

Mixed Messages

Best Practice, Quality, and Readiness: The Power of Discourse to Shape an

Arizona Early Childhood System

by

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ABSTRACT

This study sought to analyze the messages being conveyed through the discourse utilized in presenting the public face of The Arizona Early Childhood Development and Health Board, popularly known as First Things First (FTF) and to reveal how the different discourses and ideologies within FTF have been in the past and currently are "contending and struggling for dominance (Wodak, 2007)." FTF is located within the policy realm of Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC). The people and the system have been very influential in guiding the course and policies set forth in Arizona since the citizen initiative, Proposition 203, passed in 2006, which allowed for the creation of the Early Childhood Development and Health Board. Lakoff's techniques for analyzing frames of discourse were utilized in conjunction with critical discourse analysis in order to tease out frames of reference, shifts in both discourse and frames, specific modes of messaging, and consistencies and inconsistencies within the public face presented by FTF.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to the memory of a fiercely independent and extremely strong woman who impacted my life in more ways than she could have ever imagined. Grandma Jean, you will always be my inspiration and role model and I will never forget the countless words of wisdom you spoke into my life as I grew into a woman and scholar. Thank you for being the caliber of woman I can only hope to be!

This journey would not have been possible without the tireless support and encouragement of my amazing family. Thank you for being there for me over the many years it has taken me to complete course work, research, and write. Every one of you has been patient, and understanding through my career as a student. Bill, thank you for all of the dinners you have cooked, the hours you have sat on the couch and quietly kept me company while I studied or wrote, and the time you have been there for the kids when I could not and finally for encouraging me to follow my dreams. Gabby, AJ, and Noah, thank you for patiently enduring having your mother in school the whole time you have been in school. I love you all and could never have completed this without your love, encouragement, and support. Les amo más que puedo explicar en palabras!

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Political responsibility requires that one read events, that one analyze situations, that one pay attention to the rhetoric of the demagogues and the media. Elizabeth Rottenburg

This study sought to analyze the messages being conveyed through the discourse utilized in presenting the public face of The Arizona Early Childhood Development and Health Board, popularly known as First Things First (FTF) and to reveal how the different discourses and ideologies within FTF have been in the past and currently are “contending and struggling for dominance (Wodak, 2007).” FTF is located within the policy realm of Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC). The people and the system have been very influential in guiding the course and policies set forth in Arizona since the citizen initiative, Proposition 203, passed in 2006, which allowed for the creation of the Early Childhood Development and Health Board.

Education has become the primary arena where politics and power operate to create spaces of social and political asymmetry, directly influencing the lived culture of the individuals within the arena, specifically teachers and students (Mohanty, 2003). Education is a culturally and historically constructed area with direct ties to families as well as parenting which are unique from other areas of social interaction (Stambach & David, 2005). The very nature of educational governance creates asymmetrical relationships of power to those dominant in the educational policy realm who are able to

control and maintain a system that favors a few but subordinates many due to gender, race, age, position, culture, and language (Olivos & Quintana de Valladolid, 2005).

The power of language wielded by media, politicians, and school boards directly influences the language used and thoughts generated by teachers and administrators.

Language serves as a tool of domination and social regulation (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2000) and the views which dominate early childhood policy discourse are those of a child who is “at-risk” who requires saving so society will benefit economically and socially when the child enters adulthood (Swadener and Lubeck, 1995; Rose 1999). A turn needs to be made away from seeing children as an investment from whom society deserves a monetary return. We do not want to see younger human beings reorganized into yet another interest group (Charkiewicz, 2007). Relationships should not be seen as items on a balance sheet, constantly viewed from a perspective of a cost-benefit analysis (Moss & Petrie, 2002). While put forth as human development, Early Childhood Education and Care interest by both business and government runs the risk of becoming a more direct yet subtle technology of control (Charkiewicz, 2007).

A lesser view is of the child as a resource necessitating support as well as education so the future of society can be shaped (O’Connell Rust, 2003; Lakoff 2006). In the United States, researchers at the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) are working in conjunction with the Pew Charitable Trusts on a project emphasizing the legal right of all children to attend preschool beginning at the age of three. This program is working to support policymakers and activists who are working toward mandated pre-K in their respective states (NIEER, 2004).

The present study utilized critical discourse analysis in conjunction with qualitative methods of participant observation, analysis of records, artifacts, archives, and environmental print. The aforementioned methodologies were chosen in order to tease out the discourse that has served to guide, frame, and shape FTF.

Background/Context of the Study

Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) systems in the United States vary in both structural form and areas of oversight from state to state. Variance in structural arrangements allows for greater flexibility within each system but also creates possibilities for highly fragmented sub-systems which consequently become political pawns rather than educational assets. The field of ECEC is plagued by tremendous fragmentation (Beatty, 2004). There are a vast number of disconnected programs running as well as initiatives that are overseen, funded, sponsored, and run by a myriad of NGO'S, private foundations, and public agencies. Money disbursed by the federal government, foundations, non-profits, and private donors is carefully guarded by receiving agencies that can sometimes appear to be more concerned about their political turf than collaboration and the bottom line for younger human beings (Cannella & Swadener, 2005; Smith, 2004; Cannella 1997).

The state of Arizona's early childhood programs are no exception to this systemic fragmentation problem. The fragmentation of the current system, as well as a lack of legislative commitment to funding for early childhood and 0-5 programs, led to the development of Proposition 203 in 2006 also known as the "Arizona Early Childhood Development and Health Initiative" (Brewer, 2006). Proposition 203 was a citizen initiative whose design and implementation was led by an affluent woman actively

involved in the Arizona child advocacy and political scene, and a public relations leader, who later became the Executive Director.

The passage of Proposition 203 provided a unique opportunity for the state with regard to ECEC. Funds accrued through this initiative enabled an array of child advocates across Arizona led by Nadine Basha to create (at the state level) the Arizona Early Childhood Development and Health Board. The Board “adopted” the name First Things First because they agreed that the healthy development of young children is what lays the foundation for their future success in school, life, and the work world.

Over the past six years, First Things First has developed and marketed a very public face. From the initial stages as a board to the present, the word quality, by itself and attached to people, institutions, and systems, appears to be a driving force/focus of the board. So much so that their other goals of increased access and equity appear both in the public arena and internally to have taken a back seat so to speak to an over emphasis on quality.

Theoretical Framework

Theory helps to frame our knowledge and guide our actions. Theories may serve as lenses, filters, and as orienting devices. It is important to remember they are open to reworking and not to be taken as technologies of truth (Moss & Petrie, 2002).

But theory *produces* particular questions as well as possible answers, it influences what we constitute as problems as well as what we think might be suitable solutions, what evidence we seek and how we seek it, how we make sense of evidence and experience, the objects of policy and practice,

and how we conceptualise, organize, and name the interventions of public policy.

(Moss & Petrie, 2002, p.18)

How a researcher both constructs as well as verifies knowledge statements is heavily influenced by their ontological beliefs regarding the composition and operation of the social world (Bennett & Elman, 2006). The development of knowledge takes place through enculturation and socialization. These processes directly impact our conceptual frameworks regarding the lenses utilized to view the world (Hawkesworth, 2007; Wodak in Seale et. al, 2004).

The primary theoretical lenses utilized in this study are multiple feminisms, and critical theory. Qualitative researchers often use a bricolage of theory and method in order to tease out intricacies within our research. As I consider qualitative methodology and how I can resist the dominant view of appropriate research, my thoughts are immediately drawn to bricolage and then beyond to the arts and the technique of collage. Why shouldn't research methodologies and theory in the qualitative realm act as the materials of a collage? Collage is often the preferred medium of artists who are considered "revolutionary" because of a freedom to "juxtapose" materials in order to construct pieces that "jarr or shock" viewers (IMCAC, 2007). Within this realm a singular, privileged method is not found as fields and disciplines are transversed (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003).

Collage can begin with a flat surface and when elements of varying material are applied/assembled, the resulting piece becomes three dimensional. What was simple becomes an intricate piece holding many dimensions, depths, and is open to innumerable

interpretations. Collage is also applicable to literary works composed of both original and borrowed material (Answers, 2007). Diverse elements come together in both unity and conflict. Since power is multidimensional (Foucault, 1994; Sandoval, 2000; Swadener & Cannella 2005), research as a construct would benefit to be so as well in order to counter the dominant. The researcher as artist, craftsperson sees research as telling a story, relaying information about the worlds they have studied. Such a person finds research a process of interactions of history, race, class, gender, ethnicity, age, etc. (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). History can only be understood through multiple lenses such as those of gender, sexual preference, race, age, ethnicity, class, and religion (Hesse-Biber, 2007).

Purpose and Objectives of the Study

The purpose of this study was to analyze the messages being conveyed through the discourse utilized in presenting the public face of First Things First (FTF) and to reveal how the different discourses and ideologies within FTF have been evolving and currently are competing and struggling for dominance (Wodak, 2007). The creation of the system First Things First by the Early Childhood Health and Development Board has been highly publicized throughout the state as a new system/framework that will decentralize governmental control while simultaneously increasing community and regional control of funding and programs directly impacting Early Childhood Education and Care.

Research Questions

This study sought to analyze the messages being sent via the discourse utilized in presenting the public face of First Things First. Two questions, with their respective sub-questions, guided this study:

1. How has the discourse utilized by, in, and through First Things First shifted or changed since its inception?
 - a. How does this initiative/agency portray their programs?
 - b. What assumptions about knowledge, young children, families, and teachers organize the discourse of FTF?
 - c. What particular views of young children, families, and teachers does the text reveal?
 - d. What are the messages being conveyed and what do they mean?
2. What power relationships are achieved through the documents and how are children, families and teachers constructed as a result of these power relationships?
 - a. What values are revealed in the text and how do they emerge?
 - b. What discourse is absent from the texts?
 - c. Are there contradictions or inconsistencies present?

(adapted from Fairclough, 2003; Mac Naughton, 2005; and Pacini-Ketchabaw, White, de Almeida, & Armstrong, 2006). Also to be taken into consideration are the abilities of First Things First to expand, improve, and increase access as well as equity and quality in Early Childhood Education and Care in Arizona. Is the policy being implemented as originally stated? Will populations and regions previously not provided opportunities see

positive changes? Are communities being drawn into the arena and new voices being heard?

Rationale for the Study

Citizen initiatives in the United States are a part of the process of direct legislation. The process allows both citizens and interest groups to draft as well as propose legislation and submit it directly to voters. Those who are critical of the process feel it is yet another tool controlled by the wealthy who are able to push their own agendas through interest groups (Boehmke, 2005). Rigby, Tarrant, and Neuman (2007) state the design of policy ultimately privileges particular conceptions of child care both socially and politically. This privileging serves to legitimate the specific role government serves in the lives of young children. Policies are similar to institutions in that they serve to structure how resources, authority, and agency are distributed (Rigby, Tarrant, and Neuman, 2007).

First Things First does serve a privileged role in the state of Arizona with regard to the delivery and regulation of services related to ECEC. The policies the program institutes stem from particular discourses framed in such a way as to legitimate specific conceptions of caregivers, teachers, facilities, service providers, young children, and families. The program serves as a technology of power within the ECEC realm in our state and is looked to by the community and businesses to create and prepare responsible citizens who will eventually benefit our state in terms of economic productivity.

Over the past several years many consistencies and inconsistencies have appeared within the discourses of FTF. Their messaging is powerful and some of the language they utilize can be considered problematic when studied carefully. My hope was this

study would bring to light some of the complications that arise when too much emphasis is placed on notions of quality, readiness, brain development, and young children's human right of care and education as an opportunity to create an ideal citizen or as an investment in the future with regard to economic productivity and thus create a space for a new type of conversation that does not reinscribe notions of the normal child, the good teacher, and the five star facility.

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

The literature reviewed for this study is intended to provide in-depth coverage of the theories utilized throughout the course of study. Further, it offers a snapshot of governmentality and how this technology affects policy and language as well as the function of governance on institutions and individuals. The idea of ECEC as a development tool is addressed and finally an example of critical discourse analysis in educational policy research is provided.

Feminist Theories

Feminist methodology as a construct includes a varied assortment of strategies toward research, methodological stances, and conceptual approaches (Fonow & Cook; 2005; Wodak in Seale, et. al, 2004). There is not one feminism or feminist methodology; rather, there are multiplicities of lenses not easily defined by particular theoretical claims, methods, or propositions (Hesse-Biber, 2007). However, feminist research by nature does have some themes in common due to its nature of interdisciplinarity (Hesse-Biber, 2007). Within feminist research, “more is examined and less is assumed (Hawkesworth, 2007, p. 488).” Always aware of power hierarchies and the authority that lies within them, even in the field of research, feminists work to expose colonizing methodologies as well as those that aid in the perpetuation of the status quo (Hesse-Biber, 2007). Inquiry in the feminist realm involves issues regarding social reality, the function and practice of research, and “emergent questions” (Hesse-Biber, 2007).

Feminists challenge the notions of universality and objectivity (Hesse-Biber, 2007). Hesse-Biber (2007) cites Haraway who says that objectivity in feminism is ‘situated knowledges’. An important concept to remember is truth and knowledge are subjective, only partial, relational, and filled with power. Arrogance can be directly attributed to an ideology of “correct thinking.” Some academics put on the rigor mask and as such become primary contributors to what becomes a reduction of knowledge to bits and pieces which directly influences the action involved in knowledge construction. This is not to completely discount the importance of rigor, self-criticism, and skepticism due to the fact that all of these elements are crucial to critical pedagogy. However, it is to say the positivist view of the possibility of objectivity or neutrality is impossible. We must be careful in our own progressivity not to tie ourselves to our own “truth” (Freire, 1997). As with other theoretical perspectives, feminists are not all in agreement about the direction to head and tensions exist as to how best conduct research that clearly challenges hegemonic power relations while representing the concerns and issues of women (Hesse-Biber, 2007).

Feminist theories are not perfect and they are also fragmented (Hesse-Biber, 2007). However, feminist theory, particularly Third World feminist theories provide strength with regard to research in their recognition of multiple perspectives. Inherent to feminist research is an understanding of difference while highlighting the significance of power issues, ethics, authority, and reflexivity all the while remembering these are socially constructed (Hesse-Biber, 2007). A feminist perspective challenges power and knowledge claims made by those in positions of power and privilege. It challenges knowledges that are exclusive while portraying themselves as inclusive (Hesse-Biber,

2007). New questions are raised by feminists in order to center women and those who are marginalized including people of color and children. Feminist research aims to be disruptive to what are regarded as 'traditional ways of knowing'. Multiple perspectives are considered and negotiated (Hesse-Biber, 2007). An important element of feminist research is to work against, across, and within epistemologies as well as utilizing various elements of varied perspectives (Fonow & Cook, 2005; Hesse-Biber, 2007). Feminists are continually altering and reinventing methods as well as creating new ones.

There are commonalities among feminist approaches that Fonow and Cook (2005) have delineated as 'guiding principles' within the realm of feminism as methodology. First and foremost is recognizing and reflecting constantly on how significant gender is and how gender inequality is evident in all social life. They remind us to recall this inequality exists within the research realm as well. Next, they cite the crucial aspect of 'consciousness-raising' as an element of the methodological tool box as well as a way of orienting perception. Third, it is imperative we challenge the notion of objectivity as a norm where there is a possibility for the research subject and object to be separate from one another and the idea of 'grounded experience' being 'unscientific'. Next, they highlight the importance of ethics in our research and finally how women are able to transform patriarchal institutions through their research. Another important element in the feminist realm of research is the ground is unstable and always shifting and evolving (Charkiewicz, 2007). It is only here we can make room for the unexpected where reading for difference rather than dominance can occur (Gibson-Graham, 2006; Sandoval, 2000).

One area of emphasis feminists underscore is reflexivity. Reflexivity can be defined as a process through which the researcher purposefully addresses, analyzes, and

tries to understand how their individual location socially as well as their own assumptions impact their research. It also involves looking carefully at how an individual's research agenda affects the research process from beginning to end. This constant interrogation of location is significant for the individual as both a feminist and a researcher (Hesse-Biber, 2007; Cannella & Viruru, 2004).

Villenas and Moreno (2001, p. 685) remind us that for women of color "... surviving and creating lives full with meaning meant developing other mujer oriented pedagogies of rebelliousness and 'subversion to the laws of the culture.'" Chicana feminists utilize *la facultad* which is an ability to see what is on the surface as holding much deeper meaning, to recognize the depth of knowledge and experience that lie below the surface (Anzaldua, 1987; Elenes 2001). A consciousness of opposition is not new in qualitative methodology. Resistance has "quietly influenced" Western thinking throughout history (Sandoval, 2000). Feminism is both a social movement and critique which places itself in the "larger power/resistance landscapes (Charkiewicz, 2007, p. 8).

Gloria Anzaldua has said new theories are needed to not just study the particulars of situations but also what lies behind the situations themselves (Chicana Feminist Homepage, 2007). Research must serve as a bridge between varied histories and origins and should work to support a qualitative shift in historical as well as political consciousness (Charkiewicz, 2007). It is political work and women of color theory provides a critical lens from which to work as it takes into account intersectionality (Collins, 2000) of race, gender, age, ethnicity, culture, sexuality, and other indicators of a diversity of identities (Latina Feminist Group, 2001). Scholars should recognize the views of individuals will be significantly different based upon their social location and

plurality is a very relevant aspect of the human experience (Hawkesworth, 2007).

Difference, plurality, and multi-vocality and their development are a commitment of feminist theorists (Hawkesworth, 2007).

New knowledge should impel us forward, to crossover the known and comfortable into unknown territory where we grapple with new hows and whys. To know for ourselves means we encounter greater uncertainty, face uncomfortable ideas/thoughts, but it also begs us to reposition ourselves (Anzaldua, 1987). Latina feminists realize that an anti-colonial critical social science is “theory born of an activist need” (Morales in Latina Feminist Group, 2001, p. 29). How we as academics speak and write provides a window for others to discern who we are as researchers, the intent of our research, and exactly who the audience is we are writing for or speaking with. Useful content and theory is directly linked to language and if our work is to be activist in nature as well as democratic, it must not be decipherable only by those in the academy (Morales in Latina Feminist Group, 2001). We need to remove ourselves from our isolation and put our specific communities first and our research second. If our work is disconnected from daily use it is no longer activist in nature.

The ability of Latina Feminist theories to border cross disciplines and theories allows them to become strong elements in the qualitative collage. Border crossing creates new materials/spaces when considering liberation theories (Hurtado, 1996). Latina Feminist theories accept areas of linguistic ambiguity and resistance in an attempt to create openness in discursive spaces while at the same time pushing for further inclusion. While rules of research have been created primarily by white men, they can be easily un-made por las Chicanas. Difference cannot be taken on or off, it is a crucial

element of who we are as women, academics, and activists. We are situated within a multiplicity of intersecting power systems as people who are placed in a variety of histories (Latina Feminist Group, 2001).

Mestiza theory is theory of inclusivity, of constant shifting, and divergent thinking. It is characterized not by specific patterns and ideologies but by a perspective of wholeness that is inclusive rather than exclusive (Anzaldua, 1987). The New Mestiza crosses borders and refuses stasis; she constructs theory out of life experiences (Elenes, 2001). Critical qualitative research should not only value /recognize border crossing, it could see such a method as strength. Mestiza consciousness calls for a new perception of reality, others, a development of new consciousness. It necessitates a deconstruction of paradigms and is characterized by flexibility, tolerance for ambiguity, and contradictions (Elenes, 2001; Anzaldua, 1987). The ability to move across research domains and draw from strengths in other fields should have a significant positive impact on our research giving it a broader, more inclusive foundation (Anzaldua, 1987). Feminist logic can unravel “rules” of research and recreate a more inclusive anti-colonial perspective (Anzaldua, 1987).

When we live, work, write, and think only from directives received from the outside excluding the knowledge we hold internally we immediately limit our lives, work, writing, and thoughts to the external and by doing so conform to a structure outside of human/individual need. Feminist standpoint theorists argue that there are a variety of factors mediating knowledge and an individual’s location in the sociopolitical time/space continuum (Hawkesworth, 2007). When we allow our internal knowledge and power to inform our lives, work, thought, and actions, then we start to deny satisfaction with the

dominant structures of our lives giving place to alternatives and empowering ourselves (Lorde, 1984).

As researchers, educators, and human beings, we should be open to the new with regard to research practice and theory for “reasons beyond mere novelty” but it is crucial to remember that we should not discount nor reject that which is old simply because it is old. Even as researchers we are subject to historical amnesia. There is validity in old and new alike (Freire, 2005). Latina Feminist and Women of Color Theories are traditionally marginalized and relegated to their own realm (as if this is a positive thing) at the margins of the research arena. However, they are purposeful, political practices constructed and utilized to disrupt those discourses dominant in academia yesterday, today, and tomorrow (Mohanty, 2003). Border pedagogies move to create theoretical and political positionings/movements constructed upon a foundation of the understanding of the multiplicity of dominant ideologies, identity markers, and forms of resistance (Elenes, 2001). One’s ideological position can serve to either produce or pierce ideological positions or obfuscations (Hawkesworth, 2007).

There are commonalities of feminist inquiry not dependent upon specialization. Some of these characteristics include the challenging of assumptions, interrogation of accepted beliefs, and an effort to reframe questions posed for research. Feminists’ desire and work toward transformation of society through the development of ‘alternative’ practices of research (Hawkesworth, 2007). The ability to conduct a multi-perspective analysis allows a researcher to consider voice and perspective of actors involved as well as the interactions between both the actors in the system and their interactions with other groups/systems of actors (Tellis, 1997). Just as any other method of research, feminist

research is also subject to political influence. However, feminist researchers do not deny or ignore the political nature of their work but rather acknowledge that it is precisely the political that has brought them to their research convictions (Hawkesworth, 2007).

