ‘unfinished’- they need to learn the elaborate code of the EYL context and then realise the tests that are acceptable to practitioners. This was clearly illustrated in chapter six where, with reference to health discourse, it was revealed how social class divisions were reinforced through differently distributed access to ‘unthinkable’ knowledge around health and the body. At Little Stars and Little People health was not seen as a priority for practitioners or in their view for children’s families. They assumed children arrived with little knowledge (‘they
won’t understand the word healthy’- Jane practitioner at *Little People*, p.144) and therefore focussed more on personal hygiene rather than developing children’s health knowledge and understanding (“oranges are nice, but make sure you wash your hands” - Ms Smith practitioner at *Little Stars*, p.145). Practitioners understandably were reactive to what they saw or believed to be the case and made assumptions of children’s orientation to learning and did not deviate or encourage them to think outside/beyond these perceptions, regardless of whether children were able or not to do so.

By contrast, there was no discontinuity at *Busy Buzzy Bees* between the framing codes and pedagogies (the enactment of talk is the same at home and school allowing children to embody knowledge valued across both contexts – see chapter four, figure 4, p.84). The continuity therefore between power and control relations in the family and EYL, enables children at *Busy Buzzy Bees* to access the realisation and recognition rules valued by ‘school’ (EYL) codes. The data presented in chapters six, seven and eight suggest the pedagogy of the middle class setting (*Busy Buzzy Bees*) supported and endorsed the development of elaborated orientations to meaning. This was evident in several ways, for example;

- Academic knowledge was more strongly classified (see chapter seven)

- During practitioner – child interactions, the practitioner prioritised the learner and his/her ‘school readiness’, as evident through the increased time spent on ‘academic play’ (see chapter six)

- There was a strong demarcation of children’s pedagogic identity and an individualising disposition, evident in the 1:1 nature of ‘work play’

In contrast, within the working class settings of *Little People* and *Little Stars* children’s play was constructed along the lines of a horizontal pedagogic modality characterized by strong framing over sequence, selection and pace, and very weak framing over the evaluative rules. Tasks incorporated knowledge that was familiar, and meanings that were concrete and context-bound (see Hoadley, 2008) due to the interruption between the formal and informal pedagogies of the EYL and home context which allowed the children to be inducted into the school behaviour code. These findings lend support to much of the literature on social class and the home – school interface which has clearly documented the challenge for working
class children to access the culture, language and code (Bourdieu, 2006; Lareau, 2000; Bernstein, 1975, 2000; chapter one) of the school. Much of the data of chapters six, seven and eight, confirm that social class impacts a child’s knowledge construction and learning. At Busy Buzzy Bees, the majority of children seemed to be predisposed with elaborated coding orientations consistent with those privileged by the EYL setting. However, at Little People and Little Stars, children make meaning and experience through their community which often values different knowledge from the EYL setting (e.g. as Stacy suggests health is not necessarily a priority within the home life of many of the children at Little People- p.129). Consequently practitioners in these settings then have to interrupt this (community) orientation to induct children through a predominance of regulative discourse into school ways of behaving and making meaning.

9.3 (Re) production of social inequalities in EYL

Bernstein (1975) argued that successful learning depends on the strength of framing over the pacing of learning. In his view, if children have some control over the timing of the acquisition of knowledge they are more likely to develop the realisation and recognition rules required for learning. Practitioners across the settings differed in their pedagogical practices arguably due to a mix of their own social class and perceptions of children’s pre-existing knowledge. At Busy Buzzy Bees, practitioners’ commitment to ‘school readiness’ through a mixture of performance and competence pedagogies (influenced by parental expectations - many parents within this setting expected the nursery to ‘get’ their child ‘ready for school’ in relation to behaviour and literacy/numeracy), had wider social and educational implications. Performance pedagogies and a focus on instructional discourse encourage children to develop techniques, knowledge and language which are future orientated, i.e:

‘places the emphasis upon a specific output of the acquirer, upon a particular text the acquirer is expected to construct, and upon the specialized skills necessary to the production of this specific output, text or product’ (Bernstein, 1996, p. 57–58)

This exposure to strongly classified school knowledge within the EYL setting prepares the children for future educational achievement in formal educational settings.

Pedagogies which make implicit cultural assumptions benefit those with the requisite cultural capital obtained though socialisation within the home while simultaneously disadvantaging the already disadvantaged. The EYFS encourages the development of the independent
‘individual child’; providing opportunities for all through ‘high quality early learning... provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up’ (EYFS, 2012, p. 2). Government policy aims to achieve this through the redistribution of material resources through free childcare places for all 3 year olds (2 year olds for the most ‘disadvantaged’ families), thereby reducing social class inequalities based on cultural inheritance (Fraser, 1997). However, the ways in which practitioners enact the EYFS and their perceptions of children and their ability reproduce social class and cultural inequalities. As illustrated in chapters six and eight, practitioners make judgements of children’s abilities and, particularly those deemed ‘difficult’ were given little opportunity to alter the identity they have been afforded. Although these ‘learner identities’ are not fixed or immutable and there is some fluidity between them, those deemed ‘difficult’ often find it difficult to shake off this identity as both practitioners and peers acknowledge (and reproduce) them as such (e.g., ‘Partryk is naughty isn’t he, he doesn’t have kind hands Stacey’ – child at Little People, p.146). At Little People and Little Stars practitioners relied on a competence pedagogy featuring weak boundaries with regard to time and space and weak F over pacing and evaluative rules. Consequently children were allowed to freely ‘choose’ activities they wanted rather than being encouraged to develop new skills or broaden their experiences. The child centeredness of the setting thus represented a context (essentially but not exclusively) of social control rather than of learning.

9.4. Social inclusion and the structuring of EYL knowledge

The child centered philosophy/ideology of the official EYFS curriculum along with practitioner’s understandings of children’s communities and an enacted curriculum together contribute to stratified versions of knowledge (see chapters, six, seven and eight). The social organisation of pedagogic knowledge determines access to different levels of thinking and understanding knowledge (through ID and RD) with potential long term effects on education, social class and attainment. At Little People and Little Stars legitimate knowledge was segmented with a curriculum focused on the acquisition of basic skills, where children located the construction of knowledge through practitioners and books. In contrast, Busy Buzzy Bees saw a shift from the basic skills towards instructional discourse and a more elaborated orientation to knowledge construction (see chapter six). This, in and of itself, had social and cultural implications for how practitioners choose to structure knowledge based on their perceptions of child and their abilities. It was difficult to gauge children’s feelings on whether they felt included in this process, however, the analysis within chapter seven,
highlights how learner identities and consequently, the types of knowledge practitioners encouraged children to develop varied along lines of social class and culture. ‘Difficult’ children at both Little People and Little Stars (working class settings) were deemed so due to their lack of realisation and recognition of valued EYL knowledge and behaviour. Their identities were perpetuated and reinforced through the enactment of EYFS policy and in particular, the performance pedagogies adopted during ‘work play’. During such performance pedagogies children were implicitly judged against each other in relation to the skills they had or had not yet acquired. Despite the stated aim of the EYFS to encourage achievement for all, when realised in situ there is a paradox at play; the performative nature of certain aspects of EYFS policy (e.g., the assessment and continual observations which require practitioners to make judgements on what children can or cannot do and the implications children should acquire certain skills/knowledge by a certain age) fixes the failure of the ‘working class’ and the ‘difficult’ child. Elsewhere, Skeggs (2004) has argued that entitlement and access to resources for ‘making a self with value’ are central to how the middle classes are formed, the consequence is too often a residual valueless working class. This was in part evident through the structure of space and time within Busy Buzzy Bees and the performative nature of EYFS. This middle class EYL environment along with children’s family context provided them with the resources (knowledge, skills, experiences) to display a valued (good) learner identity and make ‘a self with value’. The analysis of learner identities in chapter eight allows us to see clearly how children are treated/viewed differently based on perceptions of their ‘ability’ – the able child (the majority at Busy Buzzy Bees and the minority at Little People and Little Stars) has more contact with practitioners and therefore has increased opportunity to develop a self with value.

9.5. Pedagogical practices and the consequences for Identity

How each EYL setting allocates value to various identities through their pedagogic practices (see chapter seven) reflects the distribution of power and authority within and between child-practitioner interactions. As the literature (see chapter two) and analysis (chapter eight) suggests, children within Busy Buzzy Bees are much better able than those at Little People and Little Stars to invest in opportunities outside of the EYL setting to enhance their academic and physical capital within the EYL setting, resulting in practitioners labelling them as ‘good/able’ learners.
It is evidently the case that practitioners across the three settings bring into play very different identities within their EYL setting. The similar social organisation of the settings (see chapter five) conceals different approaches to knowledge constructions and consequently the kind of learner a child is expected to become. As we see throughout the analysis chapters, at Busy Buzzy Bees, ‘academic play’ is highly valued through the time dedicated to it and its structuring. Although manifestly featuring weak classification and framing, practitioners pre-determine activities for the children to choose from – encouraging certain activities to be played with. In contrast, Little People and Little Stars value ‘physical play’ with children spending most of their time on this form of play featuring weak classification and framing but with little input (guidance and encouragement) from practitioners. This stronger ‘play’ structure (although invisible to the children) at Busy Buzzy Bees effectively encouraged the children to develop various skills, experience and learn different forms of knowledge. Whereas children at Little People and Little Stars tended to have ‘free’ choice over their activities and could choose only those they enjoyed, at Busy Buzzy Bees children were encouraged (and expected) to play with different ‘academic’ toys, with practitioners deciding what equipment children could choose from each day.

