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The Effects of Adult Interaction on Toddler Behavior in the Classroom

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A thesis
presented to
the faculty of the Department of Human Development and Learning
East Tennessee State University

In partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree
Master of Arts in Early Childhood Education

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by
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May 2003

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Keywords: Toddlers, Teachers, Interactions, Behaviors, Learning Areas

ABSTRACT

The Effects of Adult Interaction on Toddler Behavior in the Classroom

by

Sarah Webb Hackney

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship of positive adult-to-child physical interactions and negative toddler behaviors in the classroom. Twenty-one licensed childcare centers participated in this study. One center was used to field-test the researcher-created tally instruments. The 20 centers remaining were observed to identify the number of positive adult-to-child physical interactions. They were then ranked from the classroom having the highest amount of adult-to-child interactions to that having the lowest. Three classrooms were then randomly selected from both the top and bottom thirds, providing six classrooms for the final study. Negative toddler behaviors were then observed in each of the six classrooms. No significant relationship was found between the amount of positive adult-to-child interactions and the amount of negative toddler behaviors. Results included the identification of high positive adult-to-child interactions occurring in the manipulative and the gross motor areas and involved touching and holding.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my husband, parents, and extended family members who loved and supported me throughout this entire process. Their helping me to keep things in prospective and making me see that all things are possible has given me invaluable insight to take into the future.

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I sincerely thank Dr. Laurelle Phillips for the time, support, and encouragement I needed to complete this project. The enthusiasm alone was priceless. Dr. Amy Malkus, thank you so much for sharing your eye for details. Dr. Pamela Evanshen, thank you for helping me to see the true joy in the process as well as the product. Dr. Rebecca Isbell, thank you for our time spent discussing early childhood issues during my graduate assistantship and for showing me that being an early childhood advocate takes more that just words – it takes hard work as well.

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I would also like to thank the childcare centers, the teachers, and the children who open their doors to my observations. Their kindness made this whole study possible.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

Although the issue of teachers having physical interactions with children is a controversial issue in society today because of the inappropriate behaviors that may occur, adult-to-child interaction is one of the most important components of the early childhood classroom. Teachers should not only provide cognitive knowledge, but they should also be positive models of behavior. Much of what children learn is through observation. Because of this, how teachers portray their emotions and values is often mirrored by their own students. By demonstrating positive and appropriate physical interactions, teachers will likely create a classroom community with fewer negative toddler behaviors.

Background of Problem

"The terrible-two's." This phrase is used by many an exasperated parent and teacher. When young children become mobile, the physical limits they had as infants no longer exist. They begin to explore the boundaries adults place in their surroundings. This is when a toddler may appear "terrible." Because they cannot see the boundary limits and often cannot understand a spoken explanation, toddlers need to test the boundaries in order to discover them (Gonzalez-Mena & Eyer, 1997). These limits not only comfort adults by providing the opportunity to protect the environment, but they also give toddlers a sense of security which is essential for the development of their independence.

Erik Erikson's stages of psychosocial development address this issue of independence. As infants, children need to develop a sense of trust in order to develop a positive concept of the world. Adults need to be consistent in providing for children's physical and emotional needs. This sense of trust is what enables children to develop a healthy sense of autonomy. A toddler's infamous response, "NO!" is symbolic of his/her movement toward self-sufficiency. Finding a balance between toddlers' need for

dependent and independent experiences requires adults to help facilitate positive outcomes to their struggles through both demonstration and explanation (Puckett & Black, 2001).

Adult-to-child interactions in the toddler classroom play a strong role in children's development (Kontos & Wilcox-Herzog, 1997). Children learn a lot from what adults do and say. When adults model prosocial behavior, children begin to exhibit the behavior themselves. Unfortunately, children will also model negative behaviors (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997). If the caregivers of toddlers expect few negative behaviors in their classroom, they need to demonstrate a positive attitude in all they do and say. By doing this, caregivers will not only promote good character traits, but they will also create an atmosphere of positive security essential for successful toddler development and learning.

Research Questions

To determine the relationship between positive adult-to-child physical interactions and negative toddler behaviors in the classroom the following question was posed:

1. Is there a difference between the number of negative toddler behaviors exhibited in classrooms rated as having high levels of positive adult-to-child physical interactions and classrooms that are rated as having low levels of positive adult-to-child physical interactions?

In addition, this research study examined the following questions to create a more complete picture of the toddler classroom:

2. What positive adult-to-child physical interactions occur most frequently in toddler classrooms?
3. In which learning area will the most positive adult-to-child physical interactions occur?
4. What negative toddler behaviors occur most frequently in toddler classrooms?
5. In which learning area will the most negative toddler behaviors occur?

Hypotheses

The following hypothesis has been established:

It is predicted that there will be a significant negative relationship between the amount of positive adult-to-child physical interactions and the amount of negative toddler behaviors.

Significance of Study

This study was significant in providing useful information to teachers in toddler classroom regarding how their interactions may affect how toddlers behave in the various learning areas of their classrooms.

Definitions

For the purpose of this study, the following definitions will apply:

1. Positive Adult-to-Child Physical Interactions: Gentle and appropriate exchanges between adults and children where their bodies are in contact.
2. Holding: To maintain within one's arms or lap.
3. Touching: To feel with fingers/hands.
4. Kissing: To touch lightly with one's lips.
5. Hugging: To embrace tightly.
6. Patting: To touch with repetitious movements of the hand.
7. Negative Toddler Behaviors: Actions that show or promote disapproving emotions.
8. Hitting: To strike someone/something forcefully with the hand.
9. Hair Pulling: To tug at the hair on someone's head.
10. Biting: To thrust into someone/something with one's teeth.
11. Negativism: A verbal response of refusal.
12. Crying: To shed tears.
13. Lead Teacher: The decision-making adult in the classroom.
14. Toddler: A child between the ages of 18-36 months (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997).

15. Learning Area: A space in the room centered around the same curricula or theme of play.

Assumptions

By observing 10 minutes before beginning data collection, the researchers will give teachers and children time to get comfortable; therefore, teachers will not change their methods of teaching because of their knowledge of an observer in the room.

Limitations

The absence of children and teachers from the classroom for illness, vacation, etc. affected the results as did the possibility of a child or teacher moving away from the childcare center completely.

Delimitations

The six toddler classrooms studied are located in the southeastern part of the United States and in a metropolitan community. The community was recently voted an All-American Community because of its cost-of-living, crime rate, climate, and health care. It also offers several higher education opportunities and over 100 different industries including a multi-billion dollar healthcare enterprise. Findings for this study should be generalized beyond the stated community with caution.

Overview of Study

This study contains five chapters. Chapter One provides background information and introduces the study. Chapter Two presents a literature review. Chapter Three describes the participants, instrumentation, data collection procedures, and data analysis procedures. Chapter Four consists of the results of the study. Chapter Five presents a summary, conclusions, implications, and recommendations for further study based on the collected data.

CHAPTER 2
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Theory

The constructivist philosophy is currently the foundation for many quality early childcare programs in America. It centers on the belief that children create their own knowledge through their interactions with their environment. The stages of development are "…understood as constructions of active learner reorganization" (Fosnot, 1996, p. 10). That is, the information a child gathers from his/her surroundings must be processed within the brain. This concept is what makes constructivism a dynamic theory supported by professionals in both the fields of psychology and education.

