SEAMLESS SERVICE: COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIP OF A NON-PUBLICLY FUNDED CHILD CARE ORGANIZATION LOCATED WITHIN A SITE WITH MULTIPLE PUBLICLY-FUNDED AGENCIES

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate School of The Ohio State University

By

Debra Therese Dunning, B.S., M.S.

* * * *

The Ohio State University
2004

Dissertation Committee:

Professor Patrick McKenry, Advisor
Professor Rebecca Kantor
Professor David E. Fernie

Approved by

Adviser
College of Human Ecology
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2004
This research study is a two-year ethnographic study examining the nature of collaboration, its development through stages, and its relevance in the real-life collaboration of a multi-children and family publicly funded agencies and non-publicly funded child care. Along with studying the nature of the collaboration and its development is the individual story of the child care organization and how it fits into the site and its history. This study builds on the premise of a sociocultural perspective by taking a comprehensive look across contexts; situating itself in multiple layers which are independent yet interrelated. It further builds on the “situated perspective” on the individual story of the one of the agencies involved in the collaboration which is fundamentally different from the other agencies in that it is not publicly funded. The collaboration is analyzed by comparing the developmental stages of collaborations as shown in the research literature and by historical documents and interviews from key stakeholders in the collaborative process of the site. The individual story of the child care organization is told by the teachers and represents their “voice” in that this story is theirs. Along with the teachers’ viewpoint, observations in the classroom and key stakeholders collaborate the feelings and perceptions that the child care staff feels in being marginalized as child care workers. The study extends the literature base on collaboration by re-conceptualizing the development of collaboration from a linear
pathway to a circular pathway surrounded by multiple contexts in which the partnership is situated and located. Thinking of collaboration as an on-going development path that should be re-visited throughout the life of the collaboration will help this particular partnership to continue to grow and develop throughout the years. It will also help this particular partnership and others who try to replicate a similar partnership among agencies and organizations to continually re-invest in the vision, the mission statement and to remember the historical contexts in which the collaboration effort was formed, developed, implemented and evaluated.
In Memory of My Mother and Grandmothers:

Therese Adeline Bilek, Rose Cecilia Halter and Sylvia May Bilek
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First, I need to acknowledge and thank God for the love and support He has shown me throughout my life. When I am troubled and when I am weary… “I lift my eyes to the hills—where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord, the maker of heaven and earth. He will not let your foot slip—he who watches over you will not slumber; indeed, he who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep. The Lord watches over you—the Lord is your shade at your right hand; the sun will not harm you by day, nor the moon by night. The Lord will keep you from all harm—he will watch over your life; the Lord will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore” Psalm 121.

My family has been an inspiration and a support for me as I worked on this project over the last few years. The last few months were especially difficult on my husband and four children and yet, they persevered and worked together to fill my “role” as I worked in the field and on the study. To my husband, John, who met me when I was a freshmen in college and encouraged me throughout the years to not give up on my dream and after 19 years of marriage and four children will finally have a wife who is not in college. I love you more now than ever and look forward to growing old with you—although you will get there first! To my children, Brittany, Phillip, Mara and Matthew, who have also lived with finals, exams, papers and who knew the words “thesis” and
“dissertation” before other common childhood words, I thank you for allowing me to be your mother and for letting me realize a childhood dream. May you all fulfill your dreams as the years go on and know that I will support you in your time of need. My heart is filled with love for each and every one of you and you each hold a special place in my life. You complete me!

To my larger family and friends, I would like to thank you for helping me get through the last few years. The loss of my father-in-law, mother, paternal grandmother and maternal grandmother during this process was very difficult and yet I felt their love and your support continuously from heaven.

To Dr. McKenry and Dr. Fernie who took a “risk’ on a student when my original dissertation committee dissipated due to new jobs—thank you for saying that you would take me on as a student. Your insight and knowledge throughout this process has been invaluable. To Dr. McKenry—your strength in time of illness is courageous and your effort to help me complete my degree leaves me humble.

And lastly to Dr. Kantor—what can you say to someone who tells you that despite so many difficulties and road blocks that everything will be all right and that you will achieve your dreams and that you don’t have to give up being a researcher just because you are a mother. Rebecca—without your help and your assurance this would not have happened. You first took the risk and with your support the idea took off and gained “wings”. Thank you for showing me how to be both a mother and a researcher. Your guidance, support, encouragement and friendship are gifts that are not taken lightly, that I am humbled by and that will never be forgotten. Thank you from the bottom of my heart. You are a true mentor, teacher and friend.
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<td>1986</td>
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FIELDS OF STUDY

Major Field: Human Ecology

Studies in child care, parental involvement, nature of collaborations in human service agencies and individual issues of inequality and marginalization.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The increased participation of mothers in the workforce during the last decade has led to an increased need for child care among families at all income levels (Whitebook, 2003). By the start of the new millennium more than half of married and single mothers of infants and toddlers and almost two-thirds of married and single mothers with preschoolers work outside the home (Mezey, Neas, & Irish, 2003). Child care is an essential work support for families, and it can provide quality early childhood opportunities for young children. Families in low-income situations or those who have children with disabilities often have difficulty finding high-quality, appropriate child care for their children. Families often face difficulties in which the current system of services and child care is too fragmented and difficult to access. Families find that systems are contradictory, restricting, and disempowering. In short, they simply fail to meet the real needs of children and families (Bruner, Kunesh, & Knuth, 1992).

Current trends in policy development have encouraged or directed multiple state agencies at the state and local levels to work together, along with service providers and other potential sources of local support and in order to be effective. Collaboration (Bruner, 1995) became the “mantra” of the 1980s as a strategy for systemic change in
human services, education and government, and community agencies. Increasingly public and private funds rewarded or required collaboration efforts. The advent of block grants (are defined as a “lump sum of money given to a state or local governing agency based on a formula to be spent in generally eligible areas whose purposes are broadly defined and few restrictions are mandated from the funding source and in which the restrictions can be imposed by the re-granting agency.”) (ww.unlv.edu/depts/cas/glossary.htm) created an urgent need for integrated and locally controlled services. Shrinking resources have caused many organizations to consider the potential benefits of working together. Beginning in the 1980s and continuing today, states are looking for ways to integrate their economic, work force and technology efforts (Bergman, 1995). Perhaps most important is the realization that the complex problems and needs of families, workers, and the communities are not being met effectively by existing services that are “fragmented, crisis-oriented, discontinuous and episodic” (Kadel, 1991, p.vi).

Although Webster’s dictionary defines collaboration as “to work together-such as in an intellectual pursuit”, Winer and Ray (1994) define collaboration more specifically as “a mutually beneficial and well-defined relationship entered into by two or more…to achieve results they are more likely to achieve together than alone.” The Winer and Ray (1994) definition of collaboration describes the relationship that would need to exist in order for collaborative efforts among agencies and organizations to work. Collaboration involves more intense, long-term efforts than do cooperation or coordination. Collaborating agencies need to make a formal, sustained commitment to accomplishing a
shared, clearly defined mission. Collaborative efforts can make services available and accessible to their clients (Melaville & Blank, 1993).

Collaboration is a process used to reach goals that cannot be achieved by acting alone. It requires that participants: (a) jointly develop and agree to a set of common goals and directions, (b) share responsibility for obtaining those goals, and (c) work together to achieve those goals (Bruner, 1995). The outcome of collaboration is more than simple communication or coordination, but shared vision and shared action resulting in cohesive family policies and practice.

Statement of the Problem

The dilemma of having states with many agencies dealing with children’s issues and hundreds of professional organizations on behalf of children and families and incoherent policies are proliferated by the staggering numbers of state and federal legislative committees that have jurisdiction for children and families (Kagan, 1991). The result is that there an inconsistent, inequitable, insufficient and ineffective services. Recognizing the dilemmas, there have been sustained pleas for coordination, consolidation, and collaboration in human services generally with a similar call resounding through early child care and education (Kagan, 1991). For example, bemoaning deep-seated concerns about the inefficiency and insufficiency of America’s service to young children and families, the nation’s most prestigious scientific body, the National Academy of Sciences, has issued repeated calls for coordination and collaboration of early child care and education (Kagan, 1991). In 1972, it recommended that “a small portion of all federal funds for child care, pre-school educational and related
programs…be earmarked to establish…intergovernmental mechanisms for the coordination of the full range of child care and developmental early education and related health and family service programs” (Kagan, 1991, p.41-42).

In 1982, the Academy again lamented the lack of coordination in children’s services, dubbing it “the…unorganized scramble of governmental and nongovernmental representatives for children and families” (Kagan, 1991, p.76).

And in 1990, the Academy “concluded that planning and coordination must occur at all levels of the policy process…with an institutional structure that can serve as a focal point for coordinating resources…establishing priorities…and designing and implementing policy” (Kagan, 1991, p.310). But held hostage to limited budgets and to primary goals of increasing quantity and quality of services, coordination and collaboration have remained a secondary (Kagan, 1991).

The view for collaboration is changing today. Pleas for collaboration reverberate through meetings of advocates, legislative committees and government agencies. Collaboration has been widely noted in the literature and labeled as today’s mantra.

An ideal situation for families would be a collaboration of services and programs that in today’s world would be considered a “one-stop” facility in which all needs and services for the children and family are provided. However, collaboration at the state and county level are been shown to be difficult and problematic. “The Partnership” seems to be thriving and is a prime example of a working collaboration in process. A sociocultural perspective views collaborations in terms of the underlying cultural structures of the separate organizations which have to blend through a negotiated process. These processes take place in an historical context which includes political aspects. Each partnership in
this unique collaboration brings a cultural organization, underlying traditions, values, orientations and so forth to the negotiating table. This perspective has the potential to reveal in context how partners come together and why they succeed and why they fail. Thus, it is important to study the collaboration in how the partnership was initially formed, how the vision was communicated and how partners became invested in such a long-term grand scale project. In addition to the macro-level story of the overall collaboration effort there is a micro-level story of how individual agencies became part of the project. In addition, the staff “lives”, the collaboration everyday and has a perspective to contribute.

The initial approach to this study has been conceptualized to capture two major aspects of the YWCA’s participation, one historical and one current. The historical context requires methods and procedures (semi-structured interviews and document analysis) designed to capture the motivations, intentions, goals and processes of the development of the overall collaboration. Participant observation, interviews, group discussion and conversations capture the daily reality of the center’s life. The historical perspective of the collaboration will be juxtaposed with the reality of living in the collaboration.

In the first phase of the parent study, broad semi-structured interviews probed the perspective of each key person representing one of the partners who played a direct role in the building of “The Partnership “and in order to gain better insight into the history of the collaboration effort through multiple perspectives.

Each leader was identified and initially interviewed in order to establish a historical timeline of events as they are related through the different perspectives of those
who collaborated. The initial interviews of the leaders of the agencies gave me a broad
orientation to inform my refined questions and focused observations. Although I studied
one particular partner in the collaboration--a broad context was needed in order to
understand the overall project from inception to development to implementation.

It was also essential to establish a historical and contextual viewpoint of the
partnership in order to understand the daily reality of working within collaboration.

In sum, the broad and initial questions guiding this study are:

1. What is the nature of the development of the collaboration at “The Partnership”
among the group of diverse partners and in particular what has been the
experience of the childcare partner?

2. How is the collaboration playing out daily for the child care partner? In particular
what are the challenges and the opportunities for the child care partner?

“The Partnership”

While many struggle to create effective and successful collaborations “The
Partnership” located in a Midwestern community has created an exemplary model of how
collaboration at the state and county level can be accomplished and how collaboration
can be achieved. Nested within the early childhood education system of the Franklin
County Board of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (FCBMRDD), “The
Partnership” is the most extensive partnership in the system combining local, county and
state education, medical, social service and mental health agencies and institutions
working together to more effectively serve the community, children and families. “The
Partnership” is a system of partners of many agencies including the following programs
which are located within one facility: Columbus Public Schools, Head Start, MMRD, YWCA, YMCA, Action for Children, Alcohol Drug and Mental Health, Columbus Health Department, Franklin County Board of Health, Franklin County Children’s Services, Franklin County Department of Job and Family Services, Ohio Department of Education—Division of Early Childhood Education, and The Ohio State University School.

Over the years in this Midwestern town, there has been much collaboration among individual agencies, community groups and parents. The partnership system that exists at the site is the first to bring together different programs and organizations in order to provide child care, services and education for families with and without disabilities in one location. This is a unique collaboration in which the combination of elements makes these centers demonstration models for quality services and practices that will support this community and be a model for other communities and states.

**Purpose of the Study and Questions**

The purpose of this dissertation study was to examine and understand the participation of a particular agency within the collaboration, specifically the Young Women’s Christian Association (YWCA) that in many aspects is the “odd-man out” or most unlike the other agencies in that it provides full-time child care year-round at the center and is the only provider without public funding. The participation of a private, non-profit childcare with publicly funded Head Start, Columbus Public School and a publicly funded early childhood special education is groundbreaking and holds great potential.
This study was oriented with a construction/interpretive paradigm using qualitative strategies and techniques (observations, interviews, document analysis, questionnaires, surveys, and field notes) based on a naturalistic study of the child care center in its natural environment. This research was a micro-ethnography (Spradley, 1980) in which a single institution was studied. Observations started a grand tour of the center, a grand tour of the partnership meeting and a grand tour of the YWCA. After these initial observations, there were more descriptive observations moving to focused observations and then selective observations (Spradley, 1980) over time in the field. Questions emerging from the initial interview questions (grounded theory) of all department heads or organizations helped to formulate further research questions that were geared to the teachers themselves in order to see how the collaboration was being perceived by them at this current point in time. The overall goal of the research was to understand the role and experience of the YWCA child care partner in the overall partnership. The more focused and selective observations led to the emergence of issues of inequality and marginalization from the child care section. As such, the ethnography changed paths (after establishing the development of the collaboration) and became a critical ethnography in which issues of power, status and inequality were studied. This change is what Spradley termed “strategic research” in that it begins with an interest in human problems and results in the search for knowledge and understanding and results in social change of some kind (Spradley, 1979).

The following initial questions were administered to each department head of an agency or organization in order to establish a timeline and chronological order of events
as the collaboration process unfolded. These questions guided the choice of methodology and served as a preliminary frame for data collection and analysis processes.

1. Why did you initially get involved with this project?

2. After initial meetings, why did you continue to stay involved with this project?

3. Have you ever collaborated with other organizations, and if so please describe them?

4. What did you hope to get out of the organization?

5. What made you want to stay committed to the project?

6. Was the finalized project different from your initial ideas?

7. Did you have any institutional hindrances?

Since ethnographic research is recursive and theory-building in nature, emergent questions arose from and during processes during the research process. As the questions emerged from observation, semi-structured interviews, questionnaires/surveys, conversations, professional development seminars and secondary interviews, they influenced the data collection and analysis processes. With the triangulation of qualitative research methods and the questions that emerged lead to an interrelation (Spradley, 1980) which was examined and analyzed to establish patterns and themes in the social situation.
Methodological Choices

The primary focus of this research study was to understand how one agency, most unlike the other agencies, fits into the initial collaboration process and how the agency sees itself currently fitting into the collaboration and current on-site issues. However, in order to fully understand the context of one agency a broader perspective was needed in order to take into account the overall collaboration structure in which the agency was situated within.

The initial research study focused on using an interpretive approach and the ethnographic perspective to study the overall collaboration as these methodologies allowed me to examine and understand the meaning behind actions and thought-processes constructed by the agencies within historical and political contexts. Using an interpretive approach allowed the focus of inquiry to be studied in a cultural context and to study how the collaboration worked from the initial conception of the idea and how the reality unfolded in light of different social contexts using an ethnographic study. An ethnographic study allowed the collaboration to be studied over time and in different social and political contexts.

During the course of the research it became apparent through the emerging patterns and themes that the nature of the study would naturally move from ethnography (and the telling of the story of the collaboration) to uncovering the YWCA story through the critical ethnography lens. The YWCA staff expressed desire for the research to “tell their story” and to “understand their feelings of inequality”. This critical ethnography was defined by the need for me to use the work as a form or social criticism (marginalization of child care in the United States) and with certain basis assumptions.
“that all thought is fundamentally mediated by power relations that are social and historically constituted; that facts can never be isolated from the domains of values; that the relationship between signifier and signified is never stable or fixed and is often mediated by the social relations of capitalist production and consumption; that language is central to the formation of subjectivity; that certain groups in any society are privileged over others and although the reasons for this privileging may vary widely, the oppression that characteristics contemporary societies is most forcefully reproduced when subordinates accept their social status as natural, necessary, or inevitable; that oppression has many faces and focusing on only one at the expense of others often elides the interconnections among them…” (Lincoln & Guba, 1994, p.140) This study allowed the teachers of child care to have a “voice” and to tell how the collaboration works in their lives. The research also “brought to the table” issues of marginalization at the macro and micro levels and empowered the teachers to think about how to change “their status” in their workplace with creative and innovative suggestions.

**Scope and Limitations of the Study**

The theoretical and methodological framework used in this study allowed for a comprehensive and situated look at an agency within a collaborative effort among different agencies in order to provide comprehensive services and programs. “The Partnership” located in a growing Midwestern city is an exemplary example of how collaboration at the state and county level can be accomplished and how collaboration can be achieved. “The Partnership” is the most extensive partnership in the system combining local, county and state education, medical, social service and mental health
agencies and institutions working together to more effectively serve the community, children and families. Purposeful sampling (Patton, 1990) and the selection of an information-rich case supports and provides an in-depth understanding of the process of collaboration among different agencies and how one agency works within this particular collaboration. The findings are not intended to be generalized but to provide insight into creative ways that multiple agencies can form a collaboration of services and programs in one-site so that families could receive a “one-stop” facility in which all needs and services for the children and their families would be provided. Although collaborations at the state and county level have been shown to be difficult and problematic, this center currently in existence shows this site as a demonstration model for quality services and practices for other communities and states.

Obviously through different contexts and social experiences other agencies involved in the collaboration process will have experienced a different story. This study is providing a methodology and theoretical framework to look at the nature of the collaboration effort and the field of child care through the agency of the YWCA.

Despite extensive and prolonged time in the field working at the center and with the people involved in the YWCA, it is important to note that this study only allows a glimpse into the collaboration effort and process of the YWCA. It would be impossible to try to go back ten years after the initial ideas arose and try to re-construct the process of the formation of the YWCA. The interviews and conversations allow glimpses and recollections of the process and the stories are pieced together to try to link an image together from the individuals who were involved in the process. Since the images are being re-constructed from memory the story will be constantly re-constructed based on
individual’s perceptions, memories and language skills. Fortunately written documents concerning the formation of the collaboration (business plans, meeting notes, memos, etc.) have been kept although a filing system for such records has not yet been formulated and time and confidentiality limitations prevented me from sorting through the boxes and boxes of recorded and written documents.

It is also important and relevant to take into account the characteristics of ethnographic and interpretive research to acknowledge my own perspective on how the data was collected, analyzed as well as the influence of my presence in the classroom and the interviews. Although having bi-weekly meetings with other members of the research team was an important part of member-checking for this study, the final analysis and the organization findings reflect my understanding and selection of the organization and the particular agency (YWCA). By being in the classroom and on site as a participant observer I became part of the site community. At first the observations were descriptive and then they moved on to focused and selective observations. After this process a pattern of themes began to emerge in regard to feelings of marginalization of the child care staff. These themes of marginalization emerged into categories of macro and micro levels of marginalization of child care as a profession and the child care workers situated within the collaboration. These issues are discussed in detail in Chapter 5.

**Overview of the Dissertation**

This dissertation is divided into six chapters. In this chapter, I have introduced the study. In Chapter 2, I present an overview of the theoretical and conceptual frameworks that guided and informed this study. Chapter 3 explains choices of
methodology, and addresses theory-method relationships. It also provides a description of the research site and participants, the data collection and analysis processes, and issues of trustworthiness, credibility and transferability. The findings are described and displayed in two chapters: Chapter 4 and 5. First, in Chapter 4, I describe the multi-layered context in which the collaboration was able to form and were embedded and constituted by displaying four layers of context separately: the political environment, vision and leadership, acknowledgement and support of the community, and investment and development of community leaders. In Chapter 5, I show the co-constructed nature of living the collaboration through the teachers of the child care section through observations, conversations and group discussion. Patterns and themes of marginalization from layers of context of macro and micro levels are prevalent and described. Lastly, in Chapter 6, I situate the findings within the existing literature, discuss the implications for replication of the collaboration and propose recommendations for the child care section of the collaboration to feel less marginalized.
CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Historical Background of the YWCA

The Young Women’s Christian Association or what is commonly known by its acronym the YWCA started its movement in England in 1855 and then moved to the United States in 1858. A group of high income women formed a social group which became concerned about the needs of these women and formed its first association. The name was later incorporated into the name “A Young Women’s Christian Association”. The Young Women’s Christian Association had its origins in the United States from 1858 when a Ladies’ Christian Association was formed in New York City under the leadership of Mrs. Marshall O. Roberts. At this time, factories were displacing traditional at home occupations such as sewing, weaving and laundry. Women moved into the cities and began working in industry. This time period was also a time of the industrial revolution when factories were abundant with long working hours, unsanitary working conditions, lack of rest periods and poor ventilation. The lack of affordable housing and the ability to handle financial matters were often new and difficult for women. A group of high income women formed a social group which became concerned about the needs of these women and formed its first association. The name was later
incorporated into the name “A Young Women’s Christian Association”. The most important duty of the YWCA was to help young working women find housing in the city. Although historians recognize that the New York group under the leadership of Roberts was the first American YWCA, the name was not formally used and recognized until 1866 when women in Boston met under the name of the Boston Young Women’s Christian Association. By 1875, there were twenty-eight associations which were meeting and working to meet the needs of working women. The first constitution of the New York Ladies’ Christian Association identified the duties of member to: seek out especially young women of the operative class, aid them in procuring employment and in obtaining suitable boarding places, furnish them with proper reading matter, establish Bible classes and meeting for religious exercises at such times and places as shall be most convenient for them during the week, secure their attendance at places of public worship on the Sabbath, surround them with Christian influences and use all practicable means for the increase of true piety in themselves and others.

A phrase from the current purpose of the YWCA describes the goal of these early associations as they sought a common vision: peace, justice, freedom and dignity for all people.

In 1864, the first day-nursery was opened in Philadelphia. The YWCA saw a need to house the children of the women who were working long hours in the factories.

The local history of the YWCA in Columbus, Ohio dates back to 1886 at which time the association provided a boarding house and child care facilities for young working women and children. In 1910, the YWCA of Columbus became a charter member of the national YWCA of the United States. During the history of the YWCA in
Columbus, the YWCA has actively contributed to the community and was one of the first organizations to provide training and housing for African American women and teens. The Columbus YWCA organization has a history of collaborating with other organizations in forming a United Service Organization during World War II to provide recreation for soldiers and the Ohio Hunger Task Force was formed in the 1960’s with the YWCA’s collaboration. The YWCA was also instrumental in collaborating with efforts to form the first kindergartens in Columbus.

Today the YWCA provides child care and school age programs in over 1000 sites throughout the United States and reaches over 750,000 children and youth. The YWCA still advocated accessible and affordable quality child care for families and has a history of working with other organizations at a National level in advocacy efforts. The history of the YWCA is long standing and its effort on behalf of children and families is a part of our country’s rich history.

**Historical Background of “The Partnership”**

As already mentioned, “The Partnership” is the most extensive partnership in bringing local, county and state education, medical, social service and mental health agencies and institutions working together to more effectively serve the community, children and families. The following agencies and institutions are represented in this collaboration effect: Action for Children, Alcohol Drug and Mental Health, Child Development Council of Franklin County Head Start, Columbus Metropolitan Area Community Action Organization Head Start, Columbus Health Department, Columbus Public Schools, Franklin County Board of Health, Franklin County Board of MRDD,
“The Partnership” was renovated and then reopened in the summer of 2001 to serve the community as a comprehensive early childhood system. There have been other collaborations among individual agencies, community groups and parents in the community in the past however the partnership that currently exists at this site is the first of its kind to house different programs and organizations in which to provide child care, services and education for children with and without disabilities and family support. This collaboration effort is unique since the combination of programs and services shows this center as a demonstration model for quality services and practices located in a central building that will support the community and be a model for other endeavors.

The “partnership system is the result of over fifteen years of collaborative interactions and planning among partners which has been supported in the wider state environment. An important catalyst for much of this work was a 1991 Governor’s initiative known as Ohio Families and Children First, a programmatic effort to improve services to Ohio’s children and families with an emphasis on reducing bureaucracy and creating seamless services. This initiative created new contexts for the Partners to create their own vision. The Executive Director of Action for Children convened a diverse stakeholder group to advance the Governor’s agenda at a local level. This group, known as the Franklin County Childcare and Early Childhood Council, was an important group to promote four key concerns reflected in the Partnership: access, affordability, quality
Collaboration Research and Theory

A large body of research has studied and examined the idea of collaboration. Very often collaboration is equated with the terms cooperation and coordination. Because of the synonymous use of the three terms—cooperation, coordination and collaboration—difficulty arises in clear definitions. The American Psychological Association (1988) and the Department of Education (1986) classify collaboration as “synonym used for” cooperation. Despite confusion a common view is emerging within the literature. The literature supports that cooperation; coordination and collaboration are quite different and constitute a hierarchy or ladder (Black & Kase, 1963; Morgan, 1985; Stafford, 1984). As one progresses from cooperation through coordination to collaboration, interorganizational relationships become more sophisticated, complex and effective for problem solving (Kagan, 1991).

Cooperation forms the base; it is the least formal and the most prevalent. Grounded in personal relationships, cooperation exists without any clearly defined structure. At the cooperation level, organizations work informally together. Often, they only have a superficial awareness of one another’s full array of programs and goals (Kagan, 1991). In fact, cooperation can occur despite differing goals (Lanier, 1981; Derlega & Grzelak, 1982). Participants and organizations that cooperate retain their independent full autonomy so that power is neither shared among them nor yielded to a
third party (Hord, 1986). Moreover, it is important to note that in cooperation, resources are not necessarily pooled (Hord, 1986).

As one progresses up to the hierarchy of coordination and collaboration, there is slightly less definitional agreement in the literature. Some authors claim that both coordination and collaboration are vague and ill-defined (Flynn & Harbin, 1987) whereas others suggest that there is little distinction between the two (Hord, 1980; 1985). Those who see little difference between coordination and collaboration typically regard them as relational systems that consist of two or more participants (Gray, 1985; Johnson, McLauqlin & Christensen, 1982).

Coordination is now more commonly regarded as a prerequisite for collaboration (Hord, 1986) and is conceptualized as a less complex and sophisticated construct than collaboration. Coordination entails efforts to smooth relationships among organizations and often results in specific modifications in the way agencies operate. But, in coordinated efforts, agencies remain independent (Morris & Lescohier, 1978). In contrast, collaboration brings previously separated organizations into a new structure (Morris & Lescohier, 1978). Melaville and Blank (1991) suggest that the advantage of collaboration is that it affords the opportunity to restructure the expertise and resources of partner agencies. Aside from restructuring, recent literature suggest that other important characteristics distinguish coordination and collaboration. Collaboration implies a greater sharing of resources, more intense joint planning and that sharing of power and authority (Kraus, 1990). Kraus (1990) affirms the point by noting that collaboration is a “cooperative venture based on shared power and authority”. Through appearing subtle, the differences are important because egalitarian power relationships entail processes and
produce consequences quite unlike those where power and resources are not distributed (Kraus, 1990). See Figure 2.1

Collaborations are defined as organizational and interorganizational structures where resources, power and authority are shared and where people are brought together to achieve common goals that could not be accomplished by a single individual or organization independently (Kagan, 1991).

Theorists suggest that rationale for and benefits of collaboration fall into four major categories: alleviating scarcity of resources, expanding the narrowness of problem conceptualization, improving inadequacies in human service and achieving organizational reform (Appley & Winder, 1977; Schindler-Rainman, 1981).

One of the most frequently mentioned rationales for and benefits of collaboration is overcoming a scarcity of resources (Appley & Winder, 1977; Schindler-Rainman, 1981). Broadly defined by theorists, resources are categorized as fiscal, physical and human. Agencies face resource limitations in each category: budget cuts dominate program operations; facilities are aging; and the pool of qualified employment candidates continues to shrink (Kagan, 1991). In an effort to minimize the threat to organizational efficacy, agencies collaborate hoping to increase access to or compensate for badly needed resources. Given the recent moves toward public accountability on the part of governmental agencies, the resources rationale gains even greater credibility.

The literature suggests that it is not unreasonable to expect enhanced resources utilization as a result of collaborative efforts. Collaborations claim to minimize administrative expenses and improve administrative efficiency (Weiss, 1981). They capitalize on the largest number of resources at the smallest cost sometimes uncovering
unused resources (Burgard, 1983; Lippitt & VanTil, 1981). Resources are used better and are wasted less, particularly with respect to resource overlaps (Gamm, 1983; Parnick & Schober, 1981). The division of labor, sharing of facilities, and pooling of information are believed to improve use of the scare resources allocated to participants (Gamm, 1983; Parnick & Schober, 1981).

Through the majority of authors see scarcity of resources as a major rationale for and benefit the collaboration, some argue instead that competition not collaboration is based on the assumption that resources are scarce (Appley & Winder, 1977; Kraus, 1980). Organizations might be discouraged from collaborating if they believe their already scarce resources will be depleted by sharing with competitors (Molnar, 1978). The achievement of true collaboration requires a belief in “non-scarcity structure” in which resources in general are believed to be abundant, although specific resources may be limited (Appley & Winder, 1977; Kraus, 1980).

A second rationale for and benefit of collaboration relates to how organizations can overcome their tendency to view problems from individual perspectives. Gray (1995) claims that an organization’s inability to adapt to a new environment lies in the failure to conceptualize a problem and analyze potential solutions at a level where the organization is joined by other similarly concerned individuals, groups or organizations. This level of interaction born of mutual interests or concerns is known as the “domain level” (Gray, 1995).

A domain can be thought of as the organization’s field of activity or niche in the market and includes the organization’s purpose, clients, products and/or income sources (Gray, 1995). Domains typically fall into three categories: similar, symbiotic, or
different (Gray, 1995). Gamm (1993) and Trist (1993) suggest that the domain category affects how and if the collaborative relationship develops. If domain similarity exists two or more agencies share purposes, clients, products, or income sources. Such similarity may lead either to collaboration or to competition among the agencies (Gamm, 1993). If agencies fall into the symbiotic category, typically one organization offers important services to another through a network or central organization (Trist, 1993). Such a pattern often implies a hierarchical rather than egalitarian relationship. Different domains where none of the elements is shared also predict hierarchical relationships where one organization looks to the other as a “standard-setter” (Gamm, 1995).

The domain construct is helpful on several counts. First, it acknowledges that the nature of collaboration is somewhat predictable, based on the alignment of critical variable (Gray, 1985), second Gray (1985) points out that organizations can use this construct as they encounter practical challenges such as coping with resource scarcity. And third, the domain construct is useful as agencies broaden their conceptualizations of the problems and their potential solutions particularly with regard to agency interdependence (Gray, 1985).

A third rationale for collaboration rests on dissatisfaction with and a related desire to improve direct services and the service delivery system (O’Connell, 1985). With respect to improving direct service, the literature indicates that this is not an unrealistic expectation. Collaborative activity is believed to “enrich services” (O’Connell, 1985) and to have them be more comprehensive, accessible and creative (Gamm, 1983; Hord, 1980; Kagan, 1989; Levy & Copple, 1989).
Beyond improvement in service delivery, collaborations are judged by some to be a vital solution to the inadequacies and inflexibilities of bureaucracy (Kraus, 1980; Levy & Merry, 1986). Severe systemic inadequacies including inflexibility in the face of change and uncertainty, ineffective communication systems caused by hierarchical divisions, and unequal power distribution have prompted theorists to argue that we must replace bureaucracy with more collaborative forms of organization (Kraus, 1980; Levy & Merry, 1986).

Warren (1973) argues that “to understand the current trend of collaboration, in the absence of empirical results, one must look at its latent functions which are “the objective consequences of a social practice or belief contributing to the adjustment or adaptation of a system which are neither intended nor recognized” (p.360). Collaborations reduce the threat of competition, ensure that agencies have a say in decisions, and promote agency viability and expansion (Warren, 1973). Warren (1973) claims that collaboration “gives the aura of change without affecting either the causes or the basic injustices in the social system” (p. 361). Weiss (1981) agrees pointing to the “indifferent success, the costs, and the conflict surrounding real-world collaborations” (p.400). Weiss suggests that collaborations serve a symbolic rather than substantive function. Recognizing that our human services system is inadequate, decision makers turn to collaboration as evidence of their efforts to structure and simplify the system, instead of reforming the system itself. The “intangible success of coordination” as Weiss (1981) calls it, “lies in its ability to evoke certain shared social values (p.400).

Less skeptical than Warren and Weiss, other theorists suggest that collaboration is more than symbolic in that it plays a very real role in increasing communication,
enhancing collective problem-solving and boosting worker productivity (Kraus, 1980; Lippit & Van Til, 1981). Not only will communication be improved and increased via collaboration but according to Kraus (1980) and Lippit & Van Til (1981), its benefits will extend to other activities. Planning is better when individuals and organizations work together (Lippit & Van Til, 1981; Kraus, 1980). With improved communication, personnel exhibit increased morale and productivity because they are informed and involved in organizational efforts (Kraus, 1980). Increased communication may enable the group to function as a more unified whole, and in doing so the group may have more influence on its external environment (Schindler-Rainman, 1981).

Collaboration is valued for the inadequacies and inconsistencies it hopes to overcome. The anticipated benefits—alleviating scarce resources, expanding problem conceptualization, improving service delivery and achieving organizational reform—constitute the rationale for the existence of collaborative entities (Kagan, 1991; Schindler-Rainman, 1981; Kraus, 1980).