Critical Theory

A critical perspective is of relevance due to the fact one must address the power issues in the aforementioned methodologies and in order to recognize one's own limitations, cite them as frequently as possible, and to realize research and the methodologies employed in doing said research are bounded in many senses. Critical thought involves a 'constant checking' (Foucault, 1994). The term critical theory is one which is often misunderstood. It is a theoretical approach to cultural criticism which was developed by several writers known collectively as the Frankfurt school. This form of social and philosophical thought was influenced by the effects of World War II on Germany and German philosophers such as Hegel, Kant, and Marx (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2000).

Early critical theorists studied capitalism as it evolved in conjunction with the ever changing aspects of domination accompanying it. In the United States, Marcuse's work gave the New Left a 'philosophical voice' grounded in political freedom (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2000). The '60's gave rise to academics finding critical theory was a continuing conversation with how experience was socially constructed and they saw how their particular disciplines had grown out of socially, historically constructed relations of power and its related discourses (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2000). If theirs was socially constructed, then it could also be reconstructed which held possibilities for a society that was more democratic as well as egalitarian (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2000).

There are multiple critical theories within which there is an avoidance of specificity and a state of continual evolution and change (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2000). The issues of concern in critical theory are related to power, class, economy, race, gender, religion, ideologies, etcetera and how the social system we find ourselves in is constructed through interaction of all of these issues (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2000). Critical theory actively works to reveal dominance in oppressive power relations and knowledge construction (Hesse-Biber, 2007). Power pulls us in and attempts to draw us ever closer to its center; it continually seeks to bridge the gap between control and resistance. It drives us to speak but allows us to do so on its terms, thus giving us “voice without influence (Charkiewicz, 2007, p. 12).” Analysis of power among and between individuals, groups, and institutions is a central tenet of critical theory. Analysis in turn helps to reveal those who benefit and those who do not relative to the social situation they apply to and how power influenced these outcomes and the processes that led to the outcomes (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2000). “Speaking truth to power does not just imply making visible the abuse. It also implies making visible how power is organized (Charkiewicz, 2007, p. 12).” A critical pedagogy “compels us to acknowledge” and look past the common tactic of placing blame on the individual while looking to broader societal issues, particularly capitalism which creates circumstances that are laden with inequities and ultimately allows them to exist and reproduce (Olivos & Valladolid, 2005).

An understanding of contemporary early childhood necessitates critical analyses of the broader overarching forces that influence change both globally and locally including but not limited to the political, economic, technical, and social (Dahlberg & Moss, 2005). Critical pedagogy recognizes any theoretical analysis cannot be collapsed

into a singular entity because a myriad of factors contribute to all situations. As Henry Giroux (Williams, 1999) states, it is a “panorama of narratives”. Critical thinking does not suggest power can be eliminated altogether rather, we need to be aware of it, the mechanisms through which it operates and manifests itself, and then endeavor to reveal assumptions made, question them, and try to suggest alternatives seeking to do things differently than in the past ultimately aiming toward a reduction in governance (Moss & Petrie, 2002).

Foucault emphasizes the importance of critique when revealing power relations. He reminds us institutions, dominant discourses, and ideas are results of historical processes which can be changed (Moss & Petrie, 2002). An analysis of power necessitates we work to problematize assumptions which are commonplace as well as how these assumptions are sustained. This then opens the door to possibilities for change (Moss & Petrie, 2002). If our studies are disconnected from socio-cultural reality, they are flawed from the beginning. Research in order to be critical has to include the historical as well as the social.

Governmentality

Foucault (1994) said the history of ‘governmentality’ includes three elements: 1. Power in a specific and complex form exercised through the processes of procedures, tactics, etc. utilized by institutions that focus on population and use political economy as the primary knowledge base, and rely on the technology of security. 2. In the West over many years, this power has taken form and come to be known as government. This government has resulted in the further creation of very specific ‘governmental apparatuses’, and also in the creation of a new set of ‘knowledges’. 3. How the state of

justice found in the Middle Ages changed and became the administrative state during the 15th and 16th centuries and finally became “governmentalized”.

Foucault (2000) sees three types of government as fundamental: that which is linked to morality, ‘the art of self-government’; the economic link which is ‘the art of governing family’; the political link which he considered ‘the art of ruling the state’. Foucault (2000) discussed Rousseau’s ideas about state governance which entailed setting up at the state level an economy; setting up such an economy necessitates surveillance and control toward the inhabitants of the state with regard to both their behavior and wealth. In this manner, the state serves as the head over the family including its members and material possessions.

...with government it is a question not of imposing law on men
but of disposing things: that is, of employing tactics rather than
laws, and even of using laws themselves as tactics-to arrange things
in such a way that, through a certain number of means, such-and-such
ends may be achieved.

(Foucault, 2000, p. 211)

The end purpose of government lies in what and whom it manages and in the continual search to intensify as well as perfect those processes under its direction. Rather than these processes being laws, there are now a varied and wide range of tactics taking many forms (Foucault, 1994). Charkiewicz (2007) discusses how the unseen “micro-techniques (p. 3)” of neoliberalism function in knowledge production with regard to governing states, markets, and societies. Techniques of rank and calculation are the heart of neo-liberal bio-politics.

The regulatory controls are exercised by way of the internalization of routines through which human subjects, entrepreneurial cities, and client countries permanently adjust themselves to the requirements of making the world, its populations, nature and territories governable in a coherent manner.

(Charkiewicz, 2007, p. 3)

The goal of neoliberalism is to produce human subjects who remain permanently flexible. Categorization of human beings in communities and regions is a form of governmentality (Ortiz & Cannella, 2007).

The welfare of population is a chief end of government. The government acts both directly and indirectly on the population through varied techniques. While the population is aware of government action, it is not wholly aware and at times ‘ignorant of what is being done to it (Foucault, 2000, p. 217).’ Political economy grew out of the networking and interweaving relationships of wealth, territory, and population. This type of economy was/is conjoined with economic intervention by the government (Foucault, 1994). The state was created in such a way as to integrate the individual in a particular form but also to shape that individual into a ‘new form’ (Foucault, 1994).

Governance through Policy and Language

Power is embedded in local as well as national governance systems (Moss & Petrie, 2002). The governance of children can be traced back to the sixteenth century (Foucault, 1994). The increase in different forms of institutionalization of childhood has the potential to lead to more stringent means of governing children. The possibility of this is very real today in the United States as Early Childhood Education and Care is

becoming the focus of increased standards and accountability measures which require the application of specific technologies to achieve desired results (Dahlberg & Moss, 2005; Brown, 2007). Government does refer to the managing of individual conduct as is the case with the government of children and families (Foucault, 1994).

When considering policy at any level it is important to examine both social processes and social context (Wallat & Piazza, 1997). The words and statements utilized in policy reports do not merely reference fixed objects acting as signifiers and signs but rather can be seen as “forms of social practice” (Wallat & Piazza, 1997, p. 4).

Assumptions about families and markets inundate discussions of ECEC policy and those assumptions are gendered (Stambach & David, 2005). The particular child created by policymaker theory has a significant impact on policy, practice, and provision (Moss & Petrie, 2002). Policy is embedded with “particular notions of families and employment while focusing on the needs of certain sectors” (Stambach & David, 2005, p. 1653). “For every discourse that breeds fault and guilt is a discourse of authority and arrogance” (Minh-Ha, 1989, p. 11).

Frances O’Connell Rust (2003) reminds us policy is derived from a context of need. It more often than not becomes a ‘response to a problem’ (p. 154). All too often, research in the policy realm is inextricably tied to definitions of “the problem” constructed by policymakers (Popkewitz & Lindblad, 2000). Whether a policy is appropriate or valuable is determined by the assumptions held by policymakers and the degree to which the policy developed accurately defines the problem.

“Shifts in power and the reframing of discourse used by the various administrations that govern the US are visible yet subtle. As each

administration locates itself politically, words are constructed, meanings are deconstructed, and policy issues that resonate with vast populations are used and misused to create positionings that facilitate particular agendas”

(Ortiz, Miller, & Cannella, 2005, p. 2).

The strongest power is that which is invisible or power whose effects are invisible (Charkiewicz, 2007). Policymakers as with many other people tend to make their theories invisible often even to the individual. This leads to a problematic position that does not constitute democracy or rigor (Moss & Petrie, 2002).

Stambach and David (2005) discuss how policy analysts and some researchers use symbolic language when linking markets to males and poor to mothers. There is also now a tendency to dismiss gender issues and place emphasis on race, class, and what can be considered a traditional family which, while descriptive, still reinscribes or, creates a normative set of individuals and portrays a particular social order that is not accurate. Categorization, naming, problematizing, and calculating all serve as technologies of power creating individuals who need to be controlled in one manner or another (Charkiewicz, 2007; Cannella & Swadener, 2005).

Foucault discusses how knowledge and reality are created by language practices which directly impact what it is we as humans think we know. The ways in which we view the world are inscribed into methods of communication as well as language practices themselves. “Communicating is always a way of acting upon another person or persons” (Foucault, 2000, p 337). “While no identifiable individual or group creates a dominant discourse for themselves, the ascendance of particular language constructions creates conditions of power” (Cannella & Bailey, 1999, p. 13). The role of language is

crucial in power relations (Foucault, 1994). It is discourse that creates Truth regimes. These truth regimes serve to regulate individuals and groups. This discourse is utilized by others and the self and directly impacts how we govern (Moss & Petrie, 2002).

There are other risks including a push for “uniformity of thought and practice” as a singular discourse begins/continues to resound within the field. Language is privileged in Western culture and research and this privileging is a colonialist tactic (Viruru & Cannella, 2006; Matua & Swadener, 2005). This western, Anglo-American discourse produced first in English and then translated to colonize the rest of the world is set within political liberalism and a growing economy. It is predicated upon developmental psychology and stems from a “positivistic and empirical analytic paradigm” (p. vi, Dahlberg & Moss, 2005). Central to disciplinary power is an ability to normalize and order through categorization and classification processes (Moss & Petrie, 2002; Foucault, 2000). One of the foundational premises of development is the importance of allowing everyone to live or become a part of the American Dream in order to improve their lives and this is rarely challenged (Charkiewicz, 2007). Power does not immediately act on individuals, but rather on their actions.

Foucault (2000) views the implementation of power as a “management of possibilities” (p. 341). Foucault discusses power's ability to shape both the individual and the collective through both truth and knowledge claims and the utilization of specific technologies to do so (Moss & Petrie, 2002). This prevailing discourse in the United States perpetuates the regime of truth that Early Childhood Education and Care is a fundamental technology that can allow for social regulatory control as well as economic success. Policy issues have increasingly turned to economic discussions regarding justice

and equity as well as the school's role to produce a workforce that will be competitive (Popkewitz & Lindblad, 2000). Such a view places the younger human beings in our society as pawns in a political chess game where they are seen as the redemptive agents for current problems at both the state and national levels (Dahlberg & Moss, 2005). Early Childhood Education and Care is now being looked to as the field to create this new citizen (Popkewitz & Lindblad, 2000). Dahlberg and Moss (2005, p. vii) see this discourse as "instrumental in rationality and technical in practice, and it seeks closure through searching for the answer to one question: what works?" The study of governmentality provides a method for the analysis of political technologies which serve to produce flexible, calculating, fit subjects who are central components of market and state restructuring. Such bodies easily adapt to new forms of capital (Charkiewicz, 2007).

Decentralization of Government

Theoretically, decentralized governmental systems allow local governments to have a major role in governance are advantageous. Control at the local level allows the citizens to have broader choices regarding services and taxation. Multiple local governments are said to encourage competition thus positively impacting efficiency as well as effectiveness of individual governmental units. At the local level, public policies can be experimented with perhaps encouraging adoption by other local units. Finally, due to the fact local governments are locally elected, there is a greater chance of them being responsive to the needs of the community (Cothran, 2002).

Decentralization of government has become a demand worldwide; however, there are some serious drawbacks which hold the ability to do more harm than good

(Prud'homme, 1995; Cothran, 2002). Societal welfare and efficiency may be negatively impacted due to the ripple effect of surrounding jurisdictions actions. There are also potential economic efficiency problems that impact communities when services are fragmented rather than being consolidated at the state level. Equity problems may also be problematic. Issues such as the quality of education or access to such education are directly impacted by the wealth or lack thereof of surrounding regions. These problems are heightened in poor jurisdictions whose tax rates tend to be higher than those in wealthier districts. Thus, the impact is doubled in poor areas. A system that is more centralized usually does not have such disparities in services or taxation among localities (Cothran, 2002). It is important to consider how decentralization involves not just transfer of power from central to local governments but also from the “central government to local bureaucracies” (Prud'homme, 1995, p. 209).

Citizen Initiatives

There is a long history of initiatives in the United States. Early in the 1900's the first comprehensive community initiatives (CCI's) began with social reformers establishing settlement houses. While many benefitted from services, there were also corresponding problems. A typical settlement house was both funded and operated by people not living in the community who neglected to include key community players (Stagner & Duran, 1997). The 1930's saw the reemergence of neighborhood programs as did the 1960's war on poverty (Vinovskis, 2005). Community action agencies were created to federally accomplish neighborhood employment enhancement and the preparation of the poor both young and old to seize new opportunities. Community Action Agencies (CAAs) were created to provide new services but had issues when

working with other service agencies. There is little data regarding these initiatives (Stagner & Duran, 1997).

The late 1980's and early 1990's saw a rise in new CCI's that also focused on participation of communities and multi-faceted service provision. However, they also sought to be: family and/or community focused, flexible, comprehensive, universally available, preventive, and accountable, inclusive of citizen participation, coordinated, integrated, collaborative, and responsive to individual difference (Stagner & Duran, 1997, p. 134).

Direct democracy has experienced resurgence in the United States and unlike representative democracy; it allows either legislators or citizens to have their proposals on a ballot which in turn can be directly voted on by the public. When such proposals are presented by citizens then they become known as initiatives or if put forth by legislators then they are referred to as referendums (Bali, 2008). Lascher, Hagen, and Rochlin (1996) feel citizen initiatives are increasing in popularity due to the public's growing distrust of both politicians and governments.

Two common arguments for initiatives are they cause government officials to respond to citizen interests and the initiative process encourages participation by the public in the democratic process. Citizen involvement allows for a semblance of public control over policy and encourages citizen participation in the project of public policy making (Lascher, Hagen, & Rochlin, 1996).

The domination of the ballot initiative process by highly organized interest groups has been well documented (Lascher, Hagen, & Rochlin, 1996). While existing to create a more democratic process for citizens, the mechanism itself has several barriers.

Barriers among states vary but there are commonalities. The most common barrier is acquisition of sufficient signatures to put an initiative on the ballot. When the appropriate number of signatures have been obtained, the huge task of acquiring adequate monetary sources to campaign for and frame the issue begin, thus the expense tends to dissuade the average citizen (Lascher, Hagen, & Rochlin, 1996).

Minor Politics

A politics of the local can be conducted with many issues including childhood to open up a place to discuss as well as debate issues and encourage the support/buy in of the public. Such critical practice is necessary in a democracy (Moss & Petrie, 2002). Moss and Petrie (2002) cite Nikolas Rose and his ideas regarding ‘minor or minority politics’. Rose feels such practices created in the local allow for greater possibilities to engage in meaningful dialogues/relationships relevant to the specific location. Such minor politics are devoid of the arrogance of our current political practices. Since such undertakings are experimental, modest, and cautious, they are focused on the present/the everyday, not with some point in a future program or miniscule details that distract from the overarching issue at hand. Through exposure of particular power relations, spaces may be opened for human agency and autonomy (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2000). These can be new spaces open to movement, change, and open arenas for the voices of many (Moss & Petrie, 2002).

Local struggles and resistance to power give space to more democratic processes as they deal with the everyday life issues involving all citizens including children. Fonow and Cook (2005) state, “...resistance and power reside in many different locations and arrangements and that agency is always an ongoing, changing accomplishment” (p.

2224). Moss and Petrie (2002) argue it is these very spaces which would include public provision for all children as well as a locale for such minor politics to occur. This would be a direct challenge to the already dominant political regimes. It offers new possibilities for thinking and doing what is considered other and directly challenges/problematises what has been seen as normal/acceptable. “Maybe, after all, the state is more than a composite reality and a mythicized abstraction, whose importance is a lot more limited than many of us think” (Foucault, 2000, p. 220).

A micro-politics view needs to be taken by governments to consider the profound impacts of the wage gap by matching parental and child needs in disadvantaged areas with policy settings. Such a view centers on the young child as an individual as well as considers their immediate family (Queensland Government, 2006). For years the focus of intervention has been aimed at children who exhibit “developmental delays” and often encompasses socially or economically disadvantaged children.

Early childhood policy has been and continues to be a key issue in social policy (Queensland Government, 2006; Dahlberg and Moss, 2005). Any initiative related to intervention needs to consider how parents employed full time or in training/educational programs or whose schedules involve non-standard hours will be able to access the program. Sure Start in the United Kingdom is a large scale intervention that seeks a balance between national standards and being responsive to the conditions in local communities (Queensland Government, 2006).

Are parents’ and teachers’ desires for particular policies considered? The participation of children with regard to the provisions they desire as well as the world they are a part of is important if minor politics is to achieve ‘critical democratic practice’.

The development of a completely different cultural climate would have to occur here in the US in order for children's participation to become an everyday aspect of democracy (Moss & Petrie, 2002).

One problem with many countries, including the United States and Australia is that the investment is more often than not reactive instead of proactive. In the United States we are failing to provide funds for children and families before they encounter difficulties (Friedman, 2005). Policy interest in recent years has begun to focus on locational disadvantage. A perception of exclusion and crime makes disadvantaged locales seem to be dangerous places or areas where 'problem' populations are concentrated despite the data not being available to support views of this nature (Queensland Government, 2006). Most policy involving young children in the United States is fragmented due to overlapping functions and internal strife found at all levels of governance (O'Connell Rust, 2003). Poverty and equity issues have been "studied, organized, and packaged for public consumption in a calculative manner which in turn serves to increase bio-political controls (Charkiewicz, 2007, p. 3).

For years the focus of intervention has been aimed at the children from these locations who exhibit "developmental delays" and often encompasses socially or economically disadvantaged children. However, policy interests are slowly changing to intervention measures that are pro-active with a desire to enhance development rather than working from a deficit mentality of a need to lessen the gap (Queensland Government, 2006). Children with disabilities as well as those identified as at risk have historically been the targets of early intervention. The majority of early childhood policy in the US has been developed for education targeting the poor. Typically these policies

are centered on education that does not consider contexts such as culture, social/economic surroundings, and the complexities/diversities of families (O’Connell Rust, 2003). The interweaving of gender, class, and race are as significant factors in policy creation as are “gendered identity, (re) productivity, and consumption” (Stambach & David, 2005, p. 1652). A politics of the local values difference and recognizes it as important relative to a politics of transformation. Difference is what allows us to move meaningfully through new spaces toward social change and it certainly does not imply inferiority (Hesse-Biber, 2007).

The greater number of risk factors a child experiences, the greater likelihood there is that they will experience poor outcomes (Stebbins & Knitzer, 2007, p. 6). Early intervention has also been linked to mental health and early detection of emotional disorders (Queensland Government, 2006). Reimbursement for diagnosis of mental health problems is rare. Only five states do so. There are only six states providing early intervention for children identified as at-risk for developmental delays (Stebbins & Knitzer, 2007).

It is misguided to think that with the appropriate amount of/availability of public funds for both intervention and research that as a government and body of research professionals, we will have an effect on educational, social, and health policy that endures (Wallat & Piazza, 1997). The answers do not lie in just pumping larger sums of money into early childhood programs and services randomly. This will not repair the problems that exist systemically. Agencies first need to work together cooperatively as well as in conjunction with community organizations and families (Queensland Government, 2006).

While each state's population of young children is unique, solutions to the challenges they face with regard to policy are not. Policymakers consider the "three legged stool" (p.7) regarding the basis of support for future growth. The legs of the stool are positive experiences with early learning, good health, and a family that is economically secure and nurturing (Stebbins & Knitzer, 2007). Linking of services is purported to provide better point of delivery coordination so that duplication or excess servicing does not occur. Needs are not met in isolation but rather holistically. Keys to the success of such programs are the ability to be responsive to children above all, their families, and society (Queensland Government, 2006). The questions should not just be solely about poverty. They need to address caregivers and what is necessary for children to lead healthy lives as citizens and human beings (O'Connell Rust, 2003).

Policymakers and governments need to consider a number of issues including, but not limited, to the following:

1. What is the government able to do in the early years, to support both child and parent/s in order to assist in increasing that child's chances of living a happy, successful, and productive life?
2. What is the impact of the wage gap (between the wealthiest and poorest communities) on the course of a person's life?
3. Are universal programs or targeted programs (directed to a specific cultural or disadvantaged group) what governments should be considering?

(Queensland Government, 2006)

The government of Queensland (2006) has found the following components of programs to have been successful in the past:

1. Ensurance of access, affordability, and availability of high quality care.
2. The co-location of a variety of children's/family services when possible.
3. Coalition building among local providers, whether government or non-government related in order to deliver more responsive, better coordinated services.
4. Making sure the mechanisms are in place that will ensure quality services.
5. Embracing a holistic approach to the child and family that meets the needs related to education, safety, health, parenting, and care giving.

