CHAPTER 5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

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5.1 Introduction

This study investigated what children know about social relationships; how knowledge differs between children with low average or high sociometric status; what knowledge, skills and behaviours are most influential for social competence; and how social competence knowledge translates into behaviours in the child's social world. In order to discover the above, many different methods of data collection and several levels of analysis were used to view the child from different perspectives.

Sociometric ratings were used to discover how peers perceive one another regarding social relationships. Sociometric ratings enabled the researcher to assign sociometric status to each child, which was important for comparing knowledge, skills and behaviours of the three status groups.

A checklist was constructed to gain the teachers' perceptions of how children perform in their social environment (see Chapter 5, section 5.3331-2). The checklist comprised children's behaviours which are related to social competence.

Interviews were used to gain understanding of how children perceive their social world. Differences between age, status, gender and intervention or non-intervention groups were investigated.

An intervention program was designed and gave another dimension to how context can affect children having difficulty with social relationships. Case studies were used to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the social world of the child. Case studies were approached from two levels: group and individual. The group case studies gave insight into the context of the preschool social world. They were also used to show how different contexts can affect the development of social competence. Individual case studies gave insight into what was happening from an individual level in the two different contexts.

5.2 Procedure

This study investigated individuals (Australian preschoolers) in order to identify typical patterns of development by attempting to describe, compare,

contrast, classify, analyse, and interpret knowledge, skills and behaviours over time. In other words the study consisted of an investigation using the same respondents at three different points in time over eight months.

This study is predominantly qualitative focusing on the child's beliefs about his/her social world through interviews, sociometric ratings, teacher checklists (HESCI checklist) and researcher's observation. Some quantitative measures are used to assist decision making within a qualitative approach. Examples are determining the sociometric status of the children (see discussion in Chapter 5, Section 5.321 on sociometric status) and in the results for determining what the most common responses to interview questions (see Chapter 6). The numbers allow the researcher to decide which responses are the most common for each age group, status group, intervention group or gender group.

Anecdotal observation is also used. The researcher attempts to comprehend the "natural" processes of social action and social interaction. Information is collected from the social setting in the least disruptive way, which enables the researcher to interpret and best understand the social actions in that context. The researcher attempts to get the subject's point of view of the world by attempting to understand what the social processes and actions mean to the subject her/himself in that context. The researcher attempted not to impose her own views on the situation and developed a critical attitude towards the research practice and theoretical framework.

When researchers use more than one approach to their research such as was used in this study they are said to use a process called triangulation. Triangulation can be used in both methods and theory.

5.21 The Sample

Many preschools and long daycare centres exist in Armidale, NSW, Australia. However, these centres differ widely in quality of teaching and philosophies. It was decided to choose preschools rather than daycare centres because staff in preschools are teacher trained in early childcare. In most day care centres, only the director may have teacher training in early childhood whereas the majority of staff are teachers' aides or nurses and have a childcare certificate from TAFE or nurse training.

Within Armidale preschools, many different philosophies exist such as those expressed by Anna Montessori, Rudolph Steiner and others. Two preschools were chosen so as to provide one with the teaching program and the other without the program. Two preschools were chosen that were most similar in their philosophies (a developmental and experiential approach to learning), one became the Non-Intervention Group and the other the Intervention Group. The Non-Intervention Group (NIG1, NIG2, NIG3, NIG4) was told that the researcher was interested in finding out what young children know about social competence and how social competence develops.

Both preschools had highly skilled teachers who were very interested in the welfare of the children. The teachers showed a strong commitment to nurturing and creating independence in each child. The preschools were not chosen randomly because there would have been problems in matching the above criteria.

In both groups, the children:

1. were interviewed to determine 'what' they knew about their social world, and

2. were asked to rate their peers' sociometric status by using sociometric ratings.

In both groups the teachers were asked to assess the children's skills and behaviours by completing a check-list (HESCI) for each child.

The Intervention Group (IG1, IG2, IG3) was trained in the application of a program to improve children's social competence and a number of children were selected for further intervention and assessment.

Of the two preschools actually chosen, both were similar in their overall approach although some differences became apparent and are explained later. (See Table 5.1 for summary of differences between class groups).

Table 5.1 Summary of the Main Similarities and Differences Between Each Group.

	IG1	IG2	IG3	NIG1	NIG2	NIG3	NIG4
Age	Mixed 3-5+ yrs	Mixed 3-5+ yrs	Mixed 3-5+ yrs	4-5yrs only	4-5yrs only	3-4yrs only	3-4yrs only
Class size	40 -am 20-pm	40 -am 20-pm	40 -am 20-pm	12	13	12	13
Staff	3 teacher 1 aide	3 teacher 1 aide	3 teacher 1 aide	1 teacher 1 parent aide	1 teacher 1 parent aide	1 teacher 1 parent aide	1 teacher 1 parent aide
Structure	Set time for eating, music & story.	Set time for eating, music & story.	Set time for eating, music & story	Set time for music & story, activities, outside time, eating	Set time for music & story, activities, outside time, eating	Set time for music & story, activities, outside time, eating	Set time for music & story, activities, outside time, eating
Activities	Wide choice of activities	Wide choice of activities	Wide choice of activities	Limited choice	Limited choice	Limited choice	Limited choice
Time spent outside	Unlimited except by music/ story times	Unlimited except by music/ story times	Unlimited except by music/ story times	Set time after eating	Set time after eating	Set time after eating	Set time after eating
Social Interact.	Different children each week day	Different children for each weekday	Different children for each weekday	Interact with same children each session	Interact with same children each session	Interact with same children each session	Interact with same children each session
Approach to social problem solving	Independ -ence & problem solving encourag -ed	Independ -ence & problem solving encourag -ed	Independ -ence & problem solving encourag -ed	Teacher discusses problems with child	Teacher discusses problems with child	Teacher helps solve problems	Teacher helps solve problems

IG = Intervention Group NIG = Non-Intervention Group

At both preschools:

1. the teachers were highly skilled and trained early childhood teachers, with 8-18 years of teaching experience in preschools (see Table 5.2);

2. the adult/ child ratio was less than 1:10 respectively and the teacher/ child ratio was less than 1:15 respectively;

3. children had plenty of space and opportunity both inside and outside of the building, for play which leads to reduction in conflict (Wheeler, 1994; Walsh, 1993);

4. children had a great deal of choice for developmentally appropriate activities eg climbing equipment, obstacle tracks, painting, puzzles, games, cooking, dolly corner, train tracks, book corner, etc;

5. children were given choice to move from activity to activity ie inside and outside activities;

6. the teachers perceived social relationship formation as vital for success at school and were keen to gather new information in the area.

Table 5.2 Teachers' Experience and Qualifications

Teacher	Qualifications	Experience
A (Intervention Group)	Dip. of Teach (Early Childhood)	2 yrs long day care centre 3 yrs in a sessional preschool 10 yrs in Early Intervention 3 yrs as director of present preschool
B (Intervention Group)	Dip. of Teach (Early Childhood)	2 yrs long day care centre 6 yrs at present preschool
C (Intervention Group)	Certificate of Child Care	21 yrs at present preschool
Aide A (Intervention Group)	Certificate of Mothercraft Nursing	2yrs in long daycare centre 2yrs preschool 4 yrs at present preschool
A (Non-Intervention)	Dip. of Teach (Early Childhood)	1 yr in city preschool 16 yrs as director of present preschool
B (Non-Intervention)	Dip. of Teach (Early Childhood)	6 yrs as infants teacher in school 9 yrs as preschool teacher

Howes, Phillips and Whitebrook (1992) and Whitebrook, Howes and Phillips (1990) point out the importance of class size, teacher child ratio, etc, which contribute to provision of high quality childcare and social competence between peers.

Differences were apparent between the two preschools. In the Non-Intervention group, thirteen children attended each session which was led by a teacher and a rostered parent. Children were graded into set sessions according to age. Younger children (mostly 3-4 year olds) attended two sessions per week (one morning and one afternoon session) whereas older children (mostly 4-5 year olds) attended three sessions (one morning and two afternoon sessions or two morning and one afternoon session. The Non-Intervention group was broken up into class or peer groups rather than being dealt with as a whole non-intervention group.

In the Intervention Group, forty children attended morning sessions taught by three early childhood teachers and one teacher's aide. Afternoon sessions were attended by twenty children and were conducted by two teachers. The

children who had attended the morning session took part in the afternoon session. In other words, children participating in the afternoon session were in attendance for the whole day. Parents could choose which days the children would attend because sessions were not set. Different peer group relationships resulted and so the Intervention Group consisted of three different peer groups.

Children participating in the study were all those who attended preschool at least twice per week. Hence, 50 children from the Intervention Group fitted this category but five dropped out later in the study, leaving 45 children. In the Non-Intervention Group, 52 children initially participated, 3 dropped out leaving 49 children. Table 5.3 shows the number of children who participated in the study at each time of data collection.

Table 5.3 Number of Children in the Study

Group/ Time	Pre test	Post test	Delayed post test
Non-Intervention	52 (29 M, 23 F)	50 (27 M, 23F)	49 (27M, 22 F)
Intervention	50 (22 M, 28 F)	47 (21 M, 26 F)	45 (20 M, 25 F)

NB. *The dates of the data collection are documented in a diary which is included as Appendix 1.*

5.22 Securing Informed Consent

Toward the end of Term I (1994) a letter was sent to parents of children from both the Intervention and the Non-Intervention preschools. This letter explained the type of research that would take place; the rationale for the research; the methods to be used; who was involved; and when the research would take place. For the Intervention Group, it was mentioned that a program would be taught by the children's own preschool teachers. The intention that all information gained and the persons involved would remain confidential, was mentioned. Any queries regarding the research were welcomed. A copy of the letters are in Appendices 2 and 3. Attached to the letter was a consent form to be signed by the parents of the children who would be participating in the study. All children who attended at least two days per week were to become part of the study, subject to consent.

An information sheet was also given out with each letter which hoped to answer a range of anticipated questions (see Appendices 4 and 5).

5.23 Data Collection

In the study, data were collected from four different sources (observation, sociometric ratings, checklists and interviews). Thus, a multimethod approach or triangulation was adopted which provided for triangulation of evidence in terms of nature of data, and source of information (child, parent, teacher, researcher). Cohen and Manion (1994, p. 254) state that this method

> attempts to map out, or explain more fully, the richness and complexity of human behaviour by studying it from more than one standpoint and in so doing, by making use of both quantitative and qualitative data.

According to Cohen and Manion (1994) and Miles and Huberman (1984) the use of this method avoids providing a limited view of the complexity of human behaviour and diminishes the likelihood of bias or distortion. They also state that this method of data collection helps to overcome the problem of "method-boundness" or pushing a particular favourite methodology. The area of education which espouses "what' young children know is quite controversial. Social developmentalists such as Dunn (1988) argue that young children in familiar contexts with familiar people can display much more knowledge than they are given credit for. Thus by collecting information in the child's preschool (their familiar environment) during second term, (new children were given time to 'settle in') with familiar people (peers, teachers and researcher) a more comprehensive view of children's knowledge, skills and behaviours would be attained. This would limit bias and produce a more accurate account of children's abilities. This triangulation method also increases the construct validity of the study (Cohen & Manion ,1994).

5.3 Research Instruments

A variety of research instruments was used, such as sociometric ratings, a checklist, an interview and observation. The instruments and their development and use are discussed in this section.

5.31 Reliability and Validity

Qualitative research differs markedly from quantitative research in epistemology, ontology and methods used (Guba, 1990). Qualitative research investigates social processes to interpret what is meant or understood by the social actors in their social world. Quantitative research attempts to explain the world in terms of what causes or what are associated with the things and

events that we observe (Harvey & MacDonald, 1993). Harvey and MacDonald (1993, p. 87) state:

> Phenomenologists argue that statistics do not represent the world but represent the way that the people who construct the statistics see the world.

In quantitative methods, there are well established, rigorous means of assessing the reliability and validity of a study. Reliability measures consistency or the degree to which an instrument will give similar results for the same individuals at different times (Wiersma, 1991). Validity is another characteristic of measurement which ensures it measures what it is supposed to measure.

Guba and Lincoln (1982, p. 1) argued for a change from quantitative research methodology for examining human behaviour. They stressed that "the concept of causality in human experience is archaic, unnecessary, and particularly misleading in social/behavioural sciences". They developed an extensive set of criteria for establishing naturalistic inquiry as a research methodology. They proposed that causality be replaced by plausibility and that prediction and control be substituted by understanding. Plausibility should include groundedness in a situation, internal consistency, conformability and holism. This naturalistic paradigm or basic belief system is often referred to as post-positivist, constructivist, ethnographic, phenomenological and qualitative It has gained acceptance as an alternative to the positivist paradigm referred to as analytical, scientific, experimental, rational or quantitative.

Wiersma (1991) explains that in ethnographic research "reliability is concerned with replicability of both procedures and findings" and that "validity refers to interpretation and generalizability of results".

Ethnographic observation is generally used to refer to the detailed study of small groups of people within a complex society (Harvey & MacDonald, 1993). Ethnographic observation (a naturalistic methodological tool) is not neutral. Smith (1990) discusses the belief of earlier times that valid research was distinguished from invalid research in terms of "proper procedures" being properly applied, that is, valid studies were procedurally correct, inept studies were procedurally flawed. He argued that methodology is not neutral.

Phillips (1990) explains that observation is theory laden and stresses that the background knowledge of the observer can influence what is observed in a significant way. In other words, observers must be aware of the role played by their preconceptions in influencing their observations and attempt to give their viewpoint in a "trustworthy" manner despite the prevailing circumstances.

Subjectivity is seen by quantitative researchers as a problem. It is minimised, according to Guba (1990, p. 21) by striving to be as neutral as possible; by "coming clean" about one's own dispositions: by relying on "critical tradition" of scholars in the field; by subjecting every inquiry to the judgments of peers in the "critical community"; and by relying on many different sources to minimise distorted interpretations.

How is research made more objective as opposed to biased or distorted as a depiction of reality? Guba (1990) suggests that "goodness criteria" be generated. Marshall (1990) implies that "goodness criteria" are loosely interpreted as, but not equated with, reliability, replicability, and validity in the old terminology. However, in an attempt to escape the rigorous quantitative methodology that is used, new terms (goodness criteria, trustworthiness, etc) have been created to avoid the traditions that accompany the old terms. Marshall (1990) suggests that all of us would agree on some common criteria in judging the goodness of qualitative studies. These common criteria are:

1. providing an articulate description of the qualitative method and a rationale for its use so as the reader can judge whether it is adequate and makes sense;

2. expressing assumptions as well as personal and theoretical biases;

3. guarding against value judgements in data collection and analysis;

4. demonstrating connections between presented findings and the real world;

5. presenting research questions, the answers and further generated questions;

6. providing an explicit statement of the relationship between this study and previous studies;

7. reporting the study in a manner accessible to researchers, practitioners, and policy makers;

8. showing that the researcher was tolerant of ambiguity, searched for other explanations, checked out negative instances, and used triangulation;

9. acknowledging generalizability and transferability of findings;

10. showing evidence of "first days in the field";

11. presenting of a full range of observations;

12. preserving of data for future re-analysis;

13 devising methods for checking data quality;

14 documenting in-field analysis;

15. providing for cross cultural perspectives;

16. maintaining ethical standards;

17. providing benefit to the people involved in the research;

18. ensuring that data collection strategies are the most adequate and efficient available;

19. ensuring that the researcher looks holistically at the setting to understand linkages among systems; and

20. tracing the historical context to understand the people or institution and the roles that have evolved

NB. *In designing the methodology and analysis, the researcher attempted to adhere to these "goodness criteria" where possible.*

In this study three different viewpoints (the teachers, the child's peers and the researchers) were investigated to determine a child's social competence. The author perceives that social competence is a hypothetical construct not observable in and of itself but infers from a regular pattern of an individual's behaviour.

Thus in order to assess whether the construct is valid (construct validity) Crowl (1993) states that it is essential that a number of perspectives are gained from various people. He states that construct validity is an abstract and comprehensive form of validity and there is no clear-cut criterion to use as

validating evidence. The process of construct validation involves gathering evidence from numerous sources (Crowl 1993). Hence, the three different perspectives led to a more valid measure of the child's competence.

5.32 Sociometric Status

Sociometric status is one of the most frequently used measures of social competence. It may reflect how well one child gets along with others in a group (peer acceptance).

The best childhood predictor of adult adaptation is the adequacy with which a child gets along with other children (Hartup, 1991). Given the life-long consequences of social development, McClellan and Katz (1992) indicate that social relationship development should be counted as one of the four "R's" of education (reading, 'riting, 'rithmetic and relationships) and that all early childhood programs should include regular periodic assessment of children's progress in social skill acquisition.

Peer acceptance assessments reflect both social skills, social behaviour and emotional aspects of social competence. Peer acceptance is defined as the degree to which an individual child is liked or disliked by each member of his/her social group (Ladd, 1988), and is measured by sociometric evaluations.

Sociometric evaluations or assessments are useful for predicting early patterns of social skills or deficits. In general, it may be assumed that popular children have developed skills, behaviours and strategies which allow them to interact with their peers effectively in various situations. Such children will be perceived by their peers as socially competent. On the other hand, it may be assumed that children who are unpopular or rejected lack strategies, skills and behaviours necessary for successful peer interaction. These children will be viewed as socially incompetent. Two methods of assessment which are usually used to determine sociometric status or social competence, are either sociometric ratings or sociometric nominations.

Sociometric ratings are established by presenting a child with a photograph of each classmate. The child is then asked to rate each peer on a scale of one to three, according to how much he/she likes to play with that peer. Each child in the group receives an acceptance score based on the ratings that he/she received from the rest of the group. Children with high scores are 'liked' or are

'popular' and those with low scores are 'disliked' or are unpopular or are rejected (Asher, Singleton, Tinsley & Hymel, 1979). Overall likeability (social preference) may also be determined by subtracting the negative rating from the positive rating (Coie, Dodge & Coppotelli, 1982).

Asher and Dodge (1986) responded to criticism of using negative peer nominations which required children to express negative sentiments about some peers. They substituted a scaled rating of 1-5 for likeability (1 being the lowest rating). This approach was not used for this study as it increased the complexity of the task which may have proved too difficult for three year olds.

Sociometric nominations are established by presenting children with a photograph of each peer and asking them to nominate a specified number of classmates (three or four) whom he/she likes to play with or likes. The child is then asked to nominate those they do not like or do not like to play with. After each child has nominated the children they like and do not like, each child receives a score based on the number of 'liked' or 'disliked' nominations by their classmates (Asher & Hymel, 1981). Results may sometimes correlate highly with naturalistic observations of teachers but subtleties in both negative and positive attitudes appear which are not always obvious in observation (Asher & Dodge, 1986).

It is possible to identify *popular* (receive many 'liked' and few 'disliked' nominations) *rejected* (receive few 'liked' and many 'disliked' nominations), and *neglected* (receive few 'liked' and few 'disliked' nominations) children (Coie, Dodge & Coppotelli, 1982). *Controversial* children are those who score above the median for positive and negative nominations (Denham & McKinley, 1990).

Current literature on the determination of sociometric status reflects the use of six or more variants of sociometric method. Terry and Coie (1991) compared four most commonly used procedures for classifying children's social status. The authors examined psychometric properties such as temporal stability and discriminant validity. Two samples of predominantly black lower to middle class boys and girls (N=571 and N=548) were followed from grade 3 to grade 5 and were classified according to the Coie, Dodge, and Coppotelli (1982) system, the Asher et al, (1986) system, the Newcombe and Bukowski (1983) and a unidimensional rating-scale system. The results indicated that the selection of sociometric measure and method should depend on the context of the researcher's problem or goal because each system maximised different

properties. A 2-dimensional system yielded better behavioural discriminability. In this study, it was anticipated that the score from the HESCI checklist, the sociometric rating and the observations of the researcher would assist in identification of status, that is, a 3- dimensional type approach would be used.

Sociometric ratings have been seen to be more stable than sociometric nominations and are more useful with preschoolers (Asher & Dodge, 1979; Hymel, 1983). In a study using 19 preschoolers aged 4 years, Asher et al. (1979) examined the test-retest reliability of scores over a 4 week interval and results indicated that the correlation for the rating scale measure was significantly higher than the correlation for the positive nomination measure ($z=1.717$, $p< .05$) and was significantly higher for the negative nomination measure ($z=2.194$, $p< .05$).

Among the preschool population, Denham et al, (1990) conducted psychometric analysis on sociometric nominations using 63 preschoolers (31 girls and 32 boys) in a university laboratory preschool over a 2 year period. Picture sociometric nominations, ratings, and expression of emotion (facial, bodily, vocal and behavioural indices) was observed, as well as teacher ratings of social behaviour were conducted. Temporal (cross time) stability of nomination resulted. It was hypothesised that the measurement of and the establishment of social acceptance and social rejection was becoming stable during the preschool period.

Denham et al, (1990) also reported cross-method stability between sociometric ratings and nominations among preschoolers. More importantly however, children participating in the sociometric nominations and ratings showed cross method consistency.

Within the above study, gender was a strong moderator of nominations: girls selected girls as liked and boys as not liked. Boys selected boys as liked and girls as disliked. Age did not have a strong effect on nominations although the youngest children's positive nominations predictably tended to be less stable than middle and older children.

Predictive validity was determined. Teacher ratings which were most highly correlated with negative nominations. Observations of children showed coherent relations with negative nominations. There was also a strong negative relation between young preschoolers' stable negative nomination

scores and teacher ratings of non aggressive and prosocial behaviour. This suggested that preschoolers were aware of individual differences in peer emotional expression. Observational measures of expressed emotion, especially anger were strongly related to positive nomination scores.

Denham et al. (1990) concluded that these nominations could be used to assess younger preschoolers' skills or deficits, and that negative peer nomination (and so rejection) is stable as early as three and a half years of age, especially for popular and rejected status groups. It seems that rejected children show both behavioural and affective deficits. For the purposes of this study the sociometric rating method was used.

