A qualitative study of infants' responses to picture book reading in a day care setting.

Chun-Mei Liao

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A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF INFANTS' RESPONSES TO
PICTURE BOOK READING IN A DAY CARE SETTING

A Dissertation Presented
by
CHUN-MEI LIAO

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Massachusetts Amherst in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

September 1996

School of Education
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ABSTRACT

A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF INFANTS' RESPONSES TO PICTURE BOOK READING IN A DAY CARE SETTING

SEPTEMBER 1996

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The purposes of the study were to describe how ten infants who ranged from five to thirteen months old responded to books in a day care setting over a five month period, to explore how teachers supported and/or constrained infants' response behaviors, and to understand teachers' and parents' beliefs about infants' capabilities to respond to books. The qualitative methods of participant-observation, formal and informal interviews, written field notes, audiotapes, videotapes, and photography were used for data collection.
The results indicated that the infants were able to respond to books through facial expressions, body movements, and verbal responses. They were active in initiating book reading, and were able to show their book preferences. They tended to look for familiar objects and details in illustrations rather than pay attention to the whole content. After being exposed to book reading events, these infants developed positive attitude and skills toward reading. Gradually, book reading events were no longer solely controlled by the teachers, it became joint teacher-infant participation.

The results showed that teachers supported infants' book reading in various ways. They made books accessible to the infants, and respected infants' different levels of interest in books. Through scaffolding and language extension, they provided a framework to allow infants to be involved in interactions during book reading. Meanwhile, teachers also encountered various constraints when engaging infants in book reading in a day care setting.

The data also revealed that the parents exposed their infants to books at a very early age with various purposes. They made conscious efforts to make book reading enjoyable experiences for their children. Both parents and teachers perceived book reading as an important activity for infants and believed in infants' capabilities to respond to books. This study further elaborated implications for day care teachers and parents which build on its findings.
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CHAPTER I

THE NATURE OF THE PROBLEM

Background of the Problem

Infants in Western societies traditionally spend their first two years primarily in a family context. Within the last thirty years, many infants have been spending a significant portion of the day in a supportive child care context, in which they are fed, played with, taught, socialized with, and kept safe. The child care setting is one which may provide infants with an introduction to literacy activities.

Much of the early research concerning young children and their experiences with books was conducted by well-educated parents. In addition, these investigations usually involved the keeping of diaries about very young children. These parent observations would focus on an individual child’s response to literature in home settings (e.g., Butler, 1979; Crago and Crago, 1980; Doake, 1985; White, 1954). The aforementioned parent diary studies were restricted to the home setting and the age range included children from four months to five years of age, the start of formal schooling.

In contrast to these parent diary studies, there were pioneers who completed research applying an ethnographic approach to explore how elementary school children respond to literature in school settings (Hickman, 1979; Hepler, 1982; Kiefer, 1982). Both Hickman’s (1979) and Kiefer’s (1982) studies stress the importance of the teacher’s
role and the various ways children respond to books, including the artistic and imaginative possibilities found in their interactions with books. Hepler's (1982) study indicates that the social context in which children learn and play will influence their book choice, their reading interest and attitude. Recently, Hungerford (1990) applied the ethnographic method to describe preschoolers' literary response behavior to picture book reading in a day care setting. Hungerford's study indicates that young children's play is influenced by the books that have been read to them. The school studies were conducted in preschool and elementary classrooms where children were between ages three and twelve.

In Western societies, picture book reading has been introduced to children at a very young age by middle class parents and other caregivers (e.g., Bissex, 1980; Butler, 1979; Crago and Crago, 1980; Doake, 1985; White, 1954). A number of studies have provided different perspectives on the interactions between caregivers and children in the course of storybook reading and describe how children respond to literature at home or in school settings. These studies indicate that picture book reading is a highly routinized activity involving caregivers' verbal scaffolding and young children's language learning (Ninio and Bruner, 1978; Ninio, 1980; Teale and Sulzby, 1987). Furthermore, children with a strong background of book experiences develop what Holdaway (1979) called a "literacy set" and what Snow and Ninio (1986) called "contracts of literacy" - a complex range of attitudes, concepts and skills related to literacy development.

The focus of this study was ten infants from 5-13 months of age as they engaged in book reading events within a day care setting at a large university. The infants'
parents and teachers were investigated to examine the relationship between family and school literacy. Specifically, the investigation centered on the infants’ responses to picture book reading over a five month period and the impact of teacher interactions with the infants, which involved picture books. In this study, the term infants is defined as children from birth to two years old. Picture books are defined as books consisting of words and pictures in a compatible relationship that conveys meaning to the reader or listener. Picture books may include alphabet books, counting books, concept books, nursery rhymes, wordless books, and picture storybooks. Response to literature is something said or done which reveals the reader’s or listener’s thoughts and feelings about a book. Among children, responses may be verbal or nonverbal, artistic, dramatic (including play), or written.

Infancy has been viewed by many major theorists as a unique life stage. It has been given special terms such as the oral stage (Freud, 1935), the stage of trust versus mistrust (Erikson, 1963), and the sensorimotor period (Piaget, 1954). In the past two decades, research has shown that infants are able to communicate through gaze, reaching, pointing, facial expression, and vocalization. Therefore, infants are sociable and emotionally expressive human beings.

In both home and day care settings, narrative is an important way of communicating. Even infants encounter narratives not only in ongoing events in the environment, but also in text - when listening to picture book reading. Narrative is used by caregivers to explain an object, to recount actions and events which have happened. Narratives occur during play, picture book reading activity, and social interactions. For
children, narrative becomes a fundamental way of knowing and of making sense of the world (Rosen, 1985). Infants at the age of one can only comment on "here and now" in which objects or events are directly before them (Rubin and Wolf, 1979). From around the second year, infants gradually spend more time outside their home environment. The change of daily life content allows them to be exposed to more verbal and narrative dimensions of interaction with their caregivers. They gradually are able to talk about "there and then" (Wolf, 1993).

In the United States, storybook reading has been employed by teachers to improve children’s ability to comprehend (Cohen, 1968), to acquaint children with literary language and to develop an overall story schema (Feitelson et al., 1986), to foster children’s critical thinking and creative reading skills (Richardson, 1988), and to help children deal with common concerns (Sullivan, 1987). Reading to children involves more than reading the text. The language and social interaction surrounding the words and events of the text are extremely significant (Health, 1982; Cochram-Smith, 1984; Taylor, 1986; Teale and Sulzby, 1987).

Reading to children has positive impact on children’s language development (Irwin, 1960; Chomsky, 1972), reading readiness and reading achievement in school (Durkin, 1966; Clark, 1976; Wells, 1985), children’s attention span (Tulkin and Kagan, 1972; Sullivan, 1988), and children’s narrative skills (Feagans, 1982; Wells, 1982). In addition, young children’s playful experience with books is linked with learning to talk and learning to read (Meek, 1982). Children with a background of book experience from
an early age are capable of developing a complex range of attitudes, concepts, and skills related to the use of books and literacy (Holdaway, 1979; Snow and Ninio, 1986).

A number of researchers have found that reading-aloud to children has been found to be a highly routinized activity that involving turn-taking, joint attention, and a sequential structure (Ninio, 1980; Ninio and Bruner, 1978; Teale and Sulzby, 1987). Caregivers play the key role in mediating the book reading activity and keeping the dialogue going.

Rosenblatt’s (1938) transactional theory of literary response argued that the reader plays a crucial role in the construction of literary experiences. Her viewpoints have led researchers in the field to focus on what children have created during the actual reading. Hickman (1979) found that children need time and opportunities to respond to literature in various ways, both verbal and nonverbal. Hepler (1982) indicated that social environmental influences affect children’s book choices, reading interest, and their attitude toward books. Kiefer (1982) found that children’s responses to books change over time. Teachers also play a key role in broadening and deepening of children’s response behaviors. The aforementioned studies were all conducted in elementary school settings.

Studies on infants’ responses to picture book reading were restricted to home settings. Researchers show that caregivers have an impact on infants’ attitudes toward books (White, 1954; Lamme and Packer, 1986). Infants’ extensive experiences with storybooks have a profound influence on language development (Butler, 1979; Lamme and Packer, 1986). Doake (1985) found that infants, by the age of one year, are able
to respond to picture book reading through gazing, smiling, and pointing. In addition, infants tend to pay more attention to familiar books. The aforementioned studies did not provide readers the verbal interactions between the adults and the child or the physical environment surrounding the picture book reading events.

Nowadays, many mothers face the dilemma of pursuing career opportunities and staying home to take care of their young children. A growing majority of young children are now in child care. According to Neugebauer (1994), the most rapid growth in the child day care population has been those under the age of three. The growing number of infants in day care centers and the lack of research addressing the infants' daily and early literacy experiences in day care settings, and relationships between infants and their caregivers point to the importance of this study.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purposes of the study were to describe how infants respond to books in the day care setting, to explore how infants' social interactions with teachers are influenced by picture book reading events, and to better understand how parents and teachers support or constrain infants' experiences with early literature at home and in the infant day-care setting. The following research questions guided the collection and analysis of data:

1. How do infants respond to books in the day-care setting?
   - What are the response behaviors demonstrated by infants?
   - How do teachers support and/or constrain infants' response behaviors?
(2) How do parents of infants provide early literature experiences at home?

— What are parents' beliefs about infants' capabilities to respond to books at home?

— How do the parents of these infants support or constrain their infants' responses to books at home?

Definitions

Infant — The period of infancy has been defined as the first two years of life.

Picture book — Broadly defined, picture books are books primarily consisting of pictures. Picture books may include alphabet books, counting books, concept books, nursery rhymes, wordless books, and picture storybooks.

Response to literature — Refers to something said or done, including verbal and nonverbal behavior that reveal the reader's or listener's thoughts and feelings about literature.

Approach to the Study

This study was concerned with a range of infants' responses to book reading events in a day care setting, and how they evolved over a five month period, as well as the influences of the teachers and the day care context. Given the nature of research
questions and the view of the day care context as a social setting, a qualitative, naturalistic inquiry approach to research was appropriate.

In order to understand the ten infants' responses to book reading, the following techniques were utilized: field notes, videotapings, informal and formal interviews with day care teachers and parents, and slides.

Scope and Limitations of the Study

The first limitation of the study is the lack of generalizability to infants, teachers, and parents in other day care programs. This limitation reflects the nature of qualitative research. Some conclusions may provide useful information about day care contexts and/or family literacy contexts. The present study was intended to explore literature response behavior in particular settings involving particular infants, their teachers, and their parents. The researcher has attempted to present as much detail as possible about the phenomena under study. This will allow readers to make judgements for themselves about the representative nature of this particular day care context and the prospects for generalizing to other settings.

A second limitation concerns the reliance upon parent interviews as the sole means of gathering data about family story book readings and infants' response behaviors at home over the full course of their lives. In contrast to the teacher interviews which were combined with data from field notes, slides, and videotapings, the parent interviews
stand alone as representatives of the infants' early family literacy context. The researcher did not visit the homes.

A third limitation is related to the small sample size. One researcher, working alone, completed all the data collection and analysis. A target range of at least ten infants was considered a feasible and workable population. While the subjects were all affiliated to different degrees with the university sponsoring the day care, a range of ethnic and cultural groups as well as variety of socioeconomic levels were presented in the study.

Summary

The results of the study will provide detailed information and insights into how infants respond to picture book reading in a day-care setting, how picture book reading activity may affect infants' social interaction, and how the parents and teachers of these infants provide early picture book reading experiences at home and in the day care setting. Using naturalistic inquiry techniques, infants' responses to book reading in a day care setting were examined over a five month period. The remainder of this dissertation will report on the methodology and findings of the study. A discussion of related research and theory will be discussed in chapter II. Chapter III will describe the methods and procedures used to complete the study. Chapter IV will describe how infants respond to book reading in the day care setting and how teachers support or constrain infants' responses to literature. Chapter V will explore parents' and teachers' beliefs
about infant capabilities for responses to book reading. Chapter VI will summarize the findings and then suggests implications for day care literacy practices and directions for further research.
CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

In this chapter, various issues and findings from the literature relevant to the study will be discussed. The development of infants' communicative competence will be addressed first, and then the literature on infant day care will be reviewed. The work of Bruner and Vygotsky on how caregivers play a role as agents of culture and how children become narrators will also be explored. Finally, theories and findings regarding picture book reading at home and in the school will be addressed and the readers' responses to literature will be reviewed.

Infants as Social Beings

Infancy as a Special Time of Life

In general, the period of infancy is defined as the first two years of life. It has been recognized by many societies as a special time and given a special name to distinguish it from the later life stages. Many major theorists view infancy as a unique stage of development. Sigmund Freud, Erik Erikson, Jean Piaget, and John Bowlby each highlighted a different developmental aspect of infancy. Freud (1935) suggested that each child is born with a fixed amount of energy - he called this energy libido. During the period of infancy, the libido’s energy is bound up with the mouth, tongue, lips and
Freud called this first period of development the oral stage. At the oral stage (0 to 8 months), an infant's mouth is the most stimulating area of sensation. Sucking, biting, and swallowing become the sources of pleasure. Therefore, infants enjoy putting various things into their mouths, such as toys, pacifiers, or books.

In contrast to Freud, Erikson (1963) regarded the first phase of development to be the period when infants learn whether adults can be relied on for care, love, and emotional security. Therefore, he called this first period (0 to 12 months) the stage of trust vs. mistrust. At this stage, infants' primary social interaction is with their caregiver. Therefore, their reliance on the caregiver and the degree to which their needs are met leads to the development of trust or mistrust in the environment.

Another viewpoint on infancy was given by Piaget (1954), who believed that during the first two years the first structure of an infant's mind is created through the active manipulation of objects. He proposed that there are four major intellectual development stages - the sensorimotor stage, the preoperational stage, the concrete operational stage, and the formal operational stage, corresponding to the period of infancy, early childhood, middle childhood, and adolescence. Piaget called the period from birth to about the age of 2 years the sensorimotor period. During this period, infants build their understanding of the world by acting on things physically. For example, infants build their knowledge of the world by looking, grasping, and mouthing.

According to Bowlby's (1977) theory of attachment, infants have five innate behaviors at birth - crying, smiling, sucking, following, and clinging. Among these behaviors, crying and smiling serve as signaling behaviors, which can bring their
caregiver near. Sucking, following and clinging show infants' active role in seeking and maintaining proximity with their caregiver. Usually, the mother is the primary attachment figure.

In the past, newborn infants were thought to be helpless and insensitive. However, the view of infant abilities has changed dramatically. In the 1970's, many researchers devoted their attention to research on communication development in the first year of life. It has become clear that infants are capable of responding to and engaging in social interaction (e.g., Bullowa, 1979; Lewis and Rosenblum, 1974; Lock, 1978; Schaffer, 1977; Stern, 1977; Tronick, 1982; Užgiris, 1979).

Infants as Communicators

The origins of the development of children’s ability to communicate can be traced to early infancy. Early interactions of infants and their caregivers have been either characterized as "conversations" (Snow, 1977), or referred to as proto-conversations (Bateson, 1971). Bateson (1971) stated "early in infancy, interactional sequences appear between mother and child which have the appearance of conversation: constant or nearly constant communication in one modality (visual) and intermittent, alternating communication in another (vocal)" (p. 170). The nature of proto-conversations reflects how infants learn to take turns in responding to their caregivers’ elicitation and become participants in conversation.

Social Perspective. How do infants develop the capacity for communication? Researchers have found that infants’ communicative behaviors develop as a result of their
social experiences, in particular their interactions with their caregivers (Keenan, 1974; McTear, 1985; Snow, 1977; Stern, 1977; Sugarman-Bell, 1978). Most importantly, adults interact with infants as if they have intentions, treat them as if they are participants in a conversation, and respond to their actions as if they are communicative (Kaye, 1977; Trevarthen, 1977). According to Harding (1983), most mothers viewed their infants' eye contact, gestures such as reaching and pointing, and sounds such as babbles, screams, and crying as communicative. In particular, infant vocalizations are interpreted as communicative. Golinkoff (1983) found that mothers tend to react to infants' vocalizations as communicative, particularly by identifying them as words and then expanding the conversation based on the infant's use of sound.

According to Snow (1977), infants, by 18 months, are able to identify their focus of the attention through comments, questions, or requests. At this stage, even though caregivers do not have to rely on infants' eye contact, gaze direction, and gesture to determine the focus of their attention, infants still rely on the caregivers to be responsive to their communicative behavior.

**Biological Perspective.** Studies indicate that infants are biologically predisposed for communication. For example, infants prefer interacting with human beings to objects (Field, 1985), like to listen to voices (Eimas, 1975), and like to look at faces (Bower and Wishart, 1979). Researchers also found that infants show their earliest smile only a few hours after birth, even though those smiles are only smiling mouths without smiling eyes (Bower, 1974). In addition, a few weeks after birth infants display "protogestures" and "protospeech", which are raising their hands, and making speech-like movements.
involving their lips and tongue (Trevarthen, 1977, 1979, 1986a, 1986b). Trevarthen (1979) argued that the biological connection of the two gestures is a capacity for intersubjective communication between infants and caretakers.

Cognitive Perspective: The Development of Intention. Infants achieve communicative competence to some extent even at the prelinguistic stage. It is reflected in their use of gestures, such as reaching, giving, showing, pointing, gazing, and crying, sometimes accompanied by vocalizations (Bates et al., 1975; Carter, 1978). Infants' major interaction achievements lie in attaining what Schaffer (1977) termed "the concept of the dialogue" which includes the notions of reciprocity and intentionality.

Reciprocity refers to the role which infants play in an interaction sequence and the ability to establish a joint topic of attention (Bruner, 1977). Therefore, when infants learn the idea of reciprocity they are able to participate in join-action games, such as "give and take" and "peek-a-boo." About the notion of intentionality, Scoville (1984) pointed out several characteristics that mark the emergence of intentional communication, including making eye contact with the adult, vocalizing with consistent sounds and intonation patterns, and persisting in attempting to communicate if they are not understood. According to Bates et al. (1975), at the end of the first year, infants become capable of using objects to interact with adults and using adults as a means of obtaining objects. From that stage on, infants can point for things they can not reach, cry for attention, or raise arms to show the desire to be picked-up, and so on.

Non-Vocal Gestural Communication. When infants cannot convey their meaning verbally, gazing between caregivers and infants is extremely important to successful
communication. Stern et al. (1977) found that mothers and infants engage in mutual eye contact with high frequency. Collis and Schaffer (1975) showed that mothers continually monitor their infant’s gaze to tell them what they are interested in. According to Scaife and Bruner (1975), infants, by the end of the first year, are able to follow another person’s gaze voluntarily.

Reaching and pointing serve the function of clarifying infants’ communicative intentions. According to Foster (1979), the earliest manual gesture to emerge is usually reaching. When infants use reaching to make a request, it becomes truly communicative. Infants’ reaching becomes communicative at about the age of six months or later. Another type of gesture to develop in infants is pointing. It has been found that the majority of infants point at the age of about twelve months, and by that age they are capable of looking where someone has pointed (Lempers et al., 1977; Leung and Rheingold, 1977). In examining the role of pointing in the context of a dyadic interaction, Murphy (1978) found that infants at 9 months of age were just beginning to point. The amount of pointing by infants differed according to their age. In addition, pointing occurred more frequently with 20 and 24 months old than 9 and 14 months old.

**Vocal Gestural Communication.** Among infants’ vocal gestures, crying seems to serve multiple functions for infants. Crying is not only the newborn’s primary mode of expressing and communicating basic needs, it is also a means of displaying an infant’s basic social need for attachment (Ainsworth et al., 1974). Lester (1985) pointed out that early parent-infant interaction patterns seem to be established around the issue of crying, feeding, and sleeping. Therefore, crying becomes an opportunity for social interaction.
In particular, it has been found that when infants stop crying, playful interactions occur. According to Brazelton (1962), crying also serves a tension-reduction function. Toward the end of the first year, infants' crying occurs due to the fear of strangers and due to fear of separation from the caregiver. In addition, when infants become more mobile, crying also occurs in response to frustrated efforts to explore the environment.

According to Halliday (1975), infants are "learning how to mean." Before mastering any words, they gradually become capable of expressing a wide range of meanings through the use of intonation contours, in particular functional contexts. Halliday (1975) examined his son Nigel's progress in attempting to communicate, when he was between 9 and 18 months old. He found that Nigel expressed the following communicative functions during that period of time: The first is an instrumental function conveying the meaning "I want" or "Give me that." The second is the regulatory function for controlling others' behavior. It includes meanings such as "Do that" or "Do what you have just been doing." The third is the interactional function, which is used to interact with people around them, particularly their caregivers. It includes meanings such as generalized greetings "Hello." The fourth is the personal function, in which language is used to express personal feeling. The fifth is the heuristic function, conveying the meaning "tell me why", which later on develops into the questioning forms that young children use. The sixth is imaginative function, the "Let's pretend" function of language.

Theories and studies of infants' communicative competence indicate that during the first two years of life, infants emerge as socially organized, emotionally expressive
human beings. Through gaze, reaching, pointing, facial expression, and vocalization, infants are able to express and communicate their physical needs and emotional state by initiating, maintaining, and terminating social interactions.

**Infants and Day Care**

According to the U. S. Bureau of the Census (1990), an increasing numbers of mothers are at work within the first year after the birth of a child, and they need someone to take care of the child. The report shows that 57 percent of infants are cared for by relatives or by parents; 20 percent of infants are in family day care; and 14 percent of infants are in day care centers. According to Friedman (1990) and Neugebauer (1994), the most dramatic growth in the child day care population has been among children under the age of three. As a result, not only researchers but also parents are concerned with the effect of child care on children’s development.

In comparing child care at home and in day care settings, Clarke-Stewart et al. (1994) found that children who were in day-care centers were more advanced in their development than children who were at home with their mothers. The study showed that being in day care was positively linked with advanced development, in terms of cognitive development, social competence with unfamiliar adults, independence from the mother in an unfamiliar situation, and social interaction with a peer. The results of studies of the effect of child care seem to be associated with the quality of the day care. According to McCartney et al. (1982), children who were enrolled in infant programs with low
verbal interactions tend to be more anxious and maladjusted than children who were enrolled in programs with rich verbal interaction. Howes (1983) found that day-care teachers who had more experience and training spent more time playing with children than did less well-qualified day-care teachers. In other words, the qualifications and experience of the caregivers influence the play experiences of infants.

According to Golden et al. (1978), more stimulating, positive, and affectionate care was related to infants’ language development. Howes (1990) found that infants who had had low quality day-care appeared less competent as they became kindergartners. In contrast, infants who had been enrolled in high quality day care showed no difference compared to children who entered day care as older children. Another interesting aspect of the effect of high quality day care is that parents of children who are in high quality day-care tend to be less restrictive and more stimulating, more responsive and nurturant (Edwards et al., 1987; Howes and Stewart, 1987).

What are critical features for determining the quality of day care? Clarke-Stewart (1992) pointed out that the physical environment, the caregivers’ behavior, the curriculum, and the number of children are important factors. Concerning the role of the physical environment, studies indicated that children tend to do better in day-care centers that are safe, neat, and are organized into interest areas and oriented toward children’s activities (Clarke-Stewart, 1987; Howes, 1983). Concerning the role of the caregivers’ behavior, in a study of preschool children in Chicago, Clarke-Stewart (1987) found that children who did well had caregivers who were responsive, positive, accepting, and informative.
Researchers also suggested that children are more likely to develop social and intellectual skills when caregivers are stimulating, respectful, educational, not custodial or demeaning (Clarke-Stewart and Gruber, 1984; Phillips et al., 1987). In addition, studies indicated that caregivers who show those characteristics are those either with more professional experience, or have stayed in the day-care program longer, and those who have higher levels of training in child development (Clarke-Stewart, 1987; Howes, 1983).

The aforementioned studies are quantitative in terms of their methodology. The ongoing, daily experiences of infants in day care centers have not been addressed. Only a few studies have attempted to focus on infants' daily experiences, and to provide contextualized understandings of the meanings of behavior for the infants and caregivers in infant day care settings (Leavitt, 1994, 1995).

Caregivers as Agents of Culture

Language is a Medium of Cultural Transmission

In the past twenty years, researchers have documented child-rearing practices in different cultural settings (LeVine, 1980; Whiting and Ewards, 1988; Whiting and Whiting, 1975), and examined how biological, social, and cultural factors influence infant development (Nugent, et al., 1989; Nugent, et al., 1991). Researchers have recognized that language is an important medium of cultural transmission (e.g., Bruner, 1983; Halliday, 1978; Hymes, 1961; Ochs, 1988; Schieffelin and Ochs, 1986;
Schieffelin, 1990). Bruner (1983) supported the view that young children are active learners and inherently social. He believed that through the steady interactive systems (Language Acquisition Support System) provided by caregivers, infants are able to enter their linguistic communities.

Bruner stressed the role of caregivers as agents of culture who create predictable formats for children’s systematic use of language. For example, peek-a-boo and reading books offer the mother and child a structure in which the mother continually raises her expectations of the child’s linguistic performance. These predictable formats also offer the child an opportunity to explore how to achieve goals using words. When children begin to use language to get things done, they become members of the culture and not just speakers of the language. The joint activity of the infants and their caregivers is a critical form of social interaction which is associated with the development of language, cognition, and the transmission of culture.

For Bruner, language is a social-cultural process whereby infants are motivated by the social forces of human existence and their own natural cognitive endorsements. He proposed the idea of initial cognitive endowment which equips infants to acquire culture through language in four different ways: means-end readiness, transactionality, systematicity, and abstractness.

Regarding means-end readiness, infant behavior from early on is seen to be guided by active means-end readiness. In other words, from the beginning infants coordinate their behaviors with the actions of their caregivers. For example, infants respond to peek-a-boo routines. Infants are extraordinarily social and communicative
during their daily activities, such as diapering, washing, and feeding. Regarding systematicity, infants' actions take place in constrained, familiar situations and show a surprisingly high degree of order. As for abstractness, infants' perceptual world is rather orderly and organized by what seems to be highly abstract rules.

Like Bruner, Vygotsky (1978) saw biological and cultural roots of language and cognition. He stressed that development occurs on the social level, within the cultural context. Therefore, children's cognitive development starts on a social plane, then proceeds to an individual level. When children internalize the mental processes initially made in social activities, they move from the social to the individual plane. In other words, cognitive development moves from interpsychological (social) level to intrapsychological (individual) level (Vygotsky, 1978).

Vygotsky believed that speech is an essential component in the development of higher psychological processes. Speech is a principal instrument of the young child's drive to explore the world. Vygotsky argued that language is a way of sorting out one's thoughts about things while thought is a mode of organizing perception and action.

Vygotsky (1978) identified the concept of the "Zone of Proximal Development" as the area in which a child can solve problems in collaboration with others, especially with an adult or a more competent peer. He stated as follows:

the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (p. 86).

In addition, Vygotsky insisted that even in the case of children's own construction of their development within the Zone of Proximal Development, it is the adults (culture)
who provide the guidelines and conditions within which the child's self-development takes place. Valsiner (1988) pointed out that the Zone of Proximal Development is constructed not only by the purposeful efforts of the caregiver of the child, but also by cultural structuring of the environment in such ways that the child is guided by his/her environment.

Socialization through Talk

For children to become members of the society, they must learn not only the correct structure of their language but also how to use it appropriately to communicate (Hymes, 1961). Therefore, the acquisition of communicative skills is a social phenomenon involving social interaction. According to Schieffelin and Ochs (1986), socialization is an interactional display to a novice of expected ways of thinking, feeling, and acting. Through social interactions, children come to internalize and gain knowledge of the society, such as rules for how to act appropriately.

Gleason (1988) pointed out that there are three different processes which indicate the role of language in socialization: (1) To instruct children about what to do, feel, and think, for example "Sit up at the table." (2) To direct children about what to say on various occasions, for example "Don't forget to say thank you." (3) To praise or condemn some behaviors. Gleason's viewpoints echo what Halliday (1978) stated:

In the development of the child as a social being, language has the central role. Language is the main channel through which the patterns of living are transmitted to him, through which he learns to act as a member of a 'society.' ... and to adopt its 'culture', its modes of thought and action, its beliefs and values. (p. 9)
There have been a number of studies focused on language socialization of children in a variety of societies over the last two decades (Blount, 1982; Clancy, 1986; Ochs, 1988; Scollon and Scollon, 1981; Schieffelin, 1990; Watson-Gegeo and Gegeo, 1986). The findings showed that each culture has unique patterns of caregivers' communication with young children. The form and content of speech to young children are shaped by the values of the particular culture in which the children are being socialized. For example, !Kung parents tolerate children's transgressions, because they believe children are not responsible for their utterances (Shostak, 1981). Among Samoan people, young children have low status, and therefore, infants are not always the focus of caregivers' attention although they receive active care from older sibling (Ochs, 1988).

Because North American mothers view their infants as separate and autonomous social beings, they interact with infants and respond to their vocalizations (Caudill, 1972), and place more value on fostering independence in their infants (Fernald and Morikawa, 1993). Regarding talking to infants, American white middle class mothers tend to provide positive vocalizations to build a pattern of reciprocal and contingent verbal-vocal exchange, and to promote the infants' excited participation in social exchange (LeVine et al. 1995). In contrast, Japanese mothers view their infants as extensions of themselves. Therefore, they emphasize sensitivity to others' needs and feelings (Caudill, 1972; Clancy, 1986). Japanese mothers also encourage mutual dependence and tend to use babytalk words more extensively and for a longer period of time than do American mothers (Fernald and Morikawa, 1993). These studies indicate
that some characteristics of American middle-class mothers’ speaking to their infants are not universal.

The use of language is embedded in a complex system with culturally specific functions and meanings. The characteristics of social interaction between caregivers and infants across various societies provide clear pictures about the relationship between language and culture and how children are socialized through caregivers’ talk.

**Children as Narrators**

**Human Experiences as Narratives**

Narratives are ubiquitous within human daily lives. Humans have always told different stories, such as: when we share the details of our vacations or special events on holidays with others; when children tell what happens of their first day of school to parents; when women and men talk on a TV program about how their lives are affected because of being overweight. Narrative descriptions have been broadly used to recount our past actions and current experiences. In other words, people give meaning to their life experiences by representing them in narrative form.

Goffman (1974) pointed out that narrating is the way we put together our reality in conversational interaction. According to Barbara Hardy (1978), narrating is a primary act of mind transferred by the storyteller and the writer to art from life. It is also a basic way of organizing human experience. Hardy maintained that narrative is the most common and effective form of ordering our world:
For we dream in narrative, day-dream in narrative, remember, anticipate, hope, despair, believe, doubt, plan, revise, criticize, construct, gossip, learn, hate, and love by narrative. In order really to live, we make up stories about ourselves and others, about the personal as well as the social past and future (1978, p. 13).

Rosen (1985) considered narrative as a fundamental way of knowing and of making sense of the world. He stated that narrative is "an explicit resource in all intellectual activity," "a disposition of the mind, a valid and perhaps ineradicable mode of human experience" and "a meaning-making strategy" (p. 8). Rosen (1986) further argued that narrative "is a mode of knowledge emerging from action; is the imposition of formal coherence on a virtual chaos of human events; is a primary and irreducible form of human comprehension; is the central instance or function of human mind" (p. 230). He emphasized that everyday life events are to be viewed as stories. Therefore, there is a story for every photo, every document, and every object.

Narrative at Home And School

In daily life, narrative is widely accessible to children and adults in schools and at home in both individual and social experience. In the school setting, children have many opportunities to encounter and use narratives or to be engaged in the narrative mode of thought (Van Dongen, 1987). For example, teachers use narratives to explain an event, an idea, or some phenomena; children tell and retell personal experiences, or create stories during play and social interactions. They are also involved in stories through reading, writing, and listening.
The onset and development of children’s narrative skills is social in nature. Peers, parents, and daycare teachers all play an important part in it (Genishi and Dyson, 1984; Paley, 1981; Vygotsky, 1962; Wolf, 1993). From participating in interactions, and in the construction of narratives as part of the ongoing events in the environment, children acquire knowledge of narrative (Cook-Gumperz and Green, 1984). McNamee (1987) examined different kinds of storytelling interactions between preschool children and their teachers. He found that children develop a fuller narrative through adult-child dialogue. These findings echo Lindfors’ (1987) recommendation that children be accepted as "full-fledged members of the club of story makers and actively engage in narrating (reading, writing, listening, talking) in real interaction with others - with classmates, community members, published authors, children authors." (p. 359)

Not all children tell narratives in the same way. Basically, the characteristics of children’s narrative performance are influenced by cultural background and have sources in family members (Heath, 1982; Michaels, 1981; Watson-Gegeo and Boggs, 1977). Investigating story reading and other literacy-related interactions between adults and preschools in three communities in the Piedmont of the Carolinas, Heath (1982) found that unlike the children of the middle-class townpeople, the children in the Roadville and Trackton communities, both poor working class communities, had difficulty in school. She suggested that part of the failure was because these children possessed language strategies that were inconsistent with the need for school-oriented mainstream success. Heath (1982) emphasized that learning to recount events and to produce running commentaries is fundamental to later school success. In order to succeed in school,
children from mainstream backgrounds need "opportunities for practicing such habits as producing running commentaries" (Heath, 1982; p. 72), and "to learn as individuals to recount factual events in a straightforward way" (p. 73).

Children Become Narrators

The Ontogeny of Autobiography: Conversational Narratives. It has been found that the production of narratives begins as early as age three (Britton, 1970; Nelson, 1980; Nelson and Gruendel, 1986; Umiker-Sebeok, 1979). According to Nelson (1980), children as young as three years old appear to acquire ordered, sequential knowledge about familiar events they experience in their lives. The investigation of young children's understanding of routine and familiar events was further undertaken. Studies have shown that children, by the preschool years, have mastered a very basic narrative structure for reporting personal narrative and some important skills for remembering and reporting autobiographical memories (Hudson, 1986; Hudson and Nelson, 1986). In examining the monologues of a 2-3 year old child, Bruner and Lucariello (1989) found that young children are capable of expressing their daily life experiences in narrative mode. For example, they are able to tell what events happened at the babysitter's house and in nursery school.

