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INTERVIEW TECHNIQUES FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

by

Cherry Chui Ying Chan, HBSc, University of Toronto, 2010

A Major Research Paper

presented to Ryerson University

in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

in the program of

Early Childhood Studies

Toronto, Ontario, Canada, 2012

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Author's Declaration

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INTERVIEW TECHNIQUES FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

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Master of Arts

Early Childhood Studies

Ryerson University

Abstract

The goal of the present study was to examine interview techniques that can be used with young children with disabilities. Four children aged three to five were recruited at a family resource center affiliated with a university in Toronto and were interviewed twice at their childcare centers. Multiple methods were used in the interviews to examine techniques that worked well with the children. The types and purposes of interview questions were analyzed, and the themes emerged from the interactions between the interviewers and the children were discussed. Overall, this study provides insights to the research methodologies that can be used to investigate the perspectives of young children with disabilities and underscores the importance of listening to this population through multiple ways.

Acknowledgement

Dr. Kathryn Underwood: Thank you for introducing this project to me. I feel very honoured to join a project that involved years of planning and hard work, and I am very happy to enter this effort of making the voices of young children with disabilities heard. Also, thank you for being flexible and supportive throughout this whole academic year. I have learned a lot from your feedback and our discussions, and I will carry this body of knowledge and use it in my future.

Dr. Donna Koller: Thank you for giving me feedback on this paper. Your comments have pushed me to think about the project on a more holistic level and have encouraged me to reflect on the interview techniques using deeper critical thinking skills. I have also learned much from observing the way you have conducted the interviews. They have given me a new perspective on how to interact with children with disabilities.

Dr. Angela Valeo: Thank you for encouraging me to join the research team. This project was a fruitful learning experience, and I am very glad that I had the opportunity to work with a team of researchers who have extensive experience with children. Your support back in the first semester certainly initiated my interest in this project.

Dr. Rachel Berman: Thank you for sending me a list of literature to support my writing. I am still very thankful that I took your class in the first semester. It was a brief but very helpful introduction to qualitative research and gave me the confidence to pursue this major research paper.

Childcare center supervisor: Thank you for coordinating the recruitment of this project and introducing the staff to the research team. Your openness to research and your organization have eased the complex research process.

Staff at the childcare center: Thank you for introducing the children to the research team and suggesting suitable places for conducting the interviews. Your help with providing pictures for the research tools and information on the children's interests and routines played a central role in the success of the interviews.

Joe: Thank you for editing the pictures and accepting many large print jobs at the very last minute. The research tools could not have been made on time without you.

Table of Contents

Author's Declaration i

Abstract ii

Acknowledgement iii

List of Tables ix

List of Appendices x

Chapter 1: Introduction 1

Research Question 2

Chapter 2: Literature Review 4

Population of Interest: Children with Disabilities 4

Definition of Disability: The Social Relational Model 5

Theoretical Framework: The Social Constructivist Paradigm 5

New Sociology of Childhood. 6

Theory of Communicative Action. 7

Methodological development. 7

Qualitative Interviews 8

The discourse of empowerment. 9

Rapport building. 9

Multimodal communication. 10

Research methods with disabled young children. 13

Question Format 15

Explicit versus implicit and traditional versus reformed questions. 16

Chapter 3: Method 17

Format of interview: Collaborative approach 17

Interview questions 18

Participants 18

Assent 19

Recording 19

Analytic approach 20

Participatory tools. 20

Questions and responses. 21

Thematic analysis. 21

Chapter 4: Findings 23

Participatory tools 23

Schoolhouse. 25

Chalkboard with magnet letters and numbers. 25

Mural drawing. 25

Pictures of school activities. 26

Sketchpad and markers. 26

Stickers and playdough. 26

Figure colouring. 27

Photographs of childcare center. 28

Photographs of toys in the childcare center. 28

Picture symbols. 29

Participatory Tools Support Multimodal Communication 29

Familiarity with the pictures. 30

Understanding of picture symbols 31

Drawing. 31

Role-playing. 33

Questions and Responses 33

Types of Questions. 33

Purpose of Questions. 34

Responses. 36

Thematic Analysis 40
Collaborative approach. 40
Rapport with the participants. 41
Following children's lead. 42
Introducing the interview questions. 44
Environment as routine-based questions. 46
Answering through becoming interviewers. 46
Parent Interviews Provide Useful Information. 47
Chapter 5: Discussion 48
Participatory Tools: Multimodal Communication 48
Questions and Interview Quality 49
Type of question. 49
Purpose of questions. 50
Using children's language. 51
Emergent Themes 52
Research setting. 52
Collaborative approach. 52
Empower children through play. 53
Connections amongst the Three Major Findings 54
Implications for Methodological Development 55
Coordination between the interviewers and children. 56
Power imbalance between interviewers and children. 56
Authentic participation of young children with disabilities. 57
Limitations 58
Interview techniques. 58
Barriers for evaluation of interview techniques. 59
Conclusion 60

References 61

Appendix A 71

List of Tables

Table 1 Participatory Tools Used in Each Interview 24

Table 2 Frequencies of Question Types in Interviews..... 34

Table 3 Frequencies of Question Purposes in Interviews 35

Table 4 Frequencies of Response Types in Different Question Types 38

Table 5 Frequencies of Response Types in Different Question Purposes 39

List of Appendices

Appendix A Assent Script 71

Chapter 1: Introduction

Although inclusive education and social supports are directly experienced by children with disabilities, research is often conducted through parents or adults who are working with the children (Merrick & Roulstone, 2011). Children with disabilities rarely have opportunities to express their own views (Ajodhia-Andrews & Berman, 2009; Connors & Stalker, 2007) because accommodations may need to be made in research methodologies to obtain their perspectives (De Schauwer, Van Hove, Mortier, & Loots, 2009). According to Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), children who are capable of constructing their own views should be able to express their perspectives on matters that are affecting them (OHCHR, 1989). Moreover, being given the opportunity to participate also positively contributes to their social and emotional well-being (Graham & Fitzgerald, 2011) and serves as an outlet for self-expression (C. Clark, 2011). Taken together, children's rights and the positive outcomes of including children with disabilities found in research has fostered a discussion about the types of methodologies which can be used to elicit children's perspectives (Connors & Stalker, 2007; Harding et al., 2009; Kelly, 2007; Holliday, Harrison, & McLeod, 2009; Lloyd, Gatherer, & Kalsy, 2006; Nind, Flewitt, & Payler, 2011).

Previous research has consistently shown that children with disabilities are capable of constructing and expressing their own views on different topics, such as their competence (Kramer & Hammel, 2011), their understanding of disability (Connors & Stalker, 2007; Merrick & Roulstone, 2011), friendship experiences (Morrison & Burgman, 2009), literacy experiences (Flewitt, Nind, & Payler, 2009), being the older sibling (Serendity & Burgman, 2012), their experiences with school (Ajodhia-Andrews & Berman, 2009; De Schauwer, Van Hove, Mortier, & Loots, 2009), social supports (Mortier, Desimpel, De Schauwer, & Van Hove, 2011;

Mundhenke, Hermansson, & Natterlund, 2010), and cochlear implants (Preisler, Tvingstedt, & Ahlstrom, 2005). Thus, their perspectives should be investigated and valued, especially on issues that are closely associated with their daily lives.

Over the last decade, an increasing number of studies responded to the lack of research with children with disabilities (Connors & Stalker, 2007), and qualitative researchers began to use diverse methods to explore experiences of children who do not use conventional methods of communication (Ajodhia-Andrews & Berman, 2009; Kelly, 2007). However, most of these studies tailored their interview techniques to their participants, and few studies examined universal techniques and methodological issues that are capable of eliciting the perspectives of young children with disabilities. Therefore, the present study will explore interview techniques that can be used with young children with various disabilities, and the results will be shared with researchers who are interested in working with this population.

Research Question

Existing studies investigating children's perceptions have a common goal, which is to investigate research topics from the children's perspectives. To increase their opportunities to express their own views, research on specific techniques that are capable of eliciting children's views in interviews is needed. Current literature predominantly examines interviewing children with disabilities over the age of 7 (Ajodia-Andrews & Berman, 2009; Connors & Stalker, 2007; De Schauwer et al., 2009; Krammer & Hammel, 2011; Merrick & Roulstone, 2011; Mortier et al., 2011), where most participants have received a formal diagnosis. However, young children with disabilities are often receiving supports while undergoing assessments and are not yet diagnosed. As a result, the voices of this population are rarely heard because they may not fit the inclusion criteria for participating in research conducted with children with disabilities.

Therefore, the central research question is: Which interview methods are effective for supporting young children with disabilities to express their feelings, or experiences in the context of social research? This study has two aims: 1) to provide techniques that can elicit the views of young children with disabilities in interviews; and 2) to increase the likelihood of including young children who are receiving supports but are not formally diagnosed in future research studies.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter will present a literature review on interview techniques used with disabled children, which are mostly grounded within the social constructivist paradigm and the New Sociology of childhood (Ajodhia-Andrews & Berman, 2009). The Theory of Communicative Action also speaks to the importance of co-constructing meaning between the interviewers and participants in an interview setting. Participatory techniques, such as participatory observation and the mosaic approach will be reviewed.

Population of Interest: Children with Disabilities

Disabled children's right to participate in research continues to be marginalized because there is an assumption that this population lacks the ability to communicate their views (Komulainen, 2007; Lloyd et al., 2006). Their authentic voices are often replaced by those of adult proxies, such as parents or professionals who are working with this population (Mishna, Antle, & Regehr, 2004; Watson, 2012). However, third parties are not able to accurately describe the children's personal experiences, regardless of how well those adults know the children (Mishna et al., 2004). Children need to have their own voice and have opportunities to express their perspectives (Davis, 1998), and the recent increase in using child-centered research methods with children with disabilities has attempted to elicit children's own voices by using methodologies that are suitable for those children (Kelly, 2007). Similarly, the present study aims to explore the types of qualitative methods that can elicit disabled children's perspectives, and the subsequent section will present the social relational model of disability, which explains the need to examine these techniques and include this population in research.

Definition of Disability: The Social Relational Model

The social relational model of disability describes the interaction between biological impairment and the social construct of disability and attempts to incorporate features of both the individual and social models of disability (Thornton & Underwood, 2012). Various internal and external factors, such an individual's personality, environmental circumstances, and cultural background are considered in the model and contribute to one's experience of disability. Thus, this model recognizes that experiences of disability is unique to an individual (Reindal, 2009), and strives to move away from a normative framework by focusing on disabled individuals' meaning of active participation instead of restriction of activities that may be normal within a specific context (Reindal, 2008).Since the circumstances in which individuals experience disabilities are different, the heterogeneity within the group of "disabled children" is highlighted (Watson, 2012). Rather than focusing on how impairments can affect children's ability to use conventional research methods to express their views, researchers can include disabled children in research by exploring alternative methods of communication to gain insights about their feelings, experiences, or perspectives (Kelly, 2007).

