“It’s Like a Baby Jail!”
The impact of regimented daily routines on children’s participation in early childhood education

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Abstract

Routines are the backbone of what is deemed a high-quality early years environment. When routines are converted into an adult-regimented timetable that informs the day-to-day experiences of children, a daily routine becomes a power structure that interferes with the self-rhythm of a child, deciding when they can eat, play and go outside while demanding desired behaviours and imbedding social norms. When a routine is designed for children and not by children, it presents a practical dilemma where children's participatory rights appear to be valued in theory but not implemented in practice. By focusing on the daily routine of an early childhood environment through a Foucauldian lens, this research explored the power dynamics that existed between adult educators and children aged 2-4 years to understand how children's forms of expression within an adult-designed daily routine shaped their level of participation. Data collection was conducted by children positioned as co-researchers equipped with head-mounted GoPro cameras to record their daily routines that included outdoor play, art, snack and indoor free play, where video recall during weekly focus groups provided opportunities for children to further express their views on the data they recorded.

The findings highlighted the rawness of being a young child in education today and the way in which children used acts of obedience and resistance to feel heard, valued and to participate, but oftentimes were ignored or silenced by educators. These moments led to the research's development of the Ject Framework which highlights the various ways children experience power and seek out ways to express themselves through the satisfaction of their self-rhythm. The Ject Framework forms the basis of the Six Participation Personas of Power that highlights the implications for participation when children's self-rhythm is either satisfied or skewed in favour of the adult's self-rhythm. The conformist and revolutionary personas of Active Conformist, Passive Conformist, Active Revolutionary, Passive Revolutionary, Secure Selective and Insecure Selective were generated to highlight how children's level of participation is shaped based on the way a daily routine is enforced on them in early childhood environments.

This research generates further insight into the implementation issues relating to children's participation rights, the role educational power structures play in silencing children and contributes further thinking and rethinking about the daily power being enforced on children and the impact this has on their ability to actively participate in their own lives.

Introduction

Without realising it at the time, I was unconsciously developing this research many years ago after one particular experience I had as an early childhood educator. I was in the early years classroom with children aged 3-4 years and they were engaged in what would be seen as ‘free play’, where children could choose from any of the forms of play available to them in the room. I enjoyed watching one small group of children, a mix of girls and boys, appearing energised by their superhero figurines that allowed them to swing their arms in big motions, run freely and shout within complex themes of good versus evil. I smiled seeing their expressions change from laughter and joy to serious contemplation and storyline plotting. My manager, however, did not share this same view of superhero play, echoing sentiments of similar nature to the below that I’m sure many other educators, and in fact adults in general, can relate to:

“Stop shouting inside!” (while shouting)
“Stop running! You’ll fall and hurt yourselves.”

Eventually, my manager had enough of the play fighting and loud noises associated with the superhero figurines and planned to hide the figurines before the children arrived the following morning. I was given this task, being told that by hiding the superhero figurines, the children will forget about them and do something else. I obeyed my manager’s order and collected all of the superhero figurines, putting them in a box and storing them in the manager’s office. Looking back, I regret never challenging this moment and obeying without question because of the guilt I felt watching the heartbreak, confusion, anger and sadness that followed for the children over the next few days.

The children from the small group that engaged in this superhero play came into the classroom throughout the morning and all exhibited similar reactions to each other. Some spent their entire time with their heads in presses, behind shelves and under tables in search of their figurines. Others accepted their figurines were not there and floated through different activities but found no stimulation in their pursuits. One child continued throughout the day to ask the other educator “Where is Spiderman? I can’t find him. Did you find him yet? What about up there?” to which he would be met with “I don’t know, I haven’t seen him. No, he’s not up there. Go play with something else.”. These responses hid the fact that we, the adults, did in fact know where the figurines were but we chose not to tell the children. I went along with this ruse, conditioned by my job and desensitised to a point that ensured I could fulfil my duties. However, I found at times I had to force myself not to empathise with the children because it made me feel guilty for deceiving them. Some seemed almost dysfunctional having no understanding of why the many superhero figurines that filled their room and their play had gone without explanation. To the children, their toys had just vanished, but in reality, the adults around them controlled the environment to suit themselves at the expense and demise of the children's well-being.

I find myself regularly revisiting this moment in my career because it wasn't just about superhero play. It showed how the manipulation of adults over children can be so easy to engage in to make the adult experiences better at the detriment of the child, even in spaces assumed to be centered around children. I have reflected on this moment from different perspectives, with new and old knowledge and throughout my growing experience. While each time I see this experience from a different set of eyes, the same common thoughts underpinned it:

How are the lives of children impacted when adults control them?
How does this make sense in spaces that advocate and value children's participatory rights?

I needed to understand this further and I needed to understand it from the child's perspective. I knew that the only way to truly understand this justified social norm that adults can control children was to enhance my awareness of power as a discourse in itself (Chapter 1, Section 1.1 Foucault's Power), to explore the essence of childhood as it stands to position children in relation to adults (Chapter 1, Section 1.2 Power and Early Childhood) and to use these elements to examine the core structures that inform early years practice, such as frameworks and policy documents (Chapter 1, Section 1.3 Power, Policy and Curricula). By having this in-depth foundation, I equipped myself better to firstly ensure that children were not objectified in this research and sought out methods that would position children as powerful. However, as is described in Chapter 2, Section 2.3.2 'Choosing GoPro Cameras', the very design of methods to empower children can equally disempower them and this research experienced this entirely, discussed in further detail in Chapter 6 Reflections of a Researcher.

By physically seeing the way in which power exists for children (Chapter 3 Witnessing Power and Participation in the Early Years Environment), I was both taken aback and fascinated at the recorded experiences children had documented. Not only were some children regularly silenced, ignored and physically restricted by their educators, but their recorded insights exhibited a glimpse into the inner turmoil and frustration that children experience every day that deliberately go unnoticed by preoccupied educators. When children were talked to directly in this research, they could very easily tell me about the power being enforced upon them and how preschool is "just like a baby jail." This unexpected but truly encompassing statement became the heart of this research.

It must be noted that, while some effort was made to ensure that the awareness of power in the early years system as a whole was captured and the impact this has on the educators themselves was explored (Chapter 5, Section 5.3 'Docile Bodies of Administration: The Role of Female Educators'), the focus of this research was always to share the experiences of the children involved and use the Six Participation Personas of Power (Chapter 4) generated by these findings to explain how power shapes children's way of experiencing their environment which impacts on the way they participate in their educational environment. Therefore, I am conscious that this may be a difficult read for the adults who directly took part in this research. It is not easy to have an outsider come in with cameras and analyse your practice, but it's even harder to experience this when you have such a high belief in the practices you carry out with children. To put yourselves in a position to be researched by the very children you care for every day and to read about their raw experiences is courageous, but the true courage will come from what you, and any other adult who reads this research, chooses to do with the children's forms of expression captured throughout this project.

This research has contributed further insights to think beyond the current educational practices we engage in with children, how limiting and outdated these practices can be in a children's rights-based era and that simply refraining from forcing a child wear a coat when it rains may be one of the most empowering actions you take to support children to actively participate in their own lives.

1. Power, Policy and Participation in Early Childhood

Introduction

This chapter aims to provide understanding about power by highlighting the simple and effective ways power can create docile individuals, while ensuring the state-built frameworks achieve their political and economic agendas over the individuals themselves. This chapter will firstly go into detail about Foucault's views on power that informed this research, starting with the discussion of what a subject is and how it was applied to this research. This is important to understand because deciphering individuals as subjects and/or objects was necessary to determine whether children in this research were actively or passively participating in their environment as subjects or objects. Therefore, having knowledge on Foucault's subject, the ways in which governmentalisation feeds into disciplinary power in the context of the schooling system as well as discussing resistance as a behaviour of 'free subjects' will firstly be explored in this chapter.

Secondly, this chapter will contextualise childhood under the lens of power and the implications this has for children and childhood in education. This section informs how current knowledge and practices relating to childhood has led to the development of practices, such as regimented routines, to be deemed effective for quality practice and the ways in which the state removes all responsibility by placing full blame on children and adults who are penalised should they resist or fail to achieve these learning aims and goals.

The third section of this chapter provides a detailed analysis of Ireland's national curriculum framework Aistear as it relates to Te Whāriki (Ministry of Education, 2017) and Ready to Learn, called throughout this thesis as The White Paper (Government of Ireland, 1999) to highlight how political and economic agendas can be embedded in early years frameworks that inform practice. The underlying agendas in policy can have severe implications for children's experiences in early years environments when positioning them as future workers and not children in childhood. Exploring these issues provides the basis for understanding the gaps that exist for children's active participation in practice.

Lastly, the concept of power will be merged with discourses of participation and voice to explore the way that power impacts the level in which children participate through recognition of voice and social positioning.

1.1 Foucault’s Power

1.1.1. The Subject

The subject is constructed through the power relations in which they are exercised (MacNaughton 2005; Ailwood 2011). They are controlled or reliant on someone else and are attached to their identity through conscience self-knowledge (Foucault, 1982). The subject is shaped and guided by the illusion of freedom in a space that instils dominance (Dean, 1999), vaporises their individuality (Woodhead, Martin, Faulkner and Dorothy, 2008) and does so through the techniques of government that “transform life into an element of the economy of power” (Frost, 2019, p.153). However, the subject both resists and depends on power for survival (Davies, 2006; Butler, 1997) where their level of subjectivity defines their social positioning. Depending on their subjectivity level, a subject can be positioned as either powerful or powerless (Walkerdine, 1990) resulting from their potential attachment to power as a factor of their identity (Golob, 2015) where their subjectivity level is categorised in defined roles, such as students, managers, physicians, or academics (Varman, Saha and Skålén, 2011). Obeying your own will outside of the structure of these prescribed roles is seen as disobeying the authority, while following the will of authority set to enforce these identity roles is deemed compliant.

> “You are being punished for your subjectivity, for being the being
> you are. You can be beaten by a judgement.”
>
> - (Ahmed, 2017, p.72).

Subjects are created through the power exercised upon them within the governmental programs, structures, technologies and disciplines that they are a part of (Murray Li, 2007). Therefore, it becomes increasingly difficult for subjects to question these structures (Tikly, 2003). If the subject is unaware of their positioning, the subject becomes an “object and target of power” (Foucault, 1979, p.136). Power decentres subjects by structuring “the possible field of action of others” (Foucault, 1982, p. 790) which ensures subjects remain objects. Subjects are no longer the original source of their actions, but exist to respond to other subjects, or the Other through “mutual acts of recognition” (Davies, 2006, p.427) as they follow the social scripts provided to them. Social scripts have become a key part in defining a subject’s level of subjectivity: “Is there an essential “I,” or is the subject a fiction, a product of the performance of social scripts?” (Hekman, 2010, p.93). It is through their engagement or resistance with social scripts that the subject’s existence is livable or not (Butler, 1997), decided by whether the subject's resistance against the power imposed on them will lead to additional surveillance or confinement (Davies, 2006; Hekman, 2010). However, a subject has the ability to detach through 'doubling of the self' (Deleuze, 1988), showing that subject positions are not permeated, but are in flux with the shifting of discourse (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985). Therefore, a subject's subjectivity is not concreted based on certain characteristics, values, intentions or experiences occupying the subject but should be viewed as the collective entirety of the subject positions an individual person represents at any given time and place (Varman, Saha and Skålén, 2011). The power structure uses the varying positioning of the subject gauged by their subjectivity level and presents itself as capable of 'fixing' the subject through enforced practices that control the time, space and movement of the subject's body, with strict monitoring and correction of behaviours being applied (Preece, 2021) until the body becomes "docile" (Foucault, 1979, p.138).

1.1.2. Docility

Docility occurs when subjects are put under constant surveillance and monitoring so the desired practice becomes internalised and the capacity for the group to resist becomes futile. Their awareness of the power being exercised over them is mute and through this unconscious existence, subjects conform, with minimal action taken against the power structure (Corbett, 2010). Power is reinforced not only by the authority force, but by the individuals themselves. By establishing norms that are based on "regimes of truth" (Foucault, 1979, p.131), subjects comply and replicate this power upon peers to avoid being on the receiving end of punishment (Urbina, 2016). By actively internalising the behaviours forced on them by power /structures, behavioural acts are no longer owned by the subject (Foucault, 1997). The subject can no longer physically resist and submits their body to the force. The subject is constantly monitored through a 'microscope of conduct' (Foucault, 1979, p. 174) and subjects who step out of line are publicly shamed to avoid other subjects repeating any acts the power structure deems as undesirable (Allan, 2019). This ensures subjects engage in close surveillance of themselves and each other, avoid punishment and exert power over each other where the need to use power over and against the other becomes normalised (Corbett, 2010).

The state ensures subjects remain docile through the continuous interference in the life of the subject (Foucault, 1988). It does so by establishing what is meaningful and what is valuable through specific rhetoric used in initiatives which directly informs follow-up initiatives, guidelines and frameworks that decipher daily practices. These initiatives use specific, repeated language to dictate what is meaningful by outlining guiding principles and defining values, providing the common benchmarks for all practice (Madden, 2012; Moloney, 2015). Practice is translated into a structured routine based on objective value, subjective attractiveness and categorised according to already established norms. It is then marketed to the public in an appealing manner in order to increase its value. Thus, it gains wider acceptance. By establishing the value of these practices, organisations position themselves as the spokesman for the subject without incorporating the voice of the subject directly. Organisations tend to lead the way to formulate routines and frameworks based on what the organisation values rather than what the subjects of that organisation value. Organisations can become rigid in their values and provide little to no opportunity for the subjects as a collective to input their views. Practices inevitably become inflexible and outdated. When larger bodies establish authority over the interpretation of values, the value's longevity is weakened. In order for values to be sustainable, they must be constructed and approved by the collective, otherwise these values become meaningless, with weak levels of engagement demonstrated by the subject (Yeoman, 2020).

1.1.3. Governmentalisation

Subjects as economic and political products go hand in hand with the governmentalisation of the state (Foucault, 2007), a concept defined by Foucault (1979; 1982; 2007) as the ‘conduct of conduct’. The first ‘conduct’ implies that government is about deliberately directing and guiding, with the second ‘conduct’ referring to people’s thinking and actions. Thus, the ‘conduct of conduct’ means the calculated control of people’s behaviour (Varman, Saha and Skålén, 2011). Historically, the control of human life centered around the torture and execution of the physical being (Foucault, 1979) and has been argued to have “destroyed the body” (Ostrander, 1987, p.121). However, population control and compliance techniques evolved so that they no longer focus on the physical to control bodies, but instead target the soul (Foucault, 1979).

> “Punishment, if I may so put it, should strike the soul rather than the body.”
>
> - (Mably, 1789, p.326)

The soul brings existence to the body by inhabiting it. Therefore, by controlling the soul, the body complies along with it. (Foucault, 1979). Foucault defined the soul as a substance that "is the effect and instrument of a political anatomy", stating how "it would be wrong to say that the soul is an illusion, or an ideological effect. On the contrary, it exists, it has a reality, it is produced permanently around, on, within, the body by the functioning of a power that is exercised on those that are punished" (Foucault, 1979, p. 29). The soul was no longer understood under Christian theology as being born without sin, but collapsed into the "real, non-corporeal soul" born out of "methods of punishment, supervision and constraint." (Foucault, 1979, p.29; Ostrander, 1987, p.121). Within this power dynamic, the soul becomes "the prison of the body" (Foucault, 1975, p.30). By making corporal punishment taboo, the non-corporeal soul becomes the target for punishment to achieve mass conformity of the corporeal body. Cultural philosophies, values, consciousness and psyche are some of the many elements that engrave the soul, making it a "reality-reference" (Foucault, 1975, p.30). Exploring these existential engravings provide deeper clarity on the "regimes of truth" (Foucault, 1980, p.131) that lead people to govern themselves (Rabinow, 1989) allowing for the state to materialise:

> "The state is practice. The state is inseparable from the set of practices by which the state actually became a way of governing, a way of doing things, and a way too of relating to government."
>
> - (Foucault, 2007).

Therefore, government is not seen as a single entity that can be pinpointed as a cause or reason but is "the correlative of a particular way of govern-ing" (Foucault, 2008, p. 6) where "the body and the blood, gave way" (Foucault, 1979, p.16) and the "bodiless reality" known as the soul is punished, contorted and disciplined by governmental discourse. Discourse shapes the social world (Cochoy, 1998) and can be defined as "a particular way of talking about and understanding the world (or an aspect of the world)" (Phillips and Jørgensen, 2002, p. 1) while giving meaning and determining what can be said within a particular domain that it regulates (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985). A governmental discourse or governmentalisation achieves regulation of people by promoting current forms of knowledge to direct certain ways of thinking. This promotes specific behaviours in humans (Dean, 1999; Foucault, 1982, 2007; Rose, 1999). The purpose of governmentalisation is to focus on the population at large using calculated supervision as a means to mould groups. Government not only aims to preserve and prolong life (Foucault, 1979), but does so regardless of the impending suffering that overshadows it (Noys, 2005). As the nature of the state transforms, so too does the rationalities of the government (Tikly, 2003). With this perspective, governmentality can be recognised as a way of thinking about who can govern, who is being governed and how governing is enacted (Gordon, 1979). To shape each individual would be impossible (Murray Li, 2007), therefore, coercive regulation of human action is implemented in large groups to ensure prescribed conditions set out by the government are met to create mass habits, social norms and beliefs. Groups are categorised and confined in intentional spaces that allow for intense control and monitoring by authority figures. By interfering with groups, the state can achieve the "welfare of the population, the improvement of its condition, the increase of its wealth, longevity, health, et cetera" (Foucault, 1979, p.100). Governmental intervention is very impactful because even though it may experience various levels of resistance and not achieve exactly what was set out, it does result in change. (Murray Li, 2007).

Foucault (2000) identified three types of governmentality in his best known lecture presented in 1978 (Oels, 2005). These are sovereign power, biopower and disciplinary power, where the common intentionality is to administer, manage and optimise life (Foucault, 1979). Sovereign power is associated with brutal coercion which centres around holders of power forcing those lacking in power to do things against their will (Varman, Saha and Skålén, 2011). Biopower was identified as a governmentality that seeks to "foster and use the forces and capabilities of the living individuals that make up a population." (Oels, 2005, p.190). Foucault (1979) associates this governmentality with what he defines as, "the government of the social body" (Clegg, Courpasson, and Phillips, 2006, p. 53). This highlights the move away from sovereign power occupied with viewing the population as a means to procure property and instead shifts to see the population as an exploitable resource (Varman, Saha and Skålén, 2011).

1.1.4. Disciplinary Power

Disciplinary power is the third governmentality identified by Foucault to which this research will explore specifically. Disciplinary power relates to power exercised and explores how it uses "a policy of coercions that act upon the body" (Foucault, 1979, p.138). Disciplinary power is enhanced through its subgroups of hierarchical observation, normalisation and examination. Hierarchical observation ensures the impacts of power to be seen and then enhanced according to what has been observed (Foucault, 1979) where the "trick to is to see without being seen"

(Ostrander, 1987, p.121). Conduct is controlled while also being improved on, with subjects internalising this mechanism as normal. Subjects then modify their behaviour as a result of the perceived or actual ‘all seeing eye’ (Bourke et al., 2013). Normalisation defines what is deemed as the norm. To rebel against ‘normalised’ power leads to the ‘justifiable’ punishment of the subject (Foucault, 1995). The instrument that combines hierarchical observation and normalisation together is examination, where watching the subject under the guise of normalised observation allows for subjects to be classified and measured against testing procedures that validate subsequent punishments (Bourke et al., 2013). Disciplinary power operates by making the gap visible between an individual’s current existence and an idealised norm. The control of subjects is guaranteed by closing the gap between the actual and ideal subject positions and bringing them closer to embodying the norm (Varman, Saha and Skålén, 2011).

Disciplinary power is both indiscreet and inconspicuous making it deceptive in its manner. Even in a space where a clear authority figure is established, it is the whole system that produces power and does so obviously, even though it remains “permanently in silence most of the time.” (Llamas, 2006, p.668). Disciplinary power is most effective when subjects are enclosed, where the aim is to “derive the maximum advantages and to neutralise the inconveniences (thefts, interruptions of work, disturbances and 'cabals'), as the forces of production become more concentrated; to protect materials and tools and to master the labour force” (Foucault, 1979, p.142). The successful enclosure of subjects is supported by the action of partitioning where “each individual has his own place; and each place its individual” that ensures each subject is accountable through the knowing of their whereabouts in the form of “presences and absences” (Foucault, 1979, p.143). By analysing the physical space occupied by subjects, the function of enclosed partitioning ensures that each individual is located, supervised, assessed and judged under the scope of failing or succeeding. This procedure was “therefore, aimed at knowing, mastering and using” (Foucault, 1979, p.143) subjects based on their ability to function and produce. The development of “functional sites” (Foucault, 1979, p.143) as being “useful” (Foucault, 1979, p.143), for example housing children to be educated and socially enhanced in a pre-school, further combines the relationality between administration with political and biological components of life that ultimately “map” (Foucault, 1979, p.144) subjects. Subjects are analysed based on their “rank” (Foucault, 1979, p.145) which “does not give them a fixed position, but distributes them and circulates them in a network of relations”. (Foucault, 1979, p.146). Subjects are organised into compartments based on their age, performance and behaviour where comparisons between each other are more easily identifiable and the execution of the hierarchy of knowledge is achieved. The ranking mechanism is unleashed in multiple formats throughout an educational context, such as through:

> "...rows or ranks of pupils in the class, corridors, courtyards; rank attributed to each pupil at the end of each task and each examination; the rank he obtains from week to week, month to month, year to year; an alignment of age groups, one after another; a succession of subjects taught and questions treated, according to an order of increasing difficulty."
>
> - (Foucault, 1979, p.147).

It is the regulation of the subject within a regulated space that guarantees "the obedience of individuals, but also a better economy of time and gesture." (Foucault, 1979, p.148).

Another mechanism exercised by disciplinary power includes the control of activity, for example, through the use of routines, discussed by Foucault (1979) as the timetable. The timetable was a technique that ensured activities were strictly governed through the division of time into hours, minutes and seconds, with its aim to "establish rhythms, impose particular occupations and regulate the cycles of repetition" (Foucault, 1979, p.149). The control of time results in power being held over the social actions and subjectivities of subjects (Haraldsson and Lilja, 2017) which ultimately reinforces the control of the subject themselves (Lilja and Vinthagen, 2018). Time then "penetrates the body and with it all the meticulous controls of power" (Foucault, 1979, p.152) through the breaking down of physical gestures into "obligatory rhythm, imposed from the outside" (Foucault, 1979, p.151) that literally break down the physical being:

> "...the position of the body, limbs, articulations is defined; to each movement are assigned a direction, an aptitude, a duration; their order of succession is prescribed."
>
> - (Foucault, 1979, p.152)

Effective gestures communicate a well-trained, obedient body, therefore, through the "correlation of the body and the gesture" (Foucault, 1979, p.152), subjects are dismantled and restructured to imitate the direct instructions given to them, altering their natural rhythm and following the rhythm of the Other. The subject is exposed to specific gestures relating to specific objects, for example, how to hold a pencil, and the rhythm of the body is reinforced to echo this gesture whenever in contact with this object. By establishing structured physical impulses to given objects and rhythms of the day, the subject, just like the object itself, becomes an "apparatus of production" (Foucault, 1979, p.153). The purpose to avoid "non-idleness" and "to accelerate the process of learning" (Foucault, 1979, p.154) is solidified where the subject's rhythm is controlled. The "exhaustive use" (Foucault, 1979, p.155) of the subject through the breakdown of repetitive gestures in the physical body ultimately creates the perfected utopia strived for by governmentality:

> The "new object is the natural body"
>
> - (Foucault, 1979, p.155).

1.1.5. Objectification

The modes in which subjects become objects, according to Foucault (1979), are dividing practices, scientific classification and subjectification. Dividing practices refers to how social groups are physically separated based on difference, a practice that is justified by the social group by associating the separation from others as part of their own identity (Madigan, 1992). Scientific classification is the practice that makes the body an object by using the status of science as a basis for instilling social norms (Foucault and Rabinow, 1984). This practice is supported through the practice of documentation, whereby the individual is captured in a fixed time and used to generate statistics that support the social norm (Madigan, 1992). The final mode of objectification according to Foucault is subjectification where an individual turns themselves into a subject (Foucault, 1982). This involves the individual attaching their identity to regimes of truth and knowledge which then make the individual active in cementing social norms. Through internalised personal discourse, individuals monitor themselves according to the social norms making themselves a subject in the process (Foucault, 1982). Foucault's process of objectification explores the political and scientific theories which act to turn people (subjects) into things (objects) (Madigan, 1992). This research uses Foucault's stance on objectification not as a means for analysis, but as inspiration for seeing the daily routine as a potential power structure that may be turning children into subjects and/or objects. While Foucault's theory of objectification was loosely applied in this research, it created the basis for a focal point on what aspect of power to zone in on, where Foucault's other theories surrounding disciplinary power, govermentalisation and docility were then applied more directly throughout.

1.1.6. The Art of Surveillance and the Panopticon

The use of surveillance as a technique to control individuals extends as far back as Bentham's famous Panopticon, an apparatus that Foucault developed upon which promised to "alter" subjects accordingly (Shah and Kesan, 2007). Based originally from the prison context, Bentham outlined how prisoners could be reformed using the Panopticon as a surveillance technique. Its design involved one supervisor placed in a tower looking over the prisoners where the tower could see out but the prisoners could not see in. The Panopticon is deemed a very versatile programme that "must be detached from any specific use" (Foucault, 1979, 205), but ultimately, it produces power regardless of the motive behind the intent. Whether it is to "cure patients, teach children or reform criminals, the Panopticon will tend to produce docile individuals." (Gallagher, 2004, p.158). This is made possible through its original purpose which sought to minimise the need for direct surveillance through ingraining self-regulation as a means to regulate prisoners and thus the overall prison itself. Eventually, the potential of being observed all the time forces "subjects to control its behaviour as if being supervised, even when not being observed." (Çeven et al., 2021, p.154). This is a psychological state that subjects develop as a result of being intensely watched (Mungwini, 2012), producing self-surveillance behaviours stemming from the feeling that someone is looking at them, even if they are not. Through the embedded soul training of the Panopticon (Haggerty and Ericson, 2000), the psyche of the prisoner is constantly moulded by the authority figure (Marroum, 2007). In the prison context, this led to prisoners not knowing if they were being watched and so the threat of possibly being seen to break rules minimised any resistance attempts resulting in their constant compliance. Foucault (1979) explored how the Panopticon was not just relevant to the prison context but entered the doors of many contexts, including schools, as a mode of spreading compliance throughout our society:

> "The Panopticon is a marvellous machine which, whatever use one may put it to, produces homogenous effects of power."
>
> - (Foucault, 1979, p.202)

Foucault (1979) states that the Panopticon is "destined to spread throughout the social body" (p.207), highlighting that every individual within society becomes a form of surveillance to enforce disciplinary power over socially unacceptable behaviour on others. Some have claimed that schools under the lens of power are realistically prisons in disguise (Barker et al., 2010; Hall, 2003):

> "Here, the schools are also a bit prison-oriented…the children are treated like prisoners…"
>
> \- (Deleuze, 1977, p. 210)

The techniques of the Panopticon is applied in more detail within the findings of this research (Chapter 3, Section 3.2, 3.2.1 The Panopticon in Early Years Practice) to highlight how methods of surveillance were evidently implemented to control children within early years practice.

1.1.7. Free Subjects

> "Power is exercised only over free subjects, and only insofar as they are free. By this we mean individual or collective subjects who are faced with a held of possibilities in which several ways of behaving, several reactions and diverse comportments, may be realized."
>
> - (Foucault, 1982, p.790)

If power is only wielded by those who are in knowledge of their power, the view of children being vulnerable becomes socially permeated by the adults placed in a role that paradoxically aims to support children's wellbeing. However, cultivating practices where children are viewed as vulnerable will mean that children's positions as rights-bearing citizens will never truly be implementable. It is better to have "a natural educational inequality" (Herrlitz, 1973, pp. 87–88) than to pretend children are exercising their rights when the reality is much more tokenistic. The challenges of life should be "made bearable for children" (Mollenhauer, 1983, p.24) where children's participation is active and intentional. To shed light on the societal order that exists, opportunities become available for one's own emancipation, where life thrives when you "follow your path" (Rancière, 1987, p.57). An awareness of power does not entrap its subjects, but the very existence of power generates the magic of resistance and the actuality of the "free subject" (Foucault, 1983, p.221). Therefore, while freedom may be seen as a stance that supports power (Foucault, 1983), it "does not vanish" (Davies, 2006, p.430). Freedom actualises the existence of free subjects who embody the variety of possibilities to take action within power through resistance, where "everyday acts of defiance can alter organisational contexts and their social practices." (Manuel and Llamas, 2006). This comes from the way in which individuals exercise power through resistance (Foucault, 1982) and utilise their capacity to resist within the "microphysics of power" (Foucault, 1979, p.26) so they can make a space for themselves and their decision-making within their environment (Hartmann, 2003; Nealon, 2008; Pickett, 1996). These spaces for and of resistance have been referred to as "mini-publics" (Levinson, 2001, p.334) and are deemed to be places where new ideas and perspectives can be generated while posing difficult questions as a means to understand can be explored (Tesar, 2014). Having spaces where voices can be expressed and generated into new forms of knowledge requires the social acceptance and practice of resistance where "engaging with resistance is not a luxury but a necessity" (Giroux, 2015, p. 2), particularly in educational contexts. This is because the moral obligation to engage more actively in resistance (Sims, 2017) is suited to the "play with power securely and safely within the limits of pedagogy" (Walkerdine, 1990, p.8). By exercising power through resistance, children's awareness of power increases so they can exist as a free subject rather than an object of power (Foucault, 1979) who, at the very least, are aware of the manipulation and control being exerted over them (Birnhack, et. al, 2018). This is particularly relevant in our growing culture relating to the importance of children's rights, particularly participation rights, and how the gap between the theory of children's participation and the implementation of children's participation in practice is also growing more disconnected as the practice of children's participation, voice and expressions prove to be a struggle to implement (Lundy, 2007; Rico and Janot, 2021).

1.2. Power and Early Childhood

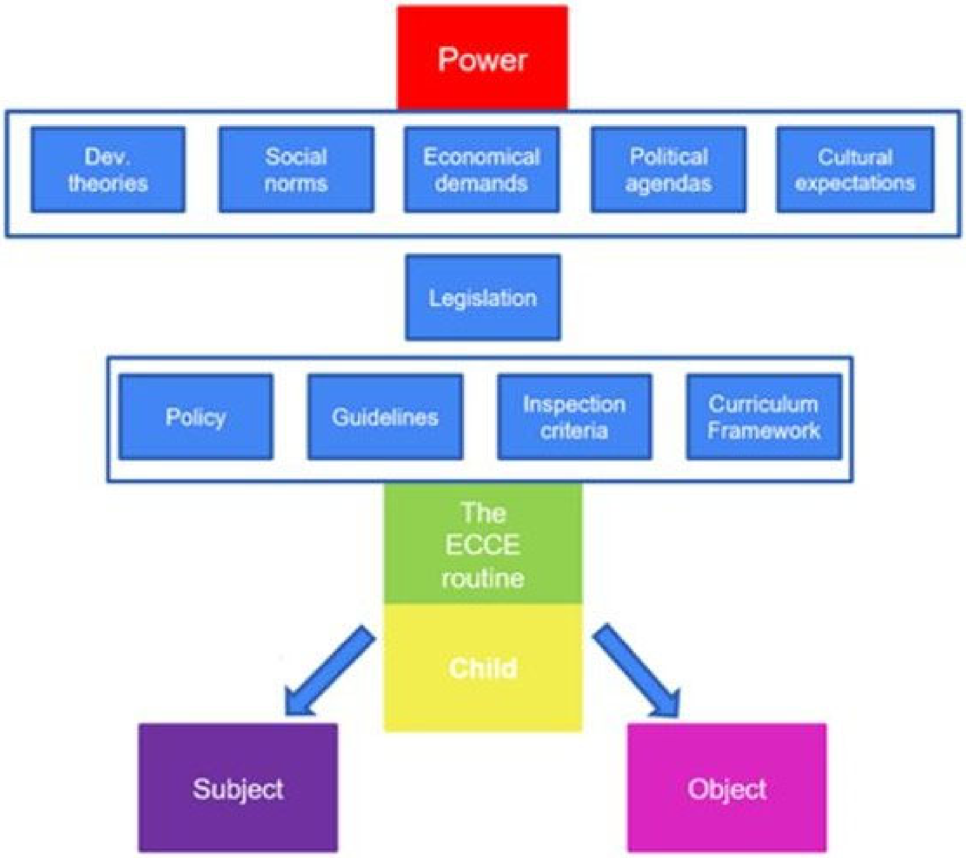

Power
Dev. theories
Social norms
Economical demands
Political agendas
Cultural expectations
Legislation
Policy
Guidelines
Inspection criteria
Curriculum Framework
The ECCE routine
Child
Subject
Object

Image: Some of the early years power structures that influence the design of the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) daily routine and shape a child's position of power

1.2.1 Neoliberalism and the Governing of Childhood

Neoliberalism as a form of governmentality seeks to produce economic workers through processes of marketisation (Rose, 1999; Skålén, Fougère and Fellesson, 2008) which is mainly enforced using disciplinary power (Covaleski, Dirsmith, Heian, and Samuel, 1998; Foucault, 1979) and is the opposing opposite of what is deemed as active participation in one's own life. Investment in people in the earlier stages of life is deemed particularly vital to ensure children mould into quality adult commodities (Rose, 1999), making schools a fundamental space for controlling children as docile, neoliberal objects that thrives on children being inactively passive when it comes to participation. Dalhberg and Moss (2005) believe that children and childhood have been targeted more intensely by governmentality because:

> “...the incompleteness of the child, the lack of corruption, the ability to inscribe the tabula rasa and to govern the soul makes the child such a promising agent of redemption…”
>
> - (Dalhberg and Moss, 2005, p.58).

Those with economic power decide who wins and who fails, correcting and modifying children in order to eliminate “social ills” (Giroux, 2010, p.35) and ensure “progression from animal infant to civilised adult and to reduce the risk of rebellion.” (Walkerdine, 1990, p.21). Filtered and unfiltered adult discourses dominate outlooks on childhood which divides the pedagogic and the non-pedagogic into an age-appropriate “shielding”, ensuring the adult lenses of life are the only ones to be represented (Mollenhaur, 1983, p.21). Failure to replicate these adult ways of living results in the social disposal of the child. This process not only increases children’s dependency but also their competitive edge in the economic and political spheres of neoliberalism (Davies, 2006; Davies and Bansel, 2005). By governing childhood, the early years sector has become another controlled space in the lives of children. As Walkerdine (1990) states, “the child supposedly freed by this process to develop according to its nature was the most classified, catalogued, watched and monitored in history” (p.21). For example, by establishing routines, children learn very quickly that “they have no say in what is happening and no power or control over the situations” as they experience life as “recipients of actions without participation” (French, 2019, p.13).

Structures that control children are most effective when implemented regularly through a timetable (Foucault, 1979), or as early years practice would see as a daily routine. Routines are predictable rhythms of events that instill expected behavioural patterns in children, informed by the “regime of truth” (Foucault, 1980, p.131) that adults decide. These daily rhythms control and enforce sequences of behaviour (Yinger, 1979) that can be seen as “ritualistic” in its manner (Yeoward, 1996, p.17) whereby children are deemed to be aware of the scripts they are following (Fivush, 1984; Klein, Kantor and Fernie, 1988). Children become familiar with the patterns of behaviour they expected to fit into where their individual rhythms become an automatic reflex to the routine rather than being actively engaged in their experiences. The most impactful element of power that routines exercise upon children is how they are done to children rather than with them (Goouch and Powell, 2012).

Through regulatory practices built on forms of knowledge such as routines, the state can elicit extreme force on children, making visible the connection between identity and power. The state controls the narrative and thus the subjectivity level of children as being vulnerable and incompetent (Davies et al., 2001; Rasmussen and Harwood, 2003), a label that children do not identify with but is placed on them by external ministries and education officials (Brunila and Rossi, 2018). This positioning is strengthened through the exertion of dominance of the state's economic agenda. This is evident in early years curriculum frameworks such as Te Whariki in New Zealand (Ministry of Education, 1993) and Aistear in Ireland (The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment [NCCA], 2009), as well as in key Irish policy papers such as The White Paper (Government of Ireland, 1999). These types of policy documents instruct the "right manner of disposing things" by giving normality to the adjustment of human conduct via expert intervention (Foucault, 1979, p.95). Concepts of readiness (Connolly, 2004) and economic and political agendas have become the core vantage point for informing how early childhood is thought about (Woodrow and Press, 2007). For example, forms of truth and knowledge such as child-centered and child-led practice is "very much a White-centred discourse in that it shares many attributes and effects of White privilege" (Norquay, 1999, p.194) and has been critiqued as not being 'developmentally appropriate' (Delpit, 1995; Langford, 2010). These forms of knowledge and truth only expect and enforce particular behaviours from the adult, a duty that is "unattainable in practice" (Lanford, 2010, p.115).

Bloch (1992) states that the increase in scientific paradigms in early childhood pedagogies is directly linked to the sector's need to be seen as professional, for example, how developmental psychology has become a mode of truth that informs the entirety of early years practice (Dalhberg and Moss, 2004, p.60). However, the power exerted over children using developmental theories and political agendas maintains the child's place in the realm of vulnerability (Brunila and Rossi, 2018) where the child is seen as a 'becoming'. This places emphasis on "the particular 'being' that one is to become" (Arneil, 2002, p.3) rather than on the child's current existence. The issue with viewing children as becomings is how it insinuates that children are in a state of incompletion and in need of support to become whole. Therefore, by enacting scientific approaches that study the child while ensuring they remain restricted in knowledge around these structures designed for them and not by them preserves the child's position as an object of power in a governmentality of neoliberalism (Foucault, 1979).

1.2.2 The Objectification of Children and Female Educators

It is not only children who are objectified within a neoliberal early years system. Adults, particularly female adults, are positioned because of state interference as the ones responsible for children's overall development (Langford, 2010; Walkerdine, 1990). This positioning is underpinned by a 'surveillance of care' (Steeves and Jones, 2010, p.187) where care is defined as someone's role "to be charged with the protection, welfare, or maintenance" (Noddins, 1984, p.9) of children. The state facilitated the woman's return to the workforce by increasing 'childcare' provision targeted towards the female role (Urban, 2012) ultimately leading to the female dominated early years sector (Madden, 2012; Rohrmann, 2016) that can use maternal instincts to monitor and control children under the "illusion of 'care'" (Walkerdine, 1990, p.22). For example, in Ireland in 2020/2021, "staff who worked directly with children were almost exclusively female (98%) which represents the same proportion of females reported every year since 2015/16" (Pobal, 2022). Children have been seen as resources or liabilities under the sphere of 'childcare' (Smith, 2018) where the state individualised responsibility to women expected to participate in the control of children (Davies et al., 2005). Female adults are then regulated to act from a caring role in order to save children from their own 'vulnerability'. However, to position the female adult as the nurturer, responsible for the development of each child into a civilised adult, free from their innate animalistic tendencies, is "impossible" (Walkerdine, 1990, p.115). Noddins (1984) discusses the level of caring capabilities of a carer and questions if their caring intentions are genuine when they are caring according to a fixed rule. As with all caring scenarios, there exists the possibility that the carer becomes "overwhelmed by the responsibilities and duties of the task and that, as a result of being burdened, he or she will cease to care for the other and become instead the object of 'caring'" (Noddins, 1984, p.12). Therefore, not only are children subjects of the system, but so too are the adults who "become the mechanism of their own subjection" (Bourke et al., 2013, p.86).

As is the case in a neoliberal world, penalties exist both for the child and the adult for not complying to their societal positioning. For children, they will be classed as defective (Langford, 2010). For adults, failing to regulate children is socially and criminally condemned in a culture of fear (Furedi, 2002) where the threat of litigation constantly looming maintains their compliance (Lester and Russell 2008; Play England 2013). By functioning in their scripted roles, where breaking out of their mould generates fear, guilt and shame, both children and adults feed into the utopia that governmentality strives for: "As long as the general population is passive, apathetic, and diverted to consumerism or hatred of the vulnerable, then the powerful can do as they please." (Chomsky, 2016, p. 56). Without awareness of the power structures to which they exist, both adults and children are objectified by a system that disguises itself as provision established to ensure their health and welfare are protected, their societal empowerment guaranteed, but inevitably, it reproduces and enforces inequality:

> "Children's bodies are controlled by others; by the teachers working
> with them, and in turn the government who control the teachers"
>
> - (Yeoward, 1996, p.41).

The divide between adults and children grows further as the governmentalisation of childhood becomes normalised and the avoidance of responsibility by the state remains intact.

1.2.3 Documentation as a Surveillance Technique

Adults documenting children's lives has become an ingrained part of childhood, beginning with the visual biographies of the foetus, to birth, to their first steps, their first tooth (Sparrman and Lindgren, 2010), their mistakes and their successes. The practice of adults documenting the daily activities of children has become widespread in the home, community and school environments where children spend their time. In early childhood education contexts, photography and video recording is used as a pedagogical tool by adults (Flanner Quinn and Manning, 2013) with the purpose to 'make children's learning visible' (NCCA, 2015) while deepening educators' reflective understanding of children's learning experiences (Kroeger and Cardy, 2006; NCCA, 2015). Making children's learning visible is viewed as something that, without documentation, may otherwise have remained invisible to adults (SOU, 1997, p.157). Thus, documentation is seen as a valuable tool in early childhood education for developing educator professionalism, enhancing high-quality practice and visually highlighting the learning advancements of children.

While rhetoric surrounding documentation implementation practices in early childhood explores the benefits for and to children, it has been argued that it can also be a form of surveillance used to report on children's everyday activities to parents and other educators to prove the fulfilling of role requirements as set out by governmental stakeholders (Skolverket 2001; Lindgren, 2012). Governmental bodies that inform the practices of educators are usually in a position of greater power than the educators, children or parents and when high-quality practice is associated with the requirement that documentation is used to prove an outcome or goal has been achieved, then the process of documentation becomes another form of surveillance done to the child (Flannery Quinn and Manning, 2013). By utilising documentation through this outcome-based approach used to communicate children's experiences to other groups of adults, documentation not only controls and interferes with the lives of children, but is a role necessary for early childhood educators to complete in order to demonstrate that they are capable of delivering on governmental outcomes that seek to mould children. From a Foucauldian lens, this is the reality of governmentalisation at play that uses adult educators to train children into accepting the presence of the 'microscope of conduct' (Foucault, 1979, p.174) as being integral in their lives, regardless of whether children consent or not. Keeping children docile during documentation practices ensures not only that the governmentalisation of early childhood educational contexts remains stable by forcing educators to prove that they have gotten children to achieve the predetermined outcomes and learning goals as set out for them, but it also embeds an authoritative consensus about how children should be 'that it is difficult to imagine how to think, act, and feel in any other way' (MacNaughton, 2005, p. 32) underpinning the realities of docility in childhood. As Flannery Quinn and Manning (2013) see it, photography used to gather documentation on children's daily activities becomes a source of knowledge and power that dictates and interferes with the way children are to live in order to maintain their docility (Foucault, 1988; 1997). By remaining unaware about the purposes of documentation and denied opportunities to participate in documentation processes, children are forced to embody the subordinate position of the 'looked on' where they must accept that visual representations of their lives will be taken, interpreted and displayed by the adults as 'onlookers' (Sturken and Cartwright, 2009), even if children do not want to be looked at (Mayell, 2001).

By positioning themselves as the onlookers, educators are in control of what is documented, how it is interpreted, who it is for and in what way it will be used in future. Through this view, the main function of children is to be passively there for educators who look at children as being necessary to prove their educator professional capabilities (Sparrman and Lindgren, 2010). Surveillance methods such as these normalise the regulation of children (Smith 2012) by making the purpose of documentation about mass governing (Gordon, 1979) resulting in people learning to govern themselves (Rabinow, 1989) and materialises the very essence of governmentalisaion as a means to direct the thinking and actions of mass populations (Foucault, 1982; 1979; 2007). This marks a key exploration of the role of documentation in early childhood education in the manner in which it is carried out to monitor and control children, disconnecting itself from the rhetoric surrounding documentation as a means to increase children's participation in their own lives (UNCRC, 1989; Lindgren, 2013; NCCA, 2015).

As is discussed in more detail in 1.4 Power and Participation, the assumption is always that participation is empowering (Murray and Hallett 2000, p.15), yet children never get the opportunity to be in, or to be trained to be in, the position of onlooker where documentation practices are concerned. The position where one subject is seen without seeing, in this case the child, while the other sees without being seen, in this case the adult, is deemed as surveillance (Foucault 1979). Relating this concept to active participation, there is no opportunity for this when it comes to children who have no rights to anonymity and no options to resist participating in documentation when conducted by adults on children (Sparrman and Lindgren, 2010). Because all control is assigned to adults to document children's daily activities, children are not seen as agents but as objects to be looked at, generating a serious lack of ethical considerations given to the child both in terms of their consent to be documented and their consent to use that documentation for interpretation and display by others (Henderson, 2003; Robson, 2009, 2011). Clark and Moss (2001) strongly state that observing children is not an adult's right. Similarly, Robson (2009, 2011) notes that we as adults should question whether uncovering the details of children's lives really is in their 'best interests'. Sometimes certain practice is rationalised under the phrase 'best interests', in this case where documenting children's daily experiences is in the child's best interests. But when associated with ethics, power and surveillance, the questions that are posed are who decides what the best interests of children are and how to act in those interests? (Flannery Quinn and manning, 2013). Interestingly, Lindgren's (2012) research demonstrated that when adults have an opportunity to reflect on how they would feel if they were watched as often as children were, with their work tasks documented using photography and displayed in the workplace office as is done in children's classrooms, the adults expressed how they "would not enjoy that very much, actually", particularly if photographs were taken by their boss or manager without getting their consent to take photographs or display them in public for others to see. This role reversal ignites further thinking about what the purpose of documentation is for and if it is being conducted in an unethical manner where consent is not actively pursued during the documentation process, then ethically how is this considered high-quality practice? Consideration needs to be given in regard to the forms of practice that disguise themselves as supporting children's rights, but in practice may be used unethically to fulfill predetermined tasks and duties that children ultimately have no say in. This topic is explored further in section 5.4.1 Children's Right to Play and Participation.

1.3. Power and Policy

Children experiencing childhood are seen as contributors of knowledge, insight and wisdom as they mould their own world and thus mould the wider world itself (Katsiada et al., 2018). The view of the child as a being is evident in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child where it defines the child as a human being under Article 1 (Children’s Rights Alliance, 2010). The use of the term ‘being’ demonstrates first and foremost that children are beings, not becomings, and that childhood is to be recognised as a valuable period in life as it is. On the other hand, the child viewed as a becoming places emphasises on childhood being a transitory stage where a child needs to develop from itself. Defining children in this manner places emphasis on “the particular ‘being’ that one is to become” (Arneil, 2002, p.3) rather than who the child is at present. The issue with viewing children as becomings is that it insinuates children as being in a state of incompletion and can lead to power and policy moulding curricula to develop “job-ready zombies” (Hil, 2015, p.5) underpinned by neoliberalism as a form of governmentality that turns individuals into useable, yet docile economic units (Crozier et al., 1975; Foucault, 1979), The concept of children as beings and becomings will be explored using Ireland's national curriculum framework Aistear as an example as it undergoes national review throughout the duration of this research. This is to highlight the way power exists and informs the daily practices of early years environments which has implications for children’s ability to participate in their daily lives.

1.3.1. Te Whāriki and Aistear’s Origin

Aistear was modelled on New Zealand’s national curriculum Te Whāriki (Churchill Dower, French, Rogers and Sandbrook, 2013). This is most evident in terms of both curriculum frameworks having very similar themes. For example, Te Whāriki’s five Strands are 1) Well-being, 2) Belonging, 3) Communication, 4) Exploration and 5) Contribution and Aistear’s four themes are 1) Well-being, 2) Communication, 3) Exploring and Thinking and 4) Identity and Belonging. The similarities between these themes cannot be dismissed. Therefore, it is important to analyse the origins of Te Whāriki in order to better understand the origins of Aistear. The rationale for Te Whāriki’s development stems from the 1980’s when public debate in New Zealand discussed the need to improve on the economic turndown. Education was pinpointed as a “major drain on government funds and reform of such systems would make them more cost effective” (Mutch, 2004, p.2). Through education reforms, New Zealand increased their economic competitiveness by being internationally known as one of the first countries to implement a national curriculum framework for early childhood education (Ministry of Education, 1993). Originally, the New Zealand national curriculum was underpinned by the following ideology:

> Schools, parents, and other groups in a school's community can use the curriculum framework to work together to develop policies and programmes which focus on the learner, promote a sense of cultural identity, work towards a fair share for all, provide a broad and balanced education, and encourage openness and accountability.
>
> \- (Department of Education, New Zealand, 1988, p.5)

The above statement embraces a flexible curriculum ideology that schools, parents and educators can work around based on their individual context. This could be seen as instilling the view of children as beings as there is no emphasis on a child developing into something, rather the focus is on supporting them as they are. Although it makes no reference to a child's input, it must be considered that the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child had not yet been published at this time. This flexible and individualised curriculum ideology was never implemented (Mutch, 2004) and was replaced with the following approach towards the national curriculum design:

> "It (the draft national curriculum) sets national directions for schooling which, I believe, will assist young New Zealanders to achieve success and acquire the essential knowledge, understanding and skills which will enable them to compete in the modern international economy."
>
> \- (Ministry of Education, 1993: foreword)

Repetitive rhetoric referring back to economic benefits depicts the creation of Te Whāriki's national curriculum framework as a tool in boosting financial income when implemented. This monetary driven incentive can be linked to the two key groups who had major input during Te Whāriki's stage of development, the neo-liberals and neo-conservatives. The neo-liberals were motivated by an immoral view of wanting the market to dictate the direction of the reform and the neo-conservatives wanted regulation that would ensure accountability through heavy monitoring of individuals (Dale, 1989; Trowler, 1998). The neo-liberals and neo-conservatives settled their tensions and formed an alliance so that both of these parties had their agendas intact together. It was this alliance that formulated the main driving force behind Te Whāriki. Essentially, the behind the scenes of Te Whāriki's development can be classed as groups of businesses developing curriculum policy that only served their own business interests (Jesson, 1999). The issue with these alliances is that combining such groups created contradictory approaches to curriculum policy (Mutch, 2004) and with New Zealand leading the way for curriculum policy internationally, many countries, including Ireland, followed their lead. Ireland absorbed the monetising motive underpinning early childhood education discourse from New Zealand as is seen and will be explored in The White Paper (Government of Ireland, 1999), a publication that directly led to the birth of Aistear.

1.3.2. The White Paper and the Birth of Aistear

The White Paper (Government of Ireland, 1999) takes on the view of children as becomings:

> "...a high-quality education system which will enable individuals to develop to their full potential as persons..."
>
> - (Government of Ireland, 1999, p.8)

When policy declares that children need to develop to their full potential, it places value on their development for future endeavours and therefore diminishes their current experiences as active agents in the society in which they currently live (Corsaro, 2011). The core aim of The White Paper (Government of Ireland, 1999) was to invest in the early years in order to improve on the future economy. This intention can be highlighted by the people associated within the document. For example, John P. Martin was quoted having conducted research on the education and economic performances of various Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) countries. It is evident that his expertise lies in linking education investment to economic growth:

> "Educational research stresses the importance of the preschool period for a child's later educational development and performance.