Consequently different identities dominated the settings, however these featured some fluidity and were not immutable. Children moved from ‘good’ to ‘difficult’ at times, e.g., during music/dancing activities, Adam (at Busy Buzzy Bees) went from being ‘odd’ to ‘good’ because music/dancing was of interest to him and he was good at it. However, the majority of children at Busy Buzzy Bees were seen as ‘good/able’ for most of the time because they were able to consistently display appropriate and valued knowledge and behaviour. The competence pedagogy (weak C and F) evident during ‘academic and physical play’ in this setting, created an imaginary self-actualising subject, and due to their elaborated orientation towards knowledge, children at Busy Buzzy Bees created identities for themselves which were valued by both practitioners and peers. The children here recognised and valued the skills of listening, engaging in quiet play, playing with others and displaying their knowledge overtly. Across all three settings these imaginary learner identities (good, difficult and odd), inform the pedagogic practice of the practitioners and influence the type of curriculum valued within each setting. This included the form of knowledge legitimated in each context (ID or RD) and the type of learner who is legitimated by the form of pedagogic discourse in each setting. The potential implications of this on children’s future educational achievements require exploration in further research.
At *Little People* and *Little Stars*, children tended mainly to experience regulative discourse and during ‘work play’ the classification and framing of knowledge was more tightly framed by practitioners. That is to say, they asked questions directly of each child and rarely gave them the opportunity to answer the question, often providing children with the answer if they did not answer it the first time of being asked. Furthermore, the space was more strongly bounded with a physical barrier, a door, separating it from other play spaces and children were aware they were not to enter that room unless it is with a practitioner for ‘work play’ and they had first lined up outside properly. This strong regulation was deemed necessary by practitioners to encourage children to behave in the correct way and become ‘good’ rather than ‘difficult’ in the immediate situation. However whilst such transactions helped develop children’s behaviour codes, the strong authoritarian regulative nature of this discourse has the potential to leave children with only this experience to draw on as they enter formal education. These children are then potentially unaware of how to cope as independent learners, unable to deal with the progressive (competency) codes of primary and secondary schooling.

At *Busy Buzzy Bees* during ‘work play’, children were encouraged to draw on their elaborated orientations and become independent and self-actualising learners more so than at the other two settings. Furthermore, practitioners asked open questions and re-phrased them if children did not answer the first time, encouraging the children to think for themselves, with a slightly weaker framing of knowledge construction again compared to the other two settings (e.g., see chapter five, p. 101). This provided children at *Busy Buzzy Bees* with the experience of thinking for themselves, predisposing them with the ‘ability’ to develop and enhance their future learner identities as good, able, independent learners within formal education.

9.6. Critiquing the use of the CD~PD model

Chapter four acknowledges there are several criticisms of Basil Bernstein’s theory and concepts which require further elaboration. Furthermore there are several alternative theories which could have featured perhaps more prominently in this study. However, Bernstein’s concepts were utilised because they provided the most helpful and searching lens through which to address the research questions. The data reported in this study clearly demonstrate that identity is contingent and founded dialectically, and relationally in this case, relationally to the context of EYL. It is therefore, partly formed in response to a particular set of corporeal circumstances and situational contingences. The CD~PD model (chapter four,
figure 4p. 84– re inserted below) offered a way of investigating such relationships, looking at, for example, how the materiality of the (child’s) body and their embodiment of discourse is constituted in relation to EYFS policy as it is emplaced and enacted in different EYL settings.

*The above depicts the dynamic of the discursive aspects of knowledge construction (the social construction of ‘abilities’, competencies, skills, etc.) and includes the lived experience of these processes (as body knowledge/ sense). It asks how EYFS policy (which generates the principles of the PD – and implicitly an ‘imaginary’ ideal child) is emplaced, enacted and embodied as it intersects with the CD the codes which children already embody and bring to the setting.

and the meaning formed during their encounters with others. This research has highlighted through the use of the CD–PD model similar processes; children within EYL find, develop and express their identities in relation to their peers within EYL settings which attach meaning to (and value, or not, as the case might be) their bodily movements and public identities (see chapters six and eight). Their bodies have agency (i.e., they are message systems in and of themselves) within classrooms and therefore we need to move beyond just the cognitive to explore the role corporeality has in cultural reproduction. Chapter eight, for example, illustrated how bodies not conforming to the ‘imaginary learner’ were marginalised. Addressing this dynamic with reference to the model is therefore fundamental to developing an understanding of the (re)production of educational inequalities within the initial stages of a child’s educational experiences. This PD–CD featuring enactment, emplacement and embodiment recognises the learner as a multi-sensory being which others too have highlighted as an important element in understanding pedagogy and pedagogic practices (see Ivinson, 2012; Evans et al 2009 and Farnell and Varela, 2008).

This model has proved valuable in illuminating the way children are required to mould their behaviour and bodies to obtain ‘good’ learner identities within EYL settings and the impact of social class and culture of these identities. However, there are limitations which require further attention if there is to be empirical application of this theoretical model. To this end we might look to the work of Farnell and Varela (2008) for example, who have gone some way to exploring the body as a parallel to la parole, but have not yet developed a codified system for representing the patterning of movement in a formal system equivalent to la langue. The concept of the CD is a slippery concept much like Bernstein’s PD (realisation and recognition rules) and there are arguably tensions between them in relation to the use of the PD–CD. One might, for example, consider whether the concept of a CD is needed and has a place in the analyses of learning, or whether the PD is alone sufficient (personal discussions with peers at the 8th Basil Bernstein Symposium). However, I would argue that to use one concept alone, such as the PD or habitus is, if not to ignore, then, badly underestimate the nature and efficacy of corporeality in any social transaction, and perhaps more broadly, to undervalue the role and significance of biology in culture (see Fuller, 2014). The CD–PD intersection is (if nothing more) acknowledgement of the inseparability of biology and culture and appreciation of the complexity of human agency as a concept and process. Still in its infancy this thesis while shedding some light on the nuances of CD–PD intersections within EYL barely touches the complexity of issues around biology and culture,
mind and body. Whether Bernstein’s work and the CD alone can accommodate the way ontology and epistemologies are intertwined, as suggested by Singh (2014) is moot and a matter for further research to address.

9.7. Conclusion

This chapter has highlighted a number of key findings of the previous chapters, concerning the nature of interactions and transactions between practitioners, children and policy within EYL settings. It has brought to the fore ideas about how we might think about the complexities of social class and cultural reproduction, embodiment and identity within the early years and the impact these processes have on children’s initial learning experiences and their potential future learner identities. The discussion has been shaped by three research questions and the key findings highlighted in relation to answering these questions, are;

- Social class inequalities are reproduced within EYL settings
- The knowledge children bring to EYL settings influences the nature of the social class and cultural reproduction which occurs within them
- Practitioners’ structure play and learning with reference to the perceived knowledge children bring with them to the learning setting and their perceptions of what children require. For example, practitioners at Busy Buzzy Bees took for granted that children arrived knowing how to behave so focused on instructional discourse. In contrast at Little Stars and Little People practitioners focused on regulative discourse believing that children had not yet acquired this knowledge (level of appropriate socialization) at home.
- This difference in the structure and organization of play underlies the reproduction of social class values and expectations.
- The structure of knowledge and type of pedagogic discourse dominant within each setting is influenced by practitioners’ perceptions of children’s ability and knowledge orientation (elaborate or restricted).
- Practitioners make judgments on children’s abilities and as such are predisposed to construct ‘learner identities’ for children, however, these are not fixed or immutable
- The intersection of CD–PD plays a role in children’s learner identities and these identities have the potential to impact children’s future academic achievements.
In the following chapter I provide a reflective overview of the research process, highlighting its limitations and strengths, the importance of using certain sociological concepts and the potential implications of this research for policy and practice in EYL.
Chapter Ten: Conclusion

10.1 Introduction

Initially this project set out to illuminate the nature of relationships between parental investment in state provided (e.g. nursery, children’s centres) and private enterprise pre and after school physical activity (e.g., play/gymnastic activities provided by ‘Tumble Tots plc’, or sport activities provided by summer schools plc) and children’s attitudes toward their own and others’ bodies, physical activity and health. In so doing it also sought to explore a variety of substantive and theoretical issues around the opportunities children have to access EYL and the notion of ‘intensive mothering’ (Hays, 1996). However, over three years the project has taken many turns and has evolved via discussions with many interested parties (e.g. colleagues, EYL practitioners and ‘experts’ within the field of EYL ), exploration of research already conducted in the field and the findings of this study itself, to provide insights essentially into EYL curriculum, pedagogies and processes of embodiment. In this respect the study builds on much other work within EYL and the sociology of education focusing on educational inequalities and parents’ role in childcare/enrichment activities (e.g., Ball et al, 1995; Ball and Vincent, 1998, 2005, 2007; Lareau, 2000, 2003; Melhuish et al, 2004, 2006; Reay, 2001, 2004, 2006) but extends understandings by focusing specifically on experiences within EYL settings and the impact of social class and culture on the provision of physical activity and processes of embodiment.