5.321 Sociometric Rating in This Study

Sociometric ratings were used to assess the popularity of each child by their peers. Sociometric ratings are established by presenting a child with a photograph of each classmate. The child is then asked to rate each peer by placing each photo in either of three boxes which will be labelled with either a smiling face, a sad face, or a face with a blank expression.

The child then was asked to place a photo in the box which expressed how he/she felt about the child in the photo. Children were asked to put their friends or the children that they liked to play with, in the box with the smiling face. In the box with the expressionless face they were asked to put children that they sometimes liked to play with, or children that they didn't know. In the box with the sad face they were asked to place the children with whom they did not like to play.

This should have indicated how much the child liked to play with that peer. Each child in the group received an acceptance score based on the ratings that he/she received from the rest of the group (see Appendices 6 and 7). The likeability was decided by using the Rasch analysis and cluster analysis for three distinct categories. Children with high scores are 'liked' and those with low scores are 'disliked' (Asher, Singleton, Tinsley, & Hymel, 1979). Overall likeability (social preference) may also be determined by subtracting the negative rating from the positive rating (Coie, Dodge & Coppotelli, 1982). For this study, children were judged as liked or disliked by the number of friendships which were reciprocated.

5.33 Checklists

Checklists are lists of learning objectives or indicators of development which are devised by teachers, researchers or designed commercially (Wortham, 1990). These checklists usually give an overview of the sequence and relationship between categories They are often used as a framework for assessment and evaluation so as to monitor development; for planning instruction; for record keeping; and for giving progress reports to parents to communicate what is being taught/learnt.

There are advantages to using checklists for assessment and evaluation such as they are easy to use since little instruction or training is needed to use them; they can be updated from observation in the normal setting (behaviours can be frequently recorded); they are easily available; and they are flexible. On the other hand they can be a disadvantage because they are time consuming, or teachers may feel that they are invalid especially when trying to measure mastery of a skill, that is, how well they perform. Checklists do not improve learning and development if the information gained from them is not used for instructional planning, implementation, and ongoing evaluation. In this study a checklist (HESCI) was devised to use as a framework of assessment, for planning instruction, and for record keeping.

Rating Scales are similar to checklists but instead of indicating whether a behaviour is present or absent, they require a rater to make a qualitative judgement about the extent to which a behaviour is present, usually with a Likert scale of 1 to 5 or descriptions such as never, seldom, occasionally, frequently, or always. Rating scales are used to measure behaviours not easily measured by other means such as social skills. Like checklists they are simple and fast to complete, and they require no special training. However they are highly subjective since they are displaying the perception of the person who fills them in. This may be an advantage if a rater spends a good deal of time with the subject (ie. knows the person well) and a disadvantage if the rater knows little about the subject. Rater bias and error may result. For example, raters may have varying meanings for descriptors, or base the information presented on attitude toward child rather than how the child actually behaves.

Informal evaluation measures, hence, are useful for teachers who need information about their students in order to plan instruction and develop appropriate learning experiences for those students. Thus, in compiling a

checklist the author planned to devise one which would create an awareness for teachers of the types of skills needed for social competence and assist in planning instruction.

After reviewing the literature to determine which skills were important for acquiring social competence, a checklist was devised which contained the areas believed to be definitive of social competence. It was anticipated that some areas would be stronger for certain children than others.

Other checklists were reviewed but tended to be designed for children with handicaps, learning problems or behaviour problems. One such test is the Comprehensive Behaviour Rating Scale for Children (Neeper, Lahey & Frick, 1990). With regard to 'Social Competence' one subsection exists containing a 6 item scale. It lists relating to others; joining in; settling disagreements with others; cooperating; being liked by others; and looking at others while talking. Although the items are certainly relevant, it seems that this checklist is limited by the small number of items. Other programs such as HELP (Hawaiian Early Learning Program); Early Development and Learning Program; Small Steps, contain checklists pertaining to social skills.

Checklists designed for young children tended to focus on general social skills such as whether or not a child greets others, puts his/her schoolbag in an appropriate place, sits quietly on the mat, etc, rather than social relationship skills. Guralnick and Weinhouse (1981) examined 54 early childcare social development assessment instruments. They found that in terms of their usefulness with regard to intervention oriented assessment for handicapped children, major inadequacies relating to social participation, cooperation, aggression and friendship, occurred. These researchers recommended that future test development occur in the areas of peer relations.

Prasad (1994) reiterates this and states that while social interaction skills and their importance have received considerable attention recently, instruments tend to focus on social skills that are important in the classroom rather than skills that are essential for interaction in the playground.

McClellan and Katz (1992) devised an informal assessment tool (revised in 1993) they claim, is suitable for all early childhood programs. They suggest that teachers should regularly and periodically, formally and informally, assess young children's acquisition of social competence. This checklist includes eight individual attributes, fourteen social skills, and two relationship attributes.

They do, however, recognise and emphasise the importance of the development of social competence in all young children. However, the expression and understanding of emotions which the researcher views as of vital significance to the development to social competence, is largely ignored. Also not included are skills associated with the prerequisites for learning.

5.331 HESCI

A checklist, HESCI (Hughes' Early Social Competence Inventory) was compiled from the literature for use by teachers. Included in the checklist were factors which showed high correlations between social competence and specific knowledge, skills and behaviours. It was devised because a suitable checklist could not be found in the literature. The compilation of the checklist in this manner increased its content validity. This checklist is like an achievement test which attempts to measure how well a preschooler has acquired the content of social competence. Crowl (1993) states that developers of a valid achievement test must select a sample of test items that accurately represent the population of knowledge and skills from which the items are drawn. Thus the items in the checklist were selected from constructs highly correlated with effective and in some cases ineffective social skills and behaviours from research reported in the literature.

The HESCI checklist was developed with the following in mind. It had to:

1. be manageable timewise;
2. be easy to complete (yes/no, ticks/crosses);
3. be succinct;
4. include most factors pertaining to social competence and incompetence (positive and negative features);
5. be useful over time;
6. be nonintrusive (allowing a child to do what he would do naturally);
7. be useful in a naturalistic setting;
8. identify the existence and extent of peer relationship deficits;
9. include communication relevant to social competence;
10. include emotion factors which contribute to social competence ;
11. include personality traits (individual attributes) needed for social competence;
12. allow for areas where strategy training could be measured;
13. list prosocial skills needed for social competence; and
14. include extent and quality of relationships.

The HESCI checklist containing a yes or no answer was used mainly for convenience, since 47 items were in the checklist and the presence of a Likert scale would have been too time consuming for a teacher to complete. The aim of the exercise was to identify skills/ behaviours present or absent in the various groups, not to measure to what extent they were present or absent. The checklist was distributed initially to ten early childhood teachers and workers for comment. Some of those checklists returned contained comments about rewording. Other comments suggested that the checklist helped them know what was important for social competence.

5.332 Rationale for items in HESCI.

The checklist was divided into the following areas:

1. prerequisites for learning;
2. communication skills;
3. emotion knowledge;
4. self attributes; and
5. social interaction attributes relevant to social competence.

5.3321 Prerequisites for learning.

Social competence is an acquired skill which occurs as a result of attending to and observing others' behaviour; and reflecting on consequences of one's own behaviour within the environment. This requires attending to information. Once behaviours are observed, then information is deemed as 'useful' or not so 'useful'. 'Useful' information is processed into the memory (short term and/or long term) ie remembering useful information. 'Useful' information may be adapted to appropriate relevant situations. Processes for determining and adapting 'useful' information are all necessary for learning. In order to develop effectively one must have learned how to determine what is useful information, remember it, and adapt useful information to specific situations. For the purposes of this thesis, these processes are termed "prerequisites for learning".

Young children must learn to select relevant and important information amidst a conglomeration of stimuli. Focusing attention on one stimulus is difficult in a classroom situation where there are so many distractions. Teachers can help

although it is difficult. For more information on the importance of information processing to social cognition, see Chapter 2, pp. 13-15.

Table 5.4 documents the skills needed for processing social information; the problems associated with the absence of the skill; and the author who makes reference to such information.

Table 5.4 Prerequisites for learning

Skill	Absence of skill	Author
Pays attention	May have problems eg. LD, aggressive,	Dodge (1986) Bye & Jussim (1993)
Determines what is useful information	May have problems	Dodge (1986) Bye et al,(1993)
Remembers useful information	May have problems	Dodge (1986) Bye et al,(1993)
Adapts useful information	May have problems	Dodge (1986) Bye et al, (1993)

5.3322 Communication

Another skill which is vital for social competence is good communication. A good communicator must be able to initiate communication (or conversation) and then maintain that conversation. This is dependent on clear articulation and conveying clear meaning such that others can understand *what* is being said. Maintaining conversation also relies on responding in a connected way such that comments are *relevant* to the topic of conversation. During conversation a speaker usually directs speech to all listeners; addresses all listeners directly; and makes ongoing relevant comments about actions or play so as to enhance involvement in the communication; rather than make irrelevant comments about the self which disrupts the flow of conversation.

Non verbal communication is also vital as it often indicates the attentiveness of listeners by the use of nods and smiles; or attitudes of the listener (thumbs up, clapping etc.). Private speech plays an important role within the individual because it helps to direct and guide actions especially when doing something for the first time.

Of special importance to young children is conversation during group entry especially when a child is attempting to enter a group. Relevant comments about play or actions are essential if a child is to have any chance of successfully entering the group. On the other hand, if a child's entry is being

rejected, then the person forbidding the entry, must give reasons or offer an alternative solution to avoid becoming unpopular.

Table 5.5 is a summary of communication skills needed, and their outcomes as cited in the literature.

Table 5.5 Communication Skills Relevant for Social Competence

Skill	Outcome	Author
Initiates communication	Outgoing and confident	Hazen & Black (1989)
Maintains conversation: Articulates clearly	Popular children do this	Hazen et al, (1989)
Makes meaning clear	Popular children do this	Hazen et al,(1989)
Responds connectedly	Popular children make relevant comments	Putallaz (1983) Hazen et al, 1989)
Addresses peers directly	Popular children do this	Kemple, Speranza & Hazen (1991)
Directs conversation to all listeners	Popular children do this Shows speaker attentiveness	Hazen et al, (1989)
Comments relevantly on ongoing group actions/play/work	Shares frame of reference (entry behaviour)	Dodge, Schlundt, Schocken & Delugach (1983)
Does not draw attention to self interests and needs	Unpopular children interrupt flow	Dodge et al, (1986)
Uses non verbal communication (smiles, nods, waves)	Indicates listener attentiveness	Miller, Lechner & Rugs (1985)
When disallowing entry into group Provides reasons Offers an alternative idea	Allows conversational turn taking. Popular children do this.	Eisenberg & Garvey (1981)
Uses private speech (talks to self about ongoing activity)	Helps child direct & guide actions	Vygotsky (1962)

See Chapter 4, pp. 75-78 on Construct of Social Competence for more detailed information on the contribution of communication to social competence.

5.3323 Emotion

Social competence may be influenced by a range of affective variables such as enthusiastic involvement in activities, expressiveness of emotions and recognition of the emotions of others and self (Sroufe, Schork, Motti, Lawroski & La Freniere, 1984). (See Chapter 4 pp. 78-88 on The Construct of Social Competence for importance of understanding and expression of emotion). Emotions are important in:

- communicating a frame of reference for children, indicating how others feel, what others desire, and how others are responding to information given;

- initiating social exchanges (a smile communicates affiliative intent, shared emotion, and produces positive responses in others);
- regulating social exchanges (the continuance, switching, pacing or termination of exchanges are guided by affect); and
- mood setting (sharing feelings of interest, delight, fun, etc. creates bonds).

Children who communicate positive emotions such as happiness, laughter etc. are likely to project themselves positively and so be judged as being prosocial. Hence, children who are usually happy may make others feel happy and are often more popular. Children who are constantly sad, quiet, or aggressive make others feel uncomfortable and are less likeable. Sharing thoughts and emotions with others leads to understanding emotions. Understanding emotions helps with empathy which is a prosocial skill which promotes likeability (Denham, McKinley, Couchard & Holt ,1990).

Humour contributes to positive affect and is seen as a way of releasing tension in some situations, and so children who display humour can make others feel comfortable and be viewed as exhibiting positive behaviour. Some emotions expressed such as shame, pride, or embarrassment convey an awareness of self. Other emotions such as anger, sadness, frustration, etc. help organise the social environment, (help establish limitations or appropriateness).

Table 5.6 shows a summary of emotional attributes needed for social competence, and their outcomes as cited in the literature.

Table 5.6 Emotional Attributes Needed for Social Competence

Skill	Outcome	Author
General mood usually happy	Happy people more likeable (need social skills too)	Sroufe et al, 1984; Denham & McKinley (1990)
General mood rarely sad/ lonely/ angry/ aggressive	Sad, angry, aggressive children are less liked Preschoolers need intervention for anger/aggression	Rubin & Clark (1983) Denham et al. (1990)
Displays humour sometimes	Tension in a safe setting expressed as laughter relieves stress	Rothbart, (1973)
Expresses feelings, opinions to others	Promotes & sustains interaction;	Sroufe et al (1984)
Shows emotions such as embarrassment, shame, pride	Have notion of self awareness and idea of standards of behaviour	Lewis, Alessandri & Sullivan (1992)
Understands others' emotions	Emotion knowledge related to prosocial behaviour = likeability	Denham, McKinley, Couchard, Holt (1990)
Shares thoughts and emotions with others	Understanding emotions	Denham et al (1990)

5.3324 Self Attributes

The attributes of a child will influence the development of social competence. As children develop, their attributes becomes more differentiated into various domains of their self concept. (see Chapter 4 pp.89-94 on Construct of Social Competence for differentiation of self.)

The development of the self concept has a role in the development of social competence. Children who are confident have a high self esteem (their judgement of their self worth). Children who approach new tasks, new situations and new people without fear are seen as being confident. Hence, confidence (feelings of competence about one's abilities) leads to non-intervention or discovery that one is a causal agent and it is possible to control one's environment. Having control enables a child to self regulate and to comply. On the other hand, children who stand up for their rights, are displaying confidence in their beliefs, by challenging another, especially if reasons are given.

Shy children are often ignored because they may not appear confident and assertive. However, a child who is continually defiant is seen as being antisocial (compromising has not been developed or enacted). Table 5.7 presents a summary of self attributes needed for social competence.

Table 5.7 Self Attributes Needed for Social Competence

Skill	Outcome	Author
Usually confident to approach new task	Confident = popular Shows good self concept	Hill (1989) Bredekamp (1987)
Usually independent of teacher/other adult ie. secure in preschool environment	Independence/high self esteem. Popular.	Marshall (1989)
Usually complies	Antecedent of self regulation	Kopp (1982)
Usually exerts self control during confrontation	Perform better academically	Stipek & Weisz (1981)
Usually stands up for rights	Shows emergence of compromising & negotiation	Crockenberg & Litman (1990)
Rarely shy	Outgoing /initiate contact	Crockenberg et al. (1990)
Defiant	Not linked with social competence	Crockenberg et al. (1990)
Blames others for accidents	Sign of aggressive child	Dodge (1984)

5.3325 Social Interaction Attributes

A child needs certain attributes for social interaction and the development of social competence. These skills are particularly important when interacting with peers.

Most people would agree that most of these skills are vital for social interaction and often are not discussed in the literature. Such items eg. sharing, helping, turn taking and compromising are usually attached under the heading of cooperative or prosocial skills. These skills are accepted as social skills necessary for effective classroom behaviour.

For example, in the Comprehensive Behaviour Rating Scale for Children (Neeper, Lahey & Frick, 1990), a subsection exists called 'Social Competence'. It lists the following as components of social competence: relating to other children in a friendly, positive manner; joining ongoing activities easily; settling disagreements with others by stating the rules or suggesting different ways to play; cooperating actively with other children in a group; being liked by others; and looking at others while talking. The researcher preferred to list such items separately in order to discover which of these prosocial acts were of most importance. Social interaction attributes are listed in Table 5.8.

Table 5.8 Social Interaction Attributes

Skill	Outcome	Author
When attempting entry into a group:	Good diagnostic tool for social skills	Putallaz & Wasserman (1990)
1. Waits for appropriate time	Successful entry = further social interaction	Putallaz et al (1990)
2. Initiates contact with peer through communication	Needed for assimilation into group	Phillips, Shenker & Revitz (1951)
Rarely disrupts group (eg. running off with toys)	Related to aggression/ unpopular do this	Putallaz et al (1990)
Usually initiates a suggestion for negotiation	Pro social act	Neeper, Lahey & Frick (1990)
Usually talks about ways to resolve issues	Pro social act	Neeper et al, (1990)
Usually initiates a compromise	Pro social act:	Neeper et al, (1990)
Usually accepts a compromise	Pro social act	Neeper et al, (1990)
Usually cooperates	Feature of popular child	Ladd, Price & Hart (1988)
Usually shares	Pro social act	Neeper et al, (1990)
Usually turn takes	Pro social act	Neeper et al, (1990)
Usually engages in interactive play (has a special friend)	Increased experience in social interaction	Hartup (1983)
Is sensitive to peer information interests and desires (responds appropriately) to peers'	Helps determine frame of reference for knowing what is appropriate	Denham, McKinley, Couchard, Holt, (1990)
Aware of what is fair	Pro social value	Neeper et al, (1990)
Takes the view of others (empathise)	Shows understanding emotions	Denham, et al, (1990)
Has regard for others (respects others)	Pro social act	Neeper et al, (1990)
Has regard for other cultures	Cross-race bias Affects likeability	Palmer (1990)

Using the information from Tables 5.4, 5.5, 5.6, 5.7, and 5.8, the HESCI was constructed (See Appendix 8).

5.333 Procedure: HESCI

Teachers from the intervention group completed the HESCI on each child together as a group. This was done at lunchtime or on Tuesday afternoons, which is a time set aside without children for meetings and other duties. In completing the checklist as a group for each child at pre test, post test and delayed post test, the problem of interrater reliability was minimised. Information was discussed when uncertainties occurred. However, one teacher may have known more about one child and may have been able to contribute more information.

For the non-intervention group, one teacher only filled in each HESCI for each child at each test time. Although two teachers were present at this school, each teacher had a different set of children and a different parent acting as an

aide. Thus completing the HESCI was accomplished principally alone. Before the pre test, however, the researcher and both teachers had a meeting, to ensure that each teacher was clear on the meaning of each item. The two teachers jointly filled out a checklist for another child each knew, who was not in the study because these two children shared one placement ie. they came only one session per week. Much discussion occurred about hypothetical situations. This was an attempt to reduce differences in interpretation of items on the checklist. Later teachers conferred only when uncertainties arose eg on clarifying meaning of item *"Does not draw attention to self interests and needs"*. Interrater reliability may have been less reliable compared to the Intervention Group.

5.34 The Interview

A major aim of the study was to find out what young children "know" about social relationships and social competence, paying particular attention to gender, age and status. Little information is available particularly for 3-5 year olds in preschool settings. Much of the information obtained is in artificial simulation studies where children are asked to perform tasks, as is discussed by Siegal and Peterson (1994).

The determination of what a young child knows was also of interest in the view of metacognition ie. what and if young children are consciously thinking about their own thinking regarding their social relationships. It was inferred that by asking children what they would "think", "do" or "say" in specific situations, the most common answers would give an indication of the "rules" of the social group or the way they were thinking.

The interview method collects information from a smaller group, for the purpose of describing characteristics of the whole group (Jaeger, 1988). The interview allows the researcher to directly find out about respondents from the sample and make assumptions about a population.

Brenner, Brown and Canter (1985) mention that when a researcher and respondent have the possibility of communicating directly with one another, that the subtleties of mutual understanding between the two parties can be harnessed. In other words, it allows both parties to explore the meaning of the questions and answers involved. Additional information is also obtained by observation eg. body language when the respondent may not understand the question. They also state that strengths of the interview method are that

misunderstandings can be checked rapidly and immediate responses are given. Weaknesses of the interview method are: that contact between the interviewer and respondent is face-to-face; may be intensive; and bias can occur. To avoid interviewer bias requires a manner which is not pointed or leading. In other words, the interviewer should remain neutral and avoid expressing their view regarding the answers. This will decrease the validity of the information reported (Brenner, 1987). When necessary, all questions should be clarified and also sufficient time must be given. This too will decrease interviewer bias (Cohen & Manion, 1994). The interviewer was conscious of these points during the interview.

The interview in this study had two purposes: the first was to find out what young children know, and the second was to see the effect of a teaching/ learning program on their knowledge. Hence, in order to find out what children know, a field study approach was taken, that is, the children were asked to provide the data. To find out the effect of the teaching/ learning program, an intervention study approach was taken, that is, one group was taught the program, the other was not.

Two general formats exist for interviews: the structured interview and the semi-structured interview. The structured interview method was used. However, keeping a conversational style was continually in mind. Seigal (1991;1994) has stressed the importance of researchers using conversational style. Siegal and Peterson (1994, p. 429) state that "to formulate a comprehensive model of cognitive development requires investigations of children's abilities as conversationalists". For those children who had difficulty with the questions, they were rephrased. For one question (about listening) some alternative answers were prepared. Jaeger (1988) states that a critical objective for a survey researcher is to present all respondents with questions that they understand in exactly the same way. He also states that care in phrasing questions, definitions, and instructions will reduce ambiguity and misunderstanding.

5.341 Pilot testing

A set of questions was composed carefully. Three children (aged 3.5 years, 5 years and 6 years) who were not involved in the project, were interviewed in a pilot test. The purpose of the pilot was to help produce a set of questions which was useable and gave an insight into the type of problems that may be encountered. The answers given were similar and typical of what was

expected. The questions were slightly modified after the pilot and it was decided that a personal warm up question was needed with which to begin. It was also evident from the questioning that the only question that appeared to be difficult was the question about listening. It seemed that it was too abstract. It was decided to provide a reworded alternative with specific alternative answers for those children who showed difficulty with that particular question. It was found that it was best to adopt a conversational style as the children were more comfortable with that format.