The literature indicates that collaborations have much in common structurally. All collaborations seem to pass through the common developmental stages. Highly predictable, these stages follow in sequence. But the pace and the trajectory through which the stages are achieved are idiosyncratic to particular collaborations (Kagan, 1991). This suggests that certain mediating variables (goals, resources, power and authority, and levels of adaptiveness) alter the pace of implementation to yield individually distinct collaborative processes (Kagan, 1991). Like stages, the categories of variables are also quite universal. Less predictable than stages, however, mediating variables differ in intensity and in their many sources, suggesting that it is a combination
of the normal developmental stages and the individual mediating variables that influence the same way; normal human development is the product of universal developmental stages and individual mediating variables (Kagan, 1991). Together they mesh in highly idiosyncratic ways, yielding an infinite variety of personalities (Kagan, 1991). See Figures 2.2 and 2.3
Figure 2.1  Cooperation, Coordination, and Collaboration
Figure 2.2  Stages of Collaboration
Figure 2.3  Meditating Variables
Developmental Stages of Collaboration

The organizational development literature is replete with theories that discuss the stages of organizational development and provide a basis from which theories about collaborative development have emerged (Kagan, 1991). A review of the literature indicates that collaborations have much in common structurally (Kagan, 1991). All collaborations seem to pass through common developmental stages. Highly predictable, these stages follow in sequence (Lewin, 1951; Levy, 1986; Flynn & Harbin, 1987). The literature suggests that certain mediating variables (goals, resources, power and authority and levels of adaptiveness) alter the pace of implementation to yield individually distinct collaborative processes. Like stages, the categories of variables are also universal and are less predictable than the stages however, mediating variables differ in intensity and in their impact on the collaborative process (Kagan, 1991; Levy, 1986; Flynn & Harbin, 1987). The literature suggests that it is a combination of the normal stages of development and the individual mediating variables that influences the pace and outcome of the collaboration (Harbin & McNulty, 1990).

Lewin (1951) an early stage theorist suggested that the process of organizational change can be described in three stages: unfreezing, moving and refreezing. Lewin’s stages have been reinterpreted and embellished in the decades since their introduction (Kagan, 1991). Reitz (1987) and Cummings and Huse (1989) have suggested that these periods reflect the natural stages wherein the need for change is recognized, acted on, and institutionalized.

The literature tends to agree on the sequence and basic activities within each stage. The stages of collaborative evolution have been termed: formation (Trist, 1983),
sequential phases (McCann, 1983) and steps in the process of interagency collaboration (Lippitt & Van Til, 1981). Four stages suggested by Flynn and Harbin (1987)—formation, conceptualization, development and implementation—combined with two stages—evaluation and termination—from Brewer and deLeon (1983) convey the range of stages described in the literature. The progression through the stages is typically linear but a change in mission or direction, or a reassessment of the collaborative structure, may necessitate a transition back to a previous stage (Flynn & Harbin, 1987). Although these stages appear fairly neat and orderly on paper, in reality they overlap (Kagan, 1991).

**Formation**

During the formation stage, a number of important activities take place that will shape all future stages—the idea for the collaboration is born. Lippitt and Van Til (1981) call this “articulation of the vision” (p.15). The vision arises in response to recognition or identification of a potential or real problem. Formation is underway when an individual or event conceptualizes an effort or strategy to resolve the problem (Lippitt & Van Til, 1981).

Once the idea arises, the problem and the vision must be shared with those in the group. Group members are identified and recruited, often by the initiating individual or organization. Gray (1985) calls this process identification of stakeholders. The initiator presents the rationale for the collaboration to the stakeholders so that they begin to recognize and appreciate their interdependence (Gray, 1985; Lippitt & Van Til, 1981).

Following the identification of the group members, the collaboration explores the viability of the vision. Lippitt and Van Til (1981) refer to this activity as “testing the collaborative waters” (p.8). Members become acquainted with one another and their
programs, in part to find out if the collaboration will threaten organizational turf (Lippitt & Van Til, 1981). Now, a global mission will be identified and discussed (Flynn & Harbin, 1987; Lippitt & Van Til, 1981).

**Conceptualization**

The conceptualization phase is reached when the collaboration’s participants adopt a formal policy statement and objectives (Kagan, 1991). This phase is also referred to as direction setting (McCann, 1983; Trist, 1983). Individual expectations about the future of the collaboration and the activating forces behind each member’s participation are shared. Participants identify a common purpose, develop a common interpretation of the future and agree on a path to achieve it (Gray, 1985; Trist, 1983).

This phase requires active member commitment and participation, tasks, roles and responsibilities are discussed during conceptualization (Kagan, 1991). Theorists agree that clear definitions of member and team roles must be developed at this point (Flynn & Harbin, 1987; Lippitt & Van Til, 1981; O’Connell, 1985). Such role assignment enables the group to select a decision-making model and to develop an administrative structure for future interagency activities (Flynn & Harbin, 1987).

**Development**

The third stage involves the development of a formal structure that will sustain the conceptualization and the collaboration. The development stage has been termed “institutionalizing the shared meanings and prevailing norms” of the collaboration (Gray, 1985, p. 913). The vision and the mission are now transformed from philosophy to practice.
During the development stage the group creates permanent structures which are internal and facilitate participant work such as how to address and resolve issues and conflicts within the group, developing plans and obtaining permission and approval of key decision makers (Flynn & Harbin, 1987).

**Implementation**

When the group has successfully passed through the first three stages, the collaboration is ready to implement its programs. This stage is called the “action-intervention” (Kagan, 1991, p.17) since the proposed revisions are put into practice (Margulies & Raia, 1972). Decisions made during the previous stages are now implemented at the administrative and service delivery levels. Necessary policy changes are made, agencies interact accordingly to the agreed-upon structures, and services ideally are improved (Flynn & Harbin, 1987).

**Evaluation**

Evaluation is an essential and continuous phase of collaboration. It is the process by which the actual performance levels are compared to the expectations (Brewer & deLeon, 1983). Lippitt and Van Til (1981) describe this stage as “renewal and review of the validity of the dream that brought the collaboration into existence” (p.10). The participants see if they are successful. If discrepancies exist, the collaboration attempts to find the source or if they are contained within the formation, conceptualization or implementation.

**Termination**

Termination is the final phase in the development of collaboration. Brewer and deLeon (1983) define termination as “the adjustment of policies and programs that have
become dysfunctional, redundant, outmoded, unnecessary, or even counterproductive” (p.385). Termination means that the collaboration as it has existed is ended. Termination can also bring about a new beginning in which a new collaboration may be developed from this effort (Kagan, 1991).

**Mediating Variables**

**Goals**

Participants work to solve problems and share a common vision or goal (Gray, 1989). Typically, the goal derives from a mutually identifiable need that may arise from an external or internal problem (Berkowitz, 1986; Caruso, 1981; Elder & Magrab, 1980). In most collaboration the coming of the group serves the interests of both the collective and the individual participants (Black & Kase, 1963; Hord, 1986; Pareek, 1981) enabling them to engage in joint planning and problem solving (Hord, 1985; Lieberman, 1986).

Achieving consensus of the common goals is not always easy. Most commonly the formal goals are adopted by the group and are the product of many conflicting sub goals that are reconciled through the consensual process (Kagan, 1991). The test of “good” goal decisions is that relevant interest groups will accept and work to implement them (Covey, & Brown, 1985).

Goal consensus is complicated and often constrained by organizational factors. In the nonprofit sector, organizations are subservient to a board of directors and/or governmental guidelines which often restricts freedom of choice regarding goals and operational strategies (Anthony & Young, 1984).
Resources

Sharing resources enables organizations to trade among themselves and pooling allows all participants to contribute to the group (Kagan, 1991). In spite of differences in sharing strategies, resource exchange is considered to have a profound influence on the collaborative effort (Dunkle & Nash, 1989; Flynn & Harbin, 1987).

The literature disagrees about the relationship between collaboration and the quantity of resources themselves (Kagan, 1991). Some believe that collaboration is based on the assumption that resources will be more abundant through sharing (Kraus, 1980) where others believe that collaborations represent a form of limited-resource management and are using a coping mechanism for scarcity of resources (Schindler-Rainman, 1981).

All agree however that resource allocation in some form is fundamental to the collaboration effort (Kagan, 1991; Martinson, 1982; Schindler-Rainman, 1981).

Power and Authority

Authority relationships are found in each stage and transaction in the process of collaboration. In the collaboration, power comes from many sources. Being an initiator of the collaboration is a source of power and participants of voluntary collaborations hold enormous power because they select participants who shape the identity of the group and choose the goals and strategies by which the collaboration will function (Gray & Hay, 1986; Edgar & Maddox, 1983; Hord, 1985; O’Connell, 1985).

Clearly, collaborative participants will hold different degrees of power. An ideal collaboration has the idea of an egalitarian sharing of power and authority among the group members. Gamm (1983) believes the power diffusion and not power elimination is the ideal and that is should be based on knowledge or expertise and not on role of
function as in a bureaucracy. This means that the participants assume control over those activities they have expertise in but that no single type of contribution or agency is considered better or more powerful (Gamm, 1983). Leadership can be shared among the participants so that no single agency dominates the collaboration. While such equal distribution of power is hard to achieve, it is the goal of a true collaboration (Gamm, 1983).

Developing trust is essential so that the ideal of an equitable sharing of power is realized (De Bevoise, 1986). According to the literature, the most important dimension of power and authority is the leadership of the collaboration in being supportive, effective and a flexible leader (Dunkle & Nash, 1989; Gans & Horton, 1975; Gray, 1985; Wu, 1986). The role of the leaders can be internal or external and is best suited when described as a facilitator (Kagan, 1991).

In a voluntary group where group purpose and goals are shaped by the participants’ power will be influenced by control over resources, expertise. The group will form more slowly, experience more conflict, and be less efficient, but group output is innovative and results in high member satisfaction (Kagan, 1991).

**Flexibility**

The fourth mediating variable of collaboration is flexibility. Flexibility, used in this context, means that change can occur at any time (Davidson, 1976; Flynn & Harbin, 1987; Fombrun, 1986). Flexibility enables the collaboration to monitor and respond to the changing nature and scope of any internal or external problems that may arise. Flexibility also allows for participants to react to shifting boundaries among themselves and changing internal structures and role assignments (Kagan, 1991). New members
must be incorporated into the existing structure. New members may assume new responsibilities and internal changes in the member organization or the collaboration itself necessitates a flexible organizational structure (Kagan, 1991). The framework of the collaboration must remain flexible as its existence depends on the changing experiences of the participants and dealing with change (Fombrun, 1986; Hord, 1980).

**Child Care Environment**

The U.S. Department of Labor’s Occupational Outlook Handbook (2004-5) describes a child care worker with the following statements: “Child care workers nurture and teach children of all ages in child care centers, nursery schools, preschools, public schools, private households, family daycare homes and before and after school programs. These workers play an important role in a child’s development by caring for the child when parents are at work or away for other reasons…In addition to attending to children’s basic needs, these workers organize activities that stimulate the children’s physical, emotional, intellectual and social growth. They help children to explore their interest, develop their talents and independence, build self-esteem and learn to get along with others…Child care workers spend most of their day working with children. However, they do maintain contact with parents or guardians through informal meetings or scheduled conferences to discuss each child’s progress and needs. Many child care workers keep records of each child’s learning and development at home…Most child care workers perform a combination of basic care and teaching duties. Through many basic care activities, child care workers provide opportunities for children to learn. For example, a worker who shows a child how to tie a shoelace teaches the child while also
providing for that child’s basic care needs. Child care programs help children to learn about trust and to gain a sense of security…Child care workers in preschools greet young children as they arrive, help them to remove outer garments, and select an activity of interest…Child care workers identify children who may not feel well or who show signs of emotional or developmental problems and discuss these matters with their supervisors and the child’s parents…The work hours of child care workers vary widely. Child care centers are usually open year round with long hours so that parents can drop off and pick up their children before and after work. Some workers are unable to take regular breaks during the day due to limited staffing. Replacement needs in this occupation are high. Many child care workers leave the occupation temporarily to fulfill family responsibility, to study or for better paying jobs. Some workers leave permanently because they are interesting in pursuing other occupations or because of dissatisfaction with hours, low pay and benefits and stressful conditions…Child care workers held about 1.2 million jobs in 2002…High replacement needs should create good job opportunities for child care workers. Many child care workers must be replaced each year as they leave the occupation to take other jobs, to meet family responsibilities or for other reasons. Qualified persons who are interested in this work should have little trouble finding and keeping a job…Employment of child care workers is projected to grow about as fast as the average for all occupations through the year 2012. The number of women of child bearing age in the labor force and the number of children under five years of age is expected to rise gradually over the projected 2002-12 period. Also, the proportion of youngsters enrolled full or part time in child care and preschool programs is likely to continue to increase, spurring demand for additional child care workers…Child care
workers generally obtain employment with a high school diploma and little or no experience…Child care workers must anticipate and prevent problems, deal with disruptive children, provide fair but firm discipline, and be enthusiastic and constantly alert. They must communicate effectively with the children and their parents as well as other teachers and child care workers. Workers should be mature, patient, understanding and articulate and have energy and physical stamina. Skills in music, art, drama and storytelling are important… Opportunities for advancement are limited…”

Child care is a relatively easy field of employment despite the complicated definition and detailed job description given above. The child care worker fills many roles some of which are caregiver, teacher, art teacher, music teacher, playground supervisor, teacher of social skills and language development. However despite the many roles a child care worker needs to be skilled for there are little educational demands beside a high school education in most states. Furthermore, since there is a virtual free entry into child care employment with little educational demands, child care is not only a female-dominated occupation but it is derived from the gender division that has existed throughout history. It is commonly believed-by the general public and by many child care consumers, employers and policy makers—that any woman can do this work and therefore, when demand for child care increases, the supply of workers can come from the large pool of untrained and inexperienced women looking for jobs (Whitebook, 1999).

Another inherent problem for child care workers is the poor pay compensation for the job. Poor pay for child care workers is driving almost a third of them to quit jobs each year, creating unstable environments for children and depleting the child care work
force (www.4children.org). The cornerstone of child care that promotes healthy
development is the presence of consistent, sensitive, well-trained and well-compensated
caregivers. High turn-over in the field, fueled by poor compensation and few
opportunities for advancement is causing the quality of services that children and parents
receive to decline dangerously. Our nation has adopted a child care policy that relies on
an unacknowledged subsidy: the contribution that child care workers (98% female and
one-third women of color) make by being paid much less than the value of their skilled
and vital work (Whitebook, 1999).

According to a 1997 study of child care staffing, real wages for most child care
teaching staff have remained stagnant over the past decade (Whitebook, Howes &
in Ohio salary average is $7.90 and pre-school teachers are $8.94. Nationally, the wage
for child care workers is $7.86 and pre-school teachers are $9.66. Thus, comparing the
national average with the state of Ohio average—the average child care teacher in Ohio
earns slightly more than at the national average and the average pre-school teacher earned
slightly more than the national average. Mean wages which can be skewed upward by a
few reports of high wages which tend to be somewhat higher than median wages. The
median wage which identifies the midpoint of the distribution of all wages may be more
typical of the earned wages than reported averages.

Whereas a child care worker is defined by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2003)
as “a person who attends to children in schools, business, private households and child
care institutions, performing such duties as dressing, feeding, bathing and overseeing
play”, a preschool teacher is defined by the bureau as “a person who instructs children
(normally up to five years of age) in a preschool program, day care center or other child
development facility, in activities designed to promote social, physical and intellectual
growth in preparation for elementary school”.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics in the U.S. Department of Labor reports that mean wages for over 700 occupations and that only 18 occupations report having lower mean wages than child care workers (2003). Those occupations that earn higher salaries than child care include service station attendants, tree trimmers, crossing guards and bicycle repairers. The annual turnover rate hovers between thirty and forty percent through out the country and current market wages in the child care field have clearly been insufficient to secure a skilled and stable workforce or to guarantee high-quality services for children and families. The field is comprised of 98% female—many of whom are parents of young children themselves, better-educated than the general population, and/or women of color—suffers a higher concentration of poverty-level jobs than any other occupation in the United States (Swartz & Weigert, 1995). Please refer to Figure 2.4
Figure 2.4 Child Care Workforce Earnings in Perspective

A comparison of median hourly wages between child care jobs* and other occupations

Based on Bureau of Labor Statistics Data 1998

Compiled by the Center for the Child Care Workforce
Along with poor compensation, the majority of child care centers still offer their teaching staff limited or no health insurance, despite heavy exposure to illness and physical strain on the job (Whitebook, Howes & Phillips, 1998). Twenty percent offered fully-paid health coverage to teachers only and twenty-one percent offered fully paid health insurance to teachers and assistants (Whitebook, Howes & Phillips, 1998). Even fewer offer a pension plan and fewer than five percent of center-based teachers have a union contract (Whitebook, Howes & Phillips, 1998).

The Worthy Wage Campaign of 1992’s jingle was “Parents can’t afford to pay; Teachers and providers can’t afford to stay; Help us find a better way” (Whitebook, 2003). The campaign initiated by the Center for Child Care Workforce in the early 1990’s and embraced by teachers, providers and advocates in numerous communities throughout the United States, sought to educate the early childhood community and the larger public about the crisis in securing a skilled and stable child care workforce. Initial efforts focused on exposing the problems of high turnover and low pay among child care workers, the resulting mediocre and poor quality of services available to the majority of young children and the inability of families to cover the costs of child care services let alone an increase in fees to improve child care wages. The above jingle captures the economic dilemma that characterizes child care service in the United States. Through the Campaign, it sought to “expose funding impasses and to engage the vision and policy makers into organizing efforts that would improve child care jobs and services” (Whitebook, 2003).
In the early days of the Campaign, Worthy Wage advocates encountered considerable resistance to the idea of raising child care wages (Whitebook 2003). Thus, the Campaign focused its effort on why wages should be increased instead of how to increase them. Findings of the National Child Care Staffing Study (Whitebook, Howes & Phillips, 1990) demonstrated the links among skilled and educated child care personnel, higher-quality programs and better outcomes for children. Other studies (Helburn, 1995; Kontos, Howes, Galinsky & Shinn, 1995) reinforced the need for a well-trained and well-compensated workforce to deliver high-quality services which resulted in ensuring school readiness, addressing developmental needs of children and early brain development.

The Worthy Wage movement stimulated public awareness of the child care staffing crisis moving the question of how to improve child care jobs. While the movement proposed unrealistic discussions of raising parent fees, charging the “full-cost of care” or corporate involvement for funding, most advocates expressed concern in order to improve child care jobs there must be a new and substantial public investment in services. There is a widespread acknowledgement that the dual need for better-paying jobs and more accessible high-quality child care services will not be solved by the market forces alone (Whitebook, 2003).

And even when advocates agree that the solution to the staffing crisis lies with a major public investment, the complexity of the current childhood services delivery system creates many challenges. Because services are so decentralized, with multiple funding sources and regulatory requirements and because providers are so diverse with regard to professional preparation, location of care and demographic characteristics, it is
an especially daunting task to craft and fund policy reforms targeted to improving child care jobs (Whitebook, 2003).

The need for affordable, high quality child care in Ohio is reaching crisis proportions as increasing numbers of parents enter the workforce (www.cincypost.com/news/2002). Estimates are that more than half of all American families with children under age thirteen (approximately 29 million) regularly need child care. According to the *Kid’s Count Report* “in 2002 73% of Ohio children under the age of six years old and 47% of children ages six to twelve live with working parents and need some sort of child care for their children” (www.cincypost.com/news/2002).

Will collaboration efforts address the inherent problems in the child care field such as little educational training, poor pay, lack of benefits and high-turnover rates? The literature seems to indicate that since child care is a predominately female position that part of the inherent issues stem from the gender division of the field (Whitebook, 1999). And the literature also indicates that movements such as the Worthy Wage Campaign stimulated public awareness of the child care staffing crisis. Discussions from the movement addressed unrealistic notions such as raising parent fees, charging the “full-cost of care” or corporate involvement for funding (Whitebook, 2003). Most advocates also expressed the concern that in order to improve child care jobs a new and substantial public investment in services must occur (Whitebook, 2003). Even when advocates agree that the solution to the staffing crisis lies with a major public investment, the complexity of the current early childhood services system creates many challenges. Because services are so decentralized, with multiple funding sources and regulatory requirements and because providers are so diverse with regard to professional preparation, location of care
and demographic characteristics, it is an especially daunting task to craft and fund policy reforms targeted to improving child care jobs (Whitebook, 2003).

Collaboration of services and programs is not a new idea or solution being sought in times of fiscal responsibility or struggling programs. Historically there has been a context of service integration in the field. Federal initiatives in the 1960s under the War on Poverty sought to develop more community decision-making through “maximum feasible participation” and the development of new services and new administration structures. Major federal service integration initiatives occurred in the 1970s under Eliot Richardson and the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, which sought greater coordination and accountability among institutions serving the same children and families (www.ncrel.org/sdrs/areas/stw).

While elements of both of these federal efforts remain, neither was successful in reshaping the major-child serving institutions-schools, health care providers, and human service agencies-to be more responsive to one another or to the children they served when it came to meeting needs outside their programs.

The National Center for Family Support conducted a survey (2000) to explore the status of collaboration efforts in states as it related to family support. They faxed a survey to twenty-two states/territories (including Ohio) and received responses from nineteen of the sites for an 86% response rating. Although these responses are the opinions of one respondent at each chosen site within a state, the responses give some insight into collaboration efforts within these states. It also points out that more research is needed to truly gain insight in regard to collaborated efforts within states and agencies.
In the survey, one of the stated questions was “what is the level of interagency collaboration in your state among state and local government agencies, service providers and other potential sources of support to assure cohesive family policy and practice?” Most respondents indicated moderate or very little overall collaboration in their state or territory.

Some of the actual responses to hindrances to effective interagency collaboration among respondents were the following: “lack of shared vision and knowledge”, “lack of leadership”, “territorialism”, “lack of trust (history)”, “turf issues”, “old-fashioned thinking”, “change”, “lack of understanding among agencies regarding programs”, “policies and practice”, “funding issues” and “tight budgets”. When the respondents were asked to list what they felt the three major factors were that presently hinder effective interagency collaboration by order of importance, they listed that “territoriality” among agencies and administrators wanting to “protect their share of the pies” resulting in a “reluctance to really collaborate” was the biggest hindrance followed by a lack of funding across agencies that intensifies feelings of competition for funds and historical differences between agencies concerning terminology, service mandates or mission and service practices.

Winer and Ray (1994) describe four steps in developing collaborations: “envisioning results, empowering the effort, ensuring success, and endowing continuity”.

Envisioning results is defined by “(1) bringing people together by deciding criteria for membership, inviting participation, and getting to know one another; (2) enhancing trust by sharing knowledge, disclosing self-interests, ensuring that all stakeholders’ needs are met, and producing visible results so that people feel their
participation is justified; (3) confirming that shared vision by developing vision statements that indicate where the groups wants to go; and (4) specifying desired results, the agreed-upon goals and objectives that state how the collaboration will achieve its vision” (Kadel, 1991; Melaville & Blank, 1993; Winer & Ray, 1994).

Collaborations can empower the effort by “(1) obtaining authority to act, clarifying roles and securing commitments, and specifying what each agency contributes and what it can expect; (2) resolving conflict-realizing that conflict can be expected and can be dealt with by having a conflict resolution process in place, clarifying issues, focusing on goals, and exploring alternatives; (3) organizing the effort-forming a structure, determining roles and staffing, and securing resources; and (4) supporting members by establishing a decision-making protocol and communications plan and recognizing and rewarding what made participants” (Kadel, 1991; National Assembly, 1991; Winer & Ray, 1994).

In order to ensure success plans should include: “(1) managing the work by establishing an action plan based on vision and goals, developing collaborative work habits, and determine accountability; (2) making necessary changes in collaborating organizations; (3) evaluating and continuously improving the effort, using multiple methods; (4) renewing the effort” (Melaville & Blank, 1993; Winer & Ray, 1994; Wynn, Merry & Berg, 1995).

And finally, endow continuity by “(1) make the collaboration visible; (2) involve the community and (3) sustain the effort by periodically reassessing the mission and vision, involving new leadership, and securing diverse funding (Kadel, 1991; Winer & Ray, 1994).
Collaborations require a change in thinking—the ability to see the “big picture” and to make the service or program seems “seamless”. Such changes can be intimidating or threatening (Bendle/Carmen, 1996). Successful collaborations require a great deal of work and effort to begin and to continue.

**Social Constructionism**

The basic contention of a social constructionist perspective is implicit in its title, namely that the reality is constructed socially (i.e. created in interaction) and that researchers must analyze the processes in which this occurs (Berger, Luckmann, 1966). A social setting is defined as an environment in which numerous forces, particularly those relating to an individual’s relationship to others, act upon people who are located in that setting (James & Nash, 1979). Culture refers to the values, beliefs and practices that influence the way an individual interprets the world (Gee & Green, 1998; Lee & Smagorinsky, 2000). Culture manifests itself in a variety of social settings and research shows that culture plays a significant role in an individual’s way of thinking about self and others (Hooper, 1998).

Social constructionism looks at the ways a social phenomenon is created, institutionalized and made into tradition by humans (Berger, Luckmann, 1966). The underlying assumption of this approach are that people constitute, create and produce themselves and their worlds through their conversational activity (Shotter, 1993) and that people communicate they are offering definitions of themselves and responding to definitions of other people. Socially constructed reality is seen as an on-going dynamic process where reality is re-produced by people acting on their interpretation and their
knowledge of it (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). This perspective does not suggest that people do not exist separate from their conversational activity but that the meaning and perceptions people have of themselves, others and reality are communicatively created. Meanings and knowledge are co-constructed (constructed together) in interaction.

Shaw’s (1995) theory of social construction states that “individual developmental cycles are enabled by shared constructive activity in the social setting and the social setting is also enhanced by the development of the individual” (p. 19). Shared constructive activity refers to the creation of social constructions of which there are five types: (1) social relationships, (2) social events, (3) shared physical artifacts, (4) shared social goals or projects and (5) shared cultural norms and traditions (Shaw, 1995). Social constructionism is a useful framework for looking at the interests of a group or community (Shaw, 1995). According to Shaw (1995) “the social setting presents a context of social relations and cultural materials which set the stage for sociocultural activities and processes through which developmental internalized and externalized constructs can be formed. These constructs can further influence the setting by adding new artifacts and processes to the setting, causing it to evolve by changing existing relationships, adding or altering cultural materials, activities and processes and by fostering new cognitive and social developments” (p. 45).

As social constructionism is social and focuses on both the process and the product of human interaction and communication (Leeds-Hurwitz, 1995) and that it is social in the primary focus on communication and the relationship of people interacting rather than on the individual, it seems to fit nicely into studying how individuals within the agency (as a group and individuals) viewed the collaboration effort. Social
constructionism focuses on both process and product at the same time and communication maintains the reality and “on-goingly modifies it” (Berger & Luckman, 1966, p.13). Relationships and reality are viewed as created, constituted, and sustained by communication. We engage in communication processes that generate meaning and create knowledge (Penman, 1992). Communication creates and recreates our social world (Penman, 1992).

Shotter (1993) contends that social constructionists in general study the contingent flow of continuous communicative activity between human beings. Our ways of talking lend further form or structure to what we know about the world and what we know about the world is rooted in our ways of talking. Social constructionists recognize the constitutive role of social interaction in the construction of group identity (Shotter, 1993). Social constructionists recognize that people’s past and present experiences color their understanding of the world in which they live and can affect their interactions with others.

Berger and Luckmann (1966) contend that institutions have a shared history and that this cannot be created instantaneously. Institutions always have a history of which they are social products and that to understand the history of the institution you must understand the history (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). According to Berger & Luckman, 1966, “The relationship between man, the producer, and the social world, his product, is and remains a dialectical one and that the social world and man interact with each other. The product acts back upon the producer. Externalization and objectivity are moments in a continuing dialectical process which is internalization (by which the objectivity social
world is in the course of socialization) and will have a fundamental relationship in the social world. Society is a human product. Man is a social product” (p.61).

This is important in this research study since the collaboration effort is not only dealing with different agencies but different staff across agencies and staff members who are involved across several agencies. Acknowledging that each agency or organization and then each staff member will reconstruct their own version of the collaboration as they viewed it from their standpoint. It is also important to understand that each agency will view its conception, process and progress differently as their viewpoint from the collaborative process is unique. Research from a social constructionist perspective focuses on communication transaction as complex, dynamic and context-dependent.

According to Shaw (2004) “Social constructionism is usually thought of as an educational theory rather than as a theory with broader social implications. But I believe that borrowing this paradigm from educational circles can offer fresh and insightful perspectives to issues involving institutional settings and social conditions. Borrowing ideas from one field to another can be an important avenue for breaking new ground on old problems”. In this aspect, this research will borrow from the ideas of the social construction theory in that the socially constructed reality of the recollections of the collaborators is seen as an on-going, dynamic process and that reality will be re-produced by people acting on their interpretation and their knowledge of it.

Socio-cultural Theory

Socio-cultural theory is the main theory that this research will be based upon. Socio-cultural perspective is a perspective that combines variables of culture, social
grouping, context and historical background while at the same time concerning itself with the individual and social groupings and culture that the individual is embedded into. Current conceptualizations of sociocultural theory draw heavily upon the work of Vygotsky (1986) as well as Wertsch (1991, 1998). Vygotsky pioneered a sociocultural approach to understanding cognitive processes. He focused on revealing how social and cultural interactions are critical to the genesis of cognitive functions. Vygotsky (1986) believed that our need to interact and communicate in the sociocultural context in that which makes human cognitive development intellectual and distinct from animal cognition. By highlighting the effects of social interactions on cognitive development, Vygotsky reveals a critical role that external activities play in sparking internal mental constructions. Although internal and external dynamics are cyclic, Vygotsky clearly views the external component (the shared and communicated experiences) as being primary in many key instances, in that they initiate certain critical internal components through the process of internalization (Shaw, 2004).

According to Cobb (1994), “The sociocultural and the constructivist viewpoint can be used to complement each other when studying cultural practices”. Bott (1971) also argues that the social constructionism offers an important bridge for the socioculturalist and the constructivist viewpoints as individual development are enhanced by shared constructive activity in the social setting. Social constructionism adds further harmony to sociocultural and constructivist views by revealing that the social setting is also enhanced by the developmental activity of the individual. The duality of this interplay has important ramifications for studying social institutions. If the constructionist notion that shared constructions and social relations are the key to
individual development, the social settings that are marked by fractured and limited shared social activity and less cohesive social relations—such as those in institutions—may present troubling development barriers. However, since the social setting is not immutable, introducing activities which are socially constructive may provide responses.

Indicating that cultural context plays an important role in individual development connects sociocultural component with the constructivist viewpoint Papert (1990).

According to Cole (1974), constructs are defined through the activities and characteristics of a particular social group which has functional objectives and needs. Through this combination lens, a group of subjects can serve as active agents in the construction of outcomes and artifacts that produce a developmental cycle in the social setting and this view explicitly includes as social constructions the social relations and social activities embedded in the social setting (Cole, 1974). To social constructionism, the social setting itself is an evolving construction. When the member of a social setting develops external and shareable social constructs, they engage the setting in a cycle of development which is critical to determining its ultimate form (Shaw, 2004).

According to Tharp and Gallimore (1988), “The view [the sociocultural perspective] has profound implications for teaching, schooling and education. A key feature of this emergent view of human development is that higher order functions develop out of social interaction”. Vygotsky argues that a child’s development cannot be understood by a study of the individual. We must also examine the external social world in which that individual life has developed. Through participation in activities that require cognitive and communicative functions, individuals are drawn into the use of these functions in ways that nurture and ‘scaffold’ them (Tharp & Gallimore, 1988).
How does this theory translate to child care givers in the field? Adamson and Chance (1998, p. 21) contend that “…There are two particularly noteworthy aspects to a Vygotskian approach to social interactions. First, it is fundamentally culture. Caregivers are agents of culture (Trevarthen, 1988) who set an infant’s nascent actions within an intimate setting that is deeply informed by the caregiver’s cultural knowledge. Caregivers cannot help but view infants’ expressions as meaningful within the human sphere of their own culture. Infants, in complement, are quintessential cultural apprentices who seek the guided participation of their elders (Rogoff, 1990).

Second, the notion of a zone of proximal development reveals a pattern of developmental change in which a phase of adult support precedes a phase of independent infant accomplishment. …The adult’s reaction and interpretations transform the infant’s emerging behavior into a social act. In essence, the child induces the adult to recruit the act for communication (Bakeman, Adamson, Konner & Barr, 2003). …The child gradually masters an action that is qualified with cultural meaning.”

Clearly, sociocultural theory is much more complicated then this brief discussion however the aspects that the child care worker and the infant communicate in a social world in which there is co-interpretation by the adult and the child is important to note when examining the cultural world of child care. It also helps to establish that the child care world is a social setting in which communication and interpretations are occurring constantly.

The adults are communicating with each other in the overall site and the adults are communicating within their own agencies. The center is a social setting in which communicate occurs and in which interpretation of that communication happens. In
investigating the process of the collaboration and how the administrators, director and teachers recall this experience will heavily rely on their interpretations of past and current events. Part of the research study will be trying to piece together the “story” of the collaboration effort and the links between the stories and the memories. This story will be an interpretation of individuals who lived the experience with their own individual differences and personalities.

There will be recognition of the fundamental role of mediation means in understanding human collective and individual action. Forms of mediation include language (or discourse) and artifacts as well as specific methods of studying the collective action (interviews, survey/questionnaire). Language is the most significant resource for creating and reproducing meaning for the human species and it is an essential feature of practically all human practices. Human knowledge is largely stored in discourse and communication is foundational of all human activity and a prerequisite for all coordinated social action (Rogoff, 1990). Talk is considered as a means of social action. In this complex society, many practices are predominantly communicative in nature (Rogoff, 1990).

There is a relationship between language/artifacts/social actions in that artifacts are conceived as “embodied forms of human knowledge and as mediating resources that restructure communicative and physical practices as well as human thinking. Social action prototypically involves the simultaneous use of physical artifacts and language and is carried out by means of coordination between people and artifacts. Thinking is understood as distributed between people in shared actions and as discursive in nature” (Koschmann, 2003).
According to Koschmann (2003) there is an interest in the field in the historical emergence of forms of communication, of artifacts and of social institutions—how did specific modes of communication arise and how were they transformed during history? During the course of this research the recollections of the administrator, director and staff along with the physical artifacts will help give rise to how the story transformed from the initial conversations to surveys to later interviews. The hope is that a pattern might emerge from the research which gives a picture of how through communication means—a written and oral history of the process of the collaborative effort will arise. It will be interesting to note if there are any repeated stories that have variations on the theme of the collaboration.

