The teacher called mommy: a qualitative study of the experience and meaning of teaching one's own child in an early childhood setting.

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THE 'TEACHER CALLED MOMMY':

A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF THE EXPERIENCE AND MEANING

OF TEACHING ONE'S OWN CHILD IN AN EARLY CHILDHOOD SETTING

A Dissertation Presented

by

DOROTHY A. BAUER

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Massachusetts Amherst in partial fulfillment
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School of Education
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Approved as to style and content by:

Maurianne Adams, Chair
Grace Craig, Member
Warren Schumacher, Member

Bailey W. Jackson, Dean, School of Education
At work, you think of the children you have left at home. At home, you think of the work you've left unfinished. Such a struggle is unleashed within yourself. Your heart is rent.

Golda Meir
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and to my students at Keene State College, for their positive response to me as their instructor, which has encouraged me to complete this project.
The successful development of children in the early childhood years is facilitated by positive interrelationships within the child's ecosystem. This ecosystem is composed of the family and home environment, and the schools, child care centers, and teachers involved with the child's education and care. However, the educational literature reports conflicts between teachers and parents over the education and guidance of children in the United States throughout this century. The misunderstanding and confusion surrounding the different perspectives of teachers and parents can be problematic for the child's growth and development, and can jeopardize communication between the school and the home. Clarification of the similarities and differences between the teacher and parent roles will add to our understanding of these multiple perspectives, as they influence the child, and will suggest ways to improve teacher preparation with regard to parent and family communication.
One direct way of getting data on the complementary and conflicting aspects of the parenting and teaching roles is to study women who experience them simultaneously, that is who teach their own child in an early childhood classroom. This study uses phenomenological interview data and a developmental assessment of self-knowledge to gather more information concerning the complex dynamics of the teacher and mother roles.

The data collection proceeded in three parts. First, a written questionnaire designed to assess self-knowledge level of teacher/mothers was administered. Second, in-depth interviews were conducted with ten of the survey respondents, all of whom taught their own child in an early childhood group setting. The interview protocol focused on each participant's personal background as a teacher and a mother, her experience as a 'teacher called mommy', and the importance and meaning of that experience to her as a teacher and as a mother. The interviews were transcribed and edited into a profile of each participant. Profiles were coded for common themes and issues across participants. The third phase involved sharing the themes in a Focus Group session with the interview participants. They considered the relevance and salience of the themes in light of their own experiences and made recommendations for teachers, parents, administrators, and future 'teachers called mommy'.

The findings point to common themes within the experience of the 'teacher called mommy', and indicate a range of experiences within each theme. Developmental analysis of the self-knowledge levels of the participants is used to group the responses within each of the themes, and provides a helpful model for understanding the variations within each theme. Recommendations suggest strategies to facilitate parent and teacher communication in general, and more specifically to supporting the simultaneous dual role situation of 'teacher called mommy'.
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CHAPTER 1

SCHOOL-HOME RELATIONSHIPS: AN AMERICAN PROBLEM

Introduction

The successful development of children in the early childhood years is facilitated by a positive relationship within the child's ecosystem, which is composed of the family and home environment, and the schools, child care centers, and teachers involved with the child's education and care (Hobbs, 1979). When parents and teachers communicate well and share values and goals for the child's educational and socioemotional experiences, optimal development occurs.

However, the literature reports conflicts between teachers and parents over the education and guidance of children in the United States throughout this century. Parents blame the schools if their child is not learning, and teachers blame parents for the behavior, social and learning problems they encounter in the classroom. The misunderstanding and confusion surrounding the different perspectives of teachers and parents can be problematic for the child's growth and development, and can jeopardize communication between the school and the home.

If we accept Hobbs' (1979) assertion that positive relationships within children's primary environments, the home and the school, are important to successful development and learning, then improving home-school relationships takes on a special significance for educators. Clarification of the similarities and differences between the teacher and parent roles will help early childhood
education professionals develop a clearer understanding of these multiple perspectives of the child, and will guide the improved preparation of teachers with regard to parent and family communication.

**Background**

The role of the teacher in the United States has become increasingly complicated during the latter half of the twentieth century. Schools are being asked to take on responsibilities that were assumed to belong in the home, such as values education, self esteem development, social skills (Charney, 1992), drug abuse and teen pregnancy prevention, and family life education (Cassidy, 1990). Counselors in the school assist students with emotional and social problems, and a wider range of learning experiences are considered essential in today's curriculum (Boyer, 1991; Gardner, 1991).

These changes are often blamed on the "breakdown of the family". The stereotypic nuclear family of the 1950's does not exist in the 1990's (Coontz, 1992; Skolnick, 1991). Families may consist of cohabiting adults, single parents, adopted children, multi-generational extended families, adolescent parents, homosexual parents, multi-racial children, dual career parents, at-home fathers, in addition to the traditional nuclear family. Variety is the norm in family forms, with half of children in the United States living in a single parent home for some part of their childhood and adolescence (Ahlburg & DeVita, 1992). The teacher's family experience no longer necessarily reflects that of the students in the class, and any assumptions a teacher holds concerning family background, religious and moral values, and cultural norms must be questioned.

Schools have also become more inclusive during the past 20 years, since the passage in 1975 of PL 94-142 which mandated the least restrictive educational
setting for handicapped children. A "typical" classroom may contain students with learning and emotional disabilities (10%); students from single parent families (12%); students who have experienced divorce (50%); students with two working parents (60-75%); students who have been in child care since infancy (50%); students from so-called minority backgrounds (percentage varies depending on location); students whose first language is not English (percentage varies depending on location); students who live in poverty (22%); students who were born addicted; students exposed to excessive amounts of violence at a young age, as well as students with varied learning styles, intellectual potential, and multiple intelligences (Ahlburg & DeVita, 1992; Armstrong, 1987; Armstrong, 1994; Children's Defense Fund, 1994; Deiner, 1993; Gardner, 1983; Slaby, et al., 1995). The population of students in our schools in the 1990's is different from those in the schools that current teachers attended in the 1950's and 1960's.

Schools, as the single comprehensive, compulsory institution we have in our society, are called upon to address the needs created by the population of students who come through the classroom doors. But can schools take over the nurturing role of the home? How will teachers prepare to meet the emotional and social and learning needs of this diverse student body? Jonathan Kozol (1991) in Savage Inequalities found that schools in poor districts with largely minority residents were significantly lower on achievement scores, per pupil expenditures, ratios of students to teacher, and other measures of educational quality. Sylvia Hewlett (1991) in her book When the Bough Breaks: The Cost of Neglecting Our Children, identifies improving education and child care as two components of her "Action Plan for Children," and Marian Wright Edelman has consistently emphasized the importance of educational opportunities for children through the Children's Defense Fund (1994).
Schools for middle class families need to change as well, due to the increase in dual career families and latchkey children, in reported alcoholism and child abuse within all socioeconomic classes, and in the number of children experiencing divorce and other loss in their lives. Schools have traditionally been considered separate spheres from homes (Waller, 1932), with the roles of teacher and parent often perceived as adversarial (Lightfoot, 1978). Yet the school of the future, and indeed of the present, needs to better address the wide range of human needs that children bring to the school house door (Martin, 1992).

The challenge of building community among teachers and families with such disparate backgrounds can be overwhelming. Steps must be taken to break down the barriers between teachers and parents, and to enhance positive communication and understanding among these two important constituencies in the lives of children.

One way to proceed is to examine the relationship between teachers and parents, by studying the teacher role and the parental role. Teachers who are mothers give particular insight into these two roles as they experience them simultaneously. Teachers who are parents report greater compassion toward children and their families (Claesson & Brice, 1989; Kontos & Wells, 1986) and a less judgmental attitude toward parenting decisions and limitations (Kontos, 1987). Katz (1980), in discussing the difference between teaching and mothering, points to the need to study individuals in the dual role to better understand the differences and complementary nature of these two important roles in a young child's life. Spencer (1986) and Claesson and Brice (1989) have begun this process through their studies of the overlap of school and home life (Spencer, 1986) and the role overlap experienced by teacher/mothers (Claesson and Brice, 1989).
My personal experience as a teacher/mother brings a new level to this investigation. I received my M.Ed. in Early Childhood/Special Education in 1977, and had been teaching in various settings (after school, special education, preschool, protective child care, laboratory school) for 10 years before I had my first child in 1983. I was clearly aware of the different perspective that parenting brought to my teaching when I returned to the preschool classroom in 1984. I was also deeply aware of the biases held by undergraduate preservice teachers against working mothers and families in general. My personal investment in being successful as a teacher and as a mother made me vulnerable to their comments in a new way, and I began to wonder how we could better prepare these preservice teachers to respect the parenting experience and the parental perspective.

In 1987-1988 I became my then four year old daughter’s preschool teacher; she was enrolled in the Child Development Lab School where I was employed. That experience lead to continued contemplation of the teacher role and the parent role, as I was pushed to sort out when each was appropriate, when each was activated, and what environmental characteristics supported us in being teacher/student and mother/daughter during that year. Prior to my experience, and subsequent to it as well, I have met other early childhood educators who have taught their own children in a child care center, preschool, or public school setting. Each has had an interesting story to tell about the dual roles.

My interest in studying this population comes from my personal and professional experiences. I believe this data will broaden and deepen our understanding of the role of teacher and the role of mother in the early childhood classroom setting. Increased understanding of these dual roles, and their complementary and conflicting components, can suggest improvements in the preparation of teachers for family communication and involvement.
The Current Study: 'The Teacher Called Mommy'

The study discussed in the following pages focuses on the experience of the 'Teacher Called Mommy', the professional early childhood educator who has taught her own child in her classroom setting. These mothers, who were also teachers of their child, held the teaching and parenting roles simultaneously. Their experience can inform our understanding of the conditions of home and school that conflict, that overlap, that complement, and that interfere with each other (Katz, 1980). In addition, by examining how they understand and describe their experience, we can better interpret their responses to it. By deepening our knowledge of this unique dual role, we can facilitate change in school-home relationships. The vision of a caring school setting where families and educators collaborate for the best needs of the child (Martin, 1992) also inspires this investigation.

Research Questions

The following research questions guide this dissertation study.

1. What themes, issues and concerns emerge from 'teachers called mommy' as they describe the experience of teaching their own child in an early childhood classroom setting?

2. How is the self-knowledge developmental level of the 'teacher called mommy' reflected in how she experiences and describes her dual role?

3. What potential applications emerge from the 'teacher called mommy' experience that may contribute to the improvement of teacher-parent relations?
Definition of Terms

In order to clearly describe the population for this study, I have used the following definitions.

Early childhood setting: Group care for children during the early childhood years, which has an educational component; e.g. child care center, Head Start program, Kindergarten or Primary Grades classroom in a public or private school.

Early childhood years: Birth to age eight.

Early childhood professional: Person trained in early childhood education, whose education and experience in early childhood precede parenthood; and whose entry into the early childhood profession is by the traditional educational or the serendipitous routes, not the parenthood route (Bredekamp, 1992).

Teacher/mother: Teacher who is also a mother.

Teacher called Mommy: Teacher who has/had her own child in the classroom setting, who thus held and experienced the teacher role and mother role simultaneously during the time when her child was a student in her classroom.

Implications of the Research

Previous research has compared the viewpoints of teachers and of parents and has found congruity between these groups (Smith and Hubbard, 1988; Thornburg, Gray, and Ipsa, 1989; Totta and Crase, 1982). Other research has examined the impact of the parenting experience on a teacher (Claesson and Brice, 1989; Shulman, 1987; Spencer, 1986). However, this prior research has only
looked at the parent role and the teacher role as parallel experiences. By focusing on persons who not only hold the teaching and parenting roles simultaneously, but who also experience them simultaneously, the current study has moved the discussion of school-home relations to a level which more fully considers the overlapping nature of teaching and parenting.

A better understanding of the dual role of mother and teacher contributes to the knowledge base of the wider population of early childhood educators in several ways. First, it facilitates our understanding of the parent perspective as it intersects with the teacher perspective in the experience of the 'teacher called mommy'. This understanding can be used by schools and child care centers who desire to incorporate parents and families in a more positive and respectful way by educating teachers and administrators as to sources of support needed for both parents and teachers. Thus the insights from the participants in this study can help promote educational change to accommodate the needs of contemporary families (Martin, 1992).

Parents can also benefit from the results of this study, as it examines strategies to facilitate the communication between teachers and parents. Parent and teacher relations are bi-directional; both groups need support in improving the sense of community, partnership, and collaboration necessary for the optimal development and learning of the children they share. Advocacy for families takes on a new quality as a result of this research. In addition, prospective 'teachers called mommy' can benefit from the advice and experience of the research participants in planning for their own situations.

The new knowledge and understanding gained from this research can contribute to the improved preparation of teachers and child care workers to better understand parents and families. Kontos (1987) found that early childhood teachers who had five or more years of experience, children of their
own and were over 30 years of age, were more understanding and less judgmental of parents. With the high turnover rate in child care staffing (Jorde-Bloom, 1988; Willer et al, 1991) and the brief amount of time children are in their early childhood years, our society's young children cannot afford to wait for new teachers to mature before they involve and respect families. Teacher educators need to have an impact on the attitudes of preservice teachers towards families during their professional preparation. Inservice teacher workshops on family relations are also of critical importance. Hence this line of inquiry has relevance on an institutional as well as an individual level, and has broad application to teachers, families, and administrators beyond the direct 'teacher called mommy' experience.

Limitations and Bias

The current study is limited due to the small sample size, and to the location of the researcher and participants in northern New England. This creates conditions wherein racial and ethnic diversity is minimal due to the racial/ethnic composition of the inhabitants of the northern New England states. Since the participants are by definition college educated and employed, there is a limitation with regard to social class, although child care and preschool educators are significantly underpaid in comparison to public school personnel. In addition, the current study does not consider children who have special needs, who are home-schooled, or who are cared for in a family day care home.

This study does not address the potential conflict between school expectations and home life that might be attributable to cultural differences between the teacher and the family. The cultural values of the teacher in this situation are most likely to reflect her values as a mother, even though the school
setting may expect different expression of those values. Thus the application of the research to communities and settings where the culture of the school and the culture of the home are significantly different is limited.

Due to my having been a 'teacher called mommy' when my own daughter was four years old, there is the potential for personal bias to influence the design, data collection, and interpretation of the results in this study. However, my personal experience with the topic allows for ease of rapport and understanding between myself as the interviewer and the participants. Pilot research guided the development of the interview protocol and questionnaire. In addition, the research methodology contains multiple safeguards for bias, reliability, and validity, as explained in Chapter 3.
CHAPTER 2

TEACHER - PARENT RELATIONSHIPS:
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Historical Perspectives

The relationship between parents and teachers has a long and complicated history. Since the evolution of the human species, families have been responsible for raising children and preparing them for adulthood requirements in their culture (Lancaster, 1985). Formal education was initially provided for the sons of the wealthy (Osborn, 1991), often by in-home tutors. Institutions of higher learning developed in the United States during the 17th and 18th centuries (Turner, 1990), and as areas became more settled the common school movement spread, establishing schools for the common people's children (Herbst, 1989). Gradually, education became compulsory, with the United States passing mandatory education laws in the late 19th century (Osborn, 1991). Early educational programs for young children were modeled on the maternal relationship (Feeney, et al, 1991), and parents were still viewed as the most important teachers in children's lives (Berger, 1991a).

By the early twentieth century, however, parents and teachers were perceived as "natural enemies" (Waller, 1932, p. 68). What created the rift between families and schools? Society in the United States had changed significantly, due to the Industrial Revolution and the waves of European immigration in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Schools took on a powerful socialization function, becoming the "melting pot" through which the ethnic and
language differences were to be eradicated and an educated citizenship was to be produced (Berger, 1991a; Olneck, 1989). Schools and families found themselves in conflict as children of diverse ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds were brought into the same classroom. Schools strove for homogeneity; each child was seen as one of a group of students. Parents were perceived as promoting difference and individuality; each child was a special and unique member of the family (Waller, 1932). Waller notes that "Parent-teacher work has usually been directed at securing for the school the support of parents, that is, at getting parents to see children more or less as teachers see them" (Waller, 1932, p. 69). He goes on to note that the impersonal treatment of children by schools occurs in a context of family support for the child, which makes it acceptable. Waller suggests that a different type of parent-teacher interaction might be possible: "If parents and teachers could meet together often and intimately enough to develop primary group attitudes toward each other, and if both parents and teachers might have their say unreservedly, such modifications of school practice and parental upbringing might take place as would revolutionize the life of children everywhere (Waller, 1932, p. 69)." This dream of Waller's is still not a reality, and his suggestion of parents and teachers working together as a group is rarely expressed or achieved by contemporary teachers or parents.

**Case Studies**

Gertrude McPherson (1972) studied teachers in a rural school in Massachusetts from her perspective as an elementary teacher in the town. The teachers she interviewed and observed also considered parents to be "natural enemies" (McPherson, 1972, p. 120) based on differences in role definition and conflict between parents and teachers regarding spheres of control. The parents...
held particularistic expectations for the school and the teacher with regard to their child's experience; the teachers held universalistic expectations for children and of families, even when they were aware of individual family situations and problems. Contact between teachers and parents was limited, formal, and usually focused on problems the child was having in school. Parents who came to the school uninvited were seen as intruders; parents who called to talk to teachers were seen as "pushy". Teachers expected parents to support and respect them and to behave like teachers, that is, to consider their child no differently than any other child in the group. Not surprisingly, few parents measured up to these expectations. The school administration did little to promote positive interaction and understanding between parents and teachers.

Sociologist Dan C. Lortie (1975) focused his research on the influence of the organization of the school on the daily tasks and responsibilities of teaching. He used a combination of national survey data and individual interviews to construct his description of schools in the 1960's and 1970's. Teachers criticized parents for interfering in the classroom and not supporting them at home. They wanted more contact with parents when the child was having difficulty at school, but wanted little contact if things were not problematic. Lortie (1975) sees this tendency as supporting the notion that teachers wanted to maintain a superordinate role (p. 190), to be the gatekeeper for the teacher-parent relationship. Parental concerns were not seen as legitimate. Class differences among parents, and the relationship between the status of the family and that of the teacher's background, influenced the responses of teachers to parental requests.

Sarah Lawrence Lightfoot (1978), in her book Worlds Apart, discusses the cultural images of mother and teacher in her analysis of the barriers and boundaries between schools and families. Historically, mothers have been
expected to be nurturing, selfless, and submissive; their identity is shaped by their relationships to their family. Schools become a primary institution with which mothers have contact, and are judged. Teachers are expected to be caring and nurturing, but they are also expected to be scholars, directors of the educational experience of their students, and able to be neutral and objective in evaluating the progress of these students. As society has changed and more women are in the workforce, conflicts have developed between mothers (who are focused on home and family) and teachers (who are also workers). Thus relations between mothers and teachers have become conflict-ridden and distrustful.

Lightfoot (1978) also reports the results of an in-depth study of the attitudes of two teachers towards parents. Her analysis indicates that a teacher's attitudes and philosophy of learning and individuality influence their attitudes toward and involvement of parents in the educational process. One teacher relied on stereotypic descriptions of children, behavior, and family influence, and focused on group norms and achievements. The other saw development, personality, and individuality as the key to learning and sought out information from parents to help her meet the needs of her students. These differences lead to significant differences in the way parents were involved, with the second teacher more successful at creating a partnership with parents. Lightfoot looks to a future where teachers and parents can learn techniques for collaboration and conflict resolution.

This enmity between teachers and parents has survived the events of the 20th century in the United States. Contemporary researchers continue to find challenges in parent-teacher relationships. Parental involvement in schools, in educating their children particularly ones with special needs or economic disadvantage, and the importance of parent-teacher communication are
important topics in the professional literature for educators (Jones, 1991; Swap, 1990).

The underlying assumption of much of the literature on parent involvement, parent communication, and parent education, is that parents need to meet the expectations of schools for participation, involvement, and support of their children. Teachers see themselves as the experts; parents are expected to fit into the school program. There is little discussion of ways in which schools can accommodate the needs of families. Today's changing family structure is lamented as the cause for the decline of school, but schools seem reluctant to meet the changing needs of families. A recent campaign for parental involvement (Project Appleseed, 1994) has developed a Parental Involvement Pledge to "compel parental responsibility" (p. 1). Parents are asked to pledge their ownership and commitment to the public schools, to do homework with their children and to volunteer in the schools. The literature from the National Campaign for Public School Improvement, sponsor of Project Appleseed and the Parental Involvement Pledge, does not consider the responsibility of schools to meet the needs of families. This current example indicates the ongoing need to enhance teacher awareness of family needs and issues.

The professional literature for teachers often discusses the importance of parent-teacher conferencing, citing benefits for the child of good communication between the home and school (Langdon & Stout, 1954). Recent emphasis has been on advance preparation for the conference on the part of the teacher (Bjorklund & Burger, 1988) and on principles of effective communication (Rotter, Robinson & Fey, 1987). Berger (1991b) emphasizes the need for regularly scheduled conferences throughout the school year, and recommends including concrete examples of the child's work and/or behavior to illustrate progress. Gestwicki (1987) indicates the importance of a positive attitude on the part of the
teacher, and cites gains in knowledge about the child for both parents and teachers.

In reality, parents and teachers/care givers do not always communicate easily, nor do they necessarily have common goals for their children (Powell, 1989). Katz (1980) identifies significant differences between the teaching role and the mothering role. For example, parents are partial and attached to their child; teachers are impartial and detached. Lightfoot (1978) describes the significant structural and attitudinal discontinuities between parents and teachers in elementary schools. The teacher is perceived as the "other mother" and hence as in conflict with the parent (Lightfoot, 1978, chapter 2). The pervasive conclusion is of a separation of role and function. The question becomes, is this separation beneficial, neutral, or harmful to young children.

Discontinuities between Teacher and Parent Roles

In her essay *Mothering and Teaching - Some Significant Distinctions*, Lilian Katz (1980) discusses seven role dimensions as they affect mothering and teaching. In her discussion she highlights the differences between these two roles, in an effort to explore the conflicting attitudes between mothers and teachers. According to Katz, mothering involves a diffuse and limitless scope of function; high affect; intense attachment, irrationality and spontaneity; individual responsibility, and partiality on the part of the mother toward the child. The teacher, in contrast, has a specific and limited scope of function; low affect; appears detached, rational, and intentional in her behavior; is responsible for the whole group, and is expected to be impartial toward any individual child.

Sachs (1985) describes the potential pitfall of the well-intentioned teacher who tries to act as a surrogate parent to troubled children. This teacher can
reinforce a student's complaints about his or her family and unintentionally interfere with problem solving within the family system. Parents need help and support to be parents, to establish loving limits for their children, and to maintain communication within the family. Teachers should work to support both children and parents, respect the boundaries of their role as classroom teacher, and refer families for help when appropriate. It is only when teachers have a fuller knowledge of family functioning that they can successfully negotiate this borderland.

Gertrude McPherson (1972) found conflict between parents and teachers in her study of small town elementary teachers, even when the teacher was a parent herself. Teachers who were parents held parental expectations of other teachers (i.e., complained that their child didn't get special treatment), and simultaneously maintained the universalistic teacher expectations of the parents of their students. Those teachers who taught their own children reported that the universalistic expectations they had for students were applied with a higher standard to their own child. In short, the teacher's role predominated in the classroom.

Katz's (1980) position emphasizes the discontinuities between families and schools, and reinforces the distinctions between the two roles with regard to the development and education of the child. These distinctions are particularly "fuzzy" in early childhood education and care settings, for the teacher/child care provider's role more closely approximates the nurturing and wide scope of the parental role, than does the more formalized instructional role of a public school primary grades teacher. Katz (1980) recommends research to clarify the confusion of these two roles, mothering and teaching, by studying women who hold them simultaneously.
An interesting line of recent research has explored the continuity/discontinuity of relationships among parents, children and staff in early childhood centers. Long and Garduque (1987) explored the relationship between environment (home vs. child care) and child behavior with adults (mothers vs. caregivers). They found that children asked for help more frequently, and were more negative toward their mothers at home, and were more socially involved with peers in the child care setting. Mothers were more controlling and negative in response to their children's initiations, gave more help and were more likely to play with their children than caregivers, who used positive reinforcement and were more likely to ignore child initiations. Their results indicate that the child's behavior was different in each setting, and therefore influenced the adults in addition to being influenced by them.