Calling on the voices of twenty six key participants, fifteen EYL practitioners and seven case study children, gradually the research has assembled a picture of the early years learning experiences of children across three socially and culturally diverse preschool settings. Chapters two and three posed several key research questions which I suggested needed attention as they represented a significant lacuna not only in the field of physical education and sports pedagogy, but also educational research generally around EYL, physical activity and embodiment. I therefore sought to address this lacuna by centring the lives of seven case study children and their experiences within EYL settings. Although the study only focuses on three EYL settings in one geographical location in England, the depth and detail of the data provided on the lived experiences of children in pre-school, how they negotiate their identities, and the influence of social class and culture, will hopefully lend themselves to ‘naturalistic generalisation’ (Stake, 1980, p. 69) across other EYL sites in the UK and beyond. Deviating from and building on the more frequently used conceptual tools of
Bourdieu and Foucault for the study of health and embodiment, I employed those offered by Bernstein, albeit in places elaborated using Evans et al’s (2009) notion of a Corporeal Device to explore such processes.

In this final chapter, I return to the questions that have structured, directed and underpinned my research in order to examine how (or whether) the empirical data has facilitated deeper understandings of how social class inequalities are produced and reproduced within Early Years Learning. Furthermore, I want to explore some of the key issues which have been identified via the analyses of data, debate the usefulness of the concepts used and discuss potential implications for future research and EYL policy.

10.2 Summary of the key findings: Social Class and EYL

A combination of social, culture and political changes (see chapter three) within westernised societies across the globe have given prominence to issues of educational equality and the means of achieving it (Levin and Riffel, 1997; Lauder and Hughes, 1999; Saltmarsh, 2007). Principles of inclusion, equity and ‘achievement for all’ are now embraced (rhetorically at least) and embedded within UK education policy (see chapter three) with a focus on ‘high quality learning’ to ensure children ‘make the most of their abilities’ because ‘every child deserves the best possible start’ (EYFS, 2012, p.2) within the early years. Throughout my thesis, there has thus been a focus on how social class and culture are reproduced within EYL and how this potentially impacts knowledge construction, identity, the body and children’s ‘academic’ success. The three central research questions, raised in chapter two with regard to social class, are therefore addressed below in relation to the findings of this study;

1. Are social class inequalities reflected within the pedagogies of Early Years Learning?

   - The findings suggest that children learn about their own and others’ bodies through various forms of play and that the structure and organisation of these play forms vary across settings.
   - Across all three settings performance and competence pedagogies were adopted by practitioners.
   - During ‘work play’ performance pedagogies dominated although social class differences in the intake of each setting influenced the types of knowledge
practitioners expected children to possess and bring to the setting. Therefore different pedagogic discourses dominated each setting and were class driven and value loaded.

- During ‘academic and physical play’ competence pedagogy prevailed, but again the data was suggestive of social class differences in relation to the value placed and time spent on each form of play. At Busy Buzzy Bees (essentially a middle class setting), ‘academic play’ was more valued and children spent most of their time engaged in this form of play. In contrast, at Little People and Little Stars children spent most of their time on ‘physical play’. As chapters six, seven and eight illustrate, this had implications for children’s ‘school readiness’ and the learner identities they were attributed by practitioners.

2. How are social inequalities produced and reproduced within Early Years Learning across different settings?

- The findings suggest that different organisation and curriculum structures, pedagogical interactions and transactions within the three settings impacts social class reproduction in distinctive ways, as outlined below;

- Children arrive at their EYL settings predisposed with different forms of knowledge. Practitioners make judgements on the knowledge children may or may not possess based on their assumptions about a child’s class, culture and family background; consequently EYL policy is enacted very differently across the settings.

- The use of pedagogical discourse differs according to practitioners’ perceptions of the knowledge children bring with them to the setting. For example, at Busy Buzzy Bees, there is a focus predominantly on instructional discourse and being ‘school ready’, while at Little People and Little Stars there is a focus on behaviour and regulative discourse. In effect, the former emphasises academic learning and the latter, social control.

3. What role might class and culture play in children’s early years learning opportunities?

- Previous research (see chapter two) suggests that middle class parents enrol their children in a variety of educational enrichment activities outside formal schooling; they invest in their child’s habitus and capital trying to develop their talents,
abilities and ‘learner readiness’. Whilst this research was not able to explore such out of school processes in detail, the findings do reflect this, suggesting for example, that parents at Busy Buzzy Bees (middle class setting) focus on moulding and developing their children in particular social and educational directions (and discourses), e.g., with trips to the museum/theatre or extra academic work set at home, resulting in the home becoming a site of pedagogy (Vincent, 2012).

- The data suggest that children from middle classes families acquire and have already learnt the codes and rules valued by EYL settings because they are similar to those valued (and realised) at home. Additionally these children are afforded more opportunities (educational and in leisure) outside of EYL setting because they have access to the necessary resources (money, knowledge, transport). The effects of having access to both material and symbolic resource are cumulative (Evans and Davies, 2008; Rose and Hatzenbuehler, 2009).

- In contrast, those children from working class families are required to learn and accept the codes/rules of the EYL settings i.e., display the correct behaviour (e.g. sitting still, putting their own shoes and coats on, listening and playing appropriately with others) if they are to meet the wider educational expectations that are valued in situ. As chapter eight illustrates, this inability to meet fundamental social (regulative codes) impacts negatively on very many children’s learner identities.

The analyses addressing these initial research questions brought to the fore the nature and subtly of the processes of social class and cultural reproduction occurring within EYL. It therefore became important to explore the kind of child being produced legitimated and privileged (or made abject) within these settings by such processes. This allowed me to pursue the second set of research questions around ‘physical play’ and health, embodiment and ability.

10.2.1 ‘Physical play’ and health

Health education and ‘physical play’ have been of enduring interest throughout this research. Its findings, predominately illustrated in chapter seven, add to knowledge produced by previous critical health researchers in education (see chapter two) in suggesting that;
On one level, health discourse is a constant in children’s lives (even in the early years). Pictures on walls, snack on the tables assembled in relation to other discourses aimed at developing the ‘independent child’ invoked and imagined by the Early Years Foundation Stage framework. However it is also compartmentalised and strongly bounded from all other curricula and, in this respect, afforded less importance. In all three settings, health spaces such as the snack area, served as a location expressing a specific discourse and purpose, ‘incidentally’ reinforcing healthy choices, such as eating the ‘right food’. This reinforcement (of ‘good’ and ‘bad’ food – and by extension ‘good’ and ‘bad’ parents who provide it) occurred not only through each setting’s choice of snack but also via incidental pedagogical transactions between practitioners and children.

Across the three settings, different the types of knowledge and meaning around health were exchanged. The data suggests that some children, predominately those from middle class families who attend Busy Buzzy Bees, were expected to and are considered able to display more elaborate understandings of health discourse – it constituted an element of their ‘ability’. Furthermore, in this context, it was assumed by practitioners that families invested heavily in their child’s physical culture and development outside ‘school’ (see chapter seven, p.8). By contrast, children at Little People and Little Stars were expected to understand less about ‘health’ but were given more time for ‘physical play’, with practitioners often suggesting that children had limited opportunities for ‘physical play’ outside of nursery.

Such findings add weight to previous research (Gard and Wright, 2005; Humberstone and Stan, 2011; Paechter, 2011; Evans et al 2012) which has highlighted the different ways in which health education privileges certain body images reproducing class and cultural hierarchies and differences in the process. As outlined in chapter two, in Australia and New Zealand, Burrows and Wright (2004) suggest that children’s identities and health are influenced by dominant cultural narratives; it implies that parents are increasingly held responsible for their child’s body size, shape, with single parents or those with low income being marginalised by the dominant ‘normalising’ health discourses which require parents to regulate and monitor their child’s eating and television watching behaviours. While this research did not explore such issues in any great detail, it does suggest that similar processes occur in EYL settings. For example, practitioners at Little People and Little Stars (working class settings) felt children were not exposed to healthy eating or indeed in some cases
breakfast before nursery (see chapter seven, p.144-145) – implying that it was not part of their family culture (within their financial means) to provide such knowledge or food.

This research therefore takes us beyond the current literature in documenting how social class differences influence: (i) the types of health messages (elaborate or restricted) imparted to young children; (ii) how practitioners view and evaluate children’s prior knowledge around health; and (iii) how low income families are marginalised by ‘dominant’ health discourses – their children appear to be underexposed to elaborate health discourses. There is an absence of elaborate health messages within these ‘working class’ settings when compared to those of the higher income families, because practitioners in the former either did not consider children ‘ready’ to receive (‘privileged’/official?) health knowledge or that it was culturally relevant to them (see chapter seven) given their working class lifestyles. In effect, children were disadvantaged by absences in the health discourse rather than what was said and transmitted to them.