Theoretical Framework: The Social Constructivist Paradigm

Social constructivism holds that individuals construct their own experiences and have different, but equally valid views of the world (Hatch, 2007; Penn, 2008). This paradigm is antifoundational, which rejects methods that seek one universal truth, and multiple authentic perspectives can emerge from the same set of data (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). It also holds that knowledge can be gained through examining and interpreting how participants interact with their environment during interviews (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Hence, this paradigm is often used for qualitative interviews because it focuses on the process of meaning construction and negotiation

within a specific social context (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). Interviews also emphasize the importance of listening to participants' unique stories, which may indirectly provide insights to researchers' questions (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). In some qualitative interviews, researchers and participants engage in conversations that shape the interviews' social dynamics (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005) and affect how the participants tell their stories (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Since this paradigm emphasizes the need to seek multiple perspectives and views social interactions as influential in research settings, it is especially compatible with two other conceptual frameworks, which are the New Sociology of Childhood and Theory of Communicative Action.

New Sociology of Childhood. In the past 20 years, the movement from research *on* to research *with* children fostered the use of participatory methods and meaning-making activities (Christensen & James, 2008; C. Clark, 2011; Corsarro, 2011) and emphasized listening to children's voices (Hill, 2006; James, 2007; Komulainen, 2007). Congruent with this transition, the New Sociology of Childhood is a framework that views children as active constructors of their own experiences and capable of describing their perspectives (Matthews, 2007) and highlights the value of children's participation in research (Franks, 2011; Graham & Fitzgerald, 2011).

This framework is also compatible with social constructivism (Penn, 2008) because it holds that children actively explore their surroundings to construct their experiences. Research grounded in this framework often involves researchers directly interacting with children and asking them about their perspectives on their experiences within their immediate environments (Matthews, 2007). When children are interviewed, researchers are encouraged to use child-friendly techniques instead of the mundane and cognitively demanding research methods used with adults (Punch, 2002). Thus, the present study will support researching *with* children by

examining interview techniques that can highlight children's agency and are able to elicit their experiences and perspectives.

Theory of Communicative Action. Although Habermas' Theory of Communicative Action lies within the critical school of thought, it is also compatible with the social constructivist paradigm. Habermas believed that knowledge originates from human interest and social organization (Ewert, 1991) and is open to reconstruction as individuals interact with their world (Baert & da Silva, 2010). This notion of knowledge led to the construction of the Theory of Communicative Action, which focuses on the meaningful interaction between people and sustaining social relationships (Edgar, 2006). Discussions with equal contributions of the parties involved are central to communication and the co-construction of knowledge (Ewert, 1991). Moreover, language is the central means of communication that facilitates understanding between people and coordinates actions within a society and is not limited to speech but also includes gestures (Edgar, 2006; Ewert, 1991). Coordination in communicative acts is especially important in interviews with young children because interviewers have to quickly adapt to the child's communicative style (C. Clark, 2011). With the Theory of Communicative Action as this study's theoretical lens, this study examines the interaction between the interviewer and the participants to deduce suitable research methods that will elicit children's unique perspectives.

Methodological development. In reaction to the strength-based models of individuals with disabilities and children, such as the Social Relational Model of Disability and the New Sociology of Childhood, the capabilities of our population of interest were highlighted (Matthews, 2007). Although age and cognitive abilities may hinder disabled children's ability to express their perspectives (Beresford, 2012), methodological development of qualitative interviews address this barrier by introducing alternative methods of communication that allow

disabled children to communicate in their own unique ways (Lewis & Lindsay, 2000; Kirk, 2007). Qualitative approaches are especially suitable for consulting children with disabilities because they are flexible and allow researchers to use a variety of ways to elicit children's perspectives (Kelly, 2007). In the past decade, there has been an increase in literature focusing on the methodological considerations when working with children with disabilities, and researchers have described their methodology and discussed the successes and pitfalls of their approaches (Darbyshire, MacDougall, & Schiller, 2005). Similarly, the following sections will examine the literature on qualitative interviews to gain insights on the interview techniques that may be suitable for young children with disabilities and discuss the strengths and weaknesses of those methods.

Qualitative Interviews

Interviewing is the most common type of data collection method in qualitative research (King & Horrcks, 2010) and is inherently flexible and sensitive to multiple forms of expression and individual differences (Willig, 2001). Thus, this method is regarded as appropriate for children with disabilities because it gives them space to discuss personal experiences and feelings using their preferred methods of communication (Morris, 2003). The key process within qualitative interviews is co-construction of meaning between the interviewer and the participant (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005), which means that neither the participants' nor the researchers' views are the focus (Dockett & Perry, 2007). The meaning-making process between researchers and children is transformative and fluid (Einarsdottir, Dockett, & Perry, 2009; Goodwin & Goodwin, 1996) and allows researchers to reflect on their theoretical lens and explore children's perspectives through analyzing the meaning of their creative answers (Greene & Hogan, 2005). In qualitative interviews, interviewer and children can communicate with speech, voice tones,

facial expressions, and gestures (Kavale, 1996), and children's responses are dependent upon how the researchers ask their questions (Greene & Hogan, 2005).

The discourse of empowerment. The empowerment of interview respondents was first discussed by Eliot Mishler in response to standardized interviews, where he suggested that interviews should be conceptualized as an interaction and co-construction of meaning between interviewer and respondent (Mishler, 1986). The use of the prefix *co-* implies collaboration, but interviewers inherently have power over their respondents because they are the ones who ask the questions (Gubrium & Holstein, 2002; Rubin & Rubin, 2012).

Moreover, cognitive ability is another factor that influences the power dynamics between researchers and children (Mishna et al., 2004), and the power differentials will be more exemplified when the children belong to a marginalized group (A. Clark, 2010). Thus, to lower their power, researchers who are interviewing disabled children often use a child-centered approach, which includes methods that may seem interesting to children and encourage children to communicate in their own ways (C. Clark, 2011).

Rapport building. Consistent with the goal of empowering participants, researchers are advised to establish and maintain rapport throughout an interview. Building rapport is the process of establishing trust between the interviewer and interviewee, which allows the participant to be comfortable in opening up to the interviewer (Gubrium & Holstein, 2002; King & Horrocks, 2010). There are several ways of building rapport with children: 1) getting to know the child before the interview, 2) talking with parents to learn about the child, 3) conducting multiple short interviews instead of one long interview, and 4) following children's lead (Irwin & Johnson, 2005; Punch, 2002). During the interview, researchers should also look for signs of rapport to ensure that children are willing to continue in the research process. There are several

indicators that signify the establishment of rapport: 1) including the adult researcher in child-only activities (Christensen, 2004), 2) being told secrets or being trusted to keep them, 3) regarding researcher as a trustworthy companion for questionable behaviors such as telling fart jokes (C. Clark, 2011). Certain nonverbal behaviors are also indicators of having positive attitudes towards a person, such as proximity, smiling, face-to-face interaction, touching, eye contact, body movement, and vocal expressiveness (Richmond, Gorham, & McCroskey, 1987).

Multimodal communication. Another way of empowering children in interviews is to allow children to express their perspectives in their preferred mode of communication. Children are often presented as having communication difficulty because their literacy level is inferior in comparison to adults (A. Clark, 2010). The most challenging part of developing methods to explore children's worlds is to accommodate for children's own ways of communication, including through nonverbal and visual means (C. Clark, 2004; Wright, 2007). Although children's limited expressive language may affect the richness and clarity of resulting data (Lloyd et al., 2006), their ability to use multiple means of communication can serve as a process of triangulation. Children's explanations with one form of communication may complement another to clarify their message, and speech, body language, facial expressions, drawing, showing signs and symbols, and play are different forms of communication that children use to transfer information (Kelly, 2007). Together, rich information can be gathered from children when the research procedures are designed to capture different forms of communication.

Alternative communication techniques. Providing disabled children with an alternate method of communication is empowering because it allows them to participate in research and express their views (Graham & Fitzgerald, 2011; Lewis & Lindsay, 2000). Verbal responses are not the only means of communication, but alternative communication techniques, including

using standardized symbols and deciphering nonverbal behaviours can yield useful information that supplements verbal responses in interviews. Picture/symbol exchange is the most common type of augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) used and is suitable for children with different types of disabilities (Allen, Paasche, Langford, & Nolan, 2008). For instance, Ajodhia-Andrews and Berman (2009) interviewed a boy who does not use speech to communicate. To elicit his views towards his school activities, the researchers constructed their interview questions in the format of picture symbols, and they report that the child was happy to use those symbols to express his views. Interviewers can also interpret the child's body language (De Schauwer et al., 2009) and facial expressions (Krammer & Hammel, 2011) to deduce how they feel towards their topics of investigation. Although non-verbal behaviours are prone to subjective interpretations, they can still be recorded and used as supplementary to verbal answers.

Consulting with people who know the child. Before the interview, researchers in previous studies have consulted with the child's speech and language pathologist (Mortier et al., 2011) and mother (Ajodhia-Andrews & Berman, 2009) to deduce whether their communication aids were appropriate for their participants. De Schauwer et al. (2009) also asked the mother of a child, a support worker, and a speech therapist to help interpret vague responses provided by achild. However, obtaining help to interpret children's responses should be distinguished from checking whether the children gave accurate responses. For studies that aim to explore children's perspectives, feelings, or experiences, children's answers should be acknowledged and valued. This is demonstrated by Ajodhia-Andrews and Berman (2009), who shared the child's responses with his mother after receiving consent from the participant. These researchers explicitly emphasized that their intention was not to confirm the boy's answers but only to share his

answers with his mother. Therefore, although adults who know the child well can help researchers communicate with their participants and interpret vague responses, it is important for researchers to record and construe interview responses as the children have intended. One way of ensuring validity of the interpretations is to have multiple people interpreting the child's view, thus discussion amongst interviewers about the resulting data is a crucial step in the research process.