Studies indicated that talk referring to specific past events emerges in conversational routines established by parents with their toddlers (Eisenberg, 1985; Sachs, 1983). Snow (1990) pointed out that when parents and their children converse about important events in the children's lives, the interactive process helps the children
develop the sense of self, which is the ontogeny of the child's autobiography. She further stated:

The attribution to children of memory for the significant events of their lives constitute a recognition of their role as agents, as individuals with intentions, whose subjective experiences are relevant to the narrative (p. 235).

Children's ability to talk about "there and then" rather than just "here and now" is a basic tool for creating a coherent autobiography (Kihlstrom, 1981; McAdams and Ochberg, 1986). From around the second year, children gradually spend part of their days either away from their parents, or away from home. Talk and the exchange of experience provide children a verbal and narrative dimension of interaction between them and their parents or caregivers (Wolf, 1982). Furthermore, this kind of exchange narratives of personal experience becomes one way to preserve emotional attachment for both parents and their children (Wolf, 1993).

As Wolf (1993) emphasized, children are not born narrators, rather they become narrators. Through entering the community of narrators, at home, school, or community, they develop memories, acquire the language markers for recollection, and finally become narrators themselves.

**Mind as Narrative: Fictional Narratives.** According to Kemper (1984), children between the ages of two and eight gradually master the ability to tell stories of connected sequences of events. By the age of ten, children are found to be capable of telling causally well-formed stories. Sutton-Smith (1981) stated that if we consider the mind as narrative, the analysis of narrative would be the analysis of mind. Sutton-Smith (1981) systematically collected fictional narratives by children ranging from two-year-old to
eleven-year-old. He found that the stories told by the very youngest children tend to be a verse-like, line-by-line, chronological style, not using continuing sentences. In addition, the younger children, from the ages of three to eight years, more often tell stories about animals and monsters. For older children, their story contents are human drama, romance, or science fiction.

Studies have shown that there is a parallel between the skills used in sociodramatic play and the narrative skill found in storytelling (Galda, 1984; Gardner, 1982; Sachs et al., 1985). Psychologist Howard Gardner (1982) and his colleagues, at Harvard's Project Zero, have tried to trace the steps by which children become able to create stories and characters, to manage dialogue and other literary devices. He found that children in their second year begin to imitate adults' actions; they soon become able to imagine playthings as either objects of action or agents, such as imaging the doll acting as a baby. At this stage, children enter the realm of symbolic activity. When children reach the age of two-and-a-half or three, they are capable of using various objects to stand for absent objects; for example, a stick can serve as a vacuum cleaner. By age four or five, children start to carry out their play through words. Their narrative language becomes the medium of play. Gardner (1982) maintains that the shift from playful action to linguistic play is accompanied by an equally central development - the discovery and realization of narrative structure.

Rubin and Wolf (1979) pointed out that children at the age of one comment only on objects or events directly before them. By the age of three, children can generate stories which speculate about possible events and imaginary characters. Therefore, the
evolution of young children's storytelling capacities represents a shift from the given world of manipulable objects, pragmatic actions, and immediate feelings to the world of imagined events. The root of this achievement comes from children's developing ability to invoke the actions and feelings of a range of characters in a variety of contexts. Rubin and Wolf (1979) further stated that "the child's understanding of roles, derived from early social interaction, must expand in particular ways to sustain the illusion of internally motivated characters within a story" (p. 16).

Applebee (1978) used an approach derived from Vygotsky's (1962) stages of concept development to analyze 120 stories told by children between two to five. He identified six types of structures of children's stories: (1) **Heaps** is a type of in which primitive mode of organization and because of immediate perception, unrelated objects are linked by chance and by free association; (2) **Sequences** is an organization which put events into an arbitrary sequence where objects are linked on the basis of similarity; (3) **Primitive narratives** is a type of structure in which collection of events around a concrete center whose structure is based on complementarity rather than similarity and where objects are grouped together to form a set; (4) **Unfocused chains** is a type of structure in which each element shares a concrete attribute with the next, but the attribute is constantly shifting and the beginning has little to do with the ending; (5) **Focused chains** is a type of structure in which a chain of events is related to a concrete center where a main character usually goes through a series of events; and (6) **Narratives** is an organization which resulted from an expansion of the centering of the focused chain. However, in narratives, when the chain progresses, the center is elaborated. In general,
the pattern of sequences is the most frequently used form in the stories of two year old, while the focused chains is used the most by five year old.

Applebee (1978) also examined aspects of fantasy and distancing with the same children's stories. He found that children included more patterns of behavior removed from immediate experience when they matured from two to five. The findings also indicated that 97 percent of two-year-old’s stories reflected home and family. By the age of five, only about 33 percent still maintained that characteristic.

Applebee (1978) explored children’s reasons for story preference, expectations about common character roles, and their retelling ability. The findings of the study provided Applebee the basis for establishing a systematic model of the development of children’s verbal response. Applebee identified the following stages, which are divided in terms of Langer’s (1967, 1972) objective and subjective modes and correspond to Piaget’s cognitive stages: (1) **Preoperational stage** (age two to six): Children’s typical objective response is retelling in whole or part with little or no reorganization in the representation. Their subjective comments tend to be egocentric. (2) **Concrete operational stage** (age seven to eleven): Children’s objective comments reflect the abilities to organize, summarize, and categorize. Children can carry on discussion about a story without going through the process of retelling. Their subjective response includes the use of terms like "exciting" and perceive it as an attribute of the story itself rather than as a personal response. (3) **Formal operational Stage I** (age twelve to about fifteen): They are capable of analyzing the structure of the story or the motives of the characters. Children become aware of the difference between their own objective and subjective
reactions. They can talk about their involvement in the work. (4) Formal operational stage II (age sixteen to adult): They make generalizations and formulate abstract statements about theme and meaning. Their subjective response focuses on personal reaction.

**Picture Book Reading at Home and School**

**A Highly Routinized Activity**

A number of researchers have pointed out the importance of highly routinized activities for children’s language acquisition (e.g., Bruner 1975a, 1975b; Ninio and Bruner, 1978; Ninio, 1980; Snow et al., 1981). According to Snow et al., (1981), routine has two very different meanings. One meaning refers to child utterances that have a purely social function, such as: hello, good-bye, and thank you. Another use of the word routine is situations or interactions that are highly predictable and repetitive, such as the peek-a-boo game or book reading activity between caregivers and young children.

Book reading has been found to be a highly routinized activity involving the following steps: (a) caregiver gets the child to focus attention on a picture, (b) caregiver attempts to get the child to label the picture, (c) if the child does not respond, the caregiver provides a label for the picture, (d) caregiver provides feedback to the child’s response (Ninio, 1980; Ninio and Bruner, 1978; Teale and Sulzby, 1987). Also, these
four types of caregiver utterances occur almost exclusively in the order as sequence shown above.

According to Ninio and Bruner (1978), children are treated as participants and encouraged to engage in turn-taking during book reading. Caregivers do not control the focus or direction of the conversation. Rather, they allow children to initiate or terminate topics. This dialogue goes on as a game format which involves a number of factors, such as turn-taking, joint attention, and a sequential structure. These routines show that caregivers play the key role in mediating the book reading activity and keeping the dialogue going.

Furthermore, the caregiver's speech to the child during book reading changes as the child becomes older (DeLoache, 1984; Ninio and Bruner, 1978; Wheeler, 1983). As the child grows older, the caregiver tends to provide less description and request that the child provide more information involving recall and recognition memory. The caregiver's talk also goes beyond the information in the picture, for example, relating something in the picture to the child's past experience.

The Importance of Early Experiences with Books

Educators have pointed out that listening to literature not only provides children pleasure and entertainment, but also motivates them to learn to read and develop a taste for quality literature (Sims, 1977; Huck, 1987). In addition, it reinforces narrative as a way of thinking, develops children's imagination, and gives children various experiences that go beyond their own experiences (Huck, 1987). It also enables children
to see the universality of human experience and offers children the opportunity to explore and understand their own feelings and the feelings of others (Sims, 1977). Furthermore, storybook reading provides young children with close physical contact with their caregivers. Cazden (1972) pointed out the importance of the individual experience of being read to:

Reading to the young child may be a particularly potent form of language stimulation. As usually done, with child sitting on the adult’s lap, it brings a special relationship of close physical contact, easily shared visual focus, and adult speech about that focus spoken directly into the child’s ear. Furthermore, reading aloud is likely to stimulate meaningful conversation about the picture to which both adult and child are attending.

Studies of children who become early readers have indicated that having books and being read to play an important role in children’s language development. In a pioneer study, Irwin (1960) found that systematic sound stimulation, reading and telling stories about pictures, leads to an increase in the phonetic production of those infants during the period from about 13 to 30 months of age. There is a positive correlation between children’s linguistic stages of development and their exposure to books. Studying language acquisition of 6 to 10 year olds, Carol Chomsky (1972) found that children who are read to or read more on their own have a greater knowledge of complex language structures than children who read less and are read to less. Researchers have also established that the childhood experience of being read to is correlated with reading readiness and reading achievement in school (Durkin, 1966; Wells, 1982, 1985).

The language used in books is different from the language used in conversation and other kinds of oral discourse in some ways. The language in children’s books has been found to be more provocative, more complex, and more highly structured, and
richer in syntactic patterns than the language used in children’s television programs (Gasick, 1973). Furthermore, television engages children in a passive way with language, while reading books or telling stories engages children in using language actively, for example, repeat rhymes and talk about the pictures. Worden (1985) examined the similarities and differences in parent-child interaction in two contexts: a book reading activity and a home computer activity involving an alphabet program. The results showed that the amount of verbal interaction was greater in the book reading than in the computer session.

Book reading dialogue routines between mothers and children usually contain an introduction, a setting and character information, as well as the development of some event or action sequence. Therefore, it not only facilitates children’s labeling and learning the structure of dialogue, but also familiarizes children with the narrative structures which are the precursor for later narrative skills (Feagans, 1982; Wells, 1982). In addition, it also helps young children to acquire a sense of story and story grammar, which is a set of rules describing the structure of many different types of story texts (Johnson and Mandler, 1980; Stein, 1979; Stein and Glenn, 1979; Stein, 1982).

Reading to children also has a positive effect on children’s attention span. Tulkin and Kagan (1972) reviewed methods to enhance mother-child interaction during infancy. They support reading to children as an exemplary activity for strengthening mother-child interactions involving sustained attention, listening, and responding from both parents and children. Sullivan (1988) found that reading aloud to kindergarten children on a regular
basis does have a positive effect on their test scores relating to auditory memory and attention span.

The importance of using books as part of the young children’s play experience is also emphasized by researchers. Researchers have found that young prereading children frequently pretended to read their favorite books after they were read to (Holdaway, 1979; Taylor, 1983; Cochran-Smith, 1984). Pappas and Brown (1987) found that when children take their turns to read, they pretend to read and use a reading voice, not a telling about the pictures voice.

British educator Margaret Meek (1982) pointed out that young children’s playful experience with books is an essential link between learning to talk and learning to read. For young children, the playful experience with books can be turning pages of books, squealing and slapping a favorite picture with enjoyment, climbing into caregiver’s lap with a book to initiate a story-time, and rocking or bouncing with the rhythm of songs. Meek (1982) stated the following:

Important learning, for adults as well as children, begins as play, and it is from watching play that we discover just how prodigious is the learning that goes on in early childhood. If reading looks like play to a child, it will be taken seriously. (P. 35)

Holdaway (1979) proposed the concept of literacy set which indicates that children with a background of book experience since an early age are capable of developing a complex range of attitudes, concepts, and skills. The wide range of literacy set includes the following factors which affect children’s literacy development: motivational, linguistic, operational, and orthographic.
On a motivational level, after children have extensive, repetitive experiences with books, they develop high expectations of print and view books as a source of enjoyment. Concerning linguistic factors, children learn oral models from the language of books, including syntax, vocabulary, intonation patterns, and idioms. Furthermore, children use them naturally in daily conversation. In terms of operational factors, children become capable of understanding language without reference to the immediate situation. They also develop the ability to create and use images and make meanings from metaphors and symbols which go beyond their own real-life experiences. On the orthographic level, children gradually develop the knowledge of the conventions of print. For example, the story comes from print and not from pictures; the left hand page is read before the right hand page.

In 1986, Snow and Ninio turned their attention to the contributions of book reading to young children's literacy development in terms of the contracts of literacy which are the basic rules related to the use of books and the meaning of texts. Snow and Ninio (1986) found that the very first period of joint picture book reading, between preschool children and their mothers, is devoted to teaching young children about the correct use of books. For example, books are for looking at or reading not for chewing or throwing. In the course of these interactions, children also learn that the topic of conversation between themselves and the caregivers is determined by the picture held under joint attention. Therefore, children realize that the proper role for the reader is to be led by the book. In addition, children also learn that pictures are symbolic.
representations. Even though pictures are not the real things, they are symbols and can be related to real world experiences.

According to Snow and Ninio (1986), another basic contract established during picture-book reading is that the pictures and words in the book are to be read. Children learn that words go along with pictures. Children further realize that pictures are not only used for labelling, but also can be used to portray actions or events. In addition, children become able to separate book time from real time, as a byproduct of the fictional worlds created by books.

**Picture Book Reading at Home**

Despite the acknowledged importance of picture book reading, only about fifty-eight percent of United States preschoolers were read to daily by parents or other family members in 1995 (The National Education Goals Report, 1995). In addition, parents who were college graduates read daily to their preschool aged children at twice the rate of parents with less than a high school education.

A number of studies of picture book reading with young children have been conducted by well-educated parents in the form of writing journals (e.g., Butler, 1979; Crago and Crago, 1980; Doake, 1985; White, 1954), or recording through fieldnotes, audiotapes, and videotapes about how their children respond to picture book reading (Wolf and Heath, 1992). The results suggest that children’s early experiences with stories and books not only enrich their experiences, but also influence their language, concept development and later attitudes toward reading.
Researchers have found that early readers are often read to by their parents or someone else in the home environment (Clark, 1976; Durkin, 1966; Manning and Manning, 1984; Teale, 1978). Durkin (1966) reported that early readers' homes contain a large amount of printed materials, such as newspapers, books, library books; they also see adults reading and responding to print. These parents' respect for reading is found to have a significant influence on their children. Clark (1976) found that the parents of early readers highly valued books, used the local library regularly, and read to their children at an early age. In addition, these parents or other family members provided children with extended and positive verbal interactions that did not involve any direct formal instruction in reading.

In addition to middle-class families, researchers also paid attention to low income families and children with special needs. The findings indicated that sending books to low-income families for a period of time results in a significant improvement in children’s reading (Hewison and Tizard, 1980; McCormick and Mason, 1989; Tizard et al., 1982). According to Manning et al. (1984), most parents begin reading to their children by the time the children are two years old. Usually, the mother is the parent who reads to her children. In addition, low-income parents tended to believe that if they read aloud to their children, it will help children succeed in school.

Many (1989) found that when children are familiar with the storyline, they become actively involved in the book sharing process. The story reading becomes a shared event between the participants rather than a performance by a reader. Many (1989) also underscored the importance of taking the advantage of illustrations by
allowing the children to share their reactions to them and associate the pictures to objects related to their life experiences. In other words, this kind of discussion allows the children to attach personal meaning to the visual representation of the story.

Fagan and Hayden (1988) investigated the nature of verbal interactions between parents and children as they read familiar and unfamiliar books. The findings indicated that there were no statistically significant differences between fathers and mothers in the nature of their request and response strategies. Also, the children used similar strategies whether the adult reader was a father or a mother. Fagan and Hayden (1988) also found that parents used different strategies when the story being read was familiar versus unfamiliar. When the story was familiar, parents engaged children more in initiating text prediction, text completion, and text critique. When the story was unfamiliar, parents’ request strategy was checking to make sure the children were on the right track and understood the story’s meaning. Furthermore, Fagan and Hayden (1988) stressed that favorite and unfamiliar stories played different roles in children’s reading development.

The familiar story provides security of meaning and allows the child more freedom to relate graphemic information... Unfamiliar stories..., especially as opportunities to open up new areas of meaning and expand horizons of knowledge which provide the child with more knowledge resources to negotiate meaning with each successive reading encounter. (p. 35)

How can storybook reading activity at home affect children’s success in school? In *Ways with Words*, Heath (1983) examined story reading and other literacy-related interactions between adults and preschoolers in three communities. She found that the middle-class townspeople believed that what happened at school and home were closely related. They helped children learn how to take meaning from books to make sense of
their world. Children at a very early age were read to, taught how to label, verbalize the content of books, and answer what-explanations questions from books. Storybook reading became a major event and a natural way for parents to interact with children. Thus, children growing up in middle-class communities were expected to develop habits and values that helped them to enter into a literate society.

In the poor white working-class Roadville community which Heath described, children were talked to, read to, and encouraged to label and verbalize the content of books. However, this kind of interactive book reading only lasted until children were three years old. After that, children were discouraged from making comments or asking questions about those books. Although children were prepared to be good audiences, they also became passive listeners.

In the poor black working-class Trackton community, children were not read to by parents and only occasionally by an older sibling. Furthermore, adults viewed this with amusement and did not try to persuade the small child to sit still and listen to the older sibling. Therefore, children were not intentionally taught to read, to label objects in books, or to ask and answer questions related to book content. When they went to school, they had difficulty sitting at their desks, answering questions with reason-explanations, and making effective statements about reading material.

Heath's study (1983) indicated that Roadville and Trackton adults did not value the use of book meanings to help children make sense of their worlds. Therefore, they failed to socialize their children into literacy in ways that prepared them for school success.
Picture Book Reading in the Classroom

At school, storybook reading is used by teachers for various purposes. It has been used as a way to improve children’s ability to read (Cohen, 1968), to acquaint children with literary language and to develop an overall story schema (Feitelson et al., 1986), to foster children’s critical thinking and creative reading skills (Richardson, 1988), and to help children deal with common concerns (Sullivan, 1987).

Cochran-Smith (1984) applied the ethnographic approach to examine storybook readings at a nursery school in a Philadelphia community over a period of 18 months. She came to the conclusion that storybook reading is a negotiated event in which the readers’ and listeners’ comments and actions surround the information of the print and pictures. In addition, the teacher is a significant mediator between the text and the children. Essentially, the teacher instructs the children on how to use their life experience and knowledge to make sense of texts (Life-to-Text), and to take the knowledge they found in books to apply or relate to their daily lives (Text-to-Life). Cochran-Smith (1985) underscored that the relationships between nonverbal and verbal communicative norms are vital parts of school learning. Children with early group story reading experiences bring their knowledge of how to talk like readers, or how to use oral language, to interpret decontextualized written language.

One of the major insights resulting from a number of studies on the process of storybook reading at home and in school has been the realization that reading to children involves more than reading the text. Rather, the language and social interaction
surrounding the words and events of the text are extremely significant (Heath, 1982; Cochran-Smith, 1984; Bloom, 1985; Taylor, 1986; Teale and Sulzby, 1987).

Children’s Response to Literature

Rosenblatt’s Transactional Theory

In 1938, Louise Rosenblatt offered the transactional theory of literary response in Literature as Exploration. Rosenblatt argued the reader’s input is critical to the creation of meaning. To create meaning from a literary text is a complex process involving both the reader and the text. Louise Rosenblatt was one of the earliest literary scholars to discuss the idea that the reader plays a crucial role in the construction of literary experiences. In her book, Rosenblatt (1938) examined the interaction between the reader and the text and how they both contribute to the process of making meaning. Rosenblatt (1938) described response to literature as an interactional, or transactional process. She stated:

A novel or poem or play remains merely inkspots on paper until a reader transforms them into a set of meaning symbols. The literary work existed in the live circuit set up between reader and text: the reader infuses intellectual and emotional meanings into the pattern of verbal symbols, and those symbols channel his thoughts and feelings. (p. 25)

Rosenblatt’s theory was called the transactional theory of literary response. Rosenblatt made an important distinction between what she called efferent and aesthetic reading - two different types of readers’ stance. The efferent stance focuses the reader’s attention on accumulating the information which can be carried away at the end of
reading. The aesthetic stance focuses the reader's attention on what has been created during the actual reading. Rosenblatt's transactional theory of reader response shares a perspective with James Britton's notion of two modes of language. Britton (1984) maintains the readers use two forms of response for different kinds of text. In reading certain kinds of text, readers play the participant role - they are directly involved, they use the information they are reading to reality. While reading other kinds of text, readers play the spectator role - they stand aside from the text to interpret and evaluate it.

Rosenblatt's viewpoints have led researchers to focus on what children bring to the aesthetic experience and what their responses tell us about aesthetic processes. In the review of research in response to literature, Purves and Beach (1972) stated:

Response consists of cognition, perception, and some emotional or attitudinal reaction; it involves predispositions; it changes during the course of reading; it persists and is modified after the work has been read; it may result in modification of concepts, attitudes or feelings. The research indicates that there may be some common processes, some sort of 'kernels' from which the wide range of response is generated (p. 178)

Early research on children's response to literature tends to focus on the area of children's reading preference. Over the years, researchers have identified certain topics and elements of content that affect children's reading interests (Dunn, 1921; Broening, 1934; Norvell, 1958). As children grow older, they move away from a preference for fairy tales toward realistic subjects (Purves and Beach, 1972); children's reading interest varied with gender and age level (Huus, 1964). In addition, children's reading preference is also influenced by the illustration, color, format, and length of the book (Fenwick, 1975; Watson, 1980). Basically, early research tended to be done using
controlled experiments or large group surveys of a quantitative nature, which tended to ignore children’s actual reading situations and the individual child’s unique responses.

During the 1960’s, a number of important studies on the responses of adolescents and adult readers moved toward describing the nature of response. Squire (1964) explored oral responses of adolescents in a structured response context during the reading process. He categorized readers’ comments as (1) literacy judgements; (2) interpretational responses; (3) narrational reactions; (4) associational responses; (5) self-involvement; (6) prescriptive judgements and (7) miscellaneous. Squire (1964) found that each reader responded to literature in unique ways. Readers deeply involved in a story were more likely to consider the literary values of the story. He also noted that adolescents related fiction to their own lives in some way.

In 1968, Purves and Rippere developed an extensive categorization system for readers’ oral and written responses to text. By examining written statements of 13 to 17 years old from four countries, they categorized responses into five broad categories: (1) engagement-involvement, or reader reaction; (2) perception, or the observation of objective elements in the text; (3) interpretation, or relation of text to the reader’s world; (4) evaluation of author method, author vision or effect on the reader; and (5) a miscellaneous category. The aforementioned two studies offer descriptions of categories of response, one based on oral responses and the other based on written responses. During the 1960’s and 1970’s, research into reader response tends to be conducted among adults and adolescents. Children were viewed as not experienced enough to respond to literature.
Children's Response to Book Reading in School Settings

The pioneering study on the complexity of how children responded to literature in natural contexts was conducted by Hickman (1979). Hickman applied an ethnographic approach to explore the response behaviors of ninety children in three groups: kindergarten-first grade; second-third grade; and fourth-fifth grade.

Hickman's (1979) study showed that children are capable of responding to literature through verbal responses, actions, drama, and writing. Through body stance, laughter and applause, children expressed their interest and involvement in literature being read to them. When younger children have contact with books, they tend to just browse through the books. They like to discuss whether a story is true or possible. Older children (4-5 grade) express stronger and narrower preferences in choosing books. They are concerned about a story's probability or likeness to real life, and are capable of making more efficient summaries. Children's responses are associated with teacher-created contexts. For example, the kind and amount of focus provided by the teacher influences the form and direction of children's responses. In addition, the presence of books and their accessibility, and the amount of attention drawn to them affect the quantity of response generated.

Hickman's (1979) findings indicated that children need opportunities to respond to literature in various ways, both verbal and nonverbal, for example: through dramatic play, painting, or other symbolic representation of a book. They also need time and opportunities to make and share comments not only with the teacher, but also with their
peers. Hickman's study provides teachers with valuable information that is not available from purely statistical studies.

In 1982, Hepler moved in another direction to explore children's responses to literature. She employed a naturalistic approach to explore patterns in response to literature of ten fifth graders and fifteen sixth graders in one classroom during a school year. The results strongly showed that the children of the classroom formed a community of readers. The community of readers provided all children with ideas on what to read, how to involve themselves in book talk, and how to respond to books. The teacher also provided constant support for each child.

Hepler's (1982) notion of community of readers indicated that social environmental influences not only affect children's book choices and reading interest, but also their attitude toward books. Therefore, children need to know that their effort to become readers is valued. When they view the number of books they have read as an accomplishment, they are proud of reading a book to a greater depth or of seeing new aspects of a book. Then, they will perceive themselves as good readers.

Another important ethnographic study of children's response to literature was conducted by Kiefer (1982). Kiefer examined the response of twenty-one first and second grade children to picture books in two combination first and second grade classrooms for twelve weeks. The results showed that children's responses to a book changed over time. If enough time was provided, their response would go further and deeper.
Kiefer’s (1982) study suggested that teachers play an important role in the development of children’s response behaviors. Teachers can take steps to broaden and deepen children’s response to picture books, for example, providing a wide range of picture books and displaying them attractively. In addition, teachers need to recognize that not all young children respond to a book in the same way. Therefore, children should be allowed to respond through various ways: talking, writing, drawing, music, and movement.

Lehr (1985) conducted a response study with young children to characterize the nature of the child’s sense of theme in narratives. She focused on how children come to represent meaning when they encounter books and what the influence of context might do to facilitate this type of learning. The results showed that there is a strong correlation between level of thematic awareness and the exposure to a story. Opportunities to listen to, read, and discuss books greatly contribute to children’s developing their ability to create meaning for themselves.

In 1990, Hungerford utilized an ethnographic methodology to explore preschoolers’ responses to literature in a day care setting. The study focused on how young children create meaning for their lives through Benton’s (1983) notion of "secondary world" of literary responses and Winnicott’s (1971) notion of a "third area" of play. Their results indicated that preschoolers’ response behaviors were deeply integrated with play behaviors.

Hungerford (1990) categorized preschoolers’ response behaviors in three types. In individual/dyadic response behaviors, an individual child or two children were
involved in book reading. They tended to have physical contact with books, for example, they carried book around or stroked or smelled the pages. They also demonstrated literary behavior, such as pointing to words they know, telling the story to themselves, or using the illustrations as clues to recreate the story. When two children were involved in book interaction, they tended to tell the story together and both shared comments and ideas. When an individual child was read to by an adult, the child seemed to be more interested in exhibiting book-using knowledge, such as turning pages, than in the actual story content.

In communal response behaviors, if several children sat together in the book area, they might recommend books or show their favorite parts to each other. The book talk among them was basically centered around the characters and actions in familiar books. When book talk involved several children and an adult, children usually participated in the predictable parts of the story.

In guided/directed response behaviors, the adults tended to perceive book reading as one way to quiet down children or bring everyone together. Therefore, adults used books in circle time for instruction on issues of feelings, emotions, or birthday celebrations, or for preparation for a field trip. Children were encouraged to express ideas, to dictate, or to dramatize the story they heard.

According to Hungerford (1990), because the environment provided an atmosphere that physically, humanly, and philosophically encouraged literary response and play activity, the children were allowed to have opportunities to act as readers creating meaning for themselves.
Recently, children’s literature researchers and educators have explored different aspects of children’s responses to literature, concerning response modes, teachers’ influences on children’s responses, and contexts for children’s responses (Holland et al., 1993). In the study of how kindergarten children were involved in repeated reading of a picture book, Jacque (1993) found that young children actively participated in the creation of meaning by bringing their own lives and literary experiences to the books read to them. In addition, young children used body language in many different ways to create their unique and shared meaning of the text. For example, they acted out the plot of the story. Jacque’s study (1993) indicated that a story should be read aloud more than once to provide young children with opportunities to organize internalized information, and to express their understanding and their interpretations of the text.

Infants’ Response to Book Reading at Home Settings

Some longitudinal studies focus on how one specific child responds to literature at home. White (1954) kept a journal of story reading to her daughter, Carol, who was 2 years old, which was extended over a three year period. In her journal, White described herself as an adult reader who played an important role in affecting the child’s attitude toward books and the relationship between the child and the books.

Butler’s study (1979) focused on her granddaughter Cushla who was born with severe mental and physical handicaps. In order to fill the long hours carrying Cushla around, Cushla’s parents read children’s books to her from the age of four months. Cushla’s mother came from a book-oriented family; she perceived reading to children as
an everyday activity limited not only to bedtime. After the successful experience in
interesting Cushla in books and the realization that Cushla was able to occupy herself by
crawling, touching, playing with objects, Cuhsla’s parents believed that children’s books
could be an important link between Cushla and the outside world. In addition, because
Cushla was ill very often, reading to her was always possible.

According to Butler (1979), Cushla, by three months, was far behind the normal
baby in most aspects of her development. For example: she was lacking in arm control,
could not hold her head up, and could not focus her eyes on an object unless it was held
close to her face. Therefore, in the course of reading, Cushla was usually held on a
adult knee and her back was supported by the adult’s body. The book to be read was
usually held at an appropriate distance from her eyes to match Cushla’s focusing
technique. Even though Cushla was different from normal children physically, she was
able to show various response behaviors when she was read to.

Usually, when Cushla was shown a wordless book, she would use a scanning
motion, often pausing to stare at a certain part of a picture. When the adult pointed to
the objects in the book, she would follow the adult’s finger with her eyes. If she
preferred to keep staring at something, she would refuse to move her eyes to the next
object. When she responded to a rhyme type of book, she always showed an expression
of focused attention, and often smiled and kicked her legs with a jerking motion. Even
though Cushla’s arm and leg movements were weak, she always showed her excitement
by waving her arm, and kicking her legs when a favorite book was read to her.
When Cushla was about eleven months old, she could sit firmly on an adult knee and point at and turn pages. She even smacked a page to show her approval. Cushla was tested at seventeen months. Although Cushla was not able to walk or to pull or push toys, the results showed that her language development was normal. By twenty-four months, Cushla was able to walk unsteadily for a short distance. She was able to walk well by thirty months of age. At three years and eight months, Cushla was tested again. Her development level was above average, except tests related to visual images and finer motor movements. The results also showed that her pre-reading skills were well established, although she had slight difficulty in focusing her eyes. Butler (1979) concluded that Cushla’s extensive experience with storybooks had a profound influence on her development. She made significant progress in language development and further established a sense of security both toward people she knew and unfamiliar people.

Crago and Crago (1980) audio-taped their daughter Anna’s experiences and responses to picture books and stories between the ages of twelve months and five years. Crago and Crago (1980) pointed out that they read to Anna at the same pace they would for an adult audience. However, in the early period (12-24 months), Anna’s mother regularly simplified texts or talked about pictures with language better suited to Anna. By the time Anna was three, most texts she was read to were read as written. When Anna was two, she was given her own library card in response to her eager demand for more books.

According to Crago and Crago’s record, Anna, at one year and ten months, gazed at the pictures for a surprisingly long time. At this stage, Anna could identify a pictured
object or creature, and she also asked for clarification of what she was not able to understand, by a questioning look or grunt. In addition, she memorized and quoted text phrases. She also showed her intense interest in a particular picture by silent concentration. Interestingly, she requested real food after seeing it referred to in the book. When Anna was three, she corrected her mother's reading, like "he" for "she", or "wonderful witch" for "powerful witch."

Crago and Crago (1980) described their daughter's response in detail, both verbal and nonverbal. However, during the period between eleven months and eighteen months, because of their ignorance of the potential significance of Anna's verbal and nonverbal behaviors, they did not record exactly which objects in an illustration Anna consistently identified or what kind of comments Anna provided. In addition, their study did not provide readers the verbal interactions between adults and the child or the physical environment surrounding the picture book reading events.

There has been little research completed which focused on infants below the age of one. Lamme and Packer (1986) videotaped thirteen mothers each reading four books to their infants, ranging in age from three months to eight and a half months at the beginning of the study and from seven months to twelve and a half months at its conclusion. They concluded that infants who have been read to routinely greatly enjoyed that experience and learned a great deal about books, reading, and language from their book reading experience.

Doake (1985) conducted research on an individual child Raja's response to book reading from birth until he was a year old. Doake found that, for the first two months,
the child paid little attention to the books, instead looking around the room, looking at the reader’s face, and occasionally looking at the book. At the age of two months, Raja would listen and look with a high degree of attention when familiar stories were read and reread. By two months and three weeks, Raja began to touch the pages of his books. Even though he sat on a parent’s knees quietly and passively, he became active and animated when a familiar book was read to him. Between three and four months, when a new story was read to him, he immediately became distracted and restless. But if after a few pages the reader turned to a familiar one, Raja’s attention returned.

By five months, Raja had an attention span of forty minutes when fifteen familiar stories were read to him. Before he was six months old, Raja responded with smiles and excited words, such as: Meow, No-oooo, when the reader emphasized those words. By eight months, he would smile up at the reader when the last page was turned and read. Raja also started to point at certain illustrations or part of the illustrations. Raja’s attention span gradually increased. By nine months, his attention span for listening to familiar stories increased to about seventy-five minutes. When Raja was eleven month old, he was able to identify some of his favorite books by name when he was asked to bring one to his parents. Occasionally, he played with his books for a long period of time. In addition, Raja also demonstrated his mastery of opening books and turning pages.
Summary

This review of the literature began with a discussion of current views of infants and the complexity of their interactions with the outside world. Studies indicate that infants' senses are functional, and that they are able to communicate. The work of Bruner and Vygotsky on how caregivers play a role as agents of culture was then explored. Bruner and Vygotsky both emphasized children's language and cognitive development from a sociocultural perspective. Children's development occurs on the social level and within the cultural context.

The importance of narrative was then discussed. Narrative is a natural human language organization and serves as a means of organizing and representing human experiences. It has been recognized as a primary act of mind and a fundamental way of knowing and of making sense of the world. Narrative gives power to children as they acquire narrative competence to tell and retell their personal experiences, and to involve in social interactions. Children at the age of two to three are capable of telling stories, expressing their daily life experiences, or participating in sociodramatic play in narrative form. Both at home or in school, narrative is an important way of communicating between children and adults surround them.

The issue of storybook reading at home and school was also addressed. Storybook reading has been identified as a highly routinized activity involved interactive behavior and verbal scaffolding dialogue which was found to be a significant factor for children's early language development. Studies also indicated that reading aloud,
especially at an early age, familiarizes children with language structure, language patterns of literature, story schema, and narrative skills. Researchers also have found a positive correlation between being read to and reading achievement, reading readiness, the development of listening skills, and attention span. In addition, reading to young children also offers them a sense of security which comes from physical closeness to an adult. Furthermore, storybook reading both at home and in classroom is a social activity in which caregivers play the key role in mediating the book for children.