Ipsa, Gray, and Thornburg (1988) analyzed the relationships among children's behavior at home and in child care; mothers' and fathers' behavior; and parents' and teachers' behavior toward the child, looking for interaction effects. Their results indicate a set of complex interrelationships between father's and mother's parenting style, child behavior, and teacher affect. For example, children showed more positive behavior at child care, and more negative behavior at home if in a family that corrected their behavior frequently; teachers and mothers displayed more warmth than fathers, when relating to the children. Their small sample size suggests the need for further research.

Taylor (1986) discusses the role of the child as go-between, linking the school and home worlds, from the perspective of family therapy. She states that the triangular relationship of child, parent, school, can become divided and/or unbalanced if tensions, problems or conflicts around authority and deprivation occur. Parental history with education and the teacher's relationship with her/his parents all influence the contact, with the child bearing the strain. The
complexity of each triad is significant; young children need support to cope with this potential stress, and adults need education and good communication skills.

A survey of teachers, directors, and parents (Kortz, 1984) indicated roles and boundaries between parents and teachers, conflicting adult needs, and developmental concerns as "sensitive areas" (p. 35) between teachers and parents of young children. In an article written for child care center administrators, Smith (1990) declares that "parents should be partners, not opponents" (Smith, 1990, p.27). Galinsky (1988) identifies sources of tension between teachers and parents related to job stress, socio-economic status, confidence, and jealousy. She suggests that teachers become aware of their biases, learn about parent development (Galinksy, 1987), and work on positive communication skills in order to overcome these sources of tension between teachers and parents.

Other research findings indicate a strong correlation between parents and teachers attitudes and experiences. Totta and Crase (1982) found fathers, mothers and teachers were largely in agreement as to a child's fine and gross motor abilities; however they all were only 72% - 75% accurate in their estimations of the children's actual skills. Significant congruence among the roles of fathers, mothers, and teachers with regard to preschool children indicates more similarity than difference among the parents and teachers in their behavior and attitudes toward the children (Thornburg, Gray, and Ipsa, 1989). Smith and Hubbard (1988) report a high degree of correlation in the quality and quantity of staff and parent communication, based on interview and observational data, in kindergarten and child care settings in New Zealand. The indications are that parents and teachers have strong areas of overlap and agreement.

Interviews with early childhood educators in the Midwestern United States revealed that teachers do not view themselves as equal with parents in the running of their classrooms, but that they do value parent input regarding the
particular child (Powell & Stremmel, 1987). This study also found a wide range of different ideas and responses among the teachers included in the study. This lack of consistency among teachers, along with the growing diversity of family types (Coleman, 1991) makes it difficult to quantify the variables effecting this important relationship.

Susan Kontos examined teacher and parent attitudes, and children's experiences in child care in a series of studies (Kontos, 1987; Kontos and Wells, 1986). She found that early childhood educators held negative attitudes towards most parents, and were quite judgmental. Staff members who had college educations, more than five years experience, were over 30 and were parents themselves were more positive in their attitudes about parents. Parents were assigned to groups, according to teacher attitude (positive or negative) toward their parenting for the follow-up studies. When the experiences of the children were observed, minimal differences were discovered. Teachers treated children with the same care and respect, regardless of their attitudes about the parents. In fact, teachers were more compassionate towards children when they felt the parents were inadequate, as if to compensate for the perceived poor parenting the child was receiving. Parental attitudes toward their child's child care experience showed no effects of the teacher's judgments. Kontos concludes that "the negative attitudinal context of families and day care appears to be situated with the caregiver" (Kontos, 1987, p. 111). Teacher and caregiver training must focus on the understanding of family needs and the development of a family support model. "If day care is to serve as a family support, as some suggest, it appears that perhaps caregivers ought to acquire sensitivity to the needs of all parents, not just the communicative, friendly ones who share similar values" (Kontos and Wells, 1986, p. 66).
The question becomes, with the history of discontinuity between parent roles and teacher roles, and the expectation of enmity, how do we create an atmosphere of mutual respect, trust, and collaboration? Improved understanding of the parental and the teacher perspectives, and recognition of the social and cultural influences on each role (Bronfenbrenner, 1979a), will facilitate this process. The opportunity to increase the understanding of both school and family influences, by interviewing teachers who teach their own children, will add new knowledge and perspective to the field, and inform teacher education programs as to ways to influence teacher attitudes about parents.

Current Research

Dee Ann Spencer (1986) studied contemporary women teachers and the balance of school and home lives. She conducted case studies of eight women teachers, and surveyed a total of 50 female teachers, to examine the effects of their teaching career on their home life, and vice versa. She found that the teachers studied did not compartmentalize their roles into family and work, but rather felt significant overlap between the two roles. Their professional life influenced them at home in terms of income level, location, respect, attitude, time for housework and family schedules. Their home lives affected their school lives when they were having personal problems or scheduling complications, such as sick children. "The effects of home and school were inextricably interrelated or, as one teacher commented, "There's no difference!" (Spencer, 1986, p. 186).

Claesson and Brice (1989) studied the dual roles of kindergarten through third grade teachers who were also mothers of young children. Early childhood educators who are also the mothers of young children, or teacher/mothers, face
unique challenges between work and family roles, because their work requires attention to the care and education of young children, and their home life also requires that constant attention. While role strain in working mothers has been studied (Okun, 1989), teacher/mothers have not been extensively studied.

Claesson and Brice's (1989) informants perceived their dual roles as complementary and found benefits both as teachers and mothers. They could better understand the parental perspective and had improved communication with parents. They knew their children better as a result of their knowledge of child development, and could better understand their child's school experience. They saw themselves as better, more compassionate teachers as a result of being a parent. Conflicts and problems of the dual role were also cited, particularly in the area of high expectations of themselves, their child, their child's teacher, and other parents. Strategies for coping with the dual role were also suggested, including support group participation, exercise, involving husbands fully, taking time for themselves, paying for household help, and setting priorities to focus on family. Claesson and Brice (1989) conclude that "parenting can even be complementary to teaching if the proper support is available to the teacher/mother" (p. 18).

There are contradictory conclusions about mothering and teaching found in the literature. Perhaps cohort differences can explain some of these contradictions. Women in the 1980's and 1990's are more comfortable with the dual role of worker and parent than women in previous decades (Gerson, 1985). McPherson's (1972) small town teachers rarely taught while they were mothers of children at home, so those in the dual role were outside the societal norm for women at that time. Lilian Katz (1980) followed the 'parent route' (Bredekamp, 1992) into the early childhood profession; hence her understanding of the dual role is influenced by this sequential perspective. On the other hand, half of
Spencer’s (1986) teachers were mothers; both the teachers who were mothers and those who were childless experienced overlap and congruence between their personal and professional lives. Parenting was not perceived as a disadvantage or stigma by these teachers. And Claesson and Brice (1989) note that proper support creates positive results for teacher/mothers. Shifting numbers of women who are in the work force while also mothers of young children, and changing societal norms have had an influence on the different outcomes of these various studies.

Another possible explanation for the different conclusions about mothering and teaching mentioned above lies in gender-based assumptions about career development. Biklen (1985, 1987) suggests that gender is an important issue in considering professional development, especially for elementary school teachers. She suggests an alternative career model that focuses on commitment to professionalism and the quality of one’s work, rather than upward mobility, and on internal career identity, rather than the continuity of employment. The feminist redefinition of career roles and of family roles is essential to understanding the shifts in attitude and experience that teacher/mothers seem to be undergoing.

Roles are learned through the process of socialization (Zurcher, 1983). Humans are inherently social beings and accumulate the ability to enact a variety of roles, depending on their identity, self concept, and social and cultural influences. This variety of roles can result in conflicting role expectations on the individual (Biddle, 1986). Many theorists believe that role conflict can lead to role overload (Pleck, 1985), or role strain (Mahler, 1989). Thus we have the expectation that women who work experience significant conflict between their personal and professional roles, leading to burn-out, family conflict, and psychological distress (Googins and Burden, 1987; Kingsbury, 1987; Okun, 1989).
Seiber (1974) disputes the assumption that multiple roles lead to role conflict. Instead he postulates that role accumulation, which occurs when roles are overlapping and somewhat complementary, enhances well-being and self esteem. Positive outcomes of role accumulation include enhanced role privileges, status, security, resources, diversification of roles, and personality and ego gratification. Empirical research on professional mothers of preschool children (Barnett, 1982), student teachers (Shulman, 1987), and teacher/mothers (Claesson and Brice, 1989), indicates that multiple roles contribute to personal well-being and the satisfactory completion of professional and personal tasks. Skills learned through one role, such as communication, negotiation and compromise, are transferred to the new role, resulting in greater success and enhanced self esteem.

Marks (1977) discusses the contradictions between these two views, one that multiple roles creates negative outcomes, the other that multiple roles accumulate positively. Role conflict and role strain theories are based on an approach of 'scarcity'; human time and energy is limited and must be divided up among the roles the individual plays. The alternate approach, according to Marks, is a theory of 'expansion' when explaining human energy. He suggests that human psychological energy is abundant, that energy use (as in the fulfillment of role expectations) creates new energy as a result of participation in group life and activity. This model proposes that one role, such as family membership, produces energy for the individual, because of the support and love offered within the family setting; this in turn creates energy that can be utilized by the individual in performing other roles. By shifting levels of commitment to various roles, the energy balance can be maintained. Marks (1977) further identifies four reasons that individuals accept multiple roles: (1) spontaneous enjoyment of the role; (2) loyalty to a role partner; (3) anticipation of
perceived rewards; (4) avoidance of negative outcomes, such as punishment or disapproval.

As contemporary society adjusts to the changes in family structure, workforce participation of women, and attitudes toward mothering and professionalism, the roles that shape our normative expectations for behavior will continue to change. The particular dual role of teacher/mother can be studied as part of examining these changes in two major social institutions, education and the family.

New Perspectives on School - Home Relationships

Although the history of relations between parents and schools is the history of conflict and strain (Biklen, 1993), there are changes coming. Schools are becoming aware of the need to include social skills (Charney, 1992) and values (Riley, 1984) in the curriculum. Cooperative learning is becoming common and the importance of parental influence on children's achievement is documented (Swap, 1990). But parents and teachers still struggle with each other (Biklen, 1993). We need to look for new models for parent-teacher relationships, and for educational practice.

The literature on parent-teacher relationships emphasizes the importance of home and school collaboration in order to enhance the learning success of the child (Bempechat, 1990; Swap, 1990). But this literature does not examine the qualities of home and the qualities of school in a critical fashion, to determine what of home might be added to the school world. Schools appear to consider themselves "above" families in the educational enterprise, yet they are quick to blame families for school failure and for society's difficulties (Lortie, 1975).
Hobbs (1979) discusses the overlapping roles of families, schools, and communities in the successful education of children. He describes an ecosystem for children that includes overlapping clusters of activity between family and school, surrounded by neighborhood and community. Hobbs (1979) believes that interaction among these three forces in a child's life is essential, and usually not well developed. His examples of successful integration of family, school, and community are focused on early intervention programs for special needs children, but the concept of this integration has merit for all educational programs for all children. In order to achieve this interaction the antagonism between home and school must be overcome.

Minuchin (1987) offers a therapeutic perspective on parent-teacher relationships and roles. She indicates the need to consider school as a developmental experience, and notes the importance of culture and child rearing as influences on children's growth. The interrelationships among these influences are complex and crucial. Families, schools, and children must develop the ability to cope with change.

The relationship between parents is a pretty good model for a constructive relationship between schools and families. They have different purposes and realities in relation to each child, and they cannot be perfectly matched. It is important, however, that they be complementary systems rather than adversaries, willing to communicate and adapt in the best interests of the child. In that way they can help the child cope with the first experience of moving into the school world and the continuing challenge of development in both school and family settings.

Minuchin (1987), p. 254

Jane Roland Martin (1992) has postulated a coming together of the school and the home as the educational response to changing families and societal pressures. She describes current schools as schoolhouses; her model of the new school is called the schoolhome. The schoolhome brings the nurturing of the
traditional family into the school environment, allowing for individual growth and development, integrated curriculum, and the "three C's" of care, concern and connection. Martin bases her discussion and ideas in part on the work of John Dewey and Maria Montessori.

Dewey (1915) noted that the Industrial Revolution changed home life, by taking the fabrication of household goods away from the home and locating their manufacture in factories and their distribution in stores. He felt that schools needed to change in order to prepare students for this change, by including subjects that prior to that time had been taught in the home. Curriculum reform in the 19th century transformed schooling from an elite experience with classic texts to a broader learning environment that included a wider range of information and materials and students. Martin (1992) believes that the same magnitude of change must occur in response to the societal and family changes of the late 20th century: the increased labor force participation of women, single parent households, latch key children, and diverse family forms.

Martin studied Maria Montessori and the Casa dei Bambini, finding in Montessori's writing the commitment to creating a home, rather than a house, for children. Montessori's (1912/1965) educational reforms occurred in response to extreme poverty, family collapse, and delinquency among children in parts of Rome, which sound rather like the current conditions affecting the lives of the almost 25% of American children who live below the poverty level. Martin identifies Montessori's success as combining the nurturing and creative aspects of home with the educational aims of school.

Martin's (1992) Schoolhome is a place where children are cared for and learn to care for others; where human relations and concern for life are central to the curriculum, and where connection among students, teachers, and families is paramount. Collaboration is the main mode of curriculum development.
Cultural perspectives are integrated through literature, drama, and writing. Scientific exploration of environmental concerns embodies the "three C's" as well. In order to operate the Schoolhome requires respect among all participants. This type of change to the educational system will require a change in the way teachers are prepared and socialized, and in the way parents and students are treated by schools. "Teachers need a model that allies them with rather than separates them from mothers" (Biklen, 1993, p. 172). The enhancement of teacher self esteem, and an increased respect for the importance of nurturing and parenting in the life of the child, will contribute to more positive relations between parents and teachers (Lightfoot, 1977).

Nel Noddings (1984) recommends reorganizing schools to focus on caring. She believes that this feminine restructuring of education will result in enhanced community involvement, an increased spirit of caring among adults and children, and teachers who are valued and supported as professionals who are knowledgeable of subject matter in techniques for fostering personal relationships. Noddings calls this spirit of caring "the maternal attitude" (p. 197). She recommends disbanding the traditional hierarchical management model and replacing it with a more lateral model made up of circles and chains that denote cycles and patterns of relationships among the members of the school community.

Maternal thinking, as described by Sarah Ruddick (1982), arises through the experience and practice of motherhood. It involves specific interests, practices, judgment and decision making that develops in response to the realities of the life of the mother, just as scientific thinking develops from the realities of the scientist. Maternal thinking requires and is shaped by three main interests: preserving the child's life; fostering the child's growth; shaping an acceptable child who will "fit" in society. Maternal practice promotes the
intellectual capacity for attention, and the virtue of love, as the mother responds to the demands and needs of her child.

Theodore Klein (1989) argues for mother love as an ideal for teaching. He suggests that maternal love, which is not to be considered exclusive to females, consists of nurturing toward the child and a focus on the growth of the child. Klein argues that mother love involves a particular type of "thinking that integrates reflection, judgment and emotion" (Klein, 1989, p. 376). Effective mother love involves attentiveness, protection, sensitivity, and adaptability. Nurturing in this way requires a focus and knowledge of the child, the ability to support and protect the child while facilitating his/her growth, and the sensitivity and awareness to change to adjust to the child's new needs over time.

Klein (1989) draws the parallel between these traits of mother love and the characteristics of good teaching. Good teaching is a nurturing relationship from the teacher to the child, and involves attention to the child's needs, flexibility and adaptability, and a focus on children's growth. Teaching with mother love would bring a care and loving quality to the school environment, and would allow teachers to attend to the needs of the students rather than the needs of the school or the curriculum.

Klein's (1989) position is quite different from Katz (1980) and others, who believe that mothering and teaching have separate and opposite functions in the areas of attachment, responsibility, affect, partiality, rationality, spontaneity, and scope of function. Parents are usually characterized as having particularistic expectations due to their primary relationship with their child; teachers have universalistic expectations because of their focus on the whole group's needs (Lightfoot, 1977). Anna Freud (1952) advocated that teachers not get emotionally involved with children; they must stay distant and objective because children belong to their mothers, not to the teacher. But Klein (1989) recommends
Can maternal thinking and maternal love really become part of education? Chip Wood describes what he calls *maternal teaching* as the revolution of kindness in the schools. Wood (1991) believes that the ethic of caring is found in schools where groups of women are empowered to create a positive, nurturing environment. "Maternal teaching, then, is an ethical perspective," (Wood, p. 5) that includes four essential classroom practices: listening to the children; ethical literacy; structure for choice and meaning; and changing the workplace (pp. 5-6). Wood advocates school reform that reexamines the dominant, patriarchal, ethical system and incorporates a feminist perspective on knowing (Belenky, *et al*, 1986) and caring (Gilligan, 1982, Noddings, 1984).

One way to examine the concepts of maternal thought and mother love in the school is to study mothers who are teachers. Spencer's (1986) work on home lives of teachers, and Claesson and Brice's (1989) work on teacher/mothers begin to give us some insight into the relationship between these two domains of their lives. The current study of mothers who teach their own children takes this line of research a step further, by focusing on teachers who manage the mothering role and the teaching role simultaneously.

Role theory tells us that people switch from role to role, and change and adapt to fit the needs of the role (Biddle, 1986; Zurcher, 1983). Therefore, an individual could fulfill the mother role at home and the teacher role at work, with little overlap or contact between the two, except perhaps when parent conference time comes, or when their child is doing homework, or when school
requires evening commitments (Spencer, 1986). But a mother who is teaching her own child is functioning within both roles simultaneously, allowing a new perspective on the dual roles.

The current study considers the experience of teachers who teach their own child in a professional educational setting when the child is in the early childhood years of birth to age 8. Early childhood educators are primarily women, resulting in greater confusion between the teaching and mothering roles in this setting. Society's expectations of early childhood education as being more nurturing, requiring more mother love in the setting, have an influence on the population, as does the expectation that children should be at home with their mothers during the early years.

**Early Childhood as a Unique Setting for Teacher-Parent Relationships**

Early childhood education offers unique challenges to the development of positive relationships between teachers and parents. First, the definition of early childhood as spanning the period from birth to age 8 (Bredekamp, 1987) covers a wide range of developmental change in the physical, cognitive and psychosocial domains. The needs of infants in group care are significantly different from those of second graders, and there is a rapid rate of developmental change during these years. The need for early childhood educators to understand child development is critical to their ability to adapt to the varied settings and levels of the students they will teach.

Second, the settings in which young children grow and learn vary from part day enrichment programs to full day child care programs, from public school classrooms to family day care homes. The developmental needs of the children in the early childhood years require a blend between education and
nurturing; the term "educare" symbolizes this blending of teaching and caring (Weiser, 1991). Early childhood professionals believe that in order for young children to learn, they need to be well cared for; and in order for them to be well cared for, they need learning opportunities. Thus the two concepts of education and care are integrally connected (Caldwell, 1986). Preparing preservice teachers to meet the challenges of this variety of classroom and caregiving settings requires a broad selection of clinical experiences as part of the teacher preparation program (Spodek and Saracho, 1990).

Third, the early childhood professional is expected to develop and maintain closer contact with families, due to the age and developmental needs of the children in their classrooms (Berger, 1991b; Gestwicki, 1987). Child care and early education professionals serve as the extended family for many young families (Travis and Perrault, 1980) and thus need additional skills in communication and counseling, as well as additional knowledge about the family life cycle (Duvall, 1971; Galinsky, 1987) and adult development (Rich, 1987).

Given the important role that families play in the development of young children, we need to consider knowledge of families as part of professional preparation. How do teachers learn to work with families? While educators agree that family involvement is crucial to student performance (Hamby, 1990), the strategies to prepare teachers who can work effectively with families are not well formed (Greenberg, 1989). Discussions of the new knowledge base for early childhood rarely include understanding families (Houston and Houston, 1992; Spodek and Saracho, 1990). While working with families is seen as important, few teacher education programs focus on this content area (Williams, 1992). As the structural and cultural composition of families continues to change, teacher knowledge of the needs and experiences of families becomes more important.
Bronfenbrenner (1979b) describes parent education as essential for all professionals, parents and those who are not parents but who work with parents. He recommends providing education about the conditions of parenting and families for all those who deal professionally with children and families, as well as work associates, neighbors, friends, and relatives of families. Teacher preparation and in-service education programs must rise to meet this need, for teachers are clearly working with parents and families.

While we know that teachers have strong opinions about parents (Kontos and Wells, 1986; Kontos, 1987), and that in general they perceive parents as adversaries (Lightfoot, 1978; McPherson, 1972), we know little about how teachers form attitudes about parents. One researcher found that teachers with more than five years experience, had children of their own and who were more than 30 years old, were more flexible and understanding of the parental perspective (Kontos, 1987). In a recent survey, 98% of first year teachers agreed that teachers need to be able to work well with the parents of their students, and 70% of them find that parents treat teachers as adversaries rather than partners in their child's educational program (MetLife, 1991). Twenty percent of these first year teachers responded that they needed additional training in working with students and families, 33% wanted more practical experience prior to having their own classroom, and 46% identified the need for a mentor during their first year of teaching (MetLife, 1991). Clearly, the need for in-service teacher education to help teachers work with families is important, as is improved preservice teacher education (Houston and Houston, 1992; Kochan and Mullins, 1992).

Common sense might predict that becoming a parent improves a teacher's attitude toward parents. There is, however, conflicting evidence with regard to the influence of parenting on a teacher's attitude. While Kontos (1987) found that
becoming a parent improved teacher attitudes towards parents, McPherson (1972) found that the teachers who were parents still had different expectations for parents and teachers, depending on which role they held in the relationship. These contradictory results may be explained by a cohort difference; many more mothers of young children were working in 1987 than in 1972. Kontos (1987) studied day care providers in the 1980s, and McPherson (1972) studied elementary teachers in the 1960s.

In a study of teacher effectiveness among Head Start teachers, Seefeldt (1973) found that teacher effectiveness correlated positively with education and experience, but not with the experience of parenting. In fact, she found that teaching effectiveness decreased as the number of the teacher's own children increased. This is likely due to the increased burden which child rearing placed on her time; exhaustion and burn-out due to the stress of parenting could result in reduced teacher effectiveness.

Shulman (1987) observes that the experience of parenting can have a positive influence on a developing teacher. Her ethnographic case study of a student teacher, who is also a wife and mother, suggests that the parenting experience and the ability to assume multiple roles provided her informant with added strength and self-direction as a student teacher. In this case, experience with potentially conflicting roles, norms, and expectations resulted in an increased ability to negotiate and mediate in the educational setting.

Professional standards and expectations vary widely across the different settings in which early childhood professionals work. States and counties regulate child care centers, family day care homes, private nursery school programs with a focus on health and safety; certification standards for public early childhood education fall under Departments of Education and are often more stringent; the federal government regulates Head Start, Chapter 1 and sets

Because of the variability of state regulations for educational and child care programs for children under the age of 6, there are significant variations in the preparation of staff who work in these settings. Children under six, when cared for outside of the home, are placed with relatives, babysitters, nannies, family day care providers, preschool teachers, child care center teachers, public and private pre/kindergarten and kindergarten programs, and Head Start programs (Wilier, et al, 1991; Willer, 1992). Some of these settings require bachelor's degrees and teacher certification for teachers, others require a high school diploma, Child Development Associate, or a few hours of college level coursework (NAEYC, 1994). Because of this range it is difficult to analyze the professional development of people who teach and care for young children.

NAEYC has recently proposed a model for professional development within the early childhood field, the career lattice (Bredekamp, 1992). While there is a common core of knowledge in early childhood (Bredekamp and Willer, 1992; Ott, Zeichner, and Price, 1990) there are several entry points into the profession, many levels of professional competence, and varying needs for professional development (Bredekamp, 1992; NAEYC, 1994). "There appear to be three typical routes that describe how people become early childhood professionals: the traditional route, the parent route, and the 'serendipitous' route" (Bredekamp, 1992, p. 52). This diversity of entry point, considered with the previously discussed diversity of settings and developmental ranges, indicates the need for diverse and developmentally appropriate professional preparation programs.
Likewise, there is a need for diverse professional development and in-service opportunity for early childhood educators. Teachers are influenced by their family history, life stage and life events, as well as by the organizational environment of the setting in which they find themselves working (Fessler, and Christensen, 1992). Thus the teacher in a Head Start classroom who has worked her way up from a parent aide position (Mallory and Goldsmith, 1990) and the teacher in a public school second grade classroom with her Master's degree present different profiles, different identities, and different needs for professional development.