Video recording. Video is often used to capture naturalistic interactions in approaches such as conversational analysis and discourse analysis (King & Horrocks, 2010), and video data can help researchers recall the context and interactions within an interview (Dockett & Perry, 2005). However, the use of video recording, especially with children, is controversial because children's faces and the research settings are easily recognizable. Transcribing videos by matching verbal and nonverbal interactions is also a laborious process, thus researchers must have a strong rationale for using video recording as a method of data collection (King & Horrocks, 2010; Robson, 2011; Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Since children's body language (De Schauwer et al., 2009) and facial expressions (Krammer & Hammel, 2011) may show how children feel towards the topic of investigation, video recording captures information in a different way than audio transcriptions alone and has high potential for capturing rich data (Robson, 2011). When video data is analyzed in detail, observation also becomes a part of the methodology (Sparrman & Lindgren, 2010). The video's ability to capture nonverbal responses also provides a gateway to include young children and children who are less verbal in research. The next section will continue to discuss other child-centered research methods that are suitable for young children with disabilities.

Research methods with disabled young children. Since researchers take the primary responsibility of representing children's accounts (Christensen & James, 2000), it is important for researchers to use a variety of participatory techniques and let children's voices come through (C. Clark, 2011). In line with the discourse of empowerment, research methods with disabled young children include child-centered approaches that support multimodal communication, such as participatory observation and the mosaic approach.

Participatory observation. Participatory observation is a type of unstructured observation where the researcher interacts with the participant who is observed (C. Clark, 2011), and is a gateway for researchers to embed themselves in children's worlds (A. Clark, 2011). In both interviews and participatory observations, the importance of social exchange between the interviewer and the participant is underscored, and the process within the interviews and observations, respectively, rather than the individual behaviors of the participant is the focus (Goodwin & Goodwin, 1996).

The central characteristics of the researcher who is conducting participant observation include being natural, open, persistent, vigilant, sensitive to their participants and environment, and reflexive about social interaction (C. Clark, 2011). These characteristics are similar to those of responsive interviewers (Rubin & Rubin, 2012), and social intelligence is especially important for adult interviewers working with children because they need to balance between their role as an adult and lowering their power enough for the children to tell them their experiences (A. Clark, 2005; C. Clark, 2011). This can be described as a "friend" role, an adult who does not adopt adult privileges and respects children's actions (Fine, 1987). Another description is the least adult role, where researchers try to embed themselves in children's worlds by following children's lead, actions, and language (Mandell, 1991) and display openness and empathy (C.

Clark, 2011). Although adult researchers cannot deny their grown-up status, they can still remain open and be non-judgmental to foster children's confidence and comfort in disclosure (C. Clark, 2011).

Mosaic approach. The mosaic approach originated from two studies that included children's voices in the evaluation of early childhood services (A. Clark 2004; A. Clark & Moss, 2001) and combined observation, interview, and participatory tools to formulate an approach that tapped into children's personal experiences (A. Clark, 2003; A. Clark, 2010). The studies used observations and interviews as the main data collection tools, and the interviews served as a way to introduce multiple participatory activities (C. Clark, 2004). Since solely using one method cannot fully capture the complexity of individual experience (Gubrium & Holstein, 2002), these creative activities allowed participants to use different means to express their perspectives (A. Clark, 2005), such as visual and kinesthetic modes of communication, which are the strengths of young children (Christensen & James, 2008; A. Clark, 2011; Greene & Hogan, 2005). This approach is also consistent with the discourse of empowerment because multiple approaches provide access to children with diverse backgrounds and personalities (A. Clark, 2010). Children also have the freedom to select activities that they are good at and wish to participate in (Stephenson, 2009). Furthermore, the mosaic approach includes interview techniques that seek explanations for children's action through offering children multiple ways to communicate. Alternative techniques are also able to reveal perspectives that are not accessible through talk (Kirk, 2007), and the use of visual aids is especially important for young children because they often communicate through pictures (Davis, 1998).

Photo-elicitation. Several studies demonstrated the effectiveness of using photos during research with children. Mortier et al. (2011) used photo-elicitation during their interviews by

showing children photographs of different supports in mainstream schools (peers, adults, or devices). Those photos were taken in the observations prior to the interviews and were used to help children express their views. On the other hand, Kramer and Hammel (2011) used the photographs taken in their observations to help children elaborate on their thoughts and feelings towards the objects, person, or tasks in the pictures. In another study, Merrick and Roulstone (2011) gave children disposable cameras to take pictures of people or objects that were meaningful to them and the pictures were used as visual aids in the subsequent interviews.

Drawing. Children's drawings have been regarded as an effective research tool for eliciting children's views on a topic (Einarsdottir, Dockett, & Perry, 2009; Holliday, Harrison, & McLeod, 2009). In particular, the "drawing-telling" method, where the researcher is engaged in a conversation with the child when he or she is drawing, emphasizes the importance of using children's verbal inputs in understanding the concepts of their drawings (C. Clark, 2011; Einarsdottir et al., 2009). The process of drawing allows children to naturally engage in a conversation with the researcher and is more important than the final product (Wright, 2007). Children's interests and experiences may also be revealed during the drawing process (Hopperstad, 2010), and researchers can actively listen to the children use this information to engage children in interviews (C. Clark, 2011). Hence, drawings can enrich children's narrations, which are especially useful for understanding children who are less verbal (Lev-Wiesel & Liraz, 2007).

Question Format

The format of interview questions, including the structure and wording, is the major determinant of whether the participants are able to respond (Irwin & Johnson, 2005). While open-ended questions allow participants to elaborate on their perspectives, close-ended questions

are less cognitively demanding and require less verbal ability to answer (Hennessy & Heary, 2005). Thus, researchers should be cognizant of children's language and cognitive abilities and structure their questions accordingly (Irwin & Johnson, 2005; Kortesluoma, Hentinen, & Nikkonen, 2003). Asking close-ended questions, especially in the beginning of an interview, helps children focus on the research topic and understand subsequent interview questions (Di Santo & Berman, 2011), and posing open-ended questions can give children opportunities to elaborate on their views and experiences (Irwin & Johnson, 2005).

Explicit versus implicit and traditional versus reformed questions. In addition to open-ended or closed-ended, questions can also be categorized into four types using two dimensions: 1) implicit versus explicit and 2) traditional versus reformed. This coding scheme was used in a study conducted by Parks (2010), who explored how different question types fostered mathematical thinking in an elementary mathematics class. While explicit questions provide a context where respondents can draw their answers, implicit questions allow respondents to add their own interpretations of the questions in their answers. On the other dimension, traditional questions ask respondents to provide a correct answer or specific strategies for generating their answers, and reform questions ask respondents to express their rationale for their thoughts and experiences. In her study, Parks (2010) argued that teachers should adapt their questions according to the learning context and students' needs because out of the four types of questions, students were most likely to stay silent when implicit reformed questions were asked in her study. Similarly, in qualitative interviews, a combination of the four types of questions can be asked to suit the research context and participants' needs, and the present study will examine how different question types elicit the participants' perspectives.

Chapter 3: Method

Since this study is a part of a larger study that will investigate the construct of capabilities (Nussbaum & Sen, 1993) from children's perspectives, the goal of the present study is to examine techniques that are useful for getting children to talk about complex and abstract ideas. To explore different interview techniques, this study employs an emergent design, where the research method is not predetermined. The data collection process is open and context-dependent, and revisions are made to maximize the meaningfulness of the resulting data collected (Suter, 2012). The following sections will discuss the design of this study and how the resulting data will be analyzed.

Format of interview: Collaborative approach

All of the interviewers in this study had extensive experience interacting with young children in a variety of settings. Two to three interviewers were present in each child interview. With three interviewers, the primary interviewer was responsible for interacting with the child and asking interview questions, and another researcher gave visual aids to the primary interviewer to sustain play and engage the child while the primary researcher was busy with performing a request made by the child. The third researcher held the camera to capture the interactions between the researchers and the child. In interviews where there were two interviewers, the camera was positioned in one place, and the secondary researcher periodically checked the camera to make sure the interactions were captured. This is especially important because the children and the primary interviewers were moving around in the room during the interviews. Moreover, one researcher was primarily interacting with the participant, and another researcher enriched the play by giving the primary interviewer materials and intermittently asking questions to elicit responses from the child. Consistent with the mosaic approach and past

literature on rapport building (A. Clark, 2011; C. Clark, 2011), the researchers followed the children's lead and used materials that they believed were suitable for children's play at the moment. This also gave the interviewers a chance to try out different materials and see how those materials can be integrated into the children's play to help them articulate their views.

Interview questions

Since the goal of the present study is to examine techniques for eliciting children's feelings and perspectives, the interview topic was related to children's daily experiences. The interview had three parts: 1) children's current experiences in childcare, 2) their future expectations for going to school, and 3) their career aspirations. In the first part, the interviewers asked the children what they like doing and who helps them at their childcare center. In the second part, the interviewers asked the children what they think they will do or are good at in school. For the last interview part, the interviewers asked the children what they want to be when they grow up. The manner in which the questions are asked is open to the researcher. While there is a set of interview questions, the researcher rephrase the questions in the context of the interview and in language or words that the children understand. This allows the interviewers and the participants to co-construct meaning because the questions that the interviewers asked were dependent upon the children's responses.

Participants

Four children (3=M, 1=F) were recruited through a resource consultant working in childcare and family resource programs in Toronto. The age of the children ranged from 3 years to 5 years 1 month (mean= 3 years 11 months). The family resource center has a long history of asking parents and children to participate in research, and the resource consultant who worked there had established a relationship with the families and ensured that participation was

voluntary. We asked the director of the family resource center to approach parents with children who had a diagnosed disability or an individual support plan and ask if they would be willing to participate. The children were interviewed at their childcare center twice. For two participants, the parents were interviewed before the first interviews of the children, and the researcher asked the parents to describe their children and provide words that their children were familiar with. For one participant, the parent was interviewed at the same time as her child was interviewed for the first time. For the remaining participant, the father of the child was interviewed between the two child interviews. In the parent interviews, the parents were asked about their children's interests, their children's strengths, what other programs the children were participating in, and what their children called their childcare center.

Assent

The assent script was adapted from a script used by Koller, Nicholas, Gearing, & Kalfa (2010). The researchers first introduced the topic of investigation by telling the children that they were here to talk to them about their daycare or kindergarten and that they would be playing with some toys together. Next, the children were asked if the researchers could make a movie about their answers, and the researcher showed the children how the video camera worked. After the children agreed to participate, the researcher told the children that they could ask any questions and stop the interview at anytime they wanted. When the children demonstrate comfort in proceeding to the interview by showing interest to the researchers' toys, the researchers began the interview. Please refer to Appendix A for the full assent script.

Recording

The interviews ranged from 30 to 54 minutes, and the average interview length was approximately 43 minutes. The interviews were both video- and audio-recorded. While the video

camera was used to capture the verbal and nonverbal interaction between the researcher and the participant, the audio recorder was placed closer to the area of play to capture children's verbal responses. The video recording was especially important for capturing children's nonverbal responses because children are capable of using multiple means to communicate their ideas (Kelly, 2007). The audio recording was effective in capturing the voices of children who were more soft-spoken.