Summary

The theoretical framework presented in this chapter identifies the lens for which the research is seen; the orienting conceptual assumptions underlying this research. By using the sociocultural perspective, I assume a (1) “dynamic interdependence between social and individual processes in the construction of knowledge” (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996, p.192) and (2) “a situated approach” to the nature of collaboration and the linear developmental pathway of collaboration as situated and conceived by the literature base (Kagan, 1991) and (3) the idea that the nature of collaboration is embedded in many larger nested and overlapping contexts (Graue & Walsh, 1998, p.10), and (4) the issue of marginality within the child care environment on macro and institutional levels and (5) that marginality of child care is also displayed on the local level located and embedded within state and thus, the influence and perception of the larger society.
These central themes form the theoretical framework guiding my epistemological assumptions on the nature of collaboration and the life of a “neighborhood” located and situated within that collaboration project. As will be discussed in Chapter 3, these theoretical assumptions have oriented this research study and the choice of methodology and the process of data collection and analysis. Specifically, guided by a sociocultural view in regard to collaboration and child care, I used an interpretive and ethnographic approach on the studying the nature of the collaboration and then guided by the research moved into a critical ethnography to look at the child care neighborhood in context. I took into account the focus on meaning making and phenomenon making as “situated, historically, socially and culturally” (Graue & Walsh, 1998) and “the sociocultural substantiality of ethnographic inquiry (Hymes, 1982, p.30). I also took into account that critical ethnography has an emancipatory interest and that critical research should “use ethnographic work as a resource, critically appropriating aspects of the work…to clarify the basis of everyday life and the possibilities of transformation” (Simon & Dippo, 1986, p.199).

This research takes the opportunity to look at a collaboration which is unique and a model for other states in combining programs and services for families with and without children who have disabilities. It also provides information on the pre-existing literature base on collaboration and the linear developmental pathway and mediating variables. Along with expanding that literature base, the research adds to existing literature base on how sustaining collaborations deal with the child care section of human service programs and how their incorporate into combined programming needs to account for differences in perception, societal views and inherent institutional hindrances.
such as: low pay, low education requirements and long hours. Further, it examines these marginalization issues in regard to an existing collaboration so that these issues can be addressed and recommendations can be made to continue the nature of the collaboration.
CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, I present the methodological framework that has guided this study. Included in this section is also a description of the study’s data collection and analysis processes. I begin with a brief overview of the framework focusing on interpretive inquiry which shaped the methodology. In the second section of this chapter I describe the study including the research site and participants, selection of the research site, gaining entrance into the site and rapport, and the role of the researcher. Included in this section are also data collection methods and analysis methods. In the final section I discuss issues of praxis and ethical issues of trustworthiness, credibility and transferability.

Methodological Framework

The central question of this research study is how did the YWCA enter into the collaborative process as the only full-time year round child care program at the center site? Research indicates that overall collaboration efforts fail and do not work well (Kagan, 1991). “The Partnership” seems to be thriving and is a prime example of a working collaboration in process. Since child care and the YWCA specifically is clearly
an “odd-man-out” of the partnership in that it is a full-time child care program with infants, toddlers, and pre-school age children year round. This program is truly unique and different fundamentally from the other programs in the center that are part-time and not year-round programs. Thus, it is important and essential to study this agency of the collaboration to see how the partnership was initially contacted, formed and how the partnership was initially contacted, formed and how they contributed to the partnership and collaboration effort.

Initial interviews were conducted with the primary partners and important key players in each organization and agency. The following questions were asked of each key person or partner who played a direct role in the building of the partnership and in order to gain better insight into the history of the collaboration effort through multiple perspectives: (1) Why did you initially get involved with this project? (2) After initial meetings, why did you continue to stay involved with this project? (3) Have you ever collaborated with other organizations, and if so, please describe them? (4) What did you hope to get out of the organization? (5) You want to stay committed to the project? (6) Was the finalized project different from your initial ideas? (7) Did you have any institutional hindrances?

The above questions and subsequent participant observations, semi-structured interviews, questionnaires/surveys and group interview with a particular theoretical framework grounded in social constructionism and sociocultural perspective guided my choices of methods in fundamental ways. My methodological viewpoint involved a particular ontological and epistemological viewpoint based on the nature of collaboration efforts and the marginalization of the child care field. Thus, assuming that the teachers
and administrators are socially-constructed their memories and recollections of how the project was started and in accordance with the idea that the reality was socially constructed within and among the agencies throughout the process; I adopted an interpretive approach and ethnographic perspective to understand the social construction of this collaborative process.

**Interpretive Inquiry**

The theoretical framework is the basic belief system or worldview (Guba & Lincoln, 1994) that guides the researcher’s methodology and assumptions. Zaharlick and Green (1991) suggest that the basic belief system “suggests ways of conceptualizing the phenomena of interest as well as factors that the researcher may need to consider for the specific group under study” (p. 213) it then creates a context for inquiry.

Using sociocultural perspective this study will assume that people are social creatures embedded into social constructs. I believe that the process of collaboration is a social construct and that the recollections of the key partners and administrators and teachers will be embedded in social and historical constructs. I am assuming that since each person is a social being and is embedded in his own culture and the overall culture of working with children there will be multiple realities in the recollections of individuals and agencies even as they recall the same process.

An interpretive study is best suited for this type of research. Since the interpretive aim is to understand the perspective of participants, the basic underlying question and follow up research questions can be studied by assessing situated, historical, social and culturally meanings (Graue & Walsh, 1998). An ethnographic perspective and methods
are because these methods (field notes, prolonged engagement in the field, semi-structured interviews, document analysis) and will help to reconstruct the meanings that people initially held, aiming toward consensus but still open to new interpretations. Findings include those constructions about which there is relative consensus (among those competent to interpret the substance of the construction). Multiple findings can coexist when equally competent interpreters disagree depending on social, political, cultural, economic, and ethnic and gender factors that differentiate the interpreters. An ethnographic report will present an integrated synthesis of experiences and theories. The final interpretive theory will be multi-voiced and dialogical. It will build on “native” interpretations and in fact simply articulate what is implicit in those interpretations. Social and cultural understanding can be found by ethnographers only if they are aware of the sources of ideas that motivate them and are willing to confront them all. Based on Spradley’s work (1980) the observations will start with general description and then move on to focused and the selective observations. A cultural domain analysis will be used to look at cultural patterns with the focus on the “feeling” domain (Spradley, 1980). Thus, this study will tell the story of the YWCA’s participation in the collaboration effort from the point of view of the administrator, director and the staff involved in the daily dealings with the collaboration effort. It will tell how the staff feels about the collaboration effort as they are the ones living it daily.

**Ethnography**

Spradley (1979) considers that ethnography can describe and explain human social behavior in four specific ways. These can be paraphrased as follows:
• Informing culture bound theories, meaning to find out how participants in the culture define the world rather than imposing the researcher’s own theories on those being studied;

• Discovering grounded theory, meaning the development of theories grounded in the empirical data of cultural description, rather than the testing of formal theories;

• Understanding complex societies, meaning the recognition of the complexity of modern life the range of cultural differences and…how people with diverse perspectives interact;

• Understanding human behavior through what the participants themselves know and how they define their actions. (Spradley, 1979, p.10-12).

However, Spradley (1979) also suggests that ethnographic research can result in social change of some kind that it doesn’t need to be a neutral search for knowledge and understanding, but can subsequently serve the needs of the culture being studied. He calls this “strategic research” and suggests that: “Strategic research begins with an interest in human problems. These problems suggest needed changes and information needed to make such changes.” (Spradley, 1979, p.15)

Critical Ethnography

Historically, ethnography has been used as a research tool in anthropology and in contemporary usage is often included in discussions of the interpretive paradigm of research. The role of the ethnographer is to draw a detailed picture of the social experiences of people.

A particular form of ethnography, known as critical ethnography is difficult to define. Quantz (1992) suggests that we should not even try, as it is not possible to define
social reality with any precision. Simon and Dippo (1986) do not attempt to define it but point to the conditions that must be met if we are to call something critical ethnography. Simon and Dippo (1986) suggest critical ethnography should meet three conditions. First, it “must employ an organizing problematic that defines one’s data and analytic procedures in a way consistent with its project” (Simon & Dippo, 1986, p. 197). To be critical, it needs to study the social practices operating in groups which determine action and meaning.

These social practices are verbal and non-verbal, seen and unseen, open and at times suppressed. These practices are culturally influenced and therefore any critical ethnography study requires the questioning of macro issues of power, ideology and culture. Not only must critical ethnographers study groups but they must encourage a critique and involve themselves in challenging inequitable social practices and unjust social structures and institutions. Critical ethnography attempts to enable people to see their actions in a wider socio-historical context (Simon & Dippo, 1986).

Second, in critical ethnography the “work must be situated” in part, within a public sphere that allows it to become the starting point for the critique and transformation of the conditions of oppressive and inequitable moral and social regulations” (Simon & Dippo, 1986, p.197). This critique should encourage people to understand their own actions and the historical and social context in which they are acting.

The emancipatory interest is the key insight into understanding critical ethnography. Emancipatory interest can be defined as “a fundamental interest in emancipation and empowerment to engage in autonomous action arising out of authentic,
critical insights in the social construction of human society” (Grundy, 1987, p.19). In other words, emancipation is a key human characteristic and any critical research has to reflect emancipator characteristics. Quantz (1992, p. 448). The participants should be able to “use ethnographic work as a resource, critically appropriating aspects of the work…to clarify the basis of everyday life and the possibilities of transformation” (Simon & Dippo, 1986, p. 199).

And third, critical ethnography needs to acknowledge their work is “constituted and regulated through historical relations of power and existing material conditions” (Simon & Dippo, 1986, p.197).

**The Research Site and the Participants**

The research site “The Partnership” located in a Midwestern community is a unique partnership of local, county and state education, medical, social service and mental health agencies and organizations working together in a collaborative effort in one site to more effectively serve the community’s children and families. This particular project was initiated in 1998 by the Franklin County Board of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities. The center is set up as a series of neighborhoods, interconnected yet independent. A total of 29 classrooms with a capacity for up to 700 children have been designed to incorporate a number of proven child care and teaching approaches that best serve the multiple needs of children from birth through age eight both with and without special needs.
List of Partners which form “The Partnership:

- Action for Children
- Alcohol Drug and Mental Health
- Child Development Council of Franklin County Head Start (CDCFC)
- Columbus Metropolitan Area Community Action Organization Head Start (CMACAO)
- Columbus Health Department
- Columbus Public Schools
- Franklin County Board of Health
- Franklin County Board of MRDD/Service Coordinators
- Franklin County Board of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (MRDD) Early Childhood Education
- Franklin County Children’s Services
- Franklin County Department of Job and Family Services
- Ohio Department of Education, Division of Early Childhood Education
- The Ohio State University
- YWCA of Columbus
- YMCA of Central Ohio

Figure 3.1 List of Partners in the System

The YWCA provides full day, partial day and wrap-around childcare services for this facility and the neighboring community. Wrap-around services are available for those children who are participating in FCBMRDD programs but need childcare before or after the program. There are five classrooms with space for 16 infants, 24 toddlers and 16 pre-school children. There are 56 full time slots available and approximately 5,000 square feet of space. Numerous additional play and enrichment areas are located throughout the building adding to the available space for the children. They include a library, art and music spaces, large motor areas, several outdoor play spaces and an Art Studio in which the children can keep projects going over multiple days. The center
operates from 7:00 am until 6:00 pm Monday through Friday on a 12 month schedule with limited days off due to holidays. Customers include families involved within the FCBMRDD and Head Start system, and families in the surrounding communities. The surrounding area includes a major shopping area, residential, retail and office complexes and an international airport and is a major employer base. The staff includes 1 program director, 4 lead teachers, 6 teachers and 1 part-time substitute.

YWCA (Birth through Pre-school)

Staff: 10 teachers; 4 lead teachers and 6 assistant teachers; 1 part-time substitute and 1 on-site director

Children: 16 infants; 24 toddlers; 16 pre-school=56 slots available

Classrooms: 5 classrooms; Neighborhood 1

Hours of Operation: 7:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m.

Schedule: 12 months with limited holidays off

Work Hours: 40 hours a week in an assigned age group

Figure 3.2 Demographics of The YWCA Neighborhood

Selection of Research Site

This research site was chosen because of the unique nature of the collaboration effort. Since there are no other centers like it in this area—it was purposely chosen as a
research site. However, using the YWCA as the focus of the center grew out of emerging questions after time in the field. At first, I attended “Partner Meetings” in which the key players and administrators in this collaboration effort meet with a professional “facilitator” who has helped them over the course of the collaboration effort. This facilitator would have each member raise concerns and examples of collaboration and discussions would address and solve problems. During the course of going to these meetings and listening to dialogue and with my background in child care, I decided that working with the agency that dealt with child care issues would be most interesting to me.

Criteria for Selecting YWCA Agency

In this collaboration site, there are many agencies and organizations working with children however the YWCA providing child care is a unique part of the collaboration since it provides year-round all day child care. I wanted to study the field of child care since it most unlike the other agencies and I wanted to see if the workers in the child care field at this center experienced the same types of inherent issues that face the child care field in general. Some of the inherent problems across the child care field include: poor pay, high turn-over and low education. Poor pay drives almost a third of child care workers to quit their jobs each year, creating unstable environments for children and depleting the child care work force (www.4children.org). According to the Child Care Workforce, “child care workers earn less than parking-lot attendants, and data entry-operators” (www.4children.org). The cornerstone of good child care is the presence of consistent, sensitive, well-trained and well-compensated caregivers. High turn-over rates in the field, fueled by poor compensation and few opportunities for advancement is
causing the quality of services that children and parents receive to decline dangerously.

Our nation has adopted a child care policy that relies on an unacknowledged subsidy: the contribution that child care workers (98% female and one-third women of color) make by being paid much less than the value of their skilled and vital work.

While policy makers and advocates have devoted considerable attention in recent years to improving child care quality, their efforts have focused almost exclusively on the child’s environment and hardly ever on the adult’s (Whitebook, Howes & Phillips, 1998). Although the pedagogical concept of “caring for the whole child” is widely recognized, many have yet to acknowledge how critical it is to care for the “whole adult” in child care settings: the caregivers who do not only fulfill a certain professional role but have a wide array of personal, family and economic needs of their own (Whitebook, Howes & Phillips, 1998). Because of this general disregard for the needs of the child care workforce, job conditions in the profession remain substandard (Whitebook, Howes & Phillips, 1998).

According to a 1997 study of child care staffing, real wages for most child care teaching staff have remained stagnant over the past decade. The average center-based teacher earns roughly $7.50 per hour and even those on the highest end of the pay scale earn on average only $10.85 an hour or $18,988 per year (Whitebook, Howes & Phillips, 1998). The annual turnover rate hovers between thirty and forty percent throughout the country according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics in the U.S. Department of Labor 2003 report. Appropriately one third of the nation’s child care workforce leave their jobs each year—most often, in order to earn a better living elsewhere (Whitebook, Howes & Phillips, 1998). At such a rate of turnover the shortage of trained and qualified workers
has become a national staffing crisis. Those who remain on the job share the extra burden of constantly training new co-workers and the quality of services that children and parents receive continues to decline dangerously.

This collaboration effort includes a newly renovated center with top of the line space, new materials and areas that most child care centers can only dream about. The building itself has rooms that child care dreams about and services that most child care facilities do not have such as art teachers, music teachers, developmental specialists and inside gyms. Material resources are also not scarce but are plentiful and give teachers the opportunity to explore.

**Gaining Entrance and Developing Rapport**

Gaining entry into this site was contingent upon being part of the research team under the guidance of Dr. “Willis” and Dr. “Warton”. Both Drs. “Willis” and “Warton” have a long relationship with the collaboration process from the beginning stages of development, implementation and the opening of the center site. Being part of the research team gave me automatic access to the site. After being part of the research team and being introduced at a partner meeting two years ago, I have been able to attend research meetings with the collaboration team, attend and participate in partner meetings, attend and participate in initial interview sessions, and attend and participate in professional development seminars located at the center.

Research meetings were conducted with all members of the research team meeting either the center site or on campus to discuss what the project should be about and how each team member’s role and study of interest might fit into the research project.
as a whole. We read the book “Creative Collaboration” by Vera John-Steiner (John-Steiner, 2000) as a group and discussed chapters and parts of the book that we felt were relevant to the research project.

During the first two years of the process the research team conducted interviews with key players and administration involved in the collaboration history. We asked each administrator/key person the same questions about their involvement in the collaboration process. It soon became apparent through the initial interviews that some key recollections were accounted by each group. Some of these recollections began telling the story of how the process of the collaboration was interpreted by the key members of the collaboration process.

After the initial interviews and establishing that my connection to the collaboration process would be the child care factor and the YWCA it became time for me to gain entry into the particular classrooms and to build a relationship with the staff. As I wrote my field notes a pattern of study became more focused. I was going to concentrate on how the YWCA became part of the collaboration process (their history, their story) and how that collaboration was perceived by them and how it was working at the current time and place. I was interested in knowing how the field and profession of child care fit into collaboration with different types of services and programs and mission statements. True, all agencies deal with children and families however each agency has its own unique history and its own unique story that it brought to the table in this collaboration process. I also felt that other child care programs would be able to benefit from seeing how the collaboration worked for the YWCA.
After it was formally announced a Partner Meeting by Drs. “Willis” and “Warton” that my focus was to be with the YWCA, I made plans to start observing classrooms and getting to know the staff and director. I already had an established professional and personal relationship with the administrator of Early Childhood Programs for the YWCA and thus, trust was already established although a reconnection needed to be made.

I was introduced at a staff meeting after center hours by the director. I was asked to tell about my professional and personal life and to give the teachers an idea and a glimpse of what the research would be about. I gave a family photo of my children and a brief professional and personal biography that was distributed to the parents and placed on the bulletin boards so that parents would understand who I was when they saw me at the center. Later, this photo of my children would open up conversations from staff about my children which helped to build connections. I wanted to put them at ease that I was not coming in to “tell on them” or “to tell them what is wrong with their teaching methods, etc”. I was instead trying to tell their story of how the collaboration began and their role in the process. I let them know that my plan was to participate in the classroom and not be a burden to the already overburdened work load in the classroom. Working in the classrooms was the way to gain entrance to building a relationship and gaining trust with the staff in order to ask those questions about the collaboration process. I wanted them to know that I remembered what it was like being in the classroom and that I would offer my share of the help when I was in the classroom. I wanted to see that I understood the job and all the inherent issues that are present when working in the child care field.
Although I observed in the classrooms I became a participant observer instead of a silent non-participating observer. Being a participant observer was the only way to gain trust with the staff and build a rapport. Child care staff members are so busy with the physical demands of their jobs, time constraints and licensing requirements that they simply do not have time to sit and “chat” with a researcher. Since child care workers always need another hand it was important to let them know that my presence in the classroom would not be a burden but would be a benefit. In my opinion and experience the busiest classrooms seem to be the infant rooms. I started with observing in the infant rooms. I then moved on to the toddler and preschool rooms. I tried to spend different parts of the day in the classroom as my schedule and time allowed (excluding nap time on purpose as I remember this was the only time my staff had to relax and catch up on paperwork) and in different kinds of weather (raining, sunny, cold) so that I could experience the day in the life of the child care worker. This allowed me to experience walking in the rain, being caught with strollers and infants as the rain began, playing in the inside gyms and playing outside in the sunshine.

Since I did not have an established relationship with the director I tried to schedule some time before our schedule interview to get to know her better. I stopped by her office each time I came to observe at the center in order to establish that I was in the facility (even though I signed in at the front desk—this was a courtesy) and to check in what room(s) I would be observing in that day. Sometimes I saw the director and other times I didn’t however by establishing that courtesy I believe a professional contact was made. Sometimes when I stopped in, I tried to make small-talk about the profession in general. We discovered after talking that our daughters attended the same high school
and that we lived in the same community. We had built up enough of a relationship that some time later when a bomb scare would happen at our daughters’ high school, I stopped by the center to see if she knew and if she needed me to pick up her daughter and bring her to the center.

By having an already established professional and personal relationship with the administration, being introduced at a staff meeting, working with the staff and stopping by for small-talk with the director, I feel that a working relationship was established and that I became part of the center community by “jumping in” and helping where I was needed when I was present in the classroom. Listening to the staff and interacting with them on different levels (classroom, staff meeting, and professional development) helped me to build a rapport and establish a working relationship.

The Role of the Researcher

Defining my role in the classroom was established early when I started my observations in the classroom. Because the process of the research is just as important as the product of the research, the relationship between the researcher and the researched must be foregrounded. Individual action and reaction are no longer isolated or examined from a linear perspective instead the complex interplay of the researcher, the researched and the social world must be acknowledged. Research is seen as constructed between the researcher and the researched and the methods and role of the researcher is a creation and discovery of the co-construction of meaning.

Collaboration in the research process is necessary in order to recognize and include the experiences of both the researchers and the researched. Collaboration is the
reciprocal sharing of knowledge and experience between the researcher and the researched. Although the researcher’s understanding of what has been researched will always be incomplete, collaboration with research participants can provide the opportunity to compare and modify researcher perception with the participants so that shared meaning about the research becomes more apparent and a more complete understanding is available. According to Shields and Dervin (1993) the more we collaborate with the people we research, “the more we interact with them, the more we partake in their environment, the better, more accurate and less exploitive the results will be” (p. 70).

Keeping that in mind, I decided that my role as a researcher would be to conduct participant observation in the classrooms in order to build a relationship and establish rapport and then to move on to semi-structured interviews, survey/questionnaire, and a group meeting to provide the best recollection of the process of collaboration from the YWCA’s point of view. I also would examine and look at historical documents such as the business plan in order to establish a timeline of events.

Since I understood the profession and the daily job of the child care worker, it was not a conflict for me to participate in functions such as feeding children, wiping runny noses and rocking crying infants. My role was conflicting in the classroom when I saw practices that were in direct conflict with my education and professional knowledge in which I clearly wanted to correct. It was difficult to stand back and take a role as a helper and not be the “teacher” or “professional” in charge. If a teacher asked me if there was another way to solve a conflict I would offer helpful suggestions however I needed to be clear from the beginning that my presence was not to interfere or correct the daily
running of the classroom. During one particular incident in which a classroom was outside and the parents were picking up children a teacher became confused on how many children she had to bring inside. After some confusion and other teacher’s trying to help her re-call what children she came outdoors with, I suggested that since she had taken a digital picture of the children before we left the classroom that she look at the picture and then count the number of children who went outside and compare that to the sign-out list in the classroom. Only because this was a safety issue did I offer an unsolicited suggestion and after that I tried to stay out of the daily running of the classroom since I was trying to establish a rapport with the teachers.

Participant observation was the best method to employ when working in the classroom as the teachers in child care classrooms can always use another set of hands. There never seems to be enough teachers in the classroom especially the infant room.

**Issues of Reciprocity and Ethics**

This study involved several years of contact with members of the partnership and the YWCA. It involved being present at Partner Meetings with administrators and key people involved in the process while they discussed sensitive issues of concerns, problems and insight into the collaboration process. It involved being part of professional development seminars in which teaching materials relevant to the center was discussed and implemented. It required that partners and staff members would speak out on issues in front of the research team noting that we were documenting and taking field notes. Interviewing key people and administrators to tell their recollections of the stories involved sharing personal memories and private moment’s throughout the collaboration.
process. The YWCA staff shared personal struggles with the field of child care and how they are involved and affected by the collaboration effort. They also shared personal feelings about being in the child care field and the differences that they faced being in the center with diverse groups and agencies.

Meeting the “demands of reciprocity” (Marshall & Rossman, 1995, p.60) was an overlying concern throughout the research process. There were some conversations in the classroom that I felt were too personal and in order to build the relationship and gain the trust of the staff; I choose not to write it down in my field notes. There was a time when I had planned to observe another classroom however when I saw the infant room was busy and short of staff I changed my plans and went to work helping feed the infants and get them settled for nap time.

As part of the child care community I felt an obligation to the relationship that I had established with the staff. I tired to help out when I could and tried to pitch in with the “dirty work” (i.e. wiping running noses) when I needed to. I volunteered to give a seminar on a child development topic at the director’s choosing to thank her for the staff participating in the study and spending time after hours filling out survey/questionnaire information and attending a group interview based on the answers from the survey and observations.

Confidentiality was maintained in the surveys and field notes. I wanted to make sure that the observations and my field notes were my interpretations of events as they unfolded. Since my focus was not on classroom behavior or the children’s I did not share my field notes with the staff. I made observations that I felt corresponded to the collaboration efforts and then based on these observations made notes to ask the staff
about them in interviews. The observations helped the research questions to emerge from what I observed and participated in within their world and their culture. The teachers are my guide into how the collaboration is a work in progress and how the collaboration in working in the practical sense of the classroom. The teachers are my guide into how they perceived their part in the history of the collaboration and since they live the collaboration daily, what their opinion of the collaboration effort is to the field of child care.

Ongoing Reflexivity

My personal background in child care, my long-standing relationship with the administrators of the YWCA, my participation in the classroom, my theoretical and methodological orientation and my interpretations of what I saw and heard all influenced the research process. For example, having been a center director of both non-profit and profit day care centers in the area led me to understand the every day workings of child care and inherent issues that the field faces on an on-going basis. Being a former child day care worker allows me to understand the long hours and demands of the child care teachers. And being a parent helped me to understand how child care workers are perceived and treated from a parental viewpoint.

Understanding that my past experiences played into how I viewed the research were important so that I did not project my thoughts and feelings into what I was observing. Thus, the reflective journal that I kept during my observations helped me to focus on what was my perception and what I observed. Ongoing reflexivity involved taking into account my presence and the roles that I took while in the classroom or
partner meetings. In other words, “Observation not only disturbs and shapes but it is also shaped by what is observed” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p.98). Further, the context of the relationship built between the researcher and the research participants is also situated historically, socially and culturally (Graue & Walsh, 1998).

Data Collection Process

An interpretive approach with an ethnographic perspective was used to examine the nature of the collaboration and the history of a particular agency within the collaboration. A critical ethnography emerged from prolonged engagement in the field and looked at how the staff members interpreted their daily participation in the collaboration located with the field of child care and feelings of marginalization. This research took place over several years with the most concentrated part of the research occurring in the final year of study.

Specific ethnographic methods used for data collection were: participant observation, semi-structured interviews, field notes, audio taping, collection of documents and artifacts and informal interviews with staff and director through ongoing conversations. The data collection process took place over several years in four phases: (1) initial participation in partner meetings and initial research meetings; (2) regularly scheduled research team meetings and initial interviews of key partners and administrators; (3) prolonged engagement in the field with participant observation for a five-month period in addition to regularly scheduled research team meetings; and (4) semi-structured interviews with administrator, director and staff, surveys, secondary interviews with administrator, director and staff.
First, I will describe the techniques that were used in the data collection process. Then, I will detail the time period, focus and data sources of each data collection phase.

**Ethnographic Tools used for Data Collection**

This two-year ethnography is constructed from a collection of data from multiple sources including participant observation, field notes, professional seminars, retreats, research team meetings, audiotaping, videotaping, collection of artifacts and documents, document analysis and conversations with staff and administrators. The research began with the meeting of the research team and is depicted in Figure 3.3.
### Timeline of Research Process with Team Members

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Nature of Meeting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>Initial Meeting with team members</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 3     | 02   | Worked on initial interview questions  
   Started book discussion on “Creative Collaboration” by Vera John-Steiner; attended Partner meeting and spoke about research interests |
| 4     | 02   | Scheduling of initial interviews with key Partners; area identified as working with the child care section of collaboration; YWCA |
| 5     | 02   | Attended Partner Meeting and requested initial interviews with key Partners  
   Initial meeting with YWCA teachers; informal meeting; meetings with research team to re-work initial interview questions; interviews start with key Partners |
| 6     | 02   | Research meetings with Team Members  
   Summer Break  
   Continue with book; work on research of Collaboration topic |
| 10    | 02   | Initial fall meeting; discuss schedule for meetings and where research should go from observations/inferences from initial interviews |
| 11    | 02   | Meetings start again on a monthly basis; discussion of collaboration research; interviews; attendance in Partner Meetings; professional development |
| 1     | 03   | Start research on each key partner in order to fine-tune research proposal; histories of each Partnership has unique and distinct beginnings |
|      |      | Summer off |
|      |      | 10 | 03 | Meetings again in the fall resume |
|      |      | 11 | 03 | Meetings again with addition of new research doctoral student; one subtraction of doctoral student |

Continued

**Figure 3.3** Timeline of Research Process with Team Members
Figure 3.3 continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>04</td>
<td>Regular meetings starting every two to three weeks. Second round of interviewing and intense and prolonged engagement in the field begins; formal introduction to the YWCA; field work observations begins on weekly basis in classrooms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>04</td>
<td>Worked on IRB as a group; research meetings continue and field work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>04</td>
<td>Finalized IRB proposal to be submitted; attended Professional Development Sessions; formal Introductions to Partners and Teachers at Site.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>04</td>
<td>Research Meetings and Field Work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>04</td>
<td>Research Meetings and Field Work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>04</td>
<td>Research Meetings and Field Work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>04</td>
<td>Retreat for Partners, Formal Meetings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>04</td>
<td>Formal Meetings and Draft.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>04</td>
<td>Formal Meetings and Defense.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Participant Observation

As a participant observer, the ethnographer is able to gain the perspective and understanding that comes from being an “insider” to the culture (Spradley, 1980). Spradley (1980) advocates the use of participant observation and in-depth interviews to learn about the explicit and tacit knowledge held by individuals while minimizing the risk of imposing predetermined ideas on the population under study. Kirk and Miller (1986) believe that qualitative research is especially useful when seeking to understand questions of process rather than quantity. I came to the study originally with only general interests in mind. However, during the time spent at Partner meetings and the research meetings a focus started to emerge. After realizing that my professional background and the mission of the YWCA which focused on child care would be a great match for my part of the research project, I used prolonged time in the field in order for the specific question to emerge. The field data from the participant observation led to discovering a focus in looking at how the staff felt about the collaboration effort and process.

My involvement in the center involved various levels of participation during fieldwork. Mostly, I took a “reactive entry strategy” in that my actions in the classroom were “peripheral” to the daily routines (Corsaro, 1985). I was careful not to interfere with the daily routines of the classroom and helped when needed. My primary purpose was to observe and document classroom activities involving teacher participation in the overall collaboration effort. I was careful to not walk around with a notebook and pen instead choosing to write down my observations after I left the classroom. If an event occurred in which I felt needed documenting right away—I went to my small notebook
which I kept with my personal belongings and quickly jotted down some key points to remember the incident later. The following is an example from my field notes on jotting down key points to remember the situation to recall later:

“In play area—rainy day—another group approached the area and didn’t join us. Oh, someone else is there…we will find another space. Sigh of teacher—reaction—verbal reaction—oh, well. We would have made room, right guys” (Quick field note, 2004).

Figure 3.4 Sample of an Anecdotal Field Note

To some extent I did participate in classroom activities as I was needed. Being part of the classroom and becoming a presence in the room I alternated between being an insider and outsider” and having both simultaneously (Spradley, 1980).

During classroom observations I tried to find a space in the classroom where I could quietly observe. My interactions during these times were minimal. Other times it was necessary to be more involved in the classroom and I was needed to help physically be with the children. This is not to say that the teachers could not physically care for the children without my presence—they were quite capable and do so on a daily basis without my presence in the room. The times that I physically interacted with the children were when an “extra” pair of hands in the classroom made life a bit easier. An example of this participation involvement would be helping put bibs on infants before meal time and helping to supervise those infants who could feed themselves when teachers were busy
feeding bottles to other children in the classroom who were unable to feed themselves. Since I wanted to build a relationship with the teachers in order to understand their daily life in the collaboration it was essential to build a relationship with them during my time in the classroom. Had I chosen to quietly sit in the classroom during all of my observations it would have been difficult to build a relationship in which future conversations and discussions required them to open up about the details of the collaboration effort.

The research questions and theoretical framework guided my classroom observations. My classroom observations changed and became more focused throughout the study. The focus of my observations was impacted and guided by methodological decisions made after revision and analysis of field notes. Ongoing analysis influenced the selection of observation times, participants and areas to focus on; that is, identifying “who or what to observe, when, and for how long” (Creswell, 1998, p.125). The observations helped to formulate the areas of the collaboration effort that helped to perceive the concept of marginalization by the child care workers.

Field Notes

Field Notes/Reflective Journalizing is a way for the qualitative researcher to reflect upon and interpret events that have happened along the research process. The interpretation of such events along the research path is important as it can lead to patterns of behavior or can show the researcher’s point of view. The researcher is able to convey with descriptive notes how the process is being played in the researcher’s mind which gives voice to the researcher but also allows the reader to make their own interpretations and conclusions. The reflexive journal will be kept while in the field and reflections and
I purposely did not take a full notebook into the classroom when I observed. I wanted to make sure that the teacher’s felt comfortable with my presence and that they did not feel as if they were “under a microscope”. I wanted to build and establish a trusting relationship in order to have a better working relationship when I conducted the semi-structured interviews. I also wanted to fully participate in the classroom environment and not be a burden in an already busy environment and holding a notebook and writing feverishly did not seem to fit into this model. If there was an important incident that I felt needed to be documented so that I didn’t forget it---I carried a small spiral notebook in my pocket in which I would jot down some key words to remember the incident until I was finished with the observation. Then before I left the parking lot, I would write down more key phrases and notes in my larger notebook so that when I arrived at home to write out my thoughts on the computer I would have recollections of the incidents.

The field notes contained descriptive recollections of my observation time in the field. I would write down a detailed description of my time in the field and then write down my key reflections and points to ponder. The points to ponder section would contain questions that had emerged from the observation and points that I felt were considered important to remember. Some of these points to ponder became later emergent questions that were worked into informal discussions (conversations), the semi-structured interviews, and the survey/questionnaire forms. Some of the points to ponder
sections turned out to be theoretical notes which “involved hunches, hypotheses, interpretations…critiques” (Richardson, 1994, p.526).

My field notes became more focused as time went on in the field. Goodwin and Goodwin (1996) explain “Initially, they [the observation and notes] are more general, descriptive and broad in scope: as time goes by, they become increasingly focused, narrow and deep” (p.133).