Research on early childhood teacher development identifies four developmental stages (Katz, 1984a). The first stage, Survival, is characterized by a focus on classroom management, developing relationships with children, and learning how to plan daily activities. As the teacher masters these basic skills, the period known as Consolidation begins; now the teacher can focus on individual differences among children, plan developmentally and cope with a wider variety of behaviors and events. After 4 to 5 years of teaching, the third stage, called Renewal, begins. In this stage the teacher seeks out new ideas and begins to experiment with innovative techniques, new materials and methods, and take risks with her teaching. Attendance at workshops, conferences, and in-service programs increases during this stage. The teacher reaching Maturity, the fourth stage, has developed strategies for self-renewal and is ready to consider deeper philosophical questions regarding education, including ethical, philosophical, historical and theoretical issues. Unfortunately, the turn-over rate in early childhood education is so high that few teachers in the stage of Maturity stay in the classroom; many move into administration, teacher training or other support fields (Katz, 1984a).
Susan Brand (1990) identifies four major issues impacting beginning teachers as they attempt to blend their growing knowledge of theory and practice. Initially the need for acceptance in the workplace is predominant. Success is defined as being liked by the children. As her confidence grows, the beginning teacher becomes anxious about her role as an authority figure, and is also increasingly aware of the significant responsibilities associated with teaching. Reassurance as to appropriate child guidance techniques and support in curriculum planning assist teacher development at this time. As the beginning teacher becomes more experienced, she is able to move beyond the immediacy of her experiences in the classroom to a broader understanding of the roles and responsibilities of an early childhood professional.

Olivia Saracho (1984) has analyzed the roles of early childhood professionals and identified six role dimensions that include the caretaking, instructing, and facilitating roles which early childhood teachers fulfill. These six dimensions are: Decision-maker; Organizer of Instruction; Diagnostician; Curriculum Designer; Manager of Learning; Counselor/Advisor. Classroom observations and interviews designed to evaluate these role dimensions (Saracho, 1988) found all of them to be present. However, the decision-making role dimension was found to be integrated in the other dimensions, as teachers are continuously making decisions. When observing teacher performance the roles of manager of learning and organizer of instruction were seen as overlapping and difficult to separate. Thus the performance of the roles showed decision-making as pervasive, and indicated a balance among the other roles, with organizer of instruction being expanded to include the management of learning as well. Saracho (1988) suggests that these role dimensions inform teacher education practice, as well as refocus the important characteristics of
good teaching away from teacher personality to teacher decision-making and role performance.

Smith and her colleagues (Smith, et al, 1992) have expanded the list of early childhood teacher roles to include collegial relationships among teams of teachers. Since many early childhood settings rely on teaching teams, relationships among teachers become very important. Emerging themes, from this study of teaching teams in kindergarten classrooms adjusting to personnel change, indicated goal consensus and shared power and decision-making as critical skills for successful relationships among the members of the teaching team. Early childhood teachers must develop positive collaborative relationships in order to achieve quality in this role dimension.

The field of early childhood is beginning to recognize itself as a profession (Bredekamp, 1992) and has proposed a career lattice model to illustrate the range of preparation, setting, and roles within the profession. Katz (1984b) identifies several important characteristics of professions and applies these to early childhood. Of special importance here are the characteristics of professional standards, prolonged training, and specialized knowledge. The National Association for the Education of Young Children, the largest professional organization for early childhood educators, has worked over the past decade to define these standards for professionalism, training, and knowledge (Johnson and McCracken, 1994).

By using actual classroom teachers as the "raw materials" of the research on teaching, we can begin to create a more comprehensive model for classroom success, based on the integration of feelings and thoughts, of practical and theoretical knowledge, and of life history and present experience. There is a clear need for professionalism in the field of early childhood (Spodek, Saracho, and
Peters, 1988) and for more research on early childhood teacher preparation (Spodek and Saracho, 1990).

Summary and Implications of the Literature

The literature on teacher-parent relations presents both visions and realities concerning this important role relationship in children's lives. The reality is that parents and teachers have seen each other as enemies for decades (Biklen, 1993; Lightfoot, 1978; Lortie, 1975; McPherson, 1972; Waller, 1933). Teachers and caregivers hold negative attitudes towards parents (Kontos, 1987) and recognize the need for further education in communication skills with parents (MetLife, 1991). This reality has helped create a pervasive assumption of the discontinuity between parental attitudes and teacher attitudes (Katz, 1980). Yet some of the research identifies greater overlap between parents and teachers than this assumption would expect (Smith and Hubbard, 1988; Thornburg, Gray, and Ipsa, 1989; Totta and Crase, 1982). Other research indicates that becoming a parent contributes to a teacher's increased sensitivity to family needs in her professional role (Claesson and Brice, 1989; Kontos, 1987).

The vision of collaboration between teachers and parents originated with the initial documentation of the enmity between these two groups. Waller (1932) described the benefits for children of a more positive, equalitarian relationship between parents and teachers. Hobbs (1979) builds on this notion as he describes the "ecosystem of the child" (Hobbs, 1979, p. 192) which involves enhanced communication among families, schools, and the community. Biklen (1993) calls for new models to define the roles and relationships of mothers and teachers. One such new model is Jane Roland Martin's (1992) Schoolhome where the nurturing qualities associated with motherhood are incorporated into the life of
the school. Feminist articulation of maternal thought (Ruddick, 1983), caring (Noddings, 1984), and teaching (Wood, 1991) contribute to this new vision of the overlap of school and home.

We need new knowledge about parents and teachers, their roles and relationships, conflicts and complements, joys and challenges, in order to improve the larger relationships between school and home and to better prepare teachers to support families. Katz (1980) recommends studying persons who hold these two roles simultaneously in order to better understand each role. Spencer (1986) and Claesson and Brice (1989) have studied the impact of home life and of parenting, respectively, on teachers. This study of teachers who teach their own child is an important next step, for they live a microcosm of the home-school relationship in their classrooms. These women can help us understand how these dual roles, both of major importance to the child, function in the classroom environment.
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Overview

As noted in Chapter 1, this dissertation research focuses on the relationships between teachers and mothers, as experienced by women who teach their own child. These women hold the teacher and the mother role simultaneously, and experience them simultaneously. The research protocol is guided by the following questions.

1. What themes, issues and concerns emerge from 'teachers called mommy' as they describe the experience of teaching their own child in an early childhood classroom setting?

2. How is the self knowledge developmental level of the 'teacher called mommy' reflected in how she experiences and describes her dual role?

3. What potential applications emerge from the 'teacher called mommy' experience that may contribute to the improvement of teacher-parent relations?

The research questions for this study indicate the use of qualitative research methodology. A combination of phenomenological and developmental approaches address the three Research Questions.

Teachers who have taught their own children were recruited for this research through personal contact and referral, an Early Childhood Internet discussion list (Early Childhood On-Line), an advertisement in the New Hampshire Association for the Education of Young Children (NHAEYC) Spring 1995 Newsletter, and attendance at New England Association for the Education
of Young Children (NEAEYC) Conferences. The population was limited to female teachers who had entered the early childhood profession by the traditional or the serendipitous route (Bredekamp, 1992) who had teaching experience prior to becoming a parent. They were early childhood educators who taught their child in a group classroom setting, as opposed to home schooling. Further limitations included the child being a typically developing child between age two and age 6, and the 'teachers called mommy' having major responsibility for their child in the early childhood classroom setting for an extended period of time. (Situations such as substitute teaching, being an aide or parent volunteer, or teaching in religious or community education setting were not included in this study.)

The study proceeds in three parts. First, a written questionnaire designed to assess self-knowledge level was mailed to thirty potential participants. The self-knowledge data contributed to the developmental analysis of theme responses across the participants in the study. Second, in-depth interviews were conducted with ten of the respondents; the interview protocol focused on their personal background as a teacher and a mother, their experience as a 'teacher called mommy', and the importance and meaning of that experience to them as teachers and as mothers. Themes relating to the 'teacher called mommy' experience were identified based on the data from these interviews. After thematic analysis was complete, the themes were shared with a Focus Group of the participants. They considered the relevance and salience of the themes in light of their experience, and discussed potential implications and applications of the data.
Research Design

In the first phase of the study, thirty 'teachers called mommy' were sent information about the project, an informed consent form (see Appendix C), and a copy of the written survey designed to assess their level of self-knowledge (see Appendix A). Fifteen completed responses were received, and ten of those were selected for in-depth interviewing. The responses to the self-knowledge questionnaire were coded by two independent coders who are familiar with the protocol. The results of this coding were not shared with the researcher until after the in-depth interviews, coding, and focus group components of the research were complete, in order to prevent any bias in the data collection or thematic analysis.

The second phase of the study consists of the two-part in-depth interviews. Each interview lasted approximately 90 minutes, and the two interviews were scheduled with an interval of two days to two weeks between them. Interview #1 begins with the personal and professional background of the participant, and includes a discussion of her teaching and parenting experiences. The central focus is on her experience as a 'teacher called mommy'. Interview #2 builds on this more factual base by asking the participant to reflect on the meaning of the 'teacher called mommy' experience on her understanding of herself as a mother and as a teacher. Probes were designed to identify attitudes towards parents, the importance of mothering in the classroom setting, the relation of the family system and the school or child care system to their experience, things that surprised them and things they learned through the experience of being a 'teacher called mommy'. (See Appendix B for the Interview Protocol.)
Participants were grouped for this second phase of the study by their classroom setting, the age of their child at the time of the 'teacher called mommy' experience, the quality of their experience, and by their availability. Of the fifteen completed responses, fourteen met the criteria to be included in the study but only ten were available for the interviews, due either to location or scheduling conflict. The sample does achieve variety in the categories of age, setting, and quality of the experience. Not all of the participants had what they would call a "successful" experience teaching their child; participants with both positive and negative outcomes are included in the interviews. All participants were within a 2-3 hour drive of the researcher, and were available for the two 90 minute interviews. Interviews took place in a setting of the participants' choice; criteria for selecting an interview site were privacy and accessibility. All interviews were conducted by the researcher, tape-recorded, and transcribed by a professional secretary. The names of all people identified in the interviews were replaced with pseudonyms.

The interview transcriptions were then checked for accuracy by the interviewer (myself), and entered into HyperQual, a software package which facilitates qualitative data analysis, developed by Raymond Padilla (1991) of the University of Arizona. A profile of each participant was created, identifying in the person's own words the most salient elements of her experience. These profiles were analyzed through use of an open coding strategy (Strauss and Corbin, 1990) assisted by computer analysis (Padilla, 1991), to identify major themes and issues within each profile and commonalities across the participants.

The third phase of the study consists of Focus Group consideration of the dominant themes and issues which arose from the open coding of the interview profiles. Six of the interview participants attended a Focus Group session to consider the themes and issues with regard to teaching and mothering, and to
discuss implications of the experience for teachers, parents, administrators, and prospective 'teachers called mommy'. The interview participants unable to attend the Focus Group session completed written feedback forms. This part of the study provided an alternate perspective on the data analysis, thus supporting the validity of the results. In addition the Focus Group provided group verification of the implications for practice which the study supports. An interesting outgrowth of the Focus Group is the identification of the need for peer support for future 'teachers called mommy'.

Data Analysis Procedures

Self-Knowledge Analysis

How a person understands herself, or self-knowledge, can be seen in a developmental framework. The development of personal identity has been a focus of psychological research for decades (Damon and Hart, 1988; Erikson, 1968; Josselson, 1987; Marcia; 1966; Selman, 1980). While much of this research has focused on childhood and adolescence, we know that social-cognitive development continues into adulthood (Chickering, 1981; Perry, 1981; Sternberg, 1985). Major life changes, such as marriage, parenthood, and the loss of a close family member, are known to be triggers to social and cognitive change in adults (Berger, 1994). Career transition or stagnation likewise contributes to adult social-cognitive development (Schaie, 1977).

It stands to reason that the experiences of teacher/mothers would be influenced by their social-cognitive development and vice versa. Weinstein and Alschuler (1985)'s useful model for examining self-knowledge in adults is applied in this study. Through reference to an Unforgettable Experience,
participants describe the importance of an experience and their understanding of themselves as a result of this experience. Four stages of self-knowledge have been identified: Elemental, Situational, Pattern, and Transformational, with sub-stages indicating movement within them (Weinstein, 1991). These levels of self-knowledge relate to the individual's ability to understand herself in her societal roles, and to effect changes in these roles and relationships. Self-knowledge has also been related to parenting capacity in a dissertation study utilizing the Unforgettable Experience interview protocol (Baker, 1993).

I conducted a small pilot study using a modified version of Weinstein and Alschuler's Unforgettable Experience protocol. Questions were modified to focus the reflection on the 'teacher called mommy' experience, with follow-up questions on both the teaching and the parenting perspective. Preliminary analysis indicated variations in the level of self-knowledge of the pilot participants. These results suggested that the modified Unforgettable Experience protocol would yield developmental differences in the 'teachers called mommy'. Feedback from the pilot participants helped me to clarify the wording of the questions. Examination of the responses also led to improvements in the wording, in order to clearly elicit both the teacher perspective and the parent perspective.

In the current study, this modified Unforgettable Experience protocol is used to assess the way in which an individual 'teacher called mommy' understands her experience of the dual role, the way she is able to articulate any understanding, and the way in which she is able to change her responses based on this understanding. The respondents answered a written questionnaire designed to take approximately 20 minutes to complete. (See Appendix A.)

The written responses were transcribed by a professional secretary and corrected for spelling only. Initially, the transcriptions were analyzed by two
independent coders selected for their familiarity with the Unforgettable Experience protocol. Dr. Gerald Weinstein is one of the authors of the original model and the person from whom I learned how to conduct the analysis; Dr. Linda Baker applied the Self-Knowledge stages in her dissertation research, using a modification of the original format. Their results were not made known to me until I had completed the interviews, coding, and Focus Group processes, in order to prevent any researcher bias that may have resulted from my awareness of the participants' self-knowledge levels.

As the final stage in the analysis, self-knowledge coding of the questionnaires was then conducted by the researcher. At this point, the results from the two independent codings were compared with my results. Participants were identified as being at the Situational, Pattern or Transformational stages. In cases where the three codings were not in agreement, I consulted the interview transcripts for further evidence upon which to base the analysis. Thus the final self-knowledge levels, discussed in Chapter 4, reflect the written questionnaire, the in-depth interview, and the input of Dr. Weinstein and Dr. Baker. Final assessment of self-knowledge level for each participant was a result of my consideration of all these sources.

In-depth Interviews and Selective Coding

The use of in-depth case study methods to study the experiences of teachers has increased in recent years. For example, Yonemura (1986), Elbaz (1983), and Ayers (1989) have created in-depth case studies of individual teachers in order to understand teacher effectiveness and knowledge. Their work gives some insight into the development of effective professionals from a more qualitative and phenomenological perspective. My study builds on this line of qualitative research of teachers, through the focus on the teacher's thinking,
values and beliefs (Yonemura, 1986) and how these are put into practice in her own classroom with her own child; the examination of the teacher's knowledge of herself and her roles (Elbaz, 1983); and the identification of the connections between the teacher as a parent and the teacher as a teacher, recognizing that both teaching and parenting are what one is rather than what one does (Ayers, 1989; Biklen, 1986; Ehrensaft, 1987).

The in-depth interview component of the research utilizes a qualitative phenomenological interviewing methodology, adapted from Irv Seidman's work on in-depth phenomenological interviewing (Seidman, 1991). Seidman's approach draws on phenomenological theory (Schutz, 1967) which describes the only true meaning in life as being that which is perceived by the ordinary person in a particular situation as she/he understands that experience, and focuses on the world of lived experience by asking "What is this experience like?" (Van Manen, 1990, p. 9). Phenomenology allows that there are multiple ways of interpreting experiences, and that these are reflective of our own past, present, social interaction, and psychological construction (Bogdan and Biklen, 1982). Hence each participant must be allowed to share her background, her perceptions, and her understanding of the reality she has experienced.

In this study, the open-ended in-depth interview approach allows the participants to share their self-knowledge, their experiences as the 'teacher called mommy', and their understanding of these experiences over two interviews, each lasting approximately 90 minutes. The use of a two part interview format here is based on pilot in-depth interview and case study research. The length allows for both depth and breadth of discussion; the open-ended format provides an initial question and follow-up probes, but the interview is basically guided by the responses of the participant. The time interval between the two interviews
allows for personal reflection time for both the interviewer and the interviewee, which facilitates the analysis of the meaning of the experience (Seidman, 1991).

As the first step in the analysis of the content of the interviews, a profile summarizing the main issues and concerns of the participant, in her own words, is created. Strauss and Corbin (1990) describe the process of creating a story line from the data, as selective coding. Seidman (1991) suggests this approach as a technique that remains true to the meaning of the participant, but that allows the researcher to highlight the most interesting issues from each set of interviews. This part of the data analysis process focuses on the themes within the interviews and links each participant's background, personal experience, and understanding of her experience. Since each 'teacher called mommy' has a unique perspective on her situation, the profile captures the essence and maintains the words of that individual.

The second step in the analysis utilizes an open-coding strategy (Strauss and Corbin, 1990), wherein themes within each participant's profile, and then across the profiles are examined, with the support of HyperQual (Padilla, 1991). This level of analysis moves out of the individual's experience and into the interactions between the individual's experience and knowledge, and a wider perspective on the shared nature of the experience. At this stage each interview profile is read and reread to identify both the commonalities and the variety of individuality among the experiences. Seven broad themes emerge as existing across the interviews, and as including the diversity of the 'teacher called mommy' experience. (See Appendix D for the listing of the themes with the diversity of theme statements taken from the interviews.)
Focus Group and Validity

The use of Focus Groups, or group interviews, in educational research is relatively recent (Morgan, 1993). Focus groups can provide techniques for triangulation (Wolff, et al., 1993), thus being useful as a tool in confirming the validity and reliability of qualitative research (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994). Focus groups can also be used to analyze complex problems, and to assess the degree of consensus around a theme or topic of interest to the researcher (Morgan and Krueger, 1993). In order to insure quality, a focus group must have a clear purpose, appropriate participants, effective questions, careful data handling, and systematic analysis (Krueger, 1993).

In this research, a Focus Group is utilized for purposes of triangulation, validity and reliability, and to analyze the implications of this complex experience and seek consensus on the application of the research results to four populations. The Focus Group session was planned and facilitated by myself and an outside consultant with a specialization in school psychology, Dr. Karen Abrams. Her presence insured accurate and unbiased recording of the input of the participants. Dr. Abrams served as process observer, recorder, and time keeper, thus allowing me to attend to the questioning, analysis, and support of each participant in contributing her experience.

All interview participants were invited to attend the Focus Group session. Those unable to attend completed the written component of the experience. The 'teachers called mommy' were each given a written summary of each theme, followed by statements which represented the combined experiences of the participants, as culled from the interview profiles. Thus each person responded individually to the common themes as well as the diversity of the experience. Each participant indicated the statements which applied to her, and added any missing statements. These results were then shared and discussed by the Focus
Group. All theme statements were marked as relevant by at least one participant, thus confirming the validity of these statements as components of the data analysis. (Appendix D contains the final version of these statements.)

The Focus Group members also considered the application of their understanding of the 'teacher called mommy' experience to four populations: early childhood educators; parents; administrators and support personnel; and prospective 'teachers called mommy'. Advice and recommendations for each constituency were developed in small groups and shared in writing. The results of this component of the Focus Group contributes to the discussion of the implications and applications of the research located in Chapter 5.

**Informed Consent**

Participants were provided with general information about the study, its goals, methodology, timeline, and proposed outcomes at the point of initial contact. General information, including the age and setting in which she was the 'teacher called mommy'; family status and configuration; ethnic and educational background; residential environment; employment status, was collected to insure individual eligibility and provide information to promote sample variability. An informed consent form was part of the introductory packet, and was completed by every participant prior to the interviews or transcription of her questionnaire. Copies of these explanatory documents are located in Appendix C.

**Triangulation**

An important component of qualitative research is the process of insuring reliability and validity. Researcher bias is important to examine and recognize,
and procedures for confirming the data analysis are essential. Triangulation requires different sources of data, multiple perspectives and methods in order to allow the researcher to cross-check her work (Janesick, 1994). Crabtree, et al. (1993) recommend using multiple methods to address the various research questions within a study, and suggest that contrasting information can be gathered from individual interviews and group sessions.

In this study several mechanisms are combined to provide triangulation of the data, therefore insuring validity and reliability. These include the use of independent coders for the Unforgettable Experience Recall; the application of the developmental analysis at the conclusion of the other research components; the involvement of the participants in a Focus Group to consider the data analysis and the application of themes to teacher education; the use of a consultant during the Focus Group process.

Researcher Bias

Because this study has grown out of my personal experience as a 'teacher called mommy', the potential for interviewer bias is clear. Pilot studies confirm my ability to conduct the interviews without leading the participant to any particular themes, but my close relationship to the experience could bias my reading of the transcripts and development of the profiles. However, my experience as a 'teacher called mommy' facilitates rapport and personal sharing with the interview participants, which allows for greater depth (Oakley, 1981). This connection became clear during telephone recruitment and scheduling; potential participants began describing their experiences eagerly when they learned that I had taught my own child. Thus the benefits of the shared experience outweigh the disadvantages in this situation.
An important protection against researcher bias occurred with regard to the self-knowledge analysis. These data were not considered until after completion of all other components of the research. This prevented the researcher from prior knowledge of the suggested developmental level of the participant, thus allowing probing for the greatest depth of response possible during the interviews. Thus the themes, and the diversity of expression of these themes, emerged without influence of self-knowledge stage assessment.

The Focus Group process allows the research participants to insure that their "voices" were still found in the data. This step in the research design not only provides for triangulation, it is an important cross-check on researcher bias. It is important to note here that all theme statements were corroborated, thus confirming that conflicting perspectives were heard and included in the analysis. By acknowledging the potential for researcher bias, I have been better able to identify and address these conflicts.

Summary

Because of the focus on a specialized group, the 'teacher called mommy', this study gathered data which helps us understand the meaning of the teaching and parenting roles, the support systems effective for teachers and mothers, and provides recommendations for inservice and preservice education of teachers of young children. The 'teacher called mommy' represents a microcosm of the school-home relationship which has challenged educators and families for decades. This population adds a new dimension to the conceptualization of the school-home relationship. Examining the lived experience of individuals who hold and experience the dual roles of teacher and mother simultaneously, allows us to see the interaction of these roles in the classroom environment. Conflicts
and complements between the teacher and mother in this population can be attributed to the differences or similarities between the roles, as there are no cultural, class, educational, or developmental differences between the teacher and the mother here. The experience of the 'teachers called mommy' provides support for change and improvement in education by expanding the knowledge of these complex interrelated roles, and by recommending improvements to the training available to teachers who negotiate the relationship between families and schools on a daily basis.
CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Introduction

This chapter presents the results of the research. First, the characteristics of the sample are described. Second, the themes and issues identified through the open coding process are outlined, and the results of the triangulation process summarized. Finally, each theme is examined in relation to the self-knowledge levels of the participants.

All names of participants, and any individual mentioned in their interviews, such as their child, other family members, colleagues, etc., have been changed. Participants were given the option of reviewing the pseudonyms I selected; however, none made such a request. Excerpts of interviews are quoted in the original words of the participant. Changes have been made for clarity (removing repetitions and hesitations such as "umm") and readability only. Such editing is marked by an ellipse (...), if a section of the response has been omitted. Any editorial additions for clarity and readability are enclosed in parentheses to denote them as separate from the exact text of the interview.

The Sample

All ten of the participants in the study identified their racial/ethnic heritage as Anglo/European. All were married to the father of the child or children they taught, and lived in two-parent households. None identified her
living environment as urban, and only one identified her teaching environment as urban. Table 1 summarizes the living and teaching environment data.

Table 1: Living and Teaching Environment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Rural</th>
<th>Urban</th>
<th>Suburban</th>
<th>Small Town</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Living Environment</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching Environment</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The age range of the participants at the time of the study was between 30 and 47 years old, with an average age of 37.3 years. At the time of their most recent 'teacher called mommy' experience, the participants were between 27 and 41 years old, with an average age of 34.9 years. The number of years since their most recent 'teacher called mommy' experience ranged from the current school year to 10 years ago. These data are summarized in Table 2 below. The average number of years elapsed since the most recent 'teacher called mommy' experience was 2.4 years.

Table 2: Time Elapsed Since 'Teacher Called Mommy' Experience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Years Elapsed</th>
<th>Current Year (0 Years Elapsed)</th>
<th>1 Year</th>
<th>2 Years</th>
<th>3 Years</th>
<th>10 Years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Participants</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All of the participants had postsecondary education in fields such as Early Childhood, Education and Child Development. They had earned Associate's, Bachelor's and/or Master's degrees prior to their parenting and their 'teacher called mommy' experiences, as shown in Table 3. One participant earned a
Doctorate in Developmental Psychology in the years following her 'teacher called mommy' experience, and another has recently returned to school in a new field.