> This suggests that a policy of extending pre-primary provision, especially to children from disadvantaged backgrounds, would probably yield high private and social returns."
>
> - (Government of Ireland, 1999, p.8)

Micheál Martin was the author of the foreword of The White Paper (Government of Ireland, 1999) and at the time of publication, Martin was the Minister for Education and Science. By having the Minister for Education and Science introduce the report, The White Paper (Government of Ireland, 1999) was aiming to place itself in a position of credibility through its association with the Minister. This is a deliberate act that policy documentation engages in because it seeks to be accepted by the public (O'Donnell, 2018). To be widely accepted in this manner, policy attaches itself to relevant people of power. Martin, having originally worked as a history teacher before his career in politics took off (Harte, 2020), is experienced in educational structures suitable for primary and secondary sectors but these educational sectors are very different to the early years sector. For example, Woods et al. (2021) highlighted the issues primary school teachers had in implementing Aistear and would typically engage in 'Aistear hour' where children played freely. This shows primary school teachers are trained in the primary school curriculum, deemed as formal learning, which does not place as much emphasis on children learning through play as early years education does. This study also depicts the different approaches taken in children's education from an early years and a primary school perspective.

When a Minister for Education and Science is used to inform policy for the early years, it can be argued that the importance of learning through play and the concepts of meaning making (Clark and Moss, 2001; Corsaro, 2011; Miller and Almon, 2009; Urban, 2012) will not be their speciality, but the need for improving on the standardisation of educational structures to produce and achieve educational outcomes is. When a governmental body with a background in a different educational sector and experience in designing work-based initiatives is used to drive a report about early childhood education such as The White Paper (Government of Ireland, 1999), it can be stated that the intentions that drove the creation of The White Paper (Government of Ireland, 1999) are not that of children's rights, but of children as future workers. This economical intention is made very clear in The White Paper's (Government of Ireland, 1999) answer to the direct question "Why do we need early childhood education?":

> “...its importance in preparing children for the challenges of formal primary education, longer-term returns to the individual in terms of life chances and earning power, and the broader returns to society which flow from investment in the area. It also highlights the crucial importance of quality of provision.”
>
> - (Government of Ireland, 1999, p.12-13)

The view of early childhood education in The White Paper (Government of Ireland, 1999) revolves around preparing children for primary school, the financial returns the children will receive in their future life by assuming children who are skilled will get better jobs as well as stating lastly that these things are only possible with quality standards in early childhood education. From this quote, it is clear that quality provision is necessary in order to guarantee children will be skilled enough in later life for primary school and give them a start towards becoming a financially stable citizen in adulthood. This document submerges itself in the concept that quality provision is important to produce academic results to support progression into the workforce and uses this intention as the driving force to be widely accepted by the public.

O’Donnell (2018) conducted a critical discourse analysis of The White Paper (Government of Ireland, 1999) where a prominent argument was highlighted in relation to the report’s rhetoric that aimed to promote the economic benefits of early childhood education investment:

> “The word “cost” is mentioned 28 times throughout the entire document and “value” appears on 12 occasions. An attempt to reaffirm the link between educational expenditure and economic prosperity is present, the word “capital” being used on 6 occasions, 3 of which appear within the term “human capital”, placing capital value on the acquired skills of people, a skilled workforce equating to greater capital value.”
>
> - (O’Donnell, 2018, p.2803)

O’Donnell (2018) states that the intention for The White Paper (Government of Ireland, 1999) placing such emphasis on the economic benefits of education is because it needed to be endorsed by the public who were experiencing a booming economy at the time. The public were being fed rhetoric that, in order to maintain this financial prosperity, investment in early childhood education was vital to encourage women as an economic cohort to return to the workforce. By using critical discourse analysis (CDA) in this manner, the agenda of policy can be analysed by considering the context in which it was written and exploring the relationships between text, talk, culture and society in relation to the economy, race, gender, sexuality or religion (Mogashoa, 2014). Counting the number of times a word is used can also highlight what intention is being pushed in order to influence the reader. For example, expanding on O'Donnell's (2018) critical discourse analysis of The White Paper (Government of Ireland, 1999), the use of the word "rights" was used three times, two in relation to children and one for naming the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. This is in contrast to the number of times the word "economic" was used, at 24 times, "economy" 4 times and "financial" 7 times highlighting that the economy is discussed more often in this document than children's rights are.

Policy is typically written for a particular audience, and it is evident through the use of CDA that the public audience for The White Paper (Government of Ireland, 1999) wished to maintain a prosperous economy. However, an audience from the early years sector would be less likely to endorse a report such as this. Research has shown early years educators are motivated by the love of working with children and engage in positions in this industry fully aware of the poor financial gains the sector has to offer (Madden, 2012). We see how text utilises this. For example, The Story of Aistear in Action (NCCA, 2009) discusses how Aistear's inspiration came from the publication of The White Paper (Government of Ireland, 1999). However, it only discusses how The White Paper (Government of Ireland, 1999) looked to promote high quality provision for the early years sector. In this case, a curriculum framework that ensured the future-orientated economic agenda of The White Paper (Government of Ireland, 1999) was needed, but it was necessary to be designed in a way that the rhetoric used would be appealing to the early years audience. Aistear was thus created with the aim to appeal specifically to the educators who would be implementing the framework with the economic agendas closely attached but subtly hidden.

1.3.3. Analysing Aistear

- **The Foreword**

The foreword of any document gives an indication of the governmental backing to highlight the key messages that these bodies wish to promote (O'Donnell, 2018). In Aistear, as of the 2009 version, we see two forewords or ‘messages’ being used, one from the Minister for Education and Science and one from the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs. These are two departments with two very different agendas in regard to children. For example, the Department of Education and Skill’s mission in 2010 was as follows:

> “The mission of the Department of Education and Skills is to provide for high quality education, which will enable individuals to achieve their full potential and to participate fully as members of society, and contribute to Ireland’s social, cultural and economic development.”
>
> - (Department of Education and Skills, 2010)

The mission of this department has not changed since and states today an almost identical mission as above, with the only difference being children and young people are mentioned specifically, but still in relation to their ‘potential’:

> “To facilitate children and young people, through learning, to achieve their full potential and contribute to Ireland’s social, economic and cultural development.”
>
> - (The Department of Education, 2021)

The Department of Education and Skills, renamed the Department of Education as of 2020 (Department of Education, 2020), is fuelled by the view of children as becomings. It sees children as needing to become “full” indicating they are not currently ‘whole’ or are incomplete while also expecting them, as a result of the requirement to reach their “potential”, to contribute to the country, specifically the economy in later years, demonstrating the neoliberal governmentality highlighted earlier (Crozier et al., 1975, Hil, 2015). The Minister for Education and Skills who wrote the first foreword for Aistear was Batt O’Keefe. His time before becoming involved with education was spent working as the Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Innovation where economic competitiveness would have been a key role in his position (Houses of Oireachtas, 2011). O’Keefe translates Aistear to mean “journey” and explains how this can be interpreted as a journey of “advancement”. This indicates that children in their educational positions must be seen to progress onwards in their "lifelong journey of learning and development" (NCCA, 2009, p.3). To advance is to further yourself, and in its title, Aistear demonstrates its goal orientated agenda that doesn't let children be children, but are in fact adults in the making. The agenda for this department echoes what has been outlined earlier in this article in terms of The White Paper (Government of Ireland, 1999) and Te Whāriki, the concept that education values childhood as a time for skill development for the future workforce where children are not seen as whole beings but incomplete products that must be moulded to support the future economy. The fact that the message from the Minister for Education and Science is printed first before the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs can also be seen as a form of hierarchy in Aistear where the education of children takes precedence over the children themselves.

In the second foreword, the message is written by the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs who at the time was Barry Andrews. Andrews was qualified in English, Philosophy and Law before entering politics (University College Dublin [UCD], 2006). The theme of Andrew's foreword is very much based on children being supported through having "rich experiences in these early years" (NCCA, 2009, p.4). There is no indication of children needing to advance, progress or improve in this second foreword, but rather acknowledging the early years as a period of life in itself for children. This is supported by the department's annual report in 2009 where it states its vision in policy:

> "The vision of the OMCYA is an Ireland 'where children are respected as young citizens with a valued contribution to make and a voice of their own; where all children are cherished and supported by family and the wider society; where they enjoy a fulfilling childhood and realise their potential."
>
> - (Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, 2009)

There is a reappearance of the word "potential" whereby children are assumed to develop for future experiences of life. Although this is slightly different to the Department of Education's expectation of children achieving their full potential, the view of childhood as being something that must grow from itself is common. There is a constant rhetoric of childhood being a stage that needs to be passed and the journey that Aistear is promoting is about children becoming adults rather than valuing children's experiences in childhood.

The dual foreword introducing Aistear, with one promoting education and one promoting early childhood, contributes further to the divide that already exists between care and education in practice (Woodrow and Press, 2007). By having two different forewords as a foundation, Aistear establishes itself as a curriculum framework that struggles to merge the care and education needs of children from birth to six years together in practice. The departments themselves that stand over Aistear are placing importance on two very different agendas where one is focused on developing children's skills and the other is focused on encouraging children's quality experiences and this of course has implications for practice.

- **The Purpose and Design**

The current purpose of Aistear is as follows:

> "It provides information for adults to help them plan for and provide enjoyable and challenging learning experiences, so that all children can grow and develop as competent and confident learners within loving relationships with others."
>
> \- (NCCA, 2009, p.6)

Aistear looks to identify "how children should learn" (NCCA, 2009, p.6) and the phrasing of this shows how Aistear "should" involve children learning in a particular manner under particular themes. Because Aistear is very much a developmental based framework looking at children from birth to 6 years of age under physical, emotional, social, language and intellectual areas of development. However, developmental frameworks like Aistear can be seen as contributing to the governing of individualisation as Foucault (1982) describes:

> "They are struggles which question the status of the individual: on the one hand, they assert the right to be different, and they underline everything which makes individuals truly individual. On the other hand, they attack everything which separates the

> individual, breaks his links with others, splits up community life, forces the individual back on himself, and ties him to his own identity in a constraining way."
>
> - (Foucault, 1982, p.781)

Aistear declares that its four themes "describe what children learn" (NCCA, 2009, p.11). In stating this, Aistear makes it clear that children's education will be decided by adults who dictate what is valuable knowledge worth knowing and what is not, demonstrating Foucault's (1980) "regime of truth" (p.131) at work here. Learning opportunities are to be acknowledged by educators within these themes and although some educators may see the flexibility within this framework, the issue lies with how the majority zone in on applying only these themes directly in practice (Woods et al., 2021) without consultation with the children themselves. Statements of children being directed based on adult expectations for future use are in abundance in Aistear. For example, "...be motivated, and begin to think about and recognise their own progress and achievements" (Identity and Belonging - Aim 4, Learning Goal 6). The agenda of children acknowledging their own progress and achievements places children in competition with each other, which was evident in Aistear's predecessor Te Whāriki where "education was also seen as an important key to improving workplace skills and entrepreneurship to increase New Zealand's economic competitiveness." (Ministry of Education, 1993). Aistear appears to encourage a competitive learning environment where children are expected to succeed in particular areas decided by the adult or run the risk of adults increasing analysis on the child for potentially being defective (Langford, 2010). This competitiveness as part of educational norms feeds into the neoliberal discussions provided in more detail in Chapter 5. Insights into the Current Conditions of Power and Child Participation in Early Childhood.

1.3.4. A Note on Aistear's National Review

It is worth noting that Aistear is currently undergoing national review throughout the lifespan of this research from September 2020 to February 2024 where unofficial draft themes have been presented at the time of submission for this project. Processes involved in reviewing the framework include consultation with children, educators, regulatory bodies and the wider sector to highlight what changes and improvements are needed since Aistear was first established in 2009. The purpose of consultation with these cohorts is because they are directly involved in the implementation and support of Aistear. While Aistear's review highlights the way it is going to become more relevant based on the extensive consultation processes to understand areas for improvement, the NCCA's promotional video published at the beginning of the review process stated that no major change is expected to be made to Aistear:

> "It is not intended to make significant changes to Aistear…"
>
> - (NCCA, *Updating Aistear: The Introductory Video 00:58*, 2021)

The review of Te Whāriki in 2017 also determined the same outcome, stating that the framework did not require any major changes even after extensive consultation was conducted:

> "The overarching structure of principles, strands, and goals for Te Whāriki remained unchanged."
>
> - (Ministry of Education, 2017)

This is an interesting power dynamic at play, especially when Aistear has proven to be difficult for educators to implement 15 years on (Woods et al., 2021). The possibility is that Aistear may be seen to involve the views of the consultation, but as policy previously has shown, it may be protecting its original 1980's economic agenda that continues to promote early childhood as a commodity and children as future workers, embedding the realities of modern neoliberalism even further towards docility in childhood. While the outcome of Aistear's national review remains to be seen, it is necessary to critique that, not only is Aistear blueprinted from a curriculum framework designed in the 1980's, but as it undergoes national review, it has been declared before the review began that the intention is not to majorly change Aistear (NCCA, 2021). It begs the question then, what is the point in a national review that does not intend to implement major change to a curriculum framework that is proving difficult to implement on the grounds? By critically analysing the historical and present political undercurrents that inform Aistear, the focus of this research becomes much more significant in understanding children's forms of expression in power structures imposed on them and how the economic agendas underpinning curriculum frameworks play a vital role in the way children participate in their daily lives in the early years sector.

1.4. Power and Participation

Children's participation is assumed to be empowering (Murray and Hallett, 2000) and focuses on recognising and validating the views of young people to enhance their decision-making related to their lives (Raby, 2014). It has been increasingly popularised, particularly in the UK, Northern Europe and Australia as a result of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC, 1989), where children's views are directly referred to in Article 12: The child's opinion. Children's participatory rights are also highlighted in other articles including Article 13: Freedom of expression; Article 14: Freedom of thought, conscience, and religion; and Article 15: Freedom of association and peaceful assembly (Raby, 2014; Children's Rights Alliance, 2010). While the definition of what participation means is vague (Lindgren, 2012), a key component of children's participation is associated with the need for adults to listen to children's voices in order to gain insight into children's lives, experiences and perspectives of children themselves (Thorne, 2002; James, 2007). However, positioning children's participation in relation to an adult's recognition for validation demonstrates the undercurrent of power that exists, placing children as dependent on adults in order to participate in their own lives. As Murray and Hallett (2000) highlight, "the right to participate is often discussed in relation to the least powerful in society" (p.15). Tokenistic approaches to children's participation are deemed conflicting in political spheres (Lindgren, 2012), where children are being conditioned to push predetermined adult ideas, agendas and strategies under the guise that children's participation is emancipatory, but in fact can be another mode of manipulation over children (Gallacher et al., 2008; Kim, 2016; Kyritsi, 2019). Children's participation is thus linked to power in how it is based on who has power and who does not (Hart, 1992; Treseder, 1997; Lansdown, 2006).

Foucault's work, as described earlier in this chapter, is a useful lens to analyse children's participation because a Foucauldian conception of power focuses on how power is relational and exercised between at least two entities (Tisdall and Davis, 2004), such as between an educator and a child. A Foucauldian lens can result in telling unexpected, passionate stories (Game and Metcalfe, 1996) about participation, rather than making claims to objective truth (Gallagher, 2008) understood by Foucault (1979) as "regimes of truth" (p.131). This contrasts with discussions that advocate for children's participation to be analysed based on its impact and outcomes, typically related to the verbal and written voices of children. Voicing experiences of children has become a primary symbol for childhood studies as it discusses giving children a voice (James, 2007; Thorne, 2002) rooted in historical democracy that showcased how voices have led to the obtaining of formal rights by previously suppressed groups of people (James, 2007; Qvortrup, 2015; Veiera, 2020). However, emphasising the importance of the verbal and written voices of children has been criticised for standardising children's participation. Focusing on the verbal and written forms of children's voice to understand participation excludes children who fall outside the norm of a "verbally expressive child" (Orrmalm et al., 2022, p.71) and produces certain norms and standards about participation overall while ignoring "the messiness and ambiguities of children's voices" (Orrmalm et al., 2022, p.72. See also Eldén, 2013; Komulainen, 2007; Spyrou, 2016). By making participation an outcome or learning goal centered on written and verbal voices, participation becomes another mode of governing and regulating children (Elwick, Bradley and Sumsion, 2014; Gallagher, 2008b, Moss and Petrie, 2002, Orrmalm, 2021) that achieves the governmentality of mass docility (Foucault, 1979). Children who do not participate as they are expected to by adults, or as they are told to, may experience public shaming or punishment for not complying (Allen, 2019) and the increased state interference in children's lives based on it being in children's 'best interests' to participate in decision-making is another method in which state power reinforces docility in child subjects (Corbett, 2010; Foucault, 1979). By outlining what is meaningful for children's participation based on children producing specifically outlined outcomes and learning goals through state recommended guidelines (Madden, 2012; Moloney, 2015), participation is contorted into another technique of power exercised over children to maintain docile.

To avoid a limited presentation of children's participation, new ways of approaching children's voices and participation have emerged, showing that "children's voices are not only a methodological and political matter, but also a theoretical and pluralistic concern." (Orrmalm et al., 2022, p.72). It is thus recommended to explore 'the fullness of voice' (Spyrou, 2016, p. 7) that includes the unpredictable, diverse features that make up voice (Orrmalm et al., 2022) which may not necessarily align with predetermined learning goals and aims of practice. One approach to do so is to view the verbal voice of children not as the sole source of information to understand children's participation, but that other elements of children's voices, such as silence (Annerbäck, 2022; Kohli, 2006; Lewis, 2010; Spyrou, 2016), space and place (Mannion, 2007), non-verbal ways of communicating (Gallagher et al., 2017; Komulainen, 2007; Nairn, Munro and Smith, 2005) and resistance to power (Foucault, 1982; Hartmann, 2003; Nealon, 2008; Pickett, 1996) are explored in depth alongside it. This further positions Foucault's (1977; 1982) work as vital when understanding children's participation, particularly when related to his concepts on the disciplinary techniques of power exercised using time, space and control of daily activities to condition the subject, as discussed earlier in this chapter and forms the basis for the overall discussion of this thesis. The methodological choices of positioning children as co-researchers using GoPro cameras was influenced by the complexity of voice and participation and is discussed further in Chapter 2, 2.1 Children in Research, and 2.3.2 The Official Study: Choosing GoPro Cameras - Children as Co-Researchers. The way in which Foucault's work is evident in children's participatory environments can be seen throughout this thesis, particularly in Chapter 3, 4 and 5.

Conclusion

This chapter has outlined how power exists in totality, with particular reference to educational contexts and childhood itself. It sought to highlight Foucault's lens on power that was used to inform this research as well as highlight the link between power and childhood in positioning children as future workers from a governmentality that underpins neoliberal agendas. By analysing Aistear as it undergoes national review as well as exploring its origin relating to Te Whāriki and The White Paper (Government of Ireland, 1999), this chapter shed light on the ways in which government political and economic outcomes can embed themselves in frameworks that inform early years practice and ultimately how power can impact on children's abilities to participate in their own lives.

The next chapter will outline how this research was designed and implemented, exploring my research decisions that were heavily influenced by this extensive background of power, participation and policy in early childhood provided in this chapter.

2. The Research

Introduction

This chapter will provide extensive details on the thinking processes, research methods, children's positioning in the research and ethical considerations that led to the overall design of the research. Consideration to my researcher position and how this played a significant role in how children experienced power as co-researchers of this project is also discussed.

2.1 Children in Research

Conducting qualitative research with children involves understanding and addressing unique methodological and ethical considerations. This type of research is critical for exploring the perspectives and lived experiences of children, acknowledging them as active participants rather than passive subjects. Engaging children in qualitative research emphasises their agency and capacity to contribute valuable insights into their own lives and experiences (Christensen and Prout, 2002; James, Jenks and Prout, 1998). Qualitative research with children can be particularly complex due to their developmental stages, communication styles, and the power dynamics between adult researchers and young participants (Coad and Evans, 2008). Researchers must develop methods that are accessible and appropriate for children, ensuring that the research process respects their autonomy and encourages genuine participation (Punch, 2002). This involves creating a safe and supportive environment where children feel comfortable expressing their thoughts and feelings. Ethical considerations such as informed consent, confidentiality and the minimisation of potential harm are paramount in research involving children (Alderson & Morrow, 2011).

This qualitative research is rooted in views of childhood as a social construction where children are active constructors of their lives (Corsaro, 2011). I have strived to create research that is underpinned by the recognition and importance in children's voices and active engagement with their world (Christensen, 2004; Clark, 2005). With the increase of attention placed on children's rights (Children's Rights Alliance, 2010), recognition of their status as active citizens (Corsaro, 2011; James and James, 2008) and the evolving discourses centered around child development, assessment and pedagogy, I have found myself conducting research with young children to explore their lived experiences in a world with adults who control their freedom (James, 2009).

Children are capable of generating and expressing views and perspectives on their lives (Dayan and Ziv, 2012) and I was conscious that myself as an adult would play a role of power in some way, but I wanted to ensure this research was not focused on the adult, the educator or the parent, but on the child. I was motivated by my belief that any research which aims to understand a cohort of individuals, such as children, ought to generate primary data from that cohort directly. Therefore, I felt that conducting this research was an opportunity for children to be heard loudly and clearly while being in control of what was documented in their lives. Children having their views expressed and listened to is more vital now than ever as children's participation in early years services has significantly increased over the last twenty years (Organization for Economic Co- operation and Development [OECD], 2021) where an average of 83% 3 to 5 year old children in Europe attend an early years service (OECD, 2021) and 40% of 3 to 4 year old children and 84% of 5 year old children attend an early years service in the United States (National Center for Education Statistics, 2023). Knowing that children are spending ample amounts of their childhood in an early years service coupled with the widespread acknowledgement of children as rights-bearing citizens (NCCA, 2009; Lundy, 2007), it was crucial for me to utilise this research opportunity to understand why educating children about their participatory rights has been so heavily neglected (Brantefors and Quennerstedt, 2016; Quennerstedt, 2016) and what role does the early years classroom have in influencing the way children experience power communicated through their forms of expression (verbal and non-verbal language, body language, facial expressions, tone of voice and interactions with others).

Accounting for children's capacity and participation is important (Abebe, 2019; Gallagher, 2019) so it was vital when considering this research that it centered on exploring children's forms of expression by making the research method accessible for all children to participate in, where their age and stage of development was not going to be a barrier to their participation. I believed that seeking understanding of children's forms of expression lay within an exploration of their daily lives where they provide me as the adult researcher access to their world as they see fit. Children understand their lived experiences more than any adult ever could (Canning, 2019; Sutterby, 2005) and so the children in this project would be instrumental in not only gathering the data but providing context and understanding to it. Yet, I needed to develop a research method that was credible and valid, where children could be in control of the data being collected with their views adding to the interpretation. I also had to consider my own personal bias and experiences as a previous educator, manager and now early childhood specialist to ensure I was mindful of my own forms of early years practice and personal bias while working from the lens of a researcher, as well as being aware of the influence of the research project itself impacting on how children experience their daily lives. In order to ensure these factors were foreseen in my research, I needed to think further than what I was used to by reflecting on the influence power can have on young children's agency (Gallagher, 2019). From my own experience of conducting research with children in my BA and MA using art-based methods within semi-structured interviews and focus groups, I felt these research methods alone would not be able to capture the complexity of power experienced within a child's life. I had to consider a more dynamic and relational understanding of power with children's voices and participation, and how they relate with the methods chosen (Davidson, 2017; Gallagher, 2019). Therefore, I needed to think beyond my comfort zone but I also needed to think further than the theories that surround children in research and how my choices would influence the positioning of children overall. This chapter will explore the thinking processes that led to the design of this research and the rationale behind the methods chosen.

2.1. Recruitment and Context of the Chosen Service

This research was conducted in one rural play-based early years service that caters for children aged 2 years and 8 months up to school age, where programmes such as the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programme is delivered, as well as afterschool and breakfast clubs. In the event that access was not provided for the research, I secured a second preliminary service for the research which ultimately never got to take part in this research as all research duties were fulfilled by the service I had chosen first. The chosen service caters for two ECCE rooms with 6 staff made up of Bachelor's and Master's level qualifications as well as a work experience student where the owner is typically on site every day. The service benefits from a large outdoor area that is positioned on cement ground with an advanced climbing wall and large outdoor shelter with benches and tables inside. The shelter has no walls but the roof is supported by four pillars on each corner. This allows for open access between the shelter and the outdoor space.

Twenty-two Year 2 ECCE children and their two educators were chosen to take part in the research study because I wanted to understand the forms of expression given by a group of children who have been conditioned for Year 1 of the ECCE programme and see how their daily routine as a power structure influenced their forms of expression during Year 2. By working with Year 2 children, I was able to conduct the pilot study in May of 2022 when the participants were finishing Year 1, going for summer break and heading back in September 2022 for Year 2. September 2022 was the month chosen for the official study to take place because this was a transitioning month, where children are coming back from their summer holidays and reengaging with their early years environment, to include the potential for reconditioning and reminding of certain procedures, routines and rules. I felt capturing these experiences would have provided the most meaning where children were coming from extensive time in their home environment and now back to an environment that would be quite structured in its routine design that set out arrival time, snack time, outdoor time and home time. Therefore, to ensure the participants and I were comfortable with the research process before September 2022, it was necessary to implement a pilot study in May 2022.

2.2. The Research Process

2.2.1. The Pilot Study and Testing Out GoPro Cameras

Because of my lack of experience in using video-based methods, as well as the children's lack of experience in conducting research, it was necessary to implement a pilot study with the group of children who would be taking part in the official study. The pilot study was designed to be a sample run of the official research with its purpose to introduce myself to the children, explore their choice in taking part in the research and for those who do consent, they could explore their role as researchers in the project. It ran for one academic week where children explored the GoPros and on Friday of that week, I tested out a focus group to rewatch and discuss video clips captured. The purpose of the pilot study was not to gather data for analysis, but to test out the processes and methods that would make up the official study in September 2022 so I could refine the design in areas that may not be as effective in practice.

Mirroring the focus group process the children would be engaging in, the children talked initially with me in a large group about why I was there, my interest in understanding what it is like to be in a preschool environment, what their thoughts on their preschool, rules and routines were and how important their role in research is for helping adults to understand what children think about things so together we can make things, such as school, a better experience for children. These precursors provided children with opportunities to become more informed about the research, deciding what aspects they wanted to take part in, if any.

The pilot study allowed me to figure out technical design aspects of the project, such as wearing the GoPro cameras. I firstly assumed that every child would want to wear the GoPro, and had planned that each child be paired by the educator to allow for each child to get a chance to wear them in case there was a demand for use. However, this was not the case. Children did seek out the cameras, but they found themselves wearing the GoPros then giving it to their friend to wear, or coming back to the educators or me to say they were done. Therefore, my initial pairing structure naturally crumbled and thankfully so. In hindsight, this pairing system would have restricted children to research with a child they may not have wanted to research with. By keeping the pairing system unstructured and giving two children at the start of the day the GoPros, the children told me and their educators what they wanted to do with the GoPro, whether that was to give it to someone else who wanted a turn or be done with it without interest on where it went to next. If children wanted to keep the GoPro for the day, they could, but two other children would be picked for the next day to provide an opportunity for all to ensure access was granted to those who wanted to use the GoPros. Children, when chosen, did not have to wear the camera, but it was easier to see during the pilot study that some children showed more interest in the GoPros where others didn't, highlighting even further that structuring the children into pairs continuously throughout the study would not have worked. The way children were chosen by educators played a significant role in children's access to the GoPros and is discussed in further detail in Chapter 2, Section 2, 2.3.2 The Official Study.

In terms of wearing the GoPros, head-mounting cameras provide specific understanding of children's interactions with their environment based on where their physical, visual attention is that a chest mounted camera would not capture (Remmen, 2014). However, I wanted to ensure the cameras were comfortable for the children to wear. If the cameras were inaccessible, it may have limited their decision to use them throughout the research, so it was vital for me to work with the children on what fitted them best. One design aspect I implemented was attaching the GoPro head-mount to a child's baseball cap with a large peak to let the camera sit securely on the peak. I thought that, by wearing a hat, the weight of the GoPro would be easier for children to manage, and yet, I learned this had the opposite effect. While the cameras securely sat on the hat's peak and were wearable, the hats themselves became weighed down on children, covering their eyes and slipping down over their face, especially when they were running. This caused the children to come back to me or their educator to adjust it which interfered heavily with their play experiences. I observed how these children in their play kept finding the camera was constantly in the way of their face, eventually deciding they did not want it at all. By exploring these aspects in the pilot study, I was able to rethink the GoPro design aspect and sought out the GoPro head-mounting straps that can be bought specifically for the GoPro camera. Originally, these were not considered because I thought the cameras being placed on child-sized caps would have been more accessible for children, but this was a very clear example of how we as adults do not know everything about children's lives and our ideas may in fact limit children's experiences without realising, as is proven by my cap idea that ultimately hindered children's play and researching abilities.

When it came to reviewing the video recordings of the GoPro cameras, I was fascinated by the visual clarity of the videos. I had bought an external microphone for the GoPro that was useful to enhance sound capture and playback but it was also beneficial in all outdoor weather types that became vital for this research with children being outside (Llyod et al., 2018). Applying the external microphone for the GoPro came about when I discovered that sound recordings were difficult to capture (Richardson, 2019), so testing out the external microphone during the pilot study reassured me that the variety of indoor and outdoor experiences could be seen and heard very clearly. However, one aspect I did not predict involved the actual video data of the GoPro itself. I assumed because video was being captured continuously unless it was turned off, the videos would download as full videos for the length of time it was recording. This was not the case. GoPros, because they capture such high-quality video, they automatically divide the full video into smaller videos of approximately 11 minutes long but store them in a way that is not sequential when downloaded to a computer. After vigorous internet-based searching in the hopes of finding a hidden setting that I could activate to ensure the videos would present themselves in full, organised clips, I had to come to terms with the fact that this was a design setting that was unchangeable as a result of the high quality recording the GoPro was going to provide. Even reducing the video quality did not affect this process because when I changed the quality standard of recording to the lowest possible, the GoPro still divided video into non-sequential clips when downloaded. Thus, I learned that part of my data analysis process was going to involve organising and renaming these smaller video clips in the order they were recorded. Although this was frustrating at the time, I was relieved to have learned this in the pilot stage so I was more prepared when it came to the official study itself and could factor in time to dedicate to organising the data for analysis.

The focus group experience itself was not reflective of the official study because of the time of year it occurred. It was the end of May 2022 when the pilot study was conducted and many children were absent because of some families being on summer holidays. Therefore, my experience of the focus group was limited in how it did not give me the experience of working with twenty-two children as expected in a full ECCE class and how to manage this number of children eager to watch the videos. It was very straightforward in the pilot study and did highlight how necessary rewatching clips with children is in providing a deeper insight into their views, but the complexities of the focus group in this study is explored in more detail in Chapter 2, Section 2, 2.3.2 The Official Study.

The pilot study became such a crucial part of the overall study because not only did it generate a space for children to become familiar with their role as co-researchers, ask questions and navigate their consent for opting in and out, but it also highlighted the design flaws of my own cap design with the GoPros which I assumed would have helped children to wear them but in fact hindered them entirely. Alongside this, the pilot study forced me to face the complex realities of working with GoPros as a research method with their automatic and unchangeable video dividing feature that I now needed to factor into my data analysis processes. The most impactful piece the pilot study provided was how it gave time for the children to familiarise themselves with their co-researcher role using GoPro cameras which made the research process easier for them to re-engage with in September 2022 having already been briefed. I assumed that some of the children would have forgotten about their researcher role over the summer, but it was a relief when September 2022 came and I was met with a group of excited children ready for research: “Chloe! Are we using the cameras today?!”

2.2.2. The Official Study

The official study occurred throughout the month of September 2022. Children used the GoPros Monday-Thursday for the second, third and fourth week in September 2022, totaling 12 days of recording. Fridays were used for the weekly focus group discussions of select clips. Conducting the research for one entire month was not the original intent of my research. Before I implemented the pilot study and during my ethical approval process, I had planned that children engaged in video recording throughout the academic year to highlight how different times of the year influence the level of participation children engaged in. After enlightening ethical discussions, I realised this would have become another level of control which would have impacted severely on children’s experiences of their final year in ECCE. After considerable thought was given to this issue, I agreed that having the research designed to occur throughout the entire academic year would be much more harmful to children than it would have been of benefit. I reevaluated the purpose of the research study which was to understand children’s level of participation in their ECCE routine through exploring their forms of expression within a routined environment and, upon reflection, I realised that sufficient data could be collected during the month of September. By conducting the research for one month rather than sporadically throughout the academic year, it would highlight how children navigate the ECCE routine being imposed on them during a time of year when educators seek to implement their routined structure. Therefore, I realised that understanding power dynamics and children's forms of expression during the ECCE period would be best captured just as well during the month of September and how unfair it was to expect children to commit to a year-long project. The research was able to achieve the outlined outcomes just as well, if not better, because all of the participants were aware that their involvement was not a permanent fixture of their year, but was going to be completed within 4 weeks.

- **Choosing GoPro Cameras**

The use of video cameras to collect empirical data for qualitative studies has become quite common (Emmison and Smith, 2000). Video methods such as GoPros have been on the rise in research primarily because they collect audio and visual data from one device and allows researchers to see how participants experience the world (Burris, 2017) by sharing the wearer's physical view (Brown et al., 2008). GoPro cameras are also suitable when participants are highly mobile, for example analysing the high level of activity that children engage in on a day-to-day basis (Hov and Neegaard, 2020), while head-mounted cameras have been argued to generate understanding in "how bodies, senses, technologies, thoughts and feelings become entangled in the experiences of places, spaces, landscapes and environments" (Brown et al., 2008, p.8). But also, the GoPro camera is seen as a research method that empowers participants because they are in control of the data being collected (Richardson, 2019). This was the deciding factor for use in this research because children could decide what insights they provided while capturing their dynamic and highly mobile actions throughout the day (Brown et al., 2008).

  - **Children as Co-Researchers**

I wanted to ensure "ethical symmetry" (Christensen and Prout, 2002, p.482) was being exercised where my approach with participants was consistent regardless of whether participants are adults or children and I saw the important role that children played as co-researchers to collect the data and give initial analysis of it during the focus groups. I believe that if research includes children as being a core part of the overall project, it is vital to consider the underlying positions of powerful or powerless that titles in research can give children, but also how it may diminish their researcher role in the eyes of other adults. By calling children co-researchers, the children were able to use this language knowing what it meant and used this language throughout the project with staff and parents. I believe, because children had the title of co-researcher, the children who physically had the GoPros saw this as a symbol of their position of power that they had not experienced before. While they verbally used the term “researcher” instead of co-researcher, children were not corrected because their uninterrupted experiences of researching I felt needed to be captured as they were. Therefore, children used the word “researcher” instead of ‘co-researcher’ throughout the project. The children were in control of recording their own experiences to help adults understand what their lives are like. They had cameras that were for their hands only and videos that were watched in the focus groups came from their work as a researcher which many valued highly. More details of children’s experiences as co-researchers can be found in Chapter 3, Section 3.3, 3.3.1. Children’s Views on Being GoPro Co-Researchers.

○ The Educator Role

I reviewed the video recordings after each day of collection to keep in touch with the research, to assess and choose which 2-3 clips would be most significant for discussions at the weekly Friday focus group and to assist if there were any adjustments that needed to be made in the research. Over the first few days, it became clear that some children, as expected, became less interested in using the GoPros. Some wanted to participate and some didn’t. However, in some cases, the educators sought me out for support. They knew the research involved children using the GoPro cameras, but what if none of the children want to wear the GoPros? Initially, the discussion led to the educators believing if they wore the GoPro cameras, then this role modelling approach would entice the children to use the cameras more. This decision highlighted how child development theory is thoroughly embedded in practice (Jenks, 1996; Langford, 2010), even in the most spontaneous moments of an educator’s decision making, in this instance recalling their learned knowledge of Bandura (1977) to role-model the GoPros to entice children to wear them. I was in between two minds at this point. To tell the educators not to wear the GoPros following the belief that role modelling would convince children to wear the cameras I felt would have put me in a position of telling the educators what to do with their practice and influence the power dynamic I was seeking to research. On the other hand, I wanted the research to focus on children’s experiences to include any lack of interest in documenting their lives. I ultimately chose to not interfere with the educators at this point. However, the outcome of this decision of mine was not something I could have anticipated.

The impact of the educators wearing the GoPros in this research was an unintended consequence of my researcher role not being directly in the environment. My decision not to be involved was because I wanted to cause as little disruption to the classroom environment as possible (Hov and Neegaard, 2020) in order to analyse the power dynamics between children and educators without my interference being a factor. The research design did not include educators wearing the GoPros but intended for the GoPros to be used by the children when and if they wanted to wear them. However, the educators wearing the GoPros highlighted not only how rooted child development theory is in an educator's reasoning behind their way of practice with children (Langford, 2010), but it added a new insight into the physical viewpoint of the educator as well as showcasing how easy it is for power to be exercised over children in research, even when the research is designed for the children to conduct. Therefore, the amount of data reflective of children's experiences was minimal when educators wore the GoPros mainly because of height differences in an environment designed for children, as well as educator viewpoints changing to focus on their own tasks rather than interacting with the children. Yet, this in itself gives even more insight into the power inequalities between educators and children in the classroom. This power dynamic is covered in more detail in Chapter 3, Section 3.3, 3.3.2. The Unintended Consequence of Educators Wearing GoPros.

- **Focus Groups**
  - **Initial Focus Group**

The official study began in a similar fashion to the pilot study where an initial focus group with the entire class was set up. All focus groups of the official study were audio recorded, transcribed and used to support the forms of expression analysed from the video data. When planning the focus group stage, I planned it to be similar to a scenario like story time where children gather together with the educator to discuss a topic. While I was aware of the implications of conducting a focus group with a large group of twenty-two children going against the recommended 3-5 per group (Butschi and Hedderich, 2021), I felt it was more natural to dedicate a corner of their classroom to the focus group, introduce it to the whole group and make space for children to enter or withdraw from the group enhanced by their familiarity with being in their classroom. To dictate who could sit and who could not and rotate their participation in small groups where some had to wait to know what was happening would not have been an experience I wanted to impose on the children, especially not for the initial focus group when curiosity levels were high in the group. Therefore, all children were invited to sit with me in a group but they were informed that they did not have to sit and listen if they did not want to and could continue playing. They were also told they could come back to the group anytime they wished. All children initially joined the group, but after a few minutes, some children returned to their play showing that children might take part when initially asked, but may not want to be involved in the whole project (Dockett and Perry, 2011). Interestingly, these same children returned to the group when the discussion went from discussing the rules and routine of preschool and came to talking about the GoPros showing that sometimes children are unsure about whether they wish to take part or not and may decide over time (Dockett et al., 2012). This constant flow of children in and out of the focus group reassured me that, while a large focus group with children may not be the most advised, it worked well for this research because it was conducted in the children's classroom where they were in control of where and when they could go and what they could do. Not only did the children who wanted to talk about their rules and routines of school get their opportunity for expression, but the children who were less interested could go and play and return when the topic peaked their interest. By having their educator in the focus group, this provided additional insight that I did not have about the children where their knowledge about the children could provide support if children became in any way distressed by the experience (Dockett and Perry, 2011). Fortunately, children utilised the flow of the focus group by playing when they wanted to.

By remaining in the classroom after the focus group and engaging in play with the children, I took the pressure off myself as a researcher to collect data during a specifically designed stage so that rapport was created where children could talk to me about their perspectives on their preschool routine if they wanted to on their terms. These informal discussions that occurred during the children's play were not audio recorded, but field notes were taken.

This research demonstrated that a full group of twenty-two children in an initial focus group is successful when conducted in the children's classroom that allows them to flow in and out of the focus group as they wish, but making myself available within children's play afterwards was vital to ensure children had time to think, process and gather their views that they may not have thought about within the focus group.

- **Friday Focus Groups and Video Playback**

I chose 2-3 video clips to show in the Friday focus group that would generate the most understanding about children's experiences relating to power dynamics with educators. The clips were selected based on the criteria: 1. Command - Instruction is given by one to another. The instruction is completed as required. 2. Conflict - Instruction given is not obeyed. 3. Compromise - Instruction is altered based on interactions that occur. 4. Collaboration - There is no evidence of an individual enforcing instruction on another. This involved choosing clips where children were being instructed by an educator to do something different to what the child was doing or about to do and exploring the child's reaction i.e.: going out in the rain and being told no or running inside; a child resisting an educator or rule being instructed; an educator instructing a blanketed rule to the whole group i.e.: tidy up/line up; and/or a child or children engaging in routined tasks without being asked by an educator. Before these clips were shown to the group, I would individually talk to each participant that was recorded in the chosen video clips to ask them if they were okay for me to show their recording to the wider group. This was essential because wearers of GoPro cameras can forget they're wearing a recording device (Richardson, 2019) where participants may engage in private speech (Parsons et al. 2021) and/or record conversations that they do not want to be shared (Skovdal and Abebe, 2012). Therefore, seeking out verbal consent prior to showing the video clips in the focus group was required in advance, including children and educators. If clips were not consented for showing or caused any participant involved discomfort or distress, an alternative clip was vetted in the same way and, depending on consent, would be shown to the group instead. Conducting the initial focus group with the full group of twenty-two children worked when the topic was being verbalised, such as talking about the rules and routine of their preschool. However, showing video clips to the large group using only a laptop screen proved to be difficult. Therefore, when video clips were being shown to the children on each Friday following their data collection with the GoPros from Monday to Thursday, I conducted multiple focus groups with children based on their interest in exploring the video data.

The educators facilitated so that all of the children went outside except for 5 or 6 children who wanted to see the video clips and stayed with me inside the classroom. One educator remained with me to ensure support was there if any child became distressed in any way (Dockett and Perry, 2011) and cover staff was used outdoors to adhere to adult:child ratios. Instead of telling the children to stay inside to look at the video clips, children were asked if they wanted to look at the videos recorded and talk about what they found. If more than 5-6 children expressed an interest, as was the case for the first Friday, 5-6 children were randomly picked to join me and then additional focus groups of 5-6 were conducted separately with the rest of the consenting children if they were still interested. I believe the reason so few children were interested in the final focus group by the end of the research is because the novelty of their role wore off, but it highlighted certain children that had developed a real interest in the research project, such as Phoebe who was consistent in attending the focus groups. Her viewing of the video clips seemed to motivate her and some of her other peers to continue to collect data with the GoPros echoing the sentiments of Robson (2011) who highlighted the importance of playing back videos children for enhancing their understanding of their researcher role. Even though children were inside rather than outside, this did not mean children who were in the Friday focus group had to remain in the group. Children were reminded that if they wanted to go play, they could and the educator who was in the room could bring them outside or they could remain inside and play there. This free flow meant giving children the very visible opportunity to opt in and out of the focus group as they wished.

Questions centered on how children felt during the video clips shown and I asked them to think about the perspective of their educator in the interaction or situation that was discussed, depending on the context. While the Friday focus group discussions did not generate massive amounts of data compared to the video data, they did generate fascinating nuggets of knowledge created by children's voices that were able to give further insight into children's experiences. Therefore, using only one method to understand children's experiences is not enough and merging at least two methods of data collection can provide fascinating insight that one method may not capture on its own.

- **Follow-up Feedback Loop**

A follow-up feedback loop was conducted with participants in May 2023 following the initial data analysis stage, one year after the pilot study was conducted. The purpose of this feedback loop was to validate the initial findings with the educators and children and ensure the data had been interpreted effectively before the findings were finalised. Fieldnotes were taken to capture any feedback provided during these sessions. The initial findings were outlined with children using printed images screenshotted from their GoPro video recordings used to capture their time as researchers as well as provide visual prompts to talk about what was found. Verifying the data with the children channelled lots of memories for them as they identified what was happening in each photo that involved them. For example, Dylan recognised his photo where he looked directly into the lens of the camera “That’s when I was looking for creepy crawlies!” whereas other children asked “What am I doing here?” which provided me the space to discuss the scenario as it was interpreted and waiting to hear their response. Children verified the overall key findings captured and when asked if I had forgotten anything they researched, some children saw this as an opportunity to tell me about their summer plans. I took this as an invitation that the children were growing weary of the verification process and because all photos were discussed, I took this time to re-engage with the lives of my fellow researchers as children in play. As a token of appreciation, I had made copies of the photos and added them to a frame with a written thank you within the center of it. The owner placed this on the parents welcome table where all who enter the service can see the wonderful researchers that attended the service and serves as a reminder to the researchers of the incredible work they conducted for this project.

The process for the feedback loop for the owner and educators was more detailed in terms of presentation using PowerPoint and outlining direct quotes captured in context of the findings. This feedback loop was critical because it afforded me the chance to establish that while the findings identified the multiple ways that children’s participation was limited and/or silenced/ignored in the environment, it was recognised how educators are also in a power system that seeks to objectify them as objects. This stimulated an in-depth conversation about power and although generated discomfort at times in the owner and educators, it was necessary to validate to these adults that the findings captured the lived experiences of the children by themselves and cannot be denied. Therefore, the feedback loop paved the way for the owners and educators to recognise that the purpose and findings of this research came from the perspective of children’s experiences of power that inevitably included educator practice which caused some discomfort on their part. However, this was an opportunity for educators to reflect on their child-centered practices and how it relates and to children’s positioning of power and level of participation.

- **Ethics**
  - **Adult Consent**

Gatekeeping was a significant aspect of the decision-making process when choosing what service to conduct this research in (Davidson, 2017) as access to children in preschools is firstly granted by the owner or the service. Having worked in this service previously and knowing the owner was a person I highly respected for her values towards the early years, access to this service was much easier to secure compared to a service where I would have been unknown. Expressing my interest in conducting the research here was successful not only for access, but because of the way the owner prepared staff, parents and children about the research being conducted over the months leading up to the pilot study and official study while making space for my visits pre- and post-research. I believe that this natural informing of participants by the owner of her own accord made consent from parents, staff and children much easier to gain over time as they were regularly hearing about the research in an eager and curious way as well as generating excitement in children for what was to come. This was vital because, although I was familiar with the owner, none of the staff or children attending this service knew me because I worked there many years prior. The owner's ongoing briefing made my presence during the research highly anticipated rather than met with confusion, fear or worry. Consent forms were issued to all educators to review and gather any questions or concerns they had in advance of my pending visit. As the educators are Level 8 and Masters level, their understanding of the importance of research involvement was clear through their interest and recognition of the work that was going to be conducted. I outlined their facilitator tasks in relation to supporting children's co-researcher role during an onsite visit which involved explaining to educators that children use the GoPros to record their experiences and it was the educators role to help children take on or off the Gopro, remind children not to record in the bathroom and ensure that the GoPro was accessible to children if no child was wearing it at a certain point. Educators were informed of the process of video recording practices; data protection relating to video recordings captured and analysed; that any video clip that is discussed in the focus groups that involves them being recorded, they will be asked if they consent to the video being shown; and if they do not consent, the video will solely be analysed by me. By conducting onsite visits, this allowed me the opportunity to build trust with the educators and being available throughout the data collection process ensured they had the opportunity to ask me questions or discuss concerns as they occurred. Written consent forms were collected from the educators and throughout the research process I was onsite to support them in any questions they had.

Lingering Covid-19 practices where parents no longer come into the building or classroom were evident in this service, even though parents are very welcome to enter. The owner and I discussed how it seemed like Covid-19 generated a different cohort of parents who did not want to enter the service because their level of comfort was altered during the pandemic. I found this lack of parental involvement difficult to navigate because I had the full support of the owner who had briefed parents verbally and via phone about the upcoming research in the weeks before and yet I had no interaction with parents at all. Conducting an in-person parental information session was necessary before the pilot study took place so that parents could understand the research through discussions of the processes outside of reading their information sheets and consent forms. I built in a parental information session a week prior to the pilot study research being conducted before written consent was sought for this cohort of children to engage in the study overall. The session was advertised in the service in poster format at the parental sign-in station alongside a list where parents could sign whether they wished to attend the in-person feedback session or a Zoom alternative that evening. While the information session was available beside their sign-in sheets which they sign in and out of for daily drop-off and collection of children, no parent signed up to attend the in- person or online information session. I felt this was unusual, typically expecting at least one or two parents to engage in discussions about the research project, but it highlighted a number of aspects for me. Firstly, the owner and staff had very strong relationships with the parents of this service as observed throughout the research study. Some families attending this service had multiple children attending in the ECCE and afterschool service, where the majority of after schoolers had attended ECCE in the service previously before transitioning to primary school. Therefore, I believe the owner's high levels of interest about the research being conducted in her service may have translated across to the parents in their ongoing, informal conversations and possibly played a factor in parents' perspective of the research. Secondly, the information and consent forms were very detailed where I gave my contact information should any parent wish to speak with me about the research project. While no parent contacted me about the research at any point, I believe having access to my contact information as the researcher gave more transparency to the research so parents were not being walled out if they had any concerns. Therefore, I learned that, while providing prior information sessions to parents about research projects is vital to ensure ethical boundaries are understood so parents are well-informed before giving consent for their child to participate, hosting such sessions does not guarantee attendance by parents. I personally believe this situation occurred in this manner as a result of the trust and transparency the service has built with their attending families and the detailed, written information they were provided in advance about the project alongside the post-Covid-19 influences that are still evident in early years practices today. While potential reasons have been personally given here, the literal reasons are outside the scope of the research. Therefore, regardless of the reason for no attendance or engagement from parents, ultimately all parents provided written consent for their Year 2 ECCE child to participate in the research project.

Parental consent typically takes precedence over children's consent so that children can be protected in research (Christensen and Prout, 2002; Nutbrown, 2010), but I designed the research so that if a parent did not consent to their child taking part, their child would not have been excluded from the project's processes but could still engage without being analysed. This is important as previous research has found the negative impact on children who realised they were being excluded or were deliberately uninvolved in research (Richardson, 2019). For example, if a child wanted to use the GoPros or the child was recorded in a scene with consenting children and their parent did not consent to their child taking part, this aspect of the data that included the non- consenting child either wearing the GoPro or recorded by the GoPro would not have been analysed. This design was not necessary for the Year 2 ECCE classroom of children and staff because all parents consented. However, this process was necessary to implement when it came to the other classroom of pre-ECCE children during outdoor play. The pre-ECCE children were not participants of the project but it was impossible to separate the Year 2 ECCE children from their pre-ECCE peers when outdoors. Therefore, I drafted up information sheets and acknowledgement forms for the pre-ECCE classroom that informed these parents of the study and that their child, if recorded, would not be analysed as part of the research. Again, I saw the benefit of the strong bonds that had been cultivated between the service and the parents of the pre-ECCE, as many of them were already aware of the research project. All parents of the pre-ECCE cohort provided written acknowledgement that their child may be recorded but their data would not be analysed which made video analysis much more straight-forward overall for the research project. However, it was important to have my backup plan set out in the instance that some parents opted out. Luckily, this was not the case and the required ethical criteria were met and data collection and analysis was possible.