5.342 Reliability and Validity

Fink and Kosecoff (1985) state that reliable and valid surveys (interviews) are obtained by making sure that definitions and questions used are grounded in fact or established theory or experience. The interview method was chosen because young children can not write, and thus is the most appropriate method. Extensive pilot testing and analysis of results will ensure reliability and validity (Fink & Kosecoff, 1985). The interview method was also most appropriate for this age group because meaning can be clarified by asking and body language can be observed for difficulties. The researcher had worked with young children as an early intervention teacher for a number of years and was familiar with appropriate interaction and language styles.

Factors which relate to the reliability of the interview results pertain to whether information collected on one interview during one time frame is similar to that of another time frame (test-retest reliability); and whether information by the respondent is consistent with information given by the respondent in the same interview (Marsh & Terdal, 1981).

5.343 The Interview Questions

In the weeks prior to the research, the researcher spent time playing with and getting to know the children at the preschool. It was felt that by the time the research began the children were comfortable with the researcher and indeed some children were actively seeking her out.

The answers to the interview questions were recorded on tape. The tape recorder was placed at the back of the table as not to be intrusive. Conversational style was used as it makes young children less anxious.

Taping of interviews increases the likelihood of gathering accurate information and so increases the validity of the interview (Brenner, 1987; Crowl, 1988).

Taping allowed the interviewer to re-examine answers and often hear things which were missed during the interview. The tapes were later transcribed and used as raw data files for Q.S.R. NUD*ist (devised by Richards & Richards, 1990), a software package used for qualitative research.

The interview questions which were asked are outlined in Appendix 9. The questions corresponded with the five areas (processing social information, communication, emotions, self attributes, and social interaction attributes) that relate to the checklist and the teaching program. It was anticipated that differences and similarities between age groups, gender, sociometric status, and control/ intervention groups would be determined.

The first question was designed to get the children talking and at the same time feeling at ease. This question was of interest to each child but not too personal. *(Who are your friends?).*

The second question was designed to find out what they thought a friend was. *(What do you think a friend is?).* It was anticipated that they would mention that friends were people who you played with or showed affection for them. It was also intended to seek out those who had the goal to be liked, those who might not have a friend or those who had little experience with social relationships.

Question 3 regarding listening, was the most difficult. *(How do you show that you are listening when someone is talking to you?).* From the pilot it was suspected that some children would need this question rephrased. Answers providing alternatives would be needed also. The aim of this question was to see what the children knew about listening, for example, if you are quiet, if you look at the speaker, if you nod, etc. It was hypothesised that children with high status would have less difficulty with this question.

The next two questions were about sadness, (question 4 and question 5) and were constructed to determine what children knew and how they handled this emotion. *(How do you know if someone is sad? What do you say if your friend is very sad?).* (For more information on emotion knowledge, see Chapter 4, Construct of Social Competence). Responding to or reacting to others' emotions prosocially is a skill learnt early in life (Strayer, 1980) and is an important predictor of likeability for young children (Denham, McKinley, Couchoud, & Holt, 1990). Children by the time they have reached 5 to 6 years of age have learned well articulated emotional scripts which help in the

understanding of appropriate emotional responding both for self and others in particular situations (Lewis, 1989). Children in the friendship situation are more likely to respond and intervene on behalf of others (Costin & Jones, 1992).

Question 5 was expected to contribute knowledge as to how children regulated their emotions. Eisenberg, Fabes, Bernzweig, Karbon, Poulin, and Hanish (1993) examined the relationships between emotions, emotion regulation, preschooler's social skills and peer status. Regulation of emotion is attained by *switching* one's attention to something different, *avoiding* a situation, *distracting* oneself, and *changing* aspects of an emotional situation.

It was also expected that empathising with sadness may lead to improved status. Empathy is hypothesised as a mediator of prosocial interventions, especially when accompanied by acts of compassion and or sympathy. Empathy provides motivation to act while cognition provides the knowledge (Zahn-Waxler, Ianotti, & Chapman, 1982).

Sadness was chosen because it is one of the first emotions a young child identifies. Question 5 was also included to find out the different responses or scripts used from different age groups and gender. Radke-Yarrow, Zahn-Waxler, and Chapman (1983), stressed that traditional socialisation pressures would emphasise non emotional behaviour from males. Their research concluded that girls are seen as expressing emotions more often and having more understanding of emotions and responding to emotion; whereas boys respond to others' distress but do not express as much emotion. Thus, it was the researcher's intention to investigate this difference in style. For further information on gender, see Chapter 4 The Construct of Social Competence.

The next question (question 6) was asked to determine how young children attempt to join groups. *(If some friends were playing in the sandpit and you wanted to play with them, how would <u>you</u> go about joining them?).* This question was included to find out if preschoolers have an awareness of the steps for entry into a group and if the children with low status conformed to descriptions in the literature. Feldbaum, Christenson, and O'Neal (1980) state that amongst preschoolers the usual sequence of events for successful entry occurred within the unfamiliar peer group. Initially, the newcomer engaged in passive but alert *observation* of the group for a period of time; then involved themselves through *vocalisation* or *cooperative activity.* This strategic hovering and watching allows a child to determine their frame of reference

(Feldbaum et al, 1980; Phillips, Shenker, & Revitz, 1951). Sharing a group's frame of reference is critical for acceptance by a group (Putallaz et al, 1990).

Children who are rejected by their peers often approach a group aggressively, intrusively, or disruptively, for example, they do not wait until there is a transition in a group activity or 'room' for them (Putallaz et al, 1990).

Question 7 was included to determine how the children viewed themselves or what their self concept was. *(What things do <u>you</u> do best?).* It was envisaged that children who perceived that they did things well may be confident and outgoing which would affect their social status. Children evaluate their appearance and their actions by viewing themselves as a reflection of the way others treat them; through observation of their own behaviour, their outcomes, and correlations between the two; by looking at the reason for behaving in a certain manner; and by comparing their behaviour with that of others (Perry & Bussey, 1984).

The next two questions (questions 8 and 9) were included to determine what knowledge young children have about intentions and the emotional response to those intentions. *(What would <u>you</u> do if you were building a high tower (which you wanted to keep) and a person came along and knocked it over by accident. How would you feel? What would you do if you were building a high tower (which you wanted to keep) and a person came along and knocked it over on purpose. How would you feel?).* Accurately discriminating another's intention (eg. accidental or intentional) has been correlated with sociometric status (Dodge, 1984). Interpreting intention relies on communication of thoughts or actions that can be transmitted to others. Beal (1990, p 313) states that communication acts as a "bridge between mental worlds of different people." She states that the awareness of states of knowledge may differ between individuals, and is critical to the communication process. Although young children learn to communicate their intended meanings, interpretation of intention (accident or intentional) is more difficult. Children must use cues to assist in interpreting the information. The correct interpretation of the situation will be dependent upon past experience such as the person involved and the situation eg a child who continually knocks over block towers may be perceived to project purposeful intention regardless of his/her intention.

The above questions thus were an attempt to gain insight into what young children think. Prosocial children will tend to look at behaviours and think

about the consequences of their actions or the causes of other's actions. They can usually determine the difference between an accident or intentional behaviour. Rejected children, because of continuous negative experiences with peers, tend to label accidental behaviour as intentional behaviour.

5.35 Observation

Observation is defined as the process used by teachers to planfully watch a child in order to obtain information about that child's cognitive, emotional, social and motor development both in instructional and play contexts (Wortham, 1991). Naturalistic observation is a most valuable method for identification of a child's status within the peer group because it focuses on the child within the dynamics of peer group interaction (Westwood, 1993). It can help with both the identification of the child's social status and the surface reason for the problem. This type of information is essential for a teacher who wishes to provide intervention for those children having problems with their social relationships.

For the purpose of this study, observation of children at work and at play provided the information needed by the teachers to complete the checklist. Preschool teachers spend a great deal of time watching children at work and play and thus get to know how each child operates. This observational time is crucial to the process of understanding the uniqueness of each child.

Observation was used by the researcher to clarify personal attributes of the child and help gauge if the sociometric status identified, appeared to be correlated.

5.4 Intervention Program for Teaching Social Competence

Another aim of this study was to determine the effects of an intervention program aimed at helping preschoolers (aged 3-5 years) develop social competence. The program was based on the reviewed literature which was linked to social competence.

5.41 General Goals/ Outcomes

The program for teaching social relationship skills or social competence (devised by the researcher) was taught to preschool children using a metacognitive approach. A metacognitive approach helps children become aware of their behaviours, think about, assume control of their learning and

provides strategies for learning. This basic philosophy taken is similar to the approach taken by Pramling (1990) who perceived that the more children are aware of their learning, the better they are at learning. Her study involved a didactic approach which, in this study, paralleled the aim of giving instruction about a content area which normally is left to children to work out for themselves.

The goals and outcomes of this program:

- Established the overall goal that "having friends is very important" for competent social/emotional development. Children who are rejected often have a different goal for example, that of trying to control or gain power overother children.

- Taught skills/strategies to all children to assist in coping with antisocial situations. It was envisaged that if all children were given the same program that some children would learn the skills before others and so provide 'models' of prosocial behaviour.

- Attempted to develop an awareness of the importance of thinking in all situations. This is dependent on the teacher encouraging a child to try and solve their own problems and so leads to the child's autonomy or independence.

- Gave social goals to young children ie. gave reasons or function to the content. The teacher was required to continually give reasons or explain what was happening and why in social situations.

- Attempted to develop specific strategies for commonly recurring behaviours - provided dialogue which promoted thinking about problem behaviours and situations.

- Used and developed a special questioning technique which helped to create awareness of the processes of thinking, that is, to lay the foundations for future development for the problem solving process. This questioning technique should have encouraged a child to be an active participant in discussion whereby there are no right or wrong answers just points of view

- Developed a notion that there were often several solutions to a problem and that if the first attempt at solving a problem did not work, then one must try again.

- Taught most of the important skills for social competence, eg. listening, encouraging, supporting, cooperating, compromising, etc.
- Attempted to provide an environment which gave maximum opportunity for social interaction, discussion of social skills, rule setting, group problem solving, individual problem solving, open mindedness, expression of judgements, questioning and acquiring information.
- Provided opportunities for independence in social problem solving.
- Provided nurturant control where discipline was needed.
- Allowed for discussion of testing of knowledge against performance, that is, as situations arose the teacher encouraged the child to verbalise what he/she did, how he/she felt, what could have be done to improve the situation.

5.42 Program Assessment

The assessment tools used for evaluating the effectiveness of the program were measurement of:

1. observation and a case study of targeted children by the researcher; and
2. evaluation by teachers.

Together these two methods should have given an accurate picture of the effect of the program on the children.

5.43 About the Program

Prior to teaching the program, an inservice afternoon was held with all members of staff of the preschool in the intervention group. The inservice afternoon aimed to clarify and discuss the rationale, goals, methods and expectations for teaching/learning the social competence program.

The program was later taught over one school term of ten weeks. It is expected that if the program were taught over a longer period the outcomes would have been more effective. However the program was taught over this time span because of the nature of the research. One week for each focus is equated with only two sessions of preschool, which is a short period of learning time for this age group. A teacher's evaluation of the programme was

carried out to find the strengths and weaknesses of the program. (See Results Chapter 6 for the evaluation)

The focus topics are as follows.

5.431 Focus Week 1. Friends.

The author previously mentioned that children who want to have friends are those who will act prosocially toward others. These children experience more positive social interactions with peers. Costin et al, (1992) stated that friendship enhances the sensitivity to and concern for others, that is, friends are more inclined to provide emotional support and intervene on behalf of others.

Children who are often rejected appear to try and take control of play or interrupt it. These children do not appear to appreciate the value of trying to be liked by conforming with peer rules for friendship. Thus, the author wanted to emphasise the benefits of having friends and that friends can be fun and often they make you feel better. In other words, this provided a rationale for the rest of the program which would hopefully increase motivation to behave in a prosocial manner.

Activities and stories used to promote discussion and awareness of benefits of having friends are listed in Appendix 10.

5.432 Focus Week 2: Attending and Listening.

Attending and listening is a vital skill for observation and hence, learning. Active attending and listening is also required for effective communication and understanding of emotions. Hence, social relationships and so social competence depends on effectual attending and listening skills. This focus lesson stressed the skills needed for effective listening and watching; pointed out ineffective behaviours, for example, interrupting; and stressed that good listening was a friendly behaviour which helps with making friends.

5.433 Focus Week 3: Feelings.

Being able to relate to others requires that people understand how others feel (empathy). Kemple (1991) suggest that well liked children are better able to recognise and respond to peer emotions whereas disliked children often misinterpret peers' emotional states which may lead to difficult interactions or

even rejection by peers. Garner, Jones and Miner (1994) consider the affective domain to be of central importance for the development of social competence. Roberts and Strayer (1987, p. 415) state that "high levels of negative affect have been considered to have disruptive or disorganising effects on concurrent behaviour and to be at least partly responsible for long-term deficits in behavioural functioning".

The process of learning about emotions and how to express them is quite a complex task. Children need help with learning emotion knowledge because they must learn how to identify, express, control their own and respond to others' emotions. For example, the expression of positive emotions such as a smile communicates affiliative intent, especially during social exchanges. This possibly contributes to a positive perception of a child by social partners, and reinforces positive feelings toward the child, which later increases the likelihood of future positive initiations and responses to the child (Sroufe et al, 1984).

This program focus attempted to help young children to identify and understand their own and others' basic feelings. This required learning to label emotions in specific situations and being able to talk about them. Children who can talk about how they feel, can then learn to cope with how they feel. Once young children can identify particular feelings and understand why they feel this way, they need to learn how to express these emotions in an appropriate manner. For example, young children soon learn that throwing tantrums in order to get their own way is not acceptable, and so look for other appropriate ways to express their feelings.

Sharing feelings with others is compatible with making friends. The researcher believes that people who share their feelings with others rather than hiding them tend to be more emotionally healthy.

5.434 Focus Week 4: Valuing yourself

The program emphasised that young children learn to appreciate themselves and realise that they can do many things if they try (especially with a little help from others). In learning to value oneself, it helps to create an awareness of the value of others. Respecting oneself and one's own rights is also necessary for respecting the rights of others which is crucial knowledge for conflict resolution. The program also includes conflict resolution.

Marshall (1989) states that people behave consistently according to the way they see themselves and this affects their beliefs about whether they can or cannot do things and how they approach new situations. Thus, if they succeed in new situations, this then affects their view of themselves. Hence this is a continuous cycle.

This focus week also stressed that young children become realistic about their own achievements. In other words, there will be some things that they can do well and other things not so well In lieu of the above, if children can accept their failures realistically then perhaps they learn to cope with failure more effectively. This appears to be a problem for gifted and talented children especially as they strive for perfectionism, that is, they view failure as something incredibly awful (Walker, 1991).

The program also attempted to make young children realise that if you value yourself, then others will value and like you too. Children with high self esteem are participants of conversation rather than listeners; they do not submit to irrational peer pressure; they make friends easily; they express their opinions confidently and assertively; they are not preoccupied with themselves; and they approach new tasks confidently (Coopersmith, 1967). Low self concept is related to poor academic achievement, delinquency, and poor mental health (Harter, 1983). Thus realistic perceptions of self may help lead to a more positive identity of self.

5.435 Focus Week 5: Joining a Group

Successful initiation of entry into the peer group is a pre-requisite for further social interaction. Thus intervention programs with preschoolers should include successful strategies for entry as well as encouragement for accepting entry, that is, it should be viewed as a friendly behaviour. Putallaz and Gottman (1981a & 1981b) stress that intervention programs should provide a strategy for increasing the likelihood of accepting new members.

Thus, young children are aware of 'rules' and develop appropriate behaviours necessary for being accepted into a group. 'Rules' include watching what the group is doing (alert but passive observation); exploration of connected play; and/or then verbalisation about the play. Children who are rejected by their peers often approach a group aggressively, intrusively, or disruptively, for example, they do not wait until there is a transition in a group activity or 'room' for them (Putallaz et al, 1990).

'Friendly scripts' should be introduced when not allowing someone to enter a group. Children with high status tend to give a reason for not allowing entry.

5.436 Focus Week 6: Friendly Behaviour

Friendly behaviour or prosocial behaviour is a psychological construct which refers to an action that aids or benefits another person (Radke-Yarrow, Zahn-Waxler & Chapman, 1983). Prosocial behaviour includes helping, sharing, cooperation, turn taking, comforting, caregiving, sympathising, protecting, etc. Although prosocial behaviour may be viewed as an action having a net cost, it is also viewed as being intrinsically rewarding (Radke-Yarrow et. al, 1983).

Kohler and Strain (1993) emphasise the importance of prosocial skills during the preschool years because these skills form the foundation for positive peer relationships and friendships in later life. The Early Childhood Social Skills program (a formal teaching program) was developed by Odom, Kohler et al, (1987) and specifically taught social interaction skills sequentially ie sharing followed by making play suggestions; giving assistance; showing affection and giving compliments.

This focus week suggested that young children be encouraged to think of others or play in a friendly way, for example, by sharing, turn taking, helping and cooperating. It also attempted to create an awareness that working together makes people feel good and they may become friends. Young children were also encouraged to comment on or praise the accomplishments of others because this was a friendly behaviour (see Appendix 10).

5.437 Focus Week 7: Problem solving/ taking control

This part of the program aimed at developing a framework or structure to enable young children to attempt social problem solving. The process was continually repeated as problems arose in context. Children were encouraged to talk about their problems. The teachers used a question/ answer format each time a problem occurred in context. It was also hoped that problem solving approaches would be automatised and later used in other areas for life, for example, academic, practical knowledge, etc.

This focus week also stressed that young children begin to develop self management skills, that is, attempted to solve their own problems, recognise the effect of their actions in social situations and attempt to take control of their

actions and solutions. Independence involves taking control which is necessary for self management skills such as appropriate expression of emotion, asserting oneself in a socially appropriate manner, taking responsibility for one's own behaviour, etc.

This focus also stresses that young children recognise situations that are accidental. A different solution is needed for accidental situations as compared to situations where there is intent.

Shure (1993) states that by teaching interpersonal cognitive problem solving techniques to young children, impulsivity and inhibited behaviours decrease in classrooms.

Problem solving aids development of independence and is a necessary precursor to resolving conflict.

5.438 Focus Week 8: Resolving Conflicts

Recent research suggests that peer conflict contributes to children's development and represents a vital form of social interaction (Rende & Killen, 1992; Ross & Conant, 1992). Hall (1994) in a study over a twelve week period with pre-kindergarten children, indicates that a teaching program for developing conflict resolution strategies in a positive prosocial manner can result in a reduction of inappropriate acts of conflict and can increase students' ability for appropriate action during conflict. Hence early childhood educators should help young children develop strategies to enable them to resolve conflicts. Not only do children's conflicts involve issues of morality such as individual rights and prevention of harm, but also social order, for example, rules for a preschool activity (Killen & Turiel, 1991). Strategies that children adopt may be physical (removing themselves from play or removing an inanimate object); or verbal (asking for a child to 'stop' transgressing or initiating compromise or negotiation); they may exert control or they may seek adult intervention. The outcome will be dependent on the strategy used, that is, conciliatory strategies resolve the problem. Wheeler (1994) proposes that the issues are related to the strategies used, and strategies often determine the outcome of the conflict.

The presence of an adult changes the context of the children's conflict, that is, children who take responsibility for their own interactions generate their own solutions more often when an adult is absent (Wheeler, 1994). Also, when

adults provide a solution they are often mistaken about the situation, inconsistent or biased in the resolution imposed (Wheeler, 1994). Hence, children should be encouraged to resolve their own conflicts. Help in the form of discussion may initially be advisable.

This program emphasised:

- That young children understand that other people may have a different point of view that should be respected.
- That young children may have to think of others and compromise.
- That young children develop strategies for resolving conflicts.

5.439 Focus Week 9: Peace making (Specific Strategies)

This part of the program focussed on young children understanding reasons for and developing specific strategies for coping with antisocial behaviour. It was referred to as "peace making". Some of the areas listed were teasing, tattling, being bullied, and being destructive. Many other areas such as not sharing, disobeying, complaining, being a bad sport, etc, could have been included but were not due to the time constraints. It was recognised that these sorts of behaviours are readily encountered and often children do not have a strategy to cope with them. If such strategies were taught then they could become part of the preschool 'rules' of which most children are aware and attempt to obey.

5.4310 Focus Week 10: Revision of friendly behaviour and language

The last week of the program reviewed the previous weeks' foci and allowed time for discussion of the strategies and knowledge conveyed. Behaviours which help you make friends, for example, listening, sharing, compromising etc were discussed. Language or scripts used, and unfriendly behaviours were also discussed.

5.44 Teaching Methods

Discussion was initiated with use of picture boards (See Appendix 11 for pictures and questions asked). Important issues relating to the focus pictures

were discussed by teachers and children at each session during story time. Discussion was of the nature of Socratic dialogue (Mulcahy et al, 1987).

Books were chosen by the researcher from the town library, the preschool library and from home, for relevant content for foci. A list was compiled under focus headings. Specific books were used for discussion and are listed in the teaching program (see Appendix 12 - Book List). Each of the four teachers read a story to a group (according to attention level). Selected books were used during the week in non story time for children who had social problems or were perceived to be needing more help. Appropriate books were also used as a means of introducing discussion after specific incidents occurred in the playground.

The booklist was extended over time as teachers found more books relevant to the program. They were included in the list after screening by the researcher.

Scripts or repeated language are useful for a specific situation. For example, children who were behaving inappropriately toward another child, were asked to tell the transgressor *I don't like that.* to indicate that they did not appreciate the other child's behaviour. Other scripts, for example were used when attempting problem solving in the playground. *(If you have a problem let's talk about it.)*

Strategies were proposed for situations that often occur. For example, a strategy that could help with not interrupting and good listening ie.

STOP whatever you are doing,
LOOK at the person speaking,
THINK before you do or say anything.