Analytic approach

Four components of the interview were examined, which included: 1) the participatory tools, 2) the questions that the interviewers asked, 3) the responses that the children gave, and 4) emergent themes of interactions within the interview. A qualitative approach was used to analyze the utility of participatory tools and the interactions between interviewers and children, and thematic analysis was employed. On the other hand, a quantitative approach was used to analyze the questions and responses, and frequencies were calculated.

Participatory tools. Consistent with the mosaic approach, the present study paired participatory tools with interview techniques to elicit children's perspectives (A. Clark, 2003, 2005, 2011). The participatory tools were chosen based on their appearance and their potential to help interviewers introduce the interview questions, and there is no specific order in which the interviewers have to introduce these tools. The participatory tools used in the first two interviews were: 1) schoolhouse, 2) chalkboard with magnet letters and numbers, 3) mural drawing, 4) pictures of school activities, 5) sketchpad and markers, and 6) stickers and playdough. After the interviews with the first two participants, the research team met to revise the interviews and prepare new participatory tools that may be effective for the upcoming interviews. The new tools developed were: 1) Figure colouring, 2) photographs of childcare center, 3) photographs of

activities in the childcare center, and 4) picture symbols. After each interview, the interviewers also discussed how the subsequent interviews should be conducted, thus there was an iterative process in which the pairing between the participatory tools and interview techniques were developed.

Questions and responses. The questions asked in all interviews were organized into an excel spreadsheet with five columns: 1) the questions that the interviewers asked, 2) the responses that the children gave, 3) the question type, 4) the question purpose, and 5) the answer type. First, the questions were coded based on its type and purpose. An a-priori coding scheme used in Parks' (2010) study was employed to analyze the question types. The questions were categorized into: 1) explicit traditional, 2) implicit traditional, 3) explicit reformed, and 4) implicit reformed. The purpose of questions was also categorized into: 1) research question, 2) routine-based question, 3) rapport-building question, 4) steering question, and 5) play-based questions. The frequency of each question type and purpose were calculated and organized into two separate tables. After, the children's responses were also coded into five groups: 1) short verbal responses that provide limited information, such as yes, no, or okay; 2) verbal responses with content, 3) I don't know, 4) nonverbal responses, and 5) no responses or responses that did not match question. The percentage of responses were calculated for each question type and purpose and organized into two separate tables.

Thematic analysis. In addition to questions and answers, the interviewers also commented on the children's play to foster their conversations with the children and demonstrate that they are actively listening to the children (Kelly, 2007). Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) was conducted across the eight interviews, and unique themes that emerge from each interview were also analyzed. The foundation of this thematic analysis is grounded theory, where

an inductive approach is used to evaluate empirical evidence and form emerging concepts (Neuman, 2006). To investigate participants' perspectives, it is important that the themes are strongly linked to the data and emerge directly from the participants' responses (Strauss & Corbin, 1998); hence, the analysis process begins with open coding (Neuman, 2006), where children's verbal and nonverbal expressions in reaction to the interviewer's questions and interview techniques are coded and subsequently organized into themes.

Chapter 4: Findings

This chapter will present three major findings, which are the utility of the participatory tools, the questions and responses in the interviews, and themes that emerged from the interactions between the interviewers and the children. The participatory tools used included a schoolhouse toy, a small chalkboard with magnet letters and numbers, mural drawing, pictures of school activities, a sketchpad and markers, stickers, playdough, figure colouring, photographs of the children's childcare centers and toys in the childcare center, and picture symbols. The questions were categorized into question types and purposes, and the responses of the children were also coded. Thematic analysis was used to develop emergent themes, and the subsequent sections will provide direct quotes from the children to support the findings.

Participatory tools

The interviewers were free to introduce any participatory tool available depending on the context of the interview. Conducting multiple interviews also allowed the interviewers to use the participatory tools with different children and examine how those tools can be used to suit the children's unique means of expression. In the interviews, the children showed varying levels of interest towards the participatory tools. For instance, the mural drawing activity and the chalkboard with magnet letters and numbers were only used in one interview, but the schoolhouse was used in five of the eight interviews. Although the schoolhouse was intended to be used with each participant once, one participant remembered the schoolhouse from his first interview and asked for the toy in his second interview. The participatory tools served as a gateway for the interviewers to introduce the interview questions, and the next sections will provide descriptions of each tool and how these toys or materials were presented to the children, and Table 1 also shows a list of the participatory tools used in each of the interviews.

Table 1

Participatory Tools Used in Each Interview

	Participatory tools used
Interview 1 (Child 1 first interview)	Schoolhouse Playdough Pictures of school activities Sketchpad with stickers
Interview 2 (Child 2 first interview)	Schoolhouse Mural drawing Chalkboard with magnet letters and numbers Pictures of school activities
Interview 3 (Child 2 second interview)	Schoolhouse Figure colouring Photographs of childcare center and activities in the center Picture symbols
Interview 4 (Child 3 first interview)	Schoolhouse Picture of school activities Sketchpad, markers, and stickers Picture symbols
Interview 5 (Child 4 first interview)	Schoolhouse Sketchpad and markers Pictures of school activities Picture symbols Photographs of activities in childcare center
Interview 6 (Child 3 second interview)	Figure colouring Photographs of childcare center and activities in the center Picture symbols Sketchpad and markers
Interview 7 (Child 4 second interview)	Figure colouring Photographs of childcare center and activities in the center Picture symbols
Interview 8 (Child 1 second interview)	Figure colouring Photographs of childcare center and activities in the center Picture symbols Stickers

Schoolhouse. The schoolhouse was a toy that looked very similar to a classroom, including supplementary pieces such as blackboard, tables, chairs, and figures of teachers and children. It also had a plastic door that led to a playground area with a basketball net and a clock. When the interviewers first showed the children the schoolhouse, they asked the children, "What is it?" or "What do you think this thing is?" Some children identified the schoolhouse as a school, and the interviewers were able to ask the children some follow up questions about what they think they will do at school. Other children identified the schoolhouse as their childcare center, and the interviewers followed the children's lead and subsequently asked them their experiences and who helps them at their childcare center.

Chalkboard with magnet letters and numbers. This toy was useful for introducing the first and second interview questions because both childcare centers and schools are settings where children learn letters and numbers. Our participants were familiar with seeing letters and numbers at their childcare setting, and this gave the interviewers a chance to use this tool and ask about their childcare experiences or their expectations about school. We used this tool in one interview, and the child was able to draw on the board with chalk. For instance, in one interview, the interviewer showed this toy to the child and asked, "Do you like to draw with chalk?" After, the interviewer asked the child to draw a picture of a daycare on the board, and the child drew.

Mural drawing. Large newsprint and markers were used for the co-construction of a large mural drawing between the interviewer and the participant, and this method was only used in once. In the interview, the interviewer first asked the child to draw a picture of a kindergarten on the large newsprint that was taped to the wall. While the child was making marks on the paper, the interviewer asked him what he was drawing and wrote down the his descriptions beside the marks he made.

Pictures of school activities. Photographs of children in a school setting, including children writing on a blackboard with a teacher, learning a lesson about time, writing in notebooks with their classmates, reading in a group, raising their hands to answer questions, and eating snack, were shown to the participants. These pictures were selected to help children express what they think school might be like. After the pictures were shown, the interviewer asked the children whether they think they will have those toys or do those activities when they go to school. In one interview, the interviewer showed the child these pictures and asked, "Can I show you some pictures of things that kids might do at school?" In another interview, the child spontaneously referred to these pictures as he was playing with the schoolhouse, and the interviewer subsequently asked the child other questions about the pictures.

Sketchpad and markers. Although the sketchpad and markers were not directly presented to our participants, some children spontaneously asked if they could have paper to make pictures or asked the interviewers to draw pictures for them. For example, after the interviewer showed one child some stickers, he asked, "Can I have a piece of paper to put them on?" The interviewer gave him a piece of paper from the sketch pad, and he put stickers on the paper and drew pictures on it. In another interview, the child wanted a swing for his play and said, "We can draw one." The interviewer subsequently used the paper in the sketchpad to draw a swing, and the swing was added to the pretend play.

Stickers and playdough. In addition to materials that were directly relevant to the interview questions, stickers and playdough were also provided. Since most of our participants were familiar with stickers and playdough, these materials were used for rapport building. When the children did not show interest in the other materials, playdough or stickers were introduced. For example, the interviewer showed the participant some stickers and asked, "Do you want to

play with the stickers?" In another interview, the child spontaneously asked the interviewer whether he could have a piece of paper to put the stickers on and used the stickers to make a drawing.

Figure colouring. The use of a blank human figure was introduced after a brief analysis of the two first interviews of two participants. In one interview, the participant was playing with a figure in the schoolhouse. The interviewer pointed to the figure and asked him, "Who's that?" The child answered, "He is a boy." After some probing, the boy expressed that the figure was not representative of him and was only a figure of a boy. Since the interview questions aimed to examine children's perspectives of their experiences in childcare and their expectations of school, a new participatory tool was created such that they could role-play their personal experiences. A blank human figure was designed to look like a gender neutral person and was printed in two sizes. The children could personalize the figures to look like them; they could also colour in other figures to look like their friends or colour in bigger figures to look like adults who they were familiar with.

The goal of this activity was to let the children transfer themselves onto the figures and use the figures to represent them and act out what they liked to do at their childcare centers or their expectations of what school would be like. In the subsequent interviews, the interview showed the children the figure and asked, "Can we make a picture of you?" or "How do I make it look like you?" Some children customized other figures to supplement their play. For instance, one child asked, "What about my mommy?" The interviewer then showed the child a large figure and said, "I got one that we can make into your mommy. Look, a big one." Although the figure was designed to be gender neutral, the children thought that the figures were male. When the

interviewer showed this child a big adult figure and said, “I got one that we can make into your mommy,” the child answered, “I want her to be a girl.”

Photographs of childcare center. To prepare visual aids that were personally relevant to our participants, pictures of the children’s childcare center were taken with permission from the childcare center supervisor. After taking photographs of the playground and kindergarten and preschool rooms, the pictures were printed on 3-foot-by-3-foot and 3-foot-by-7-foot vinyl, respectively. These materials were designed to help children explain their experiences at their childcare center, and both indoor and outdoor play was considered. In one interview, the mat of the kindergarten room and the playground were set up before the participant entered the room. In another interview, the interviewer first rolled out the kindergarten room mat and asked the child, “What is this a picture of?” Later, when the topic of outdoor play emerged from the interview, the interviewer introduced the playground mat to add to the child’s play.