Policy for the early years as well as the family must address the following key issues: mental health in childhood, youth and crime, literacy and educational outcomes, health issues, abuse and neglect/safety, and an aging population as well as dropping birth rates. In order to meet these challenges: Spending will need to increase, a shift in thinking needs to occur, the piecemeal approach does not work, singular interventions are not cost effective nor do they make a significant difference in an individual's life, the development of policy needs to undergo a paradigm shift from best practice to early intervention and prevention, services need to be broad across communities and the policy initiatives can no longer focus on programs catering to single issues (Queensland Government, 2006). Three kinds of policies can assist parents in their relationships with their children: Those that lower economic strains, those that include both health and mental health treatment provisions, and those which provide adequate time for parents to be with their infant children (Stebbins & Knitzer, 2007).

Sadly, the US does not have a national child-care policy. O’Connell Rust (2003) cites Olson who describes ours as a ‘non-system’ where responsibility for locating, monitoring, and financing early learning falls on the family. Stebbins and Knitzer (2007) have compiled a summary of early childhood policy patterns emerging across the United States. They feel that we are in a time when policymakers may help to “improve the odds” for younger human beings regarding provisions of opportunities as well as basic supports which will encourage healthy development in conjunction with school readiness. The policies tracked in this report are those that promote healthy development, effective parenting, and high-quality Early Childhood Education and Care. However, the reports data is limited because of gaps in information, time periods, an inability to answer access questions, for example, the number of eligible for childcare subsidies in each state or the number of students entering kindergarten who have not been a part of a “formal early care experience.” National organizations are being looked to for support in influencing national health policies (Queensland Government, 2006).

Health and nutrition are increasingly becoming a part of the policy spotlight with regard to young children. The majority of states in the U.S. offer provisions for public health insurance to low-income pregnant women and children but most do not include parents. Arizona is one of only four states that cover parents who are at 200% of the Federal Poverty Level. Half of the states exclude single parents who receive Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) funds from their working requirements until the families youngest child is one (Stebbins & Knitzer, 2007). There are 10.8 million children in this country under 18 who lack health insurance (O’Connell Rust, 2003). While 80% of the states provide low income families with children’s public health

insurance, many are not getting the appropriate health and dental screenings pediatricians call for (Stebbins & Knitzer, 2007).

In the United States, a large number of low socioeconomic status children are not a part of early childhood programs and most significant is the limited access to services for infants and toddlers (Stebbins & Knitzer, 2007). To be considered “low income”, a family (of 3 or 4) income must fall at \$34,340.00 or below, which is twice the official poverty level (\$17,170.00) (Stebbins & Knitzer, 2007). Even when a family’s income is below the federal poverty level, less than ½ of the states in the U.S. exempt them from personal income tax. There are only six states in our nation that have paid maternity provisions (Stebbins & Knitzer, 2007).

It takes two times the federal poverty level to provide for just the basic necessities and often more than that in order to reach low-income level, a single parent with two children would have to work 35 hours a week at a wage of close to \$19.00/hour (more than three times the federal minimum wage). In this nation, 42% of children are members of families deemed low-income or below, this is the equivalent of ten million children (Stebbins & Knitzer, 2007). In Arizona, 59% of children under 3 are members of low-income families (Stebbins & Knitzer, 2007). Arkansas ranks 49th in family income yet it has still put forth a program that would give 60% of the children in the state provision (Urahn & Watson, 2007). While many states have increased access to healthcare, 50% have reduced the eligibility criteria for subsidies tied to child care (Stebbins & Knitzer, 2007). Over twenty years of data have shown that young children from low income families with access to high quality programs are more apt to remain in school, attend college, and become successful as adults (Stebbins & Knitzer, 2007).

Policies are a means of working toward increased equity. The manner in which states allocate funding and create requisite criteria to do so directly influences who is able to access support and who is not (Stebbins & Knitzer, 2007). Policymakers are influenced by the number of children of immigrant families, the prevalence of poverty, and other risks found in their particular states which influence healthy development (Stebbins & Knitzer, 2007).

Access to quality Early Childhood Education and Care and pre-kindergarten programs also varies widely from state to state. While access is growing as of 2006, only 3% of three year olds and 20% of four year olds were enrolled in state funded programs, many of which are still only part day/partial year (Stebbins & Knitzer, 2007). In 2007, Illinois was the first state to enact legislation that gave provision for pre-K to all of the state's three and four year olds. The program was set in 2006 and aims to serve all by 2011 (Urahn & Watson, 2007). The governor of Tennessee desires to have all four year olds covered and his state saw a 57% expansion in 2007 (Urahn & Watson, 2007). In 2006, legislation was unanimously passed in Massachusetts for pre-K provision for all (Urahn & Watson, 2007).

Thirty-nine states fund some type of pre-K program but the investment range is broad. Some states increase funding to their Head Start programs rather than creating new state-funded pre-K programs (Stebbins & Knitzer, 2007). States should not draw funds away from an existing program in order to fund another (Urahn & Watson, 2007). Access still remains a problem and it is even more significant for children in low-income families. Even more disheartening is the fact that access does not guarantee a subsidy. Five states have waiting lists due to insufficient funds. Rhode Island is the only state that

has made an entitlement of child care subsidies for those families who are eligible (Stebbins & Knitzer, 2007). This report demonstrates a variety of policies that only offer support to varied parts of a child but not the child as a whole. Where states provide increased funding for pre-K they are reducing income eligibility for subsidized child care. Improving the Odds for Young Children suggests that policy choices need to address the whole child and family economic security needs to be joined with early childhood investment. There needs to be a significant increase in access to services and supports, a larger investment needs to be made in infants and toddlers (Stebbins & Knitzer, 2007). Arizona is cited in the recent developments section for Proposition 203 (the tobacco tax). The report calls it a “targeted strategy for sustained investments in young children as well as families with regard to increased funding” (Stebbins & Knitzer, 2007, p. 13).

Current licensing standards do not necessarily equate with “high quality” care. Arizona is one of the states that do not meet licensing standards recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics, NAEYC, and the National Research Council. These standards recommend one adult for every four, eighteen month olds with a maximum class size of eight and a ratio of one adult for every ten four-year olds with a maximum class size of twenty (Stebbins & Knitzer, 2007). The success of outcomes depends on the integration of services which are universal and include both targeted and specialized assistance as well as the drawing together of services to meet the needs of child and family. Those programs that follow through the primary years and provide the most intensive intervention early show the best sustained effects over the long term (Queensland Government, 2006).

Other nations have implemented policies where the care as well as the education of young children is essential components of a robust economy (O'Connell Rust, 2003). The Victorian government sees a focus on early childhood as a wise investment. The government currently has an infrastructure that offers a variety of services for young children. The desire is to continue to build a universal program of services that is more comprehensive as well as inclusive (Program Overview, 2007). The Best Start program is similar to US early childhood programs in that it falls under the auspices of both the Department of Education and the Department of Human Services. These departments in turn work jointly with several other departments (i.e.: Industry and Regional Development, Department of Justice, and the Department of Infrastructure) (Program Overview, 2007). Best Start is an inclusive governmental early intervention and prevention program that seeks to improve learning, health, development, and safety of children 0-8 in Victoria. The central component of the project is the partnership established between local government agencies and the Victorian government. The Best Start project aims to enhance the life choices of all of its children through a strong, universal system that encourages community involvement in all areas of the project from design to evaluation (Program Overview, 2007). Outcome goals are utilized to help guide rather than "prescribe" the efforts of the community with a goal of empowering the community. Through consultation within the community, data can be used to guide projects and efforts to better serve local families and children (Queensland Government, 2006).

Best Start utilizes community facilitators who work with both parents and the local service providers in determining communal needs regarding improved utilization of

the early childhood services that are already in place (Queensland Government, 2006). The government sees the community partnerships providing necessary activities but doing so in different ways as family needs will differ from community to community. This is the first principle of service (Program Overview, 2007). The fulfillment of the goals of the Best Start program will require time and will have to be implemented in phases. Phase One began in 2001 and consisted of project planning. Phase Two was initiated in 2002 and dealt with establishing the selection process for interested communities. It also included a demonstration project, expansion of consultation, and the finalization of what the formal evaluation process would be and then its implementation (Program Overview, 2007).

What is equitable is a question that comes up often when the government is a service provider to some groups and not others. Programs such as Head Start raise the question of legitimate exclusion, such as “near –poor” children who could also benefit. The concept of “drawing the line” becomes a very important policy question. Universal approaches to Early Childhood Education and Care are also considered “population based interventions” (Queensland Government, 2006).

Services that are aimed at early childhood and target specific groups are not always the best policy. If a family has not engaged in services through pregnancy and birth, there is a possibility of delayed intervention, thus decreasing possibilities of circumventing possible problems before they arise. Also there is the more damaging aspect that results from such policies and that is the effect of labeling. Universal programs offered to all individuals and families provide the opportunity for better support or additional support if necessitated (Queensland Government, 2006).

There are also difficulties related to policy decisions involving universal support rather than targeted interventions. In the long run, targeted support will not remedy a particular situation if the larger systemic issues have not been dealt with (Queensland Government, 2006). Governments have done a poor job historically with targeting. Education falls on a continuum that begins at birth and involves factors both inside and outside of formal education settings (O’Connell Rust, 2003). Younger human beings should be seen as citizens of their particular locale who as human beings have a diverse range of needs (Queensland Government, 2006).

Global Policy and Program Trends

Kamerman (2005) conducted a study of the current policy and program trends particular to Early Childhood Education and Care in advanced, industrialized countries. She identified three trends with regard to ECEC policy in both the European Union and in particular countries included in the OECD which have been referred to as “advanced industrialized countries.” Two contributing factors to this push to bring ECEC front and center in the aforementioned countries are the increase of women in the labor market and second, the support as well as the admonition that group interactions at an early age are positive precursors to social, cognitive, and emotional growth, often enabling young children who have been identified as disadvantaged to compensate for and overcome early inexperience.

1. Many have goals for very specific expansion targets within the field by 2010.
2. Creation of parental leave policies that are both paid and extended not only to reduce need for infant and toddler care but also to provide

support for parents who wish to be nurturers/caregivers.

3. To alter current governmental configurations so that ECEC falls under the umbrella of education rather than being under split governance. For example: Social and health welfare as well as education.

When policymakers address the issue, it is often attributed to the increasing numbers of women in the workforce. Why doesn't it just have to do with being a basic human right rather than being tied to women? While targets have not been reached, there has been significant expansion of services and provisions of ECEC. In nine of twenty-five European Union countries as well as Iceland and Norway, 90% of the goal to supply services to age four through compulsory school age has been met. With regard to the OECD countries, approximately 90% of children age four and under are enrolled in free or much reduced cost ECEC services. It should be noted that the programs may or may not be offered for a full work day but the average school day in these countries does tend to be longer than in the United States (Kammerman, 2005) although there are exceptions such as Mexico and Africa (Swadener, personal conversation).

Many countries are hoping that increasing parental leave provisions including both job protected and paid leave will meet the needs of those with children three and under. It is these policies that directly impact what services will be needed for out of home care for infants and toddlers (Kammerman, 2005). Leave policies vary greatly from country to country in all aspects including eligibility, length, benefit levels, and flexibility. A directive issued by the European Union states that its member countries are required to provide a minimum of fourteen weeks paid maternity leave and if a child has

a disability, then eighteen weeks. This leave may then be ‘supplemented’ with an additional thirteen week period of unpaid leave for each parent, again eighteen weeks if a disability is present. Duration and benefit levels are crucial as they serve to replace a large portion of a parent’s wages. Almost a full year of parental leave may be found in the Nordic countries in conjunction with a benefit level that very nearly compensates for all wages. There are several Eastern European, European Union, and Central European countries with two to three years of extended parental leave. However, there is a significant difference in monetary support in these cases (Kammerman, 2005).

Since the 1970’s the Nordic countries have placed a priority on policy integration regarding ECEC. Early on, the move was to create a social welfare system of care that was free-standing. New Zealand, in 1986, was the first country to place the child care policy responsibility under the umbrella of the education department. In 1996, Sweden followed suit with Spain and regions of northern Italy developing similar policies. Finally in 1998, England and Scotland did so as well. The reasoning behind the changes in New Zealand was to better integrate care with education while improving quality as well as increasing the financial backing of the government. In the cases of England and Scotland, reparations were sought to fragmented systems in the hopes of better serving disadvantaged children. All was done in attempt to reduce poverty (Kammerman, 2005).

Sweden already had an integrated system of education and care, so their focus became improvement of an existing system. Their hopes were that the schools would place greater emphasis on quality while the early childhood programs would adopt more educational practices. There were worries that ECEC would become ‘schoolified’ (Kammerman, 2005).

ECEC as Economic Development

Since 1945, education has played a crucial role in the United States push for economic growth. The push has increased with the globalization of the marketplace as nations seek advantages over competition which they are now defining through the quality of education and training of educators. States are heavily emphasizing the work and economy relationship demanding a workforce that is both highly skilled and highly educated (Popkewitz & Lindblad, 2000).

Many countries including the United States see early childhood development as a crucial form of education based upon research. Research has shown that ECEC is grossly underfunded but there are now many individuals in both the policy and business arenas who feel that given the appropriate management and funding the returns it will yield in both private and public sectors would exceed the required investment (Lynch, 2004; Rolnick & Grunewald, 2003). There is a prevailing discourse in the United States business sector as well as ECEC that emphasizes the social responsibilities of corporations. This discourse acts as a reinforcing agent of the current political agenda thus superseding the possibility for alternatives regarding economic policies (Charkiewicz, 2007).

The Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis feels that education as a publicly subsidized institution has shown convincing results economically for a long time but it is not until recently that an “economic case” has been made for early childhood development (Rolnick & Grunewald, 2003). Members of the business community see ECD as a means of creating future economic success through human capital investment. They maintain that a highly educated workforce is the key to a strong future state

economy (Rolnick & Grunewald, 2003). Charkiewicz (2007) found in her NGO research that arguments for women's integration based on human rights were given support with the presentation of cost-benefit analyses just as we are now seeing with ECEC. The platform has been constructed and is now being built upon for a business case and the right of a citizen takes a backseat to the economic development driving the machine. The multinational corporations that steer politicians as well as policy appear to feel a need to view young children as investments perceiving their value as objects in the future labor market.

Human capital ideas presently underwriting neoliberal educational policy fetishize education and reduce the pursuit of knowledge to the logic of commodification tied to future employment opportunities, to schoolings' power of economic return, to investment in human labor. To ensure favorable returns, education slavishly prostrates itself before the dictates of the labor marketplace and the Brain Lords of the corporate elite.

(McLaren, 2005, p. 95)

Rolnick and Grunewald (2003) and Lynch (2004) urge policymakers to follow the literature and invest in early childhood development because it will yield the highest returns for the public sector. They suggest that it be considered by both state and local governments as a measure of economic development. Rolnick and Grunewald (2003) also propose the creation of a foundation to provide government subsidies so that all children ages three and four living in poverty could attend a high quality program. Government, businesses, private foundations, and individual donors could provide the economic backing necessary for such a program. The initial outlay of 1.5 billion would

have 7% yearly return and if invested in corporate bonds, would serve to cover all costs due to 105 million in annual earnings.

This outlook has devastating effects upon both policy organization and provision in several countries including our own. Entwined with the economic sense of ECEC is that of early care and education being a human right (OECD, 2006). However, this too can be problematic as a discourse of human rights engenders a desire for justice, equity, and security. Human rights are arguably an important tool but when they are essentialized and placed within a political framework and accepted as universal, problems occur. The rights of all humans should be considered as relevant, significant tools to induce change but that is all (Charkiewicz, 2007).

According to the Queensland Government (2006), governments around the world cannot disregard the increasing scholarly evidence with regard to both the social and financial rewards gained through investment in programs dedicated to the early years of life. The government of Queensland (2006) feels that the benefits of prevention and early intervention policies are linked to both the social and economic realms. Included in the social are stronger more interconnected communities as well as improved education and health. Within the economic sector there are the realized benefits of lower unemployment, a stronger economy, and increased productivity.

Neoliberalism tends to emphasize the importance of education and educational policy operating as sub sectors of the economy (McLaren, 2005). This is not to say that significant contribution from the public is not necessary for equitable, well sourced systems but it does imply a need for financing without strings attached where funds are

distributed to all young children and their families so that collaboration rather than cooptation becomes the norm.

Looking ahead to further policy changes commonly sought, it seems that many countries see quality, affordability, readiness, and Early Childhood Education and Care as a right (Kamerman, 2005). Bloch and colleagues, among others, have applied the term neoliberalism to the current prevailing discourse in ECEC. Neoliberalism here is both a contradictory and confusing hybrid of classical and modern liberalism, social conservatism, and libertarianism. Neoliberalism calls for deregulation, privatization, accountability, the operation of governments as businesses, a decentralization of government functions, and a prevailing adherence to the logics of the free market, in conjunction with the pushing of social policies through public policy (Anderson-Levitt, 2003; Morgen, 2001; Swadener & Wachira, 2003). The discourse of neoliberalism moves through the generalized “global politics of educational borrowing and lending” (Steiner-Khamsi, 2004) but critically through models of Euro-American ECEC promoted by the World Bank, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nation Children’s Fund (UNICEF), international agreements, requirements related to funding, and a host of nongovernmental organizations (Nagasawa & Swadener, in press; Rana 2012; Urban, 2007; Swadener & Wachira; Penn, 2000)

Arizona Charter Schools

Garn’s study of Arizona Charter School policy implementation (1999) reviewed McDonnell and Elmore’s four distinct methods that can be employed by policymakers to help gain more successful results in preservation of initial policy intentions. Money could be allocated when specific conditions are satisfied, rules could be set, authority

could be given to specified agencies or individuals, and investments in ‘future capacity’ could be made. Other methods could utilize publicity and investigation on the part of legislators following up on implementation processes.

Garn’s study (1999), further “sought to clarify the nexus between policy development and program enactment” (p. 3) by looking specifically at the process of implementation. Data for the study came from document analysis, focused interviews with both those implementing policy and those who created it, as well as observation of key figures. First he looked at how Arizona’s ‘legislative insiders’ communicated the charter school policy intentions and how they also defined Arizona’s “problem”. Next, he wanted to see whether the current program had produced results that pleased policymakers. His last desire was to discover the manner in which original intent was kept preserved by policymakers. The final research question dealt with how policymakers in Arizona maintained their original legislative intentions during the implementation process despite the fact that many of the mandates were subverted.

Garn (1999) found that those people implementing policy per the statute were those who held positions of power. Regardless of the fact that the intentions of policymakers were clearly stated, there were no guarantees that those at the state level would either promote or support their interests through implementation. The state of Arizona has a history of discontent between legislators and those at the State Department of Education (Garn, 1999). This ill will has been predicated on individuals at the State Department feeling they are continually asked to do more with less while legislators at the state level have felt that policy intentions are often misinterpreted by bureaucrats.

State agencies such as Arizona Department of Education have experienced policies in the past which increased oversight responsibilities without increased funding. The Auditor General's office has had the same issues with regard to the oversight of public entities utilizing tax-payer dollars as outlined (Garn, 1999). Garn (1999) cites Wohlstetter who argues that educational reforms and their success are directly linked to both self-interests and political agendas of their respective legislative sponsors. In the case of Arizona charter schools, Lisa Graham-Keegan, as State Superintendent of Public Instruction, was in a position to ensure that staff members "did not misconstrue" (Garn, 1999, p. 10) policy aims. Nadine Basha has had this same advantage. "Similar to creating the state boards and appointing handpicked individuals, local implementers were recruited" (Garn, 1999, p 11). Garn (1999) found that for policy implementation to be successful, there were four influential variables: will, communication, bureaucratic structure, and finally financial support.

Policy implementation research shows at both the local and state levels, those implementing policies often alter or undermine legislative intentions (Garn, 1999). While intentions of legislators may be explicit, there is no guarantee that said intentions will be carried out or remain as originally conceived through the process of implementation (Garn, 1999). Those delivering policy often are at odds with or do not fully understand the purpose of legislative intentions and thus the result is undermining of policy (Garn, 1999). Garn (1999) cites Odden who feels responses at the local level are more often than not contradictory to the federal or state initiative. Policy initiatives originating at high governmental levels are not likely to be carried out by educators or complied with whether it be in regulations, program design, rules, or expectations.

Critical Discourse Analysis in Educational Policy Research

Ketchebaw, White, de Almeida, and Armstrong (2006) analyzed Canadian policy discourse with regard to racialization and the assumptions made as a result of early childhood policies which served to steer early childhood services. Early childhood policies are critically analyzed in the literature especially those related to welfare reform (Swadener, 2000), however, the authors found that the assumptions resulting from the policies are not. Their purpose was to use critical literacy with relation to race to “interrogate” policies. Through various interpretive methods including critical discourse analysis and post structural questioning, the authors conducted a review of the policy documents that had served to guide principles of ECEC in British Columbia. They emphasize critical analysis of policy discourse related to ECEC is important because it is more often than not laden with discourses of normalization which are more often than not taken for granted.

Popkewitz and Lindblad (2000) highlight research in relation to ECEC policy tends to accept the norms and definitions that policies create. Ketchebaw, White, de Almeida, and Armstrong (2006) sought to follow Lee and Lutz through use of a “critical literacy of race” to challenge those accepted norms and definitions. They also saw themselves as “interpretative bricoleurs” due to the fact they did not emphasize one particular methodology for interpretation but rather multiple methodological tactics and tools.

The study reviewed documents created by the British Columbia Ministry of Child and Family Development (MCFD) during 2004 and 2005 that served to outline objectives and goals implemented in the creation as well as the operation of British Columbia’s

early childhood programs. Documents analyzed were speeches, pamphlets, annual reports, presentations, briefing notes, and papers. The focus of analysis was on the particular discourses represented within all documents. Theoretical and empirical secondary sources were also employed to allow for further insight.