Collection of Documents and Artifacts

Documents were collected throughout the research process. Some of the documents are for marketing purposes at the center and are available to the public for distribution whereas other documents have been shared by the agency in order to further the research process and in which prior written and verbal consent was given. Verbal and written consent were given to the research team by the administrator of the collaboration, the individual agency (YWCA) so that collaboration and YWCA documents, business plans and memos could be used and shared among the research team members. Through the documents I sought “information about the behaviors, experiences, beliefs, knowledge, values and perceptions” of the center (Goodwin & Goodwin, 1996, p.136).

The documents are rich sources of information in that they accurately portray the participants’ beliefs and knowledge and they were “contextually relevant and grounded in the contexts” they represented (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p.277). Lincoln and Guba (1985) distinguish documents and records on the basis of whether the text was prepared to attest to some formal transaction. Records can include such things as architectural designs and notes from partnership meetings. Documents according to Lincoln and Guba (1985) are prepared for personal rather than official reasons and can include personal notes, memos,
letters and field notes. Documents require more contextualized interpretations while records have officially sanctioned meanings. The study of material culture is of importance for qualitative researchers who wish to explore multiple and conflicting voices, differing and interacting interpretations (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Material culture is necessary for most social constructs as a study of social interaction depends on the incorporation of mute material evidence (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The interpreter thus learns from the experience of material remains and the data and the interpreter bring each other into a dialectical relationship.

Documents include those from professional seminar meetings, hand-outs from professional development meetings, center handouts to prospective parents/clients, business plans, written articles and magazine articles for the purpose of advertising the center site. It will be important to remember that material culture has to be interpreted in relation to a situated context of production and reading (Webb, Campbell, Schwartz & Sechrest, 1966).

Through the documents and artifacts I sought to gain information about the process of the collaboration, its history and how staff associated with the center site as they are experiencing the collaboration. I sought to gain information about the “experiences, beliefs, knowledge, values and perceptions” of those associated with and in the center (Goodwin & Goodwin, 1996, p.136).

Since these documents were detailed insights into the collaboration effort and process, they are “contextually relevant” and “grounded in the context” as described by Lincoln and Guba (1985, p.277).
Audiotapes and Videotapes

Audiotapes were collected during interviews of the administrator, the director and the staff. I used a tape recorder to record only formal interviews with the above mentioned participants. The adults were aware of the recorder before the semi-structured interviews take place. No one was tape recorded without their permission and verbal consent. A videotape was used during the group discussion with the teachers. It was used to support transcription of the audiotape could be done especially when multiple teachers were talking at one time. The videotape was only used for purposes of understanding who was speaking at what time and to facilitate transcription needs. The teachers were informed of the videotaping, signed waivers to videotape and understood that they could leave the room at any time during the videotaping if they chose to for any reason.

Semi-Structured Interviews

As knowledge is re-constructed by individuals in the sharing of recollections (Mason, 2002), “qualitative interviewing can be seen as involving the construction or reconstruction of knowledge” (Mason, 2002). The questions that were asked in the semi-structured interviews were generated from the field observations and in stories that were told in the field that required a closer look and more investigation. According to Mason (2003) interpretive ethnographies “see people, and their interpretations, perceptions, meanings and understandings, as the primary data source and thus do not have to rely on total immersion in a setting—it is acceptable to use interview methods in which the aim is to explore people’s individual and collective feelings, understandings, reasoning processes, social norms and so on…” Blaikie (2000) wrote that “Interpretivists are
concerned with understanding the social world people have produced and which they reproduce through their continuing activities. This everyday reality consists of the meanings and interpretations given by the social actors to their actions, other people’s actions, social situations, and natural and humanly created objects. In short, in order to negotiate their way around the world and make sense of it, social actors have to interpret their activities together, and it is these meanings, embedded in language that constitute their social reality” (p.115). Thus, people and their interpretations of this collaboration process are essential in finding the” inside view” (Blaikie, 2000).

Surveys/Questionnaire

In order to get some demographic information from the staff it was important to use a survey/questionnaire. The questionnaire was used to compare the child care earnings and demographic information with the national and Ohio averages in order to compare how the staff compares. The questionnaire also obtained demographic information such as age, ethnicity, educational background and child care work background. Data will be described in Chapter 5 in order to have a demographic picture of the child care workers at this particular center. No names were on the surveys and teachers mailed the survey back to me in pre-stamped and pre-addressed self-sealed envelopes. Participation was voluntary. Four out of nine teachers returned the survey.

Group Interview

A group interview was scheduled to gain insight into the teachers’ collective thoughts about the nature of collaboration and how their reality plays out on a daily basis. Issues that were raised from observations, informal conversations or the survey emerged from and formed the questions that guided the group discussion. The direction of the
group discussion was directed by the teachers’ answers to questions and in topics that they brought up and raised during the discussion. When a noticeable period of silence was observed I introduced another issue that I observed or had previously had a conversation with a teacher. For example, during one period of transition and silence I asked the teachers about an incident I had observed in which a classroom noticed that we were in a motor area and instead of joining us made verbal comments about finding another space to play in for whatever reasons. This recollection of a particular incident that I observed prompted the teachers to recall incidents in which they also encountered similar situations.

Although I had wonderful participation from the teachers who chose to participate in the group discussion was high—I did not have a majority of the teachers that I was hoping for. Three teachers out of eight attended the function. One teacher who I had observed and was looking forward to hearing her in-put in the group discussion left the center for an administration job within the agency and was unable to attend the function. It was difficult to get the teachers to attend because of their long hours at work so I had to provide cash incentive to help with the attendance at the function.

**Research Team Meetings**

The research team met on an irregular basis during the course of the two years in which I was involved in this project. The team focused on identifying the project and areas of research to be looked at and identified the key partners for the initial interviews. A key role of the research team was to identify and interview the key partners of each agency and organization. After that the research team attended partner meetings, professional development meetings and professional retreats. The research team met on
campus and on-site to discuss relevant issues pertaining to each member’s individual research and regularly gave progress reports and shared information and findings with team members. Team members kept in contact by email or through personal contact at the research meetings. A field notebook was kept on campus and contains field notes, relevant studies to be shared with team members, minutes of meetings, copies of important and relevant historical documentation and transcriptions of interviews.

Praxis

Critical educators believe that autonomy is gained in the act of struggle, a struggle that is on-going and takes place at the micro and macro levels of society. One comes to know through doing and then reflecting on this action. “The act of knowing involves a dialectical movement which goes from action to reflection and from reflection upon action to new ‘reflection’ (Freire, 1972, p. 31). This process of reflective action is known as praxis.

Praxis is a dialectical process where practice is seen as action. However to be authentic praxis must be planned, thought out and consciously oriented toward emancipatory social change. Praxis is not individualistic but a collective phenomenon whereby communities or small groups seek to live a collective struggle toward human emancipation (Gitlin, 1989). Praxis is freely chosen and informed through reflection and critical theorems. However, this does not mean the action will be “right”. It must always be reflected upon and subject to careful scrutiny. Praxis is always critical but it is reflection and action open to critique (Grundy, 1987). “Praxis is informed by an emancipatory interest which would preserve for all groups the freedom to act within their own social situations in ways which enable the participants to be in control of their
situation, rather than the ultimate control of their actions residing elsewhere” (Grundy, 1987, p.113).

Phases of Data Collection

The data collection was organized in phases over the time period of two years. As shown in Figure 3.5 each phase involved a particular focus, data sources and techniques for data collection.

The first phase involved meeting with the research team in the year 2002. The team was established and meetings were held to discuss potential research areas and the overall topic of collaboration. During this phase the book “Creative Collaboration” by Vera John-Steiner was read by team members and relative points were discussed at meetings in regard to the collaboration effort that was being studied. Research team members were invited and participated in partner meetings that were held monthly. During that time members of the research team were encouraged to try to find a focus and to observe and learn about the collaboration.

During phase two the topics of interest emerged for team members and each member began to find a way to combine the area of interest into the overall collaborative effort and where in the collaboration that research could take place and with whom. Key partners where identified with the project and initial questions were formulated in order to establish some baseline stories about the collaboration and to find some common ground of the collaboration. Team members attended interviews and were able to conduct interviews on their own in time without a primary researcher if needed. Meetings of the research team continued to take place on site and at the university and
any information that was considered relative were related to all members of the team. Meanwhile, members of the team began to work individually on their specific interests and to employ methods which pertained to them. I began to focus individually on the child care section of the collaboration and began to work on entering into that area in regard to observations and interviews. I also began to investigate the literature base on collaborations and the individual agency, the YWCA, to understand the community in which I was trying to understand and became a part of.

Phase 3 of the data collection began when prolonged engagement in the classrooms began. After prolonged engagement with observations began then the work of interviewing the teachers and administrators about the marginalization of the field of child care began in earnest. This was the most detailed and engaging area of the research. A relationship was built with prolonged periods of observations in the classroom and then survey material was formed and went to the teachers to probe more into the areas of the collaboration in which they felt needed work and those which did not. After the surveys were examined for patterns of feelings and perceptions then a group discussion was held in which the teachers could freely discuss areas of the collaboration and tell their story. On-going document analysis occurred during this phase and attendance at professional development seminars. Attendance at a professional retreat of administrators also occurred. This concluded the last phase of the data collection.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phases &amp; Time Periods</th>
<th>Focus</th>
<th>Data Sources</th>
<th>Techniques</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phase 1: 2/02 to 9/02</td>
<td>Working with the Research Team to establish research project; Gaining entry into the partner meetings and developing initial interview questions with research team; gaining insight into collaboration by team reading the book, “Creative Collaboration” by Vera John-Steiner and holding discussions on relative research</td>
<td>Research Meetings with Team members; partner meetings, tours of center and classrooms; emails between research members for purposes of constructing initial interview questions</td>
<td>Participant Observation; Field Notes, Reading of Collaboration material; book discussion; tours of building and classrooms; informal contact with classroom teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estimated Hours: 30</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 2: 10/02 to 10/03</td>
<td>Research team re-focus of research and what specific topics of research will be; re-entering into partner meetings; heavy concentration of historical background</td>
<td>Research materials; historical documents; research meetings with team members; email communication; interviews with key partners and transcription process</td>
<td>Participant observation; field notes; interviews and audiotaping; document analysis; historical research; informal conversations with key partners and staff members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estimated Hours: 168</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Phase 3: 1/04 to 8/04</td>
<td>Field work at site; preparing IRB documents; prolonged engagement</td>
<td>Classrooms; teachers; historical documents; other pertinent staff; administrators</td>
<td>Participant observation; field notes; interviews; survey; group discussion, conversation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estimated Hours: 98</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
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</table>

Figure 3.5  Phases of Data Collection
Data Analysis Process

According to the constructivist paradigm, an assumption is made that there are multiple realities and that there is a subjective epistemology. Analysis of such naturalistic studies from this perspective will include discussions of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. The main mode of analysis will be interpretation of the various methods used in the naturalistic setting. Patterns of behavior will also be interpreted from the researcher’s point of view but with clear, detailed descriptive accounts so that the reader can draw their own interpretations of the accounts.

The analysis process was not a separate stage in the process but rather was present from the beginning with the formation of the initial interview questions and the broad questions that guided the research process. The data analysis was situated, continuous and a reflexive process which supported and informed the data collection directions as to what data to collect and how the data should be collected.

Analytic Aspects of Design

This research has a conceptual framework in that it “lays out the key factors, constructs, or variables and the presumed relationships among them” (Lincoln & Guba, 1994, p.440). The graphic displays are connected by directional arrows specifying intervariable relationships which make the frameworks clear (Lincoln & Guba, 1994, p. 440). The conceptual framework is iterated over the life of the study. Please see Figure 3.6
Figure 3.6 Interactions between Display and Analytic Text
The data analysis process was “iterative” (Fetterman, 1998; Graue & Walsh, 1998) and “not linear but rather cyclical and recursive, with findings from one analysis often leading to new questions and additional analysis” (Kantor, Miller & Fernie, 1992, p. 188). As such, the analysis involved an on-going “dialectical interaction between data collection and analysis” (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995, p.205). This cyclical and recursive process involved varied levels of analysis within a reflexive process of interpretation or meaning making.

Subjectivity

Recollections of events are subjective and are the perceptions and beliefs of the individual involved in the social event (Bakhtin, 1981). In exploring subjectively, one emphasizes the social nature of the research and the researcher as a social self (Bakhtin, 1981). Whatever the researcher discovers about her personal bias and personal relationships to those whom she is working with must also locate herself in the theoretical connections of her field to achieve what Stauss (1987) called an “informal theoretical sensitivity” (p.12). There are linkages and connections in the research as the systemic nature of the research process and research is a socially interactive process. I did not go into the field absent of a sense of what social agencies and the child care field is—as a notion has been formed in previous interactions.

Triangulation of Multiple Data Sources

Triangulation of multiple data sources was ongoing throughout the data collection and analysis processes. By using multiple procedures to collect data it was possible to
“construct validity by examining data relating to the same construct from participant observation, interviewing, and documents” (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983, p.199). In other words, the triangulation of multiple data sources contributed to “contextual validation” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) of possible meanings and patterned regularities. It involved looking at relationships across multiple sources of data in order to compare and relate what happens at different places and times in order to identify stable features and patterned regularities.

Triangulation helped to understand and put into perspective an action and thought within its context, as well as, examines patterns across the data. In this study, triangulation included a “data collection-verification process” (Zaharlick & Green, 1991) and data analysis-verification process, which involved searching for confirming and disconfirming evidences (Erickson, 1986). Ongoing research team meetings and conversations with my committee members supported this process.

**Identification of Patterns and Major Themes**

“Analysis of any kind involves a way of thinking. It refers to the systemic examination of something to determine its parts, the relationship among parts, and their relationship to the whole. Analysis is a search for patterns.” (Spradley, 1980, p.85)

A key part of the analysis process was the identification of the pattern of thought, perception and practice of marginalization in the collaboration site and of the child care profession in general. The examination of patterns of thought, perception and practice involved examination of staff members and the center site for a prolonged time in the field. It involved a search for patterned regularities (Wolcott, 1994); stating “the
relationship among features within and across contexts” (Zaharlick & Green, 1991, p.220); and drawing connections between the cultural group (and the role of the YWCA in the collaboration) and larger theoretical frameworks (Creswell, 1998). The examination of patterns led to the identification of major themes across the data. Three major themes were identified: (1) the multi-layered nature of contexts in which the collaboration was formed and is embedded and situated; (2) the interdependence of the layers of context; (3) the lived experience of a neighborhood in context and the feelings and perceptions involving marginalization of child care across contexts. These themes will be described, displayed and interpreted in chapters 4 and 5.

**Ethical Issues**

**Creditability**

The connection between the participants has already been established as the partnership and collaboration process included researchers from the Ohio State University from the initial time of creation. My connection with the YWCA agency has a long-established working and professional relationship during a ten year period. However, the staff and director of this particular YWCA agency did not have an established relationship with me and so a relationship was built and trust was gained over time. Trust was earned through experiences and prolonged engagements at the center.

**Privacy, Identification and Confidentiality**

Conventional practice and ethical codes espouse that various safeguards should and will be used throughout this process. Safeguards to protect the research subjects will be in place and clearly spelled out to ensure that privacy of all involved. Names will not
be typed on field notes or written out on questionnaires. Because of the historical nature of this research project the name of the YWCA organization was kept and not changed. The YWCA has a defined and rich history which needed to be included in the document instead of assigning it an anonymous name. The name of the particular site was changed to “The Partnership” for privacy reasons although published documents presented within the research named specific agencies, organizations and county of the site and as these documents are in the public domain, I choose use them “as is” and not try to change governmental agencies and organizations. Changing the name of these organizations, agencies and political initiatives would have been confusing to the reader and difficult to understand throughout the research document. Written permission was granted to use business plans, memos, letters and documents “as is” in the research process. Credit has been given to those sources and documented within the text and in the reference section.

Validity of Qualitative Research

The issue of validity and how this can be achieved in qualitative research is problematic. As Maxwell (1992) states: “Validity has long been a key issue in debates over the legitimacy of qualitative research…Proponents of quantitative and experimental approaches have frequently criticized the absence of ‘standard’ means of assuring validity, such as quantitative measurement, explicit controls for various validity threats and the formal testing of prior hypotheses” (Maxwell, 1992, p. 272).

Most researchers accept that even if they believe it desirable establishing this kind of scientific objectivity in qualitative research it is not possible. One powerful reason for this is offered by Eisner (1992) who states: “Whatever it is we think we know is a
function of a transaction between the qualities of the world we cannot know in their pure, non-mediated form, and the frames of reference, personal skills, and individual histories we bring to them (Eisner, 1992, p. 53).

As an alternative to objectivity Ball (1990) calls for the “rigour” and considers the basis for rigour in qualitative study to “rest firmly upon the researcher’s awareness of what it is possible to say given the nature of the data that was and was not collected” (Ball, 1990, p. 40). The reflexivity of the researcher, in other words, the ability to monitor his or her own role in the gathering and analysis of data is seen as essential to establishing the rigour of qualitative data.

Whether or not we consider objectivity or rigour to be the basis for validity of research the “critical spirit in which it has been carried out” (Phillips, 1989, p.71) would seem to be essential. This critical process takes place both internally in the form of the researcher’s self-awareness and reflexivity and externally in opening the research to the scrutiny and critical appraisal of others.

**Triangulation of Methods**

In order for this research study to provide a stronger case of “validity” triangulation of methods will be used (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In this particular study, the methods will include observation, interviewing, questionnaires, document analysis and field notes/reflective journaling. The foundation for the interpretation rests on the triangulation of methods and issues of trustworthiness. Trustworthiness consists of four parts: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (these are the constructionist equivalents of internal and external validity, reliability, and objectivity: Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p.300).
Triangulation of data was ongoing throughout the research process. By using multiple procedures to collect data it was possible to “construct validity by examining data relating to the same construct from participant observation, interviewing, and documents” (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983, p.199). The triangulation of multiple data contributed to the “contextual validation” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) of interpretations and patterns. Using triangulation of data involves looking at patterns and recollections from different sources in order to relate and re-construct the storyline and process of the collaborative effort. Triangulation will also be used to serve as a “data collection – verification process” (Zaharlick & Green, 1991) and data analysis-verification process which involved confirming and disconfirming evidences (Erickson, 1986). On-going discussions with the research team, cross-checking multiple realities of the same event and process, peer debriefing and conversations with the research team will help support this process.

**Multiple Observers/Collaboration Meetings**

Using multiple observers who are diverse in age and gender can enhance the validity of observations so that researchers can cross-check each other’s findings and eliminate any inaccurate interpretations (Denzin, 1989). In this particular case, a research team from The Ohio State University consisting of two professors and four doctoral students engaged in research at this particular center. The team consisted of individuals of various ages, ethnic diversity, backgrounds and gender. The team meet consistently to discuss what has occurred with each member and to report any issues that arose from communications or observations with the center, staff, parents or children.
Ethnographic Studies: Preventing Overgeneralizations

Ethnographic studies run the risk of easy stereotypes and generalizations. Child care is presented as a marginalized group of individuals and the literature and the reality supports this fact. However, the research needs to be careful to not generalize this population to represent all child care workers. In fact, this population has many benefits and a large support team from many agencies that most child care workers do not have access to in their work environment. The research is situated to describe a set population of child care workers in a very unique and unusual work environment. Although the group of child care workers is still a marginalized group, they express feelings of gratitude for the services and programs that they are able to take advantage of with this unique collaborative effort.

Critical Text

“A critical text is judged by its ability to reveal reflexivity structures of oppression as they operate in the worlds of lived experience. A critical text thus creates a space for multiple voices to speak; those who are oppressed are asked to articulate their definitions of the situations. For some critical theory must be testable, falsifiable, dialogic and collaborative (Carspecken & Apple, 1992, pp.547-548).” (Lincoln & Guba, 1994, p. 509) “Thus, a good critical emancipatory text is one that is one that is multivocal, collaborative, naturalistically grounded in the worlds of lived experience, and organized by a critical interpretive theory” (Lincoln & Guba, p. 509).

This study tries to meet those criteria as I spent prolonged time in the field working along side the teachers and building a trust relationship; spoke to them about
their experiences and encouraged them to speak to me formally, in conversation, in writing or calling me about their experiences in the field. When they told me a story I tried to re-say their words back to them to confirm the sentiments that they expressed. When I re-counted situations that I encountered in the field, I encouraged them to correct me if I had the situation incorrectly assessed or if they felt I had not represented the situation correctly. In Chapter 5, their story will be described and discussed through my interpretations and through their stories, their words and their feelings and perceptions.
CHAPTER 4

LAYERS OF THE COLLABORATIVE EFFORT AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF MEDIATING VARIABLES IN COLLABORATION

The initial area of research guiding this study is a broad one: How did the YWCA become involved in “The Partnership” collaboration especially in light of being the only non-publicly funded partner? Questions arise as to how child care can fit into the structure of the collaboration with publicly funded programs and organizations. While the overall goal and mission seems to be the same: to better serve children and their families—the programs are inherently different and with individual programs, mission statements, programs, agendas and time schedules. Compounding and highlighting the differences between the child care section and the other programs is funding. While the YWCA is non-publicly funded and answers to a governing board to be financially sound, the other organizations run on public funds.

There are also different pay scales, time schedules, educational levels, societal and field perceptions regarding day care teachers versus Head Start or public school preschool teachers. Issues of power and status are raised as staff from across agencies is located together on a single-site tied to organizational ties and boundaries. In the sense of a true collaboration, the issue of power and status are equalized and spread evenly among
the parties involved however, in this example of collaboration—the organizations still maintain their separate identities and organizational structures.

Although the common factor binding all parties remains the same—to better serve the children and families with integrated services—a common factor alone does not guarantee the success of implementing an idea and opening a newly renovated building or maintaining a vision.

Developing collaborations and integrated services is hard, takes time and is a learning process (Hughes, 2004). More failures have happened than success stories (Hughes, 2004) and integrating services represents a radical departure from current practices of working within one’s own agency. Many efforts have failed because participants were unwilling to create sufficiently challenging or uncomfortable planning structures and creating new service delivery models cannot be done by simply “reorganizing the boxes on a chart” (Hughes, 2004).

This chapter will primarily focus on how the collaboration started and the political climate which promoted and enabled this collaboration project to form, conceptualize and develop. Using a descriptive rich narrative form, the partnership “story” will be told through a historical timeline of critical dates and events and will identify, describe and discuss four layers of context: Political Ripeness, Vision and Leadership, Community Acknowledgement and Support and Community-Leader Investment and Development (shown in Figure 4.1). These layers of context will be situated within an interpretive nature and will be embedded and situated within reflections, recollections and documents which will form the “story”.

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First, it should be established that “The Partnership” center fits the definition of a collaboration as defined by Kagan (1991): an “organizational and interorganizational structures where resources, power and authority are shared and where people are brought together to achieve common goals that could not be accomplished by a single individual or organizational independently”.

The literature indicates that collaborations have much in common structurally. Many collaborations can be described as passing through the common developmental stages. Highly predictable, these stages follow in sequence. But the pace and the trajectory through which the stages are achieved are idiosyncratic to particular collaborations (Kagan, 1991). This suggests that certain mediating variables (goals, resources, power and authority and levels of adaptiveness) alter the pace of implementation to yield individually distinct collaborative processes (Kagan, 1991) (as shown in Figure 4.2). As with many theories, the categories of variables used to describe the connectedness are universal. Less predictable than stages, however, mediating variables differ in intensity and in their many sources, suggesting that it is a combination of the normal developmental stages and the individual mediating variables that influence the same way; normal human development is the product of universal developmental stages and individual mediating variables (Kagan, 1991). Together they mesh in highly idiosyncratic ways, yielding an infinite variety of personalities (Kagan, 1991).

The literature tends to agree on the sequence and basic activities within each stage. Four stages suggested by Flynn and Harbin (1987)—formation, conceptualization, development and implementation—combined with two stages—evaluation and termination—from Brewer and deLeon (1983) convey the range of stages described in
the literature. The progression through the stages is typically linear but a change in mission or direction, or a reassessment of the collaborative structure, may necessitate a transition back to a previous stage (Flynn & Harbin, 1987). Although these stages appear fairly neat and orderly on paper, in reality they overlap (Kagan, 1991).

In this chapter, I will be using the stages and criteria as outlined by Flynn and Harbin (1987) and Brewer and deLeon (1983) to describe the developmental path of the collaboration and mediating variables. “The Partnership’s” development of collaboration will be discussed within a narrative account embedded with recollections, reflections, major documented critical points and examples to show the development of the collaboration through a stage model.

The next chapter will focus on a particular agency within the collaborative effort. This chapter will focus on how the YWCA agency as the only non-publicly funded child care program was able to establish itself within this collaborative effort and the unique situation that the YWCA finds itself in with this project. As the YWCA was a partner from early on in the development of the collaboration, its “story” will be situated with the overall development of the collaboration effort. The stories are happening at the same time and yet, it is another layer of the overall story.

As the YWCA story involved issues of power and feelings, perceptions and practices which perpetuate feelings of marginalization, the next chapter will involve the use of critical ethnography to continue the individual story of a neighborhood in context. The critical ethnography will describe and discuss issues of power, ideology and culture. This part of the research will enable people to see actions in a wider socio-historical context (Simon & Dippo, 1986) and will be situated in part within a public sphere which
will encourage people to understand their own actions and the historical and social context in which they are acting (Simon & Dippo, 1986).

**Layers of Context**

Even though these context layers will be discussed separately, they are all layers of context that are interrelated and mutually constituted (Rogoff, 1995). The purpose of this chapter first is to share that without the four contexts existing and coming together at different times in the collaborative process “The Partnership” may not have been realized. The four layers of context: political ripeness, vision and leadership, community acknowledgement and support and community-leaders investment and development demonstrate that the collaborative effort was multi-layered and although independent were also interrelated. The purpose of this section is to build a broad picture of the multi-layered contexts in which the collaboration was built and is embedded and situated within. By describing and displaying the four layers of context, I am able to tell a story of the macro and micro influences which enabled this collaboration to formulate, conceptualize and develop. Thus, the nature of the collaboration was located within social, cultural, historical, political and institutional realms and contexts. Discussing the overall collaboration will also set up the next chapter which will discuss how a particular agency fitted with the overall collaborative effort and the issues that were particular to their organization.
Figure 4.1  Layers of Context
Figure 4.2  Stages of Collaboration and Mediating Variables
The Prologue

“The Partnership” has created an exemplary model of how collaboration at the state and county level can be accomplished and how collaboration can be achieved. Nested within the early childhood education system of the Franklin County Board of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities, “The Partnership” is the most extensive partnership in the system combining local, county and state education, medical, social service and mental health agencies and institutions working together to more effectively serve the community, children and families.

Examples of benefits that the children and families receive from such a unique collaboration are the following:

- “All children benefit from a nutrition program planned by MR/DD nutritionists, and receive healthy snacks and nutritious meals, prepared by a cooking staff hired by CDCFC Head Start.
- Medical attention and medical/dental, vision, and hearing screenings are provided by personnel coordinated through MR/DD.
- Families have one central location where they can access an umbrella of educational, health, and assessment services for their children, as well as social services that can support families in times of need.
- The community benefits because program resources have been pooled and more efficiently spent.
- Overall costs born by the community are lowered and better targeted to provide the best services possible.
Earlier and more effective intervention minimizes the need for more costly and specialized programs later.” (Kantor & Fernie, Draft of document titled: Franklin County Early Childhood Partnerships: An Integrated Program and Curriculum Model)

The partnership system that exists is the first to bring together different programs and organizations in order to provide child care, services and education for families with and without disabilities in one location. This is a unique collaboration in which the combination of elements makes these centers demonstration models for quality services and practices that will support this community and be a model for other communities and states.

The challenge in telling this story is that it is “in progress”. As such, it is ever-changing as issues and conflicts arise within the collaborative effort. My aim for this chapter is to present my interpretation of its history embedded and interpreted within documented political movements, document analysis and the reflection of key individuals involved throughout the process. My aim is to build a macro and micro picture of contexts for which this collaborative effort began and exists today. The presentation and reporting of the “data” is told in a narrative story form as this represents the “story” of “The Partnership”. Thus, I have used headers such as prologue, exposition, conflict, characters and plot so that the reader can read the document and understand that this “story” of collaboration was a journey through time from 1991 until present day.
The Partnership System:

- Action for Children
- Alcohol Drug and Mental Health
- Child Development Council of Franklin County Head Start (CDCFC)
- Columbus Metropolitan Area Community Action Organization Head Start (CMACAO)
- Columbus Health Department
- Columbus Public Schools
- Franklin County Board of Health
- Franklin County Board of MRDD/Service Coordinators
- Franklin County Board of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (MRDD) Early Childhood Education
- Franklin County Children’s Services
- Franklin County Department of Job and Family Services
- Ohio Department of Education, Division of Early Childhood Education
- The Ohio State University School
- YMCA of Central Ohio
- YWCA of Columbus

Figure 4.3 List of Active Partners
The Beginning

A narrative is defined by the Concise Oxford English Dictionary as a “tale, story, recital of facts, especially a story told in the first person”. There are many kinds of narratives from oral to historical. Kaplan and Maxwell (1994) argue that the goal of understanding a phenomenon from the point of view of the participants and its particular social and institutional context is largely lost when textual data are quantified as it cannot tell the story accurately or give multiple voices. As interpretive researchers start out with the assumption that access to reality (given or socially constructed) is only through social constructions such as language, consciousness and shared meaning. Interpretive studies generally attempt to understand phenomena through meanings that people assign to them and interpretive methods of research. A story is defined as “a record or narrative description of past events” (www.cogsci.princeton.edu). Thus, the narrative accounts that will be presented will become my interpretation through interviews, open-ended questionnaires, observations, focus groups and document analysis of the “story of the partnership”. I have attempted to represent the “living” factor of the narrative by adding in quotes from interviews with key partners and administrators that “lived” the story.

The Exposition and First Layer: Political Ripeness (1991)

The economic times were right in Ohio in 1991 for the governor to announce an initiative. In 1990, Ohio was experiencing the longest period of economic growth it had seen in years. Like the rest of the United States, Ohio benefited from the eight years of a growing economy during the 1990s (State of Ohio Report, 2002). This growth period
was the longest economic expansion that the United States has ever experienced and the country was feeling good about itself and the future (State of Ohio Report, 2002). The income of an average Ohio taxpayer rose by 10% between 1989 and 1999. Welcome growth in both jobs and earnings had an anti-poverty impact in Ohio through much of the decade. With many Ohioans experiencing good economic times, it was a ripe time for the Governor of Ohio, George Voinovich who was frustrated by the lack of coordination among human service programs (Family Impact Seminar, 1998) to launch an initiative to bring the fragmented human services together and for his administration to focus on children and family issues.

**Children and Family First Initiative**

“Our aim …is to make an unprecedented commitment to one priority that I believe ranks above all others—the health and education of our children. Most Ohioans have enough welfare…enough drugs…enough crime. Most would love to see that debilitating cycle broken…The only way to do it is to pick one generation of children…draw a line in the sand…and say to all: This is where it stops.” (Governor Voinovich, State of the State Address, March 1991)

From the early 70s, Governor Voinovich was frustrated by the lack of coordination among human service programs (Family Impact Seminar, 1998). When he became governor in 1991, finding a way to reform entrenched state bureaucracies and give local government more flexibility for service coordination became high on his list of things to do while in office (Family Impact Seminar, 1998). In 1991, Governor Voinovich first introduced an idea for an initiative which became known as *The Ohio Family and Children First Initiative* during an inaugural speech.

The initiative brought together the governor and the directors of the Department of Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services, Budget and Management, Health, Human
Services, Mental Health, Mental Retardation, Developmental Disabilities, and Youth Services (Family Impact Seminar, 1998). The purpose of the initiative was to focus and encourage collaboration among state and local government, non-profit organizations, businesses and parents to achieve school readiness.

In 1992, The Ohio Family and Children First Initiative and Council was created to specifically bridge the services for children and families. The Ohio Family and Children First Council (OFCF) primary focus was to promote local decision making about resource utilization through partnerships between families and communities and to recognize the family as the core and strength of a stable society. The goal was to improve access to, and delivery of, education, health, and social services to Ohio’s children and families. “…At its core, Ohio Family and Children First has been about diverse representation and parent participation” (Kantor, Fernie, Scott, Verzaro-O’Brien, pg. 167). The Council is represented in all of Ohio’s 88 counties and is comprised of family members, Head Start grantees, non-profit providers, judges, county commissioners and other child/family resource people. Varying combinations of state, federal and private organization funds support the Ohio Family and Children First programs. Administration of the funds also varies with each program.

The Council worked on two levels: at monthly meetings the members discussed statewide systems and solicit comment or assistance from their colleagues regarding specific initiatives in their agencies. In one particular session a discussion led to how interventions for alcohol and drug abuse would help prevent teen pregnancy and lower school dropout rates and how the Department of Human Services could let schools know when student’s parents were being sanctioned under the new welfare time limits.
(Summary Report, 1998). “In 1991 Ohio’s childcare and early education ‘system’ (CC/EE), especially its Head Start programs, had received national recognition. However, CC/EE professionals (focused on children from birth to kindergarten) and families who were consumers of CC/EE services were not satisfied. They knew that large numbers of children and families did not have access to services and that low-income households were especially hard hit by the shortage. They also knew that, except for the most basis health and safety requirements, there were few clear, consistent, system wide guidelines to assure that adequately trained people were providing developmentally appropriate care and activities to foster the emotional, physical and intellectual growth of young children.

Further aggravating the situation was the fact that funding of CC/EE raised serious questions about the extent to which families and communities truly value children in Ohio and, indeed, throughout the United States. Public funders, most private purchasers of services (families) and the few family friendly employers that helped provide care established reimbursement levels so low that wages were typically above poverty level. Attracting and retaining qualified staff in such an environment was difficult. Even for-profit providers, except those serving the wealthy, chose to compete on price, not quality. Driven by a scarcity-based view of the world, providers competed fiercely for very meager resources. In this context, Ohio’s Governor leveraged his relationship with the Reagan administration to access federal resources to create his Children and Family First Initiative.” (Kloth & Love, 2002).
Federal Government Policies

The time was also ripe and right for collaboration at the Federal level. The Federal Government entered the child care business during the New Deal of the 1930s when federally funded nursery schools were established for poor children. The motivation for creating these nursery schools was not specifically to provide child care for working families. Rather, the schools were designed primarily to create jobs for unemployed teachers, nurses, and others, and also to provide a wholesome environment for children in poverty (www.policyalmanac, 2004). However, when mothers began to enter the workforce in large numbers during World War II, many of these nursery schools were continued and expanded. Federal funding for child care and other community facilities was available during the early years under the Lanham Act which financed child care for an estimated 550,000-600,000 children before it was terminated in 1946.