Vygotsky (1978), a Russian developmental psychologist of the early 20th century, wrote that social experiences greatly influenced the human interpretation of the world, and, therefore our way of thinking. This process of an external social activity transforming into an internal mental process is defined as the development of higher mental functions. These higher mental functions are the result of the internalization of speech interaction with a more knowledgeable person. According to Vygotsky's theory in relation to children, this guidance from an adult or a more skilled peer is called scaffolding, and it plays an essential part in children's cognitive development. Scaffolding occurs in the zone of proximal development – the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers (Smolucha & Smolucha, 1998). Vygotsky noted that one way of learning was facilitated by social interactions with more mature persons.

Another interpretation of the social-constructivist spectrum was discussed by Piaget, a prominent Swiss psychologist. He wrote that a child creates his/her own cognition from within as a result of his/her own interactions with the environment (Piaget, 1952). His theory explains that children assimilate their experiences into their existing schemes – mental structures that represent their external world. When they

discover inconsistencies between their existing schemes and new experiences, they experience a state of disequilibrium. Because children seek equilibrium from their environment, they accommodate by producing new mental structures or by modifying old ones (Caulfield, 1996). Piaget wrote that children must be a part of this active process in order to learn. This cognitive conflict, or disequilibrium, leads the learner to ask questions and continue to manipulate his/her environment in order to discover answers and therefore regain equilibrium (Forman, 1993). Concerning the construction of knowledge, research supports both Piagetian and Vygotskian theories (Forman & Fyfe, 1998, Fosnot, 1996).

Piaget not only stated that academic conflicts construct knowledge, but he stated that learning is gained from social conflict as well. He noted that the construction of morality could either be heteronomous or autonomous. Heteronomous morality is developed by following the rules made by others; autonomous morality is developed by following the rules that are self-constructed and self-regulated (DeVries & Zan, 1996). A battle of the wills is likely to develop between a teacher and a child participating in a heteronomous process of development. The child's concept of character will likely not go beyond the surface of his/her persona. Whereas a teacher/child relationship that focuses on autonomy will promote cooperation and an internalized sense of social values; "the child who is given opportunities for regulating his or her behavior has the possibility for constructing a confident self that values self and others positively" (DeVries & Zan, 1994, p. 50). This self-regulation is the key to positive moral development and the hope for lifelong social success.

Although Albert Bandura is associated more with behaviorism, his work in regards to the cognitive theory and how children learn through observation relates well with the social constructivist theories. He notes that children can regulate their own behavior. Two major components of his theory include self-efficacy, the belief that one is capable of learning and/or performing specific tasks, and self-regulation, monitoring and evaluating progress toward self-selected goals (Moon, 2000). Bandura's studies show that these character traits are developed through modeling and imitation; "modeling was seen as a primary mechanism for the acquisition of novel actions" (Cairns, 1998, p. 87).

Because many behaviors are performed more successfully by social cues or through a combination of complex response patterns, modeling is necessary for learning. Bandura explains, "Learning would be exceedingly laborious, not to mention hazardous, if people had to rely solely on the effects of their own actions to inform them what to do" (Bandura, 1977, p. 22). Modeling can significantly shorten the length of time needed to acquire a new skill or behavior; however, imperfect imitative actions can be caused by inadequate attention, inadequate retention, motor difficulties or insufficient incentives. Attentiveness is enhanced when models possess pleasant, interpersonal skills and when the modeled behaviors lack in complexity. Sensory simulation and rehearsal aids retention. Motor difficulties are relieved by informative feedback, monitoring and self-corrective adjustments; and incentives are more effective when behaviors are self-satisfying and/or immediately extrinsically rewarding (Bandura, 1977). Therefore, the teacher plays an important role in developing positive learning environments. The attitudes and actions he/she promotes within his/her class will be reflected in the attitudes and actions of his/her students. As with constructivism, Bandura's social learning theory sees children as capable learners who are able to construct their own knowledge and character.

During the later part of the 20th century, character was best defined through the concepts of emotional intelligence. Goleman (1995) states that we need to incorporate the dimensions of emotional intelligence (self-awareness, mood management, self-motivation, empathy, and social skills) into everything we do in order to become more healthy individuals. Self-awareness, the first dimension, is the foundation for self-confidence. When children understand their strengths and weaknesses, they will make better decisions because their choices will be made with more certainty and assurance. Mood management is the second dimension. Goleman notes that a child is more likely to show integrity and stay positive under pressure when s/he can control his/her feelings or impulses. This will also help him/her rebound after a crisis. The third dimension is self-motivation. Hope plays an important role in one's motivation and ability to move toward a goal and find fulfillment in life. It also helps one to have a more productive life. The next dimension is empathy, knowing and understanding how someone else feels. This character trait helps one to become a better friend. The last dimension is social

skills. During the 1997 Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development annual conference Goleman explained that when people get along well with others their prosocial attitude could be contagious (Pool, 1997).

In a conversation with O'Neil (1996), Goleman states that IQ contributes to no more than 20% of life's success. The other 80% depends on having the characteristics that make up emotional intelligence. He goes on to explain that practically all of one's emotional intelligence is learned, so it is critical that children are taught these skills early. In fact, much of one's emotional intelligence is developed during the first year of life. Simple cause-and-effect situations guide children's knowledge of feelings. Because children need to see how best to handle these situations, emotional role modeling from adults is critical during the first year (Jensen, 1998).

Also critical during the first year is brain development. The brain is divided into three parts – the reptilian brain, the limbic system, and the cerebral cortex. The reptilian brain controls genetic/ instinctive behaviors. It also controls a person's fight or flight reflexes. When one's basic needs are not met, this part of the brain can make the rest of the brain needed for learning ineffective (Healy, 1987). The limbic system houses one's emotions and includes the amygdala (for emotions) and the hippocampus (for memory). It also provides the necessary means to rewrite the reptilian involuntary reflexes (Caine & Caine, 1994). Blanketing the other two layers is the cerebral cortex or the thinking brain. It provides the mental capabilities to understand the language, symbols and images necessary for learning; however, without a healthy reptilian brain and limbic system, the cerebral cortex may not function properly. The absence of threat and a positive emotional environment is essential to a well-functioning brain (Kovalik, 1994).

The environment plays an important role in the details of the brain's development as well. A human brain contains essentially all of its neurons before birth. The first two years are spent connecting them together to form a well-organized relay system throughout the brain. These synaptic connections are strengthened through repeated use. "The more work the brain does, the more it becomes capable of doing" (Healy, 1987, p. 19). Because neurons need connections to survive, some may die when not used as the brain carefully prunes for efficiency. This is a beneficial process, but

enriched environments are necessary to ensure that the brain grows and develops successfully during childhood (Jensen, 1998).

The Environment

An enriched environment influences brain development and academic learning. Its key elements include good nutrition, exercise, feedback, love, exposure to the arts, and opportunities for challenge (Jensen, 1998). As a teacher organizes his/her classroom, she/he should consider its effect both aesthetically and educationally. The walls should both inspire and affirm learning. The materials should provide for creativity and challenge. The relationships should reflect a cooperative and caring atmosphere. In short, the environment should become the third teacher (Isbell & Exelby, 2001).