○ Children's Consent

Current power structures relating to children's participation in research certainly played a factor in this research in how I am bound by the limitations of current ethical guidelines that require parental consent to decide whether children can participate first and foremost (Educational Research Association, 2018; EECERA, 2015) and not the children themselves. While I'm aware these power structures may never be overcome completely (Palaiologou, 2012), I wanted to ensure my core beliefs about children's participation was evident in this research. Children are capable of giving consent having demonstrated their abilities to make choices and express preferences about their environments, emotional states and motives (Goodvin et al., 2008; Lansdown, 2010), including young children who are typically overlooked in research (O'Farrelly et al.2020; O'Farrelly and Hennessy, 2014). Furthermore, young children have demonstrated much more competency than adults care to admit (de Zulueta, 2010) where their capacity for altruism and empathy form the basis for their competency in giving informed consent (O'Farrelly and Tatlow-Golden, 2022). However, I struggled with the terminologies of consent and assent trying to decide which one supported my position of children being capable researchers and attempting to avoid any tokenistic statements. Assent refers to children's agreement to participate in the research process where parental consent is gained as the basis for children's participation (Cocks, 2006), is stated as different to consent because consent requires a signature (Spriggs, 2010) and is mainly associated with being practiced in a child friendly way (Pyle and Danniels, 2016). However, it must be stated my hesitation to refer to children's assent rather than consent comes from the view that using assent can be seen as diminishing children's ability to comprehend the complexities (Joffe, 2003). For example, a researcher may allow competent children to assent but also ask their parents to consent and involve children based on their parental permissions and not the child themselves. By using assent, it can imply that the researcher does not consider whether the children should themselves consent and by doing so, the researcher fails to respect the autonomy of a competent child (Baines, 2011). However, children's consent is not gained at certain rigid points of a research project but is part of an ongoing process (Spriggs, 2010). Therefore, rather than focus on the terminology of consent or assent when it came to children, I wanted to ensure that the research method children were using made participating in research active by easily opting in and out of the research as they wished.

> "The debate about assent needs to move away from terminology, definition and legal issues. It should focus instead on practical ways of supporting researchers to work in partnership with children, thus ensuring a more informed, voluntary and more robust and longer lasting commitment to research."
>
> - Oulton et al. (2016, p.9)

In terms of the focus groups, the priority was ensuring permission was gained prior to showing the chosen 2-3 video clips that were recorded. This was necessary to alleviate from the known limitations of the GoPro for being forgotten when the wearer is wearing it on their head (Richardson, 2019), how it records the private speech of participants (Parsons et al. 2021) and that it could record conversations that do not want to be shared by participants (Skovdal and Abebe, 2012). Therefore, part of the research participation process regarding the focus groups required that I seek out each recorded participant shown in the chosen video clips, allow them to watch the clip themselves and ask for their verbal permission to show the clip to the wider group of participants of educators and children. By doing this, participants, both educators and children, were in control of what was being shown to other participants, while also being aware that I, as the researcher, would be the only person to see the video clip if they chose not to show the video to other participants.

Another common ethical issue that arose was how to balance the expression of views of each participant equally. However, regardless of the size of a focus group or a participant's confidence in speaking in a group, there will always be those who do not wish to engage at all (Butschi and Hedderich, 2021). Children who were not as communicative but chose to sit and listen were not spotlighted or pressured to engage, but were respected for their choice to not voice their thoughts if they did not want to. Conducting the research in their classroom with their educators present was also an element that ensured children were comfortable with the process where educators were on standby if any child was finding the experience in any way stressful (Dockett and Perry (2011). This applies both to the initial focus group and the Friday focus groups. By conducting the focus groups in the library corner of their own classroom, opting in and out was much easier as children were confident in their surroundings, but also reassured they could go and play whenever they wanted and return if they chose to. Children were also reminded about how to use the GoPros, not to record in the bathroom cubicles but could everywhere else, how they did not have to wear the GoPros if they did not want to and if they wanted to wear them they could if they weren't being used by someone else. Children were reminded daily that if they no longer wanted to be a researcher or did not want to record something, they could take off the camera and vice-versa if they wanted to opt in they could access the camera. However, I should have included more detailed discussions with the educators about how to recognise if a child wants to consent or not consent to participating in the research which came about after recognising the impact educators were having on children's role as co-researchers, discussed in more detail in Chapter 3, Section 3.3, 3.3.2 The Unintended Consequences of Educators Wearing GoPros. This particular outcome of the research is ethically fundamental because if children's ability to consent is ignored and are then coerced into conducting research or excluded from it, children's initial excitement and curiosity of being stationed as a researcher can be damaged because it becomes another experience of their life that the adult controls (Rose, 1999; Ryan, 2011; Smith, 2014). Their sense of research autonomy is lost and their purpose for completing the research is no longer intrinsic, but is to satisfy the adult, turning what should be research conducted by children into tokenistic research that promotes the adult agenda over the child themselves. Recognition of the subtle and direct expressions of consent that can be communicated by children needs to be a major discussion point for any research to avoid limiting children's research experiences to that of coercion and control. Ensuring those who are facilitating the use of a research method, like the educators with the GoPro cameras if the researcher is directly out of the field, are given the tools to be more practically aware of how to see consent when it is being given and when it is being withdrawn by children.

However, it must be noted that this ethical dilemma presented itself as a result of the power dynamics that already existed between the educators and children which were the subject for this research project. Direct interference from me would have influenced how educators and children navigate their power dynamic and ultimately skewed the findings of the research project. Yet, I believe the way in which children's research participation and access to using the GoPros was navigated within the research field is an ethical scenario that needed to be highlighted here. Having background knowledge of children's participation and gaining written gatekeeper and parental consent is not enough when conducting research with children as in-life participation can be very different to one's own knowledge base. Furthermore, while using GoPro cameras with children is deemed an underdeveloped research tool that can provide insight into children's perspectives (Green, 2016), adults must not choose these video methods as a way of increasing surveillance over children and of their lives. Therefore, for ethical research to occur with children involving video recording, positioning children as co-researchers ensures they can control of video methods and what is recorded. Understanding children's experiences further while ensuring children are the ones who give that insight to their lives if and when they choose to do so needs to be ethically balanced throughout research designs to ensure children's participation in any research is recognised, understood and respected at all times without increasing the surveillance of their already over-regulated lives (Furedi, 2001; Gill, 2007; Guldberg, 2009; Gray, 2011).

- **Data Analysis**

My primary data analysis focused on the video data captured by the children using the GoPros because they gave the research an extended first-person perspective of the child's view (Kindt, 2011; Waters, Waite, and Frampton, 2014) while capturing the "the messiness and ambiguities of children's voices" (Orrmalm et al., 2022, p.72). The transcripts from the focus groups were secondary to the GoPro camera data as they helped to provide additional insight into the video data, but were much more minimal in terms of data collected and served more so to provide additional quotes and context to the video data.

As previously highlighted, the first stage of data analysis required the reorganising of video clips to put them in sequential order as a result of the automatic downloading feature of the GoPro which divides recordings into 11 minute videos and saves them in a mixed order. These videos were then labelled and categorised into GoPro1 and GoPro 2 to demonstrate the two cameras recording potentially different perspectives of the same scenarios at the same time. This provided additional insight, for example, where one GoPro was closer to an experience occurring and the conversation could be heard clearer or the scene being more visible making it easier to transcribe. By categorising the recordings in this manner, I could work between the GoPros if a different perspective or closer range was needed to transcribe the data accurately. Once the recordings were categorised into GoPro 1 and GoPro2, I needed to clean the data by gathering the recordings that were valid. This meant eliminating any recordings that resulted in video playback having no visible recording because of either of the GoPros not being used but recording facedown without being picked up. Any recordings that had some scenes where the GoPro was faced down but was picked back up again were not eliminated as the GoPro was at some point picked up and experiences could be viewed and heard. However, audio was not transcribed when the GoPro was facedown as this was deemed as the participants opting out.

In total, out of 12 days of recording, 9 days of valid data was collected. After the data was cleaned, each 11 minute video was then grouped into Day 1, Day 2 up as far as Day 9 and then into Day 1 - GoPro 1; Day 1 - GoPro 2; Day 2 - GoPro 1; Day 2 - GoPro 2 etc. Each video had its own coded name generated by the GoPro so each 11 minute video was analysed one at a time. While I was aware that coding software such as Studiocode or DataVyU can be used to transcribe and analyse video data quicker, I felt I needed to be completely immersed in the data if I wanted to be able to understand and contextualise it. This meant analysing everything by myself using only two computer screens, a Microsoft word document and a screen for video playback. Analysis of 36 hours of data seemed daunting, but I felt it was important for me to sieve through it on my own to be most familiar with it. During my initial analysis of the video data. I focused on transcribing the entirety of the videos to include all interactions between educators and children, facial expressions, eye contact, body language, transcription of conversations and tones of voice as well as the background ongoings and environment descriptions. Analysing the variety of elements that make up children's voices is vital to ensure the fullness of voice is not tokenistically limited solely to the verbal and written word (Spyrou, 2016), Exploring meaning in the diverse elements of voice such as exploring silences used as a form of communication (Annerbäck, 2022; Kohli, 2006; Lewis, 2010; Spyrou, 2016), how the space and place influences their ability to participate (Mannion, 2007), non-verbal ways of communicating using their bodies as a mode of expression (Gallagher et al., 2017; Komulainen, 2007; Nairn, Munro and Smith, 2005) and resistance to power to express needs, wants and desires (Foucault, 1982; Hartmann, 2003; Nealon, 2008; Pickett, 1996) has been shown to provide much more detailed insights into children's experiences in research (Lansdown, 2010; Pálmadóttir and Einarsdóttir, 2015). Therefore, including analysis of the wholeness of the child's world in the initial stage was crucial so that I could first consider everything in context before engaging in further analysis.

The initial analysis of video data resulted in 307 pages of transcription to be analysed. I manually generated these transcripts by using a Word Doc table to keep order of all the video data being collected, analysed and reflected upon. The headings were as follows: Video Details which identified the name and number of the video clip being analysed; Time which identified the time on the video clip during which a transcription of a situation was recorded; Description which outlined what occurred in the situation providing all details of fore and background events including verbal and non-verbal communication; Themes/Coding which was a heading added after the initial transcripts were generated to support in analysing initial themes and codes using Braun and Clarke (2006); and Reflective Points was an original heading which supported the Description section so any additional thinking or insight could be documented, including links with other recorded situations and references to literature. Meticulously, I watched through all 36 hours of video clips, timestamping, describing, analysing and reflecting to ensure that I absorbed all of the data the children collected for this research project. A sample of the transcription process is provided in Appendix 8.

When the initial transcription of the data was completed, I conducted theamatic analysis

(Braun and Clarke, 2006) that allowed themes to become more visible as I went through the transcripts. The first round of themes identified four core daily routine elements where interactions and experiences most occurred between adults and children. These were outdoors, art, snack time and free play indoors. Additional themes of access, documentation, surveillance and GoPro experiences were also identified. Together, these eight initial themes provided the focus where experiences recorded were placed under one of these areas and then reanalysed in a second round. The most prominent themes were expectedly the themes relating to the daily routine (outdoors, art, snack and free play indoors). Once the four themes of the daily routine were established, I engaged in a third round of analysis that focused on each theme separately. By doing this, I could explore the kinds of experiences relating to compliance, resistance and power battles that occurred within children's experiences. For example, outdoor interactions between educators and children centered on children being told to come in when it rained but the children seeking to experience it anyway; or at snack time, children were told by educators to sit down but children sought to sit in a different place. When analysing at this point, I wanted to ensure that the children's forms of expression and participation were communicated effectively in a way that the child's voice was represented accurately. Therefore, using headings that reflected the experiences of children seemed more organic to the data and allowed for a continuation of children's experiences to be discussed as passionate stories that explore participation (Game and Metcalfe, 1996), rather than cutting the experiences down further into more mechanical themes and potentially losing 'the fullness of voice' (Spyrou, 2016, p.7) observed throughout this study.

In terms of analysing the focus group discussions, the discussions were audio recorded using a voice recorder and I manually transcribed them just like the video data. The focus groups were transcribed after the first initial analysis stage of the video data because I wanted to link the children's group discussions with the GoPro recordings to see how they correlated. By doing so, I ensured not to rely solely on the verbal words of children to inform the study, as discussed throughout the importance to capture children's whole voice (Lansdown, 2010; Pálmadóttir and Einarsdóttir, 2015). The processes of initial thematic analysis did not work as well for the focus groups because children's discussions were sporadic, reflective of how the children's individual experiences of power were more personal. Therefore, rather than categorise the transcripts, children's experiences were put into themes associated with experiences they had captured using the GoPro resulting in many unexpected and passionate stories about their experiences of participation (Game and Metcalfe, 1996). If their experiences were not relative to a recorded experience, I contextualised their focus group discussion to support the overall experiences of the collective. This meant that small quotes stated by the children became very impactful when combined with the GoPro data, where one quote has been used as the title of this research: “It’s like a baby jail!”. Ultimately, this became the purpose of the focus group discussion transcription as planned, to enrich the GoPro video data by highlighting children’s forms of expression and participation within a power structure without hindering the unpredictable, diverse features that make up children’s voices (Orrmalm et al., 2022). While the amount of data generated from the focus group was minimal, it provided substantial support to the overall findings of this research. This approach demonstrated not only the importance of having multiple methods of data collection when understanding children’s experiences, but that combining video data recording with children’s direct voices was an effective way to clarify children’s recorded experiences that was not always documenting their verbal or written voices, but explored their participation within power holistically. By analysing the verbal voices in the focus groups with the whole body experiences recorded using the GoPro cameras, this research demonstrated how children’s voices are more expressed in more ways than just verbally and in writing (Orrmalm et al., 2022), but is made up of their non-verbal communication, silences and choices of resistance and compliance as additional elements that encapsulate the complexity of children’s voices.

- **Balancing Foucauldian Research with a Video Camera Method**

I have spent much of my time critiquing and reflecting on my choice to use video cameras as a method for a Foucauldian influenced piece of research because of the irony of a surveillance method underpinned by a theorist who questions the place of surveillance in monitoring people’s lives (Foucault, 1979). Extensive consideration was given to the use of video recording within a Foucauldian lens so there was a clear rationale for what could be described as designing research that involved opposing methods and theories. For me, the purpose of the research was always to validate the children’s views and ensure their forms of expression were not misled, diminished or devalued by any adult, such as their educators, particularly if it was found that children’s views highlighted how restricted their lives are by their authority figures. The research could highlight potentially harmful practices that might be exercised subtly by educators who have normalised malpractice without awareness of the impact this has on the children. Therefore, there was a need for a method that allowed for the rewatching of practice to understand it further, not from a Panopticon type manner where the purpose is to alter subjects’ behaviour into a certain format

(Shah and Kesan, 2007), but to provide opportunities for reflecting on one's own conduct with children and being accountable for any potential malpractice (Kindt, 2011). With this in mind, I was aware that I was subjecting educators to their practices being questioned in favour of the children's voices both by me as the researcher and potentially by their manager who consented to the access of this research, eager to know the findings from the study. This in itself is a typical Foucauldian example of how an authority figure can use surveillance as a means to enforce a certain type of behaviour that ultimately leads to the control of a group where their acts are no longer their own (Foucault, 1997; Tikly, 2003). I had to ensure that this research was not about to mirror this version of Foucault's (1979) art of surveillance (Çeven, et al., 2021) over any of the participants involved. However, if the group are educators and their acts are restricting children's participation in their own learning environment, a review of practice would be a reasonable outcome for this research project in order to improve children's level of participation and dismantle the socialisation of power being exercised over children's lives (Corbett, 2010). Adults silencing children is a culture that we live in (James, 2009) and so I wanted to know if this culture was at play in the early years sector and if so, what these practices were that may be contributing to the lack of recognition and active implementation of children's participation rights. My thinking was that if this service was the ideal service eluding perfect practices of children's participation then this research would lend itself to promote what informed child participation looks like in practice. Therefore, I was open to what the research found in the hopes it would generate further insight into how the daily routine influenced children's participation. Yet, whether it was to highlight the positive or negative aspects of children's participation in practice was only discovered after the data was collected and analysed.

My choice of service also played a factor into why I chose video recording for a Foucauldian piece of research. The service I picked was one I worked in for many years and was not only for the long-term connection I have with it personally and professionally, but it was also chosen because this service was where I learned the importance of valuing children. This service has always led an experienced team qualified to Bachelor's and Master's level, and so their place in this research was never assumed to capture malpractice, but to seek understanding on whether the use of a daily routine played a role in children's participation rights. I was conscious of the fact this service was deemed highly compliant and praised by different regulatory bodies who monitor their practices in the form of inspection and knew this dynamic would have played a part in embedding the normalisation of their practices even further, even if it was subtly hindering children’s participation. To potentially dismantle this service’s praised work approved by their regulatory bodies was daunting for me. What if children 's views were contradictory to the status granted to this service by regulatory bodies and thus the children’s views were not taken seriously? I knew I could not avoid this additional layer of power dynamics if I wanted to ensure children’s views were understood. Therefore, it was inevitable that analysing educators’ practice was something that could not be ignored when understanding children’s level of participation in an early years service because “when the early childhood educators are ‘accused’ by the expressions of the children and this opens up for new and unexpected beginnings, they are educated by the children” (Johannesen, 2013, p.294) and this is a power dynamic that is vital to be further understood from the child’s perspective particularly in society that advocates for children’s participation.

In order to capture the lived experiences of children, it is often necessary to undertake observations (Robson, 2011) and in this research, that included observing and analysing the practice of educators. Considering all of this, I felt it was necessary to use video recording as a method that would demonstrate the reality of the child’s participation level in an early years service as well as provide opportunities for reflective practice with educators. To me, exploring power through a Foucaldian lens in a world where adults dictate children’s lives and silence their voices (James, 2009), I felt that video recording was the most accountable way to explore power as it exists so that children’s experiences could be validated and the role of educator practice as a factor in children’s level of participation could be explored in a deeper, reflective manner. All of this reflective consideration I undertook was driven by the key aspect of how I did not want children’s views to be diminished, questioned or believed to be untrue or exaggerated by adults. Nor did I want adults to assume my intent was to tear down their daily routine that they put so much work and effort into everyday with quality regulatory compliance as their backing. I knew that the value of video recording in understanding power dynamics was vital for the credibility of this research and recordings were then available to reflect on however often was necessary by myself or the participants as a tool to alleviate any potential conflict that possibly could occur between adults and children when children were provided an opportunity to express their unregulated voices.

Foucault’s positioning on power also influenced my choice in how practice was video recorded. Originally, I considered stationing a camera in a corner of the classroom, however I did not want participants, both educators and children, to feel like this was a research project where they could not behave as they normally would under a possible ‘microscope of conduct’ (Foucault, 1979, p.174). I did not want it to be another surveillance lens that was monitoring participants beyond their control, like a Panopticon type scenario that produces docile bodies (Gallagher, 2004). I needed to ensure I stayed close to my core values that underpinned this entire research purpose. I wanted to create a research project that highlighted children's forms of expression within power that they were in control of. The use of a stationed video camera did not reflect the philosophy behind this research and I went in search of a more dynamic videoing method that children could use themselves. This is how I came upon the GoPro as a method. However, I was aware that any video recording can infringe on a participant's privacy, particularly GoPro cameras for the fact that wearers can forget they're being worn (Hov and Neegaard, 2020), may engage in private speech (Parsons et al. 2021) and/or record conversations that they do not want to be shared (Skovdal and Abebe, 2012). I sought to alleviate these limitations by providing knowledge of the power that existed. By providing knowledge of power, participants were in a better position to be "free subjects" (Foucault, 1983, p.221) rather than docile bodies. Children were reminded daily about when the GoPro is being recorded, it records everything unless they take it off and either place it face down so I, the researcher, know not to write down what is heard or for the wearer to use the very clear off button on the top to stop the camera recording. The fact that video clips were going to be shown to the wider group was another layer of power where I did not want to create research processes that became an "apparatus of production" (Foucault, 1979, p.153) that could contribute to educators and children as feeling like anything they did or said could be shown to the class during the weekly focus groups and thus further inform potential docility driven by fear. Therefore, in order to dismantle the risk of participants controlling "their behaviour as if being supervised, even when not being observed" (Çeven et al., 2021, p.154), all participants were reassured that any chosen video clip that was chosen for playback in the weekly focus group was first shown individually to each participant recorded in the clips and they decided whether the clip could be watched by the whole group. Knowing that participants were in control of what was being shared with the rest of the group as well as understanding that I was the only person to see these videos minimised the effects of Foucault's (1979) conduct of conduct where people's behaviour is controlled as a result of surveillance methods (Varman, Saha and Skålén, 2011).

After considering the complexities of power in relation to video recording people and the impact this has on behaviour through surveillance, having awareness of the culture where children's voices are silenced by adults and merging this with the benefits of video playback as a means to support educators to reflect and improve their practice, the use of video recording seemed like a valid method of choice for this project. As Schwartz and Hartman (2007) phrased it, video "can help people see things they did not see before" (Schwartz and Hartman, 2007, p. 337). To be able to 'see' the gaps in practice that may be subtly supporting or hindering children's participation was the sole purpose of this research, and while it may not be a conventional method choice from a Foucauldian lens, this research has shown that not only does video-based methods work effectively when underpinned by Foucault's views on power, but it generates more opportunities for researching power with the intent to understand and highlight potential practices that may be suppressing the lives of certain groups of people, such as children.

Conclusion

This chapter has delved into the reasonings behind the research design to include the methods, implications for choice, ethical considerations and overall reflections. By highlighting these aspects in detail, this research has ensured the research's validity for future replication and critique. The following chapter will outline the core findings of the research and how the design choices made influenced the outcomes of the project.

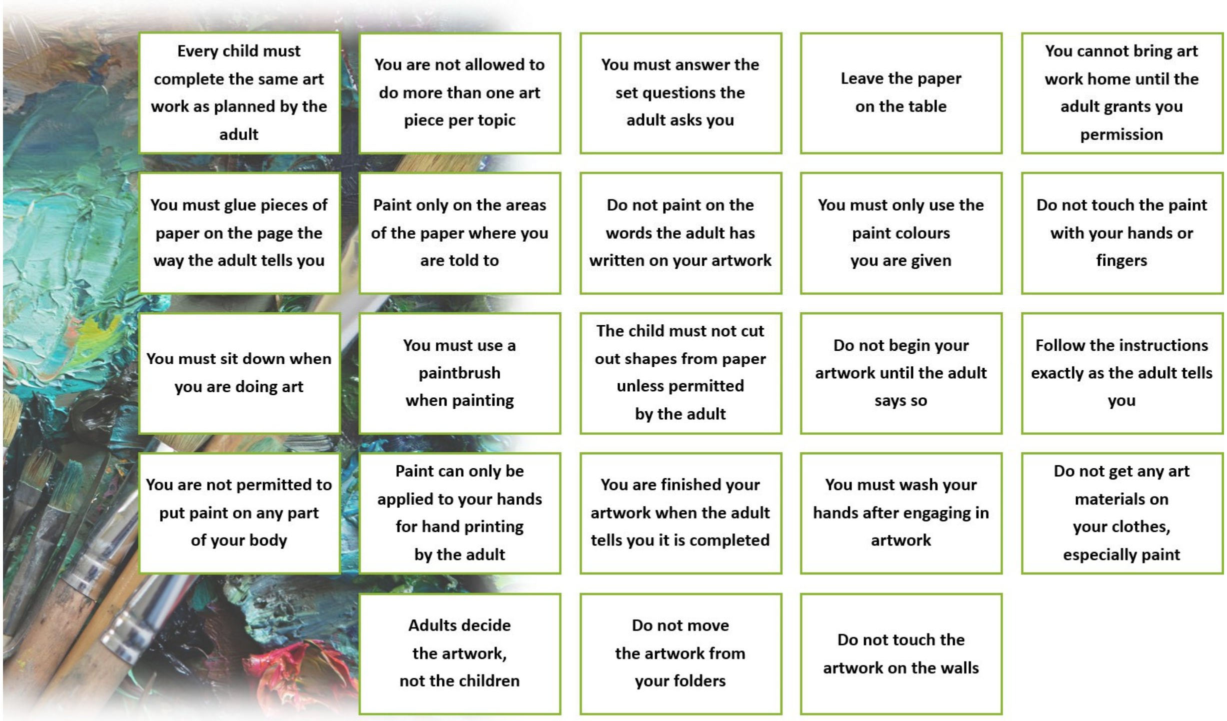
3. Witnessing Power and Participation in the Early Years Environment

Introduction

This chapter will outline the findings of this research. These revolve around the experiences captured by children as co-researchers using GoPros, the unforeseen power dynamics that evolved when educators became involved in using this method themselves and center on themes relating to surveillance, documentation and the daily routine (art, the outdoors, snack and indoor free play).

3.1. The Routine

3.1.1. Art



Every child must complete the same art work as planned by the adult

You are not allowed to do more than one art piece per topic

You must answer the set questions the adult asks you

Leave the paper on the table

You cannot bring art work home until the adult grants you permission

You must glue pieces of paper on the page the way the adult tells you

Paint only on the areas of the paper where you are told to

Do not paint on the words the adult has written on your artwork

You must only use the paint colours you are given

Do not touch the paint with your hands or fingers

You must sit down when you are doing art

You must use a paintbrush when painting

The child must not cut out shapes from paper unless permitted by the adult

Do not begin your artwork until the adult says so

Follow the instructions exactly as the adult tells you

You are not permitted to put paint on any part of your body

Paint can only be applied to your hands for hand printing by the adult

You are finished your artwork when the adult tells you it is completed

You must wash your hands after engaging in artwork

Do not get any art materials on your clothes, especially paint

Adults decide the artwork, not the children

Do not move the artwork from your folders

Do not touch the artwork on the walls

Image: The verbally spoken and the subtly conditioned rules observed during art activities

Aistear outlines the learning aims and goals that children are expected to achieve within their early years experiences. The framework "provides information for adults to help them plan for and provide enjoyable and challenging learning experiences" (NCCA, 2009, p.6) for children, with art being specified as a valuable activity for children's wellbeing and development. It outlines that "in partnership with the adult, children will express feelings, thoughts and ideas through improvising, moving, playing, talking, writing, story-telling, music and art" (NCCA, 2009 - Exploring and Thinking, Aim 3, Learning Goal 4). However, art was found to be the most regimented activity overall within the daily routine, where children's own expressions of personal thought or feelings were not evident, and moments of resistance by the children were met with coercive tactics used by the educators to ensure children engaged as educators wanted them to. The two adult educators in the room, Rebecca and Kim, were the planners of any art that was experienced by children:

> Kim: "So we were gonna do one or two art activities per theme."
> Rebecca: "So will we finish the caterpillars today and then…D'ya want to start the family tree?"
> Kim: "Oh yeah, we can, yeah."

The manner in which the art activities were carried out in terms of method and materials was also decided by the educators:

> Rebecca: "Dya know where you cut out the different shapes, squares, rectangles, circles..."
> Kim: "Oh yeah!
> Rebecca: "...and triangles and do it that way."
> Kim: "Oh, yep, I haven't done that one yet. Perfect."

Once the art activity had been decided by the educators, they then prepared the art materials themselves, aimed solely around that one piece of artwork.

- **The Mass Production of Artwork**

One key art activity I observed was the implementation of the "My Family Tree" artwork pre-planned by the educators. I could see the title of the artwork written by the educators at the top of each page, one for each child, where Rebecca sat "at a table on her own prepping the art activity by cutting green paper" to form the leaves of the trees. I noted how one child, Byron, was sitting beside her in silence "watching her cut the green paper" but at no point did he attempt to engage with cutting the paper, nor was he invited to. I watched as the educators designed the page layout, cut out the green coloured paper into leaf shapes, laid out brown paint with glue in it and set out only these materials on the table before calling children individually to sit at the table and wait until they were granted permission to paint:

> Kim: "Does everybody have a paint brush?...Don't start painting yet. I'm going to show you now what we have to do."

The educators gave detailed instructions to children on how to complete the art activity. Children were permitted to do their artwork one at a time only when the educators told them they could. By allowing children to engage in art one at a time, it ensured that the educator could monitor and control the artwork completed by the children in the order and method they wanted. This practice reflects Foucault's concept of disciplinary power, where control and surveillance are mechanisms through which authority is maintained (Foucault, 1977). Foucault's theories on governmentality also apply here, as the educators' actions demonstrate the regulation and governance of children's behavior through subtle means of control (Foucault, 1991).

Children sat at the art table "holding their paintbrush waiting for their turn". Some children bartered with the 'no painting until I say so' rule by "dipping the paint brush in and out of the paint" to experience the paint but not actually painting. The children demonstrated their near-compliance here by engaging in the paint they wanted to use at that moment but without being corrected for breaking the rule fully. Some children attempted to enforce this rule on peers, as seen between Anna and Angie:

> Anna goes to touch the brown paint. Angie says "No! Don't paint." and pulls the brown paint away from Anna. "No, don't paint, Anna." Anna does not touch the paint and sits looking at the paint. Anna

> then points at the brown paint: “I want this?”. Angie shakes her finger at Anna and nods her head no, saying: “No Anna, we’re not doing this. We’re not painting.”

Angie complied with the rule so much that she also enforced the educator’s own rule on them to keep them accountable too:

> Angie goes to walk away but stops and says to Kim: “Tell Anna not to touch that.”
> Kim: “Yep, I’m going to show you what to do now.”

When initiating the art activity, the group of four children as a whole were given an overall instruction for how they must complete the artwork:

> Kim: “Okay, so we’re going to make our family tree and on our tree we’re gonna stick some, what are these?” She holds up a green piece of paper she has cut out in the shape of a leaf.
> All of the four children sitting at the table slowly say: “Leaves.”
> Kim: “Leaves. But on each leaf, there’s going to be the name of people that live with you, that are in your family.”

Following the brief overall instruction of the art activity, the instructions became more precise. Details on what to paint first and where were exercised in children’s art where the educator used her hand to trace the page and outlined where the children must paint. This typically occurred one to one, where the child sitting beside the educator received the detailed instruction and the rest of the group watched and waited to be permitted to paint:

> Kim: “So what you're going to do Angie is you're going to draw your tree okay? So you draw the big branches coming out of it as well and then you can stick on your leaves all over your tree.”
> Kim points out on the page where the tree trunk and branches must go, then Angie is permitted to paint using the only paint provided on

> the table: brown paint, which ensures that children paint the tree trunk the way the educator wants it. Angie starts painting, doing brush strokes up and down the middle of her page, imitating Kim's hand movements that demonstrated an invisible guideline.

Foucault's concept of disciplinary power is evident in the way Kim manages the art activity. She provides overall instructions and then breaks them down into detailed steps, closely monitoring the children's compliance. This approach aligns with Foucault's idea that disciplinary power involves hierarchical observation, where individuals are constantly visible and their actions are evaluated. By instructing children one at a time and having the others wait and watch, Kim creates a dynamic of surveillance where each child is aware of being observed, both by the educator and their peers. It is here that it becomes evident of how powerful the adult gaze is in the "ordering of the world and children's lives" (Steeves and Jones, 2010, p.188). This constant visibility ensures adherence to the set guidelines and fosters self-regulation among the children (Foucault, 1977).

With Angie obeying the instructions, the rest of the three children sitting at the table sat in silence and watched, waiting for the educator to permit them to paint. The educator would then choose another child to repeat the process with:

> Kim: "Angie, I'll come over to you now and you can start your one."
> Kim moves her chair beside Angie.

The physical positioning of the educator to sit beside the child completing the artwork ensured that the intense monitoring of the art work was achieved. The child sitting beside the educator was verbally and physically maneuvered more directly which meant there was more control on the art product being produced as the educator wanted. This influence was evident in children who wanted to complete the artwork correctly, for example when Judy was making her family tree:

> Kim: "There's yours Judy, will you stick on yours as well for me?"
> Kim hands out the green pieces.
> Judy asks Kim: "Where will I stick them?"

> Kim points at the page: “You can stick them up here.”
> Judy follows Kim’s command as instructed and sticks the leaves where Kim had pointed to.

Judy wanted to follow the process perfectly, and so by asking Kim where she should stick the leaves gives an insight to the lack of personal expression experienced by children in art. Kim telling Judy where to stick the leaves that Kim cut out meant the artwork was more the work of the educator rather than the child’s. The children's behavior during the activity exemplifies Foucault's notion of creating ‘docile bodies’: individuals who have been conditioned to follow rules and norms through subtle forms of control. Kim's physical positioning beside each child, her hand movements demonstrating how to paint, and the limitation of paint colors to ensure compliance and control, all contribute to moulding the children's behavior. The children respond by imitating Kim's actions and complying with her instructions, thus exhibiting the docility that Foucault describes. This process of moulding behavior through precise control and regulation is a key aspect of Foucault's theory of how power operates in institutions to produce compliant subjects (Foucault, 1977). This practice was also seen in the design of the family tree art product having the names of each family member written on each leaf which was essentially the work of the educator who wrote the names of family members while prompting children to give the answers the educator wanted:

> Rebecca to Judy: “So who’s in your family tree Judy?” Judy names two family members.
> Rebecca: “And who else lives in your house?”
> Judy: “That’s it.”
> Rebecca sounds shocked: “That’s it?! What about mammy and daddy?...And I think you’re forgetting a little baby. And you’re forgetting yourself! .....Rebecca writes down more names on leaves as Judy sits painting brown strokes of paint up and down the middle of the page.
> Rebecca: “Okay, so when you finish your tree trunk, you stick on your leaves, okay? Now.” Rebecca puts the written leaves in front

> of Judy.

It is evident here that Rebecca knows Judy’s family members and wanted Judy to name all of them. Rather than encouraging Judy to make the art the way she wanted to and include family members of her choice, Rebecca continued to write more names that Judy deliberately chose not to say and told Judy to stick all of them on her artwork. Foucault's concept of disciplinary power is vividly illustrated in the way the educators Rebecca and Kim manage the children's activities. Disciplinary power is characterised by the meticulous control of time, space, and activity, with the goal of producing docile and compliant individuals (Foucault, 1977). Rebecca’s interference on naming all of Judy’s family members, regardless of Judy’s preferences, demonstrates this control. Rather than encouraging autonomy, Rebecca imposes her own structure, ensuring conformity to her expectations.

This method of control extends to the caterpillar activity, where children are required to stick pre-cut circles in a specific order and answer questions dictated by the educator. The repetitive questioning and insistence on "correct" answers emphasise what Foucault describes as normalisation, where certain behaviors and responses are deemed acceptable, and others are corrected or dismissed (Foucault, 1977):

> Kim: “Now Anna, I have to ask you some questions. What’s your favourite thing to do in school?”
> Anna: “That’s Anna’s.” Anna points at her photo on the page.
> Kim ignores Anna’s distraction: “Anna, what’s your favourite thing to do in school?”
> Anna: “That, em….That…” Kim cuts Anna off.
> Kim: “Yeah, but what do you like to do in school? What do you like to play with?”
>
> Anna: “My …..*inaudible*…..My *inaudible* is my best friends”
> Kim leans in closer to Anna’s face who is across the table from Kim.
> Kim: “Okay, but what toy do you like to play with, what’s your favourite toy?”

> Anna: “The plants.” Kim leans back from Anna and begins
> writing.
> Kim: “And what’s your favourite food?

What is deemed a relevant answer is decided by the educator Kim, where time for children to think and process is limited, as shown when Anna firstly attempts to redirect from the question and focus on her photo: “That’s Anna’s” only to be redirected back by Kim who repeats the question “Anna, what’s your favourite thing to do in school?”. When Anna does not give an answer that is adequate enough for Kim: “my best friends”, Kim physically moves in closer and prompts her to answer differently: “Okay, but what toy do you like to play with, what’s your favourite toy?”. When Anna gives what Kim deems a ‘correct’ answer, the next question is asked and the process is repeated. The answers weren’t genuinely the child’s, being redirected by the educator. The act of Kim moving physically closer to Anna when her answers are not deemed sufficient can be seen as a form of surveillance. Foucault argues that surveillance is a critical mechanism of disciplinary power, ensuring that individuals conform to norms through the implicit threat of being watched and corrected (Foucault, 1977). By leaning in closer, Kim not only increases the pressure on Anna to conform but also reinforces the power dynamic between them. This physical proximity acts as a form of silent coercion, pushing Anna towards giving the "correct" answer.

By having only a select number of children complete the artwork over a period of two to three days, this created moments where those who finished their artwork earlier wanted to make another. However, children who were ticked off the checklist having completed the set artwork were forbidden from doing a second version of a completed art piece. This practice of limiting the number of artworks each child can produce reflects Foucault’s discussions that disciplinary power operates through mechanisms such as surveillance, normalisation and examination, which regulate and control individual behavior within institutional settings (Foucault, 1977). In this context, the restriction on creating multiple artworks serves to discipline the children by enforcing conformity to a predetermined set of rules and activities, thereby shaping their behavior according to institutional norms. Children were told that they can wait until everyone had completed their artwork, for example, the family tree, and then when all the family trees are completed by each child, then each child can engage in the next art piece planned for them when called. This sequential and controlled approach to art production illustrates Foucault's concept of time being used as a form of power to mould the actions and behaviours of groups. Foucault discusses how time and schedules are used to regulate behavior and productivity, ensuring that individuals adhere to institutional routines and expectations (Foucault, 1977). By dictating when each child can proceed to the next art activity based on collective completion, the educators exercise disciplinary power to maintain order and efficiency in the classroom. For example, Lee wanted to make another family tree, but he was not allowed by his educator Kim:

> Kim: “No, you have your one done Lee. You can do something else
> until we make our caterpillars.

Here, Kim's assertion of control over Lee's artistic output demonstrates Foucault's concept of examination as a technique of disciplinary power. Foucault discusses how examinations are used not only to assess knowledge but also to normalise behavior and regulate individuals' capabilities within institutional frameworks (Foucault, 1977). By denying Lee the opportunity to create another family tree, Kim reinforces the rule of completing only one artwork per activity, thereby subjecting Lee to the disciplinary mechanism of examination and control. While the rule that every child cannot do a second art piece of the one activity was a dominant rule being implemented, the educators weren’t always so direct in enforcing this rule as seen above with Lee. For example, with Phoebe, she queried subtly about whether she could make another caterpillar earlier in the day with Kim:

> Kim to Phoebe: “Now, we’ll do one more and I have to go
> and…we’re gonna do caterpillars.”
> Phoebe: “Different caterpillars?”
> Kim: “Did you do yours last week?”
> Phoebe: “Yeah.”
> Kim: “Oh, kay…” Kim sounds dismissive.
> Phoebe changes her answer: “No, actually I didn’t! I just did my
> own, I did my face on mine.”
> Kim: “Oh, yeah yeah.” Kim walks away.

Phoebe's interaction with Kim demonstrates how children negotiate and sometimes resist disciplinary norms within educational institutions, reflecting how individuals, through their actions and discourse, challenge and negotiate power relations imposed upon them (Foucault, 1982). Phoebe's attempt to ask about creating another caterpillar reflects her awareness of the disciplinary rule limiting artworks per child. By initially suggesting she had not completed a caterpillar previously, Phoebe seeks to bend the rule, showcasing a form of resistance against disciplinary constraints. Phoebe demonstrated that she knew she had completed a caterpillar already, hence why she asks if they're doing "different caterpillars". Phoebe demonstrates her understanding of the 'one art piece per child' rule because she's aware if the caterpillars today are the same ones that she did last week, then she won't be able to do one. Phoebe answers honestly when asked if she had hers done previously, but then changed her answer to convince Kim she didn't do it at all. Phoebe does this in the hopes of bypassing the 'one art piece per child' rule. Kim dismisses Phoebe's changed answer and the interaction stops there until later in the day when Phoebe approaches Kim again about making another caterpillar:

> Phoebe: "I want to do another one of my caterpillars."
> Kim: "Ehhh….Yeah, we might do one…". Kim does not look at Phoebe, directing her attention to Anna who is completing the caterpillar art piece.
> Phoebe picks up her artwork: "Is this my one?"
> Kim: "Yes it is, look how good it is."
> Phoebe: "Do I have to…." Kim cuts Phoebe off and continues instructing Anna to stick her circles down.
> Phoebe: "Do I have to do another caterpillar down here?" pointing to the bottom of her page.
> Kim: "Eh, no, just do one." Kim is still not looking at Phoebe.
> Phoebe: "Do you have to do two ones?"
> Kim continues to ignore Phoebe and focuses on Anna finishing the caterpillar: "Now Anna, I have to ask you some questions. What's your favourite food?"
> Phoebe interrupts before Anna can answer: "Do I have to do two, Kim?"
> Halfway through Phoebe asking, Kim is shaking her head

> communicating ‘No’
> Kim: “No, you have your one done, Phoebe.”

There are many clear and direct verbal attempts made by Phoebe to express her desire to engage in more artwork. Kim responds firstly by misleading Phoebe into thinking she will get the opportunity to do another caterpillar, stating “Yeah, we might do one” hoping that this would stop Phoebe from asking. Phoebe was given no opportunity to complete a second art piece as seen after Phoebe repeatedly asks to do another caterpillar and Kim replies with “No, you have your one done, Phoebe.” Kim indirectly enforces the rule that only one art piece per child is completed, using misleading responses as a tactic to make Phoebe believe she will get what she wants when realistically, Kim banks on Phoebe getting distracted or losing interest. In this situation, the aim was to make sure every child completed their caterpillar once and once only. If the educators permitted Phoebe to do another, it would mean more children may want to do a second one too, and that is time spent that their predetermined plans associated with the daily routine do not cater for. Therefore, if Phoebe’s desire to repeat an art piece was allowed, this would have delayed the production process that the educators Kim and Rebecca had planned which involved each child producing one family tree and one caterpillar art piece.

Attempts to mislead children happened in situations where the educators had determined the group plan they wanted to achieve, as seen here with Anna and Rebecca:

> The top of Anna’s head shows Anna walking to the art table. She
> looks at the table and asks: ”Can I do some painting?”
> Rebecca says to Anna: “You can do some painting in a few minutes
> Anna, because you did yours yesterday.”

The rule that only one art piece can be completed per child is subtly enforced. By responding in this way, the educator does not have to outright say no to the child, but says it in a way that the child will be led to believe they will get to do another. The child waits for an art opportunity that never comes. Any further attempts by Anna to ask to paint as she continued waiting was responded with the educator’s indirect statement being repeated. Anna continued to wait, but at no point was Anna permitted to paint by the educators:

> Anna is still sitting at the art table with Rebecca.
> Anna: “Can I do painting now?”
> Rebecca: “In a few minutes Anna, you did your one yesterday.”

Phoebe's persistence in seeking to create another caterpillar despite Kim's dismissive responses illustrates the ongoing negotiation of power within disciplinary frameworks. Foucault's concept of power relations emphasises how individuals engage in strategic maneuvers and resistance tactics to navigate and challenge disciplinary mechanisms (Foucault, 1982). Kim's indirect enforcement of the rule, despite Phoebe's attempts, underscores the disciplinary power's ability to regulate and normalise behavior through subtle control tactics as is seen in more detail in the next section.

- **The Art Rebellion**

Because each child was required to complete the planned artwork within a timeframe set out by the educator, it resulted in some children having a more physically mechanical experience of art manoeuvred directly by the educator so the art was completed on time. This occurred with Dylan who initially questioned why he had to complete this art, but was ignored by the educator when he asked: “Why?”. Dylan also tried to physically walk away when he explained that he didn’t want to do the art because “I’m not the best at drawing”. Kim encouraged him to do this art piece: “Okay, well try your best” because he was one of the few children left to complete this artwork. But his decision was ignored and coaxed into completing the art Kim wanted him to do:

> Kim: “And now we’re gonna do your handprint, because you missed this on the first day of school.”
> Dylan seems confused: “I missed it?”
> Kim continues talking: “So show me your hand.”

The approach of the educator sitting directly beside the child in order to direct their movements more intensely is seen here and the detailed instructions for Dylan to follow are given:

> Kim takes Dylan’s hand in hers “We’re gonna put a little bit of paint

> on it."
> She holds his hand and paints blue paint on his palm while he stands with his hand in hers watching her paint.
> Kim: "Don't want to get it on your lovely fireman outfit."
> Kim paints his hand. She turns his hand around while he still stands watching her in silence. "Okay turn it around then." She moves his hand to face the page palm down. Dylan does not move his hand.
> Kim: "And stick it down." Kim directs his hand and she presses it down onto the page. Her hand holds his down in pace for a second. Dylan stands in silence watching as she moves his hand.
> Kim: "Now lift up." She lifts his hand up off the page and Dylan otherwise does not move.
> Kim: "Perfect, now will you go wash your hands for me? Good boy." Kim ticks Dylan's name off a list as Dylan walks to the bathroom.

Because each child was required to complete the planned artwork within a timeframe set out by the educator, it resulted in some children having a more physically mechanical experience of art manoeuvred directly by the educator so the art was completed on time as seen here with Dylan. Dylan's resistance and initial reluctance to engage in the art activity were overridden by Kim's directive control. Despite Dylan's verbal and physical attempts to resist ("Why?" and attempting to walk away), Kim's insistence and physical manipulation of Dylan's hand illustrate how disciplinary power operates through the regulation of bodies in order to conform to institutional norms and objectives (Foucault, 1977). Kim's method of sitting directly beside Dylan to direct his movements intensively exemplifies Foucault's idea of the examination as a disciplinary technique. By physically guiding Dylan's hand and giving detailed instructions ("We're gonna put a little bit of paint on it"), Kim exerts disciplinary power to ensure Dylan's compliance with the prescribed activity. This method of close supervision and direct physical intervention aims to enforce conformity and efficiency in completing the art task within the allotted time frame. Furthermore, Dylan's lack of autonomy and control over his own artistic expression highlights Foucault's notion of subjection. Despite Dylan's expressed reluctance and lack of confidence ("I'm not the best at drawing"), he is coerced into participating and conforming to

Kim's instructions. Foucault discusses how disciplinary power not only regulates actions but also subjectivities, shaping individuals' self-perception and capabilities within institutional frameworks (Foucault, 1980). The interaction between Kim and Dylan exemplifies Foucault's theories on disciplinary power and the regulation of bodies within institutional settings. Kim's directive control over Dylan's artistic process illustrates how disciplinary mechanisms operate to enforce compliance, regulate behaviours, and mould individuals to conform to institutional norms and expectations.

Other children equally experienced more direct coercion to complete their set out art tasks, such as Byron, but in Byron's case, he was more verbally defiant in his resistance. Byron verbally communicates that he does not want to make a family tree, but also non-verbally expresses this by physically turning away from Rebecca:

> Rebecca to Byron: "Byron will you come over here and do your family tree?" Rebecca pulls an empty chair towards her.
> Byron: "No."
> Rebecca calls over to him: "Who's in your family?"
> Byron faces away from Rebecca and towards the couch mumbling 'My mammy".
> Rebecca calls across the room again, holding the chair towards him: "Tell me who's in your family."
> Byron shouts "Mammy!"

Byron's verbal and non-verbal resistance to creating the family tree reflects a form of resistance against the disciplinary power exerted by Rebecca. Byron's refusal to comply directly challenges Rebecca's authority and attempts to assert control over his artistic expression. As seen in previous art activities, the mass production of art process requires the child to sit beside the educator so that the educator can intensely direct the child to complete the artwork as prescribed. Here, Rebecca looks to coax Byron over to sit beside her:

> Rebecca: "Yeah but you can paint it on your tree." Rebecca holds up a paintbrush towards him. Byron looks at her.
> Byron: "I want to be the researcher."

> Rebecca: “What?”
> Byron: “I want to be the researcher.”
> Rebecca smirks and eyerolls towards Kim.
> Rebecca: “Here, do this first and then you can. C’mon.” Rebecca taps the blank page to imply painting is first. Byron takes off the GoPro and walks over to her.

Foucault's (1977) concept of disciplinary power highlights how authority such as the educators position themselves physically to monitor and direct subjects’ behavior closely. By sitting beside Byron, Rebecca exercises disciplinary control over his actions, ensuring he adheres to the prescribed task. This physical proximity allows for direct supervision and correction, reinforcing the institutional norms of the educational setting (Foucault, 1977). Not only did Byron express that he did not want to paint, but he gave his reason of using the GoPro to justify his decision. Rebecca responded to this by smirking and rolling her eyes at him and proceeded to tap the paintbrush and the page telling Byron to “C’mon”. Rebecca’s repeated demand of Byron finally caused Byron to reluctantly get up and sit in the seat. Byron's assertion of wanting to be a researcher and Rebecca's dismissive response illustrate a struggle for agency. Foucault would interpret Byron's desire to use the GoPro as a form of resistance, attempting to assert control over the activity by proposing an alternative role (Foucault, 1982). However, Rebecca's redirection and insistence on compliance reflect her exercise of disciplinary authority to maintain order and conformity in the classroom. Because of this struggle, Byron expresses more resistance:

> Rebecca asks Byron: “Who lives in your house?” Byron begins to name family members but then he stops himself and says:
> “Where’s the green paint?”
> Rebecca ignores his statement, focusing on his family member answers: “And who else?”
> Byron says again, sounding more annoyed: “Where’s the green paint?!”
> Rebecca: “We don’t have green paint, we’re using these as...”
> Byron: “But how...How...Are these?” Byron is referring to how the leaves are already green.

> Rebecca: “Yeah, we use paper.” Byron stamps on the paper and
> gets paint on the table.
> Rebecca: “Ohh! Careful.”

Byron expresses frustration because the leaves are already done for him because the educators cut the leaves out of green paper. Byron physically expresses this frustration by hitting the paintbrush on the table and Rebecca suppress his expression by physically removing the paintbrush and lowering his arm to the table. Rebecca's swift response to Byron's frustration by physically removing the paintbrush and guiding his hand demonstrates her role as a disciplinary agent enforcing the rules and norms of the educational environment. Rebecca then continues to talk Byron through the specific instructions she has given other children previously, ignoring his expressions of frustration:

> Rebecca: “Yeah, so paint a big tree truck so you can stick the
> leaves down.”
> Byron paints the back of a leaf slowly. Rebecca takes it off him
> when she thinks there’s enough on it and says “Now, stick it on
> now. Mind now.” Byron goes to stick it down.
> Rebecca: “Good boy. That’s Daddy.”
> Byron paints one long strip on the page and Rebecca sticks a green
> piece on the page.

Not only does Byron have limited control of the art materials he has access to, but Rebecca gets more actively involved to make sure the artwork is completed the way she wants. However, Byron lets out more frustration:

> Rebecca tells Byron to turn the leaf around and stick it down.
> Byron complies. He then stamps his hand down on the leaf saying:
> “I don’t want to make a tree trunk!”

Rebecca again ignores Byron’s attempts to say no to doing this artwork as well as dismissing his verbal and physical expressions of frustration. Rebecca continues to direct Byron towards completing the art work:

> Rebecca: “Mind now. And.....There’s Mammy. .. Maybe you could just stick that one there.” Rebecca sticks the leaf down.
> Byron paints the back of the leaf and Rebecca holds it for him saying “Now don’t put any paint on the. ...Good boy. Now stick it down.”
> Byron sticks it down as told.
> Rebecca: “Good boy. Well done. That is a beautiful family tree!”
> Rebecca holds up the painting in front of Byron.

Byron walks away from Rebecca after this interaction and Rebecca checks his name off the checklist. In this case, Byron's compliance, albeit reluctant, reflects the internalisation of disciplinary norms within the educational setting, where resistance is met with corrective measures to ensure conformity (Foucault, 1977).