Finally, theory and practice of children's responses to literature were also discussed. Early research concerning young children and their interactions with books was conducted by parents who usually had higher educational background. These studies tended to focus on an individual child's response to literature in home settings. They do not provide information about the verbal interactions between the adults and the children. In the last fifteen years, research applying the ethnographic method to explore children's responses to literature in school settings shows that the social community of children influences their book choice, their reading interest, and their attitude toward reading. In addition, young children's response behaviors are integrated with play behaviors.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This study employed qualitative, naturalistic inquiry techniques to describe infants' response behavior to book reading in a day care setting. The exploratory, descriptive nature of the research questions suggested that qualitative methodology would be appropriate in addressing the questions and would be more practical for the collection of data within a day care setting. The decision to use a qualitative perspective guided the research design, data collection procedures and selection of instruments and techniques.

One of the most striking features about qualitative, naturalistic inquiry is its utilization of a wide range of sources of data. Researchers who employ this methodology tend to spend a long period of time in a setting. In other words, they tend to focus on the micro level of human interaction and social processes rather than concentrating on the macro level of institutions or social classes.

Decisions concerning selections of the day-care site as well as characteristics of the population will be presented first in this chapter. Next, the research design, including the research cycle, role of the researcher, and methods of data collection will be discussed. Finally, a description of the analysis process is included to document how final conclusions were determined.
Rationale for Site Selection

The study took place in an infant center of the Human Development Laboratory School on the campus of a large northeastern university. Major populations within this setting were university affiliated families who reflected a wide range of cultural and international diversity. There were several reasons for the site selection. (1) Because the researcher was previously employed for two years by the Infant Center as an assistant teacher, and had completed two graduate course research projects as pilot studies there, the researcher was familiar with the teachers and the setting. (2) The subjects at the Infant Center would provide a wide range of multicultural and socioeconomic populations. (3) Book reading activity has been an on-going practice in the Infant Center.

The Laboratory School was on the campus of the university. It offered half-day child care to infants and toddlers from Monday to Friday, and a three day a week preschool program for children aged two to five years. The permanent staff consisted of University faculty and professional staff. Graduate teaching assistants and student interns also assisted in all programs. The Laboratory School has served students, teachers, preschool children, and their families since the 1930’s.

According to its philosophy statement (see Appendix A) the emphasis was on individualized care and developmentally appropriate education for young children. In each classroom, the staff and student interns worked closely to create and provide a secure and cognitively stimulating environment. Over the course of the year, the
children were encouraged to explore social relationships and form close bonds with the
teachers and peers. It was believed that these close relationships help support the
children as they explore the environment and construct knowledge to their fullest
potential.

In the Laboratory School, autonomy, self-reliance, and prosocial development
were encouraged. The philosophy statement also emphasized that the staff members pay
close attention to the children’s language development and help their work towards
mastery of language within the realm of their social development. For example, children
were encouraged to express their thoughts and feelings in words, as well as in other
symbolic media. Creativity, individuality, and respect for cultural diversity were basic
values in these programs.

In addition, through group meetings and individual parent conferences, parents
gained access to involvement and to become familiar with the program and staff
members. Parents were also encouraged to visit and share their comments and
experiences with one another and with staff and student teachers at pick-up times and in
the observation booth. In the Laboratory School, every classroom was equipped with an
observation booth which served child development, psychology, nursing, and other
students who wished to observe children in a classroom setting. Parents were
encouraged to observe in the booths at any time.

The Laboratory School was open to children of the local community. However,
children of the University students, staff, and faculty were given preference in the infant
and toddler programs. Staff made their admission decisions based on a diversity of economic, ethnic, and occupational backgrounds in families.

The Infant Center

In 1991, the Infant Center consisted of a half-day (9 a.m. to 1 p.m.) program for the group care of infants aged 2 to 19 months, within the Laboratory School. The Infant Center was founded in 1977 and was on the ground floor of a building located at the center of the campus. The toddler program and the preschool were on the same floor, across the hallway from the Infant Center.

The Infant Center (see Figure 1, p. 88) included two areas: a play area and a crib area. The play area was bigger than the crib area, and was carefully and effectively organized into various activity corners. In the crib area, there were ten cribs, two rocking chairs, and three low toy shelves which were used to display toys and books that were reachable for the infants. The two areas were well divided by a divider shelf (a row of low toy shelves) which faced the play area. The room had its own sink in a corner of the play area. There was a small kitchen next to the sink separated by a small gate that adults could easily cross. The room was well supplied with a wide variety of toys serving different purposes. In general, toys and activities of the setting were changed regularly once a week. The Infant Center also had an observation booth to allow parents, practicum students, and researchers to observe infants.
Subjects for the Study

The Infants

The study included ten infants (see Table 1, p. 82), ranging in age from five months to thirteen months, six boys and four girls, from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds. All ten infants were American born. Eight were white, including one Jewish and one Hispanic child, one was Asian and one was black Hispanic. All the ten infants were approximately 5 months to 13.5 months old at the beginning of the study. By the end of the study they were 10 months to 18.5 months old.

The Parents

The parents of the infants were affiliated with the University in various ways. Among the twelve parents who were interviewed (see Table 2, p. 83), there were two undergraduate students, four graduate students, two faculty members, one administrative staff, one visiting scholar, one homemaker whose husband was a graduate student, and a local policeman. These parents were diverse in their ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

The Teachers

There were three female teachers (see Table 3, p. 84), Gail, Debbie, and Polly, at the Infant Center. Gail obtained her Bachelor’s degree and Master’s degree from the university’s early childhood education program. Debbie has a Bachelor’s degree from the university. Polly was actively taking graduate classes and planning to pursue her
doctorate degree in Education at the university. Gail and Debbie worked as co-directors and head teachers. All of them had substantial working experience in the field of early childhood education.

In order to establish a close relationship between the infants and the teachers, each infant was assigned to a specific teacher. Debbie and Polly each took care of three infants, while Gail took care of four infants. In addition to the three teachers, there was one part time graduate assistant teacher and three student interns assisting in the program.

In addition to taking care of the infants, the two head teachers, Gail and Debbie, also facilitated and supervised practicum students at the Infant Center. They also participated in a collaborative manner with a professor in the Infant practicum class, covering principles of group care and infant development, discussing individual infants' needs and progress, and giving feedback on practicum students' work. For the practicum students, each was assigned a specific attendance schedule in the morning. The role of a practicum student was to be auxiliary, unlike many "student teaching" situations. It has been well defined in the handout of Infant practicum class, entitled "What to Expect as a Practicum Student" (see Appendix B):

Initially, each caregiver establishes a strong relationship with his/her babies, and eventually with most or all of the other babies. This network provides a critical groundwork of security and stability for the babies which we should not jeopardize by allowing ourselves, as primary caregivers, to be displaced by students.
Daily Routines

The daily schedule (see Table 4, p. 85) in the Infant Center was determined largely by the individual schedules of the infants, and partly by caregivers’ need to organize the flow of the day. Usually, from 8:45 to 9:00 a.m., parents brought their infants to the crib area through the back door. Then they filled out a daily chart, put their infants’ snack in the refrigerator, and brought the child to the play area to chat with the primary caregiver. In caregivers’ minds these were very significant exchanges, since they considered parental support a very important component of the program. In addition, separating from parents might not be easy for the infants or parents.

From 9:00 to 10:00 a.m., most of the infants were alert and ready for the most organized, self-initiating play of the morning. Some infants might need a short period of time-out away from others because they would get tired, hungry, or over-stimulated.

From 10:00 to 10:15 a.m., snack time occurred, during which the infants were fed by adults or engaged in self-feeding. Caregivers sat with the infants to help feed and to facilitate a cheerful social time. After finishing the snack, the infants were removed one by one and taken to the crib area. During snack time, room pick-up and reorganization were done by whoever happened to be free.

Nap time was from 10:15 a.m. to noon. After snack time, the infants needed to stay in their crib to wait for diaper changes. They either had their diapers changed or were kept in the crib area until diapering and snack clean-up were accomplished. Usually caregivers sustained eye and verbal contact with the infants to help them wait for
their turns, and whoever was free tried to engage the infants who were playing on the floor. During these moments, caregivers must decide who needed to take a nap earlier or later. Infants who were not napping were invited back to the play area.

At around 12:00 noon, most infants woke up and rejoined the group for a second activity time. Most infants were not as well-organized at this time as earlier in the day. Therefore, they did less exploring and experimenting.

During the 12:00-1:00 p.m. period, infants had final diaper change before their parents picked them up. According to the regulation, parents needed to arrive before 1:00 p.m. They could talk with caregivers, stay and socialize for a while.

Gaining Entry

Because I had been the teaching assistant in the Infant Center for two years previous to the conception of the study, all three teachers knew me very well. I discussed the research plans with all three teachers. They were supportive and agreed to participate.

The study had been approved by the Human Subject Review Committee of the Human Development Laboratory School, and the School of Education at the University of Massachusetts. It was also approved by the teachers, and the parents of each of the infants in the Infant Center. Each parent and teacher was asked to read and sign a written consent form (see Appendices C and D). The researcher was permitted to do participant observation and videotaping in the Infant Center, and to interview the teachers.
and the parents. All the teachers and the parents responded not only positively, but also showed their strong interest in the topic of the study.

Research Design

The study was qualitative, employing a naturalistic inquiry perspective. The naturalistic inquiry permits a way of looking at and interpreting a culture from the "native point of view" (Spradley, 1980). It has been referred to as the work of describing a culture (Spradley, 1980). Bauman (1972) described it as "the process of construction through direct personal observation of social behavior, a theory of the working of a particular culture in terms as close as possible to the way members of that culture view the universe and organize their behavior within it" (p. 158). According to Lutz (1981), the focus is "on the participant observation of a society or culture through a complete cycle of events that regularly occur as that society interacts with its environment" (p. 52).

The design of this study reflects an interactive and context-governed perspective through the employment of participant-observation and successive videotaping over a five months period. The investigation also employed both formal and informal interviewing strategies.
Research Cycle

The day care aspect of the study included observation in the day care setting for a five month period from January to May, 1991. Four phases occurred and each will be discussed separately (see Table 5, p. 86).

Phase One. During the first phase (January), gaining entry, getting acquainted, and establishing trustful relationships with the infants and their parents were the main foci. Another focus during this period was to identify general research questions to provide a framework for further inquiry and observation. During this period, the researcher kept field notes to record what was going on in the Infant Center and utilized slides to document the features of its physical setting. In addition, informal interviews with the teachers and the parents occasionally took place either inside the Infant Center or at the observation booth.

Phase Two. The second phase of the study occurred between early February and late April. During this period, field notes, slides, informal interviews were continuously utilized. Videotaping was also employed to document book reading related activities. Another goal during this period was to formulate interview questions for the teachers and the parents. The researcher brainstormed a set of formal interview questions and presented them to dissertation committee members. After editing by two of the committee members, a list of fourteen parent questions (see Appendix E) and twelve teacher questions (see Appendix F) were approved.

Phase Three. During phase three (from early May to May 25), the teacher and parent formal interviews were conducted. Appointments had been secured when the
teachers and the parents agreed to participate in the study. Through discussion with the teachers and the parents individually, the appointment date for each of them was set.

Most of the interviews took place either at the Infant Center’s observation booth or at the playground of the Laboratory School. Most parents arranged the schedule prior to the time they picked up their child. Two parents chose to be interviewed at their office in the University.

The researcher arrived at the place about ten minutes ahead of time carrying a battery operated tape recorder, a folder with the formal interview question guide, paper, and pen. The tape recorder was shown to the interviewee; once they felt comfortable the questioning began. The researcher was sensitive to the moods and personalities of the interviewee, usually started with a friendly conversation and a brief biography of the interviewee. The researcher was open to the interviewee when he/she expressed interest in knowing the researcher’s personal experiences.

The amount of time spent on the interviews varied, averaging about one hour. Teacher interviews went on for about one and a half to two hours. After each formal teacher and parent interview was completed, the researcher labeled the tapes and kept notes about feelings and reactions to the interview.

**Phase Four.** During the fourth phase (June, 1991 - December, 1995), the post-site analysis, transcribing, interpretation, and reporting of findings occurred. The huge amounts of data including written field notes, hundreds of pages of transcripts of audiotapes and videotapes from participant observation and formal interviews were transcribed by the researcher. This allowed the researcher to explore the patterns of
picture book reading events, infants responding to books in a day care setting, and parents'/teachers' attitudes concerning infants and book reading.

The Role of the Researcher

The researcher assumed two roles during data collection: that of participant-observer and that of interviewer. Each of these roles will be discussed separately.

Participant-Observer. As a participant-observer, the researcher could record many aspects of the context of book reading events the teachers may have taken for granted. The researcher could also observe events from a neutral position.

Interviewer. Naturalistic inquiry data collection from human sources often requires the researcher to assume the role of interviewer. In order to complete an interview, the researcher must follow certain steps to complete an interview. First, a decision must be made on whom to interview. Second, the researcher must prepare for the interview. Third, initial relaxed talking should begin the interview to place the respondent at ease and introduce them to the topic under study. Fourth, flexibility should be maintained to follow up new leads or probe for more information. Finally, the interview should be terminated and closure must take place.

Therefore, in the dual roles of participant-observer and interviewer, the researcher could use these various perspectives in order to minimize personal bias and prejudice (Dolbert, 1982).
Data Collection

Several methods were utilized for data collection. These included participant-observation of book reading events, informal and formal interviews. The major tools for the data collection were written field notes, the video-tapes of infants engaged in picture book reading activities, and the audio-tapes of the formal interviews with parents and teachers, supplemented with slides that documented the physical environment of the Infant Center and the picture book reading events.

Participant Observation

Through participant observation, the researcher was able to directly experience social situations, observe the activities of infants, and explore the physical aspects of the social situations. In other words, the researcher was not only an insider (participant), but also an outsider (observer).

Formal Interviews

Formal interviews were scheduled with parents and teachers at the end of the study. The purpose of these interviews was to obtain more information about infants' early literacy experience at home and in the Infant Center, and about parents' and teachers' beliefs about infants' responses to books.

Each formal interview centered on but was not restricted to the questions prepared ahead of time by the researcher. The structured interview questions allowed the
researcher to keep the topic of research in focus. The questions for formal interviews with parents (9 mothers and 3 fathers) and teachers are listed in Appendix E and F.

Informal Interviews

In general, the parents were more often informally interviewed than the teachers. Informal discussion between the researcher and the parents tended to occur at the observation booth of the Infant Center, either after parents dropped off their child in the morning or before they picked up their child in the afternoon. In addition, informal talk occurred before or after parent formal interviews. For each formal interview, before the tape recorder was turned on, the researcher usually had a chat with the parent. After the formal interview was completed, the researcher turned off the tape recorder. Then, the parents shifted to a more informal mode of conversing about themselves and their child. Sometimes, the informal discussion focused on issues related to their child and their book reading at home. The parents tended to assume more responsibility for this informal talk to ensure that the researcher fully understood the information they had shared.

Informal interviews with teachers occasionally occurred during participant-observation. Another occasion was during weekly staff meeting held on every Monday afternoon. This was a time when the three teachers met to discuss various issues they were concerned about. Right after the meeting, Debbie would start her weekly routine - changing the physical setup. The researcher attended the staff meeting a few times and had informal talks on those occasions. In addition, the researcher participated in
changing the setup once with Debbie to gain an insight of how teachers incorporated their ideas into the physical setting.

**Written Field Notes**

In the course of the study, written field notes were taken in two settings: during and after each day's participant-observation, and after each parent and teacher interview. Field notes were not taken during interviews, because the researcher felt that note-taking would intrude upon the rapport-building between the researcher and informants. Note-taking might have interrupted important interview non-verbal listening stances: eye contact, facial expression, and head nodding in agreement or understanding of statements made. The written field notes served many purposes. First, they provided the researcher with a written record of impressions and events as they happened during the participant-observation and the interview. Second, they documented the infants' book reading context in a day-care setting during the study. Thirdly, they provided evidence for ongoing analysis as the researcher worked on the task of discerning patterns.

**Audiotaping**

Audiotaping was essential in obtaining the exact transcript of the interview conversation. A total of thirteen one hour parent interview tapes and three one hour teacher interview tapes were made. They provided an accurate record of the formal interview.
Through audiotaping, the researcher was able to concentrate on listening and was also relieved from note taking. Audiotaping allowed the researcher to engage in lengthy interviews without distraction. In addition, it provided an opportunity for the researcher to review and analyze the data again and again.

**Videotaping**

In this study, in addition to making field notes and audiotaping, videotaping was used as means of collecting data. Videotaping allowed the researcher to record what was happening in the setting and to watch it over and over again. Over time the researcher might find new meanings, verbal and nonverbal patterns of communication of the people under study.

In the course of the study, the researcher videotaped 22 days between February and May, 1991. The total hours for the videotapes was approximately thirty hours. The actual dates on which video recordings were made are listed in Table 6 (p. 86).

**Photography**

In the course of the study, the researcher took one hundred and ninety five slides dated from January 29 to May 22. The majority of the slides were of the physical setting in the Infant Center, and how children’s books were incorporated into the physical setting. The changes in the physical setting were documented week by week. Other slides included photographs of book reading events and field trips. Photographing
enabled the researcher to document people, events and settings, and to create a photographic record of specific setting and behaviors.

**Data Analysis**

The researcher conducted a systematic search for order and understanding by "working with data, organizing it, breaking it into manageable units, synthesizing it, searching for patterns, and discovering what is important and what is to be learned, and deciding what you will tell others." (Bogdan and Biklen, 1982, p. 145). In selecting the analytic strategies, the researcher was influenced by "the general purpose of the research, the nature of the research problem or question, and the theoretical perspectives that inform the research problem and intrigue the researcher." (Goetz and LeCompte, 1981, p. 64).

**Analysis in the Field**

The following analytic strategies suggested by Bogdan and Biklen (1982) were employed by the researcher to make analysis an ongoing part of data collection.

**Narrow the Study.** The early stage of data collection was on a broad basis focusing on a wide range of behaviors in the day care setting, in order to have a broad understanding of the subjects, setting, and issues related to the study. Then, subsequent data collection focused more on specific concern.
The researcher began the research guided by the broad category of "What is happening in the Infant Center?" After the first phase of the study was completed, the researcher realized a narrower category, entitled "Book reading events in the Infant Center" needed to be addressed. The specific areas of focus during the second phase of participant-observation emerged. The researcher focused on observing "How and when book reading events occur?", "How infants respond to books?", and to explore "Teachers’ and parents’ value systems regarding reading to infants." During this period, the researcher also used participant-observations and conversations to pursue these foci.

During the third phase, the researcher kept the above foci and added new aspects: "Infants’ book reading practices at home," and "How teachers and parents support or constrain infants’ response to books in day-care and home context." During this period, the researcher continued the participant-observation at the site. The formal interview with parents and teachers was also used to pursue these foci.

**Type of Study.** Before the beginning of the study, it was necessary for the researcher to decide what type of qualitative methodology to use. In order to gain insight into how infants respond to books in a day-care setting, and to explore teachers’ and parents’ belief systems and practices on book reading to infants, the best choice was to conduct participant-observations and formal and informal interview approaches. Throughout the data collection, the researcher was building infant, parent, and teacher files by adding transcripts and field notes. All of these files were helpful for post-data analysis.
Analytic Questions. Prior to this study, the researcher conducted two pilot studies related to infant and book reading in a day-care setting at the site. After the completion of those studies and through extensive reading of literature on children’s response to literature, the researcher was able to formulate the specific questions for this study. As this study was in progress, the research questions became modified to address the important aspects of infants’ responses to picture book reading as they became more apparent.

Data Collection in Light of Previous Data. Before the researcher engaged in another week of participant-observation, or another formal interview with teachers or parents, all previous written field notes were reviewed and were reflected upon for themes and patterns. Through this constant review of collected data in light of new data, the researcher began the preliminary analysis and formulation of further questions.

Observer’s Comments. Throughout the study, the researcher’s own thoughts and feelings were recorded in field notes. These reflections included personal feelings, questions, and frustrations. This insight led the researcher to focus questions and observations on verification or modification of the research questions.

Venting. To talk about the ideas emerging from the ongoing study is a part of the naturalistic inquiry approach. In the process of the study, the researcher talked with other doctoral students, and friends. She also talked with members of her dissertation committee. In addition, she talked about the ideas emerging from the ongoing study with two groups of Chinese parents who were affiliated with a Chinese School in Boston and
the Chinese Student Association at a private university. The researcher was invited as a guest speaker to present on the topic of "Children's Literature and Reading."

Analysis after Data Collection

The data derived from transcription of videotapes of participant observation, audiotapes of teacher and parents interviews, and field notes served as main resources for analysis after data collection. The researcher began a more intensive analysis after all the audiotapes and videotapes had been transcribed. Then, the researcher reread all the transcripts several times to get familiar with the material and began to use "memoing" along margins in order to identify categories for coding.

According to Spradley (1980), analysis is a search for patterns. He states it in this way:

Analysis of any kind involves a way of thinking. It refers to the systematic examination of something to determine its parts, the relationship among the parts, and their relationship to the whole. (p. 85)

The viewpoint that Miles and Huberman (1984) made about coding echoes what Spradley (1980) referred to as "analysis is a search for patterns." They stated the following:

A code is an abbreviation or symbol applied to a segment of words - most often a sentence or paragraph of transcribed fieldnotes - in order to classify the words. Codes are categories. They usually derive from research questions, hypotheses, key concepts, or important themes. They are retrieval and organizing devices that allow the analyst to spot quickly, pull out, then cluster all the segments relating to the particular questions, hypotheses, concept, or theme. Clustering sets the stage for analysis. (Miles and Huberman, 1984, p. 56)
In order to reflect the research questions of this study, following the researcher's intensive search for coding categories, the following categories emerged from the transcripts of the videotapes and field notes. They are listed as follows:

- II: Infant-initiated Book Reading
- TI: Teacher-initiated Book Reading
- TS: Teacher's Support of Infants' Response
- TC: Teacher's Constraint of Infants' Response
- Solo: Infant's Response to Books in an Individual Context
- Duo: Infants' Response to Books in the Dyadic Context
- Chorus: Infants' Response to Books in the Group Context
- SC: Scaffolding
- EXT: Language Extension
- RR: Reading Readiness Interaction Sequences
- LT: Life-to-Text Interaction Sequences
- TL: Text-to-Life Interaction Sequences

The aforementioned coding categories originated from regularities or patterns in the data. The data were also examined for relationships among categories. Transcripts of formal interviews with parents and teachers were extracted and grouped around the interview questions, to reflect the research questions used to guide the study. This procedure was followed by a general discussion of points that the researcher found particularly helpful in understanding infants' book reading experience in day-care and home context, and teachers' and parents' belief systems on the issue.

Trustworthiness

When conducting qualitative research, the trustworthiness of the findings need to be established. In order to insure the trustworthiness of this study, the following strategies were utilized: prolonged site engagement, member check, and triangulation.
Prolonged Site Engagement

The researcher spent almost four hours in the setting on a daily basis for twenty weeks. Prior to the study, the researcher had worked as a teaching assistant for two years in the same setting. In addition, before the researcher formally conducted the study, she went to the Infant Center to observe the infants from the observation booth a few times to get familiar with the infants. Occasionally, she was asked to substitute for the teachers. Therefore, the day the researcher arrived to begin the observations, the infants and parents were comfortable with her presence.

While the researcher was in the room, she made an effort to keep a low profile in order not to interfere with the routines. She did not actively initiate engagement with the infants during data collecting, except occasionally when the teachers were short handed. Sometimes at the teacher’s request, the researcher helped with various routines, like feeding, and diaper changing. Even though she played the role of an observer, she gained familiarity, acceptance, and trust not only from the teachers and parents, but also from the infants. They interacted in front of the researcher without any stranger anxiety and even initiated engagements with her. The researcher’s prolonged and successive site engagement allowed rapport and trust to build between the researcher and subjects under study.

Member Checks

Because the researcher met with the parents and teachers daily, she had opportunities to clarify things that she did not fully understand or that she might have
misunderstood during her observation at the site. In addition, the researcher had regular meetings with the members of her dissertation committee. Therefore, the discussion of emerging hypotheses, patterns, overall progress, and findings took place throughout the study.

**Triangulation**

According to Glaser and Strauss (1967), triangulation prevents the researcher from accepting too readily the validity of initial impressions; it enhances the scope, density, and clarity of constructs developed during the course of the investigation.

In this study, in order to develop a comprehensive perspective on infants' responses to books and how parents and teachers supported or constrained their responses at home and in the day-care setting, various methods of data collection were utilized. Throughout the study, each of these data sources, the written field notes, the transcripts of videotapes and audiotapes, and slides, provided the researcher opportunities for cross-checking.

**Summary**

A naturalistic inquiry approach was used to explore infants' responses to book reading in a day-care setting, and how parents and teachers support or constrain these infants early literate behaviors in the day-care and home context. The study involved a five month period with ten infants and their parents and teachers.
In this study, several methods were used for data collection, including participant-observation, formal and informal interviews, audiotaping, videotaping, photographing, and the use of field notes. The research cycle was composed of four interactive phases, including gaining entry and acquiring the parent and teacher population, on site participant-observation, formal interview, and post-site data analysis. The researcher played the roles of participant-observer and of interviewer.

In this study, data analysis was not only performed after data collection was completed, but also as an ongoing part of data collection. During field work the researcher employed the following strategies for ongoing analysis: narrowing the study, selecting the type of study, asking analytic questions, using previous data, making observer comments, and venting. Analysis following data collection included the following phases: checking transcriptions and memoing, creating coding categories, searching for regularities and patterns, and writing the final report. In order to provide credibility for the study, the issue of trustworthiness was also addressed.
Table 1. The Infants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Ages*</th>
<th>Parents Interviewed</th>
<th>Teacher</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Karl</td>
<td>5 - 10 months</td>
<td>Dennis</td>
<td>Gail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lucy</td>
<td>6.5 - 11.5 months</td>
<td>Sophia</td>
<td>Polly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nancy</td>
<td>8 - 13 months</td>
<td>Malinda</td>
<td>Debbie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karen</td>
<td>8.5 - 13.5 months</td>
<td>Julia</td>
<td>Debbie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eric</td>
<td>8.5 - 13.5 months</td>
<td>Bill</td>
<td>Polly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kelly</td>
<td>11.5 - 16.5 months</td>
<td>Barbara</td>
<td>Debbie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrew</td>
<td>12 - 17 months</td>
<td>Anita</td>
<td>Gail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter</td>
<td>12 - 17 months</td>
<td>Cathy</td>
<td>Debbie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kent</td>
<td>13 - 18 months</td>
<td>Yen and Shih</td>
<td>Polly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joe</td>
<td>13.5 - 18.5 months</td>
<td>Dana and John</td>
<td>Gail</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* At the beginning to the end of research period
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Infant Name</th>
<th>Cultural background</th>
<th>Job status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dennis</td>
<td>Karl</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>undergraduate student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophia</td>
<td>Lucy</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>university faculty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malinda</td>
<td>Nancy</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>graduate student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Julia</td>
<td>Karen</td>
<td>Hungarian</td>
<td>undergraduate student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bill</td>
<td>Eric</td>
<td>Jewish</td>
<td>visiting scholar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barbara</td>
<td>Kelly</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>housekeeper (spouse of graduate student)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anita</td>
<td>Andrew</td>
<td>Puerto-Rican American</td>
<td>graduate student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cathy</td>
<td>Peter</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>university faculty</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yen and Shih</td>
<td>Kent</td>
<td>Taiwanese</td>
<td>graduate students</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dana and John</td>
<td>Joe</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>university staff and local policeman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Highest Degree</td>
<td>Cultural Background</td>
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<td>Gail</td>
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<td>Activity</td>
<td>Time</td>
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<tr>
<td>Arrival (parents and infants)</td>
<td>8:45 a.m. - 9:00 a.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Active Play</td>
<td>9:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Snack Time</td>
<td>10:00 a.m. (or 10:15 a.m.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Diaper Changes*</td>
<td>10:45 a.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nap Time*</td>
<td>11:00 a.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Active Play*</td>
<td>11:15 a.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Changes and Departure</td>
<td>12:30 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.</td>
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* Varies per infant depending on his/her schedule
Table 5  The phases of the Study

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<th>Phase II</th>
<th>Phase III</th>
<th>Phase IV</th>
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**Primary concerns of the Researcher**

| Field Notes | * | * | * | * |
| Informal Interview | * | * | * | * |
| Slides | * | * | * | * |
| Videotaping | * | * | * | * |
| Formal Parents Interview | * | * | * | * |
| Formal Teachers Interview | * | * | * | * |
Table 6. Videotaping Dates

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<td>March</td>
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<td>April</td>
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<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>2, 3, 10</td>
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Figure 1. The Layout of the Infant Center
CHAPTER IV

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS OF INFANTS’ RESPONSES TO BOOKS
IN THE INFANT CENTER

Introduction

The main focus of this chapter is to describe the role of books in the Infant Center, to understand how the teachers supported and/or constrained these infants’ response behaviors, and to explore how the infants in the Infant Center responded to books.

The Role of the Books

The Genres of Children’s Books in the Infant Center

Nowadays, there is a large variety of children’s books available for young children, including infants. In the course of this study, the children’s book collection in the Infant Center consisted of fifty books of various genres, with different physical materials and sizes. According to Huck (1987), books can be classified in the following genres:
Identification Books. Books for infants are frequently identification books that allow infants to point to and identify objects. They are usually constructed with heavy cardboard or have soft vinyl pages. These books tend to have round corners, so infants will not be hurt by sharp edges. Identification books may have little or no text. There is no plot or sequence for the pages. Each page can be perceived as an unit. Tana Hoban’s *What Is It?* was used frequently by the teachers at the Infant Center. Illustrations for this kind of book consisted of photographs or realistic drawings, which are simple and with little or no background. Books with animal themes were very popular in the Infant Center. Among the collection, fifteen (about one-third) of them were related to animals, such as *Animals in the Country*, *Animals Climbers*, and *Animal Jumpers*.

Participation Books. Some books published for young children have special designs, like flaps to lift up and peek under, or various materials that allow a child to touch. Included in the Infant Center’s book collection, Dorothy Kunhardt’s *Pat the Bunny* invites infants to participate in the process of reading through the senses - touching and smelling. Other participation books in the collection included A. J. Wood’s *Jungle Hideways Animal Sound*. It has a flap on each page, every flap revealing a delightful surprise.

Concept Books. Concept books have been defined as books written for young children with the specific purpose of developing concepts (Huck, 1987). They can be viewed as young children’s first informational books. ABC books, counting books, and books that help children to identify colors and sizes are all concept books. Among the
books in the collection, titles like The Animal ABC and A Little Book of Color are concept books.

Books about the Common Experiences of the Young Child. Another genre in the Infant Center's book collection was related to young children's daily life activities and concerns, titles like My Day, What Do Toddlers Do?, The Playground, and A Checkup. Other titles were related to bed time, such as Margaret Wise Brown's Goodnight Moon. There were also a few books centering on the infant himself/herself, such as The Baby, Baby's First Year, Growing from First Cry to First Step and This is Me.

Picture Storybooks. In contrast to the aforementioned genres, there were a few picture storybooks. Titles like Chicken Little, The Tale of Peter Rabbit, and The Little Engine That Could were in the book collection. They were seldom read to the infants by the teachers but were occasionally displayed on the toy shelf.

Mother Goose. The Real Mother Goose was the only Mother Goose which had hard cover with paper pages in the collection.

The Physical Materials of the Book Collection

In addition to the various genres, the book collection in the Infant Center also contained books of various sizes and were made of different physical materials. In terms of sizes, the smallest was about palm size, about 3.25 inch by 3.5 inch. This could easily be handled by the infants. Regarding the physical materials of the books, they included the following:
**Cloth Books.** There were two cloth books in the Infant Center’s book collection. During the course of this study, the infants were not exposed to the cloth books. It might due to the fact that their softness made them difficult to stand up in front of younger infants as visual stimulation or it may have been that it was difficult for infants to turn the pages. In addition, it was also hard to disinfect them if they were mouthed by an infant.

**Soft Vinyl Books.** There were two soft vinyl books in the Infant Center’s book collection. Even though it was only a small portion compared to the cardboard books, they were provided to younger infants frequently by the teachers. Soft vinyl books tend to have simple objects with bright colors; therefore teachers liked to stand them up in front of younger infants as a visual stimulation. In addition, their softness and durability were appropriate and able to withstand infants’ mouthing and chewing. Also, it was easy to disinfect them.

Another characteristic of the soft vinyl book is that it unfolds into a long strip. Thus, they were occasionally put on the wall by the teachers as decorations or as visual stimulation for the infants.

**Cardboard Books.** The majority of books in the Infant Center were cardboard books. Their sizes were smaller than most books with hardcover and paper pages. They were easy for infants to carry around and it was easy to turn the pages. Books that were displayed in the room and were reachable by the infants were exclusively made of cardboard (or soft vinyl).
Books with Hardcover and Paper Pages. This type of book was always kept on the high bookshelf where infants were not able to reach. They were only used under teachers' supervision - when infants were read to by an adult reader. This was because teachers were afraid that these books might be torn apart by the infants.

The Sources of the Book Collection

Most of the books in the collection were purchased by the teacher over the years. Because of a limited budget for books, they purchased two to three books per semester. Parents' book donations was another source. In addition, whenever teachers felt the need, they could always borrow books from the preschool across the hallway. In the course of the study, the researcher also brought in various books including participation books - Debby Siler’s *What Goes with This?*, and concept books, such as, Bruce McMillan’s *One, Two, One Pair!*, and Helen Oxenbury’s *Clap Hands*.

How Books were Incorporated into the Physical Environment

The design of the physical environment and the rearrangement of the room were based on the individual needs of the infants, and where they were at in their gross motor and fine motor development. Generally, the basic design, the divider shelves between the main area and the crib area, and the toy shelves were never changed. Teachers occasionally moved one or two cribs to a different angle, but the basic design stayed the
same. It created a sense of familiarity for the infants so that they were able to predict that those large items were always in the same place, and that this was always what the room looked like. In general, each section of the divider shelves provided one kind of material, or one concept. Therefore, when infants looked at those shelves from a distance, they saw choices. In addition, from the infants' perspective, when they were working at one section of the shelves, they had everything they needed in a small area. Therefore, the teachers often reorganized the toys during the day.