The end of the war brought the expectation that mothers would return to home to care for their children however, many women choose to remain at work and the workforce participation of women has increased steadily ever since. The appropriate Federal role in supporting child care, including the extent to which the Federal Government should establish standards for federally funded child care, has been an ongoing topic of debate (Adams & Schulman, 1998).

In 1988 and 1990, four Federal child care programs were enacted providing child care for families receiving Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), families that formerly received AFDC, low-income working families at risk of becoming dependent on AFDC, and low-income working families generally.
The establishment of these programs was the culmination of a lengthy and often contentious debate about what role the Federal Government should play in child care. Lasting nearly four years, the debate centered on questions about the type of Federal subsidies that should be made available and for whom, whether the Federal Government should set national child care standards, conditions under which religious child care providers could receive Federal funds, and how best to assure optimal choice for parents in selecting child care arrangements for their children, including options that would allow a mother to stay home. Differences stemming from philosophical and partisan views as well as jurisdictional concerns were reflected throughout the debate.

Through the programs created in 1988 and 1990 represented a significant expansion of Federal support for child care, they joined a large number of existing Federal programs providing early childhood services, administered by numerous Federal agencies and overseen by several congressional committees. The U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO, 1994) estimated that in fiscal year 1992 and fiscal year 1993 more than 90 early childhood programs were funded by the Federal Government, administered through 11 Federal agencies and 20 offices. Of these programs, GAO identified 34 as having education or child care as key to their mission. The Congressional Research Service (CRS) in a memo to the House Committee on Ways and Means (Forman, 1994) identified 46 programs related to child care operating in fiscal year 1994, administered by 10 different Federal agencies. However, CRS noted that some of these programs were not primarily child care programs, rather, they were designed for some other major purposed but included some types of child care or related assistance. Moreover, a majority of the programs were small, with 32 of the 46 providing
less than $50 million in annual funding. In 1998, a GAO report identified 22 key child care programs of which 5 accounted for more than 80 percent of total child care spending in fiscal year 1997.

In 1995, the 104th Congress passed a major restructuring of Federal welfare programs including a consolidation of major Federal child care programs into an expanded Child Care and Development Block Grant (Public Law 104-103). The child care provisions in the new law were developed to achieve several purposes. The legislation attempted to address concern about the effectiveness and efficiency of child care programs. The four separate child care programs that were enacted in 1988 and 1990 had different rules regarding eligibility, time limits on the receipt of assistance, and work requirements. Consistent with other block grant proposals, considered in the 104th Congress, the child care provisions in Public Law 104-193 were intended to streamline the Federal role, reduce the number of Federal programs and conflicting rules and increase the flexibility provided to States. The Federal reform included fiscal incentives for provides and business to establish or expand child care facilities, and initiatives to increase and collaborate child development and education programs (such as Head Start and pre-kindergarten programs) (United States General Accounting Office, 1994).

Thus, putting the two pictures together one is able to see that the conditions were right on a state level with the Governor’s initiative and on the Federal level with the Child Care and Development Block Grants for an idea to begin to conceptualize about a collaboration which would form in order to help the fragmented human service programs that existed (and still exist for the most part) to better serve children and families. The two separate “cultures” (Ohio and Federal) overlap each other to form the political
ripeness level in the first layer of context in describing the story of “Smithville Road”.
The second layer of the story lies in two people with vision and leadership skills meeting and taking the next steps toward the reality of ‘The Partnership’.

Characters, Plot and the Second Layer: Vision and Leadership

“During the summer of 1991 Chris Kloth had attended Marvin Weisbord and Sandra Janoff’s first effort to teach others how to conduct what became known as the Future Search. Recognizing that the Governor’s office had contracted to begin the initiative in 1992 with a strategic plan, Chris suggested they use a Future Search to create a set of parameters to inform the planning process and increase the possibility of gaining broad-based stakeholder support. With the Ohio Head Start Association, the Governor co-sponsored the event in December of 1991….

Rebecca Love attended the Future Search. As Director of Early Childhood for the Franklin County Board of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (MR/DD), a levy funded government agency responsible for people affected by MR/DD from birth to death, she was a key stakeholder. With strong support from her agency’s administration, Becky had begun working with Head Start in 1985 to assure that children with special needs were served with non-handicapped peers of the same age. By 1991 she and her staff had achieved a high degree of personal and professional credibility in the community as advocates and service providers for the children and families they serve. In addition, they were seen as good partners when working with others.” (Kloth & Love, 2002)
Future Search Conference

“The Future Search Conference (1991) was sponsored by the Head Start Collaboration Project as a venue for key stakeholders throughout the system to come together and consider options for the future. The goal of the conference was to develop a shared vision of collaborative service for all of Ohio’s young children and their families, especially those of low income. Fifty-seven state and local representatives from Head Start, state agencies and associations, local service providers, and the business community attended the conference and came to consensus around core values and key issues in the field. Commitments were made to support the system changes necessary to realize the vision. Discussions were summarized and provided to the Policy Academy by leaders who were part of both events—such dual and blended roles became another theme characteristic of Ohio’s early childhood work.” (Kantor, Fernie, Scott, Verzaro-O’Brien, pg. 167)

Years 1992-1995

The vision and values that emerged from the Future Search resonated deeply with Becky, her administration and her staff. It allowed her to expand her view of interdependence to include the larger system. It also provided her with access to a broader set of relationships as she worked with others on common interests.

While she understood the potential benefits for all children, Becky was deeply committed to finding ways to leverage the resources of the larger system for her constituents. Collaboration was particularly important to her. She believed that an environment that included children of typical and non-typical ability and of many cultural and economic backgrounds could benefit all the children. Throughout interviews with
key partners the same storyline was heard that Becky’s leadership and vision kept the
process going throughout all the years. She kept the vision going among the key partners
and stakeholders. Chris Kloth stated “…Becky was the reason to keep going. She had a
clear vision and this was the time…” (Interview, 2003).

Over the next several years, many promising ventures were launched and
provided a fertile learning ground for the partners: St. Phillips, Westerville Learning
Tree, Ohio Avenue, Broadleigh Elementary, Capital Park Toddler Inclusion Program,
Cherry Creek/YMCA parent-infant and toddler program, the Early Childhood Learning
Community at Marburn, Cherry Creek/YMCA Preschool Inclusion program and the
Christ Lutheran Inclusion Preschool. These full inclusion programs children with and
without disabilities were enrolled through Head Start, YMCA, or MR/DD. One of the
ventures, the Westerville Learning Tree involved the YWCA and MR/DD. “Kelly
Browne”, Coordinator of the Early Childhood Programs for the YWCA recalled that
“…since we had already collaborated with MR/DD at the Learning Tree—we felt it was
easier to say yes to the “Smithville Road” project. …We had a positive experience and
although we had never collaborated on such a grand scale—the groundwork was laid for
us to want to be a part of it” (interview, 2004).

“All programs represented cooperation, collaboration and partnership but at the
Learning Community at Marburn, a closer blending of organizational structures and
systems was developed and implemented paving the way for the multi-system partnership
at “the partnership”. In Columbus, the 15th largest U.S. city and Ohio’s state capital,
another participant in the Future Search decided to seize the moment. The Executive
Director of Action for Children (AFC) wanted to build common ground and energy for
action on CC/EE issues in Central Ohio. Leveraging the energy generated when the
Governor’s plan was published in mid-1992, she convened a diverse stakeholder group to
engage in a dialogue focused on its potential benefits to Central Ohio children and
families. The group became known as the Franklin County Childcare and Early
Education Council (the Council). Becky became active in the Council. Chris facilitated
the dialogues.

In November 1993 the Council sponsored a Future Search focused on building
common ground for improving the quality of CC/EE in Central Ohio. The result was the
identification of four key areas of concern: Access, Quality, Affordability and Public
Awareness. They committed to creating a Comprehensive Community Plan to focus and
guide their work in the future. The Council created task groups for each area of concern
and charged them with creating a vision, core values, goals and strategies for each
concern. Consistent with the parameters that guided the Governor’s plan, collaboration
emerged as both a core value and core strategy.

In the summer of 1994, the plan was released at a large, widely covered outdoor
event at the statehouse. Community leaders delivered speeches while hundreds of
children from childcare centers throughout the community participated by creating jigsaw
style ‘Pieces of the Plan’ with donated Mr. Sketch markers. Becky’s leadership role
continued to expand.

Meanwhile, AFC’s Board of Trustees decided to leverage the agency’s high
visibility and credibility among CC/EE professionals, families and employers to assure
that a broader, ongoing dialogue would occur throughout the community. In 1994, they
began their regular three-year strategic planning cycle. In March 1994, they used a
Future Search to include members of the council and other stakeholders in shaping the AFC strategic plan” (Kloth & Love, 2002).

“Kelly Browne”, current Administrator of the Early Childhood Programs for the YWCA remembered that “Lori Antonia” (the former Administrator of Early Childhood Programs for the YWCA) “felt very strongly about becoming involved in the project. “Lori” also felt very strongly about the YWCA working with others outside their group….She stated that “the CEO at that time was in full support of the program and that the YWCA felt that with this collaboration they felt they could better serve the population in which they were targeting with their own mission statement.” (Administrator interview, 2004) “Kelly” continued to state that “although they were excited, they [YWCA] was also nervous and apprehensive as they had been involved in other collaborations but nothing to this scale and with so many other agencies from the state of Ohio. ...They just decided to take a ‘leap of faith’ and jumped in with both feet because the idea sounded so good and they wanted to be part of the project” (Administrator interview, 2004).

Kloth and Love (2002) write that “one result [from using AFC] was that they committed considerable agency resources to incorporating the system vision, values, goals and strategies into their public information and education efforts. AFC also committed agency resources to support its expanding role as a neutral convener of dialogues about ongoing and emerging CC/EE issues and the plan. In an effort to model the values of community collaboration and partnership, AFC also took the counter intuitive approach of highlighting the work of other individuals and groups, making its own role less prominent.
During this period, CC/EE providers continued to provide services. Shared quality standards were identified and endorsed. Some providers, especially most of the Head Start approved centers, already met or exceeded the standards. Others were able and willing to begin to incorporate the standards into their programs. However, many fund that the cost of the implementing standards would increase their costs and undermine their commitment to increasing access by increasing the number of child care ‘slots’ and maintaining the affordability of those slots, especially for those most in need.”

The YWCA realized early on in this project that the initial idea of providing a pre-school and school-age care with full inclusion of Head Start and MMRD was not how the organization would be set up and that financially their organization would not be able to sustain itself. It is not clear however between the time of the survey in 1997 and the time of the coordination of services with the architect and other agencies over space issues—the YWCA decided to focus their program on child care from birth to pre-school and run a year-round full-day program.

“Kelly” stated that “another issue for the YWCA was that early on they realized that they would need new equipment and materials in order to open up their “neighborhood” the full-day all round child care section of the building. They were always use to having hand-me downs and wanted new equipment and furniture to fit with the newness of the project. And that this would be a costly adventure for them. They started thinking of ways to fund the start-up costs of running this program.”

(Administrator interview, 2004) Being the only agency without public funding, the YWCA had the desire to be part of the collaboration but questions arose to whether they
had the ability. They didn’t want to be part of the project without contributing financially to the overall project. The search for outside funding began in earnest.

Conflict: Funding 1995-1999

“Access and affordability posed (and continue to pose) challenges. The Council struggled to design a model for reducing cost through ‘shared funding’. However, issues related to trust, power and control seemed to undermine each design. People began to express a loss of hope that they would ever find the perfect model. In this traditional frame people could not agree to share financial information, much less actual dollars until the design was complete and approved by all.

Some organizations tried working with others in a variety of new ways. Others insisted that working together was nothing new and that they had been collaborating for many years. However, on closer examination it became clear that the quality of working together varied dramatically. One set of collaborators made sure that the busses from each agency did not all arrive in a neighborhood at once, while another found ways to send done bus to pick up all the children in a particular neighborhood.” (Kloth & Love, 2002)

Without funding the project would never get started. The political and economic climate was ready and willing to support the idea, the vision and the leadership was present with Rebecca Love and Chris Kloth to start the dialogues and to make sure the “right” partners were included in the dialogues but a critical point became funding.

The building already existed but it was old and in poor condition. It could not house the type of program and services that would be needed to host such collaboration. The next layer of the story begins with the community acknowledging the project and
financially supporting the project. Financing the project will be one of the layers that permeates the whole context however during the years of 1995-96, funding was at a critical point in which the collaboration needed to start moving forward.

**Conflict Resolution and Third Layer: Community Acknowledgment and Support: Years 1995-1996**

“Finally, AFC and the Franklin County Department of Job and Family Services (JFS-the biggest funder of subsidized care) changed the frame. The Director of JFS announced that the agency would consider funding any collaborative project that conformed to the Council’s vision and values and demonstrate alternative ways of sharing funding. It agreed to allow AFC to evaluate proposals on behalf of JFS and Council members. In the new frame the focus shifted from ‘getting it right’ to allowing multiple experiments and learning from mistakes….

Meanwhile, Becky was preparing to take ‘shared funding’ and ‘collaboration’ to a new level. The Ohio Department of MR/DD solicited proposals to expand existing early childhood centers. Franklin County MR/DD bid for and, in 1995 received a 1.5 million dollar matching grant from the state. With the combined state and county leadership and resources as a base, Becky immediately invited a broad base of CC/EE professionals in creating a truly inclusive and collaborative model childcare and family center.

In 1996 Becky received letters of support from agencies and organizations which included: Action for Children, CDC, The Ohio State University, Columbus Health Department, Columbus Public Schools, ADAMH, YWCA, Franklin County Education Service Center, Franklin County Children Services, and Ohio Dominion College. These
letters of support showed that community leaders took a hold of the vision and were giving support to the project. Acknowledgement and support from community levels gave the community a reason to rally behind the project. The letters indicate the willingness of key community leaders of agencies and organizations to putting their names and reputations on the line in order to support a vision that Becky articulated well enough that they believed in the mission.” (Kloth & Love, 2002)

A community is defined as “a group of people brought together by geography, culture, or common interests” (Webster, 2004). Whether an initiative is statewide and/or state planning the real action takes place in the communities. The collaboration gained strength when the community leaders took hold of the vision and acknowledged and supported the vision. Without the community rallying behind the collaboration it is difficult to say that even with the resolution of funding, if the project would have taken hold. By publicly supporting the project with letters of support, the community leaders and their agencies took a “personal stake” in the project and put their support into action.


‘In 1997 MR/DD interviewed architects and selected locally based Moody/Nolan. The principle architect conducted stakeholder focus groups to contribute to the design.” (Kloth & Love, 2002). When the Reggio Emilia Model was chosen for the site, a group of partners, Becky and the architect went and traveled to the town in Northern Italy where the approach was created” (Kloth & Love, 2002).
The Reggio Emilia Model

“In order to fully appreciate what is particular about Reggio Emilia, it is necessary to consider its position within the larger context of contemporary Italy. As is the case with most of its European neighbors, Italy has a national commitment to the period of early childhood that builds upon a widespread cultural value of shared responsibility for young children. Social activism in the late 1960s culminated in a wealth of social policies related to working families with young children, including a 1968 law establishing preschool education for all 3- to 5-year-olds based on the active participation of both the state and local governments (New, 1993). Similar laws for increased provision of infant-toddler care were eventually passed, first in 1971 and most recently in 1999. Italy's system of early childhood education is now a subject of heightened interest as part of national educational reform initiatives (OECD, 2000). In legal texts as well as public conversations, high-quality early care and education are defined as socio-educational services and a right of all Italian children and their families. Reggio Emilia has contributed to both the discussion and interpretation of these Italian principles.

Reggio Emilia is one of several small wealthy cities in Emilia Romagna, a region in northern Italy with a history of collaboration and political activism. The groundwork for what is now regarded as "the Reggio Emilia approach" was established shortly after World War II, when working parents built new schools for their young children. Parents did not want ordinary schools. Rather, they wanted schools where children could acquire skills of critical thinking and collaboration essential to rebuilding and ensuring a democratic society. This strong sense of purpose inspired the late Loris Malaguzzi to join in this collaborative effort. In 1963, well in advance of the national system, Reggio
Emilia opened its first municipal preschool. By the late 1970s, a system of municipally funded preschools and infant-toddler centers was in place; it has since served about half of the city's young children. As is the case in other Italian municipal programs, fees (primarily for meals) are on a sliding scale. Children who are not in the city program attend early educational programs provided by the State, the Church, parent cooperatives, and private organizations.

During the decades following the 1960s, Reggio Emilia educators concentrated on building schools and implementing their developing philosophy; they also participated in national and regional discussions regarding early care and education. Many credit Malaguzzi for bringing together other Italian early childhood educators to share and debate the merits of their diverse approaches to creating environments for young children. In some cities, educators explored strategies to promote connections in and outside of preschool environments, leading, for example, to Pistoia's curriculum-as-apprenticeship model and the multi-year projects in Milan. In cities such as Parma and Modena, university researchers worked with teachers and caregivers to study the implications of attachment theory for infant-toddler care. In all of these settings, documentation was explored as a means of promoting parent and teacher understanding of children's learning and development.

Within the same period of collaborative exploration, Reggio Emilia educators were busy exploring Malaguzzi's ideas-including his belief that creativity is a characteristic way of thinking and responding to the world. These ideas were eventually translated into partnerships of inquiry among teachers, atelieriste [art educators], and pedagogiste [pedagogical coordinators] to discover and nurture children's symbolic
languages. Reggio Emilia also served as a leader in examining principles of social management—originally developed for the labor market—as a basis from which to build respectful and enduring home-school relations.

A century after Montessori opened up the Casa dei Bambini in Rome, the diversity of Italian interpretations of high-quality early childhood programs remains consonant with Italy's tradition of innovation and regional variation. The ongoing exchange and debate that has characterized the development of program differences, in turn, continues to reflect (and contribute to) the larger cultural value associated with the period of *l'infanzia* [early childhood]. There is little question that Reggio Emilia has been a key player in this lively Italian conversation. This role is now heightened by the recent invitation from the Italian Ministry of Education for Reggio Emilia to participate in the development of teacher education programs nationwide. And yet its influence at home pales in contrast to the role Reggio Emilia has played in expanding the vocabulary and the nature of the discourse concerning early childhood education in nations beyond Italy's borders. There are few places where Reggio Emilia's influence has been as widespread as in the United States.

The first presentation on Reggio Emilia at an annual conference of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) took place in Anaheim in 1987. Since that time, inspired by the exhibition "The Hundred Languages of Children" and fueled by delegations of educators who have seen firsthand the city and its early childhood classrooms, American interest in Reggio Emilia has grown at a remarkable pace. Once used as a counter to U.S. notions of developmentally appropriate practices (DAP) (New, 1994), the revised version of NAEYC's DAP guidelines is filled with
examples from this Italian city (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997). Interest among American 
educators is focused on the implications of key features of Reggio Emilia's municipal 
early childhood program, including:

- the role of the environment-as-teacher,
- children's multiple symbolic languages,
- documentation as assessment and advocacy,
- long-term projects or progettazione,
- the teacher as researcher, and
- home-school relationships.

Efforts to understand and utilize the principles of Reggio Emilia's practices are 
now described in numerous English-language manuscripts and publications, including 
theses and dissertations as well as accounts by teachers struggling with the realities of 
Reggio Emilia's compelling challenge. Reflecting and contributing to this still-rising level 
of interest is a revised second edition of *The Hundred Languages of Children-Advanced 
Reflections* (Edwards, Gandini, & Forman, 1998), a Reggio Emilia track at NAEYC's 
national conference, multiple electronic discussion lists and study groups, a newsletter, 
and annual U.S. delegations. Thus it should be no surprise that Reggio Emilia's "image of 
the child" has become a dominant theme in discussions on early care and educational 
policies and practices at the local and national levels. It is this influence-to promote not 
only change, but reflection, debate, and conversation-that may well be Reggio Emilia's 
greatest legacy.

While it is premature to make claims about the influence of Reggio Emilia's 
example on children's lives, there is little question that the field of early childhood
education, including teacher education, has been altered as a result of exchanges taking place with Italian colleagues. In settings around the world, educators are now looking with greater attention to children as sources of their own learning, to parents for new ways of thinking about sharing in children's early education, and to each other for support and collaboration in making schools learning communities for adults as well as children. As a result of these cross-cultural conversations, some have begun to use Reggio Emilia as illustrative of how nations might best respond to children's development and learning potentials—in particular, Reggio Emilia's emphasis on local processes of knowledge construction (Dahlberg, Moss, & Pence, 1999; New, 2000). Loris Malaguzzi often repeated his immodest and ambitious goal of changing the culture of childhood. The impact of this advocacy agenda continues to reverberate as parents and teachers, citizens and policy makers in schools, in states, and across nations debate the rights and potentials of young children in a changing global society.” (New, 2000).

Reggio Emilia Influence of Design

The innovative physical design of the building led by the architects was guided by on-going input and feedback from the agencies and organizations representing various services and roles. Through the architectural firm and Becky, survey forms to agencies that had expressed interest in the project and supported the idea of the collaboration. These forms were used to prepare an architectural program for the early childhood and family center. The introduction on the form read as follows: “The program survey forms will be used to prepare an architectural program for the early childhood and family center. They will be circulated first to individuals attending the briefing session. After that session, they will be mailed to those who were unable to attend the session. The
The purpose of the survey forms is to collect needed information on the space, equipment and qualitative needs of various service agencies scheduled to participate (locate) in the early childhood center. All persons in each participating agency are to be interviewed” (Sample Survey Form, 1997)

The forms were set up so that individual agencies could write down what special requirements their program might need such as: noise/acoustical, audio-visual, special hearing, humidity control, movable storage, special cabinetry, special fire protection, computer equipment, electrical, fumes/exhaust, special cooling, built-in storage, shelving, special security and communications. A separate section asked for parking requirements which asked for the number of spaces that each program might need in a parking lot for staff, visitors, center vehicles and drop-off. In addition, the forms allowed any comments to be written in regarding things such as exterior and interior character, materials, color, overall perception of the facility and how the center might fit into the neighborhood and still be attractive to children and families. Each agency was also asked to give a description of services and functions to be provided at the facility. The YWCA indicated that “are interested in providing child care in collaboration with Head Start. We also have experience in school age care for ages six years through kindergarten and are considering a pre-school experience. Our mission is to eliminate racism and the empowerment of women and thus, this collaboration fits into our mission statement as we can reach groups of people that we previously have not been able to.” (statement taken form Survey Form, 1997). An important section of the survey form was a section in which the organization needed to list in order of importance their proximity to other agencies and functions. The survey stated that “the architect needs to know these
linkages and relationships so that a smoothly functioning plan can be designed for the building” (Survey form, 1997) and asked participants to use the following codes: 0-not significant (very little or no contact necessary); 1-general area (same area within the building, but not adjacent); 2-adjacent area (immediately adjacent to other service/function); 3-same area (located in same area or room). The following areas were coded with the number system: administration, administration staff, receptionist, lobby, parking, day care, pre-school, early intervention classrooms, Head Start, recreation, multi-purpose, physical therapy, clinic, drop-off area, occupational therapy, audiologist, playground, language therapy and restrooms.

Becky Love challenged people during this evaluation period to write in minutes from a partner meeting in 1998 “…we want to make certain we make comprises we can live with—look at it in a new way. Create spaces that will be an advocate for curious young learners…all spaces must be maximized for multiple uses and people and for learning…Open your minds, resources, and hearts to change. Space must be viewed different than we know it now.”

What resulted was a 60,000 square foot building that was renovated and designed to support the innovative programs. The building contains wide hallways and bright, airy classrooms and is organized into “neighborhoods” of clustered classrooms, each with a shared studio space, motor park, kitchenette, and teacher workspace. At the center of the building is a large and open “town square space” which provides a place for large group meetings and display of current projects and curriculum and is bordered by an inviting library, the medical and health suite and staff offices. The result is more than a new building: it is a statement about the value of families and children, about the importance
of a high quality environment in supporting learning and teaching, and a commitment to a new way of doing business on behalf of children and families.

Common Mission Statement

Each of the agencies involved in the collaborative process had a viable and working mission statement. In April of 1998, the partners meet to decide upon a common mission statement. The following ideas needed to be incorporated within the collaboration mission statement: “This Family Center will provide a continuity of services to enhance wellness, education and support to families and their children who may be with and without disabilities. This Center will service families in the Franklin County Community with children who are birth through eight years of age, with a commitment to provide a community of support among educators, professional education institutions, community agencies, children, families and early childhood staff. Multiple services will be provided on-site that are accessible, available, affordable and coordinated.” (Memo to partners, 1998)

From that mandate the partners met and after many discussions agreed upon a common mission statement which read: “To enhance the quality of life for children, their families, and the community by providing collaborative and comprehensive services that are inclusive, affordable and accessible.”

Having a common mission statement became important as it brought together all the separate identities of each agency and organization into a common goal and place in which a new degree of evaluation would now take place. Although each agency maintains its own identity and separate mission statement—having a common and unified
mission statement helped to bring all the parties in agreement upon the purpose of the collaboration project and to ensure the vision was clarified through a formal statement.

Partner Meetings

In 1999, a group was formed to “shape and guide the implementation of the center and became known as the Family Partnership” (Kloth & Love, 2002). This partnership consisted of members from the following agencies: Action for Children, Alcohol Drug and Mental Health, Child Development Council of Franklin County Head Start (CDCFC), Columbus Metropolitan Area Community Action Organization Head Start (CMACAO), Columbus Health Department, Columbus Public Schools, Franklin County Board of Health, Franklin County Board of MR/DD Service Coordinators, Franklin County Board of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (MR/DD) Early Childhood Education, Franklin County Children’s Services, Franklin County Department of Job and Family Service, Ohio Department of Education—Division of Early Childhood Education, The Ohio State University, YWCA of Columbus, and YMCA of Central Ohio.

“In January of 2000 the Partners were clear that the work was about to become more difficult. They knew that when the building opened in September 2001 the human systems would have to be in place to create a caring learning community that would have the capacity to grow into their highest values and vision for children, families, professionals and the community. They faced decisions about the shared staffing, shared funding, and shared space and other contractual arrangements that would begin to affect each agency’s bottom line. Becky asked Chris to facilitate a planning process. Her agency provided the resources to support his role.” (Kloth & Love, 2002)
The Partners continue to meet on a monthly basis from September through June to discuss issues that the collaboration is faced with and to evaluate future areas to be worked on. During a partner meeting in 2002, the issue was raised as to the role of the partners and how is the role changing as the collaboration keeps going on. The discussion continued with how do we pass on the legacy and keep the “right” people in the room to address issues and concerns that arise. One concern was that most of the partners in the room have been part of the collaboration process from the beginning and one of the new tasks was to bring the message to the next generation of leaders and to identify who those leaders might be. For many partners in the room, the collaboration “was a fantasy that was actually happening” (interview, 2003) and the next task was how to get others involved in living the fantasy.

Other partner meetings raised issues with fiscal responsibility and financing—an issue that continues to plague the collaboration to the present day. During the course of a partner meeting in 2002, financial concerns were specifically raised with nutrition and food service concerns. Issues were raised that the initial projections concerning costs of the program were low and that one partner stated “we need to go back to the drawing board and talk about issues that have surfaced [in regard to food service] that were originally not thought of but that we are dealing with”. Specifically the program and service had to add staff that added cost to the overall program. After the issue was raised in a partner meeting—key partners involved in the process met and discussed how to solve the fiscal dilemma. Constant communication and dialogue seems to be a key in keeping current issues raised and dealt with in appropriate forms so that a single small issue does not compromise the larger scale operation of the collaboration. What seems to
be a constant source of strength for the collaboration throughout the years has been the source of an outside facilitator during the collaboration process and at the partner meetings.

**Role of an Outside Facilitator**

Early on in the collaboration an outside facilitator was engaged to participate in the collaboration process. Early minutes indicate that the facilitator was engaged to participate in the process and introduced the group to the Principles of Dialogue through works of David Bohm, Peter Senge, William Issacs, Art Kleiner, and Mary Fewel-Tulin. But what exactly is a facilitator and why was an outside source so important to the story of this collaboration. First, a definition of a facilitator and the roles need to be defined.

The formal definition of a facilitator is “someone who makes progress easier; a supporter” (FreeDictionary.com). According to Cartwright (1951) a facilitator is someone who is skilled at helping everyone in the group expresses their leadership qualities. They help things go smoothly without imposing their own ideas upon everyone else. Negotiators are skilled facilitators. Facilitators adhere to a number of basic qualities: democracy, responsibility, cooperation and honesty. Each of these qualities has conditions that should be met. Democracy allows for the following conditions: each person has the opportunity to participate without prejudice— the planning of any meeting is open and shared by all participants; the agenda should be designed by the group to meet their needs and can be changed by the participants if they think it should be; there is no hierarchy in the group meeting—usually sitting in a circle. Each person, including the facilitator, is responsible for their own behavior, including the choice of participating during a meeting. The facilitator must be sensitive to how much responsibility the
participants at a meeting are prepared and able to take. If someone does not wish to contribute, that is a valid option for them. Participants can learn to take an increasing amount of responsibility with experience. Cooperation expects that the facilitator and the participants work together to achieve collective goals. Leadership is something you do a group whereas facilitation is something you do with a group. Honesty is where facilitators express feelings, values, concerns and priorities when working with a group. The open honesty of the facilitator about abilities and knowledge will help elicit honesty from all participants.

What is the role of a facilitator? According to Pfieffer and Jones (1972) and Porter, Lawler and Harkman (1975) the following items are part of the role of the facilitator: A facilitator's job is to pay attention to how people in the meeting work together, so as to assure the group can accomplish their goals. A facilitator:

1. Challenges thinking.

2. Helps the group creates lists of important points.

3. Summarizes the issues from time to time.

4. Shares ideas when they can help the meeting progress.

5. Provides handouts when needed to clarify the main points.

6. Raises questions to bring out different viewpoints.

7. Guides discussion, but does not lead it.

8. Restates ideas when the person presenting them is not clear.

9. Provides constructive criticism when, for example, a person or people attempt to dominate the meeting.
The facilitator accepts that each member of the group is willing and able to share responsibility for what happens, including reminding people of the next meeting, assuring each person has the opportunity to contribute to a discussion, or making sure the agenda serves the group's purpose. Sharing responsibility helps distribute the success or failure of the group's actions and allows more people to determine what happens within the group and what decisions are made.

Any member can assume, from time to time, the role of leadership and call the group back to the subject of discussion, interrupt patterns of conflict between other parties, offer clarifying comments, summarize activities or give feedback. As groups become more skilled in group process, the facilitator will become just one more member.

Facilitators must be aware of how people's interactions influence the dynamics of the meeting. The tone of the meeting can be set by simple non-verbal cues, such as where the facilitator sits. If the facilitator sits at the front of the room, facing the members of the audience who are seated in rows, with a podium between, the other members of the group are less inclined to speak up. Their attention is focused on the facilitator, not on each other. This gives the facilitator a great deal of authority. On the other hand, if the facilitator sits with the other people, this will physically equalize the relationships and ease the interaction.

The Partnership Working with the Facilitator

“As the process began Chris oriented the members of the Family Partnership to the principles of Dialogue. Early in the process he reviewed the system learning from previous years. He introduced them to a typology of ways to work together, including five basis images:
1. Independence,

2. Coordination,

3. Cooperation,

4. Collaboration,

5. Integration (Kloth, 2000).

He also highlighted six key elements of working together that would frame their work:

1. Shared goals,

2. A shared view of interdependence,

3. Shared power,

4. Shared control,

5. Shared accountability, and

6. Trust (Kloth, 2000).

A series of monthly dialogues lead to a two-day planning retreat during the summer of 2000. In the midst of the retreat the group faced a crisis. The web of external requirements and internal traditions regarding the number of adults with particular qualifications required in a given space with a given number of children at particular times of the day seemed to have created a potential “deal breaker”. After a difficult night one of the partners shared an idea at the morning check-in. It almost seemed too easy, but it released a flurry of activity that created an important success….A task group structure was created to focus on key areas of the operating model. Several line staff members were included in the design. It also increased their commitment to the changes in how they would do business in the new facility. The group reluctantly developed
structures that were clear enough to provide direction for staff and flexible enough to adapt to the real conditions that would shape their theoretical design after the building opened. Over the summer of 2001 the new staff were provided with orientation and training to the new center.

In September of 2001 the new building opened….Throughout the 2001-2002 school years the partners met regularly. The Partner meetings are designed so that a professional facilitator meets with the above mentioned agency representatives on site for a regular monthly meeting and in special retreats in order to plan how a comprehensive services, one-stop program serving diverse early childhood programs and agencies can be realized across the variety of cooperating agencies, each with its own administrative and fiscal structure, traditions, and external accountability requirements.’(Kloth & Love, 2002)

They faced and continue to face challenges as unanticipated issues surfaced. While there were difficult times, conflicts and another crisis that seemed to threaten the economic structure of the whole design, the group kept its values and vision in plain view….Key players have remained substantially the same. In the next chapter, the YWCA faces a crisis and fiscal challenge which almost causes them to have to pull out of the collaboration. This section will discuss the motivating factors that helped them to retain in the collaboration and hold out until they could reach fiscal stability. The Partner Meetings continue to meet monthly during the school year and attendance remains high (Love, 2004).

The process of evaluation continues today. During the summer retreat of 2004, Chris set the tone for the discussions and conversations by stating principles and laws of
dialogue which the group was already familiar with at previous retreats and meetings. The principles of “Open Space Technology” are: whoever is here is the right person; whatever happens is the only thing that could have happened; whenever it starts is the right time; when its over its over. Along with these principles he reminded the group that the “Law of Two Feet” is that “moving or leaving a group doesn’t need to be negative; there are butterflies—who flutter from group to group; and there are bumblebees—which ‘pollinate’ other groups by passing ideas and information along” (Summer Retreat, 2004). The guidelines for dialogue were stated that: “listen to learn, question with curiosity, speak to share, ponder paradox and seek common ground” (summer, 2004). With these guidelines, the group started reflected upon the past and where the current issues and concerns led them too currently.