- **The Power of the Checklist**

The checklist was designed so that educators could keep track of what children had completed the art activities. Once each child had produced the art piece as required for that given theme, they were ticked off the checklist. Children were then summoned again the following week individually into small groups of four or five when the cycle repeated itself for a new art activity the educators had planned for the next theme. The checklist was used by the educators to organise who completed the artwork and who didn’t:

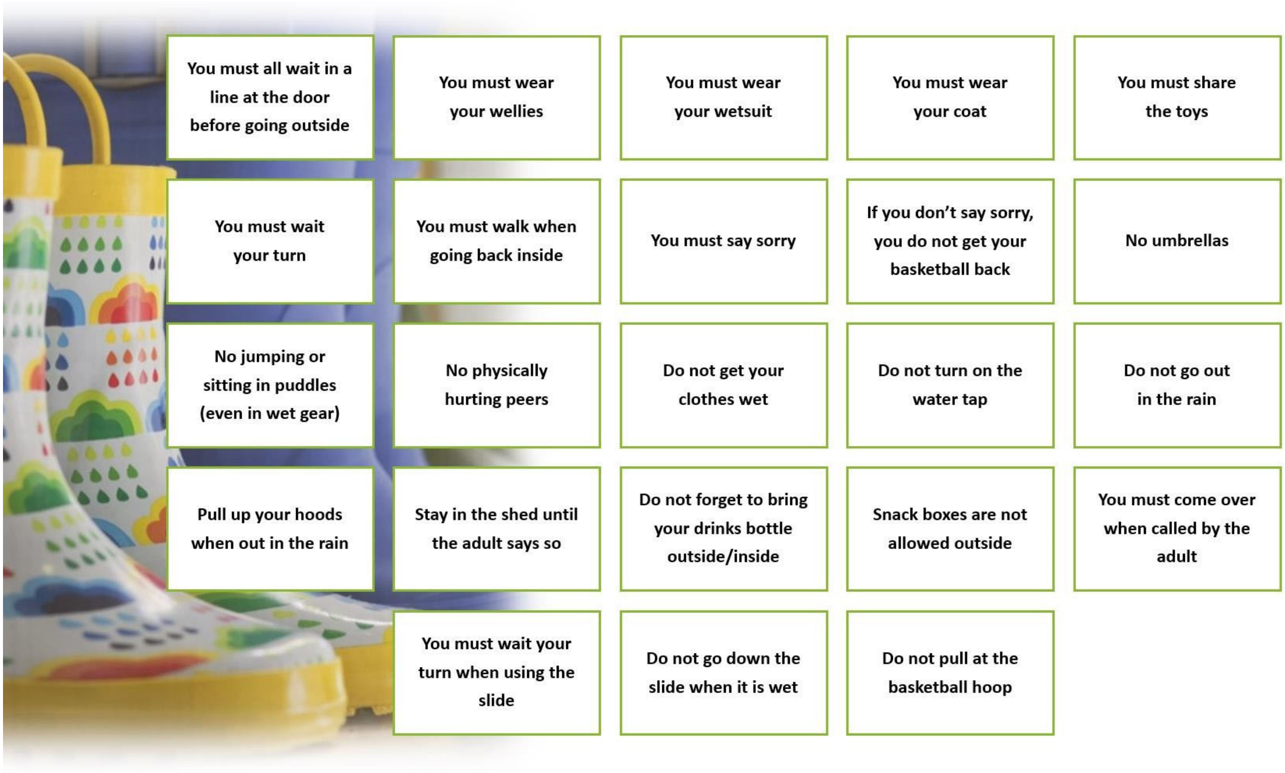
> Rebecca: “How many are left?”
> Kim: “Just the three of them.”
> Rebecca: “Did you do your one Lee?”
> Lee: “Yeah. I wanna do my one now. Can I do my one?”
> Byron: “No, he already did his one.”
> Rebecca: “No he didn’t do his, I don’t have it ticked off.”

The checklist was like the educator’s tool of power that granted permission to the selected children to complete artwork when the educator requested. It forced other children to complete art when they did not want to for reasons of them not having done it previously, but it also denied other children additional opportunities to engage in art because they "have one done". The checklist empowered educators to monitor the art work of children and identify the children who slipped under the radar. However, the checklist also demonstrated how important the art products were to the educators, for example as seen here when Kim could not find Grace's work even though she was ticked off the checklist:

> Kim turns to Grace: "Grace, where did you put yours? Where's your picture?" Grace stands holding a doll looking at Kim with an empty expression, looking unsure of what Kim is saying.
> Kim: "Where's your picture Grace?" Grace points to the door with the crayons.
> Kim: "No, it's not up on the wall because I didn't get to laminate it yet."
> Kim continues to look for Grace's picture. She checks Phoebe's drawing "Can I see this for a second?" She then looks again at the folders. "Grace, where did you put your picture of your crayon?" Grace is standing by Kim but looking at the ground. Kim sounds more panicked now: "Grace? Grace?" Grace looks up then looks away.
> Kim: "Grace, where's your picture for your crayon? Where is it?"
>
> Rebecca says "You gave it to me, it's over there" and points to the kitchen.
> Kim: "Oh! Yep, I see it now." Kim puts Grace's crayon template art with the art folders.

When children had their art work completed, the key purpose was to ensure that proof of their work was accounted for and stored in each child's art folder, regardless of whether the children wanted to do the art or not. The checklist system described throughout this section reflects a disciplinary mechanism within the educational setting, aligning with Foucault's insights into surveillance and normalisation processes in institutions (Foucault, 1977). The checklist functions as a tool of power wielded by educators, granting permission to selected children to engage in art activities based on their status of completion. This mechanism not only monitors compliance but also regulates access to further artistic engagement, as evidenced by Byron's and Lee's interactions regarding completing their art pieces. Foucault argues that disciplinary power operates through hierarchical observation and examination, which are evident in the educators' systematic tracking of completed tasks using the checklist (Foucault, 1977). The checklist enables educators like Rebecca and Kim to enforce compliance with the planned activities, ensuring that each child conforms to the prescribed schedule and completes assigned tasks. By ticking off completed artworks, educators assert control over the children's participation in artistic expression, reinforcing the institutional norms and expectations. Foucault's concept of disciplinary power emphasises how institutions like schools normalise behaviors by creating systems that monitor and categorise individuals (Foucault, 1977). The educators' use of the checklist to identify completed artworks not only manages individual behaviour but also signifies the institutional importance placed on the products the children produce, such as Grace's artwork, regardless of the children's personal interest to engage in the activities. The incident with Grace further illustrates the checklist's role in monitoring and documenting each child's participation, showcasing how the completion and storage of artwork are meticulously tracked and valued within the educational framework. This process reinforces the institutional priorities and objectives surrounding the production and preservation of art as educational outcomes. By using a checklist to monitor and distribute art related tasks, the checklist serves as a visible tool of disciplinary power within the educational context, regulating children's access to artistic activities and emphasising institutional control over the level of participation children can experience by influencing and directing the outputs they produce.

3.1.2. The Outdoors



You must all wait in a line at the door before going outside
You must wear your wellies
You must wear your wetsuit
You must wear your coat
You must share the toys
You must wait your turn
You must walk when going back inside
You must say sorry
If you don't say sorry, you do not get your basketball back
No umbrellas
No jumping or sitting in puddles (even in wet gear)
No physically hurting peers
Do not get your clothes wet
Do not turn on the water tap
Do not go out in the rain
Pull up your hoods when out in the rain
Stay in the shed until the adult says so
Do not forget to bring your drinks bottle outside/inside
Snack boxes are not allowed outside
You must come over when called by the adult
You must wait your turn when using the slide
Do not go down the slide when it is wet
Do not pull at the basketball hoop

Image: The verbally spoken and the subtly conditioned rules observed during outdoor time

The outdoor environment in this early years service is a large, concreted space with brick walls along three edges and a green gate that extends over six feet tall. A wooden climbing frame with built in slides covers the back wall and a large wooden shelter with a roof is situated beside the building with artificial brass covering the floor, presented with two tables and benches for sitting on. Other elements to the environment are the mud kitchen and the sandpit with some indoor and outdoor toys scattered throughout. Overall, the outdoor environment has lots of empty space which allows children the space to move freely and at a fast pace.

- **Conformists in Wet Gear**

Outdoor access was not granted to the children every day and was decided by the educators. Some days children were scheduled to go outside as they were dressed. Other days, time was spent supporting children to put on wet gear and wellies before being allowed outside. Educators contained children in the classroom as they individually supported and checked that each child had appropriate wet gear on. There was variation in the capabilities of the children to put on wetsuits and wellies by themselves, so the educators laid out the wetsuits on the floor with the associated wellies per child to allow the child to attempt to put the gear on themselves. The educators would then go up individually to support children to get dressed, even if support was not sought after by the children:

> Rebecca: "Right, who needs help with their wet gear?" No one answers. Rebecca focuses on Simon. Rebecca: "Right, Simon, you take off your runners for me and we'll put it on." Simon does not respond but begins to slowly take off his shoes.

By regulating outdoor access based on their assessment of readiness and by overseeing the dressing process, educators exercise control over spatial and temporal dimensions of the children's activities, demonstrating the interference of surveillance and control of activities (Foucault, 1977). Educators decided which child was going to be provided support with getting dressed. Some children were denied support under the educator's expectation that the child can to do for themselves, while other children received help:

> Rebecca: "No, I'm not going to do it, you're going to do it, you're a big boy. Now Cillian, will you take off your shoes for me and we put on your wetsuit?"
> Cillian: "I need help sometimes."
> Rebecca: "Okay, I'll help you if you need help. Open your shoes for me first."

Many instructions were asked by the educator for the child to do it "for me", as seen above, almost like the child was doing the educator a favour by putting their wetsuit on. I heard this phrasing of the child doing something for the educator or "for me" often which makes me think about the power of asking someone to do something with the added element of doing it "for me" and why this made children more compliant in tasks:

> Rebecca is with James: “Now, you pull it up for me. Don’t forget to put in your arms now. Good boy, now zip it up for me. Pull, pull, pull. Good job, now put on your wellies.”

The phrasing of tasks as being done “for me” by educators subtly invokes relational obligations that influence compliance (Foucault, 1977). This linguistic tactic aligns with Foucault's analysis of disciplinary power, where relational dynamics of obligation and obedience are used to regulate behavior. By framing instructions in this manner, educators enhance compliance and reinforce their authority over children's actions.

Some children were physically manoeuvred in a mechanical manner when being dressed, where the educator moved the child’s legs and arms into sleeves and legs of clothing while the child stood typically in silence:

> Rebecca: “And you put on your wetsuit for me. You have to put your feet in first. So hold it like, look at me, hold it like this.” Simon’s movements are very slow and disinterested as Rebecca moves his body into the wet gear.

The mechanical maneuvering of children’s bodies went as far as the educator deciding what limb was to be moved first, even when the child moved a different one and correcting them to move the one the educator wanted to be moved:

> Rebecca: “Now Lee, put on your wellies. No, no, the other foot. Good boy.” Lee follows Kim’s instructions. “Good boy,” she says.
>
> \- - - - - - - - - - -
>
> Kim: ”But you need to put your hand in here”….James follows the instructions given… “Yep, now your other hand…. Wait, wait, not like that.”

In these instances, the educators' actions go beyond mere assistance, they demonstrate a form of disciplinary power where children's bodies are directed and adjusted according to institutional norms. Foucault's (1979) concept of instrumental coding of the body provides a framework to understand these dynamics. This concept underscores how institutions, through disciplinary mechanisms, regulate and normalise bodily practices to enforce compliance with societal norms and expectations (Foucault, 1977). The educators' interventions in guiding children's dressing routines illustrate this disciplinary power in action. By directing children on how to wear their wetsuits and wellies, correcting their movements, and outlining the sequence of actions ("put your feet in first," "now your other hand"), educators not only facilitate practical tasks but also enforce a standardised way of performing these tasks. This standardisation contributes to the maintenance of order and conformity within the educational setting, ensuring that children's behaviours align with institutional expectations of proper conduct and bodily comportment. Through such practices, educators exercise disciplinary power by shaping and coding children's bodily movements to fit the prescribed norms of the educational environment. This process extends beyond functional assistance to actively mould and regulate children's bodily practices, reinforcing the disciplinary regime aimed at maintaining control and order within the institution and ensuring that those who resist and given additional reinforcement to complete the tasks as instructed, as is observed in the next section.

- **Revolutionaries in Raincoats**

Sometimes, the educator engaged with the same support processes with children who were capable of getting dressed themselves, but even when the child asserted their independence in this particular task, the educator continued to instruct the child anyway:

> Kim is with Phoebe now. “One foot in here.” Phoebe cuts her off and says “I, I can do it myself.” Kim cuts her off to instruct her more: “Yeah, yeah and one foot in here. Yeah and put it up” Phoebe: “Yeah, I know how to do it. I learned how to do it. One foot at a time.” Kim: “Yeah, one at a time.” Phoebe puts her wellies on herself.

Compared to Lee or James who were told they were “good” boys for complying with the educators instruction as given, Phoebe is not praised for asserting her independence. The same is seen with Molly, who decided she wanted to wear her own coat rather than the coat she was given by the educator, where the educator attempted to convince Molly out of her decision:

> Molly begins taking off the spare coat she is wearing saying “I’m getting my own.”
> Kim: “Oh, no, leave this on you because your own one will get soaked and you won’t have a coat then going home.
> Molly interrupts “No.”
> Kim: “This one will keep you nice and dry”
> Molly: “Mammy’s gonna buy one.”
> Kim: “Mammy’s gonna buy one?”
> Molly hesitates and says “No…she’s gonna, wash it.”
> Kim: “She’s gonna wash it? But if you leave this one on, Mammy won’t have to wash your black coat.”
> Molly says more sternly: “I don’t need it!”
> Kim: “Okay, dya want to take it off then?
> Molly: “Yeah, I want to put on my own one.”
> Kim: “Okay…”

Children’s resistance emerges as a crucial counterpoint to this disciplinary regime. Phoebe's initial assertion that she can dress herself and Molly's insistence on wearing her own coat highlight moments of resistance against authority’s control. In Phoebe's case, her verbal assertion of competence challenges the educator's attempt to regulate her actions, even though she was unsuccessful. Similarly, Molly's determination to wear her preferred coat despite the educator's persuasion reflects resistance to conforming to enforced norms. These acts of resistance disrupt the educator’s smooth management of the children and when children such as Phoebe and Molly assert individual agency and preferences, they complicate the educator's efforts to regulate children's behaviours. While Phoebe and Molly demonstrate resistance in specific instances, the broader framework of disciplinary power continues to shape their interactions and behaviors within the educational environment, demonstrating their internalisation of the social space they are in. The educator's persistent guidance and attempts to persuade children to conform illustrate how disciplinary mechanisms seek to normalize behaviours that support institutional goals and routines, even if it disregards the autonomy and competence of children.

- **The Battle of the Coat**

Resistance by children during the preparation for going outside was regularly seen with Byron, who regularly refused to wear a coat when going outside:

> Rebecca: “You need your coat, now!
> Byron: “I don’t.” Byron grabs at his wet gear straps.
> Rebecca sounds surprised: “You don’t want rain to get on your arms?!
> Byron: “I do.” He rubs his arm.
> Rebecca: “You do?!”
> Byron nods yes.
> Rebecca: “Why?”
> Byron walks away.

Byron, like Phoebe, clearly asserted himself, however, the educator continued to question Byron and he resisted this by walking away, shunning the educator’s further attempts to convince him into wearing his coat. However, the tactic of repetitive questioning of children’s decisions was used by the educators in order to try and use the child’s reasoning against them and force them to comply with the given instructions. This was seen when Byron refused to wear his coat and the educator continued to question him:

> Byron continues to sit in the chair looking at Rebecca.
> Rebecca: “So, whatcha gonna do?” She holds up a coat.
> Byron: “That's Mili’s.”
> Rebecca shockingly responds: “That’s not Mili’s?! That’s yours!”
> Byron furrows his brow and argues back “No, it’s Mili’s!”
> Rebecca: “Well why did mammy give you Mili’s coat then?”
> Byron: “Mili brought it over to mammy’s house and she left it there.”

> Rebecca: “I think you’re tricking me.”
>
> Byron stares at Rebecca in silence, still clutching his dungarees tightly in discomfort.

When Byron explained that the coat shown was not his, Rebecca questions his logic where the phrase “You’re tricking me” is the child friendly version of stating someone is lying. It is a softer phrase but has the same meaning, that what the child is saying is not true and the educator does not believe what he is saying. Even though the phrasing is softer, it does not mean it has less impact, because by stating Byron is “tricking” Rebecca, Byron is shamed into silence. Rebecca subtly undermines Byron's credibility and Rebecca's questioning not only aims to enforce compliance with the dress code but also to mould Byron's understanding of truth and authority. Following this, Byron stops verbalising his resistance and instead closes up. He no longer verbalises his preferences and uses his body language to communicate his resistance instead:

> Rebecca gets his coat. “Here, if you put on your coat it won’t slip down. C’mere. Come here for a second. C’mere and I fix them.”
>
> Byron shakes his head no and sits on a chair.
>
> Byron can be seen sitting on the chair sucking his thumb and looking at Rebecca sideways.
>
> Rebecca to Byron: “What if we put on a jumper?”
>
> Byron shakes his head no and holds his dungarees tighter.

Byron's non-verbal resistance, such as holding onto his dungarees tighter, signifies a form of bodily assertion, which aligns with Foucault's (1977) notion of how individuals navigate disciplinary mechanisms. Despite complying with his physical presence, such as sitting on the chair, Byron's refusal to cooperate fully by not putting on his coat or jumper demonstrates his attempt to retain agency over his body amidst the disciplinary pressures being enforced on him by his educators. According to Foucault, disciplinary power operates through subtle negotiations between individuals and social norms, where individuals like Byron assert their autonomy through non-verbal gestures and being strategically non-compliant. By refusing to engage verbally, Byron may be attempting to shield himself from further scrutiny and coercion, recognising that up to this point, his verbal resistance has been ineffective. This use of silence as a form of resistance reflects Foucault's insights into how individuals adapt their behavior within disciplinary contexts to preserve a sense of agency and autonomy (Foucault, 1977) which is evident throughout Byron's response in this situation with his educators.

A peer of Byron teams up with Rebecca in this interaction, repeating the tricking phrase he has heard in order to further force Byron into compliance:

> Cillian comes over to Rebecca and says to Rebecca: "He's tricking you."
> Rebecca: "What?"
> Cillian points to Byron: "He's tricking you."
> Rebecca: "I think so. C'mon."
> Byron tightens his grip on his dungarees and mouths the word "Noooo."
> Rebecca: "Right, well I'll leave it there and then when we go outside you can put it on."

In moments where the child was silent when being asked to do something by the adult, the adult increased the intensity of the outcome if the child did not do as they were told. A common increase to the instruction when relating to going outdoors was threatening the potential outcome of the child becoming ill should they not do as they are told, as seen here with Byron:

> Rebecca: "Because if you don't put on a coat Byron, you're gonna get a cough and you're gonna be sick for your holidays. C'mon, you don't want to have a cough on the airplane, do you? C'mon, good boy. Good boy. C'mon."
> As Rebecca talks, Byron stares in the distance tapping his feet, clutching his dungarees and as Rebecca continues to repeat "C'mon", Byron tenses

> his shoulders and looks more uncomfortable.

Byron continued to remain silent after it was implied his logic was a ‘trick’ he was playing on the educator. Rebecca then uses her knowledge of his upcoming holiday as more leverage against him should he not follow her orders. By invoking the threat of illness due to inadequate clothing, Rebecca exerts control over Byron's body by regulating his behavior in accordance with institutional norms of health and safety. This battle of knowledge and what is truth with Rebecca makes Byron revert into himself even further. The use of illness as a potential threat was seen on a separate occasion with Byron to increase the level of control over him to comply:

> Kim holds up two pieces of clothing: “Byron, would you like to put one of these things on going outside?”
> Byron: “No.”
> Kim looks disapprovingly at Rebecca.
> Kim: “No you can’t go outside with no coat on because it’s raining and dya know what? You’ll end up getting sick.”
> Byron: “Well, we’re not going out now.”
> Kim: “We are going out now to go and jump in the puddles!”
> Byron: “Well, I don’t need that.” referring to coat
>
> Kim: “You do, because I need my coat too because it's raining out. We can’t go out in just a t-shirt pet, you’ll get sick.”

When it was clear that the tactics to make Byron comply were not working separately for each educator, the educators teamed up together where both of them solely focused their attention on Byron to enforce compliance:

> Byron: “No I won’t.” Kim talks over him.
> Kim: “We have to put our coats on us…You will!...Is there a different coat out there that you’d wear?”
> Byron: “No.”
> Rebecca intervenes.” It’s either this or your coat, which are you

> gonna pick?”
> Kim: “You can put this little jumper on or your coat. Which would you prefer?”
> Byron: “Ehh…The green jumper one.”
> Byron puts on the jumper.

The educators verbally repeated their concern to Byron about the possibility of him getting sick, reinforcing the message that his resistance will be met with further disciplinary measures by both of them. Byron's eventual compliance with wearing the green jumper instead of his preferred coat illustrates Foucault's concept of strategic compliance. Despite expressing his preference, Byron ultimately conforms to the educators' demands under the pressure of disciplinary coercion. Foucault would interpret this compliance as a negotiation of power relations where Byron, recognising how ineffective his continued resistance was becoming, strategically chooses the path of least resistance to avoid further disciplinary consequences. However, this unified front was not always an approach demonstrated by the educators when concerned with wearing coats. For example, there was one day where children were outside playing. It was drizzling with rain and Phoebe, wearing the GoPro, turned to talk to Byron who was seen wearing a t-shirt. Insight to the educator’s view on why Byron was allowed to wear just a t-shirt on this occasion were captured by the second GoPro:

> It is noticed that Byron is outdoors wearing a t-shirt.
> Rebecca: “Kim, will you try Byron with that, he won’t put it on for me.” Rebecca hands Kim a red raincoat
> Kim notices Byron: “Byron! You don’t have your waterproofs or your wellies on!” and walks over to him.
> Rebecca mumbles: “He doesn’t care.”
> Kim comes back and turns to Rebecca: “He won’t put them on.”
> Kim then ignores Byron’s refusal to put on the coat but calls out to various other children to tell them to “Put on your hood!”

The educators' decision to allow Byron to defy the norm of wearing a coat can be seen as the educators temporarily relaxing their control. Foucault (1977) discusses how power operates not only through coercion and surveillance but also through strategic exceptions and relaxations in order to maintain mass control. In this instance, the educators' frustration and fatigue with enforcing compliance led them to momentarily pause on their direct control over Byron's behaviour. This change from their usual disciplinary approach where children are typically coerced to wear a coat if they choose not to highlights how power relations are not fixed but are in constant flux between the educators and children. Rebecca's statement, "He doesn’t care" and Kim's acknowledgement "He won’t put them on," reflect their awareness of Byron's resistance while reflecting on their own limitations in enforcing compliance with him. This recognition of Byron's agency, even in defiance, underscores Foucault's (1977; 1982) notion that power relations involve negotiation and contestation between authorities and subjects. On this particular day, as a result of the educators’ own limitations, this can be interpreted as a strategic calculation on their part to avoid escalating confrontation and to maintain overall control and order in the group dynamic. Thus, through a Foucauldian lens, it becomes clear that the enforcement and relaxation of rules are not solely about maintaining discipline but also about managing resistance and maintaining authority over time. Byron's occasional defiance and the educators' responses illustrate the ongoing negotiation and contestation inherent in power relations that occur often within this early years service.

- **Wars in Water**
    - **Tyrants of the Tap**

There are two water taps in the outdoor environment, one is situated at children’s height beside the shelter and another is behind gapped fencing at the back of the storage shed. Children sought out the water tap by the shed because it was near the mud kitchen and helped stimulate their play, but sometimes they could not reach this tap, so they would use the one near the shed instead. Children accessing the tap of their own accord were responded to with an immediate urgency by the educators to stop in all cases. In some instances, the order to turn off the tap was ignored by children so it resulted in the educator walking over and doing it themselves:

> Emer can be heard shouting: “Turn off the water.” The camera turns
> to show children filling a basin of water under a tap.

> Emer shouts, more panicked now: “Turn off the water guys!” Her response to the children not listening to her command is to walk over to the group and turn the tap off herself.

Children seemed to turn on the tap for a specific purpose, such as filling up an object like a basin. In these instances, the educator would turn off the tap and then empty the basin out so the children had no water at all. In Lee’s situation, he tried very hard to hold onto the basin of water, but Emer forcefully took it from him. Emer’s sarcastic repetition of "Thank you Lee" until he complies highlights a subtle form of psychological coercion aimed at shaping Lee's behaviour to conform to established rules:

> Evelyn looks over at the shelter and says to herself “Uh, oh...”
> Some children have turned on the tap. Evelyn walks over to them.
> Emer: “Molly, turn off the water.” The children ignore her.
> Emer shouts “Molly!” Emer then turns off the tap and takes the basin Lee was trying to fill.
> Emer: “Guys, you’re not to turn on the tap.” She tries to take the basin off Lee who keeps holding it.
> Emer repeats sarcastically: “Thank you Lee. Thank you.” until he lets go.
> Emer then pours the water down the drain.

There were moments where children sought out permission from the educators so they could get more water for their play, as seen here with Evelyn, but that also resulted in denied access to the tap:

> Evelyn goes and looks for more water from Lisa
> Evelyn: “Lisa, Lisa, we need water for this.”
> Lisa: “No.”
> Evelyn: “Why?
> Lisa: “No more water unfortunately. ‘Cos I tell ya what, right,

> there’s loads and loads of water in the yard and you’re all gonna get drowned.
> Evelyn: “Are you?
> Lisa: “Yeah, but look, there’s water over there in the puddle, why don’t you use that?”
> Evelyn: “Oh, okay.” Evelyn goes over to the wet ground and scrapes the ground, saying to herself: “It doesn’t work.”

Lisa's denial of further access to the tap, explaining that there is “loads of water in the yard” and to add more would cause potential chaos "you're all gonna get drowned", reflects a disciplinary discourse of coercion aimed at controlling the children's activities. Children also turned on the tap when they did not have a clear purpose for it. In James’ case, an attempt to get water was short lived, having been caught as soon as he showed an interest in the tap:

> The adults are in the shelter and Kim shouts over to James “Oh, no James, no water!” Evelyn looks over to show James running away from the tap.

When the tap was turned on, it demonstrated obvious panic in the educators to control the situation. In one scenario, multiple educators ran to turn the tap off and stop the water from flowing into the yard:

> The children are scattered throughout the yard. Lisa walks over to the tap shouting “Dylan!! Turn that off!!!”
> Lisa shouts: “Kim, can you reach this because my hands are too big!” as she tries to reach through the fencing that blocks the tap.
> Kim runs over to Lisa: “Oh guys! Who turned on the tap?!”
> Kim turns the tap off as Phoebe and other children watch on.

When the tap was turned on, it led to some water running through the yard, creating spaces for puddles and small water streams which some children were evidently very excited to play in.

When this happened, the educators banded together to patrol the water in the yard and denied children access to it, both verbally and physically restricting children. The educators' coordinated effort to turn off the tap and patrol the resulting water in the yard illustrates their function as agents of disciplinary power, intervening to prevent potential disruptions and ensuring compliance with established rules:

> Angie watches the water scene from a distance. Angie asks Kim what happened, who says: "Someone turned the tap on." Some children walk towards the tap, Lisa says "No! Go away." The water is rolling out slowly and Angie tells the younger group to "move back". Angie stands and looks at the puddle as Lisa tells all the children to "Stop at the water, you're gonna get all wet. Guys, away from the water." She physically moves them back "No, you need your wellies and waterproofs guys if you're playing in water." More children join and watch the shallow water puddle as it rolls across the yard slowly, spreading their legs so it can roll between their legs.
>
> The adults shout from the shelter "Guys, away from the water!" Angie and James continue to watch the water.

By patrolling and maintaining guard over the puddle after removing the children, the educators reinforce their authority and enforce spatial boundaries, thereby shaping the children's behaviour to align with their authority. When some children refused to obey, Rebecca joined Kim and Lisa and approached the children with more intensity in her commands to enforce mass obedience in the group:

> Rebecca marches over from the shelter and tells all the children to "Get out of the water guys, now!" She puts her hand on the backs of children to guide them away from the water. Once all the children are out, she stands by the puddle for a moment keeping guard so the children do not go back over.

Some children did not see the reasoning behind the educators' need to create an urgent lockdown over water access, as seen here with Angie:

> James puts his hands into the water and Angie asks "What is the problem?" to no one in particular.

Angie's curiosity and defiance demonstrate her individual agency shining through during a mass control of her and her peers' activities. This highlights further the real the tension between children's desire for autonomy in their play and the educators' role to enforce rules and restrictions.

Because some children evidently love playing with water, they keep an eye on the patrolling tactics exercised by educators manning the puddles and wait for the educator to walk away so they can go back to their water play:

> Angie sees that Rebecca has walked away and she goes over to the puddle to try and scoop up some water. Angie is by the water puddle scooping the water with Orlagh into shovels "I got some water! We need some water to pour in here, don't we?" She points at the pot. Julianne, Orlagh and Angie fill the pot with water together.

Angie indicates her awareness of the disciplinary control being imposed on water play and Angie's decision to wait until Rebecca walks away before engaging in water play can be seen as a strategic form of resistance. By timing her actions to take advantage of moments of relaxed supervision, Angie and her peers, Orlagh and Julianne, demonstrate an active defiance against the educators' regulations and surveillance to assert their right to play. Overall, the response to the water tap being turned on was the first of many other water-related moments which created a constant struggle for power between the children's desire for water play access and the educators' need to control the group's experiences away from water.

- ### Rebels in the Rain

An extensive amount of time and planning went in to ensure children were wearing the appropriate wet gear, such as raincoats and wellies, before going outside. However, the educators' attitudes towards rain meant that access for children to experience rain was completely dependent on the educator, with most rainy days involving children being ordered to go into the shelter:

> Kim walks out of the shelter and shouts “Guys if it’s raining, go under the shed. Byron, under the shed, it’s raining. Lee, under the shed.” Kim gets frustrated as the children do not respond to her: “GUYS!! C’mon!! Under the shed. Lee! Under the shed, it’s raining! Phoebe and Emma!!”

By setting strict boundaries and using direct instructions as commands, this demonstrates that the rules in particular about keeping children out of the rain were not only about protection from weather but also served to maintain order and control over the children's activities. The implementation of strict boundaries that are contradictory to the children who were head-to-toe in wet gear caused a power struggle between the educators’ need for compliance and the children’s agency. For example, because of the design of the shelter, when all were inside, some children would walk along the edge of the shelter, sometimes leaning out in the rain and other times leaning in. The educators would keep watch of this and were quick to call children back in if this happened to ensure children were not in the rain at all, demonstrating what Foucault (1977) would see as a direct exercise of disciplinary power, where surveillance and immediate consequence are actioned by the educators to maintain control over the children's spatial and behavioural boundaries:

> Rebecca says to Byron: “Get out of the rain, you were giving out about it two minutes ago.” She nods her head in the direction of the shelter to gesture to him to come inside. Byron stands holding his two hands looking at her. He turns to look at his feet and walks slowly along the edge of the shelter still in the rain.
> Another boy says “It’s lashing!” Rebecca laughs and turns her attention back to Byron. “Byron, c’mon in out of the rain.” She nods her head again towards the shelter. Byron looks at her and he slowly walks into the shelter.

- - - - - - - - - - -

> Anna jumps out of the shelter quickly, squeals in excitement and jumps straight back in rubbing the rain off her head. Kim says to Anna: “Anna, stay under the shed please.” Anna stops expressing excitement, goes silent and stays inside the shelter.

Byron and Anna’s actions demonstrate a clear use of strategic compliance that is used by the children when the learn that their resistance to the strict boundaries imposed are not going to penetrate the educators’ control. But the children’s desire of wanting to be in the rain was evident the longer they were forced to stay inside the shelter, as shown when more and more children began to test the shelter boundary and move in and out of it. However, the control measures of the educators also increased, with Kim standing at the edge of the shelter to control any children escaping outside:

> Kim is standing by the edge of the shelter and can be heard saying “Eh, don’t even think about going out there!” James and Lee have their hoods up and are going in and out of the rain.
> Kim: “I see ya!” James and Lee wander slightly back in but continue to test the boundary.
> Kim: “You’ll get soaked guys, and then you’ll get sick.” Both James and Lee have raincoats, hoods up and wellies on. They step in and out onto the ledge of the shelter without fully going out in the rain.

Kim’s increase of her physical prescence is a tactic used to intensify her disciplinary power and control over the resistant children. This tactic of physically imposing presence is aimed at compelling compliance through the threat of physical containment rather than solely relying on verbal coercion or reasoning. Familiar threats of potential illness were frequently stated by the educators in order to contain children inside, but for James and Lee these threats were not impactful. For James, being forced inside made no sense because he was aware he was wearing wet gear, but he was still restricted because the educator said so, as demonstrated below:

> Kim: “James! Under the shed please, it’s raining.”

> James: “No.”
> Kim shakes her head firmly in a yes motion: “Yes, you need to wait for the rain to stop and then you can go back out.”
> James holds his hood up and says “But I have my hat.”
> Kim shakes her head no: “No, you’ll still get drowned.” She looks away from him now as she says: “Just wait a few minutes.” He stands waiting.
> Kim turns towards Anna “Anna! You stay in the shed until it stops raining.”

James’ actions show that firstly he is aware of the power being exercised over him while also being aware of his own power of autonomy and choice. His behaviour can be seen as an attempt to assert his autonomy and challenge the control the educators are enforcing on him. James' defiance, such as ignoring commands and physically turning away from educators, represents a subtle form of resistance against the institutional control over his behavior. By refusing to conform immediately to the educators' commands, James disrupts the authority’s control and asserts his agency in deciding how he wants to interact with his environment. James’s actions resulted in other children following him when he went outside the shelter while it rained, demonstrating that James was not the only child who wished to assert their autonomy over the educators’ control. However, when some children followed James outside the shelter, the educators always focused on the ‘follower’ children who seemed easier to subdue. This shows the educators’ strategy in identifying the children they believed would be more compliant and easier to control:

> James and Lee are outside the shelter with James sitting on a see-saw and Lee is walking over to James.
> Kim: “Lee, come in please.” She beckons Lee with her finger to come inside. Lee walks inside. James ignores Kim.
>
> \- - - - - - - - - - -
>
> James can be seen walking out of the shelter towards the back of the outdoor environment. Anna follows him.
> Multiple educators shout: “Anna!! Come back!” Anna begins

> walking back towards the shelter.

When Kim had Lee and Anna's obedience at hand, she then turned back to James, the child who was less likely to comply and required a higher intensity of educator control. Because the threats of getting sick and telling him to wait for a few minutes did not waiver James into compliance, Kim used a different tactic:

> Kim calls James twice. Both times, James has his back to her and does not respond. Kim walks over to him and James walks inside as she nears. Kim stands between him and the outside to prevent him from going into the rain. She can be heard saying "...when it stops raining."

James' way of turning physically away from Kim to ignore her was a common tactic seen by children when they wanted to avoid the repeated command of the educator. In this case, Kim increased the intensity of her command by making her physical presence bigger over James and then acting like a physical barrier between him and the outside. More details on this control tactic used by educators is discussed in Chapter 3.2, Section 3.2.1 The Adult Prescence as a Form of Enforcement.

- **Distorting Children's Views of Rain**

In a few instances, children verbally expressed that rain did not bother them during their play:

Evelyn: "It's just a bit of water falling."

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Phoebe: "It's only a little shower."

Most children only ended their play to come into the shelter when the educator's called them, demonstrating that children, once in their wet gear, were quite content to play in the rain unless interrupted by the educator. The fact that the shelter was designed to be accessed by children at their leisure also meant they could go inside when they felt like it, so children knew if they wanted to avoid the rain they could go inside this shelter. I discussed earlier examples with Byron and James who were very clear in their comfortability in the rain as well as the two girls Evelyn and Phoebe as shown above. But it was found that children began to echo the negative attitudes of educators towards rain:

> Emer, the educator from the other room comes out saying: “Oh, run, the rain, the rain is here.”
> Julianne: “Oh no, it’s raining!”
>
> -----------
>
> Evelyn: “It’s starting to rain.”
> Kim: “Don’t worry, we're going in now.”

Phoebe’s altered views towards rain was very well documented in this research because of how often she wore the GoPro. Phoebe attempts to diffuse her educator and peer negative views of rain by pretending the weather is sunny in the hopes this will mean she can continue playing outside in it:

> The educators can be heard calling children to come into the shelter.
> Phoebe says: “No, that’s a sunny day at the beach!”

Phoebe’s personal experiences of rain became more and more distorted and impacted her overall experience in the early years service. For example, if her peers told the educators that it was raining, she would become quite angry and upset about it, trying to convince them that it wasn’t raining, even if it was:

> Other children say: “It’s raining”
> Phoebe: “No it’s not!” The other children keep saying it's raining and Phoebe gets annoyed: “No it’s not raining!! No it isn’t rainingggg!!”
> Lee says to Phoebe: “Come in out of the rain.”
> Phoebe: “No, the rain is not hereee!!”

Even when Phoebe was forced to wait in the shelter during rainfall, she would try and create an imaginary scenario which might allow her access to the rain, such as urgently needing to save a tractor stuck in the basketball hoop, but this approach didn't work either:

> Phoebe says, referring to the rain: "It won't go away."
> Lauren: "Maybe if you sing."
> Phoebe points outside: "Look! One tractor has to be saved!"
> Lauren: "I know, he's stuck in the rain."
> Phoebe, still sitting with Lauren, says: "I have to get him."
> Lauren: "Not in this rain."

Phoebe began to reevaluate her thinking around rain. One moment of significance was where she walked around in the rain slowly. She held her hands out to catch the raindrops, but verbally, she mirrored the negative views of her educators:

> Molly stands up and shouts in a concerned manner "It's raining!" and begins to pull up her hood. Phoebe comes over and says "Well, rain is bad." Phoebe walks around the yard holding her hands out and Molly runs into the shelter.

It is clear that Phoebe struggled with following the rules she knows and experiencing play as she wants to. Eventually, the educators' negative attitudes towards rain influenced Phoebe so much that she embodied the same views as them. She does this so much so that she automatically stopped her play as soon as it rained, even without any educator instruction, much to her peers' surprise:

> Phoebe walks under the shelter. Angie says to Phoebe: "Why aren't you playing anymore?" Phoebe says sadly: "Because, it's, it's raining..."

Phoebe's experiences outlined above highlights how power operates not only through overt control and coercion but also through the shaping of norms, discourses and subjective perceptions, influencing how individuals like Phoebe navigate and negotiate their autonomy and compliance within institutional environments. By initially demonstrating her disinterest in the negative attitudes of the educators related to rain, Phoebe was actioning her resistance and autonomy of personal preference. However, over a short period of time, Phoebe faltered to the internalisation process by which the internal processes of an individual become moulded by authority to shape not only their physical bodies, but how they think, feel and act, resulting in their ultimate docility (Foucault, 1977).

○ Play and Protests in Puddles

When it came to puddles, some days children were allowed to jump in them once they had wellies on. Children who jumped in puddles without wellies were publicly called out in front of the group to stop them from jumping in it. In Brendan's case, he displayed expressions of embarrassment for being shouted at from across the yard by an educator where his peers silently shunned him until he left the puddle:

> Brendan is jumping in the puddle with the rest of the children wearing shorts and runners. Rebecca calls him.
> Rebecca: "Brendan!! You have no wellies on!" All the children stop jumping and look at . Brendan stops jumping and looks at the ground. He walks away from the puddle. Once Brendan is gone out of the puddle, the children begin to jump again.

In other cases, the puddles were swept away by the educator to stop children jumping in them because they didn't have wetsuits on, even if they were wearing wellies:

> Aisling and Anna are wearing wellies and jumping in a small puddle. Evelyn sees them and runs over screaming in excitement. Kim shouts "Oh, guys, you don't have waterproofs on! Out of the puddles!" The children stand and go silent looking at Kim. "You've

> no waterproofs on you today.” Kim gets the sweeping brush and
> begins to brush the puddle away.

One child in particular, Evelyn, found the practice of sweeping the puddle away very conflicting because she was wearing wellies deliberately so she could jump in the puddles:

> Evelyn: “What are you doing?” She asks Kim. Kim ignores her.
> Evelyn repeats herself: “What are you doing?”
> Kim: I’m brushing the puddle away.”
> Evelyn: “Whhhy?”
> Kim: “Because you’ll get soaked. You don’t have any waterproofs on you.” Kim continues to sweep the puddle away and Evelyn runs to the climbing frame.

Evelyn, having run away and processed what Kim had said, was clearly still unsure of Kim’s reasoning and returned to question Kim again. Evelyn wanted to express to Kim that she had wellies on and should be allowed to jump in puddles as a result:

> Evelyn goes back to the puddle she jumped in. She looks at Kim and Kim smirks at her “Don’t go in the puddles.”
> Evelyn: “Why?”
> Kim: “Because you don’t have your waterproofs on.”
> Evelyn: “I do!”
> Kim: “Show me.”
> Evelyn walks over to Kim
> Kim: “They’re your wellies, but what about your clothes? Dya want to put your waterproof on?
> Evelyn: “Yeah.”
> Kim: “Will I bring it out for you and we can put it on out here?”
> Evelyn: “Yeah.”
> Kim: “Dya want to get your waterproofs then Evelyn?”

> Evelyn: “Yeah.”
> Kim goes and asks Phoebe and a few other children if they want their waterproofs.

By Evelyn questioning Kim’s practice of sweeping away the puddles, it forced Kim to rethink and consider the child’s desire to experience the puddle. By Evelyn questioning her educator, it resulted in Kim compromising on denying puddle access and allowing those with wet gear to play in them. The outcome was that Evelyn got to play in the puddles as she wished. This negotiation of power demonstrates that power between authority and subject is in constant flux and that children such as Evelyn can persist in their knowledge to inform the actions of their educators. By being open to Evelyn’s rationale, Kim changed her original purpose of sweeping the puddles and began to work towards the requests of Evelyn, ultimately allowing more children to engage in broader play experiences. However, this also demonstrates the importance of seeing what resistance looks like when working with children, that their questions not only serve to request a change of action from their authority figures, but also to demonstrate their own autonomy in action.

The manner in which children played in the puddle once permitted access was also controlled in a way that can be seen as authority controlling the activities of its subjects to embed social norms and docility (Foucault, 1977). For example, shouting at children from across the yard was often done by educators if children were found to be playing with the puddle in the ‘wrong’ way i.e.: sitting in the puddle instead of walking or jumping in it:

> Rebecca shouts at Shane who is sitting in the puddle as he begins to lie down in it. She walks towards him while shouting: “Shane! Up out of the puddle!!” Shane doesn’t look at Rebecca, but seems to automatically respond by standing up and walks out of the puddle.

> Dylan can be seen sitting in the puddle.
> Rebecca: “Dylan, up you get Dylan!”
> Dylan can be seen slowly standing up out of the puddle.

Dylan was in a full wetsuit in the above situation when ordered to not sit in the puddle. Multiple children were found to be corrected for sitting in puddles, but the children's view of puddle play was very different to that of the educator's. For example, James expresses the simplicity of puddles when Evelyn, a peer of his, enforces the educator's 'no sitting in puddles' rule:

> James is sitting on a mat in a puddle splashing the water alongside him. Evelyn says: "James, get out of the water." James keeps moving his hand slowly through the puddle.
> James says calmly: "But it's just water."

Because the rules associated with puddles were very unpredictable and hard to understand whether access was permitted or not, it meant that some days children enforced and followed the rules and other days they didn't. For example, Phoebe jumps in the puddles because she wants to, wearing wellies but no wetsuit:

> Evelyn and Phoebe walk out towards the puddle. Phoebe is not wearing waterproof clothing.
> Evelyn sings: "Jump in muddy puddlessssss!!"
> Phoebe sings with her.
> Evelyn: "No, you're not jumping in them cos look." Evelyn is referring to Phoebe not wearing waterproof clothing. Phoebe jumps in the puddle anyway. Kim can be heard calling Phoebe in the background.

However, other days, particularly when the educators would shout across the yard to enforce the rule that only those in full wet gear could play, Phoebe would comply:

> Kim shouts loudly at the children in the puddle "EH! EH! GUYS!!!! You don't have waterproofs on!" Kim is seen walking quickly up to the puddle. Angie turns to Phoebe and says "Well, we have waterproofs on." Phoebe: "No, I just have a normal flowery dress,

> I'm just normal like, so I won't walk in the puddles."

In Phoebe's case, she expressed a love for playing in puddles, but equally wanted to comply with the rules to avoid being shouted at by the educators, so she often enforced these rules on herself and on her peers as a result of controlling her own desires:

> Phoebe walks along the yard with Evelyn and they see puddles on the ground. She shakes her right hand "We won't walk in the puddles."
> Evelyn: "No."
> Phoebe: "No."
>
> -----------
>
> **2 days later:**
> Phoebe: "It's a very busy day today isn't it?"
> Evelyn: "Mmm"
> Phoebe: "Here would you like to take my hand? Let's walk. This way Evelyn. We won't jump in the puddles, on this main road. This is a main road."
> Phoebe looks for Evelyn. She makes a point of jumping over the puddles and says "Jump OVER the puddles!"

Creating an imaginary game out of the rule she has to follow was a tactic Phoebe used regularly, as seen above with the puddle being a main road that she is not allowed to cross. She also created a game that involved crocodiles living in the puddle which forced her and her peers to not jump in the puddle as instructed by the educators. This meant that Phoebe could enforce the educators' rule while ensuring she too obeyed it:

> Phoebe and Angie walk near the puddle looking at Kim sweeping it away. Phoebe: "Everybody!! Don't ever go near the river!! Because there's a crocodile in the river!! EVERYBODYYYY!! Come with us!"
> Phoebe runs up the climbing frame: "I have to help the children to

> stay away from the bad river."
> She runs over to the shelter and tells Anna: "Don't go near that river, we have to run to not go into the bad river!" She gets a bike and pedals, but the bike is stiff so she runs over to the other children on bikes shouting: "Don't' drive in the river guys!! Don't drive in that river!" She is waving her hands to redirect them away from the puddle.

The educators' views on puddles are similar to that of rain, with both being perceived in a negative manner:

> Rebecca says to Kim, sounding relieved: "No puddles today."
> Kim replies, also sounding relieved: "Oh thank God. James went straight out yesterday and went straight into the puddle. He was soaked!"

- **Dependency and Dryness**

There is an ongoing theme with educators preventing children from accessing various forms of water outdoors that can be related back to the above statement of Kim, that children getting wet causes stress and frustration for educators:

> Kim says to herself, sounding frustrated "James is drowned as well."

Children having wet clothes is a focal point of control for educators to maintain to ensure children avoid getting wet by all means necessary, even if it means limiting their play experiences. For example, children's play is interrupted when the educator goes around to check the wetness level of the children's clothes, such as when Phoebe was sitting on the climbing frame reading a book:

> Kim grabs the end of Phoebe's dress while asking: "Are you wet?"
> Phoebe dismissively says: "No."

It was evident that the reason for children getting wet causing stress for educators is the amount of time changing children's clothes takes for educators to complete:

> Rebecca: "We'll need to go inside earlier for them to be changed."
> Kim: "Yep we'll get them sorted."

In all the instances that involved children changing their clothes, the educators would state that the task required them to change the children "I'll change you", rather than the children being supported to change themselves:

> James goes to sit down.
> Kim: "You're soaked James. Don't sit down there, it'll get all wet and dirty. Go into the bathroom and I'll change you."

The approach of adults to change children rather than encouraging the children to change themselves meant that when children sought out dry clothes, they had to wait for the educator to change them, maintaining the children's position as docile and dependent on their authority figure to alleviate them of their discomfort. This was seen with Lee when he was outside and had wet trousers from going down the slide:

> Lee walks up to Lauren holding a plastic bag containing his change of clothes. He looks up at her biting his lip and seems reserved. Lauren looks down at him "Do you want to change?" Lee: "Yeah." Lauren: "Wait until we go inside because you might get a little bit more wet." Kim turns around to him and asks: "Are they your clothes, Lee?" Lee: "Yeah." Kim: "Okay, we'll change you when we go inside because you're going to be playing for another while. And then you might get wet again, okay?" Lee walks away holding the plastic bag of clothes.

By making children dependent on the educator for changing their clothes rather than supporting them to be independent, Lee is being taught that his autonomy and choice is secondary to the commands of the educator. This is done by the educators by not responding to Lee's requests for assistance and forcing him to wait in the discomfort of wetness that then became Lee's primary focus for the rest of his play outdoors:

> Rebecca is seen sitting on the ground talking to Lee who is still holding his plastic bag of clothes. Lee: "Can I change now?" Rebecca: "In a few minutes please because you're still gonna get wet. Go play and I'll mind these." Lee walks over and points to the slide: " No no, because I'm not going on the slide." Lee is grabbing the bum of his trousers indicating his bum is wet from being on the slide. "Okay, well we'll go in soon."

Lee's discomfort being left to wear wet trousers until the educators changed him meant that Lee's frustration got more intense, to the point that he literally begged to be changed, further embedding his position as an object of his educator's power over him:

> Lee pleads: "I'm still weeeeet." as he holds the back of his trousers. Rebecca ignores Lee and turns to another child playing a jigsaw "Oh, wow.!" Lee looks very uncomfortable and keeps pulling his trousers. Rebecca looks at him doing this and says exhaustedly: "Right, c'mon we'll go change you." Kim calls everyone and tells them to get their drink bottle because they're going inside for snack time.

This example shows that the needs of the group are prioritised over the needs of the individual child. In order for Lee's discomfort to be alleviated, Rebecca had to get the whole group inside so that ratios could be maintained inside where both educators could monitor the whole group, benefiting from having access to bathroom facilities, something the outdoor space does not have.

While it is evident that the educators became frustrated when children were wet, children also displayed frustration at being on the receiving end of 'wetness checks':

> Kim calls Phoebe and Aisling to come into the shelter. Phoebe was still sitting reading her book.
>
> Phoebe shouts back "But I'm not wet!!" Phoebe runs over to the shelter.
>
> ----------
>
> Rebecca: "James, you need to take off your coat."
>
> James shouts: "But it's not wet!"

Exercising the fact that they were not wet showed how children resisted their educator's authority in order to assert themselves and they did so by reassuring the educator that they are capable of not get their clothes wet:

> Kim: "Phoebe, will you put on your waterproofs for me? Because it's actually very wet outside"
>
> Phoebe: "Well, I'm not wet."
>
> Kim: "Yeah I know but you might get wet if you don't put these on. And then your lovely dress would get wet and we'd have to change your dress and take it off. So do you want to put it on so we don't have to take off your dress?"
>
> Phoebe: "Well, I'll try not to get it wet."
>
> Kim: "Okay. Dya not want to wear waterproofs?"
>
> Phoebe nods her head no and says "Em, no."
>
> Kim: "Okay then." Phoebe runs over to Anna
>
> Anna: "I don't want to wear waterproofs either."

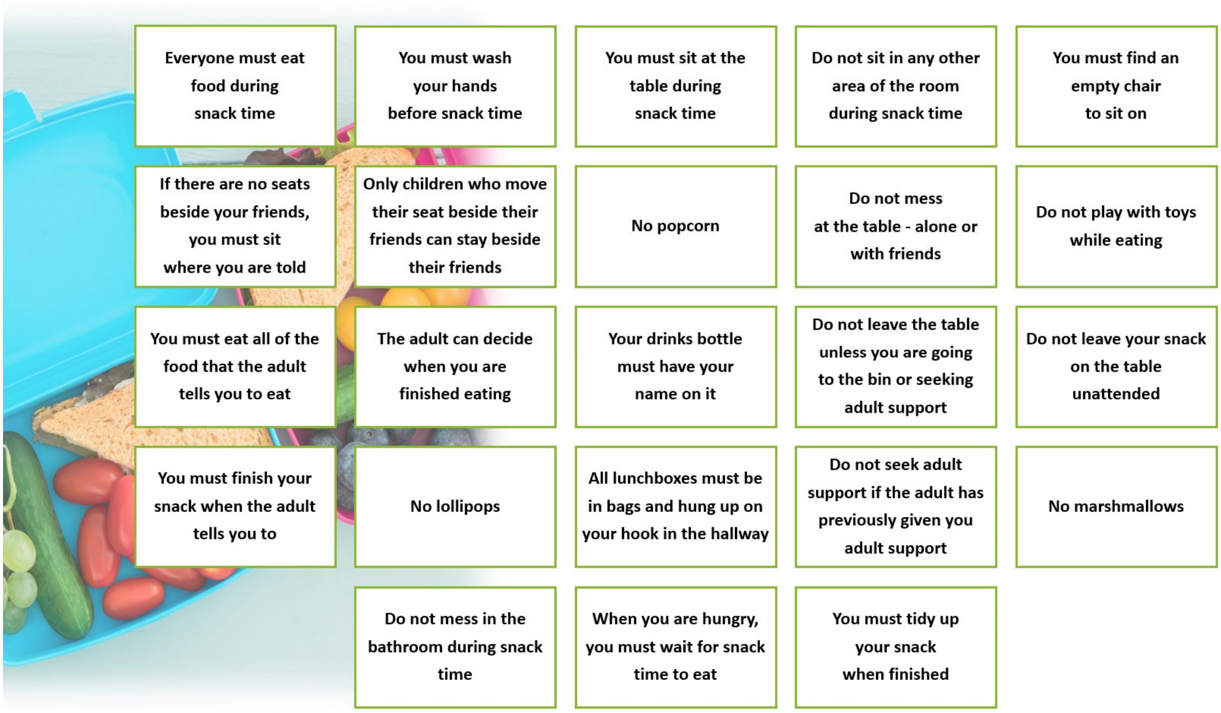
Ultimately, children were able to associate having wet clothes with much more ease and less panic than the educators because children saw wetness as having a very simple solution: They can change into spare clothes:

> Kim says to Angie: "Angie what happened to your trousers?"