Photographs of toys in the childcare center. Prior to the interviews, we also asked the children’s educators for pictures that they used to label the children’s toy bins. Since there were no toy bins in the playground, pictures of toys specifically in the playground area were taken. The photos were categorized according to the play area that they were from and filed in boxes for accessibility during the interviews. For instance, photos of markers, feathers, and coloured pencils were categorized under “creative arts,” and cups, baby clothes, and food were grouped under “daily living.” These photos were supplements to the interviewers’ questions and were used with the large vinyl pictures of the indoor and outdoor childcare setting. As an example, the interviewer showed the child pictures of some creative arts materials and asked, “Do you like these things?” In another interview, after the interviewer rolled out the playground mat, she showed the child some playground toys and asked, “Do these belong to the playground?”

Picture symbols. Since previous studies successfully used picture symbols to elicit children's perspectives on their experiences (Ajodhia-Andrews & Berman, 2009; Beresford, 2012), the present study included picture symbols as visual aids. Specifically, picture symbols of social and individual activities, occupations, and emotions were used. While social activities included playing with friends in the playground, holding hands with a friend, and circle time, individual activities included reading, building with blocks, and sleeping. These icons depicted activities that might occur at the children's childcare center or at school and were relevant to the interview questions about the children's current experiences in childcare and their future expectations about school, respectively. The occupation symbols were selected for the interview question about children's career aspirations and included pictures of a fireman, policeman, chef, taxi driver, and zoo keeper. The emotion icons were used to help children explain their emotions towards any event that they describe, and the range of emotions included sad, happy, and frustrated. These picture icons were shown to the children throughout the interview to complement their narrations. For instance, when the child said he liked circle time, the interviewer said, "Look, there's my circle time picture. You like my circle time picture?"

Participatory Tools Support Multimodal Communication

In the interviews, the children were able to express their perspectives and demonstrate their knowledge through a variety of ways. It was natural for the children to use gestures to complement their verbal expressions. For instance, when one child wanted the interviewer to help him draw curly hair on a figure, he said "and her hair is round in a circle" while he was making circular motions around his hair. Moreover, our participants were free to use any of the visual aids, including the figures, the vinyl mats of the rooms, pictures of toys, picture symbols, and the their own drawings, to complement their verbal expressions. For example, the large vinyl

mat of the playground was successful in eliciting responses from one of our participants who was less verbal. When that child saw the mat, she immediately said, “Weee…running.”

The children also had their own interpretations of what those participatory tools were. For instance, the interviewer showed the child some picture symbols and asked, “Do you see these pictures? Which one of these do you like?” The child referred to a picture symbol of a child playing on a swing and another child hanging upside down on a bar and said, “Upside down.” The interviewer continued, “You do? Why? You do that at daycare?” The child answered, “Yea, sometimes I go upside down, and sometimes I slide like that.” In some parts of the interviews, the children used pictures as their answers. For example, the interviewer asked, “What do you do at recess?” The child answered, “These pictures, too!” However, there were instances where the child did not think that the pictures were helpful. When the interviewer asked the child an interview question, the child was hesitant to respond. The interviewer then asked, “Do you think the pictures might help you tell me?” The child answered, “No.”

Familiarity with the pictures. Three of the four participants actively recognized the visual aids that were used because they were pictures of the children’s childcare center. For one participant, as soon as he saw the vinyl mat of his kindergarten room, he said loudly, “Hey! That’s my school!” He continued to identify different parts of his kindergarten room on the mat. For example, he pointed to the mat and said, “That’s the grocery store!” When the interviewer put some pictures of toys on the floor, he said, “Oh, that’s the dollhouse, and we got the big green house.” However, familiarity with certain pictures over others might have influenced the children’s responses. For example, the interviewer showed the participant a few pictures. After the child chose one picture, the interviewer asked, “Why did you pick that one?” The child answered, “Because I do know that one.”

Understanding of picture symbols. Although some of the children might not be familiar with the picture icons, they were able to understand what those pictures depicted. In one interview, when the interviewer held up the frustrated icon and asked, “How does this person feel?” The participant answered, “I don’t know.” After a moment of looking at the icon closely, the child said, “He’s angry.” The same child demonstrated understanding of the icons in another way by initiating a game with the interviewer. He first lined up the icons side by side, made a few rows of those icons, and took a wooden spoon from a shelf in the room. The interviewer asked the child to identify the icons by saying, “Which one is sad? You point to the one that is sad.” The child answered, “I don’t know” but pointed to the sad icon and said, “That one.” As the game proceeded, he took initiative and told the interviewer, “I want to find the one who has waters.” He then pointed to his eyes and said, “Crying.” This participant also seemed to enjoy telling the interviewer what those icons meant to him because he was singing a song when he was identifying the icons.

Drawing. The children in the present study demonstrated familiarity with drawing, but for the mural drawing, the interviewer needed to explain how she would like the participant to draw. For instance, the interviewer taped a big piece of newsprint onto the wall and asked the child, “Can you draw me a picture of a kindergarten?” The child answered, “What is draw?” It was unclear whether the child was unfamiliar with drawing, or he was only unfamiliar with drawing on a big piece of paper that was taped onto a wall. However, he took initiative to ask the interviewer what he was supposed to do in that task, and he later co-constructed a mural drawing with the interviewer. In contrast, other materials inherently invited children to draw. For instance, all four participants drew on the small blackboard as they were playing with the schoolhouse, and when the blank figures were shown, the children spontaneously knew how to

colour in the figure. On the whole, the children were very comfortable with drawing and colouring, and they were able to show their knowledge and competence through drawing.

Specificity in the drawings. In particular, the children demonstrated agency through specifying what they want in their drawings. For instance, when the interviewer was drawing with one child, the child pointed to the exact location where the interviewer was making a mark and said, “Draw it like this” and “Down, up, up...” In this child’s next interview, the child specified how the interviewer should colour. When the interviewer helped the child to colour in the mom figure, the child said, “Mommy’s skirt likes to be pink.” On the whole, all our participants gave the interviewers very precise instructions on how to colour. Three of our participants pointed out that there were white spots on the figures and wanted the interviewer to colour in those spots. While one child said, “and the inside” and pointed to where the inteviewer was colouring, another participant said, “Hey, you need to get those edges.”

Moreover, one participant also made social comparisons as he drew with the interviewer. In the interview, he was colouring a small figure that represented him, and the interviewer was colouring a larger figure that represented his mother. As the interviewer coloured the mother figure, the child said, “I want to start all over again.” The interviewer gave the child another small figure, and the child asked, “Can you help me make the eyes?” After the interviewer drew on the small boy figure, the child was happy with the figure. Although drawing and colouring with the children were very time consuming, the interviewers still followed the children’s lead. In one interview, the interviewer was able to ask the child some interview questions while the child was drawing, but in another interview, the interviewer had to give the child time to finish his drawing before proceeding onto the next task.

Role-playing. Three participants used the figures, the vinyl mats, and pictures of toys to role-play with the interviewer. In one interview, the playground mat was set up such that both the child and the interviewer were sitting on the mat. The interviewer was holding the figure of the child's mother, and the child was holding a smaller figure that represented himself. The interviewer began the role-playing by asking the child, "What should we do at the park?" The interviewer was also speaking in a high-pitched voice and moving the figure as if the figure was talking. The child said, "Play with the sand toys." The interviewer then used her figure to give the child the "sand toys," and said in a high-pitched voice, "Here you go, sweetheart." The child then followed the interviewer's lead and also used a high-pitched voice to say, "Thank you!" He used his figure to take the "sand toys" from the interviewer, and their role-play continued.

Questions and Responses

When the children were playing with the participatory tools, the interviewers were engaged in a conversation with the children and asked the children questions according to the themes that emerged from their play and interview questions that were on the research agenda. This section will explore the questions asked in the eight interviews and provide frequencies for each question type and purpose. Children's responses are also presented in frequencies and will provide insights on the effectiveness of the interviewers' questions.

Types of Questions. The questions were coded into four categories: 1) explicit traditional; 2) implicit traditional; 3) explicit reformed; and 4) implicit reformed (Parks, 2010). Explicit traditional questions encouraged respondents to give one answer, and an example would be, "Do you know what this is?" Although implicit traditional questions were still content focused, they encouraged reasoning. An example is, when the interviewer showed the child the human figures, she asked "What could that person be?" On the other hand, explicit reform

questions encouraged children to think about why they have done certain actions. For instance, when the interviewer asked, “Why did you put that little person on the desk?”, she is expecting one answer but the question was focused on the children’s thinking process rather than on the content. Implicit reform questions encouraged reasoning and an example was, “What do you think that is?” The findings are summarized in Table 2, which displayed the frequencies of questions types. The most frequently asked questions were explicit traditional questions, and the least asked were implicit reformed questions.

Table 2

Frequencies of Question Types in Interviews

Question type	Percentage	Example
Explicit traditional	72%	Do you know what this is?
Implicit traditional	17%	Does it look like a place you know?
Explicit reform	4%	Why did you put that little person on the desk?
Implicit reform	7%	Why do you think that is?

Purpose of Questions. The five main purposes of the questions asked in the interviews were: 1) research question, 2) routine-based questions, 3) rapport-building questions, 4) steering questions, and 5) play-based questions. Research questions were instances where the interviewer directly asked the interview questions. An example was, “What do you think you want to be when you grow up?” Routines-based questions were questions about the children’s daily activities.One example was, “Is that what you do in the morning at daycare?” Rapport-building questions were not directly related to the interview questions but were used to build a trusting relationship with the participants. For instance, in the beginning of one interview, the interviewer asked the child, “Can you help me take the toys out?” Steering questions were used to bring the

children's play or their conversations with the interviewer back to the interview questions. For example, when the child was drawing, the interviewer asked, "While you are making a fish picture, can I ask you a question about big school?" Play-based questions were related to the child's play at the moment, and an example was "Can you tell me what you are doing there?" The findings were summarized in Table 3, which displayed the frequencies of the questions asked. Most questions asked were play-based, and steering questions were the least frequently asked.

Table 3

Frequencies of Question Purposes in Interviews

Question purpose	Percentage	Example
Research question	15%	What do you think you want to be when you grow up?
Routines-based	16%	Is that what you do in the morning at daycare?
Rapport building	5%	Can you help me take the toys out?
Steering questions	1%	While you are making a fish picture, can I ask you a question about big school?
Play-based	63%	Can you tell me what you are doing there?