Reflections at the summer retreat of 2004 stated that fiscal stability is still an issue and stability has not yet been reached. On the positive side, the center has been able to build a rapport with families and that needs of children are being met and exceeding expectations. Current issues that face the collaboration include: professional development, name recognition, assessment of services and programs and fiscal stability. The group recognized that the “honeymoon phase was over and new work needed to be done”.

As such, the retreat allowed for groups to meet and discuss possible solutions to issues at hand and then task groups were formed at the end of the retreat to address issues and concerns that face the collaboration at the present time. Current issues that face the collaboration include fiscal, professional development and assessment of program and services for community and professional awareness. At the summer retreat of 2004, task
groups were formed to address concerns and issues that were raised with the aforementioned issues.
Timeline of Events leading up to the Opening of the Partnership

1991  Initiative by Governor Voinovich known as; *Family and Children First*; Chris Kloth attends what is later termed “Future Search”. Becky attends “Future Search” that Chris Kloth conducted with his colleagues.

1992  Becky convenes a diverse stakeholder group to engage in dialogue which became known as the Franklin County Childcare and Early Childhood Education Council. Chris facilitated the dialogues.

1993  The Council sponsored a Future Search in which they committed to creating a Comprehensive Community Plan to focus and guide work in the future. Council created task groups collaboration emerged as a core value and strategy in conjunction with the parameters of the Governor’s plan.

1994  The plan was released at an outdoor event at the statehouse. The Action for Children Board of Trustees began a three-year strategic plan in which a Future Search was used and included members of the Council and other stakeholders.

1995  The Franklin County MR/DD bid and received 1.5 million dollar matching grant from the state with a proposal to expand existing childhood centers. Becky invited a broad base of CC/EE professionals in creating this model.

1996  Supporting letters from agencies and organizations are provided. Groups included: Action for Children, CDC, OSU, Columbus Health Department, CPS, ADAMH, YWCA, Franklin County Education Service Center, Franklin County Children Services, and Ohio Dominican College. Approval was granted by the Department of MR/DD.


1998  Letters to partners agencies to work with Moody/Nolan on space issues and design. YWCA returns space assessment to Becky. Moody/Nolan presents architectural program.

1999  Working with AFC, the Council and other community leaders raised the visibility of the plan.

Continued
Figure 4.4 continued

2000 Chris was asked to facilitate a planning process and introduced the Family Partnership to the principles of Dialogue. Series of monthly dialogues occurred which lead to a 2 day planning retreat. Task group structure was created.

2001 New Staff were provided and oriented to the new center. Center opened in September.

2002 Partners met regularly to discuss on-going issues. Looking at new role of Family Partnership and ways to empower staff. **YWCA** looking at crisis in staying open.

2003 Looking at on-going daily issues that continue to come up. **YWCA** looking at professional development issues and because of child care cannot attend professional development days.

2004 Creating new task forces to deal with on-going issues and new issues of fiscal need for maintaining dental clinic, ways of professional development and ways to bring awareness of collaboration to community leaders, community and funders. **YWCA** still looking for ways to be included in professional development—at the retreat attention is given to the matter and tasks groups are formed to think of ways to include **YWCA** in professional development seminars and trainings.
Definition of Collaboration and Properties

Collaborations, are defined as organizational and interorganizational structures where resources, power and authority are shared and where people are brought together to achieve common goals that could not be accomplished by a single individual or organization independently (Kagan, 1991). Very often collaboration is equated with the terms cooperation and coordination. The literature supports that cooperation; coordination and collaboration are quite different and constitute a hierarchy or ladder (Black & Kase, 1963; Morgan, 1985; Stafford, 1984). As one progresses from cooperation through coordination to collaboration, interorganizational relationships become more sophisticated, complex and effective for problem solving (Kagan, 1991). Cooperation forms the base; it is the least formal and the most prevalent it exists without any clearly defined structure. At the cooperation level, organizations work informally with each other. Coordination involves agencies to remain independent (Morris & Lescohier, 1978) whereas collaboration brings previously separated organizations into a new structure. Collaboration implies a greater sharing of resources, more intense joint planning and that sharing of power and authority (Kraus, 1990). What are the reasons for entering into collaboration? Theorists suggest rationale and benefits of collaboration fall into four major categories: alleviating scarcity of resources, expanding the narrowness of problem conceptualization, improving inadequacies in human service and achieving organizational reform (Appley & Winder, 1977; Schindler-Rainman, 1981). Although “the partnership” meets the definition of collaboration as presented by Kagan (1991), what was the rationale for collaboration (Appley & Winder, 1977; Schindler-Rainman, 1981)?

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Rationale for Collaboration

Alleviating Scarce Resources

One of the most frequently mentioned rationales for and benefits of collaboration is overcoming a scarcity of resources (Appley & Winder, 1977; Schindler-Rainman, 1981). Broadly defined by theorists, resources are categorized as fiscal, physical and human. Agencies face resource limitations in each category: budget cuts dominate program operations, facilities are aging and the pool of qualified employment candidates continues to shrink (Kagan, 1991). In an effort to minimize the threat to organizational efficacy, agencies collaborate hoping to increase access to or compensate for badly needed resources. Given the recent moves toward public accountability on the part of governmental agencies, the resources rationale gains even greater credibility.

The literature suggests that it is not unreasonable to expect enhanced resources utilization as a result of collaborations. Collaborations claim to minimize administrative expenses and improve administrative efficiency (Weiss, 1981). They capitalize on the larger number of resources at the smallest cost sometimes uncovering unused resources (Burgard, 1983; Lippitt & VanTil, 1981). Resources are used better and are wasted less, particularly with respect to resource overlaps (Gamm, 1983; Parnick & Schober, 1981). The division of labor, sharing of facilities, and pooling of information are believed to improve use of the scarce resources allocated to participants (Gamm, 1983; Parnick & Schober, 1981).

Every publicly funded agency competes for the same funding and Ohio is no exception to the rule. During the 1990s, competition among limited financial resources was strong and remains so today in Ohio due to budget cuts and less governmental
spending on early childhood programs. Governor Voinovich in a 1997 speech which addressed a subcommittee on early childhood funding stated that he got the message and is trying to change policies in their states to focus more on advancing early-childhood development. “I need to take heed”, said Governor Voinovich. “I have a duty to act on behalf of children and families. Programs such as Head Start are vitally important and should be expanded”, said Governor George Voinovich. Governor Voinovich added that “his state is using federal block grants to channel money to Head Start, Early Start, parent training, and other programs.” "It is discouraging that so many professionals in traditional education fields fail to see the learning value of early-childhood programs and view them strictly as competition for scarce funds," Governor Voinovich said (Senate appropriations subcommittee minutes, 1997).

Fiscal stability is a goal of every childhood program. Collaboration of services and programs would ideally help alleviate scarcity of resources as the organizations and agencies who are competing for the same resources would be working together to obtain the resources for the good of the whole collaboration effort. Competition among resources also includes physical and human aspects. In this respect, the collaboration was drawing from the same employment markets and competing for the same workforce. The collaboration allowed a core group of health and community service workers to deal with various agencies within the collaboration in order to better serve the families and children that the collaboration was serving. This also proved beneficial for the YWCA because they were able to receive benefits from a core group of health and community service workforce located at the collaboration in which they would not have received the benefits being the only non-publicly funded agency within the collaboration. All
agencies and organizations benefited from the newly renovated building in which the collaboration resides in currently. Alone, no single agency could have re-opened the building as it stands now but, as a collaborative group the building and facilities are among the most innovative, creative and functional within the state of Ohio.

Expanding Problem Conceptualization and Improving Service Delivery

A second rationale for and benefit of collaboration relates to how organizations can overcome their tendency to view problems from an individual perspectives. Gray (1995) claims that an organization’s inability to adapt to a new environment lies in the failure to conceptualize a problem and analyze potential solutions at a level where the organization is joined by other similarly concerned individuals, groups or organizations.

In the 1990s Governor Voinovich was frustrated by the lack of coordination among human service programs (Family Impact Seminar, 1998). He wanted to find a way to reform entrenched state bureaucracies and give local government more flexibility for service coordination.

Meanwhile although the increased participation of mothers in the workforce and child care being an essential work support for families, those in the low-income status or with children with disabilities often found it difficult to find high-quality, appropriate child care for their children. Families often faced difficulties in which the current system of services and child care was fragmented and difficult to access. Families found the systems were contradictory, restricting and disempowering. In short, they simply failed to meet the real needs of children and families (Bruner, Kunesh & Knuth, 1992).

Governor Voinovich introduced his initiative called Ohio Family and Children First which brought together the governor and directors of the Department of Alcohol and
Drug Addiction Services, Budget and Management, Health, Human Services, Mental Health, Mental Retardation, Developmental Disabilities and Youth Services (Family Impact Seminar, 1998). The goal was to promote local decision making about resource utilization through partnerships between families and communities and to recognize the family as core and strength of a stable society. The goal was to improve access to, and delivery of, education, health and social services to Ohio’s families and children.

Separately each organization and agency was thriving amongst difficult economic times and ways of public interest however; they were not meeting their own goals of complete and one-stop service for the families and children they served. Each agency and organization had its own strengths and weaknesses that by pulling together and joining forces helped to better serve the population they strove to help. “Kelly Browne” of the YWCA stated that “we wanted to work with the other agencies so that we could better serve the population that our mission statement strives to help and alone we couldn’t do it. Being part of the collaboration gives our child care part services that we can’t afford and don’t have the resources to accomplish alone” (Administrator interview, 2004).

**Achieving Organizational Reform**

Beyond improvement in service delivery, collaborations are judged by some to be a vital solution to the inadequacies and inflexibilities of bureaucracy (Kraus, 1980; Levy & Merry, 1986). Warren (1973) argues that “to understand the current trend of collaboration, in the absence of empirical results, one must look at its latent functions. These are the objective consequences of a social practice or belief contributing to the adjustment or adaptation of a system which are neither intended nor recognized” (p. 360).
Collaborations reduce the threat of competition, ensure that agencies have a say in decisions, and promote agency viability and expansion (Warren, 1973). Warren (1973) claims that collaboration “gives the aura of change without affecting either the causes or the basic injustices in the social system” (p.361).

The agencies and organizations within the collaborative effort showed public support by writing letters and providing funds to support the collaborative effort. Each agency was seeking to better serve its clients and to work on a fragmented and difficult service system. The result of having so many states and agencies dealing with children’s issues and hundreds of professional organizations on behalf of children and families and incoherent policies are proliferated by the staggering numbers of state and federal legislative committees that have jurisdiction for children and families (Kagan, 1991). Recognizing the dilemmas, there have been sustained pleas for coordination, consolidation and collaboration in human services generally with similar call resounding through early child care and education (Kagan, 1991).

“The Partnership” is a prime example of a working collaboration in process and an example of organizational reform in progress. “The Partnership” has created an exemplary model of how collaborations at the state and county level can be accomplished and how collaboration can be achieved. Nested within the early childhood education system of the Franklin County Board of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (FCBMRDD), “The Partnership” is the most extensive partnership in the system combing local, county and state educating, medical, social service, and mental health agencies and institutions working together to more effectively serve the community, children and families.
Stages of Development

The literature indicates that collaborations have much in common structurally (Kagan, 1991). All collaborations seem to pass through the common development stages. Highly predictable, these stages follow in sequence (Lewin, 1951; Levy, 1986; Flynn & Harbin, 1987). The literature suggests that certain mediating variables (goals, resources, power and authority and levels of adaptiveness) alter the pace of implementation to yield individually distinct collaborative processes. Four stages suggested by Flynn and Harbin (1987)—formation, conceptualization, development and implementation—combined with two stages—evaluation and termination—from Brewer and deLeon (1983) convey the range of stages described in the literature. The progression through the stages is typically linear but a change in mission or direction, or a reassessment of the collective structure, may necessitate a transition back to a previous stage (Flynn & Harbin, 1987). Although these stages appear fairly neat and orderly on paper, in reality they overlap (Kagan, 1991).

Formation

Lippit and Van Til (1981) outline what happens during the formation period of collaboration. According to them, a number of important activities take place that will shape all future stages—the idea for the collaboration is born and thus, the “articulation of the vision” (p.15) is born (Lippit & Van Til, 1981). The vision arises in response to recognition or identification of a potential or real problem. Formation is underway when an individual or event conceptualizes an effort or strategy to resolve the problem (Lippit
& Van Til, 1981). Once that idea rises, the problem and the vision must be shared with those in the group. Group members are identified and recruited, often by the initiating individual or organization. Gray (1985) calls this process “identification of stakeholders”. The initiator presents the rationale for the collaboration to the stakeholders so that they begin to recognize and appreciate their interdependence (Gray, 1985; Lippitt & Van Til, 1981). Following identification of the group members, the collaboration explores the viability of the vision. Lippit & Van Til (1981) refer to this as “testing of the collaborative waters” (p.8). Members become acquainted with one another and their programs, in part to find out if the collaboration will threaten organizational turf (Lippit & Van Til, 1981). Now a global mission will be identified and discussed (Flynn & Harbin, 1987; Lippitt & Van Til, 1981).

The economic times were right in Ohio for the governor to announce an initiative. In 1990, Ohio was experiencing the longest period of economic growth it had seen in years. Like the rest of the United States, Ohio benefited from the eight years of a growing economy during the 1990s (State of Ohio Report, 2002). This growth period was the longest economic expansion that the United States has ever experienced. The income of an average Ohio taxpayer rose by 10% between 1989 and 1999. Welcome growth in both jobs and earnings had an anti-poverty impact in Ohio through much of the decade.

The 1991 Governor Initiative Ohio Family and Children First combined brought an environment which enabled the idea to be thought of. During the past decade, the human service delivery system for children and families has proven increasingly inadequate (Hughes, 2004). A need now exists for more integrated services and more
partnerships between agencies and organizations to create “seamless” or “wrapped” services (Hughes, 2004). In Ohio, the *Family and Children First Initiative* called for a link between human services, child protection, education, health and juvenile justice to form a comprehensive system of services for children. Governor Voinovich helped to create the environment with the 1991 initiative and long standing issues of service for children and families helped to bring awareness to the problem. During the years of 1991-3, the Future Search seminars allowed for dialogue and conversation to happen between individuals who had community ties, influence and positions to make something happen. Because of two highly committed individuals—a diverse stakeholder group was formed known as the Franklin County Childcare and Early Childhood Education Council in which dialogue continued to discuss and a plan was created in which to begin a three year strategic plan to include members of the Council and other stakeholders. This plan which was presented at an outdoor event could be considered the global mission which was to be identified and discussed.

The timing was also right with the 1990 government program entitled The Child Care and Developmental Block Grant. This program was designed to support families by increasing the availability, affordability and quality of child care in the United States. The CCDBG program was authorized for more than $2.5 billion during the first three years of operation. Appropriation levels were $732 million for fiscal year 1991, $825 million for fiscal year 1992 and $892.8 million for fiscal year 1993. Funds were available to States, Territories, Indian Tribes and Tribal Organizations and could require a state match. The Federal government wanted to work toward collaboration between programs to provide seamless child care services. Coordinating with existing child care
programs was promoted to ensure the varying needs for children were met. And even through it was promoted that the eligibility “may change over time, coordination and collaboration is encouraged to help ensure child care services are provided without the necessity of changing the child care provider or to create a community of child care services.” (www.archrespite.org)

The program stated that “there are many ways in which collaborations between grantees could occur and that collaboration should be mutually beneficial. In determining potential collaboration should consider the following suggestions:

1. Information and referral systems
2. Facilities
3. Staff (including child care providers)
4. Joint training on topics pertinent to both programs such as child development, CPR, first aid, cultural awareness, child abuse detection and prevention and disability awareness
5. Support services for parents/caregivers such as parenting classes, medical services, counseling
6. Service to children with special needs such as disabilities, HIV positive, medical conditions, potential identified abuse and neglect
7. Joint public awareness materials and/or campaigns
8. Funding

According to Cohen (2002), child care programs are linked with how the trends are being played out in the government. During 1971 and 1988 the idea of child care became intertwined with that of welfare reform culminating in the Family Support Act of
1988 which included the first federal child care entitlement. This trend continued throughout the 1990’s including the Act for Better Child Care in 1990 which supplied block grants to states to improve child care and ended with the linkage of child care to welfare reform in 1996. Policy shifts according to Cohen (2002) as the public and government becomes interested in something else—child care programs and policies are subject to the whim of government programs and public interest. As such, the time and conditions were right for “The Partnership” center to be formed—a governor’s initiative, a good economic time for the state and the visionary of individuals who wanted to create a new idea.

**Conceptualization**

The conceptualization phase is reached when the collaboration’s participants adopt a formal policy statement and objectives (Kagan, 1991). This phase is also referred to as direction setting (McCann, 1983; Trist, 1983) and individual expectations about the future of the collaboration and the activating forces behind each member’s participation are shared. Participants identify a common purpose, develop a common interpretation of the future and agree on a path to achieve it (Gray, 1985; Trist, 1983).

This phase requires active member commitment and participation, tasks, roles, and responsibilities are discussed during conceptualization (Kagan, 1991). This period would be the years 1995-1996 as the plan had been released however the means and who began to form. During this time period the Franklin County MR/DD bid and received a 1.5 million dollar matching grant from the state with a proposal to expand existing childhood centers. Becky invited a broad and diverse group of professionals in the field
to create a model for this project. During this time period letters of support were received from organizations and programs in the area and approval to start the project began.

**Development**

The third stage involves the development of a formal structure that will sustain the conceptualization and the collaboration. The development stage has been termed “institutionalizing the shared meanings and prevailing norms” of the collaboration (Gray, 1985, p.913). The vision and the mission are now transformed from philosophy to practice. During the development stage the group creates permanent structures which are internal and facilitate participant work such as how to address and resolve issues and conflicts within the group, developing plans and obtaining permission and approval of key decision maker (Flynn & Harbin, 1987).

In November of 1997 a letter was sent to the partners that stated that “the partnership has strengthened, a program plan has been developed, and a significant financial commitment has been made. We are near design with a timeline to break ground this summer of 1999. It is at this time that we need a fiscal commitment from (insert agency) is needed.” (Letter dated, November 14th, 1997 to all partners) and in January of 1999 a letter of confirmation was sent to all partners with stated fiscal commitments to the effort. (Letter dated January 22nd, 1999 to all partners)

During the years of 1998—2001 the vision of the collaboration was developed with a common mission statement that was produced from the key partners and incorporated into the vision, a delegation went to Italy to review the community village concept from the Reggio Emilia programs and an architect was hired to help design and
visualize the dream. The architect included the key partners and staff with requesting their in-put on the style of design and features that they felt should be included within the project. The architect wrote in a memo stating that “the structure will be designed to facilitate collaborative partnerships among staff, families and children. A sense of community, light, storage and movement opportunities for children continue to rank high relative to the use of space” (memo to staff before survey was sent out, 1998).

Staff remembers being asked everything from wall color to carpet color. They were included in as many decisions as possible and their feedback was valued in the decision making process. Their task was “not to design space; but to identify what you would like to do in the spaces/what you need to put in the spaces to support your teaching abilities, individually and as a group; and finally how you would like to use the spaces and remember don’t get hung up on the trees—Look to the forest” (memo to staff, 1998).

Surveys were sent out to the partner organizations and agencies asking for them to evaluate the importance of features such as: noise/acoustical, audio-visual, special hearing, humidity control, movable storage, special cabinetry, special fire protection, computer equipment, electrical, fumes/exhaust, special cooling, built-in storage, shelving, special security and communications. The forms also allowed comments to be written regarding issues such as exterior and interior character, materials, color, overall perception of facility and how the center might fit into the neighborhood. “Smithville Road” was developed with much input and feedback from the staff and the partners involved in the process. Each person or agency’s views were considered when designing and developing the plan for the center site.
Implementation

When a group has successfully passed through the first three stages, the collaboration is ready to implement its programs. Decisions are made during the previous stages are now implemented at the administration and service delivery levels. Necessary policy changes are made, agencies interact accordingly to the agreed-upon structures, and service ideally is improved (Flynn & Harbin, 1987).

The idea of the collaboration was finally realized and the program opened its doors in September of 2001 to 500 children and their families representing cultural, economic and ability diversity. Children receive quality care and education in inclusive classrooms led by teams of educators from MR/DD and either CDCFC or CMACAO Head Start, Columbus Public Schools, the YWCA, and YMCA. These inclusive classrooms are supported by specialist roles including: vision, behavior management staff, a nurse, speech and language pathologists, occupational and physical therapists, adaptive physical educator’s, art studio teachers, as well as parent support staff. These specialists provide direct services to children and families and support classroom educators in their work within the classrooms.

Necessary changes are made as the partnership continues to hold professionally facilitated monthly meetings in order to discuss issues that arise and concerns that need to be taken care of immediately. At one partner meeting in 2002, it was discussed that children had received two dental screening and that services could have been combined so that the children only received one dental check-up and that the point of the collaboration was to make the “process easier for parents”. Discussion was held as to
why the two dental check-ups had occurred (due to agency policy) and how to deal with this issue in the future regarding agency policies and procedures and the “head” agency offices dealing with the agencies within the collaboration and new policies and procedures being allowed to fulfill requirements.

Service is definitely improved for the child care agency in the collaboration. The child care section is able to work in a new and exciting building that has art studios, inside gym areas, a library, and inside motor areas—all of which are uncommon to the average child care center. The child care section also benefits from the health and human service part of the collaboration in which they receive benefits as to having specialists in the classroom or available to help them with the special needs children that are in the classroom. The part-time programs benefit from having the child care section in the collaboration as their clients can receive wrap-around care and summer care when their programs are not in session. Overall, each agency and organization has its own strengths and together they form an impressive array of services and programs that benefit the families and children that they aim to serve.

**Evaluation**

Evaluation will also be necessary in the future to sustain the vision and maintain the momentum that was used in order to open up the facility. The process of creating systemic change takes a time. To be successful, strategies for maintaining momentum need to be integrated into a state or community effort from the beginning. Evaluation is an essential and continuous phase of collaboration. It is the process by which the actual performance levels are compared to the expectations (Brewer & deLeon, 1983). Lippit
and Van Til (1981) describe this stage’s “renewal and review of the validity of the dream that brought the collaboration into existence” (p.10). The participants see if they are successful and if discrepancies exist, the collaboration attempts to find the source or if they are contained within the formation, conceptualization or implementation.

The overall center formally evaluates itself in two main ways: through monthly partner meetings and through summer retreats which are attended by the key partners and administrators and are conducted with an outside facilitator. After the center opened in 2001 the work did not end there nor did the Partner Meetings in which the key administrators from each agency or organization continued to attend monthly meetings in order to discuss issues that arose and to keep the communication and dialogue continuing on the collaboration and evaluating the progress.

Monthly meetings are held on site and include all key partners and administrators from the collaboration. At these meetings, needs and concerns that involve the daily running of the collaboration are brought to the table in order to be discussed. The professional facilitator helps to keep the meetings focused and the dialogue constructive and task-oriented. He keeps written records and minutes from each meeting to help evaluation process be recorded and documented. Since he has been part of the project from the beginning, he brings valuable insight into the project knowing partners and the history of the project.

Two retreats which have been held in the summer month’s help evaluate the program. The goal is to bring up issues that continue to plague the collaboration, discuss them constructively and form new task forces to work on issues and concerns facing the site. These summer retreats invite key administrators and partners along with
an outside facilitator who runs the meetings and sets up the discussion and policies for discussions.

During the summer of 2002 Professional Development Institute the following belief statements were developed by the professional staff. These core statements are the following:

- Our work is defined by the characteristics, uniqueness, needs and promise of the children and families we serve,
- With appropriate support and assistance, all children and adults are learner,
- That identifying strengths as a starting point, and working toward potentials is a right of all children and adults,
- In building inclusive communities of child and adult learner,
- Relationships are central to what we do,
- All people have the potential to be listeners in an atmosphere of communication, respect and trust,
- Our environments mirror the values, attitudes, cultures and teaching practices of the cultures within them,
- Curriculum should be meaningful, relevant and integrated. Only together can we provide the best for children and families.

It was brought up at the 2004 summer retreat that an area that needs to be worked on in the collaboration is evaluation and assessment. Once reason that evaluation and assessment are important is that fiscal stability is still not a reality of the center and funders look for assessment and evaluation documents when considering funding. The site has procedures in place which could be easily set up to be an evaluation method.
(such as records in the receptionist area which indicate who, when, and for how much
time visitors spend at the site—to indicate the number of visitors who visit and the many
reasons why the site is a model) however it would take a new position within the site in
order to take the pre-existing procedures and change them into evaluation or assessment
tools in order to give a physical demonstration on what the center provides to the
community. The summer retreat also brought up issues relating to name recognition and
how many people in the community are not aware of the program, services and model
that the collaboration provides for the community. Task forces were set up to discuss
how the better market the collaboration for funding purposes and in order for the model
to be shared with the community and other venues.

**Mediating Variables**

**Goals**

Typically, the goal derives from a mutually identifiable need that may arise from
an external or internal problem (Berkowitz, 1986; Caruso, 1981; Elder & Magrab, 1980). In most collaboration the coming of the group serves the interests of both the collective
and the individual participants (Black & Kase, 1963; Hord, 1986; Pareek, 1981) enabling
them to engage in joint planning and problem solving (Hord, 1985; Lieberman, 1986).
Achieving consensus of the common goal is not always easy. Most commonly the formal
goals are adopted by the group and are the product of many conflicting sub goals that are
reconciled through the consensual process (Kagan, 1991). The test of “good” goal
decisions is that relevant interest groups will accept and work to implement them (Covey
& Brown, 1985). Goal consensus is complicated and often restrained by organizational factors. In the nonprofit sector, organizations are subservient to a board of directors and/or governmental guidelines which often restricts freedom of choice regarding goals and operational strategies (Anthony & Young, 1984).

“The Partnership” wanted the same goal: to better serve the families and children that they serve. Reaching consensus on the main goal was not a difficult task according to key partners interviewed. The main consensus was spoken over and over again in interviews that “they could not believe that they were living out their fantasy—a one-stop facility to serve families and children”. However, when the logistics came down to goal consensus on individual practices, procedures and administration tasks—the job for consensus became harder. Each agency or organization was dealing with its own rules, regulations, governmental guidelines, curriculum guidelines and governing boards. The agencies had individual rules and regulations regarding every aspect of their programs. Agencies could not compromise on issues that they themselves had no control over as the rules and regulations were being sent from head offices and administrators. Very few of the rules and regulations could be comprised or “bent” in order to serve the new population and environment within the collaboration. However, each agency and organization felt strongly about the main goal which was to make a difficult and fragmented human service agency easier for their clients (families and children) and that the main focus would drive them to seek the best solutions for each problem they encountered.
Resources

Sharing resources enables organizations to trade among themselves and pooling allows all participants to contribute to the group (Kagan, 1991). In spite of differences in sharing strategies, resource exchange is considered to have a profound influence on the collaborative effort (Dunkle & Nash, 1989; Flynn & Harbin, 1987).

As child and family programs are often dealing with scarce resources and competition among them for limited governmental funding is sometimes fierce, a benefit for the collaboration was that they could combine resources and services in order to better serve the population that they all tried to serve. A breakthrough with the group was when in 1995; Franklin County MR/DD bid for and received a 1.5 million dollar matching grant from the state. As a leader in the community and with a specific vision in mind, Becky was prepared to take “shared funding” to a new level. She invited the state and county leadership and community leaders to be the broad base of early childhood education professionals that would help create the model for the collaboration. Each agency was able to come up financial resources to make the collaboration work within their organizations and for all the other agencies also.

Besides financial resources, human resources were a major impact to the success of the collaboration and a mediating variable that helped to promote and establish the collaboration. Leaders were willing to make a long commitment to the project in helping to establish the vision, participate in continuous and long-lasting dialogues, work many outside hours in partner meetings to set up guidelines, establish a common mission statement, establish procedures, policies and administration guidelines.
Power and Authority

Authority relationships are found in each stage and transaction in the process of collaboration. In the collaboration, power comes from many sources. Being an initiator of the collaboration is a source of power and participants of voluntary collaborations hold enormous power because they select participants who shape the identity of the group and choose the goals and strategies by which the collaborations will function (Gray & Hay, 1986; Edgar & Maddox, 1983; Hord, 1985). Clearly, collaborative participants will hold different degrees of power. An ideal collaboration has the idea of an egalitarian sharing of power and authority among group members.

Gamm (1983) believes the power diffusion and not power elimination is the ideal and that it should be based on knowledge or expertise and not on role of function as in a bureaucracy. This means that the participants assume control over those activities they have expertise in but that no single type of contribution or agency is considered better or more powerful (Gamm, 1983). Leadership can be shared among the participants so that no single agency dominates the collaboration. While such equal distribution of power is hard to achieve, it is the goal of a true collaboration (Gamm, 1983).

According to the literature, the most important dimension of power and authority is the leadership of the collaboration in being supportive, effective and a flexible leader (Dunkle & Nash, 1989; Gans & Horton, 1975; Gray, 1985).

From the beginning, Becky and Chris established a way to distribute power among the participants—the partnership council. In the partnership council each member of an agency or organization was asked to participate and be a factor in decision-making,
task group formation and problem-solving. The role of the outside facilitator established ground rules for participation and dialogue which helped to distribute the power among all instead of a governing few. No matter what financial resources or other factors played into the collaboration, each agency involved in the collaboration was treated with the same amount of respect and in-put. Becky commented at the summer retreat of 2004 that “she had to learn to be facilitated to”. And in this regard, all the agency and organizational leaders had to “learn to be facilitated to” in order to make the mediating variable of power be diffused evenly among the group. This would prove to be no easy task as each leader was a head of an organization or in a position to speak for the agency for specific reasons. Each possessed the following leadership skills:

“1. A sense of mission. They have clarity of vision and mission which provides the foundation to excite and inspire others in the team and organization.

2. Values-based measurable goals. They have clear understanding of the values of both the organization and individuals and these form the foundations enabling them to meet clear objectives. At their instigation the concept of ownership of goals unifies members of the team and organization and continues to provide everyone involved with a clear sense of direction towards a common cause.

3. Action orientation. They are entrepreneurial, innovative and forward in their thinking, and they launch quickly. An attitude of "we can do it!" prevails.

4. Courage. They are initiators of action and attack; they persistently stay the course, believing that the future belongs to the risk-taker.

5. Planners and strategists. They are big picture thinkers, taking the long view, looking at all options and outcomes. Concentrating on personal strengths and weaknesses, always aware of what could be the worst possible outcome, in order to avoid it.

6. Inspiring and motivational. They have an ability to draw out additional capacity within others, to arouse enthusiasm with total commitment. High levels of regular encouragement establish trust, confidence and loyalty.
7. Committed to success. They are future oriented, never thinking of failure, always learning from mistakes. They display a commitment to excellence and quality performances from products, services and people within the organization.

8. Communicators. They have the ability to delegate with agreed clear responsibilities. Everyone in the team knows what is expected of him/her, consequently instilling meaning and purpose into a task.

9. Low pressure salespeople. They possess a sound knowledge of the "relationship" selling process and how to apply it in daily interactions with customers and members of the organization to make them feel significant. They have excellent presentation and negotiation skills, and are prepared to compromise, always looking for a win/win solution.

10. Visibility. Never hiding behind a desk, they are always available to meet and talk with customers and team members. They actively seek responses to improve products, services and leadership style and achieve targets.

11. Team builder. They demonstrate clear coaching skills which enables them to determine ineffective team members. Only quality people are hired and continually developed via appropriate training strategies. Tasks are distributed to most suited individuals where they can make a major contribution. Open communication abounds.

12. Prioritizing. They ensure measurable and prioritized key result areas are known by all.

13. Love of leadership. They are self-reliant with a strong desire to be in charge. If asked, they like to make their own decisions and to be in control, however they also recognize that in order to lead, an individual must first be a good follower.

14. High self-esteem & positive self-image. They gain self-knowledge via introspection and this provides sensitivity towards the feelings of others in the team and organization. Strong leaders know their limitations and honestly evaluate themselves.

15. Self-motivated. They have a strong vision which provides them with the ability to continually set higher goals and gain commitment from others.

16. Ask advice. They are able to build upon their known strengths. They are prepared to seek advice from others in order to discover and compensate for any weaknesses.

17. Power through co-operation. They are always seeking talented people and developing relationships with key people. They understand and appreciate that if
others are first helped to achieve their goals, they will in return, assist you towards achieving your goals.

18. Listening. They learn to listen without interrupting, understanding that the more people are allowed to discuss an idea the more likely they will be committed towards its implementation.

19. Integrity. They understand that trust and credibility are the foundation of strong leadership. They always keep promises and are prepared to stand up for their beliefs, knowing that those beliefs are based upon sound personally-owned values.

20. Continual personal growth. They have a strong commitment towards life-learning and ensure their own self-improvement through reading, study and personal development courses.” (www.american.edu/academic, 2004).

The goal was to get each of the leaders committed to the project and to get them invested within the collaboration effort so that their investment became a personal and professional commitment and mission of the agency and not of any one individual.

Becky and Chris were able to divide power among the partners so that each had equal footing regardless of resources that they brought to the project or what agency they represented. They gave each partner a voice in the partner meetings thus, status at the meetings was equalized amongst the group. Involving current staff and partners in the process from the building designs to needs and desires in program areas increased the amount of participation, commitment and investment to the overall collaboration.

Levels of Adaptiveness and Flexibility

Flexibility and adaptiveness is the fourth mediating variable in collaboration. Flexibility enables the collaboration to monitor and respond to the changing nature of the and scope of any internal or external problems that may arise. Flexibility also allows for
participants to react to shifting boundaries among themselves and changing internal structures and role assignments (Kagan, 1991). The framework of the collaboration must remain flexible as its existence depends on the changing experiences of the participants and dealing with change (Fombrun, 1986; Hord, 1980).

The monthly partner meetings make flexibility available as issues can be brought forth on any administrative level and discussed with resolution in mind. During the discussions brought forth at the partner meetings—flexibility to solve problems or concerns are encouraged by the facilitator. At summer retreats all current issues or concerns along with pre-existing problems are brought forth and task forces are formed in order to tackle the problems with multiple members of various organizations and agencies.

The individual agencies and organizations are sometimes held bound and cannot allow for flexibility due to organizational hindrances or boundaries. The individual agencies are bound by their own rules and regulations and sometimes need to educate their organizations on why flexibility within the collaboration is needed and desired.