10.2.2 Embodiment and ability

The findings in chapters seven and eight illustrate the complex dynamic between the body, discourse, identity and social class. ‘Good’ learner identities are articulated by children who are able to display knowledge which is valued by the setting through their behaviour, actions and movements. For example, acquiring (or already having acquired) appropriate recognition and realisation rules (e.g., defining when and how to sit and listen ‘appropriately’) positioned children as ‘able’ and ‘good’ across all three settings. These good/difficult learner identities, constructed, nurtured and encouraged by practitioners, became embodied in the actions and behaviors of children. Consequently, most children (perhaps unsurprisingly) also appeared to value the identities practitioners attributed them and their peers; thus they too played their part in and helped produce and reproduce extant social hierarchies.

Observations of children’s interactions across all three settings suggested that many children viewed and valued their peers in similar light to that of their practitioners; for example, at Little People and Little Stars many children saw Patryk and Jordan as ‘naughty’ children and avoided/treated them accordingly, while at Busy Buzzy Bees, many saw James as the ‘most able’. As it was not possible to explore this process in depth (i.e., beyond observations) within this research, future research with a sharper focus on EYL children’s views of themselves and their peers would permit further elaboration on issues of identity construction. For a variety of reasons discussed in detail in chapter five, this research focused
primarily on practitioners’ views of children and the researcher’s interpretations of children actions. Due to the age of the participants it was difficult to gain their opinion or ask them how they viewed themselves and others. Exploring this aspect of learning as they enter the final year of the EYFS stage may shed greater light on their own sense of self and identity rather than the identity practitioners attributed them. In summary, when addressing the research questions relating to embodiment and identity (see chapter one), the findings revealed:

- EYFS policy implicitly depicts an ‘imaginary learner’ (see chapter three) as able, active and independent through aspects of effective learning and the implicit neo-liberal discourse of independent play. However, how each EYL setting and practitioner emplaced and enacted this policy critically influences a child’s sense of themselves, their learner identity and social status within the EYL setting.

- ‘Ability’ is situationally specific i.e., it is valued and recognised differently across each setting, albeit against a normative ideal of the imaginary ideal ‘able’ child (see chapters three and eight).

- Social hierarchies are evident within each setting and children learn their place amongst their peers in relation to their body, culture and gender.

- Children’s identities are forged through the different distribution and forms of regulative and instructional discourse within each setting, in relation to the intersection of class, gender, age and culture. For example, across the three settings, instructional discourse is mainly used when practitioners are talking to those children deemed ‘able’/ ‘good’. In the case of Busy Buzzy Bees, this is the majority of children, however at Little People and Little Stars, it tended to be the older girls who are engaged and engage with instructional discourse.

- The CD-PD model used to explore embodiment, highlights that children are inducted into socially classed, self-regulating modes of behaviour, which leave those who cannot or do not adhere being classed as either ‘difficult’ or as ‘failures’. This has the potential to precipitate educational difficulties as the children progress into ‘formal’ education.
10.3. Theoretical Implications

Several potential contributions to theory can be highlighted in respect of this research. As mentioned above, this study sought to contribute to the sociology of education, physical education and sports pedagogy and EYL fields in which relatively limited sociological research around physical activity, embodiment and social class is to be found (see chapter three). Much of the previous sociology of education research has focused on parents (Lareau, 2000, 2003; Reay, 2005; Green, 2010; Wheeler and Green, 2012), numeracy and literacy (Hartas, 2011), HLE (Meluish et al, 2004; Siraj-Blatchford, 2008) and/or explored the role of embodiment within formal school settings (Paetcher, 2011; Evans et al 2012). In line with the corporeal turn in social theory (Merleau-Ponty 1945/1962, 1968; Turner 1984; Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992; Grosz 1994; Shilling 2000, 2005, 2008) and empirical work of others (Evans et al. 2008; Evans, Rich, and Davies 2009; Evans, Davies, and Rich 2010; James 2000; Prout 2000; Pronger 2002; Sykes 2007; Walkerdine 2008; Wright and Harwood 2008; Zembylas 2007), chapter eight highlights the need to move beyond biological or cultural reductionism, demonstrating how children actively engage with cultural stereotypes in experiencing their own bodies (Prout, 2000).

In utilising Bernstein’s understanding of the PD (Bernstein 1996) alongside Evans et al’s (2008) concept of the CD, (see chapter four) this study sought to address this lacuna by centering the embodiment of pre-school children and the impact social class and culture has on learner identities. To a degree the previous chapters have offered empirical evidence of such processes in signposting that EYL settings not only reflect but reproduce a hierarchy of social class values, with some identities (forms of embodiment) being viewed as negative, some positive and others either excluded or largely ignored (see chapter eight). Different knowledge forms – working class or middle class – carry different and unequal value and power within diverse communities – EYL settings or local community – and this knowledge is differentially distributed to different social groups (see chapter six – eight). For example, chapter seven revealed that children in Little People and Little Stars arrive with very different health knowledge to those at Busy Buzzy Bees and there is a different emphasis and value placed on such knowledge within the EYL settings. The conceptual tools of Bernstein and Evans et al, the CD–PD intersection, enabled me to explore both the ‘relations within’ (e.g. family, school) and ‘relations to’ (knowledge construction, space, time) within the early years. However, it is acknowledged that these concepts have their limitations, some of which are discussed below.
Notwithstanding the usefulness of ‘habitus’ (see chapter four) the empirical data has highlighted the importance of the ‘CD’ if we are to pay due regard to the body and its agency in research. Bernstein explores social class reproduction in relation to discourse, language and codes, however, this thesis argues that attention only to the discursive elements of reproduction is not enough (perhaps especially so) when researching young children. I therefore adapted his work to move beyond the discursive and explore the corporeal (Evans et al 2008) within EYL. However, whilst Evans et al’s (2008) work provides one useful way of talking about the body and bringing the corporeal to the fore, this (i.e., the CD) too falls short (at least in its current articulation) in helping us address the individual as ‘multi – sensory’. Unlike older children, who are able to articulate their sense of embodiment and their feelings about their body, very young children may not have such facility. It therefore becomes important to explore the child not just through their language and movements but as ‘multi-sensory’. This means acknowledging that knowledge construction can not be reduced to the physical, social, or the discursive realm, but rather its construction involves interaction of all these things. The term ‘multi-sensory’ therefore foregrounds how biology and culture combine to form our identities; how the self is realised through what we see, hear, touch, and act (Harre, 1998). In Merleau – Ponty’s (1968) terms it would mean addressing a ‘field of being’ – interrogating how humans relate to the world through ‘embodiment, perception, feeling, social meaning and mind’ (Burkitt, 2003, p. 329). Some of the methodological challenges of achieving this are mentioned below.

10.4. Limitations

Whilst this research has shed light on previously under researched areas of educational activity, it is to be acknowledged that it also contains some significant limitations. The data collected and subsequent analyses are but indicative of processes observed over the course of the study. Due to the limitations of the research, outlined below, it therefore has to be acknowledged that this work is not conclusive. However, it does endeavour to accurately represent the three settings which participated in the study and the daily lives of the children whilst they attended the EYL setting. As with any qualitative research however, there is the potential for data to be missed, misinterpreted, or misused;

- Firstly, it is important to note that throughout this thesis it has not been the researchers’ intention to assume or imply that practitioners within the ‘working class’ EYL settings only actively encourage a ‘restricted code’. Rather it is posited that
practitioners’ are rationally reactive. They respond to the embodied knowledge children bring with them to the EYL setting and endeavour to build on it, but at *Little People* and *Little Stars* they have neither the time (with individual children) nor resources to go beyond the use of restricted code in such settings.

- Secondly, it was the intention of the researcher to capture children’s voices, however, this was not possible due to methodological issues discussed below (and in chapter five). Therefore the voices that dominate throughout this text are those of the researcher and practitioners. Given this, it is acknowledged that the findings largely reflect perceptions from the participating practitioners, but that other perspectives e.g., of children’s parents need to be considered within future research.

Outlined below are some of the key issues which arose throughout the study. Specifically, I reflect on the data collection process and the use of social class as an organising concept; consider the methodological obstacles faced, including the lack of parental voices and difficulties with questionnaire return rates. Finally I present my thoughts for future research.

10.4.1 Representing the world of EYL children

Different research methodologies provide different claims for the status of knowledge produced. Historically, critical ethnographies (e.g. Willis, 1977; Fine, 1991; Yon, 2000) have provided rich, in depth descriptions of ethnographic moments in schools. I therefore adopted a critical ethnographic methodology in order to provide what I hoped would be a detailed and nuanced account of the experiences of young children in EYL and explore their embodiment and corporeality. Fitzpatrick (2013) argues that a key challenge for ethnographers is to balance issues of culture and identity with social hierarchies and structures. Whilst ethnographic approaches can enable us to provide a means for representing children’s voices and experiences, for me it was a challenge to convey the complexities, fluidity and nature of children’s interactions and transactions through an academic writing style. This was the case because EYL settings do not conform to the highly structured organisation that features in schools and similarly, children do not focus on one activity for any length of time. Confronted with the dilemma of trying to represent the (often fast moving, fluid, messy) everyday experiences of young children in EYL settings, through academic text (structured chapters) I needed to format a writing voice that would allow me to communicate my data. I therefore decided to use key episodes and case study children in order to give the reader a
sense of the context and how children interact within it, as well as their spontaneous nature and an insight into their characters and personalities.