> Angie: “I dunno, they got wet anyway.” Kim: “Okay, well I’ll change ya so.”
> Angie walks into the classroom where Kim comments disapprovingly of Angie to Rebecca “Angie got soaked anyway.” Angie overhears this and looks up. She says: “Well I have spare clothes anyway.”
> Rebecca sounds shocked: “What?”
> Angie repeats: “Well I have spare clothes anyway.” Angie walks into the bathroom and washes her hands.

This demonstrates that the stress and frustrations demonstrated by the educators were not the same as children who saw wetness as something that could be easily fixed and not a reason to interfere with their play.

3.1.3. Snack Time



Everyone must eat food during snack time	You must wash your hands before snack time	You must sit at the table during snack time	Do not sit in any other area of the room during snack time	You must find an empty chair to sit on
If there are no seats beside your friends, you must sit where you are told	Only children who move their seat beside their friends can stay beside their friends	No popcorn	Do not mess at the table - alone or with friends	Do not play with toys while eating
You must eat all of the food that the adult tells you to eat	The adult can decide when you are finished eating	Your drinks bottle must have your name on it	Do not leave the table unless you are going to the bin or seeking adult support	Do not leave your snack on the table unattended
You must finish your snack when the adult tells you to	No lollipops	All lunchboxes must be in bags and hung up on your hook in the hallway	Do not seek adult support if the adult has previously given you adult support	No marshmallows
	Do not mess in the bathroom during snack time	When you are hungry, you must wait for snack time to eat	You must tidy up your snack when finished	

Image: The verbally spoken and the subtly conditioned rules observed relating to snack time

- **Waiting in Hunger**

Rolling snack time, sometimes referred to as seamless snack, is an approach where children can access their lunch bags and eat their snack whenever they wish throughout the day. However, this is not a regulatory requirement for practice so not all services use this approach. Instead, services such as the one I conducted my research in, do not do rolling snack time, but implement a set time for snack to be had as part of the daily routine. By having a set time for snack time, the educators decided when children could eat their snack, where children have no say on the matter. Snack time was typically held at approximately 11am each morning. Educators used generic phrases like "2 more minutes" without visual timers that allowed them to decide when snack occurred. Children of this age are not fully competent in understanding time as a concept, especially when visual timers are not used, therefore, children did not know how long they would have to wait in hunger until they could eat, even when their hunger was very clearly expressed to the educators, as seen here with Dylan:

> Rebecca announces to the class: “2 more minutes everybody.”
> Dylan: “I’m reeeeeally hungry.”
> Rebecca: “Well Dylan, if you want snack, we have to tidy up first.”
> Dylan: “I’m already tidy.”
> Rebecca walks away.

This encounter showed me that even when a child has completed their task of tidying up, they still had to wait on the group as a whole to finish tidying up. Thus, not only was their access to food at the mercy of the educator, but also of the hastiness of their peers to tidy. If educators were distracted or consumed by a task, or peers worked at a slower pace when tidying, it meant that individual children like Dylan had to endure their hunger for an unknown amount of time until they were permitted to eat. Dylan tried to distract and regulate himself from the discomfort of his verbally expressed hunger:

> Dylan says to himself: “I’m hungry. I feel hungry right now. I’m. So. Hungryyy!!”
> Dylan walks over to the dinosaur table and then begins to jump around the room.

Trying to escape this hunger that was certainly distressing him, Dylan tried to communicate his need to eat to the other educator:

> Dylan walks over to Kim and says: “I am hungryyyyyy…”
> Kim ignores Dylan and walks away as Dylan looks at the windowsill and moves a toy in silence.

Rebecca and Kim ignored Dylan’s pleas for food because they were prioritising the routine. It was not 11am yet, and tidying up had to be announced before anyone was allowed to eat. Rather than acknowledge that Dylan had tidied up his play in the hopes he could eat, they ignored him as he begged. Other times when Dylan expressed his hunger, the educators would acknowledge him, but would not permit him to eat, instead ordering the group to tidy up so that everyone could eat.

This meant Dylan still had to suffer in his hunger as he waited on the efforts of his peers tidying up to get him fed:

> Dylan stands beside Kim still pinning up crayon templates and he sternly tells her "I'm hungryyyyyy..."
> Kim: "You're hungry..." She then shouts to the classroom "Okay! Can everybody start tidying up please to go outside. Now guys there's loads of pegs on the floor so I need everyone's help to pick up the pegs!"

Dylan was hungry at 10am, but the tidying up was to prepare to go outside. So not only did Dylan have to wait in hunger while his peers tidied, but he would have to engage in outdoor play while hungry too, not to mention complete the pre-snack tasks before he'd be permitted anywhere near his lunch bag. His need for food resulted in him physically pulling out of the educator to remind them of the time because he was clearly uncomfortable and expressing his desperation at this point:

> Dylan pulls out of Kim.
> She tells him: "Dylan, you're kind of hurting me."
> Dylan: "But it's 10.01"
> Kim: "Yeah, well we're gonna start tidying up now."

Dylan often had to suppress his appetite over the running of the group, but he wasn't the only one. For example, Alice during outdoor play told Kim she was hungry, and this one-on-one conversation evolved where Kim initially permits Alice to get something to eat, but then subtly twists the permission back around again to convince Alice to wait to eat her snack:

> Alice: "I'm getting kind of hungry."
> Kim: "You're hungry?"
> Alice: "Yeah..."
> Kim: "Dya want something out of your lunchbox?"
> Alice turns and says: "Yeah?" sounding unsure.

> Kim: “Or dya want to wait until snack time?”
> Alice hesitates, looks at Kim and then says “Emm... I will wait till snack time.”
> Kim: “Are you sure? You can get something if you want?”
> Alice begins to think about getting something and seems to build up to responding but Kim cuts her off and says
> Kim: “Ya know, we’ll probably be going in for snack time soon anyway.”

Because Alice did not respond with certainty and had a moment of silence where she was processing whether she wanted food or not, it gave Kim time to reconsider her offer of food and revert back to maintaining group order. If one child was allowed to get something to eat, then everyone would and that was not allowed unless it was snack time. Therefore, the suggestion to Alice that snack time would be “soon” meant Alice, like Dylan, had to wait until the educator decided it was snack time. And the number of tasks that have to be completed before a child could physically eat meant that “soon” and “2 minutes” were much longer than expected, especially for a child who does not understand the numerical value of time.

- **Complete These Tasks, Then You Can Eat**

The activities before or after snack varied between art, free play and outdoor play, meaning different goals were given to children to achieve before they could get their lunch bag and eat, for example tidying up after free play:

> Rebecca: “The quicker we tidy up, the quicker we can have snack!”

However, throughout the variations of pre-activities, there were four core requirements identified that children had to fulfil before being able to eat their snack: wash your hands, get your lunch bag from the hall, find an empty seat and sit down.

> Kim shouts into the group inside: “Guys, you need to wash your hands first!”

The educators positioned themselves at the same stationed points during the transition into snack time. One station point was at the bathroom entrance to ensure children were washing their hands:

> Kim stands by the bathroom door reinforcing orders: “Wash your hands and then dry them, everyone!”

The other educator was at the classroom door leading into the hallway to monitor children which ensured children were focused solely on getting their lunch bag and not playing. It also meant the educator could intervene and enforce certain rules if the child was delaying the group’s overall transition into snack time. For example, we see here how Dylan took longer to find his lunch bag because it was on another hook. Rebecca took this opportunity to remind him that him spending more time looking for his lunch bag would have been avoided if he put his lunch bag on his own hook in the first place:

> The children who have washed and dried their hands walk out to the hall and go straight to their hook where they get their lunch bag. Rebecca is giving out to Dylan because he cannot find his lunch bag. He finds it near another hook.
> Rebecca: “That’s why it’s important to hang up your lunch bag!”
> Dylan walks into the classroom.

This was also seen with Aisling who was hanging her coat on her hook over her lunch bag. She was corrected by Kim who told her to hang her coat under her lunch bag. The educators had planned snack as the next activity after handwashing on this particular day, so by Aisling having her lunch bag on top of the hook ready to go, it would save time transitioning her into the classroom:

> Kim shouts into the group inside: “Guys, you need to wash your hands first!” She then directs Aisling who is putting her coat over

> her lunch bag, “No Aisling, do this, take your lunch bag off first, then put up your coat.” Aisling watches as Kim completes the task.

Having two stationed educators made transitions into snack time more time efficient. This was because the educator stationed at the hallway hurried children into the classroom towards the other educator standing at the bathroom:

> The group go inside where children are being told by Rebecca: “Hang up your coats guys and then go in and wash your hands. Wash away all the germs!” Phoebe hangs up her coat and walks into the classroom.

By having the educators both positioned where they can monitor the main classroom, the hallway and the bathroom at the same time meant that children who strayed from the commands were easily identified, corrected and redirected:

> Dylan has taken out the doctor set. Rebecca tells him “Dylan, it’s snack time, you need to wash your hands.”

Some children would try and avoid having to fulfil all the commands issued to them in order to get closer to eating their food, as seen here with Lee:

> Lee walks in with his bag and Kim says “Wash your hands before you get your snack.” Lee replies “I washed my hands already.” Lee did not wash his hands. Kim says “Okay.”

However, children misleading educators in favour of satisfying their appetite was rarely observed in this research, but demonstrates the individual ways children attempt to express themselves and resist the rules being enforced on them.

- **Sit Down**

There were 3 child-sized tables with 6 children seats in the classroom. There was a smaller table positioned in the play kitchen area where up to 4 children could sit at should there be more than 18 children attending. Children enjoyed sitting beside their friends during snack time, as Phoebe and Aisling show in their interaction while playing outdoors before going inside:

> Phoebe exclaims excitedly to Aisling "We're going in!" She leaves the book behind. "Hold my hand! Cos you're my best friend!"
> Aisling: "Are you going to sit beside me?"
> Phoebe: "Yeah cos you're my best friend."

There was always an element of competition between children while hurrying to get their hands washed and lunch bags before their peers, so they could get their chosen seat and hold the surrounding ones for friends. If children failed to get these pre-snack time tasks done quickly, they were forced to sit in one of the leftover seats, even if it was a seat they did not want to sit in:

> Anna is looking for a seat.
> Kim: "Look Anna, there's a seat beside James."
> Anna: "James?" Anna shakes her head no when she walks to the seat.
> James says "You sit here."
> Anna shakes her head and says "Noooo." She does not want to sit at the table.
> She walks closer to the chair and stands looking at it shaking her head no.
> Kim orders: "Anna, sit down."
> Anna sits down.

There were children who were more creative but also resistant when it came to sitting at a seat without their friends around them. For example, Anna provided a solution to the educator in the hopes of being permitted to move an empty chair beside her friend:

> Angie holds her bag and walks into the classroom. She asks Rebecca: “Can I sit beside my friends?” Rebecca gets distracted and answers Kim. Angie stands beside Rebecca waiting. “Angie, sorry what were you saying? Can you sit with your friends?”
> Angie: “I wanted to sit beside them and Dylan is sitting beside them so I can’t sit beside my friends.” Angie walks around and finds a spare chair. She brings it over to the full table.
> She asks Rebecca: “Can I sit here?”
> Rebecca nods “Yep.”

However, not every child got this positive response. When Anna used Angie’s approach to move an empty chair to where she wanted to sit, she was met with a more dismissive, negative attitude:

> Rebecca is telling Anna “Sit beside Dylan because there’s no space.”
> Anna stands and says “But I want to sit there” She points beside Lee. Rebecca rolls her eyes and says “Right, then get the chair and move it there then.” Anna goes over to Evelyn, taps her on the shoulder and says “I want to sit there.”
> Rebecca shouts loudly, sounding frustrated: “Anna!” Anna jumps in fear.
> Rebecca: “Get the chair and move it then.” Anna quickly gets the chair, moving it beside Lee. She sits down.

For children to move chairs around was to disrupt the organisation of the room as laid out by the educators, so having one child move an empty chair was manageable. However, for two children to move chairs to different spaces around the tables was met with frustration from educators who are wanting to manage control of the full group so that everyone eats during the scheduled time set out for snack. While there were negotiations about moving chairs around the classroom, not everyone was willing to sit on the chairs set out for children to sit on. For example, Byron wanted to sit on the blue couch by the library to eat his snack, which is not allowed, but he tries to negotiate with Rebecca. Byron is talked over by Rebecca so he does not get the opportunity to negotiate with her and when Byron fails to obey, Rebecca establishes her authority by increasing her physical presence and walks towards him. He responds by sitting in the empty designated chair she wants him to sit in:

> Rebecca: "Byron, up to the table." Byron begins to talk as if negotiating with her to sit on the couch, but Rebecca talks over him: "No, no, at the table. Everyone has to sit at a table for their snack. C'mon" Byron is sitting on the couch in the library. Rebecca moves empty chairs as she walks nearer to Byron. Byron goes to sit in the empty chair.

When all of the children had their designated seat, the common educator instruction that could be heard throughout snack time was the children being told to sit down:

> Molly and Byron can be seen running out of the bathroom towards their chairs. Byron runs back towards the bathroom.
> Rebecca: "Now, Molly, Byron and Simon come in and sit down and eat your snack please. Molly. Sit down and have your snack." The camera moves and Byron and Molly can be seen sitting at the table
> Rebecca: "Lee? C'mon, sit down." The camera moves to show Lee is between standing and sitting in his chair.

There were many moments involving children looking to regulate their bodies to remain seated in the chairs during snack time, a time in the routine that typically lasted approximately 15-20 minutes. Some children wiggled in their chairs, talked to themselves and chatted with friends to keep themselves in the seats as instructed:

> Phoebe continues eating and says to no one specifically "This

> are….1, 2, 3, 4" and she then immediately starts wiggling in her chair as she eats. She then pulses in her seat repetitively. This goes on for approximately 1 minute.

Other children sought out excuses to get up out of their chairs, such as announcing they were putting something in the bin to avoid being corrected by the educators who would otherwise tell them to sit down:

> Angie gets up from her seat and announces to Kim: "I'm just putting this in the bin!"
> Kim looks at her and does not respond.
> Angie goes back to her seat.

There were the few that would seek out finishing their snack almost as soon as snack time began so they could go back to playing, but in these moments, children were redirected by the educators and told to continue eating as seen below with Simon who non-verbally seeks permission to put his lunch bag out in the hallway:

> Simon is standing by Kim holding open his bag but does not say anything.
> Kim: "Now, Simon, no messing today, go sit over on your chair."
> Simon walks over and sits at a table in silence.

Children's choices on being able to leave food to eat later was also not allowed if it meant they finished snack time earlier than the routine was scheduled for. For example, Lee gets up to walk out to the hall and hang up his lunch bag, but he is called back by Rebecca who checks his lunchbox and sees he has food left:

> Rebecca states in a high pitched voice: "Are you finished your snack already Lee?"…… "No, look here you have a gingerbread man down here."
> Lee: "Oh."

> Lee goes back to his seat.

- **Monitoring Children's Food**

The monitoring of children's food choices was a form of practice demonstrated during snack time where above we see Lee being told to eat a gingerbread man, an unhealthy food choice, rather than risk him playing too soon outside of the scheduled snack time. Yet, there were certain foods that were banned entirely in the school, as seen in this discussion between Evelyn and Kim, where Evelyn outs herself when she sees her lunch bag contained a banned food:

> Evelyn says to Kim "I've popcorn in my bag."
> Kim says "Oh, well, what if you eat the other stuff and leave the popcorn for home time, is that okay?"
> Evelyn sits down and says slowly: "Yeah..."
> Kim: "You remember from last year didn't you that you're not allowed it. Good girl."

The rule that popcorn is not permitted is clearly embedded because Evelyn outed herself rather than risk getting called out by the educator. However, even though Evelyn obeyed the rule, Kim used this as an opportunity to condition the banned food types into the whole group of children once more by testing them:

> Kim says to one table but can be heard by the whole class: "What else are we not allowed in school do you remember?" Phoebe shouts over "Food! Only food and snnnnacks!" Kim continues by repeating the answers from the table "...Lollipops and? Marshmallows! They're the only three things that we can't bring to school."

The banning of a preferred food favourite of Evelyn's in the classroom i.e.: popcorn, influenced her to the point that she was going to ensure her mother does not repeat this rule break again, demonstrating the level of control and influence school practices can have on the child's home life:

> Evelyn says to no one in particular: “I’m going to tell my mommy we’re not allowed popcorn...”

This moment was not just a simple popcorn in the lunch box moment, but it was an ongoing problem whereby Evelyn’s parents gave her popcorn, she outed herself to the educators for bringing it and this repeated until one day something changed:

> Evelyn is opening her lunchbox and says to the children at the table “This was open all along! Hmm, what do I have? I hope I don’t have popcorn.” She takes off the lid fully.
> Evelyn exclaims excitedly: “Yes! I finally, I finally! I have! Orangeeees!!”
> Dylan says to her smiling: “Do you finally have a healthy treat?” She waves the orange in front of him excitedly.

Not only was Evelyn relieved and excited to see that this day she would not need to be reminded about how popcorn is not allowed, but her peers were also ecstatic for her. When one child is constantly spotlighted for a rule break, the whole group felt it too, and this was demonstrated by the genuine excitement this peer group showed. This highlights that the educator’s reach went far beyond the children but into the food choices that parents made also.

- **The Subverter of Snack Time**

Transitioning out of snack time had an equal number of tasks that children had to complete before they were allowed to engage in another activity. These included tidying up their lunches, zipping up their lunch bag and hanging it out in the hallway. There was little adult reinforcement required relating to children zipping up their bags or bringing them into the hallway because children obeyed these commands often automatically without getting further instruction:

> Phoebe walks out of the classroom and hangs her lunch bag up. She grabs a nearby book she finds in the hall and walks herself to the library area.

However, the repeated commands and the intensity of which these commands were given came from educators when certain children refused to tidy up their snack. One child, James, regularly disobeyed tidying up after snack. He demonstrated his knowledge of the rules for tidying up which included putting rubbish in the bin, however, in some cases, he deliberately broke this rule and watched the educator in order to see if she would notice:

> James is in a daze, staring out the window eating some bread. He has a wrapper in his other hand. James comes out of his daze, chews some more bread and looks at the wrapper in his hand. He gently throws the wrapper on the ground, looking at Rebecca as he does it to see if she is looking. She does not see. James leaves the wrapper on the floor and turns around to the table.

The manner in which James tests to see if the educators see him breaking a rule means James is demonstrating how capable he is of navigating boundaries between rules he knows and rules he wants to break. James not only broke rules established during snack time such as throwing rubbish on the floor, but he regularly avoided tidying up after snack. For example, he leaves his snack half eaten on the table as he goes over and begins building Lego. It is only a brief minute or two before Rebecca instructs him to complete the order of tasks before he is allowed to play:

> Rebecca: “James, can you go tidy up your snack, please? And then you can finish this after you’ve tidied up your snack.”

This command does not impact James, as he ignores Rebecca and continues to play with the Lego. Rebecca repeats her order to him:

> Rebecca: “James? Can you go tidy your snack please?” James does not look at her.

By physically shunning Rebecca, James refuses to absorb the verbal instruction she is giving him. As seen in earlier examples of a child physically ignoring the educator’s commands, the educator makes their physical presence bigger over the child to enforce compliance, as seen here with James:

> Rebecca walks over to James, pointing at the table with food on it and says: “James? Can you go tidy your snack please?” James begins moving towards the table of food.

In this instance, James walked over towards the table to appease Rebecca’s wishes, but once she turned away from him assuming he was complying, he went back to his Lego avoiding the tidying up once more. This further defiance led to Rebecca becoming much sterner in her tone and this dramatic vocal change underpinned by evident frustration was enough to make James obey:

> Rebecca: “Now James this is the last time I’m going to say this, can you please go to the table and tidy up your snack?”
> James walks over and begins tidying up.

However, depending on the day, James had different responses to the educators when it came to tidying up after his snack. On some occasions, James would play with the rules more intensely by disobeying other known rules relating to snack time, for example, breaking the rule that states children must sit in chairs, but not climb them:

> James walks over to his table and walks on the empty chairs, looking at Rebecca each time he steps on another chair. He stands on them and then crouches down. Rebecca walks past him and says: “James, c’mon, tidy up, good boy!” Rebecca walks back to the couch and James goes back to his seat by walking on the empty chairs. He sits back on his own chair and starts cutting paper with a pair of scissors in his seat.

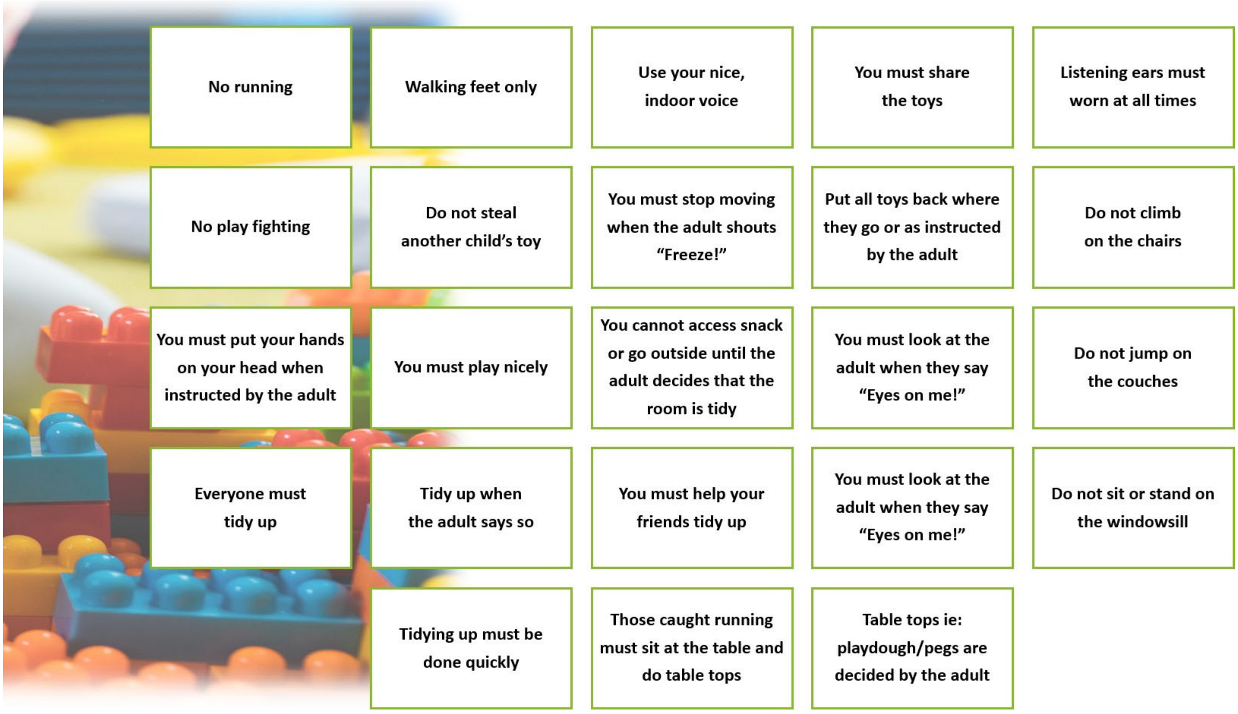
A common tactic James used when breaking known rules was to watch the educator to see if either of them noticed his defiance, as seen above. Like the wrapper throwing example, James pushes boundaries by watching the educator while walking along the chairs after being told to tidy up the snack. Rather than tidy, he climbs the chairs to further avoid obeying a task he does not want to do, but he makes a point of sitting in the area where he is told to tidy. In a way, he has half-obeyed. As James had different responses on different days, the educators equally had different approaches. For example, on some days, the educators would begin the tidying up for James because any attempt to make him tidy up failed up to that point:

> James can be seen using the scissors to pretend to cut the lid of his snack tub. He is then seen walking over towards the kitchen.
> Rebecca: "Now, James, c'mon over here to me and help me tidy up."
> Rebecca begins tidying up the rubbish on the table.

Other times, James was bombarded with multiple instructions to complete in one go:

> Kim: "No James, put it in your school bag. Then tidy up your school bag and then you can play this. Now put it out on your hook. Good boy. Out on your hook. Good boy."

3.1.4. Indoor Free Play



No running

Walking feet only

Use your nice, indoor voice

You must share the toys

Listening ears must worn at all times

No play fighting

Do not steal another child's toy

You must stop moving when the adult shouts "Freeze!"

Put all toys back where they go or as instructed by the adult

Do not climb on the chairs

You must put your hands on your head when instructed by the adult

You must play nicely

You cannot access snack or go outside until the adult decides that the room is tidy

You must look at the adult when they say "Eyes on me!"

Do not jump on the couches

Everyone must tidy up

Tidy up when the adult says so

You must help your friends tidy up

You must look at the adult when they say "Eyes on me!"

Do not sit or stand on the windowsill

Tidying up must be done quickly

Those caught running must sit at the table and do table tops

Table tops ie: playdough/pegs are decided by the adult

Image: The verbally spoken and the subtly conditioned rules observed relating to indoor free play

- **Verbal Commands Control Children's Physical Bodies**

There were many restrictions placed on children's physical movements indoors. The first common one was to halt the group's play with a verbal announcement commanding them to complete a task, for example, telling them all to tidy up in order to go outside or get ready for snack, as decided by the educators. The majority of children responded immediately to the command "freeze!" which saw the children physically stop instantly in their actions, placing their hands on their heads and standing like foot soldiers. They directed their attention to the educator and waited for their next instruction. It seemed military-like in its delivery:

> Rebecca announces to the group: "Okay everybody, everybody freeze, put your hands on your head." Some children put their hands on their heads, others stand up quickly then put their hands on their heads and some children do not put their hands on their head. All

> are looking at Rebecca. Rebecca: “Everybody have a look around the room. Is it a big mess?”
> Everyone: “Yes!”
> Rebecca: “Yes, so, I want all hands on deck and we all have to tidy up and help our friends. So we’re gonna tidy up! Ready! Steady! Go!”

The command of “freeze” was heard regularly, verbally commanded by educators who wanted to stop children in their physical movements. The freezing command allowed the educator to have more control over where the child’s physical attention was and, for the most part, they could then redirect the children to doing what the educator wanted them to do:

> James and Lee are beginning to run around for a few seconds.
> Kim: “Oh, Lee? Lee freeze, pick up the chair…..Lee, go back and pick up the chair please. Thank you.” Kim continues to watch Lee and James.

If the children did not abide by “freeze”, the educator increased their physical presence by placing themselves physically in front of the children’s way and using a sterner verbal warning, typically relating to the child getting a potential injury from their actions, to control the child’s physical movements:

> Kim becomes stern when she sees Brendan and Lee running around the table. She stands in front of them. “Okay! Lee and Brendan Freeze!” She crouches down in front of Lee as Brendan slowly walks away from her.
> Kim to Lee “We don’t run around the classroom. You could trip over something and hit your head.”
> Lee stops running, sucks his thumb and walks away from Kim.

As seen earlier when it comes to controlling multiple children, the educators focused on the child deemed more easily subdued. In this case it was Lee again, who sucked his thumb as he retreated in a manner as if to console himself. Another boy, Simon, also found the restrictive physical demands difficult to obey when it came to his demonstrated need for more physical activity. His physical body built up more energy for faster movement around the classroom where Rebecca interferes by verbally regulating his physical play. Simon often struggled between abiding by the rules commanded of him and his body's physical need to engage in fast-paced play:

> Simon can be seen beginning to run. His body is quickening when he walks and he continues to do this around Rebecca's table with Cillian running back to the blue couches. They do this twice and Simon squeals in excitement as he runs to the couch.
> Rebecca turns to look at them on the couch and says loudly: "Now guys, you're not gonna run in the classroom, remember we have to use walking feet." Simon continues to run around the table while Rebecca sits.
> Rebecca states: "Simon, walking feet please. Simon."
> Simon remains on the couch climbing with Cillian.

Climbing on the couch was used as an alternative to engage in physical movement by children when indoors, as seen here where Simon satisfied his physical need to move by climbing, which technically did not break the no running rule. By having somewhere to climb, Simon was able to express his need for physical play within the restrictive boundaries indoors. However, climbing and jumping on the couch was also forbidden indoors, even if it was conducted by the children in a seated position:

> Kim turns to see Anna and Lee jumping in a seated position on the couches. "Oh! Oh! Now, Lee and Anna, what are the couches for?" Lee replies: "For jumping up and down!" Anna walks away from the couch as Kim corrects Lee: "Nooooo, they're for sitting on." Lee stops bouncing.

The desire for children to be passive indoors comes from the fear that if all children are physically active indoors, injuries will happen. One incident was captured in this research that involved a child getting bumped to the ground as a result of another child running indoors, justifying the educators' need to enforce the no running rule:

> Kim can be seen hugging Lee who is still upset. "Won't you stop running around now?........ You'll be alright " She rubs his back "Now if you're going to be running around Lee, you're gonna have to sit at the table and do table tops, because you're already after hurting Aisling now. Mon then and we tidy up."
> Kim: "Simon and Cillian, what did I say about running around the classroom?" The boys continue to run. "Cillian!!" Kim becomes annoyed and the boys jump on the couch.

However, the ongoing threat of 'don't run, you'll hurt yourself' did not have a long-term impact on the children. Even though Aisling was crying and Lee got upset after hurting a peer, this scenario did not deter other children from running, as seen with Simon and Cillian. Further on in this discussion, it will be shown that both Lee and Aisling, even after this incident, still sought out fast paced, physical play both with each other and their peers and demonstrating their autonomy in action even in defiance to the educator.

Lastly, verbal commands were used by educators to control the noise of children's voices indoors. This was typically done individually if a child screamed out of excitement or to communicate over the general noise of the room to a peer:

> Rebecca says to no one in particular "This classroom is very noisy."
> Aisling shouts out "Hey!"
> Rebecca: "Alisling, inside voice, good girl."

Even in times of sheer frustration between peers when a child's decision to shout was understandable, as seen here when Dylan asserted himself with Brendan who kept taking the toys Dylan was using, the shouting child was still regulated to quieten their voices:

> Dylan shouts very loudly and points his finger at Brendan “STOP! STEALING!” He then turns his head to face the rest of the classroom behind him who have gone instantly silent after he shouted.
> Rebecca: “Oh, Dylan, can you use your nice voice please.”
> Dylan talks quieter now: “Stop. Stealing. Will you please stop stealing or I’ll get angry.”

Dylan is clearly expressing his personal boundaries towards a child who continues to interfere with his play. But the bigger side to this situation is how the educators imposed the ‘sharing is caring’ rule on Dylan and dismissing his expression for personal space, resulting in complete emotional turmoil for Dylan. This scenario is discussed in more detail in the next section.

- **Sharing is Caring or An Infringement on Personal Boundaries?**

Dylan was wearing the GoPro and this method provided wonderful insight into the amount of concentration and precision demonstrated by Dylan in his ocean themed small world play. However, as Dylan created a bigger scene on the table, Brendan began to destructively interfere with Dylan’s play, causing Dylan to become very frustrated highlighted below from the continued situation previously discussed:

> Rebecca: “Oh, Dylan, can you use your nice voice please.” Dylan talks quieter now: “Stop. Stealing. Will you please stop stealing or I’ll get angry.”
> Brendan continues to steal Dylan’s toys and Dylan gets more upset but does not shout.
> Dylan continues to repeat to Brendan “Could you please. Stop. Stealing.”
> Brendan laughs at Dylan as he takes another toy. Dylan takes the camera off in frustration.
> Dylan says very calmly and slowly to Brendan: “Would you pleaseee.....Stopppp. ... Stealinggggg.”

Dylan had invested a lot of time and energy in making his small world play and the effort he made to communicate very calmly to Brendan to stop was evidently clear. His shouting occurred after multiple attempts to stop Brendan, and Dylan was corrected by Rebecca as a result. He then seeks out support from Kim:

> Dylan is seen in the background in the kitchen area visibly upset. He has tears in his eyes and walks over to Kim.
> Dylan: “They’re messing up!”
> Kim turns to look at the kitchen area: “What’s going on over there?”
> Dylan: “They’re messing up!”
> Kim: “They’re messing up what, Dylan?” Kim sounds frustrated in her response to Dylan.
> Dylan: “They’re messing up all of the animals!”
> Kim: “No, they're playing with them. Look. They’re playing with the animals.”
> Dylan: “No I was.”
> Kim: “You can play **with** *emphasised* them, okay? You have to share them.” Kim turns back to the table and dismissively says “Good boy.”

Dylan has clearly expressed himself multiple times and was only left with one option: to share. By forcing Dylan to share with a peer who is causing destruction to his play meant Dylan’s voice went unheard by his educators Ultimately, Dylan could not regulate himself to suit the needs of everyone else, including obeying the sharing rule demanded of him, and so he emotionally broke down:

> There is an extremely loud scream from the kitchen area and a boy begins to scream and cry. Kim and Rebecca look over and Kim calls over from her seat: “Dylan, what’s wrong? C’mere. Come over to me.” Dylan is on the floor crying. Kim walks over to him and bends down to his level “What’s wrong?” Dylan is crying and shouts “I want to play by myself!” Kim doesn’t understand him. “What?”

> Dylan cried loudly again and says: “I want to play by myself!”
> Kim reinforces the rule that he has to share. Dylan begins to cry more. She holds him in her arms for a moment and he moves away from her to face another table. Kim walks back to the art table and talks to Rebecca.

A lot of power is exercised in this dynamic that is important to note. Dylan was very clear in his need to play by himself and he expressed this verbally to the educator. Rather than supporting this child who wanted to continue with his small world play alone, the educator prioritised the rules of the classroom. Dylan had to share because he had to learn to share. The response is that Kim looks to comfort Dylan but Dylan resists and removes himself because not only has his voice been ignored, but he is being forced to share with a peer who does not have the same play intentions as he does. The dismissing of the child’s voice by the educator creates a situation where Dylan is no longer upset, but begins to express anger that intends to physically hurt a peer:

> Dylan is standing behind Kim, he seems to be processing what is going on around him with what Kim has just said to him. Alice begins answering until Dylan interrupts angrily saying “I want to snap them!” and pokes Kim gently with a dinosaur to get her attention.
> Kim: “Now Dylan, play nicely please.” Dylan sits on a nearby chair visibly angry and upset holding 3 dinosaurs.

Sharing is caring is a rule that was mirrored by children to their peers, yet when they sought back up from the educator to enforce this rule, the educators responded inconsistently, as seen here when Emma wanted support in enforcing the sharing is caring rule over James:

> Emma runs up to the basketball that James is playing with.
> Emma: Hey, its my turn now!”
> James: “No!”
> Emma says very sternly: “Hey! Sharing is caring! I’m telling on you!” Emma walks away from James and heads straight over to

> Kim
> Emma: "Kim? I want a go of that." She points at the basketball James is holding
> Kim answers Emma but continues to walk away from her "Yeah, after James is done."

Kim earlier left Dylan distraught by prioritising the sharing is caring rule, however, here, she does not enforce the rule, leaving Emma having to battle this situation with her peer herself. Rebecca also did not consistently enforce the sharing is caring rule, sometimes telling children "He is playing with them toys, so could you please stop taking them on him?". In one very prominent moment, the approach to sharing was executed in complete opposite manners by the same educator where one child was told to give a toy back, but another group of children were demanded to share minutes later:

> Rebecca: "James, can you give that back please?" He doesn't. "No, you're not playing with it, the girls are playing with it. Give it back please." James puts it back.
> Lee walks over to Rebecca and says: "The girls are not sharing over there."
> Rebecca: "Girls, are we sharing? Are we sharing?" Lee walks back over to the table and gets a numbered card.

Enforcing rules for the sake of rules, rather than considering the individual child in the specific context they're in, means that children like Dylan are left to feel unsupported, where anger and resentment is going to be part of their forms of expression towards the people around him. Dylan expressed his need to play alone. By ignoring this, the educator not only silenced Dylan, but they made clear that rules are rules and they are to be followed.. In the same breath however, by being inconsistent in this rule means that children cannot know how to behave because they cannot predict which view of sharing will be enforced. It is completely subjective in favour of what the educator wants to enforce at that given moment, making children even more dependent and reliant on the educator to tell them how they are expected to behave.

- **Physical Force Used By Educators to Regulate Children's Physical Bodies**

When verbal commands failed, physical force was used by educators on several occasions to enforce compliance in children indoors, particularly when it came to children who sought out physical and fast-paced play. For example, jumping on the couch often gave children a sense of excitement and thrill which typically led them to seek out more fast-paced movement around the classroom. This increase in excitement, adventure and thrilling play became so invigorating for the children that they divulged in their need for fast-paced play many times originating from the couch. However, the more hyper-induced experiences children had involving physical play indoors led to the educators using physical force to stop their physical movement because repeated verbal commands did not have an impact. This physical force was seen to be used by the educator multiple times in a situation. For example, Simon and Cillian did not comply with the initial physical restrictive approach taken by the educator as they repeatedly looked to run past her out-stretched arm:

> Simon and Cillian squeal again in excitement. Rebecca turns around quickly and says: "Okay, Simon and Cillian, Cillian..." Rebecca puts her hand out to stop Cillian and Simon running past her. They run by her and she turns around and puts out her other arm to reach them. "Simon? Cillian? Cillian?" The boys turn to Rebecca who has lowered her voice now.
> "Can you c'mere for a second?" Her arm is outstretched to them and her tone is gentle and friendly. The boys walk over to her as she begins to say "Okay now put on your listening ears..." then the boys run past her again. Rebecca points out her arm again to stop them but they run away.

The variation in Rebecca's tone of voice here shows that initially being stern did not work, but changing to a more approachable, friendlier tone lowered the children's defences and drew them in to her. However, as soon as Rebecca began to enforce the physical restrictions such as "put on your listening ears", the boys fled away from her again. This led to Rebecca becoming more forceful as she attempted to physically stop the boys from running:

> Rebecca: “Simon? Simon, come here please.” Rebecca is more forceful now as she turns directly to Simon who is standing on the blue couch. Rebecca beckons him using her hand and is more forceful in her tone directly looking at him. Simon walks over to Rebecca and covers his ears while Rebecca says “Use your walking feet” and points to his legs. She turns to Cillian: “Walking feet Cillian.” Simon paces slowly in the library corner looking at his feet.

It must be noted how Simon covered his ears as Rebecca commands him to use his “walking feet”. It seems how Simon was trying to physically block out her demand because he did not want to listen to her. Yet, as he walked away from her, he looked at his feet deep in thought as the instruction “walking feet” was repeated by Rebecca. Simon and Cillian publicly restrained by the educators in front of their peers and then given instructions requiring them to alter their physical body parts i.e.: change your running feet into walking feet and turn your non-listening ears on. Rather than having independent access to outside where a variety of physical movement is possible, the children were forced to stay indoors and obey the rules that told them the ways they were allowed to move their physical bodies and punished for not complying.

- **Children Separate Their Upper and Lower Bodies to Comply**

Following this incident, Simon seeks out even more alternatives for physical movement, when he is seen here obeying the no running rule but increasing his upper body movements for satisfaction. It appears that he had disengaged from his lower half and focused on his upper half:

> Simon, who was stopped earlier by Rebecca for running, can be seen in the background walking around tables, swinging his arms and briefly skipping.

Children increasing their upper body movement to alleviate their need for physical movement was observed in other children also, such as James and Lee, who walked around the classroom but engaged in play fighting with their upper selves:

> James and Lee can be seen walking around the classroom and play fighting with each other using scissors. Their upper body movements are rough by pulling and tugging at each other's upper halves and shows a need for more physical movement. They use their 'walking feet' while their upper body expresses more physical action.

With James and Lee, they sought out play fighting with their upper bodies to satisfy their need for fast-paced play, but this increased slowly, starting with the boys pulling at each other for reaction, walking away from each other and then seeking each other out, repeating the pulling actions again:

> James and Lee are play fighting with each other, grabbing at each other's upper body and pulling each other around the classroom. Lee grabs James and James pulls him off. Lee lies on the floor. James walks away and looks back at Lee smirking. James walks around the tables keeping an eye on Lee's position.
> Lee gets up from the ground and James sees. James begins to run away from Lee. James stays away from Lee by watching from the couch.

Lee's need for physical play saw him increase the intensity of the play from pulling at James, to grabbing his toy and initiating a reason for the play to increase towards running. However, this flux of passive to fast-paced play was responded to gently by Rebecca who looked to regulate the boys before they became more physical in their movements:

> James is trying to stop Lee from taking his toy and Lee continues to grab at James, holding onto him as he walks nearer to Rebecca.
> Rebecca is looking at the green paper. She looks up when James gets nearer and says "James, simmer down, please." Lee is still grabbing James's jumper.

With Lee set on taking James's toy, he succeeds, resulting in James and Lee alternating between running and walking, which eventually leads to Rebecca taking away the toy in order to stop their increased physical movement. However, as observed here, James attempts to run away from Rebecca, only to be physically stopped by her:

> "Okay! Lee and James, come here please." James and Lee stand and look at Rebecca for a second who continues talking: "Stop running in the classroom." James tries to run past Rebecca. Rebecca grabs James's arm and pulls him over to her, his feet still mid-run. He trips over one foot as Rebecca pulls him close to her. She talks in a normal tone to him: "James, as I said, no running in the classroom. Can I have that please?" As Rebecca asks, she takes James's toy from his hand.

This was the most physical force observed in this research where the educator's physical pull on the child lifted him from his feet and caused him to trip over himself. Not only does James experience this physical stopping of his body by Rebecca, but his toy is also taken from him. Rebecca associates the toy as the catalyst for his increased level of physical activity and so removes it from him to make him more passive.

- **The Troubles of Tidy Up Time**

Children equally resisted commands to tidy up indoors, particularly when they were immersed in their play. Tactics typically involved the children ignoring the educators completely:

> Kim: "Okay guys, can everyone put their hands on their head. Hands on your head! Hands on your head!" Most children immediately respond by turning to look at Kim and placing their hands on their head. They comply. Lee can be seen jumping and touching one hand on his head as he does. He tries to comply but physically cannot because he is expressing lots of energy he wants to physically let out. Phoebe can be seen ignoring Kim entirely, not looking at her or putting her hands on her head. She is getting materials from the art

> corner.

It is evident that Lee desperately tries to control his body to obey Kim and his internal struggle is evident. On the other hand, Phoebe does not flinch. She is the only child at this moment who does not comply with the physical instruction to stop and put her hands on her head. She is wearing the GoPro and remains invested in her art and maintains this throughout Kim's orders. Kim does not notice the disobedience of one child. However, the scenario develops where more children begin to join Phoebe's lead by turning to individual choices of play rather than clean, which leads to Kim noticing the group disobedience and expresses frustration with the lack of compliance in the group:

> Kim: "Guys, I don't see anybody cleaning!!" Kim is getting very frustrated. Brendan runs and jumps on the couch, Phoebe and Aisling continue to draw and James begins using the art materials beside the girls. Lee runs out of the bathroom.

Eventually Kim regions control over some children by repeating her command loudly, specifically naming children and directing their attention to a specific tidying up task:

> Kim: "Now, I want **everybody** *emphasised* to start tidying up so we can go outside before it rains. **Everybody** *emphasised* tidying up please! Oh, Mr. Potato Head needs to be tidied up." Kim walks around giving orders. She tells Brendan and Lee to "get out of the bathroom."
> Kim: "Guys, who's going to tidy this for me?" She holds the blocks. Phoebe can be seen continuing to draw at the table with Aisling and James.

The children at the drawing table do not move. This leads to Kim increasing her measures and repeating her threat to deny access to the outdoors to enforce compliance:

> Kim: "Girls, you're not coming out until you tidy this table! C'mon!

> Julianne." The girls continue to sit at the table in their coats ready to go outside.

By denying access to the outdoors for the whole group, the educator forces children who have complied to wait on the resistant children who want to continue to do their artwork. No one is allowed outside until everyone has done their tidying up task. This means some children wait in the line ready to go for a longer period than others because they complied straight away. Therefore, by making the compliant children wait, it forces those who are disobeying to eventually comply:

> Most of the children are waiting in the line. Kim is standing at the front of the line of children in the doorway stopping them from going outside until all of the group is ready.
> Kim: "Now guys, you're not going outside until the girls go back and tidy the table! Phoebe, you tidy up the glue. Molly? Molly, go tidy up the table please. James, you need to tidy up these pieces."
> Aisling, Phoebe and Molly are seen tidying up the table. The rest of the children watch on from the line.
> The girls clear the table.
> Kim: "Right girls, are we ready then?"

The threats given by the educators were often expressed by children to their peers to enforce group control, showing that the commands of the educators have a direct impact on how children learn how to interact with other people:

> Evelyn walks up to James who is playing with the blocks on the table.
> Evelyn: "It's tidy up time."
> James whines: "Noooo." He continues to play with the blocks.
> Evelyn: "It is!" James ignores her.
> Evelyn: "Okay, well then you're not going outside!" James doesn't respond to her.
> Evelyn: "You're not going outside?!. ... If you're not going to tidy

> up!" James continues to play with the blocks. Evelyn walks away.

Phoebe, who followed her own rhythm to draw and not tidy, which encouraged her peers to do the same, was also micro-managed by her peer. By Phoebe being clear on her reasons for wanting to do her art and not tidying up resulted in Aisling joining her and then James soon after.

> Aisling comes over to Phoebe and says: "Phoebe you're supposed to be tidying up!"
> Phoebe: "Well, I'm making my mom and dad. I'm making my mom
> and dad." Phoebe continues with her drawing.

This small interaction makes for a larger statement about children's choices. A child's reason for resisting an educator's command may not suit an educator because the educator has a routine to follow. However, when a child gives reason to their peers for disobeying, it makes sense to their peers who may not want to comply either. This gives other children courage to follow their own rhythm. Children may not know that drawing instead of tidying up is a choice they can make, but may fear the educator's response should they not comply. Thus, those who resist in a group are important because not only do they give courage to children who want to draw but do not want to get in trouble, but they also give insight into what a child deems as important. In this moment, lining up to go outside did not take precedence in Phoebe's eyes. By following her own rhythm, she got to finish her drawing as she wanted to as well as go outside, even if it delayed the educator's routine.

- **The Table Top Threat and Use of Stickers**

There was always a looming consequence for those who could not obey the indoors rules which was the threat of table tops. Table tops is a term used in early years where educators pick out an activity and lay it out on the tables. This is any activity chosen by the educator that requires the child to sit at the table. This could be anything from playdough or pegs to drawing. The threat of table tops was often verbally given to the children who failed to comply to the physical restrictions indoors:

> Kim turns her attention to Brendan and Lee who are running around

> the table. She stands in front of Lee to stop him running. “You’ll sit and do table tops if you don’t stop running. Walking feet please.”
>
> ----------
>
> Kim: “Now if you’re going to be running around Lee, you’re gonna have to sit at the table and do table tops.”

Sometimes this threat was carried out, where children were forced to remain seated and engage in a table-top activity chosen by the educator until the educators decided they could stop. This practice resembled an active timeout where the child was forced to sit where they were told, but unlike the outdated timeout where a child would sit with nothing to do, this active timeout gave them a set activity for them to engage in until the educator released them of this punishment for disobeying:

> Rebecca can be heard emphasising: “James, stop running in the classroom. Now sit at the table and do playdough.”
>
> ----------
>
> Brendan and Lee slumped at a table doing pegs. Brendan puts in a peg and looks at Kim. He sighs and looks unhappy.

Alongside threats made towards children relating to table tops, the use of positive reinforcement and the chance to gain a sticker was a tactic used by educators to instil compliance:

> Rebecca announces: “If you’re doing really good tidying up, we might have a sticker for everybody.”

However, the positive gain of a sticker was another way for educators to control children by threatening that their sticker would be taken if they did not obey:

> Anna and Lee are running around the table.
> Kim: “Oh, oh! Lee and Anna!” Anna and Lee continue to jog around the table.
> Kim: “Eh, Anna? Lee?” They ignore her.

> Kim: “Okay Lee, there’ll be no sticker then.” Lee stops running straight away and walks as Anna continues to run.
>
> Lee: “I’m not running.”
>
> Kim: “You are running!”
>
> Lee: “I’m not.”
>
> Kim: “No, you’re running too!” Anna and Lee go over to the line.

The excitement children associated with stickers showed they were eager to work towards getting one, even if this meant always being promised one but never receiving one. For example, in all the recorded data, at no point was any child given a sticker. This shows that educators can use promises such as gaining a sticker to enforce compliance from children, yet the children are never guaranteed to receive this sticker, only threatened to not get a sticker should they not obey, as seen in Lee’s case.

3.2. Surveillance and The “Watching Monster”

3.2.1. The Panopticon in Early Years Practice

Having one to two supervisors with a mass of prisoners, the Panopticon replicates that of a preschool environment almost too adequately as outlined in detail in Chapter 1, Section 1.1, 1.1.4 The Art of Surveillance and the Panopticon. Consider the two educators who watch the 22 children in the classroom to monitor and instruct so the children’s existence is a reflection of the expected social requirements placed on them as they are moulded into society. By using the Panopticon as a lens and applying it to the early childhood context, it is clear that power is exercised effectively using surveillance, where the level of surveillance over children and childhood has been ever increasing (Steeves and Jones, 2010). The early years application of the Panopticon was evident in this research in the way that educators, through being a physical presence as a form of enforcement, were capable of controlling activities, policing access points through spatial control, herding children and documenting their lived experiences without children’s participation. The controlling of children’s activities was evident in the previous chapter and so the topics of surveillance, the physical presence of an adult as a form of enforcement, policing access points through spatial control, herding children and documenting children’s lived experiences will be examined here.

- **The Adult Presence as a Form of Enforcement**

The adult’s physical presence was shown to be a source of power used by the educators when children did not comply with a verbal command. The adult increased their physical presence over children by either sitting directly beside the children, walking over to them or standing beside them either looking down at them or at eye-level. Educators increasing their physical presence over children was regularly implemented as a technique to enforce a verbal command that was not being obeyed. For example, Kim looks to herd children inside from the outdoor environment, a verbal command they all ignore. Kim then walks up to the group who immediately comply with going inside:

> Kim calls all of their names “Come on, let’s go!” The 4 children
> stand talking. Kim walks over to them.

> Kim: “Guys come on, what’s going on? I’m calling ye!” The 4 children run in.

This was again seen between Kim and James when James ignored Kim’s command for James to come into the shelter out of the rain:

> Kim calls James twice. Both times, James has his back to her and does not respond. Kim walks over to him and James walks inside as she nears.