Table 3: Educational Level of 'Teachers Called Mommy'

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Highest Degree Earned</th>
<th>Associate's</th>
<th>Bachelor's</th>
<th>Master's</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Participants</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The ten participants were 'teachers called mommy' for a total of 15 children; nine of these children were males and six were females. Five of the participants had two of their children in their classroom, and five taught one of their children as a 'teacher called mommy'. In addition, five participants taught their child for one year; the other five had their child or children for more than one year as part of a multi-aged classroom group. For the five participants who taught two of their children, this consisted of all the children they currently have. Of the five participants who only taught one of their children, two have younger children whom they expect to have in their classroom. The remaining three do not have additional children.

The settings in which the 'teacher called mommy' experience occurred varied among the participants. Three participants taught their child or children in a Toddler Program when he/she was between 15 and 36 months old; three taught their child or children as a Preschooler, aged 3 to 4 years; two were their child's teacher in a Kindergarten classroom as a 5 to 6 year old; two worked with their children in a licensed group Day Care setting with a mixed age range. One of the Toddler and one of the Preschool classrooms were part of a College
Laboratory School. Table 4 summarizes the settings and numbers of children in each, as well as the number of 'teachers called mommy' in each setting.

**Table 4: Settings of 'Teacher Called Mommy' Experience**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Classroom</th>
<th>Toddler (15-36 Mos.)</th>
<th>Preschool (3-4 Yrs.)</th>
<th>Kindergarten (5-6 Yrs.)</th>
<th>Child Care (Mixed Age Group)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Participants</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Participant's Children</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 5: Current Employment Status of Participants**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Child Care Center Teacher</th>
<th>Toddler Teacher</th>
<th>Preschool Teacher</th>
<th>College Lab School Teacher</th>
<th>Kindergarten Teacher</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Participants</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3rd Grade Teacher</th>
<th>Teacher/ Director</th>
<th>Child Care Director</th>
<th>College Faculty</th>
<th>Career Change - in School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Participants</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The participants in this study are currently employed in a range of settings; some hold more than one role or position (see Table 5). Four of them are employed in the same position as when they were a 'teacher called mommy'; six have changed employment. Of these six, three have switched age levels or settings, and three have advanced their career into administration or higher...
education. Only one participant left her previous position due to the 'teacher called mommy' experience.

Since participants are mentioned by name in the following discussion of both themes and self-knowledge, they will be briefly introduced at this point. Betsy taught her daughter Beth and her son Jeffrey in a Toddler Program at a College Laboratory School, spending a total of five years as a 'teacher called mommy'. Marilyn also taught her daughter Colleen as a toddler; she now directs the same child care center where she was the 'teacher called mommy'. Amy's daughter Erin was in her Toddler classroom in a large urban child care center where she currently teaches Kindergarten.

Ellen is a Preschool teacher in the same College Laboratory School as Betsy; her daughter Joanna was her student for two years and her daughter's best friend Melissa was also in the classroom. This situation was complicated by the fact that Melissa's mother had died of ovarian cancer the summer prior to their enrollment in Ellen's classroom. She described her situation as similar to having twins. Nancy also taught her two children, Emily and Paul, in a community Preschool. Other preschool teachers include Robin, who had her sons Andrew and Sam in a preschool/child care program she began and ran for several years; Georgia, who had her own multi-aged child care business for five years, teaching her sons Danny and Joshua; and Annie, who began a "Mommy and Me" program when her son Adam was a toddler, then developed a Parent Cooperative Preschool where she taught both Adam and her daughter Angela.

Two participants were their child's Kindergarten teacher. Hilary had her son Steven in her public Kindergarten classroom, and anticipates teaching her second son Jeremy when he is in Kindergarten. Kristen taught Kindergarten in the private school her son Tyler attended as a preschooler; she had planned to resign when Tyler entered her classroom but was supported by the Board of
Directors and by her Assistant Teacher to stay in the position for Tyler's Kindergarten year.

The participants in this study represent a substantial variety in the classroom settings and environments that comprise Early Childhood Education from Birth to Age 6. It is interesting to note that setting, age of child, and gender of child did not appear to have a relationship with the outcome of the 'teacher called mommy' experience or with the self-knowledge level of the participant.

**Themes**

As a result of the open coding analysis (Strauss and Corbin, 1990) seven broad themes emerged from the interviews. These themes are:

1. Expectations and Adjustments
2. Challenges
3. Coping Strategies and Sources of Support
4. Benefits
5. Disadvantages
6. Transition and Separation
7. Learnings

Six of the themes can be seen as exploring the chronology of the 'teacher called mommy' experience, beginning with the expectations of and adjustment to the situation, and ending with separation as the child transitioned out of the mother's classroom. The seventh is a summary of what was learned from the experience, and leads into the implications and application of the research, which are discussed more thoroughly in Chapter 5.
Theme 1: Expectations/Adjustments

This theme captures the feelings 'teachers called mommy' experienced as they prepared for and adjusted to their dual role. Their expectations did not appear to be influenced by their setting, or by the way in which they came to teach their own child. The adjustments they describe are influenced in part by the age of the child and the response of others in the environment.

Participants recalled thinking that this experience would be the "best of both worlds", that their expertise as a teacher would enhance their child's learning. They would be the 'perfect teacher' and their child the 'perfect child'. As Betsy explained it,

(When it came time for me to go back to work,) I never thought of another option (than putting her in my program). One reason was because I didn't have a lot of confidence in other places. It didn't really ever enter my mind because this was just the perfect way to have it. She would be with me all afternoon. It was easy to drop her off, it was easy to pick her up, the philosophy (was right), and I would know everything about it. It would be like she was still with me. It would be the best of both worlds.

All the participants in the study freely chose to be their child's teacher, although the circumstances varied. Betsy and Ellen both teach in a center where other teachers had already experienced being 'teachers called mommy'; it was part of the culture of the center and therefore the accepted practice. As noted above, Betsy felt that there was no other alternative that met her standards for quality. Ellen felt that she made her decision by default. She said,

I think my trust in my connection with the staff was so strong that (sending her elsewhere) wasn't a serious consideration. I also felt the peer group connectedness had begun and it just felt like it would be a hard time to make that change. Working and parenting was already feeling pretty complicated, and it felt like it would feel more complicated rather than less to have a separate program to get her to every morning, get to my job, and get her picked up. So I don't think I really thought long and hard about it.
Some of the participants were more hesitant in deciding to teach their child. Marilyn looked for other child care arrangements when it became apparent that she would become her daughter's teacher in response to a staffing crisis in her center, but found no other program option to be satisfactory. Nancy had her children visit her classroom frequently before she decided to enroll them with her.

Still others were enthusiastic, and sought out the experience. Hilary, for example, requested permission from her principal to enroll her son Steven in her Kindergarten classroom, even though they live in a different town which does provide public Kindergarten (in New Hampshire Kindergarten is not mandatory in every school district). As she said, "I feel like this is my turn to spend a very special year with him." Amy works in a large child care center with several classrooms for each age level, yet chose to place her daughter Erin in her toddler classroom.

Annie, Robin, and Georgia started their own preschool programs, in order to be part of their child's learning experience while maintaining their careers in Early Childhood. Georgia found that she could "make the center my philosophy, I was able to do what I believe." And Kristen took the position as Kindergarten teacher in the school where her son Tyler was enrolled in the Preschool group, knowing that he would eventually be enrolled in her classroom. As Annie said, "I love young children so much there was no way I was going to be denied the pleasure of being with my own, knowing that they were only going to be young once."

Their collective belief in their abilities gave them encouragement to manage what they realized could be a challenging role. Nancy represented a common thought among the participants, when she summned up her decision to
teach her daughter Emily as follows:

I knew how much she loved school, and I thought I was a pretty
darn good preschool teacher. I thought if there's any program I
want her in, I want her in mine. That's exactly what I want for my
child. So that's really how I determined it. I really like what I did
in my classroom and I felt it was very compatible to her style of
learning.

Betsy, when facing the decision to place her second child in her classroom,
didn't waver. She clearly preferred having her child with her to the option of
another program.

Parker (husband) said maybe we should think about putting Jeffrey
(son) elsewhere and I said definitely not. I'm not ready to give him
up.... I just knew that it was hard but you dealt with it. It was like
childbirth, that was hard but OK, I'm going to do it again.

The reality of the experience lead to many adjustments. Participants
spoke of their desire to treat their child as any other child, to be fair and not show
favoritism. The desire to have the child fit in and behave well was common;
Amy was particularly pleased that "some (parents) didn't know that she was my
daughter."

Several 'teachers called mommy' spoke of the conflict between their
expectations for their child and the reality of their child's behavior in the
classroom. In speaking about her daughter Beth, Betsy acknowledged,

My expectations might have been a little bit greater because I
thought she was almost like a reflection (of me). 'I don't want you
too loud, I don't want you to be the biter.' So I think that was
difficult and often times I think when I would step in, it may have
been times where I didn't want it to look bad.... So maybe that
pressure was there for her to hold it all together.

Hilary acknowledged, "I was finding myself being harder on him because I had
expectations for him. I knew what he was capable of." Georgia realized, "I
expected him to represent me ... to be a little bit better than everybody else
because he has his mother who ... cared for him and knew all these things."
Nancy discovered that she expected her children to understand that she was the teacher when at school, and the mother when at home. While her daughter "Emily was able to make that distinction, Paul (her son) never got the hang of it. If he wanted mom, that was it.... It was hard because he couldn't separate me (as) mom from (me as) teacher.... I realized after the second month that I was going to be very stressed out." For Nancy, Paul's inability to separate her roles lead to confusion and stress.

Some 'teachers called mommy' identified the feeling of being watched by other parents, co-teachers, and children, as having an effect on them in the classroom setting. They didn't want to "lose their cool" with their child, and were particularly hard on themselves if they did. Marilyn was very clear on this issue. "It was really important to me when we were around the other families that she not misbehave and that I not lose my cool." Kristen describes her situation in this way:

Other people didn't realize that he was in the class. I really struggled, though. I didn't want to treat him different from the other kids.... I didn't want to come down harder on him than I did on anyone else... (but sometimes) the mommy started to take over when there was a power struggle.

Ellen's daughter Joanna created the need for a different adjustment during her second year in her mother's classroom, but Ellen's concern about how others' viewed the situation remained strong.

What was very hard the second year was her kind of emulating my teacher role. That drove me crazy, that she was running circle, she was deciding what we were going to sing, and she was telling another child what they should do with their sneakers. (I felt) sort of a sense of embarrassment, I guess, about (how) this child is seen by others.
Theme 2: Challenges

The 'teacher called mommy' experience is challenging in many ways. Participants cite challenges in the classroom with their child, with the other children, the other families, and their colleagues.

Each participant identified sharing mom with classmates as a challenge for her child. This manifested itself differently, depending on the age and developmental level of the child. Marilyn described her young toddler "pinching and grabbing" other children. Amy's two year old daughter Erin also responded physically. "She would become pretty insistent, say 'No, now!', and pull (my arm)." Robin describes her younger son Sam, age 3, in this way. "He used to push kids out of my lap.... He would be verbally abusive to the kids, he bit and he pushed and he called kids idiots. He didn't stop at that, he used to call me an idiot practically every day."

Hilary's son Steven, a Kindergartener, showed his struggles with sharing mom differently. If she couldn't attend to his needs quickly, he would "sort of slap his thighs and walk off with his head down." As a five year old, he had a different way of expressing his frustration, but Hilary was just as distraught as Robin, Amy or Marilyn were; "It tore me to pieces."

Ellen also found it hard to share the responsibility for her daughter with some of the other staff members. "It was very hard for me not to just attend to her first and foremost. It was very hard for me to (see Joanna) with the older woman aide." She wanted her child to have relationships with other adults, yet also wanted to be the primary caregiver.

'Teachers called mommy' found it challenging to observe their child struggle with social relationships in school. They observed things about their
children that they didn't know from their home life. Marilyn found that

(I learned to) see her in a light I would never have seen if she was
someplace else or at home. I would never have imagined that...
she could be this vicious little thing, going after these kids ...
grabbing and pinching.... She was a normal kid, (I was) lucky I
knew that was normal.

Hilary found observing snack time and playground behavior in the
Kindergarten to be challenging. "I got to see some things that other parents don't
get to see... I had to let Steven deal with it the way other parents would have to
let their children deal with it.... He needs to learn how to solve his own problems
like the other children do."

While one might expect that home-school communication would be
enhanced in the 'teacher called mommy' situation, Hilary found that to be a
challenge as well. When she asked students if they had seen their report cards,
she realized she had neglected to share Steven's with him.

He said, 'Mommy, you didn't show me my report card.' I said,
'You're right I didn't.' Report cards aren't really important to me so
I just really didn't make it a point. I shared it with Seth (husband)
and it stayed on the kitchen table.

Most of the participants identified being manipulated by their child as a
challenge, with the style of manipulation related to the developmental level of
the child. Kristen's Kindergarten students would "work him on the playground -
'ask your mom tonight if we can have legos tomorrow'," whereas the younger
children would tantrum or cry when frustrated about waiting for mommy. Amy
described her two year old daughter Erin, this way, "she would end up crying...
and winning anyway."

Ownership of mommy as teacher was an issue, as Betsy's example of her
two year old son, Jeffrey, demonstrates.

Clearly he would choose me to take care of anything that was
difficult at the moment. There were other children who clearly
chose me as well.... I can remember some real screaming at Lisa (another toddler) in particular. 'She's not your mommy, she's only my mommy!' He bit her a few times because she was too close to me. I think he really knew who was really attached to me and who needed the most in the room. I (would) hear him say to children 'She's not going to read you a story, she's my mommy.'

Marilyn's daughter Colleen, a young toddler, "would push the (other children) away (and say) 'my mommy, my mommy'." This response was characteristic of the toddler aged children.

Ellen had the added complication of her daughter's best friend Melissa being in the classroom with them. Melissa's mother had just died of ovarian cancer the summer prior to her third birthday. Thus Ellen had to adjust to two children, each significantly attached to her, each with distinctly unique needs in the classroom.

Just everything the first month felt hellish to me. I couldn't believe it could be this bad to have Joanna here because she just screamed and demanded my attention for that whole month, and of course Melissa was right there beside her. There wasn't a free space in my lap. I couldn't share my lap with anybody else because there was Joanna and there was Melissa.

Clearly the circumstances Ellen faced were more challenging than the typical 'teacher called mommy' experience.

**Theme 3: Coping Strategies and Sources of Support**

This theme captures the range of strategies 'teachers called mommy' identify as helping them cope with the classroom challenges they face. Diverse sources of support, including colleagues, parents, spouse, friends and administrators, emerge from the interview data.

Having support in the classroom was key to feeling successful as a 'teacher called mommy'. "I don't know if I could have done it without the aide that I had," stated Kristen. Colleagues in the classroom or in the school were
most important in providing support. If available, colleagues who had taught their children were considered highly supportive, but colleagues who were parents were also identified as helpful. Betsy spoke highly of the support she received from her colleagues.

We have all been teachers together, but something about being parents together has just put another perspective on it.... I can tell you I could never leave my job just because of all that support.... I don't think I could have done it (without) knowing the people I work with as well as I did.

Spouse and extended family members sometimes were supportive; the response of these family members reflected other patterns in the family. A 'teacher called mommy' who identified her spouse as actively involved with their young children also identified him as supportive of her dual role. The stress on the 'teacher called mommy' spilled over at home, as Nancy describes, "My husband Kevin struggled through this with me." Hilary "bottled it (the stress) up inside ... and (went) home and fell apart in front of Seth (husband)." Whether or not the 'teacher called mommy' received support from her spouse, he clearly was affected by the experience.

Parents of other children in the classroom provided support for many of the participants. In most cases, these parents thought it must be nice to have contact with your own child all day. Ellen noted this situation in the following excerpt.

It is an interesting experience to have parents say to you 'how lucky you are to be with your own child so much'.... I do sense that parents who have always had that arrangement of children being in (childcare) away from them during the day merely idealize time with children.

Marilyn had a supportive director/owner of the center in which she worked, as did Nancy, and Hilary's principal encouraged her to enroll her child
at their school as a positive public relations gesture. However, it is interesting to
note that administrators were least often mentioned as providing direct support.

The 'teachers called mommy' appreciated support from any source, and
identified respect for their choices as important. As Nancy stated, when
describing the response of her director, other teachers, and parents,

There was never any question (as to) whether or not (teaching my
children) was appropriate. The decision was left to me, and
whatever decision I made was fully supported.... They were just
cconcerned about me, about how I was handling it. (They were)
watching out for me.

Coping strategies vary with each participant and her situation, but again
there are some patterns. Kristen, Amy, and Nancy mentioned that having a
supportive co-worker who knew when to step in improved the situation for both
the 'teacher called mommy' and her child. As Nancy said, "It was easier when
the other teacher (intervened), because she was more objective."

Other women reported their need to handle everything as their coping
strategy; they were unable to accept help. Betsy identified "that first hour it was
hard for me to be a teacher and a mommy.... I pretty much needed to stay
focused on him as a parent." Ellen found it hard to ask for help from other staff
members; she noted that she "put myself in the position of asking for their
understanding," as she struggled to handle the situation herself.

Some participants were able to change group size, arrange for alternate
transportation, or have time in the classroom without their child. It became
important to create a separation between school and home, as Kristen said, "I
would try not to talk about school on the way home." Creating a space between
the two worlds helped her cope with her two roles.
Georgia also identified the need for a separation between school and home. She relied on her spouse, and created the separation this way:

My husband and I co-parent.... When we get home at night I let him handle it (a difficult situation from school) and remove myself from the situation.

Participants also found that they needed to acknowledge their special relationship with their child, by providing special treatment of some kind. Amy found that Erin needed to stay physically close to her.

She would need to come with me, (say) to bring other children to the bathroom even if she didn't need to use the bathroom. My co-teachers and I decided that (it) was no big deal, that (it) was not worth having a fight over.

Accommodating Erin's needs was an important coping strategy for Amy. Robin allowed her son Sam to sit on her lap as his special accommodation to having to share his mother. "The (other) kids kind of accepted that Sam really needed to sit in my lap. They were cool about that because I wasn't their mother."

Hilary always tried "to find time ... to give Steven that special hug (and to) whisper in his ear, 'you're doing a great job'.... (And) every day I wrote (a note) on a napkin (to go) in his snack box." Ellen explained the situation to other children as a coping strategy:

I can think of a few times when I felt like I needed to say to other children, 'Well, I'm Joanna's mother too', probably something around being in circle (together). I can remember actually talking to one child who was wishing a lot for her mother to be her teacher like I was Joanna's teacher, and talking with her about how it was sometimes hard for me and Joanna too, that there were parts of it that were hard, that we sometimes did more fighting than we would do at home because we were in the classroom together so much.

Georgia found it helpful to be "logical in explaining things to Danny.... I always made sure that his needs were met, too." It was an important coping strategy to
acknowledge the difference in their relationship, and to provide something special that was unique for their child.

Theme 4: Benefits

Benefits of the 'teacher called mommy' experience include knowledge and influence on the social and cognitive development of the child. The 'teacher called mommy' is more fully able to see the whole experience of the child. These advantages occur in both the home and the school environments. The benefits seem to relate to overlapping aspects of the teacher and parent role.

As working mothers, participants in this study identified a major benefit of their experience that they were able to spend their work days with their child, gaining an understanding of that child in his/her primary environments of home and school. The congruence in values and teaching style between home and school was also a clear advantage. Being Early Childhood professionals they were all very much aware of the importance of the early years in development, and of the challenges inherent in finding high quality child care.

They also gained inside knowledge as to how their child's day had been, and could make corresponding adjustments at home. Betsy identified this as an important outcome. "I think it's been easier to parent them because I have real insight into what has happened for them throughout the day." Amy noted that she was able to be "a little more sympathetic as to why Erin's (having a hard time) and make concessions, have dinner early so she can have some quiet time in the evening."

They cited benefits in two major developmental areas: cognitive and social. Robin described the advantage of being her child's teacher as cumulative. "Any moment I (could) teach anybody something, I would take the opportunity and my kids really benefited in that respect." Kristen found particular pleasure
as she "watched him catch onto things that he didn't know before, or discover (new) things."

Their professional expertise was put to use to provide the best curriculum for their children as well as the classroom group and they saw that as an advantage for their child's learning opportunities. Nancy recognized the fun her children had with her teaching materials at home, and Annie liked trying out activities with her children ahead of time. Georgia acknowledged that she "maintained a good environment for the children because my children were there, (the curriculum) was really geared to each child's needs."

In addition, knowing their child's friends and their families was also seen as advantageous. Kristen said, "It gave me the opportunity to see him leave me and (be with) his peers." Marilyn, now the center director, commented that "Colleen has grown up with five others (who have been) in her class since (she was) a baby." Marilyn herself feels that these children are "like nieces and nephews and cousins."

Access to their child during the school day allowed them to enhance their understanding of their child's experiences, friends, and development. Hilary identified the best part as being able to "watch him grow, watch him make the right decisions, watch him enjoy school knowing that I think he's really going to do OK." Ellen described "quite a bit of satisfaction for me around the activity period. I was able to see and be close to and (know) that she is enjoying it and she's not really needing me and is really on her own. This I wouldn't have seen if she was in another program." As Amy said, "I was able to learn about her by doing my own observations." Most working parents do not have knowledge of their child's day during the work day in this way, and the 'teachers called mommy' definitely identified access to their child's daily experiences as a benefit.
Theme 5: Disadvantages

Disadvantages of the dual role also exist in the data. These disadvantages seem to relate to aspects of the teaching and parenting roles that are distinct and discontinuous. Discipline challenges emerge frequently as problematic for 'teachers called mommy'.

Participants in this study found it difficult to separate home from work. If they had a difficult morning with their child at home, it spilled over into school. If their child had misbehaved at school, it was difficult not to bring that home. Kristen compared her situation to that of the other parents in this way.

I tell (the other parents) that I'm not really going to tell them all the nitty gritty little stuff. If it's just a regular kid kind of thing it's over and done with (at school). And of course I took all that home (about my son).

She identified a "mommy voice" that would enter the classroom when Tyler was resisting directions, creating a power struggle she never had with other students.

Work would spill over into home in another way, for the behavior challenges of the classroom would be replicated in their child at home. As Betsy stated, "His (her son Jeffrey, age 2) needs in the room are the same as his needs at home.... I burned myself out on those needs all day long, those physical needs and social needs.... Being needed (that way) all day is the hard part, I think."

Ellen articulated this lack of separation between home and work as paradoxical. She identified the positive and negative aspects of the situation simultaneously.

I absolutely adored the checking in times with Joanna and the closeness of being able to hug and kiss her in the middle of the afternoon. But the flip side of it just feels so like my whole work life has just turned upside down and I don't know what to do next. I don't feel like there's any boundary between my organized scheduled work life and my involvement with children.... There's just not any workspace that's mine alone. My life is completely imbued with her life, one way or another.
I feel like I lost perspective on my capabilities at the job having my daughter on site. And it wasn't just my daughter, it was the Melissa connection too.

That was the part that I just had no standard for in those two years, you know. What's typical for a three or four to be experiencing? And what is just Joanna and me being together in this space that's being demonstrated here?

Ellen found herself questioning her knowledge and her abilities. She also noted an impact on her ability to focus on other children. "I think I was not as warmly connected with the other children when she was there." Her attention was drawn to the needs of her child, and this made it difficult to fulfill her expectations for herself as the teacher of all the children.

Ellen also described the challenges of communicating with other parents when your child is in your classroom. "I really felt vulnerable to what parents' perceptions probably were of my capabilities. If she can't help her own child to be a successful preschool learner how is she going to work with my kids?"

Annie felt that her abilities as a teacher and as a parent were on the line when her son misbehaved.

I really wanted to be able to model with him so the other mothers could watch me and do it the way I did it, and of course he just wouldn't really cooperate to be the model.... I thought (the other mothers) were critical of me, that I wasn't parenting in a way that would cause this child to behave appropriately. How (could they) really listen to what I had to say if my child wasn't behaving perfectly? So I did feel that my credibility was undermined.

Nancy described the difficulties in separating work from home as part of her teaching style, rather than particularly related to being the 'teacher called mommy'.