September of 2005 brought an agreement between the federal government of Canada and the provincial government of British Columbia for five years that was to serve in increased coordination between various governmental entities handling ECEC in British Columbia. Assorted ministries were to work in conjunction with MCFD to develop policy, fund, and deliver programs related to ECEC. January 2006 brought the cancellation of this agreement due to changes within the government.

The authors report on three discourses which were not unified in any way and resulted in many contradictions. The first discourse deals with “multiculturalism” and aboriginal categories. The system in British Columbia is divided into three informal areas which were found to be reflective of a larger discourse in the area: the dominant course of early childhood development, aboriginal early childhood development and a loose system that work with “multicultural communities”. When categories are created, they have a tendency to both “collapse and erase the complexity and heterogeneity within, across, and amongst” (Pacini-Ketchabaw, White, de Almeida, & Armstrong, 2006) particular groups while also remaining ignorant of the differences that exist in cultural contexts.

Another problem encountered was the categories themselves were created as “deviations from the norm.” (Pacini-Ketchabaw, White, de Almeida, & Armstrong, 2006). The policy and state discourses regarding multiculturalism were not equal,

neutral, objective, or a benefit to all, rather they served to build hierarchies of ideal subjects/citizens that were racialized, gendered, and ordered. Based upon Foucaultian theories of the formation of the ideal citizen, the policies and discourses falling under multiculturalism serve as technologies to create the model citizen (Pacini-Ketchabaw, White, de Almeida, & Armstrong, 2006).

The second discourse analyzed was of the population health model meant to include “all children”. The system in British Columbia created a discourse that became dominant with regard to what was considered to be the “ideal early childhood development discourse for ‘all’ children” (Pacini-Ketchabaw, White, de Almeida, & Armstrong, 2006). Children in this discourse were constructed as either normal or deviating from the norm with regard to health. Discourses found were those constructed around the knowledge various participating agencies had related to healthy growth and development from 0-6 and how that knowledge was utilized to determine when early intervention was necessary to allow for healthy development. The authors determined these discourses were problematic because they were based upon assumptions about universal child development. Notions of universal child development serve to silence young children and families, especially those who are deemed immigrants, Aboriginal, or minorities. The solutions from participating agencies appeared to be particular populations needed “more” services/intervention strategies beyond what a typical child required. Finally the population health model perpetuated the discourse of all children assuming colorblindness (Pacini-Ketchabaw, White, de Almeida, & Armstrong, 2006).

The third discourse studied was the use of culture for a unit of analysis. The categories of Aboriginality and multiculturalism were embedded in discourses which

served to guide policies that assumed homogeneity of young children and families. Programs and services targeted assumed populations as vulnerable due to income, education, and language. The dynamics of gender, language, and race are not acknowledged often and when they are, they serve as ‘categorical identifiers’, rather than categories that have been socially constituted and situated (Pacini-Ketchabaw, White, de Almeida, & Armstrong, 2006).

Pacini-Ketchabaw, White, de Almeida, & Armstrong (2006) suggest there needs to be a critical examination of policies because they are “embedded with normalizing discourses that are often taken for granted” (p. 108). They remind researchers of the importance of questioning discourse that serves the purpose of racializing in order to seek alternatives which go beyond normalizing and essentializing apparatuses. The discourse critically analyzed for this study included policy briefs, publications, meeting notes, and media pieces, many of which were found to contain normalizing discourses that have become accepted as common sense in Arizona. While the data was not analyzed for racialization, it was analyzed for both equity and access.

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

Design and Methodology

“The researcher-as-bricoleur-theorist works between and within competing and overlapping perspectives and paradigms” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003, p. 9). With regard to the research question, it is important to consider ahead of time what may occur through the course of study (Stake, 1995). My desire was to critically examine the Arizona Early Childhood Health and Development board as well as the system, First Things First, created by the particular citizen initiative, Proposition 203. A variety of feminist perspectives were utilized in conjunction with critical and postcolonial theory in an attempt to reveal how the discourse utilized by, in, and through FTF has shifted or changed since its inception as well as how the initiative/agency has portrayed their programs. Power relationships achieved through policy documents, publications, and text were also analyzed in conjunction with absent discourse and contradictions/inconsistencies. As a feminist researcher, I utilized a variety of tools and methods throughout this study to both access and understand the data (Hesse-Biber, 2007).

Methods Employed

Critical discourse analysis, in conjunction with other approaches served as the guiding methodologies for data collection, analysis, and interpretation. The reasoning behind the choice of critical discourse analysis was the methods emphasis on the political, ideological, racial, economic, advertisement/promotional culture, language of media, gender, institutional discourse, and education (Blommaert & Bulcaen, 2000).

Popkewitz has suggested “drawing links between development research and policy questions” “may have three enduring contributions: Providing visibility for multiple ways of thinking, arguing, and viewing the world, in essence a sharing of disciplinary knowledges. Recognizing knowledge within a discipline creates irregularities of “explicitness and ambiguity” (Wallat & Piazza, 1997, p. 4). The disciplinary knowledge produced is gathered through vague, constructive processes. Gains are made through inquiry involving multiple methods (the visibility of policy practices and research as socially regulated processes and practices) (Wallat & Piazza, 1997).

From the critical perspective, language serves to both describe and construct the world (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2000). There is a distinct relationship between policy and language so it is important if not imperative to look into communicative functions as well as underlying tasks that occur prior to the final publication of policy reports. Viewing both power and knowledge in this context allows for accessibility to policy analysis and evaluation across a variety of disciplines. There is not a best method or disciplinary approach for policy analysis (Wallat & Piazza, 1997).

Wallat and Piazza (1997) discuss Lakoff’s ideas regarding the functions of discourse in policy analysis. Here the important idea to grasp is the direct relation between the meaning and function of communication utilized and the resultant power it gives to the user. It is crucial to remember that “all language is political (p. 5).” Political ideologies do impact differing views regarding policy. Ideology and hegemony are inextricably linked to power (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2000). Who benefits when we do not invest in all human beings (O’Connell Rust, 2003)?

“The discourses of childhood have fostered regulation of a particular group of human beings by another group (described as adults) and generated multiple sites of power for these adults” (Cannella, 1997, p. 44). Family is a governmental instrument (Foucault, 1994). “Mechanisms put into operation by an institution are designed to ensure its own preservation” (Foucault, 2000, p. 343).

Legal writers tend to work with “the ambiguous nature of language” when creating discourse with the intent of muddying language to acquire a broader sense of political support. Ambiguity in language serves many purposes such as masking the differences that lie unresolved between legislators and competing interest groups (Wallat & Piazza, 1997, p. 22). Language has been and continues to be a means of power maintenance (Moss & Petrie, 2002). There is not an element of consent in power. It is the way some act upon others (Foucault, 1994). It is language that draws in our attention, directs our thoughts and serves to privilege specific ways of knowing over others (Denzin & Giardina, 2006).

How individuals communicate and persuade in the area of policy is difficult to understand at best if not impossible to resolve. An oversight that can occur in policy research is the issue of how to gain knowledge from previously gathered information (Wallat & Piazza, 1997). Lakoff implements a schema of a triangle to guide thoughts and observations with regard to policy analysis (Wallat & Piazza, 1997). Linguistic functions are a reflection of our socio-cultural contexts. Thus coming to an understanding linguistically requires a negotiation of linguistic meaning regarding the manner in which discourse is utilized and interpreted (Wallat & Piazza, 1997).

“In other words, the conventions used to help make intent and meaning connections in the audiences mind essentially adds up to constructing an interpretive framework” (Wallat & Piazza, 1997, p. 17). Utilizing a schema or framework to attempt to understand socio-cultural and cognitive aspects of linguistic variations in and across specific contexts, assists in understanding various consequences of institutional services and policies (Wallat & Piazza, 1997; Lakoff, 2006). Perhaps policy could be understood not so much as “choices” or “acts” with researchers looking to find “motives” or “reasons” but rather as the result or outcome of varying linguistic functions, assorted frames of interpretation, and structures of the participants (Wallat & Piazza, 1997).

Research studies of both child development centers and studies of family have implemented concepts of schematic knowledge and “frames of interpretation” which are interactive. The outcomes of such studies imply the possibility of conflicting frames as being an inherent part of parent/professional structures that involve interaction and communication. Such overlap and competition between frames can produce difficulties in even the most organized, efficient health, educational, or social worlds (Wallat & Piazza, 1997).

Qualitative Research

Qualitative research as a category encompasses a diversity of “methods” including but not limited to interview, case study, interpretive analysis, politics, etc. (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). Denzin and Lincoln (2003) utilize the metaphor of a bridge regarding qualitative research. The bridge serves to connect the assorted methodologies, schemas, periods in history and widely diverse representations of areas of academic study that are working in the qualitative realm.

A qualitative researcher employs assorted techniques in order to attempt to gather the complexity and subtlety of the study (Janesick, 2003). Those who utilize qualitative methods tend to recognize the intricacy of the social world and all of its complexities; the effect of interactions, bi-directional causality, and equifinality. The researcher is continually aware of the possibility that any of these complexities presence affects the usefulness, construction, and verification of knowledge statements (Bennett & Elman, 2006). The element that distinguishes qualitative inquiry from other inquiry methods is the emphasis it places on interpretation (Erickson, 1986; Stake, 1995).

A qualitative researcher can be seen as a bricoleur who uses those methods, or strategies at hand. If they do not have the appropriate 'tool' for the job, one may be invented or created from pieces of other tools (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003; Kaomea, 2000; Kincheloe, 2005). Multiple methods are often found in qualitative research. The reason for this is the researcher desires to obtain an intensified understanding of the research focus (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). The construction of qualitative design is not done in such a way as to prove something (Janesick, 2003). A qualitative researcher seeks meaning through a search for patterns and consistency, often called correspondence (Stake, 1995). These patterns may be of prior knowledge if taken from research questions and they may also serve as an outline for data analysis (Stake, 1995).

There are three things a researcher does which define qualitative research as a process (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). First, they gather materials relevant to the research question. Second, they conduct an analysis of the materials gathered, and finally, they write about their understandings (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). A qualitative analysis

highlights both process and activity through “narrative description and interpretive assertion” (Stake, 1995, p. 96).

A study begins with fixed actions such as interviews and document analysis but as information becomes available, there becomes room for flexibility or changing of direction (Janesick, 2003). One needs to understand how a group or organization (their social practices both written and oral language in specific policy arenas/projects and to make themselves cognizant of the group’s “rules” or conventions regarding language. How, why, and what ways a group functions (Wallat & Piazza, 1997).

Critical Discourse Analysis

*The object of the human sciences is therefore not just man,
but man as producer of texts. Mikhail Bakhtin*

During the late 1980’s, European discourse studies gave rise to critical discourse analysis (CDA) led by researchers such as Fairclough, van Dijk, Wodak, and others (Blommaert & Bulcaen, 2000). CDA seeks to analyze structural relationships of power, control, dominance, and discrimination as revealed by language (Blommaert & Bulcaen, 2000; Wodak, 1995; Pacini-Ketchabaw, White, de Almeida, & Armstrong, 2006). Discourse is a form of power and the goal of CDA is to make language more transparent thus revealing the power relationships contained within it.

Critical Discourse Analysis “foregrounds links between social practice and language, and the systematic investigation of connections between the nature of social processes and the properties of language texts” (Fairclough, 1995, p. 96). CDA is considered both a method and a theory used to analyze language in relation to its power and ideology.

The three dimensional framework created by Fairclough for the analysis of discourse begins with the area of discourse-as-text. Patterns and word selection, cohesion, grammar, and the structure of the text comprise this dimension. The second area is discourse-as-discursive practice, i.e. the recognition that discourse is circulated, distributed, produced, and consumed within society. The third area is discourse-as-social-practice. Discourse is a feature of both hegemonic processes and ideological effects (Fairclough, 1992). The manner in which discourse is respoken, rewritten, or represented reveals “emergence of new orders of discourse, struggles over normativity, attempts at control, and resistance against regimes of power” (Blommaert & Bulcaen, 2000, p. 449). A particular discourse cannot be attributed to the speaker alone. Others voices are conveyed in the words of the speaker (Bakhtin, 1984).

The central tenet of critique in CDA is the link between social structure and speech/language/discourse. It strives to reveal the ways social structure impacts power relations, discourse patterns, ideological effects, and models while viewing these relationships as inherently problematic. Intervention into the social practices investigated by researchers is advocated by CDA. Blommaert and Bulcaen (2000) cite Toolan who offers a prescriptive approach by stating that suggestions for correction and proposals for change to discourses studied should be offered by CDA researchers. Due to this activist positioning, CDA “openly professes strong commitments to change, empowerment, and practice-orientedness” (Blommaert & Bulcaen, 2000, p. 449).

The areas/topics of analysis of CDA are: 1. Political discourse; 2. Ideology; 3. Racism; 4. Economic discourse; 5. Advertisement and promotional culture; 6. Media language; 7. Gender; 8. Institutional discourse; 9. Education. In every one of these

areas structural inequalities, exploitation, asymmetries of power, and manipulation are featured (Blommaert & Bulcaen, 2000). Pacini-Ketchabaw, White-de Almeida, & Armstrong (2006) conducted a critical discourse analysis of racialization in early childhood policy discourses of the British Columbian government. Utilizing a variety of methodologies including CDA they reviewed documents that were designed to establish the guiding principles for British Columbia's ECE system. Through the use of CDA, they were able to interrogate the political discourse, identify racism within the governmental discourse of ECE, and consider the ideology driving the policies.

The roots of CDA lie in social theory and diverge in two directions. First, CDA has a profound interest in theories of both ideology and power stemming from "order of discourse" as well as "power-knowledge" as formulated by Foucault (1971, 1977). Gramsci's theories of "hegemony" in conjunction with both "interpellation" and ideological state apparatuses" of Althusser (1971) also serve as points of interest for CDA (Blommaert & Bulcaen, 2000).

Second, CDA seeks to "overcome structuralist determinism" (Blommaert & Bulcaen, 2000, p. 452). Theoretical grounding for this position lies in Giddens' theory of structuration (1984) which rests on the idea that discursive events are often formative for much bigger social structures and processes. The works of both Bourdieu and Habermas also influence the social process aspects of CDA.

Framing

Frames structure our political institutions, elections, courts, and legislative and administrative structures. George Lakoff

The framing of discourse is not strictly related to communication or political messaging. The human mind creates frames (mental structures) to both order and interpret reality. The way an individual frames information directly impacts their perceptions, actions, interactions, and reasoning. The mind then utilizes these frames unconsciously directly impacting the individual's behavior in social situations as well as institutions.

Lakoff (2006) suggests reframing political issues/discourse in a way other than that presented which may allow us to reveal "important truths". Deep seated frames like, "The nation as family" (Lakoff, 2006, pg. 49), "directly inform our political worldview." These frames then serve to create the structure for "entire worldviews" through which individuals interpret the world of discourse around them.

Political and policy discourse is often defined as liberal or conservative but there is much more to these discourses than meets the eye. While the discourse may be presented from one perspective or another, it is generated and understood as a result of framing. The structure of frames does not have to be complex. There are many frames that come with their own language and jargon that become meaningless when used outside of their particular frames (Lakoff, 2006).

Consider the word "quality" which can be defined with respect to a quality frame. A quality frame implies qualified individuals and programs, a qualifier who assesses the level of quality, the need to qualify, standards for qualification, and qualitative measures to determine said quality. All of these phrases evoke surface frames which both depend on and activate deep frames. Phrases such as the need for a "quality rating system" within FTF serve to activate deep frames among all individuals involved from board

members to stakeholders and all those in between generating different ideas with regard to implementation, delivery, assessment, etc.. Deep frames are necessary for the mind to hang surface frames on. Moral values and political principles reside within deep frames and are key to how an individual conceptualizes and acts upon discourses they are a part of.

Rationale for Approaches Utilized

A qualitative researcher takes a holistic approach (Stake, 1995). Due to the fact that this was a qualitative study, a variety of methods were utilized with the goal of triangulating data. Triangulating data sources occurs to determine if what is observed and reported will be seen in the same light if discovered in another instance (Stake, 1995). Triangulating through perspectives, multiple methods, and empirical materials is not a tool but rather a strategy utilized to bring out the depth, complexity, breadth, and rigor of a study. It allows one to move away from linear interpretation of a study (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). Often, things initially perceived as “simple” become much more complex as a result of triangulation sending one back to reconsider, ask new questions, and reevaluate. Triangulation is not solely meant for confirmation of meaning particular to a single idea but rather a desire to look for other interpretations (Stake, 1995).

Researchers in this genre emphasize reality is a socially constructed idea, the relationship created between research and researcher is personal, and inquiry is guided, shaped, and constrained by context (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003).

Triangulation utilizes multiple perceptions in order to clarify meaning. It also allows for different presentations of how phenomena are both perceived and interpreted (Stake, 2003). Triangulation happens with methodologies, data, theories, and

investigators. Triangulation is necessary in order to insure the validity of the processes utilized in a particular study. One way of achieving this is to include a variety of data sources (Tellis, 1997).

Both Stake and Yin (Tellis, 1997) have discussed various sources regarding evidence, including; participant observation, documents, physical artifacts, archival records, direct observation and interviews. Participant observation allows the researcher an opportunity to actively participate in the events of the study. As a participant, however, there is always the danger of changing the outcome of events through participation. Observation should be a time of careful recording of events in an attempt to create a retelling that most would not contest as well as make the process of both analysis and reporting less difficult (Stake, 1995).

Newspaper articles, memoranda, letters, administrative documents, or agendas can all be considered sources of documentation. Varieties of documents provide additional means of checking information with other sources and assist in evidential triangulation. One must be careful not to make false inferences regarding documents. Records are artifacts produced under certain conditions which are seated in particular ideological and social systems (Hodder, 2000). Reading records is a social practice and as such, each interpretation/understanding/reading will provide for different meaning to be arrived at/acquired. Physical artifacts may include physical evidence, tools, or instruments which may be obtained through a site visit. Such artifacts help to broaden researcher perspective. Items such as survey data, organizational records, service records, and lists of names can be included as archival records as well. Careful analysis

of these records needs to be done regardless of whether they are quantitative or not in order to ensure their accuracy (Stake, 1995).

Data Analysis Process

The purpose of this analysis was to determine the discourses used to present the public face of FTF both past and present that are struggling and contending for dominance. There were two guiding questions for this study: 1. How has the discourse utilized by, in, and through First Things First shifted or changed since its inception? How does this initiative/agency portray their programs? 2. What power relationships are achieved through the documents and how are children, teachers, and families constructed as a result of these power relationships. What values are revealed in the text and how do they emerge? What discourse is absent from the text? Are there contradictions or inconsistencies present? In this study, data will be collected and analyzed concurrently. Appendix A illustrates the four phase time line that I followed.

The data analyzed for this study came from forty-five hours spent in 2007 and 2008 in two strategic planning sessions of the Early Childhood Health and Development Board, and five board meetings of the same organization (see Appendix C for detailed summary). Each time extensive notes were taken and then the notes were transcribed the following day and put into word documents. A total of eighty-three pages of notes and reflections were analyzed. The discourse of three policy documents created by the board for the public was also analyzed. Artifacts utilized for analysis came from the following sources: *Building Bright Futures: Needs and Assets Assessment 2007*, the *Family and Community Report: A Baseline Report on Families and Coordination*, *Building Bright Futures: Arizona's Early Childhood Opportunities 2009 Report*, the *Vision for Early*

Childhood Home Visiting in Arizona-Plan of Action 2010, Ready for School, Set for Life: Creating the Model Early Childhood System, the Policy Brief-Measuring Quality in Early Childhood Education, the Policy Brief: Read All About It-School Success Rooted in Early Language & Literacy, and the Policy Brief: Professional Development of Teachers of Arizona's Young Children (see also Appendix D for a summary of all publications/policy documents analyzed).

An environmental scan was conducted of billboards around the state of Arizona, advertising campaigns in movie theaters and television spots on local television stations, kiosk advertising at strip centers, bus stops, and local malls. I asked friends, relatives, and colleagues to alert me to any of the aforementioned items related to FTF from August 2012 through January 2013. Over the past six years I have repeatedly visited the FTF website and continued to do so in order to stay abreast of current issues related to FTF, read policy documents, downloaded publications, and watched for change in content and discourse utilized. I also watched for local and regional press releases put out by FTF.

Utilizing both CDA techniques and Lakoff's frames, I analyzed specific words and phrases that occurred repeatedly in the past as well as in the present in order to tease out frames of reference, shifts in both discourse and frames, specific modes of messaging, and consistencies and inconsistencies within the public face FTF is presenting.

Prior to an analysis of documents, a word count of words that appeared to be high frequency was done with the documents listed in Appendix B. The documents that displayed the greatest number of high frequency words pertaining to quality, readiness, professional development, etc. were chosen as representative documents. Once a

determination was made as to what the dominant discourses were, (Appendix B is a VERY rough example of determining dominant discourse utilizing the crude measure of word count via Microsoft Word) I looked through all of the data gathered at the ways each of the discourses have been framed (Lakoff, 2006) over time to reveal shifts or changes and consistencies/inconsistencies that have occurred as well as the course/direction/path FTF has pursued as a result. I relied on Lakoff's (2006) method of framing discourse (surface frames, deep frames, issue defining frames, messaging frames, etc.). The power structures created and maintained by both the frames and discourses contained therein thus became evident revealing the conditions and assumptions they were based on and the representation or naming that has occurred as a result.

A discussion of problems inherent to a system are perceived as disruptive and is usually intentionally avoided (Charkiewicz, 2007). When there is conversation regarding policy frameworks that avoids critical analysis of root causes, multi-stake holders are able to sustain dialogue which becomes a political technology that serves the purpose of systemic reproduction (Charkiewicz, 2007). Power within such frameworks allows for the inclusion of voice that is not influenced from the outside (Charkiewicz, 2007).