The adult’s physical presence in the environment echoed that of the surveillance tower of the Panopticon, physically towering over the children where educators positioned themselves in front of areas that were prohibited for children to access, particularly relating to puddles and water forms outdoors:

> Rebecca marches over from the shelter and tells all the children to “Get out of the water guys, now.” She puts her hand on the backs of children to guide them away from the water. Once all the children are out, she stands by the puddle for a moment keeping guard so the children do not go back over.

The adult presence was so powerful that the educator didn’t always have to be physically towering over the child to increase compliance, it was enough to be seen walking towards the child coupled with a verbal command:

> Rebecca shouts at Shane who is sitting in the puddle as he begins to lie down in it. She walks towards him while shouting: “Shane! Up out of the puddle!!” Shane doesn’t look at Rebecca, but seems to automatically respond by standing up and walks out of the puddle.

Another example involved a child being shouted at from afar by an educator who then physically increased their presence over the child to enforce the instruction. This interaction resulted in the child's peers to disperse, abandoning the child and saving themselves from the power source of the adult presence through avoidance:

> Rebecca can be heard saying angrily in the background of Phoebe and Aisling's play "Dylan what did I just say?" as he pulls on the basketball hoop as she stomps towards him. The physical presence of Rebecca makes some of the children disperse from the basketball hoop slowly.

The physical presence of the adult also allowed for educators to feel comfortable checking children's personal belongings at their own disposal without asking the child's permission, such as going through their lunch bags before snack time:

> Evelyn is in the hallway holding a plastic bag. Kim: "Now Evelyn, what have you got?" Kim walks over and looks in the bag while Evelyn stands holding it open. Kim: "Oh, your wellies and waterproofs. Okay, you can hang up your school bag then."

These examples demonstrate the normalisation of educators utilising their physical presence as a form of enforcement upon children. The action of increasing their presence was to ensure the children obeyed the educators and this was typically used when the educators' verbal instructions were ignored by the children. Every time this tactic was used, the child or group of children complied as soon as the educator increased their physical presence.

- **Spatial Control and Policing Access Points**

From a regulation perspective, keeping children in a set number in different rooms is to comply with standard adult:child ratios, in this case being 2 adults to 22 children (Tusla, 2018). The design of the classroom meant that children were only permitted access to environments as the educator allowed it to ensure these ratios were adhered to and children were accounted for. This involved a gate and a heavy fire door used to go in and out of the classroom. Sometimes the door was left open, but the gate was always closed, unless the educators were standing at it. Children sought further exploration out of the classroom but any attempt was redirected by the educator, sometimes underpinned by the potential threat given by the educators that children may incur an injury if they did not comply:

> Anna says something to Rebecca and Rebecca says “What?” before she quickly turns her attention to Byron and Molly who are opening the gate at the classroom door.
> Rebecca: “Oh, Byron and Mollye, can you keep the door closed please?” Molly and Byron continue at the gate.
> Rebecca: “No, leave the gate closed because you’ll catch your fingers.”

Unauthorised access was denied so that children were always accounted for in the room. This meant that children could not access their lunches in the hallway until permitted by the educator or could not go outside when they wanted. By having a door, a gate and a final door to contain children into the classroom meant that there were multiple stopping points for educators to see and catch children attempting to go outdoors unauthorised:

> Rebecca walks out into the hall and looks for Evelyn’s bag. Rebecca turns around and sees Byron opening the door to go outside.
> Rebecca: “No Byron, we’re not going out yet pet. Good boy. Right, c’mon.” Rebecca motions Byron into the classroom then closes and locks the door and walks back into the classroom.
>
> ----------
>
> Kim walks back up the hall and says “Where are you going Ollie?....
> *Ollie keeps walking*
> Kim: “No, no go back into your classroom because they’re not ready to go out yet.” Kim ushers Ollie into the classroom.

Children could not mix with the children housed in the other classrooms because of the standard ratio requirements where, even if there are 44 children and 4 educators, the service would still be in breach of regulatory requirements because of the additional floor space requirements that outline how many children are allowed in one room (Tusla, 2018). To have an overflow between the two rooms would mean the service would be deemed as non-compliant for ratios if the floor space did not cater for the full group at one time. The different classrooms were connected through an adjoining door, however, this door was blocked by a couch placed strategically by the educators to stop children going through and mixing with each other, highlighting the service's priority to comply with ratio and floor requirements over children's experiences with each other. Sometimes, the blocked door was opened by the children who sought social interaction with the other classroom, much to the stress of the educators:

> A table that is blocking the door between the classroom and the other classroom falls over with a loud bang because a child in the other classroom pushed open the door. Kim says in shock of the loud noise: "Jesus Christ!"
> Rebecca walks over to the adjoining door where only the child's elbow is visible poking through the door. Rebecca moves the child's elbow out from the door gap so she can close the door. Rebecca tells the child: "Keep the door closed, okay?" Kim closes the door and puts the table back up in front of the door.

The windows in the classroom looked out to the outdoor environment where often the other class group were playing. Children enjoyed sitting on the windowsill inside which was designed to be a low hanging windowsill so that children could look out. These windows could not be opened meaning children could look outside but not access outside in this way. Sometimes children sat on the windowsill for prolonged periods to look outside which was discouraged by educators:

> Anna is the only child in the background sitting on the windowsill.
> Kim sees her and says gently across the room: "Anna! Down off

> the windowsill please.” Anna crouches down but stays on the windowsill.

Anna resisted Kim’s orders by pretending to get off the windowsill, but remained on it to watch her peers outside. Anna begins to physically bang at the window in frustration to get the attention of her peers playing outside until she is reprimanded by the educator once again:

> Anna can be seen standing on the windowsill again. She bangs on the window.
> Kim shouts: “Anna! Anna! Get down from the windowsill please.”

Access to the outdoor space was only permitted for the full group and not individual children. The children who wanted to be outside with their friends were at the detriment of the educator’s interpretation of time based around the daily routine:

> Emma: “Rebecca?” Rebecca bends down to face Emma.
> Emma: “Can I go see Mili?” referring to going outside to see her friend in the other room.
> Rebecca: “We’ll be going outside in a few minutes.”
> Emma: “No, ‘cos I want to see her. Will I see her in ten minutes?”
> Rebecca checks her watch “Emmm, yep! In ten minutes.”
> Emma walks away and goes over to the peg table.
> Emma walks over to look out of the window. She says “There’s Mili! There’s Mili!” She watches Mili outside in the shelter.

In order for Emma to go outside, not only did she have to follow the tidying up procedure instructed by the educator first, but she would also have to line up and wait for the rest of the group before being allowed outside. Even if Emma had an understanding of the value of “ten minutes”, the reality was the entire process of being able to access the outdoor space from indoors would have involved at least 20 minutes of controlled activity, depending on the level of group compliance and the educators level of effort to herd the group outside.

- **Herding Children**

There are many examples given so far in this research of how children were herded as a group from one environment to the next, particularly in relation to the outdoors between the main yard and the shelter as well as transitioning in from the outdoors towards snack time and vice versa. Herding children involved the educators giving the group an overall instruction, such as “get into the line” as a physical format to complete for going outside. While the majority of the group obeyed, there were typically a few that resisted or went at their own pace, rather than the pace of the group. The herding technique allowed one educator to stand with the main group in the line while verbally correcting the rest of the children who were easily identifiable for not complying. The second educator was freer to move around the environment which allowed her to focus her attention on making the non-compliant children obey. Oftentimes, herding children involved the educators stationing themselves at the doorways to areas children were being moved to, from or between. For example, transitioning from outdoors to snack time resulted in one educator policing the doorway into the classroom while the other policed the bathroom entrance. All of the children were visible to the educators and they could direct the children from the hallway, into the classroom, to the bathroom to wash their hands, back to the hallway to get their lunches and finally into the classroom to get a seat. By making children line up at the doorway in front of the educator, children were contained indoors until the group were permitted access outdoors by the educator:

> Kim: “Okay guys...Can everybody line up behind. .... Dylan.” Kim reminds the guys of a song to sing “Guys dya remember our song for going outside? Hands on shoulders?” All the children put their hands on their own shoulders, most with their heads down and they walk in a line slowly out of the door.

Children were praised for their compliance while the level of conditioned behaviour demonstrated by the children when standing in the line was evident:

> Kim: “Guys, well done, you’ve gotten so good at tidying up! Okay, I’m going to pick…......James to be the leader for us today!” James

> runs up to the door and all the children run after him in silence. They line up straight away and wait.
> Kim: "Oh my goodness guys, it seems everyone brought their listening ears today"
> Rebecca turns to Kim and notes : "Aww, they're so good!"
> Kim nods smiling: "Yeah, they are."
>
> ----------
>
> Phoebe says to her friends in the line: "You have to hold my hand. And don't run when we're going out, we just walk." Evelyn holds hands with Phoebe and Aisling.

However, there were times where children waited in the line for much longer than they could manage and they began to get restless, pushing the line forward to move out. The positioning of the educator in front of the line allowed her to maintain control of the group through herding:

> The rest of the children begin to push the line forward to go outside.
> Rebecca shouts: "Oh! Oh! Guys who's pushing?! Back please!" The children begin to walk backwards in the line behind the door frame.
> Rebecca tells them: "Guys, can we all just move into the classroom for one second?" The line moves back again.
> Evelyn stands at the front not stepping past the doorframe.

Herding made surveillance of the children easier during transitions because children were contained between the two educators positioned at the front and back of the group. Through capping the herd this way, children were led to follow one educator where the educators wanted them to go and the second educator could ensure that all of the children of the group followed by doing surveillance from the back. If children weren't complying, the second educator had the ability to watch for stray children and had free range to redirect the children back to the herd.

- **Documenting Children’s Lives**

Documentation is a role requirement for early years educators to fulfil in order to evidence their everyday practice for regulatory bodies, communicate children’s progress with parents and enrich children’s learning through the form of assessment (NCCA, 2009). The Irish early years sector has a history of public health nurses inspecting the sector rather than posting early childhood specialists causing conflict in the field (Early Childhood Ireland, 2021: Moss, 2013). With the mixing of medical and education backgrounds together, the expectation from the medical lens meant educators saturated themselves under documentation techniques that replicated medical checklists over observing the meaning and magic of children’s lived experiences as supported by early childhood education. With the establishing of the Early Years Regulations 2016 and inspector backgrounds evolving so the sector is now inspected by Tusla’s early years inspectorates (Tusla, 2021) and the Department of Education’s Early Years Education Inspectorate (Department of Education, 2024), the lens of documentation has been struggling to find consistency in practice between the regulatory requirements and the quality practice guidelines being issued to the sector. For example, Aistear states that:

> “Assessment enables the adult to find out what children understand, how they think, what they are able to do, and what their dispositions and interests are. This information helps the adult to build rich stories of children as capable and competent learners in order to support further learning and development. In doing this, he/she uses the assessment information to give on-going feedback to children about how they are getting on in their learning, to provide challenging and enjoyable experiences for them, to choose appropriate supports for them, and to document, celebrate and plan the next steps in their learning.”
>
> - (NCCA, 2009, p.72)

Completing monthly observations was a practice used in this service, and while conducting assessment of children’s learning is a role requirement (NCCA, 2009), conducting them on a monthly basis is something services choose to do of their own accord but is not stated in any guidance or legislation to be conducted to this frequency. Forcing themselves to complete monthly observations seemed to cause additional stress for the educators who rushed through documenting the children towards the end of the month in order to complete each observation for each child:

> Kim says to Rebecca: "I must keep remembering to take photos of them for their monthly things. I keep forgetting."

Educators took photos of children at play to add to their written outline of an observation they had of the child relating to their learning and development. Even though the original purpose of documentation has been outlined, data in this research demonstrated that the educators only took photos of the children for the sole purpose of completing their task of writing up an observation for each child, not out of curiosity to understand the children and their experiences:

> Kim takes a photo of Byron drawing. She says to Lisa, the educator on work experience: "I'm trying to get pictures of them doing everything for them monthly things, ya know them things?"
> Lisa: "Yeah, yeah."

The main observed tactic used by educators to document children was to do it as children played. This included redirecting the child to repeat what they had done for the educator to capture a photo, or to encourage them to continue if they stopped after noticing the educator had taken out their phone to take pictures:

> Kim walks to the climbing frame and watches Orlaigh and Ali on the climbing frame. Kim takes out her phone and points it at Orlaigh. Orlaigh stops climbing and looks at Kim confused.
> Kim: "Go on Orlaigh, I'm just sending a picture for your… to send home is all." Orlaigh turns around and continues climbing. Kim turns the camera to Ali and takes a photo of her.
> Kim smiles and says: "Ooooh, look at you Ali!" Ali smiles and continues to climb.

> Kim: “Dylan, are you gonna show me how you climb up?” Dylan grabs the rope, but Orlaigh is at the top of it trying to climb down.
> Kim: “Now, careful because Orlaigh is after, you coming down it Orlaigh?” Orlaigh nods yes and moves down the rope.
> Kim: “Dylan, you wait until Orlaigh comes down and then you can come up it.” Kim takes more photos of the children climbing. She encourages them “Go on Grace, good girl!” and “Ali, you’re flying it!” as she takes photos.

Sometimes the educators just took photos discreetly, trying not to influence the children:

> Kim stands closely to them, takes two to three photos and then walks away from the area.

Other times, the educators directly interfered in the children’s play by stopping them and telling them to look at the phone being pointed at them. Oftentimes, the children were told to smile even when the moment originally did not involve them smiling:

> Rebecca walks over to Bobby, kneels down and points a phone camera to his face saying “Bobby, will you say cheese for me? Look at me. Look!.....Smile?! Show me your teeth. Cheeeeeese. Cheeeeeese! Smile??” Rebecca gets up and walks away from the table.
>
> \- - - - - - - - - - -
>
> Kim walks over to Phoebe who is focused on her game. Kim interrupts her and says while holding the phone in front of her: “Phoebe, say cheese!”
> Phoebe physically stops in her play, turns and looks at Kim. Phoebe puts on an automatic smile and says: “Cheese!”
> Kim instructs Phoebe to stay that way until Kim is ready: “Come over here….Wait now.” Phoebe stands posed until Kim takes the

> photo. Kim takes the photo and turns to Lee going down the slide. She snaps photos of Byron at the telescope. Kim walks back into the shelter after taking the photos.

Children were rhetorically asked for their consent for their photo to be taken. For example, Kim asks Dylan if she could take his photo, but takes his photo while asking him and gives him no opportunity to answer. She then instructs him further to pose while dismissing children around him in order to capture the desired photo she wants for her observations:

> Kim turns to Dylan: “Hello Dylan! Can I take a picture of you? Because you look so cool!” Dylan can’t be seen or heard.
> Kim: “Dylan! Look up at me! Cillian, out of the way please.” Cillian backs away.
> Kim: “Now, say cheeeese!”
> Dylan: “Cheeeese!”

This research has found that the documentation of children was conducted in a tokenistic manner, engaged with for the sake of completing what seemed to be an administrative task rather than an opportunity to explore children’s learning with the children themselves. Even though the frequency of documentation is not set out, this means the requirement is subjective to each service and can result in services over-documenting children unnecessarily. As this research shows, documenting children’s lives every month in this manner caused direct interference of children’s play experiences and caused additional stress for educators to complete.

3.2.2. Children’s Views on the Surveillance They Have Experienced

How children responded to the surveillance placed upon them was observed, showing they were aware they were being watched by educators, where some voiced how they did not like being watched by the educators. For example, Phoebe used play as a means to hide from the educators’ gaze. She was first noted to do this by creating an ocean themed game:

> Phoebe looks at Rebecca and says to herself: “She’ll be watching us. Everybody down, and sneak like this.” Phoebe crawls along the climbing frame. “We’re going under water.”

On another occasion, Phoebe engages with fast-paced play in order to escape the adult presence and watchful gaze:

> Rebecca begins to walk over to Phoebe. Phoebe watches her then begins to run up the climbing frame saying to herself: “Quick! Rebecca is....She’s a big watching monster!”

Children also demonstrated feelings of being disempowered, for example with Emma when she challenged Kim who was seeping away a puddle. When Kim continued, Emma walked away and her voice was captured by the GoPro she was wearing:

> Emma climbs up the climbing frame with Molly and watches as
> Kim continues to brush the puddle away.
> Emma says: “Teachers are mean, aren’t they?”

The individual views of children can be encompassed by this statement from Byron when asked in the focus group what preschool is like:

> “It’s just like a baby jail.”

When it came to documentation, children did not know why educators took their photos. In Angie’s case, she sought to find out the reason by asking Kim directly:

> Ali: “Teacher? Why do some people take pictures?”
> Kim ignores Angie, looks at her phone and turns to Linda saying: “That’s actually a cute picture of her.” and then takes another picture of Julianne.

> Ali repeats her question to Kim: “Why do you have to take a picture of her?”
>
> Kim: “Eh, ‘cause were going to be sending some stuff to your mammys and daddys with some pictures of what you were doing in school.”
>
> Ali: “Why?”
>
> Kim: “Just so they can see what you're doing, ‘cause they're not in here every day, they don’t see what we get up to in school.”
>
> Ali: “Why do they?”
>
> Kim: “No they don’t, ‘cause they don’t be in our school, so we take pictures so we can show them.”

Angie’s curiosity not only shows that children do not see the reason for adults to take their pictures, but it also demonstrates that surveillance within the preschool extends out further than just the school context. Educators not only evidence the details of children’s experiences for inspectors, but to parents as well, highlighting there are multiple adult cohorts who are informed of each individual child’s progress. The child does not see or hear about why this information is collected on them or what that information is, as shown by Angie’s confusion to Kim’s photo taking. By withholding children from the documentation process, the adult cohorts are more empowered to make decisions for the child rather than with the child, because, for example, involving the child may derail the adult agenda. This over analysing of children’s experiences means that children are scrutinised by multiple adult groups guided by the expectation that the child must live their lives as they are told. If not, there is a web of consequences for educators and parents who are held responsible should a child not live as prescribed by external regulatory and governmental bodies, not to mention the increase of surveillance and monitoring of children who do not fit the social script. By positioning themselves as the onlookers, educators are in control of what is documented, how it is interpreted, who it is for and in what way it will be used in future. Through this view, the main function of children is to be passively there for educators who look at children as being necessary to prove their educator professional capabilities (Sparrman and Lindgren, 2010). Surveillance methods such as these normalise the regulation of children (Smith 2012) by making the purpose of documentation about mass governing (Gordon, 1979) resulting in people learning to govern themselves (Rabinow, 1989) and materialises the very essence of governmentalisaion as a means to direct the thinking and actions of mass populations (Foucault, 1982; 1979; 2007). This marks a key exploration of the role of documentation in early childhood education in the manner in which it is carried out to monitor and control children, disconnecting itself from the rhetoric surrounding documentation as a means to increase children's participation in their own lives (UNCRC, 1989; Lindgren, 2013; NCCA, 2015), as is discussed further in section 1.4 Power and Participation and 1.2.3 Documentation as a Surveillance Technique.

Overall, it is clear that children as young as 3 years old can be painfully aware of the power and exercised over them through surveillance and control of activities, highlighting that the existence of disciplinary power is prevalent within preschool routines. The way in which power is exercised by educators can directly impact children's experiences, often to prioritise group control and role requirements over children's individual needs. Ultimately, the intensity of surveillance and control of children's experiences by educators through use of the routine was negatively impacted on children where some were aware of the power, some questioned the power and others were conditioned to remain docile. These findings echo the sad but true statement of Walkerdine (1990) who stated that:

> "The ultimate irony is that the child supposedly freed by this process to develop according to its nature was the most classified, catalogued, watched and monitored in history." (p.21).

3.3. The GoPro Experience

3.3.1 Children's Views on Being GoPro Co-Researchers

Many children in this research highly valued their role as researchers:

> Phoebe: "Is it fun that we're researchers?"
> Anna: "Look what I got Kim! Look what I got!"
> Kim: "Oh my goodness, you're the researcher!"
> Anna: "Yeah, we're the researchers!"
> Anna: "Yay, we are the researchers! Phoebe you have a camera too!"
>
> \- - - - - - - - - - -
>
> Emma: "Mia! Look!" Emma points at her GoPro. Mia stares at the camera.
> Kim: "Emma, are you the researcher?
> Emma: "Yep!"
> Kim: "Wowww!"

The children were comfortable in what their researcher role was and for what purpose and they utilised this powerful status allocated to them in extraordinary ways, for example, by becoming very protective of their role as a researcher:

> One boy waves and says "Hiii!"
> Phoebe: "No, it's not a camera to say cheese. It's for researching."
> A boy sits beside Phoebe and tries to grab her GoPro.
> Phoebe: "No, that's not for pulling at." He grabs Phoebe's GoPro.
> She tells him loudly: "No!" and moves away from him.
> A boy in brown says to Phoebe "I want to have that." pointing to the GoPro.
> Phoebe: "You can't. This is only for researchers."

This self-imposed sense of authority that the GoPros gave some children seemed to portray a higher relational status between them and the educators who the children viewed as authority figures. This justified some researcher children to seek out the educators to subject the non-researcher children to punishment for interfering with their research, particularly if that child was not in their peer group:

> James knocks over the stack.
> Phoebe: “James!!” she says horrified. “You’ve ruined the
> work of the researchers! James... I’m a researcher!”
> James continues to stand on the fallen blocks.
> Phoebe: “You’re not doing it anymore. I’ll go and tell the
> teacher.”

While all children were informed that, whether they used the cameras or not, they were all helping to support the research, as highlighted by O’Reilly et al. (2013) who demonstrates the importance of recognising the value of non-participating children choosing not to be directly involved in the research. Children developed a power dynamic between themselves as being researchers and non-researchers based on who wore the GoPros and how this influenced children’s play experiences:

> Evelyn goes over to the mud kitchen to Byron and Anna.
> Evelyn: “Guys, can I play?”
> Byron stares at her.
> Byron: “Can I have the camera?”
> Evelyn laughs.
> Evelyn: ”You can’t have the camera.”
> Byron: “Can I have a go?”
> Evelyn: “Ask Phoebe, not me.”
> Byron is staring at Evelyn.
> Evelyn says to Byron: “Don’t ask
> me one more time, you can’t have it
> because I’m the researcher!”

> Evelyn walks away from Byron.

The power dynamic between child researchers and non-researchers became most evident when there was a standoff between two groups of friends. The non-researchers wanted to know why they weren't researchers but their friends were. The empathetic outcome delivered by Phoebe as a researcher demonstrated traits of leadership and teamwork:

> Anna to Evelyn and Phoebe: "Why are you researchers and we aren't?"
> Phoebe: "You're my two researchers, you're still researchers like me.... You're still my favourite researchers."
> Phoebe looks towards the 3 girls who don't say anything but are looking at Phoebe and Evelyn who is sitting on the frame behind Phoebe.
> Phoebe: "Like, me and Evelyn are the same researchers so… ...... You can keep the house very clean, so you can make sure no bad guys or no Dylans come in here!"
> The 3 girls begin to climb the climbing frame with Phoebe and Evelyn.
> Phoebe shouts excitedly "Yayyyy, ay ay ay!" as the group climb together.

Not only did the use of GoPros in the study show how unequal power dynamics can easily be created when a method is limited to being used by some but not all participants, but it also highlighted just how collaborative and understanding child researchers can be when it comes to reassuring their peers of their non-researcher status. Phoebe recognised the dissatisfaction of her peers and instinctively created a game where her non-researcher friends were given certain roles in their play in order to help them feel equally as important as she felt as a researcher with the

GoPro. This demonstrates how children are capable of exercising the responsibility of a researcher that can have its conflicts within power dynamics and how they can do this without prompts or support from an adult.

Lastly, children's experiences of being the researcher was impacted because of the GoPro camera itself. One design flaw of the GoPro camera head-mounting straps that I bought following my failed child-sized cap idea during the pilot study was how the straps do not adjust for smaller heads, so some children that were smaller in size had difficulty wearing the GoPro on their head. Every attempt was made to try and secure the head mount for these children interested in being the researchers, such as tying the head strap in a knot, but this just added to the discomfort of the child. I did not want children to literally be tied to their research method and so these children wore the camera across their chest or held it in their hands. Sometimes these children placed the GoPro beside their play area and then forgot about it, where another child would pick up the camera and put it on their head.

While each GoPro was able to record continuously for approximately 2 hours over 16 days of recording, the camera began getting exceedingly hot after being worn on an individual's head, causing discomfort for the wearer. This was expressed more often by children towards the end of the research study where I believe the GoPros became hot because of excessive use over the month recording constantly and being charged overnight.

> Kim calls James: "Do you want to wear this for a few minutes? Dya want to be the researcher?"
> James: "Yeah."
> Kim adjusts the GoPro onto James.
> Kim: "Now, is it sore?"
> James: "No."
> Kim: "Now off you go researcher, see what you can find!"
> James: "Why is it heavy and hot?"
> Kim: "Because it's been on everyone's head."
> James says to no one directly "It's very hot." referring to the GoPro as he walks out of the shelter

The fact that the GoPros became so hot played a role in the children wanting to wear the GoPro because the heat was hurting their heads:

> Evelyn runs into the shelter. “Rebecca, I’m done with the camera.”
> Rebecca: “You’re done with the camera, are ya?”
> Evelyn: “Yeah, it’s hurting my head.”
> Rebecca takes the camera off Evelyn and puts the camera on the table.

In Emma’s case, she saw going inside as a reason to take off the GoPro without explaining that it was hurting her. However, when the educator supported the child’s GoPro wearing inside, Emma had to express her issue that it was in fact hurting her too:

> Emma walks over to Rebecca and asks her “Can I take this off my head because I’m going in to get my drink?”
> Rebecca: “You can go inside and get your drink if you want?”
> Emma: “But it hurts my head...”
> Rebecca: “Oh, it hurts your head, is it? Okay.” Rebecca takes the GoPro off Emma and sits the GoPro on her lap.

By trying to hide the fact that the GoPro was hurting Emma was a way for her to avoid the educators taking the GoPros away entirely. The children, even though it hurt their heads, still used the GoPros demonstrating the value they placed on their researcher role. Dedicated children got creative and wanted to utilise taking breaks from the GoPro where they could return to wearing it without completely excluding themselves from having future use. I believe this response from the children came as a result of educators giving the GoPro to other children if the original child took a break. In Anna’s case, she stated she was planning on wearing it during break time and stating this gave her reassurance that she would be able to return to the GoPro after being away from it:

Anna takes off the camera. “I don’t want to wear this now.”
Rebecca: “Okay, is it hurting your head?”
Anna: “Well… I’ll wear it on the break.”

Overall, children using GoPros as co-researchers echoes how child-friendly methods can hinder children’s status rather than support them in their research roles (Huser, 2019). I witnessed how the term ‘researcher’ taken on by the children evolved into a powerful authority position for some children, to the point that it meant excluding their peers from what they saw as their “researcher work.” On the other hand, some children demonstrated how they were able to recognise the power inequality that being a researcher can bring to their friend dynamics, were able to dissolve this power dynamic and turn it into a form of collaborative play. The GoPros themselves proved to be useful for capturing children’s physical viewpoint of the world when mounted on their heads, however, the design of the GoPro head-mounting straps was not suitable for all children who were smaller in size where these children became less interested in the research as a result of not being able to wear the GoPro comfortably on their heads. The use of the GoPros recording for 2 hours a day across 16 days seemed to wear down some aspect of the GoPro itself where initially in the first few days, the heat from the camera was not an issue, however, by the end of the study, the cameras became too hot to wear at all after only a few minutes of being turned on.

3.3.2 The Unintended Consequence of Educators Wearing GoPros

Throughout my daily review of video data, I noticed the impact of educators wearing the GoPros and how it was influencing the data being captured of children’s experiences by children. The GoPros were now being gated by the educators when the purpose of the research was for children to use the GoPros as and when they wanted to. I was reluctant to intervene directly, not wanting to influence the research, but I also felt that continuing data collection this way was derailing further from the main purpose of the research and denying children the autonomy to be the researchers as and when they wanted to. I suggested to the educators that an alternative approach if no child was interested in the cameras was to leave the cameras on a shelf or a desk where children can pick them up whenever they wish. This approach was exercised a few times, mainly outdoors when educators were more likely to group together to chat amongst themselves in the shelter, and it highlighted that children will seek out the GoPro camera when they want once it is left available for them and not gated by an adult. Yet, for the most part, the educators had control of the GoPros, holding them when they believed no other child wanted to wear them, but also denying children who asked to wear it if they already had a turn. This meant that children who very clearly asked the educator for the GoPro were told no because they had already got a turn. Oftentimes, the educator remained holding the GoPro or putting it face down on a surface recording black scenes that were not transcribable. This access only changed when a child the educators deemed suitable based on their turn-taking status showed interest in the GoPro. When no child was interested, possibly due to the fact they asked often and were told no, or did not have an interest in the first place, resulted in educators engaging in a form of practice where they chose which children they wanted to wear the GoPro, not the children themselves, which led to some children being convinced into wearing the GoPro camera when they did not want to wear it:

> Kim is saying loudly and firmly to Dylan "Now listen, listen. Do you want to wear this? Do you want to be the researcher?"
> Dylan: "No, because they will steal it. Tell them not to steal them."
> Kim "Okay then I will tell them not to take them and that you were playing with them. So do you want to be the researcher Dylan?"
> Dylan: "No"
> Kim: "Okay I'll give it to someone else then." Kim sounds frustrated and walks away.
> Byron and Pheobe can be seen putting up their hands.
> Kim: "No Phoebe, you had it yesterday."
> Rebecca: "Byron you can have a turn the next day."
> Kim looks around. "Dylan, are you sure you don't want to be the researcher?"
> Dylan: "Yes I am sure."

In some cases, the educators were quite forceful in their convincing of children, continuing to call the child by name, repeatedly interfering in the child's play by asking them if they wanted to wear it and if the child showed a moment of hesitation, the educator took this to mean the child was consenting to wearing the GoPro where the educator praised the child for putting it on, even when the child did not answer. The result was that children wore the GoPro when they did not want to and eventually took it off, not showing further interest in it and reducing their overall interest in participating in research. Children's expressions of opting in and out of the research over the period of the study were not always recognised by the educators who gradually took control of the GoPros and thus impacted on children's access to these cameras. Some children expressed a very clear, verbal desire to wear the GoPros, but they were constantly told no by the educators if that child already had a turn. This led to children who were originally very passionate about their researcher role being excluded from the role they were interested in exploring. In some instances, no child was wearing the GoPro and not because of a lack of interest, but because educators followed the turn-taking rule so much so that if a child who had a turn showed interest and no other child did, then no child got to be the researcher:

> Rebecca: "There's one more. Does anyone else want to be the researcher?"
> Phoebe turns in her chair and opens her mouth about to answer.
> Phoebe says quietly: "I do..."
> Rebecca ignores Phoebe and says louder to everyone "No?"
> Phoebe says louder: "I do!"
> Rebecca: "No, you were the researcher yesterday, Phoebe."
> Rebecca walks over to the whiteboard with the GoPro and then eventually sits it on the bench.

The practice that occurred on the opposite end of this was equally distressing for children who were not consenting to wear the GoPros but were coerced by the educators into wearing them. This led to children who were initially hesitant and cautious about the researcher role becoming completely disillusioned by the experience and associating the GoPro cameras negatively as something that makes them uncomfortable. While the following excerpt is long, it is necessary to see the extent to which children's consent was coerced by educators into wearing the GoPros and the way in which children's consent was not recognised. Children tried to make their consent visible but were unheard by their educators Kim and Ava. This resulted in the children compliantly saying yes to wearing the GoPros but then taking it off as soon as possible:

> Ava and Kim are asking every child near them if they want to wear the camera. No child is interested. Ava sees Anna and says to her: "Do you want to be the researcher?"
> Anna: "Yeah"
> Ava: "Will I put it on you?" Anna seems to instantly change her mind by pulling her body in the opposite direction and walking backwards from Ava. Her expression shows discomfort.
> Anna: "You can have it." and she walks backwards, away from Ava.
> Ava repeats her question to Anna: "Do you want it? Do you want to be the researcher?"
> Aine hesitates, clearly not wanting to as she tries to walk away again from Ava's questioning but ends up saying: "Yeah"
> Ava takes off the GoPro and puts it on Anna "Now, we'll get it all comfy on ya, is that okay Anna?"
> Ava is adjusting the camera and asks "Now, is that okay Anna?" the camera slips slightly.
> Ava: "Oh, will I fix it on you or tighten it Anna?"
> Anna: "No, I don't want it."
> Ava: "Oh, you don't want it now, okay." Ava laughs awkwardly and takes back the GoPro.

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> Evelyn runs over to Ava to tell her about a birthday party she was at “I had some cake because it was my favourite!”
> Evelyn: “My sister had a birthday yesterday!”
> Ava: “Oh lovely, was it a party?”
> Evelyn: “Yeah! I had some cake because it was my favourite.”
> Ava: “Oh lovely. Dya want to be the researcher Evelyn?”
> Evelyn: “Yeah.”
> Ava: “Oh, good girl, you’re the best researcher!”
> Ava puts the camera on Evelyn.
> A few minutes later, Evelyn comes back to Ava and says “I’m done, I don’t want this anymore.”
> Ava: “You’re done? You don’t want it?”
> Evelyn: “No, take it off.”
> Ava takes the GoPro off Evelyn.
>
> \- - - - - - - - - - -
>
> Approximately 20 minutes later, Ava is standing watching the children as Evelyn runs over to her to ask Ava to open her bottle.
> Ava’s first thing to say to Evelyn is: “Evelyn, dya want to be the researcher for me?”
> Evelyn growls and laughs loudly, shouting “No!!!” and shakes her head no.

The educator Ava was focused on convincing children to wear the GoPro over listening to Evelyn’s excitement about a birthday party or Anna’s repeated answer of ‘No!’ and ultimately ignored the children’s direct verbal consent to opt out of the research n that moment. This demonstrates how children were not being heard for what they were very clearly saying in terms of participation in the research, where educators may have sought to fulfil the research agenda, in this case getting children to wear the GoPros, but ultimately ended up ignoring children’s voice and convincing the children to commit to their commands.

Children were able to identify that their research tool was being taken over by their educators Kim and Rebecca, to the point that the children questioned them on this, but the educators could not provide a clear answer:

> Phoebe to Kim: “Why do you have to be the researcher
> now?” Kim doesn’t answer.
> Phoebe repeats the question.
> Kim replies: “Because...We’re all taking turns!”
> Phoebe asks: “Can we wear it?”
> Kim: “Mmm, I’m not sure what’s happening next.”
> Kim is wearing the GoPro now and the camera only
> captures the ceiling.
> Some other children ask Kim: “Why are you wearing that?”
> referring to the GoPro.
> Kim replies: “Because I’m the researcher now!”

Children’s position that originally gave them the power to seek out the camera given to them as researchers was diminished where they now saw the camera as being owned by the educators and could not use the cameras without the educators’ permission. In the below scenario, it was obvious that some children wanted to use the GoPro, but when they were seen to be near the GoPro, they quickly turned it over in an attempt to show they were not near it:

> Emma says to Phoebe about the GoPros: “We were looking
> for it. We were looking for it.”
> Phoebe: No, don’t touch! It’s Rebecca’s.”
> Kim comes over and says “Guys, what are you doing?”
> Phoebe, Emma and Anna quickly turn the GoPro back over
> and the lens is pointing to the ceiling.

The design of the environment is for the physical size of children to access the materials and resources (NCCA, 2009) and so when educators wore the GoPros, the viewpoint mainly captured the ceiling. This showed that when educators were standing in the classroom looking down at children, their physical view was quite high up and gave an impression that the adult was almost too big for the child-designed classroom. Their stance in the room was vast compared to the child's viewpoint which in itself showed how dramatically different physical viewpoints can generate power inequalities. This became another reason as to why the choice of head mounted GoPros were a better option than chest mounted as it reflects the huge difference between the educator and the child's physical viewpoint when the educator is standing in a room looking down at a child. When educators sat down, it was easier to see children's interactions throughout the room, but this depended on where the educator was looking. Oftentimes the educators were looking down, focused on their administration tasks, filing artwork or looking at the other educator and chatting amongst themselves.

Overall in terms of GoPro experiences in this research, I feel that future research with children, if conducted in this manner where the researcher remains completely out of the field in an attempt to provide little disturbance to the research environment (Hov and Neegaard, 2020), I believe it is vital that the researchers, both adult and child, and the educators understand how to recognise the variety of ways children communicate their participation in research and how necessary it is to worry less about what amount of data is captured and more about how the research experiences are impacting on the children themselves.

Conclusion

This research looked to examine the ways in which educators used the daily routine to exercise power upon children, the ways in which children obeyed and resisted this power as well as exploring surveillance under Foucault's lens to demonstrate a deeper insight into power dynamics as they existed between adults and children within the preschool environment. Having concluded that this research showed various ways in which educators and children navigated power within the routine as well as the way the research method of GoPros impacted the power dynamics, this research will now explore the concept of the self-rhythm and how this was used to generate the six participation personas of power.

4. The Ject Framework and the Six Participation Personas of Power

Introduction

This chapter will discuss how the children's experiences captured in the findings of this research was used to develop the Ject Framework and the Six Participation Personas of Power to demonstrate further the link between children's forms of expression given within a power structure and how the engagement with power shapes a child's level of participation in early childhood education. By combining the work of Foucault and the analysis of the data, the Ject Framework was generated first and foremost in order to understand how power was being exercised and responded to by the individual guided by their self-rhythm. By using the concept of a self-rhythm and how it applies to power, I was able to generate the six personas that became evident in the data. By developing the Ject Framework and the Six Participation Personas of Power, this research was able to provide new insight into the implementation issues surrounding children's participation in early childhood education contexts and highlights the way regimented daily routines as a power structure can impact on whether children can actively or passively participate in their early years environments.

4.1. The Ject Framework: Understanding Power and Children's Participation

Inspired by the work of Foucault, the Ject Framework focuses on the way power influences, shapes, guides and distorts the natural self-rhythm of subjects, where full control of their self-rhythm at the hands of another person, results in their repositioning as an object. As outlined in Chapter 1 Section 1.1 'Foucault's Power', Foucault (1979) discusses how disciplinary power uses the control of activities to enforce desired behaviours and docility in individuals and groups. He looks at this in terms of how timetables, or in this case regimented routines, dividing time into hours, minutes and seconds, with its aim to "establish rhythms, impose particular occupations and regulate the cycles of repetition" (Foucault, 1979, p.149). By using time as a means to control the daily activities of a subject, power can be used to dictate the social actions and subjectivities of subjects (Haraldsson and Lilja, 2017) which ultimately reinforces the control of the subject themselves (Lilja and Vinthagen, 2018). Time then "penetrates the body and with it all the meticulous controls of power" (Foucault, 1979, p.152) through the breaking down of physical gestures into "obligatory rhythm, imposed from the outside" (Foucault, 1979, p.151) that literally break down the physical being:

> “...the position of the body, limbs, articulations is defined; to each movement are assigned a direction, an aptitude, a duration; their order of succession is prescribed.”
>
> - (Foucault, 1979, p.152)

Time as a power tactic becomes a mechanism to infiltrate the self-rhythm of a subject, where fulfilment is individual to each person but becomes distorted when mass interference of subjects through the “correlation of the body and the gesture” (Foucault, 1979, p.152), restructures and alters the subject’s self-rhythm to abide by the rhythm of another person By establishing a timetable or regimented routine with the aim of making subjects docile, enforced gestures are repetitive, where control can be exercised in order for the subject to act fully as instructed. By engaging in repeated action with objects and rhythms of others, the subject becomes an “apparatus of production” (Foucault, 1979, p.153) where they detach from their self-rhythm, ignore their own needs and obey the needs of others. The subject becomes an object when their rhythm is fully controlled and the demanding regimented activities enforced by authority ensure this power position is activated long-term.

> The “new object is the natural body”
>
> - (Foucault, 1979, p.155).

The Ject Framework uses the concept of a self-rhythm inspired by Foucault’s work on disciplinary power, time and the control of daily activities as a means to instil docility to the masses. The Ject Framework is derived from the fact that an individual can be a sub-*ject* and/or an ob- *ject* within the realms of power. It consists of three experiences that influence an individual’s positioning as a subject and/or an object that feeds into their ability to participate consciously by their self-rhythm or unconsciously as an object. The self-rhythm can be seen like an internal clock without numbers, where each individual has different needs and wants which have different internal schedules that seek to be fulfilled. For example, the self-rhythm of an individual creates its own rhythms relating to basic needs such as eating, drinking, sleeping, heat, shelter and warmth as well as guiding an individual towards their creative, spiritual and belonging needs. The self-rhythm of one person will always be different to another but it can be reprogrammed through the repetitive and “exhaustive use” (Foucault, 1979, p.155) of breaking down the physical body that aims to form docile objects rather than free subjects.

The three experiences within the Ject Framework are primary satisfaction, secondary satisfaction and skewed satisfaction. Primary satisfaction occurs when the subject’s self-rhythm is responded to and satisfied by themselves. For example, primary satisfaction occurs when the subject recognises their need for hunger and responds to this natural rhythm request by finding and eating food by themselves; to open up the box of Lego and begin building the space station the subject has been thinking about satisfies the subject because they were able to identify their own creative need and engage with it; the subject recognises through their self-rhythm that they are feeling mentally tired and need some downtime, so they go outside to refresh themselves. The subject feels satisfied because they identified their need to recharge and had access to a space that provided them with this when they wanted to use it according to their self-rhythm.

Secondary satisfaction occurs when the subject’s self-rhythm is acknowledged and supported by another. For example, the subject is outside but begins to feel cold. They realise they will need to put on their coat. The subject is in tune with their own body’s need for warmth and goes to get their coat. However, the subject at this stage of development does not have the physical capacity to zip up their coat. Another person is able to help zip the coat up and the subject’s self-rhythm of getting warm was supported by this other person without this other person placing their self-rhythm on the subject. Another example would be the subject as a baby is crying because they feel hunger but do not developmentally have the ability to provide food or feed itself. Another person hears the hungry cries of the subject and provides the feeding bottle to the subject and the subject’s self-rhythm is satisfied with support from this other person. Lastly, the subject becomes physically distracted by the snow they see outside and wants to play in it, but the door to access outside is locked. Another person acknowledges the subject’s self rhythm that seeks outdoor exploration and so they unlock the door and provide access to the subject to explore the snow outside.

However, when the subject is no longer satisfying their own self-rhythm, but is living by the imposed self-rhythm of another person, the subject becomes an object, making experiences attune to their own self-rhythm impossible. Because the subject is now an object as a result of following the self-rhythm of another person, their experiences have thus become unnatural or ‘skewed’. For example, the subject experiences skewed satisfaction when they feel satisfied sticking pieces of paper onto cardboard the way another person has instructed them to, but it’s not in line with the subject’s self-rhythm that is craving to paint or go outside; the subject feels satisfied when they sit down and eat snack even if they are not hungry because another person told them to eat now as it is half ten - a timing symbol understood and implemented by another person that it is snack time but means nothing to the subject; the subject feels satisfied when they are standing in a line with their finger over their mouth making no sound as instructed by another person, but the subject’s self-rhythm urges the body to express the inner excitement for going outside by jumping around, yet the subject remains still, abiding by the self-rhythm of another person that demands order; the subject experiences skewed satisfaction when they are tired and need a nap because they had little sleep the night before, but are forced to stay awake and do literacy and numeracy based activities because an authority figure says it is ‘work time’.

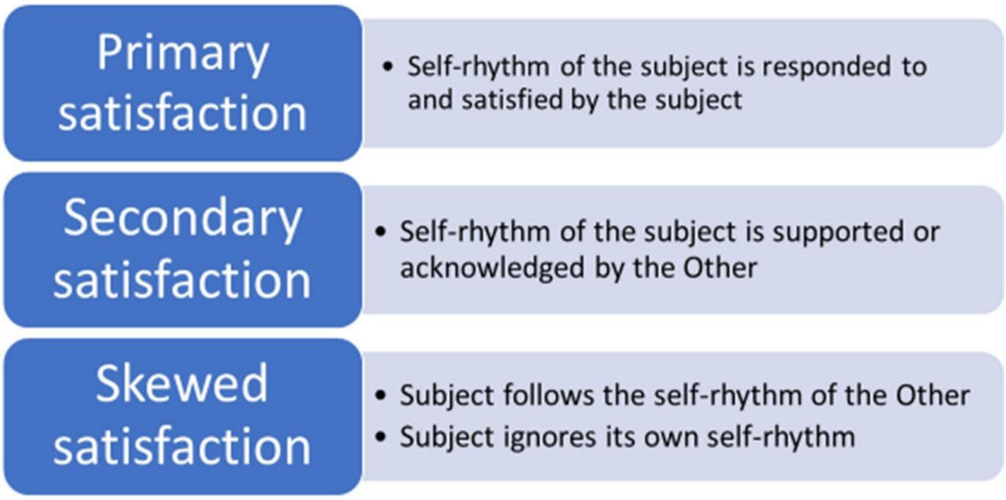
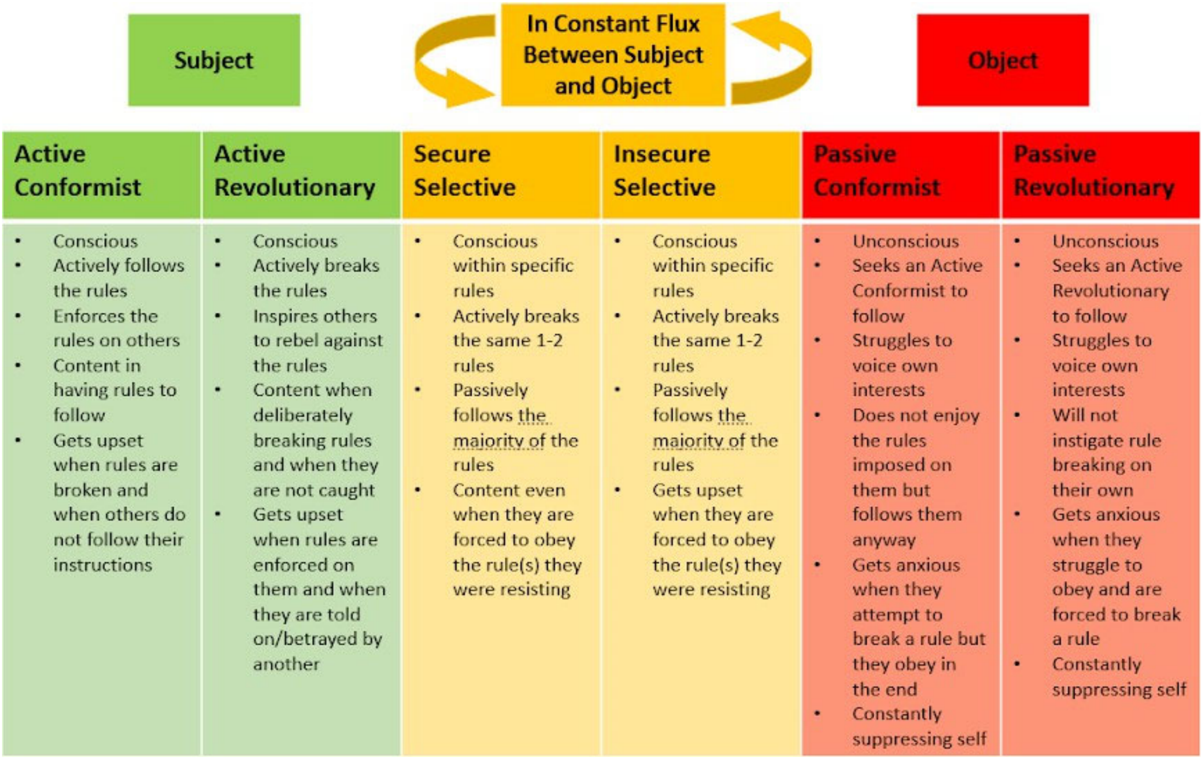

Primary satisfaction
• Self-rhythm of the subject is responded to and satisfied by the subject
Secondary satisfaction
• Self-rhythm of the subject is supported or acknowledged by the Other
Skewed satisfaction
• Subject follows the self-rhythm of the Other
• Subject ignores its own self-rhythm

Image: The three elements of the Ject Framework

The subject suppresses itself to avoid punishment from authority figures should they not follow the instructions driven by the self-rhythm of this authority figure. When the subject suppresses itself, they are no longer in tune with their own self-rhythm, but have become objectified by the self-rhythm of another person. The subject is thus experiencing skewed satisfaction and is repositioned as an object. While in these examples, one could argue ‘but they’re satisfied nonetheless', however, being satisfied by living according to the self-rhythm of another person results in the development of personas that hinder any possibility for active participation and negatively impact on wellbeing. This will be discussed in further detail in the following section.

4.2. The Six Participation Personas of Power

To provide further insight into the impact on an individual as they navigate the power processes outlined by the Ject Framework, this research has generated the Six Participation Personas of Power which demonstrate how power is experienced differently by individuals, results in the development of subject and/or object positioning which creates personas that influence the individual's level of participation in their environments. Considering the embedded soul training of the Panopticon discussed previously (Haggerty and Ericson, 2000), the Six Participation Personas of Power illustrate how an individual's sense of being responds when authority seeks to mould their psyche (Marroum, 2007) and how this influences their level of participation in their own lives. Through exploration of the Six Participation Personas of Power, insight is given into how individuals experience power either to actively uphold and/or break down the elements of the power structure as a means to participate in the world, but also the way in which passive responses to power and engaging in skewed satisfaction results in their transition into a docile object as a passive persona. The impact of experiencing the influxes of power and exercising active and passive responses to power and how this generates a subject and/or object positioning persona has also been identified. The Six Participation Personas of Power are Active Conformist, Passive Conformist, Active Revolutionary, Passive Revolutionary, Secure Selective and Insecure Selective. These personas identify how children experience a particular power structure, in this case the regimented daily routine of an early years classroom, and how children seek to satisfy their self-rhythm or follow the rhythm of their education and the impact this has on the child's level of participation in their early years environment.



Subject

In Constant Flux Between Subject and Object

Object

Active Conformist	Active Revolutionary	Secure Selective	Insecure Selective	Passive Conformist	Passive Revolutionary
• Conscious • Actively follows the rules • Enforces the rules on others • Content in having rules to follow • Gets upset when rules are broken and when others do not follow their instructions	• Conscious • Actively breaks the rules • Inspires others to rebel against the rules • Content when deliberately breaking rules and when they are not caught • Gets upset when rules are enforced on them and when they are told on/betrayed by another	• Conscious within specific rules • Actively breaks the same 1-2 rules • Passively follows the majority of the rules • Content even when they are forced to obey the rule(s) they were resisting	• Conscious within specific rules • Actively breaks the same 1-2 rules • Passively follows the majority of the rules • Gets upset when they are forced to obey the rule(s) they were resisting	• Unconscious • Seeks an Active Conformist to follow • Struggles to voice own interests • Does not enjoy the rules imposed on them but follows them anyway • Gets anxious when they attempt to break a rule but they obey in the end • Constantly suppressing self	• Unconscious • Seeks an Active Revolutionary to follow • Struggles to voice own interests • Will not instigate rule breaking on their own • Gets anxious when they struggle to obey and are forced to break a rule • Constantly suppressing self

Image: The Six Participation Personas of Power

4.2.1. The Actives

The Actives are positioned as subjects for they demonstrate a conscious existence deliberately seeking to maintain (Conformist) or change (Revolutionary) the power structure they are aware of. By engaging in deliberate action and behaviour, the Actives make their quest of power a reality towards defending or improving the power structure, equally aware of the impact their actions have on themselves and on others. Not only are they consciously aware of the power that they exist in, but they are satisfied when they are actively existing in this power structure as required or actively dismantling it. Actives are typically fuelled by a self-rhythm that is satisfied by a sense of social justice and thus share common values of fairness, equality and truth in the world with care for themselves, others and humanity itself. They embody awareness of the power structure they live in and this knowledge can either generate a sense of peace (Conformist) or a motivation for change (Revolutionary) guided by their knowing of whether they believe the structure supports their self-rhythm and the self rhythm of others within its boundaries. Because they seek to promote their way of living, they can sometimes become an authority figure in their own right by enforcing behaviours or actions they believe are true on their peers. This means that, while Actives can actively satisfy their self-rhythm through primary and secondary satisfaction, they may engage in actions that cause their peers to experience skewed satisfaction. This means that those who abide by the way of living of the Active are either fellow Actives, or Passives who have succumbed to this skewed satisfaction. An Active Conformist can evolve into an Active Revolutionary and vice versa where their persona depends on the interpretation of the subject's view of the structure they are in, as outlined below. Both types of Actives run the risk of becoming power-driven by forcing others to follow their way of life and by doing so, they would make for great authority figures, but the way in which they seek to either inspire or bully peers is dependent on how the Active themselves develop their participation persona of power.