The citizens in Reggio Emilia, a city in Italy whose practices in childcare have a great influence on early childhood philosophy, see the value in establishing a child-friendly environment. Each room of their schools represent peaceful learning and social experiences. Art supplies, field trip memorabilia, and other leaning manipulatives are plentiful and within easy access for the children encouraging personal independence and impulsive creativity. Their work is displayed in a purposeful and pleasing manner in order to keep the families informed of their children's activities and interests. Because they see the environment as another instructor, the teachers of Reggio Emilia take great care in making each area available for learning. The use of space not only exhibits beauty but also a great deal of consideration for the program and curriculum goals (New, 1990).

The environment should also become an important aspect in the curriculum of the toddler classroom. Lowman and Ruhmann (1998) categorize the necessities of the toddler classroom under the letter "S"; these categories include seclusion, softness, senses, stimulation, stability, safety, and sanitation. Seclusion refers to a child's need to sometimes be alone in a group setting and providing a place to meet this need. Often these places, as well as other spots in the environment, are as soft as possible to provide for a homier feel in the classroom. A sensory-rich environment is also important, and the classroom should have a variety of things to see, hear, and touch without being overwhelming. It should be stimulating by providing opportunities for

challenge, not frustration. An environment with a stable staff and schedule gives children a sense of security. This security also comes from being in a safe environment where they can explore freely. Last, but not least, sanitation or cleanliness is an essential part of keeping children happy and healthy.

The visual aspects of the toddler environment are essential to creating a mood that promotes positive development. The visual aspects should begin with natural lighting and coloring, "With a neutral backdrop the people, toys, and materials stand out better allowing children to find them and focus on them" (Gonzalez-Mena & Eyer, 1997, p. 202). Colors should be added as accents in order to compliment the room, not complicate it. Displays should document children's language and interactions in order to help parents see the learning occurring in the programs. They should help build self-esteem by demonstrating the value of each child through pictures and work samples (Gandini, 1993). Other items in the room should be both functional and beautiful. Plants, fabrics and furniture are just as essential as manipulatives and books (Isbell & Exelby, 2001). Beautiful things bring interest and joy encouraging positive emotional health and more engaged learning.

The Curriculum

Essential to the toddler curriculum are daily caregiving activities. The routine tasks of living such as eating, toileting, and dressing help children learn about their world and acquire skills that encourage independence (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997). These tasks should not be rushed but seen as opportunities for learning. They can be used for teaching concepts such as body parts, social skills such as turn taking, and healthy habits such as hand washing (Dombro, Colker, & Dodge, 1999). When children realize that the adults in their lives are respectful of their needs, a sense of trust develops, and a relationship grows. This is fundamental to a child's feelings of attachment that are vital to learning. "Through caregiving interactions, attachment grows. When caregiving times are quality times, much learning takes place" (Gonzalez-Meza & Eyer, 1997, p. 44).

A daily task that is often overlooked as part of the curriculum is the transition from home to school. Parents and teachers need to work together to ease children's

fear of abandonment and help build their sense of trust. By encouraging parents to stay inside of the room until their children are settled and leave immediately after a goodbye statement and hug, teachers can help children better manage their battle between connectedness and autonomy (Greenberg, 1991). Displaying items and pictures from home can create a smooth family transition. Offering opportunities for children to identify with their families during the day helps them feel secure. They begin to realize that they are attached to, but still separate from, their parents (Dombro et al., 1999).

Another important part of the toddler curriculum is the simple act of conversation. Labeling objects, describing events, and reflecting feelings help to expand the children's language and give meaning to the world. Jensen (1998) noted that these conversations should not only be relevant to children's lives but should also provoke emotion. He explains, "Emotions drive the threesome of attention, meaning, and memory. The things that we orchestrate to engage emotions in a productive way will do 'triple duty' to capture all three" (p.94). Children who have been talked to sensitively and listened to responsively, develop a strong sense of self which is necessary for the building of positive emotional health and moral development (Greenberg, 1991).

Play is the main ingredient of the toddler curriculum. It allows children to take initiative and practice problem-solving skills (Gonzalez-Mena & Eyer, 1997). By setting up the environment with touchable (and mouthable) materials and by providing children with the freedom to choose their activities, children become active learners able to construct their own learning (Post & Hohmann, 1995). Giving children the opportunity to solve their own problems also encourages active learning. Although there is a fine line in keeping children from being frustrated, adults should give them ample time to solve their child-size problems of reaching a toy or making it move before giving them assistance (Post & Hohmann, 2000).

The Teacher's Role

The behaviors teachers bring into the classroom may be more important than the activities they plan or the environment they provide. Perhaps the most effective behavior they can bring is a positive attitude. Cartwright (2000) speaks of professional detachment: "one sign of detachment is often delightful humor…it signals enjoyment…

and often opens the way for cooperative learning" (p. 16). She explains that teachers are role models for children. The emotions, thoughts, and behaviors they model for them may affect their lives more than society will ever know. Kontos and Wilcox-Herzog (1997) expand by stating, "Children's emotions in early childhood programs are related to their interactions with their teachers" (p. 11). How the children act in the classroom may be a direct reflection of how adults behave around them. This is a challenging discovery that all educators should take very seriously.

Everyone enjoys feeling special, and children are definitely not an exception. The one-on-one interactions caregivers have with their children says, "You are as important as I am; your interests are my interests" (Szanton, 2001, p. 19). Caregivers should look for these opportunities every day with each child. When considering children who may be difficult to manage, teachers should make an effort to observe them carefully and spend more time with them in low-stress situations (Elicker & Fortner-Wood, 1995). These situations occur most frequently in child-initiated activities. Although these may be less structured times needing little teacher assistance, the teacher can use these opportunities to play with his/her children by being a gofer, a source of information, or a character in their dramatic play. These times of reciprocal play help children understand that their teacher is available and increases their sense of security. Da Ros and Wong (1996) explain that caregivers who practice this "art" become more sensitive to their children's needs and find the time spent in class more rewarding than before. The special relationships teachers develop with their children not only make their interactions more meaningful, but enjoyable as well.

One of the greatest aspects of constructivist learning is allowing for adult interaction with children in an environment where they have initiated the play and have been able to make their own mental connections through their active involvement. Schweinhart and Weikart (2000) researched the outcomes of children coming from a High/Scope program, a nursery school program and direct-instruction program. They found that those coming out of a group using direct instruction from a teacher were less successful as adults. Their study describes those coming from a preschool focusing on direct instruction as being more likely to be arrested, divorced or suspended from work and less likely to do volunteer work or graduate from college. They directly relate these

statistics to the person's preschool instruction. Schweinhart and Weikart (2000) explain that direct instruction only produces temporary academic improvements while both High/Scope and nursery school programs focus more on real world learning instead of academic performance. Because High/Scope and nursery schools are child-initiated programs, they also encourage children's development in social responsibility and interpersonal skills. Although giving up power may be hard for some adults, allowing children to take an active leadership role in their learning appears to be the key to their future success.