Play-based questions disguised as other question types. When the play-based questions were analyzed more closely, we found that some of them had other purposes besides eliciting children's explanations about their play at the moment. A play-based question had the potential to serve as a research question, routines-based question, and rapport building question. In one interview, when the child was drawing a picture and constructing a story about lightning, the interviewer asked, "Does the teacher help him so he does not get hit by lightning?" The child answered, "No, he just do it by himself." This question was related to theinterview question

about the child's experiences at their childcare center and the help that they receive. Some play-based questions also served the purpose of a routines-based question. For instance, during play, the teacher figure of the schoolhouse was "hurt," and the child moved the teacher figure from the playground area into the classroom area of the schoolhouse. The interviewer asked, "The teacher's hurt? Uh-oh. You are putting the teacher inside?" The child answered, "Yea. He needs to get some ice." Although the question was pertaining to the child's play, it was likely that the child's answer was related to what happens regularly at his daycare. Last, some play-based questions were also used for rapport-building. For example, when the interviewer was introducing the schoolhouse, she asked the child, "Can you help me open the box?" After, the child and the interviewer were opening the box together, and the child began to explore and talk about different toy pieces in the schoolhouse.

Responses. The questions were categorized based on whether the children gave answers that were related to the interviewers' questions and both verbal and non-verbal responses were analyzed. The responses were categorized into: 1) short verbal responses, 2) responses with content, 3) I don't know, 4) nonverbal responses, and 5) no responses or responses that did not match the question. While explicit traditional and explicit reform questions yielded 47-51% of responses with content and 15-17% of yes/no responses, implicit traditional and implicit reform questions yielded 60-64% of responses with content and 8-9% of yes/no responses. There was also an exaggerated difference between the percentage of nonverbal answers between the explicit questions (19-20%) and implicit questions (7-8%). However, there was a minimal difference between the no/mismatched response percentage between the explicit questions (14-16%) and implicit questions (17-20%). The same procedure was done with the different question purposes, and the frequencies of answer types across the different question purposes were similar. Short

verbal responses ranged from 13-20%, and responses with content ranged from 48-59%. I don’t know responses ranged from 0-2%, and nonverbal responses ranged from 6-22%. Last, no responses or the mismatch of responses ranged from 10-20%. The results are also summarized in Table 4 and 5.

Table 4

Frequencies of response types in different question types

Question type	**Percentage of response**
Explicit traditional	No response/ mismatched response= 16% Short verbal responses= 17% Response with content= 47% I don't know responses= 1% Nonverbal responses= 19%
Implicit traditional	No response/ mismatched response= 20% Short verbal responses= 9% Response with content= 60% I don't know responses= 4% Nonverbal responses= 7%
Explicit reform	No response/ mismatched response= 14% Short verbal responses= 15% Response with content= 51% I don't know responses= 0% Nonverbal responses= 20%
Implicit reform	No response/ mismatched response= 17% Short verbal responses= 8% Response with content= 64% I don't know responses= 3% Nonverbal responses= 8%

Table 5

Frequencies of response types in different question purposes

Question purpose	**Percentage of Response**
Research question	No response/ mismatch response= 15% Short verbal responses= 20% Response with content= 48% I don't know responses= 2% Nonverbal responses= 15%
Routines-based	No response/ mismatch response= 20% Short verbal responses= 18% Response with content= 50% I don't know responses= 0% Nonverbal responses= 12%
Rapport building	No response/ mismatch response= 10% Short verbal responses= 20% Response with content= 48% I don't know responses= 0% Nonverbal responses= 22%
Steering questions	No response/ mismatch response= 17% Short verbal responses= 18% Response with content= 59% I don't know responses= 0% Nonverbal responses= 6%
Play-based	No response/ mismatch response= 17% Short verbal responses= 13% Response with content= 51% I don't know responses= 2% Nonverbal responses= 17%

Thematic Analysis

Collaborative approach. The collaborative approach was useful for several reasons. First, the observer provides an alternative perspective of the interview and can help the primary interviewer ask questions. For instance, in one interview, the child was role-playing a scene at the playground area of the schoolhouse. When the primary interviewer asked, “What else goes on the playground?” The child answered, “Juice boxes and nobody wants them.” The secondary interviewer then jumped in to lead the play back to the interview questions by asking, “Where is the teacher on the playground?”

Second, the primary interviewer can continue to engage the child while the other interviewer looked for suitable materials. For example, when the primary interviewer was playing with the child using the playground mat, the secondary interviewer handed the primary interviewer some pictures of playground toys to add to their play.

Third, the primary interviewer can ask the other interviewer some interview questions to set an example for the participant. In one interview, the primary interviewer, secondary interviewer, and the child were sitting in a circle together for “circle time,” and all three of them were engaged in a conversation. When one interviewer asked the other interviewer questions, the answers of the interviewers helped the child to express his capabilities. For example, the primary interviewer asked the secondary interviewer, “What are you best at at school?” The secondary interviewer replied, “I am really good at counting.” The primary interviewer then asked the child, “What are you really good at?” The child answered, “Counting too.” After some probing, the child demonstrated his ability to count from one to ten and said, “I am good at those numbers.”

Rapport with the participants. In most of the interviews, rapport building was successful, and the children demonstrated trust towards the interviewers through both verbal and nonverbal means. For one child, the presence of rapport was signified by telling the interviewer "bum jokes." For instance, when the interviewer was helping the child to colour in a small figure's shirt and asked, "Is black shirt ok?" The child answered, "And the bum." On the other hand, another child demonstrated rapport in by placing his arm around the interviewer's neck and whispering into her ear. When the interviewer asked the child, "Is that a secret?" the child nodded. The interviewer continued to ask him, "Did you tell anybody else?" The child answered by shaking his head. Another child, who had approximately 30 words in her vocabulary, used her body to demonstrate trust towards the interviewer. This child did not speak in the first part of the interview, but, after 30 minutes of interaction, the child moved so close to the interviewer that she was touching the interviewer's leg. She also began to use words towards the end of the interview, such as identifying "stickers" and "chair."

Ongoing rapport in the second interview. Three of the four participants remembered the interviewers from the first interview. In particular, one child was very excited to see the interviewers again. When the interviewers asked the child whether he remembered the camera, he said that it was used to make a movie about him. During the interview, he also asked the interviewer, "Where is the house with all these people?" He was referring to the schoolhouse that he played with in his first interview, and interviewer took out the schoolhouse and used it again in the second interview. Another participant remembered the picture that he co-constructed with the interviewer. When the interviewer asked him, "Remember we made a picture together with fish?" The child said yes, and he told the interviewer, "And then when I go home…I added more fishies." For the third participant, there were indications that he remembered the first interview

when he was looking for the toys that he played with at the toy kitchen area. When he could not find the kitchen toys that he played with in his first interview, he was frustrated. For the remaining participant, the interview began by showing the child her first interview to spark her memory. Although the child showed a surprise face when she saw herself in the video, she was uncomfortable in starting the second interview right away. Hence, the interviewers played with her for a little while in the presence of her early childhood educator before the second interview was conducted.

Following children's lead. After playing with the dollhouse, the child initiated a time to talk about his research experience. In the kindergarten room, it was tidy up time in five minutes. Since the child had been playing with the schoolhouse for a long time, the interviewer wanted to use this chance to introduce other participatory tools. The interviewer said, "Five more minutes, then we're gonna tidy up…" The child interrupted and said, "How about we had fun with this?" The interviewer then asked, "We had fun with this? We did." The child continued, "No, when it's time to tidy up, we're going to talk we had fun with this." This gave the interviewers a good chance to ask the child some questions about his play with the participatory tools and other interview questions.

Stepping back at the right time. The participants were capable of giving signals to the interviewers that they wanted to play on their own. In one interview, the interviewer initiated role-playing by holding a figure that she coloured with the participant and asked the participant, "Hey! How are you?" The child took the figure from the interviewer's hand. To clarify why the child took the figure away, the interviewer asked, "You won't let me play with that girl?" The child answered, "Uh, maybe after my turn you can play." After, the interviewer switched gears

and asked, “Can you tell me what you are doing right now?” The child answered, “I am going to put this somewhere, where I want.”

Transition between activities. The interviewers also gave the children time to finish one activity and provided specific instructions on how the transition will occur before proceeding to the next activity. For instance, in one interview, the child was very engaged in creating a picture with the fish stickers. To transition, the interviewer said, “We’re gonna do those last three fish on your picture, and then we’re gonna put these pictures away…and then I’m gonna ask you my last two questions.” After the child put the last three stickers on the picture, the interviewer said, “So you got all those fish on there. You know what? I’m gonna take these and put it inside, so you can give it to your mom.” The child agreed and said, “It has to be in my cubby.”

Balancing children’s request and research purpose. However, sometimes the children were not willing to shift to another activity, and the interviewers had to negotiate with the children. In one interview, the child wanted to keep drawing, but the interviewer had other interview questions that she would like to ask the child. The interviewer asked, “You want to draw? Can I ask you my two questions first?” The child said, “Yea.” In another interview, the interviewer spent a large portion of the interview having a “tea party" with the child. When the interview had to come to an end due to time constrains, the interviewer asked the child, “I have two more questions, they are really important for me to ask you. Can you listen to those questions?” The child nodded. After, the interviewer asked him the interview question, “When you are big, and go to a big school, what do you think you are going to be really good at?” The child answered, “People,” and elaborated on his answer when the interviewer probed further. Giving children time to finish what they were doing before asking the interview question was also crucial. When the interviewer introduced the last question, she asked the child, “Are you

ready for my last…really really important question?" The child did not answer and was "washing his hands" at the toy kitchen area. The interviewer waited until the child was finished and asked, "Are you ready for my question now?" The child nodded and sat in front of the interviewer. The interviewer asked, "When you are an adult, what are you going to be?" The child answered, "A nice person."

Stopping the interview. Videotaping was stopped for one interview because during the interview, the child said, "I don't want to." It was unclear what the child was referring to when he said that, however, the interviewer stopped the camera and asked the child whether he meant that he does not want to be videotaped anymore. The child nodded, and in the remainder of the interview, only field notes were taken.

Introducing the interview questions. In many instances in the interviews, the interviewer was introducing the main interview questions as that theme emerged from the children's play. For instance, when the child was playing on the playground mat with a swing drawn by the interviewer, the interviewer asked, "Do you think when you go to big school you might have swings?" The child nodded. Interviewers also asked the children interview questions as they showed the children pictures. In one interview, the interviewer referred to a picture symbol and asked, "Oh, who's that? What kind of job is that?" The child answered, "That's the person who drives the train." The interviewer continued to ask, "He drives the train. Yea, you like trains right? When you grow up, do you want to drive a train?" The child responded, "Yea. I grow up…thirteen...I can drive a train." However, although the interviewer introduced the interview question as the theme came up in play, it was up to the children to follow the interviewer's suggestion to elaborate. For example, one child was interested in the "no" sign on a binder. To lead the child's play into the interview question, the interviewer said, "What about in

your classroom? What no's are there in your classroom?" However, the participant remained silent after the question.