Regarding the use of the space, the space was subdivided to create areas that were open for active play. In the crib area especially in the corners of the main room, there were more enclosed, softer, and quiet areas with curtains or pillows. They provided smaller, quieter places for cuddling up, so that an infant could be alone with an adult, or two infants with one adult. It not only allowed infants to be alone and separated from a large group, but also cut down on the amount of interaction that infants were forced into.

In the Infant Center, the book display was changed on a weekly basis. Teachers displayed books in various ways, for example, on the toy shelves in both the main area and the crib area or on the divider shelf. At the smaller, quieter corners, books usually could be found on a pillow, on the area rug, or in a basket. Even though the location of the book display changed on a weekly basis, teachers were free to replace the books whenever they reorganized the toys. Teachers' choices of books were based on infants' interests, or the theme of the center, such as animals, truck. Sometimes, toys or posters
accompanied books to provide infants with different perspectives on the same object (e.g., truck, animals).

The Role of the Teachers

The Context of Book Reading

In the Infant Center, there was no fixed schedule for book reading activities. Because of the unpredictable nature of the infants, a book reading activity might occur at any moment and at any corner. In addition to being initiated by the infants, book reading events occurred most often under the following circumstances:

When Books were Accessible to the Teachers. Teachers tended to initiate book reading if books were accessible to them when infants approached them. It happened when books were part of the physical setting, or when the teacher was reading to other infants at the time, or when books were previously dropped by other infants near the teacher.

---

Debbie holds Karen and walks around the corner between Karen’s and Kelly’s cribs. At that corner, a poster of a mommy bunny and a baby bunny is on the wall at infants’ eye level. A wooden shelf leans against the poster. There are children’s books about animals on the top and the bottom of the shelf along with two stuffed animals - bunnies. Peter (13.5 months old) comes to the corner, he lifts his head up and looks at Debbie. Debbie greets Peter, "Hi, Peter. What’s the matter? What are you going to do?"

Peter moves forward and stands in front of the shelf. "There are bunnies in that book. Are there bunnies in the book? Should we look?"

Debbie walks to the front of the shelf.
"Should we sit down with Karen? Should we sit down with Karen and look at the bunnies?" Debbie sits down with Karen on her lap. (2/11)

---

Polly finishes reading to Peter. At this time, Joe (17 months old) comes over and sits down in front of them. Polly holds up the book and shows the cover to Joe. "Do you see the picture there? It's a book."
"Book," says Joe.
"You can hold the book."
Joe takes the book from Polly. He turns the pages back and forth. Finally, he turns it to the last page.
"You are right. That's a birthday cake with candles. Happy birthday, happy birthday, happy birthday cake." says Polly. Joe closes the book and puts it aside. He rubs his eyes, then picks up the book again.
"Do you want to see other things in the book?" Polly takes over the book. (4/1)

---

Gail and Nancy (11 months old) are in the crib area. Gail picks up a book near her, and reads it to Nancy. After finishing the book, Gail goes to main area with Nancy in her arms. She mentions that Nancy likes animal books, then she picks two books about farm animals from the high bookshelf. She puts the books in front of Nancy for her to look at. Nancy turns the pages and murmurs to herself intently. (4/11)

---

Polly is with Nancy who sits in the swing at the high bookshelf corner. When Gail comes in, Polly picks up Nancy and passes her to Gail. Gail sits down with Nancy, and reads a book to her. When she finds Nancy does not pay attention to her, she lets Nancy hold the book.
"Joe, would you like to read a book?". Gail has a couple of books near her, she takes one of them and shows it to Joe who sits in front of her. Joe is playing with a Slinky toy and does not respond. (2/28)

When Infants Brought Books Along. Older infants who were able to walk were easily able to get objects they desired. They seemed to like to carry books as they
wandered about. Teachers and practicum students tended to assume that the infants’ action was a way of saying "Read it to me." Therefore, whenever teachers saw infants passing by or walking toward them with a book, they initiated book reading.

---

Joe (16 months old) goes to the divider shelves and finds a book on the top of it. Joe takes the book and sits down on the floor. He opens up the book and turns the pages backwards very quickly. Practicum student Susan who sits near Joe moves closer and takes over the book. When Susan reads it to Joe, Peter and Kent who play nearby stand in front of them and watch. Before Susan finishes reading the book, Joe gets up and goes to the divider shelves again. He finds another book on the top of it. Joe sits down with the book and opens it up. He turns the pages back and forth. At that moment, Teaching Assistant Kathy moves over and talks about the pictures. After a few minutes, Joe gets up and goes to the high book shelf corner. Then, Kathy picks up the book Joe left and reads it to Nancy who sits near her. (3/29)

---

Polly sits on the floor underneath the window. Kent (15 months old) brings a book with him and walks toward Polly. "Oh, you brought a book? You want to bring the book here? You want to bring the book here?" Polly pats her lap to show her invitation. Kent does not accept the invitation; instead he picks up the snoopy puppet from the floor. "You want to bring this too? How about the book? Should we look at the book together? Here, come and sit down." Kent is watching another Snoopy stuffed animal on the floor. He picks it up and gives it to Polly. "You want to bring this with you? That one is not a puppet. It does not have a hole like this one does." Kent points at the puppet. Polly puts her hand into the snoopy puppet and shows it to Kent. "This one has a hole. Right, it’s a puppet. This one is a puppet." "Would you like to read a book with me? Would you like to read a book with me?" Polly tries to initiate book reading with Kent again. At that moment, Gail walks Lucy to Polly. Polly greets Lucy. Lucy crawls toward her. Then, Kent leaves for another corner, and brings back two noise maker toys. (3/11)
Book Reading was Used to Provide Infants with Emotional Comfort. At the Infant Center, book reading has been frequently employed by the teachers as a way to soothe and calm down a crying infant who has an emotional need or has difficulty separating from parents or primary caregivers. If the primary caregiver was available at the time, usually she would be the one who took the initiative.

---

At around 11:30 a.m., most infants are sleeping. Lucy, Peter, Karl and Polly are in the main area. At the time, Debbie is getting Kelly ready for a nap. Peter (14 months old) is upset at Debbie’s being away from him. I hold him and let him sit on the window looking outside. He continues to cry. Then, Polly picks a book and reads to him. When Peter is done with this book, he walks toward the high bookshelf and points at it. "You want another book?" asks Polly. (2/27)

---

When Debbie goes into the kitchen to make snacks, Peter (14 months old) starts crying. Polly picks up Peter and tries to comfort him. She plays with him, but Peter does not stop crying. Then, Polly picks two books from the high bookshelf --- Byron Barton’s *Machines at Work* and Phyllis Hoffman’s *Baby’s First Year*, and reads to Peter. After a short period of time, Peter calms down (3/7)

---

Polly sits near Andrew (14 months old) who is crying. Polly picks up the book right after it is dropped by Kent. Polly moves closer to Andrew, and puts him on her lap. "Andrew, would you like to read this book with me?" Then, she begins to read the book. Andrew does not stop crying. He stands up and goes to the other corner. (3/6)

---

Andrew (14 months old) is crying loudly. Gail picks him up, then goes to the high bookshelf. After picking three books from the shelf, Gail goes to Joe who is near the corner. Gail holds Joe in her left arm, and Andrew in her right arm. Then, she goes to the crib area. After a few minutes, Gail comes back to the play area with Andrew who has calmed down. (3/15)
At 9:00 a.m., Andrew (15 months old) has a hard time separating from his mother Anita this morning. When Anita leaves, Andrew becomes fussy. Gail holds him and sits in the rocking chair. Then, Gail reads a book to Andrew. (4/5)

Debbie's son comes to visit. He gets along with the infants very well. After snack time, Joe (16 months old) and Debbie's son play for a while. When Debbie's son is ready to go, Joe follows him until he crosses over the gate between the main area and the crib area. Joe looks as if he is searching for someone when Debbie's son disappears. Then, he bursts into tears. "I know it. Disappointment, isn't it? People have places to go and things to do..." Debbie tries to comfort him.

"Joe, Joe. Do you want to look at books with Gail? Would you like to look at some books together?"

Gail who is Joe's primary caregiver is with the youngest infant, Karl. She calls out to Joe. "Book." Joe responds. He passes by Gail and goes toward the high bookshelf directly. Gail gets up and follows Joe.

"Which one would you like?" Gail picks up Joe, and lets him choose whatever he likes.

"This one? This one with dogs?" Gail follows Joe's pointing and picks that one.

"Dog." says Joe.

"This one with babies?" Gail picks up the second book without Joe's objection.

Gail sits down near the mirror with pillows at her back, while Joe sits down opposite her. Then, Gail moves Joe to her lap and starts reading the book. (3/13)

Joe (16.5 months old) who sits near Gail looks upset because his toy has been taken away by Kent. Gail notices and she initiates a book reading activity with Joe.

"Joe, do you want to look at books with me?" asks Gail. (4/4)

Book Reading as a Way to Hold Infants' Attention. In the Infant Center, books were always available in the crib area. Small cardboard books were either on the toy shelves within infants' reach or in the infants' cribs. In general, infants were put in their
own crib when they finished their snack. In order to let infants wait for their turn to have a diaper change, teachers tended to leave one or two books in the infants' cribs in advance. This allowed infants to entertain themselves, while waiting. In addition, teachers also tended to initiate book reading activity with those infants who already had their diapers changed and were anxious to get back to the main area. It allowed other teachers sufficient time to clean up the main area.

---

Kelly (13 months old) lies down in her crib waiting for diaper change. She holds a book, opens it up, turns the pages, closes it and turns it around. Then, she puts the book down, and picks up another book next to her. She opens it up, and points at the pictures. She shakes the book with both hands. She closes the book, and then opens it up. Kelly mumbles. She repeats that with the book - turning pages, closing the book, then opening it up, and turning the book around several times. Then, she puts the book into her mouth. After a few seconds, she pulls it out and touches the place she has just mouthed. Finally, she puts the book aside, and lies down there relaxed. (2/14)

---

Peter (13 months old) stands in his crib. He holds a book with his left hand and holds the bar with his right hand. He stands there and looks around at what other people are doing. Then, he sits down to play with his shoes. After a while, he stands up again, holding the same book in his right hand. (2/14)

**Book Reading as a Transitional Activity.** During the daily routines at the Infant Center, older infants tended to go back to the main area to resume free play after all infants had their diapers changed. Because book reading was a quiet activity, it was frequently employed by the teachers as a transitional activity to prepare infants for nap time.
--- Gail picks *Baby's First Year* book from the high book shelf. She shows it to Kent but gets no further response. Then, Joe becomes interested in the book; he and Gail sit on the top of the climber. Gail reads the book to Joe. Kent crawls over and joins them. After turning the pages in a quick manner, Gail holds Joe and puts the book back on the high book shelf. She goes to the hallway, puts Joe in a carriage, then comes back for Kent. When Joe and Kent are settle for nap, she comes back to get Andrew ready for his nap. (2/27)

--- Debbie is reading a book to Joe and Peter. Kent joins them and sits next to Debbie, who has Joe on her lap. Ten minutes later, Joe is sent to the hallway, then Kent follows to take a nap. "Have a nice nap," says Debbie. Debbie invites Peter to sit on her lap.

"Are you getting tired of this book?" says Debbie when she notices Peter pointing at the high book shelf. Debbie picks up the book that Kent dropped and reads it to Peter. A few minutes later, it is Peter's turn to take a nap. (3/4)

Reading to Infants in a Group Setting Has Its Constraints

When people think of storytime in a day care setting, they usually conjure up a picture of a group of young children gathered around and listening to their teacher intently. They may raise hands to ask questions, or talk about how the story relates to their life experiences. In fact, reading to infants in a day care setting is very different. At the Infant Center, most book reading events began with one teacher and one infant. Then, it tended to draw the attention of other infants and ended up with one teacher reading to more than one child. It may be that in reading to young infants, certain circumstances might create constraints hindering teachers from engaging infants in book reading.
Interruptions from Surrounding Noises. Teachers faced various interruptions resulting from noise coming from the surrounding areas, such as other infants’ crying or other teachers’ talking in the course of reading to infants.

---
Debbie reads to Eric (12 months old) who is crying loudly. After being read to, he calms down gradually. "What are these dogs doing? ... Doggies say 'Woof- Woof," says Debbie.
Then, Debbie is distracted by someone talking to her from the hallway through the door window. When Debbie turns her attention back to the book, Eric closes the book and pushes it aside. Then, he crawls out of Debbie’s lap. (4/25)

Interruptions from Other Infants’ Inappropriate Behaviors. Older infants with the mobility to walk around tended to listen to story reading in group settings for short periods of time. They might get up to do something else, then return to the teacher for a few more minutes with renewed interest in the book. Sometimes, they might bring along other toys, or engage themselves in other activities near the teacher. These situations sometimes created constraints for the teachers to share books with other infants.

---
Joe is upset because Debbie’s son has to leave. His primary caregiver Gail initiates book reading with him. In the course of reading, Kelly, Kent, and Peter come to join them.

"Baby’s first bed, this baby has a crib. That’s baby’s first night." Gail points at the left side page, then the right side page. Kent (15 months old) who sits in front of Gail hits the book with a stick. "What’s this? A little dog." Gail points at the picture. "Baby’s first bath." Gail turns to next page. Kent hits the book with a stick again. Gail presses the stick for a few seconds to keep Kent from hitting it again. (3/13)
Practicum student Judy reads to Joe. Because Judy needs to go to the hallway to watch the infants who are napping in the carriages, Debbie takes over the book. At the time, Kent (16 months old) and Peter come to join, but Joe walks away. Kent looks at the picture and points at the book hard with the flute in his hand. "Kent, that is not a pointer." Debbie moves the flute away from the book. (4/3)

 Interruptions from Infants' Physical Actions. The following three episodes showed that the teachers were easily distracted by infants' physical movements, such as turning to the next or previous page before the teacher finished talking, grabbing the book that the teacher was holding, or trying to squeeze into the teacher's lap, etc.

Debbie is reading a book about animals to Karen, Peter, and Kelly. Karen sits on Debbie's lap. Peter and Kelly stand on the right and left sides of Debbie.

"Bunny rabbits. There are so many. This one is jumping so high." Debbie points at the bunnies one by one. Peter attempts to turn to the next page but seems to be attracted by Debbie's exaggerated high pitch voice. He puts down his hand. At the same time, Kelly tries to squeeze into Debbie's lap.

"Kelly, do you want to sit down too, with Debbie and Karen?" At that time, Karen tries to grab the book, but Kelly takes it away. "Kelly would like to hold that book. Let's give a book to Karen. Let's give a book to Karen." Debbie takes one book from the shelf and gives it to Karen. At that moment, Peter climbs up the top of the shelf. Debbie gives a hand to Peter to help him sit down in the right position. "You are going to sit up on the shelf?" says Debbie. Kelly gives the book with pages opened back to Debbie. Debbie starts to read it, but she is interrupted by Peter who is attempting to stand up on the shelf.

"That's not a place to stand." Debbie presses Peter's feet with her left hand to force him sit down. (2/11)

Lucy sits in the swing hanging in the high book shelf corner. Her primary caregiver Polly sits on the floor with Kent on her lap.
Polly reads a book to Kent and occasionally gives Lucy a push. At the time, Nancy comes over and tries to take the book away. Meanwhile, Lucy becomes fussy.

"You know, sweety. That's a good book for you. That's a good book for you." Polly points at the vinyl book on the floor. Nancy takes a look, then crawls away.

Polly puts the vinyl book and the rest of books behind her back. A few minutes later, Nancy comes back. Polly puts the book she is reading behind her back and takes out another book. (2/28)

---

Debbie reads a book to Joe who sits on her lap. Debbie continues reading the book, but she is distracted by Lucy's crying, coming from her crib. At that moment, Kent comes to Debbie.

"You need a lap, Eric?" Kent is mistaken as Eric. He stands beside Debbie, so he can see the pictures.

Practicum student Susan plays with Karl not far from Debbie. Susan asks help from Debbie when Karl becomes fussy.

"I am kind of tied up to one to one. How about sitting him down next to you?" suggests Debbie.

"There is juice for little bear. There is a bowl of cereal. There is a stack of pancakes..." Before Debbie continues reading the book, Kent goes to Susan. Meanwhile, Kelly and Peter come to join the group. Kelly stands on Debbie's right side, while Peter stands on her left side.

When Kent comes back to join the group, he stands in front of them and tries to turn back to the previous page. Kelly is anxious and attempts to turn to the next page. However, Debbie continues talking about the pictures. Joe sits quietly on Debbie's laps, his eyes following Debbie's pointing.

Debbie turns to next page, "On this page, there is a lot of work going on. There is hammering going on and sewing. And..." She uses her right hand to smoothen the right side edge of the book back and forth to keep Kelly from turning the page. When Debbie talks with Susan about what to do next, Joe closes the book and tries to stand up.

"Close the book? Close the book?" says Debbie. She holds Joe and goes to his crib to get his coat and socks. After he is dressed, she sends Joe to the hallway to have a nap in the carriage. (3/1)
Teachers Needed to Supervise Other Infants. Sometimes teachers needed to supervise other infants near them for the sake of safety. Under these circumstances, either the teacher had to stop reading and the infant who was being read to at the time, loses his/her interest in the book.

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Gail sits between the crib area and the main area with Kent on her lap. Gail reads a book to Kent. After a few minutes, she stops reading and looks at the main area. Kent lifts his head to look at her, then turns his attention to the book. He turns the pages back and forth. Gail lets Kent look at the book by himself. At the time, Nancy crawls over to Kathy, a teaching assistant, who is with Lucy standing by the window. Nancy stands up and holds onto the wall with both hands. She looks as if she needs help. When Gail notices she moves over to her immediately with Kent on her lap. Gail holds Nancy and kisses her. Kent crawls out from Gail’s lap, sitting at the same spot with the book in his hand. Gail holds Nancy and goes to the main area. (3/15)

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Debbie sits on the big wooden box with Karen on her lap. On the box, there are books about animals and plastic animals that go with them. Debbie reads to Karen. At the same time, Peter (15.5 months old) pulls the fire engine truck up to the box. "Oh, this would not work. It needs to stay on the floor. This truck needs to stay on the floor." Debbie pushes the truck down to the floor. Peter almost cries. "If you want the truck, you need to be on the floor. Sit down, sit down." Debbie helps Peter get down the floor. Peter keeps crying. He rides on the truck. "You can have your truck on the floor," says Debbie. "Oink, Oink, Oink, Oink. I see ducklings." Debbie continues reading the book. Peter gets out the truck and turns to Debbie. "Peter, stay on the floor," Debbie reminds Peter. (4/25)

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"The fire truck, Owin, Owin. Here is the fire truck." Gail sits against the divider with Joe (17.5 months old) on her lap. When she talks about the picture, she points at it. "Truck," says Joe.
Infants were Attached to Their Primary Caregivers. Book reading was constantly employed by the teachers as a way to comfort infants who had difficulty in separating from their primary caregiver. By contrast, teachers were not able to sustain those infants' attention on the book when the primary caregiver showed up in front of the child.

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Gail reads to Peter at a corner near the sink. Andrew sits close to them. At that time, Peter's primary caregiver Debbie is in the kitchen.

Gail reads *Baby's First Year* to Peter. When she turns to the page with a dog, Peter responds to it immediately.

"Dog." Peter says it loudly.

"That's right. It's a dog."

All of a sudden, Gail holds up the book she is reading to block Peter's view toward the front. But Peter notices that Debbie is coming out of the kitchen. He points at the kitchen and pushes down the book. Then, he gets up and goes to Debbie.

"Were you reading books with Gail? You read some books with Gail? You are all done with reading now?" Debbie picks up Peter who almost cries.

"Did you read books with Gail and Andrew?" asks Debbie. Peter calms down after he receives comfort from Debbie. (3/8)
--- Teaching assistant Kathy has Peter on her lap. They are looking at a book together.
At that time, Peter notices Debbie coming out from the kitchen. He leans forward and tries to get up from Kathy's lap.
"Oh, you see Debbie." says Kathy.
"Hi, you are reading with Kathy. You are reading a big book." Peter walks toward Debbie who sits down against the divider shelves. (3/27)

--- Polly reads the third book - Baby's First Year. When she open up the book, Peter starts looking for the page with a dog. At that time, his primary caregiver Debbie comes out from the kitchen, Peter gets up from Polly's lap immediately and goes over to Debbie. (4/2)

The episodes listed above indicated that the majority of constraints hindering teachers' engaging infants in book reading resulted when the number of infants involved exceeded one child. Due to infants' short attention span and motor-oriented characteristics, it eliminated the possibilities for teachers to share books in an inclusive manner in a group situation.

Teachers Lacked of Understanding of the Child. The following episodes showed another kind of constraint resulting from teachers' lack of understanding of the child who was being read to. In this case, Kent, at the age of 15 and a half months old, expected Gail to share the page of birthday cake with him. After a few unsuccessful attempts, he was frustrated and went to his primary caregiver Polly.

--- Kent (15.5 months old) picks up Debby Siler's What Goes with This? from the floor, then he goes to Gail who sits next to the ramp. Kent attempts to hand over the book to Gail from her back.
"Ba-Ba," says Kent. Then, he sits down on the ramp.
"He likes that page." Gail who talks with Polly seems to know what Kent wants. She takes over the book and lets it stand on the ramp, so Kent can see it. Gail turns the pages from back to front. "Ba, Ba," says Kent with an urgent expression. Gail lays down the book. Before she starts turning the pages, Kent leans forward and turns it to the last page - the picture of a birthday cake. "Ba, Ba," says Kent. At that moment, Gail is talking with Polly. Kent looks at Gail and waits for her to do something with the book. "Do you want to count?" asks Gail. Then, she starts from the first page. Kent is eager to turn the pages, he does that in a really quick manner. He does not stop turning the pages until it is the page with a birthday cake. He looks at the picture. When there is no quick response from Gail, Kent moves the book a little distance away from Gail.

At the time, Kelly comes over and starts opening up the book. Kent stands up and takes the book back. He runs down the ramp and goes to Polly who is talking with Gail. "You want to read the birthday book?" Polly takes over the book from Kent. "Sit down." Polly pats her lap. Kent stands right in front of her with no intention of sitting down. "Happy birthday to you, happy birthday to you. Happy birthday dear Kent, happy birthday to you." When Polly is singing the song, Kent bounces up and down with a smile. (3/29)

Infants were Restricted to Certain Books When They were Alone. In order to prevent books being ripped, teachers were cautious about supplying books with paper pages to infants who explored books on their own. They tended to provide cardboard books and soft vinyl books to infants in individual contexts. Books with hard cover and paper pages were only allowed when infants were read to by teachers.

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Gail puts Byron Barton's *Machines at Work* beside her while she reads another book to Peter.
Andrew who sits nearby Gail picks up the book *Machines at Work* and walks away.
"Ok, Andrew, I don’t want them to be ripped." Gail gets up and takes back the book from Andrew. Then, she puts it back on the high bookshelf. (3/8)

"Boo." Andrew (13.5 months old) said.
"Book? You want to look at the pictures?" Gail puts the book she is reading in front of Andrew. Nancy (9.5 months old) who sits on Gail’s lap seems unhappy about it.
"You want that one? I am not sure if we have another one of this. "Gail asks Polly to pass her another book. Polly picks a vinyl book from the high bookshelf for Gail. Gail opens it up and gives it to Nancy. (2/28)

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Polly reads to Kent. Nancy comes over and tries to take the book away.
"You know, sweety. That’s a good book for you. That’s a good book for you." Nancy does not seem interested in the vinyl book. She crawls away.
Polly picks the vinyl book Nancy left behind and the rest of the books from the floor hidden behind her back. (2/28)

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Teachers Demonstrated Distinctive Book Reading Styles

The teachers in the Infant Center approached written text differently when they read to infants. They did more than just decode letters to sounds. They tended to restate the text in their own words, and used various ways to translate its meanings into spoken language. The three teachers demonstrated distinctive book reading styles. Each teacher seemed to be consistent in the way she read books aloud. In addition, considerable social interaction occurred among the teachers and the infants in a book reading event. The
variations in teachers' book reading styles allowed the infants to experience literature differently.

Gail. The observation data showed that Gail tended to initiate book reading with her infants prior to nap time. Because the purpose of book reading was mainly to provide infants with a quiet time before the nap time, she talked about the pictures in a soft tone and went through the book quickly. In addition, when Gail chose to read the text aloud, she usually did it with minimal changes. Phyllis Hoffman's *Baby's First Year* was the book chosen by Gail most often. In comparison with the original text of the book, the following episode provided a glimpse of Gail’s book reading style.

The original text of *Baby's First Year* is as follows:

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baby's first / baby's first night / baby's first bed / baby's first light / baby's first bath / baby's first mat / baby's first booties / baby's first hat / baby's first smile / baby's first hair / baby's first rattle / baby's first chair / baby's pillow / baby's first socks / baby's first books / baby's first blocks / baby's first tooth / baby's first crawl / baby's first steps / baby's first fall / baby's first words / baby's first fear / baby's first party / baby's first year
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Gail sits down near the mirror with pillows behind her, while Joe sits down opposite her. Then, Gail moves Joe to her lap and starts reading a book to him.

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Gail lifts her head to watch the clock above the high book shelf. She puts the book aside and picks up another book, *Baby's First Year*. Kelly tries to grab the book.

"That book is about babies. Do you want to look at that book, Kelly?"

"Hey-", says Kelly.

"Look, do you see the baby? The mommy was holding the baby." Gail turns to the first page and points at the picture. She opens up the book widely, so Kelly and Kent can see the pictures also.
"Baby's first day, baby's first day." Gail turns to next page and points at the left side page.
"Sleepy baby, shhh--." Gail points at the picture on the right side page, So does Joe. At the time, Peter is with Debbie. He gets up from the floor and comes over to join the group. He stands beside Gail.
"Baby's first bed, this baby has a crib. That's baby's first night." Gail points at the left side page, then the right side page. Kent who sits in front of Gail hits the book with a stick.
"What's this? A little dog." Gail points at the picture.
"Baby's first bath." Gail turns to next page. Kent hits the book with a stick again. Gail presses the stick for a few seconds to keep Kent from hitting it again.
"Baby is having a bath." Gail points at the left page. At that moment, Peter who stands beside Gail stretches his right arm points at the right side page from a distance, and calls out "Dog!" "You see the dog, right? The dog is on the window." Gail points at the dog. Then, she turns to next page.
"Baby's first nap." Said Gail.
"Dog!" Peter stretches his right arm pointing again right away.
"You are right, it's another dog." Gail praises Peter's discovery. Kent seems to lose his interest in the book, he picks up another book from the floor and browses it by himself.
"Baby's first smile. Look at baby smiling. Smile." Said Gail. Kelly raises her left hand and drops her toy. Then, she crawls forward to touch and point at the left page. Peter is pointing at the same time.
"Dog!" said Peter.
"Yeah," Gail smiles and looks at Kelly. Then, she turns to the next page. At that time, Kelly turns her attention to Kent's book. Peter kneels down and picks up the stick dropped by Kent. Joe holds still, looking at the pictures.
"Baby's first pillow." Peter leaves for other corner when Gail turns to next page.
"Baby's first socks. Look at these bubbles, bubbles." Joe is quiet without any responses. Kelly touches Kent's head. Gail demonstrates how to be gentle by touching Kent's head gently.
"Baby is reading books with his mama. Baby found the blocks. Did you play with blocks this morning, Joe?" says Gail. Joe is still quiet. Kelly crawls to other corner.
"Baby is walking. Baby is talking on the telephone."
"Baby is singing 'Happy birthday.'" Gail starts singing the song to Joe and Kent. Not for long; Kent moves aside to play by himself.
"Balloons, balloons." Gail turns to the next page, and points at all the balloons. Then, she looks at the clock and closes the book. "I need to get your pants... You are doing a great job." Gail says to Joe. "All done," said Joe. He gets up and stands in front of Gail. "All done." Gail puts the books aside and picks up a music box near her. "... You see this toy looks like a book. listen - " Gail rewinds it and shows it to Joe. "I need to get your pants." Gail gets up and puts the books back on the high book shelf. "I need to get your pants and clothes." Gail said to Joe again. After Gail comes back from the crib area with Joe and Kent's clothes, Gail and Debbie help Joe and Kent put on their clothes before they take a nap in the hallway. (3/13)

The episode mentioned previously indicated that Gail's book talk focused more on clarifying what the illustrations were about in a general sense, and did not go into detail. In addition to reading the text aloud, she also occasionally turned infants' attention to objects that were excluded from the text but familiar to the infants, for example, "Baby's first socks. Look at these bubbles, bubbles." The episode also showed that Gail skipped over part of the text, like "baby's first fall, baby's first words, baby's first fear" which were more abstract than the others. When looking at the page of "baby's first party," instead of reading the text aloud, Gail helped infants make a personal association with the content by singing a birthday song.

Similar to her way of reading aloud Baby's First Year, Gail's voice always remained low and gentle in the process of book reading. She tended to focus her talk on the book, and express her awareness of infants' actions that were not related to book reading in a non-verbal way. She smiled at the infant who came to join the activity to welcome her. When Gail noticed Kelly's touching Kent's head, she simply demonstrated
what an appropriate touching behavior should be by touching Kent’s head gently without any verbal interruption. Gail’s book reading style seemed to convey the idea that book reading activity is a quiet activity and suitable to prepare oneself for a nap.

Debbie. In contrast to Gail’s book reading style, Debbie tended to read books aloud with a louder voice, high pitch, and occasionally exaggerated tone to raise infants’ interest and attract their attention. The following episodes showed how Debbie talked about the illustrations through pointing, labelling, and describing the animals to a certain extent.

In addition to labelling the animals, Debbie also turned infants’ attention to other aspects of the illustrations regarding the color, and the movement of the animals. In the process of book reading, Debbie also informally instructed the infants in how to handle a book, like "When we read the book, we open it up."

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"You see bunnies on the book? Mommy bunny and all the baby bunnies." Debbie points at the cover of the book.
"Here comes the little bunny out of the box. Hop-hop-hop-hop." Debbie takes a toy bunny out of the shelf, imitating bunny’s hopping toward Peter’s feet. At that moment, Peter picks up the bunny book from the top of the shelf and hands it over to Debbie.
"Should we look at this book? Should we read it?" Debbie takes the book and opens it up.
"When we read the book, we open it up. What can we find? We find a squirrel. Gray squirrel." Debbie points at the picture.
"Squirrel." says Peter. Kelly walks toward them from another corner.
"Gray squirrel, gray squirrel, swashy-bushy tail. Gray squirrel. Here comes Kelly." Debbie sings the song and announces Kelly’s arrival.
"Ducks," Debbie turns to next page.
"Duck," responds Peter. "Ducks, that is correct. Ducks, Quack-Quack-Quack-Quack." Kelly is laughing.

"Look at all the baby ducks." Debbie points at the baby ducks on the right side page. All three infants look at that page and follow her pointing. Debbie turns to the next page.

"Bunny rabbits. There are so many. This one is jumping so high." Debbie points at the bunnies one by one. Peter attempts to turn to the next page but seems to be attracted by Debbie's exaggerated higher pitched voice. He puts down his hand.

At that moment, Peter climbs up to the top of the shelf. Debbie gives a hand to Peter to help him sit down in the right position. "You are going to sit up on the shelf?" Debbie asked. Kelly gives the book with pages opened back to Debbie. Debbie starts to read it, but she is interrupted by Peter who is attempting to stand up on the shelf.

"That's not a place to stand." Debbie presses Peter's feet with her left hand to let him sit down. Then, she comes back to the book. "Hello, rabbits. All these rabbits have these little noses, noses, noses." Debbie points at her own nose, and Kelly's. Peter points at his own nose too. Before Debbie asks, "Where is your nose, Peter?", Peter gets down on the floor and runs away to another corner. (2/11)

The observation data showed that the teachers in the Infant Center were consistent in their book reading style. The following episode again indicated that Debbie tended to provide detailed descriptions for each illustration and informal instruction in book handling behavior, like "We turn the page, we can see what is happening..." In contrast to Gail's low-key book reading style, Debbie's style was more cognition-oriented. Her style of presenting a book seemed to convey to the infants that book reading was a way of acquiring information and knowledge.

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At the book corner in the main area, Debbie reads a book to Joe who sits on her lap.

"Shall we open the big book? Look at all the things the little bear has to do in the morning? Little bear has to - wash his face, brush
his teeth, and comb his hair." Besides pointing at each pictures, Debbie also pretends to comb Joe’s hair when she reads the last phrase.

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"There is juice for little bear. There is a bowl of cereal. There is a stack of pancakes..."

......
"We turn the page, we can see what is happening at the rabbits’ family house. Look at all that is going on at the rabbits’ family’s house. The rabbit is getting dressed. The rabbit is brushing her teeth. This rabbit is putting on his shoes..." In the course of reading, Debbie points at each picture she talks about.

......
Debbie turns to the next page, "There is a lot of work going on this page. There is hammering going on and sewing. And..." She uses her right hand to smoothen the right side edge of the book back and forth to keep Kelly from turning the page. (3/1)

Polly. Among the three teachers, Polly tended to engage infants in book reading in a variety of ways. When she shared Debby Siler's *What Goes with This?* with Peter, she applied the sentence pattern "Where should --- go?" to introduce objects on each page. When Kent brought the same book to her with the page of birthday cake opened, she sang the birthday song based on Kent’s interest. When she read *What Goes with This?* to Joe, she presented the page with the birthday cake like a dramatic (pretend) play, by pretending to blow out the candles. Her book reading style not only allowed infants to experience books differently, but also appreciate that book reading was a fun activity.

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At around 12:05, there are only two infants, Peter and Nancy, in the main area. Debbie goes into the kitchen to take a break. Polly asks Peter (15 months old) if he likes to look at books; then she goes to the high bookshelf picking up three books - *What Goes with This?, One, Two, One Pair!,* and *Baby's First Year.* She
shares What Goes with This? with Peter first. Polly applies "Where should xx go?" sentence pattern to introduce each page. When she asks Peter "Where should socks go?" Peter lifts his feet to answer the question.