Another strategy used was when joining others in play :

LOOK for a while to see what game they are playing,
THINK up a 'fun' idea which they could use,
TALK about what was happening, tell them a 'fun' idea.

Strategies were also used for antisocial behaviour, for example, if you are being bullied tell the person that you don't like them behaving like that and walk away.

Role play was used to demonstrate good listening skills, problem solving and conflict resolution. Role playing is a type of enacted drama in which the

participant is assigned a character to portray, but no lines are learned. The individuals portraying specific roles improvise their responses to the situation. The purpose of role playing according to McKeachie (1978) is to:

- give students practice in using what they have learned;
- illustrate principle from the course content;
- develop insight into human relations problems;
- provide a concrete basis for discussion;
- maintain or arouse interest
- provide a channel in which feelings can be expressed under the guise of make believe; and
- develop increased awareness of one's own and others' feelings.

5.5 Analytical Procedures

This study was approached from a predominantly qualitative standpoint but certain quantitative techniques were used to assist decision making during qualitative data analyses. According to Lafleur (1990) quantitative and qualitative approaches are viewed as complementary and produce a synergy which seem to enhance understanding and interpretation.

5.51 Research Themes

The interview allowed the researcher to find out what children knew. The checklist assisted in confirming status and identifying children's knowledge, skills and behaviours. Observation verified sociometric status, social relationship knowledge, skills and behaviours.

5.511 Research Theme 1: Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours of Young Children

5.5111 Sociometric Status.

The sociometric status of each child was important to the study. Sociometric status was determined by two quantitative methods: the tallying of raw scores of sociometric ratings and the Rasch Model applied to sociometric ratings.

5.5112 Raw Scores.

Data derived from the sociometric instrument are ordinal in nature; that is, they allow for positioning responses on an ordinal scale but do not provide

information on the magnitude of the "interval" between adjacent points on that scale. Notwithstanding this difficulty most researchers (Asher & Dodge, 1986; Denham et al, 1990; and Newcombe & Bukowski, 1983) ignore this aspect of their data, and, following Kerlinger's (1989) advice, proceed to sum the rows and columns of their data matrix and using these marginal totals analyse the data using parametric methods, such as analysis of variance.

In the present study, adopting that approach would not have revealed differences in response patterns that are important to detect. For example, two children might receive the same aggregate score from their peers but those aggregates could reflect quite different patterns. One child who is moderately popular or high in sociometric status might receive mid-point scores from most of his/her peers, whilst the other child, a more controversial personality, might receive some high and some low scores. Since in the present study it was important to identify such children as being perceived differently by their peers, it was necessary to use a finer-grained analysis of the sociometric data than is yielded by aggregation of raw scores.

This kind of problem is familiar to teachers evaluating children's performances on academic tests. For example, two children may achieve similar scores on a 20 item algebra test, yet one might have passed a larger number of more difficult questions and failed a substantial number of easy questions, whilst the other child's answers may have conformed to a more usual pattern of passing easy and failing difficult items. This is analogous to the sociometric response patterns mentioned earlier.

Data of this kind may usefully be analysed using item response theory, or, more specifically, latent trait models (Anastasi, 1982). In the present study the latent trait model employed was the Rasch model (Masters, 1982,1984,1988), as implemented in the Australian Council of Education Research's QUEST software. The Rasch model provides estimates of item "difficulty" and respondent "ability" for the polychotomously scored items in the sociometric questionnaire. A feature of the Rasch model is that it provides estimates of item difficulty and respondent ability on a logit scale and, hence, at an interval level of measurement (see Appendix 6).

Algebraically, in the Rasch model for polychotomously scored data - usually referred to as the partial credit model - the probability of respondent *n* responding in category *x* of item *i* is given by

$$P_{nix} = \left\{ \frac{\exp \sum_{j=1}^{x} (\beta_n - \delta_i - \tau_j)}{1 + \sum_{i=1}^{m} \exp \sum_{j=1}^{i} (\beta_n - \delta_i - \tau_j)} \right\}$$

where β_n is the ability of the respondent *n*; ∂_i is the overall item difficulty; $\tau_1, \tau_2, \ldots, \tau_m$, is a set of parameters associated with the transition between response categories; and *m* is the number of response categories provided for each item.

In the present context, respondent ability was construed as the respondent's capacity to discriminate between children in their peer group on the basis of perceived sociometric status , from their own perspective and that of others in their group. Item difficulty was construed as the popularity of each child in the group. Item difficulty and respondent ability are, hence, closely related as two sides of a social/perceptual interaction. This is reflected in the Rasch model which locates both respondent ability and item difficulty on the same logit scale.

It is instructive to compare sociometric ratings for the same group using both the raw score aggregation and Rasch modelling techniques. The data used in the following illustrations are taken from the present study. Figure 1 shows the sociometric status profile of the group based upon aggregation of raw scores. Figure 2 shows the sociometric status profile of the same group using Rasch modelling techniques. It is evident that the latter provides a superior basis for categorising children in high, average and low sociometric status subgroups.

Figure 5.1 Sociometric Status as Determined by the Raw Sociometric Ratings

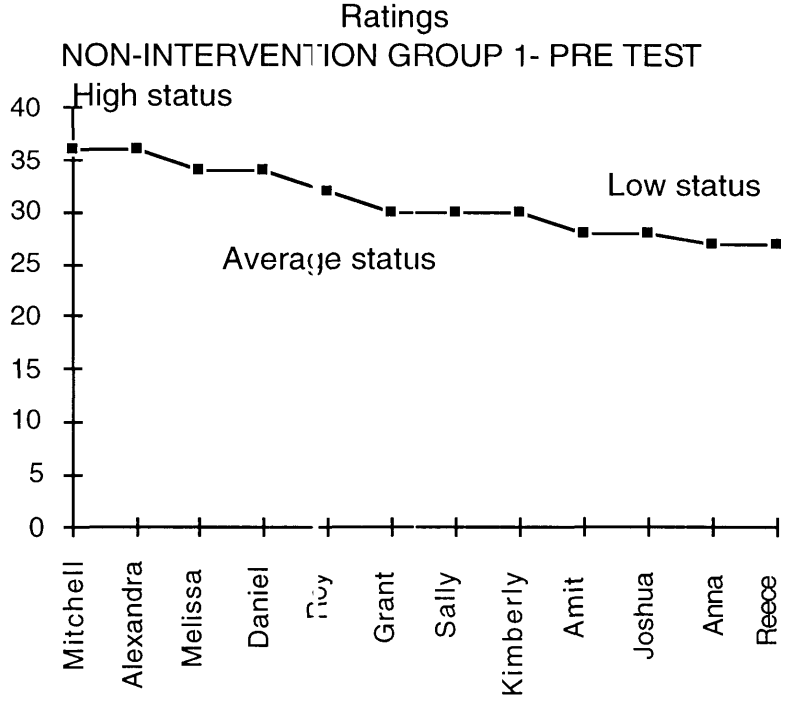
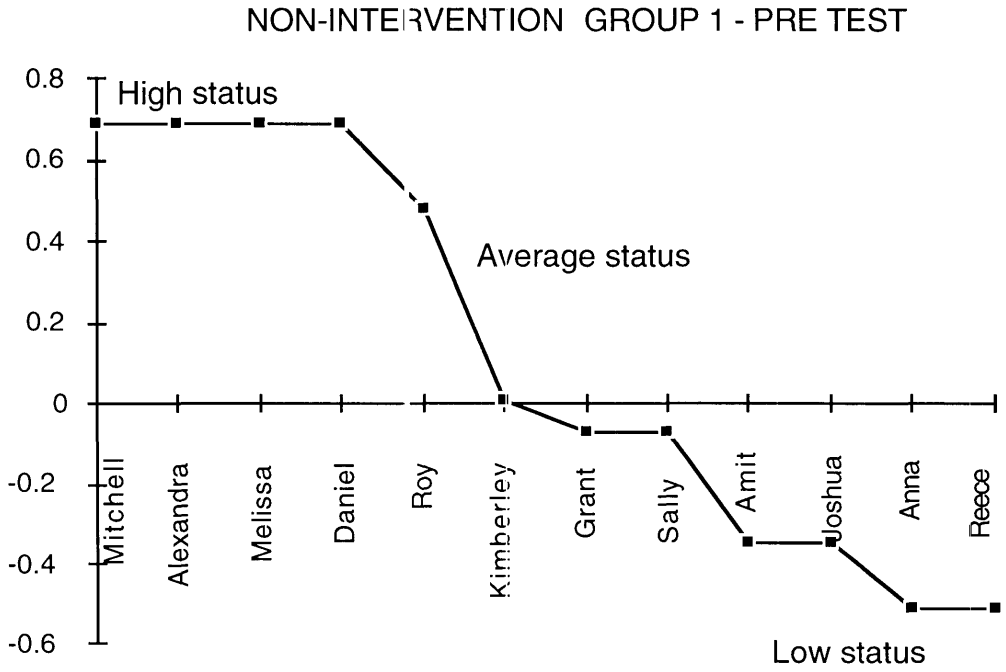


Figure 5.2 Sociometric Status using Cluster Analysis of the Item Estimates of the Rasch Model for Non-Intervention Group 1.



There is, however, a potential difficulty when individual patterns of response are taken into account. Apparently aberrant patterns where children "pass" difficult items and "fail" easy items in academic tests can be due to a lack of unidimensionality. For example if such a test is made up of both algebra

items and questions concerning Jacobean comedy, aberrant patterns could be expected because the lack of item homogeneity in such a test could be tapping two (at least) underlying constructs. If that example is extended to the domain of social perceptions, lack of unidimensionality can cause difficulties of interpretation as Duncan and Stenbeck (1987) illustrated using political opinion data. In the case of the present research it seemed reasonable , a priori, to consider the quality being assessed, sociometric status, in a unitary sense. However, it should be remarked that unidimensionality issues associated with Likert scale data have provoked considerable debate since Thurstone (1959) formulated his attitude scale and Guttman (1950, 1954) provided his measure of scalability. It should also be emphasised, though, that as Andrich (1988,) points out:

> "unidimensionality is a relative matter - every human performance, action or belief is complex and involves a multitude of component abilities, interests and so on. Nonetheless, there are circumstances in which it is considered useful to think of concepts in unidimensional terms"

The issue was examined empirically in this study by evaluating the item consistency statistics produced by the Quest software. This aspect of the Rasch model will be returned to in the discussion of the results.

In order to determine the sociometric status of each child within the various groups, the Rasch item estimates for each group were plotted as shown above in Figure 5.2 for the Non-Intervention Group 1. The separation of children into three status categories - high, average and low - was then carried out by visual inspection of the graphs. Additionally, a K-means cluster analysis (Hair, Anderson, Tatham and Black, 1995) was carried out for each group, using item estimates and their associated standard error estimates as the clustering variables. For each group, a three cluster solution was identified and the membership of each cluster compared with that of each status group determined by visual inspection. In virtually all instances there was complete agreement with respect to status group membership between visual inspection and clustering methods. On this basis, each child was allocated to one of three sociometric status groups on pre, post, and delayed post testing. Subsequent analyses were then carried out to determine the extent to which children migrated between groups over the period of study.

5.5113 The interview.

The interviews were analysed using the Q.S.R. NUD*ist computer package designed to assist users in handling non-numerical and unstructured data by indexing, searching and theorising. The software builds two related databases. The first is the document database which holds the transcripts of the interviews. The second is the index database which holds a coding structure expressed in the form of a hierarchal tree diagram (see Appendix 13) and pointers from every node in the structure to elements of the database which are instances of the concept represented by that node. Definitions for each node are presented in Appendix 14. The coding structure, that is the tree diagram, is crucial to the analysis. It is usually developed interactively and, in its final form, reflects the analyst's theoretical frame of reference. In this regard the construct of sociometric status, being of central importance to the study, formed a principal organising theme for the qualitative analysis, and, hence was a major node in the tree diagram.

The transcripts of interviews were introduced as raw data. A summary of the transcripts is found in Appendix 15. Text in the introduced documents, was then coded. The text of the documents was searched electronically after asking questions and posing hypotheses. Reports were formed based on questions asked.

5.512 Research Theme 2: Knowledge, Skills, Behaviours and Personality Traits Associated with Social Competence

Using NUD*ist, knowledge, skills and behaviours which were present in children with high, average and low status were examined. Information examined was derived from the interviews, observation and the HESCI checklist. It was expected that distinctly different patterns of knowledge, skills and behaviours would emerge for each of the sociometric status groups.

5.513 Research Theme 3: Constructs Associated with Social Competence

A principal components analysis was performed on the sub-categories of the teacher checklist (HESCI) and the sociometric item estimates derived from the Rasch modelling, to examine associations between these variables. The HESCI sub-categories are pre-requisites to learning, communication, emotion,

self attributes and social interaction attributes which correspond to the knowledge deemed essential to development and demonstration of social competence. As previously mentioned, the item estimates measure each child's sociometric status which, presumably, is associated with and is partially dependent upon their degree of social competence.

The sub-categories of HESCI will also be examined using the NUD*ist software package, to determine which skills and behaviours are lacking in children with low sociometric status. The skills and behaviours present in children with high status will also be examined, as a contrast to children with low status.

5.514 Research Theme 4: Efficacy of Social Competence Intervention Program

Although all children were exposed to the program in the intervention group, some were targeted for further intervention because of their lack of experience or lack of interaction with other children. The efficacy of the program thus was examined by looking at:

- an evaluation by the teachers, and
- the effect of the program on the targeted children.

It should be emphasised that this was not an experimental, or even a quasi-experimental study that sought to compare mean levels of performance on a set of dependent variables between non-intervention and intervention groups with time (pre, post, and delayed post) as a within subject factor. Although such an approach may have seemed attractive and may have conferred an ambience of precision on the study, it was believed that there were too many intervening variables that could not realistically be controlled for a week, let alone the eight months of the collection phase of the project. Moreover, the strength and direction of the effect of these variables is unknown. Variables include size of the classes, age of children in groups, composition of group, size of the playground, approaches to social problem solving, freedom of choice of activities, choice of preschool attendance days and others. Given these circumstances the decision was taken to adopt a case approach with a number of different groups, and within groups, with a number of particular children. Thus, each of the seven groups represented a separate case study, with data being collected on three separate occasions. The groups differed on a number of attributes which are described in the Results Chapter 7.

The group level case studies focused on the flux of social interactions that operate dynamically to influence, if not determine, sociometric status. One aspect of the analysis of these group level case studies was an attempt to identify qualitative differences in the flux of sociometric status as between intervention and non intervention groups. The "targeted" children also represented another kind and level of case study. Here the emphasis was not so much on whether the child's peer group accorded him/her higher or lower sociometric status over the period of the study, as it was on detecting smaller scale changes in components of social competence.

5.5141 Case Studies.

A case study is a study characterised by an investigation of a single individual, group, event, institution or culture (Wiersma, 1991). The group case studies presented a context. The individual case studies gave an insight into some of the reasons for having low sociometric status and how an improvement in behaviours may occur due to intervention.

In the Intervention group, children targeted for intervention were selected by the teachers. Teachers previously had expressed concern regarding their social relationship skills . All of these children had low or average sociometric status. Case study information was collected by the researcher by observing the children, obtaining information from interviews, and consultation with teachers who had access to parent information and student records. Case studies of children in the Intervention Group were compared with similar children from the Non-Intervention Group. Children compared were those who:

1. lack experience with peers
2. exclude others;
3. show poor control of their behaviour; and
4. have physical problems.

5.5142 Evaluation by Teachers.

A written questionnaire regarding the teaching program was given to teachers at the end of the study to complete (see Appendix 16). After the teachers had completed the questionnaire, they were asked to discuss or brainstorm as a group, answers to questions regarding the teaching program. This discussion was taped (see Appendix 17). Questions asked were similar to those on the

written questionnaire. Group discussion is often more reflective and more ideas are gathered.

In this chapter the development and use of the research instruments such as sociometric ratings, the HESCI checklist, the interview and the teaching program for social competence, were discussed. The analytical procedures such as the four research themes were also discussed.

The next chapter discusses the results of the research relating to what young children know.

CHAPTER 6. RESULTS: SOCIAL KNOWLEDGE

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In this chapter, results and analyses of theme 1 (knowledge of social competence) are presented.

6.1 Sociometric Status

Sociometric status was crucial to this study and assisted in the identification of behaviours which were characteristic of the level of status. It also assisted in the identification of effective knowledge and understanding that children of high status had developed. Conversely, it helped in the identification of knowledge and understanding which was lacking in children with low status.

Using the Rasch model sociometric status was determined for all children in the Non-Intervention and the Intervention Groups. See Appendix 7 for the status of each child at each test time. Included in Appendix 6 are charts which show the status for each child in each group. The charts, based on clusters of Rasch scores, were used to assist in the assignment of status to each child.

The internal consistency of item analysis of each sociometric status group was examined. The internal consistency reported by the Quest software was, for polychotomously scored items, analogous to Cronbach's Alpha (Anastasi, 1982). It is usually accepted that the minimum acceptable value for Cronbach's Alpha is 0.7 (Anastasi, 1982).

Table 6.1 Internal Consistency of Item Analysis

Group	Group Number	Pre test	Post test	Delayed post
Non-intervention	1	0.74	0.83	0.71
	2	0.57	0.63	0.77
	3	0.72	0.83	0.75
	4	0.86	0.79	0.50
Intervention	1	0.58	0.73	0.81
	2	0.85	0.67	0.82
	3	0.71	0.64	0.79

It will be noted that from Table 6 1, that for most groups the index exceeded 0.7. Given that the analysis was carried out on data collected from very young children, an outcome of only three out of twenty one indices which did not exceed the 0.7 threshold seems reasonable. Thus, it may be concluded that the sociometric instrument provided a reliable means of measuring sociometric status.

It was evident that on the whole only one to six children had high status at each time of testing (see Table 6.2). However, Intervention Group 2, at the delayed post test, had a greater number of children (eleven) with high sociometric status than in any other group at any other time. All of these children with high status in the delayed post test were females. Girls even at three or four years of age appear to be more mature and more sensitive to their social environment than boys. Thus, being exposed to additional knowledge via the teaching program could have accounted for their elevated sociometric status.

Table 6.2 High Sociometric Status at Pre Test, Post Test and Delayed Post Test

	Non-Intervention Group				Intervention Group		
Status	1	2	3	4	1	2	3
pre	3	1	2	2	6	2	3
post	1	2	2	2	5	3	4
delayed post	1	4	1	1	1	11	5

Table 6.3 lists figures for the average sociometric status group. In most cases, the largest number of children were in this status group. Non-Intervention Group 2 contains a small number of children with average sociometric status because the majority of that group had low status.

Table 6.3 Average Sociometric Status at Pre test, Post Test and Delayed Post Test

	Non-Intervention Group				Intervention Group		
Status	1	2	3	4	1	2	3
pre	5	2	6	7	7	10	6
post	8	8	3	7	7	13	5
delayed post	8	4	8	6	8	5	6

Table 6.4 displays the number of children with low status. Non-Intervention Group 2 had a larger number of children with low status, unlike other groups. This seemed unusual because this group consisted of the older children who were in their second year of preschool and would be expected to have had more social experience with their peers. Perhaps, at this age (4-5 years) many find a special friend and tend to exclude others. This was the case for Laura/Linden, Sally/Anna. Two children (Keira and Dominic) were not regular attenders at preschool and so found it more difficult to become part of the group. Another reason the number of low sociometric status children

increased around 4-5 years, could be that children became more aware of the peer group rules and of those who defied those rules, as was the case with Samuel and Nikita.

Table 6.4 Low Sociometric Status at Pre Test, Post Test and Delayed Post Test

	Non-Intervention Group				Intervention Group		
Status	1	2	3	4	1	2	3
pre	4	10	4	3	1	6	4
post	3	3	7	3	2	2	4
delayed post	3	5	3	5	5	2	2

6.2 The Interview

The answers to interview questions helped to identify, from the child's perspective, what children as a group knew and performed. This knowledge changed over time as children participated in, and experienced their social environment. The interview questions were drawn from a 'theory of mind' view of child development.

Although children's knowledge was the focus, tables were compiled which contained percentages of responses by children. The figures gave an indication of what was acceptable or unacceptable to the peer group and what young children knew.

Frequencies of answers to interview questions were derived from the NUD*ist software package. The tables indicated responses given by children from the perspective of gender, age, status and group (intervention or non-intervention).

Various research themes evolved as well as research questions within the themes.

6.3 Research Theme 1.

Differences in knowledge, skills and behaviours between children of different age, gender and sociometric status from the child's perspective

6.31 Choice of Friends

6.311 Research Question 1 (Theme 1)

Did males and females have a similar number of friends of cross sex, same sex, and opposite sex?

Children indicated their sex preference of friends by naming their friends. Children often named friends of the opposite sex even though later in the interview they expressed that they did not like children of the opposite sex, as did, Peter and Joshua 1.

The proportion of cross, same, and opposite gender friends as well as those who had no friends was similar for both females and males at pre test, post test, and delayed post test (see Table 6.5). There was a slightly higher percentage of friends of the same sex (approximately 50%) than those of cross sex (approximately 45%) in the three test times except in the delayed post test time. At this time males had a higher percentage of cross sex friends (49%) as compared to females (36%). The reason may have been a result of "getting used to" the opposite sex through their sheer presence. Conversely, more females befriended same sex friends (60%) compared to males (38%).

Table 6.5 The Gender of Friends for Males and Females

Time	Sex	Cross		Same		Opposite		None	
Pre Test	Males	18/45	40%	24/45	53%	0/45	0%	3/45	7%
	Females	21/49	43%	25/49	51%	3/49	6%	0/49	0%
Post Test	Males	21/45	47%	21/45	47%	3/45	6%	0/45	0%
	Females	21/49	43%	25/49	51%	3/49	6%	0/49	0%
Delayed Post Test	Males	22/45	49%	17/45	38%	5/45	11%	0/56	0%
	Females	18/49	36%	29/49	60%	2/49	4%	0/30	0%

6.312 Research Question 2 (Theme 1)

Did children from the Intervention and the Non-Intervention Group have a similar number of friends from each category in the three test times?