Adults must work as partners with children. They must have faith in children's quest for equilibrium as they interact with the environment to construct their own knowledge (Forman, 1993). Because this process can neither be rushed nor explained, adults need to give children the gift of patience and enjoy the lifelong learning adventure (Healy, 1987). In Kovalik's (1994) discussion of integrated thematic instruction, she emphasizes the need for celebrating learning. These celebrations give children the opportunity to share their knowledge and help to solidify facts into their long-term memory. It also gives children a chance to review previous information as well as apply new information. She concludes that the best part of celebrating is getting the community involved.

The Child's Role

Once children feel secure in their surroundings, they will feel at ease to explore their environment. Children need time to investigate and experiment with materials before being introduced to more structured activities (Keenan, 1998). These times should be child-directed in order to maximize learning although teachers should interact by modeling good problem-solving behaviors. McMullen (1998) explains, "Gentle encouragement and well-placed questions or comments from a caring, observant adult to children facing a dilemma may encourage them to stick with the problem until they find a solution" (p. 69). The knowledge gained from stimulation exploration may be different from child to child, yet the value is just as important to each. The educator's role is to see its value and maximize each child's learning to the best of his/her ability.

Children can also take an active role in their learning by adding materials to the environment. This allows them to take ownership of the space while making them feel more at home at school. Bringing telephones, clothes, dishes, etc. from home for pretend play makes the classroom familiar to the children and individualized for the parents (New, 1990). Children can also gain a better understanding of their world when they gather materials from outside and bring them into their classroom themselves. Ordinary objects like feathers, tree bark and stones provide extraordinary sensory experiences that can be revisited as often as the child likes (Isbell & Exelby, 2001). Classroom displays should also give children a sense of classroom ownership; "When children see that you value their creations, they gain confidence and take increasing pride in their work" (Dombro et al., 1999, p. 245).

Social interactions are also important roles for toddlers to take as they participate in a childcare setting. Pratt (1999) explains that when children are able to teach and learn from each other with adult guidance, they are more likely to make healthy contributions to society as adults. Children develop prosocial behaviors by participating in opportunities to care for and assist their peers. Additional self-esteem will be gained during the times when adults take time to notice and compliment kind gestures (Greenberg, 1991).

Classroom Guidance

The development of positive social character is the responsibility of teacher and child alike. Teachers should not only model prosocial behaviors such as sharing, helping and comforting others, but they should explain the reasons for their actions and provide opportunities for children to do likewise (Eisenberg & Mussen, 1989). They need to set the stage for positive social interactions by constructing times for experimentation, cooperative play, and engaged work. The attitudes they bring into the classroom atmosphere will also play an important role. Their respect for children's interests, values, feelings, and ideas can either build or destroy a sociomoral classroom (DeVries & Zan, 1994). Once the teacher has fulfilled his/her duty of creating a prosocial environment, children begin to feel a sense of security enabling them to feel free to explore. Gonzalez-Mena and Eyer (1997) explain, "This is the beginning of self-

esteem. Children's ability to feel themselves as loving and competent allows them eventually to see others in a similar way" (p. 182).

Self-esteem plays a huge role in toddlers' development of moral character. Erikson (1963) explains that toddlers seek autonomy. Setting up the environment for children to succeed by allowing children to participate in daily routines and choices fosters their independence (Dombro et al., 1999). Teachers must consider the individual child during these times in order for him/her to thrive. Even everyday tasks may cause children stress when they are exhausted or emotionally distraught (Greenberg, 1991).

Understanding child development is important to guidance strategies. For example, some toddlers are not ready to share; providing duplicates of favorite toys helps to avoid conflicts (Dombro et al., 1999). Adults must also understand that everything in the toddler classroom can be a possible play item. Toddlers learn through their senses, so adults should be prepared for them to manipulate all the objects in the room (Gonzalez-Mena & Eyer, 1997). Many toddlers also have trouble handling their emotions. Every child will get mad or frustrated at some point. The key is knowing how to handle emotions when they come. Identifying each child's individual character is essential to providing effective means for handling emotions. Some children just need to talk about them, while others need to literally pound them out with a hammer, drum mallet or clay (Mitchell, 1982).

Children need limits to feel secure. They help children work and interact safely and pleasantly in the classroom (Hohmann & Weikeart, 1995). Adults should present limits optimistically focusing on the strengths of the child and the faith that he/she will succeed. Schreiber (1999) explains that these limits should be predictable and stated positively and clearly. When adults take time to communicate with children about the reasons behind the limits set, they model that language can become an effective method of conflict resolution.

Another way adults can model positive social behavior is by assisting children in problem solving. Because the ultimate goal in a constructivist classroom is for children to resolve their own problems successfully, adults provide the linguistic resources for the children to internalize this behavior. Post and Hohmann (2000) suggest a six-step

plan for conflict resolution with toddlers. The first step is to keep the situation calm by using a soft voice and steady actions. Next, the teacher needs to acknowledge the children's feeling. This helps the children let go of negativity and move on to resolution. After this, the teacher should gather information about the situation and then restate the problem. Finally, the teacher is ready to help the children solve their conflict by asking questions that allow children to form their own solutions. In the end, the teacher must also remember to praise the children's efforts and make sure that they know that she/he is available again should another problem arise.

Sometimes the only way to resolve conflicts is to call time-out. Traditional time-outs involving separations from the group rarely address the children's needs but often cause them to multiply. By isolating children, the anger, fear, or hurt that got them in trouble often intensifies (Mitchell, 1982). It can also have a negative effect on children's self-confidence. Schreiber (1999) notes, "A child may come to believe that his own feelings and desires have little value because adults' feelings and needs consistently take precedence" (p. 22). Teachers should instead supply positive places for children to call their own time outs by giving them places in the room to escape. Providing a quiet corner with books, pillows, and other soft items allow children to rest. "Good mental health requires one to spend time away from others now and then" (Isbell & Exelby, 2001, p. 50). When a child is being difficult, the adult might bring in another to resolve the conflict through a different approach; thus allowing the first adult to call time out and reevaluate the situation (Schreiber). Humans are not solitary creatures but need each other to survive (Greenberg, 1991). The toddler classroom can become a healthy place morally when everyone involved works together for the common good.

Childcare

Childcare is becoming more of a necessity in America. According to a 1995 survey completed by the National Center for Education Statistics, 6 out of 10 children under the age of six who have not started kindergarten receive care and education on a weekly basis from someone other than a parent. This survey also demonstrated that approximately half of the families with toddlers needed childcare on a regular basis. The childcare providers included both relative care and center-based care. Center-

based care included childcare centers, Head Start programs, preschools, pre-kindergartens, and other early childhood programs (West, Wright, & Hausken, 1995).

Because of these high statistics and the assumption that they are continuing to grow on a yearly basis, the search for quality care is more important than ever. The 1997 National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) position statement describes a high quality early childhood program as one that is sensitive to the age and individuality of a child while providing "a safe and nurturing environment that promotes the physical, social, emotional, aesthetic, intellectual, and language development of each child while being sensitive to the needs and preferences of families" (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997, p. 8). It recommends using learning activities for toddlers that promote physical mobility, language development and personal independence. These activities should also be rich in sensory experiences, social interaction, and adult-involvement.