When Polly shares the second book - One. Two. One Pair! with Peter, she still applies the same sentence pattern to talk about the content of the book.

"Where should mittens go? Do they go to your ear?" Polly asks Peter, with a sense of humor. (4/2)

The following episode revealed another aspect of Polly's book reading style. When she described each vehicle in the truck book, she provided explicit information to a degree that was far beyond what the picture itself conveyed, and beyond infants' experience and comprehension. Her way of presenting the book might convey the idea that each picture could symbolize an event or a story.

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Polly reads to Joe and Peter.

"There is a truck. It must be winter time, because there are lots of snow blowers. The snow blowers plowing the snow and throwing it in the back, so the cars don't slip and slide." Polly points at the cover and talks about it. Then, she turns to the first page.

"Here is a fire truck with one, two, three fire fighters in the front, and one fire fighter in the back. It's rushing down the street to go help put the fire out."

"This is a dump truck. The driver backs the dump truck in and lifts up the hatch and dumps everything out in the back..."

Joe turns the book to the next page after Polly finishes talking.

"A truck," says Joe.

"And here are two trucks." As Polly says it, Nancy presses the book and tries to pull it closer to her. Then, she touches the book.

"Two-", says Joe.

"Two trucks." Polly points at the picture.

"This is a milk truck," says Polly.

"Mu- truck." Joe repeats what Polly has said.

"A milk truck. This whole tank is filled with milk." Polly circles the tank with her finger.

"A truck," says Joe.

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"And what is this? The moving van." Polly points at the picture. As Polly turns to next page, Peter gets up and moves to the nearby corner to play with the steering wheel toy. He kneels down just for a few seconds, then comes back to Polly’s lap.

"This is a livestock truck with some animals in the back. You have to leave some holes so the animals can breathe." Polly explains.

"Breathe," says Joe.

"They will be able to breathe, like this -." Polly takes two deep breaths to demonstrate what deep breath is. "They have to be able to take the air in and out their lungs." Joe turns to the next page voluntarily.

"A truck," says Joe.

"Yeah, this is a tow truck."

"Tow truck," says Joe.

"Tow truck. The tow truck comes like if your car get struck in the mud, the tow truck can come and pull it out. Or if your car is broken, and the tow truck can come and give your car a lift." At that moment, Nancy is excited, she pats the book.

Joe intends to turn to the next page. "Open," says Joe.

"And this is a garbage truck, comes around and takes all the garbage or takes all the recycling back to the recycle center." Polly points at the picture. Nancy holds the corner of the book. She tries to take away the book, but does not succeed.

"The end." Polly closes the book.

The Commonalities in Teachers’ Book Reading Styles

In spite of distinctive book reading styles, the three teachers all demonstrated what Cochram-Smith (1984) referred to as "Readiness interaction sequences", "Life-to-Text interaction sequences", and "Text-to-Life interaction sequences" in preparation for and during the book reading events.

Readiness Interaction Sequences. According to Cochram-Smith (1984), the majority of "Readiness Interaction Sequences" occurred before or at the beginning of book reading events. This included seating arrangement and the teacher’s expectation
about listener’s appropriate behavior, such as listener silence and mental concentration. In contrast to "story time" in preschool, there was no specific behavioral norm requested by the teachers during book reading events in the Infant Center. Once the reading of a book began the teachers tended to overlook infants’ inappropriate behavior, unless they interfered with the teacher or other infants. The observation data showed that teachers avoided the book being pulled away by holding it tightly. They prevented infants from turning the page they were reading by smoothing the book edge back and forth. The teachers rarely corrected infants’ inappropriate behavior verbally. There was one incident observed when Kent hit the book that Debbie was reading aloud with a flute twice. Debbie reminded him that "It’s not a pointer."

The following segments indicated how the teachers began book reading, involving seating arrangement and book handling behavior. The message underlying these "readiness interaction sequences" seemed to convey that the way to show you are ready to be read to is either to sit on the teacher’s lap or sit on the floor (when teacher’s lap was occupied by others). Opening up a book is an important step to get to know what the book is about.

--- Gail sits down near the mirror with pillows at her back, while Joe sits down opposite her. Then, Gail moves Joe over to her lap and starts reading the book. (Gail)

--- "Should we look at this book? Should we read it? When we read the book, we open it up. What can we find? ..." (Debbie)

--- "Shall we open the big book? Look at all the things the little bear has to do in the morning? ... We turn the page, we can see what is happening at the rabbits’ family house..." (Debbie)
When we read the book, we open it up. What can we find? We find..." (Debbie)

"What would you like to read, Peter? A truck book? ... OK! Let's sit down." Polly lifts a pillow up with her foot to against the door. Then, she sits down with Peter on her lap. (Polly)

"You got a book? You got a book? Do you want to sit down and read the book?" (Polly)

"You want to read that book? OK! What's inside the book? You open it up. Open it up". (Polly)

Life-to-Text Interaction Sequences. In order to help infants to make sense of the book they were read to, the teachers tended to associate infants’ experiences with the book content.

"Shoes, shoes, shoes. Shoes have laces on them." Polly points at the pictures on the book. Kent follows her and points at it. "Those are laces." Polly turns to the next page, and Kent points at the right page. "There is a cup," said Polly. "Cup," said Kent. "Right, and a bib. Those are things you have at snack table." Polly connects the content of the picture with Kent's daily life experience. (2/28)

"Baby is reading books with his mama. Baby found the blocks. Did you play with blocks this morning, Joe?" asks Gail. ------ "Baby is walking. Baby is talking on the telephone." "Baby is singing 'Happy birthday.'" Gail starts singing the song to Joe and Kent. Not for long; Kent moves aside to play by himself. (3/13)

Polly reads What Goes with This? to Peter. She applies "Where should --- go?" sentence pattern to introduce each page. When she asks Peter "Where should socks go?" Peter lifts his feet to answer
the question. When Polly turns to the last page - a birthday cake picture, she mentions that Eric's and Lucy's birthdays are coming. (4/2)

Text-to-Life Interaction Sequences. The interaction sequences described above occurred frequently during book interactions. The "Text-to-Life interaction sequences" found by Cochram-Smith (1984) also occurred throughout the course of the study. Unlike "Life-to-Text interaction sequences," in which the adult reader focused on extra textural information in the process of book reading, "Text-to-Life interaction sequences" was almost the opposite. It involved the application of book information to real life.

--- "You see bunnies on the book? Mommy bunny and all the baby bunnies." Debbie points at the cover of the book. "Here comes the little bunny out of the box. Hop-hop-hop-hop." Debbie takes a toy bunny out of the shelf, imitating bunny's hopping toward Peter's feet. At that moment, Peter picks up the bunny book from the top of the shelf and hands it over to Debbie. (2/11)

--- Polly reads What Is It? to Kent. "Where are the socks?" Polly turns to the first page and asks Kent. "Here are socks right there on your feet." She points at Kent's foot. (2/28)

At the Infant Center, book reading was also used to introduce infant's forthcoming experiences. Once Gail read Harold Roth's A Checkup, a book which describes how a child went to see a doctor for a regular checkup, to an infant who had a doctor's appointment for her regular checkup, before the parent picked up the child. It is another vivid example of "Text-Life interaction sequences".
Teachers Respected Infants' Decision. All three teachers respected infants, in terms of whether infants wanted to be read to or not, and infants' choice of book.

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At around 12:00 a.m., most infants are still sleeping. There are only Polly, Peter, and Nancy in the main area. Peter goes to the first section of the divider shelf where there are four animals books displayed. He picks up two of them and goes to Polly. Peter hands out the books and goes back to get the other two. After handing out all four books to Polly, Peter heads straight to the other corner. Polly invites Peter to come over to look at the books. Meanwhile she displays the books in a wagon nicely to attract Peter's attention. However, Peter just ignores her effort.

(2/28)

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"You got a book? You got a book? Do you want to sit down and read the book?" Polly has Kent sit on her lap, and starts reading the book.
"Apple, there is an apple."
"A key."
"What is this?" "A cup." Polly points at each picture and labels it. At the end, Kent holds the book and goes toward Debbie.

(3/4)

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"Which one would you like?" Gail picks up Joe, and lets him choose whichever he likes.
"This one? This one with dogs?" Gail follows Joe's pointing and picks that one.
"Dog." Said Joe.
"This one with babies?" Gail picks up the second book without Joe's objection. (3/13)

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Polly picks up Peter, who is fussy. She holds him and walks toward the high bookshelf. Joe is standing near the corner.
"A book." Joe points at the high bookshelf.
"A book? Hum, animal sound?" Polly stands in front of the bookshelf and tries to pick books.
"A book." Joe points at the bookshelf again.
"A book about trucks?" asks Polly.
"Truck," says Joe.
"OK, we will get that." Polly accepts Joe's request. At that time, Peter who is in Polly's arm, points at the bookshelf. "A book," says Peter. "A book about trucks. OK!" Polly pulls out a book and shows it to Joe. "Book," says Joe. "What would you like to read, Peter? A truck book? We have the truck book. OK. Let's sit down." Polly lifts a pillow up against the door right next to the book corner. Then, she sits down with Peter on her lap. Joe sits down next to Polly. (5/8)

Infants' Responses to Book Reading

The infants in the Infant Center differed considerably in their responses to books. Some infants did not care to be read to. By contrast, some infants enjoyed listening and looking. The observation data showed that infants are able to respond to books. How they interact with and how they respond to books depend on their general level of development, the teachers' reading style, and their past book reading experiences. In this section, how the infants in the Infant Center interacted with and responded to books will be discussed.

Background of the Infants

Joe. Joe is the child of Donna and John. He enrolled in the Infant Center at the inception of the study. In a very short period of time, Joe adjusted himself very well to the new environment. Joe was the oldest infant among the ten infants at the Infant Center. He loved books and enjoyed being read to at home and in the Infant Center.
The parent interview revealed that Joe had been read to before he was born. His parents made a conscious effort to give him a supportive environment for his literacy development. Since he was born, his parents had read to him as much as he wanted. The observational data showed that Joe was an active reader in the Infant Center. He initiated book reading activity frequently and made his verbal requests clearly. In addition, he showed his strong preferences for certain books as time went on.

Kent. Kent is the child of Yen and Stone. Kent was thirteen months old at the inception of the study. The parent interview showed that Kent was exposed to books between five and six months of age. Kent was frequently found in the book corner. He actively initiated book reading activities and enjoyed being read to.

Peter. Peter is the child of Cathy and Willy. At the beginning of this study, Peter was twelve months old. According to the parent interview, he began to look at books when he was four months old. It was his favorite activity in the car. After he was about a year old, he became more interested in climbing on things or pushing around the riding toys. At the Infant Center, Peter actively participated in book reading events and enjoyed being read to.

Andrew. Andrew is the child of Anita and Jeffrey. He is a bilingual child who was exposed to Spanish at home and to English at the Infant Center. He was about twelve months old at the beginning of the study. Andrew was a happy infant who liked to explore the environment and enjoyed being read to by his caregivers.

Kelly. Kelly is the child of Barbara and Ben. She was about twelve months old at the inception of the study. The parent interview and the observation data showed that
Kelly developed a strong interest in books, particularly the mechanical aspects of book reading. She could spend quite a long time turning the pages, looking at the pictures, and mumbling.

**Eric.** Eric is the second child of Lesley and Bill. Eric was nine months old at the beginning of the study. The parent interview showed that Eric was perceived by his father as a very active child who did not have the patience for picture book reading. At the Infant Center Eric enjoyed being read to occasionally but was not exposed to book reading activity frequently.

**Karen.** Karen is the child of Julia and Stephen. She was nine months old at the inception of this study. As the second child, she was read to occasionally by her older brother and was included in the bedtime story routine at home. At the Infant Center, Karen had a short attention span when she was exposed to book reading. She did not demonstrate a strong interest in books.

**Nancy.** Nancy is the child of Malinda and Ron. Nancy was eight months old at the beginning of the study. The parent interview and the observational data indicated that Nancy developed a strong interest in books at home and in the Infant Center, after she was about nine or ten months old. Nancy acted like a reader - opening up the book, turning pages, pointing at the pictures, and mumbling to herself. She often exhibited calm, listening behavior during group reading.

**Lucy.** Lucy is the child of Sophia and Michael. She was seven months old at the beginning of the study. Lucy was a shy child and occasionally exhibited stranger anxiety. She developed a strong bond with her primary caregiver - Polly. Lucy enjoyed
playing with Polly. When she was read to, she exhibited a short attention span and was
distracted easily by the noises from the surrounding area.

Karl. Karl is the child of Mary and Dennis. He was the youngest one among the
ten infants. At the inception of the study, Karl was about five months old. The parent
interview showed that Karl enjoyed being read to and had positive responses. At the
Infant Center, Karl exhibited less interest in books. In addition, his lack of mobility
affected his opportunities to be exposed to books.

The Context of Infant-Initiated Book Reading

For infants, being able to crawl or walk is a major achievement. The mobility
enables them to get things they desire more easily. In the Infant Center, infants initiated
book reading in various ways.

Non-Verbal Gestures. Infants initiated book reading through reaching toward
books, pointing at a bookshelf, and handing over books to a teacher. The following
episodes provide vivid examples of how the infants played active roles in initiating book
reading activities.

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There is a poster entitled "Read to Me" with the picture of
a mommy bear holding and reading to a baby bear hanging
on the wall in the high bookshelf corner. Kent and Lucy
sit in the swings for a long time. Polly helps Kent get
down. Kent (13 months old) plays for a few minutes and
then he walks to Gail. He looks at the books lying on the
floor near Gail. Then he goes back to Polly. Kent makes
some noise. It looks like he is eager to have something.
"What is it? What are you looking for? You want a book?" says
Polly. Kent points at the high book shelf.
Gail hands a book over to Polly.
Have you read this one? Have you read this one?" Polly puts Kent on her lap. (2/28)

---

Joe and Andrew stand in front of a toy shelf at the crib area. They both hold a book in their hands. Gail is putting Nancy down for a nap at the time. When Joe (15 months old) hands Tana Hoban's What Is It? to her, she asks practicum student Susan to come over to read to Andrew and Joe. "Andrew, would you like to look at the book?" asks Susan. "Wo--", replies Andrew. "You want to look at the book too?" Susan asks Joe. (3/8)

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Kent (14 months old) picks up a book from the floor. Then he sits down on the floor and flips through the book. After a few minutes, he brings it to his primary caregiver Polly. Polly takes over the book and flips through it. Then, she puts it aside. At the time, Polly is talking with Debbie. Kent plays with a toy truck for a short period of time. Then, he picks up the book and hands it over to Polly again. "You want to read that? Sit down." says Polly. (3/14)

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Peter (15 months old) takes all four books from the first section of the divider shelf and goes to Polly who is with Lucy. Polly takes over the books and starts reading to Peter and Lucy. (4/11)

Verbal Request. When infants gradually entered the one word stage, they either verbalized their desire to be read to with the word "book", or a key word related to the content of the book they like. In addition, they might combine the word with non-verbal gesture, like pointing.

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Peter (15 months old) climbs up to the wooden box where is right next to the high bookshelf corner. I move closer to watch him. A few seconds later, Peter points at the high bookshelf. "Book," says Peter. "You want to read a book?" I ask him. "Book," Peter says it again. (4/15)
The aforementioned episodes indicated that infants initiated book reading through non-verbal and verbal gestures. Meanwhile, these gestures were also perceived by the teachers and practicum students as requests to be read to. It required teachers’ sensitivity and attention.

Soloing: Infants’ Responses to Books in an Individual Context

In this study, infant’s interaction with books in individual context will be referred to as "soloing".

Books as Teethers. Infants devote an increasing amount of time to manipulating objects. They finger, bang, and rotate objects often with interest and enjoyment. They do so in various situations, particularly in the context of solitary play. At the Infant Center, books were also perceived by the infants as objects. When infants investigated books, by looking at them, turning the pages, and mouthing the books, object play began. Infants’ indiscriminate mouthing of materials and simple manipulation has been identified as undifferentiated exploratory play (Belsky and Most, 1981). The following episodes illustrated it well:

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Before picking up Lucy (7.5 months old) at 1:00 p.m., Lucy’s mother Sophia comes to the observation booth. We chat for a while. She mentions to me that she shared books with Lucy about two months ago. Because Lucy always puts books in her mouth, eventually Sophia gives up the idea of reading to her. Recently, because of the suggestion from Peter’s mother, she uses soft vinyl books as an alternative. (1/29)
Debbie sits at the high book shelf corner with Kelly (almost one year old) on her lap. Kelly is holding a book about farm animals, and she puts the book in her mouth occasionally. After a while, she tries to turn the pages. (1/7)

Nancy (one year old) crawls around to explore the room. She finds a small cardboard book on the floor. She picks it up and puts it in her mouth. (5/8)

The aforementioned episodes indicated that infants at Freud's Oral stage of development displayed frequent mouthing and chewing of objects behaviors. They did not distinguish books from other objects. Books were treated as objects, and functioned as teether.

Books Provided Visually Guided Manipulation. The physical characteristics of books seemed to appeal to the infants. In addition to mouthing books, some infants were likely to bang, wave, and make short periods of visual contact. They were fascinated by the mechanical aspect of books which could be opened up and closed; pages could be turned back and forth. As time went on, the infants gradually mastered the skills of manipulating a book, like opening up the book, turning the pages. Their ability to handle books and their interest in exploring what books are about made books especially intriguing for their age level.

Eric (one year old) picks up a cardboard book Zoo Animals from the first section of the divider shelf. Susan who sits near him initiates book reading activity with him. Eric does not respond to her invitation. Instead he sits down and holds the book upside-down. Eric turns the pages and points at the pictures with his index finger. (4/11)
During diaper change time, Kelly (13 months old) lies down in her crib waiting for diaper change. She holds a book, opens it up, turns the pages, closes it and turns it around. Then, she puts down the book, and picks up another book next to her. She opens it up, and points at the pictures. Kelly shakes the book with both hands. She closes the book, and then opens it up again. Kelly mumbles. She repeats that with the book - turning pages, closing the book, opening it up, turning the book around several times. Then, she puts the book into her mouth. After a few seconds, she pulls it out and touches the spots that she mouths. Finally, she puts the book aside, and lies down there, relaxed. (2/14)

During free play time, Peter (14 months old) brings two books with him from the crib area. He comes to the main area, and glances at both books. Then, he puts them on the floor. He kneels down and picks up one book, turning and flipping through the pages for awhile. (3/1)

Kent (15 months old) carries a book with him, and walks around in the main area. Once, he stands in front of the high book shelf and points at the shelf. Nobody notices his request. Then, he walks a few more steps and points at the same corner again. He looks around and realizes that nobody responds to his pointing. He kneels down and starts turning pages of the book. After a short period of time, he gets up and sits down on a mat next to the book corner. Kent repeatedly opens up the book, turns the pages, closes the book, and turns the book around. He looks at the book intently, only occasionally lifts up his head to look at his surroundings, particularly when Joe pushing the lawn-mower toy passes by behind him. (3/6)

Books as Companions. In the Infant Center, books were not only treated by the infants as teethers to put in their mouths and as objects to manipulate, but also as companions to carry around.

Lucy (11 months old) takes a book in her right hand and tries to climb up the wooden ramp. But it does not work. After a few
attempts, she gives up. She drops the book to the floor and reaches to other toys. (5/8)

--- Kent (15 months old) picks up a book from the floor. He holds it with one hand and pushes the lawn-mower with the other hand. Then, he leaves the lawn-mower, and plays with the mirror hanging underneath the window with the book in his left hand. (3/6)

--- At around 11:00 a.m., toys and books have been reorganized back to the shelves. Infants who take naps later go back to the main area. The safety gate has been put up between the crib area and the main area. Kent takes the *Zoo Animals* book from the first section of the divider and goes toward the box filled with legos near the sink. He drops the book into the box and plays with legos for awhile. Then, he picks up the book. "Isn't it silly?" says Debbie who is near him. Kent holds the *Zoo Animals* book and passes by practicum student Susan. "Kent, would you like to read the book?" asks Susan. Without Kent's further reaction, Susan puts Kent on her lap and starts reading the book. (4/11)

--- At around 12:00 a.m., most infants are still sleeping. There are only Polly, Peter, and Nancy in the main area. Peter (15 months old) goes to the first section of the divider where there are four animal books displayed. He picks up two of them and goes to Polly. Peter hands out the books and goes back to get the other two. After handing out all four books to Polly, Peter heads straight to another corner. Polly invites Peter come over to look at the books. Meanwhile she displays the books in a wagon nicely, to attract Peter's attention. However, Peter just ignores her effort. (4/11)

**Infants Talked Like Readers.** When infants interacted with books on their own, they also demonstrated what has been referred to as "expressive jargon" (Schickedanz,
1986) behavior. They jabbered while looking at books. They sounded as if they were reading the text aloud, although the sounds made no sense.

---

Gail and Nancy are in the crib area. Gail picks up a book near her, and reads it to Nancy. After finishing the book, Gail goes to the main area with Nancy in her arm. She mentions that Nancy likes animal books. Then she picks two books about farm animals from the high bookshelf. She puts the books in front of Nancy for her to look at. Nancy (11 months old) turns the pages and murmurs to herself attentively. (4/11)

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Nancy (12 months old) finds a book on the floor. She picks it up and turns the pages. She looks at the pages and mumbles. After going through a few pages, she puts down the book and plays with other toys near her. (5/8)

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"This is my chain. This is my cup. This is my bed. These are my dishes." Practicum student Susan reads to Andrew. Andrew (14 months old) tries to take away the book, and he succeeds. "I guess you are all done with that book," says Susan. Andrew concentrates on turning the pages. He mumbles. "Really?" Susan gets up to get a tissue for Andrew. "Yeah, I need to wipe your nose again. Almost done, all done. Are you reading the book by yourself now?" Susan gets up to throw away the tissue. "Gulu-gulu..." Andrew shows the book to Susan. Then, he opens it up and looks at the pages. (3/8)

**Duoing: Infants' Responses to Books in Dyadic Situations**

In this study, a book reading event which occurred between an infant and a teacher is termed as "duoing".

**Book Reading as Scaffolding.** According to Bruner (1977), for learning to take place, appropriate social interactional frameworks must be provided by the caregivers.
In order to do so, the caregivers need to use contexts that are extremely familiar, routinized to the child, but that are also one step ahead of the child. The format has been called 'scaffolding.'

The following episodes indicated that 'scaffolding' commonly occurred in the process of reading to infants, especially in a one to one situation. The teacher repeated the infant's previous utterances and extended the infant's language by asking further questions. For example, "Duck, right. What does duck say?". The predictable nature of such routines provided a supportive framework to allow both the infant and the teacher to be involved in reciprocal verbal interchange.

---
"What's this, Joe? What's that? Dog. That is a doggy. What does doggy say?" Joe's father, John, shows a book about farm animals to Joe (13 months old).
"What does cow say?" asks John.
"No -" says Joe.
"The cow says 'Moooo'," says John. (1/7)

---
"What's that?" Gail shows the picture on the back cover to Joe (15 months old).
"Duck," says Joe. He points at the picture.
"A duck, right. What does duck say?" Gail waits for Joe to respond.
"Quack, Quack," says Joe.
"Quack, Quack, Quack. You are absolutely right." Gail lifts her head to watch the clock above the high book shelf. She puts the book aside and picks up another book. (3/13)

---
"Did you see a cat in my book? There are the kittens. Do you know what kittens say? They say 'Miaow-Miaow-Miaow'." Debbie asks Peter and Joe.
"Miaow-Miaow-Miaow," says Joe (17 months old).
"That's how they say it. They say 'Miaow-Miaow.' Then I have a few little doggies over here. Do you know what they say?" Debbie points at the picture.

"Woof, Woof, Woof," says Joe.

"That's exactly what the doggy says. Woof, Woof, Woof. Woof, Woof, Woof."

"We did our best to make as much noises as we can." Debbie jokes about it with Polly. (4/25)

The episodes showed that there was a high proportion of questions in both parent's and teachers’ speech. They took infants' utterances as a starting point and expanded them in a conversation-like interchange. By the use of questioning, teachers passed the conversational turn to the infants and prompted labeling. 'Scaffolding,' offered teachers and infants a structure within which teachers could gradually raise their expectations of infants’ further responses. Within the format, infants not only learned to use the language, but also learned to master the routines of book reading. Joe, at the age of 15 months, was able to participate in "book talk" with the teachers. He not only supplied the correct answers involving naming and making animal sounds in response to teachers' "what's that?" "what does --- say?" types of questions, but also responded with physical movements - pointing to the picture.

Book Reading as a Language Extension Process. Another type of the teachers’ assistance to infants’ responses to books in "duoing" book reading contexts was 'extension.' Extension refers to an utterance in which the teachers, in addition to expanding the infants’ utterance, added new semantic information. The following episodes revealed how the utterances made by the infants were extended and the context taken into account by the teachers in daily interaction and in the course of book reading
events. Teachers' utterances not only incorporated the infants' topics, but also added new information. In addition, the language extension process prolonged the interaction between the infants and the teachers. It not only allowed the teachers talk about the content in more detail, but also allowed the infants to visually inspect the pictures for a longer period of time.

---

Joe (15 months old) wakes up from his nap at 12:10 p.m. Gail lets Joe sit on practicum student Susan's lap. "Apple," says Joe. "I don't have apple, ..." answers Polly who sits near Joe. A few minutes later, Joe has his snack. "Apple," says Joe. "You do not have apple. You have noodle." answers Susan. (2/26)

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"Ducks," Debbie turns to next page. "Duck," Peter (13 months old) responds. "Ducks, that is correct. Ducks, Quack-Quack-Quack-Quack. Look at all the baby ducks." Debbie points at the baby ducks. (2/11)

---

"Have you read this one? Have you read this one?" Polly puts Kent (14.5 months old) on her lap and turns it to the first page. Kent points at the picture (One candle). "One (sounds like)," says Kent. "Right. That's 'one'," says Polly. "One candle," Polly points at the candle. (2/28)

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The teaching assistant Kathy sits on the mattress with Peter (14.5 months old) on her lap. They are looking at a book together.

"Bus," says Kathy.
"Ca-," says Peter.
"That's a car, correct."
"Ca-.
"A lot of cars," Kathy nods her head.
"Ca-," Peter points at right upper corner of the right side page.
"This is the tree, a green tree. Do you want to turn page to get the other car?" Kathy turns to next page.
"Where did the car go?" asks Kathy.
"Ca-," Peter points at the picture.
"There is the car. Do you see another car?" asks Kathy. Peter starts searching for it. After a few seconds, he points at upper corner of the right side page.
"You are right. Cars are up there too..." says Kathy. (3/27)

Book Reading as Play. Play has been recognized as a consequence of a social act between a caregiver and the child (Lewis, 1979). In interactions with social objects, reciprocal behavior and interactions themselves are learned by infants. These behaviors are the precursors of play. From this point of view, the precursors of play have their origin in infants' social relationships.

At the Infant Center, teachers' various ways of approaching the written text turned book reading into playful activities with a pretended play component. Teachers were partners in the infants' early growth of pretend play. They not only modeled play behavior for the infants, but also conveyed the idea that pretend play is an acceptable, even a desirable type of social activity.

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Peter (13 months old) brings a book with him, and goes toward the high book shelf corner where pillows and a baby crib are (two baby dolls in the crib). Polly is with Lucy sitting nearby the high book shelf corner.
"Peter, do you bring a book over to baby?" Polly said to Peter. At the same time, Kent comes over too. Kent picks up the baby doll, then he goes to Polly and hands it over. (2/12)

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After diaper change, Kent, Peter, Joe, Eric, and Andrew go back to the play area. Kent holds a book and sits down to look at it. He turns the pages for a while, then walks around with the book in hand.

A few minutes later, Kent brings the book to Teaching Assistant Kathy. Kathy reads it to Kent.

"Orange, cup." Kathy points at the picture and pretends she is drinking the orange juice out of the cup. (3/4)

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Debbie reads a book to Joe who sits on her lap.

"Shall we open the big book? Look at all the things the little bear has to do in the morning. Little bear has to - wash his face, brush his teeth, and comb his hair." Besides pointing at each picture, Debbie also pretends to comb Joe’s hair when she reads the last phrase. (3/1)

The playful aspect of book reading activity evolved and became more elaborate when it became a joint activity of teachers and infants. Through direct participation and modeling in the course of book reading, teachers not only directly engaged infants in pretend play but were also influential in encouraging the growth of infants' early pretend play. The following episode illustrated how Joe (16 months old) made eye contact and smiled to signal his pleasure in the pretend play. The particular act that children enjoyed repeating over and over again has been referred to as "recycled episodes" (Garvey, 1990). The following episode showed that Joe appeared to remember the scenario and initiated a replay with the teacher. This kind of shared pretend experience created a special moment in the participants' relationship.
Polly reads the birthday book—Debby Siler's *What Goes with This?* to Peter who sits on her lap. "Blow out the candle. All done," Polly tries to finish reading the book. Joe comes over and sits down in front of them.

"Do you see the picture there? It's a book." Polly holds up the book and shows the cover to Joe.

"Book," says Joe.

"You can hold the book." Joe takes the book from Polly. He turns the pages back and forth. Finally, he turns to the last page. "You are right. That's a birthday cake with candles. Happy birthday, happy birthday, happy birthday cake." says Polly. Joe closes the book and puts it aside. He rubs his eyes, then picks up the book again.

"Do you want to see other things in the book?" Polly takes over the book.

"This is a cup. A cup and a bowl." Polly shows the first page to Peter and Joe.

"Bow," says Joe.

"Bowl, a bowl," says Polly.

"Apple," responds Joe.

"Sounds like apple." Polly turns to the next page.

"Duck," says Joe.

"Duck, that's right." At the time, Joe is in a hurry to turn a couple of pages toward the end.

"Wait, wait, wait." Polly holds the book tightly.

"This is socks." Polly points at the picture. She also holds Joe's finger to point at it.

"There is some coins, toothbrush. What's this? Hands. What are these?" She turns the pages one by one. When Polly turns to the page of birthday cake, she pretends to blow out the candles. "Bye-Bye, birthday cake." Polly closes the book. Joe takes over the book and turns the pages. When he turns to the page of birthday cake, he looks at Polly. Then, he pretends to blow out the candles. Polly does it also and smiles at Joe.

"That's a birthday cake," says Polly. Then, she sings the happy birthday song to Joe.

Joe turns the pages back to the page of birthday cake again. He blows the candles. Then, he repeats it again, until Polly puts the book aside and replaces it with another book. (4/1)
"Chorusing" referred to the situation when a teacher would read to more than one infant. Most of "chorusing" book reading events took place by chance. Usually a teacher would read to an infant, then it would attract other infants' attention. Therefore, a "chorusing" book reading situation most likely originated from a "duoing" book reading event.

In the "chorusing" situation, infants at various age levels tended to participate and contribute to the book interactions in different ways. Some infants participated verbally in response to teachers' questioning, or non-verbal response behaviors including looking intensely at pictures, leaning forward or moving closer to the book, and laughing or smiling at familiar pictures.

Because of their short attention spans, some infants would come and go. In a "chorusing" situation, each infant might bring different dynamics to book interactions. The following episode showed how the teachers incorporated Joe's verbal responses in the book interaction.

--- Polly reads Tana Hoban's *What Is It?* to Kent (14.5 months old). "Shoes, shoes, shoes. Shoes have laces on them." Polly points at the picture. Kent imitates her and points at it. "Those are laces." Polly said to Kent when Kent points at the picture. Polly turns to the next page, and Kent points at the right page. "There is a cup." "Cup," says Kent. "Right, and a bib. Those are things you have at snack table." Polly connects the content of the picture with Kent's daily life experience.
"An apple." Joe (15 months old) comes over and looks at Polly. "An apple. Is there an apple in there? Is there a picture of an apple? Oh! There is a spoon. Is there an apple? Is there an apple in here? I didn’t see an apple. I didn’t see an apple. Let’s start from the front again." Polly looks through all the pages. She closes the book, and intends to go through each page one more time. Suddenly, she notices that there is an apple on the cover. She shows the cover to Joe. Joe starts to tiptoe backwards a little bit. "Oh, there is an apple. You are right. An apple. I didn’t see that apple." Polly shows the book cover to Joe and points at the apple. "Apple," says Joe. "It’s an apple. Did you see the apple, Kent? This one is an apple." Polly looks at Kent and holds his right hand to point at the apple on the cover. Joe walks away. "Where are the socks? Here are socks right there on your feet." Polly turns to the first page and asks Kent. Then, she points at Kent’s foot. (2/28)

In contrast to "soloing", both "duoing" and "chorusing" book reading events were accomplished through joint teacher-infant participation, with the teacher acting as intermediary between infants and books. The following episodes indicated how Joe, at the age of 17 months, absorbed teachers’ book reading behaviors - making correct animal sounds, pointing to and circling the picture, while looking at it. He acted and talked like a reader. These two episodes also showed that book reading events gradually changed from being controlled by the teacher to being jointly controlled by the teacher and the infant.

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Joe (17 months old) sits on the wooden box where animal books and plastic animals are displayed. Joe holds an opened book and mumbles. Nancy looks at him. "Wa-Wa... Duck." Joe is turning the pages and making the noises.
"Where are those chickens that say 'Cluck-Cluck.' Where are they? Can you find them in your book?" Debbie asks Joe (17 months old). Joe turns to a page, then he makes some noises. "Those are sheep. They say 'Baa-Baa-Baa'," Debbie explains. "Wa, Wa, Wa." Joe makes a strange noise. "I never heard that." Polly, who sits near him, is laughing about it.

"Where are the chickens that say 'Cluck-Cluck.' Let's find them." Debbie smiles. Nancy attempts to take the book from Joe. Joe holds it tightly. Debbie takes over the book and puts it flat on the box, so Nancy and Joe are able to see it. "It's not there, not there. No, ... Here they are, chickens." Debbie searches for the picture of the chickens page by page. Then, she leaves the book with Nancy and Joe. "Cluck-Cluck-Cluck-Cluck." Joe makes the animal sound when he turns to the page of chickens. He does it repeatedly. Then, he drops the book and goes to another corner. (4/25)

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Polly reads to Joe, Peter, and Nancy.