Constraints of the Study

As an academic, I write from a place of power and privilege which directly influences my thinking and interpretations of data. Throughout this study I have continually revisited the data and purposefully worked to view both the data and my interpretations of it through multiple lenses. I have done this not to arrive at any particular truth but rather to tease out the nuances of discourse which often become accepted in the area of ECEC as right or correct. The purpose of critical discourse

analysis and specifically Lakoff's (2006) ideas of framing is to reveal these dominant discourses that more often than not silence the discourses that those of us in the field of ECEC work so hard to reveal and support.

The following two chapters present both the findings and a detailed discussion of this study and its implications. Data analysis and findings are presented relative to the guiding questions and sub-questions for the study. The data analysis is set within two particular discourses found which serve to frame how FTF reveals its very public face within the state of Arizona. The dominant neoliberal discourse of the child as an investment has effectively silenced the progressive discourse of nurturance where the child is a recipient of education and health services because they are a member of society with the same rights and privileges as any other human being. Each of the two dominant frames is discussed in detail with related evidence. The following chapter presents a discussion of the findings and the final chapter presents conclusions reached as well as questions raised with regard to the future of ECEC in both the state of Arizona and the United States as a nation.

Chapter 4

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Data Analysis and Findings

There were two guiding questions with their respective sub-questions for this study. The first was: How has the discourse utilized by, in, and through First Things First shifted or changed since its inception? How does this initiative/agency portray their programs? The second was: What power relationships are achieved through the documents and how are children, teachers, and families constructed as a result of these power relationships.

Other, related questions included, what values are revealed in the text and how do they emerge? What discourse is absent from the text? Are there contradictions or inconsistencies present? The framing of discourse found in the strategic planning sessions appears to be a progressive frame of nurturance, however, at the same time another discourse runs throughout the initiative, strategic planning sessions, board meetings, policy briefs, and advertising/branding that is based upon a neoliberal production frame, which is essentially a business/banking model.

The data utilized for this discourse analysis were taken from a variety of oral, written, and visual sources beginning in January of 2007 and ending January of 2013. The six year time span allowed for an analysis of not just laying the groundwork of First Things First, but also the planning, and delivery of services, as well as dissemination of information to the public. The data include notes taken at two of the Early Childhood Development and Health Board Strategic Planning Sessions, notes taken at five meetings of the Arizona Early Childhood Development and Health Board, the *Building Bright Futures: Needs and Assets Assessment 2007*, the *Family and Community Report: A*

Baseline Report on Families and Coordination, Building Bright Futures: Arizona's Early Childhood Opportunities 2009 Report, the Vision for Early Childhood Home Visiting in Arizona-Plan of Action 2010, Ready for School, Set for Life: Creating the Model Early Childhood System, the Policy Brief-Measuring Quality in Early Childhood Education, the Policy Brief: Read All About It-School Success Rooted in Early Language & Literacy, the Policy Brief: Professional Development of Teachers of Arizona's Young Children, billboards around the state of Arizona, advertising campaigns in movie theaters and television spots on local television stations, kiosk advertising at strip centers, bus stops, and local malls.

Initial Framing Analysis

In November of 2006, Proposition 203 (a citizen's initiative) was passed creating the Arizona Early Childhood Development and Health Board. The language of the proposition addressed the young child as developing, with a brain structure whose major elements are formed by age three and whose early educational experiences have a direct impact on future success in education (Prop. 203). The proposition emphasized that children who are given the opportunity to access high quality education and care from birth to age five will be better equipped to succeed academically and have greater opportunities as adults. The investment in ECEC in Arizona would benefit the state in the future due to increased productivity in the workforce, a decrease in crime and unemployment rates, as well as a decrease in the costs of social services (Prop. 203).

There are two deep frames of discourse found in the initiative, the strategic planning sessions, board meetings, policy briefs, and marketing campaign. The first

discourse is rooted in a progressive vision of education where an investment in people by the government should make it possible for every human being to have a high quality education (Lakoff, 2006). This progressive frame of education values empathy and it is the responsibility of all to act upon empathy that in turn will empower others (Haas, 2008; Lakoff, 2006). Within this frame, the government provides communities with the necessary funds to create learning environments that best meet the needs of all young people within a given community (Bloch, Popkewitz, Holmlund, & Moqvist, 2003).

The second discourse is rooted in a neoliberal vision of education where the business community and the government should invest in young people for the purposes of strengthening the workforce, increasing productivity, and positively impacting the economy (Lakoff, 2006; Rose 1999). “Neuroscientists, economists, and educators agree that Early Childhood Education and Care pays dividends as children enter kindergarten” (Measuring Quality in Early Childhood Education, p. 2). This futures market approach sees the young child as a type of mutual fund whose rate of return over the years will increase provided the child, parents, and teachers enhance the value of the fund by choosing the appropriate stock options in order to yield the maximum dividends on the government’s investment upon the student’s graduation from college (Building Bright Futures, 2007; Lynch 2004). This discourse also references the hard science of brain research which causes both corporations and policy makers to be drawn into the conversation (Kirp, 2007). The cognitive research is utilized and the young child becomes likened unto a computer whose circuitry must be hardwired properly so they do not crash when they begin kindergarten. Here the responsibility for success lies with the

individual and the systemic issues that either ensure or deter success are evaded (Bloch, et al., 2003).

Progressive Frame of Nurturance

The initial discourse began at the board meeting of the Early Childhood Health and Development Board in February of 2007 with an emphasis on system building and FTF saw themselves as one of four parts of Arizona's ECEC system. The other three parts were cited by the chairperson as being philanthropy, state government, and child advocacy. Thoughtful discussions took place with regard to what role FTF would play and concerns were voiced about not wanting to become just another part of the bureaucratic system. A desire voiced by several board members in the strategic planning sessions was to collaborate and coordinate with existing ECEC systems in the state and facilitate an integration and working together of all systems so that FTF would not appear as a "stand alone" system. One board member said, "We don't want to duplicate, we want to bring agencies together and work together. Some of the wording is concerning. It appears as stand alone. We would be a coordinator or facilitator."

However, the fact that FTF is a government agency was reiterated several times during the strategic planning sessions. Intentions were not to replicate any one state's system. FTF intended to create their own system but members of the board realized that there are valuable lessons to be learned from other states. Board members stated that self-promotion would not be well received and their intentions were not to "build" their own system.

It was agreed upon by the members of the Early Childhood Health and Development Board that the most important thing they would do over the next ten to twenty years would be helping to both build and support the infrastructure of ECEC across the state of Arizona. Early on in the 2008 planning sessions, board members agreed that FTF would be more than regional councils. They would be about meeting the needs of communities and linking up/coupling/connecting with and nurturing relationships among service providers across the state. At the February 27, 2007 meeting of the board, a member of the board who is also the president of a local philanthropic organization said, “We need partnerships and alignment and to make sure the language in our documents reflects what we are doing here”.

The Vision for Early Childhood Home Visiting Services in Arizona: A Plan of Action 2010-2015 (2010, p. 29) highlighted a desire of FTF to define outreach strategies that were culturally relevant with materials printed in the primary languages of the families being served. Needs to accommodate and be prepared for diversity with regard to regional councils and grant proposals were brought to the table as well. In the 2010 report, *Ready for School. Set for Life: Creating the Model Early Childhood System* the following statement is found, “A system that is organized around the unique needs of each child and family has no room for bureaucracy or turf wars” (p. 5). The addressing of bureaucracy and turf wars in a public document such as this serves to draw attention to the undercurrents felt by all those involved with FTF over the previous three years.

The same desire was conveyed in the *Family and Community Report: A Baseline Report on Families and Coordination*, “First Things First will work with early childhood

partners across the state of Arizona to focus coordination, communication, and family support efforts to most effectively meet the needs of Arizona's families and children (2009, p. 35)." *Building Bright Futures* (2007) highlighted the desire to assure Arizonans that family supports and services needed to be included in this system seeking to serve young children. A critical component of a strong system was that the needs of *all* families be addressed. The issue of a need for access to quality ECEC for all families was addressed once again in 2009's *Building Bright Futures*. The report suggested that there was a need to set standards for what qualifies as quality ECEC.

In the 2009 publication, *Building Bright Futures*, FTF discusses the most fundamental aspect that guides their principles which is the need for a "high quality, interconnected, comprehensive service delivery system that is timely, culturally responsive, and family driven, community based, and directed toward enhancing a child's overall development" (p. 2). Within this document there are three primary areas of focus for the FTF system: "1. Early learning; 2. Family support; 3. Health, mental health, nutrition, and special needs" (p. 2). The goal was to develop statewide initiatives and fund grants directly related to these three areas for the next ten to twenty years. Once again in 2010 a need for a comprehensive system was highlighted in a document put out by FTF titled, *Ready for School. Set for Life: Creating the Model Early Childhood System*. The report was based upon conclusions reached by the newly created Arizona Early Childhood Task Force. The task force saw a need to move beyond the incremental approach of creating one pilot project after another. This method served to create "a slew of disconnected programs" (p. 3). Government spending that targets children and families occurs at all governmental levels from district to federal. This spending involves

a myriad of agencies at each level and includes both public and private sectors. Within a typical state governmental structure there are multitudes of funding sources utilized to finance a multitude of programs. All of this results in a highly fragmented system of services that are premised on the categorization of children and services. It is true that some children and families do receive the help they need but many more are failed (Friedman, 2005). A comprehensive approach that addresses all elements of the system was recommended by the task force which echoed ideas presented three years prior in the strategic planning sessions.

The strategic planning sessions served to help develop a mission statement for the board. The mission that was agreed upon was to increase the quality of and access to Early Childhood Education and Care across the state (2-1). A year later in the *Family and Community Report: A Baseline Report on Families and Coordination*, FTF stated that their mission was “to support parents to be the first and best teacher of their child” (p. 6). Their current mission statement is, “First Things First is one of the critical partners in creating a family-centered comprehensive, collaborative and high-quality early childhood system that supports the development, health and early education of all Arizona’s children birth through age five” (FTF, 2013).

The board sought a tone that was inclusive (not marginalizing), proactive, and demanding of the existing system. They wanted to be sure that FTF was both complimentary and supplementary. On March 25th of 2008 at the strategic planning session, one board member went so far as to say, “If we can’t fund all children, how can we justify what we are doing?” A member of the Children’s Action Alliance was

concerned that statewide funding priorities were going to spread FTF too thin. They wanted to be sure that the decision criteria for funding strategies would ensure sustainability and would involve policymaker education. The head of the Association for Supportive Child Care said,

“As far as ASC and I are concerned, we are concerned how this will turn out for children in the long run. We want to be sure that the board is mindful of those of us who have been here for a long time, thirty-two years for ASC. We have a really good handle on what the community needs. I would hope you would begin to work with state agencies to see how we can all be on the same page and partner. I implore you to be cautious when you seek out private sector dollars that have not been committed to existing programs as many of us rely on those dollars to keep our agencies going and we cannot compete with FTF.”

Concern for equity among the different regions was raised and several board members wanted the language created related to the regions and their respective funding strategies to align with, complement, or be completely different from statewide strategies as long as they would support the goals of FTF.

The issue of varying needs and priorities among regions resurfaced in the *Ready for School. Set for Life: Creating the Model Early Childhood System* publication in 2010. The Arizona Early Childhood Education task force stated that, “Different communities will focus on different elements, depending on their local priorities” (p. 3). FTF would serve as the agency that convened partners, offered leadership, and proposed a collaborative, working relationship with the existing system in order to maximize resources as well as improve outcomes. This document highlighted the gap that

continued to exist between needs and services across the state. Members of the task force emphasized the need of the state to continue to invest wisely. FTF clearly stated that they would not be the sole funder of Arizona's ECEC system. However, the agency would continue to take an active role in aiding to increase as well as coordinate "available resources from multiple sources" (p. 5).

A small number of the board members saw a need to shift public and policymaker thinking out of the deficit model that the state has been rooted in for so long. This model can be traced back as early as the 1930's settlement houses and neighborhood programs and more recently to the war on poverty efforts of the 1960s (Brown, 2007; Kirp 2007; Cannella, 2005; Bloch, et al, 2003; Carini, 2001; Rose, 1999; Stagner & Duran, 1997). A majority of governmental interventions and comprehensive community initiatives in the past were centered on neighborhoods characterized by extreme and concentrated poverty. Historically, programs such as these have neglected to work on the systemic issues that were contributing to extreme poverty (Swadener & Wachira 2003; Delpit, 1995).

There was also a desire to change attitudes, coupled with a concern related to placing families at the center of focus over programs. The executive director stated that changing attitudes of policymakers and the public would be the first matter of business and then the root causes of issues could be addressed.

Many voiced a need to elevate the professional field by eliminating words like "training" and to establish and implement a wage enhancement system.

Neoliberal Frame of Production

The second discourse began with an emphasis on Best Practice research and a need for measurement/assessment of students' readiness, parenting practices, and teacher quality. There was a strong push by the chairperson of the board, as well as the facilitator for the planning sessions for all short term measures to be based on Best Practice research, cognitive science, and behavior research. Particular ideological constructions related to evidence based research, best practice, and developmentally appropriate practice create very complex and nearly invisible ideas regarding truth that serve to universalize childhood (Ortiz & Cannella, 2006). There are two problems inherent to funding only research-proven practice, all of the answers do not lie in the research world, which eliminates all innovative ideas, and the thinking that occurs outside of research is often the most creative and it allows a space for new knowledge to develop (Friedman, 2005).

The emphasis on young children being an investment was seen early on not just in strategic planning sessions but also in early publications produced by FTF. *Building Bright Futures 2007* states that FTF would create a system that yields productive citizens because an investment in the child will result in a strong state and ensure both economic growth as well as the future well-being of the state (p. 9). There is now a much more visible market approach to education. Care has been assimilated into education thus pulling it into the realm of politics and governance (Gibbons, 2007). States are increasingly neoliberal in their policy arguments as they move away from intervention in order to construct conditions that allow for individuals to act in their personal interests

and the primary metaphor for policy is markets (Ortiz & Cannella, 2006; Popkewitz & Lindblad, 2000; Rose 1999). Rigby, Tarrant, & Neuman (2007) state, “adoption of a particular policy design includes the adoption of a particular politically constructed problem and the ideological interests it reinforces” (p. 100).

Children are crucial to societal progress in a market economy and as such their care and education fall under intense scrutiny so that through quality programs, they can then contribute to society’s progress (Gibbons, 2007; Rigby, Tarrant, & Neuman, 2007; Hamm, Gault, & Jones-DeWeever, 2005; Rolnick & Grunewald, 2003; Rose 1999). Swadener, Nagasawa, & Peters (2013) remind us that the discourse of quality here is based upon an assumption of qualities or markers that are “fixed and objective” as well as a “common sense” notion of the public getting what they pay for. Instruments for measuring quality in ECEC are limited and based upon white middle class cultural assumptions of what counts as quality.

The first strategic planning sessions were run based on the business model “*Good to Great*” (Collins, 2001). When ideas or processes did not seem to sit well with particular board members, they were told by the executive director, “This is how it’s done in business”. This same individual stated changing attitudes of policymakers and the public would be the first matter of business and then the root causes of issues could be addressed. State expectations have increasingly leaned to the family ceding both care and education of the child to educators/carers. In conjunction with this effort has come increased regulation and surveillance pushing it toward the business model. This then moves care in conjunction with education into political discourse of community rights,

diversity and a governmental determination of those who require care and those who should provide it (Gibbons, 2007). Caring in this sense then become programmatic with education where programs construct ready, competent children who will succeed. As a result, quality of educators, programs, and child development are subject to a system of standards which then measure. Through regulation, the desired child is produced (Gibbons, 2007).

During the strategic planning sessions, it was agreed that the board's vision statement was to recognize that all children will be healthy and ready to succeed. A professor from one of the state universities who was also a member of the board raised concerns about inclusionary practices wanting to be sure that they were included in the language of documents, strategies, funding, etc. The board chairperson told this individual that inclusionary practice would be included but, "in a very small way." From the beginning, long-term outcomes of FTF's success required that children be evaluated and assessed for skills and abilities in order to decide if they were ready or not for kindergarten. While a small number of board members sought to implement the idea of ages and stages, the majority agreed that developmentally appropriate assessments were necessary to measure child outcomes. *Building Bright Futures 2007* (p. 87), a publication of FTF, states that, "The state must be a system of systems in which rigorous monitoring and assessment ensure positive, expected outcomes occur." In our society, most schools are set up in a way that they view certain groups of children as normal while others are seen as deficient, deviant, or not-ready (Gee, 2011; Arzubiaga, Ceja, & Artiles, McDermott & Varenne, 2010; Cannella, 2005; Super and Harkness, 2003; Weisner, 2002; Bloch & Popkewitz, 2000).

The Vision for Early Childhood Home Visiting Services in Arizona: A Plan of Action 2010-2015 (2010) presents FTF's five year plan intended to ensure the state "is increasing the number of children who are ready to succeed when they start school" (p. 26). The majority of the programs included in the home visiting services target parents as the individuals responsible for getting the child "ready" for kindergarten. Service providers participating in home visiting will be required to adhere to "core quality standards" (p.30). Specifically outlined in the objectives for home visiting (objective 3.4) is the necessity to "monitor quality assurance of core standards" (p. 30) of individuals and providers involved in home visitation services. This document demonstrates the evolution of a desire to measure quality which began with providers, moved to teachers, and has now encompassed those involved in home visitation services whether they are nurse practitioners or volunteers.

Cognitive science was discussed in the strategic planning sessions but became a dominant theme within FTF publications and policy briefs with the release of the *Family and Community Report: A Baseline Report on Families and Coordination*. The publication highlights the importance of brain research as well as economic research with regard to the improvement of ECEC (p. 7). In 2010, FTF released the document *Ready for School, Set for Life: Creating the Model Early Childhood System 2010*. The content of this publication is grounded in the importance of children's early experiences as those are what determine whether they are prepared to achieve in school. The significance of early experience is validated through brain science and an emphasis is placed on both parent and child as the entities responsible for a child being prepared to achieve in school. "Fulfilling our commitment to young children means more than simply funding programs

and services. It means having a shared vision about what being prepared for kindergarten actually means and then a collective commitment to work across sectors to realize this vision” (p. 1).

Once again, the shift can be seen from a progressive approach involving the system as a whole being ready to receive and educate all children to the neoliberal ideas of personal responsibility and accountability appearing at the forefront of a child’s readiness for kindergarten.

Assumptions about Knowledge Organizing FTF Discourse

A sub-question of this study related to the discourse utilized by, in, and through FTF was, what assumptions about knowledge, young children, families, and teachers organize the discourse of FTF? In order to understand the underlying assumptions found in this study it is important to note that assumptions are usually based on moral values and principles thus rooting them in deep frames (Lakoff, 2006). The terms best practice, at risk, developmentally appropriate, ready, pre-K and quality are all deep frames of discourse tied to the conservative production model of education. A quote from one of the most recent policy briefs released by FTF (Professional Development of Teachers of Arizona’s Young Children, p. 2) clearly illustrates this model, “Research demonstrates that when child care and other early learning programs are of high quality and developmentally appropriate, children score higher on school readiness measures.”

The first strategic planning session set the stage for FTF aligning its decision making process with best practice research. The Arizona Early Learning Standards for ages three to five years were cited in *Building Bright Futures 2007* as the basis for

achieving as well as measuring readiness. The standards were developed based upon criteria developed by the NAEYC. Data does not have to come from a scientifically valid study to be good. All good data does not come from “experts” (Friedman, 2005).

The board chairperson emphasized that developmentally appropriate practice (DAP) was linked to best practice research and needed to be considered, as well, with regard to programs and decision making processes. The *Family and Community Report: A Baseline Report on Families and Coordination* cites developmentally appropriate practice as a way for parents to “correctly perceive their child’s behavior as representative of his/her developmental stage (p. 20).” Throughout the publication, behaviors and stages are tied to developmental appropriateness. A reference is made more than once to developmentally appropriate parenting as well (pp. 24, 26). FTF’s *Vision For Early Childhood Home Visiting in Arizona-Plan of Action 2010* discussed the need for home visitation services to ensure that children are “developmentally on track and prepared to enter school ready to succeed (p. 24).” The policy brief *Measuring Quality in Early Childhood Education* highlights the need for both curriculum and assessment related to Quality First to be aligned with DAP (p. 6). The brief also states that DAP curricula and assessments utilized by Quality First programs would be connected to Arizona’s K-12 curricula and assessments (p. 5). In another policy brief released by FTF, quality programs are cited as those rich with developmentally appropriate materials (*Read All About It-School Success Rooted in Early Language and Literacy*, p. 6). DAP is set within a specific class-based discourse which has its own frame with regard to child development, stages, parent-child interactions, and independence (Gee, 2011; Arzubiaga, Ceja, Artiles, 2000; McDermott & Varenne, 2010;

Brown, 2007; Cannella, 2005; Super and Harkness, 2003; Weisner, 2002; Bloch & Popkewitz, 2000).

Several board members felt that readiness for kindergarten should be a goal of FTF and that young children needed to be evaluated before entering kindergarten to determine their level of readiness. A large portion of the intervention programs listed in the *Vision For Early Childhood Home Visiting in Arizona-Plan of Action 2010* target parents as the individuals with whom the job lies to make sure their child is ready for kindergarten. There are twenty programs named in this document and eight of them place the onus of child readiness on the parent/s.

At the first strategic planning session one member of the board felt that pre-K did not just mean preschool but also pre-natal. While there was not much discussion related to the comment, pre-natal care/education became a focus of FTF as seen in *Building Bright Futures 2007* in which FTF stated such care differed by race and origin.