I really base how well I'm doing on the children's happiness, whether they're really satisfied with the program, and on parents feedback. If I have a class full of parents that are unhappy then I
would be unhappy with myself as a teacher.... My teaching is an extension of my self.

While the 'teacher called mommy' experience did not create this connection between sense of self and professional success, it made role separation more difficult. Nancy said that "my kids got the short end of the stick."

Another significant challenge was dealing with her child's aggressive behavior toward other children. Communicating these incidents with the parents of the victim was particularly difficult, given that it was her own child, under her supervision, who had been the aggressor. Georgia remembered the time when her son Danny bit his friend:

Number one, I was mortified that any child would get hurt under my care and number two, I was upset that my nice sweet little boy (would) bite!... I called (the mother) at work and told her and she was really upset at first.... I was more nervous telling her because it was my son who bit her son (because I thought) it was a reflection of my parenting.

When Nancy's son bit another child, she relied on her co-teacher to handle him, and on the director to help her "figure out what I'm going to tell the parents."

Betsy was very clear on this matter. "The real hard issue of being the mother and the teacher (was) being able to approach other parents and say 'Your child was bitten today' and know that it was my child that did it."

While many 'teachers called mommy' identified colleagues in the school as sources of support, there were also instances where other teachers were critical of the 'teacher called mommy' as a teacher and as a parent. Hilary found herself dealing with another teacher who was talking about her son in the teachers' room. She found herself not able to talk about him around her colleagues. "If someone else brought him up, I'll talk about him, but I try not to do that. I don't want people to get tired of (him) before they've had a chance to meet him." The
challenge of dealing with colleagues continued after the child was in her/his mother's classroom, when the child remained in the school.

Theme 6: Transition and Separation

Participants in this study are all very committed to their child’s education. This commitment creates both positive and negative outcomes, when it comes time to end the 'teacher called mommy' role. For some the transition out of the shared classroom marks a major separation; for others it is a gradual shift in roles and relationships.

The 'teachers called mommy' clearly recognized the need for their children to move on to new challenges, new classrooms and new teachers. They also commented that their increased knowledge of their child's learning abilities, and their investment as both a teacher and a parent in his/her success, influenced their desire to select the teachers and learning environments they feel are best for their child. Georgia is "much more critical of curriculum" and "more of an advocate for my children because of my background." Hilary said, "I know that there are (teachers) that I really want him to spend a year with." Thus while the transition to another classroom was understood, and in some cases welcomed, it too presented challenges to the 'teachers called mommy'.

Likewise, their children experienced challenges when separating from the classroom with their mother as teacher. Amy's daughter screamed and cried for the first month of her preschool experience. Ellen found that "it was just so interesting to me to be bringing her (to preschool after) my time in the classroom, because she was completely resistant to going!" Marilyn's daughter constantly asked for her when a newly hired teacher took her place.

At first it was really hard because she kept asking for me and crying. I would go in and visit and I'd try to reassure her that (the new teacher) was going to take care of her and be her teacher and I
would see her when school was over.... (Fortunately) things started getting a lot better quickly. Colleen would have wonderful days, she wasn't as aggressive any more. The new teacher understood what I was going through and what she had been through and was really helpful.

The need for support from colleagues continued throughout the separation process.

Nancy moved her son Paul to another preschool program because of the difficulties they had together; when that proved unsatisfactory she had to move him again, finally settling on a family day care home. While she was happy with this last placement, "I was very upset because I really wanted him to experience my class and he couldn't." When Robin enrolled her son Sam in a new preschool program, after closing her own, "he was very distrustful of everybody... he didn't come out of his funk until about April or May the following year." They both identified supportive new teachers or child care providers as crucial to this transition process.

At the end of their Kindergarten experience together, Kristen's son Tyler "cried and he said, 'I'm going to miss being in your class. I liked having you for my teacher. It won't be the same.'" Hilary's son Steven, also a Kindergartener, was "really sad about next year" in first grade. He was experiencing the loss of his mother as teacher, as well as the transition to a new classroom.

Some 'teachers called mommy' became distant from their child's educational experiences in the years following their shared time. Nancy found herself creating a separation between her daughter Emily and Emily's school experience when Emily entered Kindergarten. "After I had her in my classroom,... I really wanted to distance myself and let her experience school without mom there." Annie found it difficult to become involved in her children's school experiences because she was a teacher and she didn't want to "step on anyone's toes."
Betsy noted the loss of information when her daughter Beth began to attend the public elementary school.

I never would trade being with my children for the length of time that I was. It's been a real eye opener to have Beth across the street (at the elementary school), not knowing what is going on. Parker (husband) never knew how much information he got until he didn't get any more!

The loss of a personal relationship with her child's teacher was unanticipated, and difficult.

**Theme 7: Learnings**

Even though aspects of the 'teacher called mommy' experience are challenging and difficult, participants identify many important components of growth from the experience. In some cases a specific change is noted, in others a more general attitude shift is paramount. In all situations, the experience is seen as one to learn from.

Participants reported learning about parenting, teaching, and themselves as parents and teachers, through their experience. Overall they reported having more empathy for parents, becoming more careful not to judge parents. Kristen described her attitude toward parents.

No matter what I may think I know about this child, the parent always knows the child better, and just because I believe it's the best for the child doesn't necessarily mean that it is.
Robin said it this way:

I think a teacher should look at the relationship with the family as a partnership.... I believe that all parents do the best that they are able to do. I think that teachers need to stop blaming them for being lousy parents. You need to accept that some parents are only able to do what they are able to do.

Georgia characterized parents as

absolutely essential to the educational system. I believe that the parents are the children's first and foremost teachers.... The teacher is there as a primary agent in the children's learning along with the parents ... it's more of a team effort.

As Early Childhood professionals, they felt they had always valued the child in the family; their dual role experience had strengthened this professional value and clarified it in their classroom practice.

Their teaching shifted also, to an increased awareness of the individuals in the classroom. Because as mothers they knew one individual child more in depth, they were reminded that each child had individual feelings and needs which needed to be respected and valued. Hilary stated,

It just made me a better teacher to teach my own child. I know next year when school starts, when I see the look that I saw in Steven's face when he (was having) a hard time doing (something), I'm going to be sensitized now. I'm going to be able to say 'gee this is really hard for you'. I didn't know that before.

Ellen said, "I think there (is in me) an increased appreciation of how young children in group settings really are looking (for and) needing that nurturing piece of you very much." They found they communicated more of the child's personality in the classroom to parents in conferences. "I try to share more of them as little people, not of their work," stated Kristen. Amy began to share videotapes of the classroom with parents so they too could see what the day was really like, a practice she has continued since her daughter was her student.
Recognition that school is only part of a child's life developed through the 'teacher called mommy' experience. Kristen described this change in this way.

It made me be a little more patient with some of the mothers. It was hard to remember that (school) was not their only life, that it was only a little tiny piece of their life. You can't (always) expect it to take on a tremendous magnitude of importance.... They have brothers and sisters and work and other stresses.

This understanding helps teachers develop good communication and trust with the families of their students.

The 'teacher called mommy' experience had also affected them as parents. They learned to recognize their need for separation from their child. Nancy said, "I'm realizing... I need to really set my own clear boundaries, that this time is for family, and even though I see a need over there for work, I'm just going to let it slide." Amy acknowledged that she was "a better parent if we had our time apart.... I wasn't capable of being with my child all of her waking hours."

Annie acknowledged her children's need for separation from her as well.

I am so attached to my kids and my kids are so attached to me.... But attachment alone does not make social confidence.... Children need to have attachments and then separations, there need to be these cycles throughout our lives.... Being able to do both well makes for social competence.

This type of learning about the importance of separation was significant.

Sometimes their standards as a parent and as a teacher differed, which surprised them. Ellen "questioned if I shouldn't do a better job on limit setting and not just letting her make all those choices about how her life happens at home. So then in the classroom, poor kid, ... when I'm insisting that she do it 'because I'm the mother, you know'... it's not what she's used to at home." Betsy said, "I tend to be a little bit more lenient with some things with my own kids,
than I might have been with other children." Betsy, who taught both of her children, learned that separating the two roles was healthy and possible.

Second time around... I knew much more what to expect, that it was going to be OK. I could rely on other people that were in the room, I could call Parker and say 'come take him home'.... My expectations weren't 'I have to be the teacher. I have to be available to my students all the time'. It was OK to say, 'and now I have to be this child's mother.'

Learning to distinguish the two roles of parent and teacher was significant.

They also gained the ability to communicate with their child's teachers. Georgia said "I just can't imagine how parents who aren't teachers survive. How do they know what to ask?" Georgia mentioned that she has become more supportive if (teachers) get a call to come get their children if their children are sick.... It shows me that they're a good teacher because they care for their own children first.... It's hard to find a sub just like any center but we have to honor that (parental role).

As a center director, Marilyn has used her experience as 'teacher called mommy' to better support other staff members who enroll their children in the center, establishing policies to guide the teacher and her co-workers through the experience of the dual role.

As working mothers, being with their child all day in the classroom gave them more appreciation for the at-home mother. Ellen said,

I think I gained an incredible appreciation for the woman who does choose, as an active choice, to be an at-home mother. That's her clear work commitment in life, it's an incredible commitment and devotion, an act of love I guess, to say that what you want to do is to be with your child and mother 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

This understanding was important, because the choice to be an at-home mother is in clear opposition to the choices these women had made.
They also developed a keener understanding of the conflict between family and career that is common among professional women in the 1990's. Robin characterized this conflict in this way.

I'm so attracted to a career and the feeling of validation one gets from a career, but then I have to remember that I made a choice to have a family.... It's easier for me to make sacrifices as a professional.... I think it's easy for me to take my family for granted.

They recognized that teaching and parenting are both hard work, and doing them together is even harder. Ellen described it this way. "It was really important for me to have a work identity. Suddenly to have both identities blended into one for (such a) long time really confused that self image for me."

Being the 'teacher called mommy' brought these role conflicts into sharper focus.

**Confirmation of Themes**

The Focus Group provided valuable confirmation of the thematic data, and allowed participants to engage in discussion with each other. Each theme was summarized as a series of statements, taken from the interviews, which sometimes contained contradictory elements. Participants, both as individuals in written form and then as a group, indicated the statements which applied to their experience, and added any statements which may have been missing under each category. The second component of the Focus Group session, Implications of the Experience, will be discussed following the Self-Knowledge analysis.

When the responses were tallied, all statements under each theme were marked by at least one individual. Thus the participants agreed with all the variations on the themes which were extracted from the transcripts. This is an important corroboration of the analysis of the themes, for it indicates that the
participants still find themselves in the analysis, even though it is no longer stated in their own words. Thus it seems fair to state that researcher bias is being managed successfully. Appendix D contains the theme statements, listed in order of frequency of response. Items with the most responses are at the top of each list.

**Self-Knowledge Analysis**

Weinstein and Alschuler (1985) identify four stages of Self-Knowledge: Elemental, Situational, Pattern, and Transformational. Participants in this study were identified to be at the Situational, Pattern, or Transformational Stages of Self-Knowledge, based on their written responses to the modified Unforgettable Experience Recall questionnaire (see Appendix A). In cases where the two independent coders and myself did not totally agree on the stage assessment, I reread the interview transcript for additional data in order to clarify the final stage identification.

The first stage, Elemental Self-Knowledge, is characterized by the ability to recall fragments of experiences, often disconnected, and without reference to inner feeling states. This stage is often correlated with thinking more characteristic of a young child who does not yet understand causal relationships (Weinstein and Alschuler, 1985). None of the participants in the present study were at this stage in relation to their understanding of the 'teacher called mommy' experience.

Individuals at the Situational Stage of Self-Knowledge can link internal emotional states with external situations and behaviors, and can relate these factors into a coherent whole (Weinstein, 1991). They can see the linkage between the elements of the situation and use these to describe what has
happened, how they feel, what they do in the situation. They identify external events as the major influences on their behavior, and can discuss specific situations that result in specific behaviors (Baker, 1993). Annie and Marilyn were identified as being in the Situational Stage of Self-Knowledge.

Pattern Self-Knowledge is characterized by the ability to relate different classes of situations and identify an internal pattern of responses. Early Pattern thinking is more global ("I have a tendency to"), whereas later Pattern thinkers are able to relate patterns and identify the relationship between their inner state and an external response (Weinstein, 1991). Pattern thinkers begin to show the ability to predict a response to an event, and to begin to change this response because of the identification of a pattern (Baker, 1993). Amy, Betsy, Georgia, Hilary and Nancy were categorized as being in the Pattern Stage.

At the fourth stage, Transformational Self-Knowledge, people are able to describe the way in which they identify and/or change their internal responses to the patterns in their lives (Weinstein, 1991). They are able to explain the circular relationship between their feelings, their behaviors, and the situation, and they demonstrate the capacity to alter their feelings or inner states. They take an active role in managing their psychological well-being through their awareness of the relationship of the self and the situation (Weinstein and Alschuler, 1985). Ellen, Kristen, and Robin were identified as Transformational thinkers.

Differences in Self-Knowledge levels are seen in the ways in which participants describe their experience as 'teacher called mommy'. While their satisfaction with their experience varied, this did not correlate with Self-Knowledge. For example, Annie, who was Situational, was very negative about the experience of teaching her children. Nancy, a Pattern thinker, also had an unsuccessful experience teaching her son, Paul, and moved him out of her
classroom after two months. Her experience with her daughter, Emily, had been positive, so she felt unprepared and challenged by her conclusion that she was unable to teach Paul. A third participant, Robin, who was Transformational, had a difficult experience and changed teaching jobs because of the challenge of having her sons in her program. Yet despite their common experience of difficulty, their descriptions of the experience, and their understanding of it differ with the levels of Self-Knowledge represented. These Self-Knowledge differences appear across the themes, as can be seen in the following discussion.

**Theme 1: Expectations/Adjustments**

*Situational Stage.* Participants at the Situational Level describe their expectations and adjustments in terms of what others thought of them. Annie was "really so much into fairness and treating everybody fairly and equally and not showing favoritism to (my) child." She stated that she "really wanted to be able to model with him so the other mothers could watch me and do it the way I did it." Her expectations were external, and were not expressed in terms of her own inner feelings.

Marilyn had high expectations; for the situation: "I think it's all our dream to have our kids where we work"; for herself: "It was really important to me ... that she not misbehave and that I not lose my cool"; and for her young toddler Colleen: "I kept telling her, I'm the teacher now, I'm your teacher now, your teacher and their teacher." She clearly described the various elements of the situation, but did not report the interrelationships of these elements.

*Pattern Stage.* The Pattern thinkers could clearly describe complex patterns of interaction between their child, their child's reactions, and their own experience in their discussion of expectations. They could generalize across specific situations and discuss the experience in a more holistic and abstract way.
They could also recognize the interrelationship between events, patterns of events, and their adjustments to the situation.

Georgia recognized the pattern in her expectations for her son Danny, and related it to her own concern about being a good parent. "I think maybe I expected him to represent me. I expected him to maybe be a little bit better than everybody else, because he has his mother ... who cared for him and knew all these things.... If he did something wrong it would be a reflection on me."

Betsy recognized her patterns pretty clearly, especially since she taught her daughter Beth, and then her son Jeffrey. She knew, for example, that it was her preference to struggle with the dual role than to place her child in another program. "Now I would rather deal with how hard this is and have (my child) here than have her in a place that I know is not going to do well by her.... I was not ready to give them up."

She also could identify the patterns in her expectations for her children and herself. "I've always had to keep things relatively calm, and make sure I spend enough time at home, make sure she gets to bed early, make sure I don't get into too many power struggles with her, and that was difficult for her as well as me." Her pattern thinking shows as she acknowledges the interaction between the events of the day and the emotional state of her daughter. While she demonstrates an understanding of the intricacies of these relationships, she is not yet describing her inner responses or modifications of her inner states.

Transformational Stage. Participants at the Transformational Stage describe internal conflicts between being teacher and being mommy. They are aware from the onset of the experience of the potential problems the cross-over in roles presented, and have strategies for recognizing and modifying these conflicts.
Ellen characterized her response to being a 'teacher called mommy' as one of "incredible ambivalence." Robin's internal conflicts about working and mothering as originated during her pregnancy. "I really was ambivalent... there has always been for me a career/motherhood conflict." She arranged to take maternity leave from her teaching job, and then started her own school when she decided not to return to the public school classroom. "We can't make it on one income... so I made the decision that I would go into business." Her expectations were focused on her understanding of herself. "I did what I had always done; I was really nurturing toward all the kids. I tried to treat all the kids as equals.... I was really in tune with what the kids liked (to do)."

Kristen clearly described her struggles with fairness and the differences between her intellectual and emotional expectations for her son. She could see the interrelationship of her role as teacher with her role as mother. I didn't want to come down harder on him than I did on anyone else... I worried about that a lot.... Because it's your son,... you don't want him to be perfect, you know, you want him to make little mistakes so he's prepared when big mistakes come along. I knew all that intellectually, (but) emotionally I wanted him to be perfect, so that was hard.

She could also explain this conflict to Tyler, demonstrating her recognition of the inner challenges and the classroom manifestations of these conflicts.

I would tell him, sometimes it's really hard to be the teacher and to be your mom in the classroom. If we're trying to do all of these things and you're not being real cooperative, it's hard for mommy to give you other choices because I really expect you to be doing this.

Theme 2: Challenges

Situational Stage. Participants in the Situational Stage identify their challenges as externally based. The children, the other parents, her own child, are all the sources of any difficulties she experienced. Annie saw things in terms
of her children's behavior, not her own influence on them. She identified her
daughter Angela as being "a model child, very quiet, very compliant when I
wasn't the teacher," but as being the opposite when Annie was the teacher.
When describing her son, Adam, she declared "my child was the worst acting in
the whole program, to the point that it would be embarrassing to me.... It might
be one incident each day that I would just cringe inside because he would be
more demanding or louder or break the rules or something more than the other
kids." She attributes the challenge of being a 'teacher called mommy' to her
children's behavior and lack of cooperation.

Marilyn described the challenges globally, "It was hard, really hard," and
looked into other child care options because of her concerns. "I looked around
for another center but I didn't find anything that would meet my needs." She
elaborated on specific incidents that were challenging, and described her actions,
but not her internal processing. Marilyn seemed focused on meeting the needs of
the other children and being fair. "I just tried to keep going, to get through, to be
fair with the other children. I had to let the parents know that they were getting
as much attention and as much care (as needed)."

**Pattern Stage.** The pattern level thinkers describe the challenges they
experience in terms of the patterns of their child's development and of their
internal responses to those patterns. They recognize the complexity of the dual
role on both the child and themselves.

Betsy explained the challenge of her child needing additional attention in
terms of the developmental pattern of a two year old, combined with her
professional experience and her observations of her child. She described the
reciprocal relationship among these factors in this way.

Beth did get more of my attention than any other child during that
time, but I also think she was one of the neediest children in there,
and that may have been because I was there. She not only needed
to figure out this space and these people but she needed to figure out my role in here as her mother. She had to deal with all those complications.

Betsy made decisions as to her classroom response, based on her recognition of these complex patterns of interaction. She describes this in relation to her son, Jeffrey.

I had to really judge which is a day when I can say to him 'No, Jeffrey, today is the day that I will need to invite other children' and then judge 'No, this is a day where he clearly needs me to take just him.'... There were times when I felt like I had to make my role revolve around what his specific needs were going to be.

Amy noted challenges at times such as rest, transitions, toileting and when other children were particularly demanding. She was able to describe patterns in these challenging times, and attributed them in part to Erin's developmental stage.

Transition times were difficult. Whenever it was time to do something she would look and see where I was, what I was doing.... She's much better behaved (at school) than she is at home.... It could be just the age you know, temper tantrums and the kind of breaking away, I need you but I don't want you, that sort of thing.

Amy was also able to see the influence of her own functioning as a 'teacher called mommy'.

I decided that was no big deal, it was not worth having a fight over, she could go to the bathroom with me if she needed to, so she stuck pretty close the first half of the year. We tried to be kind of laid back, you know, realizing that it would be different (with) a mother/child in the same room.

Her ability to recognize both the patterns in her own behavior and in that of her child gave her valuable insight into the experience.

Hilary demonstrated her Pattern level thinking in relation to her son Steven's responses, and in relation to herself. She describes her growing understanding of Steven in this way. 'I never took into consideration that he was
going to have to share me. I didn't think that that would be a big deal to him. But Steven has always been a very sensitive child." Then on the first day of school, Hilary experienced the conflict between needing to attend to someone else when her son wanted her attention, "I wasn't prepared for that."

She described her struggles watching Steven experience social conflicts.

Watching him go through all those learning experiences ... (like) who gets to play on the baseball team ... was really hard for me, so I bottled it up inside, let Steven deal with it the way other parents would have to let their children deal with it, and go home and fall apart in front of Seth (husband).

Hilary was able to describe her consistent responses to these situations, and link the situations to her pattern of responding. "I needed to remember that my son was expected to share his mom, and that it would not always be easy to do so."

Transformational Stage. These participants clearly identify the challenge of the situation as related to their internal functioning. Robin stated, "The sad thing is that my own children got in the way and so my story is not a positive story. You know, what made me so great at what I did almost ruined our family." She saw her role in the challenging situation, and because of this ability to see, was able to transform the situation. Kristen described herself as "lying awake at night wondering how to keep the voice of mommy down and the voice of teacher up." She related her inner states to the challenges in the classroom, and worked to modify them.

Ellen described her inner conflict about her daughter's relationships with other adults.

There was that incredible protective sort of piece of me, feeling wonderful about the chance for Joanna to connect with other adults, to know (that) other adults could care for her, but being sort of caught in this limbo place (feeling) that I didn't care for her as well because I worked full time.
She struggled with her internal response to how others saw her and her child, reflecting on the paradoxical challenges of the dual role. This inner dialogue indicates the Transformational level of her thinking.

**Theme 3: Coping Strategies and Sources of Support**

**Situational Stage.** When discussing support, Situational thinkers again focus on describing the external details of the situation. Marilyn found that she tried "not to get involved with any kind of discipline with my own child.... I would try to get the other teacher to take care of it because it was really hard to ... draw the line ... with my own." While she found this other teacher to be helpful, she commented, "She (the other teacher) wasn't a mother either, so I don't think she truly understood."

Marilyn's main source of support was from the director/owner. "I got a lot of support from the owner of the day care who is a mother.... She would give me breaks in the room, she would take Colleen from me if Colleen was screaming and I couldn't handle it. She would take her out of the room if I was doing a story." She described the details of the support in terms of the situation, not in terms of any emotional or psychological response.

Annie didn't identify many sources of support or coping strategies in her interviews. She mentioned that her husband was not overly involved when their children were young. "He pretty much turned the educational part when they were young children over to me ... once they became teenagers he took over a lot more in the educational role with them." She also was reluctant to rely on other staff because "it was embarrassing to me because I would feel the criticism of 'can't she get her act together to make her kid act right?'." She was more likely to "ask one of them to take over the class and I would go out and deal with my child." Annie did recommend that future 'teachers called mommy' consult with
their colleagues and have a plan for handling discipline issues. Her advice, and her thinking, focuses on the situation.

**Pattern Stage.** Just as they could identify patterns that caused challenges in the classroom, so could the Pattern thinkers recognize patterns in the emotional supports they received as 'teachers called mommy'.

Amy clearly identified her key source of support. "In my case one of my co-teachers had had her daughter when she was teaching in the younger toddler room..... She knew exactly what it was like." She and her co-teacher had "a signal that said 'I can't do it any more'," and her co-teacher would step in and handle the situation. The parents of other children in the room were also supportive of her being with her daughter, "most parents thought it was pretty neat."

Amy also identified her own patterns of behavior in the classroom as part of how she coped with the challenges of Erin's demands on her. "I was consistent, I would follow through and finish what I was doing first, so after a while she just knew that I would do what I said." She also had three days when she was just the teacher, which gave her "a little bit more freedom.... I needed a break from her, if I was going to be with that age group all day (and at home)."

Not only did she receive support from multiple sources, she recognized her own patterns which contributed to her successful experience.

Betsy found support in her own ability to accept help from other staff and to identify times when it was more important for her to intervene with her child as the parent. She was more able to recognize this distinction of needs with her son, Jeffrey. Her clarity around the two roles and when she needed to parent first, or teach first, contributed to her ability to cope with the situation.

I think the parent voice speaks louder. I would hear him get himself to a point where (he was) beyond control or beyond being consoled by this particular person, and with other children I might wait and let (the other staff person) work that through, whereas
with him I'd say 'I'm going to be a better teacher in the other areas if I can deal with this issue right now'. This is one reason why I have him in my program, so I can parent him a little bit longer. You know, there will come a time when he can't come down from the preschool and have me deal with it.