"There is a truck. It must be winter time, because lots of snow blowers. The snow blowers plowing the snow and throwing it in the back, so the cars don't slip and slide." Polly points at the cover and talks about it. Then, she turns to the first page. "Here is a fire truck with one, two, three fire fighters in the front, and one fire fighter in the back. It's rushing down the street to go help put the fire out."

"This is a dump truck. The driver backs the dump truck in and lifts up the hatch and dumps everything out in the back..." Joe turns the book to the next page after Polly finishes talking. "A truck," says Joe. "And here are two trucks." As Polly says it, Nancy presses the book and tries to pull it closer to her. Then, she touches the book. "Two-," says Joe. "Two trucks." Polly points at the picture. "This is a milk truck," says Polly. "Mu-truck." Joe repeats what Polly has said. "A milk truck. This whole tank is filled with milk." Polly circles the tank with her finger. "A truck," says Joe. "And what is this? The moving van." Polly points at the picture. As Polly turns to the next page, Peter gets up and moves to the nearby corner to play with the steering wheel toy. He kneels down just for a few seconds, then comes back to Polly's lap.
"This is a livestock truck with some animals in the back. You have to leave some holes so the animals can breathe." Polly explains.

"Breathe," says Joe.

"They will be able to breathe, like this -." Polly takes two deep breath to demonstrate what deep breath is. "They have to be able to take the air in and out their lungs." Joe turns to the next page voluntarily.

"A truck," says Joe.

"Yeah, this is a tow truck."

"Tow truck," says Joe.

"Tow truck. The tow truck comes if your car get struck in the mud, the tow truck can come and pull it out. Or if your car is broken, the tow truck can come and give your car a lift." At that moment, Nancy is excited, she pats the book.

Joe intends to turn to the next page. "Open," says Joe.

"And this is a garbage truck, comes around and takes all the garbage or takes all the recycling back to the recycle center." Polly points at the picture. Nancy holds the corner of the book. She tries to take away the book, but does not succeed.

"The end." Polly closes the book. Joe takes it over immediately, and turns around the book so that he faces the book in the correct direction. Then, he opens up the book and turns the pages backwards. He murmurs to himself.

"Car, truck," says Joe.

"Joe is reading us a story." Polly talks to Peter and Nancy who concentrate at the time.

"Big truck." After saying it aloud, Joe looks at Polly.

"A big truck." Polly nods her head. Joe turns to the next page and points at the picture.

"Those are the wheels on the truck," says Polly.

"Wheel," says Joe. He points at the picture with his left index finger and murmurs to himself again.

"Where is the driver? The truck driver." Asks Polly. Joe turns to the next page. He circles with his finger around the picture and murmurs.

"There is the truck driver sitting in the front seat." Polly points at it. Joe continues pointing at the pictures and murmurs. Then, he tries to turn to the next page but does not succeed.

"That’s the last page, Joe." Polly notices that. Joe turns the pages backwards and murmurs. (5/8)
Infants Responded to Books in a Variety of Ways

The observation data indicated that infants in the Infant Center were capable of demonstrating their understanding of what a book was about and how the books they were read to related to their life experiences. In addition to verbal responses, infants tended to respond to books in various ways.

**Facial Expressions.** Infants laughed or smiled at a familiar picture to indicate their recognition of the object, especially when teachers made an interesting sound (such as an animal sound), or read it in an unusual way. When infants discovered the object they were familiar with, appearing unexpectedly in the book, they usually reacted with a surprised facial expression.

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Peter (15 months old) is crying in his crib. At the time, I have Kent in my arm. I quickly pick up a book from the top of the toy shelf right across from Peter’s crib. I pass a book to him. He turns the pages quietly in his crib. Then, he points at the toy shelf to request other books. I pass him the *Puppies* and *Kittens* books, let him look at it by himself. When he turns to the second page, there is a ball in the picture. Peter suddenly breaks into laughter.

"Ball!" Peter says it aloud with a big smile and a tear drop still hanging on his face. (4/9)

"When we read the book, we open it up. What can we find? We find squirrel. Gray squirrel." Debbie points at the picture. "Squirrel," says Peter. Kelly walks toward them from another corner.

"Gray squirrel, gray squirrel, swashy-bushy tail. Gray squirrel. Here comes Kelly." Debbie sings the song and announces Kelly’s arrival.

"Ducks," Debbie turns to the next page. "Duck," responds Peter. "Ducks, that is correct. Ducks, Quack-Quack-Quack-Quack." Kelly is laughing. (2/11)
Body Movements. Unlike older children, who reveal their feelings through subtle changes of expression and posture, infants are motor-oriented. Younger infants in the Infant Center grasped the book with their hands and brought it up to their mouth. They shook, sucked, and waved the book. After hand and mouth manipulation had subsided, they returned to looking intently at pictures and turning pages.

Through physical actions, infants demonstrated their intention, their discovery and participation in the course of book reading. Pointing was broadly used by the infants. They pointed to individual pictures to raise questions, "What's that?". When Peter discovered that there was a dog in the illustration, he stretched his arm, pointing at the page from a distance. Through pointing, infants also achieved their intention to request that teachers talk about the page again.

"Shoes, shoes, shoes. Shoes have laces on them." Polly points at the picture in the book. Kent follows her and points at it. "Those are laces." Polly repeats it again when Kent points at the picture. Polly turns to the next page, and Kent points at the page on the right. "There is a cup," says Polly. "Cup," says Kent. (2/28)

The following episode showed how Andrew, at the age of 14 months, requested that the teacher talk about the pictures by using his body movement - grabbing the adult reader's finger to point at the picture repeatedly.

Joe and Andrew (14 months old) stand in front of a bookshelf, each has a book in his hands. Gail was getting Nancy ready for
a nap at the time. When Joe hands a book to her, she asks Intern Susan to come over to help with reading to Andrew and Joe. "Andrew, would you like to look at the book?" says Susan. "Wo--", replies Andrew. "Joe, You want to look at the book too?" asks Susan. Both Andrew and Joe stand in front of Susan. When Susan starts reading Lenore Blegvad’s This is Me, Joe moves closer to her. "This is my shirt." Susan points at Andrew’s shirt, then turns to the next page. "These are my socks. This is my boat." Susan points at the pictures, meanwhile Andrew attempts to hold the book. Finally, he puts down his hands. "This is my tree. This is my door. These are my keys." Andrew touches the book. Then, he holds the corner of the right side page. As a result, Susan is not able to turn to the next page. Susan holds the book tight, Andrew gives up and sits down. "This is my chain. This is my cup. This is my bed. These are my dishes." Andrew tries to take away the book, and he succeeds. "I guess you are all done with that book", says Susan. At that moment, Joe runs away. Andrew concentrates on turning the pages. The mumbles. "Really?" says Susan. She gets up to get a tissue for Andrew. "Yeah, I need to wipe your nose again. Almost done, all done. Are you reading the book by yourself now?" Susan gets up to throw away the tissue. "Gulu-gulu..." Andrew shows the book to Susan. then, he opens it up and look at the pages. "It’s a book", said Susan. Andrew repeatedly opens up the book and closes it. He turns the pages from left to right, right to left, or even from top to bottom, bottom to top. It looks as if he is searching for a certain page. "Bu-", Andrew grabs Susan’s finger to point at the page he turns to. "This is a boot. A boot and socks." Susan leans toward him to look at the pictures. Then, she leans back against Peter’s crib. Andrew grabs Susan’s finger again. "A blue sky." Said Susan. Susan sees Andrew point at the bookshelf; therefore she puts the book back to the shelf. Andrew takes the book back right away. When he turns the pages, he grabs Susan’s finger again. "There is light." Susan leans forward looking at the page, then she sits back. Andrew turns to the next page, he grabs Susan’s finger to point at the picture a few times.
"That is a door," says Susan. Andrew puts the book back on the shelf.
"All done," says Susan. Suddenly, Andrew grabs Susan's finger again.
Susan picks up the book and shows it to Andrew. At that moment, Kelly crawls over.
"Hi, would you like to read this book with us?" Susan invites her to join them. Kelly crawls forward without stopping.
Andrew seems to lose his patience, he takes back the book, opens it up, then puts it back on the shelf. He tries to grab Susan's finger again.
"What?" says Susan. She picks up the book and leans toward Andrew. At that time, Gail comes to the corner. She talks with Susan while she is changing Lucy's diaper. Andrew takes the book back from Susan right away. He opens up the book and turns the pages. Then, he stands up, continues looking at the page, closes it, and goes to the main area with the book. (3/8)

Infants also demonstrated other postures, including patting, grabbing and pulling the book, turning the pages for the teacher or attempting to turn back to a previous page in the process of being read to. Some infants even kissed the pictures (such as baby photos) to show their affection. In addition, infants stopped teachers' reading by pushing away or closing the book, or by standing up and walking away from the teacher.

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Polly is reading a book to Kent. Nancy crawls over to join them. She grasps at the corner of the book and tries to pull it away. Polly continues reading.
"Polar bear. Let's turn to the next page. Oh - look at that! ... and there are the eyes. Yes, big eyes." (2/28)

Infants Looked for Familiar Objects and Details in Illustrations. The following episodes showed Peter's fascination with details and his joy in searching for a familiar object - dog - in the illustrations. When Phyllis Hoffman's Baby's First Year was read to Peter for the first time, he associated "dog" with its animal sound "Woof," and
attempted to turn back to the page. On the following day, the same book was read to him. When he saw a dog in the illustration, he labeled it directly without the teacher's asking. Gradually, Peter was able to look for more details in the illustrations. "Dog" seemed to become the focus of his interest in the book and the target of his visual searching. Through facial expression, naming, and pointing, Peter expressed his discovery of and enjoyment in finding dogs on different pages. His responses received the teacher's positive reactions. For Peter, the experience suggests that book reading is a series of discovery processes.

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There are Nancy, Karl, Peter, Gail and I are in the play area. Peter (14 months old) is looking for Debbie who is getting Kelly ready for her nap at the time. I go to the high bookshelf and pick the Baby's First Year book, then sit down with him.
"Baby's first day. Look at this, ... Baby's first hat. That is a doggy. Do you see the doggy?" I point at the picture.
"Wo-." Peter points at it also. After I turn a few more pages, Peter tries to turn the pages back to the one with the dog. At that moment, it is Peter's turn for a nap. I dress him, then pass him to Debbie. (3/6)

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When Debbie goes into the kitchen to make the snack, Peter starts crying. Polly picks up Peter and tries to comfort him. She plays with him, but Peter does not stop crying. Then, Polly picks two books from the high bookshelf - Machines at Work and Baby's First Year, and reads to Peter.
"Baby's first day," says Polly.
"Dog," responds Peter.
"That's right." ...
"Where is the dog?" Polly tries to engage Peter with what he is familiar with. (3/7)

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Gail reads to Peter at a corner near the sink. Andrew sits close to them. At that time, Peter's primary caregiver Debbie is in the kitchen.
Gail reads *Baby's First Year* to Peter. When she turns to the page with a dog, Peter responds to it immediately.
"Dog." Peter says it loudly.
"That's right. It's a dog." (3/8)

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Gail reads *Baby's First Year* to Joe who sits on her lap. Kent and Peter come to join them.

.......
"What's this? A little dog." Gail points at the picture.
"Baby's first bath." Gail turns to the next page. Kent hits the book with a stick again. Gail presses the stick for a few seconds to keep Kent from hitting it again.
"Baby is having a bath." Gail points at the left page. At that moment, Peter who stands beside Gail, stretches his right arm and points at the right side page from a distance, and calls out "Dog!"
"You see the dog, right? The dog is on the window." Gail points at the dog. Then, she turns to the next page.
"Baby's first nap."
"Dog!" Peter stretches his right arm, pointing again right away.
"You are right, it's another dog." Gail praises Peter's discovery. Kent seems to lose his interest in the book; he picks up another book from the floor and browses it by himself.
"Baby's first smile. Look at baby smiling. Smile." says Gail. Kelly raises her left hand and drops her toy. Then, she crawls forward to touch and point at the left page. Peter is pointing at the same time.
"Dog!" says Peter.
"Yeah," Gail smiles and looks at Kelly. (3/13)

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Polly reads to Peter...
At last, Polly reads the third book - *Baby's First Year*. When she opens up the book, Peter starts looking for the page with a dog. At that time, his primary caregiver Debbie comes out from the kitchen, Peter gets up from Polly's lap and goes over to Debbie. (4/2)

**Infants Had Book Preferences.** When infants grew older, the contents of books began to dominate their interest. They became more interested in books which contained pictures of familiar objects and activities which related to their life experiences. In the
Infant Center, the infants were exposed to book reading activities on a daily basis; they gradually became familiar with the book collections. Some older infants showed their book preferences clearly. They rejected teachers' book choices by repeatedly requesting another book or by walking away to terminate the reading.

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At around 11:30 a.m., most infants are sleeping. There are Lucy, Peter, Karl and Polly in the main area. At the time, Debbie is getting Kelly ready for her nap. Peter (14 months old) is upset at Debbie's being away from him. I hold him and let him sit on the window looking outside. It does not work. Then, Polly picks a book and reads to him. When Peter is done with the book, he walks toward the high bookshelf and points at it. "You want another book?" asks Polly. I pick a book for him. Peter is not satisfied and keeps pointing. Eventually, I hold him and let him pick whatever he likes. (2/27)

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Peter (15 months old) climbs up to the wooden box which is right next to the book corner. I move closer to watch him. A few seconds later, Peter points at the high bookshelf. "Book," says Peter. "You want to read a book?" I ask him. "Book," Peter says it again. Then, I pick Sally is Helping and show it to him. Peter takes a quick look, then he points at the bookshelf again. "Book," he says. I encourage him to look through the pages. When I turn to the first page, he goes away immediately. (4/5)

In the adult world, we sometimes become attached to certain objects. In the Infant Center, certain books had a strong personal emotional appeal for some infants. The following episodes, which occurred in three consecutive days, show how Joe, at the age of 16 months, was able to express his book preference verbally by saying aloud a key word related to the content of his favorite book. Through frequent verbal requests, he negotiated with the teachers, and gained support from them.
Practicum student Judy reads Richard Scarry’s big book to Joe. In the process of turning the pages, Joe (16.5 months old) keeps saying "Balloon, balloon..." At that time, Peter is crying because Debbie has to leave to get Kelly ready for her nap. Polly moves over to hold Peter; at the same time, she blows bubbles to entertain other infants. Joe goes to join them. A few minutes later, Polly lets Judy take charge of the game.

When the game is over, Joe points at the high bookshelf. "Book," says Joe.

"Book? A book. You want to look at a book?" asks Judy. She picks two books from the high bookshelf. Then she sits down and invites Joe to sit down. However, Joe stands there and keeps pointing at the high bookshelf.

"Would you like to read this book?" Judy pulls out Richard Scarry’s big book and shows it to Joe.

"Yeah," Joe sits down with satisfaction. (4/3)

At around 12:40, Gail is holding Nancy, Joe who sits nearby, looks upset because his toy was taken away by Kent. Gail notices so she initiates book reading activity with Joe.

"Joe, would you like to look at books with me?" asks Gail. Gail goes to the high bookshelf and picks a book for Joe. Joe stands underneath the bookshelf, points at it, and keeps saying "Balloon." Gail encourages Joe to look through the book she has picked first, but Joe insists to have the "balloon book." Therefore, Gail takes the Richard Scarry’s big book, and has Joe sit on her lap.

In order to find the page with the balloon, Gail turns the pages one after one. Meanwhile, Joe keeps saying "balloon." (4/4)

Gail asks Joe if he wants to look at books. Then, she picks three books from the high bookshelf. Gail reads One, Two, One Pair! first. Before she finishes it, Joe who sits on Gail’s lap turns back and looks for other books. "Baby," says Joe. Gail suggests Joe wait until finishing the first book.

Then, Gail reads the second book, Baby’s First Year. Joe says "balloon" out loud when he sees the picture of a birthday balloon. At that moment, Kent comes to join them. "Kent likes to look at the birthday cake." says Gail. She shows it to Kent.

Joe gets up from Gail’s lap and says "balloon" repeatedly. Gail goes to the high bookshelf and picks Richard Scarry’s big book for him. After turning to the balloon page, Gail makes the following
Part vs. Whole. Infants' responses to their favorite books were likely to focus on certain parts rather than the whole book. Joe’s favorite part of Richard Scarry’s big book was the balloon page. The way he responded to What Goes with This? was acting out bits of stories - blowing out the candles repeatedly. Peter’s fascination with Baby’s First Year was also on the dog in the illustrations rather than the whole content. The following episode provided another vivid example of how an infant actively initiated being read to his favorite part of the book, over and over again. It also revealed how an infant showed a favorite page of the book by searching for it, and by holding the book open at a certain page, as if the part was understood or particularly appreciated.

"Yeah, that’s right." Polly is laughing and clapping her hands. Kent kneels down to look at the picture which faces him. At the time, Polly listens to Gail and responds to her talk. Kent stands up, then kneels down again. He points at the picture of the birthday cake.
"Birthday cake," Polly sings the birthday song to Kent again. Then, Kent points at the upper part of the picture.
"That’s birthday presents," says Polly. Then, Kent points at the birthday cake.
"That’s a cake. Blow the candles out." Polly pretends blowing the candles. She holds the picture toward Kent for a few seconds. Then Polly turns it back to the first page and says "Here is a cup." Suddenly, Kent turns to the page of birthday cake.
"Here is the birthday cake. Where is the present?" asks Polly. Kent starts searching for the page. He leans forward to look at the picture.
"Where is the present? Where is the present?" "You turn the pages. There is the present." Polly helps Kent find the page.
"Ba, Ba,"
"Present."
"Ba, Ba."
"Boxes of presents."
Kent looks at the page intently. Then, he turns his attention to the bells near him. Polly puts down the book as if Kent is done with it. But she holds up the book again when Kent turns back.
"Happy birthday to you, happy birthday to you, happy birthday dear Kent, happy birthday to you, to you, to you, to you. Happy birthday to you..." Polly sings the song to Kent and points at him. Then, Kent points at the picture of birthday cake. "Yes, it's a birthday cake. It says 'Happy Birthday'." Polly points at the written words on the cake.
"Ba."
"Birthday cake." Polly points at the picture.
"Ba."
"Boxes. Birthday present." Polly points at the picture.
"Do you want to blow the candle, Kent?"
Kent takes over the book. He looks and points at the picture, "Ba, Ba."
Polly who is talking with Gail, turns a few pages back to the front of the book. Then she closes the book. Kent sits there and plays with another toy. (3/29)

Summary

In this chapter, infants' responses to books were investigated. The results indicated that the infants were able to respond to books through facial expression, body movement, and verbal response. They were active in initiating book reading, and were able to show their book preferences. They tended to look for familiar objects and details in illustrations rather than pay attention to the whole book. For some infants, book reading events were no longer solely controlled by the teachers but became joint teacher-infants participation and gradually controlled by the infants. After being exposed to book reading events, these infants gradually developed positive attitudes and skills regarding reading.
The role of the books in the Infant Center has been discussed in terms of their genres, the physical material aspects of books, their sources, and how they were incorporated into the physical environment. The book collection covered diverse genres, but all the genres were not equally used by the teachers. Identification books, concept books, books about children's common experiences, and participation books were more commonly used by the teachers than picture storybooks and Mother Goose. The physical materials of those books were of different varieties, including cloth books, soft vinyl books, cardboard books, and books with hardcover and paper pages. Among them, cardboard books and soft vinyl books were suitable to display in the setting for infants to reach, in terms of durability. Books were part of the setting and incorporated into the physical environment on a daily basis. They were accessible and reachable to the teachers and the infants.

The role of the teachers was also explored regarding the context of book reading, and how the teachers supported and constrained infants' responses to books. The results showed that teachers initiated book reading activities under a variety of circumstances. In addition to infants' requests, teachers also employed book reading to hold infants' attention, to prepare them for their naps, and to provide emotional comfort for a crying child. Meanwhile, book reading activity was also perceived by the teachers as a fun activity to do with infants. Teachers supported infants in various ways. They respected infants' will to be read to or not, and they accepted infants' choice of books. In the process of book reading, through scaffolding and language extension, they provided a framework to allow infants to be involved in reciprocal interchange. Different teachers'
reading style also allow infants to experience literature differently. In contrast to teachers’ support of infants’ response to books, there were also constraints, which resulted from teachers’ responsibility to supervise other infants, and teachers’ lack of understanding of infants other than the ones each was primarily in charge of.
CHAPTER V

THE RESULTS OF PARENT AND TEACHER INTERVIEWS

Parent Interviews

The formal interviews took place at the end of the study and lasted for a period of forty minutes to one hour for each parent. In all cases, only one parent was interviewed for each family, except both in the cases of the Joe’s and Kent’s parents.

Background of the Parents

Interviews of the parents under study indicated that there were similarities and differences in terms of their backgrounds. The twelve parents (9 mothers and 3 fathers) interviewed came from various racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds, but were all associated with the University in somewhat different ways. Among them, two were faculty members, and one was a visiting scholar in the University. One parent was a staff member in administration, whose husband’s parents had retired from the University. One parent was a full time mother whose husband was pursuing a doctorate degree. Among the other parents five were pursuing doctorate degrees, and two were getting Bachelor’s degrees.

Joe’s Mother - Donna. Joe’s parents Donna and John were interviewed separately. Based on their convenience, Donna was interviewed in her office on the
campus of the University and John was interviewed in the observation booth of the Infant Center one hour before he picked up Joe. Donna and John used to live in a town about two hours drive from the University. John worked in a small town near the University community. John wanted to move back to the University community where he grew up, so Donna began looking for jobs in the area. Finally, she located a job in the University in August of 1990. Joe was about ten months old at the time.

Joe's Father - John. John is the youngest of five boys in his family. Both his parents worked in the University and retired in 1990. John worked in a nearby town as a police officer on the night shift, from 11:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. Because Donna went to work at eight o'clock in the morning, John took Joe to the Infant Center. During the same semester, John also took two classes in Criminology on Tuesday and Thursday mornings. In order to help John concentrate on course work, John's mother was in charge of picking up Joe from the Infant Center on those two days.

Kent's Parents - Yen and Shih. Yen and Shih both came from Taiwan. They have studied at the University since 1984. Kent's mother Yen was a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Communication Disorders, concentration in Audiology. Kent's father was a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Electrical Engineering.

Peter's Mother - Cathy. Cathy had been a faculty member in the Marketing Department of the University since 1982. She and her husband were married about eight years before they had Peter. Although Cathy was busy with teaching, she tried to arrange her schedule so she could spend as much time as possible with Peter. In the afternoons, Cathy sometimes took Peter to a few meetings while he was napping. Before
Peter enrolled in the Infant Center, Cathy had heard a lot of good things about the program. She also visited a few child-care centers and family day care settings and felt that they did not have the same quality as the Infant Center regarding equipment, toys, activities, and individualized attention of the caregivers.

Andrew’s Mother - Anita. During the period of the study, Andrew’s parents were both doctoral students in the department of Chemistry in the University. They came from Puerto Rico and had been in the United States for five years, and both spoke English fluently. During the interview Andrew’s mother, Anita, pointed out that because her sister’s child has been in the Infant Center in the previous year, she had the opportunity to know how the center worked.

Kelly’s Mother - Barbara. Barbara was born and raised in Washington D. C. She met her husband in 1973 and was married in 1980. Ten years later, they had Kelly. She accompanied her husband to the University to pursue his Ph.D degree. They had lived in the University town since 1980.

Eric’s Father - Bill. Bill was forty years old and was born in Israel. During the study, he was a visiting research scholar from Israel, a specialist in Food Science and Food Engineering. His wife was a physical therapist working in the University’s Health Center. They had two children, a three year old daughter and a thirteen month old son - Eric.

Karen’s Mother - Julia. Karen’s mother, Julia, was born in Hungary, where she finished high school and three years of college. She dropped out of college to pursue her career in music. She started as a singer and travelled around the country. When Julia
was thirty years old, she decided to leave Hungary and see the outside world. She went to Paris and met her husband, who was also a musician. They were married and had a son there in 1983. They came to the United States, the University area, where her husband grew up. Julia continued her study in music education in the University and was expected to graduate in the semester this study was conducted. Julia and her husband were both practicing musicians. At the time of the study, Julia had a part-time job, teaching a children's music class in a nearby city.

Nancy's Mother - Malinda. Malinda was born and grew up in Japan. In her first seven years, her family lived on a small island in Japan. Her father, who is an American, was a missionary there. They were the only foreigners. The house they lived in was also used as a church. Malinda's parents adopted two Japanese girls who were much older than Malinda. Then, her family moved to a bigger city - Kobe. In the third grade, Malinda transferred to a Canadian school. She graduated from high school in Japan. In between, she lived in Paris for one year, spent one year in Berkeley, California, and two years in Michigan. Two years later, her father got a Ph.D. in Linguistics and went to teach in a school in Tokyo. Malinda began to learn English when she was in third grade. Her parents always spoke to her in English, but she spoke Japanese all the time. Malinda was a doctoral student in the University when this study was conducted.

Lucy's Mother - Sophia. Sophia was a faculty member in the Psychology Department at the University. Lucy was her first child although she had a twelve year old stepson. Sophia came from Chicago. Her father is also a professor. Sophia recalled
that she also went to a laboratory school herself from nursery school to high school, and had a pleasant experience.

**Karl's Father - Dennis.** Dennis grew up in New Jersey. He went to Syracuse University in 1980, majoring in Anthropology and Religion. Dennis met his wife Kim in 1983 and was married in 1985. Kim graduated from the University where this study was conducted, in 1984. She began medical school in 1988. Dennis continued to work on his second Bachelor's degree in Engineering in the University. Even though both were students at the time, they decided that no time is the best time to have a baby. They tried hard to work it out. During the day, Kim went to school at 6:30 in the morning until 6:30 at night. Therefore, day-care arranging, feeding, and shopping were mainly taken care of by Dennis.

Parents Perceived Day-Care Setting as a Social and Learning Environment for Infants

All the parents regarded the Infant Center as a caring, loving environment where teachers were able to pay attention to their child's needs. Most parents held the same expectations for the Infant Center. Eleven out of twelve parents emphasized the importance for their child to be around children at their age. They perceived the Infant Center as a social environment for their child to interact with other children.

--- "Joe has a lot of attention from uncles, grandparents, but he doesn't have a lot of interaction with children. The most important thing for Joe in the Infant Center is to interact with other children. Communication with other people is one of the most important thing, as far as I am concerned. You have to communicate with people in order to do anything." (John)
"I expect Peter to learn how to socialize with other children in the Infant Center. I think he really has. For the most part, he is outgoing, and very friendly. He just seems very self-assured and confident. That is a real plus." (Cathy)

"In my mind, exposing Nancy to many different things is culturally beneficial to the child. My main purpose in enrolling Nancy in the Infant Center was to allow her to be around other children and to learn to interact and play with other children of her own age. It is important that Nancy feel comfortable with other babies." (Malinda)

"I think perhaps that as a second child, going to school early is good for Karen. She can't learn social skills, such as how to get along with other kids, how to share and to take turns, how not to pull someone's hair from me." (Julia)

"A lot of people would rather leave their children in a family day care type environment. That's fine if you know the family very closely. But I was uncomfortable with that and I didn't know a family intimately. So I preferred to put Joe in a more structured kind of day care environment. The first time I walked in the Infant Center, it was very peaceful and happy. The infants were content. It sounds weird, but it struck me. I think today a lot of parents put a lot of emphasis on their children having to learn while they are in day care. I didn't. That's nice if it happens. But it's not priority with me. When Joe is in day care, I want him at least at his age to have fun, to be around children." (Donna)

"The infant center is a secure environment where the teachers pay full attention to the infants. It is totally different from family day care where the caregiver usually is a housewife who can only pay partial attention to the child and do her own chores at the same time. We expect Kent to learn to get along with other children his age, and also learn to be independent, from his day-care experience". (Yen and Shih)

The two youngest infants' parents, Dennis and Sophia, also pointed out the importance of the social aspect of day-care experience. They both emphasized other aspects as first priority for their child.
"In a daycare setting, the important experiences for Karl are that he is well cared for, his needs met, and attention given when he is tired, when he is hungry, when he needs to be changed. It is also important for Karl to learn to be with other children, not only adults. Humans are social animals; they learn to deal with other people on a daily basis." (Dennis)

"It is important for Lucy at this age to feel secure with me. It is also important for Lucy to have good relationships with other family members - father, stepbrother, and the cat. Lucy is likely to be my only child; therefore it is especially important for her to be with other children to learn to cooperate, and be with other people. I think it's important to have a variety of stimulation, so I try to balance home, my office, and the Infant Center, to allow Lucy to experience different places and different people." (Sophia)

Two out of the twelve parents perceived the Infant Center as an environment for their child to speed up motor skills and language development.

"It is important for Kelly to be around other children at her age. Because Kelly is an only child, if she does not have peer experience, she might have a hard time making the adjustment when she starts school. Children learn better with other children. I think Kelly, who is a late crawler and a late walker, would crawl sooner in the day care environment." (Barbara)

"I would like Eric to have more experience developing his motor abilities, such as walking, running, and climbing. On the other hand, I would like Eric to begin talking. I know that it is a little bit more difficult for Eric because we speak Hebrew instead of English at home." (Bill)

The parents perceived the Infant Center as a social and learning environment not only for their child but also for themselves. Particularly, for some first time parents, teachers and other parents became important information sources on parenting skills and choosing children’s books.
"Some of the things we assume happen naturally, like the climbing, the attention to certain toys. I think they nurture a lot back here. Even the simple things like sitting around the snack table, learning to pick up cups and eat with their fingers, and to be part of the social group. Being a first time parent, I was able to learn a lot, by just interacting with the teachers, with the other parents and children." (Cathy)

"I learn a lot of things from Gail, Debbie, Polly, and other parents. One of the things I learned was the idea to keep environment simple, and not cluttered... What I learned from other parents is that you can give your child this young a book. It would have never occurred to me." (Sophia)

Parents Introduced Books to Infants at an Early Age

The parent interviews indicated that all the parents exposed their children to books at a very early age. In many parents’ minds, ideally, books should be introduced to infants right after birth. One parent pointed out that no age is too young to be read to. In reality, parents did not read to their child until the child was able to sit or have control of their necks.

"It is never too early to read to a child. Joe was read to at about three to four months of age. I did not expect Joe to learn things from stories, but just that communicating with the child would be beneficial. I used to sing a couple of songs to Joe, and they were very effective in calming him down when he was little. Based on my own experience, I think reading to my wife’s belly would be very beneficial and that is something I would do. There is a friend of mine having a baby, and I suggested that he sing and tell stories to his wife’s belly. I told him that if he doesn’t have time and feels silly, he can just tape-record and put the ear-phone on his wife’s belly. I do really think it makes a difference." (John)

"I started reading to Kelly by the time when she could sit up, between five and six months." (Barbara)
"I started to share books with Andrew probably when he was five months old. When he was able to sit on my lap, I showed him books. I wasn’t reading to him, just showing pictures, talking and making stories. I talk to him in Spanish. Because I want him to learn Spanish from me. What I do, I translate the books for him. I show him the pictures and explain the pictures to him." (Anita)

"Peter started looking at books when he was four months old. I made a mistake at first, buying books that had paper pages. Because Peter grasped and tore them at that time, I soon realized that it was not going to work. Then, I bought the cardboard books, Peter really liked them and tried to turn the pages. Even at a very young age, Peter looked at the pictures and stared at them attentively." (Cathy)

Parents also introduced children’s books to their child in different ways. They tended to start with soft vinyl books to allow their child to chew on, or to play with in the tub. Some parents mixed in books with other toys, so their child could choose a book from the selection of toys and become familiar with the physical appearance of books.

"My husband and I allowed Nancy to play with magazines from the time she was three months old. We started buying books for Nancy when she was about five months old. Nancy became more interested in books at about eight and a half to nine months old. When she was nine and a half months old, I bought a series of Dr. Seuss’s books for her. I began to read them to Nancy at night as a part of bed-time routine. After I did that for two nights, then the next day she began to read them saying "bla-bla-bla." I noticed she used the same smiles and intonation that I would use for similar things. Since Nancy was nine and half to ten months old, book reading has been the activity she likes most. Nancy likes to sit and turn the pages." (Malinda)

"I bought Joe books right away, the little plastic books you take into tub. I actually didn’t start reading and sitting with him in my lap. It was at the point he could pretty much sit and pay attention that we started reading to him." (Donna)
"We bought Kent his first book when he was between five and six months old. It was a plastic book with a mirror-like thing in it. The purpose for buying the book was because it allows Kent to chew on it. In addition, it has a toy-like function; Kent could look at the mirror in the book." (Yen and Shih)

"We bought him books that are soft and can be used in the bath tub a few months ago. I just made it part of his selection of toys, so, the physical appearance of books was familiar to him long before he understood what it was." (Dennis)

Most parents reported that they would like their child to have a bed-time story routine when the child became older. According to Barbara, it was hard to nurse the child (or to provide the bottle) and share books at the same time. Some parents have adopted the bed-time story routine in a very flexible way. They sometimes initiated book reading activity after the child took a bath or before the child’s bed time. Two of the ten infants who had older siblings had bedtime story routine, because when their older siblings were read to before bed time, they were included in the activity naturally.

"I don’t know exactly when I started reading to Eric, but what I remember is he was listening to stories we were reading to my daughter... I think without knowing the exact time for this case, I would say a child should be read to from a very early age. If he can concentrate from one second to five seconds, from a few seconds to one minute, it’s time to show him books." (Bill)

"It was my son who started to read to Karen. He just loves to do that. Karen pays attention but she doesn’t show anything or say anything. When I read to my son in the evening or we read together, she lies down and looks at the pages. So I just do things because I have to put both in bed. I don’t have a concept that it should be like this or like that. I pretty much go along. I bought books for Karen when she was five months old. I was told by Karen’s teacher that Karen enjoyed being read to and had a preference for a specific book, I bought that book for Karen." (Julia)
Motivations for Exposing Infants to Books Varied

The interviews showed that parents’ ideas of sharing books with their infants had different origins. Some parents read to their infants because they had received suggestions from relatives, doctors, friends, and books.