The NAEYC position statement also stresses the importance of both a stimulating environment and nurturing caregivers (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997). These guidelines are in direct correlation with the Federal Interagency Day Care Requirements (FIDCR) for quality. The standards for FIDCR are defined under both structural and process variables. The structural variables include adult: child ratios (Table 1), group size and the training of the teachers (Howes, Phillips, & Whitebook, 1992). Process variables include the behavior of the teacher and the provision of activities for the children. Following these standards is critical to meeting the needs of children in all of their developmental domains (Bredekamp & Copple; Burchinal, Roberts, Nabors, & Bryant, 1996; Howes et al., 1992; McCartney, 1984; Phillips, McCartney, & Scarr, 1987). In their study of social development, Howes et al. explain, "When teachers teach in child care centers meeting reasonably high standards of quality, they are likely to engage in appropriate care-giving and provide developmentally appropriate activities" (p. 459). As educators, striving for a developmentally appropriate classroom is the goal. Although they may have little control over the structural variables provided for classrooms - higher administrative authorities often influence these - they should strive to achieve success with the process variables of behavior and curriculum development.

Table 1

Ratios and Group Sizes Recommended by NAEYC (Greenberg, 2001)

Age	Ratio	Maximum Group Size
Infants up to 12 months	1:4	8
12-24 months	1:5	12
24-30 months	1:6	12
30-36 Months	1:7	14
Preschool	1:10	20

The United States government is now making the search for quality care a federal issue. The importance of children participating in a quality preschool program is growing in value. The Head Start Quality Improvement Act of 1991 recognized the need for quality in preschool programming; however, the funding was not available at the time to make it effective (Schweinhart & Weikart, 1999). During the fiscal year 2000, the US government made $3.8 billion available to the Department of Health and Human Services through the Child Care and Development Fund indicating that a minimum of 4% of this money must be used to improve the quality of childcare and assist parents in selecting the appropriate care for their children (Child Care Bureau, n.d.). With continued research and practice, the developmentally appropriate standards of NAEYC will hopefully be seen in classrooms around the country.

Conclusion

In conclusion, quality is an important part of providing children with the childcare they need to develop successfully. Although the caregiver can often not change a number of the structural variables, his/her efforts in bringing a positive attitude and developmentally appropriate activities to the classroom have a tremendous effect on the development of students. Because toddlers have a tendency to model after those who are older, adult interactions play a major role in their emotional health. When feelings such as joy, security, and contentment accompany toddlers at school, they will be ready

to learn. A positive social classroom not only creates an enjoyable learning atmosphere, but it also stimulates the brain, enhancing the possibilities of children's future success both academically and socially. Therefore, when a toddler caregiver demonstrates a generous amount of positive physical interactions, there should be fewer negative toddler behaviors in the classroom.

CHAPTER 3
METHODOLOGY

Participants

Participants in this study were 58 children between the ages of 18-36 months and six lead teachers from six toddler classrooms. These six toddler classrooms were randomly selected from a larger sample of 20 state licensed toddler classrooms in the Tri-Cities area of East Tennessee. State licensed child centers meet specific requirements for administration, staff, equipment, program, food, facilities, and the care of children with disabilities. The state of Tennessee requirements for a toddler classroom include a safe, healthy, and simulating environment with an adult/child ratio of 1:7, a group size of no more than 14 children, and at least a high school diploma for the lead teacher. The participants were primarily Caucasian and from working class or lower middle class backgrounds.

Instrumentation

Positive Adult-to-Child Physical Interactions Tally Sheet

The researcher created a tally list of positive adult-to-child physical interactions. These included gentle and appropriate holding, touching, kissing, hugging, and patting. A place was also given for any other behaviors and notes. The tally list was also divided into the different learning areas in the classroom: 1) home-living, 2) gross motor, 3) sensory, 4) music, 5) library, 6) manipulatives, and 7) diaper changing (Appendix A).

Administration and Scoring. The tally list was administered to discover the frequency of positive interactions in the different learning areas of the classroom. The researcher observed 20 classrooms twice. Each observation lasted for 45 minutes and was broken into 5-minute intervals.

During the 5-minute intervals, each interaction observed received one tally mark. The tally mark was also noted as occurring in a specific learning area. After the observation, the tallies were totaled within each category of the tally sheet.

Inter-rater Reliability. The positive adult-to-child physical interactions tally sheet was field-tested in a randomly selected licensed classroom not participating in the study. The researcher trained an early childhood graduate assistant by giving her definitions to read and then discussed possible scenarios. Training observations were conducted together to identify differences in interpretations. The lead teacher of the classroom was consulted to verify the observed interactions took place as described on the tally lists. The researcher and the graduate assistant then made individual observations at the same time in a quarter of the classrooms observed and compounded the results. Percentages were calculated by dividing agreements by agreements plus disagreements resulting in an 85% interrater reliability.

Negative Toddler Behaviors Tally Sheet

After the positive adult-to-child physical interactions were observed, six classrooms were then methodically chosen for the final study. The researcher created a tally list of negative toddler behaviors. These included hitting, hair pulling, biting, negativism, and crying. Space was provided for other behaviors as well as notes. The tally list was also divided into the different learning areas in the classroom: 1) home-living, 2) gross motor, 3) sensory, 4) music, 5) library, 6) manipulatives, and 7) diaper changing (Appendix B).

Administration and Scoring. The tally list was administered to discover the frequency of negative behaviors in the different learning areas of the classroom. The researcher observed 6 classrooms twice. Each observation lasted for 45-minutes and was broken into 5-minute intervals.

During the 5-minute intervals, each behavior observed received one tally mark. The tally mark was also noted as occurring in a specific learning area. After the observation, the tallies were totaled within each category of the tally sheet.

Inter-rater Reliability. The negative toddler behaviors tally sheet was also field-tested in a randomly selected licensed classroom not participating in the study. The researcher trained an early childhood graduate assistant by giving her definitions to

read and then discussed possible scenarios. Training observations were conducted together to identify differences in interpretations. The lead teacher of the classroom was consulted to verify the observed interactions took place as described on the tally lists. The researcher and the graduate assistant then made individual observations at the same time in two of the classrooms observed and compounded the results. Percentages were calculated by dividing agreements by agreements plus disagreements resulting in a 91% interrater reliability.

Procedures

After identifying via the internet (Tennessee Department of Human Services, 2002) the complete list of classrooms displaying licensure standards in the Tri-Cities area of East Tennessee, the researcher then selected 21 classrooms by a random draw. Permission was obtained from the directors (Appendix C & Appendix D) and from the lead teachers (Appendix E & Appendix F). Both the positive adult-to-child interaction and the negative toddler behavior tally lists were field-tested in a randomly selected classroom not being used in the final study.

The researcher then used the tally list naming specific positive adult-to-child physical interactions to observe the behaviors of the lead teacher in relation to the toddlers in her class (Appendix A). After field-testing the instrumentation in one classroom, two visits were made to the rest of the 20 classrooms previously selected. Each visit consisted of a 45-minute observation during the morning choice time for toddlers. After the observations were documented, the results of each classroom were then averaged and ranked from the highest amount of adult-to-child interactions to the lowest amount of adult-to-child interactions. This list was divided into thirds, and the middle group was dropped, therefore, leaving a high positive adult-to-child physical interactions group and a low positive adult-to-child physical interactions group. Three classrooms were then randomly selected from each of these groups providing six classrooms for the final study. The researcher then observed and recorded the amount of negative toddler behaviors in each of the six classrooms (Appendix B). Two 45-minute observations were made in each classroom.