Using children's language. In some instances, our participants did not understand the questions asked because they were not familiar with the words that the interviewers used. In one interview, the interviewer showed the child a picture and asked, "Do you have that in your childcare?" The child then asked, "Childcare?" This was an indication that the child did not understand the word "childcare," thus the interviewer used the term "daycare" for the rest of the interview. After this experience, the interviewers found out specific words that the children used before asking the interview questions. For instance, in the beginning of the next interview with another child, the interviewer showed the child the big vinyl picture of the kindergarten room and asked, "What is this a picture of?" The child answered, "My school." After, the interviewer used the term "school" to refer to the child's childcare center, and the child was able to understand the questions. When the interviewer asked, "Do you have swings here at your school?" The child answered, "No," and his answer was accurate because there were no swings at the childcare center.

Repeating questions. Although the interviewers wanted to clarify children's answers by repeating the interview questions, two participants were frustrated when the interviewers repeated their questions. In one interview, the interviewer could not hear what the participant said because his voice was soft and asked, "Can you say that again?" The child answered, "No, I am not going to say it again. I can't." In another interview, the interviewer asked, "Can you show me what you like to do in your daycare?" The child answered, "I just showed you already. I just showed you."

Environment as routine-based questions. Since the children were interviewed at their childcare center, the children were able to hear what other children and their educators were doing outside the room where we interviewed the children. Two participants were especially sensitive to environmental cues at their childcare center, and this gave the interviewers a chance to ask children some questions about their daily experiences. In one interview, after the educator outside the interview room said, “It’s time to tidy up for community circle,” the child said, “Hey, community circle.” The interviewer then asked, “Oh, they are doing circle. Do you do circle in class?” In another interview, the kindergarten children were preparing for tidy-up time in five minutes. When the participant heard, “Five more minutes,” he immediately put his hands up on his head. The interviewer asked him, “What do we do now?” The child told the interviewer to put her hands up because it was a part of the children’s daily routine during tidy-up time.

Answering through becoming interviewers. Towards the end of two interviews, there were role reversals where the children were asking the interview questions. In one interview, after the interviewer asked the child what he was best at, the child turned the question back at the interviewer and asked, “What is the best thing you do?” The interviewer answered the child’s question and said, “I play sports.” The child said, “Play sports? Cool!” At this time, the second interviewer jumped in and said, “I like to read.” The primary interviewer then asked the second interviewer other interview questions. After watching the second interviewer answering questions, the child also answered the interview questions when he was asked. In the other interview, the child spontaneously used the figures with the interviewer for role-playing. The child first “sat” two figures onto two separate chairs, and then he held up a picture and asked, “Look. What is this?” The interviewer played the role of the figures and said in a high-pitched voice, “They are fishes and sharks.” After, the interviewer asked the figures an interview

question, “What are you good at at school?” and told the child to answer for the figures. The child subsequently said, “We like building.” In addition, both of these instances occurred towards the end of the interviews, after the participants were more familiar with the interviewers.

Parent Interviews Provide Useful Information. Communicating with parents prior to the interview was a useful strategy for building rapport and fostered our communication with the participants. For instance, one child was elated when the interviewer told him that she met his father. The interviewer was also able to talk about his interests because she received that information from the parent interview. For this same child, the father was interviewed after the first interview and had the chance to watch the first video. He was able to provide some insights on why the child understood some of the interviewers’ questions and not others and explained some of the answers that the child gave. In the second interview, the interviewers were able to use the father’s input and avoided terms that the child did not understand. This is a part of the methodology that should be explored further in future research.

Chapter 5: Discussion

This chapter will discuss the implications of the findings on interview techniques that were used to explore the feelings or experiences of young children with disabilities. The participatory tools and framing of questions were two main components that fostered the interactions between the children and interviewers and children's expressions. The emergent themes also reveal the significance of the research setting, the collaborative approach used in the interviews, and empowering children through play in qualitative interviews.

Participatory Tools: Multimodal Communication

A large variety of participatory tools were used such that children could choose different activities (Kelly, 2007) and shape their interactions with the interviewers according to their own interests (Serendity & Burgman, 2012). One main strength of participatory techniques is their ability to foster communication (Christensen & James, 2008), and the findings show that the children were happy when they were able to recognize the pictures and used the tools in unique ways to express their perspectives. Since the risk of interviewers imposing their views on their participants is enhanced when participants are less verbal or provide answers that are difficult to understand (Goodley, 1996), children with disabilities are especially prone to having their views imposed on by others.

In the interviews, the children used participatory tools to engage in play with the interviewers, and they were able to express their ideas using speech, body language, drawing, and role-playing. This is consistent with the Theory of Communicative Action, where language, verbal or nonverbal, was the primary means for reaching understanding (Ewert, 1991). The rationale behind using multiple methods is to highlight the child's communicative strengths (C. Clark, 2011), and the use of participatory methods in childhood research also lowers the power

of the interviewer and give children's perspectives value (A. Clark, 2010). Past research also suggested that spending time with disabled children is the most important part of communicating with them (Greene & Hogan, 2005). For one participant, the interviewer spent a large portion of the interview co-constructing a drawing with the participant in the first interview and colouring in figures in the second interview. Although it was a time consuming process, the interviewer was able to fulfill the three functions of communicative action in her interactions with the child: 1) transferring information, 2) building social relationships, and 3) expressing opinions and feelings (Baert & da Silva, 2010; Edgar, 2006)

Questions and Interview Quality

Asking questions that are relevant to children's experiences does not guarantee that the children will respond because it also depends on the children's ability to respond (Christensen & James, 2008). In addition to the use of participatory tools, the way interviewers frame the questions also affects children's responses (Irwin & Johnson, 2005). The subsequent sections will provide reasons for the frequencies of different question types and purposes by referring to the interactions within the interviews and the children's responses.

Type of question. The most frequent question type used in the interviews was explicit traditional questions. One explanation for this is the need to put the questions in concrete terms for children to understand (Connors & Stalker, 2007; Hill, 1996; Kortesluoma et al., 2003). The least frequently used question type was explicit reform questions, which are open-ended and process-oriented (Parks, 2010). Although the interviewers asked a higher number of traditional questions, some children spontaneously explained their reasoning when the traditional questions were asked. Moreover, when the responses were further analyzed, it was found that the implicit question yielded more responses with content and fewer nonverbal responses in comparison to

explicit questions. In contrast, Parks (2010) found that elementary school students were more likely to stay silent when they were asked implicit questions in comparison to explicit questions. Since implicit questions allow children to add their own interpretations to the questions and foster reasoning, communication, and problem solving (Parks, 2010), children are encouraged to explain their answers to the interviewers. On the other hand, explicit questions provide context and opportunity for one answer from respondents (Parks, 2010), thus the children can nod or shake their head to respond. Moreover, there was only a very small difference (17 to 20% versus 14 to 16%) in the percentage of no response or mismatch of response between the implicit and explicit questions. This may be due to the presence of participatory tools, which gives children visual cues (C. Clark, 2011) to help children express their perspectives.

Purpose of questions. A majority of the questions asked were play-based, which is consistent with the past literature that emphasizes the need to follow children's lead during research (C. Clark, 2011; Mandell, 1991). Play-based questions had the potential to lead into other question types, including routine-based, rapport building, and research questions. This demonstrates the flexibility of play-based questions and highlights the richness of information embedded within children's play. Through symbolic play, children show an understanding of life events (Greene & Hogan, 2005), and asking about children's play is an effective interview technique because the information is immediate and may reveal children's perspectives. When play-based questions are paired with participatory tools, children can use multiple ways to respond to the interviewer, which increases the richness of the resulting data. Hence, concrete and physical triggers, such as toys and participatory tools, are effective in prompting children to think about a topic of interest and helping children to provide responses (McLeod, 2008).

In addition, the frequencies of the response types across different question purposes were similar. Since the research questions had similar frequencies as other questions, it shows that children are capable of directly answering research questions. In the interviews, the interviewers rarely used probes to obtain more in depth response from the children because the children naturally responded to the interview questions during play. Similar to previous studies, the interviewers used other techniques with direct questioning to make the interview engaging and prompt responses that are relevant to the interview questions (Koller, Nicholas, Goldie, Gearing, & Selkirk, 2006; Punch, 2002). However, the language and wording of the questions are crucial factors that affect the quality of children's responses. The subsequent section will continue to explain the importance of word choice and language during interviews with young children with disabilities.

Using children's language. According to Mandell (1991), the researcher who is playing the least adult role needs to be aware of the language used with children, and young children may struggle to respond when the interview questions are not developmentally appropriate (Spratling, Coke, & Minick, 2012). The findings show that it is important to use words that the children understand, and in some instances, the children actively asked the interviewers what some words meant. Consistent with past research (Ajodhia-Andrews & Berman, 2009), the findings also showed that interviewing the children's parents allows the interviewers to use terms that the children are familiar with in the interviews. Therefore, using children's language during interviews is crucial for eliciting children's perspectives, and children's agency is also demonstrated by their initiative in asking the meaning of words that the interviewers used.

Emergent Themes

Research setting. One of the most important considerations of interview research with children is creating a natural environment for the interview (Gubrium & Holstein, 2002), and conducting research in a familiar setting has greater validity in comparison to researching with children in places where they are unfamiliar with (Fraser, Lewis, Ding, Kellett, & Robinson, 2004). Although many interviews with young children have been done at children's homes or schools, it is argued that conducting interviews in school settings, where power imbalance between adults and children are present, may distort children's responses (C. Clark, 2011). Since the participants in this study are young and have not started school, the childcare setting may be seen as equivalent to a school setting. However, the present interview showed an advantage in interviewing children in their childcare setting because the children were able to show the interviewers their understanding of the daily routines at their childcare center. The routines also became a part of the interview and helped the interviewers transition between activities.

Collaborative approach. In qualitative research, Hennessy and Heary (2005) suggest that that there may be a power imbalance between the interviewer and the participant, which they suggest may be alleviated in focus groups, because one adult interviewer is directly interacting with a child. In this study, the presence of another interviewer appeared to lower the power of both interviewers. This was demonstrated when the interviewers were asking each other questions, and the child was engaged in this three-way conversation and joined in the conversation when the interviewers invited him. Another advantage of the collaborative approach is that the primary interviewer can continue to play with the child while the other interviewer looks for participatory tools that can enrich the child's play. The flexibility of

qualitative interviews also allows the second interviewer to add to the discussion and the child's play.