The strategic planning sessions also laid the groundwork for the emphasis on high quality programs, centers, providers, and professionals in the field of ECEC. *Building Bright Futures 2007* states that quality education and care are a result of services provided by “highly qualified professionals (p. 33).” This statement places the responsibility for quality solely on the teacher/caregiver rather than the totality of components that contribute to quality (Brown, 2007; Urban 2007). This publication states that the broad range of service providers found in the state of Arizona (from center based classrooms, and teachers to grandparents) complicate the ECEC system and attributes the non-cohesive, disjointed professional development system that exists to them (p. 63).

This same document (p. 62) quotes Naomi Karp from her book *Building a New Early Childhood Professional Development System Based on the 3 Rs: Rigor, Research, and Respect* (2007):

We have to dream about new ways of preparing high-quality early childhood educators. It is time that policy makers, researchers, educators, and society as a whole address in-depth the funding, policy and implementation issues related to early childhood professional development. We have to create a seamless system of both high-quality early childhood education and high-quality early childhood professional development programs. We must groom a new generation of leaders in a thoughtful and well planned way.

The focus of quality continued to be tied to programs, facilities, teachers, and caregivers in *Ready for School. Set for Life: Creating the Model Early Childhood System* publication in 2010. This publication stated that while the regional funding strategies of FTF would be focused on Kith and Kin care, their statewide focus would be on “regulated, licensed settings (p.5).” Quality First, TEACH, SUCCEEDS, and other professional development programs have become the driving forces of programs, funding, and the overall direction of FTF. Unfortunately, this narrowing of focus has served to reduce rather than increase access as well as to miss many programs serving low income families (Barnett & Yarosz, 2007).

Views of Young Children, Families, and Teachers

Another sub-question of this study is: What particular views of young children, families, and teachers does the text reveal? Young children, in both conversation and text, are put in the position of having to be “ready” for kindergarten and later school and

life success. This discourse of readiness is based upon particular principles embedded in a particular notion of development where normality is based upon what a typical child of white middle class parents is able to do at a particular age thus making it a deep frame. Norms were created in order to universalize what a normal boy or girl is characterized by at a particular age. These norms then also serve to create deviations on either end of the spectrum be it deviating low or high. This normality discourse is also gendered, racialized, and class based (Soto, 2005; Graue 1993).

Readiness is a relative term based upon the contextual framework of the young child. Children are strongly influenced by and influence the contexts within which they live. Culture, socioeconomic status, geographical location, parental work responsibilities, special needs, unique abilities, primary language, and religious orientation are all critical components of this complex, contextual framework (Gee, 2011; Arzubiaga, Ceja, & Artiles, McDermott & Varenne, 2010; Super and Harkness, 2003; Weisner, 2002; Bloch & Popkewitz, 2000).

The issue defining frame of readiness became highly publicized with the release of the *National Education Goals in 1995*. Goal 1 stated that “by the year 2000, all children will start school ready to learn (National Education Panel).” The Bush administration’s No Child Left Behind policy pushed the readiness notion further into the American psyche. Ready for school resonated well among the business community and policy makers and the notion has continued to appear at the forefront of discussions related to ECEC. Ready in this case meaning they have met specific criteria as outlined by either the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) or

particular screening instruments utilized by both public and private schools that assess readiness based on a variety of indicators. Readiness here is tied to assessment driven education (Carini, 2001).

As a mother and former kindergarten teacher (five years), I have never met a young person who was not “ready” for kindergarten. If one were to ask a child in the summer prior to their kindergarten year if they are ready for kindergarten, the answer would be animated and filled with both excitement and anticipation at the thought of finally being able to go to school. The board felt so strongly about parents needing to make their children ready for kindergarten that they put together school readiness kits for families (Policy Brief: Read All About It-School Success rooted in Early Language and Literacy). Another policy brief, *Professional Development of Teachers of Arizona’s Young Children* highlights parents and families as the child’s first and best teachers (p. 2). While this may be true in some cultures it is not true for all and it perpetuates a white, Eurocentric perspective (Berry, Dasen, & Saraswathi, 1997).

Relative to the notion of ready or not is the idea of being “at-risk”. The strategic planning sessions brought out a variety of ideas related to risk and poverty inferring the pathologizing of poverty through a discourse of risk (Brown, 2007; Cannella, 2005; Swadener, 2000; Swadener & Lubeck, 1995). The discussion related to this topic was contentious and polarizing. One board member discussed their thoughts related to problems with young children being driven by disparity while another said that it all stems from “bad parenting” (the issues of abuse, neglect, lack of use of medical care). A fellow board member responded with the comment that the way for outside agencies to

reach low income families was to build relationships not just hand them parenting kits. A couple of the board members agreed that as the groundwork for FTF was being laid, a clear picture of how children should be treated by both programs and parents needed to be discussed, defined, and agreed upon. Another board member emphasized that the focus should be on all parents not just mothers.

A discussion arose at the March 26, 2007 meeting of the board about readiness, quality and parental responsibility. One board member, the head of a state agency serving children and families, made the following comment during the discussion, “I’m all for QRIS etcetera, but we’ve got tons of people becoming parents every day that have zero parenting skills and zero support. When a kid leaves a good daycare and is at home with the loser boyfriend while mom goes to work at Hooter’s, we have parents who have no skills. I’m concerned that I don’t see any of those things really address that unmet need.” When members of a board such as this view parents in such a negative manner, it is not difficult to see the neoliberal issue defining frames of bad parenting and the necessity to pull oneself up by the bootstraps (individual responsibility) taking root early on in the history of FTF.

At the April 22, 2008 meeting of the board, an emphasis was placed on targeting interventions and services to the poorest of the poor. The research used cited a specific sector of the population rather than citing how programs would benefit all children and the gains that could be statewide rather than for the same isolated population that had been targeted in the past. It appeared at this meeting that the goal was still to rescue those poor children and to educate those poor, welfare mothers. Children of poverty

being viewed as at risk continued in the *Family and Community Survey on Early Childhood: A Baseline Report on Families and Coordination*. This publication also cites “research based knowledge” (p. 4) about what parents can expect from their child at each age in order to guide their child and set appropriate rules and boundaries. The targeted outreach of FTF programs within this document are those for low income parents, and the education provided is “related to current research in brain development, enrichment resources, and developmental milestones” (p. 4).

Both brain and educational research are repeatedly cited in this periodical as showing that kids who grow up in poverty start kindergarten with more risk factors (Family and Community Survey on Early Childhood: A Baseline Report on Families and Coordination, 2009, p. 9). The responsibility for children reaching the appropriate developmental milestones lies with the parents. A member of the board began *Building Bright Futures: Arizona’s Early Childhood Opportunities 2009 Report* with an introduction focused on quality, early childhood experiences taking place in the home and then the community. This individual said that, “too many of these children will start school unprepared. Thus they will be more likely to drop out, depend on welfare, and be in jail” (p. 1). Once again children from lower income families are cited as “these children”, insinuating the risk factor and then assuming the worst about their future contributions or worse dependence on society (Cannella, 2005). Kincheloe (2000) reminds readers that these assumptions occur every day with policymakers, psychologists, and educators. Children in the lower socioeconomic class whose manners, speech, and attitudes are “different” are then perceived to lack both cognitive and academic abilities due to their “difference”. The projects developed to “help” the

disadvantaged child are further exclusionary systems that continue to differentiate them from their peers. Interventions with children and families are premised on a lack of action at home or appropriate school participation. Thus the absences inscribed on the child and family serve to govern teaching constructs (Popkewitz & Lindblad, 2000).

The views of teachers/caregivers in the text are quite similar to those of the parent/s. *Building Bright Futures: Arizona's Early Childhood Opportunities 2009 Report* places the responsibility for quality early care on a skilled and educated workforce where teachers, caregivers and staff are qualified to care for and educate children based upon continued professional development. Whether individuals are qualified would be tied to the TEACH program as well as the QRIS. The policy brief, *Measuring Quality in Early Childhood Education* went so far as to say that quality is defined first by “teachers” (p. 3). This policy brief was the public announcement that FTF now had both agreed upon statewide strategies and priorities for funding.

In a recent policy brief put out by FTF, *Professional Development of Teachers of Arizona's Young Children*, the quality of early care and education depends on the professionalism, education, and skills of the teacher (p. 2). Bloch and Popkewitz (2000) discuss this discourse of professionalism as serving to inscribe very specific roles of administration as well as constructing categories of women who have particular knowledge, scientific or professional, and contrasting them with others who are labeled as less knowledgeable or unprofessional. This professionalization of teachers and caregivers functions to create not just differences but also hierarchies and serves as yet another means to govern. Rose (1999) relates this to the continual economic

capitalization of the self. The teacher here is required to take part in continual training and retraining in order to enhance their credentials and become highly qualified.

Messaging Frames

The messaging frames utilized by FTF vary from policy briefs, news/press releases, billboards, television commercials, and print advertisements to branding. While the messaging mediums are varied, what they have in common are particular semantic roles: each has a messenger, a target audience, a specific message, addresses a particular issue, a medium, and accompanying images (Lakoff, 2006). FTF had a vision in 2010 to develop consistent messaging that could be used by all programs, anywhere in the state (Vision for Home Visiting Services in Arizona, 2010).

The first message, outlined in Proposition 203, was that of the child as an investment. The *Building Bright Futures: Needs and Assets Assessment 2007* again emphasized the child as an investment who would influence the economic growth and well-being of the state of Arizona (p. 9). *Building Bright Futures: Arizona's Early Childhood Opportunities 2009 Report* began with a view of the child likened unto a bond or similar type of investment who if invested in early would have the largest rate of return. For every dollar invested in a young child, the rate of return would be from four to sixteen dollars (p. 1). FTF stated that they are charged by law to make Arizona aware of the impact of early care on the state's economy and quality of life (Policy Brief: Measuring Quality in Early Childhood Education).

The concept of target populations took hold in the first strategic planning session and has been reiterated throughout the print publications and policy briefs. These

populations are not exclusively people groups but also center based ECEC. The language in many of the early documents published by FTF was geared toward center based ECEC. Board members raised concerns related to this unidirectional focus in January of 2007. The funding strategies and discussions at all meetings were clearly directed toward center based ECEC.

The message of children needing to be ready for kindergarten was also rooted in the strategic planning sessions and has not ceased to be one of the major goals of FTF. The first session established that readiness required assessment, testing, or some sort of formal evaluation. It also placed the responsibility for readiness on the child, parent, and teacher/caregiver rather than the system as a whole. *Building Bright Futures: Arizona's Early Childhood Opportunities 2009 Report* tied limited English proficiency to a child not being ready to learn (p. 70). Young children are situated through specific pedagogical discourses either inside or outside a normative continuum made up of action, reason, and thought. Some children are constructed as disadvantaged and thus not ready for or unable to succeed in school due to race, poverty, or other exclusionary frames (Popkewitz & Lindblad, 2000).

Parental responsibility has been linked specifically to mothers and women in general across the messaging genres. *Building Bright Futures: Arizona's Early Childhood Opportunities 2009 Report* discussed a mother's educational level as a predictor for her child's academic achievement. An increase in maternal education was cited as an equivalent to improved school readiness with no mention made to paternal education (p. 75). Beginning in 2010, in the *Vision for Home Visiting Services in*

Arizona-Plan of Action (2010) a need was identified to screen mothers of children under six for depression/mental health issues (p. 24). Within the same document (p. 2) a need was seen to improve school readiness for children born to mothers with low psychological resources. Preventive measures are important; however, suggesting that mothers should be screened with regard to mental health issues tends to raise questions as to how, why, and by whom. The mental health of fathers, teachers, and caregivers is not included.

Tied to readiness is the message of DAP, which was strongly cited in the very first planning session as foundational to what FTF did and would continue to do in the future. The *Family and Community Survey on Early Childhood: A Baseline Report on Families and Coordination* addressed parents within the state whose children are “developing normally” (p. 5). This same document placed the onus for brain development on parents and likened the developing child’s brain to architecture (p.11). Later on in the report early childhood is analogous to a window of time during which parents have the opportunity to build the right structure for their child to be successful (p. 12). The *Vision for Home Visiting Services in Arizona-Plan of Action* (2010) while offering support and collaboration still placed the burden of readiness on children and their families. FTF stated that their vision was to see confident, supported families raising healthy children, ready to succeed in school and life.

Messaging with regard to quality is a very consistent strand woven through nearly everything FTF presents to the public. *Building Bright Futures: Arizona’s Early Childhood Opportunities 2009 Report* stated that the primary available indicator of

quality is the NAEYC. The policy brief, *Measuring Quality in Early Childhood Education* stated that caregivers/centers must be enrolled in Quality First in order to receive funding through FTF (p. 54).

There has been a strong emphasis on branding from the first strategic planning session. At the February 2007 meeting of the board, parent education kits distributed by the Piper Foundation were seen as “a perfect vehicle for branding.” A partnership with the Piper Foundation would allow FTF to brand the kits and disseminate their organization across the state via advertising on the kits and the materials provided with the kits. From the inception of FTF, there has been an emphasis on strategic communications, so much so that they have created strategic communication plans. In October of 2010, FTF refined their brand by changing their tagline from, “The right system for better futures,” to “Ready for School. Set for Life.” This new tagline transfers the responsibility for readiness from the system to the child. Branding is so important to the organization that they have a fulltime staff person, a brand advocate whose sole responsibility is to focus on efficiency and consistency in branding. The organization provided brand training for all staff, a variety of regional council members, and state board members at the annual summit in August of 2010. The training came complete with a communications toolkit. The First Things First Brand is based on a heritage, personality, and visual aspects. The brand is said to provide self-expressive benefits, functional benefits, and emotional benefits.

In my analysis of both the text and visual images produced by FTF portray the role of caregivers/teachers as gendered. The billboards, commercials run in local

theatres, and documents/publications consistently show women as caregivers and teachers of young children. When males are present in visual images, they are depicted as a parental figure not a teacher/caregiver. This has been consistent throughout FTF's history. Two examples from print documents are; the *Building Bright Futures: Needs and Assets Assessment 2007* where of twenty four pictures representing caregivers/teachers and parents, only seven include a man and of those seven all are portrayed as parental figures. A second example is *Building Bright Futures: Arizona's Early Childhood Opportunities 2009 Report*, 3 of 9 photographs include a man and each time he is portrayed as a parental figure in this report as well. Current advertisements in local movie theaters, billboards, and magazines rarely present males in any role. Typically, women of all ages and a variety of races are utilized to represent teachers, caregivers, and parents. One man was seen in a commercial at a local theater and he was with a woman playing with what appeared to be their child, once again, the male role was portrayed as a parent. These photographs and visual images reinforce teaching and caregiving as a gendered role belonging to women. An image makes far greater impact than words (Lakoff, 2006).

Power Relationships Analysis

The second question guiding this discourse analysis is, "What power relationships are achieved through the documents and how are children, teachers, and families constructed as a result of these power relationships?" The strategic planning sessions set the stage for how meetings of the board were to operate. While the meetings were open to the public, it was clearly stated and reiterated by the board chairperson that the board

would develop the actual objectives, strategies, and action plans despite the fact that the public was invited to participate in the strategic planning process. The chairperson also emphasized the fact that all members of the board and committees would be appointed by the chairperson.

It was determined the board would be the entity to appoint the regional councils. There are 31 regional partnership councils (RPCs) comprised of volunteers within each region who have applied to be members of their respective regional council and have in turn been approved/appointed by the board. RPCs were appointed in the spring of 2008 and were given the job of assessing needs within their respective communities and then creating plans for funding which would improve services and support for families and children in their areas. The volunteers are representative of a variety of groups and service providers including the health care community, ECE, the faith community, business, parents, etc.. At the first strategic planning session one particular board member was very firm about the fact that the relationship/partnership of FTF with the regional councils should be more than oversight but governance, “The governance/support of the regional councils and their respective children, families, teachers, and service providers should be the responsibility of the board.” Both services and support provided by RPCs began mid-summer 2009.

The Early Childhood Health and Development Board identified a Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS) for statewide funding because it builds infrastructure. “We envision FTF as the home for QRIS.” FTF felt that a comprehensive statewide system may be better and that Arizona could establish its own QRIS. *Building Bright Futures:*

Arizona's Early Childhood Opportunities Report 2009 states that Arizona's QRIS was designed in order to "increase the availability of quality early care and education" (p. 18). In the FTF publication, *Measuring Quality in Early Childhood Education*, Quality First, Arizona's QRIS is cited as one of First Things First's "signature programs". Quality First was established as a response to educational reform efforts for the purposes of improving the quality of service providers, as well as the quality of teachers, and for promotion of school readiness (p. 4).

Justification for the program comes from the idea that best practice validates rigorous evaluation such as that found in a QRIS (*Building Bright Futures: Arizona's Early Childhood Opportunities*, 2009). Further defense of the QRIS was that a "good" ECEC program is vague without some sort of standard of quality (*Policy Brief: Measuring Quality in Early Childhood Education*). Lakoff (2006) sees Quality Rating Systems (QRS) as part of a merit based market where success comes through competition. Perhaps of even greater significance is the fact the evaluation tool utilized by Quality First was designed by FTF (*Policy Brief: Measuring Quality in Early Childhood Education*, p. 6). The QRIS is a form of public management where the focus is accountability, there are very specific measures and standards of performance, the emphasis lies on output rather than input, and rewards are linked to performance (Rose, 1999).

The authority and control that FTF will be able to maintain through such a program goes back to the conservative morality found in the education as production frame. There are specific values that result from authority and control: discipline,

ownership, and hierarchy (Lakoff, 2006). “Power depends not only on access to resources but also on access to contexts in which resources can be used” (Blommaert & Bulcaen, 2000, p. 458).

In the FTF publication, *Vision for Home Visiting Services in Arizona-Plan of Action* (2010), the agency decided to, “Establish a structure of collaborative decision-making at the state and the local level with one state agency taking the lead to facilitate a State Level Steering Committee that will ensure the coordination of Home Visiting services at the state and local level.”

Values Revealed

Gee (2011) sees both value and belief orientations as being historically tied to wider dichotomies that are centered around beliefs with regard to responsibilities as well as the role of governments. The values that enter into big C conversations then circulate via a multitude of media and texts. First Things First firmly emphasized the grounding of their work, policies, and funding in best practice research. By placing best practice at the forefront in the first strategic planning session in January of 2007, FTF revealed what would steer/guide everything they would do in the future.

In conjunction with best practice, the board voiced a desire to be evidence based at their April 22, 2008 board meeting. The *Building Bright Futures: Needs and Assets Assessment 2007* contained a list of projects and services on which FTF felt they could build a professional development system that promoted the use of best practice (p. 67). *Building Bright Futures: Arizona’s Early Childhood Opportunities 2009 Report* stated that curricula utilized by ECEC centers/caregivers should be evidence based (p. 11). The

same document outlined a quality improvement plan to be implemented by Quality First that was based on standardized assessments (p. 18). The value placed on evidence in both instances requires that quality be tied to empirically demonstrated values.

Popkewitz and Lindblad (2000) state the governance of education often occurs through specific evaluation systems which stem from a managerial/business approach. They remind readers market strategies serve to reconfigure the procedures of governing through things such as standards and mandates based on performance.

The board revealed a desire to create models of excellence in quality care at their first strategic planning session. The *Building Bright Futures: Needs and Assets Assessment 2007* stated that a quality caregiver is an individual who is skilled in meeting developmental needs (p. 11). The value placed on quality and its respective measurement related to teachers, caregivers, and facilities was again emphasized in the policy brief *Measuring Quality in Early Childhood Education*. FTF cited the national accreditation of ECE programs as one of the most important measures of a quality program on the first page of *Ready for School. Set for Life: Creating the Model Early Childhood System*. The standard measure for quality in this case is derived from what NAEYC has created and disseminated (NAEYC, NAECS/SDE position statement, 2003). The *Policy Brief: Read All About It-School Success Rooted in Early Language & Literacy* stated literacy success would be a result of quality interactions between teachers, caregivers, parents, and children.

Beginning with the verbiage of Proposition 203 and continuing throughout strategic planning sessions, board meetings, and print materials, FTF has underscored that

they want to maintain a sense of fairness and to be sure that the citizens of Arizona see that the organization cares equally about all areas of the state.

Discourse Absent from Text

The *Building Bright Futures: Needs and Assets Assessment 2007* cited Arizona as one of the states in the U.S. with the lowest scores of tests of academic achievement. This report ties extremely low test scores to children not being ready to enter kindergarten. What is missing from the material presented here is the fact that Arizona removed bilingual education programs from the state educational system which has had significant impact on ELL students and their ability to demonstrate their capabilities on tests of academic performance which are all in English.

The *Policy Brief: Measuring Quality in Early Childhood Education* addressed a problem with retention rates in ECEC centers/programs. The economy was cited as possibly playing a role in this issue, however, many centers/programs in Arizona both rural and urban experience flux with regard to retention due to migrant families as well as economic conditions. Also not addressed were instances in which one area of state support or one leg of the stool supporting ECEC was missing.

Contradictions and Inconsistencies

The most evident contradictions and inconsistencies relative to both the Early Childhood Health and Development Board and FTF are those related to whether they are a governmental entity or not. A desire to not be seen as a government entity was reiterated in planning sessions and board meetings. At the first strategic planning session

one of the board members told other members of the board that FTF needed to be a needs/asset driven service model so that, “we don’t come across as the government here to help you.” The individual who led the strategic planning sessions had to remind the board that they were promoting themselves as a “non-governmental solution.” A board member who is also the head of a large non-profit in the state followed this comment with, “I am not satisfied that we are a non-governmental solution.” The comeback was then, “You are quasi-governmental. You are a hybrid of government organization and entrepreneur.”