It is acknowledged that throughout my narrative writing, I focus on children’s and practitioners’ voices. However there are potential realisation problems with this method in terms of my narrative being a reinterpretation of their conversations and experiences. As Tullis Owen et al (2009, p.180/81) suggest, when writing qualitative research we are,

‘taught to construct texts in an enjoyable way for readers…we follow a story…we also change names and places for individual and organisational protection…depending on the arguments we may alter the sequence of fieldwork happenings.’

Whilst narratives are constructed and edited by their author, they provide a powerful way to represent and understand experiences (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000). Throughout my narrative I have attempted to centralise the voices of the practitioners’ and children through the use of episodes and case studies and to contextualise each episode with reference to place, class, gender and ethnicity. Furthermore, I also acknowledged myself in the process and have tried to be reflexive throughout in order to interrogate my own value position and the broader epistemological context of my research. Kenway and McLeod (2004, p. 526-27) suggest there are three ways reflexivity is frequently used;

First, reflexivity is marked as a characteristic of contemporary biographies (generating studies on reflexivity as an ontological category) and a structural artefact of late/ high modernity [ ]. Second, reflexivity is lauded as a necessary methodological stance, particularly in feminist and post-structuralist research. Indeed, it has become somewhat of an imperative, a doxa of post-positivist educational research that the researcher situate themselves, 'own' their investments and constructions in the research process and in the production of both meaning and 'partial' truths…The third use of reflexivity[ ] pertains to both what Bourdieu regards as a necessary reflexivity of the field of sociology, and to the practice of reflexively situating and historicising the space of one's point of view as a scholar and a sociologist.

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22 Narrative being used to express how the research has been written: as an account of children’s experiences and events observed within EYL.
Furthermore, Pillow (2003) suggests that reflexivity is often used as a process to allow the researcher to reflect on their impact on participants and in the interpretation of the data. Throughout this thesis I have been mindful of these reflective modes and have aimed to attend how my own experiences have influenced my decisions to undertake this ethnography and the methods I used. One key reflection occurred at the point of negotiating my role within the settings and this and its implications are documented below.

10.4.2 Issues to negotiate: researcher, staff member or child?

Prior to undertaking my PhD, I had worked as a qualified secondary school PE teacher and my only encounter with children under the age of 7 had been as a Saturday morning football coach. Whilst I discussed my methodological approach in more detail in chapter five, there are several reasons based on my lack of experience in early years’ education, that informed my decision to use this methodology and which perhaps impacted my initial struggles to negotiate my role during data collection.

Ethnography requires the researcher to spend time in a context and build meaningful and ongoing relationships with people. Coming from a secondary school background, the organisation, structure and activities of a EYL setting appeared alien to me. It therefore became a priority to understand how such settings operated in order to conduct the research, which is why adopting an ethnographic approach became so important. Rather than viewing my lack of EYL experience as a limitation, I gradually began to see it as a resource as it meant I entered each setting without any preconceptions or expectations of what I should be seeing. As such, I became an ethnographer in the traditional anthropological sense – going into a culture that was unfamiliar to develop our understandings of that culture/context (e.g. Mead, 1925).

I entered each EYL setting with the belief that my purpose was to trial data collection methods and collect preliminary data for my thesis. I thought that by following the standard formula suggested in many research textbooks: (i) getting access to the setting; (ii) managing relationships in each EYL setting; and (iii) experimenting with different data collection techniques; and (iv) leave the research setting whilst maintaining a relationship with the setting manager in order to regain access for phase two, I would be able to achieve my intended outcomes (Buchanan et al. 1988 cited in Bryman 1988). However the most difficult
aspect of collecting data in phase one was negotiating my role within the setting and how the role would allow me to build relationships with the children and staff without being seen either as an assessor of both or a member of staff. As mentioned (in chapter five) in doing ethnographic fieldwork, Junker (1960) suggests that there are four possible types of position an ethnographer may adopt: (i) a complete participant; (ii) a participant as observer; (iii) an observer as a participant; or (iv) a complete observer. Throughout my observations I found that my position altered and could not be slotted into a distinct category. At no point did I feel I became a complete participant (child), as both staff and children often saw me as an additional “helper”/staff member. For example, during my first morning at ‘Little People’, I was given the task of watching over four of the children as they played outside. The member of staff said to me, “you have a CRB, so you can watch these boys outside while we (the other staff) watch the children inside”. Schwartzman (1993, p. 48) asserts that ‘stepping into a setting for the first time is probably the most significant phase of the entire ethnographic process…The surprises, differences, misunderstandings, and such that occur in these encounters may foreshadow major research concerns and issues’. She explains further that the problems of access and the experience of first encounters should not simply be regarded as ‘noise’ that hinders the research process, but rather valuable data in their own right (Schwartzman, 1993). Whilst observing the boys outside was insightful, particularly because they were being physically active, after a while I wanted to observe more of the boys play fighting and running around, but felt torn between wanting to gather data and at the same time not wanting to anger staff by leaving the outside play area. This example highlights the difficulties I faced when negotiating my role in each setting and to some extent imposed some limits on how I was able to represent these locations/settings. To begin with, I gained a narrow view of some of the settings due to practitioners seeing me as an ‘extra set of hands’ – I was confined to observing activities I was supervising and was not able to take a detached, observer only role. However, over time, I became better at reducing the time I spent ‘helping out’ and was able to focus more on my data collection. In hindsight, whilst initially limiting and difficult to negotiate, I feel this actually allowed me to collect more detailed, rich data, particularly with practitioners who acknowledged I had been helpful and taken on a role outside of that which was required of me. As a result, they became more willing to talk more openly about the structure, organisation and planning that goes into EYFS policy enactment in their setting.

10.4.3 Questionnaire difficulties
My experiences throughout phase two differed in all three settings, although one common theme/difficulty transcended them all – engaging practitioners and parents in the research. As previously mentioned, various methods were trialled to engage parents in the data collection process, but none were particularly successful. I handed out questionnaires to parents during drop off and collection times, spoke to parents to explain who I was and why I was at the nursery in addition to leaving flyers (see appendix xi) highlighting my research and asking if they would like to take part in an interview. I felt the personal approach to engaging with parents during drop off and collection time would allow me to build up a rapport with them and encourage parents to participate. However, it soon transpired that parents were not amenable to engaging in any form of ‘research talk’ at these times, as they were understandably more concerned to busy themselves getting feedback from practitioners on how their child had been during the day and collecting the bags, clothes and art work made by their children. Other strategies tried, were also less than successful,

Reflecting on the questionnaire distributed to parents and used in my data collection, my low return rate may be attributed at least in part to poor questionnaire design. The purpose of the questionnaire was to gather as much data about the children’s home life as possible, but in attempting to do so, the questions (too long, too many) and size of the questionnaire (too bulky) may have deterred parents from answering it (Bryman, 2012).

The lack of parental voices within my research meant that the data gathered on children’s home/family life, relied solely on practitioners perceptions and snippets of information children provided during observation/conversation (with both practitioners/other children and the researcher). This in itself meant that caution had to be used when drawing on such data as it did not necessarily provide a detailed reflection of children’s home lives. Having parental voices and an insight into children’s home life, would have provided greater clarity over issues around social class, children’s prior knowledge and parental expectations of EYL settings.

As well as facing problems engaging parents in the research, across two of the settings (Little People and Little Stars), the willingness of practitioners to participate varied. Although a number of factors may have influenced this, one issue which appeared to play a significant role was related to communication and gaining access. Initially, prior to phase one when approaching the EYL setting, I spoke to the managers or deputy managers (as protocol dictated), who granted me access to each of the settings. However, for the most part (with the
exception of *Busy Buzzy Bees*), the managers/deputy managers were not involved in the day to day running of the EYL rooms. Furthermore, there appeared to be limited communication between practitioners and managers about my research and the purpose/length of my visit. To some extent, this impacted negatively on the practitioner-researcher relationship; practitioners appeared wary of the researcher, as if they were being observed and assessed. Although over time this initial barrier was broken down through conversations between the researcher and practitioners. In light of the difficulties faced getting parents to participate, for future research, I would adopt a different approach to gain access to the settings initially in the hope of minimising some of the issues raised. When gaining access, I addressed only the setting manager, however, getting both the setting manager and room manager on board from the outset may be a better way of getting practitioners on board not only as participants but also as points of contact to encourage parents to participate also.

10.4.4 Data Collection methods…The camera

Prior to starting phase one, I envisaged using cameras to engage the children in the data collection process and give them the opportunity to take pictures of what they thought was healthy or good for them etc… Much of the research on EYL advocates using cameras with children of a young age (Alderson, 1995; Morrow and Richards, 1996; Thomas and O’Kane, 1998; Greene and Hogan, 2005; Clark and Moss, 2005; Thomson, 2008; McEvilly, 2013). However despite previous research using visual methods successfully with similar age groups, I felt that providing children with cameras was so removed from the other toys in each of the settings (i.e. disconnected from ‘normal’ cultural activity), that it caused disruption which meant it was hard to control and structure tasks around the use of the camera.