Nancy experienced support from her husband, Kevin, and from her director and colleagues. She noted this pattern in accepting support from her co-teacher.

I think that parents who are teachers tend to err one way or the other. They are either too easy on their kids or they are too hard and I think I (was) probably too hard.... It was easier when the other teacher stepped in, because (she) was more objective.

She also recognized the need for unconditional support. "I really appreciated that there was never any question ... the decision was left to me and whatever decision I made was fully supported." Since Nancy had contrasting experiences with each of her two children, this pattern of support was especially important to her. Her ability to identify these patterns again indicated her Pattern level self-knowledge.

Georgia linked her logical approach to her success teaching her children. Her identification of patterns focused on the connection between her explanations of the situation and her children's self esteem and security, as the following excerpts demonstrate.

I was very logical in explaining things.... I think that my children were secure enough that they knew that even though other kids were sharing me that I was still their mother.... I made sure that in the evening hours they always knew.

Yes, my son(s) did have special attention.... Sometimes if the (other) kids would call me 'mommy', I would say, 'well my name is Georgia, and mommy is a special name that Danny and Joshua have for me'. When Joshua was saying 'Georgia' recently, I said, 'you know what, that is my name, but I'm also your mom. It's OK to call me mommy because that's something only you and I share'.
Georgia’s ability to be clear about the special connection between her sons and her mother role, even while they shared her as teacher, indicates her understanding of the patterns of her experience.

Hilary had a lot of emotional support from her husband, Seth, whom she identified as an involved parent. She also found colleagues and other friends who were teachers to be very supportive. In particular, one friend "would say to me, if this was another child, would you speak to that other person?" This helped Hilary to identify appropriate responses when other children were bothering her son. Another friend helped her monitor her expectations of Steven. "She was always the one who would say to me, 'Would you have made somebody else sit in the thinking chair?' " in response to certain behavioral challenges in the classroom. These examples indicate Hilary's ability to understand the patterns of her thinking in the social context of the classroom, and indicate her ability to integrate this knowledge about herself.

She was also very clear about her pattern of helping Steven cope with the stress of sharing his mom. In this excerpt she described a pattern of responses she had observed in herself and in Steven.

I started the first day of school, sending a napkin in his snack box (with a note on it). I needed to do that for myself and I needed to do that for him. I had to read it to him every day. But I think that was both for me and for him. That was my way of still doing something extra personal for him, and it could say 'love mom and dad and Jeremy' (sibling). Whatever it said, it was the thing that I could do just for him that I couldn't do for anybody else.

As a Pattern Stage thinker, Hilary is clear about these patterns and how she responds to them, but does not describe inner psychological change in relation to the patterns.

**Transformational Stage.** Participants at this level identify multiple levels of support, and see the interrelationship of these support systems with their own
inner ability to cope. Robin found her husband to be supportive during her experience as a 'teacher called mommy'. "I have to give my husband a lot of credit.... he is a great father... I couldn't do it without him, I think it would be very hard for me to be a single parent." Kristen also found her spouse and extended family to be supportive; "my mother commented that everybody should have their mother be their teacher if this is the end result."

Robin also found several strategies for coping in the classroom. She would explain to the other children that her relationship with Sam was different since she was his mother and his teacher. "The kids kind of accepted that Sam really needed to sit in my lap and they were cool about that because I wasn't their mother." She also kept other parents informed of the goings on, especially when Sam demonstrated challenging behaviors. "I always told them in detail what he had done and how I had handled it." Good communication was key in these situations.

Ellen drew children into the circle of support, explaining to them the challenges of the situation for both her daughter Joanna and herself. Her experiences with parents involved a great deal of self reflection on her part.

It is an interesting experience to have parents say to you 'how lucky you are to be with your own child so much' and to feel so ambivalent in your response. To feel like you're just never happy with anything if you respond 'well it's not all wonderful.' But on the other hand I do sense that parents who have always had that arrangement of children being in programs away from them during the day merely idealize time with children.... It looks wonderful but the reality is that in each stage of a child's life there are those struggles in the caregiving process that make it (hard) work.

She was able to identify internal conflicts and to resolve them, managing her feelings about both the parental comment and her own response.

Kristen had "a wonderful aide, Alice, (who could) just step in if it gets to be too much mommy and not enough teacher". Not only could her aide
recognize this inner struggle and intervene, Kristen and Alice could discuss the issues and plan accordingly to improve the situation. "There were days when... he would just be obnoxious and I would be obnoxious.... When that would begin to happen, Alice would say, 'Tyler, come over here, you're going to work in my group'."

Robin also looked within to cope. "I put myself in one of my very sensitive friends' shoes... we're talking about people's precious children here, we're not talking about a commodity...." This ability to reflect, to think about the self and other perspectives, is indicative of the Transformational Stage.

**Theme 4: Benefits**

**Situational Stage.** These participants focus on components of the situation when identifying benefits to the experience. Their thinking focuses on external factors such as curriculum and friendships, rather than on parenting or teaching.

Marilyn described the benefits as relating to her satisfaction with her job, "I really like my job, I like coming to work," and her professional commitment. I think I might be a little more dedicated to the field, this is my career and I expect to have it for quite a few years. I kind of told my daughter that she had to adapt to it because this is what I do. She liked "knowing what's going on all day and watching them grow," and mentioned knowing the group of children who had grown up with her daughter as a positive outcome.

Because Annie identified the source of the challenge as being with her children's behavior, she had a hard time identifying any benefits of the experience, since their behavior did not conform to her expectations. She
preferred being in the classroom environment with her children, but without their classmates being present.

The best part was being able to try stuff out with them ahead of time. I loved being able to do all my activities, use them as guinea pigs, and they loved it too.... My children really helped me to become a much better educator because as I became focused on them and knew them really well, ... they would let me know what works and what doesn't work.

She continued to identify the components of the situation as influencing her response, rather than identifying any pattern to her responses.

**Pattern Stage.** Pattern thinkers are able to integrate the experience of 'teacher called mommy' and identify overriding positive components. These patterns of advantage give them the strength to continue, despite the challenges, and for the most part, lead to the conclusion that the experience was one worth having.

Hilary identified the opportunity to see first hand how her son was doing in school as validating the experience. She had first hand knowledge of the success of her parenting, as well as her teaching.

Watching him grow, watching him make the right decisions, watching him enjoy school, knowing that I think he's really going to do OK.... I got to see that the time we spend with him and the things that we do together (are worth it). He feels pretty good about himself and he has a lot of friends and he knows how to make them.

Hilary's overall response to the experience demonstrates her patterned thinking about the benefits of being a 'teacher called mommy'.

I feel very fortunate to have (had) the opportunity to have our son in my class. It's not always (been) easy, but it's always (been) worth it. (Being) a working mom, I look at this opportunity as a unique 'gift' to share a special year with our son.

Hilary is looking forward to having her second son, Jeremy, in Kindergarten when he is old enough.
Amy was able to cite several benefits to the 'teacher called mommy' experience. As a teacher, she was able to see Erin's growth and development alongside the other children and with the input of her co-teachers.

I could pretty much see how her relationships were going with friends... seeing the changes from when she first came in (the toddler room compared to) when she was ready to go to preschool.... I was assured that she was fitting in and really becoming comfortable there, so then that made it easier for me to do my job a little bit better.... I (was) able to bring up concerns that a teacher may not notice or have any idea about right away.... (The teachers) would also come and tell me if there was a concern... so I could talk about it with her at home. I think it was really helpful, they told me the good things that I could talk about with her (too).

She also found that she was more understanding at home. "Just seeing what they go through in a day (makes me) more supportive in the evening." And she found the experience to be special because "all parents like to watch their kids interact with other kids." She was able to integrate her experiences at school and home, demonstrating her pattern level thinking.

Georgia is now a center director, and identifies her 'teacher called mommy' experience as important to her success in this new position. "I realized as a parent how precious the children are, and I would never put my child somewhere that was substandard. I think it (being a 'teacher called mommy') makes you a better teacher and director." Her pattern level thinking is shown by her ability to generalize the benefits of her experience across situations and responsibilities, from parenting and teaching to administration.

**Transformational Stage.** These women could describe the interaction between their parenting and their teaching. They could see beyond the daily challenges and identify components of each role that were enhanced, regardless of their overall evaluation of the experience.

Ellen's circumstances were particularly challenging, as she had both her daughter, Joanna, and her daughter's best friend, Melissa, who had lost her
mother to cancer. She focused on her own internal struggles as to what Melissa's needs were and how she was able to meet those in this context.

I (have) the constant sense of ambivalence about feeling wonderful to have this opportunity and feeling depressed how little it means I'm accomplishing for myself.... I'm just going to have to believe that Melissa has been helped by our closeness and the intimacy that we have established.

As she lived through the 'teacher called mommy' experience she gained clarity on how to manage these conflicts, to see the benefits, and to consider teaching her second child when the time comes, stating "already I have feelings of 'I can do it again with this next child'."

Robin was very reflective on the benefits of the experience from both the teaching and the parenting perspectives. Even though she found being the teacher with her own children to be unsatisfactory, she said, "I was able to be their teacher, and still am their teacher in a way. They still look to me as someone that they learn from... so that has never ever disappeared." As a parent, she also feels the benefit of having taught them. "I think when I step back and reflect (on the whole situation), that's when I feel pride in my children. (There's) a feeling of pleasure that I get from looking at these two little individuals." Her ability to integrate her negative experience of 'teacher called mommy' with some positive outcomes indicates her ability to transcend the details of the situation and affect her emotional response to a difficult situation.

In contrast to Robin, Kristen described her overall experience as being positive. She mentioned being able to observe Tyler's cognitive and social growth as being direct benefits of the experience. And she identified the benefits to both her role as teacher and her role as mother.

The demonstration of information would sometimes come out of a clear blue sky. I would think these children have paid absolutely no attention to anything we've said or done for a month now and
out of nowhere Tyler would come with this huge chunk of information he had integrated.

As a mother she felt pride in her son's intellectual growth; as a teacher she knew that her curriculum had had an impact on her students.

**Theme 5: Disadvantages**

**Situational Stage.** Situational thinkers are quite able to describe aspects of the 'teacher called mommy' experience as disadvantageous. They use their ability to describe the connections between the situation and their feeling state in a global, general way. Negative feelings are seen as the result of the situation and are not recognized as having patterns or interrelationships.

Marilyn continually referred to the experience as "hard, really hard" and "stressful for both of us." She identified the toddler age as "the worst age" and disciplining her own daughter as the biggest disadvantage.

I didn't want to be angry with her during the day. We don't tell (other parents) every little thing that happens all day so I didn't want to know every little thing that happens. When I got her home I wanted to be happy and not angry at her.

She describes the emotions as being the result of the situation; her way of coping is to manipulate the situation.

Annie was quite articulate about the disadvantages of the experience. She felt that the dual role was very difficult. "I don't think I really worked at being a mother when I was doing it, I think I tried to be more of a teacher, the hard part was to be both." Since she focused on being the teacher, she felt "my credibility was undermined" because her children did not cooperate with her expectations for their behavior. She had a hard time separating school from home, indicating that "one incident that lasted five seconds and I would be reeling about it for the rest of the day." She sums up her experience by saying "I guess I would say I feel
like a failure as a parent because my children don't live up to my expectations for them or my desires for them." Again, her children and the situation are blamed for her feelings of failure and inadequacy.

**Pattern Stage.** Pattern thinking participants are able to acknowledge the interrelationship between their two roles and their responses. They can see beyond the dissatisfaction they feel with the situation and note how they respond to the situations. They also can anticipate and alter their patterns of responding to the negative aspects of the experience.

Betsy was able to clarify the conflict between the two roles, teacher and mother, and the way she felt doing them simultaneously. "I think it (was) the stress of 'I have two roles here and it's hard to keep them separate'." In a given situation, she could see the pattern in her response which created her unhappy feelings: "I felt like, OK, where's the best place for me to be here?... (I felt I was) not fulfilling my (parental) expectations or fulfilling my job requirements as much as I wanted to be able to."

Georgia's struggle with the two roles, and her recognition of a pattern of disadvantage to the experience, centered on her response to an incident where her son bit another child. "I was ashamed as a parent that my child would do that, and then I was ashamed as a teacher that I would allow it to happen." She also recognized that in this situation "it was more emotional for me" than for the other parent. She continues to acknowledge her pattern of recognizing the two roles.

I think it was mother first and teacher second. For example, if the kids were sitting down doing a project, and Danny didn't want to do it, well he would (have to do it) if all the other kids were. He couldn't just pop up ... he needed to follow the rules.... He needed to respect the other children too, and so (it was) times like that when the teacher would step in.
Georgia's ability to recognize her patterns, but not to identify ways to change them, is consistent with her Pattern Stage thinking.

Amy had a strong support system as a 'teacher called mommy', and identified few disadvantages to the experience. Her thinking here demonstrates her recognition of the pattern of interactions she has with toddlers, and her need for separation from her daughter in that context.

I needed a break. The bad thing of having my daughter with me was that it was the same type of behavior 24 hours a day. It got a little old after a while, kids at work saying 'me', 'mine', hitting and all the things that they do, and then to go home and have a temper tantrum at bedtime... it (was) kind of tiring.

Her ability to recognize this pattern led her to acknowledge the benefit of having days at work without Erin. This recursive thinking is indicative of the Pattern Stage.

Hilary, like Amy, had strong supports and recognized the experience as being positive. The patterns of disadvantage she noted focused on the reactions of colleagues in the teachers' room (in a public elementary school), and her need to refrain from conversations about her son for fear of being identified as bragging.

I just want to be fair to Steven, and I make it a point not to talk about him in the teachers' room. If something gets brought up from someone else I'll talk about it, but I try not to do that. I don't want people to get tired of Steven before they've had a chance to meet him. Given the opportunity I think anyone would love to brag or talk or tell a story about their child, and I don't want people to get tired of him before they have had a chance to see what he is all about.

Knowing that her son will be in the classrooms of her colleagues as he proceeds through elementary school has made Hilary adapt her pattern of responding about her child, indicating her ability to adjust internal responses based on external expectations.
Nancy identified her patterns of response to her experience as 'teacher called mommy'.

I was far too concerned about what parents thought of my teaching.... It certainly wasn't a good scenario for Paul.... When my son was awful in my classroom I questioned my own teaching ability. I thought if I can't teach my own child how can I expect to teach other children.

Nancy's ability to identify this pattern in her thinking, and to alter the external aspects of the experience, that is to move Paul to another setting, are clear evidence for her Pattern level thinking. She does not yet find internal ways to manage these conflicts which she can clearly recognize in her response to the situation.

Transformational Stage. Transformational thinkers see the disadvantages of the situation as related to their inability to manage their inner states. They do not identify their child, colleagues, or other external factors, but rather focus on their own thoughts and feelings. This self-knowledge allows them to alter their inner psychological response, thereby improving the situation.

Kristen described the main disadvantage as her inability to manage the mommy voice when in school, and her inability to leave teacher at school.

There was a tone of voice that mommy would use that the teacher very seldom used.... 'You really need to go and do this!' The teacher very seldom ever used that really stern kind of voice.... The teacher could always give a choice... 'I would like us to try and think about doing this'.... For mommy the bottom line was 'There is no choice, you are going to do this right now.'

She also found it hard to leave things behind. "On the rides home, if it had been a bad day I really had to struggle not to go over every single thing." Even though she identified the different emotional states, and was aware of their influence, she recognized that she could not always manage them.
Ellen found herself struggling with her daughter's behavior in the classroom.

I never succeeded in rationalizing myself out of the emotional response.... I was just out of control, out of control in terms of just shutting off that teacher piece and just being on a strictly emotional mother/child level power struggle. That stayed with me then, for so long after, the sense of disappointment around that, my not being able to see with real clear eyes what was going on. Why couldn't I respond to her in a less invested way around such trivia in the classroom?... I became much more aware... I did feel like I was able to step back a little more and just observe.

Ellen also experienced "a lot of self questioning about my relationships with other children in the preschool," when a parent withdrew her child from the program. Recall that her daughter's best friend was also in the classroom, having just lost her mother to cancer.

I could agree that they (my relationships) were qualitatively different because of that incredible demand of a child or children (Joanna and Melissa) that I had special interest in.... And I do feel that although there is no other parent that has made that direct of an accusation or connection between my personal situation and their child's experience in preschool, I still muse about ... the question 'Has it been to every child's detriment, having my daughter there? Have I let other children suffer in that experience?' (It was) unfortunate for my own sense of morale, but you know, I do think that it was an unfair sort of attack by a parent and inappropriately directed at me.

As she worked through these inner conflicts about her effectiveness as a teacher and as a mother, she moved into Transformational thinking, becoming able to manage and modify her responses to this conflict.

Robin is the only participant in this study who changed her employment as a direct result of her 'teacher called mommy' experience. Yet she is able to
reflect on her contribution to the negative aspects of the experience, rather than identifying external causes of the challenges.

I bent over backwards to treat everyone fairly and be professional, but I denied at times the needs of my son.... I was so angry because he was preventing me from doing my 'important' work. Ironic! My most important work was raising my own children, but at the time I had a harder time seeing that. The best thing I did was quit (that job)... by getting... some distance I feel I got my son back.

Theme 6: Transition and Separation

Situational Stage. The participants at the Situational Stage were eager to end the 'teacher called mommy' experience. They could identify the negative aspects of the situation and moved to end it, rather than working to modify their feelings. Both described guidelines they put into place to protect themselves from this type of difficult situation in the future. Annie said, "I have my children involved in my teaching as little as possible." Marilyn has established rules for other staff in the center she now directs, to manage the parent-child relationship at the center. "Home is home and school is school" is her guideline.

Annie made the decision after a year with each child that "neither they nor I were showing our best being in the same classroom together, so I sent them both to other programs." Her decision to end the dual role was almost as abrupt as her decision to teach them: "There was no way I was going to be denied the pleasure of being with my own (kids)." The Situational nature of her thinking interferes with her ability to reflect on the role her expectations played on the outcome of their shared experience. She does identify a mixed response to the change. "I could have taught my son better than they did because they didn't do all the neat stuff with him that I would have done, and that was hard for me. But the good part of it was he learned to separate."
It is interesting to note that Annie has found herself unable to become involved in her children's classrooms since her 'teacher called mommy' experience. Her son was in a Kindergarten program she did not approve of, yet she states that she "never did a thing because I didn't want to intimidate them with who I was and my educational background.... I should have taken more of an advocacy role than I did, but I didn't have the courage to do it because I was a teacher." As a Situational thinker, she couldn't extract herself from the details of the situation to see patterns or to act upon those patterns.

Marilyn moved out of the classroom after six months, when a new teacher was hired to work with toddlers. "At first it was really hard because she kept asking for me and crying." She noted that things improved fairly rapidly: "She would have wonderful days, she wasn't as aggressive any more." But she maintained close contact with her child's teachers as the assistant director and subsequently the director of the center. Her daughter's impending transition to first grade, and therefore out of the center, had her worried. "How am I going to know ... what they did all day?" She is not able to plan for this new situation because she is focused on the situation itself, rather than the patterns that influence her response to that situation.

**Pattern Stage.** As they describe the transition and separation process, the Pattern thinkers identify patterns in their child and in themselves, that relate to their developmental knowledge. Conflicts between their response and their child's response, their needs and their child's needs, are understood and recognized as playing a role in the adjustment. Thus they are relating internal responses across situations, integrating the multiple aspects of the situation and creating a patterned response to their experience.

Amy's experience of separation and transition, when Erin moved to a preschool classroom at age three, was initially quite traumatic. "They had to
physically take her from me crying, kicking, screaming.... It took about a month before I could leave her without her crying." Although Amy described herself as "very happy when Erin went to preschool because having her (in my room) was sometimes really restrictive", the actual experience of the separation was painful. Erin was moving to a new classroom, new group of children, new teachers, and separating from her mother for the first time in her memory.

Once again, Amy's thinking led her to a pattern that involved her knowledge of child development, her experience as a parent and as a teacher. "Of course (because Erin) only comes two days a week... transitions take a little bit longer." Once Erin had adjusted to the new room, Amy described herself as "in general more relaxed. Your mind isn't always thinking or you're not always watching her, checking her. You can't help but watch from a distance because it's fun, so that was gone. I could focus more on the other children." She relates the interrelationship between the events of Erin's not being in the classroom and her ability to focus on other children.

Hilary recognized that Steven's sadness about leaving her classroom is related to a number of factors in their situation.

He's sad about next year. At the end of the school year I asked the children how they felt about going to first grade.... Steven told me the other day (that he still wasn't positive) about school next year. People ask him who his teacher is going to be (and he) doesn't want to talk about it. So we're preparing ourselves for having a hard time.

Kindergarten is such a big step for most kids because it is their first year of 'education'. This will be Steven's big step (to first grade) because he had (me). This is like our big year, I'm not going to have him and he's not going to have me.

Hilary's ability to integrate her perspective as a teacher, as a parent, and Steven's perspective as the child in the situation, indicates her pattern thinking.
Georgia recognizes the advantages and disadvantages of her dual role in relating to Danny's teachers in elementary school.

I think I'm more of an advocate for my children because of my background. During parent conferences I think I just have to learn to sit there and be the parent and not be the teacher.

When I'm the parent what happens is nicer. I can just sit back and listen and enjoy what they're saying about him. I can think 'OK, does he need to be doing this or that' because I want to make sure he's well rounded.

Georgia differentiates the patterns of her response as parent from her response as teacher, but does not appear to modify her inner feelings from either perspective.

**Transformational Stage.** The Transformational thinkers are again able to identify and manage inner feeling states with regard to transition and separation issues. Kristen's son, Tyler, was extremely sad at ending his year with her; she was able to help him understand why his situation as her student was unique, and gave him strategies to manage his sadness that were age appropriate. Her ability to apply her developmental knowledge to the conflicting feelings in her son, and to use her ability to reflect and modify feelings to help him, indicates Transformational Self-Knowledge. Not only was she proactive with regard to her own feelings, she was able to be so for her son.

Ellen tried several variations of the schedule during her two years as 'teacher called mommy'. For a few months she hired someone to come to her home two days per week to be with Joanna, and was able to identify changes to her inner sense of self as a result of this change.

I can clearly speak ... of a sense of liberation, of gaining a piece of myself back again when there were those two mornings a week that I could just leave her at home and drive myself to work alone.
Another change occurred when Melissa's schedule changed; Joanna and Ellen were now in the classroom without Melissa two days per week.

That turned out to be a real benefit too, because Joanna and I did have ... just a wonderful time. We happily went to school together, happily were in school together for those weeks. What I could pinpoint was the fact that Melissa suddenly wasn't in her sphere all the time, and there was a sense that 'I am with mom everyday again.'

Clearly on those couple of days that Melissa was home (I was) feeling a real sense of interest in who Joanna was in the classroom alone, because that just hadn't been my experience, you know, it had just been the two of them. So those couple of days Joanna was there and Melissa wasn't there, seemed particularly wonderful for me in terms of really being able to get a view of Joanna finally. If felt like I finally had a couple days a week when I could really just be that person I'd hoped that this experience might let me be, which was to be there, to be aware of what she was doing, be able to take joy in how she interacted and what she did and how she did it and just to kind of enjoy all of those aspects of who she was in that setting. So that really felt like a gift after two years.

Throughout this experience Ellen is aware of her own changes and adjustments, and becomes more articulate about how she wants to be in the situation.

Ellen teaches for nine months each year; when Joanna continued in the preschool classroom after Ellen had completed the academic year, "she was completely resistant to going. It was a benefit to (realize) I could have been struggling for two years to bring her to another preschool. In ways that would have been difficult and taxing too." Ellen recognizes the impact this would have had on her and alters her inner response to the struggle of getting Joanna to school. This is additional evidence of her Transformational thinking.

Because Robin chose to change jobs due to her 'teacher called mommy' experience, the details of her transition and separation differ from those of the other participants. Nonetheless, it is her thinking about this decision that characterizes her as Transformational. "I really, for a time, lost sight of my own
family. I'm just so grateful that it didn't get worse, that I saw it. It was a very difficult year but I saw that I had to give up (my business), I tell you I grieved so long for that business.... I was my own boss, I was doing something that I really liked, I had an impact on other families.... It took a really long time to repair the damage that had been done with Sam and me." She identifies her own patterns of behavior that influenced the situation, and transformed things by taking action and by reflective thinking. "What I regret was just becoming so preoccupied with my career that I couldn't see my family,... that I was sabotaging my own family in a way." Her ability to look inward and understand these behavior patterns enabled her to make constructive changes in the situation, characteristic of the Transformational Stage.