**Summary**

This chapter shows the collaboration situated and embedded within four layers of context: political ripeness, vision and leadership, community acknowledgement and support and community-leader investment and development. Each layer is situated within a historical timeline and is described in regard to interviews, conversations, documents and time spent in the field with participants involved in the process. Although the layers are presented individually they are interrelated and overlap. A timeline of
critical events has been diagrammed in order to give the reader a sense of time and events that progressed throughout the long collaborative process.

The stages of development as established by the literature and research from Harbin and Flynn (1987) which are: formation, conceptualization, implementation, evaluation and termination have been outlined with the criteria set forth from the research and examples and critical events that occurred throughout the collaborative process to show the linear path of development of the collaboration.

Mediating variables as outlined by the literature (Lewin, 1951; Levy, 1986; Flynn & Harbin, 1987) of goals, resources, power and authority and levels of adaptiveness have been described through data from the research and are present in the process of the collaboration effort and further validate the literature base in regard to the presence of these variables in collaboration process.

This particular collaboration agreed with the literature base that its development contained stages and that the stages overlapped at times; the collaboration had mediating variables in accordance to the literature base which concluded that these variables are present and decided if the collaboration will process and at what rate.
CHAPTER 5

LOOKING AT A NEIGHBORHOOD IN CONTEXT: THE STORY OF CHILD CARE
IN A PUBLICLY-FUNDED COLLABORATION

Child care workers held about 1.2 million jobs in the United States in 2002 (U.S. Department of Labor’s Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2004-5). And employment of child care workers is projected to grow as fast as the average for all occupations through the year 2012, as the number of women of child bearing age in the labor force and the number of children fewer than five years of age is expected to rise gradually over the projected 2002-12 period. Also, the proportion of children enrolled in full or part time in child care and preschool programs is likely to continue to increase (U.S. Department of Labor’s Occupational Handbook, 2004-5). Clearly, the need for child care and the number of families needing child care is projected to rise over the next decade.

The population of child care needs for Franklin County in the year 2002 for children under the age of five years old is 77,363. The number of children under the age of five with both parents in the workforce is 55,694. 10,133 newborns (58%) have mothers who are working and need full-time care in Franklin County. One of the biggest challenges for child care in Region 9 (includes the counties of Delaware, Fairfield, Franklin, Licking, Madison, Pickaway, and Union) of Central Ohio is that the needs and availability for newborns with working mothers is 14,324 but the available full-time infant care spots available is 4,795. The overall number of children under six with all
parents in the labor force is 83,176 and the capacity of formal full-time child care programs is 44,690.

This chapter will examine the demographics of child care in Franklin County where the collaboration effort is located and the market availability for such programs. Looking at the demographics of Franklin County it will provide a background in which the child care context is located and situated and how the demographics and market research support the need for child care in Franklin County and show that the YWCA program and fees are comparable to other child care programs and services. Thus, the YWCA providing child care at the collaboration filled a need at the county level and from the statistics and the market research, filling the spots at the site should have been relatively easy. However, the reality is that the YWCA struggled from the opening in filling the child care spots. And at one critical point, a year into the project the YWCA had to seriously consider if the doors could stay open at the program as it was still not making a profit and sustaining itself. This chapter will look at some factors that contributed to the fiscal difficulty for the program.

Through the research, it emerged that the next part of the research would focus on the staff at the YWCA and how child care fits into the collaboration. While the partnership seems to fit the definition of collaboration and fits into the stages of development very well, when examining a deeper layer of the staff the research seems to indicate that cooperation is the better description on-site instead of collaboration. It will be described and shown through the research that inherent and institutional hindrances continue to plague the child care field and that these hindrances are also felt in the collaboration on a macro and micro level. The macro level issues that plague the
profession of child care can be categorized into categories of institutional hindrances such as: high turn-over, low pay and long hours; professional silos; societal views and being a predominately female occupation. These macro levels issues cause feelings of marginalization to be felt by the child care field and is well documented in child care literature. Being part of an innovative and creative collaboration and partnership did not take away the inherent issues that continue to be problematic for the profession. The macro-level issues are felt at the collaboration site as shown through the observations, interviews, conversations and group discussion with the staff at the site.

Along with the macro levels of marginalization, the site experiences micro levels of marginalization which are somewhat unique to their experience at the collaboration. These micro levels of marginalization are: inherent issues (high turn-over, low pay and longer hours) in addition to professional development and isolation. Patterns of feeling marginalized are described by the staff through conversations, interviews, survey, and group discussion.

It is important for the collaboration to examine the feelings of marginality that the child care section feels as these feelings directly affect and is related to the collaboration, its continuing development process and the existence of the collaboration in the future. These combination of the macro feelings of marginalization felt by the profession combined with the micro levels of marginalization felt at the collaboration are played out in regard to issues of investment of vision, feelings and perceptions of inferiority, feelings of resentment and territorial issues. If these feelings of marginalization are not addressed and they continue to impact the collaboration and its developmental process—this could negatively impact the growth and existence of the collaboration.
Thus, the story will continue with the telling of the YWCA struggle to be the only non-publicly funded program within an effort of publicly funded programs and the feelings and perceptions of the staff as “marginalized” within the overall collaboration. The story will be situated within my interpretations based on their interviews, questionnaires, conversations, documents and societal issues. The research methodology is grounded in the belief that my reflections and interpretations did not begin with a search for answers but with a search for questions (Freire, 1972). I wanted to understand the dynamics of child care within the collaboration. What the YWCA expressed was a need and interest in the telling of their story and getting the word out about their involvement in the project. Through interviews, conversations and group discussions it was apparent that the research moved at this point from being an ethnography about their “story” into a critical ethnography in which their struggle for equality and the need for institutional reform that was wanted and desired by the participants. My goal for this chapter is to tell the story of child care and specifically, the YWCA child care located within “The Partnership” and to give them what they expressed was most needed from this research--“a voice” and “representation”.

Demographics of Child Care in Franklin County

Franklin County Statistics

The population of child care needs for Franklin County in the year 2002 for children under the age of five years old is 77,363. The number of children under the age of five with both parents in the workforce is 55,694. 10,133 newborns (58%) have
mothers who are working and need full-time care in Franklin County. One of the biggest challenges for child care in Region 9 (includes the counties of Delaware, Fairfield, Franklin, Licking, Madison, Pickaway, and Union) of Central Ohio is that the needs and availability for newborns with working mothers is 14,324 but the available full-time infant care spots available is 4,795. The overall number of children under six with all parents in the labor force is 83,176 and the capacity of formal full-time child care programs is 44,690.

The population for the county has grown significantly since 1960 from 682,962 people to 1,068,978 people in 2000. And in the year 2000, 17,470 births were registered in the county. With the trend of mothers going to work and two-income families and the shown population and birth growth in Franklin County, child care spots (especially for infants) are not meeting the demand of the growing county. Many child care centers that have infant programs have waiting lists for expectant parents (Action for Children, 2003). Please refer to figures 5.1 and 5.2.
Franklin County (Ohio) - Population Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Population</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1860</td>
<td>50,361</td>
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<tr>
<td>1870</td>
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<tr>
<td>1880</td>
<td>86,797</td>
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<td>1910</td>
<td>221,567</td>
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<td>1940</td>
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<tr>
<td>1970</td>
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<td>1980</td>
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<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>961,437</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>1,068,978</td>
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</table>

Figure 5.1 Population Demographics of Franklin County
Figure 5.2   Vital Statistics for Franklin County

Franklin County (Ohio) - Vital Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Births</th>
<th>Deaths</th>
<th>Teen Births</th>
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<td>1990</td>
<td>16,506</td>
<td>7,209</td>
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<td>1991</td>
<td>16,401</td>
<td>7,341</td>
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<td>1992</td>
<td>16,656</td>
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<tr>
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<td>16,438</td>
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<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>16,394</td>
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<td>1995</td>
<td>15,957</td>
<td>7,814</td>
<td>2,059</td>
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<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>15,762</td>
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<td>1,978</td>
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<td>1997</td>
<td>15,377</td>
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<td>17,470</td>
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<td>17,127</td>
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<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>17,127</td>
<td>8,118</td>
<td>1,816</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
As shown in figure 5.3, the average median income for Franklin County in 2000 was $45,076 annually. The average child care center cost for one week in Franklin County is the following: infant ($164.00); toddler ($139.00); Preschool Age ($122.00); School Age ($112.00). Figuring that the average family has two children in child care that means the cost of care for one week, full-time care of an infant and a preschool age child is $286.00 or 33 % of the family income.

Franklin County (Ohio) - Poverty Statistics

<table>
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<th>Rank</th>
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<td>$28,706</td>
<td>$30,375</td>
<td>23</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1995</td>
<td>$33,958</td>
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<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>$36,029</td>
<td>$39,498</td>
<td>26</td>
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<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>$38,726</td>
<td>$41,267</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>$39,707</td>
<td>$41,866</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>$42,054</td>
<td>$45,076</td>
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Figure 5.3 Franklin County Median Incomes
Market Research for YWCA

Rationale

According to the Business Plan (2002-2003), the YWCA rationalized the need for their participation with the following statements to the Board: “There has been a growing need for child care in the last 15 years as more and more parents are working outside the home. This trend demonstrates an increased need for child care while simultaneously decreasing the pool of people such as neighbors, relatives or friends who traditionally fill the role of in-home caregiver. In some cases, women must return from maternity leave sooner creating a need for infant and toddler child care. Parents have become more aware of the value and necessity of quality child care and now demand that centers provide quality-learning experiences for their children. The problem is compounded for those families who must find care and resources for both special needs and typical children in the family”.

The YWCA felt that several factors would contribute to their success of the program:

- “Blended program of which the focus is on the children and families as families without public definition of income, disability status or family characteristic.
- Seamless delivery where ‘one-stop shop’ under one roof for families to have their early childhood care needs met.
- Affordable with wide use of community resources to help keep the cost of service delivery in check.
• Accessible with transportation available from several sources to assist parent in getting their children to school.

• Service enriched where a wide variety of needed services are available and

• Since this program is the only one of its kind in Franklin County area and the wide-range of benefits that is currently unavailable in one location" (Business Plan review 2002-2003).

**Market Competitive Advantages**

According to their market analysis their customers would be families who had children from birth through five years of age and to provide care for current participants, children of staff members and families in the surrounding area.

The YWCA believed that it was very difficult to compare the need for the center with others in the area “as the center is so innovative” (Business Plan 2002-2003). According to their report, “there are 243 public and private child care centers in Franklin County with 63 located in the Northeast area of the county” (Business Plan 2002-2003). The YWCA felt that it has an edge over these centers as their niche was that “while these centers do provide full time child care they cannot provide the rich, inclusive environment that the “partnership” center is able to provide for children with and without learning disabilities. Other centers also lack the ability to serve multiple children within a family. This center advocates for changes in the traditional service delivery through inclusiveness, accessibility and collaborative funding streams.” (Business Plan 2002-2003).
The YWCA felt that their competitive advantages would be the customer, staff, service enrichment and affordability. In regard to the customer, the YWCA felt that the “partnership” would attract customers from the large pool of clients that would be served in the building (approximately 600) and that staff children and the surrounding community would also be potential customers. And that variable combined with the program would enable them to attract and retain quality staff because of the excellent working environment and have support from collaborators and abundant training opportunities. And that they would be able to enhance teacher/child ratios through the use of student teachers, interns from local colleges and universities and volunteers.

With regard to service enrichment, the multitude of services available would be attractive to parents enabling them to have many needs being met at one location such as: special needs intervention services, child care subsidies, immunizations, speech and hearing testing and treatment, counseling and supportive services for families with special challenges. And lastly, a competitive advantage would be the affordability for parents due to the relatively low overhead costs and sharing of expenses and services with the collaborators.

**Comparable Child Care Costs**

The average child care rates for full-time care in Franklin County are: $164.00 for infants; $139.00 for toddlers; $122.00 for preschool; and $112.00 for school age. The YWCA did the research to find out what their competitors were charging in the area and what the average rate for Franklin County and the pricing strategy was set at the following rates: $160.00 for infants; $150.00 for toddlers and $130.00 for preschool age.
children. Compared to their competitors the infant rates were lower; toddlers had one competitor that was lower, one was the same and one was higher; and preschool age children rates had one competitor two lower and one higher. The marketing strategy was that the infant programs in Franklin County had the greatest demand and that if the prices were lower than the competitors and the parents were satisfied with the innovative program that they would stay with it until preschool (interview, 2004).

The statistical population growth in Franklin County and the deficiency of available child care spots, especially at the infant level, demonstrated the need for additional child care centers. The statistical information (median income) demonstrated the need for good affordable child care centers in Franklin County. And the YWCA offered comparable prices to those child care centers in which they were competing for resources (children and families).

**Operating Plan**

Money has always been a concern for the YWCA and the new center proposed new fiscal challenges to the organization in regard to funding the program. It was a concern on the part of the YWCA leadership that they wanted their section to have new equipment in the new building and they didn’t want to have look like the “poor step-sister” to the other programs (conversation, 2004). The YWCA is used to going to garage sales and second-hand stores to fill its centers with needed equipment and supplies. However, early on they realized that this type of “piece meal” operating would not work at the collaboration site where their partners would be having new equipment and furniture.
The search for funding began in earnest once the YWCA realized that the project was a go and became involved in the building designs and the collaboration process. According to “Kelly Browne”, administrator of Early Childhood Programs for the YWCA, it was “also important for us to contribute something to the general collaboration fund”. We needed to find a way to purchase our equipment and to also help the greater cause of the collaboration effort”. (Administrator interview, 2004)

A wonderful opportunity arose for the YWCA when Nordstrom Department Stores entered into the area. According to “Kelly Browne” of the YWCA, a board member of the YWCA went to the Junior League as the Junior League was looking for a project to fund on a large scale. Nordstrom Department Stores were new to the area and with the Junior League was able to offer $90,000 to the YWCA for the collaboration project. This was an important financial event for the YWCA for several reasons: “it enabled them to buy new equipment and furniture so that they could feel like they were on equal footing with the other partners” and “the presentation of the money was a high profile event and made us feel the importance of our contribution” (Administrator interview, 2004). Although most of the money went to purchasing equipment for the YWCA, $25,000 was given to the collaboration for the playgrounds. This was exciting to the YWCA because they knew that all of the partners would be benefit from this contribution. A grant from the United Way and the Start Smart Program enabled the YWCA to furnish the infant programs so that the infant rooms had new equipment and furniture. Starting off the collaboration with new equipment was important to the YWCA because it was so used to having to use whatever equipment was necessary or buying from garage sales. Starting off this new venture with new equipment and being able to
give a significant amount of money toward the playgrounds in which all partners would benefit helped the YWCA to feel closer to being on equal footing with the other agencies.

Once funding was established for the center and the operating costs were considered, it was time to start promoting the center within the collaboration. Promoting the center formed another crisis event for the project which emerged through the collaboration process.

**Promotional Strategies**

The promotional strategies to promote the new site included: advertising, public relations, media relations, special events and incentives. The YWCA distributed 35,000 fliers to households in the *****, *****, and ***** zip codes through the “On Target Marketing” Program in November of 2001. Along with community flyers a main source of advertising was to promote the child care section to the families that would be using the center and to ask the collaborative partners to distribute the material. The center was added to the existing listing in the Yellow Pages under “Preschools and Child Care” and the YWCA organization placed the center on their main website.

As part of the collaboration the YWCA received media attention that helped to promote the program initially. The center appealed to the local news media because of its uniqueness, collaboration and the fact that events promoting children have a “feel good” quality and make wonderful visuals. The media focus tends to be on the “serving children with disabilities” aspect of the program and thus, the child care section was somewhat overlooked (Administrator interview, 2004).
Special events such as the Open House for customers to view the center and staff helped to promote the center to the community. Public Officials and members of the collaboration were invited to an Opening Ceremony in which the center was opened and the community was invited to come and visit. This publicity brought notice to the child care section of the collaboration.

With all the key factors in place—the increased participation of mothers in the workforce, the increased need for child care among families at all income levels, the need for families with children to have child care for children with disabilities and without, and the need for a system in which services and programs for the family and the child are integrated and in one location, the demographics and market analysis supporting the idea of another child care center Franklin County and the funding in place to support the program—why then was it so difficult to fill the spots in the child care section to the point where the question whether to close center and end the YWCA’s partnership at the collaboration.

Factors that Contributed to Fiscal Difficulty

The YWCA thought that with such an innovative program and the hard-part behind them in joining and maintaining the collaboration through the stages of formation, conceptualization, and development with multiple agencies and the negotiation of those stages that opening the center and maintaining its program and enrollment would be relatively easy. They initially thought that funding would be their greatest hurdle and with grants from The Columbus Foundation, Ingram White-Castle Foundation, The
United Way Start Smart Initiative and a large donation from Nordstrom they were able to furnish and open the center.

However the issues that contributed to their fiscal difficult for the first few years can be identified first by a new focus and re-shaping of the classrooms, timelines for child care reimbursements and enrollment issues which contained name recognition problems, signage and identity issues.

**Re-Shaping the Focus**

In the earliest survey documentation, the YWCA expressed interest in partnering with Head Start and MRDD in classrooms. They also expressed interest in pre-school and after school care. They marked that these issues were of utmost importance to them as they wanted to work with other agencies in the classroom—an integration of their program with other leading agencies and organizations. From the time of that first response to what they were looking for in the collaboration effort to the present configuration of classrooms is a different picture. No one at the YWCA is sure when the focus changed as personnel responsible for the initial inquiry is no longer with the agency however, when the center was scheduled to open the configuration was to include: two infant rooms, one toddler room and two preschool rooms. Teachers were hired and told that they would be preschool teachers when it was decided by the YWCA that the focus of care would change slightly. This change of focus was due to fact that the agency felt that preschool needs would be filled by other avenues in the collaboration and that trying to converge two infant rooms into one toddler room would eliminate
potential clients and not fit into the demographic and market analysis needs in Franklin County for affordable and quality infant-care programs.

Unfortunately, when the age configuration changed this inadvertently caused some financial difficulties for the YWCA. According to state daycare licensing laws the number of adults to children is higher at the toddler level than the preschool level. This essentially means that while you can hire one preschool teacher for a specific number of children, for the same number of children a daycare would need to hire two teachers to cover the teacher/child ratio for younger children. Most day care centers have infant rooms but the business rationale for keeping those rooms is for potential clients as they progress into other classrooms and for multiple clients (those who have an older sibling). Most child care centers compensate financially by having two preschool rooms and after school care which has large numbers of children for few adults.

When the YWCA changed their age configuration they inadvertently caused a financial issue in which they were top heavy with infants and toddlers which are the most expensive classrooms to operate in regards to teachers and salaries. And since they do not have after school care the program they can not make up the financial gain through that avenue. This ultimately means that to keep financially sound the center is almost forced to keep enrollment at full status so that other financial issues such as having competitive or higher teacher salaries, additional program needs such as substitutes or equipment might severely be impacted. According to the Business Plan 2002-2003, the center must operate at 85% capacity of 56 full time slots in order to break even and enrollment is a constant challenge.
Reimbursement of Child Care

An issue that contributed to the YWCA having fiscal difficulties was the ODJFS Childcare Subsidy Absenteeism policy which has a detrimental impact on both family access to quality children and the YWCA’s bottom line. Title XX families are eligible for a maximum of ten absenteeism days every six months. The work schedules of the Title XX families often include days off during the week rather than weekends. This results in an absenteeism day for that child, as the parent is not permitted to bring the child to childcare on the parents’ day off from work. A family in this situation will use all of their allowable absenteeism days within 5-10 weeks. Approximately 30 to 40% of the families at the YWCA child care program meet Franklin County Department of Jobs and Family Services’ income eligibility guidelines for child care subsidy. At first, the slow turn-over rate of reimbursement for child care negatively affected the bottom line for the YWCA financial status. According to the most recent business plan 2002-2003, “FCDJFS has greatly improved the timeline for processing childcare reimbursements. Most invoices are now paid within 30 days of submission alleviating cash flow problems experienced earlier.”

Enrollment Issues

The YWCA was clearly not prepared to deal with issues concerning lack of enrollment which in turn caused fiscal issue. They felt that as the promotional literature outlined the purpose and services of the collaboration that enrollment would not be an issue that they faced. The following is an excerpt from the YWCA promotional literature:
“The ‘Partnership’ was designed to bring together collaborative partners in early childhood care and education to share resources and expertise to better serve families and children. The intent was to make services available, accessible, convenient and affordable in an effort to enhance and support an improved quality of life for these families and children. A family with multiple children is able to access services for all of their children in one facility. Children with disabilities, typically developing children, Head Start children, school age children and daycare children are all served through the various partners in the center. Two or more of the partners may serve many of the children at various parts of the day. In the past, many parents were faced with the challenging and sometimes insurmountable task of accessing multiple services and finding transportation while balancing their jobs and other responsibilities.

The internationally renowned infant-toddler and pre-school centers of Reggio Emilia of Italy have influenced the design of this building. The center design includes individual classrooms nestled within five neighborhoods. A town square provides a central gathering point and provides many collateral services for families and children. In addition to the classrooms, many agencies have offices throughout the building to provide medical, social and other services to the families. Numerous play and exploration spaces have also been designed into the structure to provide a variety of experiences for all of the children. These play and exploration spaces are intentionally designed to offer varied and challenging large motor, art, music and small group activities with children from all programs.” (Business Plan 2002-2003)

According to “Kelly Browne”, administrator of Early Childhood Programs for the YWCA, “We were not prepared for enrollment to be an issue. We thought we would
have people beating down the doors and that we would be pushing people back saying we
don’t have room—we don’t have room. No one could predict that our enrollment
wouldn’t take off. We had an innovative program and we did our research on marketing
and the need for child care in the area. Why has enrollment been a constant need...I
don’t know...everyone has their speculations but we just don’t know.” (Interview, 2004)
Speculation from inside the YWCA was the lack of name recognition, signage and lack
of identifying key stakeholders in the name

Name Recognition

Name recognition was a speculation from inside the YWCA on why the
enrollment numbers were not as high as were expected. It took three years for the
YWCA to gain the enrollment numbers they needed in order to stay open and operate.
And according to “Kelly Browne”, although enrollment issues are better currently the
issue is still a concern and they continue to struggle with it although not as seriously as in
the beginning.

Although there was publicity on the collaboration in the early stages and during
the opening, the YWCA felt that the media tended to “focus on the serving children with
disabilities” aspect of the program and that the need to broaden the focus so that the
community recognized that the YWCA was a quality child care center with typically
developing children also was needed. The center has a 10-12 child waiting list of special
needs children who need child care and struggle to market to families with typically
developing children.
Signage

The FCBMRDD does not allow the placement of any signage or permanent advertising on the outside of the building or property. As such, the YWCA is not identified by the outside sign nor can they promote their program and the available openings within their center as most child care centers place “now enrolling” signs on the property. This has made it extremely difficult for the YWCA to market to the community. The YWCA also felt that “many perspective customers are unable to find the center” (Business Plan 2002-2003).

I first encountered difficulties with name recognition when first trying to locate the center site during my first on-site research meeting. As described in my grand tour (Spradley, 1979) notes I had a difficult time finding the center because I was confused about the name of the site as it had always been referred to as “Smithville Road” in my e-mail correspondence and research meeting dialogue with team members.

“Today I was able to visit the research site. I found it without too much trouble although it was always referred to in discussions as the “Smithville Road” center and as such, I was looking for a sign that had those words in it. After I passed it, I realized that the building that I saw with school buses nearby must have been the site. And so, I turned around and turned into the parking lot. I hesitated when entering the building because it said “Franklin County…” and I didn’t realize that the site wasn’t called “Smithville Road”. From the sign I can’t really tell who part of the partnership is—and that in itself is not a bad thing. However, being new to this makes it so that even I don’t understand who all is involved in this.” (Grand Tour, 2002)

As the notes from my initial visit to the center, indicate, the reader can see my confusion in trying to locate the site. The center was often referred to as ‘Smithville Road” as that is the road the building is located on, in research meetings and in talking to
other professions in the field and thus, the first time I went to the site I did not understand that these words would not be used in the signage.

Although I refer to the building by its full name or initials in the research I find myself calling referring to it as the “Smithville Road Center” more often than not. It is difficult for me to cognitively think of the building other than “Smithville Road” partly because I heard it often referred to that way in meetings, by professionals and staff in the building and also because the longer name does not seem to reflect what mission and purpose of the center is all about.

Another issue that I felt hindered easy name recognition is that the name is a mouthful and does not roll off the tongue very easily. It was comforting to talk to other members of the research team who also needed to constantly look up the correct name or re-check the initials when writing them down in the research process. At first, I thought it was only me that kept getting the initials wrong or who had to look up in the promotional literature to check-up on the correct name.

Name Identity

Name recognition is more than having difficulties in finding the sign or even being able to remember what the name of the collaboration, it involves being able to identify the partners that are involved in this innovation process. Because the collaboration is so innovative, it is important that the name be recognizable and that the partners be identified as key stakeholders in the collaboration. The YWCA found it difficult to enroll children and difficult to maintain enrollment during the first three years as they felt that no one knew they were there. Although the media attention was there for the opening of the center, this attention focused on the “special needs” population and
soon even the media attention waned with other issues and the center was left to other promotional avenues. Without signage, it proved difficult for the YWCA to let the community know that child care was present and available at the site. As the YWCA was the only agency without public funding it needed the promotional avenues such as signage to help it get off to a “good start” and to ensure that the community and its potential clients knew that it existed.

One of the strengths to the collaboration is the participation of the agencies and organizations located within the center site. Each agency or organization has its own rich history, loyal followers and clients and unique story which combined with the other agencies and organizations helped to formulate the wonderful and innovation collaboration site. The YWCA name is recognized around the world and the community easily recognizes the name and its programs and services. However, without signage identifying the YWCA the question was often raised as to “how the YWCA was going to let the public know that it continued to be in the center and that it had openings for child care” (Staff interview, 2004).

In addition, without an easily recognizable name or an easily remembered name and one that did not identify the collaboration partners, the combination of these variables affected and contributed to enrollment issues for the YWCA. If the community doesn’t understand that child care exists at the site then how will the YWCA continue enrolling students? Other agencies did not have to deal with the enrollment issues since their clients are set from their programs such as Head Start, Columbus Public Schools and MRDD. Their client base comes from various sources and as these programs are publicly funded the agencies are not struggling in the same way to make ends meet. If the YWCA
does not fill its enrollment and it continues to lose money then the program will shut its doors being that it is not publicly funded and relies on tuition to make its budget needs and demands.

Name identity continues to be a topic of discussion for the partnership. During a summer retreat in 2004, a discussion arose from which I was part of that discussed the name recognition and name identity. The summer retreat was a meeting for all partners in the collaboration in which continued evaluation of the collaboration process is discussed and continuing and new issues and concerns are brought up, discussed and task forces formed to address needs.

During a discussion of funding and how to gain additional funding for the collaboration, the issue of name recognition came up.

“I wish the site would reflect all the partners, organizations and agencies involved within this one place. I didn’t even realize who all was involved. The initials “ABCDE” are cumbersome and being relatively new to the partnership I sometimes have to remind myself to think about the name before I say it or write it”. (Summer retreat conversation, 2004)

The conversation continued that if people who were newly connected or remotely connected to the center were having difficulty with remembering the name then how would clients and potential funding organizations remember the name.

Although keeping in the same vein as the Reggio Emilia approach in which the center was designed and developed the natural progression for the name seems to be in an emergence of a name that comes from within the partnership and those involved within the process. It may be time in the developmental process for the collaboration to start thinking of how they view themselves and how a common name might reflect that process.
New Name

Name recollection and recognition is important for getting new clients and in building a name that funding organizations can easily remember and recall. However, the name of the partnership should also be able to identify the stakeholders and reflect the innovative programs that are contained within the building. A new name to the Partnership would alleviate a lot of the confusion with multiple wording that is currently used by all those involved with one common name. Currently those involved in the center and even contained within this document the site has been referred to as: “Smithville Road”, the “Collaboration” and the “Partnership” of which none of those names is the name on the sign outside the building.

Another point to consider when discussing the value of identity and name recognition is that the collaboration involves many agencies and organizations and no one name should be associated any more or less than another. To build connections among and within the collaboration a common name would reinforce the collaborative process. Although each agency is represented with the organization and each has a name with an identity that is known throughout the community—the collaboration seeks to better serve families and communities as a group and not through its individual identities.

Transition

Despite financial difficulties stemming from a new focus, timeline of receiving child care reimbursements and enrollment issues due to name recognition, signage and name identity the center opened in September 2001. It opened up providing full day, partial day and wrap-around child care services for potentially 16 infants, 24 toddlers and
16 preschool age children. There are five classrooms with approximately 5,000 square feet of space with additional play and enrichment areas that are located throughout the building including a library, art and music spaces, large motor areas, several outdoor play spaces and an Art Studio in which projects may be kept for multiple days. The partnership is considered a success by the YWCA as stated in their 2002-2003 Business Plan “The partnership can also be considered a success. Together we have worked through a number of problems situations during the year…”

While researching this project and focusing on the development of the collaboration from a historical aspect and after finding my focus of the child care section, I discovered through my observations, interviews and conversations that the story of the teachers began to change my methodological stance from an ethnography of the collaboration and how child care fit into the process of collaboration into a critical ethnography and how the teachers were not feeling the “collaboration” but instead felt the project was more defined as a “cooperation”. And with further investigation of how they didn’t define the collaboration as such, patterns of marginality at a macro and micro level emerged. These patterns of marginality manifest themselves at the site and could potentially threaten the development of the collaboration. As such, the next part of the research concentrates on telling their story of why they feel “marginalized” from a macro and a micro level and how they wish to be heard and to have a “voice”.

**Wanting a “Voice”**

It became apparent through some conversations with the staff during observations that they felt that the current name of the collaboration doesn’t exactly describe their
participation in the project. “It is really Franklin County MMRD building and that everyone but them falls into the Franklin County status and they fall outside of it” (Staff member at a group discussion, 2004). They mention that unless you take a tour in the center one might not know that they even exist in the collaboration process. They expressed that they would like to see a new name emerge from within the collaboration site and from the people who are involved including parents and children.

When discussing signage and name recognition with the teachers the idea was brought forth to have a new name for the site emerge from within the collaboration and by those who are involved in the process including parents and children. This topic brought up interesting conversations which caused this research to take a methodological turn. Although from the initial partner meetings that I attended and the initial interviews that I participated in with key administrators—the word collaboration and seamless service kept coming up over and over. At the level of the administration the word collaboration was how everyone described this large-scale project. And one can see that in Chapter 4, the development of this particular collaboration fits very nicely into the existing literature about stages of collaboration. The collaboration had the mediating variables that are discussed in the literature and researching the project and seeing the integration of services, the word collaboration most aptly describes the project.

However during conversations, observations, survey forms and group discussions the teachers at the most intimate level did not classify themselves as collaboration. Instead they felt the word “cooperation” fit more aptly for what was happening in their particular situation. As such the critical ethnography part of the research was born.
Critical Ethnography

It is difficult to define critical ethnography and Quantz (1992) suggests that we should not even try, as it is not possible to define social reality with any precision. Simon and Dippo (1986) do not attempt to define it but point to the conditions that must be met if we are to call something critical ethnography.

Simon and Dippo (1986) suggest that critical ethnography should meet three conditions. First, it “must employ an organizing problematic that defines one’s data and analytical procedures in a way consistent with its project”. (Simon & Dippo, 1986: 197) To be critical, it needs to study the social practices operating in groups which determine action and meaning.

These social practices are verbal and non-verbal, seen and unseen, open and at times suppressed. These practices are culturally influenced and therefore any critical ethnographic study requires the questioning of macro issues of power, ideology and culture. Not only must critical ethnographers study groups but they must encourage a critique and involve themselves in challenging inequitable social practices and unjust social structures and institutions. Critical ethnography attempts to enable people to see their actions in a wider socio-historical context (Simon & Dippo, 1986).

Second, in critical ethnography the “work but be situated, in part, within a public sphere that allows it to become the starting point for the critique and transformation of the conditions of oppressive and inequitable moral and social regulations” (Simon & Dippo, 1986:197). This critique should encourage people to understand their own actions and the historical and social context in which they are acting.
The emancipatory interest is the key insight into understanding critical ethnography. Emancipatory interest can be defined as a “fundamental interest in emancipation and empowerment to engage in autonomous action rising out of authentic, critical insights in the social construction of human society” (Grundy, 1987:19). In other words, emancipation is a key human characteristic and any critical research has to reflect emancipator characteristics. Quantz (1992) is quite definite in arguing that any ethnographic research must be deliberately and consciously political “oriented toward emancipatory and democratic goals” (Quantz, 1992:448). The participants should be able to “use ethnographic work as a resource, critically appropriating aspects of the work…to clarify the basis of everyday life and the possibilities of transformation” (Simon & Dippo, 1986:199).

Third, critical ethnographers need to acknowledge their own work is “constituted and regulated through historical relations of power and existing material conditions (Simon & Dippo, 1986:197).

Meeting the Conditions of Critical Ethnography

Studying the YWCA child care section of the overall “The Partnership” meets the three criteria of fitting into a critical ethnography as set forth by Quantz (1992). Three fundamental questions are asked:

1. “Must employ an organizing problematic that defines one’s data and analytical procedures in a way consistent with its project”.

This project studies the social practices operating in groups which determine action and meaning. With participant observations, conversations and participating and
conducting a group discussion/interview the research allows for social practices verbal and non-verbal, seen and unseen, open and times suppressed to be studies.