A lack of unity among board members was both seen and heard from the first public meeting in January of 2007. One board member brought up within the first hour of the first strategic planning session, “We are not unified in ideas regarding chair and executive director or board responsibilities.” This lack of cohesiveness has continued over the years as the organization has experienced high turnover of both board members and employees due to dissatisfaction with direction, results of decisions made, and conflicts related to personalities within the organization itself.

In January 2007, board members agreed that summits would be a means to encourage citizen engagement as well as a vehicle to raise community awareness. These were said to be two of the most significant things that the board could do. Yet, during the planning sessions, the open meeting law was said to be detrimental. Several board members disagreed as to what should and should not be discussed with the public present in both strategic planning sessions and board meetings. At the first strategic planning session, the open meeting law was equated to a “learning disability”.

The passage of Prop 203 by the citizens of the state of Arizona was proof that the people of this state do value and care about ECEC. However, the *Building Bright Futures: Needs and Assets Assessment 2007* used the statistic of Arizona ranking 48th with regard to the provision of preschool experiences for young children to bolster their opinion that, “our state does not value ECEC” (p. 36).

Statistics utilized to determine initial “fair allocation” strategies were from the 2000 census. The board began decision making with regard to funding in 2007 and distribution of funds did not occur until 2009. At this point, the population stats were nine years old and Arizona was experiencing unprecedented growth due to the housing boom which dramatically altered the population of young children in all areas across the state. Access and equity for all families were repeatedly stated as being valued and necessary. A board member present at the first strategic planning session in January of 2007 said, “We run the risk of a huge inability to serve families.” Another individual said, “We are trying to avoid a two-tiered system.” Immediately following this comment a vote was made with regard to regional funding/distribution criteria which would allow for equity across councils and all board members voted no.

Inconsistencies over the years are visible with the attitudes/perceptions of regional councils, specifically the tribal councils. Several members of the board came across as annoyed with several tribes during the strategic planning sessions because they had not decided whether they would be included with the region they were located within as outlined by the board or whether they would choose to remain independent. In January of 2007, the board was waiting for tribes to decide if they would be part of the regions.

One board member said that if the tribes did not make a decision soon, the decision would be made for them for the next two years. Remarks such as this sound very much like a governmental agency dictating what will and will not be done rather than an agency coming along side and complementing/assisting.

Disagreement arose among board members about the make-up of tribal councils as well. It would seem that members of tribal councils would consist of tribal members. However, clarification was made and board members were told that individuals serving on tribal councils do not have to be a member of the tribe nor do they have to live on tribal lands, they only have to be working for the tribe.

Board members voiced concerns about language of printed materials/programs and access to such items during the first strategic planning session meeting. Sensitivity to other cultural practices and languages could be heard in meetings but there was a feeling of resistance to both by a couple of members of the board. One board member cited California First Five and the conclusion they had reached with regard to meeting linguistic diversity, they felt trying to do so was not cost effective. This concern came up again when the board decided to begin partnering with the Piper Foundation to increase the distribution on parenting kits to new parents upon the birth of their child/ren. The statewide distribution of parent education kits was strongly supported by all board members from their first meeting in January of 2007. This was an attempt to come alongside Piper and enhance what they were already doing. However, the parenting kits have now essentially been taken over by FTF and are viewed more as a means of branding/messaging than anything else. The kits are still only available in English and

Spanish which excludes several populations across the state (Vision for Home Visiting Services in Arizona-Plan of Action, 2010). The phrase, “this is a branding opportunity”, was heard repeatedly with regard to these kits.

Quality in ECEC consistently appears over the years in meetings, publications, messaging mediums, etc., as being equated with teachers. Professional development programs such as SUCCEEDS and TEACH are presented as the means to achieve a quality teacher. A recent policy brief put out by FTF says, “A review of various studies involving four year olds revealed that increasing teachers’ education levels alone does not significantly improve classroom quality (Policy Brief: Professional Development of Teachers of Arizona’s Young Children, 2010, p. 5).” The purpose of TEACH is to provide opportunities to move up steps through professional development and this is also theoretically tied to wage/salary enhancement. The same document states that, “Early care provider training may lead to higher quality care” (p. 6).

Developmental screening was identified as a priority of the board at the first strategic planning session. Then board member and now CEO of First Things First stated, “We must do the developmental screening but we’re creating a population we don’t have a capacity for (special education).”

The data analyzed reveal a desire by many board members to truly increase access and equity in the realm of ECEC for all children in the state of Arizona, however, the dominant discourse of the child as a tool of the market has effectively served to silence progressive notions as well as created space for the related neoliberal discourses of accountability and quality to become accepted as the correct direction for FTF and the

state as a whole to pursue. The dominance of this frame of discourse is not particular to Arizona; it can be seen across the nation and other nations as well. Language is a very effective technology of power that serves to shape and drive thought processes, institutions, and policies. The logic of the market metaphor has prevailed. Chapter five presents a discussion of how this frame has been so successful, what this has meant so far for ECEC in Arizona, and finally raises questions as to how or even if there is a remedy for young children, families, and stakeholders in the field.

Chapter 5

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Parameters of the Study

As a researcher, my social “frame of reference” directly impacts the questions I raise and my interpretations of the data (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2000, p. 303). As a critical feminist and a Mexican American, I am acutely aware of issues related to power, patriarchy, race, gender, age, and class. My struggles personally are often centered on my privileged social location as a middle class, fair-skinned, female academic. I continually have to remind myself my ideas and beliefs have been strongly influenced by a male-dominated, capitalistic society. Areas typically outside of ‘legitimate investigation’ such as class, age, race, sexual orientation, gender, and place in history are all directly related to the researcher’s situatedness (Hawkesworth, 2007). It is not possible for a person to be completely transparent or to be cognizant of all of her/his prejudices in order to have a clearly unobstructed view of reality.

The purpose of this study was not to determine whether First Things First is or is not the right system for Arizona and I certainly do not intend to put forth my ideas and thoughts as a revelation that should be accepted as truth due to my position as an academic. A researcher cannot be a source of truth due to the fact she or he is a product of specific truth regimes (Hawkesworth, 2007). Privilege is another significant impediment to objectivity (Hawkesworth, 2007). Feminist researchers seek to be continually aware of bias as well as distortion which can result from generalization or insufficient evidence (Hawkesworth, 2007). This study has provided me with the

opportunity to better understand the strategies utilized in Arizona to improve the area of Early Childhood Education and Health Care.

Language serves to structure thought and can serve to legitimate or make acceptable particular ideologies (Spivak, 1987). The ability of language to structure thought thus enables it to serve as a technology of power (Foucault, 1994). Viruru and Cannella (2006) discuss Gandhi's views in regard to language. He saw language as inciting and a "purveyor of colonial power" (p. 186). The maintenance of power occurs via language. It is imperative to recognize and address its limitations (Viruru & Cannella, 2006).

A researcher's ethical standpoint is also crucial to both the trustworthiness and validity of a study (Hesse-Biber, 2007). Validity in the qualitative realm encompasses explanation and description. The degree to which the explanation fits the description implies credibility (Janesick, 2003). Validity in research cannot be guaranteed by any one method. Following a formula or specific procedure cannot certify "truth" has been attained (Hawkesworth, 2007). The ideas of objectivity in feminist research are not tied to producing truth or truths. It is not easily reached and requires study across as well as among disciplines (Hawkesworth, 2007).

The choice of what to include and exclude is obviously subjective. As such, some understandings will be passed from researcher to reader but in the same manner, some will not (Stake, 2003). Validity in research results cannot be guaranteed by any one method. In the wake of *No Child Left Behind* in the United States, validity has been drawn into question and essentially discredited in qualitative research. Federally, validity equated with replicability, and objective, systematic procedures (Cho & Trent, 2006).

However, within the field of qualitative research, following a formula or specific procedure cannot certify that “truth” has been attained (Hawkesworth, 2007). Both Lather (1986) and Wolcott (1990) challenge the notion of validity even a constructed one. Both challenge whether validity is able to achieve an eventual ideal (Cho & Trent, 2006). Popkewitz and Lindblad (2000) remind researchers, “the problem of research is not only to identify what is made visible through official reports and policy discourses but to identify and study what does not appear-the silences-in the official maps of policy making and research (p. 26).” There are no magic forms of assurance and triangulation of data still does not mean the researcher has all the answers.

Defining Frames

Our interactions with the world are facilitated by specific frames that serve to shape our reasoning, structure concepts and ideas, and even directly impact our perceptions as well as the way we act (Lakoff, 2006). Frames allow us to interpret reality and sometimes can create what we believe to be reality. Deep frames serve to define what an individual feels is “common sense” as well as the structures on which surface frames hang. If a surface frame like FTF’s “System ready, child ready” “makes sense” to an individual it is because they have a deep frame like education as investment to attach it to.

Two deep frames of discourse were found within the data analyzed (Lakoff, 2006). The first deep frame is one of nurturance and progressivity where the government makes it possible for all human beings to have high quality education and values an investment in all people groups for the benefit of society as a whole. Communities in this discourse are provided with the necessary funds to design and create learning

environments which will both meet the needs of and benefit all young people within a particular community (Lakoff 2006; Bloch, et al., 2003).

A frame of progressivity is one of empowerment where community is a result of two-way accountability. In the educational realm this means through the government as an agency, we as a nation must provide, safe, inviting, stimulating learning environments for all of our children. Every community as well as the nation should be held accountable if the appropriate provisions are not made available to all students whether those provisions are computers, teachers, books, labs, materials, etc. for students to have an equal and equitable learning experience. At the point our society has met this requirement, then, and only then, if it is necessary, should students, families, or teachers be held accountable. Even at this point the idea of accountability can be contested based upon definition, purpose, and desired outcomes (Haas, 2008).

The first strategic planning session held by the Early Childhood Health and Development Board in January of 2007 included multiple conversations related to system building, collaboration with existing agencies, facilitation of services, meeting the needs of communities, nurturing relationships among service providers, and defining strategies for building and supporting the infrastructure of ECEC across the state of Arizona. All of these conversations appeared to be inclusive as well as progressive. Multiple documents and policy reports including; the *Family and Community Report: A Baseline Report on Families and Coordination* (FTF, 2009), *Building Bright Futures* (FTF, 2009), and *Ready for School. Set for Life: Creating the Model Early Childhood System* (FTF, 2010) reiterated a desire to work with partners across the state to develop a comprehensive, interconnected, culturally responsive, family driven, community based, delivery system

which would serve to enhance the overall development of the state's young children. The board set certain tones with regard to inclusion but over the years the neoliberal discourses of quality and readiness have pushed interconnection, family oriented, community based ideas to the sidelines. Multiple changes in board membership and agency leadership in conjunction with the shift from a democratic to a republican governor caused the board to become more conservative.

The second deep frame is one of neoliberalism, in which both the business community and the government see education as an investment in the young person whose purpose is to be a productive, responsible citizen who will contribute to the market in the future thus impacting the economy positively. This market discourse of education places value on the child as an investment whose rate of return in the future warrants investment by the government, corporations, and non-profits today (Kirp, 2007; Smith, 2004; Goodman, 2004). The generation and accumulation of profit necessitates resources which by nature are human subjects either in their roles as consumers or laborers and it is their money that is utilized to buy the products that generate profit (Charkiewicz, 2007). Swadener, Nagasawa, and Peters (2013) cite Cochran (2007) who states that the neoliberal arguments of the free market logic applied to ECE naturally lead one to think of this field as a commodity where services provided are a direct result of the amount invested by parents/guardians. The metaphors of failing schools threatening our nation generated by *A Nation at Risk* still prevail in the hearts and minds of the American public and in turn have become woven into the background of "common sense" assumptions held by people relative to ECEC (Smith, 2004).

The first executive director of First Things First repeatedly reminded board members in strategic planning sessions and board meetings of the fact FTF was based on a business model, and meetings, and other activities would mirror how things are done in the business world. The implementation of the business model has pushed ECEC toward increased surveillance and regulation. Programs in this model are expected to construct competent children who are ready to succeed (Gibbons, 2007). While the vision statement created during the strategic planning sessions recognized that all children will be healthy and ready to succeed, long term outcomes were based upon evaluation and assessment of skills/abilities in order to determine if children are ready or not for kindergarten. Placing the onus of readiness on the child began early and the five year plan, *The Vision for Early Childhood Home Visiting Services in Arizona: A Plan of Action 2010-2015* (2010) specifically stated FTF's plan would ensure an increase in the number of children who are "ready to succeed when they start school" (p. 26). Readiness in this document focused on parent and child, not the system.

The child as investment approach relies on best practice research and cognitive science to "sell" ECEC to constituents. Cognitive science is now tied with effective parenting and quality caregivers/centers (Loeb, Fuller, Kagan, & Carrol, 2004). Success is equated with individual responsibility and systemic issues are not relevant when a child is deemed not ready for kindergarten or unable to produce an acceptable score on a particular achievement measure because the individual, family, or teacher has not worked hard enough to provide evidence of learning (Haas 2008; Cannella 2005; Bloch, et al., 2003). The common core of neoliberalism is the promotion of market-based solutions in a variety of public arenas including ECEC and health care (Lave, 2012; Goodman, 2004).

It is within this frame that results and accountability become a driving force for funding and where the measurement of learning becomes confused with learning itself (Haas, 2007). Research often looks at how different social relations are impacted by policy, but it typically does not clearly address how the nature of the categories inscribed in those relations are the direct result of power (Popkewitz & Lindblad, 2000). The language of accountability can become a powerful tool that serves to exclude (Friedman, 2005). The politicians who put together *A Nation at Risk* assumed that productivity was tied to test results, thus creating a nationwide push to reform schools and increase the performance of students, teachers, and schools. While intentions may not have been to benefit the private sector, that was the ultimate result and continues to be the impetus behind the push for accountability and quality in ECEC (Smith, 2004).

Silencing of Progressive Discourse

While both a progressive frame and a neoliberal frame were found in the data, the strength of the neoliberal frame served to essentially silence the nurturant values of the progressive frame. The logic of the market metaphor and its relative production frame are pervasive in policy discussions on education, effectively silencing the progressive frame of nurturance which consequently appears illogical (Haas, 2007). This pervasiveness in turn makes the neoliberal frame of education the most common sense way of understanding and can be understood in a neo-Gramscian sense of good sense/bad sense (Nagasawa, Peters, & Swadener, 2013).

The ability of the market discourse to silence the nurturant discourse stems from the fact that it is a dominant, deep frame of discourse that has been present within the United States for decades. Embedded within this deep frame of discourse are the issue

defining frames of poverty, children at risk, bad parenting, readiness, and quality. Issue defining frames assign blame, characterize problems, and serve to constrain possible solutions (Lakoff, 2006). According to Lakoff (2006), “Frames not only define issues, problems, causes, and solutions; they also hide relevant issues and causes. Moreover, policies and programs make sense only given issue-defining frames” (p. 35). Metaphors trump the thought process and rational arguments because they work at the emotional level outside of reason and it is for this very reason policy makers are able to use them to influence how people interpret specific phenomenon (Smith, 2004).

One imagined solution in this market-based discourse lies in mandates set forth related to standards based accountability. Within this discourse, data driven decision making leads to standardized assessment and measurement which are confused with learning. The mandates for state standards and accountability reform measures have increased since President George W. Bush’s Good Start Grow Smart initiative targeting children ages 3-5 was instituted but the complexity and intricacies of issues related to accountability reform measures have never been addressed (Brown, 2007). In the United States, the policy research and policies related to formal schooling, school reform, and now reforms in ECEC make the assumption the state serves as the governing agency, however, there is an abundance of rhetoric regarding both local control and decentralization which serves as a governing strategy (Apple, 2009; Smith, 2004; Bloch, et al, 2003; Popkewitz & Lindblad, 2000; Prud’homme 1995). Standards based accountability (SBA) has emerged as the policy solution for systemic failure in the nation’s K-12 schools and is now being seen as a fixative for early childhood as well.

The re-framing of Early Childhood Education and Care requires a reflection and consideration of our values. The values of empathy and responsibility should be the impetus for the government to empower its citizens both young and old. Education is a key to empowerment. There is considerable research available to substantiate a nurturance frame over a production frame in education (Haas, 2007). However, one does wonder whether systemic reform is even possible in the field of ECEC as we know it in the United States (Brown, 2007).

From Issue Defining Frames to Deep Frames

The origins of the assumptions about knowledge and the views of young children, families, and teachers organizing the discourse of FTF can be found once again within the deep frame of education as production (Haas, 2007; Lakoff, 2006; Goodman, 2004; Smith, 2004). The issue defining frames of best practice, DAP, at-risk, ready or not, and quality have become deep frames of discourse no longer just hanging on the structure of education as production but now being equated with this deep frame of discourse. An overemphasis on standards began in January of 2007 and has continued to the present. FTF often references and cites NAEYC when discussing standards, DAP, assessments, curriculum, and quality. Three position statements in particular serve as gospel relative to these issues; *A Conceptual Framework for Early Childhood Professional Development* (NAEYC, 1993), *Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs Serving Children from Birth through Age 8* (2009), and *Early Childhood Curriculum, Assessment, and Program Evaluation: Building an Effective, Accountable System in Programs for Children Birth through Age 8* (2003).

While one may argue the NAEYC is an organization with the best of intentions for the field of ECEC, critical scholars have long raised a concern that many of the concepts and ideas they champion are embedded in a very specific class-based discourse which serves as yet another deep frame of discourse dominating the field of ECEC in the United States (Gee 2011; Arzubiaga, Ceja, & Artiles, 2000; McDermott & Varenne, 2010; Brown, 2007; Cannella, 2005; Super and Harkness, 2003; Weisner, 2002; Bloch & Popkewitz, 2000; Kessler & Swadener, 1992).

Within the NAEYC documents, as well as multiple FTF documents, the responsibility for readiness lies mainly with the young child and their parents, while the responsibility for quality lies with teachers and caregivers. The surface frame of personal responsibility rather than system responsibility is yet another attribute of the neoliberal discourse of education as production. The difference here from the progressive frame of responsibility lies in the individual bearing the weight of the responsibility rather than fulfilling a responsibility. The neoliberal view places blame on the individual if they are unable to or fail to carry their own weight. The progressive view is that of fulfilling a need as a result of empathy toward a situation while utilizing the common wealth for the common good (Lakoff, 2006). It is a patriarchal power structure that desires to both protect and ready young children. Neo-liberalism is a political project dependent on agency as a technology as well as empowerment. Both elements are required to create flexible, responsible, physical bodies attuned to capitalist accumulation (Charkiewicz, 2007; Gibson-Graham, 2006).

The rhetoric of readiness, or lack thereof, was tied to particular ideas of risk, poverty, and parenting in both planning sessions and board meetings. Phrases like

poverty and equity have a seductive appeal and power to turn the gears of neoliberalism toward projects which tend to increase rather than alleviate poverty. While poverty is the underlying social anathema being addressed through targeting children, the root of poverty and ways to remove the root are not addressed. Since the 80's, the standard of living in the United States has declined for 75% of its households. Wealth has become more concentrated than ever and the working poor continue to increase in number (Charkiewicz, 2007). Before determining solutions, it is very important to think about causes. Determination of the story behind the baseline is required before considering actions to be taken (Friedman, 2005).

Board members voiced concerns on multiple occasions about needing to be able to provide funds for all families across the state, building relationships with all stakeholders, and focusing on all parents not just mothers. However, such concerns always seemed to be glossed over and conversations moved to targeting interventions and services. Increased access and equity were desired outcomes from the beginning and yet programs such as Quality First and the QRIS have served to create a two tiered system. When programs such as QF are utilized by mainly center based providers, a large segment of the population requiring ECEC is eliminated. In November of 2012, there were 759 participating providers in QF, with a waitlist of 309 (FTF, 2012). There are potentially 308,619 children under age 6 needing child care in Arizona and a total of 224,543 spaces/slots available in centers and family child care homes, this could leave 84, 076 children without an option (NACCRRRA, 2012). This number does not include all of those children affected by the frozen waiting list maintained by Arizona Department of Economic Security.

The economic downturn across the nation and in the state of Arizona over the past five years has caused many families to have to pull their children from center based care and utilize kith and kin care. Center based care in Arizona tends to serve a more middle class population and even those in the middle class are having to find alternatives to this type of care for their children due to economic constraints (Barnett & Yarosz, 2007). One exception within the FTF, QF program is the Crisis Nursery's Early Head Start program which is about to receive a five star rating (Swadener, personal conversation). The importance of family care providers cannot be overemphasized as they often provide flexible, low cost, and easily accessible child care options. Since affordable child care options are at a minimum in the U.S., family care fills a very important gap (Hamm, Gault, & Jones-DeWeever, 2005). The three legged stool of ECEC includes positive experiences with early learning, good health, and economically secure and nurturing families. What are families to do when one or even two of the legs of their stool have been removed? There are not enough child care scholarships available through FTF to meet the needs of all of Arizona's families so both equity and access are set aside and the focus is re-directed to push the number of centers/caregivers enrolled in QF and subsequently to move the gaze of surveillance to the teachers/caregivers through the technology of professional development (Popkewitz and Brennan, 1998).

Shifting Messaging Frames: The Branding Issue

FTF has utilized a variety of messaging frames over the past seven years. Although the mediums are varied, they all have semantic commonalities: each contains a messenger, a target audience, a specific message, addresses a particular issue, a medium, and accompanying images (Lakoff, 2006). The most important message that the majority

of the messaging frames have pushed is the economic benefit of ECEC. The repetition of education as investment is very effective because it reinforces the deep frame of education as production and strengthens neural connections of receivers so that the message increasingly is received as common sense (Nagasawa, Peters, & Swadener, 2013). The messages of readiness, DAP, parental responsibility and quality are consistently repeated regardless of the medium utilized. The medium used is of utmost importance because an image is always more powerful than words and within print ads the initial text is more powerful than what follows. The messages of cognitive science and DAP also serve to privilege a form of cultural masculinity (Cannella, 1997).