Despite my unsuccessful experience I would not dismiss the use of a camera and visual imagery for future research with a similar age group, but suggest that using a small group of children (up to four) in a designated space might prove more successful. Additionally, allowing a greater lead in time in terms of distributing cameras to the children to play with in the weeks leading up to using them for data collection may also reduce the excitement and research ‘noise’ around them.

10.4.5 The difficulties of researching social class and EYL
Current UK government policy discourse (see chapter two) around education and EYL suggests that anyone regardless of disadvantage or background can succeed in life if they want to. In this neo-liberal view, ability and effort are more important than social status and class background, however, as the analysis chapters of my thesis suggest, social class is important in shaping and influencing young children’s experiences within EYL and their subsequent embodiment and identities. Social class infuses children’s educational experiences and social lives (see chapter eight) and therefore, it has been important to explore issues around social inequality and education. However as a concept, social class is not without its challenges.

Class analysis and class theory are fraught with disputes (see Savage, 2000) and whilst social class categories are often determined by occupation (see chapter five), many (Bagguley, 1995; Crompton, 1995; Robson and Butler, 2001) raise questions as to whether values, practices and attitudes can be simply ‘read’ off from occupational categories. From a practical data collection standpoint, engaging practitioners, parents and children in issues of social class was difficult. Within EYL, the markers (e.g. free school meals) used within primary and secondary school research to assess social class intake and SES are not available. It was therefore difficult initially to engage practitioners in a discussion about the children’s and their own SES. Furthermore due to the questionnaire issues discussed above, conversations with practitioners in relation to their clients became an increasingly important way to collect this data. I negotiated the contentious terrain of social class through informal conversations and building a rapport with practitioners which enabled me to ask questions and raise issues around SES more openly than I had previously anticipated. Overall, whilst social class is a complex concept and has received less focus within sociology of education within recent years, it is still an important issue to explore in relation to educational achievement; as Fitz et al (2005, p. 11) comment ‘patterns of success and failure [ ] strongly influenced by class which….mediates patterns by gender and ethnicity’. The section below discusses issues of gender and ethnicity, their intersections and why they have not played a visible role within this research.

10.4.6 Critical Ethnography: What’s critical about this study?

The aim of critical ethnography is to explore agency and social constraints, to develop an understanding of the interrelationship between structure, agency and consider how individuals can become empowered. It deals with ‘sources of domination and repression’
(Anderson, 1989, p. 249) and specifically, within this research, the source of domination was social class. However it is acknowledged that other structures such as race, gender and culture impact on children’s educational experiences and attainment. Together with social class, these structures intersect to influence the social stratification process (Sage, 1990). Bearing this in mind it is important to therefore justify why social class is the dominate issue raised throughout this research. As discussed in chapter five, within ethnographic research, we need to contextualise the research within wider societal hierarchies. By doing so we are attending to the social hierarchies and power relations, questioning inequalities and making the ethnography critical.

Bloch (1991) argued that early childhood researchers often choose not to frame their research in critical perspectives due to the fields’ tradition of being researched within developmental psychology using positivist traditions (see chapter two). Furthermore, government policy and public pedagogies around the early years (see chapter two), focus on the individual, suggesting that social improvement results from individual efforts rather than structural social problems (such as social class, race, gender) which maintain inequalities. However, previous EYL policies within England and Wales, namely *Sure Start* (see chapter three) openly focused on social class and its impact on opportunities and achievement in the first five years of a child’s life. Therefore, so too this critical ethnography chose to focus on social class, traditional foci within critical ethnographies (see Luke, 2010) at the expense of comprehensively addressing the intersection of social class, gender and race. The research however is not without insight into the ways in which gender and ethnicity intersect with social class, as highlighted in chapters six, seven and eight even if not a dominant theme in its narrative. This is a potential area for future research.

10.5. Implications of this research for EYL and Physical Activity

As indicated in chapter three, researchers in the sociology of education and physical education and sports pedagogy have rarely engaged with aspects of physical activity/physical development within EYL settings, opting instead to focus essentially on numeracy and literacy or HLE (Melluish et al, 2004, 2006). Furthermore, despite a plethora of research

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23 Conversations with and observations of practitioners, revealed that for them, play was not gender specific; they felt children should be free to play and dress up in whatever way they chose irrespective of their sex. However, parents often were more concerned about encouraging or discouraging their children from playing games and dressing in ways that were not seen as socially or culturally appropriate for their gender. For example, Jane at *Little People* reported that several parents had asked for their son not to be allowed to dress up in princess costumes because it was not a suitable activity for their child.
exploring the body and lived experiences of young people (Burrows and Wright, 2004; Gard and Wright, 2005; Evans et al, 2009; Paechter, 2011) most of this work has focused on children within formal (primary and secondary school) health and physical education. Within sports pedagogy, researchers (with the exception of McEvilly and colleagues, 2013) have been less concerned with PA and embodiment in EYL than with such issues in primary and secondary schooling. Much of the sociology of education research highlighting the educational inequalities within EYL points to middle class families having greater access to resources and childcare/enrichment activities than working class children (see Ball and Vincent 2005). However given the current focus of government policy and expansion of funded childcare places in the UK, there is increasing need for researchers to explore EYL settings in relation to inequalities and physical activity. Physical development is a key area in EYFS policy rhetoric and considered important during children’s early years and as often impacting on more academic aspects of a child’s life. Issues around physical development/activity in the Early Years curriculum are valued and deserve exploration in more detail as well as having a stronger focus within EYL pedagogy and policy voices. This research has, if nothing more, set agendas for further research.

The aim of this thesis has not been to establish what is a ‘good’ or ‘bad’ practitioner or how to improve policy, but rather to explore the influence of social class and culture on children’s embodiment within EYL settings. The analyses in chapters’ six to eight documented the ways in which certain discourses became inter-linked with knowledge construction, power relations and the privileging of certain forms of play and embodied learner identities. By highlighting the structure, organisation and nature of learner identities formed within EYL, the findings open up spaces for exploring ‘alternative’ ways of knowing and being and for developing pedagogical practices which provide better (more equal) educational opportunities for all.

A number of interrelated implications for practice and policy emerge from this research. Firstly, it is not enough to simply document and describe processes of social reproduction, the findings of research need to be disseminated. In this case not only to those within academia but also practitioners and EYL setting managers. Key areas highlighted by this research, namely that social class and cultural inequalities are reproduced through EYL and that certain identities are valued over others, have long term negative consequences for children’s educational attainment. Therefore, throughout my time in each setting, I had several conversations with room managers and practitioners around the data I was collecting and the
emerging ‘findings’. However, to date I have not formally disseminated the key findings to practitioners, but look to do so in the future, including through publications in ‘Early Years’, the official journal of TACTYC (Association for the Professional Development of Early Years Educators) and other relevant journals.

Secondly, the research has policy implications, challenging as it does the claim that EYL and the EYFS are a means of reducing social disadvantage and increasing social mobility. EYFS policy depicts an ‘ideal learner’ which aligns with middle class values, therefore, when enacted by practitioners, those who do not have the realisation and recognition rules valued in the EYFS are disadvantaged, and this tends to be working class children. It is therefore important that policy makers acknowledge other types of learner and develop a curriculum which is accessible by/for all. Whether researchers have the capacity to influence policy makers however is moot (see Gewirtz, 2003; Whitty, 2006). Furthermore practitioners lack of focus on ‘physical play’ and developing children’s skills through ‘physical play’ in large part is expression of their lack of training in this area and the dominance of numeracy and literacy skills in the EYFS framework. For example, Stacey at Little People who was currently finishing her level two training and looking to complete her level 3 reported she expected to only receive half a day training during her course (see Early Years Educator (Level 3): Qualifications Criteria – July 2013 – Gov.UK). This lack of ‘physical play’ training understandably impacts practitioners’ confidence to encourage, deliver and promote purposeful ‘physical play’ to develop children within EYL settings. This is something that practitioners themselves acknowledged as did the Local Authority Early Years Physical Activity Officers24. Whether policy makers are aware of this and (even if so) would provide additional training for practitioners given current austerities, again is moot.

10.6. Future Research Recommendations

This research, together with the body of knowledge reviewed in chapter one, provides valuable insight into social class and the embodied experiences of young children. However, there remain a number of possible directions future research could take.

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24 Local authority early years physical activity officers were contacted as part of a smaller research project – they commented about the need to improve practitioners training to develop their confidence in relation to physical activity. Some local authorities have introduced specific training to help with this.
The research has highlighted the complex dynamic between the body, knowledge and identity and points to the merits of perceiving the child as a multi-sensory being. This will require further development of the CD–PD model and articulation of theoretical codes for movement. As mentioned in chapter nine Farnell and Varela (2008) have gone some way to exploring the body as a parallel to la parole, but have not yet developed a codified system for representing the patterning of movement in a formal system equivalent to la langue. Within the field of linguistics and developmental psychology, different types of gestures have been coded. Exploring this further to develop codes for the CD would perhaps enable us to distinguish between the expression of regulative and instructional embodied learning, and allow for further development and application of this theoretical idea.