The percentage of children having cross sex friends was greater in the Intervention Group (60%-70%) than in the Non-Intervention Group (36%-39%) at each test. The percentage of children with same sex friends was greater in the Non-Intervention Group (45%-54%) than in the Intervention Group (27%-40%) at each test.

The percentage of children with friends of the opposite sex was slightly higher in the Non-Intervention Group as compared to the Intervention Group. The Non-Intervention Group also had a slightly higher percentage of children with no friends at each time interval. Percentages are recorded in Table 6.6.

Table 6.6 The Gender of Friends for the Non-Intervention Group and the Intervention Group.

Time	Sex	Cross		Same		Opposite		None	
Pre Test	Intervention	32/45	71%	12/45	27%	1/45	2%	0/45	0%
	Non-Intervent	18/49	36%	26/49	54%	2/49	4%	3/49	6%
Post Test	Intervention	27/45	60%	18/45	40%	0/45	0%	0/45	0%
	Non-Intervent	19/49	39%	24/49	49%	6/49	12%	0/49	0%
Delayed Post Test	Intervention	27/45	60%	18/45	40%	0/45	0%	0/45	0%
	Non-Intervent	19/49	39%	22/49	45%	7/49	14%	1/49	2%

6.313 Research question 3 (Theme 1)

Did younger children have more friends of cross sex than the same sex?

Younger children (under four years of age) had friends mostly of cross gender (50%-63%). Percentages of responses are displayed in Table 6.7. Children between four years and five years also had friends mostly of cross gender (48%-56%). However, 25%-43% of children in both of the above groups had same gender friends. Table 6.6 lists the percentages of children with friends of different gender combinations for various ages. Few children had only opposite sex friends or no friends at all, at each of the three test times.

Table 6.7 The Gender of Friends for Various Age groups.

Time	Sex	Cross		Same		Opposite		None	
Pre Test	Under 4	14/28	50%	11/28	39%	1/28	4%	2/28	7%
	4-5 yrs	35/63	56%	24/63	38%	2/63	4%	1/63	2%
	Over 5	0/3	**0%**	3/3	**100%**	0/3	0%	0/3	0%
Post Test	Under 4	8/16	50%	6/16	38%	2/16	**12%**	0/16	0%
	4-5 yrs	35/65	54%	26/65	40%	4/65	6%	0/65	0%
	Over 5	3/13	**23%**	10/13	**77%**	0/13	0%	0/13	0%
Delayed Post Test	Under 4	5/8	63%	2/8	25%	0/8	0%	1/8	12%
	4-5 yrs	27/56	48%	24/56	43%	5/56	9%	0/56	0%
	Over 5	14/30	**47%**	14/30	**47%**	2/30	6%	0/30	0%

6.314 Research question 4 (Theme 1)

Did older children (Over 5 years) have more friends of the same sex than of cross sex?

Older children (over 5 years of age) appeared to prefer same sex friends in the pre test, but by the delayed post test, this age group had an equal number of same sex and cross sex friends. Numbers were small in the pre test situation and thus may have been distorted (100% prefer same sex friends). At the post test, 77% of children over five years of age had same sex friends and at the delayed post test only 47 % had same sex friends. See Table 6.6 for percentages of children with friends of different gender combinations for various ages.

6.315 Research Question 5 (Theme 1)

Did children with low sociometric status have friends of the same sex or the opposite sex?

For the pre test, children with high and low sociometric status had a similar percentage of friends in each group. In the post test and the delayed post test there was a difference in friendship patterns.

The pattern of friendships between high and low sociometric status children for cross sex and same sex friends was different in the post test and the delayed post test. Children with low sociometric status had a slightly larger percentage of friends of the same sex (50% and 44%) as compared to children with high sociometric status (38% and 39%). Children with low sociometric status however, had a lower percentage of friends of cross sex (33% and 44%) than children with high sociometric status (56% and 58%). This may indicate that cross sex friends is acceptable for preschoolers. This

pattern may have occurred because high status children mix more freely with children of either sex. This may result from having the confidence and skills to mix with either sex as a result of the composition of their siblings and perhaps neighbours or with whom they regularly mix . The figures presented in Table 6.8 are for gender of friends of low and high sociometric status.

A larger percentage of children with low sociometric status had friends of the opposite sex only (17% in the post test and 12 % in the delayed post test) as compared to children with high sociometric status (4% and 5%). All children who had friends of the opposite sex were from the Non-Intervention Group. Their ages ranged from 42 months to 59 months and, hence, does not appear to be age related.

Table 6.8 Gender of Friends for High and Low Sociometric Status.

Time	SOCIOMETRIC STATUS	Cross sex		Same		Opposite		None	
Pre Test	LOW status	15/32	47%	16/32	50%	0/32	0%	1/32	3%
	HIGH status	8/19	42%	10/19	53%	1/19	5%	0/19	0%
Post Test	LOW status	8/24	33%	12/24	50%	4/24	**17%**	0/24	0%
	HIGH status	11/19	**58%**	7/19	37%	1/19	5%	0/19	0%
Delayed Post Test	LOW status	11/25	44%	11/25	44%	3/25	**12%**	0/25	0%
	HIGH status	14/24	**58%**	9/24	38%	1/24	4%	0/24	0%

6.32 Description of Friends

6.321 Research Question 6 (Theme 1)

How did children describe friendship?

Most children described friends as being those people with whom they "played" (37%-53%) or whom they both liked and played with (8% at each test time). This was exemplified by the children's responses. (*Plays with you and likes you. Happy people, they play with you. Someone you play with.*) Many (22%-25%) described friends as those who acted prosocially towards them (*Someone you think about, shows you things. People who share . A person you talk things over with . A person who makes you happy. Nice to you).* Some children (11%- 27%) described friends as those people for whom they had feelings. (*Someone you love Likes you and have a happy face and say I want to be your friend forever. My friends have happy faces).* As children grew older they increasingly became aware that they had positive feelings for friends.

Table 6.9 Description of Friends

What friends are	Pre test (n=94)		Post test (n=94)		Delayed Post test (n=94)	
Feelings for	11/94	12%	10/94	11%	25/94	27%
Play	35/94	**37%**	50/94	**53%**	33/94	**35%**
Play + like	7/94	8%	8/94	8%	8/94	8%
Prosocial	23/94	**25%**	21/94	**22%**	20/94	**22%**
Name only	6/94	6%	3/94	3%	2/94	2%
Name + other	4/94	4%	2/94	3%	3/94	3%
No friends	2/94	2%	0/94	0%	0/94	0%
Other	6/94	6%	0/94	0%	3/94	3%

Some children simply named a friend while others stated that friends were people they knew. Others claimed they had no friends. Table 6.9 lists what children know about friends or how they describe them.

6.322 Research Question 7 (Theme 1)

Did females have a different perception of friendship to males?

Females and males had a similar perception of what was a friend, with one exception. A slightly higher percentage of females (10% - 14% - 14%) as compared to males (5% - 3% - 3%) indicated that friends were those with whom you played and liked. Other percentages of responses were similar at all three test times. Table 6.10 lists the descriptions and percentages of what males and females said about friends.

Table 6.10 Description of Friends by Females and Males

	Pre Test				Post test				Delayed post test			
What friends are	Males (n=45)		Females (n=49)		Males (n=45)		Females (n=49)		Males (n=45)		Females (n=49)	
Feelings for	5/45	11%	6/49	13%	6/45	13%	4/49	8%	13/45	29%	12/49	25%
Play	14/45	31%	21/49	43%	25/45	56%	25/49	51%	18/45	40%	15/49	31%
Play + like	2/45	5%	5/49	**10%**	1/45	3%	7/49	**14%**	1/45	3%	7/49	**14%**
Prosocial	13/45	29%	10/49	20%	9/45	20%	12/49	25%	10/45	21%	10/49	20%
Name only	5/45	11%	1/49	2%	2/45	4%	1/49	2%	2/45	4%	0/49	0%
Name + other	2/45	5%	2/49	4%	2/45	4%	0/49	0%	0/45	0%	3/49	6%
No friends	2/45	4%	0/49	0%	0/45	0%	0/49	0%	0/45	0%	0/49	0%
Other	2/45	4%	4/49	8%	0/45	0%	0/49	0%	1/45	3%	2/49	4%

6.323 Research Question 8 (Theme 1)

Did the children who stated that they had no friends, have low sociometric status?

Only two children stated that they had no friends. One child (Amit in Non-Intervention Group 1 at pre test) who stated that he had no friends, had low sociometric status. The other (Nathan in Non-Intervention Group 3) had average status. Children who have low status are aware that they are not liked. Amit was from another culture, who only mixed with his sisters and so had little experience in the Australian peer group. Amit is discussed as one of the case studies (see Chapter 7, pp. 223-224) At the time of the post test, his sociometric status had improved to average but by the delayed post test his sociometric status had dropped again. Nathan, too, had little experience with other children outside preschool. His teacher perceived a great deal of improvement in his social knowledge over the year. However, the children did not share that perspective as his status remained low over time. Perhaps his skills did improve but not fast enough to keep up with his peers.

6.324 Research Question 9 (Theme 1)

Did children with high sociometric status have the same knowledge about friends as children with low sociometric status?

Table 6.11 contains percentage of responses for descriptions of friends. A larger proportion of children with high sociometric status (11%-21%-25%) knew that friends were people with whom they played and liked, as compared to children with low sociometric status (3%-4%-4%). Responses indicated a more comprehensive view of friends. (*Someone who plays with you and they smile. It's a person who likes you to play with. People you know and you like to play with).*

At post test and delayed post test, a slightly larger percentage of children of high status expressed that friends were people you loved or liked (17% and 24% respectively). This was exemplified by the children's responses. (*It's someone you like really much. Someone that you like. It's when they hug you when you are sad).*

Table 6.11 Description of Friends by Sociometric Status

	Pre test				Post test				Delayed post test			
Friends	High (n=19)		Low (n=32)		High (n=19)		Low (n=24)		High (n=24)		Low (n=25)	
Feelings for	3/19	16%	5/32	16%	2/19	11%	4/24	**17%**	5/24	21%	6/25	**24%**
Play	5/19	26%	12/32	38%	9/19	47%	10/24	42%	10/24	42%	9/25	36%
Play + like	2/19	**11%**	1/32	3%	4/19	**21%**	1/24	4%	6/24	**25%**	1/25	4%
Prosocial	6/19	32%	8/32	25%	3/19	16%	9/24	**38%**	2/24	8%	8/25	**32%**
Name only	0/19	0%	2/32	6%	1/19	5%	0/24	0%	0/24	0%	0/25	0%
Name + other	1/19	5%	1/32	3%	0/19	0%	0/24	0%	0/24	0%	1/25	4%
No friends	0/19	0%	1/32	3%	0/19	0%	0/24	0%	0/24	0%	0/25	0%
Other	2/19	10%	2/32	6%	0/19	0%	0/24	0%	1/24	4%	0/25	0%

During the post test, 38% of low status children viewed friends as kindly or prosocial people. During the delayed post test 32% of low status children viewed friends in this way. This was exemplified by comments made by these children. *(Friends are good to you. You don't hurt them. Being nice. They don't hurt people.)* In other words, friends were the people who treated you well rather than rejected you or were mean to you.

6.325 Research Question 10

Did the Intervention Group know more about friendship than the Non-Intervention Group?

A greater percentage of children in the Intervention Group expressed friendship in terms of having feelings for another; playing only; and playing and liking; than in the Non-Intervention Group. (Percentages are given in Table 6.12). One reason may be that in the Intervention Group, children with low status had more support for forming friendships because of the environment established through the intervention program. Thus, being rejected or being the subject of animosity may have been minimised.

In the Non-Intervention Group, a larger percentage of children expressed friendship in terms of kindly or prosocial people as was the case for low sociometric status children. Most of the low status children who expressed this view were from the Non-Intervention Group. It should be stressed that in the Non-Intervention Group there was less support for friendship formation as compared to the Intervention Group, only because of the absence of the program rather than from a lack of support from teachers. This strengthens the argument that intervention for social competence can improve the outcome of friendship formation by setting up a supportive environment for all.

Table 6.12 Definition of Friends by Non-intervention and Intervention Group

	Pre test				Post test				Delayed post test			
Friends	Intervention Group		Non-intervention		Intervention Group		Non-intervention		Intervention Group		Non-intervention	
Feelings for	8/45	**18%**	3/49	6%	8/45	**18%**	2/49	4%	12/45	**27%**	13/49	26%
Play	19/45	42%	16/49	33%	19/45	42%	31/49	63%	17/45	38%	16/49	33%
Play + like	5/45	**11%**	2/49	4%	8/45	**18%**	0/49	0%	8/45	**18%**	0/49	0%
Pro-social	9/45	20%	14/49	**29%**	9/45	20%	12/49	**25%**	6/45	13%	14/49	**29%**
Name only	0/45	0%	5/49	10%	0/45	0%	3/49	6%	0/45	0%	2/49	4%
Name/other	1/45	2%	3/49	6%	1/45	2%	1/49	2%	1/45	2%	2/49	4%
No friends	0/45	0%	1/49	2%	0/45	0%	0/49	0%	0/45	0%	0/49	0%
Other	3/45	7%	5/49	10%	0/45	0%	0/49	0%	1/45	2%	2/49	4%

6.326 Research Question 11 (Theme 1)

Did older children know more about friendship than younger children?

The only description of friends which appeared to be linked to an increase in age was the category "feelings for", especially at pre test and post test (see Table 6.13).

Table 6.13 Description of Friends with Age

	Pre test			Post test			Delayed post test		
Friends	Under 4 yrs	4-5 yrs	Over 5 yrs	Under 4 yrs	4-5 yrs	Over 5 yrs	Under 4 yrs	4-5 yrs	Over 5 yrs
Feelings for	2/28 **7%**	8/63 **13%**	1/3 **33%**	1/16 **6%**	7/65 **11%**	2/13 **15%**	1/8 12%	16/56 29%	8/30 27%
Play	8/28 29%	26/63 41%	1/3 33%	8/16 50%	34/65 52%	8/13 62%	2/8 25%	18/56 32%	13/30 43%
Play + like	3/28 11%	4/63 6%	0/3 0%	0/16 0%	6/65 9%	2/13 15%	1/8 13%	4/5 7%	3/30 10%
Prosocial	9/28 32%	13/63 21%	1/3 33%	5/16 31%	15/65 23%	1/13 8%	1/8 13%	13/56 23%	6/30 20%
Name only	2/28 7%	3/63 5%	0/3 0%	2/16 13%	1/65 2%	0/13 0%	0/8 0%	2/56 4%	0/30 0%
Name + other	2/28 7%	2/63 3%	2/65 3%	0/16 0%	0/3 0%	0/13 0%	2/8 25%	1/56 1%	0/30 0%
No friends	0/28 0%	1/63 2%	0/3 0%	0/16 0%	0/65 0%	0/13 0%	0/8 0%	0/56 0%	0/30 0%
Other	2/28 7%	6/63 9%	0/3 0%	0/16 0%	0/65 0%	0/13 0%	1/8 12%	2/56 4%	0/30 0%

Percentages for Under 4 years, the 4-5 years and Over 5 years groups, were 7%, 13%, and 33% respectively at pre test; and 6%, 11%, and 15% at post test. Some of the responses were: *Someone you like. A friend is someone that you love, care for, you play with when you go to their place. Someone you love. It's when they hug you wher you are sad.*

No other trends were evident over time. It was expected that the combination of 'play and liking' would increase with age but it did not. It appears to be related to sociometric status rather than age. This is discussed in Research Question 9.

6.33 Listening

6.331 Research Question 12 (Theme 1)

What did young children know about listening?

This question was difficult for most children. Children indicated that when they were listening they listened with their ears, talked back, were quiet, were still, looked at the speaker, or a combination of those responses. Some children gave an incorrect answer especially in the pre test. Fewer children gave an incorrect answer in the post test and the delayed post test. This can be a problem of asking the same questions again.

Many children responded by giving a combination of skills which are needed for listening. *(Put your hands in your lap, look at her, and be quiet. Be quiet, sit still, look at the person. Be quiet, face the front and look at her).* The responses given and the percentages are listed in Table 6.14.

Table 6.14 How Young Children Perceive Listening

Listening	Pre test (n=94)		Post test (n=94)		Delayed post test (n=94)	
Ears	7/94	7%	7/94	8%	7/94	7%
Talk back	7/94	7%	6/94	7%	1/94	1%
Be quiet	12/94	13%	18/94	19%	14/94	15%
Sit still	7/94	7%	3/94	3%	7/94	8%
Look at person	2/94	2%	0/94	0%	5/94	5%
Wrong answer	20/94	21%	6/94	6%	3/94	3%
Combination	10/94	11%	5/94	5%	17/94	18%
Rephrased - right answer	30/94	32%	49/94	52%	40/94	43%

The majority of children were able to answer this question if given alternatives. This indicates that young children may know the correct answer but may have difficulty with recall.

6.332 Research Question 13 (Theme 1)

Was there a gender difference in what children know about listening?

There were no apparent differences in the answers given by females or males regarding listening (see Table 6.15). However there was a slight difference in the percentages for the answer "being quiet." In the pre test (16% females; 8% males) and the delayed post test (22% females; 7 % males), more females indicated that one should be quiet. Perhaps females are quicker to respond to teacher's rules, as they appear to be more receptive to learning social and preschool rules.

Table 6.15 Listening and Gender

	Pre test		Post test		Delayed Post test	
Show you are listening	Males (n=45)	Females (n=49)	Males (n=45)	Females (n=49)	Males (n=45)	Females (n=49)
Use your ears	3/45 6%	4/49 8%	2/45 4.5%	5/49 10%	3/45 7%	4/49 8%
Talk back	4/45 8%	3/49 6%	3/45 7%	3/49 6%	1/45 2%	0/49 0%
Be quiet	4/45 8%	8/49 16%	10/45 22%	8/49 17%	3/45 7%	11/49 22%
Sit still	3/45 6%	4/49 8%	2/45 4.5%	1/49 2%	5/45 11%	2/49 4%
Look at the person	1/45 2%	1/49 3%	0/45 0%	0/49 0%	3/45 7%	2/49 4%
Wrong answer	9/45 20%	11/49 22%	2/45 4.5%	4/49 8%	1/45 2%	2/49 4%
Combination (quiet + still)	6/45 13%	4/49 8%	2/45 4.5%	3/49 6%	4/45 9%	13/49 27%
Rephrased: Right answer	16/45 37%	14/49 29%	24/45 53%	25/49 51%	25/45 55%	15/49 31%

6.333 Research Question 14 (Theme 1)

Was there was a difference in what children knew about listening between the Intervention Group and the Non-Intervention Group?

There are no consistent differences between the Intervention Group and the Non-Intervention Group at the three test times. (See Table 6.16).

Table 6.16 Knowledge of Listening and Groups

	Pre test		Post test		Delayed Post test	
How to show you are listening	Non-intervention (n=49)	Intervention (n=45)	Non-intervention (n=49)	Intervention (n=45)	Non-intervention (n=49)	Intervention (n=45)
Use your ears	4/49 8%	3/45 7%	3/49 6%	4/45 9%	5/49 10%	2/45 4%
Talk back	6/49 12%	1/45 2%	2/49 4%	4/45 9%	1/49 2%	0/45 0%
Be quiet	7/49 14%	5/45 11%	12/49 25%	6/45 13%	4/49 8%	10/45 22%
Sit still	4/49 8%	3/45 7%	2/49 4%	1/45 2%	6/49 12%	1/45 2%
Look at the person	2/49 4%	0/45 0%	0/49 0%	0/45 0%	4/49 8%	1/45 2%
Wrong answer	10/49 21%	9/45 20%	3/49 6%	3/45 7%	0/49 0%	3/45 7%
Combination (quiet + still)	5/49 10%	5/45 11%	1/49 2%	4/45 9%	9/49 19%	8/45 18%
Rephrased: Right answer	11/49 23%	19/45 42%	26/49 53%	23/45 51%	20/49 41%	20/45 45%

6.334 Research Question 15 (Theme 1)

Did older children have a similar perception of listening than younger children?

There were no consistent differences between the various age groups, regarding knowledge about listening, over the three test times (see Table 6.17).

Table 6.17 Knowledge of Listening and Age

	Pre test			Post test			Delayed Post test		
Show you are listening	Under 4 yrs n=28	4-5 yrs n=63	Over 5 yrs n=3	Under 4 yrs n=16	4-5 yrs n=65	Over 5 yrs n=13	Under 4 yrs n=8	4-5 yrs n=56	Over 5 yrs n=30
Use your ears	1/28 3.5%	6/63 10%	0/3 0%	1/16 6%	6/65 9%	0/13 0%	1/8 13%	4/56 7%	2/30 7%
Talk back	1/28 3.5%	6/63 9%	0/3 0%	0/16 0%	6/65 9%	0/13 0%	0/8 0%	1/56 2%	0/30 0%
Be quiet	1/28 3.5%	9/63 14%	2/3 67%	6/16 38%	9/65 14%	3/13 23%	1/8 12%	8/56 14%	5/30 16%
Sit still	1/28 3,5%	5/63 8%	1/3 33%	0/16 0%	3/65 5%	0/13 0%	2/8 25%	3/56 5%	2/30 7%
Look at the person	2/28 7%	0/63 0%	0/3 0%	0/16 0%	0/65 0%	0/13 0%	0/8 0%	4/56 7%	1/30 3%
Wrong answer	8/28 29%	11/63 17%	0/3 0%	2/16 12%	4/65 6%	0/13 0%	0/8 0%	1/56 2%	2/30 7%
Combination (quiet + still)	2/28 7%	8/63 13%	0/3 0%	0/16 0%	2/65 3%	3/13 23%	0/8 0%	11/56 20%	6/30 20%
Rephrased: Right answer	12/28 43%	18/63 29%	0/3 0%	7/16 44%	35/65 54%	7/13 54%	4/8 50%	24/56 43%	12/30 40%

6.335 Research Question 16 (Theme 1)

Did children with high sociometric status know more about listening than children with low sociometric status?