Theme 7: Learnings

Situational Stage. These participants identify very concrete, specific learnings, and do not appear to generalize or integrate these experiences to other parenting and teaching experiences.

Annie described herself as being more understanding and empathetic towards parents, because of her experience as a parent, saying that "most parents are trying their best." She stated, "I think parent/teachers, the teachers who are parents and the parents who are teachers, it's the best possible combination.... They understand each other's roles because they are able to bridge two very different things." However she described her sources of growth as relating to her experience as a parent, not to her 'teacher called mommy' experience.
Marilyn was able to list things she has learned about teaching and parenting in a concrete way, relating them back to the situation of 'teacher called mommy'.

It was a really good learning experience, definitely, and I think I can relate to parents more now. As we have teachers coming in, bringing their own children (I have) kind of a blueprint to be able to lay out and help them (make) the best plan for their child and for them, so they can work here.

You have so much invested in your own child, teachers without children don't seem to understand.... It's much easier for me to step in and handle somebody else's child; I'll have them go take care of mine (because it's) much easier.... People who haven't had their own child with them, whether they be parents or not, I don't think they can understand what it's like for you to watch other people take care of them or discipline them.

Her learnings all focused on the specifics of teachers with their own children in the workplace.

**Pattern Stage.** Participants at this stage could integrate their learning from their 'teacher called mommy' experience with their ability to teach or their ability to parent.

Amy's description of her growth from the 'teacher called mommy' experience focused on her experience as a parent.

I'm better able to understand why kids are tired and a bit on edge after a (long) day, you know, trying to be good all day, get along with their friends, listen to teachers.... I notice those differences on days that Erin comes to school, so I think I'm a little more sympathetic as to why she's like that and make concessions (at home).

Because of her 'teacher called mommy' experience, she can interrelate her experience as teacher with her experience as parent, and provide a more appropriate environment for her daughter.

She identified her experience as a parent as making her "more sensitive to children's behaviors, because I know now that they act a lot differently at school..."
than they do at home.... Just being able to empathize a little bit with the parents can help them out." Likewise, her experience as a teacher had helped her with her parenting. "I would say that working in the child care profession... enabled me to know why children do the things they do and how I should react.... I had experience to fall back on whereas a lot of first time parents are just confused and unsure of what to do." The 'teacher called mommy' experience gave her the opportunity to integrate these two patterns in her life.

Nancy was less clear about the integration of her patterns, perhaps because her experiences with her two children were contradictory. Nonetheless, she identified the following pattern in her thinking, based on her experience.

I realized now as a parent that I'm just as susceptible as other parents to ... investing too much of myself in my children and not being able to make that separation, that the child is separate from me. If (my) child is misbehaving, it's not a reflection of whether I'm a good teacher or a bad teacher, or a good parent or a bad parent.

Nancy is learning to identify these patterns in her thinking, as a result of her dual role experience. When asked to be her daughter's Brownie troop leader, she concluded that for her it is better to separate the roles. "I would like to enjoy my daughter as her parent."

Betsy learned how to separate herself from each role, and how to identify when they were in conflict with each other. She could identify her impact on her children and vice versa, demonstrating a recursive pattern to her thinking.

My children have always played off my attitudes. (When) I'm having a difficult time that's when I really have to slow down and say 'hey, this is why we're having hard departures, this is why people are falling apart at night. You have to do something about your attitude'.... I've learned not to project because if I sit on it and dwell on it ... I get stressed out.... We're both learning to say, 'Well, let's just see what happens when we get to it.

While she clearly describes this pattern and the modifications she makes in relation to this pattern, she is not yet relating internal adaptations.
Betsy also saw changes in her teaching, based on her 'teacher called mommy' experience. She has used her knowledge of her child's individual emotional needs to better understand other children.

Just the emotional piece of being in the room with a person that you are so much more invested in, I think, made me just so much more responsive to who the child is, even though I'm not as emotionally invested (with all the children).... I was so much more invested in who Lisa (another toddler) was, because she was dealing with so many of the same kind of issues (as Jeffrey was).... I think because of (having) Beth and Jeffrey (in my classroom) I was more able to accept that from her and deal with that from her.... It's (being) able to feel for that child, being able to put myself in their place a little bit more because I put myself in that place through my own children.

Again, this recognition of a pattern of response is indicative of the Pattern stage of Self-Knowledge.

Because Georgia has moved into a director's role since her 'teacher called mommy' experience, she is able to link what she has learned to this new role. This indicates that her understanding of her patterns of behavior and reaction carries across situations and integrates different classes of situations.

I think sometimes as a parent I feel bad if one of my kids has had a bad day, where they haven't been as well-behaved as they should be. I feel bad as a parent (because) ... it's going to be a long night at home.... I also feel bad as a director because I know what it's like to have kids that misbehave. So I'm empathetic as a teacher and I just feel frustrated as a parent.

She is noting conflicting patterns based on her knowledge of herself in the various roles of teacher, parent, director.

Hilary identified changes in herself as both a parent and a teacher. She can describe her pattern of reaction to parental needs as a teacher, changes due to having both perspectives, and shifts in her parental response to her son. The following three excerpts describe her recognition of her personal growth in
relation to parental expectations of teachers, the dual role of 'teacher called mommy', and to her parental role.

I think I'm different for it, more sympathetic to parents and maybe treat the whole community of parent, teacher, classroom and school differently. Being the parent, they have needs that I have never noticed before, not being in that position. So I think I'm more sensitive to them.

Now that I've got a child in the classroom, I want to make sure that all of his developmental areas are tended to. Now I'm wondering (if) they are going to be because a teacher spends so much time in classroom management. I'm looking at issues a little bit differently now. I think when a parent comes to me with that concern I can look at it from a different angle and say 'Yeah, I know where you're coming from.'

I might be a better parent for that (matter) ... knowing that I wanted so badly to say something, but I didn't. Maybe (I can) just respect Steven's ability for those (situations), and say, I know he can take care of it, he can handle it.

Hilary's ability to recognize these patterned responses, to identify the connections among the settings in which she is teacher and mother, and to relate this to changes in her response indicates her level of self-knowledge. She is beginning to recognize her internal management of these patterns, as the last sentence quoted above indicates, but she is not solidly able to describe her own management of her patterns. Thus Hilary may be showing movement toward Transformational thinking. Perhaps her experience with her second child will be different, based on this beginning evidence of the shift to Transformational Self-Knowledge.

Transformational Stage. The Transformational thinkers could identify the multiple influences of teaching, parenting, and being a 'teacher called mommy', on their functioning in each of these roles. They understand some of the conflicts they experienced as relating to career and motherhood, not just teaching her own
child. They are also able to identify subtle transformations in their thinking and reactions to situations with parents and with their child.

Ellen's reflection on what she learned was characterized by her identification of internal states and her responses to those internal states, on a number of occasions during the interview. She identified her own confidence level as influencing her experience, and her struggles to achieve balance as teacher and mother. She created strategies to manage her stress level in the experience, indicating Transformational thinking.

I find that I protect myself from another huge scene. You know, I just feel like there (are only so) many scenes a day one can handle.... It feels like it just takes me a lot of energy ... and emotional preparation.... There were certainly times when it really made me feel like I was bordering on (pause) insanity is strong but certainly conflict, internal conflict that was really provocative, and potentially dangerous to me mental health-wise.

Ellen is highly aware of her inner conflicts and the difficulties she experiences as a result of her feeling states. She accepts the responsibility for how she is feeling and how that influences her and her response to others.

I have to say out loud again (that I felt) just a general sense of sadness on my part, and too much sense of assuming the responsibility myself for not feeling that this was a great choice for our lives for these two years. You know, really having hoped that the second year would be more a sense of fulfillment around being able to be in the unique position of seeing so much of her on a daily basis and seeing how she was in the world and with friends and materials, ways that a parent (who) leaves (their child at) the center for the eight hours doesn't get to see.

Because Robin was able to see herself as both the parent and the teacher, she described learning about both components of her dual role. Now she sees part of teaching as being an advocate for parents and children.

As a teacher now, if I have a problem or a concern, I will call up (the parents) after I figure out a solution. I'll say Tm reporting to you what happened and I have a plan. What do you think of my
plan?... I think a teacher should look at the relationship with the family as a partnership.

Robin's learning about parenting focuses on the conflict between career and motherhood, and shows her internal processing of this conflict.

To be a parent I think I always need to remember, whenever I plan anything, how will this impact on my family.... If I were really honest, it's easier for me to make sacrifices as a professional. It's harder for me (as a parent)... I think I take my family more for granted.

Kristen articulated changes in how she interacts with parents. Her understanding of her own interest, as a parent, in her child's personality and social growth, based on her experience in the classroom with him, helped her modify her relationship with the parents of her students.

It made me also be a little more patient with some of the mothers. It was hard sometimes to remember that this was not their only life, that this was only a little tiny piece of their life.

I changed how I would approach a parent to discuss a problem.... I told parents different kinds of things that their children were doing.... I was trying to share more of themselves as little people, not of their work.

Kristen also mentioned changes in her teaching style, based on her experience teaching her son.

I think that things that I may have thought were real important, I realize now are not as important... I think it has made me once again realize the need to be more flexible, and allow more time for choices.

She recognized the interaction between her growth and that of her son: "I think we both grew, and he kind of became a measuring stick (for that growth)." Her understanding of these changes gives evidence for her Transformational level thought.
Implications of the Experience

The second component of the Focus Group allowed the participants to share the applications and implications of their experiences. They identified four populations who could benefit from what they learned: parents, teachers, administrators/support staff, and prospective 'teachers called mommy'. While this discussion is similar to the theme Learnings, it focuses here on direct recommendations for each of these populations.

Participants repeatedly highlight the importance of communication between parents and teachers as essential to a successful learning environment for the child. When listing recommendations for parents, they encourage parents to ask questions and to listen to the answers, remembering that teachers are human too. They feel it is important for parents to be aware of the teacher's personal circumstances as part of this understanding. They urge parents to visit the classroom, observe, and try to understand the teacher's perspective. Trust is identified as important, as is the fact that teachers need to attend to the whole group rather than just their child. They suggest that parents make their concerns known in a kind way, and that they not let little things build up. This communication needs to be accomplished in an atmosphere of trust and respect, and parents need to understand that the teacher may have to set boundaries and priorities for the whole group of students. They feel that parents need to understand that teachers are doing passionate work and are in this profession out of a deep commitment to children and learning. Becoming a team with the teacher should be a high priority for parents, according to these 'teachers called mommy'.

Their recommendations for teachers likewise focus on the importance of teamwork, respect, and communication with parents. They want to remind
teachers that parenting is a very hard job, and that parents need to be encouraged and affirmed as parents. Sharing positive anecdotes frequently is highly recommended, to avoid the situation of putting parents on the defensive. Parental values and responsibility need to be respected by teachers. Participants in this study feel that teachers need to listen to parents, to accept their feedback, to observe parent-child interaction, and to refrain from judging parents. An important recommendation is for teachers to ask parents early on what their specific hopes and desires are for their child's school year. They recognize that parents uniquely understand their own child but find it difficult to distance themselves emotionally; that understanding should guide teacher interactions with parents.

The 'teachers called mommy' interviewed in this study also have suggestions for administrators and support staff with regard to their experience. These comments focus specifically on the 'teacher called mommy' experience, whereas the above recommendations for teachers and parents are more generally applied to all teachers and parents. Administrators need to be proactive in arranging support for the 'teacher called mommy', according to these data, because the situation presents special needs and unique challenges. The administrator should be willing to step in, to talk, to relieve the teacher in times of stress. The administrator should be able to help the 'teacher called mommy' identify the issues, reflect on the entire situation, and guide her response to these challenges. This support is worthwhile because a high quality teacher is worth the extra effort. Above all, the participants feel that the administrator must recognize that each situation is different and will need special attention.

Prospective 'teachers called mommy' can also benefit from the recommendations provided by participants in this study. Suggestions to this population include specific details such as scheduling separate parent-teacher
conferences for the father to insure his involvement in his child's education, and talking to the child in an age-appropriate way about the situation. Prospective 'teachers called mommy' should consider their child's temperament and developmental level, their co-workers, and their comfort with teaching prior to considering teaching their child. These experienced 'teachers called mommy' recommend an honest appraisal of one's teaching goals, continual revisiting of these goals, taking time away from both roles on a regular basis, and open communication with colleagues, family members, and administrators. They suggest observing and talking with other 'teachers called mommy', and remind prospective 'teachers called mommy' that the experience will not be easy or perfect, and that they should be willing to reevaluate and change if it is not in the best interest of their child.
CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

Overview

This chapter will discuss the results of the research and the implications of these results for parents, teachers, administrators and support staff, and prospective 'teachers called mommy'. Application of the findings will be discussed, and suggestions for further research considered. The chapter will conclude with implications of the 'teacher called mommy' experience for the new vision of the Schoolhome, and with recommendations for teacher preparation.

Discussion of Findings

The current study is organized around three research questions. The following paragraphs discuss how the results provide answers to each question.

Question 1: What themes, issues and concerns emerge from 'teachers called mommy' as they describe the experience of teaching their own child in an early childhood classroom setting?

The in-depth interviews provided ample data from which to extract major themes, which are consistent across the ages and settings for the 'teacher called mommy' experience. There is a chronological nature to some of the themes, due in part to the format of the first interview which began with professional background and experiences, the transition to parenting, and concluded by
focusing on the experience of 'teacher called mommy'. These chronological themes are Expectations and Adjustments, Challenges, Coping Strategies and Sources of Support, Transition and Separation.

The second interview focused on the meaning of the experience of 'teacher called mommy' to the participant as a teacher and as a parent. This interview lead to themes that were more evaluative of the experience. These are the themes labeled Benefits, Disadvantages, and Learnings. Within each theme there is a tremendous range of response, reflecting the positive or negative character of the individual participant's experience and the developmental level of the child. Due to the small sample size and the qualitative focus of the research, no attempt has been made to draw specific conclusions concerning the frequency of any specific response.

With regard to the first three themes, Expectations and Adjustments to the Experience, Challenges in the Classroom, Coping Strategies and Sources of Support, the 'teachers called mommy' express fairly common concerns and issues. Their desire to be fair and successful, and their struggle with their own child's misbehavior cut across all the situations and individuals. A very common coping strategy was to create something unique for the child in the setting to set him/her apart and provide a special experience. Colleagues are identified most frequently as sources of support, with spouse and family next. The participants also indicate the need for special support for both the child and the 'teacher called mommy' in order to create the most successful experience.

The responses vary more widely on the description of the Benefits and Disadvantages of the experience, based on the positive or negative outcome of the experience for each participant. Likewise the Learnings theme consists of a wide range of reflection on parenting, teaching, and parent-teacher relations. The theme called Transition and Separation identifies the process by which the
'teacher called mommy' and her child concluded their shared experience. This theme also indicates a range of responses for both the child and the 'teacher called mommy'. The transition and separation experiences are not necessarily parallel to the adjustments made at the beginning of the experience; again due to the small sample size no attempt has been made to quantify these relationships.

The themes, issues and concerns expressed by the 'teachers called mommy' in this study echo those found in previous research by Spencer (1986) and Claesson and Brice (1989). Spencer's (1986) contemporary women teachers described overlap and interrelationship between school and home life. The 'teachers called mommy' in the present study not only found this overlap and interrelationships, they were often unable to separate the two because of the simultaneous dual role they were experiencing. Thus their experience was magnified in intensity when compared to the typical female teacher.

Claesson and Brice (1989) studied early childhood educators who were also mothers; these women found their dual roles complementary and beneficial to each separate role, providing they experienced strong positive support. Claesson and Brice's informants identified themselves as having improved parent communication and increased compassion and understanding for children in their class. Likewise, the current 'teachers called mommy' cited improvements in their understanding of children and parents, and stressed the importance of teamwork and good communication with parents. They feel better able to relate to parents' needs and children's needs in the classroom, based on their experience as a 'teacher called mommy'.

Teachers in the Claesson and Brice (1989) study described their high expectations of themselves as a problem area within the dual role. 'Teachers called mommy' in the current study experience this pattern of high expectations for their own behavior as well. An additional problem identified in the current
study is that high expectations were also placed on the child. In pursuit of the goal of fairness, the current 'teachers called mommy' found themselves expecting their child to achieve at a higher social, behavioral, and cognitive level than peers in the classroom. Their knowledge of their child's abilities sometimes resulted in pushing their child to achieve; their desire to have the relationship invisible promoted an expectation that their child could put aside the parental role and respond to them only as the teacher. This was often unrealistic and not developmentally appropriate, especially with the younger children. Again, the 'teacher called mommy' experience was more intense than that of a teacher who is also a mother.

The Claesson and Brice (1989) informants identified support groups, exercise, spousal involvement with parenting, taking time alone, paying for household help and setting priorities as helpful strategies for coping with their experience as working mothers who are also teachers. The current participants emphasized the need for support in the workplace much more so than any previous study, citing collegial, familial, and administrative support as essential to coping with the simultaneous dual role. These 'teachers called mommy' did not focus on the typical dual career family issues of housework and leisure time when discussing their need for support. They valued communication among supportive colleagues, an administrator who recognized the uniquely challenging nature of their work and home life, and a supportive husband as essential. In short, their focus was on the human relationships rather than on the household tasks. Perhaps they took the household tasks for granted as working mothers; perhaps the importance of these tasks was minimal compared to the challenges of the interrelationships among colleagues, families and children. The dual role of 'teacher called mommy' requires a different focus of support.
Both the Claesson and Brice (1989) teacher/mothers and the current 'teachers called mommy' give support to Seiber's (1974) notion of role accumulation when considering the dual role of teacher and mother. Role accumulation occurs with overlapping and complementary roles, when skills learned in one role transfer to the other and enhance the well-being and self esteem of the individual. The 'teachers called mommy' in the current study clearly identified the impact of their parenting on their teaching ability, and of their teaching on their parenting success. But they were able to point to even increased teaching and parenting abilities due to the 'teacher called mommy' experience, indicating that they did experience an accumulation of benefit from the two roles.

Question 2: How is the self-knowledge developmental level of the 'teacher called mommy' reflected in how she experiences and how she describes her dual role?

The self-knowledge analysis of the themes from the 'teachers called mommy' yielded differences in the ways in which they described their dual role experience. Three levels of self-knowledge were identified: Situational, Pattern, and Transformational. Within each theme, self-knowledge level helped to identify the variations in the quality of responses and the expression of the theme. Other factors, such as positive or negative outcome of the experience, advice to others, age of child, or setting of the 'teacher called mommy' experience, did not provide consistent categories of response. Thus the self-knowledge analysis was extremely useful in understanding and organizing the data within each theme.

The participants at each self-knowledge developmental level demonstrate qualitatively different approaches to the themes. The Situational thinkers in the study consistently express their concerns, their coping strategies and their
recommendations in relation to external factors. Their statements tend to be
global and focused on the details of the situation. They do not describe inner
feeling states or relationships across situations, only citing concrete, specific
learnings from the experience.

Likewise, the Pattern thinkers and Transformational thinkers reflect the
characteristics of their self-knowledge stage. Pattern thinkers note similarities in
the patterns of their responses to groups of situations within the larger
experience of 'teacher called mommy'. They are able to relate their parenting role
to their teaching role, and identify ways in which they have changed their
behavior, based on their knowledge of their internal patterns of response.

Transformational thinkers demonstrate further development of self-
knowledge; they identify their inner conflicts and the ways in which they
manage and change based on these inner feeling states. They are able to sort out
when they are being an effective teacher or an effective parent from when they
are ineffective in either role, and they know how to seek help and support. These
clearly identifiable differences among the participants' descriptions of their
experiences, support the application of self-knowledge theory to the dual roles of
teaching and mothering.

Self-knowledge level does not correspond to or predict the success of the
experience, as reported by the 'teacher called mommy'. In other words, there are
participants at each self-knowledge level who identify the experience of teaching
their own child as positive, one they would recommend to others or repeat
themselves. There are also participants at each self-knowledge level who found
the experience to be more challenging than they had expected or than they felt
they or their child could manage. These participants ended the 'teacher called
mommy' experience for themselves before it would have naturally ended.
The way in which these participants describe their experience, and the way in which they choose to end it, does vary by self-knowledge level, however. Situational thinkers were definite about their recommendations and described the transition and separation in relation to external factors. Pattern thinkers focused more on their role in the difficulty or success of the experience, were able to identify their internal patterns of response, and struggled with the balance between the child's situation and their response. Transformational thinkers were reflective and were able to describe how they managed the separation for themselves and the child, and what the outcomes were. They described an ongoing process of internal problem solving and adjustment which lead to external changes in the situation.

To summarize, the self-knowledge developmental level of each participant in this study is clearly reflected in the description of the experience and in the range of response relating to the common themes. The level self-knowledge development is not reflected in the quality of the experience; there is no relation between characterization of the 'teacher called mommy' experience as positive or as negative and the self-knowledge level of the individual participant. The self-knowledge level provides an extremely useful model for evaluating each participant's response.

**Question 3:** What potential applications emerge from the 'teacher called mommy' experience that will be valuable to improve teacher-parent relations?

The participants in this study identify four populations who will benefit from their shared knowledge and experience: parents, teachers, administrators and support staff, and prospective 'teachers called mommy'. Based on their simultaneous dual role experience, they offer advice to each of these groups as to how to improve parent-teacher and teacher-parent relations, how to support and
guide teachers in the dual role, and how to decide if the 'teacher called mommy' experience was appropriate to one's situation.

The 'teachers called mommy' in this study are clear in their belief that parents and teachers must work as a team in order for the child's education to be successful. Communication, trust and respect are essential for this teamwork to develop, and both parents and teachers can contribute to the process. Since not every teacher will be a 'teacher called mommy', we must find ways to support teachers to develop these interpersonal skills as part of their professional training. Likewise, parents can be taught ways to interact more successfully with teachers, perhaps through parent-teacher organizations and workshops.

Administrators and other support staff were essential in influencing the success of the 'teacher called mommy' experience for the participants in this study. One application of the research results is to develop a set of guidelines for administrators regarding personal support for teachers in general and teachers experiencing the dual role in specific. These guidelines include policies around access, communication, problem solving, collegial relations, and transitions.

'Teachers called mommy' need specific support and recognition of the daily struggle they face, not blanket approval or denial of the experience. They need guidance and support around challenges with families, discipline issues, expectations, and accepting help. They need someone to acknowledge the unique stresses of the experience, and to listen and reflect with them on the status of their adjustment and their child's experience. Participants in this study appreciated support they received in the workplace, yet it was haphazard and inconsistent. Administrators must learn to recognize this particular area of professional support and respond on a case-by-case basis.

Prospective 'teachers called mommy' clearly benefit from the results of this study. While there is no clear-cut recommendation with regard to making the
decision to teach one's own child, the data suggest several important factors to take into consideration. Thoughtful analysis of one's own expectations of self and child behavior, the developmental level and temperament of the child, the teacher's expertise with and enjoyment of the age level and setting, the support systems available in the workplace and at home, will contribute to a more successful experience as a 'teacher called mommy'. While the majority of the participants recommend being a 'teacher called mommy', they acknowledge that everyone is unique and must reflect on these factors throughout the experience.

Because of the specific applications of this research to four populations involved in early childhood education, several potential workshops and articles emerge from the data that will have relevance to professional development for teachers and administrators in early childhood, particularly those involved with children age six and under, as well as to parents and future teachers. The relevance of these data to the early childhood profession is clear. Collaboration between the participants and the researcher can facilitate the presentation of the results to the various professional groups, as well as to the teacher education community.

Teacher-Parent Relations

This study originated from a clear concern about the relationships between teachers and parents in contemporary schools, with a secondary goal of improving the ways in which we prepare teachers to interact with parents. The literature has acknowledged the enmity between teachers and parents (Lightfoot, 1978; McPherson, 1972; Waller, 1932) and the distinctions between the two roles (Katz, 1980; Lortie, 1975). Yet some of these same researchers have called for collaboration and cooperation between teachers and parents, despite their
findings of separation and antagonism between the two groups (Lightfoot, 1977; Waller, 1932). More recent research has focused on the overlap and continuity between teaching and parenting (Biklen, 1993; Claesson and Brice, 1989; Spencer, 1986). The current study connects to this most recent line of thinking about the dual role of teaching and parenting.