CHAPTER 4
RESULTS

Twenty-one licensed childcare centers participated in this study. Adult-to-child interactions were observed between the lead teachers and their children. The children were all toddlers between the ages of 18-36 months. Toddler behaviors were observed in six of these centers. This study addressed the behaviors that occurred in these six centers.

Five research questions guided this study and one hypothesis was tested. The first research question gives a statistical analysis of the study.

Data Analysis

Research Question #1

Is there a difference between the number of negative toddler behaviors exhibited in classrooms rated as having high levels of positive adult-to-child physical interactions and classrooms that are rated as having low levels of positive adult-to-child physical interactions? A bivariate correlation was run at a 95% alpha level in order to determine a significant difference between the negative toddler behaviors in the high positive adult-to-child physical interaction groups and the low positive adult-to-child physical interactions groups, r.(6)=.05, n.s. Ho1. It is predicted that there will be a significant negative relationship between the amount of positive adult physical interactions and the amount of negative toddler behaviors. The hypothesis was rejected.

Descriptive Analysis

Research Question #2

Which positive adult-to-child physical interaction will occur most frequently? Percentages of individual items on the positive adult-to-child physical interactions tally lists were calculated after the tallies under each category were totaled in order to identify the frequency of each interaction during the observations. The results of the tally lists are shown on Table 2.

Table 2

Frequency and Percentages of Positive Adult-to-Child Physical Interactions

Interaction	f	%
Holding	109	29.78
Touching	162	44.26
Kissing	12	3.28
Hugging	14	3.83
Patting	69	18.85

The most frequent positive adult-to-child physical interactions were touching (44.26%) and holding (29.78%), accounting for approximately 70% of the interactions. Patting occurred during approximately 18.85% of the observations while kissing and hugging each occurred less than 5%.

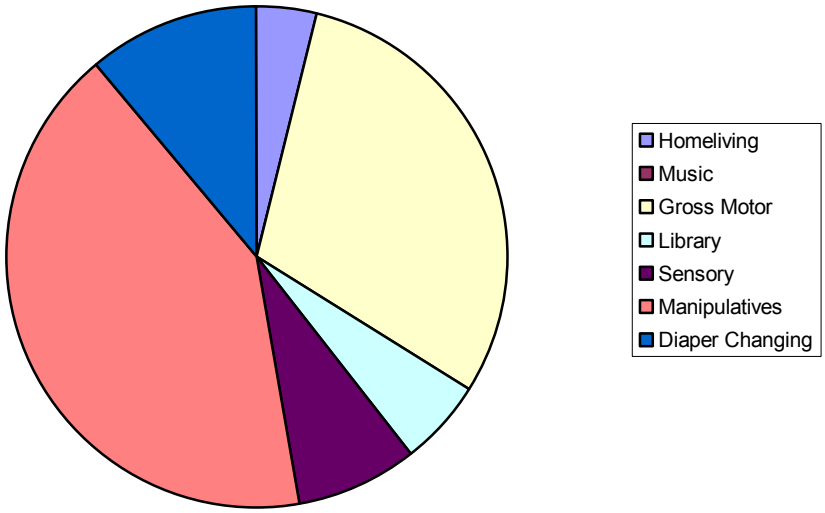
Research Question #3

In which learning area will the most positive adult-to-child physical interactions occur? Percentages of individual items on the positive adult-to-child physical interactions tally lists were calculated after the tallies under each category were totaled in order to identify the frequency of where each interaction occurred during the observations. The results of the tally lists are shown in Figure 1.

Positive adult-to-child physical interactions occurred most often in the manipulative area (41.53%) and the gross motor area (30.05%) with a combined total of approximately 70%. Interactions in each of the other areas accounted for approximated 10% or less of the interactions. No interactions were observed in the music area.

Figure 1.

Frequency of Positive Adult-to-Child Physical Interactions According to Learning Area



Research Question #4

Which negative toddler behavior will occur most frequently? Percentages of individual items on the negative toddler behaviors tally lists were calculated after the tallies under each category were totaled in order to identify the frequency of each behavior during the observations. The results of the tally lists are shown on Table 3.

Negativism was the most frequent negative toddler behavior accounting for 45.95% of the behaviors. Hitting happened during 24.32% of the observations. Although kicking and pushing were not detailed on the original tally list, they were noted as "other" and took place during 16.22% of the behaviors. Crying was heard during 10.81% of the observations while hair pulling and biting each happened 1.35% of the time.

Table 3

Frequency and Percentages of Negative Toddler Behaviors

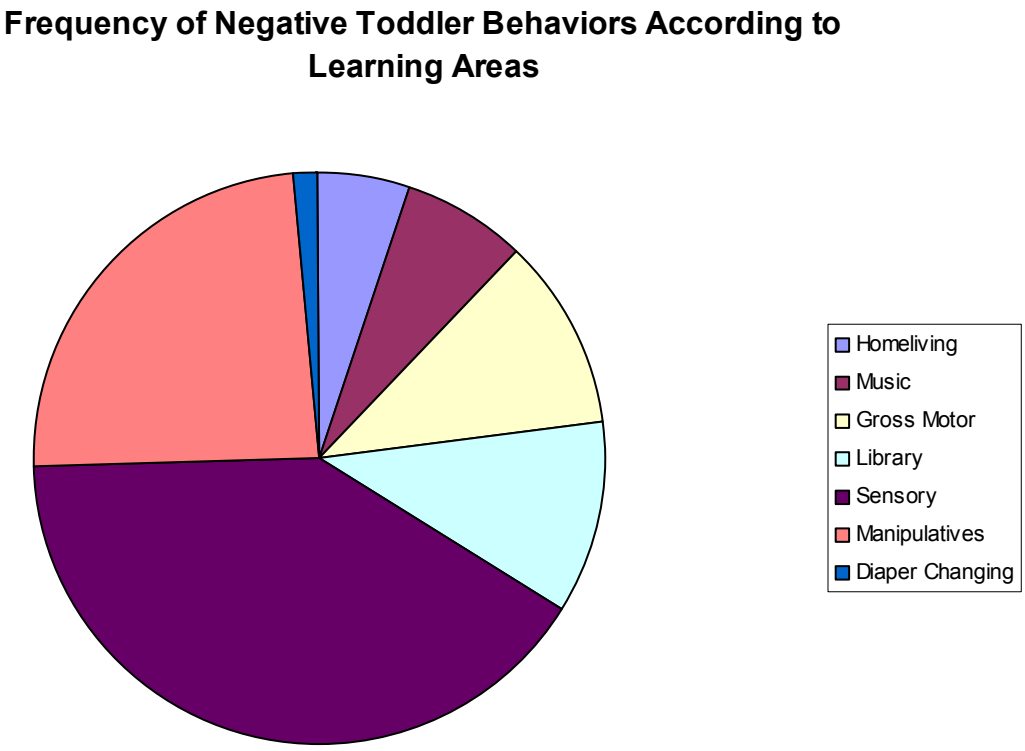
Behaviors	f	%
Hitting	18	24.32
Hair Pulling	1	1.35
Biting	1	1.35
Negativism	34	45.95
Crying	8	10.81
Other	12	16.22

Research Question #5

In which learning area will the most negative toddler behaviors occur? Percentages of individual items on the negative toddler behaviors tally lists were calculated after the tallies under each category were totaled in order to identify the frequency of where each behavior occurred during the observations. The results of the tally lists are shown in Figure 2.