--- "Well, I learned it from my sister. I saw how interested her daughter was in books. They have books here and there, all over the place. Then I got the idea. If nobody told me, I would have said "Oh, books are for older kids." (Anita)

--- "The book I read said "You should read to your child." Then I spoke with my mother, she said "Read to him." And my mother-in-law also said 'Read to him.' I was getting clear messages 'This is an important thing that I need to do.' And in the doctor’s office, they would say "talk to him, read to him, sing to him." From all, this definitely has been emphasized by many resources as far as I am concerned. So I read to him as much as he can tolerate." (Donna)

--- "People kept telling me studies show that a baby can actually hear from the womb. Therefore, I should be reading to her. I accepted the suggestion. I was reading a lot of books about what to expect when a baby comes. Sometimes I would read aloud so that unborn Kelly would remember some of those books. That was how I started reading to Kelly. I read to Kelly regularly when she was five and half months old." (Barbara)

Two of the parents were mainly inspired by talking with another parent and by observing how teachers shared books with infants, and discovered that infants actually enjoy book reading.

--- "It was actually Peter’s mom Cathy, told me that Peter was looking at books. I was surprised; I said "Oh, that’s a good idea." I also picked up from another primary caregiver Gail the idea that
babies like books with pictures of babies and animals. So I went and bought books for Lucy." (Sophia)

"My idea of reading to Kent mainly comes from observing the daily activities in the Infant Center. Otherwise, it would never have occurred to me. From witnessing infants' responses to book reading, I said to myself 'Why not?'" (Yen)

For some parents, reading to their infants seemed to be a natural thing to do, without any reason. One of the parents indicated that it originated from using books as visual stimulation to hold the attention of her fussy, bored child.

"For me, the idea of sharing books with children comes naturally. I love books; everybody in my family is also in love with books. Therefore, it is a natural thing to do." (Bill)

"The idea of sharing books with Peter began as a way of calming him when he was fussy. Peter was very fussy in the beginning. There was very little time that he was happy. During that period of time what seemed to calm him most was looking at things. My husband and I found that giving Peter something to look at, like a bee rattle, seemed to get his attention, help calm him and occupy him. When he was fussy, he would watch the rattle intently for a long period of time. This would stop him from fussing. Even though Peter was born in the winter time, we tried to take him outside occasionally, but that did not seem appealing to him. Other than shaking a rattle, there were not too many activities that could attract Peter's attention. I was also concerned that Peter might hit his own head when he shook the rattle. Therefore, we came up with the idea of replacing the rattle with books. The response from Peter was great. It also became his favorite activity in the car. When Peter was not sleeping, providing him with books was the best way to keep his attention and keep his interest in something while passing the time." (Cathy)
Parents' Belief: Reading to Children is Beneficial

Book Reading Serves Many Goals/Purposes for Parents. Books were treated by some parents as a way of calming the child. For others, they were used as a means of providing visual stimulation. Children's books were also employed by parents as a means of expanding their child's experience, to foster language development, to convey information, to teach good behavior, and to promote emotional development.

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"I believe that book reading is one way for a child to learn language and communication skills. When a child points out things in books, he can translate that information to an object. For example, when he sees a cat, he starts to understand what a cat is. When he points to a cat and says "cat", he relates the object to what he sees in the book. He is able to make the connection." (Cathy)

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It's never too soon for children to learn what a book looks like, and what happen when an adult sits down with them with a book. That's an important experience to have. I think there is a difference in speech pattern. Whether I am speaking to Karl, or singing to him, or cooing at him, or reading to him, there are quality differences. It's important for him to hear all the different types of voice patterns... Books as an occupant of time, as a learning tool, as a form of pleasure, reading is not as highly valued as it used to be. I wish it were." (Dennis)

Reading to Children Promotes Successful Schooling. The interviews indicated that parents believe cultivating children's interest in books would be beneficial for children's schooling and learning to read and write. Those parents who had painful experiences regarding reading during schooling or even in their adulthood made conscious efforts to provide their child a book-rich environment. They tried very hard
to make book reading a positive and enjoyable experience for their child. They also made an effort to have book reading a pleasurable activity without forcing it on the child.

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"I believe that reading to children is beneficial for the child. You read to him and then he goes back he remembers everything. So, yeah, it must be good for him. I think it’s like the first step. I am getting him interested in books. I think he will like it later. He is going to be able to read by himself. I hope he likes school."
(Anita)

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"New mothers and grandmothers should read to children. As far as I know, my mother-in-law did not read very often to her children when they were little, but she has seen her grandchildren read to frequently and feels that it is good for the children. When her grandchildren went to school, they began to do well in reading. My mother-in-law attributes this success to their mother having read to them. I tend to agree with this."
(Donna)

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"Books open you up to worlds that you would never otherwise experience. Even as an infant, she can have experiences she couldn’t have otherwise, in the pictures of animals, and variety of babies she might not have seen... And also it might have side effects. It increases your vocabulary, and the more you read, makes people better speakers and writers."
(Sophia)

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Reading to children not only engages them in the excitement and fun in reading, but also prepares them for schooling in terms of knowing what things are. When I was growing up, I was never really read to as a child. I never like to read when I was in school. That was my biggest problem. Because I hated to read too much so that I did poorly in school. I want her to be completely opposite. I want her to love to read, to the point that she will do well in school."
(Barbara)

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"I was never much into reading when I was a child. I never liked school or liked to read. I want to make reading fun and enjoyable for Joe, so that he wants to do it."
(John)
Book Reading Brings Closer Relationship between Parents and the Child. Some parents indicated that book reading activities promoted a closer relationship between them and their child. In addition, it provided an enjoyable experience not only for the child but also for the parents.

"Reading to children is important not just for educational purposes; it is also a nice time for me and Joe. We get to sit in the couch. We are together. We cuddle a lot. It's a nice intimate time. Maybe if I didn't read him books, it wouldn't happen at all." (Donna)

"Being read to is definitely beneficial to a child. It is soothing. I wondered whether it is the book that is responsible or whether it is the close interaction that has a calming effect on the child. Joe would not sit on the couch next to me or give me a hug and snuggle up to me for a long time. Sometimes, he sits down patiently for a length of time when he eats, but even that is not for a long period of time. The only time he would sit quietly next to me is when I was reading. Joe enjoyed being read to. It has to be beneficial to a child; at least it cannot hurt." (John)

"Book reading brings Peter and his father into a closer relationship. Sometimes, Ben (Cathy's husband) will read with Peter right after he has his bottle, while I am getting ready. The two of them are beginning to develop a better relationship in that way. Ben really likes it when Peter sits down on his lap or brings him a book. Now, Peter is beginning to appreciate their relationship." (Cathy)

Reading to Children Prepares Them to be Life-Long Readers. The viewpoint of Malinda, Nancy's mother, on the value of book reading went beyond the cognitive aspect. She saw it as a way to help the child become a life-long reader.

"I prefer my child perceive reading as a natural thing that can give her peace rather than be scared off. I don't only value reading because I am an intellectual. I want her to be very smart. That's not even the main
reason why I think it's good for her. I think the best gift of reading is that it's something she can do independently and peacefully. It's like giving her breast milk; it's something she can take with her throughout her life. I think that's the most important thing." (Malinda)

Parents as Gate-Keepers Regarding Book Choices

Content and Illustration as Guidelines. On the issue of choosing books for infants, there were some general beliefs among these parents. The majority of parents believed that the content of the books should be related to infants’ daily life experiences, such as books about babies, animals, and vehicles, because these books make sense to the child. In addition to following what their child likes as a guideline for book choice, parents also put what they want their child to learn in mind.

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"I try to think what he is interested in, because I want him to like it, to be interested in, to learn something from it. What is most important for me is the content of the book. Pictures are also important. I prefer the pictures to look real, even if it is a drawing. In addition, the story needs to make some sense so that Andrew can learn something from the story." (Anita)

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"Kelly likes books that have to do with Sesame Street. She likes all the characters, big pictures and bright colors. She watches the Sesame Street television program in the morning before I bring her to the Infant Center. In the evening, the first half an hour she watches very intensively. She'll point to it and smile. When we go to store, she picks them right out. They are bright and colorful."

"Kelly's book collection at this point is about twenty books. When I do grocery shopping, I always buy books for Kelly. In my mind, books with Disney characters, like Mickey Mouse, are dumb. When I choose books for Kelly, I look for bright colors. I look for things that will help her. I like alphabet books. I try to get things that will help her." (Barbara)
"Books for Joe’s age tend to have a repetitive type of content. If children hear the same thing over and over again, it not only helps them remember but also associate those things with daily life experiences much more quickly. They should be bright, colorful, and have lots of recognizable simple objects. In addition, simple objects should be spaced and separated enough, so children can pick things out, and also be large enough so children can see them and recognize the objects.

I don’t believe that books with a storyline play much of a role at the stage, because Joe is still not able to comprehend a story. Even though we have many storybooks, we do not try to push him. Joe is generally the one who initiates book reading. Joe picks out the books to be read to, not Donna or me. When Joe gets to the point he could comprehend, I would like to begin to work with him on the alphabet and letters. I hope to make it like a game, so Joe will have fun and want to do it himself." (John)

"It is important to begin with soft or small size books, so that the child can hold them easily, and manipulate the pages. Eric enjoys being read to, especially books with big pictures of animals. Books for very young children should have big pictures, such as one animal per page. It is also important for a child at Eric’s age to learn the names of animals and the alphabet. Thus, my wife and I first looked for books with big pictures and bright colors, which had some educational value or could contribute additional knowledge. When Eric became a one year old, we started looking for books with more text on the pages so that Eric could get more information." (Bill)

"The first thing they pay attention to is the content of the book. The content should make sense to Karl, like things Karl sees in his daily life. It does not make much sense to introduce things he does not see into his vocabulary, because it would be hard for him to associate with them. Babies like to look at babies and associate with them. Because Karl rides in the car and sees buses go by every day in the Infant Center, he has a book with buses, trucks, and cars. Some of his books contain nursery rhymes and simple stories with pictures and colors. As long as the story is well illustrated, I do not oppose it." (Dennis)

"I like Nancy to know more about animals. Thus, I bought many books about cats, dogs, farm animals, and insects. I also have a lot of Japanese children’s books on insects. Even though I have
a couple of boring books about animals, instead of reading the text, I make something up about it." (Malinda)

Most parents emphasized that books for younger infants should have only one simple object on each page. However, only one parent held the opposite viewpoint. She perceived that kind of book as boring. She believed that as the person who read to her child, if she felt bored it must be boring to her child as well.

Parents also emphasized that the illustrations of the books should be big, bold, colorful, and look realistic. Other criteria included holding the child’s attention and having entertainment value.

--- "In my mind, books for infants at Lucy’s age are pictures of babies and animals. Photographs seem to work the best. One of Lucy’s books is about toddler activities, like pushing a rocking horse, climbing, and picking flowers. They are photographs. But because the pictures are more complicated, Lucy does not look at it often. Some of Lucy’s favorite books are Golden Books of pictures of animals, although those pictures are not photographs. Because they are paper pages instead of cardboard pages, I try to keep her from ripping them." (Sophia)

--- "At this point I would consider pictures first when I choose books for Kent. (Shih)

--- "Kent would be more interested in colorful pictures related to his daily life experiences. Books not only help infants relate to, but also go beyond their experiences. For example, infants have rare opportunities to see lions and tigers, but they are able to recognize them through books." (Yen)

--- "What is important in any book that parents buy is whether it is going to hold a child’s attention. Even though Goodnight Moon proved me wrong, I still believe it is important to have big, sort of bold colorful pictures, and a shorter story line to hold the child’s attention. When Joe was younger his favorite books were two books with pictures of babies. When he became older, his
tastes began to change. For awhile, Joe especially liked Goodnight Moon, which I received from the Book Club. Now, he likes Dr. Seuss’s Green Eggs and Ham. At first Joe would sit through two pages, then get up and look for another book. Joe reached the point that my husband John and I can keep his attention almost half way through the book. What works for Joe at this age might not work for somebody else. It is crucial for parents to recognize their children as individuals." (Donna)

"In the beginning I was looking for cardboard books that have objects with bright pictures. Peter liked to be able to identify objects and animals. Thus, those kinds of books seem to hold his attention. Now, I try to buy different kinds of books, that have different kinds of entertainment value. I bought an electronic book which has many bright pictures and ten different matching sounds, such as airplanes. Peter likes it very much because he is getting to the point where he is beginning to put words together. For that reason I plan to buy books with a simple storyline." (Cathy)

Parents’ Book Choices were Affected by Their Beliefs. There were two children’s books mentioned by different parents who held opposite viewpoints about the books. Karen’s mother Julia considered that The Little Engine that Could was beyond her daughter’s comprehension. Therefore, she would not offer Karen the book. By contrast, Kelly’s mother Barbara believed that the book could be used to teach Kelly its theme "I think I can, I think I can."

"Books with one or two things on the page to look at and name are the books that I think are appropriate for children at Karen’s age. In addition, based on my parenting experience with my first child, books that have activities, like touching, looking through, putting fingers through, or doing something with the pages, are also appropriate for children at this age. Karen was not ready for books like The Little Engine that Could. Instead, Karen was ready for little books which have one sentence on each page to focus on." (Julia)

"In terms of content, I prefer books to be either entertaining or contain a little bit of content that would make Kelly think. For
example, the theme of *The Little Engine that Could* "I think I can, I think I can." I also ordered a set of books which explain why parents tell children they should not be fussy, or be tattle tales." (Barbara)

Another two parents raised completely different viewpoints toward Dr. Seuss’s books. Nancy’s mother Malinda viewed Nancy as an extension of herself. She believed that because she enjoyed reading Dr. Seuss’s books, Nancy would also enjoy listening to the intonation and rhyme of the books. However, Karl’s father Dennis considered Dr. Seuss’s books not suitable for infants, even though Dr. Seuss’s books were fun and creative.

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"I love Dr. Seuss’s books. I think he is a genius; his ideology is very nice. He has books about all the things you can think of. It’s good for children’s imagination. I think Dr. Seuss’s books also sound nice. They sound funny when you read them. A lot of American books for babies are boring, like "This is a dog," "This is a cat." I am not interested when I read them. She must be not interested when she listens to me reading it. Dr. Seuss’s books I can read aloud to her many times."

In addition to content, the way the drawings are made is important to me. Take Dr. Seuss’s *The Cat in the Hat* as an example; the illustrations are all blue; it is a little bit boring in that regard. I like some of Dr. Seuss’s other drawings in terms of colors, creativity, and story line. One of the books I love is called *Cat Wings*. It is about a city cat who has kittens. They were all born with wings. The city cat thinks that it is a blessing for kittens to have wings, because she does not want them to live in the city. But at the same time she is sad, because she knows that eventually they will leave her. And they do. They go to the country. It’s sort of like the American dream. You want your children to have a better life. That’s a very neat story and also very creative." (Malinda)

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"I remember when I was between five and seven years old, I began to learn to read and had my own books. I spent a lot of
time on my own when I was sick at home, or at night. During those periods, I would read a lot of Dr. Seuss's books. I enjoyed Dr. Seuss's books tremendously. Dr. Seuss's books are positive and fun, and the drawings are very creative and stimulating. Dr. Seuss's books are not necessary suitable for infants. Dr. Seuss's books have fantastic characters, animals, and machines with bizarre shapes and sizes. I don't think children understand the differences. At Karl's age, it's just a general experience of being able to turn the pages, see pictures of smiling faces." (Dennis)

Parents Looked for Gender Stereotype-Free Books. Two parents mentioned that absence of gender stereotypes was considered by them an important element.

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"As a parent, I cannot force something on a child. Therefore, my criteria for choosing children's books is a combination of what Joe is going to like, what he is going to pay attention to, and what I want him to learn. I would not buy books like Cinderella and Sleeping Beauty for Joe. I would not buy a book with a theme of a man rescuing a woman, regardless of the title. I prefer more male-female equality, more realistic books. As a woman growing up, all my perspective of course is a woman, it must put a lot of pressure on a man to think that he has to save somebody." (Donna)

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"We bought a Grimm fairy tale Haensel and Gretel with photographic illustrations for twenty-five cents. When I read it to Kent, I was not comfortable with the role of the stepmother and the gender stereotypes - Haensel is a boy who needs to be brave, Gretel is a girl who needs to be protected. Meanwhile, in the course of reading, Kent seemed to have a hard time sitting patiently. The reason we bought the book was not only because of the price, but also because it is a famous fairy tale. In addition, the photographs are attractive. Shih perceived the book as "an unhealthy book." We have made up our mind that we would not offer Grimm's fairy tales to Kent until he becomes older and is able to comprehend the content." (Yen)

Parents Preferred Cardboard Books to Paperback Books for Infants. The interviews revealed that most parents seemed to view paperback books as taboo for
infants, especially for young infants. They were cautious about providing their infant with paperback books. Malinda, Nancy's mother, was the only parent who exposed her child to paperback books. She pointed out that she trusted her child. She believed that Nancy was aware that ripping off pages was not appropriate. Yen, Kent's mother, looked at the issue from another perspective; she believed that the reason her son ripped off book pages was because he did not know how to handle them. Through experience, her son became familiar with the mechanical aspects of books. The problem of tearing pages seemed to disappear.

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I do have some typical storybooks that are paperbacks. I don't let her hold them yet; we'll wait for those. I also prefer them to be hardbound, because they are more durable and last longer and can be passed down to Kelly's siblings and perhaps to the next generation. (Barbara)

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"At this point I would not myself buy Lucy books with paper pages. One of Lucy's favorite books is Pat the Bunny. Lucy likes to turn the pages and do the things. Because of overuse it has been torn and fell apart, needs to be fixed. I was given six copies of Goodnight Moon. I tried several times reading it to Lucy. Lucy seems not interested when I read all the words on the pages. She turns the pages and gets impatient. Maybe Lucy is too young for the book, and also that the pictures are not clear enough for her; therefore, she gets bored. (Sophia)

The Sources of the Infants' Book Collections at Home Varied

Parent interviews showed that the books they read to their child came from various sources. In addition to buying books from bookstore, supermarket, and book club, relatives and hospital were also main sources for their books. Some of them also received children's books as gifts.
Relatives as Book Source. Anita stated that the source of Andrew’s books was her sister, whose child lost interest in those books. Among those ten to fifteen books, only one was in Spanish. The content of those books ranges from books with simple objects like animals or an airplane, with one simple picture and one word on each page, to books with big pictures with objects that a child could identify with and relate to daily life experiences.

Book Club Membership as Book Source. According to Donna, after Joe was born, she joined a children’s book club for awhile and received three books each month. Eventually, she terminated the membership because the quality of books varied. She would rather choose them herself. After that she began to buy about one book a week. Every time she went grocery shopping she would buy a book. During a period when Joe was just interested in a specific book, she decided to stop buying for a while.

Older Sibling’s Book Collection as Infants’ Book Source. The content of Eric’s books ranges from animals, to colors, to counting, and to the alphabet. Besides having his own books, another book source was his sister’s book collection. Eric was allowed to take books from his sister’s collection. According to Bill, the total number of their books was perhaps more than one hundred. Among those books, the majority were in English. Children’s books in Hebrew were received from Bill’s parents and brothers. In order to help the children learn both English and Hebrew at a very early age, Bill and his wife consciously chose to read books in both languages.
Local Hospital as Book Source. Another source of Kent's books was the Health Center in the University. According to Yen, there were many free, brand new children's books available to parents in the pediatric clinic.

Parents' Belief: Infants are Able to Respond to Books

Ten out of the twelve parents believed that infants are capable of responding to book reading. From observing their child's responses to book reading, parents perceived infants' facial expressions, like smiling and laughing, as recognition of, and interest in the books. They also viewed infants' looking, pointing at pictures, turning pages, keeping going back to the same page, listening to book reading patiently, and verbal reactions as responses.

"She smiles at babies. She smiles at kittens and ducks. I think she likes and recognizes them. Maybe just her smiles as recognition and her interest. The fact that she would look at the books, and turn the pages a lot." (Sophia)

"Just the patience she has to let me finish the book means that she is responsive to me and book reading. She independently chooses the books and is able to entertain herself with books for a long time. And also she treats books like books. She doesn't treat them like toys. She is very careful to get every page, if she is interested in the book. I recall that once the whole family (Dick, Nancy, and I) were going on a trip. Nancy was in her car seat with her book, and Dick sat beside her with his book. They were both engaged in their books for about forty minutes. They both looked as if they were reading a wonderful thing. With those books she likes, like the ABC book, she often turns the pages for me. She will turn pages one after another, and will finish the book. If she doesn't like a book, like A Cat in a Hat, she will advance to the end of the book. It's clear she doesn't like it. I also found that Nancy would choose the same books constantly,
and spend quite a long time, up to 25 minutes, with the books she likes." (Malinda)

"Children at Kelly’s age are able to respond to book reading. For example, after having the same book read to her several times, Kelly points at things, such as a cow and goes "moo-moo-." Kelly does recognize pictures of things. If Kelly is in doubt, she will go back to the page, as if asking "What is that?" (Barbara)

"Peter enjoyed the book reading activities. Just turning the pages, that was a big thing for him. Now, he likes to identify objects in the books. As we’re going through the books, he’ll point out things that he knows. He also likes to look at the pictures in our photo album. He likes to turn those pages, which are sort of like the pages of a book. He identifies people in the pictures. So it’s a kind of discovery process." (Cathy)

"I believe that children at Joe’s age are capable of responding to books. Joe has a good time and laughs a lot in the course of book reading. He particularly liked the book called A Fly Went By. I could see Joe got excited and waited for a specific part of the book to be read aloud. When I read the text "a fly went by", Joe would look at me. After I said "Oh, dear!" and made a facial expression, he would just giggle. Joe behaved similarly with many books, such as Goodnight Moon..." (Donna)

Only two parents, Dennis (Karl’s father) and Julia (Karen’s mother) showed their uncertainty about whether their child’s reactions during book reading were response behaviors.

"Kim (Karl’s mother) and I cannot be sure if Karl is responding to the book itself or to the way we show the book. He certainly enjoys it and definitely has positive responses." (Dennis)

"She didn’t show any response yet to me. When I read the baby book which has one sentence on each page. "I am a baby" that’s how it starts. Then it goes "I suck my thumb." I go each time "Look at the baby sucking her thumb," she doesn’t respond to that. I said "Look at the baby eating, there is the spoon. She is eating." She doesn’t respond to that. She likes to look at it. She
pays attention to it. She doesn’t point at it, and she doesn’t try to say the words, the important words on the page, like "eat. If I put a book in front of her, she would go through it, turn the pages by herself, and look at them. Maybe those are responses." (Julia)

Parents Supported Infants’ Early Literacy Development in a Variety of Ways

Child First, Child-Centered. The results of parents interviews also suggested that parents supported the development of their child’s early literacy in various ways. They viewed their child as an individual and read their cues carefully. Parents put their child first; they followed the child’s will regarding book choices and duration of being read to without forcing it on them. When they were requested by the child to read the same book over and over again, they seemed not to complain about it.

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"Not every child gets interested in books. So you show books to the child, and try to get him interested. That way, you introduce books to a child. The way I read to Andrew changed over time. When Andrew was younger I said just about one word about each picture, but now I add more details. When I initiated book reading, I would let Andrew pick up the book. Andrew would pick up the same one every time." (Anita)

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"I try to use words I know she understands. I don’t read the words in the books because they are too long for her. She hasn’t got the patience. For those books with pictures of babies, I do not say much about them. Instead, I just turn the pages and look at the babies. With animal books, I mainly name the animals, and makes sounds for them. At this point, I say 'Where is the doggy?', 'Where is the kitty?', and have Lucy point it out." (Sophia)

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"In order to fully support Kelly to develop her love of reading, I have a cloth bag filled with books. When Kelly shows any sign of wanting to read, I drop whatever I was doing, sit down with Kelly and go through the book. We might sit there for half an hour. I
do not put all the books away again until Kelly gets bored and walks away." (Barbara)

**Books were Accessible to the Child.** Some parents provided a bookshelf for their child to store books. Therefore, children's books were easily accessible and reachable for them. As parents of younger infants, Barbara, Dennis and Sophia used special ways to allow their child gain access to books.

According to Barbara, the only time she initiates book reading is when Kelly is tired and there are no toys that can please her. Then, she sits down with Kelly and pulls books out of the cloth bag. Sometimes, if Kelly wants to look at the books herself, Barbara just sits there and watches. In order to show Kelly there is excitement and fun in reading, the way she does that is to read very loudly and with exaggerated diction to catch Kelly's interest, like "Oh, Mommy found a baby, look!" In that way, Kelly also become really excited.

Dennis and his wife bought Karl some books that are soft and can be used in the bath tub. Karl also had about a half dozen regular books for infants. Dennis mixed Karl's books with toys on the floor, so Karl was able to grab them when he wanted to. Dennis stated the following: "I just made it as part of his selection of toys. So, the physical appearance of the book is familiar to him long before he understands what it is. Most of them have to do with babies, what babies do, what toddlers do. Now we can sit down together and open a book. He can see that there are different pictures on the different pages. He recognizes what it is. He really enjoys being read to. Certain words that we use to describe each page really entertain him a lot."
According to Sophia, books were always available for Lucy. She had books out with toys; whenever Lucy wanted to play, a book was one more thing she could play with. Sometimes, Sophia tried to look at books with Lucy when she went to bed at night.

**Parents Acted as Role Models.** Some parents strongly believed that providing their child a good model is very important. They acted as role models in their daily life. They acted as readers; they showed reading as an enjoyment and searched for guidance from books. When they set the table, they invited their child to participate. They showed their child how to express affection through kissing, hugging, etc. Both Donna and John use children’s books as a vehicle to teach Joe how to express affection. They discussed a book called *We Play*. It is centered around day care activities. It said, "We come to day care, Daddy and Mommy drop me off. We play, we hug." Whenever Donna and John say "Hug", they always gave him a hug to demonstrate what a hug is. Donna noticed that every time when she got to that page, she tried to teach Joe that hugging is an expression of love between people. When they looked at the page together, Joe was the one who hugged her first. Donna pointed out that she and John practiced the ritual of "Give me a kiss," "I love you" with Joe in their daily lives, not just through books he got.

**Mother Tended to be the Main Figure in Initiating Book Reading at Home**

Parent interviews indicated that mothers were not only the main figure buying books for their infant, but also played the key role in initiating book reading at home.
Cathy stated that in the evening and before bed time, she usually was the one who
initiates the book reading. Occasionally, it was the first thing they do in the morning
when they were getting ready to come to the Infant Center.

According to Yen and Shih, most often they read to Kent either after his bath or
before his bed time. One of the reasons was because Kent’s book collection was located
in his room upstairs right next to the bath room. It was more convenient for reaching
the books. In addition, Yen perceived reading to children before bed time as a popular
phenomenon in American culture. Shih viewed it from another perspective; he perceived
book reading as a calm activity which is suitable before bed time. Usually Yen took
Kent to bathe, so naturally she became the key person reading to Kent before bed time.

The parent interviews indicated that parents’ values and belief systems affect their
attitudes and behavior toward sharing books with their infants, regarding when and why
to start reading to infants, how and what books to choose for infants.

Teacher Interviews

Background of the Teachers

All three teachers who served as primary care givers were associated with the
University in different ways. Gail graduated from the University with a Bachelor’s
degree in Psychology and a Master’s degree in Early Childhood Education. Debbie had
a Bachelor’s degree in Early Childhood Education. Polly was pursuing her doctoral
degree in the field of Early Childhood Education. Besides their strong professional backgrounds, they have devoted themselves to, and had abundant experiences in the field of family services and Early Childhood Education.

**Gail.** Gail has a undergraduate degree in psychology from the University where the Infant Center was located. After graduation from college, she worked with adults with psychiatric disabilities for about four years. Then, she went back to the University, studying in the field of Early Children Education, and got a Master's degree. She had worked in the Infant Center more than four years prior to this study.

**Debbie.** Debbie has a Bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education from the University where the Infant Center was located. In the course of pursuing her Bachelor's degree, Debbie fell in love with day care as a kind of teaching site. She saw day care as a necessary support to families. She became interested in looking at what makes one day care setting better than another.

Because she gave birth to her own children while she was still studying, she only went to school part time for a long period of time. Once she had the degree, she was offered a job in a day-care center in a nearby college. She was hired to design and implement an expanded toddler program. Then she faced a difficult dilemma, either sending her children to day care, or staying home with her children. Because she could not afford to pay for her children in the program where she worked, she was forced to quit after working there for one year. Before her younger son was ready to go to public school, Debbie did substitute teaching in various day-care settings. During that period of time, she also put in many volunteer hours on projects in the area of family services.
In addition to the experiences of student teaching and being a teaching assistant in the preschool program in the Laboratory school, Debbie had also been a practicum student in the Infant Center and the toddler program. While she was still going to school, her younger son came to the Infant Center. Therefore, she was very familiar with the programs, and was very impressed with and believed in it. In 1987, when Debbie started looking for jobs, the Infant Center teaching position was available. Because it was a very good program that Debbie believed in, and it offered the opportunity to work with students in a well established program, it became Debbie's first choice.

Polly. Polly had been in the early childhood education field for about fifteen years prior to this study. She worked with preschool children during her college years. In order to pursue Early Childhood Education in terms of global perspectives, she quit school and went to school for international training. The program she went into was called the World Issues Program. Polly did her internship in the Early Childhood Education field for a year. Then, she went to Kenya and worked with the Kenya YWCA (Young Women's Christian Association). Polly did an internship with the organization, working with day-care centers around that country.

After her Kenya experience, Polly came back to the United States of America. She worked as a director of a day-care center in Brattleboro, Vermont. She was also actively involved in various community services there around children's issues. Before she worked in the Infant Center, she moved to Seattle for four years. During those four years, Polly did inservice training and staff training with teachers in early childhood
education settings, primarily preschools. Then she decided to come back to New England.

Polly used to be in an administrative position. To do direct care has been a switch for her. It was her second year working in the Infant Center when this study was conducted. Because she was a graduate student in the School of Education, it made sense for her to work in the University. In addition, the benefit of the tuition waiver was a big motivating factor. Compared to the administrative position she used to have, Polly realized that direct care of infants called for her to be present, right there, and attentive to the needs of the infants who were there. Even though it was a very concrete task oriented position, deep down in her heart, Polly perceived her job as an important one.

**Teachers' Belief: Forming Relationships is Important for Infants**

The interviews indicated that Gail, Debbie, and Polly all strongly believed that it is important for infants to form strong relationships with parents and caregivers. They believed that infants are capable of relating to each other and forming relationships with caregivers. Through social interactions, infants learn to become caring and nurturing. Therefore, the Infant Center was perceived by all three teachers as a place which brings infants a richer social life.

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"The most important experience for infants is to have a good relationship with their parents and other primary caregivers in their lives... The day care experiences at the Infant Center can be enriching to a child if there are some basic needs met. First of all there is a strong relationship established between the infant and primary caregiver. If the schedule is individualized enough so that the child’s needs have been met without other child being
frustrated or left feeling needy, and if teachers provide infants an
environment which is challenging and stimulating, infants enjoy
themselves and feel good about their time in the Infant Center...
Infants this young do relate to each other, do form relationships.
Therefore, their social life is a lot richer when they come here." (Gail)

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"Infants need really strong trustworthy relationships with adults.
Infants need opportunities to learn to use their bodies in a very
unrestrictive and safe environment. They also need to experience
a full range of sensory delights." (Debbie)

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"Good relationships are most important for infants. The quality of
interactions with people they relate to helps them become
consistent, caring, stimulating, and nurturing individuals. One of
the goals for the Infant Center is to support infants through the
early stages of development, in terms of physical development,
social development, and language development. For infants to
learn to separate from their parents, to recognize specific
individuals, to form intimate relationships with caregivers, and to
feel secure with those relationships are important." (Polly)

Teachers Supported Infants' Early Literacy Development in a Variety of Ways

Child First, Child-Centered. The interviews showed that all three teachers
respect the individual needs of each infant. They listened and watched the infants' cues carefully to determine how to interact with the infants and how to meet their needs. Regarding the arrangement of the schedule, the set up of the physical environment, toys, and activities, all the teachers put the infants’ needs first. When they chose children’s books or initiated book reading with infants, they took their ages and interests into consideration. In addition, infants were allowed to explore what they were driven to explore; teachers were there for them. What Polly said "If they enjoy something, then I think that is valuable" echoes their viewpoint on what child first and child-centered was about.
"As a primary caregiver, I spend time with the child when I first meet him or her. I try to listen and watch their cues, to see what they like and do not like. I respect that, then build on that to provide whatever that is for the child. In addition, it also depends on the infant's age. When they are really young, the way to achieve that is to hold them, to make eye contact, but not over stimulate them. The main purpose is to be there for them and respond to their subtle cues. When the infants get older, they can be engaged with toys and activities." (Gail)

"My role as a primary caregiver for three infants was different from Gail and Debbie, who worked as co-directors. Gail and Debbie tend to have a bigger picture of what was going on and what needed to happen. Not being in the director position, I was allowed to focus more on what was happening with the three infants. In order to fulfill my role as a primary caregiver, I took a lot of cues from the infants. I let them explore what they were driven to explore, then be there for them. Because there was plenty of stimulation from other infants and adults in the environment, as a caregiver I preferred not to stimulate the infants more than the environment provided." (Polly)

**Book Reading was Considered as an Important Activity for Infants.** The teachers interview indicated that all three teachers considered book reading as an important activity for infants. Book reading was perceived by the teachers as a form of communicating which promotes interactions and brings closer relationships on the infants and the caregivers. It is also a low key and quiet activity, which provides infants physical contact comfort with their caregiver and visual stimulation. All three teachers also recognized other values of book reading, including fostering infants' language development and cognition. They all noted that infants were fascinated by the mechanical features of books, such as turning pages. They also made a conscious effort to let infants associate book reading with enjoyable experience.
"I consider book reading as an important activity for infants but not absolutely necessary. Singing songs and telling stories are variations on book reading which are forms of communicating. I think book reading makes it easier to facilitate language, facilitates the time you can get close to a child. It takes the stress off just making the child relate to you, sort of having this piece of equipment like toys or whatever. You can drive a child into a stronger relationship. Books can be used in an important way. It's a really nice feature to do that.