- **The Active Conformist**

The Active Conformist seeks to maintain the established power structure by actively living a life of conformity. They willingly choose to follow the social norms, obligations and ways of living expected of them and find satisfaction in the sense of security that compliance, regimented structure and routine brings them. To be held in an environment where these regimented forms of power are not evident, where unpredictability and chaos dominate, causes the Active Conformist to feel lost, scattered, ill at ease and frightened in severely unstructured environments. Therefore, maintaining a power structure rooted in known rules and regulation creates a familiar foundation for them to feel stable in because they see how they can make space to experience primary and secondary satisfaction and fulfil their self-rhythm in familiar ways.

Not only do they live by the law themselves, but they meticulously monitor their peers for rule-breaks by enforcing their self-rhythm on others in order to maintain the power structure. Should peers of the Active Conformist actively break the rules in their presence, the Active Conformist will become angered or upset by their disobedience. The Active Conformist does not understand why others would not feel the same security they feel in the power structure and seek to help these peers in finding joy in the rules and routines. This results in the Active Conformist verbally or physically enforcing compliance upon their peers and they may do this in a manner that is playful, like creating a game in order for them to see the fun in the power structure.

For example, when we look at Phoebe, her educators were demanding the group to stay away from a large puddle that was created after a child turned on the outdoor water tap. Phoebe began to shout new rules of a game she spontaneously created that required her peers to avoid the water because there were crocodiles in it. She cultivated a group of children who obeyed the educator rules without directly infringing on their self-rhythm but by making play and movement her tactic for inviting compliance. This can create a following of other Actives or Passives depending on how the individual seeks to satisfy their self-rhythm. If a peer experiences primary or secondary satisfaction in these moments, then they are fellow Actives inspired by the leading Active. However, if the individual's reasons for following suit is because they are fearful or want to please the leading Active, then they are Passives which will be described in further detail in this section. In other instances where peers are not as receptive to the Active Conformist's creative approaches, the Active Conformist will seek the support of their authority figures, such as an educator or parent, in the hopes they will force the peers to see that rules are there to be followed. Should a peer be corrected or punished for disobeying, the Active Conformist feels justified in what they see as their way of guiding a peer towards the way of life that generates peace and security. When identified rule-breaking peers are forced to follow the rules, it reaffirms the Active Conformist's way of living to be righteous, encouraging their quest further to recondition any future rule-breakers and maintaining the power structure that satisfies their self-rhythm. This, however, shows that having active awareness of power and how to exercise it with and over others can cause an Active to either inspire others or suppress them.

By having a structure that is varied in activities and experiences and led by their valued authority figures, the Active Conformist thrives socially, and emotionally. However, power structures of this kind, because of the potential for authority figures to have an autocratic leadership style, may design the environment and activities with limited or denied access to certain forms of learning deemed as being unimportant, such as physical activity or engagement with creative forms of expression such as painting. Therefore, it is important with Active Conformists to ensure that varied experiences are provided in the power structure, such as outdoor play and painting, where Active Conformists can feel safe in exploring different interests while maintaining their established sense of order and compliance. A balance of routined space to grow these personal interests without dismantling their sense of security that a regimented power structure brings them is key to supporting the Active Conformist's important characteristics for activism, morale and social justice. Should authority figures choose to restrict the experiences of an Active Conformist by causing the skewed satisfaction of their self-rhythm, over time the Active Conformist's choice to actively obey the structure can quickly dissolve into passive conformity subject to the hands of the authority figures they look up to.

Without making routined space for Active Conformists to personally navigate and engage in a range of experiences and activities that supports the primary and secondary satisfaction of their self-rhythm, the impact would damage the Active Conformist's budding characteristics to advocate for fairness, equality and respected human rights needed for a just world. Their active consciousness that feeds their active participation would disintegrate and the once Active Conformist may become dependent on their authority figures to tell them how they must live, where their existence becomes one of fear and passiveness evolving into the objectified Passive Conformist that seeks to satisfy the self-rhythm of others but never themselves. Equally in this process, an Active Conformist may become resentful towards the power structure they held dear to their living and begin to see that their self-rhythm is not being satisfied, finding resentment within the structure and authority figures they once found comfort in. This may lead them to rebel against the compliance forced on them fuelled by the lack of autonomy they experience and evolve from an Active Conformist to an Active Revolutionary in order to consciously improve the downfalls they now see in the power structure.

- **The Active Revolutionary**

The Active Revolutionary sees the power structure as being inadequate and unable to fulfil their sense of being. This is usually based on how the power structure hinders their self-rhythm and the self-rhythm of others. Thus, they seek to dismantle the power structure to create more opportunities for them to experience primary and secondary satisfaction. They do this by deliberately challenging the status quo and creating an alternative, more liberating power structure to be enacted. Examples of this were often seen with James during snack time when he consciously dropped a wrapper on the ground knowing the educator was not gong to see him break the rule that rubbish goes in the bin, or when he climbed the chairs deliberately in a way that he could not be ordered by educators to stop, or during indoor free play when he engaged in running that was clearly in evolt to the educator's instruction for walking inside. The Active Revolutionary experience fulfilment when they see power structures they deem as immorally inept bend, break or disappear altogether. When their resistance attempts succeed to change the power structure towards a more autonomous format, a sense of pride and purpose fills them. These successful moments of resistance stimulate their motivations to continue on their purge of bringing down the wrongdoers enforcing the power structure they believe to be so restrictive.

Similar to Active Conformists, Active Revolutionaries want to ensure others satisfy their self-rhythm in their version of the power structure. Active Revolutionaries believe that life should not require them to follow rules that do not align with their self-rhythm and they seek to help others in setting themselves free by assuming the power structure does not fulfil others as it does not with them. Should peers in their presence conform in a manner the Active Revolutionary feels is limiting, the Active Revolutionary will break that social norm or rule in front of their peers as a form of demonstration that highlights a new way of living within the norm. They do this because they want to teach others to feel free and show that there are multiple ways to navigate life and achieve the same level of primary and secondary satisfaction. Should peers retreat and seek out authority figures to control the Active Revolutionary, then the Active Revolutionary will see these peers as being at fault for not recognising the downfalls of the power structure and will have to endure their skewed self-rhythm. Sometimes this can result in the Active Revolutionary engaging in bullying tactics that force others to follow them and is similar to the Active Conformist in how they can influence peers to experience skewed satisfaction as a result. However, should the peers respond by celebrating and mirroring the Active Revolutionary’s actions, the Active Revolutionary will embrace them, encouraging their bravery for seeing the wrongdoings and support them to see alternative ways of living in other aspects of the power structure. In this process, the Active Revolutionary may lose some followers, for some of them may only find dissatisfaction with one or two elements of the power structure. They are known as the Selectives and seldom provide the Active Revolutionary with a reliable army. The ones who stay make up a variation of fellow Active and Passive Revolutionaries that share the common goal to act against the power structure. As we saw with the Active Conformist, their followers reasons for joining make up whether they are a fellow Active Revolutionary or Passive Revolutionary. If a peer follows the Active Revolutionary’s way of life because to the peer this has inspired their needs for action, then this peer is a fellow Active Revolutionary. However, if the peer is following suit because they are fearful or have succumb to the bullying tactics of the Active Revolutionary, then they are a Passive Revolutionary.

In terms of power dynamics, a power structure that constantly wins all of the battles of resistance against the Active Revolutionary will make the Active Revolutionary experience selfdoubt, loneliness and depression because the power structure they see so much wrong with has no space for improvement. Their ability to see the controlling chains of the power structure is thus useless because their efforts to break those chains are always defeated. They feel beaten down and eventually question themselves for never finding peace in the world, never feeling satisfied and only ever seeing personal and social ineptitude. Therefore, in order to develop the Active Revolutionary's traits of activism, confidence and social justice, their *micro-moments of resistance* (discussed in detail in Chapter 5, Section 5.4 Reconstructing the Purpose of Education in Early Childhood) need to be recognised in order to experience a range of success and defeat. It is through the ongoing battle of winning and losing that the Active Revolutionary can hone their skills of compromise, negotiation and communication needed in order to lead a cohort towards autonomous citizenship while experiencing primary and secondary satisfaction. Through winning, they experience a sense of pride and belief in their abilities to make and adapt power structures to be more liberating, while experiencing loss allows for their determination, self-motivation and self-rhythm's drive for change to intrinsically strengthen. By experiencing both triumph and defeat, the Active Revolutionary becomes more refined in their acts of resistance, leading them to become more widely understood by the masses and generating opportunities for their quest for structural change to become a reality. An Active Revolutionary may evolve into an Active Conformist when they become fully satisfied in the reformed power structure they've established. In this way, the Active Revolutionary becomes fully content in the power structure they exist in following their quest for improvement and choose to live according to its newfound norms. However, should they only ever see how their active participation is continually met with a loss in battle, they may resort to becoming a Passive Conformist where it is easier to follow suit than to be at war everyday.

4.2.2. The Passives

Unlike the Actives, the Passives are unconscious as they blindly follow the self-rhythm of others even though this does not satisfy their own self-rhythm and live a life of skewed satisfaction. Both types of Passives follow the lead of authority or their Active counterpart (Active Conformist; Active Revolutionary), struggling to voice their own views especially if they differ from authority or their Active counterpart and get anxious when they act in a way that does not please others. Their reason for action solely relies on whether authority or their Active counterpart acts and their positions as either a Passive Conformist or a Passive Revolutionary depend on the way of living they embody. They may look up to an Active's approach to living and idolise their sense of being, longing to have the same level of active participation as they see in the Actives. However, they follow all that the Active does or authority tells them without question, blindly associating their interpretation of the world as the sole way of living without any acknowledgment to their own self-rhythm. This stems from how Passives are driven by fear - fear of not belonging, fear of rejection, fear of punishment. Yet, the biggest fear of all that underlies their nature is the fear of being themselves in case being themselves results in punishment. Therefore, the fear that drives them to blindly follow others in order to feel a sense of belonging in themselves and with others demonstrates their lack of understanding of their own sense of being because they are not in tune with their self-rhythm, almost as if they are avoiding being themselves because of their personal insecurity and feelings of inadequacy associated with the power being exerted upon them. They seek comfort in the masses, feeling secure that they belong to a group, not because their values align, but because they need to follow something to feel purposeful, not realising that living by the truth of others and ignoring your own self-rhythm does not lead to a fulfilling life but is docility. Thus, Passives position themselves as objects because, not only are they unaware of the power structure itself and thus unable to navigate it consciously, they are also completely oblivious to the power that exists within them that fuels active participation and therefore incapable of creating an existence that is attuned to themselves.

- **The Passive Conformist**

The Passive Conformist persona is typically embodied by an individual who is afraid of authority. They do not want to experience the backlash of punishment or exclusion of peers should they not obey or follow suit. Therefore, they seek out an Active Conformist who consciously navigates the power structure for them. This ensures the Passive Conformist can follow the actions of those who are not likely to be reprimanded by the authority figures they fear. By attaching to the Active Conformist, the Passive Conformist experiences all that their Active wants to do within the established boundaries of the power structure. This means that the Passive Conformist engages in experiences that they may not like solely because they feel that they should like it. For example, Evelyn was one child who was regularly seen not to question the strict procedure of art as prescribed by her educators. However, in the focus group, Evelyn revealed a different insight. Evelyn described how she did not like painting because she was afraid to get paint on her clothes.

Anytime she came home with paint on her clothes, her mother became upset with her. Evelyn was caught between abiding by the rules of her mother and following the rules of her educators as expected in her classroom. The result was that Evelyn engaged in painting because she felt she had to when in school, but this experience caused her to feel “sad”. Her educators were surprised to hear that Evelyn did not like painting. They stated that because Evelyn never questioned or resisted painting, then she must have enjoyed it. Evelyn is a classic example of how individuals can conform in a way that does not satisfy their self-rhythm but they ensure the self-rhythm of others is satisfied, but to their own detriment. They are driven by fear of authority figures, such as parents and educators, but they are also inherent people-pleasers. In Evelyn’s case, she never resisted painting and this lack of resistance was understood by her educators as enjoyment, when in fact it was Evelyn looking to please others regardless of what felt comfortable to her.

Because Passive Conformists like Evelyn learn to live with skewed satisfaction and satisfy the self-rhythm of others in spite of themselves, they are likely to engage in activities that make them feel sad, uncomfortable, anxious or afraid. They are unaware that they can exercise their voice to express their own personal choices, interests and boundaries even if they contradict some of the norms they’ve been expected to embody. This may be because the individual exists in a power structure that punishes individuals for going against the ways of authority. To speak out would be pointless because their compliance is forced upon them either way in the end, but also they may fear the punishment for speaking out and/or do not want to disappoint authority or their peers for resisting. Therefore, Passive Conformists learn that life is better to be lived when following orders, regardless of what those orders are. Yet by doing so, Passive Conformists fail to recognise that by being unconscious to the power that exists around, through and within them, they are a cog in the machine that helps to maintain a power structure that thrives on silencing individuals and praising them for their blind compliance. Through following suit in order to create a sense of belonging rooted in fear and people-pleasing, Passive Conformists become more disconnected from their self-rhythm, themselves, others and the world around them, willing to act by the hand of authority to secure their need for belonging, even if it means the destruction and demise of the self.

- **The Passive Revolutionary**

The Passive Revolutionary persona is embodied by an individual who, like the Active Revolutionary, has a self-rhythm that is in conflict with the power structure they are navigating. However, unlike a fellow Active Revolutionary, the Passive revolutionary is typically following the Active Revolutionary's manner to change the power structure out of fear, either of the Active Revolutionary themselves or the structure which they are in. Their inability to resist by themselves and need to follow another lies with the fact that they fear authority. Unlike the Active Revolutionary who can stand strong for their cause even if reprimanded by authority, the Passive Revolutionary, like the Passive Conformist, is driven by fear of authority and so they need to follow an Active Revolutionary in order to feel justified that someone else is behaving the same way they are. If caught in actions that are against the power structure, the Passive Conformist is likely to falter because they do not want to be punished for their actions should they be caught rebelling. Thus, instead of standing true like their Active Revolutionary counterpart, the Passive Revolutionary betrays themselves and/or their peers in order to save themselves. Thus, Passive Revolutionaries can quickly fluctuate to become a Passive Conformist because of their fear of authority and seek to comply, beg and plead only if it means they avoid consequences, but this makes them unreliable and untrustworthy.

The Passive Revolutionary is likely to cause unnecessary destruction to themselves and to other people in the power structure because they are unable to understand the impact that their actions have on themselves and other people, merely acting because their Active Revolutionary does. For example, James as the Active Revolutionary wanted to engage in more physical activity but was forced to remain indoors. He was able to navigate his indoor environment by running in spaces where he had room to move only when he saw the educators weren't looking and stopping before he was caught. Lee on the other hand, as the Passive Revolutionary, equally demonstrated a self-rhythm that sought out more physical activity like his active counterpart, but his actions led to him and a peer getting hurt when he chose to push his peer to the ground as he tried to run around the table. He lacked empathy for the impact his actions had on himself and his peers, solely looking to imitate the no running rule like his Active Revolutionary counterpart, yet unaware of the conscious thought and action the Active Revolutionary took before acting. Lee's response to authority figures who corrected him was that he would not run again if it meant he could get his sticker. His virtues were easily dismantled and his interests were ego-driven rather than to support himself and others. The Passive Revolutionary is ignorant to all of the critical planning and navigation that the Active Revolutionary implements in order to challenge the power structure and seek change that includes conscious awareness of self and others. The Passive Revolutionary only sees an individual who is breaking the rules they want to break and so they blindly follow this rhythm without knowing the consequences of their uninformed action. Revolutionaries overall do not like to follow rules when they are in conflict with their self-rhythm, but the key difference between Lee as the Passive Revolutionary and James as the Active Revolutionary is that the Active Revolutionary is driven by the primary and secondary satisfaction of his self-rhythm and makes critical and informed decisions knowing the impact his actions would have on himself and others. However, the Passive Revolutionary is a slave to other people's self-rhythm, indulging in whatever acts they do even if it means hurting himself or others around him. This is why a Passive Revolutionary can become overly destructive because their actions are unconsciously reactive rather than consciously responsive and so, if they exist in a power structure where rules feel restrictive to them, they will respond without thought for themselves or for others around them but then quickly revert to a Passive Conformist to seek the approval of authority or peers if caught revolting.

Passive Revolutionaries are positioned as objects because they will follow the rebellious actions of the Active Revolutionary, completely unaware of the conscious decisions being made behind the revolts. They also position themselves as an object if they fluctuate to a Passive Conformist when they want to avoid punishment and not because they believe in living by the power structure's norm. Passive Revolutionaries are disconnected from their sense of being because they do not see or understand the power structure or their self-rhythm and so behave in a way that is unconsciously reactive. This makes them a liability to hurt themselves and others because of their inability to consciously understand that power exists around, through and within them and, as a result, do not understand how to navigate and participate actively within these powers. Similar to the Passive Conformist, the Passive Revolutionary will engage in actions and behaviours that may be immoral if they ignore their self-rhythm and follow the self-rhythm of another where their leader may seem to be driven by the desire to improve the system, but may be in fact be driven by egotistical and materialistic pursuits. This may lead to the Passive Revolutionary following those who do not want to save humanity, but in fact seek to destroy it and can revert into a Passive Conformist towards authority or Active Revolutionaries regardless of the damage their actions cause.

4.2.3. The Selectives

A Selective is someone who consistently resists the same one or two rules being enforced on them, but in general they comply with the power structure outside of these, both actively and passively. Selectives fluctuate consistently between being a subject and an object as a result of their experiences of navigating between elements that they are consciously aware of and seek to maintain or improve upon, as well as demonstrating moments of docility. To identify a Selective is to see an individual who consistently resists the same one or two rules on a regular basis. Selectives seek to align a certain rule to satisfy their self-rhythm, but because the outcome from authority is context-based and at times unpredictable, Selectives consistently resist the same rule in the hopes that this will be the moment that the rule is amended to gratify their self-rhythm. Sometimes the tactics used by authority to enforce compliance on Selectives can be prolonged because authority expects the Selectives to resist and this adds to the power dynamic between authority and the Selectives. The way the Selective and the authority choose to interact within these particular rules will impact on both parties. In terms of authority, they can respond either by 1) forcing the Selective into complying which may involve guilting, shaming or restriction of access should they not obey; 2) compromising with the Selective where neither the Selective nor the authority fully get their way but both parties are content in the overall outcome or 3) authority ignores the Selective's attempts to resist a rule entirely and the Selective succeeds in satisfying their self-rhythm. The aspect that makes a Selective either secure or insecure depends on how authority responds to the Selective's routined resistance and how this impacts on the Selective's overall experiences in the power structure as outlined in more detail below.

- **The Secure Selective**

To understand the Secure Selective, let's look at Byron who was the protagonist of "The Battle of the Coat" (Chapter 3, Section 3.1.2). Byron fluctuated between actively and passively complying and resisting throughout the power structure. However, what makes him a Selective rather than another persona is the fact that Byron consistently resisted against the rule that forced him to wear a coat outside. Every time the group were preparing to go outside, it was evident that the educators expected Byron's familiar resistance and worked together to try and coerce Byron into wearing his coat that he never wanted to wear. Some days he was guilted into wearing it, other days he was allowed to do what he wanted, but regardless of whether he was forced to comply or allowed to resist, Byron maintained positive interactions with authority afterwards which makes him a Secure Selective. Understanding Byron's positive demeanor comes from how he knew exactly what to expect when it came to going outside and so he became more confident in his approach to advocating against wearing his coat. The practice of battling with his educators meant that some days he succeeded and other days he didn't, but he knew that the rule was always consistent: You must wear a coat outside. This consistency meant that Byron knew what to expect within this aspect of the power structure and he understood his educators' rationale for making him wear it which were generally to avoid getting ill or getting cold/wet outside. Byron's positive demeanor was fuelled by his conscious understanding of the rule he disliked, the reasons for it being enforced by his educators but also how he felt safe to resist it when he believed the rule should not apply to him according to his self-rhythm. Thus, regardless of winning or losing in the battle of the coat, Byron felt safe knowing that the power he was resisting had a consistent rationale for why it is the way it is and there was space for him to express himself where, at times, allowed him to have the rule amended for him.

Byron demonstrated a positive attitude in general towards his authority figures, showing his comfortability with voicing his opinions, needs and desires where he, for the most part, was heard and understood. For example, Byron showcased his consciousness of the fact that his paint options were being limited by authority when he questioned why he could not use green paint in his art activity. By expressing his need for green paint, Byron demonstrated that he recognised the limits being placed on him, but he was capable and confident to question this. Even though authority still enforced that no green paint was available and maintained their choice of paint on him, Byron complied and continued to comply in other art activities that were prescribed to him. Throughout moments like this in the power structure, Byron fluctuated between being a subject and an object, either unconsciously following the instructions while clearly not wanting to engage in the activity or consciously questioning the processes that were being enforced on him. However, what makes Byron a Selective rather than an Active or a Passive is the fact that throughout the entire power structure, when it came to the one rule of putting on his coat, he would always resist and through his resistance, regardless of whether he succeeded or not, this did not impact on his ability to maintain positive interactions with his authority figures. Therefore, Secure Selectives fluctuate between active participation in the conforming or revolting against the power exercised on them or sometimes they go into default mode and passively accept what is being instructed without question, even if it causes them to experience skewed satisfaction. They are not pure Actives or Passives because they do not live a life that is entirely active or entirely passive, but because of their regular activism against the same one or two rules, their regular conformist to most other rules and their regular docility for the rest all combines to form a Secure Selective because their diverse experiences of power does not impact on their overall wellbeing.

- **The Insecure Selective**

To understand how an individual embodies the persona of an Insecure Selective, let's look at Dylan. Dylan was the protagonist of the "Sharing is Caring or An Infringement on Personal Boundaries?" (Chapter 3, Section 3.1.4) where he continually advocated for his personal choice to play alone. His need for solo play was in conflict with the generic, blanketed social rule of how everyone must share because "sharing is caring". When authority figures enforced this rule, individuals were expected to share their resources, toys, activities or experiences with peers, regardless of the individual's preferences. However, the issue for Dylan was the fact that he actively expressed his voice multiple times against wanting to share with a particular peer who was being destructive to Dylan's ocean-themed play. Dylan was told firstly to stand up for himself by one educator and to tell his peer to stop. When this did not work and Dylan proceeded to experience a further lack of respect from his peer as well as the dismissive attitudes of his educators, Dylan grew more frustrated and shouted out verbally while still complying with the educator's initial request to tell his peer to stop. He even complied with the manners rule by saying please. However, the second educator's response saw Dylan as the troublemaker, correcting him for shouting and not playing nicely. This response would have been deemed as unjust in Dylan's eyes who saw his peer as being the rule-breaker, not him. This erupted a very turbulent, emotional experience for Dylan as he battled with trying to understand the social expectations of him versus what his self-rhythm sought out.

Because Dylan was given inconsistent responses when it came to sharing that were also in conflict with what he knew to be true, such as asserting your personal space and boundaries, Dylan began to demonstrate a very resentful attitude towards his educators. He sought out support from educators, however, their inconsistent responses made Dylan's experiences much worse for him as he was forced to watch as his peer continued to freely ruin his play. To add more hurt to his emotional frustration was the fact that any of Dylan's emotional expressions were met with correction from educators. In Dylan's eyes, not only does his peer get away with ruining his ocean-themed play, but he is forced to play with this peer and not express negative emotion about it. This would generate inner turmoil for Dylan who would become confused about what is socially expected of him in this type of situation and make his ability to navigate the inconsistencies of the power structure much more difficult for him to endure.

Considering all of this, the key factor that makes Dylan a Selective is how he would regularly resist against the 'sharing is caring' rule and advocate for his personal space to play alone. He enjoyed playing alone with the toys in his learning environment, but his educators would consistently respond and react differently depending on their own personal expectations of him, where some days they would support him and other days they would dismiss him. This inconsistency influenced Dylan's interactions with his educators to become very negative because whenever he did resist this one rule, he was met with correction that showcased Dylan's guilt and shame for vocalising his personal boundaries. When he got upset and sought out further compromise with educators in order for them to understand his perspective, he was dismissed or ignored. This hard walled response to his emotions created an environment where Dylan voicing his concerns, needs and boundaries all driven by his self-rhythm were not safe to exist, unlike Byron who had a more supportive response.

In other areas of the power structure, Dylan engaged in many actions passively, such as in art where his hand was painted and printed for him by the educator without opportunity for him to participate, positioning him as an object in the process (Chapter 3, Section 3.1.1 Art - "I'm not the best at drawing"). Thus, Dylan's experiences of resisting the same rule constantly makes him a Selective, but the added layer of experiencing different rationales for the inconsistent sharing is caring rule and being constantly corrected as if he was the rule-breaker influenced Dylan to exercise negative interactions with his educators which negatively influenced his overall wellbeing.

The Six Participation Personas of Power are Active Conformist, Passive Conformist, Active Revolutionary, Passive Revolutionary, Secure Selective and Insecure Selective. These personas identify the forms of expression that are exercised by an individual based on their existence within a particular power structure, in this case the daily routine of an early years classroom, and how they seek to satisfy their self-rhythm or the rhythm of another and the impact this has on their level of participation in the environment.

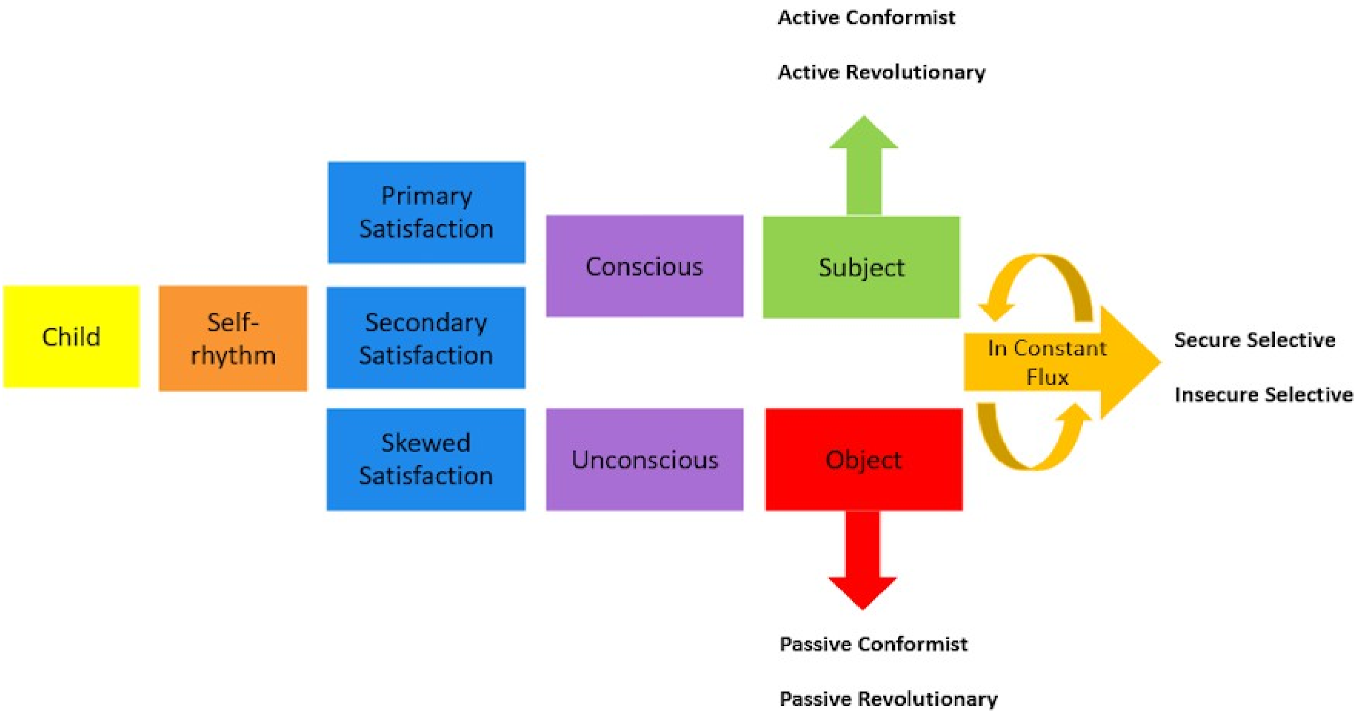

Active Conformist
Active Revolutionary
Primary Satisfaction
Conscious
Subject
Child
Self-rhythm
Secondary Satisfaction
In Constant Flux
Secure Selective
Insecure Selective
Skewed Satisfaction
Unconscious
Object
Passive Conformist
Passive Revolutionary

Image: The Ject Framework and the Six Participation Personas of Power

4.3 Summary of the Ject Framework and the Six Participation Personas of Power

The Ject Framework and the Six Participation Personas of Power together provide a deeper insight into the participation personas that individuals develop while navigating power structures (Smith, 2018) Foucault's theories highlight how power exercised by authority has the potential to diminish active participation, relegating individuals into docile, passive objects (Foucault, 1977). Foucault argues that individuals' consciousness of power must be cultivated to enable them to navigate power structures such as daily routines authentically, rather than fostering blind compliance that breeds unconsciousness, conformity and docility (Foucault, 1980). This lens illuminates the diverse ways individuals respond to power, underscoring that certain practices within power structures, like rigid daily routines, can become excessive and detrimental to those within them, such as children (Jones, 2020). The possibility of genuine participation hinges on individuals' awareness of their position within power dynamics and their ability to negotiate regulatory demands while honoring their self-rhythm and their inherent sense of being. Supporting a subject's self-rhythm balances the struggles between societal expectations and individual rhythms, thereby fostering environments where individuals can participate actively in their own lives (Jones, 2020). By critically assessing and adjusting the regulatory demands of structures like daily routines in real-time, early childhood education can become a system that not only theorises about active participation but actively implements it. This approach aligns with Foucault's (1977) emphasis on power dynamics shaping individuals' lives and underscores the importance of recognising and nurturing children's agency and autonomy from an early age (Jones, 2020; Gallagher, 2019; Smith, 2018; Christensen and Prout, 2002; James, Jenks and Prout, 1998).

Conclusion

To conclude, this chapter contexualised children’s forms of expression in the findings of this research to generate a deeper understanding on the practical ways power in early years environments can be exercised and how it influences how children participate in their own lives. The following chapter will outline how the overall findings of this research apply to the wider context of early years education, education itself and provide a critical discussion on how to rethink the power structures that hinder children’s active participation.

5. Insights into the Current Conditions of Power and Child Participation in Early Childhood

Introduction

This chapter will seek to merge the literary insights that inform this research with the findings and generated theories to highlight the wider implications these documented experiences of children have relating to the increasing neoliberal view of childhood, the positioning of children as future workers and the impact of disempowering female educators in the sector as docile administrators as an influential factor in the participatory experiences of children. This chapter will position these discussions in order to contribute further to discourses relating to education as a broader theme and how the daily lives of children as outlined by this research can be reconsidered so children's forms of expression and active participation cannot thrive in educational contexts that are built on instilling passive compliance. This chapter advocates for the recognition of active compliance and active resistant behaviours as a way that children recognise the power they exist in and the power within themselves and how adults suppressing children's acts of participation when they appear to go against the established adult norms has become a normalised practice of early childhood education that snuffs out children's ability to participate in their own lives.

5.1. A Daily Routine for Mini-Workers

Neoliberalism as a form of governmentality seeks to produce economic workers through processes of marketisation (Rose, 1999; Skålén, Fougère and Fellesson, 2008) which is mainly enforced using disciplinary power (Covaleski, Dirsmith, Heian, and Samuel, 1998; Foucault, 1979). Yet the long-term impact of how worker-orientated skills of compliance being instilled in children in education and used later as adults in the future is subject to debate. For example, the normalising of evil witnessed by Arendt (1963) highlighted that valuable worker traits of diligent employees can be used to conduct ultimate crimes against humanity, as witnessed in the form of Eichmann:

> "The trouble with Eichmann was precisely that so many were like him, and that the many were neither perverted nor sadistic, that they were, and still are, terribly and terrifyingly normal. From the viewpoint of our legal institutions and of

> our moral standards of judgment, this normality was much
> more terrifying than all the atrocities put together."
>
> - (Arendt 1963, p.276)

While this research indeed has its limits on how far it can expand on whether compliance in children can lead to dispositions evident in people like Eichmann, it has demonstrated that the neoliberal traits of compliant workers willing to follow authority are the traits that are being nurtured, praised and enforced in our young children in the early years sector through the use of a regimented daily routine. This was most evident in art where it's original purpose in children's lives, according to Aistear, Ireland's National Curriculum Framework for Early Childhood Education and Care, is how art activities should provide children with experiences to use natural art materials to support their care for the environment (NCCA, 2009, p.20), to use various art colours to interpret different cultures and understand themselves (NCCA, 2009, p.30) as well as to use art as a medium to share their thoughts, feelings and ideas (NCCA, 2009, p.38). In this research, children were coerced by educators into completing adult-designed art tasks set out for them, where educators deliberately sat beside the individual child to physically and verbally manoeuvre the child's body to complete the art activity as the educator wanted it. Group art did not occur where children would all begin the art activity at the same time because this would mean the educator having less control over what the children produced. The need for art to be created in such a manner demonstrated that art activities were not for the children to experience, but were for children to produce for the adults, whether that be for the parents, management, regulators or the educators themselves. Foucault's (1979) instrumental coding of the body was observed multiple times during art, where children's body parts (such as fingers and hands) were broken down into parts of the object to be manipulated (such as the paintbrush or the glue stick) so that the entire being of the child was not their own to experience, but for the adult to direct, instruct and manoeuvre:

> Kim takes Dylan's hand in hers "We're gonna put a little bit of paint on it."
> She holds his hand and paints blue paint on his palm while he stands with his hand in hers watching her paint.

> Kim: “Don’t want to get it on your lovely fireman outfit.”
> Kim paints his hand. She turns his hand around while he still stands watching her in silence. “Okay turn it around then.” She moves his hand to face the page palm down. Dylan does not move his hand.
> Kim: “And stick it down.” Kim directs his hand and she presses it down onto the page. Her hand holds his down in pace for a second. Dylan stands in silence watching as she moves his hand.

The purpose of art in the routine was not to facilitate opportunities for children to use art as a medium of expression guided by their self-rhythm, as outlined in Aistear, but was skewed so that art emulated a production line of docile child workers creating crafts for the world of the adult. Educators demonstrated practice that showed children as incapable (Arneil, 2002; Brunila and Rossi, 2018) and the deliberate governing of children’s art seemed to teach children how to blindly follow step-by-step instructions as ordered by authority. By directly instructing children how to experience art through the verbal and physical breaking down of their body (Foucault, 1979), educators taught children how to be their future worker self as a potential adult and not themselves as they are now as children. Value was placed on the predetermined step-by-step instruction manual created for children to follow the adult directions on how the art product must be made, where the child’s compliance was praised. Educated children must learn their lessons “properly” (Walkerdine, 1990, p.21) and children who did not produce art, such as Grace, were either ignored completely or met with disdain by educators because “Grace has nothing done.” Some children were capable of seeing the control being exerted over their art experiences, such as Byron, who demanded to know “Where’s the green paint?” as he looked at the pre-cut paper green leaves his educators had made for him to glue down on a page. Similarly, Dylan attempted to avoid the art activity by excusing his ability “I’m not the best at drawing” as he tried to walk in the opposite direction of the educator who eventually coaxed him over to do his hand printing. Other children, such as Phoebe, asked very clearly to do some painting, but were either ignored resulting in further asking by the child, but were told no because “You did yours already.” It was in statements such as these that it became apparent how the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989 (Children’s Rights Alliance, 2010) that underpins a substantial number of policies, guidance and regulation for early childhood and care by establishing children as active participants capable of producing knowledge about their own lives was not evident in the experiences children had. Some children's art experiences appeared manipulated towards producing the desired product planned by the educators which denied some children any opportunity for meaning making, something that is only possible through exploring mutual recognition, respect and care with others in the experience itself (Yeoman, 2020), aspects that were lacking in their entirety throughout.

> Kim: "There's yours Judy, will you stick on yours as well for me?"
> Kim hands out the green pieces.
> Judy asks Kim: "Where will I stick them?"
> Kim points at the page: "You can stick them up here."
> Judy follows Kim's command as instructed and sticks the leaves where Kim had pointed to.

Art was an activity that directed children into their role of "job-ready zombies" (Hil, 2015, p.5) and with neoliberalism as a form of governmentality used to mould individuals into useable economic units (Crozier et al., 1975), it was evident that children in this research have been learning that they are valued based on what they produce externally for adults over their own understanding and expression of themselves as an individual. Children's choices were clearly denied at systemic level (Davies, 2006) regardless of their personal interests which feeds into the manner in which art was assumed by educators to be an activity that all children liked because eventually they all completed it. However, this research has demonstrated that this is completely false. As observed with Evelyn, she obeyed all art activities without a word of questioning, yet in our focus group she expressed a severe discomfort towards using paint because she "did not like the feeling of paint on her hands or clothes." Evelyn's Passive Conformist persona along with the educator's demand for each child to produce art meant that Evelyn continued to engage in art even when she did not want to. Evelyn's skewed satisfaction was evident in the way she denied her self-rhythm that sought not to paint in order to gain the educator's praise and to comply with the instructions expected of her. Thus, Evelyn's value of self was attached to her role as a good worker, developing skills to produce externally and seek praise for the products she completed for the pleasure of the wider adult world, but never for herself. Ultimately, this contributes further insight into Foucault's view that the lives of humans can be governed as economic resources (Foucault, 2007), but more significantly, this highlights that the objectification of children as resources (Smith, 2018) has trickled down to our youngest, where art is used as way to instil worker-orientated skills that prioritises the mass production of a product and is entirely designed based on the adult's perception of what they believe is 'good' and 'productive', even if it means children experiencing meaningless, mechanical art as a result.

Overall, the main skills being encouraged during art activities centered around children following direct instructions given by an authority figure who positioned themselves specifically beside the child to monitor that the child produced the art product as commanded. The child learned that having their needs, desires and forms of expression silenced is a typical way of life where following the self-rhythm of an adult is the norm in childhood. Being valued as a person relied on children's ability to complete art as told, and should they resist or question the pre-planned art task, they would be manipulated into doing the task anyway or responded to with disdain by the educatorwhose main focus was on completing their routined tasks and checklists for the day. The self-rhythm of the child was regularly suppressed by the educator in this manner which emphasised the child's inferior position (Davies et al., 2001; Rasmussen and Harwood, 2003). While making art a regular component of an early year's routine seems meaningful as it falls in line with what Aistear expects of educators to provide for children (NCCA, 2009), this research has shown how art with children as young as three years of age was experienced in a controlled manner where the child could not choose the materials, colours, what was created or how it was created. Art is often seen as a participatory form of expression that children can use to make their voice visible (Blaisdell et al., 2019; Burke et al., 2021; McNiff, 2008) where the purpose of art is not to produce a product but is used as a medium of expression or voice. However, this research has observed how educators used art as a way to force children into creating products that had no meaning for their own experiences and resulted in children, such as Evelyn, learning that the orders of authority should always take precedence, even if it makes you uncomfortable. Ultimately, art as an activity where children's voices can become visible, was in fact used as a means to silence children's voices and direct them into creating products to satisfy the adult and not themselves.

Similarly, the observations relating to snack time showed a military styled system as portrayed by Foucault (1979) where children were told by the educators it is snack time and the response seen by children was to immediately end their play. For example, if they were outside, children rushed to take off their coats and wellies and barged into the bathroom to quickly wash their hands, go back to the hall to get their lunch bag and hurry to make sure they got a seat that they wanted to sit in. The process involved the two educators manning two key entry and exit points that allowed them to watch the actions of all of the children coming in and out of the classroom. Children were always under the watchful gaze of the educator (Lewis, 2017) and were quickly corrected if they did not follow the instructions demanded of them in sequence:

> Kim shouts into the group inside: "Guys, you need to wash your hands first!" She then directs Aisling who is putting her coat over her lunch bag, "No Aisling, do this, take your lunch bag off first, then put up your coat." Aisling watches as Kim completes the task.
>
> \- - - - - - - - - - -
>
> Rebecca: "The quicker we tidy up, the quicker we can have snack!"

The manner of instilling these competitive attributes that pits children against each other to have tasks finished a certain way before each other breeds the fertile soil needed to increase individualisation necessary for a neoliberal way of living. Competing with each other is normalised over caring for each other and by children being encouraged to hurry, rush and push past their peers in a competitive nature, the children learn to see themselves as being in competition with everyone else in order to satisfy basic needs of food and comfort, a core example of neoliberal motivations being instilled in our youngest (Crozier et al., 1975),. The children understand that to gain the privilege of sitting where they want, they need to act fast, complete their tasks in the correct order and be rewarded with freedom of choice in seating. This is a clear example of how a subject reproduces the structures that limits them, under the illusion that they are free to choose, but in fact, their freedom is subject to how quickly and effectively they follow orders (Dean, 2003). The entire experience was a conveyor belt where educators were the input and output points of the machine and the children were moved in and out of the system as products until they succeeded in passing all of the necessary production checks. The practices that highlighted how snack time was another area of the routine that embodied neoliberalism tendencies in children was the fact that children's self-rhythm that needed food was ignored to prioritise the time of snack. If it was not snack time, children did not eat and had to continue their outlined worker tasks as prescribed by the routine:

> Rebecca announces to the class: “2 more minutes everybody.”
> Dylan: “I’m reeeeeally hungry.”
> Rebecca: “Well Dylan, if you want snack, we have to tidy up first.”
> Dylan: “I’m already tidy.”
> Rebecca walks away.

This practice is in contrast to the Quality and Regulatory Framework (Tusla, 2018) which guides educators on how to implement quality practice with children, with extensive details provided for different aspects of the routine. In terms of working with children who are hungry outside of routined snack times, educators are encouraged to do the following:

> “Nutritious meals and snacks are served at regular times, but there is flexibility. Children who have not eaten, or who are hungry are offered food at times outside routine meal and snack times. ”
>
> - (Tusla, 2018, p.29)

Considering this disconnect with regulatory guidance and relating it to children’s experiences of seating, children could only choose where they wanted to sit if they completed their tasks faster than everyone else, where children demonstrated competitiveness when transitioning into snacktime and not wanting to sit in leftover seats. This led to some children wanting to sit elsewhere in the room, such as on the couch in the library:

> Rebecca: “Byron, up to the table.” Byron begins to talk as if negotiating with her to sit on the couch, but Rebecca talks over him: “No, no, at the table. Everyone has to sit at a table for their snack. C’mon.” Byron is sitting on the couch in the library. Rebecca moves empty chairs as she walks nearer to Byron. Byron goes to sit in the empty chair.

When analysing this alongside the QRF's guidance around seating, it clearly expects educators to have children sitting in seats and can provide insight into why educators force children into sitting at the table when it comes to eating food at a set time:

> "Children are seated at the table or in a high chair during snack and meal times, when their food is ready. Children sit at a comfortable height in relation to the table top."
>
> - (Tusla, 2018, p.29)

While analysing the frameworks that inform the sector is beyond the scope of this research, it does inform the discussion on where these regimented routines may come from and to what level are educators altering guidelines that in fact hinders children's participation Because in this case, rather than allowing children to eat when they are hungry as supported by the QRF, crowd control strategies of having a set-time for when children were allowed to eat according to the educator were implemented over the children themselves which allowed for educators to manage a group of twenty-two children more effectively. However, the impact of this on children was observed on how they went about their day either feeling hungry or eating because they are made to, but inevitably the children were being forced to further disconnecting their self-rhythm from their physical being. By learning when to eat when told, children are denied any opportunity to tune into themselves as beings even to cater to their basic needs of hunger, waiting for adult figures to recognise, authorise and oftentimes deny access to eat in favour of the routine itself. Not only does this further dehumanise children as objects of power (Foucault, 1982), but it places children into a realm where even their voices that verbal pleaded for food was deliberately ignored. Children learned that their position as children will continue to be inferior to the adult:

> Dylan walks over to Kim and says: "I am hungryyyyyy…"
> Kim ignores Dylan and walks away as Dylan looks at the windowsill and moves a toy in silence.

While neoliberalism seeks to shape individuals as useful economic units in the market (Crozier et al., 1975), its place in the early childhood routine encompasses the development of worker skills as discussed. However, this research also determined what is seen as knowledge worth instilling in children through the exercising of a daily routine designed by the educator's "regimes of truth" (Foucault, 1980, p.131). For example educator attitudes of the outdoors encouraged children to disconnect from the natural world in a time when active participation in the health of our planet is needed now more than ever. Neoliberal ideology is faulted for contributing a large proportion to the climate crisis because its lens threatens our ability to actively respond to it (Klein, 2014). This research has found that children's experiences of the natural world were limited in scope where it can be stated that expectations of their understanding not only of the natural world, but their contribution and role in it are placed in a realm of complete ignorance. This stems mainly from how the educators designed the routine to include outdoor play, but acted in a way that placed outdoor play as being unimportant. For example, when children were prepping to go into their outdoor environment, educators spent ample amounts of time ensuring children were dressed for all kinds of weather changes, including rain. Yet, when all were outside and it rained, children were ordered to return inside the shelter by their educators. The reason for preparing children for cold and wet weather only to be brought back inside echoes the views of Ouvry (2003) who identified that educators bring children inside because the educators themselves did not want to be out in the cold, wet weather, but furthermore, this research showed how children who refused to return inside were either verbally commanded or physically approached by the educator, resulting in the children being forced inside because the educators wanted to. The access to the outdoors was completely driven by the self-rhythm of the educator who evidently did not want to be outdoors in cold, wet weather or experience water in any format:

> Kim walks out of the shelter and shouts "Guys if it's raining, go under the shed. Byron, under the shed, it's raining. Lee, under the shed." Kim gets frustrated as the children do not respond to her: "GUYS!! C'mon!! Under the shed. Lee! Under the shed, it's raining! Phoebe and Emma!!"

> Rebecca marches over from the shelter and tells all the children to "Get out of the water guys, now!" She puts her hand on the backs of children to guide them away from the water. Once all the children are out, she stands by the puddle for a moment keeping guard so the children do not go back over.

As Elliott (2021) outlines, the choices relating to the outdoors were in favour of the educator who made the decisions and were decided without any acknowledgement of children let alone their views. The experiences observed in this research demonstrated that children's interest in water play of various forms (using the water tap, puddles, rain) were regulated so children were completely denied any access to experience these natural elements. It is clear that children are spending less time outdoors (McClintic and Petty, 2015) but this research expands on this by highlighting the direct influence educators and their own attitudes have on children's involvement in the outdoor environment. In the beginning of this research, some children demonstrated a genuine love for engaging in outdoor play and a curiosity for rainy, wet weather (Bilton, 2002; McClintic and Petty, 2015):

Evelyn: "It's just a bit of water falling."

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Phoebe: "It's only a little shower."

However, because of the educators having complete control over children's access to outdoors and ultimately what they experienced outdoors, it was evident how children's views towards weather conditions such as rain began to mirror those of the educators in a more negative manner over the course of a few days. For example, Phoebe eagerly sought out play in rain, to the point that she would attempt to convince peers that it wasn't raining in hopes of avoiding being told to come inside:

> The educators can be heard calling children to come into the shelter.
> Phoebe says: "No, that's a sunny day at the beach!"
> Other children say: "It's raining"

> Phoebe: “No it’s not!” The other children keep saying it's raining and Phoebe gets annoyed: “No it’s not raining!! No it isn’t raininggggg!!”
>
> Lee says to Phoebe: “Come in out of the rain.”
>
> Phoebe: “No, the rain is not hereee!!”

Gradually over the period of the research that involved many moments of educators herding children inside, it was evident how Phoebe’s attitude towards rain became more negative as a result of the educators influencing her perception of rain as something she must not experience:

> Molly stands up and shouts in a concerned manner “It’s raining!” and begins to pull up her hood. Phoebe comes over and says “Well, rain is bad.” Phoebe walks around the yard holding her hands out and Molly runs into the shelter.

Children like Phoebe became protective of their experiences, wanting to continue their play in rain and not seeing issues with exploration in this type of weather condition. When children were logically justified in questioning the educator’s reasoning, the child was still dismissed:

> Kim: “James! Under the shed please, it’s raining.”
>
> James: “No.”
>
> Kim shakes her head firmly in a yes motion: “Yes, you need to wait for the rain to stop and then you can go back out.”
>
> James holds up the hood of his raincoat and says “But I have my hat.”
>
> Kim shakes her head no: “No, you’ll still get drowned.” She looks away from him now as she says: “Just wait a few minutes.” He stands waiting.

It is evident in these examples and throughout the findings themselves that educators brought children inside because the educators themselves did not want to be out in the cold, wet weather (Ouvry, 2003). Children such as Phoebe are learning to echo these negative educator attitudes towards the natural environment, while children like James learn that even if you have demonstrated a logical judgement to a situation, such as wearing a raincoat to play in the rain, you will not be taken seriously if you're a child questioning an adult. In a broader sense, children were denied opportunities to develop a deeper connection with nature by learning that the indoor environment is more valued, particularly in cold or wet weather, and that the outdoor environment served as a break in the routine for children and educators (Kalpogianni, 2019) rather than utilised as a time in the routine to develop intrinsic motivation towards a genuine care for nature and the natural world. The obvious lack of motivation in educators to facilitate meaningful learning experiences for children outdoors (McClintic and Perry, 2015) demonstrated how nature pedagogy and ecological responsibility were not prioritised within the "regime of truth" (Foucault, 1980, p.131) of the daily routine, but also how the lack of pedagogical knowledge surrounding nature, environmentalism and climate action were not part of the educator's priorities for children's learning experiences. This may be because of some barriers the educators may experience that highlight the issues with a regimented routine, such as fear for children's health and safety outdoors and the increased pressures placed on children's academic achievements leaving little time for outdoor learning (Rickinson et al, 2004).

However, it must be emphasised that it is evidently clear within this regimented routine that children's natural drive to connect with nature that exists innately in them (Barrows, 1995; Clinebell, 1996; Roszak, 1995) was being educated out of them. The educators have decided what children should see as legitimate knowledge (Foucault, 1979) where ultimately, having developed skills and knowledge around recycling habits, water conservation and plant growth have on our world are deemed invaluable and unimportant in comparison to the academic aspects of the curriculum. This shows how the neoliberal ideologies exercised by the early childhood routine focuses on enhancing children's worker skills indoors and disregards the meaningful learning possible in the outdoors that provides timely knowledge and understanding to children in their role of care and responsibility in the natural world, particularly during the climate crisis. As Parr (2014) states, if the human race continues on its current course, then the earth could very well become an inhospitable place for a great many species, people included. To change course, humanity needs to begin with a healthy dose of critical realism and an optimistic understanding of the political opportunities climate change presents. In order for children to decide their way of life in the current climate crisis, it is vital that they are first respected as having their own voice and preferences as beings. Without recognising that the child's experiences outdoors may not be the same as their educators, children will be forced to learn to ignore their innate connection with nature and thus disregard their ecological impact on the planet. If regimented routines devalue vital experiences for connection with the impending realities of global warming, not only does the neoliberal lens succeed in maintaining its conveyor belt of workers, but it further contributes to the objectification of children as docile bodies at the hands of adults who determine their own version of what counts as legitimate and illegitimate knowledge (Foucault, 1979).