There were no consistent differences between high and low sociometric status, regarding knowledge about listening, over the three test times. Table 6.18 shows the percentage of answers given.

Table 6.18 Knowledge of Listening and Sociometric Status

	Pre test		Post test		Delayed Post test	
Showing you are listening	High n=19	Low n=32	High n=19	Low n=24	High n=24	Low n=25
Use your ears	0/19 0%	0/32 0%	4/19 21%	1/24 4%	2/24 9%	2/25 8%
Talk back	1/19 5%	4/32 13%	2/19 11%	1/24 4%	0/24 0%	1/25 0%
Be quiet	4/19 21%	5/32 16%	6/19 32%	7/24 29%	4/24 17%	5/25 20%
Sit still	2/19 11%	3/32 9%	1/19 5%	1/24 4%	0/24 0%	1/25 4%
Look at the person	0/19 0%	1/32 3%	0/19 0%	0/24 0%	3/24 12%	2/25 8%
Wrong answer	4/19 21%	3/32 9%	0/19 0%	2/24 9%	1/24 4%	1/25 4%
Combination (quiet + still)	2/19 11%	6/32 19%	1/19 5%	1/24 4%	7/24 29%	3/25 12%
Rephrased: Right answer	6/19 31%	10/32 31%	5/19 26%	11/24 46%	7/24 29%	10/25 40%

6.34 Sadness

6.341 Research Question 17

What did young children state they knew about sadness?

Young children described sadness in terms of facial expressions and crying. *(Because they're crying and tears roll down. They have a sad mouth. Their mouth goes down. They frown. Wipe their eyes. Because of the look on their face, they frown. When tears come down from their eyes.)* Responses in terms of a description of facial expressions was the most frequent answer given (54% - 63%) as is indicated in Table 6.19

Table 6.19 Knowledge about Sadness

What is said about sad peers	Pre test (n=94)		Post test (n=94)		Delayed post test (n=94)	
Description	54/94	57%	60/94	64%	59/94	63%
Context	19/94	21%	14/94	15%	19/94	20%
Description & Context	3/94	3%	11/94	12%	8/94	8%
other	18/94	19%	9/94	9%	8/94	9%

Many children (15%-21%) provided information about a context relating to sadness . *(They don't have a friend. They've been hurt. When someone pushed over your tower. No one will play with them or talk to them. When someone snatches something off me. I only get sad when I miss my mum at pre school.)* Some described both the context and facial expression. Others stated: *"Don't know." "If somebody's sad I just tell the teacher." "When you're sad you go and get your mum.' "I don't like having crying friends."* It was assumed that describing sadness in terms of both context and physical characteristics was a more elaborate answer. Hence, it was anticipated that children who had higher sociometric status or were older would express sadness in this manner.

6.342 Research Question 18 (Theme 1)

Was there a gender difference in what children knew about sadness?

Over the three test times, a similar percentage of males and females described sadness in terms of physical characteristics; context only; both context and physical characteristics; and other knowledge. Table 6.20 displays the percentages of answers given.

Table 6.20 Knowledge of Sadness and Gender

	Pre test		Post test		Delayed post test	
Sex	Males n=45	Females n=49	Males n=45	Females n=49	Males n=45	Females n=49
Description of sadness	23/45 51%	31/49 64%	28/45 62%	32/49 65%	30/45 67%	29/49 60%
Description and context	3/45 7%	0/49 0%	4/45 9%	7/49 14%	3/45 6%	5/49 10%
Context only	10/4 5 22%	9/49 18%	8/45 18%	6/49 12%	8/45 18%	11/49 22%
Other	9/45 20%	9/49 18%	5/45 11%	4/49 8%	4/45 9%	4/49 8%

6.343 Research Question 19 (Theme 1)

Was there a difference between the Intervention Group and the Non-Intervention Group, in what children knew about sadness ?

No apparent differences in knowledge about sadness were evident over the three test times. However, in the Non-Intervention Group, there was a slight improvement in the number of children able to describe sadness (58% - 66% - 70%) although percentages are quite similar to those of the Intervention Group (58%- 62% 56%). In the Intervention Group a larger percentage described a context or gave an "other" response (see Table 6.21).

Table 6.21 Knowledge of Sadness and the Groups

Time	Pre test		Post test		Delayed post test	
Group	NIG (n=49)	IG (n=45)	NIG (n=49)	IG (n=45)	NIG (n=49)	IG (n=45)
Description of sadness	28/49 **58%**	26/45 58%	32/49 **66%**	28/45 62%	34/49 **70%**	25/45 56%
Description and context	2/49 4%	1/45 2%	7/49 14%	4/45 9%	2/49 4%	6/45 13%
Context only	9/49 18%	10/45 22%	7/49 14%	7/45 16%	10/49 20%	9/45 20%
Other	10/49 20%	8/45 18%	3/49 6%	6/45 13%	3/49 6%	5/45 11%

IG - Intervention Group NIG - Non-Intervention Group

6.344 Research Question 20 (Theme 1)

Was there a difference in what children knew about sadness between the various age groups?

There were no consistent patterns of knowledge about sadness. (See Table 6.22 for percentages of answers.) However, in all age groups at the three test times, over 50% of children described sadness in terms of physical characteristics. However, there was a slight percentage decrease over time in most age groups in the category labelled "other."

It was expected that older children would provide knowledge about sadness in terms of context and physical characteristics. This was not the case and no increase with age was evident.

Table 6.22 Knowledge of Sadness and Age

	Pre test			Post test			Delayed Post test		
Age	Under 4 yrs n=28	4-5 yrs n=63	Over 5 yrs n=3	Under 4 yrs n=16	4-5 yrs n=65	Over 5 yrs n=13	Under 4 yrs n=8	4-5 yrs n=56	Over 5 yrs n=30
Description of sadness	14/28 50%	38/63 61%	2/3 67%	9/16 56%	43/65 66%	8/13 62%	5/8 61%	38/56 68%	16/30 63%
Description and context	0/28 0%	3/63 5%	0/3 0%	1/16 6%	7/65 11%	3/13 22%	1/8 13%	2/56 3%	5/30 17%
Context only	6/28 21%	11/63 18%	1/3 33%	3/16 19%	10/65 15%	1/13 8%	1/8 13%	12/56 22%	6/30 20%
Other	8/28 29%	10/63 16%	0/3 0%	3/16 19%	5/65 8%	1/13 8%	1/8 13%	4/56 7%	3/30 10%

6.345 Research Question 21 (Theme 1)

Was there a difference in children's knowledge about sadness between high and low sociometric status groups?

There appeared to be no apparent differences in children's knowledge about sadness between low and high sociometric status. It had been anticipated that children with high sociometric status may describe sadness in terms of context and physical characteristics. This was not apparent. Responses are displayed in Table 6.23.

Table 6.23 Knowledge of Sadness and Sociometric Status

Time	Pre test		Post test		Delayed post test	
Sociometric Status	High n=19	Low n=32	High n=19	Low n=24	High n=24	Low n=25
Description only	11/19 58%	20/32 63%	13/19 68%	17/24 71%	15/24 63%	14/25 56%
Description and context	0/19 0%	2/32 6%	2/19 11%	2/24 8%	3/24 13%	1/25 4%
Context only	5/19 26%	6/32 19%	2/19 10%	1/24 4%	4/24 16%	7/25 28%
Other	3/19 16%	4/32 12%	2/19 11%	4/24 17%	2/24 8%	3/25 12%

6.35 Context for Sadness

6.351 Research Question 22 (Theme 1)

What contexts were mentioned for sadness?

Table 6.24 shows answers given over the three test times. Children expressed sadness in terms of:

- not being liked -14%-32% *(They don't have a friend. No one will play with them or talk to them. Somebody won't let them play with their friend and they get sad. You need to play with people or you get sad.)* ;
- being hurt - 32%-42% *(If someone hits you. They've fallen over. [They] hurt you. 'm the person who hurt them.)*
- aggression - 10%-32% *(Someone may have hit them. Sad when they punch you.)*
- play being disrupted - 8%-10% *(I tell the teachers when someone snatches something off me. When someone pushed over you tower.)*
- other miscellaneous reasons 10%-16% *(She wanted to get some batteries for her torch and her mother wouldn't let her. When they're sick they are sad. I only get sad when I miss my mum at preschool)*

Table 6.24 Context of Sadness

Context	Pre test		Post test		Delayed post test	
not liked	3/22	14%	6/26	23%	9/29	32%
hurt	7/22	32%	11/26	42%	11/29	38%
aggression	7/22	32%	5/26	19%	3/29	10%
play interrupted	2/22	8%	0/26	0%	3/29	10%
other	3/22	14%	4/26	16%	3/29	10%

6.352 Research Question 23 (Theme 1)

What sort of contexts were mentioned for sadness by the two gender groups?

Table 6.25 shows the responses given to contexts for sadness. It appears that a larger percentage of females (22% - 41%) expressed sadness in terms of not being liked. It is interesting to note that all children with high sociometric status who connected sadness with not being liked gave an empathetic perspective. *(When they are crying and I make them happy when they have lost their friend. I start playing with them cause you need to play with people or you get sad.)* They were all females.

However, males expressed sadness in terms of being hurt (31% - 50%) or aggression (7%-46%). Often male discussions about being hurt were intertwined with aggression and were difficult to separate. Males speaking about aggression decreased over the test times. When females on the other hand spoke of being hurt it was in terms of an accident. *(Hurt theirself badly and then they put a bandaid on. Sometimes I hurt myself and I get sad. Cause*

someone falled over. When ycu trip over.) Only one female described sadness in terms of someone else hurting them. *(Probably they fell off something or got pushed.)*

Table 6.25 Context of Sadness and Gender

	Pre test		Post test		Delayed Post test	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
not liked	1/13 8%	2/9 **22%**	2/12 17%	4/14 **29%**	2/12 17%	7/17 **41%**
hurt	4/13 31%	3/9 34%	6/12 **50%**	5/14 36%	5/12 **42%**	6/17 35%
aggression	6/13 **46%**	1/9 11%	2/12 17%	3/14 21%	1/12 7%	2/17 12%
play interrupted	0/13 0%	2/9 22%	0/12 0%	0/14 0%	2/12 17%	1/17 6%
other (sick, scared)	2/13 15%	1/9 11%	2/12 16%	2/14 14%	2/12 17%	1/17 6%

Females, when speaking about sadness in terms of aggression, often mentioned that they would tell a teacher. This showed that they felt this was of a serious nature. *(I go to the teachers because someone hit them if they are sad.)* Males however, when describing sadness in terms of aggression, did not mention telling a teacher or adult. *(Sad when they punch you. Someone hit them and they cry. They hit you. You hit them when you're sad.)* It was mentioned that "when you get mad you punch."

6.353 Research Question 24 (Theme 1)

What sort of contexts were mentioned for sadness by the Intervention Group and the Non-Intervention Group?

No consistent differences were apparent between the Intervention Group and the Non-Intervention Group. See Table 6.26 for percentages of answers given.

Table 6.26 Context of Sadness and Group

Context	Pre test		Post test		Delayed Post test	
	NIG (n=49)	IG (n=45)	NIG (n=49)	IG (n=45)	NIG (n=49)	IG (n=45)
not liked	0/11 0%	3/11 27%	3/14 21%	3/12 25%	4/13 31%	5/16 31%
hurt	3/11 27%	4/11 36%	7/14 50%	4/12 33%	6/13 46%	5/16 31%
aggression	5/11 29%	2/11 18%	0/14 0%	5/12 42%	1/13 8%	2/16 13%
play interrupted	1/11 9%	1/11 9%	0/14 0%	0/12 0%	1/13 8%	2/16 13%
other (sick, scared)	2/11 18%	1/11 9%	4/14 29%	0/12 0%	1/13 8%	2/16 12%

NIG - Non-Intervention Group IG - Intervention Group

6.354 Research Question 25 (Theme 1)

What type of contexts were mentioned for sadness by the high and low sociometric status group?

Two differences were apparent over the test times. There appeared to be a relationship between high status and not being liked. A larger percentage of children with high status mentioned that sadness was associated with not being liked (20% - 50%) as compared with low status children (0%-13%). (See Table 6.27 for percentages).

Another relationship which was apparent was that a larger percentage of children with low sociometric status (83%-100%-75%), associated sadness with the two categories, aggression and being hurt, as compared to children with high sociometric status (40%-50%-37%). All children who mentioned aggression related sadness were males except one.

Table 6.27 Context of Sadness and Sociometric Status

	Pre test		Post test		Delayed Post test	
	High status	Low status	High status	Low status	High status	Low status
not liked	1/5 **20%**	1/8 12%	1/4 **25%**	0/3 0%	4/8 **50%**	1/8 13%
hurt	1/5 20%	2/8 25%	2/4 50%	2/3 **67%**	2/8 25%	5/8 **63%**
aggression	1/5 20%	5/8 **63%**	0/4 0%	1/3 **33%**	1/8 12%	1/8 12%
play interrupted	1/5 20%	0/8 0%	0/4 0%	0/3 0%	0/8 0%	1/8 12%
other (sick, scared)	1/5 20%	0/8 0%	1/4 25%	0/3 0%	1/8 12%	0/8 0%

6.355 Research Question 26 (Theme 1)

What sort of contexts were mentioned for sadness by the different age groups?

Younger children especially those under four years of age in the pre test and post test, mentioned the context of sadness in terms of being hurt or aggression. The two categories accounted for 72% in the pre test; 75% in the post test and 50% in the delayed post test.

All children who described the context of sadness in terms of being hurt had low or average status and were female except one. All children who described the context of sadness in terms of aggression were males with low status.

All older children who described sadness in the context of aggression had average or low status. Table 6.28 contains percentages of answers given regarding the contexts of sadness.

Table 6.28 Context of Sadness and Age

Age	Pre test			Post test			Delayed Post test		
	Under 4 yrs n=28	4-5 yrs n=63	Over 5 yrs n=3	Under 4 yrs n=16	4-5 yrs n=65	Over 5 yrs n=13	Under 4 yrs n=8	4-5 yrs n=56	Over 5 yrs n=30
Not liked	0/7 0%	3/14 21%	0/1 0%	0/4 0%	5/18 28%	1/4 25%	1/2 50%	3/15 20%	4/11 36%
Hurt	3/7 **43%**	4/14 29%	0/1 0%	3/4 **75%**	8/18 44%	0/4 0%	0/2 0%	8/15 53%	3/11 27%
Aggression	2/7 **29%**	4/14 29%	1/1 100%	0/4 0%	2/18 11%	3/4 75%	1/2 50%	1/15 7%	1/11 9%
Play interrupted	1/7 14%	1/14 7%	0/1 0%	0/4 0%	0/18 0%	0/4 0%	0/2 0%	2/15 13%	1/11 9%
Other (sick, scared)	1/7 14%	2/14 14%	0/1 0%	1/4 25%	3/18 %	0/4 0%	0/2 0%	1/15 7%	2/11 19%

6.36 Sadness Remarks

6.361 Research Question 27 (Theme 1)

What did young children say to someone who was sad?

The majority of children, in each test time, indicated that they would cheer up or comfort their peers. Childrer stated that they would say: "cheer up" or would use words which would comfort *(You can play with me. What's wrong and I'll take their hand and play with them. Do you want to do something?)* Some said they would just give their peer a cuddle. *(I'd cuddle him. Say come on and put your arm around them. Give them a cuddle and a tissue as well to blow their nose. Hug them).* Some children even said that they would say "sorry."

Other children indicated that they would leave the sad peer alone and say nothing. *(Say nothing. I'd probably just leave them alone. Get your tears off you (I don't like them) I'd block my ears.)* Some of the answers given as "other" were: *"Why are you crying?" "I don't know." "I always forget what I have to say." "I'll tell the teacher." "Anything." "If Matthew pushed them over. "Don't do that'."*

Table 6.29 Statements Made to a Sad Person

What is said about sad peers	Pre test (n=94)		Post test (n=94)		Delayed post test (n=94)	
Cheer up	17/94	18%	15/94	16%	19/94	20%
Comfort	25/94	27%	33/94	35%	40/94	43%
Avoid	11/94	12%	20/94	22%	8/94	9%
Sorry	6/94	6%	7/94	7%	7/94	7%
Cuddle	7/94	7%	5/94	5%	0/94	0%
Other	28/94	30%	14/94	15%	20/94	21%

6.362 Research Question 28 (Theme 1)

Was there any difference between males and females in what was said to someone who was sad?

Table 6.30 displays percentages of responses to the question regarding what is said to a sad person. Males and females approached sadness in a different way. Males (22%-31%-18%) stated that they would say nothing or avoid a sad person, as compared to females (2%-14%-2%).

Table 6.30 Statements Made to a Sad Person by Gender

What is said to someone who is sad	Pre test		Post test		Delayed Post test	
	Males (n=45)	Females (n=49)	Males (n=45)	Females (n=49)	Males (n=45)	Females (n=49)
Cheer up	9/45 20%	8/49 16%	8/45 18%	7/49 14%	10/45 22%	9/49 19%
Comfort	8/45 18%	17/49 **35%**	9/45 20%	24/49 **49%**	10/45 22%	30/49 **61%**
Avoid	10/45 **22%**	1/49 2%	14/45 **31%**	7/49 14%	8/45 **18%**	1/49 2%
Sorry	4/45 9%	2/49 4%	6/45 13%	1/49 2%	6/45 13%	1/49 2%
Cuddle	3/45 7%	4/49 8%	1/45 2%	4/49 8%	0/45 0%	0/49 0%
Other	11/45 24%	17/49 35%	7/45 16%	6/49 13%	11/45 23%	8/49 16%

Some examples of the responses were: Don't *like sad people. Nothing and go away. Leave him alone.*

A slightly larger percentage of males compared to females stated they would say the words "cheer up." Females stated that they would comfort peers who were sad (35% at the pre test, 49% at post test , and 61% at the delayed post test). Some of the responses for this category were: *Come and join in. I'll fix you up - if they hurt their knee.* It may be assumed that, as females develop, verbal comforting becomes a socially acceptable behaviour. It should be noted however that the category "cuddle" declines in percentage over time

and may not be an acceptable response. See Table 6.28 for a comparison between females and males at the three test times.

6.363 Research Question 29 (Theme 1)

Was there any difference between the Intervention and the Non-Intervention Group, in what was said to someone who was sad?

It is apparent from Table 6.31 that a larger percentage of children from the Intervention Group comforted peers (pre-29%, post-38%, delayed post-53%), compared to the Non-Intervention Group (pre-24%, post-33%, delayed post-33%). This may have been a consequence of the intervention program which promoted supporting peers. The majority of children who comforted peers were females (see discussion of Research Question 28).

Table 6.31 Statements Made to a Sad Person by Different Groups

What is said to someone who is sad	Pre test		Post test		Delayed Post test	
	IG (n=45)	NIG (n=49)	IG (n=45)	NIG (n=49)	IG (n=45)	NIG (n=49)
Cheer up	6/45 13%	11/49 23%	5/45 11%	10/49 20%	5/45 11%	14/49 29%
Comfort	13/45 **29%**	12/49 24%	17/45 **38%**	16/49 33%	24/45 **53%**	16/49 33%
Avoid	4/45 9%	7/49 14%	10/45 22%	11/49 22%	4/45 8%	5/49 10%
Sorry	3/45 7%	2/49 4%	2/45 4%	5/49 10%	2/45 4%	5/49 10%
Cuddle	2/45 4%	6/49 12%	3/45 7%	2/49 4%	0/45 0%	0/49 0%
Other	17/45 38%	11/49 23%	8/45 18%	5/49 11%	11/45 24%	9/49 18%

A slightly greater percentage of children from the Non-Intervention Group stated that they would say "cheer up" to a sad peer over the three test times (23%- 29% for NIG and 11%- 20% for IG).

A slightly higher percentage of 'other" responses were given by the Non-Intervention Group also. *(I don't know. Anything. No answer)* In the Intervention Group, a larger number of miscellaneous answers resulted and were different to those of the Non-Intervention Group. *(Don't hurt people. I'd be happy and start playing with them. Stop crying. Calm down. I'd go and tell the teacher.)* The latter statements indicate more elaborate knowledge about what to say.

6.364 Research Question 30 (Theme 1)

Was there any difference between the high and low status group in what was said to someone who was sad?

Table 6.32 presents the percentages of responses given by high and low status children. It is evident that high status children comfort others (37%-48%-58%) and the proportion increases with time. This indicates that comforting is more acceptable behaviour to the peer group. As was discussed earlier higher proportions of females comfort others. Hence, most of these high status children were female (7/9 at the pre test; 7/8 at the post test; and 11/14 at the delayed post test).

Table 6.32 Statements Made to a Sad Person by Children of Various Sociometric Status

What is said to someone who is sad	Pre test		Post test		Delayed Post test	
	High (n=19)	Low (n=32)	High (n=19)	Low (n=24)	High (n=24)	Low (n=25)
Cheer up	5/19 26%	3/32 9%	5/19 26%	1/24 4%	3/24 13%	5/25 20%
Comfort	7/19 **37%**	4/32 13%	8/19 **42%**	6/24 25%	14/24 **58%**	6/25 24%
Avoid	0/19 0%	7/32 **22%**	3/19 16%	9/24 **37%**	0/24 0%	5/25 **20%**
Sorry	2/19 11%	1/32 3%	1/19 5%	3/24 13%	2/24 8%	3/25 12%
Cuddle	0/19 0%	6/32 19%	0/19 0%	1/24 4%	0/24 0%	1/25 4%
Other	5/19 26%	11/32 34%	2/19 11%	4/24 17%	5/24 21%	5/25 20%

There was a higher proportion of low status children (22%-37%-20%) than high status children (0%-16%-0%) who avoided sad peers. As was discussed earlier, a large proportion of males indicated that they responded in this manner to sadness. At the time of the pre test 3/7 were males. At the time of the post test 2/9 were males. At the time of the delayed post test 0/5 were males. Hence, most children with low status who said nothing or avoided sad peers were actually females. Hence, this may contribute to their low status because this is not an acceptable response from females.