This study shows that continuity of thinking about the child as a developing being, who needs nurturing and care as well as an educational experience, guided the 'teachers called mommy' in their dual role and beyond it. They identify their enhanced ability to respond to children's emotional needs and learning needs as a benefit of the dual role. These teachers disavow Katz' (1980) distinctions between mothering and teaching and see the two roles as integrated. When they attempted to be rational and impartial they were frustrated; instead the acknowledgment of role overlap and accumulation was the key to their success.

The experiences of the 'teachers called mommy' interviewed for this study supports the development of a model which connects teachers and parents, rather than separates them (Biklen, 1993). Their descriptions of their experiences parallel Ruddick's (1982) concept of maternal thinking, which includes preserving the child's life, fostering the child's growth, and socializing the child. These dimensions of maternal thought are practiced in the classroom as well as in the home.

The specifics of Ruddick's (1982) dimensions of maternal thought are influenced by the setting and developmental level of the child. Preserving the child's life influences safety and supervision of young children both at home and in the classroom. Fostering the child's growth relates to curriculum in the classroom, and to the types of activities the family values in the home; literacy, numeracy, artistic, musical, and physical activity are the responsibility of
teachers and parents. Socializing the child is also a focus of the developmentally appropriate early childhood classroom as well as the home; sharing, communication, social play, self esteem, manners, and values are influenced by both environments. Early childhood educators have accepted these responsibilities for decades. The evidence from this study is that open recognition of the overlap in roles between teachers and parents contributes to a sense of teamwork and to the success of the child.

Likewise, this study supports Klein’s (1989) concept of mother love and teaching, with its focus on good teaching as involving nurturing, attention, adaptability and a focus on individual children’s growth. These concepts are key to successful early childhood education; the ‘teachers called mommy’ confirm that these teaching skills resemble good parenting skills, that both environments contribute to success. The ‘teachers called mommy’ in this study found themselves adapting to their child’s presence by providing more nurturing and attention to individual children as needed, rather than by adhering to an artificial standard of group fairness. Their recommendations resemble Klein’s description of teaching with mother love, where the focus is on the individual needs of the child rather than the institutional needs of the school or the curriculum (Klein, 1989).

The participants in this study also reflect the characteristics of maternal teaching (Wood, 1991) in their description of their experiences, and in their recommendations to parents, teachers, administrators, and prospective ‘teachers called mommy’. These changes toward a more ethical and caring environment provide support for Martin’s (1992) model of the Schoolhome. The ‘teachers called mommy’ lived and taught in an environment similar to Martin’s concept of a school that incorporates nurturing, integrated curriculum, individual growth and development, and caring, concern, and connection. Their recommendations to
others reflect the need for this integration, for respect, trust and communication, for a focus on individual needs, and for nurturing of teachers, children, and families.

**Teacher Education and Professional Development**

There is agreement in the literature that family involvement is essential to positive student performance, and that teacher-parent relations are important. However, few teacher education programs focus on this area (Williams, 1992). This is particularly important in early childhood education where closer contact between teachers and families is required to meet the developmental needs of the child (Berger, 1991b; Gestwicki, 1987). Participants in this study clearly recommend that teachers develop strong communication skills and respect for families. Teachers need to better understand the role families play in development and learning through appreciation for the complex task which parenting is. Teachers need specialized training and knowledge in human relations, family development, communication and group dynamics in order to facilitate the teacher-parent relationship. These topics need to be introduced in teacher preparation programs, and offered for professional development for in-service teachers in ways that are reflective of the career stage and developmental level of the teacher.

Teacher education focuses on preparing for the roles identified as necessary in the classroom. These roles include decision-maker, organizer of instruction, diagnostician, curriculum designer, classroom manager, counselor/advisor, colleague and team member (Saracho, 1988; Smith, *et al*, 1992). Missing from the discussion of teacher roles has been the challenge of forming a partnership with parents. This study suggests that teacher-parent relationships
are essential to the success of the teacher and the child. Adding the role of
communicating with families to the identified roles which guide teacher
preparation will encourage and support teacher education and professional
development models that expand the awareness, knowledge and skills of early
childhood educators in this important area.

Recommendations for Further Research

The results of this study suggest that teaching and parenting are much
more similar than different, that self-knowledge level influences the way in
which 'teachers called mommy' understand their dual role experience, and that
successful teacher-parent relations are critical to children's well-being in the early
childhood years. Because the research focused on mothers and children between
the ages of two and six, there are many additional areas for research that would
expand our understanding of the dual roles of teaching and parenting.

This study focused on 'teachers called mommy' in a group care or
educational classroom setting during the early childhood years. More can be
learned about the dual roles of teaching or group leadership and parenting by
studying other settings. The family day care home; the informal educational
setting, such as scouts, or 4-H; religious education classes; sports and crafts
classes are possible settings in which this dual role occurs. Examining the
differences in the experience with older children is another possible avenue of
exploration; how do the roles of teaching and parenting overlap in elementary,
middle school, and high school classrooms? This line of research would require
a close study of the developmental needs of both the child and the family.

This study has assumed typical development of the children; another line
of future inquiry could focus on the influence of exceptionality and special
education on the dual roles of teaching and parenting. This would be an interesting area to explore because of the inclusion movement, the regular education initiative, and because the family support model originated through the fields of early childhood special education and early intervention.

Likewise this study has focused on the experience of the 'teacher called mommy', resulting in a limitation of the study to women in the dual role. A parallel study could focus on the 'teacher called daddy', or the 'coach called daddy', as fathers also participate in the informal educational activities of their children. Understanding the male perspective on the dual role will contribute to our understanding of gender influences on parenting, nurturing, and teaching. Another relevant population to be studied is that of the children who experience their parent in two roles. Case study and naturalistic observation of the child during the experience of parent as teacher, as well as interviews with older children about their perceptions of the experience could also add to our understanding. This line of investigation could expand to include the experience of other children in the classroom; is there an impact on their experience when a classmate's parent is the teacher?

Continued focus on the developmental level of the teacher, in relation to the teaching and parenting roles, is essential to further research as well. Self-knowledge development was useful in understanding the dual role experience. Using other developmental models, such as parenting development and style, learning style, and stage of career development, to analyze the dual role experience will broaden the understanding and applicability of this research. Variations in cultural background and expectations, and regional location can also be explored.

In short there are many future research opportunities, beyond replication at different grade levels, available to us. Each would contribute new and useful
data and assist us in developing a fuller picture of the roles of teacher and parent. Each would yield contributions to professional preparation, developmental understanding, teacher role concepts, and parent understanding of the role of the teacher and the school in their lives. These topics are all important as we explore school reform models to better meet the needs of contemporary families and children.

**Recommendations Concerning Methodology**

The three part research methodology used in this study allows for diverse forms of data to be collected. The research protocol includes a written developmental questionnaire, a two-part in-depth phenomenological interview, and participation in a Focus Group session. Based on the results of each component of the project I am offering the following recommendations concerning the methodology.

The current modification of Seidman's (1991) three part in-depth phenomenological interview process to a two-part interview was successful for the study. The focus on personal history and experience, prior to gathering data on the target topic during the first interview, is recommended, as is allowing an interval of time between the two interviews. The second interview, reflecting on the meaning of the experience, is enhanced by the passage of time. Participants often commented that the first interview had sparked their thinking, and they had more anecdotes to share during the second session. In addition, they had time to reflect and consider the meaning the experience had in their lives. One participant mentioned that participating in the study was essential in her processing of the experience, and in her upcoming decision about teaching her
second child. Thus, I found the interview component very successful in providing relevant data.

The modification of the Experience Recall questionnaire provided participants with an effective prompt to their recollections of the experience of 'teacher called mommy'. Many participants commented that completing the written questionnaire opened up memories they had forgotten about, or had never fully considered. However, the questionnaire was less successful in eliciting complete self-knowledge data. In several cases the written responses did not provide sufficient evidence of self-reflection. The in-depth interviews provided supplementary data with which to evaluate the self-knowledge level of each participant. Thus I recommend changes in the research protocol with regard to this component. Future research of this type should begin with a written prompt of the experience in order to focus the participant prior to the interview. However, the self-knowledge questions should be clearly imbedded in the interview protocol, as well as in the written prompt, to allow fuller opportunity to assess the developmental level of the participants.

From my perspective, the most experimental portion of the research design was the Focus Group. However, participants found the experience enjoyable, and the results provided valuable corroboration of the data analysis. Recommendations emerged from the discussion that give added direction to possible applications of this research. Six heads are better than one, when analyzing the outcomes of a shared experience. Thus, I can say that the Focus Group was highly successful, and I enthusiastically recommend future research on teaching and mothering to include this component. Factors that contributed to the success of the Focus Group include providing a written summary of themes for participants to review, scheduling a balance of individual reflection
with group discussion, and inviting a process observer/consultant to help facilitate the experience.

Conclusion

'Teachers called mommy' possess a unique view of the overlap between teaching and parenting in early childhood settings. Their shared experiences point to the need for additional focus in teacher preparation and staff development on the relation of family to children's learning, to classroom success, and to teacher-parent relationships. Understanding the nature of this role overlap can facilitate more successful teaching and learning experiences for all involved.

The 'teacher called mommy' experience also teaches us that nurturing does belong in the early childhood classroom. Being a good teacher involves approaching children with attention to their emotional needs as well as their individual learning needs. Intentional and ethical response to the child and the family will promote an atmosphere of partnership and cooperation in the classrooms and schools of the 21st century. Preparing teachers to meet the demands of the Schoolhome will challenge teacher educators, administrators, teachers and families to work together in new ways.

While the 'teacher called mommy' experience is not recommended to everyone, we can all learn from the challenges these women experienced. We can learn to be fair and equitable, to communicate often with all constituencies, to ask for help and support, and to approach the needs of the whole child in the school and at home. It is counter-productive to separate the roles. Forging connection will improve the educational process for all.
APPENDIX A

SELF-KNOWLEDGE PROTOCOL
I am conducting research for my dissertation on the experience of professional early childhood educators who teach their own child in their classroom setting. I am particularly interested in how that experience has influenced you as a teacher and as a parent.

Your responses to the following questions will be kept confidential, and any dissemination will use a pseudonym. Your initials and birth date requested above are purely for me to use in organizing the responses. You may request a transcript of your responses at any time by contacting me at (603) 358-2864. Please return your responses to me in the envelope provided. Thank you very much for your participation.

Sincerely,

***************************

DIRECTIONS:

Please reflect on your experience as your child's teacher, and recall some specific experiences or incidents in which you had to deal with a problem or conflict between being the mother and being the teacher. These experiences might have been uncomfortable and difficult, but they were important to you as a teacher and as a parent.

Now select one of those times to remember in greater detail. You may want to make notes about this experience in preparation for responding to the following questions.
1. Describe as fully as you can the experience you remembered. Please try to include:

- what you did and what others did
- what you were thinking and feeling in the situation
- what led up to this experience
- what specific conditions or events made you respond as you did
- what was your parental response in this situation
- what was your professional response in this situation
- what were some of the consequences of the experience
2. How was that experience important to you then?

3. How is that experience important to you now?

4. From the experience you are remembering please describe some things you know about yourself as a parent now.

5. From the experience you are remembering please describe some things you know about yourself as a teacher now.

6. In what ways were your thoughts, feelings and actions in your recalled experience typical of thoughts, feelings, and actions you have had in other situations as a teacher and/or parent? Is there a 'pattern' to your responses in these kinds of situations? If so, how would you describe or characterize the pattern?
7. What do you find satisfying or dissatisfying about the ways you think, feel and act in such situations?

8. Describe anything you have tried to do to modify your thoughts or feelings in order to change your way of responding in these situations. Please try to describe how your efforts affects or has affected your typical response.

9. Do you have any ideas about ways you MIGHT try to modify any of your thoughts or feelings in order to change your way of responding?

**********************************

Thank you for responding. I hope this reflective activity has been interesting to you. Please write any additional comments below.
APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL
PERSONAL INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

The personal interviews will follow an open-ended, in-depth format, where a focus question will initiate the interview, and any follow-up questions will be inserted as needed. The main focus of the interviewer is on encouraging the participant to share her stories, memories, thoughts.

Interview #1

Focus Question #1: Describe your personal background and decision to become a teacher.

Follow-up questions will probe for:
- childhood experiences, family background and expectations
- sibling relationships and early caregiving experiences
- higher education and training experiences
- employment history and current employment status
- professional identity

Focus Question #2: Describe your experience teaching your own child.

Follow-up questions will probe for:
- parenting choices and current family status
- spouse/partner support and involvement
- decision to become a 'teacher called mommy'
- details of the experience
- employment system support and involvement
- challenges and joys of the experience
Interview #2

Focus Question #1: What does the experience of teaching your own child mean to you as a teacher and as a parent?

Follow-up questions will probe for:
- views of parents in relation to schools/teachers
- views of teachers in relation to families/parents
- parent role
- teacher role
- support systems needed, appreciated
- strategies for coping
- recommendations to others
- any changes as a result of the experience
- things that most surprised you about the experience

Each interview will last between 60 and 90 minutes, and will be audio-taped, transcribed, and edited into a profile of the participant.
APPENDIX C

INFORMED CONSENT AND COVER LETTER
May 1995

Dear

I understand that you have taught your own child in a classroom setting. I am writing to invite you to participate in a study of this experience, which I call the 'teacher called mommy'. As a former 'teacher called mommy' myself, when my daughter was a four year old preschooler, I know that the experience is special and unique. The opportunity to share and learn from this experience is very exciting to me.

I believe that we have something to contribute to other teachers because of the knowledge we have about teaching and mothering. Relations between schools and homes are often challenging, and I would like to help improve them. With your help in understanding the experience of the 'teacher called mommy', I think we can help other teachers understand and communicate better with parents. This would improve things for the children we teach and for their families.

You should know that this study is my dissertation research for the Doctorate in Education degree from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. There are three parts to the project: a written survey, a personal interview, and a group discussion. The enclosed written consent form explains more about the project and about how you might participate. Please read it, sign indicating your interest, and return it in the envelope provided.

I look forward to hearing from you, and encourage you to participate in the study. I will call you soon to answer any questions.

Sincerely,

Dottie Bauer
Keene State College, 229 Main Street, Keene, NH 03435-2903
phone: 603-358-2864
email: dbauer@keene.edu
INFORMATION FORM

'The Teacher Called Mommy''
A Qualitative Study on the Experience of Teaching One's Own Child

Your Name: ___________________________ Your Initials: ___________________________

Your telephone number, including area code (indicate day or evening):

Your current employment (setting and age/grade level):

Your educational background:
Degree(s): __________________________ Date received: ___________ Field(s): __________________________

List your children by age and gender:

Age and gender of the child(ren) you taught:

Setting in which you taught him/her:

Circle the term that best describes your living environment:
rural __________ urban __________ suburban __________ small town __________

Circle the term that best describes your teaching environment:
rural __________ urban __________ suburban __________ small town __________

How would you categorize your racial/ethnic heritage?

What is your date of birth?
WRITTEN CONSENT FORM

"The Teacher Called Mommy"
A Qualitative Study on the Experience of Teaching One's Own Child

1. **Background**

I, Dorothy A. Bauer, doctoral student in the School of Education at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, am interested in the question of how early childhood educators experience having their own children in their classroom. My dissertation research is a focused look at early childhood educators who have their child as a student in the classroom. Qualitative research methodology is particularly appropriate for this investigation as it allows the participants to help construct the meaning of the research data.

2. **Participation**

You are being asked to be a participant in this study. All participants will complete a written questionnaire which should take about 20 minutes. Some participants will also be interviewed in person; some will participate in a group discussion of the themes from the interviews. Please be assured that there are no known physical dangers or risks to completing the written questionnaire, being interviewed or participating in a group discussion. If you decide not to participate after reviewing this document, there will be no consequences of that decision.

3. **Use of Questionnaire, Interviews, and Group Discussion Results**

The written questionnaires will be typed by a responsible secretary who will have no access to the identifying information. The interviews will be audio-taped and later transcribed to print by a responsible secretary. The group discussion will be summarized and reviewed by group participants. Since this is my dissertation project, some material may be shared with my advisory committee, or quoted in the final written report. It is my goal to use the outcomes in the following ways:

   a. research for my dissertation
   b. an article on the experience of teaching one's child, using the voices of these participants as part of the discussion.
   c. reconsideration of teacher preparation for undergraduate early childhood education majors, in relationship to parent-teacher communication and the understanding of family development.

4. **Anonymity**

Your name, any names you mention in the interview, and any identifying details will not be used in any written documents or oral presentations I may give relating to this research. Pseudonyms will be substituted; you may request to review my choice of pseudonyms.

5. **Access to results**

You may have access to audio tapes and/or transcripts, at your request.
6. **Right to withdraw**

   While signing at this time to participate, you may at any time withdraw from the actual interview process. You may also withdraw your consent to use excerpts from your interview(s) if you notify me in writing within two months after the final interview.

7. **Further use or changes**

   In signing this form, you are agreeing to the research process outlined above, and to the uses listed in #3. If I am interested in using the material in any way not consistent with those uses listed, I will contact you to request additional written consent.

8. **Financial disclaimer**

   In signing this form you are assuring me that you will make no financial claims on me for the use of the material in your questionnaire or interview, nor hold me responsible for any results of the interview or observations. Please be assured that your privacy and integrity will be carefully respected, and no potentially compromising material will be used. The individual participant's rights come before the goals of the research.

9. **Further contact**

   Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. If you would like access to any materials I develop based on these or other related interviews, please feel free to contact me in writing at Keene State College; 229 Main Street, Suite 2903; Keene, NH 03435-2903.

   I, ______________________________________, have read the above statement and agree to participate in this research project under the conditions stated above.

   ___________________________________________  __________________  ___________________________________________
   signature of participant                        date                                  signature of researcher

   *****Please return one copy in the envelope provided, and retain the other copy for your files.*****
EXPECTATIONS & ADJUSTMENTS

I expected my child to be well-behaved and myself not to lose my cool with my child.

I wanted to be fair, and treat my child like any other child.

My educational philosophy matched my parental expectations for my child.

I didn't want people to think I was favoring my child.

I was harder on my child than on other children.

I was going to provide the perfect experience for my child.

I expected my child to cooperate at school because of the group setting, where other people were watching us.

I really tried to explain the situation logically to my child.

My two children responded very differently to being with me.

I planned ahead (with my aide) on how to manage the dual role.

It was harder on my child than on other children.

I wanted my child to be perfect - well-behaved and brilliant.

I expected my child would always want to be with me, and that wasn't the case.

I expected my child to distinguish between me as mom and me as teacher.

My child called me by my teacher name.

I liked it when visitors didn't know she/he was my child.

My child would try and talk me out of tasks ("I'll do it later/at home").

Other children would get my child to ask me to change materials/activities in the classroom.

I wanted our relationship to be "invisible" - so no one would know, so my child wouldn't stand out.

Other children realized my child's power over me.
CHALLENGES

Sharing me with classmates (e.g. my lap, reading stories, feeding, toileting, napping, being close to, consoling) was hard for my child.

My child needed extra attention and affection, because it was hard to share me.

My child tested me about limits and class rules.

It embarrassed me when my child misbehaved at school.

I focused so much on the other children and families that I neglected my own.

It was hard for me not to attend to my child first and foremost.

Watching my child struggle with friends was hard for me.

It was hard for my child to wait for a turn with me.

I had to be careful not to be manipulated by my child.

My child behaved better for other teachers (assistant, co-teacher) than for me.

There was extra competition for my attention when my child was in the room.

It was hard when my child was aggressive or hurtful toward other children.

I worried that I was negatively affecting my child’s development with so many separations in the day (every time I left the room, for example).

It was hard to trust some of the other staff with my child.

Taking my child home sick was hard, knowing I was leaving my colleagues (and my class) in the lurch.

Communication between home and school was hard (notes home, conferences, reports, etc.) because I already knew the information.

My child behaved better at school than at home.

My child really disliked another child in the group which was difficult for me as teacher of all the children.

My child wanted to take over my role (as teacher) and come to my "aid" if other children didn't follow instructions.
COPING AND SUPPORT

Sources of Support
co-teacher/assistant/aide in the room with me
parents of other children
my spouse
colleagues who had taught their children
my mother
friends
my extended family
principal/administrator
publications
this research project

Coping Strategies
I really appreciated it when my co-worker stepped in and helped.
I gave my child special treatment (1-on-1 time, hugs, lap time, note in lunch, etc.)
I would think "what would I do if this were another child"
I needed to let someone step in when I was locking horns with my child.
I tried to have a special time with my child in the classroom during the day.
I had some days at work without my child - that helped.
I needed to handle everything - I didn't want or accept help.
My child greeted everyone in the morning and helped set up the classroom.
I tried to be consistent and follow through with what I said.
Some things weren't worth struggling over, so I let my child have his/her way.
I tried not to talk about school on the way home - I needed to create space between the two worlds.
I tried to make rules about laps and turns that helped manage the competition for my attention.
Someone else brought or picked up my child.
I arranged for a smaller group size to reduce the pressure.
I explained to other children that our relationship was unique.
BENEFITS

As a working mom, I got to spend my work days with my child in both primary environments - home and school.

I got to know my child's friends and their families.

I can relate better with other parents and teachers.

I knew what kind of a day my child had had, so I knew how to respond at home.

I know my child's learning strengths and weaknesses.

I got to see my child make new discoveries.

I saw my child grow and cope with different situations well.

I got to see how my child functions in a group and how he/she learns.

Everything we did had a learning opportunity.

My professional expertise benefited my child - the curriculum was great!

I got to try out my curriculum ideas on my kids at home.

I got to see what had "sunk in" from school, when at home bits of the knowledge would come out.

My child sees me as a professional and understands what my work is.

I got to see my child with his/her age peers and compare developmental levels.

I knew my child was doing well so I could concentrate on my work.

I was proud of my child when parents realized she/he was mine and how well she/he functioned around me and the other children.
DISADVANTAGES

Sometimes "mommy" got in the way of "teacher", creating power struggles between me and my child.

There was little or no separation between home and work.

Sometimes "teacher" got in the way of being "mommy".

The same behavior challenges at work and at home got really tiring.

I questioned my teaching ability when I couldn't manage my own child in the classroom.

If we had a bad day at school it was hard not to bring that home, and if the morning had been difficult at home it was hard not to carry that into the classroom.

I had to tell other parents that their child had been hurt, knowing my child had done the hurting (hitting, biting, etc.).

I lost perspective on what was normal 'kid' behavior at this age, and what was due to my dual role with my child.

I felt I couldn't talk about my child to colleagues because they would think I was bragging and not treating him/her fairly in the classroom.

Some colleagues talked about my child in a gossipy way - this was awkward and uncomfortable.

I had to discipline my own child for physical aggression towards other children (e.g. biting).

It was much harder for me to connect with the other children in the class.
I don't know every little thing that happened any more, because my child doesn't tell me all the details of the day.

My child needed new challenges and a new environment; it was definitely time for my child to move on.

I'm really picky about the setting my child is in.

I want to select my child's teachers.

My child didn't want to move on as much as the other kids did. It was a double separation - from the class and from me.

I worry about stepping on my child's teacher's toes - about being too pushy.

My child kept asking for me and crying (when I left the room).

My child really resisted going to school when we weren't going together.

Communicating with my child's teachers is harder now that we're not in the same setting.

It was hard to acknowledge that it would be better for my child to have a different teacher.

We don't have the same special time together, in the classroom, in the car.

I had to redefine my family and career boundaries.

The schedule change was hard - my work place and my child's school aren't the same any more.
LEARNINGS

I'm more empathetic towards parents.

I'm careful not to judge parents - they're doing their best.

I'm a better teacher, more aware of an individual child's feelings.

I learned that it's really hard to be a good parent and a good teacher.

I treat my classroom more as a community with parents, children, teacher.

I value communication and partnerships between parents and teachers.

I learned that parents and teachers need to trust each other.

Parents and teachers both need a lot of encouragement.

I'm more flexible.

I'm a better parent when I have time away from my child.

I realize that school is only a part of a child's life.

Teachers need support from parents.

I'm able to help other teachers with the dual role now.

I am learning to put my family first.

I learned that as a parent you can be too invested in your kids.

I gained an appreciation for the at-home mother who is with her child 24 hours a day.

It helps me communicate better with the teachers that my children have now.

I share more fun stories with parents about their child's personality. I don't just focus on their academic progress/work.

I learned that parents and teachers have a lot in common.

I'm good at problem solving and sharing with parents.

I'm more understanding when a colleague has to leave to care for a sick child.
I learned that I have different standards for behavior as a parent than I do as a teacher.

I videotape my classroom so parents can take it home to watch what goes on during the day, because I got to see that when my child was with me.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