Negative toddler behaviors happened most in the sensory area (40.54%). They accounted for 24.32% of the behaviors in the manipulative area and 10.81% in both the gross motor and library areas. Negative toddler behaviors occurred during less than 10% of the behaviors taking place in the music, homeliving, and diaper changing areas.

Figure 2.


Frequency of Negative Toddler Behaviors According to Learning Areas
Homeliving
Music
Gross Motor
Library
Sensory
Manipulatives
Diaper Changing

CHAPTER 5
DISCUSSION

Summary

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between the positive adult-to-child interactions and negative toddler behaviors in the classroom. The frequency of the positive adult-to-child interactions and negative toddler behaviors as well as the area in which they occurred was also analyzed.

This study consisted of 21 randomly selected state licensed toddler classrooms in the Tri-Cities area of East Tennessee and included 148 children between the ages of 18-36 months and 21 lead teachers. One toddler classroom was observed during the field-testing of the instrumentation. Positive adult-to-child physical interactions were observed during two visits in the remaining 20 toddler classrooms. Six toddler classrooms were methodically selected from the first 20, and negative toddler behaviors were observed during two visits to these.

This chapter provides conclusions drawn from the findings of the study as presented in Chapter 4 and the literature review, which was presented in Chapter 2, as well as recommendations for further research. Five research questions guided this study.

Findings

Research Question 1

Is there a difference between the number of negative toddler behaviors exhibited in classrooms rated as having high levels of positive adult-to-child physical interactions and classrooms that are rated as having low levels of positive adult-to-child physical interactions? The results show no significant correlation between adult-to-child interactions and negative toddler behaviors. Perhaps the greatest reason for this was the small sample size. Only six classrooms participated in the final phase of the study. Another reason may have been because the numbers under each variable were too close in range. The gap between the high and low group was less than 20 interactions. Had the top and bottom quartertile been chosen instead of randomly choosing classrooms from the top and bottom thirds, the results may have differed.

Research Question 2

Which positive adult-to-child physical interaction will occur most frequently? Touching occurred as the most frequent positive adult-to-child interaction. This may be a small reminder that a caregiver is near and often calms a child or redirects his/her behaviors. A gentle and appropriate touch from a loving caregiver gives children the sense of security that is essential for developmental growth to occur (Da Ros & Wong, 1996). The results also demonstrate that the slightest physical interaction may have a large role in classroom guidance.

Research Question 3

In which learning area will the most positive adult-to-child physical interactions occur? Positive adult-to-child physical interactions occurred most often in the manipulative area. This area is typically one focused on enhancing cognitive development. Because teachers were present, frustrations may have been prevented through his/her assistance and/or questioning. Such guidance helps to prevent cognitive conflict, or disequilibrium (Foreman, 1993). It also promotes the necessary scaffolding needed for development to occur (Smolucha & Smolucha, 1998).

Research Question 4

Which negative toddler behavior will occur most frequently? The fact that negativism occurred most frequently in the classroom indicates that children were attempting to use words instead of actions to express themselves. This was actually a positive outcome that demonstrated the positive cognitive and social growth of the children (Nelson, Erwin, & Duffy, 1998). Children at this level of development have perhaps realized the harm of their negative actions and in sympathy for their peers, decided that a verbal response is the more effective way to communicate.

Research Question 5

In which learning area will the most negative toddler behaviors occur? The most negative behaviors occurred in the sensory area. Having to share items such as a

certain toy or color of play dough was a huge issue in the classrooms observed. Teachers should not expect toddlers to share on their own (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997). Perhaps if more examples of the same item had been in the sensory area, fewer negative toddler behaviors would have occurred.

Conclusions

The presence of a caregiver in a learning area has some effect on the behaviors that occur. Because a high number of negative behaviors occurred in the sensory and manipulative areas of the classroom, caregivers may need to consider taking a more active role in these areas. As seen in this study, even the slightest interactions with children may impact their behaviors a great deal. More research is needed in order to identify a significant relation between positive adult-to-child interactions and negative toddler behaviors; this study portrays the importance of adults taking a positive role in the activities occurring in the classroom.

Future Research and Practical Recommendations

As a result of this study, several recommendations have been formed. Further quantitative studies should be conducted to determine the relationship between positive adult-to-child physical interactions and negative toddler behaviors. A larger sample size may produce significantly different results. Research should be conducted to determine which area of the classroom the most toddler behaviors occur in order for teachers to gain more knowledge of how to arrange their environment and position themselves in the classroom. Research should be conducted to determine the effect teacher training has in relation to teacher interactions to identify how much of their interactions are intuitive and how much are learned. Teachers should take an active role in toddlers' play in order to scaffold learning and help children work through cognitive conflicts. The environment should be set up to allow for rewarding cognitive and social experiences thus making learning a positive experience for all children.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Positive Adult-to-Child Physical Interactions Tally Sheet Sample

Date _____ **Center _____**

*** Gently and Appropriately**

Frequency of Positive Adult Physical Interactions

in a Toddler Classroom

_____

Time

	Homeliving	Music	Gross Motor	Library	Sensory	Manipulatives	Diaper Changing	Totals
Holding*								
Touching*								
Kissing*								
Hugging*								
Patting*								
Other*								
Totals								

Notes:

APPENDIX B
Negative Toddler Behavior Tally Sheet Sample

Date _____ **Center _____**

Frequency of Negative Toddler Behaviors

in a Toddler Classroom

_____
Time

	Homeliving	Music	Gross Motor	Library	Sensory	Manipulatives	Diaper Changing	Totals
Hitting								
Hair Pulling								
Biting								
Negativism								
Crying								
Other								
Totals								

Notes:

APPENDIX C

Letter Introducing Study to Directors

April 9, 2002

Dear Director,

I am a student in the Master's of Early Childhood Education program at East Tennessee State University. Dr. Laurelle Phillips, a professor in the same department, is my faculty advisor. For my thesis, I am doing a study to better understand the relationship between toddler behaviors and teacher interactions. As part of my study, I would like observe the interactions between the children and the lead teacher in your toddler classroom during morning center time. I will make notes concerning where the teacher and children are in the classroom as well as what type of interaction occurs. The purpose of these notes will be to describe what I observe. I will not evaluate the classroom activities or the environment.

Following these observations, I will also observe the behaviors of toddlers in the classroom. Again, I will make notes concerning where the child is in the classroom and what type of behavior occurs. The notes will only be used for the purpose of my study.

The results of my observations will remain confidential. If anyone becomes uncomfortable with being observed, then the observation will end.