6.365 Research Question 31 (Theme 1)

Was there any difference between the high and low status group, in what was said to someone who was sad?

There was an increase in comforting behaviour with age. A higher percentage of children stated they would comfort sad peers at each test time. This comforting behaviour is related to empathy. Hence, as young children grow older, their ability to empathise increases (see Table 6.33).

On the other hand, avoiding or not comforting decreased with an increase in age in the pre test and the post test. At the delayed post test 2/4 had low status and the other 2/4 had average status.

Table 6.33 What Different Ages Say to a Sad Person

Age	Pre test			Post test			Delayed Post test		
	Under 4 yrs n=28	4-5 yrs n=63	Over 5 yrs n=3	Under 4 yrs n=16	4-5 yrs n=65	Over 5 yrs n=13	Under 4 yrs n=8	4-5 yrs n=56	Over 5 yrs n=30
Cheer up	5/28 18%	11/63 17%	1/3 33%	3/16 19%	10/65 15%	2/13 15%	2/8 25%	12/56 21%	5/30 17%
Comfort	6/28 21%	18/63 28%	1/3 33%	3/16 19%	24/65 37%	6/13 46%	3/8 37%	22/56 39%	15/30 50%
Avoid	4/28 15%	7/63 11%	0/3 0%	5/16 31%	15/65 23%	1/13 8%	1/8 13%	4/56 7%	4/30 13%
Sorry	2/28 7%	3/63 5%	0/3 0%	1/16 6%	5/65 8%	1/13 8%	1/8 13%	6/56 11%	0/30 0%
Cuddle	1/28 4%	6/63 10%	1/3 34%	1/16 6%	3/65 5%	1/13 8%	0/8 0%	0/56 0%	1/30 3%
Other	6/28 21%	18/63 29%	0/3 0%	3/16 19%	8/65 12%	2/13 15%	1/8 12%	12/56 22%	5/30 17%

6.37 Joining Play

6.371 Research Question 32 (Theme 1)

Was there a difference in how children stated they would join a group in play?

The percentage of responses are contained in Table 6.34. The majority of children during the pre test (52%) and post test (52%) indicated that when joining a group, they would begin immediately to play with their peers without asking first. *(Just join in. Go and play with them.)* By the time of the delayed post test, only 28% of children indicated that they would join play without asking. However, at the delayed post test, many of those (43% compared to 14% at pre test and 23% at post test) indicated that they would ask first before

they joined play. *(I would just ask them. I would say please could I play in the sandpit with you .Can I join you and then just go in.)* Hence it can be assumed that it was acceptable to ask first before joining in play.

Many children indicated that it was important to play the same game as their peers. *(Play what they are playing. Play the same game.)* Some children were aware that they must watch the play before joining in. *(Watch. Do nothing).* Others claimed they would help. *(I'll help them make a big sandcastle if they can't. I'd help them. Get a shovel and help them.)* These responses showed an awareness that they must engage in play in a connected manner.

Table 6.34 Joining Play

	Pre test (n=94)		Post test (n=94)		Delayed post test (n=94)	
Ask	13/94	**14%**	21/94	**23%**	40/94	**43%**
Play only	49/94	**52%**	49/94	**52%**	26/94	**28%**
Help	1/94	1%	1/94	1%	3/94	3%
Discuss rejection	6/94	6%	3/94	3%	4/94	4%
Offer fun idea	11/94	12%	11/94	12%	6/94	6%
Watch	3/94	3%	3/94	3%	4/94	4%
Combination	2/94	2%	1/94	1%	4/94	4%
Other	9/94	10%	5/94	5%	7/94	8%

Some children gave a combination of the above categories in their response. *(Go and play with you and I'd pull a funny face and that means I want to play with them. I'd watch them for a bit and then ask to play.)* Some children indicated that they would offer a fun idea for play. *(Dig for treasure. I will make a castle and put sugar on it . Dig some holes and a tunnel. I'd climb out of it. I'd make something like a chocolate cake for your birthday. Think of an idea.)* Others indicated that they are not always allowed to join in play. *(If I join her she will be angry. They won't let me. Everytime I go and play with them they tell me to go away so I do and I play with someone else. Some people don't let me play.)* The category "other" comprised miscellaneous responses such as *"Get in the sand pit and play a different game"; "Don't know." "Creep near them and tap him (on shoulder)" "I'd ask them no questions." " Say hello."*

6.3.7.2 Research Question 33 (Theme 1)

Was there a difference in how males and females stated they would join a group in play?

A higher percentage of females compared to males asked before joining in play, at each of the three test times. (Males - 9%, 9%, 24%; females -19%, 35%, 59% at pre, post and delayed post test time respectively). This indicates that females, especially high status females, are more aware of asking about joining play. (See the results of Research Questions 35 and 36). See Tables 6.35, 6.36, 6.37 and 6.38 for percentages of responses. With an increase in asking to play, came a decline in the response of immediately beginning to play when joining in.

Table 6.35 Joining Play and Gender

Responses	Pre test		Post test		Delayed Post test	
	Males (n=45)	Females (n=49)	Males (n=45)	Females (n=49)	Males (n=45)	Females (n=49)
Ask	4/45 9%	9/49 19%	4/45 9%	17/49 35%	11/45 24%	29/49 59%
Play only	23/45 51%	26/49 53%	28/45 62%	21/49 43%	14/45 31%	12/49 25%
Help	1/45 2%	0/49 0%	0/45 0%	1/49 2%	3/45 7%	0/49 0%
Discuss rejection	3/45 7%	3/49 6%	0/45 0%	3/49 6%	4/45 9%	0/49 0%
Offer fun idea	7/45 16%	4/49 8%	7/45 16%	4/49 8%	3/45 7%	3/49 6%
Watch	1/45 2%	2/49 4%	2/45 4%	1/49 2%	1/45 2%	3/49 6%
Combination	2/45 4%	0/49 0%	0/45 0%	1/49 2%	3/45 7%	1/49 2%
Other	4/45 9%	5/49 10%	4/45 9%	1/49 2%	6/45 13%	1/49 2%

More males than females tended to propose fun ideas. Proposing fun ideas can be risky because it may be looked on as joining in play in a disconnected manner, which is not acceptable. Hence, proposing a fun idea by males declined in number by the delayed post test time.

6.373 Research Question 34 (Theme 1)

Was there a difference between how children in the Intervention Group and the Non-Intervention Group stated they would join in play?

Table 6.36 shows the percentages of responses given by the children. A larger percentage of children in the Intervention Group at the post test (36% compared to 10% in the NIG) were conscious of asking before joining a group. At the delayed post test, a large percentage of children from both groups were asking before joining in, 51% from the Intervention Group compared to 35% from the Non-Intervention Group. Again in both groups, there was a decline in "joining in" without asking. No other patterns were evident.

Table 6.36 Joining Play and Groups

	Pre test		Post test		Delayed Post test	
	IG (n=45)	NIG (n=49)	IG (n=45)	NIG (n=49)	IG (n=45)	NIG (n=49)
Ask	6/45 13%	7/49 14%	16/45 **36%**	5/49 10%	23/45 **51%**	17/49 35%
Play only	26/45 58%	23/49 47%	22/45 49%	27/49 55%	10/45 22%	16/49 33%
Help	0/45 0%	1/49 2%	1/45 2%	0/49 0%	2/45 4%	1/49 2%
Discuss rejection	4/45 9%	2/49 4%	1/45 2%	2/49 4%	2/45 4%	2/49 4%
Offer fun idea	3/45 7%	8/49 17%	3/45 7%	8/49 17%	3/45 7%	3/49 6%
Watch	2/45 4%	1/49 2%	0/45 0%	3/49 6%	2/45 4%	2/49 4%
Combination	1/45 2%	1/49 2%	1/49 2%	0/49 0%	3/45 8%	1/49 2%
Other	3/45 7%	6/49 12%	1/45 2%	4/49 8%	0/45 0%	7/49 14%

6.374 Research Question 35 (Theme 1)

Was there a difference in how children with high and low sociometric status stated they would join a group in play?

As was mentioned in the previous research question, there was an increase over time, in asking permission to play before joining in. Similarly, there was a decrease in joining in without asking, in both status groups. The increase was more evident in children with high sociometric status especially after the post test and the delayed post test (42% and 54% respectively as listed in Table 6.37). In children with low status, there was an increase over time but the percentages are lower (16% to 2[illegible]% to 36% over the three test times). It may

be assumed that high status children are more sensitive to the rules and put them into practice earlier than low status children.

Table 6.37 Joining Play and Sociometric Status

	Pre test		Post test		Delayed Post test	
	High (n=19)	Low (n=32)	High (n=19)	Low (n=24)	High (n=24)	Low (n=25)
Ask	2/19 11%	5/32 16%	8/19 42%	5/24 **21%**	13/24 54%	9/25 **36%**
Play only	13/19 **68%**	18/32 56%	8/19 **42%**	13/24 54%	6/24 **25%**	8/25 32%
Help	0/19 0%	0/32 0%	0/19 0%	0/24 0%	1/24 4%	0/25 0%
Discuss rejection	1/19 5%	3/32 9%	0/19 0%	1/24 4%	1/24 4%	2/25 8%
Offer fun idea	0/19 0%	3/32 9%	2/19 11%	4/24 17%	0/24 0%	1/25 4%
Watch	0/19 0%	1/32 3%	0/19 0%	0/24 0%	1/24 4%	1/25 4%
Combination	0/19 0%	0/32 0%	0/19 0%	0/24 0%	0/24 0%	2/25 8%
Other	3/19 16%	2/32 7%	1/19 5%	1/24 4%	2/24 9%	2/25 8%

Children who discussed rejection were predominantly from the low status group. The reason is obvious, that is, children who have low sociometric status are rejected more often. Hence, when joining in there may be an expectation to be rejected.

Offering a fun idea for play was more predominant in children with low status, which was not expected by the researcher. Perhaps offering a fun idea may appear in the same light as suggesting ideas which are disconnected from the play theme. In other words, it is seen as not acceptable.

6.375 Research Question 36 (Theme 1)

Was there a difference in how children of various age groups stated they would join a group in play?

Over the test times, there was an increase in the number of children asking to join in play, especially for the "4-5 years group" (17% - 26% - 41%) and the "over 5 years group" (0% - 23% - 54%). There was a decrease over time with all age groups entering a group by immediately commencing to play (from approximately 50% to 25%). Percentages are shown in Table 6.38 below.

More children in the under 4 years age group (approximately 7%) and 4-5 years (7%) talked of rejection than in the over 5 years (0%), especially in the pre test and the post test. No other consistent patterns were evident.

Table 6.38 Joining Play and Age

	Pre test			Post test			Delayed Post test		
Age	Under 4 yrs n=28	4-5 yrs n=63	Over 5 yrs n=3	Under 4 yrs n=16	4-5 yrs n=65	Over 5 yrs n=13	Under 4 yrs n=8	4-5 yrs n=56	Over 5 yrs n=30
Ask	2/28 7%	11/63 **17%**	0/3 **0%**	1/16 6%	17/65 **26%**	3/13 **23%**	1/8 12%	23/56 **41%**	16/30 **54%**
Play only	14/28 **50%**	33/63 **52%**	2/3 **67%**	9/16 **56%**	34/65 **52%**	6/13 **46%**	2/8 **25%**	15/56 **27%**	9/30 **30%**
Help	0/28 0%	1/63 2%	0/3 0%	0/16 0%	0/65 0%	1/13 8%	0/8 0%	1/56 2%	2/30 7%
Discuss rejection	2/28 **7%**	4/63 **7%**	0/3 0%	1/16 **6%**	2/65 **3%**	0/13 0%	0/8 0%	4/56 7%	0/30 0%
Offer fun idea	5/28 18%	5/63 8%	1/3 33%	2/16 13%	6/65 9%	3/13 23%	1/8 13%	5/56 9%	0/30 0%
Watch	1/28 18%	2/63 3%	0/3 0%	0/16 0%	3/65 5%	0/13 0%	1/8 12%	2/56 3%	1/30 3%
Combination	0/28 0%	2/63 3%	0/3 0%	0/16 0%	1/65 2%	0/13 0%	1/8 13%	2/56 4%	1/30 3%
Other	4/28 14%	5/63 8%	0/3 0%	3/16 19%	2/65 3%	0/13 0%	2/8 25%	4/56 7%	1/30 3%

6.38 Self Attributes

6.381 Research Question 37 (Theme 1)

What did young children think they did best?

The responses given by the children varied widely. Some children mentioned that they were best at helping (*Helping at home or school. I pick up blocks when the children are finished with them here when it's pack up time. Helping mummy tidy my bedroom, pour my own juice, make my own breakfast. Wrapping up presents.*) Some mentioned they played best (*Playing with blocks, playing with friends. Playing.*) and others indicated that they were best at making things (*I'm good at making stuff like paper and wood knives. Building with nails and hammers. Making necklaces, playing with play dough. Making things.)*

Others stated that they were good at performing activities associated with school such as puzzles, books, drawing, writing their name, cutting, doing homework, reading stories, numbers, glueing, etc. Some children thought they were good at sport (*Jumping on the trampoline. Swimming, soccer training. Playing football. Good at doing this (balancing). Jumping, skipping.*)

Another category was formed called "other things" which contained responses which would not fit any of the listed categories. (*I'm good at flying off a hill. Clowns tricks (juggle). Being happy. No answer. Tie my shoes. Eating. Being brave.*) Many children gave a combination of categories. (*Cricket, playing in the sandpit, puzzles. Playing games, hopping, happy with capes.*) The most frequent responses concerned play, making things or a combination of categories.

Table 6.39 Self Attributes

	Pre test (n=94)		Post test (n=94)		Delayed post test (n=94)	
Helping	8/94	**8%**	3/94	**3%**	11/94	**12%**
Playing	25/94	**27%**	22/94	**23%**	17/94	**19%**
Combination	27/94	29%	22/94	23%	16/94	17%
Not good at things	0/94	0%	6/94	6%	1/94	1%
Everything	3/94	3%	7/94	7%	4/94	4%
Making things	11/94	12%	10/94	12%	9/94	9%
School activities	10/94	11%	10/94	12%	9/94	9%
Sport	6/94	6%	8/94	8%	12/94	13%
Other	4/94	4%	6/94	6%	15/94	16%

Some children thought they were good at everything (*I'm good at everything. Lots of things. Nearly everything. Everything.*) while others thought they were not good at many things (*Good at nothing. Nothing. Sometimes I can't.*)

It is perceived by the researcher that what young children envisage they do best, especially females, are the types of activities that the children believe would please adults or the activities from which they receive reinforcement or praise from adults.

6.382 Research Question 38 (Theme 1)

Was there a gender difference in what young children thought that they did best?

It was expected that males may perceive that they were good at sport and girls would perceive they were better at academic activities. This expectation came from the researcher's observations that most girls tend to spend more time inside doing school type activities, whereas many males appear to spend more time engaging in physical activity in the playground.

In the pre test and the post test, a larger proportion of males (33% and 27% respectively) viewed themselves as being proficient at playing as compared to

females (20% and 20%). Perhaps male play is more physical and was perceived by the researcher as sport rather than play.

In the post test and the delayed post test, a slightly larger percentage of females viewed themselves as being more proficient at academic activities (14% and 12% of females at post test and delayed post test respectively, as compared to 7% of males at those test times). However, a similar percentage of males and females perceived themselves as being good at sport or physical activity. No other consistent patterns are evident from the information presented in Table 6.40.

Table 6.40 Self Attributes and Gender

Time	Pre test		Post test		Delayed Post test	
Sex	Males (n=45)	Females (n=49)	Males (n=45)	Females (n=49)	Males (n=45)	Females (n=49)
Helping	5/45 11%	3/49 6%	1/45 2%	2/49 4%	6/45 13%	5/49 10%
Playing	15/45 **33%**	10/49 20%	12/45 **27%**	10/49 20%	7/45 16%	10/49 20%
Combination	13/45 30%	14/49 29%	11/45 24%	11/49 24%	5/45 11%	11/49 22%
Not good at things	0/45 0%	0/49 0%	3/45 7%	3/49 6%	1/45 2%	0/49 0%
Everything	2/45 4%	1/49 2%	4/45 9%	3/49 6%	3/45 7%	1/49 2%
Making things	4/45 9%	7/49 15%	5/45 11%	5/49 10%	4/45 9%	5/49 10%
School activities	5/45 11%	5/49 10%	3/45 7%	7/49 **14%**	3/45 7%	6/49 **12%**
Sport	1/45 2%	5/49 10%	4/45 9%	4/49 8%	6/45 13%	6/49 12%
Other	0/45 0%	4/49 8%	2/45 4%	4/49 8%	10/45 22%	5/49 10%

6.383 Research Question 39 (Theme 1)

Was there a difference between the Intervention and the Non-Intervention Group in what young children thought that they did best?

The only apparent difference between the Intervention Group and the Non-Intervention Group occurred in the responses that are categorised as "school activities." A slightly larger percentage of children from the Non-Intervention Group, at the three test times, (12%, 12% and 10% as compared to 9%, 9% and 9% from the Intervention Group) stated that they were good at school type activities (see Table 6.41). This may have resulted from more emphasis being placed on doing tasks in this group (See discussion of case studies in

Research Theme 4). Hence as was mentioned earlier if children perceive adults want them to be good a certain tasks and reinforce this, they will mention that these tasks are the ones that they do best.

Table 6.41 Self Attributes and Groups

	Pre test		Post test		Delayed Post test	
	IG (n=45)	NIG (n=49)	IG (n=45)	NIG (n=49)	IG (n=45)	NIG (n=49)
Helping	3/45 7%	5/49 10%	2/45 4%	1/49 2%	7/45 16%	4/49 8%
Playing	13/45 29%	11/49 22%	10/45 22%	11/49 23%	8/45 18%	9/49 18%
Combination	13/45 28%	15/49 31%	10/45 22%	13/49 27%	10/45 22%	6/49 12%
Not good at things	0/45 0%	0/49 0%	3/45 7%	3/49 6%	0/45 0%	1/49 2%
Everything	3/45 7%	0/49 0%	3/45 7%	4/49 8%	2/45 4%	2/49 4%
Making things	4/45 9%	7/49 15%	7/45 16%	3/49 6%	4/45 9%	5/49 11%
School activities	4/45 9%	6/49 12%	4/45 9%	6/49 12%	4/45 9%	5/49 10%
Sport	3/45 7%	3/49 6%	4/45 9%	4/49 8%	6/45 13%	6/49 12%
Other	2/45 4%	2/49 4%	2/45 4%	4/49 8%	4/45 9%	11/49 23%

6.384 Research Question 40 (Theme 1)

Was there a difference between high and low sociometric status, in what young children thought that they did best ?

Response categories are listed in Table 6.42 and show sociometric status differences. More children with high sociometric status perceived that they were good at playing, over the three test times (42% - 32% - 17%) as compared to children of low sociometric status (15% - 0% - 16%). There was a decline with time, in this perception, probably due to the awareness of an increasingly more complex self perception of which play was less important to adults.

Over the three test times, more children with high status (16%-21%-21%) perceived that they were good at sport than children with low status (3%-8%-4%). Again this may be due to an awareness and appreciation of more facets of the self.

Table 6.42 Self Attributes and Sociometric Status

	Pre test		Post test		Delayed Post test	
	High (n=19)	Low (n=32)	High (n=19)	Low (n=24)	High (n=24)	Low (n=25)
Helping	1/19 5%	4/32 13%	0/19 0%	0/24 0%	4/24 17%	2/25 8%
Playing	8/19 **42%**	5/32 15%	6/19 **32%**	0/24 0%	4/24 **17%**	4/25 16%
Combination	3/19 16%	6/32 19%	3/19 16%	5/24 21%	6/24 25%	5/25 20%
Not good at things	0/19 0%	0/32 0%	3/19 16%	2/24 8%	0/24 0%	1/25 4%
Everything	0/19 0%	1/32 **3%**	1/19 5%	4/24 **17%**	0/24 0%	1/25 **4%**
Making things	2/19 11%	6/32 **19%**	1/19 5%	5/24 **21%**	1/24 4%	5/25 **20%**
School activities	1/19 5%	8/32 **23%**	0/19 0%	3/24 **12%**	2/24 8%	3/25 **12%**
Sport	3/19 **16%**	1/32 3%	4/19 **21%**	2/24 8%	5/24 **21%**	1/25 4%
Other	1/19 5%	1/32 3%	1/19 5%	3/24 13%	2/24 8%	3/25 12%

Children with low sociometric status perceived themselves as being good at academic activities, making things or being good at everything. Although the percentage of children who perceived they are good at everything was small (3%-17%), it was larger than those with high sociometric status (0%-6%). A larger percentage of children with low sociometric status perceived that they were good at making things (19%-21%-20%) as compared to children with high status (8%-6%-4%). Low status children also believed that they were best at school type activities (23%-12%-12%) whereas children with high status expressed this less (5%- 0%-8%).

6.385 Research Question 41 (Theme 1)

Was there a difference between age groups and what young children thought that they did best ?

Table 6.43 shows the percentage of responses to the question of self attributes. All age groups perceived themselves as being good at playing or a combination of things especially in the pre test. A slightly larger percentage of children in the Under 4 years group (18%-13%-12%) perceived that they were good at school type activities as compared to the 4-5 years group (7%-11%-11%) and the Over 5 years group (0%-8%-7%). The reason may be related again to the structure of the preschool environment which helps to improve their self esteem.