Chapter eight tentatively suggests that children who acquire a ‘difficult’ learner identity may face difficulties as they progress to and thereafter within formal education. A longitudinal study exploring what impact EYL has on children once they enter reception year (primary education) and beyond would help illuminate this process.

To date there has been limited research into children’s physical development within EYL and the impact of this on future educational attainment. Further research is warranted focusing on practitioners’ training and the ways in which different notions and definitions of physical development and play are understood and enacted by practitioners.

10.7. Concluding Comments

In this final chapter I have revisited my research questions and explored the key themes that have emerged from this study. In particular, I have documented how social class impacts children’s embodied knowledge and identities within EYL. Taken together the findings highlight a number of substantive issues, including: (i) the role that EYL and family expectations and cultures play in reproducing social inequalities; (ii) the impact the structure and organisation of space and time have on young children; and (iii) the role EYL plays in the development of children’s learner identities.

The thesis illustrates clearly the (often bewildering) complexity of the discourses and practices children negotiate in re-contextualising knowledge and constructing their learner
identities within EYL settings. They negotiate and are expected to embody those values that are valued within their EYL setting in order to acquire a ‘good’ learner identity (potentially at the expense of other values). Some clearly are predisposed to succeed in this endeavour while others, sadly, are almost inevitably destined to fail.
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Early Years Learning (EYL) and children’s orientation towards the Body, Physical Activity and Health

Parental / Participant Information Sheet

Researcher; Julie Stirrup, PhD Student at Loughborough University
Contact details; J.L.Stirrup@lboro.ac.uk

What is the purpose of the study?

There has been a renewed interest in childhood in the UK within the last fifteen years or so for several reasons. For me, from an educational practitioner’s perspective, I am interested in understanding children’s attitudes towards physical activity and health prior to formal education. While there is a significant quantity of research into the declining participation levels within secondary school PE, a more thought-provoking question is how pre-school children relate to physical activity and what learning goes on in the early years.

The purpose of this research is firstly to explore access and opportunity issues which may arise within the context of early years learning and secondly to explore how physical activity in early learning settings contributes to how children learn about themselves and their bodies.

Who is doing this research and why?

This research is being carried out as part of a PhD thesis supported by Loughborough University

Are there any exclusion criteria?

Participants must be between the ages of 3 and 5 years old at the time of the data collection

Once I take part, can I change my mind?
Yes! After you have read this information and asked any questions you may have, we will ask you to complete an Informed Consent Form, however if at any time, before, during or after the sessions you wish to withdraw your child from the study please just contact the main investigator. You can withdraw at any time, for any reason and you will not be asked to explain your reasons for withdrawing.

**Where and how long will it take?**

All sessions will be at child’s centre/nursery. The research will be conducted over a number of months (approximately 10 months).

**What will I be asked to do?**

**Phase One**

- Participants (Children) will build a rapport with the researcher and the researcher will join in the activities at the nursery

**Phase Two**

- Participants will be engaged in ‘informal’ conversations with the researcher to discuss their feeling towards their environment and physical activity (play). A variety of techniques attuned to the age of the child will be used over the course of the research to encourage the child to talk about themselves and the activities in which they are engaged

**What personal information will be required from me?**

Participants will be asked their feelings towards and like/dislikes within the context of the early years learning setting

**Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?**

- All data collected will be stored in accordance with the University’s data protection protocol (all video/audio recordings will be stored on a safe computer kept within a locked office)
- All participants will remain anonymous throughout the study and will be given pseudonyms
- Prior to the start of data collection, all participants will be given a pseudonym and this will be used when recording/transcribing or reporting any data collected
• All data collected, will be kept until the study has been completed and submitted to the University

**What will happen to the results of the study?**

The general findings of the study will be reported in the researcher’s thesis and will be disseminated to participants, early year’s practitioners within the chosen settings, parents and potentially at academic conferences and in academic journals

**I have some more questions who should I contact?**

Should you have any further questions, please contact Julie Stirrup at the following email address; J.L.Stirrup@lboro.ac.uk

**What if I am not happy with how the research was conducted?**

If you are not happy with how this research has been conducted, please see the University’s policy on this using the following link

[http://www.lboro.ac.uk/admin/committees/ethical/Whistleblowing(2).htm](http://www.lboro.ac.uk/admin/committees/ethical/Whistleblowing(2).htm)
Appendix ii: Consent Form

Loughborough University
School of Sport, Exercise and Health Sciences,
Loughborough
LE11 3TU

Early Years Learning (ELY), Physical Activity and Health

Information for Parents/Guardian

Dear Parent/ Guardian,

I am a PhD researcher at Loughborough University, looking at children within the context of early years learning (3-5 year olds) and their orientations towards physical activity and their body. As a trained physical education teacher, I am interested in children’s physical development and attitudes towards physical activity and health prior to formal education. While there is a significant quantity of research into the declining participation levels within secondary school PE, for me a more pertinent question is how pre-school children relate to physical activity and what learning goes on in the early years.

Therefore, this research will focus on two main areas namely, children’s access and opportunities to participate in physical activity within an early learning context and how children construct their identity through physical activity. To achieve these aims, the study will require the children aged 3-5 years old, currently attending nursery/ pre-school to ‘agree’ to participate in direct observations of his/her behaviour, actions being conducted whilst in the early learning setting as well as engaging in ‘informal’ conversations relating to their attitudes and likes/dislikes within the same setting. All observations and ‘informal’ conversations will take place under the supervision of the Nursery/ Pre-school staff. I am very aware that dealing with very young children requires a sensitive approach to children’s age and stage of development. I will be happy to talk to you about such approaches as required.

During the research, your child may be video recorded or be asked to take pictures and/or draw their favourite area within the Early Years Learning setting. These photos may be used as part of the write up of the study and will be kept securely in a locked office with only the researcher allowed to have access to the data. The researcher has a current CRB.

The study will take place over approximately eight months. I would be grateful if you would complete the consent form below and return to your child’s early years learning facility before the 5th October 2013. If you require more information on this study, please contact the researcher, Julie Stirrup at the following email address; J.L.Stirrup@lboro.ac.uk.
CONSENT FORM

(TO BE COMPLETED BY A PARENT OR GUARDIAN)

The purpose and details of the, Early Years Learning (ELY), Physical Activity and Health research have been explained to me.

I understand that all procedures have been approved by the Loughborough University Ethical Advisory Committee.

- I have read and understood this information sheet and consent form.
- I understand that my son/daughter does not have to take part in this research.
- I understand that my son/daughter has the right to withdraw from this research at any stage for any reason, and that he/she will not be required to provide a reason for withdrawing.
- I understand that all the information my son/daughter provides will be treated in strict confidence.
- I agree that my son/daughter may be recorded and/or photographed and that all recordings will be stored in accordance to the University regulations and only visible to the research team.

☐ I have read and agree to the statements given above (please tick)

I do ☐ Do not ☐

give permission for my son/daughter to participate in the research project, entitled “Early Years Learning, Physical Activity and Health”.

Signed _______________________ Date ___________________

Childs Name____________________________ (please print)
Appendix iii: Examples of thematic analysis and data

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<th>Sources</th>
<th>References</th>
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</table>

Examples of data within specific nodes

- Children’s Interactions with each other
  - Reference 2 - 4.60% Coverage
    Chloe whilst Tom and Ian are practicing their numbers - “I say, you two were playing with my crown and I wasn’t very happy was I”
  - Reference 3 - 6.63% Coverage
    Amy asks James if he would like to join her at the painting, he replies “I’ll get paint on my stripy top and mum doesn’t was to see that…so no”
    Amy: “James don’t touch anything then”
• Types of play
  o Reference 3 - 11.23% Coverage
    Outside, children play on swings (mainly girls), Bikes (mainly Patryk, Duane, Callum, Livi and Hannah), soft play area (all) and climbing frame equipment (all)
    Lots of the outdoor activities replicate indoor activities e.g. sand box, pasta box, water box, stickle brick etc.
    Children also play with balls throwing them down a tube – like a slide
  o Reference 2 - 9.02% Coverage
    Helen sings a song to the children and there are actions to go with it – “I like to reach up tall tall tall, as tall as the sky (Children stretching up tall), reach reach up high, bend bend touch my toes (Children bend down to touch their toes), touch touch touch my nose, knee knee touch my knees (children do high knees), stand stand tall (children return to normal)
    Children repeat this a further four times, 2 slow and 2 fast
    James– “I’m hot” as he takes off his jumper
    Helen– “well that’s what exercise does, makes you hot”
  o Reference 2 - 5.43% Coverage
    Jenny tells Helen that she has a ‘Dora’ and that she will bring it in one day
    Helen– ‘Dora’ begins with a ‘d’ doesn’t it
    James– yes ‘d’ – points to the whiteboard – letter of the week is ‘d’

• Power and control
  o Reference 1 - 6.41% Coverage
    Callum is the dominant figure, telling Duane what to do and where to place the blocks
    Liam (small, quiet, ‘defenceless’ boy) also tries to join the boys – stands outside the climbing frame and watches, Patryk on the other hand, climbs the frame and ‘just’ joins in
  o Reference 2 - 3.50% Coverage
    On the soft play, 3 girls Kim, Clara, Rhianna and Callum
    Rhianna tells Callum he is the dog and she owns him (he has little choice in this)
Appendix iv: Case Study Child

<table>
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<th>Name</th>
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<tr>
<td>Age</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td>Eastern European</td>
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<tr>
<td>EYL setting</td>
<td>Little People</td>
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<tr>
<td>Years at setting</td>
<td>3months (started Sept)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Learner identity given by practitioners</td>
<td>Difficult</td>
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Patryk had recently moved to the area and was the only non-English speaking Eastern European child within the EYL room. Small in height but athletic in build, Patryk engages in more rough and tumble play than the other boys, demonstrating his strength by lifting ‘heavy’ blocks (sometimes two at a time) while others carry one between two during ‘physical play’. He is seen by staff as a ‘problem child’, not because he is Polish but rather because his listening skills are perceived as poor and they believe he wilfully pretends not to understand when being told off, often finding it funny to have staff chase him round.