5.2. Children as Neoliberal Objects

The encompassing theme of this research is how children navigate power differently, but more so, it highlights that in many cases, the structure of the routine in early childhood is moulding children using neoliberal outcomes as standards of success. While it is clear that the survival of the routine is centered on fulfilling instructions that directly tell children how to exist, it is in that process that the child is dehumanised into an object forced to obey authority rather than experience any aspect of their own self-rhythm. Some perspectives may view these children as being neoliberal subjects where 'people are actively engaged in their lives – but there are discourses that constrain what can be thought, said and done' (Staunæs, 2010, p. 103). This is true in the case of the Actives, such as Phoebe as the Active Conformist, who found safety and security in the power that sought to mould her and so she consciously acted in ways to maintain this structure she deemed a necessary way of life, including making games around enforced rules that interfered with her self rhythm. With James as the Active Revolutionary, he also internalised the power structure he was aware of that aimed to make him compliant, but instead he looked for opportunities to resist the power both subtly and directly, depending on how he interpreted the situation. Therefore, while some children navigated the daily routine consciously as subjects but within the confines of power (Staunæs, 2010), conscious awareness of power was not experienced by all which impacted negatively on how some children experienced their environment. While Phoebe and James as Actives showcased how they were able to digest their powerless positions as a means to act consciously throughout the power structure, other children, such as Evelyn as the Passive Conformist, demonstrated how some children will internalise power that intends "to produce docile individuals" (Gallagher, 2004, p.158) that moulds their psyche not by their own self-rhythm but by the authority which monitors and controls them (Marroum, 2007). Equally, the Passive Revolutionary such as Lee will follow the one who seeks change, but does so without conscious consideration for where his own self-rhythm fits into the overall agenda, while Dylan and Byron as the Selectives flux between both subjectification and objectification which impacts on their experiences of being either positive or negative or both. This is the ideal environment that the power structure seeks to create when forming neoliberal objects. Thus, to label all of these children as subjects would do a disservice to the research and the children themselves, because it is evident throughout this research that some children did not know of their own power position, the power structure itself or how they could alter, change or maintain this power to satisfy their self-rhythm.

It was found to be true in this research that a subject can be positioned as either powerful or powerless (Walkerdine, 1990) according to their subjectivity level and it was certainly evident that the subjectivity of children as being inferior (Davies et al., 2001; Rasmussen and Harwood, 2003) or separate to adults (Satta, 2015) was more regularly demonstrated than positioning children as capable beings actively participating in the decisions relating to their experiences (Children’s Rights Alliance, 2010; Corsaro, 2011 Lundy, 2007). For example, when it comes to the Passives and in some cases, the Selectives, it is evident that these children have no choice in what they do in their day or how they do it and in this manner the structure of the routine objectifies these children as objects by taking advantage of the fact they are being denied knowledge on a systematic level that ensures they remain unconscious to power and thus their ability to be active within power. For some children, the origins of their own actions were not theirs, as seen below with Judy when she relied on her educator to tell her where to stick paper leaves on a page during art:

> Kim hands out the green pieces.
> Judy asks Kim: “Where will I stick them?”
> Kim points at the page: “You can stick them up here.”
> Judy follows Kim’s command as instructed and sticks the leaves
> where Kim had pointed to.

If the children are not considered proper subjects recognised for their ability to participate in their own lives, they become objects of power (Foucault, 1979) within the realm of vulnerability

(Brunila and Rossi, 2018) and as observed here, any element of subjectivity was disregarded to ensure children's position as an object of power (Foucault, 1979) remained throughout the daily routine. As children navigated their day directed by their educators, children learned to normalise their silent, compliant way of living as one to be praised. The subjectivity level of an object is influenced because they are viewed as being powerless and thus learn to act in a way that moulds them into quality adult commodities (Rose, 1999). While there is conscious choice initially to act in line with these norms, the issue is when this powerless status becomes normalised through coercive control and surveillance, where the simplest of gazes "carries a crippling effect on the individual who feels being watched" (Mungwini, 2013, p.346) activating social conformity. The positioning of children as powerless objects in this research highlighted that all children experienced coercive control in order for authority figures to gain mass conformity even though all of them did not succumb to it. The children had different forms of expression when it came to power, as identified through the Six Participation Personas of Power, however, it is clear that regardless of how power influenced these children in particular, this research identified how neoliberal agendas and practices exist as an underlying purpose of early childhood education in cultivating children as neoliberal objects, giving rise to the governmentality that "As long as the general population is passive, apathetic, and diverted to consumerism or hatred of the vulnerable, then the powerful can do as they please." (Chomsky, 2016, p. 56). Thus, this research found that some children within the daily routine had "no say in what is happening and no power or control over the situations" as they experienced life as "recipients of actions without participation" (French, 2019, p.13).

5.3. Docile Bodies of Administration: The Role of Female Educators

The establishment of the female-dominated sector in early childhood stemming from the woman's return to the workforce (Urban, 2012; Madden, 2012; Rohrmann, 2016) certainly played an influential role in how children responded to power within the daily routine. Educators relied on the routine as a means to control all children which showed educators to be in the constant process of civilising children out of their animalistic tendencies (Walkerdine, 1990) without being animalistic themselves. This was shown by telling children to "freeze" when educators needed their attention, directing children to put their hands on their head so the children could not get distracted by something while the educator was talking and instructing children to put on their “walking feet” inside to stop them from running. These non-contact forms of discipline demonstrate how power exerted over others does not need to be physical in order to gain control of the person, but seek to control the soul first where the body will then follow (Foucault, 1979). This form of disciplining is successful and effective in a female dominated sector because it can maintain the female role as a caring nurturer while achieving the “surveillance of care” (Steeves and Jones, 2010, p.187) that allows the state to interfere in the overall development of children (Langford, 2010; Walkerdine, 1990). However, the impact of this on children when being directed in this manner proved to be in conflict with children who were striving to live according to their self-rhythm:

> Kim shouts loudly at the children in the puddle “EH! EH! GUYS!!!! You don't have waterproofs on!” Kim is seen walking quickly up to the puddle. Angie turns to Phoebe and says “Well, we have waterproofs on.” Phoebe: “No, I just have a normal flowery dress, I’m just normal like, so I won’t walk in the puddles.”

Educators demonstrated their role as prioritising the “protection, welfare, or maintenance” (Noddins, 1984, p.9) of children under the “illusion of ‘care’” (Walkerdine, 1990, p.22). Male children experienced the tactic of coercion more often than female children did, for example when Byron did not want to wear a coat, he spent time in conflict with educators on a daily basis who instilled guilt in him enduring potential sickness or injury if he did not comply with their demands. Alongside this, the educators were regularly observed verbally attempting to stop male children from physically running inside, using the reason of potentially hurting themselves or others as a cause for controlling them:

> Kim becomes stern when she sees Brendan and Lee running around the table. She stands in front of them. “Okay! Lee and Brendan Freeze!” She crouches down in front of Lee as Brendan slowly walks away from her.
> Kim to Lee “We don’t run around the classroom. You could trip over something and hit your head.”

> Lee stops running, sucks his thumb and walks away from Kim.

Being responsible for developing civilised humans was evident in the practice exerted by educators, however, the balancing between their expected nurturer role with the need to suppress animalistic tendencies as well as cultivating the neoliberal traits the routine sought to illicit proved in some cases to be "impossible" (Walkerdine, 1990, p.115) for the educators to achieve without exerting physical force over children at times. Thus, the educators found themselves inadvertently fulfilling the role of a police officer when faced with resistant children (Margonis, 2007) where physical force was observed to be used by the female educators only on male children:

> "Okay! Lee and James, come here please." James and Lee stand and look at Rebecca for a second who continues talking: "Stop running in the classroom." James tries to run past Rebecca. Rebecca grabs James's arm and pulls him over to her, his feet still mid-run. He trips over one foot as Rebecca pulls him close to her. She talks in a normal tone to him: "James, as I said, no running in the classroom. Can I have that please?" As Rebecca asks, she takes James's toy from his hand.

Female educators can be understood as trying to physically control the masculine tendencies out of male children by forcing them to exist in a less physically active manner, echoing the same level of stillness of the female educators. However, female educators did not appear to mould male children into becoming more in touch with their more feminine side either in terms of expressing themselves emotionally, but in fact suppressed expressions of emotion in male children, as seen with Dylan. Dylan found himself in a situation where he was conflicted between following the rules of 'sharing is caring' while also wanting to assert his boundary to play alone. This conflict became too much where Dylan became utterly distraught, cried and could no longer maintain the 'play nicely' expectation placed on him by educators. However, the educators' response to his crying was not to comfort or seek understanding as would be expected in a nurturing role, but was to use his emotional state to further enforce the sharing is caring rule:

> Dylan: “They’re messing up!”
> Kim: “They’re messing up what, Dylan?” Kim sounds frustrated in her response to Dylan.
> Dylan: “They’re messing up all of the animals!”
> Kim: “No, they're playing with them. Look. They’re playing with the animals.”
> Dylan: “No I was.”
> Kim: “You can play with *emphasised* them, okay? You have to share them.” Kim turns back to the table and dismissively says “Good boy.”

This disconnected response only fuelled Dylan’s emotional eruption further which then ignited the female nurturer role in Kim as the educator, however, not in a way that recognised Dylan’s need for emotional expression or understanding his side, but more so to contain his emotion in the classroom and stop his outbursts:

> Kim reinforces the rule that Dylan has to share. Dylan begins to cry more. She holds him in her arms for a moment and he moves away from her to face another table. Kim walks back to the art table and talks to Rebecca.

The female role as a nurturer is being dismantled in favour of managing the classroom as a whole, with devastating consequences for children, particularly male children such as James and Dylan. It seems that the illusion of free-play demonstrates that there is nothing free about it, portraying itself as a form of freedom but is in actual fact another instrument of governance over children (Rose, 1999; Ryan, 2011; Smith, 2014). The children’s experiences indoors became engulfed by an assumed freedom where adults controlled the choices that surround children (Cannella, 1997) even as far as how and when they can use their own bodies. Interestingly, verbal reinforcement from female educators worked more successfully on female children where using physical force on female children was not at all observed, even when female children ran indoors. This demonstrates that female children indeed became “sub-teachers of their female teachers”

(Walkerdine, 1990) and that male children were seen to physically resist this power more consistently than female children, resulting in the female educator altering her nurturer role to become more of a prison warden exercising physical control when restricting male children.

The unattainable nurturance expected of female educators becomes even more futile in the early childhood as the sector experiences more funnelling down of what is deemed as masculine schooling underpinned by excessive assessment, testing, attendance, performance, objectives and administration structures (Skelton, 2002) that encourage educators to depend on ready-made materials and activity books that form the basis of their pedagogical approaches (Formosinho and Oliveira-Formosinho, 2008). These masculine practices place female educators who enter the role with a love of children and reshape them into dependent, docile bodies of administration and police officers that transform the school into a prison-like structure that children are very much aware of:

> Rebecca begins to walk over to Phoebe. Phoebe watches her then
> begins to run up the climbing frame saying to herself: “Quick!
> Rebecca is....She’s a big watching monster!”
>
> \- - - - - - - - - - -
>
> Byron: “It’s like a baby jail.”

For example, Rebecca was focused on her task of organising the next art activity while children engaged in free play and her need to prioritise the running of the next activity of the routine caused her to not care for the children’s experiences, but of the management of the routine, even if it meant expressing disdain or frustration at children or physically restraining them in favour of completing administration tasks. Learning has thus been replaced by undercurrents that do not center on children, but focuses on how adults should teach (Mollenhauer, 1983) where adult-determined outcomes are hidden in play (Rogers, 2013), rather than creating a routine based on what the children themselves consider important (Einarsdottir, 2005; Nothard et al., 2015). This highlights that by prioritising the administration and management of the routine over the children themselves, female educators are likely to become “overwhelmed by the responsibilities and duties of the task and that, as a result of being burdened, he or she will cease to care” (Noddins, 1984, p.12). This was seen regularly throughout the routine, such as the denying of hungry children food because “It’s not snack time yet”; when tidying up took precedence over the children’s choice to finish their drawing to bring home to their family; or when children sought to experience rain instead of sitting down on a bench in a shelter, all to the point that children were met with anger and frustration by the educators for not complying with what the educator wanted when they wanted them to do it. The educator's underlying frustrations were evident and this negatively impacted on children's overall experiences in the environment:

> Rebecca is telling Anna "Sit beside Dylan because there's no space." Anna stands and says "But I want to sit there" She points beside Lee.
> Rebecca rolls her eyes and says "Right, then get the chair and move it there then." Anna goes over to Evelyn, taps her on the shoulder and says "I want to sit there."
> Rebecca shouts loudly, sounding frustrated: "Anna!" Anna jumps in fear.
> Rebecca: "Get the chair and move it then." Anna quickly gets the chair, moving it beside Lee. She sits down.

Maintaining silent, passive children so that educators can adhere to their administration duties was the encompassing normality of the routine itself. It was not for the children, but for the educators to fulfil their managerial duties under the functioning of the routine. Thus, the state's expectation of women to be responsible in the control of children (Davies et al., 2005) and the objectification of educators and children was successfully engaged with in this classroom, but led to practice that was not child-centered but was in fact child-silencing (Singer, 2005). However, the expectations placed on female educators combine to create this type of environment. Such factors include how female educators are expected to neutralise the animalistic tendencies of children (Walkerdine, 1990), to live with an unlawful amount of guilt should they not succeed in the overall development of children, will be criminally condemned if they fail (Furedi, 2002; Lester and Russell 2010; Play England 2013) and are expected to be nurturing at all times while maintaining the masculinsation of practices of documentation and assessment (Langford, 2010; Skelton, 2002). These performance-based expectations all forget that these educators are not factors in children's education but are in fact human beings that ought to be able to navigate their classroom using professional judgement and decision (Biesta, 2015; Ball, 2003; Cowie, Taylor and Croxford, 2007; Keddie, Mills, and Pendergast, 2011; Priestley et al., 2012) rather than obeying the structure that equally silences them as objects of the routine. Together, this has all caused female educators to normalise the police officer state of being (Margonis, 2007) that verbally and physically subdues children in a prison school (Çeven et al., 2021; Deleuze, 1977) to ensure the full implementation of the routine is prioritised and executed effectively. Unfortunately, all of the efforts from female educators to maintain their ever-evolving and complex role that seeks to perform and achieve all of these societal expectations and developmental goals comes undeniably at the expense of the children themselves. The civilising of the young generates neoliberal success as the group of children stand looking at their policing educator, hands firmly on their heads and tongues silent. If a pin was to drop, it would be deafening in the strict silence of attention. Having been starved of acknowledgement throughout their day, the children are finally recognised for their silent obedience and verbally praised for being "so good". It is in these processes of praising and prioritising blind compliance that children in general cannot and will not learn how to actively participate, make decisions or voice their views in any aspect of their current or future lives because they are taught to silence themselves and be who they are told to be.

5.4. Reconstructing the Purpose of Education in Early Childhood

5.4.1 Children's Right to Play and Participation

The purpose of educating the very young is seen by some to regulate the innate animalistic tendencies of humans to create civilians (Walkerdine, 1990) in order to prevent repeating some of history's barbaric persecutions against humanity, such as World War II and Auschwitz (Bergdahl and Langmann, 2018). To others, its purpose is to enforce the traditional norms onto the new generation (Ruitenberg, 2015), yet it must also be its own solution against the mass stupidity it has originally created (Nietzsche, 1997) while creating a space where women can return to the workforce and generate capital (Urban, 2012; Madden, 2012; Rohrmann, 2016). Within these vast perspectives, the common denominator revolves around children.

> Onto the child we heap the thwarted longings of decayed societies and try to figure out something better. It's a hard

> burden for children to carry.
>
> - (Burman, 2001, p.9)

When children are limited to an observable social attribute of being the hope for the future, they become easily regulated by this categorisation (Brown, 1995, p. 66). This not only increases the controlling of childhood as a form of 'guaranteed' emancipation where it is "quite easy for professional authority to turn into an authoritarian way" (Biesta, 2015, p.81) that appears to promote the best interests of children, but rationalises this reasoning as a means to shape children into something the future can be saved by, regardless of whether that is what children want for themselves. Positioning childhood as the future realm of life hollows out the meaning of early childhood education into effective education, where effective or 'quality' education becomes a mere word that says very little, "if it says anything at all." (Biesta, 2022, p.321). The purpose of early childhood education becomes hurried and rushed, monitored and evaluated because of the rapid changing lifestyles that society has normalised, underpinned by parent and educator priorities of academics over play and a fear culture that rationalises the heightened supervision of children that limits time and opportunities for children to engage in outdoor play (Ginsburg, 2007). This neoliberal drive that prioritises economic gains in the form of learning outcomes and education standards makes the control of children socially acceptable and does so through the increased emphasis on the developmental benefits of early childhood provision stemming from policy-makers who seek to capitalise on what is regarded as the most critical period for future development (Smith, 2018). This governance of children by the state solely to generate capital becomes fed through the adult written frameworks, policies and guidelines that are implemented in the early years sector:

> "To facilitate children and young people, through learning, to achieve their full potential and contribute to Ireland's social, economic and cultural development."
>
> - (The Department of Education, Statements of Strategy, 2021-2023)

With blanketed standards of practice that strive to achieve quality but inevitably view children as economic and political commodities (Foucault, 2007; Hil, 2015; Lemke, 2011), education no longer aims to support children as they are but appears in their lives as a form of constant interruption (Biesta, 2022). In this way, education demonstrates the "microscope of conduct" (Foucault, 1977, p.174) where its purpose is to cultivate a thing-orientated society over a people-orientated society (Margonis, 2012) that bases education on the narrow views of what it is supposed to "produce" (Biesta, 2015, p.75). Controlling the outcomes of education and thus children themselves limits any potential improvements for the future because it has built an educational structure that replicates traditional norms and directly kills the openness and unpredictability that change is built upon (Säfström, 2020; Masschelein and Simons, 2015). This creates implications where children's right to participate and play (Children's Rights Alliance, 2010; Williams 2013) and relevant policies are failing to be met (Play England 2013). Children must participate actively in their play because their instinct drives them to it, serving to develop their bodily faculties and their powers of selection (Huizinga, 1950) as evident through their navigation with their self-rhythm. Children appear to be much better monitors of how to create, enhance and participate meaningfully in their own play (Sutterby, 2005). For instance, when play is controlled under these socialised norms, the purpose for education in early childhood becomes another "instrument for the reproduction of the status quo" (Säfström, 2020, p.8) where children continue to be positioned as "passive objects of adults' agency" rather than as competent and capable social stakeholders who are treated in an equitable manner with adults (Liebel, 2012, p. 15). The ongoing refusal to critique these cultural and societal aspects within power relations shows that the neoliberal structure continues to succeed in reproducing structural inequality between adults and children (Brunila and Rossi, 2018). The preschool transcends into a building that imposes norm-providing power aimed to cultivate people to serve the power enforced on them (Bakioğlu and Korumaz, 2019), just like a prison (Barker et al., 2010; Gallagher, 2010; Hall, 2003; Taylor, 2012).

> “The realities of physical surveillance, attendance records, exams, performance progress reports, body-belongings research and seclusion units in schools interrogate us the idea that a school could be a prison in disguise.”
>
> - (Çeven et al., 2021)

Evidence of this norm-providing power was demonstrated when it came to the educators documenting children’s play but how it was in conflict with the children’s experiences. Children demonstrated little to no interest in the excessive documentation exercised by adults, highlighting that, not only is direct surveillance in the form of documentation a hindrance on children’s experiences, but was also an infringement on children’s right to play:

> Kim walks over to Phoebe who is focused on her game. Kim interrupts her and says while holding the phone in front of her: “Phoebe, say cheese!”
> Phoebe physically stops in her play, turns and looks at Kim. Phoebe puts on an automatic smile and says: “Cheese!”
> Kim instructs Phoebe to stay that way until Kim is ready: “Come over here….Wait now.”
> Phoebe stands posed until Kim takes the photo.

Children, such as Angie, demonstrated their awareness of the power being exercised over her and her peers by educators using documentation, and while she engaged in ongoing discussion about the purpose for documentation, this exchange highlights the primary function of documenting children’s experiences as a means to inform parents of children’s daily activities:

> Ali: “Teacher? Why do some people take pictures?”
> Kim ignores Angie, looks at her phone and turns to Linda saying: “That’s actually a cute picture of her.” and then takes another picture of Julianne.

> Ali repeats her question to Kim: “Why do you have to take a picture of her?”
> Kim: “Eh, ‘cause were going to be sending some stuff to your mammys and daddys with some pictures of what you were doing in school.”
> Ali: “Why?”
> Kim: “Just so they can see what you're doing, ‘cause they're not in here every day, they don’t see what we get up to in school.”
> Ali: “Why do they?”
> Kim: “No they don’t, ‘cause they don’t be in our school, so we take pictures so we can show them.”

As Clark and Moss (2001) strongly state, observing children is not an adult’s right. Therefore, not only does this overkill of documentation interfere with children’s experiences through telling them what to do, how to do it, who to be and when to be it, but it feeds into how adults view children as being separate from them (Satta, 2015). Inevitably, these perspectives give adults the justified rationale to scrutinise and over analyse the lives of children for being different to them and exercise documentation as a means to inform other adult groups of children’s activities, such as parents. Lindgren (2012) highlighted that when adults have an opportunity to reflect on how they would feel if they were documented during their work day as often as children were during school, with their work tasks documented using photography and displayed in the workplace office as is done in children’s classrooms, the adults expressed how they “would not enjoy that very much, actually”. This was an area of issue for the adult participants who expressed unease, particularly if photographs were taken by their boss or manager without getting their consent to take photographs or display them in public for others to see. The role reversal of experiences explored in Lindgren’s (2012) research ignites further thinking about what the purpose of documentation is and if it is being conducted in an unethical manner where consent is not actively pursued during the documentation process, then how can this method be considered as being part of high-quality practice? If documentation is a practice that includes multiple processes such as gathering photographic evidence (Data), interpreting the experiences (Analysis), writing about the experiences (Findings and Conclusions) and displaying the experiences to other people

(Dissemination), then early childhood documentation practices are essentially researching the lives of children. The difference between a researcher and an educator, however, is that in research, researchers are required to undergo extensive ethical considerations to ensure children's active consent is gathered and demonstrated throughout, while on the other hand, educators take children's consent entirely for granted (Powell and Smith 2009) by engaging in documentation practices that maintain children's passive position as an object to be looked at. Sparrman and Lindgren (2010) advocate that when it comes to documentation as a form of early childhood practice, the same ethical processes must be understood by educators as is demonstrated by researchers to ensure that children can actively consent as they wish to. By involving themselves in ethical thinking with children around participation, the right to an opinion and ensuring children have opportunities to say no, educators can use documentation as a meaningful pedagogical tool that not only supports in reflective, pedagogical practices and children's learning, but it becomes another process where children decide what and how their lives are documented, who it is for and if they wish to participate at all. If surveillance practices are used by adults where children are expected to participate, even if they do not wish to, with the purpose to prove educator professionalism and achievement of predetermined outcomes, then methods such as documentation becomes another form of governmentality practice that generates false rhetoric on how it supports children's rights to play and participate, but in essence is normalising the surveillance, monitoring and evaluation of children to maintain their positioning as subordinate objects of power while keeping their voices silent.

5.4.2 Challenging Compliance and Normalising Resistance as Forms of Participation

Individuals have the capacity to challenge power from within and form the "microphysics of power" (Foucault, 1979, p.26) and it is in these fields of power that resistance exists as far as power exists (Manuel and Llamas, 2006). Resistance can be seen as a way of exercising power (Foucault, 1982) where individuals seek to resist so they can create spaces for their own decisions to exist within their environment (Hartmann, 2003; Nealon, 2008; Pickett, 1996). Recognising the power of resistance means that everyday acts of resistance, such as defying typical activities within a daily routine, can alter organisational contexts and their social practices (Davidson, 2017) in environments such as preschool classrooms. Many *micro-moments of resistance* as I call them were observed throughout this research where children sought to assert themselves, their boundaries and their choices, most often failing against the rules enforced on them by the adult. This research highlighted that children's level of participation was little to none. For example, Phoebe learned she can paint one piece only because "You did yours already" and that her choice of painting more often was not possible; Judy learned "You can stick your one there" but also that her decision on creating art her way was not feasible; Dylan learned "You have to share them" but also that he must prioritise the needs of the group over his own personal need for space; Evelyn learned that you do as adults tell you, even if it makes you uncomfortable; and Byron learned that his decision to not wear a coat would have long-term consequences according to the adults that say he would get sick and not go on holiday, so he must obey. Children's experiences with power and resistance provided a blueprint on what is expected of them as being children in an adult world. Their continued silence and praise of obedience teaches children they are not agentic, but that they are docile and continued docility means less punishment and more value attributed to them as a person. However, to recognise these *micro-moments of resistance* could alter the ways children exercise and experience power so that their learning is not to be compliant, but to continue to be informed, active and thoughtful in their decision making.

By experiencing their own self-rhythm, testing out their decisions within their environment and reevaluating their choices over time, children connect with their surroundings, but even more so, they connect with themselves. It is through experiencing and succeeding in these "mini-publics" (Levinson, 2001, p.334) or *micro-moments of resistance*, that children strengthen their judgement, their trust in themselves and become practical and solution-focused when assessing the quality of their own experiences.

> Rebecca: "You need your coat, now!
> Byron: "I don't." Byron grabs at his wet gear straps.
> Rebecca sounds surprised: "You don't want rain to get on your arms?!
> Byron: "I do." He rubs his arm.
> Rebecca: "You do?!" Byron nods yes.
> Rebecca: "Why?" Byron walks away.

Adults may have the privilege of 'knowing' that the weather requires a coat, but this does not mean adults should deprive the child of an opportunity to participate in making a decision that leads to them having a true understanding of themselves as a being in a live world. However, it is important to be conscious of our moral obligation to engage more actively in resistance (Sims, 2017) rather than see it as an attack on what we as adults know to be true. Tesar (2014) suggests that actively resisting involves putting forward new ideas, new ways of looking at things and asking difficult questions, all things children within this research demonstrated the ability to do, but were not supported by educators in these traits as their views and opinions were dismissed or challenged into silence if it meant disobeying the educator's commands:

> Byron continues to sit in the chair looking at Rebecca. Rebecca: "So, whatcha gonna do?" She holds up a coat. Byron: "That's Mili's."
> Rebecca shockingly responds: "That's not Mili's?! That's yours!" Byron furrows his brow and argues back "No, it's Mili's!" Rebecca: "Well why did mammy give you Mili's coat then?"
> Byron: "Mili brought it over to mammy's house and she left it there."
> Rebecca: "I think you're tricking me."
> Byron stares at Rebecca in silence, still clutching his dungarees tightly in discomfort.

It is imperative that the recognition and acceptance of *micro-moments of resistance* in children becomes a part of daily routines in preschools, not to control children, but to support them in opportunities to develop their ability to resist against something that does not align with their own self. By saying "No" or "I don't want to" gives children control over their lives. Engaging with resistance and both successfully and unsuccessfully resisting adults, children can "play with power securely and safely within the limits of pedagogy" (Walkerdine, 1990, p.8) where they experience a sense of freedom as the ability to make a choice within a constrained setting (Foucault, 1982, p. 221). To succeed in using their ability to resist adult structures fuels children's consciousness to power where they can exist as a subject rather than an object of power who, at the very least, are aware of the manipulation and control being exerted over them by power (Birnhack, et. al, 2018). As Todd (2002) explains, "engagement and presence in a specific time and place" (p.2) is crucial to allow for change and possibility to come through (Johannesen, 2013). Currently, our specific time and place advocates for children's right to actively participate in their life (Children's Rights Alliance, 2010) and has become a core discourse that child-related policy papers and guidance documents discuss in depth, but struggle to implement in practice (Lundy, 2007; Rico and Janot, 2021). This research highlights clearly that a causing factor to the difficulty to implement, support and encourage children's right to active participation is because of the normalising of education practices that teach children to be compliant and to exist as adults tell them to.

> "Be yourself! All that you are now doing, thinking, and desiring is
> not really yourself."
>
> \- Nietzsche (1997, p.127)

By understanding the place of resistance in education, there is opportunity for the current regimented education structure to be revamped to see children's voices as more than just compliance. It is in preserving the innate ability to resist that is key, supported by the view that children already come to school as moral beings capable of decision-making where the role of the educator is to cultivate children's freedom to make moral judgements through exercising power and experiencing and engaging in resistance (Foucault, 1982). Therefore, the purpose of education in early childhood is to support children to actively participate from the very beginning in human struggles that present themselves and learn how to carve out their place in the world in a space that makes navigating power realities bearable for children (Mollenhauer, 1983). This is possible when educators open up to new ideas where "engaging with resistance is not a luxury but a necessity" (Giroux, 2015, p. 2). Exploring power and resistance can be organic, such as seen with Byron's dismissal of his coat, James' need to run, Phoebe's conflict between liking and hating rain, Evelyn's internal desire to not paint and Dylan's plea to play alone. These are *micro-moments of resistance* that can present themselves in a daily routine of a preschool, but they need to be acknowledged and engaged with more actively by educators so that children can explore ways to work through resistance and create meaning from it that supports children's proactive natures guided by their self-rhythm, rather than learning their place as a child is to be silent obeyers.

> “Action need not be taught; when it happens, it is a spontaneous occurrence.”
>
> \- Levinson (2001, p.334)

To act within their *micro-moments of resistance* enlightens a person of their existence, but also to consciously decide not to act is just as purposeful. Structures ought to be relevant to those existing within them which is only possible by being connected to the self rhythm and acting consciously based on knowledge of the power structure itself. Therefore, this research seeks to contribute to the discussion on what the purpose of education is. From the findings, it is evident that early childhood education currently prioritises its administrative tasks over the children themselves to the point that children’s ability to actively participate and engage with their right to a voice and opinion in their experiences are socially silenced. In this research, the preschool acted as a prison of administration both for educators and for children and made no room for young voices to be heard. Therefore, it is imperative that if we as a society want to support children to actively participate in their lives then we must stop normalising structures which seek to silence them.

Conclusion

This chapter and the overall research itself have contextualised the research findings in a broader spectrum to highlight its significance in contributing to children’s participatory rights discourse and power. By linking the findings to the realities of practice under lens of neoliberalism, administration, documentation, resistance, compliance and their place in modern early childhood education, this research has combined the work of other chapters in order to demonstrate more insight into reasons why children’s participatory rights are difficult to implement in early years practice. The next chapter will provide a brief overview of my researcher reflections to help inform future research conducted in this area.

6. Reflections of a Researcher

I have spent the last four years in constant reflection and although I didn't realise it at the time, I was doing the opposite of Gallagher (2004) who immersed himself in the power he was researching. He existed within the classroom as an observer, sometimes facilitator and over the duration of his research, became an enforcer of the power strategies he originally sought to observe, to which he removed himself quickly from but struggled at times to do, which ultimately impacted on his findings as a result of his entanglement. Gallagher (2004) highlighted in his work that by placing yourself directly in the power dynamics of an educational context, it is very easy to be positioned as an adult by fellow adults into an authority role exercising power over children, particularly in a classroom. With my background including roles as an early years educator and manager, it would have been too easy for me to fall back into the practices I was now seeking to explore with a more critical lens. For this research to be based in value that resonated with me, I knew I could not be directly in these environments for fear of slipping back into familiar habits that would have distorted my need to try and be the objective outsider looking in. However, I know that, regardless of where I physically placed myself, my personal bias as an insider would have always existed. Therefore, the only way to be able to gauge a full sense of the power dynamics within the routine both indoor and outdoor while keeping my personal experience and bias to a minimum was to benefit from children using the GoPro cameras to record their experiences while I remained entirely absent from the space. If a true outsider like Gallagher (2004) found himself as a fellow adult being roped into controlling children's behaviour, what hope would I as a previous early years educator and manager have for resisting my own vocational conditioning? That's not to say my bias was completely in check because my lens was the one that was conducting the overall analysis of the videos being captured. However, being able to rewatch video content if I found myself becoming less objective in my analysis was another benefit to this form of method.

It has become explicitly clear to me through conducting this research that power is never so clear cut to understand. It is not so easy to think of power where adults are in control of children, children are in control of adults, both are resisting or both are obeying. I learned that even when you plan out research with the best of intentions to form an objective method to meaningfully capture power, that process in itself becomes part of the power dynamic. Researching power is multifaceted no matter where you position yourself. If I had been directly involved physically in the room, exercising my absolute best to be objective in a space I once worked in, I feel I would have tarnished the research too much to be able to objectively stand by it. By being physically out of the field and observing the video data captured by the children, I had the privilege of observing the ongoings of this space externally, relieved that any footage captured did not involve my immediate interference. But equally, I too learned that choosing GoPros as a research method, originally one I believed to be the perfect child-led research tool for children to use, actually became another element of practice that sought to control children's experiences and ignore their expressions of consent. The difficulty for me is realising that my absence in the research was designed to avoid disturbing the preschool dynamics that I was looking to understand (Hov and Neegaard, 2020) and using GoPro cameras as a method because I sought to respect children's rationality and therefore their informed uncoerced consent." (Alderson, 1995 p.69) through the easy opt in and out GoPros provided. Yet, what were originally very clear choices for me became a significant factor in the controlling of children's experiences because children as researchers had the access to their research method permitted, restricted or denied by the educators. While I am aware as discussed earlier that this comes down to the already established power dynamics being exercised between educators and children, it is still something I find troubling after spending so much consideration and time seeking to cultivate research that children were in control of. However, it is important to explore limitations openly as it provides space for new research and insight to be generated that can build on our understanding of the world (Burbank et al., 2018; Clark and Moss, 2001). Therefore, it is about being a transparent and open researcher who is capable of interrogating all of the processes and stages that created the research to ensure it is valid, credible and reflective of the experiences that created it.

Overall, this research has demonstrated that children's participatory rights are being infringed upon on a daily basis in early childhood environments using the daily routine as a socialised norm to permit these restrictive interactions. By applying the learning from the Ject Framework and the Six Participation Personas of Power to understand children's form of expression and levels of participation, this research has provided further practical insight into the gaps that implementing children's participatory rights currently struggles with. It is imperative that the forms of expressions captured by the children in this research will contribute to future developments where children's voices are not just heard, but are seen in action every day.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 - Timetable for Research Project

Timeline - Pilot Study (PS)

2022	**May**	**June**
Task		
Approx. date for one parent meeting to gain consent	24th or 25th or 26th May	
Pilot study (PS)	30th May - 3rd June	
Initial Focus Group and children are paired up	30th May	
Children use GoPros to capture footage	30th May - 2nd June	
Camera footage reviewed and chosen for focus group by researcher	30th May - 2nd June	
Verbal consent gained from participants for footage to be shown in focus group		3rd June
Camera footage discussed by participants in focus group		3rd June
Reflection on PS process		3rd June

Timeline - Official study (OS)

September 2022	**Week 1** **5th - 11th**	**Week 2** **12th - 18th**	**Week 3** **19th - 25th**	**Week 4** **26th - 2nd Oct**
Task				
Official study (OS)				
Initial Focus Group	Mon 5th Sept			
Children use GoPros in their pairs **2 children max. per 9am-12pm ECCE period**	5th - 9th Sept Mon - Fri (5 ECCE periods)	12th - 16th Sept Mon - Fri (5 ECCE periods)	19th - 23rd Sept Mon - Fri (5 ECCE periods)	26th - 30th Mon - Fri (5 ECCE periods)
Camera footage reviewed and chosen for focus group by researcher	5th - 8th Sept Mon - Thurs	12th - 15th Sept Mon - Thurs	19th - 22nd Sept Mon - Thurs	26th - 29th Mon - Thurs
Verbal consent gained from participants for footage to be shown in focus group	9th Sept Fri	16th Sept Fri	23rd Sept Fri	30th Sept Fri
Camera footage discussed in focus group	9th Sept Fri	16th Sept Fri	23rd Sept Fri	30th Sept Fri

Appendix 2 – General Information Sheet (For Parents and Educators)

Maynooth University
National University
of Ireland Maynooth

Information Sheet

Purpose of the Study. I am Chloe Keegan, a PhD research student in the Department of Education in Maynooth University. As part of the requirements for qualifying with my PhD, I am undertaking a research study under the supervision of CarlAnders Safstrom. The study centers around Year 2 ECCE children video recording their own, personal experiences when attending the ECCE programme in order to see how children exercise their participation rights ie: expressing their opinion, having their views taken seriously, their views are put into place in the service, etc.

What will the study involve? The study will involve one pilot study to commence approximately at the end of May/start of June 2022 with Year 1 ECCE and an official research study to be conducted for the month of September 2022 on this same group of children starting Year 2 of ECCE. The study will involve Year 2 ECCE children using GoPro cameras positioned on their head to record footage of their play, interactions with practitioners and other children and their general experiences when attending the ECCE programme during the month of September 2022. Two children per day will be given the opportunity to wear the GoPro cameras. Samples of the children's footage will be watched by the children and their practitioners with the researcher in 4 weekly focus groups scheduled every Friday morning for the month of September. This allows children to communicate their experiences and will provide insights for practitioners to reflect and improve on their practices when supporting children to exercise their participation rights. The pilot study in May/June 2022 will be a trial designed like the official research with its main purpose for children and practitioners to become familiar with GoPro cameras and reviewing footage so that they are more aware of the official process come September. A final feedback loop meeting will occur with practitioners and children who took part to verify the researcher's findings before they are finalised for publication.

Who has approved this study? This study has been reviewed and received ethical approval from Maynooth University Research Ethics committee. You may have a copy of this approval if you request it.

Why have you been asked to take part? Parents of children going into Year 2 ECCE are being asked to provide consent on behalf of their children. This is because the study is based on capturing the forms of expression of children who are already familiar with the rules and boundaries of their service. Children's consent to participate will be verbally gained constantly throughout the research project. Practitioners of Year 2 children are also being asked for consent as they will be recorded in footage captured by children and are also required to take part in the weekly focus group discussions to help explore the footage recorded.

Do you have to take part? No. As a practitioner you are under no obligation whatsoever to take part in this research. As a parent you are under no obligation to consent to your child taking part. Practitioners who consent to taking part will be with Year 2 ECCE children for the month of September where they may be recorded by children using GoPro cameras. Practitioners are then invited to take part in 4 focus groups conducted each Friday in September 2022 where footage of them in their ECCE role will be shown to Year 2 ECCE children and other Year 2 ECCE practitioners. It is entirely up to you to decide whether or not you would like to take part. If you as a practitioner decide to do so or you as a parent decide for your child to take part, you will be asked to sign a consent form and given a copy and the information sheet for your own records. You as a practitioner are still free to withdraw at any time and as a parent you are free to withdraw your child's participation at any time both without giving a reason and/or to withdraw you or your child's information up until such time as the research findings are aimed to be finalised by the first quarter of 2023. A decision to withdraw at any time, or a decision not to take part, will not affect your relationships with the ECCE service in which you as a practitioner are employed or you as a parent have a child in attendance.

Child/ren who do not have parental consent to be involved in this research study will not be in attendance in the ECCE Year 2 classroom when research is being conducted. Should a parent not wish their child to participate in the research, the child will transition into another room for the duration of the research with other children and staff attending the service. This move will be communicated to the child/ren so that they do not feel excluded, but understand that they are contributing just as much value to the research by attending the other room as children who are participating.

What information will be collected? Video footage of Year 2 ECCE children and practitioners will be collected by children using GoPro cameras as well as video footage of the participants during focus group discussions. GoPro footage captured will be played back to Year 2 ECCE children and practitioners only. Any footage that participants do not wish to discuss within the group may still be analysed by the researcher and all participants will be briefed in relation to this prior to taking part. Data captured will be transcribed and analysed using discourse analysis. Because it is assumed that footage of other children and practitioners will be captured, it will not be possible for parents to request the recordings captured by their child/ren. Therefore, the GoPro camera footage and video recordings of focus groups will be deleted permanently. Transcriptions will only refer to code numbers ie: adults = A1, A2; children = C1, C2. Information identifying other individuals that are not consenting Year 2 ECCE children and practitioners will be retracted during the transcribing process. Anonymised quotations may be used in the final thesis and/or in any subsequent presentations and publications. Recordings on recording devices will be deleted permanently following the transcribing process. Transcripts will be stored on a password protected computer for a maximum of ten years. Paper transcripts will be stored in a locked file cabinet accessible only to the researcher and external examiners if required. These hard copies will then be shredded within the maximum ten year period.

Will your participation in the study be kept confidential? Yes, all information that is collected about you during the course of the research will be kept confidential. No names will be identified at any time. All hard copy information will be held in a locked cabinet at the researchers' place of work, electronic information will be encrypted and held securely on MU PC or servers and will be accessed only by the researcher Chloe Keegan. No information will be distributed to any other unauthorised individual or third party. If you so wish, the data that you provide can also be made available to you at your own discretion.

It must be recognised that, in some circumstances, confidentiality of research data and records may be overridden by courts in the event of litigation or in the course of investigation by lawful authority. In such circumstances the University will take all reasonable steps within law to ensure that confidentiality is maintained to the greatest possible extent.

What will happen to the information which you give? All the information you provide will be kept at Maynooth University in such a way that it will not be possible to identify you. On completion of the research, the data will be retained on the MU server. After ten years, all data will be destroyed (by the PI). Manual data will be shredded confidentially, and electronic data will be reformatted or overwritten by the PI in Maynooth University.

What will happen to the results? The research will be written up and presented as a published report, discussed at internal group meetings, presented at national and international conferences and may be published in academic journals. Note that no identifiable data will be part of the final research outputs. The research will only refer to codes as stated earlier. A copy of the research findings will be made available to the service where the owner will provide access to practitioners and parents of children who were in attendance. A general summary finding sheet will also be generated for the service to disseminate to all parents to promote the importance of children being involved in research.

What are the possible disadvantages of taking part? I don't envisage any negative consequences for you as a practitioner, a parent, or your child in taking part. It is possible that talking about the video footage involving you as a practitioner or your child may cause some distress, but the researcher having a background in working in the early years can ensure that any discomfort or distress will be minimized through a variety of ways. Firstly, the researcher will gain verbal consent from the individuals who are in the camera footage before each focus group. They will be asked if they consent to the footage being shown in the focus group. This will avoid any surprises for practitioners and children. Participants if they decide not to have the selected footage with them in it to be shown, it will not be shown in the focus group and other samples will be prepared as backup. It is important to note that all footage will be analysed by the researcher regardless of whether it is shown in the focus group,

What if there is a problem? Before and after each weekly focus group, I will discuss with you as the practitioner how you found the experience and how you are feeling. The same will apply to your child. If you as a practitioner experience any distress following the recording of practice and focus group discussions, or if you as a parent find that your child is experiencing distress as a result of the above, you may contact Deirdre Fenlon, owner of the service who can provide you with any additional services or supports you as a practitioner, as a parent or your child may require. You may contact my supervisor in Maynooth University CarlAnders Safstrom (carlanders.safstrom@mu.ie) if you feel the research has not been carried out as described above.

Any further queries? If you need any further information, you can contact me.

If you agree to take part in the study, please complete and sign the consent form overleaf.

Thank you for taking the time to read this

Appendix 3 - Consent Form: Educators

1. I…..................................... agree to participate in Chloe Keegan's research study titled The ECCE Routine: Facilitating or hindering children's participation rights?

2. I…..................................... agree to participate in Chloe Keegan's **pilot research study** commencing in May/June 2022.

3. I…..................................... agree to participate in Chloe Keegan's **official research study** commencing in September 2022.

Please tick each statement below:

The purpose and nature of the study has been explained to me verbally & in writing. I've been able to ask questions, which were answered satisfactorily. ☐

I am participating voluntarily. ☐

I give permission for my ECCE practice with children as well as discussions in 4 weekly focus groups to be video recorded ☐

I understand that I can withdraw from the study, without repercussions, at any time, whether that is before it starts or while I am participating. ☐

I understand that I can withdraw permission to use the data right up to the first quarter of 2023. ☐

It has been explained to me how my data will be managed and that I may access it on request. ☐

I understand the limits of confidentiality as described in the information sheet ☐

I understand that my data, in an anonymous format, may be used in further research projects and any subsequent publications if I give permission below: ☐

I agree to quotation/publication of extracts from my interview ☐
I do not agree to quotation/publication of extracts from my interview ☐

I agree for my data to be used for further research projects ☐
I do not agree for my data to be used for further research projects ☐

I agree for my data, once anonymised, to be retained indefinitely in the IQDA archive ☐

I do not agree for my data once anonymised, to be retained indefinitely in the IQDA archive ☐

Signed…………………………………… Date………………

Participant Name in block capitals ……………………………………………

I the undersigned have taken the time to fully explain to the above participant the nature and purpose of this study in a manner that they could understand. I have explained the risks involved as well as the possible benefits. I have invited them to ask questions on any aspect of the study that concerned them.

Signed…………………………………… Date………………

Researcher Name in block capitals ……………………………………………..

If during your participation in this study you feel the information and guidelines that you were given have been neglected or disregarded in any way, or if you are unhappy about the process, please contact the Secretary of the Maynooth University Ethics Committee at research.ethics@mu.ie or +353 (0)1 708 6019. Please be assured that your concerns will be dealt with in a sensitive manner.

For your information the Data Controller for this research project is Maynooth University, Maynooth, Co. Kildare. Maynooth University Data Protection officer is Ann McKeon in Humanity house, room 17, who can be contacted at dataprotection@mu.ie. Maynooth University Data Privacy policies can be found at https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/data-protection.

Appendix 4 - Consent Form: Parents

1. I……………………………………agree for my child....................................to participate in Chloe Keegan's research study titled The ECCE Routine: Facilitating or hindering children's participation rights?

2. I……………………………………agree for my child ....to participate in Chloe Keegan's **pilot research study** commencing in May/June 2022.

3. I……………………………………agree for my child....................................to participate in Chloe Keegan's **official research study** commencing in September 2022.

Please tick each statement below:

The purpose and nature of the study has been explained to me verbally & in writing. I've been able to ask questions, which were answered satisfactorily. ☐

My child's participation is voluntary. ☐

I give permission for my child to use and be recorded by GoPro cameras as well as to take part in 4 weekly focus groups to be video recorded ☐

I understand that I can withdraw my child from the study, without repercussions, at any time, whether that is before it starts or while my child is participating. ☐

I understand that I can withdraw permission to use my child's data up to the first quarter of 2023. ☐

It has been explained to me how my child's data will be managed. ☐

I understand the limits of confidentiality as described in the information sheet ☐

I understand that my child's data, in an anonymous format, may be used in further research projects and any subsequent publications if I give permission below: ☐

I agree to quotation/publication of extracts from my child's ECCE experiences and focus group ☐

I do not agree to quotation/publication of extracts from my child's ECCE experiences and focus group ☐

I agree for my child's data to be used for further research projects ☐

I do not agree for my child’s data to be used for further research projects ☐

I agree for my child's data, once anonymised, to be retained indefinitely in the IQDA archive ☐
I do not agree for my data once anonymised, to be retained indefinitely in the IQDA archive ☐

Signed………………………………….. Date………………

Participant Name in block capitals ……………………………………………..

I the undersigned have taken the time to fully explain to the above participant the nature and purpose of this study in a manner that they could understand. I have explained the risks involved as well as the possible benefits. I have invited them to ask questions on any aspect of the study that concerned them.

Signed………………………………….. Date………………

Researcher Name in block capitals ……………………………………………..

If during your child's participation in this study you feel the information and guidelines that you were given have been neglected or disregarded in any way, or if you are unhappy about the process, please contact the Secretary of the Maynooth University Ethics Committee at research.ethics@mu.ie or +353 (0)1 708 6019. Please be assured that your concerns will be dealt with in a sensitive manner.

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Appendix 5 – Initial Focus Group Outline

1. What happens in preschool? What things do you do in preschool? **What is this called?** **(establishing common language for adults and children to understand ie: routine)
2. Who decides when it's snack time/outdoor time/toilet time/handwashing time (use examples from responses from Question 1)? Why do they decide that aspect?
3. Why do you have a routine/what is the point/purpose of a routine?
4. What is the best part of the day/routine? Why?
5. What is the worst part of the day/routine? Why?

Appendix 6 - Criteria applied when choosing focus group camera footage

The researcher will be looking for moments/experiences where power dynamics are being navigated in terms of the child's ECCE experience. These can include the following dynamics: adult -> child, child -> adult, child -> child.

Footage shown in focus groups will be categorised based on the following 4 criteria:

- **Command**
  Instruction is given by one (Enforcer) to another (Compliant). The instruction is completed as required by the Compliant.

- **Conflict**
  Instruction given by the Enforcer is not obeyed by the Compliant

- **Compromise**
  Instruction is altered based on interactions that occur between two or more Enforcers and Compliants

- **Collaboration**
  There is no evidence of an individual enforcing instruction on another.

Appendix 7 - Focus Group Video Footage Analysis Outline

A. To the whole group:

1. Who can you see in the video?

B. To the child co-researcher who captured the video:

2. Can you tell us what was happening in this video?
3. How did you feel at that moment?

C. To the whole group:

4. Is there anything else that was happening in the video? If so, what?

(This question will depend on what the footage shows. For example, if it shows an adult telling a child to tidy up who does not want to tidy up, the discussion will focus on tidying up in the ECCE routine, why did the child not want to tidy up, if tidying needed to be done in that moment, could it been done later, etc.)

D. To the child co-researcher who captured the video:

5. How did you feel rewatching this video?

E. To the whole group:

6. How did you feel rewatching this video?
7. What, if anything, have we learned from watching this video?

Conduct an overall check-in with participants following discussion

Appendix 8 – Analysing the Video Data Transcripts

A table with the following headings was used to support the analysis of video data collected:

Video Details	Time	Description	Themes/Coding	Reflective Points

Sample from Transcripts

Time	*Description*	*Themes/Coding*	*Reflective Points*
07.18 – 07.22	Unidentifiable child: "I have carrots." Kim: "Ooh, yummy"	Reinforcing social norms Conditioning of behaviour Obeying social norms Verbal reinforcement	What is deemed as healthy food is responded to with positive affirmation By discussing what they have for food, children get confirmation that it is okay to eat what they have brought – Children are conditioned to out themselves based on what is in their lunchbox to avoid being caught by the adult for having something they shouldn't have
07.23 – 07.44	*Inaudible chatter from children* Rebecca: "Let me see?........Byron, let me see your lunchbox. I think you're tricking!" Byron: "No?!" Kim: "Yep, you are… Yep. C'mon.	Enforcing social norms (adult to child) Verbal reinforcement Child disobeys initially then obeys	Byron wanted to put his snack away but he was not allowed to and was told to continue eating This is a scenario of how children learn to out themselves

	You didn't eat anything!"		during snack – lunchboxes are monitored
07.45 – 09.00	Chatter amongst the group. Camera is still on the table with Phoebe eating. Rebecca enters the shot and sits on the couch behind Phoebe at 8.09 and begins to eat her snack. Kim and Rebecca chat themselves. Byron can be seen walking in the background holding a piece of bread	Grouping of the adults away from the children (Us-versus-them approach)	Shawn was previously told to not mess which made him go back to his seat, however Byron is seen to walk around and eat and the adults allow for this by not correcting him