Empower children through play. Empowerment is a rights-based approach that acknowledges children as active agents and that they have capabilities (Graham & Fitzgerald, 2011), evident in the creativity and play that are especially important in qualitative interviews with children (Spratling, Coke, & Minick, 2012). The first step to empowering participants is rapport building, and the presence of rapport was demonstrated at times by children telling the interviewers secrets, making jokes with the interviewers, and having body contact with the interviewer. In the present study, the interviewers also empowered the children through following their lead, which included stepping back when the children do not want their play to be interrupted and giving children time to transition to the next activity.

In addition, children and researchers should negotiate their roles throughout the research process (Kelly, 2007). During the interviews, the researchers fulfilled the children's requests while keeping their interview questions in mind. For younger children, children with cognitive impairments, and nonverbal children, it is difficult for the researchers to discern when the children want to withdraw from the study (Beresford, 2012). Throughout the interviews, the interviewers were sensitive to the participants' emotions, and in one interview where the participant demonstrated reluctance to participate, the interview was stopped. A main strength of individual qualitative interviews is that the researchers have the flexibility to adapt to the communicative style and pace of each child (C. Clark, 2011). In the interviews, the children had opportunities to choose the participatory tools that they would like to play with, and the interviewers integrated interview questions with the children's play and waited for the children

to respond. The interviewers also gave the children a chance to ask them questions, which lowered their power as researchers.

Connections amongst the Three Major Findings

In addition, the emergent themes clarified the connection between the utility of the participatory tools and the effectiveness of the questions because the themes described how the interviews were conducted as a whole. The connection between the themes and the participatory tools was evident in the children's drawings. While the children gave the interviewers specific directions on the way that they wanted to draw and play, the interviewers followed children's lead. This demonstrated that the utility of the tools is dependent on how the interviewers use those tools in the interviews. On the other hand, the link between the emergent themes and interviewer questions was shown in the use of play-based questions. The play-based questions were used to introduce the interview questions, which is a way for interviewers to balance children's requests and the research purpose. The quantitative analyses of the questions were also explained by the emergent themes. The high percentage of play-based questions asked (63%) was evidence that the interviewers followed children's lead in the interview, and the low percentage of routines-based questions asked (16%) was explained by the research environment acting as routine-based questions. Together, the three findings provided a holistic picture for interview methods that are useful for young children with disabilities and contributed to the integrity of this project.

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness was established through the iterative process of altering the interview techniques after each interview and triangulation. The iterative process was consistent with the study's aim to develop interview techniques for children with disabilities; trying out different

participatory tools with a variety of children and reflecting on the effectiveness of those tools were crucial. Some participatory tools, such as the figure colouring, pictures of the childcare center and toys in the childcare center, and pictures symbols were introduced based on the results of the two interviews, and the ways that these materials were used and introduced to the children were refined throughout the subsequent interviews.

Triangulation, the use of multiple data collection methods or data sources to study the research question (King & Horrocks, 2010), is a technique used in this study as a variety of participatory tools and questions were used to obtain children's responses. When children used multiple tools to express their views through play, their verbal and nonverbal behaviors often reveal a story about their perspectives. However, despite having these tools, interviewers should be reflexive on how the interview is conducted because the interviewer's attitude can influence how they ask the question and how the interviewee subsequently responds (Gubrium & Holstein, 2002; Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Researchers also need to be aware of imposing their own values onto the participants' when interpreting the resulting data (Beresford, 2012) when they conduct the analysis and select quotations that represent their findings (Carpenter & McConkey, 2012).

Implications for Methodological Development

The Theory of Communicative Action states that individuals use language to coordinate their actions and reach an agreement, and a balanced discussion between individuals is characterized by each individual having an equal chance to initiate communication, continue the conversation, and make suggestions to shape the final understanding (Baert & da Silva, 2010; Ewert, 1991). These characteristics of the framework will be used to examine the challenges that the interviewers encountered in the subsequent sections, and the strength-based approach

supported by the social relational model and the New Sociology of Childhood will be used to the implications of disabled young children's authentic participation.

Coordination between the interviewers and children. Although the interviewers empowered children through play and encouraged multimodal communication through the use of multiple participatory tools, there were moments in the interviews where the goals of the interviewers and the children were different. While the interviewers were focused on the interview questions, the children were drawn to playing with the participatory tools in their own ways. When the children were interested in exploring the participatory tools, they were ignoring the interviewers' questions or gave responses that did not match the interviewers' questions. In some instances, the interviewers were able to lead the children back to the interview questions, but the interviewers and children's differing interested hindered the effectiveness of the participatory tools. Moreover, interviewers may not recognize children's responses as answer to their question or expect a more elaborate answer than the children were capable or willing to provide. These factors can affect the process of meaning co-construction between the interviewers and children.

Power imbalance between interviewers and children. Another factor that might influence the co-construction of meaning between the interviewers and participants is the power dynamics within the interview. The findings demonstrated that the collaborative approach was effective in lowering the power of the interviewers, but this situation could also be intimidating for some young children with disabilities because the participant is the only child in the room in the presence of two or more adults. In addition, the discussion between the interviewers and the children might not have been balanced due to the nature of the questions asked. Since explicit questions are closed-ended (Parks, 2010), it has more potential to become a leading question in

comparison to implicit questions. With the high percentage of explicit questions in the interviews, it is possible that some of those questions were leading. In some instances, the interviewers were also repeating questions to ensure that the children understood the questions. Children sometimes feel compelled to give a correct answer in interviews (Clark, 2005), and reiterating interview questions may lead children to doubt their own answer or change their previous responses. Furthermore, since the purpose of the study is to examine a range of interview techniques, the interviewers aimed to introduce a variety of participatory tools in a short period of time. Although the children might have wanted to continue playing with certain participatory tools, the interviewers needed to present another tool for research purposes and sometimes had more control over the use of those tools in comparison to the children.

Authentic participation of young children with disabilities. Despite some pitfalls within the interviews, the paper has presented findings that support young children with disabilities' participation in research. The two frameworks of the present study, the social relational model and the New Sociology of Childhood, acknowledge children's unique experiences and competence (Matthews, 2007; Reindal, 2009). Using a strength-based lens to conceptualize disability and childhood, the findings suggest that children are capable of communicating in their own ways and should be included in research. Recognizing children's expressions is the key for their authentic participation (Graham & Fitzgerald, 2011), and sharing methodological considerations helps to prevent researchers from underestimating children's competence and offers a framework to set up the interviews (Greene & Hogan, 2005). Viewing speech as the only form of communication will lead to the exclusion of a population who are less verbal and ignores other methods, such as drawing and role-playing, which may reach a diversity of children (Tisdall, 2012). The emergence of methods that are suitable for children with

disabilities also speaks to the potential for citizenship, which signifies their participation on a societal level and recognizes their status as citizens (Graham & Fitzgerald, 2011). However, including all children with disabilities does not guarantee that each child will have equal contributions to research. In the present study, the participants with higher language and cognitive abilities were more able to express their views in comparison to participants who were less verbal. The next section will further discuss the limitations of this study and provide directions for future research.

Limitations

Interview techniques. Although the participatory tools, especially the schoolhouse, drawing, and role-playing with figures and photos, were able to elicit children's perspectives, it cannot be claimed that these tools are effective for all young children with disabilities. One rrevious study also found that the participants were not able to answer all the interview questions despite the use of a large range of participatory tools (Kelly, 2007). Moreover, the preparation and execution of this study was time consuming. The preparation of visual aids included obtaining pictures from the educators, taking extra photographs at the childcare center, and organizing the photos for easy access during the interview. The interviewers also had to become familiar with the pictures before using them in the interviews. During the interviews, the use of play-based questions was more time consuming than directly asking the interview questions. Other studies also mentioned the time-consuming nature of interviewing disabled children (Ajodhia-Andrews & Berman, 2009; Kramer & Hammel, 2011), but the present study demonstrated that disabled young children are capable of expressing their unique views when time is spent on providing them with the means to communicate.

Barriers for evaluation of interview techniques. The interview techniques were evaluated based on a small number of children, thus the results cannot be generalized to all young children with disabilities. Using different participatory tools and the presence of multiple interviewers might also have hampered the reliability of this study. It was unclear in the interviews whether the children were expressing the same types of information using those participatory tools. When multimodal communication was encouraged in the interviews, the children were free to use the participatory tools in their own ways. Even though there were instances where the interviewers directly asked the children interview questions, the diverse responses made it challenging to assess the nature of the children's answers. Moreover, the collaborative approach might have also affected the assessment of the participatory tools. Diverse interviewing styles and social dynamics between interviewers, including personalities and approaches to interacting with children, are factors that can influence the use of participatory tools in the interviews. Therefore, future studies using these tools and the collaborative approach should consider various ways to facilitate the use of participatory tools and the affective characteristics of the interviewers.

Conclusion

The foundation of the present study lies in two strength-based models, the New Sociology of Childhood and Social Relational Model of Disability, which view children as capable (Matthews, 2007) and recognize an individual's unique experience of disability, respectively (Reindal, 2008; Stalker & Connors, 2004). Thus, individuals should have the right to be involved in research that pertains to their lives, and the relevance of the research is enhanced when disabled individuals are included in the process (Stalker, 1998). For disabled children's views to be considered seriously, a different research protocol is needed, and interviewers should take the responsibility to promote effective communication with their participants (Tisdall, 2012). Hence, the interview techniques recommended from this study include providing children with a range of participatory tools, asking a combination of explicit and implicit questions, using the children's language, setting up interviews in a familiar setting, using a collaborative approach during interviews, and empowering children through play, to encourage disabled children's participation in research. The use of multiple participatory tools and question types also ensures that the questions presented to the children are relevant for them and increases their ability to give responses that are reflective of their perspectives. In sum, the findings revealed that the interviewers and the children should engage in a give-and-take relationship, where they negotiate the interview topic and interact to co-construct meaning (C. Clark, 2011).

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Appendix A

Assent Script

My job today is to ask kids about their day care (or kindergarten). We are also going to play with some toys (and pictures) while we talk. We are going to talk about this place and the teachers (or other people) that are here helping you.

While we are talking and playing, please tell me when you don't understand my questions and if you want to stop. You can ask me any questions you want while we are talking too. We are going to videotape what we talk about on this machine. Our play time will last for about half an hour, like watching about one television show. How does that sound?

I am going to videotape our conversation. That is because I am interested in what you have to say and I would like to be able to look at it after I leave here. I would like to show it to some other people who are interested in what you have to say as well. I will keep the videos locked up in my office. When we do not need them any more we will erase them.

You can ask me to stop at any time. You can also ask to have your mom or dad here while we are talking.