Patryk can often be found playing on his own either the computer or outside moving the building blocks from one climbing frame to another. He does not interact with the other children very well, often playing alongside rather than with them.

Reflecting on my perspective as the researcher and through the observations made, it appears Patryk is misunderstood – he is polite and kind when he needs to be e.g. he asks ‘please coat’ when he wants help zipping up his coat or tying his laces (‘please shoes’). He struggles to sit still at ‘gathering’, preferring to be active. Similarly he is not aware of how to socially interact with others – he wants to play with his peers but is not aware of the social etiquette around sharing toys etc…

Practitioners see his behaviour as ‘difficult’ and ‘disruptive’ but I wonder if it is just his lack English language, different culture and family background which means he is not able to access the realisation rules around behaviour the EYL values.

**A day in the life of Patryk** (based on a 20minute observation of Patryk and more general observations within the setting)

9:15- the children are sat in a circle ready for ‘Gathering’ – Patryk is still playing with some toys, Stacey moves to sit next to him. She gestures to Patryk to listen and sing along.

9:25 – ‘Gathering’ is finishing – Patryk has already begun to play with toys - Jane – tells other children to ignore him, while she finishes reminding the children about ‘kind hands’.

9:35 – Patryk is playing on the computer – he is playing football ‘penalty shootout game’. He is content to play on his own whilst the other children appear to be playing with each other.
9:45 – Dave tells Patryk to get off the computer – he has had his turn and others want to use it. Reluctantly Patryk moves away from the computer and runs outside.

9:50 – Patryk has joined the boys on the soft play area and is jumping around, building a rocket and then knocking it down by jumping and kicking it. Gradually the boys leave the soft play area, one at a time until Patryk is left on his own.

10:00 – Snack time – Patryk is asked if he wants snack – he leaves the soft play area to get some cheese and crackers.
Dear Parent,

As I am sure you are aware, I am a PhD student at Loughborough University’s School of Sport Exercise and Health Sciences and I am conducting research with children in the Early Years regarding their involvement in physical activity and health. I have been conducting my research in your child’s nursery/pre-school since October and to further help me with the research, I would appreciate your time and effort to complete the following short questionnaire.

Please could you read the questions and answer them by ticking the most appropriate response(s).

Please only complete if your child is aged 3 or 4 and not currently at school.

Please return completed questionnaires to your child’s EYL setting by 8th February

If you have any questions about this research, please email Julie Stirrup: J.L.Stirrup@lboro.ac.uk
Child’s name: ________________________________________________

Child’s date of birth: _______________________________________

Child’s Sex:        Male            Female

Name of nursery/pre-school that child attends:

________________________________

1. Why did you choose to send your child to this nursery/pre-school? Please rank in order of importance, 1-6 (1 = most important reason, 6 = least important reason):

☐ Friend/family member also attends
☐ Good childcare reputation
☐ Convenient for work
☐ Fun learning environment
☐ Prepares my child for school
☐ Good value for money
☐ Other (please state) _______________________________________

2. Do you feel it is important for your child to have physical activity opportunities at nursery/pre-school? (For example, to run around, to ride a bike/scooter, to use climbing apparatus etc.)

☐ Yes
☐ No

Why do you think it is or is not important?
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

3. Do you have any comments to make about the physical activity provision (e.g. resources such as time, space, play materials or other) at your child’s nursery?

☐ Yes
☐ No

If yes, please comment (time, space, play material, other)
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

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4. **Does your child currently attend any organised sessions/classes/lessons OUTSIDE of nursery/pre-school?** (e.g., Tumble Tots/Swift gym, Tag Tots, Jabber Jacks, music/art lessons):

- Yes - please specify in the table below and please say how much it costs or N/C if there is no cost
- No

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
<th>Saturday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Activit</td>
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<td>Activit</td>
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<td>Activit</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

5. **Why do you choose to take your child to these sessions/lessons/classes?** Please rank in order of importance (where 1 = the most important reason):

- It is something to do and it passes the time
- I think it is important for my child to interact with other children
- I like to provide good learning opportunities for my child
- The activity provides a good opportunity for my child to be active
- Other (please state) ________________________________

The above questions asked you to identify the **formally organised physical activities** to which you take your child **outside** of nursery and the home.

I would now like you to consider some of the **more casual, less structured** activities that your child engages in **at home** e.g. going for walks or bike rides, going to the park, playing in the garden or swimming for fun not as part of a class.
6. Bearing in mind the information above, please consider what activities your child has engaged in during the last 7 days and complete the table below (please write the approximate time, e.g. 5, 10, 15 or 20 minutes, they have spent on each activity and on which days in the relevant boxes):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Weds</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
<th>Saturday</th>
<th>Sunday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Walking (not in the pushchair)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swimming</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soft-play venue (e.g. Whacky Wizards, Mini Monsters)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Playing in the garden</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Playing at a park</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bicycle, scooter or tricycle</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Running around indoors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other – please state:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. Which parent tends to mostly take your child to these activities?

- [ ] Mum
- [ ] Dad
- [ ] Both
- [ ] Other (e.g. Grandparent, other family member)

8. How important do you feel it is for your child to be active?

- Very important [ ]
- Quite important to me [ ]
- Not important to me [ ]
9. What type of activity do you feel it is important for your child to engage in?
☐ Organised and led by an adult (e.g. Tumble Tots, Jabber jacks etc.)
☐ Less structured play often initiated by you
☐ Physical activity initiated by the child themselves (e.g. playing in the garden/park)
☐ All three

It would be helpful for me to gain an understanding of who has completed this questionnaire. For this reason, I would be grateful if you would provide the following information about yourself. This data will be stored securely according to the terms of the Data Protection Act and will not be used to identify you or your family in any way.

1. Are you this child’s father, mother or guardian?
☐ Father
☐ Mother
☐ Guardian

2. Do you have any other children?
☐ Yes – Please specify their age in the table
☐ No

3. How would you describe yourself/your partner? (please tick the relevant box/boxes):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Childs Age</th>
<th>Myself</th>
<th>My Partner (if applicable)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Child 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child 4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| British (White) |        |                            |
| British (Black) |        |                            |
| Irish          |        |                            |
| Welsh          |        |                            |
| Indian         |        |                            |
| Pakistani      |        |                            |
| Bangladeshi    |        |                            |
| Chinese        |        |                            |
| Black Caribbean|        |                            |
| Black African  |        |                            |
| Other, please state |        |                            |

4. Which of the following best describes where you live?
☐ Urban ☐ Suburban ☐ Rural

5. Which of the following best describes you?
☐ Home Owner ☐ Rent Property (Private) ☐ Local Council Property
6. Please provide some detail about your employment by ticking the relevant boxes in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>I am</th>
<th>My Partner is (if applicable)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-time</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-time</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. If you have indicated that either yourself or your partner is unemployed or work part-time, would you say that this is because you chose to look after your child/children instead of being in paid employment?
   - Yes
   - No

Which of the following categories best describes your/your partner’s area of employment?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Myself</th>
<th>My Partner</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education (teacher/lecturer)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering and Manufacturing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manual Labour</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government and Public Sector</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospitality</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military/Emergency Services</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Which best describes your/your partner’s role at work?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Myself</th>
<th>My Partner</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Managerial</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerical</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Employed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manual</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you are currently unemployed or working part-time so that you can look after your children, how would you describe the work you were doing before your child/children were born?
Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire

I would very much like to know what you think about the importance of physical activity in young children’s lives. If you would be willing to take part in a follow up interview so we can chat about this matter, please fill out your details below:

Your Name: _________________________________
Email Address: _______________________________
Home phone number: __________________________
Mobile number: _______________________________

I would prefer to be contacted on my:

☐ Home telephone
☐ Mobile phone
☐ Email
Dear Parents,

I have been working in your child’s nursery, observing children at play and would love to know more about your child and how he/she plays inside and outside nursery.

If you would be interested in talking to me, please contact me to arrange a brief meeting at a time convenient to you.

Thank you!

Julie Stirrup
j.l.stirrup@lboro.ac.uk
07754385565