Children's exposure to books and book reading is beneficial to their language development. I believe that there is a strong relationship between infants' interest in book reading and better school progress. The first thing you learn to do in school is reading and writing. When children can master that, they feel pretty proud of themselves. I think children who are interested in books will learn to read sooner. As a mother and working in the Infant Center lead me to see that actually infants do enjoy being read to." (Gail)

"American people live in a very literate culture; books are something that adults like to familiarize children with. It's a nice in arms activity to do with babies. There is physical contact comfort there. It's a low key activity. Children need a balance of active activities and quiet activities. Book reading is a nice quiet activity. Books provide adults with so many easily accessible images to present children with in a very compact form.

In a literate society like the United States, the ability to use books as a source of knowledge, to associate the act of reading books with a most enjoyable and entertaining time is very important. In addition, reading books would help children with written expression. If we see reading as being fundamental, there is so much in our life that can be expanded on from it." (Debbie)

"During my first year working in the Infant Center, I was surprised by infants' interest in books at such a young age. I enjoyed seeing the progression from providing infants books they could chew on to the books they could start to read. I believe that it is a natural introduction to books for infants. Sharing books with infants is an important activity for children at this age. I take my cues from the infants. If they enjoy something, then I think that is valuable. Just from the real simple physical reason, Lucy
is very fascinated by the pages that she can turn and manipulate. From that point on, it's really important.

I also think it's important because it encourages caregivers to interact with infants and to talk about things that we might not talk about. It encourages us to sit close to them and do one on one stuff. So, it's sort of like what book reading does for the relationship between the caregivers and the infants. Book reading is also an enjoyable time for the infants in terms of language development and recognition. Bringing infants and the caregivers together toward a closer relationship is most important." (Polly)

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"I would initiate book reading if the infants seem to be about the right age to enjoy pictures. Other circumstances, like when the infant who really enjoys book reading is tired and cannot focus, or before a nap, the infant needs a quiet time. In addition, when I feel like sharing a book with the infant, I will initiate it." (Gail)

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"For children at different ages, books can be used for different purposes. Infants at the age of three months to five months like to lie on their bellies and lift their heads and look around, gaining muscular control of head lifting. Therefore, adults can stand books up in front of a baby. Using books in that way provides

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Book Reading Served Multiple Purposes in the Infant Center. The teacher interviews showed that book reading served various purposes in the Infant Center. The teachers perceived that books can be used as visual stimulus for young infants, or used as toys to be manipulated. Books can also serve as references to show infants the pictorial representation of objects.

Due to the feature of book reading as a low key and quiet activity, two of the three teachers emphasized that book reading activity is appropriate for infants before nap time or when the infants are tired. In addition, book reading is also a pleasant activity for the teachers and the infants to do together.
infants the opportunity to practice focusing their eyes. It is then a visual stimulus for the child.

With older infants, book reading is an in the lap activity to share with the child. The book again stimulates the child visually and provides for language activity. You talk to the baby as you turn the pages, as you point to the pictures. The baby is then exposed to a lot of rich language, even though the child does not understand at that age what you are saying. He or she is getting the rhythm of the speech and the intonation of the speech, and the very beginning of association between the word and the image, which leads, when the child gets older, to the connection that objects have names.

Books are another material for older infants to manipulate on their own, to entertain themselves. As children get older, adults use books with them in a way to share knowledge. When adults take out a book on a particular subject and go through the book with children, they are importing to the children an attitude that books are a place to seek knowledge and information."

"If I feel like a child is tired and needing a break, or needs to wind down a little bit and have some close gather time instead of disgather time, I’ll do it. I’ll do it when a child initiates it and asks for it. Sometimes, I think it would be a fun thing to do. Occasionally I referred to a book as a reference, which I tended to do with older children. I did not do that very much with infants. Once I saw a truck on the shelf, therefore I looked in the book for the truck, and used it as a bridge between the two. A lot of what I read infants might not understand, but it did not keep me from sharing books with the infants. It’s always a mystery in terms of how much they do understand." (Polly)

Teachers as Gate-Keepers Regarding Book Choices

Regarding the issue of choosing books for infants, the three teachers all emphasized the importance of illustrations and the familiarity of the contents to infants. In addition, they also took the infants’ ages into consideration in terms of the material
of the books and the complexity of the content. Infants' interest was another factor that all the teachers would take into consideration.

"Some infants as young as three months old are really interested in looking at pictures, and other infants at six or nine months old do not seem to show any interest in books, other than mouthing them. Most infants by one year of age really enjoy books and looking at them over and over again. When I choose books for infants, I think first about what they are interested in. I always try to introduce something new to the infant who is really focussed on only one subject. Because they are not interested in the words, the illustrations are really important. You want a book with nice illustrations and non-sexist pictures. Infants are more interested in books with familiar contents, such as vehicles, babies, food, shoes, etc." (Gail)

"I would provide books with the simplest pictures, or one object to a page for the younger infants. As infants became older, I would provide books with more complicated illustrations, and also capitalize on particular interests of the children. In addition, there are also practical considerations. If the book is going to be chewed on a lot then I would use heavy cardboard or vinyl books." (Debbie)

"The material of the book is really essential depending upon the age of the children. I would take age into consideration certainly with paperback books versus hard board books. I won't use paperback books with a young child who is just going to grab and rip it up. I don't want it to be a negative experience, while I am saying "No! No! No!" all the time. It ends up not being an enjoyable experience for the child.

Regarding the content of the books, what I would choose depends on the child's ability level. I would use books with something different on each page with younger infants. For example, in *Pat the Bunny*, there is a different function on each page. With older infants, I often use books with repetition from page to page, like the animal sounds or *Where is the Spot* book.

Books carry a concept from page to page throughout a book; younger infants have less ability to carry a concept through. A lot of books have storyline not suitable for infants. The pictures are
important. For infants, it is a new concept that each page is something new. I have not seen my infants following a concept through from page to page. A lot of times, books with storylines don’t have really a lot of change from page to page. Children can easily get bored. It doesn’t hold their attention, so they just keep turning the pages looking for something different in terms of the illustration. Like the Peter Rabbit book, the pictures are not noticeably different from page to page. Unless you look very closely, you can’t see the scene has changed. So, following a storyline like that, I haven’t had success with the infants here.

The illustrations in the book are very important. Because I tend not to read the words in the book, I like to elaborate in my own words from what she saw in the pictures. Therefore, I like pictures that elicit MY conversation, that are clear for the infants. My preference for the illustrations is realistic pictures with animals, trucks, and children.

Good quality children’s books for infants should contain the following factors: durability of the book itself, the repetition of concept from page to page, emphasizes on the pictures, and the content needs to be somehow real in infants’ lives so they can relate to it. My favorite books Are the animal sounds books. I like them because it IS fun for me as an adult to read. If adults have fun with the books, then the children will have fun with them. (Polly)

Teachers’ Belief: Infants are Able to Respond to Books

Based on their professional experiences, all three teachers firmly believed that infants are responsive to books. Infants’ asking for certain books, initiating book reading, being able to locate the books, turning the pages, pointing at the pictures, naming the objects on the pages, and smiling were all considered by the teachers as response behaviors. In their mind, infants’ responses to books are not only displayed through verbal and physical actions, and facial expression, but also through emotional reactions - the enjoyment of being read to.
"I think most infants are responsive to book reading. They know where the books are and ask for them. When you bring it out of the shelf, you start it with one child, and end up with three children sitting down on your lap. It's nice to see children initiate interest in the books. That happens pretty frequently. And they also point at the pictures. When they can speak, they ask for certain books." (Gail)

Infants are quite capable of learning the mechanics of book reading, like turning pages, and turning paperback pages gently so they do not rip. Infants catch on quickly how to orient the book, including which way to open it and how to open it. Between ten and twelve months of age, infants are able to mimic the actions of pointing to objects on the pages, and babble the way that an adult would, pointing to objects and naming them. In the second year of life, infants really come to understand storylines. They memorize their favorite storylines and are able to tell back the story to an adult. By the time they are two years old, some children have come to accept book reading as an activity that they can do by themselves, or often look at books to amuse themselves." (Debbie)

"Infants are responsive to book reading, because it is an enjoyable activity for them. One day I asked Lucy, "Lucy, where are the books?" Lucy looked up the bookshelf and smiled. Another experience I had was watching Nancy paging through the books and smiling. A lot of things infants do in the infant center don't require adult interaction. I think the book reading does. If they are going to get a book and have someone read to them, then they get to be with an adult. That's one of the reasons for their enthusiasm.

Once I initiated book reading activity and got responses back - the infants were respondings something in the book. Then, I was more inspired to keep doing it. But I need to remember that they can't show me that if I don't show them the books." (Polly)
Summary

The parent interviews indicated that parents all viewed book reading as an important activity to expand their child’s experience, to foster language development, to promote closer relationships between parents and child. In addition, book reading was also associated with successful schooling later in their child’s life. All the parents read to their infants at an early age. Among them, four to six months old was the most common age parents started reading to their child. Most parents’ ideas of reading to their infant originated from receiving suggestions from relatives, doctors, and books, and from interacting with teachers and other parents and observing daily activities in the Infant Center. Parents also acted as gatekeepers regarding choosing books for their child. The factors they took into consideration included content, illustrations, child’s interest, physical material of the books and durability, and non-gender-stereotype. The majority of the parents also made conscious efforts to get their child interested in books, through making books accessible to the child, presenting the books in attractive ways to make book reading an enjoyable experience. Most parents had no doubt about infants’ capability of responding to books. They viewed infants’ facial expressions, verbal reaction, physical action, and emotional reactions as infants’ responses to book reading.

The teacher interviews indicated that all three teachers strongly believe the most important experience for infants is to form close relationships with parents and caregivers. In order to achieve the goal, all three teachers read infants’ cues carefully
and provided individualized schedules for each infant. They all considered book reading as an important activity for infants. They consciously employed it to serve various purposes, including preparing infants for nap, providing infants visual stimulation, entertainment, and language activities. In addition, book reading was also used by the teachers to bring closer relationships with their infants. Teachers also acted as gatekeepers regarding book choice for the infants. They all considered content, illustrations, and physical material of the books as important factors in choosing books for various ages of infants. Based on their professional experience, all three teachers believe that most infants are capable of responding to books. They considered infants' verbal reactions, physical actions, facial expressions, and emotional reactions as response behaviors.
CHAPTER VI
CONCLUSIONS

Summary

The purposes of the study were to describe how ten infants who ranged from five to thirteen months old respond to books in the day-care setting over a five month period, and to better understand how parents and teachers support or constrain infants' experiences with early literature at home and in the infant day-care setting. The response behaviors demonstrated by the infants during picture book reading events, the ways teachers supported or constrained infants' responses to books, and teachers' and parents' beliefs about infants' capabilities to respond to books were documented and analyzed.

The researcher conducted the study from a naturalistic inquiry perspective. Data were collected over the period of five months. The researcher played the roles of participant-observer and interviewer. Several methods were used for data collection, including participant-observation, formal and informal interviews, written field notes, audiotapes, videotapes, and photography.

Primary analysis during data collection suggested that picture book reading activity was a recurrent event at the Infant Center. The analysis also revealed patterns in picture book reading interactions between infants and teachers. After data collection was completed, a more detailed analysis was undertaken. This in-depth analysis revealed
how picture book reading events occurred within a day-care context and the nature of interactions between infants and teachers during picture book reading. Subsequent analysis involved checking transcriptions and written field notes, coding the emerging themes and patterns, and writing the final report.

The findings of this study were presented in Chapter IV and Chapter V. Presented in Chapter IV were descriptions and analyses of infants’ responses to books, the ways in which teachers supported or constrained infants’ response behaviors, variations in teachers’ book reading styles, the genres and the physical materials of children’s book collection in the Infant Center, and how books were incorporated into the physical environment. Findings presented in Chapter V included parents’ and teachers’ attitudes and beliefs about infants and picture book reading. The following section highlights the major findings of the study.

**Picture Book Reading in the Context of an Infant Day Care**

In this study, the contexts of infants’ book interactions were categorized as "soloing", "duoing", and "chorusing." In the "soloing" situations, books were used as teethers by infants, as objects to bang and shake, for page turning, and making short period of visual contact with the illustrations. Some infants tended to spend longer periods of time looking at the pages. They also demonstrated book babble behaviors where they orally read the book in their own language.

In the "duoing" situations, a teacher read to an infant, scaffolding and language extensions were more likely to occur in the course of book reading. The teachers
repeated the infants' previous utterance and extended the infants' language by asking further questions or adding new semantic information. Through scaffolding, infants not only learned the language, but also learned to master the routines of book reading. The language extension process prolonged the book interactions between the infants and the teachers. It allowed the teachers to talk about the content in more detail, and allowed the infants to visually inspect the illustrations for a longer period of time. In "duoing" situations, the teachers sometimes turned book reading into playful activity with the component of pretend play.

In the "chorusing" situations, a teacher read to more than one infant, infants contributed to book interactions differently. Some infants participated verbally in response to teachers’ questioning, some responded with facial expressions and body movement. Teachers tended to incorporate infants’ verbal responses into book talk. Both "duoing" and "chorusing" situations were accomplished through joint teacher-infant participation where teachers acted as mediators between infants and books.

The results of the study showed that infants responded to books in a variety of ways. In addition to verbal responses, they tended to respond to books with facial expressions and body movements. Infants laughed or smiled at a familiar picture to indicate their recognition of the object. They demonstrated their intention, their discovery, and participation through physical actions (e.g., pointing), and other postures (e.g., patting, grabbing and pulling the book). Infants were able to demonstrate their book preferences. In the course of reading, they tended to look for familiar objects and details in illustrations rather than pay attention to the total content of the story. For older
infants, book reading events were no longer solely controlled by the teachers, but became joint teacher-infant participation activity and gradually the reading was controlled by the infants. After being exposed to book reading events, older infants gradually developed positive attitudes to book reading and learned more appropriate book handling behaviors. They looked like readers, and also acted like readers.

All three teachers in the Infant Center considered book reading to be an important activity for infants. They acted both consciously and unconsciously in a variety of support roles to promote picture book reading with infants. The teachers provided a range of children’s books, such as: identification books, participation books, concept books, books about young children’s common experiences, picture storybooks, and Mother Goose books. These books were made of different physical materials, like cloth, soft vinyl, cardboard, and hardcover with paper pages. Teachers not only incorporated them into the physical setting in attractive ways but made books accessible to the infants.

This study showed that teachers tended to initiate book reading with infants when books were accessible to them; when infants brought books along; and when infants were fussy or had separation anxiety. In addition, they used book reading to hold infants’ attention, as a transitional activity (e.g., preparing infants for a nap), and also as a fun activity to do with infants. But teachers also encountered various constraints in the course of reading to infants. They faced interruptions from infants’ crying and other teachers’ talking, from other infants’ physical actions and inappropriate behaviors, and interruptions resulting from infants’ attachment to their primary caregiver. In addition,
teachers were often interrupted because they needed to assume the responsibility of supervising other infants.

The teachers also demonstrated distinctive book reading styles. They tended to restate the text in their own words, and used various ways to translate its meanings into spoken language. Each teacher seemed to be consistent in the way she read books aloud. This allowed the infants to experience literature differently. In spite of that, there were commonalities in the ways teachers engaged infants in book reading. The three teachers all demonstrated what Cochram-Smith (1984) referred to as "Readiness interaction sequences", "Life-to-Text interaction sequences", and "Text-to-Life interaction sequences" in preparation for and during the book reading events. In addition, teachers tended to helped infants make sense of the books by connecting the infants' daily life experiences with the particular text. Through scaffolding and language extension, the teachers provided opportunities for infants to participate in reciprocal interchange.

All three teachers allowed the infants to make book choices. They observed infants' cues carefully and respected the infants' decision. They also encouraged infants to be readers by giving books to infants and acting as listeners to their book babble behaviors. By reading to infants on a daily basis, teachers not only modeled appropriate reading behaviors, but also instilled their beliefs and value about the importance of book reading into infants' and parents' minds. This study indicated that all three teachers considered book reading as an important activity for infants. Book reading was perceived by the teachers as a form of communicating which promotes interactions and brings closer relationships between the infants and their caregivers. It is also a low key
and quiet activity, which provides infants visual stimulation and physical contact comfort with their caregivers. They believed infants would internalize the notion that book reading is a valuable activity as a means of acquiring information and knowledge, as a way to occupy themselves, a source of emotional comfort, a means of preparing themselves for a nap, and also a way to entertain themselves.

**Picture Book Reading in the Context of the Family**

The parent interviews showed that the parents, who were all associated with a major university, came from a wide range of racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds. They all supported their infants on picture book reading in family context. Parents introduced children’s books to their infants at an early age. Most of them chose to do this when their infants were able to sit or had control over his/her neck. Most parents began by introducing vinyl books as toys for their infants so that they could chew on or play with them in the bath tub. Parents of younger infants tended to mix cardboard books with toys for their child to choose from, so that they would become familiar with the physical appearance of books. Most parents expressed an interest in bed-time reading, but only two infants had the practice at home, and these two had older siblings.

All the parents believed that reading to infants is beneficial. Children’s books were used as a medium to expand infants’ experiences, promote language development and successful schooling, cultivate good behaviors, and bring closer relationships between parents and infants. One parent pointed out that reading to infants prepares them to be life-long readers. These parents tended to use content and illustration as guidelines to
choose books for their infants. The majority of parents believed that the content of the books should be related to infants' daily life experiences. Parents also considered what they want their children to learn as a criterion for book choices. These criteria for book choice was also influenced by their perception of their child’s level of understanding. Two of the parents looked for gender stereotype-free books. Most parents preferred cardboard books to paperback books.

Infants’ book collections for these families had different sources. Some parents bought books at bookstores and supermarkets. Some were given by relatives. One parent was a member of a book club, while another parent viewed the local hospital as a book source. None of the parents borrowed books from public library. The parent interviews also indicated that mothers were the main figures who read to their infants. Parents supported their infants’ early literacy development in various ways. They viewed their children as individuals and read their cues carefully concerning likes or dislikes of books. They made books accessible. The parents took their infants’ interests into consideration in every aspect of picture book reading practice at home, such as book choice and the duration of reading. In addition, parents acted as role models. They expressed the enjoyment of reading and acted as readers in their daily life where other printed materials were available, such as: newspapers, magazines, academic books, books for leisure time.
Discussion

The results of this study not only provided an in-depth analysis of how infants responded to books in a day-care setting, and how parents and teachers supported or constrained infants’ experiences with books, but also provided a "thick description" (Geertz, 1973) of how infants demonstrated their communicative competence and how North American caregivers interacted with infants and responded to their reactions.

The results indicated that infants are able to demonstrate their communicative competence. Infants initiated book reading through the use of gestures, such as reaching for, touching, offering, and pointing at books. Infants also showed their intention of initiating book reading by making eye contact with teachers, followed by pointing or vocalizing with consistent sound and intonation patterns. They would persist in attempting to communicate if they were not understood. Infants were also able to express their emotional response to books through facial expressions, such as smiling and laughing.

In addition, infants displayed their social need for close physical contact with their primary caregivers during book reading. They tended to bring books to their primary caregivers. Their attachment to their primary caregivers created opportunities for social interaction. Therefore, the results of the study did indicate that infants are sociable and emotionally expressive beings.
Rosenblatt (1995) argued that reading is an interactional or transactional process. Reading should be experiences to be reflected on, rather than a body of information to be transmitted.

... the reader must first of all adopt what I term an aesthetic stance - that is, focus attention on the private, as well as the public, aspects of meaning. Reading to find the answer to a factual question requires attention mainly to the public aspects of meaning and excludes, pushes into the periphery, personal feelings or ideas activated. To call forth a literary work of art from the same text, the reader must first of all permit into the focus of attention not only the public linkages with the words but also the personal associations, feelings, and ideas being lived through during the reading (p. 292)

The results of the study showed that infants are able to respond to books not only from what Rosenblatt (1938) termed an "efferent stance", but also from an "aesthetic stance." When they read the texts efferently, they took information from the text, such as learning to label the objects. When they read the texts aesthetically, they not only took information from the text, but also focused their selective attention on the particular text's association with their personal feelings and past experiences.

This study indicated that teachers played crucial roles as mediators between the text and the readers (infants). Even though some books might offer more potentialities for an aesthetic reading than others, teachers' reading styles affected the transaction between the texts and the infants. The results of the study showed that when teachers turned book reading into playful activities with components of pretend play, or connected book content with infants' daily life experiences, those actions increased infants' responses to books.
The ways in which teachers interacted with the infants in this study also showed that American white middle class day-care teachers viewed infants as separate and autonomous social beings. They interacted with infants as if they had their own intentions, treated them as if they were participants in a conversation, and responded to their babbles and physical actions as if they were communicative. In addition, teachers also provided positive responses to promote infants’ interest in participating in joint-attention and social exchange during book reading activities. This study showed that teachers tended to use four utterance types (Bruner, 1983) in their speech in a fixed order to arouse infants’ attention and interest in books during book reading activities. First, teachers got infants’ attention by saying "Look." Second, with a rising inflection, teachers asked "What’s that?" Third, the teachers labelled the picture, "It’s an xx." And, finally, in response to infants’ actions, they said "That’s right." In addition, teachers also used pointing to direct infants’ visual attention to particular objects in the books.

Winnicott (1964) emphasized that "... a baby cannot exist alone, but is essentially part of a relationship" (p. 88). This study indicated that teacher-infant interactions could be characterized as asymmetrical relations in which both teachers and infants were active participants. But the infants’ contributions initially relied on the teachers’ contribution. Through scaffolding and language extension, teachers provided a framework to allow infants to be involved in interactions during book reading activities. The interactions between infants and teachers during book reading gradually became symmetrical as the infants acted like readers. Gradually, book reading activity was no longer solely
controlled by the teachers; it became joint teacher-infant participation. This reflected 
Vogotsty’s (1978) concept of the "Zone of Proximal Development," that a child can solve 
problems in collaboration with others, especially with an adult or a more competent peer. 
According to Valsiner (1988), the "Zone of Proximal Development" is constructed not 
only by the purposeful efforts of the caregiver of the child, but also by the cultural 
structuring of the environment in such ways that the child is guided by his/her 
environment. Schieffelin and Ochs (1983) argued that caregiver-infant interaction may 
be embedded in a much more extensive set of cultural assumptions about what it is to be 
a person and to communicate with others:

Culture is not something that can be considered separately from the 
accounts of caregiver-child interactions; it is what organizes and gives 
meaning to that interaction... How caregivers and children speak and act 
towards one another is linked to cultural patterns that extend and have 
consequences beyond the specific interactions observed. For example, 
how caregivers speak to their children may be linked to other institutional 
adaptations to young children. These adaptations in turn may be linked 
to how members of a given society view children more generally (their 
‘natural’, their social status and expected comportment) and to how 
members think children develop (p. 116).

Implications for Day Care Teachers and Parents

1. **If day care teachers and parents want to promote book reading among infants,** 
   they need to provide a wide selection of children’s books. More books made of 
   various physical materials and written by quality authors will increase the use by 
   the infants and allow teachers and parents to have more choices. In addition, 
   children’s books with multicultural themes need to be included to fit the needs of
infants from different ethnic, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds. Even though the budget for infants' books may be limited, teachers and parents can employ various ways to expand the book collection, such as: by borrowing from local public library and by producing handmade books.

2. **If day care teachers and parents are to understand that picture book reading is integral to oral language development, they need training concerning children's literature and infants' language development.** Day care teachers and parents need to realize that picture book reading is a social process in which language and cognitive development take place.

3. **If day care teachers and parents are to promote infants' interest and response to books, they need to understand what these responses look like and the context in which they occur.** Teachers and parents in this study believed in infants' capability to respond to books. They made books accessible to infants, kept them within reach, and enjoyed reading to the infants. Teachers and parents should recognize that reading to infants is fun and enjoyable. Teachers should allow infants to choose their own books, to read alone or to be read to in a group context. In this study, infants were not constrained to one situation and this seemed to promote their interest in book reading.

4. **If day care teachers and parents are to promote picture book reading among infants, they need to provide infants with opportunities to be exposed to book reading.** In this study, older infants seemed to have more opportunities to be exposed to book reading than younger infants who were less verbal and less
mobile. Teachers and parents need to be careful not to label infants as not interested in book reading because they cannot verbally or non-verbally request a book.

5. If day care teachers and parents are to provide emotional support for infants, they need to respect individual differences among infants. Infants may use books to meet a wide range of emotional needs. Reading may make them happy. Infants may be curious to use books to get information they are interested in. When they are upset, they may like to look at a specific book. This in turn may help them cope with their distress. In this study, the teachers were sensitive to infants’ emotional needs, and respected their infants’ interests and choices of books.

6. If day care teachers and parents want to promote picture book reading, they need to provide infants with opportunities to experience book reading not only from efferent stance but also from aesthetic stance. In this study, teachers used books to label objects, to introduce infants to coming events, and to connect infants’ experiences with book content. In addition, they also turned book reading into playful activities. Book reading not only helps infants make sense of the book content and the outside world, but also helps them experience book reading as meaningful and enjoyable.
Recommendations for Further Research

1. The present study is limited to the extent that it looked at infants' responses to books in a particular university based infant center. A study which documents infants' book reading experiences both at home and in the day-care setting would provide an additional dimension to our understanding of the relation between family literacy and day care literacy.

2. This longitudinal study was conducted with infants who were between 5-13 months old at the beginning and were 10-18 months old at the end of the five months of the research. There is a need for a longitudinal study that extends over the course of the full year of day care. This would provide a more detailed and more complete picture of how infants are socialized into literacy.

3. This study provided a detailed description and in-depth analysis of infants' responses to books in a day-care setting. However, these infants came from academic families connected with a university. It would be beneficial to conduct a similar study in other day-care settings with a population which included a wide range of socioeconomic and educational backgrounds.

4. This study followed ten infants at their day-care center for five months and involved parent interviews. It would be beneficial to conduct an in-depth study to extend the scope of the study to include data in the home. This will make it possible to explore the interaction of family and day care socialization into the
development of literacy. Longitudinally, this research could follow these infants from day care into kindergarten.
Our emphasis is on individualized care and developmentally appropriate education for young children. In each classroom, the teachers work closely with the graduate teaching assistant and student interns to create and provide a secure and stimulating environment. Over the course of the year, the children explore social relationships and form close bonds with the teachers and other children. These close relationships help support the children as they explore their environment to their fullest potential. We work to support each child’s growth toward increased mastery of their physical and social world in a manner appropriate to his/her own style and temperament. We encourage independence and a feeling of security by working with the children individually and as part of the group. We also pay close attention to the children’s language development and work toward their mastery of language within the realm of their social development. We try to help them express their thoughts and feelings verbally. We encourage parents involvement and familiarity of parents with the program and staff through group meetings, and individual parent conferences. Parents are encouraged to visit and share with one another and with staff at pick-up times and in the observation booth.
APPENDIX B

WHAT TO EXPECT AS A PRACTICUM STUDENT

While there are many parallels between group care for infants and learning environments for older children, it will probably be most helpful for you to begin by focusing on its uniqueness. We are working with very young human beings who are constructing their first elementary knowledge of their human and material universe. We are very attentive to creating an environment (this is a day-to-day ongoing effort) that complements rather than bombards the babies in terms of scale, movement, activity, sound, and social interaction. For example, we are careful not to have so many adults in the room that the babies are inhibited or even obstructed in their activity. We try to be mindful of our size in relation to the babies and to avoid positioning ourselves in ways that dominate the space or co-opt babies' movement or access. We rely upon the babies' cues and signals to inform much of our behavior toward them, whether it be play or feeding or napping.

While in-session, our attention is baby- rather than adult-focused. As a newcomer to the babies and the Center, you should expect the first couple of weeks to be a gradual warming up period, a time for the babies to incorporate you into their world at their own pace and time for you to absorb the basics of our approach to caring for infants and, perhaps, to grapple with assumptions about infant care you may have brought with you.

During your time in the nursery room you will have the opportunity to work as an integral part of the staff and can expect to gain experience playing with babies, "reading" behavior, diapering, comforting, napping, and feeding. You will have a chance to get to know the babies and the workings of the Center well enough to gain competence and feel some reward over the course of the semester. Your participation contributes to our program, and we take your interest in learning seriously. While we are on the floor, however, our primary responsibility is to the babies and our best tool for training you is modelling, that is, to allow you to experience our teaching approach firsthand. You will have our individual attention at weekly class-time, an excellent time for discussion and exchange.

Finally, your role as a practicum student can be rich and rewarding, but it has limits you should be aware of. Initially, each caregiver establishes a strong relationship with his/her babies, and eventually with most or all of the other babies. This network provides a critical groundwork of security and stability for the babies which we should not jeopardize by allowing ourselves, as primary caregivers, to be displaced by students. In this sense, you can expect your role to be auxiliary, unlike many "student teaching" situations.
Dear Parents:

My name is Chun-Mei, a graduate student at the School of Education. In the past two academic years, I worked as a Teaching Assistant at the Infant Center. These experiences inspired me to choose the subject of my dissertation: Infants and Book Reading. I am writing to invite you and your child to participate in the study.

In order to accomplish my goals, I need to do participant observation and record the activities of your child. This means that I will interact with your child in various ways - talking, playing, feeding, and book reading. I will audio-tape, video-tape, and photograph your child during literacy experiences. As part of this study, you are also being asked to participate in an in-depth parent interview. The interview will focus on your experiences in reading books to your child and your viewpoints on the topic of Infants and Book Reading. The interview will be audio-taped and later transcribed for analysis. You will receive a copy of the complete transcript to verify its accuracy. All these documents will be helpful to me when analyzing the findings.

All of my data will remain confidential. Names used in the study will be fictitious. However, professionally I will use this data in dissertation committee discussion, journal articles, conferences, and possibly a book. In each of these professional instances, anonymity will be used to protect individuals and their families. Also, at the conclusion of the study, I will share the findings with parents.

I hope you will consent to participate in this study. I would be happy to answer any question you might have regarding my work. Please understand that you and your child may, at any time, withdraw from the participation without penalty.

Thank you for considering being a part of my research. I look forward to the possibility of working with you and your child on the study.

Sincerely yours,

Chun-Mei Liao
School of Education
In signing this form, you are assuring me that you will make no financial claims for the use of the material in your interview; you are also stating that no medical treatment will be required by you from the University should any physical injury result from participating in the interview.

If you consent to your and your child’s participation, please return this form to me and keep the letter for your files.

______________________________________________________________

PLEASE SIGN AND RETURN THIS PAGE TO YOUR CHILD’S PRIMARY CAREGIVER. KEEP THE LETTER FOR YOUR FILES. I WILL GIVE YOU A XEROX COPY OF THIS FORM.

Parent or Guardian’s Consent: I, ________________________, have read the statement above and agree to my and my child’s participation in the study under the conditions stated therein.

__________________________                  _________________
Signature of Parent or Guardian                  Date

__________________________
Child’s Name
Dear Teachers:

My name is Chun-Mei, a graduate student at the School of Education. In the past two academic years, I worked as a Teaching Assistant at the Roberta Collard Infant Center. These experiences inspired me to choose the subject of my dissertation: Infant and Book Reading. I am writing to invite you and your child to participate in the study.

In order to accomplish my goals, I need to do participant observation and record the activities of infants. This means that I will interact with your child in various ways - talking, playing, feeding, and book reading. I will audio-tape, video-tape, and photograph infants during literacy experiences. As part of this study, you are also being asked to participate in an in-depth parent interview. The interview will focus on your experiences in reading books to infants and your viewpoints on the topic of Infants and Book Reading. The interview will be audio-taped and later transcribed for analysis. You will receive a copy of the complete transcript to verify it's accuracy. All these documents will be helpful to me when analyzing the findings.

All of my data will remain confidential. Names used in the study will be fictitious. However, professionally I will use this data in dissertation committee discussion, journal articles, conferences, and possibly a book. In each of these professional instances, anonymity will be used to protect individuals and their families. Also, I will share the findings with you at the conclusion of the study.

I hope you will consent to participate in this study. I would be happy to answer any question you might have regarding my work. Please understand that you may, at any time, withdraw from the participation without penalty.

Thank you for considering being a part of my research. I look forward to the possibility of working with you and your child on the study.

Sincerely yours,

Chun-Mei Liao
School of Education

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In signing this form, you are assuring me that you will make no financial claims for the use of the material in your interview; you are also stating that no medical treatment will be required by you from the University should any physical injury result from participating in the interview.

If you consent to your participation, please return this form to me and keep the letter for your files.

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PLEASE SIGN AND RETURN THIS PAGE TO YOUR CHILD'S PRIMARY CAREGIVER. KEEP THE LETTER FOR YOUR FILES. I WILL GIVE YOU A XEROX COPY OF THIS FORM.

Teacher’s Consent: I, ________________________, have read the statement above and agree to participate in the study under the conditions stated therein.

_________________________       _______________________
Signature                  Date
APPENDIX E

QUESTIONS FOR PARENT INTERVIEWS

1. Could you tell me why you send your child to the Infant Center?
2. What are your expectations for the Infant Center and for your child’s primary caregiver?
3. In your mind, what are important experiences for your child at this age?
4. Do you read to your child at home? Does your child enjoy being read to?
5. How old was your child when you began to read to him/her regularly?
6. How did you get the idea to read to him/her?
7. Who initiates reading with your child most often at home?
8. Does your child own his/her own books at home? What are his/her favorite books?
9. How do you choose books for your child?
10. In your mind, what are the criteria for good quality children’s books for children under age of two?
11. Do you think infants can be benefitted by being read to?
12. Do you think infants are responsive to book reading?
13. Do you think reading is highly valued by your society? Why?
14. Were you read to regularly when you were a child?
APPENDIX F

QUESTIONS FOR TEACHER INTERVIEWS

1. What are the philosophy and educational goals of the Infant Center?
2. As a primary caregiver (teacher), how do you achieve those goals?
3. In your mind, what are important experiences for infants?
4. Do you consider book reading is an important activity for infants? Why or why not? Please explain.
5. In your mind, what age is appropriate for an infant to be read to?
6. What kind of children’s books does the Infant Center own? Where did they come from?
7. In your mind, what are the criteria for good quality children’s books for children under age of two?
8. Do you think children under the age of two are responsive to book reading?
9. Under what kind of situation would you consider initiating book reading with infants?
10. Would you choose different books for different infants when you initiate the activity?
11. Do you think reading is highly valued by your society? Why?
12. Were you read to regularly when you were a child? Who read to you?
Related Literature


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Children's Books