Table 6.43 Self Attributes and Age

	Pre test			Post test			Delayed Post test		
Age	Under 4 yrs n=28	4-5 yrs n=63	Over 5 yrs n=3	Under 4 yrs n=16	4-5 yrs n=65	Over 5 yrs n=13	Under 4 yrs n=8	4-5 yrs n=56	Over 5 yrs n=30
Helping	3/28 11%	4/63 6%	1/3 33%	0/16 0%	2/65 3%	1/13 8%	2/8 25%	6/56 11%	3/30 10%
Playing only	6/28 **22%**	17/63 **27%**	1/3 **33%**	3/16 19%	16/65 25%	2/13 14%	2/8 25%	9/56 16%	6/30 20%
Combination	7/28 **25%**	20/63 **33%**	1/3 **34%**	5/16 31%	15/65 23%	3/13 23%	2/8 25%	8/56 14%	6/30 21%
Not good at things	0/28 0%	0/63 0%	0/3 0%	1/16 6%	4/65 6%	1/13 8%	0/8 0%	1/56 2%	0/30 0%
Everything	1/28 3%	2/63 3%	0/3 0%	0/16 0%	6/65 9%	1/13 8%	0/8 0%	1/56 2%	3/30 10%
Making things	2/28 7%	9/63 14%	0/3 0%	1/16 6%	9/65 14%	0/13 0%	0/8 0%	5/56 9%	4/30 13%
Academic (school activities)	5/28 **18%**	5/63 7%	0/3 0%	2/16 **13%**	7/65 11%	1/13 8%	1/8 **12%**	6/56 11%	2/30 7%
Sport	1/28 3%	5/63 8%	0/3 0%	1/16 6%	4/65 6%	3/13 23%	0/8 0%	8/56 14%	4/30 13%
Other	3/28 11%	1/63 2%	0/3 0%	3/16 19%	2/65 3%	1/13 8%	1/8 13%	12/56 21%	2/30 7%

6.39 Intentions (Accidental)

6.391 Research Question 42 (Theme 1)

How did young children say they would feel regarding another child knocking over his/her tower accidentally?

Most children in the pre, post and delayed post test times (37%- 60%-60% respectively) indicated that they would feel sad (*A little bit sad. I'd be very sad. Sad. Sad and just build it back up again*). Some (33%-28%-22%) said they would feel happy (*I'd say that's OK. If they're my friends I'm happy. I wouldn't care, build it again. Not angry, just build it again and just talk to them and say watch where you walk. Good*). Others (14%-10%-13%) indicated that they feel upset or angry (*Angry. Cranky. Cross. Build it again but I feel mad*).

Some children expressed combinations of feelings (*A bit sad and cross. Cross and sad*) or gave other responses (*Not very good. Say sorry. I wouldn't do anything. Nothing. I'd feel sick*). Percentages of responses are shown in Table 6.44. Children indicated that they felt a loss when their tower was knocked down and so the feeling of sadness.

Table 6.44 Responses to Feelings about Accidents

Accident	Pre test (n=94)		Post test (n=94)		delayed post test (n=94)	
Sad	35/94	37%	57/94	60%	56/94	60%
Happy	31/94	33%	26/94	28%	21/94	22%
Angry	13/94	14%	9/94	10%	12/94	13%
Other	15/94	16%	2/94	2%	5/94	5%

6.392 Research Question 43 (Theme 1)

How did each gender say they would react to knocking over a tower accidentally?

Table 6.45 indicates the proportion of responses given. A larger percentage of females indicated feelings of sadness over the pre, post and delayed post test times (45%-71%-67% respectively) than males (34%-49%-51%). A larger proportion of males identified feelings of anger especially in the post and delayed post test (13%-18%) as compared to females (7%-8%). Those who identify feelings of anger may not be able to discriminate the intention of the person knocking over the tower. Discrimination of intention may occur later for these children.

Table 6.45 Gender Responses to an Accident

Accident	Pre test		Post test		Delayed Post test	
	Males (n=45)	Females (n=49)	Males (n=45)	Females (n=49)	Males (n=45)	Females (n=49)
Sad	15/45 34%	20/49 **45%**	22/45 49%	35/49 **71%**	23/45 51%	33/49 **67%**
Happy	18/45 40%	13/49 29%	15/45 33%	11/49 22%	10/45 22%	11/49 23%
Angry	6/45 **13%**	7/49 16%	6/45 **13%**	3/49 7%	8/45 **18%**	4/49 8%
Other	6/45 13%	9/49 20%	2/45 5%	0/49 0%	4/45 9%	1/49 2%

6.393 Research Question 44 (Theme 1)

Did the Intervention and Non-Intervention Group differ in how they said they would react to an accidental knocking over of a tower?

A larger proportion of children from the Intervention Group (42%-71%-71% at pre post and delayed post test respectively) identified feelings of sadness associated with having a tower knocked down than those from the Non-Intervention Group (33%-51%-49%). A slightly larger proportion of children expressed anger in the Non-Intervention Group (16%-10%-16% over the three

test times) than those in the Intervention Group (11%-9%-9%). Proportions of responses are set out in Table 6.46.

The Intervention Group's program may account for the difference because identifying feelings and discussion about what to do when a tower is knocked down was discussed.

Table 6.46 Group Responses to an Accident

	Pre test		Post test		Delayed Post test	
	IG (n=45)	NIG (n=49)	IG (n=45)	NIG (n=49)	IG (n=45)	NIG (n=49)
Sad	19/45 **42%**	16/49 33%	32/45 **71%**	25/49 51%	32/45 **71%**	24/49 49%
Happy	17/45 38%	14/49 29%	9/45 20%	17/49 35%	8/45 18%	13/49 27%
Angry	5/45 11%	8/49 **16%**	4/45 9%	5/49 **10%**	4/45 9%	8/49 **16%**
Other	4/45 9%	11/49 22%	0/45 0%	2/49 4%	1/45 2%	4/49 8%

6.394 Research Question 45 (Theme 1)

How did children of high and low sociometric status differ in how they said they would react to an accidental knocking over of a tower?

A larger proportion of children with high sociometric status identified feelings of sadness over the three test times (43%-79%-88%) than children with low status (34%-42%-44%). Percentages of responses are listed in Table 6.47. Most of the females with high status are from the Intervention Group (6/7 pre; 8/9 post; 14/16 delayed post). It would appear that in this group appropriate feelings are identified. However, most of the high status males who identified feelings of sadness are from the Non-Intervention Group.

Table 6.47 Responses to an Accident and Sociometric Status

	Pre test		Post test		Delayed Post test	
	High (n=19)	Low (n=32)	High (n=19)	Low (n=24)	High (n=24)	Low (n=25)
Sad	8/19 **42%**	11/32 34%	15/19 **79%**	10/24 42%	21/24 **88%**	11/25 44%
Happy	5/19 26%	12/32 37%	4/19 21%	10/24 42%	0/24 0%	9/25 36%
Angry	4/19 21%	5/32 16%	0/19 0%	3/24 **12%**	2/24 8%	3/25 **12%**
Other	2/19 11%	4/32 13%	0/19 0%	1/24 4%	1/24 4%	2/25 8%

Again a slightly larger proportion of low status children identified feelings of anger especially at the post test and delayed post test. The reason may be that many children with low status are immature, that is, they are not aware of the intentions of others.

6.395 Research Question 46 (Theme 1)

Did various age groups differ in how they said they would react to knocking over of a tower accidentally?

Over time, the proportion of children who identified feelings of sadness as a result of having a tower knocked over accidentally increased, especially for the Under 4 years group children (25%-50%-63%) and the Over 5 years group children (33%-46%-54%) (see Table 6.48 for proportions of responses). Identifying feelings of happiness decreased over time especially in the Over 5 years group(34%-31%-23%) and the 4-5 years group (38%-26%-25%). This decrease may correspond to the increase in identifying feelings of sadness.

Table 6.48 Responses to an Accident and Age

Age	Pre test			Post test			Delayed Post test		
	Under 4 yrs n=28	4-5 yrs n=63	Over 5 yrs n=3	Under 4 yrs n=16	4-5 yrs n=65	Over 5 yrs n=13	Under 4 yrs n=8	4-5 yrs n=56	Over 5 yrs n=30
Sad	7/28 **25%**	25/63 40%	1/3 **33%**	8/16 **50%**	41/65 63%	6/13 **46%**	5/8 **63%**	33/56 59%	16/30 **54%**
Happy	9/28 32%	24/63 **38%**	1/3 **34%**	7/16 44%	17/65 **26%**	4/13 **31%**	2/8 25%	14/56 **25%**	7/30 **23%**
Angry	5/28 18%	7/63 11%	1/3 33%	1/16 6%	7/65 11%	1/13 8%	1/8 12%	5/56 9%	6/30 20%
Other	7/28 25%	7/63 11%	0/3 0%	0/16 0%	0/65 0%	2/13 15%	0/8 0%	4/56 7%	1/30 3%

6.310 A Transgression

6.3101 Research Question 47 (Theme 1)

How did young children feel regarding a transgression?

Most children indicated that they would feel sad *(I would cry (sad). Real sad. Very sad. Want them to say sorry to me)* . Some stated that they would feel happy and gave reasons. (*I would just smile and build it up again Happy cause it's like a game. Good. I might just build it again and they would help me*). Many indicated that they would feel angry. *(I'd get angry at them. Tell on them and feel angry. Cross. I'd go to bed and throw everything. Cranky. Very*

annoyed. Grumpy and I'd punch them. Very mad). Some indicated that they would have mixed feelings *(Really cross and really upset. Upset and angry)*; while others mentioned they would tell an adult *(Go and tell the teacher. Tell on them. I'd tell Mrs. Wolfer and feel sad)*. Other category mentioned being sorry *(They'll say sorry. They'd be sorry)* and a few did not know how they would feel. The majority of children feel anger at the person or sadness due to the loss of their tower. Table 6.49 shows the percentage of responses.

Table 6.49 Proportion of Responses to a Transgression

Transgression	Pre test (n=94)		Post test (n=94)		delayed post test (n=94)	
Happy	26/94	**28%**	17/94	**18%**	10/94	**10%**
Sad	41/94	**44%**	49/94	**52%**	54/94	**59%**
Angry	18/94	19%	25/94	27%	24/94	25%
Other	9/94	9%	3/94	3%	6/94	6%

6.3102 Research Question 43 (Theme 1)

Was there a gender difference in how young children stated they would feel as a result of a transgression?

Over the test times, the number of children claiming that they would feel happy as the recipient of a transgression, declined (28%-18%-10% as indicated in Table 6.50). A slightly larger proportion of males indicated a feeling of happiness (33%-22%-9%) as compared to females (23%-14%-10%). Proportions of responses are shown in Table 6.50.

Table 6.50 Gender Responses to a Transgression

	Pre test		Post test		Delayed Post test	
	Males (n=45)	Females (n=49)	Males (n=45)	Females (n=49)	Males (n=45)	Females (n=49)
Happy	15/45 **33%**	11/49 **23%**	10/45 **22%**	7/49 14%	4/45 **9%**	6/49 10%
Sad	18/45 40%	23/49 **47%**	20/45 45%	29/49 **59%**	26/45 58%	28/49 **59%**
Angry	7/45 16%	11/49 **22%**	14/45 31%	11/49 23%	11/45 24%	13/49 27%
Other	5/45 11%	4/49 **8%**	1/45 2%	2/49 4%	4/45 9%	2/49 4%

Over time, there was an increase in the percentage of children who stated that they would feel sad, although the increase was greater for males than females (44%-52%-59% as shown in Table 6.49). A slightly larger percentage of

females (47%-59%-59%) indicated a feeling of sadness than males (40%-45%-58%).

A similar proportion of both females and males indicated anger or another response over each test time.

6.3103 Research Question 4) (Theme 1)

How did the Intervention and Non-Intervention Group differ in how they said would feel as a result of a transgression?

Although in both groups over time there was a decrease in the proportion of children stating that they would feel happy as the recipient of a transgression, the percentage of children from the Non-Intervention Group (31%-27%-12%) was greater than for the Intervention Group (24%-9%-7%). Figures are presented in Table 6.51.

Although the response of feeling happy declined, there was an increase in the proportion of children who indicated feelings of sadness (Intervention Group: 47%-51%-58% and Non-Intervention Group: 41%-53%-59%). Sadness appears to be a more acceptable feeling in the peer group.

Many children stated that they would feel angry. The percentage was slightly larger in the Intervention Group (22%-36%-31%) than in the Non-Intervention Group (16%-18%-21%). Many older children and adults would feel sadness and anger. Hence, an increase in the percentage of children feeling anger and sadness is most likely a developmental trend.

Table 6.51. Responses of Each Group to a Transgression

	Pre test		Post test		Delayed Post test	
	IG (n=45)	NIG (n=49)	IG (n=45)	NIG (n=49)	IG (n=45)	NIG (n=49)
Happy	11/45 24%	15/49 3[illegible]%	4/45 9%	13/49 **27%**	3/45 7%	6/49 **12%**
Sad	21/45 **47%**	20/49 41%	23/45 **51%**	26/49 53%	26/45 **58%**	29/49 59%
Angry	10/45 **22%**	8/49 16%	16/45 **36%**	9/49 18%	14/45 **31%**	10/49 21%
Other	3/45 7%	6/49 12%	2/45 4%	1/49 2%	2/45 4%	4/49 8%

6.3104 Research Question 5) (Theme 1)

Was there a difference in sociometric status and how young children stated they would feel as a result of a transgression?

Percentages of responses of sociometric status are presented in Table 6.52 and show that a larger number of children with low sociometric status (31%-25%-21%) stated that they feel happy, as compared with high status children (21%-11%-4%). Because the decline in the number of happiness responses was greater for high status children than low status children, it could be summarised that feeling happy was inappropriate.

A slightly larger percentage of children with high status anticipated feelings of sadness (47% - 47% - 59%) than children with low status (41% - 46% - 43%).

Table 6.52 Responses of Sociometric Status Group to a Transgression

	Pre test		Post test		Delayed Post test	
	High (n=19)	Low (n=32)	High (n=19)	Low (n=24)	High (n=24)	Low (n=25)
Happy	4/19 21%	10/32 **31%**	3/19 16%	6/24 **25%**	1/24 4%	5/25 **21%**
Sad	9/19 **47%**	13/32 41%	9/19 **47%**	11/24 46%	14/24 **59%**	11/25 43%
Angry	6/19 **32%**	8/32 25%	7/19 **37%**	7/24 29%	6/24 **25%**	8/25 32%
Other	0/19 0%	1/32 3%	0/19 0%	0/24 0%	3/24 12%	1/25 4%

A slightly larger percentage of children predicted feelings of anger in the high status group, especially in the pre and post test (32% - 37%) compared to children with low status (25% - 29%). By the time of the post test, there was a decrease in the percentage of high status children (25%) as compared to low status children (32%). This may result from children knowing that anger should be expressed appropriately, defused, or controlled. This may be confusing and the child may perceive that they are not allowed to feel the emotion.

A similar number of children from each status group predict feelings of sadness and anger. This indicates that these feelings are appropriate.

6.3105 Research Question 51 (Theme 1)

Did various age groups differ in how they said they would feel as a result of a transgression?

For the Under 4 years Group, there was an increase over time in the proportion of children indicating a feeling of sadness due to being the recipient of a transgression (32%-44%-63%). This increase in number indicates a developmental trend.

There was an increase in number of children who stated that they would feel angry as the recipient of a transgression, in each age group, especially in the post and delayed post test. See the percentages listed in Table 6.53.

Table 6.53 Age Responses to a Transgression

Age	Pre test			Post test			Delayed Post test		
	Under 4 yrs n=28	4-5 yrs n=63	Over 5 yrs n=3	Under 4 yrs n=16	4-5 yrs n=65	Over 5 yrs n=13	Under 4 yrs n=8	4-5 yrs n=56	Over 5 yrs n=30
Happy	9/28 32%	17/63 27%	0/3 0%	8/16 50%	41/65 63%	3/13 23%	1/8 12%	7/56 12%	2/30 7%
Sad	9/28 **32%**	30/63 47%	2/3 67%	7/16 **44%**	17/65 26%	4/13 31%	5/8 **63%**	33/56 59%	16/30 53%
Angry	6/28 22%	11/63 18%	1/3 33%	1/16 **6%**	6/65 **9%**	5/13 **38%**	1/8 **12%**	13/56 **23%**	10/30 **33%**
Other	4/28 14%	5/63 8%	0/3 0%	0/16 %	1/65 2%	1/13 8%	1/8 13%	3/56 6%	2/30 7%

6.4 Summary of Social Competence Knowledge

Information from Research Theme 1 was summarised as gender differences, sociometric status differences, age differences, developmental trends and group differences.

6.41 Gender Differences.

Major differences in gender were:

- A larger percentage of females expressed the context of sadness in terms of not being liked, whereas males expressed it in terms of being hurt or aggression;
- A large proportion of males stated that they would say nothing or avoid a sad person, whereas females stated that they would comfort peers who were sad;

- A higher percentage of females compared to males asked before joining in play;
- More males than females tended to propose fun ideas;
- A larger proportion of males viewed themselves as being proficient at playing as compared to females;
- A larger percentage of females indicated feelings of sadness due to an accident than males, whereas a larger proportion of males identified feelings of anger as compared to females;
- A slightly larger proportion of males indicated a feeling of happiness as compared to females; and
- A slightly larger percentage of females indicated feelings of sadness due to a transgression than males.

6.42 Differences in Sociometric Status

Major differences in sociometric status were:

- A larger percentage of children with low sociometric status had friends of the opposite sex only, as compared to children with high sociometric status;
- Children with low sociometric status appeared to have a slightly larger percentage of friends of the same sex as compared to children with high sociometric status . More high status children tended to have mixed sex friends;
- Children with low sociometric status had a lower percentage of friends of mixed sex than children with high sociometric status;
- Children with high sociometric status knew that friends were people with whom they played and they liked, as compared to children with low sociometric status;
- A larger percentage of children with high status mentioned that sadness was associated with not being liked, as compared with low status children;

- A larger percentage of children with low sociometric status associated sadness with aggression and being hurt, as compared to children with high sociometric status;
- A larger percentage of children with high status females comforted others whereas children with low status females said nothing or avoided sad peers;
- Children with high sociometric status ask before joining play, whereas children with low status tend not to ask;
- Children who discussed rejection were predominantly from the low status group;
- Offering a fun idea for play was more predominant in children with low status ;
- More children with high sociometric status perceived that they were good at playing as compared to children with low sociometric status;
- A larger proportion of children with low sociometric status perceived themselves as being good at school type activities, making things or being good at everything than those with high status;
- A larger proportion of children with high sociometric status identified feelings of sadness due to an accident than children with low status;
- A slightly larger proportion of low status children identified feelings of anger due to an accident;
- A larger number of children with low sociometric status stated that they feel happy due to a transgression, as compared with high status children; and
- A slightly larger percentage of children with high status anticipated feelings of sadness and anger than children with low status.

6.43 Age

Major differences due to age were:

- Younger children (under four years of age) had friends mostly of mixed gender but a large proportion had same sex friends;

- Children between four years and five years also had friends mostly of mixed gender. However, approximately one third of the children had same gender friends;
- Older children (over 5 years of age) preferred same sex friends;
- In all age groups, at the three test times, over 50% of children described sadness in terms of physical characteristics;
- More children in the Under 4 years age group and 4-5 years talked of rejection than in the over 5 years; and
- A slightly larger percentage of children in the Under 4 years group perceived that they were good at school type activities as compared to the 4-5 years group and the Over 5 years group.

As a result of examining an increase in age and time, developmental trends were noted and are presented below.

6.44 Developmental or Experiential Trends

- At post test and delayed post test, a slightly larger percentage of children expressed that friends were people you loved or liked;
- There was an increase over time, in asking permission to play before joining in. Similarly, there was a decrease in joining without asking in both status groups;
- Over time, the proportion of children who identified feelings of sadness as a result of having a tower knocked over accidentally increased, especially for the Under 4 years group children and the Over 5 years group children;
- Identifying feelings of happiness decreased over time, especially in the Over 5 years group and the 4-5 years group;
- There was an increase in the number of children who stated that they would feel angry as the recipient of a transgression, in each age group, especially in the post and delayed post test;
- Over the test times, the number of children claiming that they would feel happy as the recipient of a transgression, declined; and

- Over time, the response of feeling happy declined due to a transgression, and there was an increase in the proportion of children who indicated feelings of sadness.

6.45 Intervention Effects

Differences were noticed between the Intervention Group and the Non-Intervention Group. They were:

- The percentage of children having mixed sex friends was greater in the Intervention Group than in the Non-Intervention Group at each test;
- The percentage of children with same sex friends was greater in the Non-Intervention Group than in the Intervention Group at each test;
- All children having friends of the opposite sex were from the Non-Intervention Group;
- A greater percentage of children in the Intervention Group expressed friendship in terms of having feelings for another; playing only; and playing and liking; than in the Non-Intervention Group;
- A larger percentage of children in the Intervention Group, especially at the post test and the delayed post test, were conscious of asking before joining a group;
- In the Non-Intervention Group, a larger percentage of children expressed friendship in terms of kindly or prosocial people, as was the case for low sociometric status children. Most of the low status children who expressed this view were from the Non-Intervention Group;
- A larger percentage of children from the Intervention Group comforted peers compared to the Non-Intervention Group;
- A slightly larger percentage of children from the Non-Intervention Group at the three test times stated that they were good at school type activities;
- A larger proportion of children from the Intervention Group identified feelings of sadness associated with having a tower knocked down than those from the Non-Intervention Group;

- A slightly larger proportion of children expressed anger from the Non-Intervention Group than those in the Intervention Group; and
- The percentage of children stating that they would feel happy as the recipient of a transgression was greater from the Non-Intervention Group than for the Intervention Group.

This chapter discussed the knowledge young children have about social competence using interview questions drawn from a 'theory of mind' view of child development. . This knowledge changed over time, according to gender, age, sociometric status and whether intervention was received. This resulted from children's participation in, and experience of their social environment.

The next chapter will examine the results of children's knowledge, skills, and behaviours required for social competence from the study.