Branding has been a primary focus and means of messaging for FTF since the first strategic planning session in January of 2007. Some board members appeared to be almost obsessed with branding on more than one occasion. The organization quickly agreed to a partnership with the Piper Foundation to increase the dissemination of parenting kits made available to parents of newborns through local hospitals. Conversations briefly touched on increasing the number as well as the access to these kits and then quickly moved to how FTF could use them to strategically advertise. Those who felt the kits should be available in multiple languages were essentially silenced. Particular notions of parenting are put forth in these kits that are not culturally sensitive and thus they serve to reinscribe 'western' parenting practices as correct. Due to the fact the kits are not offered in multiple languages, and they disregard variance of parenting styles among cultures, one wonders how they can be seen as a positive tool for families? An organization whose purpose was to create a system of ECEC in Arizona that supported and strengthened existing agencies should not be so engrossed in self-

promotion. A shift in focus by the organization was clear in October 2010 when the system's tagline was changed from, "The right system for better futures", to "Ready for School. Set for Life". A focus on self can only serve to feed neoliberal ideas of personal responsibility and not progressive desires to build relationships in order to serve others. Part of the reason for the shift may be related to a change in board leadership. The first executive director was a career bureaucrat focused on building a state agency while the second saw public relations as the means to promote the organization.

FTF hired a full time brand advocate whose role is to focus on efficiency and consistency in branding. The First Things First Brand is based on a heritage, personality, and visual aspects. The brand provides self-expressive benefits, functional benefits, and emotional benefits (FTF, 2013). If one solely heard the basis and provisions of their brand without being told the aspects and benefits were tied to a brand, they would assume that the description fit an individual. The FTF brand is being presented as an almost human entity. The personality of the brand is likened to the personality of a person because the characteristics of it make the brand "unique in how it looks, feels, and acts." The brand is said to be a caregiver and teacher who is approachable as opposed to bureaucratic, trustworthy, knowledgeable, responsible, open, and authentic. How can human qualities be attributed to a brand? The emotional benefits the public should feel when interacting with FTF are a sense of accomplishment, of helping the greater good, making a difference, of appreciation, and engagement. Is a brand capable of inciting these feelings and emotions within the public at large? Should this type of reception really be one of the focal points of this organization? How does further self-promotion serve to strengthen the system of ECEC in Arizona?

Gender and Power

Both the visual and text messaging produced by FTF serves to reinscribe gendered roles of caregivers and teachers. Women are consistently portrayed through all media outlets as the individuals who fill these roles. Men are portrayed as parents but never as caregivers or teachers. According to Lakoff (2006), “Photos tell stories with political morals and make arguments with political inferences” (p. 140). These images serve to further reinforce patriarchal notions of a woman’s role in society and education. Language as well as images both reflect and generate power. Both serve to mirror specific ideologies and socially constructed norms (Derrida, 1981). Women within the United States have been constructed as the moral underpinning of the family and as a result become instruments whose identity is interwoven with the child. Teaching and caregiving have thus become the logical, natural responsibility of women (Cannella, 1997).

When considering public policy from a critical qualitative perspective, it is important to consider intersecting power relations and recognizing sources of power (Ortiz & Cannella, 2006). FTF exercises a notable amount of power within ECEC in Arizona. Power within the organization itself is hierarchical. The board chairperson had the power to appoint the Early Childhood Health and Development board initially and committee members, essentially hand-picking whom she wanted. The board developed the objectives, strategies, and actions plans of the agency despite the fact that the public was involved in strategic planning sessions and was asked to participate in and contribute to those planning sessions as well as to help develop action plans. The board also had and continues to have the power to appoint the volunteer regional councils. The Early

Childhood Health and Development board has the unique ability to control bodies (Charkiewicz, 2007).

Statewide funding was approved for a QRIS because the board felt such a system would help to build infrastructure. However, the publication, *Building Bright Futures: Arizona's Early Childhood Opportunities 2009 Report* states the QRIS was designed to increase availability as well as quality of ECE in the state. In the FTF publication, *Measuring Quality in Early Childhood Education*, Quality First, Arizona's QRIS is cited as one of First Things First's "signature programs." Here the program is said to be a response to educational reform efforts and its purpose is to improve the quality of service providers, as well as the quality of teachers, and for promotion of school readiness (p. 4). Once again, an increase in availability of and access to ECEC for all families in the state takes a back seat to quality and readiness, both elements of individual responsibility rather than systemic provision.

The QRIS is a technology of surveillance utilized by FTF. This form of governmentality in turn serves to include or exclude centers/caregivers as well as influence issues of both access and equity for young children and families. The authority and control FTF retains through the operation of QF feeds the agencies' ability to maintain dominance and further the hierarchy within the states system of ECEC. Both the bureaucrats and the agency implementing and overseeing a program acquire a persona as experts in the field with knowledge and capabilities to both design and evaluate programs. This in turn serves to create an institutional memory with regard to service provisions (Prud'homme, 2005). The responsive ability of the agency may then be limited with regard to policy in the future due to its programmatic nature and the fact that

it is sustained through government insiders whose authority encompasses a program already in existence (Rigby, Tarrant, & Newman, 2007).

In 2010, FTF took the lead to facilitate a State Level Steering Committee in order to guarantee coordination of home visiting services at both the state and local levels (Vision for Home Visiting Services in Arizona-Plan of Action, 2010). The decision by the agency to take the lead implies maintenance of control with regard to home visitations and the programs related to such services. A desire for quality professionals related to such services was stated in the first meetings of the board and one wonders if the next QRIS system will be for home health providers and volunteers. The creation of yet another committee does not serve to support existing structures; it provides a door for FTF to increase the bureaucratic hold they already have on ECEC in Arizona.

Conceptual Surface Frames

The values of an individual, organization, corporation, or even nation directly impact deep frames of discourse. The consciousness of the perceiver cannot be neutralized or eliminated (Bakhtin, 1986). How one perceives written or spoken discourse is tied to value laden deep frames of discourse on which conceptual surface frames like quality, ready, and professional all hang (Lakoff, 2006, Bakhtin, 1986). FTF clearly values evidence based research and best practice. TEACH and QRIS both involve professional development grounded in best practice. QF is a proponent of evidence based curricula and standardized assessments (Building Bright Futures: Arizona's Early Childhood Opportunities 2009 Report). Accreditation of programs is one of the most important measures of a quality program according to FTF and accreditation is based upon criteria established by the NAEYC. Solutions identified by "experts" to remedy the

problem of quality in ECEC are home visits by consultants or mentors, programs of accreditation, networks of family care providers, connection with community resources, tiered reimbursement systems, scholarships, and career ladders (Hamm, Gault, & Jones-DeWeever, 2005). The quality of teachers, caregivers, and child care providers has become inextricably linked with empirically demonstrated values.

Arizona was cited as one of the states with the lowest scores on tests of academic achievement in the U.S. in *Building Bright Futures: Needs and Assets Assessment 2007*. The report links young children not being ready for kindergarten to low test scores in the future. Once again responsibility is placed on the child rather than systemic conditions and circumstances. Arizona once had many schools with strong bilingual education programs, however, in November of 2000; Proposition 203 to end bilingual education was passed by the voters (Gonzalez, 2000). The state policy change was implemented the following school year and schools were no longer able to offer bilingual programs. Migrant populations directly impact program numbers and centers are seen as not retaining children which is not the case at all. However, retention is one of the things measured which in turn influences ratings and funding.

Arizona is a border state and as a result the flux in population significantly impacts schools. Students are expected to perform at or above grade level on standardized measures at the end of each school year in English. The tests of non-native speakers are not a direct reflection of their knowledge or capabilities. The state budget cuts to education are also not addressed and these cuts are a major piece of the puzzle. What happened to system ready, child ready? When will the state of Arizona or the nation for that matter provide equal access and opportunity for all children with regard to

ECEC? Due to the economic conditions the state currently finds itself in, many families simply cannot access the type of care and education FTF champions.

Governmental Organization as Entrepreneur

The contradictions and inconsistencies related to both the Early Childhood Health and Development Board and FTF reflect internal strife as well as a lack of clarity as to what exactly the role of the organization is. Concerns were raised by board members who did not want the agency to come off as the government here to help you and they were reminded by the facilitator of the strategic planning sessions that they would be promoting themselves as a “non-governmental solution”. While this may have been the goal, they were later told, after much debate, once again by the facilitator that they were a hybrid of a governmental organization as well as an entrepreneur. The idea of the organization as an entrepreneur reinforced the business model and continued to feed a neoliberal mindset.

Lack of unity among board members with regard to what exactly the organization was/is served as the beginning of many contentious discussions and situations that lead to dissatisfaction with the agency and its direction. I had several personal conversations over lunches with dissatisfied board members who were already looking for ways to “get out”. When a bureaucracy does not function, the fault does not lie with the organization but with its leadership (Friedman, 2005).

The first chairperson of the board made it very clear that FTF was not going to replicate any existing systems such as those in Oklahoma and Georgia. They would draw from ideas but were going to create their own entity. While the chairperson stated they intended to create their own system, First Things First, which would not be a replication

of any existing state systems of ECEC, the board members felt they would not be well received if their intentions were to “build” their own system. Voices of concern for collaboration and integration of existing systems were heard but appeared to be disregarded in the push to create the “right” system for Arizona. Work needs to be pulled together to one, two, or a half dozen places because collaboratives tend to take on lives of their own and then work solely to maintain their existence (Friedman, 2005).

Citizen engagement at summits and stakeholder participation in board meetings were seen as a means to raise awareness and garner support. However, one board member at the first strategic planning session said the open meeting law could be equated to a “learning disability”. There were heated discussions in strategic planning sessions as well as board meeting (in front of the public) with regard to what should and should not be discussed with the public present. These discussions created a very uncomfortable atmosphere for those not directly associated with FTF or the board and made one wonder if public participation and opinion were truly valued. During the strategic planning sessions, the public was asked to participate with groups and in discussions to help develop strategic action plans. After hours of discussion and input, the chairperson told participants that the board would ultimately be developing the strategic action plans. If this was the case, why did they offer inclusion? Regardless of all of the positive intentions of the board, efforts to include public conversation ultimately came to serve the original power structure. Staff and board members listened to well thought out suggestions and ideas with regard to change and yet the framework remained set, strategies were not altered, and often the end result was more exclusion of verbiage than inclusion (Charkiewicz, 2007).

Allocation strategies outlined in 2007 for the distribution of First Things First funds were based upon the census of 2000 and monies were not available to regional councils until 2009. At that point, the population data was nine years old. How are equity and access even possible when Arizona at the time was experiencing unprecedented population increases statewide, combined with what would be a protracted and hard hitting recession? Concerns were repeatedly raised by board members related to creating populations the agency would be unable to serve. The 31 regional councils across the state still have issues with equity and access. Populations have been created through the creation of regions, the QRIS, developmental screening, mental health screening, and home visitation services. The gap between needs and services continues to be highlighted by FTF (The Vision for Early Childhood Home Visiting Services in Arizona: A Plan of Action 2010-2015, 2010). The desire for high quality has pushed the desire for interconnected, comprehensive services to the side. While equity and access still remain a huge issue, they are no longer at the forefront of funding. Now that QF has become the ring in the nose so to speak of FTF, funding priorities have shifted toward the direction of quality as well. This study has allowed me to see the evolution of quality within this organization. The ideas of quality were initially tied to programs and then “logically” to providers. Now quality has moved its gaze to teachers and individuals involved with home visitation.

Final Thoughts

Trying to repair an existing government system cannot be equated with working to create improved quality of life for children and families; however, it seems as if most of the FTF leadership believes this is exactly what they are doing over time. Billions of

dollars in the U.S. are invested in social systems and programs that can demonstrate they are providing benefits, while quality of life and social conditions for those children and families utilizing the system and programs continues to deteriorate (Polakow, 2007; Friedman, 2005). Based on the findings of this study, I would argue that thinking needs to shift from the delivery of services to the well-being of the population, and, in particular, those most vulnerable. The answer is not and never has been more government, larger agencies, or increased programs. This is difficult when “there are dozens of little fiefdoms—health care, education, child welfare, juvenile justice, mental health, public safety, economic development, and the environmental protections system—each with its own bounded view of the world” (Friedman, 2005, p. 7).

The critical analysis of discourse utilized by, in, and through the Early Childhood Health and Development Board as well as First Things First was carried out in order to determine the particular frames of discourse present and then to see how those frames were able to shift and change the organization itself as well as its directions (Lakoff, 2006). The analysis was not conducted to determine hidden meanings but to question the facts and conditions through which discourse was manifested. While the discourse employed may have concealed particular content, I was more concerned about the transformations that resulted from it (Foucault, 1991). The neoliberal education as production frame of discourse has effectively swallowed up the progressive, nurturant frame of education desired by so many of the stakeholders within our state. The power of discourse to steer both direction of an agency and the policies it puts forth is staggering. There is no doubt in my mind that the members of the board sought to and continue to seek to improve ECEC in Arizona and that they have the best intentions.

What concerns me is the ability of this deep frame of discourse to become logical and to supersede original purposes and goals. “An almost 10% rate of return on an investment is better than many blue chip stocks right now” (FTF, 2013), should not be the reason for educating and caring for children 0-5. Charkiewicz (2007) feels when human bodies are seen as resources for economic growth, the global neoliberal economy is instituting an act of war on the individual and the subaltern. Is the tactic of extracting capital from human beings as resources an act of war? Have we entered into a war with younger human beings and if so how do we make restitution? If one reflects on the work of Foucault and his ideas of bio-politics, we are able to see life as an element of power mechanisms and calculations that act as agents on populations, individuals, and the particularities of both management and surveillance (Charkiewicz, 2007). Bio-politics certainly come into play with agencies like FTF where management and surveillance occur with young children, families, teachers, caregivers, and service providers.

How can we open up new spaces for discourse where progressives can be heard and make a difference? Multi-faceted initiatives for the common good can work if they are long term, work across issues, strive to unify grass roots and progressive groups, and they are strategic (Lakoff, 2006). The question is, are we willing to strategically work in this manner for the benefit of society as a whole? What would this look like in ECEC and specifically within our state? How do we now put the genie back in the bottle so to speak and remove the technology of surveillance and governance we as a state have created within the realm of ECEC? Nagasawa, Peters, and Swadener (2013) suggest publicly raising questions as to who/what exactly constitute “the community” and how they might be more authentically engaged? They further suggest that there is hope if

children, parents, practitioners, policymakers, and others are engaged in conversations that challenge a common sense approach to ECEC.

ECEC has moved up in focus on both national and international policy agendas; however, the driving force behind these agendas is a market based mentality of investing in young children in order to improve both economic and social conditions (Urban, 2007). The economic conditions found within the state of Arizona and the nation as a whole have forced parents and guardians to spend more time in the workplace in order to meet the basic daily needs of their families. Progress for families nationwide is limited and a decline in federal childcare funds and cutbacks to assistance programs have not allowed states to make up ground being lost (Schulman & Blank, 2007) and the U.S. ranks at the absolute bottom of not only wealthy nations, but many in the Global South in terms of family leave, publicly supported child care, and investments in children.

Early care and education is a vital resource for many families. Access to care can be expensive and difficult because availability and financial assistance are difficult to come by relative to demand. Efforts must increase on a federal and state level to not just move toward but also implement an equitable, voluntary system of ECE that will offer access to reliable, safe, nurturing care for children 0-5 for all families (Williams & Mitchell, 2004). The government and the private sector are of significant importance in remedying the situation; however, they are only two pieces of the puzzle. The focus on quality is important but should not be equated primarily with measurement/rating systems. As a society, we need to make a commitment to promote the well-being of human beings at all points of development (Brooks-Gunn, 2003; Soto, 2000).

This study has astonished me with regard to the power of the neoliberal education as production discourse to literally envelop the progressive frame advocated for and voiced by many well intentioned initial members of the Early Childhood Health and Development Board as well as the organization First Things First. In late 2006, when the Prop 203 ballot initiative passed, I waited with great anticipation and hope for the roll out of First Things First, as did many within the field of ECEC in Arizona. There were so many possibilities to forge a new direction for young children and their families and a multitude of people willing to give of their time to assist in the development of truly community/regionally based programs specific to those involved. Unfortunately, that dream has been replaced with yet another self-serving bureaucracy rooted in neoliberal market-based discourses and now actions related to branding, quality, readiness, and professional development. Arizona needs organized, community-based advocacy without governmental ties/representation, a new space for conversations about possibilities that does not reinscribe technologies of surveillance and control, and one in which children, families, providers, and others can come together in order to share ideas and offer possible solutions.

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APPENDIX A
TIMELINE

Phase	Activities	Time Frame
Phase I	Proposal Development Submit Committee Change Form Proposal Defense Update iPOS	August-September October 1, 2012 October 1, 2012 October 8, 2012
Phase II	Data Collection Tighten up Lit Review and Select Data to be Analyzed	October-December October 8-October 31
Phase III	Data Analysis and Writing of Thesis-will overlap with Phase II.	November 1-March 1
	Analyze board meeting/summit notes	October 16-October 23
	Analyze policy documents	October 23-November 1
	Analyze print media	November 1-November 8
	Begin tying together results of analysis	November 8-November 16
	Shore up theoretical frames	November 17-November 30
	Data meeting with committee	December
	Find and read relevant literature to support data analysis	December
	Write up findings	January 1-March 1
Phase IV	Final revisions and edits Send dissertation to committee for edits	March 1-March 14 March 15, 2013
Phase V	Schedule Defense Defense	April 5, 2012 April 19, 2012

APPENDIX B
WORD COUNT ANALYSIS

Document Title	Quality	QRS	Readiness	Ready	Access	Coordination	RPC	Professional Development	Brain Development
Building Bright Futures: Needs & Assets Assessment 2007 (108 pgs.)	152	1	22	21	50	27	2	24	8
First Things First 2007-2008 Annual Report (20 pgs.)	21	0	1	4	6	2	5	2	0
A Decade of Data: The Compensation and Credentials of Arizona's Early Care and Education Workforce 2008 (56 pgs.)	34	0	11	4	23	1	0	1	3
Arizona Early Childhood Coordination & Collaboration: A Baseline Report (24 pgs.)	29	0	0	2	22	29	1	3	0
Family and Community Report: A Baseline Report on Families and Coordination (46 pgs.)	26	0	2	4	27	18	1	0	24
First Things First Annual Report 2008-2009 (30 pgs.)	31	1	4	11	16	4	1	5	1
Building Bright Futures: Arizona's Early Childhood Opportunities 2009 Report (101 pgs.)	129	1	10	12	66	8	16	17	1

Document Title	Quality	QRS	Readiness	Ready	Access	Coordination	RPC	Professional Development	Brain Development
Vision for Early Childhood Home Visiting in AZ-Plan of Action 2010 (57 pgs.)	60	0	17	8	24	5	1	0	7
First Things First 2010 Annual Report (68 pgs.)	46	1	7	8	9	7	20	16	4
Ready for School. Set for Life: Creating the Model Early Childhood System 2010 (8 pgs.)	21	0	0	5	10	1	1	2	0
Policy Brief- Measuring Quality in Early Childhood Education (8 pgs.)	57	0	4	0	0	0	0	1	1
First Things First 2011 Annual Report (44 pgs.)	55	0	0	6	16	4	2	3	2
Building Bright Futures: Arizona's Early Childhood Opportunities 2011 Report (108 pgs.)	40	0	16	2	17	1	0	1	3
The Healthy Development of Arizona's Youngest Children 2010 (24 pgs.)	5	0	6	0	4	0	0	0	0
Policy Brief: Read All About It-School Success Rooted in Early Language & Literacy (8 pgs.)	7	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	0

Document Title	Quality	QRS	Readiness	Ready	Access	Coordination	RPC	Professional Development	Brain Development
Report of the Early Childhood Research and Evaluation National Advisory Panel	172	0	55	7	41	29	2	21	0
Policy Brief: Professional Development of Teachers of Arizona's Young Children (10 pgs.)	17	0	4	0	6	0	0	34	1

APPENDIX C
MEETINGS ATTENDED

Meetings Attended	Date	Hours Present	Number of Pages
Arizona Early Childhood Development and Health Board Meeting	2/26/2007	5	11
Arizona Early Childhood Development and Health Board Meeting	2/27/2007	4	12
Arizona Early Childhood Development and Health Board Meeting	3/25/2007	7.5	15
Arizona Early Childhood Development and Health Board Meeting	3/26/2007	6	16
Arizona Early Childhood Development and Health Board Strategic Planning Session	1/22/2008	6	9
Arizona Early Childhood Development and Health Board Strategic Planning Session	1/23/2008	8.5	5
Arizona Early Childhood Development and Health Board Meeting	4/22/2008	8	15

APPENDIX D
DOCUMENTS ANALYZED

Documents Analyzed	Publication Year
Building Bright Futures: Needs and Assets Assessment 2007	2007
Family and Community Survey on Early Childhood: A Baseline Report on Families and Coordination	2009
Building Bright Futures: Arizona's Early Childhood Opportunities 2009 Report	2009
Vision for Early Childhood Home Visiting in Arizona-Plan of Action 2010	2010
Ready for School. Set for Life: Creating the Model Early Childhood System	2011
Policy Brief-Measuring Quality in Early Childhood Education	
Policy Brief-Read All About It-School Success Rooted in Early Language and Literacy	2012
Policy Brief-Professional Development of Teachers of Arizona's Young Children	2013