I am writing to request your permission for me to spend a morning in a classroom and to make notes about the teacher interactions that I observe. Knowledge of how children and teachers relate may help both learning and classroom management. I would greatly appreciate your center's participation in this study. In considering your participation, please keep in mind that you may change your mind at anytime. For my study to comply with University regulations, I need a letter from you granting permission. This letter must be written on your center's letterhead and should include the name of my study, "The Effects of Adult Interactions on Toddler Behavior in the Classroom," as well as my full name, Sarah Webb Hackney.

If you have any questions about this study you may contact me, Sarah Hackney, at 423-384-0227 or you may contact Dr. Laurelle Phillips at 423-439-7930.

Sincerely,

Sarah Hackney

Laurelle B. Phillips

Assistant Professor Early Childhood Education

APPENDIX D

Sample Response Letter for Directors
(To be copied on letterhead)

April 9, 2002

Dr. Laurelle B. Phillips
East Tennessee State University
College of Education
Department of Human Development and Learning
ETSU Box 70548
Johnson City, TN 37614-0548

Dear Dr. Phillips,

As director of the Happy Days Child Care facility, I would like to extend an invitation to Sarah W. Hackney to use our licensed child care center for research which is titled "The Effects of Adult Interactions on Toddler Behavior in the Classroom."

We look forward to working with Sarah on this project. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this matter, please contact me at 423-384-0227.

Thank you,

Sally Jones
Director

APPENDIX E

Letter Introducing Study to Teachers

April 16, 2002

Dear Teacher,

I am a student in the Master's of Early Childhood Education program at East Tennessee State University. Dr. Laurelle Phillips, a professor in the same department, is my faculty advisor. For my thesis, I am doing a study to better understand the relationship between toddler behaviors and teacher interactions. Little research has been done about toddler classrooms and even less about toddlers and their relationship to their teachers. I would appreciate your participation because we share a love for toddlers and want the best care for them.

If you agree, I would like to observe your children and their interactions with you during your morning center time. I will make notes concerning where you and the children are in the classroom as well as what type of interaction occurs. The purpose of these notes is to describe what I observe. I will not evaluate the classroom activities or the environment. The total observation time should take no more than 2 hours.

Following these observations, I will also observe the behaviors of the toddlers in your classroom. Again, I will make notes concerning where the children are and what type of behavior occurs. The notes will only be used for the purpose of my study.

The results of my observations will remain confidential. If either you or your children become uncomfortable with being observed, then the observation will end.

I am writing to request your permission for me to spend a morning in your classroom and to make notes about the interactions that I observe. Knowledge of how children and teachers relate may help both learning and classroom management. I would greatly appreciate your center's participation in this study. In considering your participation, please keep in mind that you may change your mind at anytime. For my study to comply with University regulations, I need you to sign the attached informed consent form indicating you are willing to be involved with this study. If you are interested in being a part of the study please take the time to fill out the consent from and return it to your child-care center's office. If you have any questions about this study you may contact me, Sarah Hackney, at 423-384-0227 or you may contact Dr. Laurelle Phillips at 423-439-7930. Thank you very much for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Sarah Hackney

Laurelle B. Phillips
Assistant Professor Early Childhood Education

APPENDIX F

Institutional Review Board
Informed Consent

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Sarah W. Hackney

TITLE OF PROJECT: The Effects of Adult Interaction on Toddler Behavior in the Classroom

This Informed Consent will explain the research project in which I would appreciate the participation of toddler classrooms. It is important that you read this material carefully and then decide if you wish to be a volunteer. By no means is there any pressure for you to participate in this project.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this quantitative research study is to observe adult-to-child physical interactions in licensed toddler classrooms and determine if there is a correlation between them and the toddlers' behaviors. The anticipated use of this study is to increase the academic knowledge of toddler needs and development.

DURATION

Twenty-one classrooms will be observed for two different 45-minute sessions. Following these observations, six of these classrooms will be observed for two more 45-minute sessions.

PROCEDURES

First, the researcher and a graduate student in Human Development and Learning at East Tennessee State University will observe and record the adult-to-child physical interactions and document the information on a tally instrument. Next they will observe and record the toddler behaviors found in the classroom and also document the results on a tally sheet.

POSSIBLE RISKS/DISCOMFORTS

No risks or discomforts should be associated with this study. Each center will be coded so no names will need to be used in the final written document. Some toddler teachers may find it uncomfortable to be observed; however, if this becomes a problem they may withdraw from the study at any time. They may also withdrawal if any anxiety is seen or heard from the toddlers and/or their families.

POSSIBLE BENEFITS *and/or* COMPENSATION

Possible benefits include the opportunity to expand the academic knowledge of toddler needs and development and improve the quality of their care.

CONTACT FOR QUESTIONS

If you have any questions or problems at any time, you may call Sarah W. Hackney at 423-384-0227, or Laurelle Phillips at 423-439-7903. You may call the Chairman of the Institutional Review Board at 423/439-6134 for any questions you may have about your rights as a research participant.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Every attempt will be made to see that my study results are kept confidential. A copy of the records from this study will be stored in the Department of Human Development and Learning for at least 10 years after the end of this research. The results of this study may be published and/or presented at meetings without naming you as a subject. Although your rights and privacy will be maintained, East Tennessee State University, the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, the ETSU/V. A. Medical Center Institutional Review Board, and the ETSU Department of Human Development and Learning have access to the study records. My records will be kept completely confidential according to current legal requirements. They will not be revealed unless required by law, or as noted above.

COMPENSATION FOR MEDICAL TREATMENT

East Tennessee State University (ETSU) will pay the cost of emergency first aid for any *injury which may happen as a result of your being in this study. They will not pay for any other medical treatment. Claims against ETSU or any of its agents or employees may be submitted to the Tennessee Claims Commission. These claims will be settled to the extent allowable as provided under TCA Section 9-307. For more information about claims call the Chairman of the Institutional Review Board of ETSU at 423/439-6134.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION

The nature demands, risks, and benefits of the project have been explained to me as well as are known and available. I understand what my participation involves. Furthermore, I understand that I am free to ask questions and withdraw from the project at any time, without penalty. I have read, or have had read to me, and fully understand the consent form. I sign it freely and voluntarily. A signed copy has been given to me.

Your study record will be maintained in strictest confidence according to current legal requirements and will not be revealed unless required by law or as noted above.

SIGNATURE OF TEACHER & DATE

_____

SIGNATURE OF PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR & DATE

_____

VITA

SARAH WEBB HACKNEY

Personal Data: Date of Birth: June 8, 1975
Place of Birth: Johnson City, Tennessee
Marital Status: Married

Education: Public School, Johnson City, Tennessee
East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, Tennessee; B.S., 1997, Early Childhood Education
East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, Tennessee; M.A., 2003, Early Childhood Education

Professional Experience: Edu-Care Teacher, Johnson City City Schools; Johnson City, Tennessee, 1994-1997
Pre K-3 Teacher, Ashley Academy; Johnson City, Tennessee, 1999-2000
Teacher, Hospitots; Johnson City, Tennessee, 2000-2003
Third Grade Teacher, Bristol Tennessee City Schools; Bristol, Tennessee, 2003-Present

Honors and Awards: Juanita W. Proffitt Scholarship Recipient, East Tennessee State University
Gamma Beta Phi, College Honors Society Member
Phi Kappa Phi, College Honors Society Member