**Verbal and Non-Verbal Practice**: “It was raining and the teachers decided that we since we couldn’t play outside on the playground that we would find an open activity space and let the children run around to express extra physical energy after nap time and before parents arrived to start the routine of pick-up. One teacher remained in the classroom with some of the children to change them and then she would join us. The remaining teacher and I took a walk with the 5 children and soon found an empty activity space. The children began to play on the slides and on the swing. They were laughing and having a wonderful time playing and interacting with the teacher. Around fifteen minutes into our play a group came from around the corner with their two teachers and students. The teacher remarked loudly “Oh, well. Someone else is there so we can’t play there and we will need to find another space. Let’s go find somewhere else.” She proceeded to turn the children around. The teacher from the YWCA looked stunned. The teacher replied quietly, “They could have joined us. We had room. Oh, well” with a slight tone of sadness reflected in the voice tone. Field notes, 2004

These social practices are culturally influenced and therefore any critical ethnographic study requires the questioning of macro issues of power, ideology and culture. Not only must critical ethnographers study groups but they must encourage a critique and involve themselves in challenging inequitable social practices and unjust social structures and institutions. Critical ethnography attempts to enable people to see their actions in a wider socio-historical context (Simon & Dippo, 1986).
**Macro issues of power, ideology and culture:** “There have always been unspoken silos of power and prestige among teachers. All teach—but, not all are held in the same level of esteem in society and unfortunately by colleagues. First, the university professor is held in highest esteem, followed by the high school teacher, middle school teacher and then the elementary school teachers. Next the public preschool teacher along with special education and Federal programs like Head Start are held in the highest esteem in accordance with other child care programs. Private-for-profit chains, the non-profit church or community child care are next in the chain and ending the list—in the bottom of the silo is the non-certified or non-regulated home day care. These people are primarily seen as uneducated and babysitters.” (Administrator, retreat, 2004)

Second, in critical ethnography the “work must be situated, in part, within a public sphere that allows it to become the starting point for the critique and transformation of the conditions of oppressive and inequitable moral and social regulations” (Simon & Dippo, 1986:197). This critique should encourage people to understand their own actions and the historical and social context in which they are acting.

“I took this job because I had been in child care before and felt like a ‘glorified babysitter’. When I interviewed with the “Y” I was told that I would be part of the collaboration and I wanted to be part of something so unique and different. I was told that I would interact with the other groups and I was really looking forward to being more than just a “babysitter”. This place is so different and I had such high hopes in the beginning. I thought this would be different. I mean it is a nice building but we don’t really interact with other groups. They stick together and we stick together. We need to be more interactive—we need to do things together.” (Teacher, conversation, 2004)

The participants should be able to “use ethnographic work as a resource, critically appropriating aspects of the work…to clarify the basis of everyday life and the possibilities of transformation” (Simon & Dippo, 1986:199).
“What is the purpose of your research? I mean, what will we be able to do with it? Is it going to be a lot of numbers or stuff we don’t understand? I would like our story to be told so that others understand it is really hard work and we perform a valuable service to parents. We work really hard and long and for some children we are with them more than their parents.” (Teacher at introductory staff meeting, 2003).

Third, critical ethnographers need to acknowledge their own work is “constituted and regulated through historical relations of power and existing material conditions” (Simon & Dippo, 1986:197). I do acknowledge that the research is embedded and situated within pre-existing and historical relations of power and material conditions. The reason for Chapter 4 to study the layers of the collaboration effort is to situate the collaboration within a historical, political and community context. I also understand that the field of child care in general also has its own issues of power and marginality and thus, an introduction of those issues were addressed within the first three chapters of the study. This study also contends that within child care organizations there is a hierarchy of esteem and privilege financially and socially which gives an uneven playing ground to the child care faction in the collaboration effort. Chapter 4 discusses how the collaboration was able to be conceived, developed and implemented. This chapter concentrates on how the child care staff is feeling within the collaboration and how their feelings are partly due to practices within the collaboration and partly due to societal issues which are not controllable by the collaboration or the workers themselves. However, it was also discovered during the research that another group in the collaboration is feeling somewhat like the YWCA and that they have mutual feelings of
marginalization. And at the last retreat these feelings were acknowledged and task groups were set forth to address issues.

Praxis

Critical educators believe that autonomy is gained in the act of struggle, a struggle that is ongoing and takes place at the micro and macro levels of society. One comes to know through doing and then reflecting on this action. “The act of knowing involves a dialectical movement which goes from action to reflection and from reflection upon action to new “reflection” (Freire, 1972, p. 31). This process of reflective action is known as praxis.

Praxis is a dialectical process where practice is seen as action. However, to be authentic praxis must be planned, thought out and consciously oriented toward emancipatory social change. Praxis is not individualistic but a collective phenomenon whereby communities or small groups seek to live a collective struggle toward human emancipation (Gitlin, 1989). Praxis is freely chosen and informed through reflection and critical theorems. However, this does mean the action will be ‘right’. It must always be reflected upon and be subject to careful scrutiny. Praxis is always critical but it is reflection and action open to critique (Grundy, 1987). “Praxis is informed by an emancipatory interest which would preserve for all groups the freedom to act within their own social situation in ways which enable the participants to be in control of their situation, rather than the ultimate control of their actions residing elsewhere” (Grundy, 1987, p.113).
Research as Praxis

Lather (1986) suggests that “research as praxis” involves adherences to five principles of critical inquiry. These principles are detailed in relation to this particular study.

“Critical Inquiry is a Response to Experience, Desire, and Need. The Initial Step Being to Develop an Understanding of the World from the View of the Participant” (Lather, 1986, p. 268) My interest in the process of studying the YWCA portion in the collaborative effort was of particular interest to me as I had prior working experience being a child care worker, non-profit day care director and a profit day care director. I also had a prior working relationship with the YWCA organization and a personal relationship in that my two oldest children attended a past collaboration which was a preschool with MRDD children. I also needed to find a topic in order to complete my doctoral work and needed to find an area in which I was already familiar with the work and could relate my previous work and experiences to.

“Critical Inquiry is a Fundamentally Dialogic and Mutually Educative Enterprise” (Lather, 1986, p. 268) The intention of this study was that it would be a dialogue between myself and the teachers and those involved in the collaborative process. My strategy for attempting this was through feedback of the data to the participants. Each time I engaged them in a conversation, I encouraged them to respond to my observations or to my inquires—to engage in a dialogue with me. At first, I found it necessary to ask probing questions in conversations but as time progressed and we built a relationship they were able to open up more without me prompting them with questions. I noted in my fieldwork journal that I feel that sometimes they were unable to talk to me
because of the hectic nature of being a child care worker and the demands of constant attention to the children. I was disappointed that I felt we were building relationships and yet, only four out of ten teachers filled out demographic surveys and only three out of nine attended the group discussion. I had tried to make it easier for them by making the survey easy to read and open-ended and by providing a self-addressed stamped envelope for them to return it to me. For the group discussion, I understood that many of them would be hungry and tired after working all day and so I provided food, beverages, dessert and even a cash incentive to attend. However, I still could not get all the teachers to participate. A genuine attempt was made to live the principal and make the relationship as mutually educative as possible however this was difficult to access. Some of the teachers expressed verbally that this process had made them think about their profession and to even suggest positive solutions in engaging other teachers in the collaboration on a more professional level.

“Critical Inquiry Focuses on Contradiction as a Starting Point for the Process of Research and Ideology Critique” (Lather, 1986, p.268) There is a general contradiction in the idea of collaboration at the site and the teachers’ feelings that collaboration is not the best word that describes the actions that are occurring daily. There is also a general contradiction of being a marginalized group and then not attending functions to voice your opinion although the group may feel so marginalized that they may feel that voicing their concerns will not change anything.

“Critical Inquiry Provides an Environment that Invites Participants’ Critical Reaction to Researcher Accounts of their Worlds” (Lather, 1986, p.268). My intention during the research process was to conduct research in an environment that encouraged
the participants’ critical reaction and my accounting of their world. I re-counted conversations with them and encouraged them to correct me if I misspoke what they were trying to say. During interviews and group discussion I tried to re-say their words back to them so that they could correct me if I re-stated what they said incorrectly. Sometimes they would correct me and say something to the effect of “that isn’t what I meant what I meant was…” or “no, I wouldn’t say it that way…I would say…” I conducted verbal member checks with the child care staff and keep them informed on my progress and during my last group discussion we brainstormed on some possible solutions to center issues regarding “town meetings” and “professional development seminars”.

“Critical Inquiry Stimulates a Self-Sustaining Process of Critical Analysis and Enlightened Action” (Lather, 1986, p. 268). The extent to which the study stimulated a process of critical analysis and enlightened action with the staff was that they perceived themselves as a marginalized group in the greater society and within the collaboration. The teachers now need to decide how they will best deal with this knowledge and how and if they wish to change some of the daily practices in which they help to contribute to feelings being marginalized. The overall collaboration now knows how the child care section feels and they too will need to decide on how to react to this analysis and organizational reform if necessary.

Positioning Myself as a Researcher

My background is child care. I have been a director of both non-profit and profit child care centers. I have also worked at the university level of training and teaching the student teaching part of the early childhood teacher program. This last opportunity gave me access to local child care center in the area both profit and non-profit.
While working on my masters degree my children attended a branch of the YWCA child care programs for pre-school and the drop-off program which allowed me to sign up for blocks of child care while working. I was also hired on an as-needed basis to provide some on-site training for two years in which I taught seminars on issues such as: Kindergarten Readiness, Discipline versus Punishment, Parent/Teacher Communication and Child Development Milestones. As such, I have a prior professional and personal relationship with the YWCA and their child care programs. I had already established a professional working relationship with the current director of Early Childhood Programs which made my entry into fieldwork a smooth transition.

Thus, the nature of my involvement with the YWCA, my prior professional relationship and nature of the YWCA organization itself led that I needed to take a participant observer stance. In adopting this stance I recognized that I could not be objective or politically neutral in my observations and research.

In my introduction meeting with the YWCA staff members I was open in telling them that I wanted to tell their “story” from the perspective and reflections and I also wanted to help raise the status of child care worker (which was clear from conversations with them) was not fully understood within the collaboration effort—in their words “they felt like the odd-man out”. In stating this “openly ideological” (Lather, 1986a) I knew that I would need to present their story though multiple lens—the realities of society and perceptions of child care workers in general and through speaking with administrators and key partners to see if they understood the plight of the child care worker. A key tool in critical ethnography is the fostering of a dialogical community (Reid, 1985. Hedin, 1986) in which a community where the researcher and the researched are involved “in the
planning, execution and dissemination of the social research” can be achieved (Rowan, 1981; 97 cited in Lather, 1986b:73). I wanted to situate my research within the interpretive paradigm and it became clear that as I got further into the research the separate layer of the YWCA was a critical ethnography piece.

Constructing the Data: Subjectivity and Bias

Peshkin points out the need to see subjectivity as a positive aspect of research because “it is the basis of researchers making a distinctive contribution, one that results from the unique configuration of their personal qualities joined to the data they have culled” (Peshkin, 1985, p. 276-278). Cheater suggests that “we cannot rid ourselves of this subjectivity, nor should we wish to; but we ought, perhaps, to pay it very much attention…” (Cheater, 1987, p.172) It is not enough for researchers to simply recognize and attempt to erase their bias and their subjectivity will continue to exist even after they have acknowledged it because it permeates the entire research project. Subjectivity takes into account the social practices that the researcher is immersed in within the research. “Researchers need to be vigilant about the power of their own subjectivity and the way this can construct the other. Critical ethnographers must curb the tendency to believe they have the answers, that their critique is the truth and that they have the answers for the oppressed” (Cheater, 1987, p.173).

“I need to remember that I am not here to solve the inherent problems of that the YWCA facing nor can I change child care policy in the United States. My hope is to tell the story through my interpretations, conversations and observations. I want to be “a” voice but not “the” voice. I need to be careful of what I see and realize that my interpretation may not be correct or that other factors might need to be taken into account”. (Reflective journal entry, 2003)
Critical research attempts to make meaning in a given situation but “the marginalized have the first right to name reality, to articulate how social reality functions, and to decide how issues are to be organized and defined” (Mihevc, 1989). Critical ethnography recognizes that the research situation in problematic. Recognizing the “voice of the marginalized” is not suggesting that the researcher is voiceless but rather that the voice is different and that the voices should join together in dialogue. This dialogue is based on Habermas’ (1970) “ideal speech situation”. The call for an emancipated society is not suggesting that this exists at the moment but the ideal speech is referring to what could be. For “Habermas, communication is necessarily about open and unconstrained critical discourse. But since such conditions do not exist, communication also necessarily entails emancipatory political action by those who engage in it” (Moore, 1990, p.90).

“I have listened to the staff and I feel for them. I cannot change the nature of the child care profession. I cannot give them higher wages (although they deserve to be paid in accordance with the importance of their work) nor can I give them days off when others are enjoying paid holidays and summer. But I have come to realize that my voice along with their voice will be joined to help others realize the situation that they find themselves in and to recognize their efforts. And maybe along with our voices—the message can spread that child care workers need to be valued by societal standards and also among other child care services and programs. We need to lift each other up. Maybe with a smile and a pat on the back…” (Reflective journal, 2003)

Equality cannot be achieved by wishful thinking and critical ethnography is about challenging the accepted social practices. So the researcher does have a different but valid voice. Therefore, “researchers need to take risks with participants; they must take action with those involved and avoid speaking on their behalf or acting for them. They
should share in the pain and share in the joy of the other voices while at the same time accept responsibility for the research project—warts and all” (McLaren, 1989, p.8).

“Do I explain to the staff that although I feel that they are valuable as child care workers the reality is that they do not have the educational background that other teachers have and that society will probably always think of them as “glorified babysitters” unless the mind-set of society changes. The reality is that parents cannot afford higher costs attributed to child care and where will the money come to pay higher wages? The truth is that if you can’t afford to be a child care worker there are other jobs out that pay better and have better working conditions. The root of the problem lies in the reality that child care loses good teachers every day to jobs that pay better. Do you stay or do you leave? That is the question…” I see them working with the children and giving everything they have for this job. And for some of them this is not a job…it is a calling. But can you afford the call? Reflective journal, 2004

The preceding paragraphs challenge the researcher to be reflective and to be clear of the nature of the research project. As mentioned before, I did not want to merely describe the actions and meaning making processes of the YWCA staff with the collaboration or even the field of child care itself.

**Theme of Marginalization of Child Care at the Macro-Level**

The definition of marginal means “at the edge or the boarder, just barely adequate or within a lower limit” (Webster’s Dictionary, 2002) and the word marginalization is defined as “the social process of becoming or being made marginal (especially as a group within the larger society)” (Webster’s Dictionary, 2002). The profession of child care is considered by many as a marginal group in comparison with other early childhood professionals. From the research emerged a theme of marginalization which can be described in context at a macro-level of analysis. These themes emerged from the data through observations, conversations, group discussions and the survey data. Various
means of data collection and methods (triangulation) kept reinforcing the theme of marginalization. Macro levels of marginalization are present in the field of child care and present themselves in the form of institutional hindrances, professional levels of scaffolding, societal views of child care and occupational conditions. All of these influences are felt by child care workers and help to form feelings and perceptions of marginalization. Secondly, members of the YWCA child care program also expressed realization of these macro levels of marginalization that occur within the greater society.

**Institutional Hindrances**

Institutional hindrances can be characterized by three main factors: low pay, high turn-over and long hours. An inherent problem for child care workers is the poor pay compensation for the job. Poor pay for child care workers drives almost a third of them to quit their jobs each year creating unstable environments for children and depleting the child care work force (www.4children.org). The cornerstone of child care that promotes healthy development is the presence of consistent, sensitive, well-trained and well-compensated caregivers however, high turn-over in the field, fueled by poor compensation and few opportunities for advancement is causing the quality of services those children and parents depend on to decline dangerously.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics in the U.S. Department of Labor reports that mean wages for over 700 occupations and only 18 reports having lower mean wages than child care workers (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2003). Those occupations that earn higher salaries than child care include service station attendants, tree trimmers, crossing guards and bicycle repairers.

Like many low-wage industries, turnover among the child care workforce has been historically high. As a result of low pay compensation the annual turnover rate remains at between thirty and forty percent throughout the country and current market wages in the child care field have clearly been insufficient to secure a skilled and stable workforce. According to the National Child Care Staffing Study in 1997, better job opportunities and higher wages in other fields have been identified as recent major causes of turnover. This study also indicated that ninety-three percent of directors reported taking more than two weeks to find replacements for departing teaching staff and over one-third (37%) reported having to take over a month to replace teachers.

Our nation has adopted a child care policy that relies on an unacknowledged subsidy: the contribution that child care workers (98% female and one-third women of color) make by being paid much less than the value of their skilled and vital work (Whitebook, 1999).

Along with high turn-over and low pay compensation are long work hours. The typical child care worker is with children eight hours a day and most workers are unable to take a break due to the limited staffing. Child care centers are open year round with long hours of operation so that parents can drop off and pick up their children before and after their work hours. Most child care centers operate during summer and holiday seasons limiting time off to essential holidays only such as Thanksgiving, Christmas,
New Year’s Day, Easter, and Memorial Day, 4th of July and Labor Day. These institutional hindrances help to promote feelings of marginalization by the child care field.

Professional Silos

In the field there is a general consensus that there is an unwritten hierarchy that exists among teachers. This unwritten hierarchy reflects the views of the teaching profession and society on the values placed upon teachers. During the summer retreat of 2004, I had a discussion with several partner administrators and teachers in which we discussed this hierarchy of the teaching profession and there was consensus among the group in regard to professional silos that exist within the profession. As a group we felt that university and college teachers were at the top of the silo; followed by public and private school teachers from high school to kindergarten teachers; and then pre-school teachers. Within the hierarchy of pre-school teachers the public school pre-school teachers and university pre-school teachers are set at the top of the silo with Head Start and other federal pre-school teachers in next; followed by the child care section which includes private, non-profit, chains and church centers. Home day care providers are at the bottom of the silo hierarchy as perceived by the profession and by society. (Figure 5.4)

These silos are not merely our perceptions as salaries usually coincide with the various levels in which university teachers are paid more than public school teachers who are paid better than pre-school teachers who are paid better than child care teachers. This
is not always the case however; it would be difficult to imagine that any of these teachers get paid lower than the child care worker.
Figure 5.4 Professional Silos
Societal Views

Child care and day care positions are still thought of as “glorified” babysitters. Because the job demands little education and training by federal and state mandates, it is generally viewed as a low education and ability job. Most people do not consider child care workers as “professionals” and they are often viewed as babysitters (normally thought of as a teenage girl job). Although child care needs are great in the United States, job training is not needed in most cases and only a high school diploma or GED is required to get a position in a child care center teaching and taking care of children.

Predominately Female Occupation

Child care is predominately a female occupation. 99% of child care workers are female according to the Labor of Bureau Statistics (2003). A child care worker needs very little educational skills besides a high school diploma in many states and there is a virtual free entry into the field due to limited educational demands. There has been a gender division that has existed throughout history in that women should take care of young children and that due to this “natural” ability to take care of them it should not be a paid profession (Whitebook, 1999). It is commonly believed by the general public and by many child care consumers, employers and policy makers that any women can do this work and therefore, when demand for child care increases, the supply of workers can come from the large pool of untrained and inexperienced women looking for jobs (Whitebook, 1999). Low educational demands combined with high turnover rates and a
predominately female occupation provides the right atmosphere at child care centers and places teachers into a marginalized category for work professions. (See Figure 5.5)
Institutional Hindrances

Professional Silos

Societal Views

Predominantly Female Occupation

Child Care Field

Feelings of Marginalization

Figure 5.5  Macro Level Marginalization
Themes of Marginalization of Child Care at the Micro-Level

The issues that plague the general child care field also plague the YWCA child care center at a macro level as they are part of the overall society. In addition the research showed that marginalization feelings occurred on a micro level within the YWCA that is unique to their situation. The micro levels of marginalization that occur at the YWCA child care center can be categorized into inherent issues (high turnover, low pay and long hours), professional development issues and isolation issues. These micro level feelings of marginalization are unique to the center due to nature of the collaboration process and add to the feelings of marginality in combination with the already predominately macro levels of marginalization. Each of these issues will be discussed and displayed through the “voice” of the teachers at the center. This theme of micro-marginalization emerged from the data while exploring the nature of the YWCA’s participation in the collaboration process. These feelings manifest themselves in specific ways in the collaboration and these manifestations will be discussed later and the implications to the collaboration in general.

Inherent Issues

The same issues that plague the entire child care field continue to plague the YWCA; high turnover, low pay and long hours. Due to the nature of the collaboration and the innovative programming and facility, the YWCA expressed dismay that they still were experiencing high turnover rates. Although the rates are not as high as other child care facilities they still are experiencing a high turn over rate compared to other agencies.
and organizations within the collaboration. One teacher left in the five months of my field work and I discovered that two teachers had only been there for four months in the group discussion. Few teachers for the YWCA had been with the collaboration from the beginning.

High Turnover

“I really thought that our turn-over rates would be less because of the facility and the building. This is a great opportunity for child care workers because of the new facility, the partnering with other agencies and the specialists that work in the classroom. This is a unique opportunity and luxuries that most child care centers don’t get to experience. The problem we still have is finding workers to stay. There are other opportunities within the larger organization which pay higher and I have to post the job opportunities and then there are job opportunities out there—like the new grocery store—that pays higher…what are you going to do about it? That’s the way child care is. I can’t find enough people. I’m always looking.” (Administrator, Interview, 2004)

One of the reasons for the turnover rate along with the fact that YWCA child care workers can find higher paying jobs in the area is that the YWCA is required to post internal job opportunities at the collaboration site. While I was conducting my fieldwork one teacher left to be an administrative secretary in the downtown office. This was truly a lost for the program as she was a gifted and talented teacher. I specifically remember watching her one day when her fellow teacher was sick and she had sole responsibility for the children.
“I watched Miss “Lynn” today. She was incredible. She had five infants to herself as her teaching partner was sick today. She moved through the routine with calmness often singing as she completed the needed tasks. I wanted to pitch in and help but I was also memorized by the complete confidence she displayed and her total absorption of the infants. She knew I was in the room however she didn’t need me. She had everything under control. I have personally been in many infant rooms. They don’t always run so smoothly. Usually it takes a special person to be an infant teacher. They need patience, a calming spirit and endless energy. Miss “Lynn” has all that and more. She holds one child, puts another in a swing, moves one away from danger (while carrying one) and puts more food on the plate of one who is eating. She is constantly watching all four and seems to be looking ahead for issues that might arise…..She just diverted a major collision of two infants—one was walking and one was crawling. What is so special is that she was rocking one child to sleep and singing to him when she noticed the potential crisis and neatly fixed it without disturbing the sleeping child.” (Field notes, 2004)

Another reason that losing this teacher to an administrative job was that the “team” she was part of in the classroom was disrupted. This particular break-up of a “team” was hard to watch as the teachers in that room worked so well together. It takes awhile for teachers to be able to work together well and these teachers were the definition of teamwork.
“It was like a dance watching the teachers today. Miss “Lynn” and Miss “Rose” read each other without speaking a word. Today the room was busy with activity and eight infants. Today was a rainy day and so the children seemed to be on edge. They were restless and the teachers sensed this. They put on music and began singing to the tunes as they went about their routine. They were smiling at the children and the restlessness that seemed to permeate the room a few minutes ago eased into a calm presence. They each handled a few children easing each child into an activity that was developmentally fit for that child….I asked them about their relationship and how I noticed that they seem like such a good teaching fit. They remark that they are and that sometimes you click with a person and sometimes you don’t—and they do. They have similar personalities and they have a calming effect on a room full of infants. They have maturity of age which seems to make them great infant teachers because they don’t ‘sweat the small stuff’ according to Miss “Lynn”. They just enjoy each other and the children. …” (Field notes, 2004) “If I had an infant—I would definitely want my child in this room. The teachers read each other so well and each time I have observed they seem more than capable of having the infants and making sure that each child receives the attention and guidance that they need. As a center director I would have loved to have seen this kind of working relationship between my teachers—this is a rare find. I hope it lasts. I also know the reality of child care and turn-over. I remember having a teacher leave and I filled in for 9 months while searching for another qualified teacher and not just a warm body to fill a spot.” (Personal reflection on field notes, 2004)

Research has shown that high turnover rates in child care do negatively affect the quality of child care and those children with stable and consistent caregivers are less anxious, are better attached, interact more with caregivers and engage in less aimless wandering (Hofferth, Shauman, Henke & West, 1998). At the heart of high quality child care is a warm and caring teacher/child relationship and creating a relationship takes time and investment. High turnover is attributed in part to low pay compensation (Hofferth, Shauman, Henke & West, 1998).

“In the early 1990s, I was a center director for a large profit-daycare chain. I advertised, talked to friends and colleagues spread it mouth-to-mouth wherever I could and yet, I couldn’t fill my teaching position. And so, I did it myself for nine months and continued to fill my role as center director. I couldn’t compete with pay compensation when the local gas station was paying more than me.” (Personal recollections, 2004)
Low Pay

Low pay compensation, a macro-level influence affecting the profession also affects the YWCA. Although the YWCA is involved in this innovative collaboration, the salaries of its workers still remain among the lowest according to a comparison between their actual salaries and the current data on child care salaries and benefits from the Center for Child Care Workforce (2002).

While the average salary for child care workers in Ohio is $7.90 and pre-school teachers are at $8.94, the nationally wage for child care workers is $7.86 and pre-school teachers are $9.66. Thus, comparing the national average with the state of Ohio average—the average child care teacher in Ohio earns slightly more than at the national average and the average pre-school teacher earned slightly more than the national average.

In comparison the average salary for child care workers at the YWCA child care center in the collaboration is $8.72 to $10.50 for full-time child care workers which places them higher than the average Ohio child care and pre-school teacher. However, according to the Wage, Salary and Benefits Survey (2002) from the Ohio Head Start Association, the average Head Start Teacher earns an average of $14.09 and the average assistant teacher earns $10.22. This means that comparing the highest paid YWCA full-time teacher to the average Head Start teacher is an estimated salary of $22,000 to $30,000. A comparison of assistant teachers has the lowest paid assistant teacher of the YWCA at $8.72 ($18,000) compared to the average Head Start assistant teacher at $10.22 ($21,000). This makes the average assistant teacher of a Head Start program making more than a full-time lead teacher at the YWCA.
Of course, the Head Start teachers in general have more education than the child care teachers (who are only required to have a high school education by Ohio Daycare Licensing Laws and Regulations) however; the possibility of having a child care teacher with as much or more education than their Head Start counterpart can exist.

Another point to consider in the unequal wages is that the Head Start teachers and the child care teachers at the YWCA all resided within the same building and is part of the same collaboration. The YWCA organization is aware that these salary discrepancies exist and in their Business Plan 2002-2003 state “Salaries for child care staff will be lower than salaries for other staff making conflict between staff a possibility. Other staff is required to have higher degrees and educational levels”. And the YWCA does feel that the salary wages that they pay their child care workers is above the average for Ohio and the nation and “through market analysis [it has shown that] our agency salary range is above normal for early childhood programs throughout the city” (conversation, 2004).

During initial interviews of key partners the lower salary ranges of the YWCA did come up in conversation about equality of teachers in the collaboration effort. However, the YWCA felt strongly that they could not legitimately raise the salaries at one site in order to make them more “equalizing” with the other partners in the collaboration since that would make an uneven distribution of salaries among employees at different sites.

“The argument was made on the other side that this site was unique and couldn’t really compare to the other YWCA sites. The issue was whether issues of unequal pay would cause later issues down the road at the “partnership” center when teachers began to talk to each other. Other issues with equalizing the pay were that the child care workers were less educated for the most part and had less time in the field. So, the larger question was do we admit to the different layers of teachers within the same building. All teachers are not equal…” (Recollections during research meeting with team members, 2003).
And while the salary rate for the YWCA is higher than child care programs in the area, the highest salary range at less than $22,000 still ranks lower in salary to the average Head Start teacher with a salary of $22,000 and $38,100 for the average kindergarten teacher (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2003). This salary difference helps to perpetuate the professional hierarchy that was discussed as a macro-level issue that child care is general faces and the YWCA also faces this professional hierarchy within the collaborative effort. How does this affect the teachers from the YWCA in realizing this professional hierarchy?

Generally, the teachers do recognize that the field of child care is not well compensated for the amount and type of work that is performed. Many teachers disregard the lower pay by stating that “they are in the field for the children and not for the money”.

“You don’t go into this field for the money. I have been working with children for over twenty years and I do it because I love it. The pay isn’t so great…but what are you going to do about it. You just have to love children.” (Teacher conversation, 2004)

“I wish we were better compensated. It is hard to make ends meet. A lot of times people think that this is a supplemental income but I am single and I support myself and it is tough to live on this salary. I feel fortunate since I worked in other child care centers and I have it great here—higher wage, more opportunities but the work is still demanding and the hours are long. And what makes it hard is that I see all the opportunity but I can’t always be a part of it. I see what other teachers have—days off and they leave at 4:00 pm instead of 6:00 pm. That would make a world of difference.” (Teacher conversation, 2004)

Longer Hours

The daily schedule of a child care worker does not vary much from institution to institution from the aspect of long days, long hours, little time off and little opportunity
for breaks throughout the day. The reality of child care is whether in a non-profit center or a for-profit center that the child care work is physically demanding and continuous. Many teachers in child care work a straight eight-hour shift and few are fortunate to get a lunch break. Some teachers eat with their students and take a few relaxing moments when they nap. Teachers are constantly in motion and down-time is at a minimal. The teachers at the YWCA also work long hours and very little time off during the day. They are better off than most child care workers in that they do get a break during the day for lunch or to relax without having responsibility for children.

“Today I watched the teachers put the children down for a nap and sighs as they finally got the last child to fall asleep. I remember those days for my staff as I served as a center director. Rest….a moment to put your feet up and rest. If you are lucky—a moment to get something to drink—I remember the first taste of hot coffee—pure heaven. That was my time to check on them—give them a break if I could. I struggled to get all my work done and to try to give them each a break to step outside or relax away from the classroom. I remember that nobody wanted nap time to end—it seemed too short. It was a time to catch up on paperwork, read an article about child care that you just can’t seem to finish (even though it is only five pages long) and writing down notes for parents, reminders about issues like warm clothing or extra clothing. Sometimes writing a note about something that happened today because you want to share it with them. I remember my staff working through these naps. They used them to prepare for the next day—sometimes writing in the dark as to not disturb the children. I remember watching one who would work preparing lessons while rubbing the back of a child who restlessly napped. Always the teacher…always on guard and duty” (Recollections and observations, 2004)

The schedule of the teachers at the YWCA varies little from the larger field of child care. The center operates 12 months a year from 7:00 am until 6:00 pm. Minimal holidays are taken off and very rarely do the teachers get professional days off. I observed on a day in which the rest of the center was off for President’s Day and the YWCA was still open and operating. It was a different experience as the building was quiet and up until that point I didn’t realize how child care still remains the same and
even though this was a collaboration project—the child care section still retains the inherent issues of long hours and little time off.

“Today was very different observing the center. It was President’s Day and everyone else had the day off. It was quiet when I first entered the building. There was no one at the receptionist desk and I didn’t know if I should just go forward and enter the classrooms or try to find someone to let them know I was there. …The teachers decided to change the routine today since there is no one around and we play in the big gym. They bring out the balls and we have a great time of rolling balls to the children while they kick them back at us. ….I ask the teachers about being the only ones hear today. They remark how they do sometimes feel like they deserve a break too and wish they had a day off however, they do understand that not all parents have the day off and that their work is needed. ‘Sometimes it would be nice just to have the same schedule as everyone else…while they get refreshed we are still waiting for the weekend’, remarks one teacher. At first I didn’t realize that everyone didn’t have to work because I was busy learning the ropes. But as I continued on with the job and weeks turned into months—and the holidays came and went and then the snow days and such—I realized that I did sort of resent the fact that I had to work.” (Conversation and observation, 2004)

The teachers at the YWCA understand that the center operating hours are needed to remain from 7:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m. for the parents and their work hours. Over and over again it was expressed that the nature of child care was understood from the time that they were hired except that they thought that with the YWCA being involved in the collaboration process—that small things would change from overall problems in the field such as being able to attend professional development days. Their long hours and schedules affect the professional development opportunities that they are able to attend and participate in.

Professional Development

Before the collaboration officially opened, the YWCA staff was able to attend the professional development seminars as the center had not yet opened its doors. However,
since that time it has proven difficult for the teachers in the YWCA to attend professional seminars. Not being able to attend professional development days adds to the micro-levels of marginalization that is felt in the collaboration on the part of the YWCA staff.

The teachers understand the nature of child care and that they are not able to close down the center due to the fact that parents are depending on the child care. There are two levels of professional development that currently affect the YWCA staff—professional development seminars in which the center would need to be closed and weekly “town meetings” that occur during work hours at the collaboration site. Due to the nature of child care the YWCA has been able to participate in a few of the professional seminars and none of the town meetings.

**Professional Seminars**

The collaboration has professional seminars during the year in which the staff from all agencies and organizations is invited to attend. Most of the agencies schedule the day off and mandate that their staff attend. The seminars occur on-site at the collaboration and are scheduled during operating hours. Because of the nature of child care it is rare that the YWCA staff gets to attend a professional seminar. It does not make good business sense to close the center so that the teachers can participate in a professional seminar. Closing the center means that the YWCA would lose money and according to their administrators “they only schedule in a few days of closing in order to meet their fiscal demands and they would love for the staff to be able to attend professional development days but closing down the center is not always an option they can afford to take” (Administrator interview, 2004).
Except for the first seminars which were held before the collaboration opened in 2001, the YWCA has had to choose which day they would attend. This has proved problematic for them as they have either attended the seminar during the middle of a session or for only one day. When a professional seminar is built to progress during the course of the study and one group entered in the middle of the study it is often difficult for the group to understand what is going on and it is difficult for the presenter to go back over already learned material. Thus, the YWCA by attending in the middle of a seminar or for only one day does not totally benefit from the knowledge that other staff are getting in attending the whole function.

Another issue for the YWCA is that with high turnover rates, the professional seminars that are building with each presentation does not allow for them to understand the background assuming that they understand the principles that have been discussed in each preceding seminar. For example, during the first seminars the teaching style of Reggio Emilia was brought to the table and each agency and organization was committed to this style of teaching that is reflected throughout the building in design and space. The YWCA teachers however, that I interviewed had no idea what Reggio Emilia style of teaching and since none were present at the initial professional seminars they were not able to communicate with me what it meant when I asked them, “what is the Reggio Emilia style of teaching”?

The teachers from the YWCA want to attend the professional seminars. I was able to attend a professional seminar with them in which curriculum webbing was being discussed and the teachers were encouraged to bring their lesson plans to the table and
discussion was held with other teachers from the collaboration. After the seminar I spoke
to them about their being able to attend and what it meant to them and the program.

The teachers were so excited that they were able to attend a professional seminar
workshop day. It is rare that the center closes and they wanted to take full advantage of
the information that day. I spoke with them the following day about the experience and
their excitement was still evident. They listened to the talk about curriculum design and
were eager to implement the changes within their lesson plans. One teacher expressed to
me that she didn’t understand that her lesson plan contained so many valuable lessons.
For example, when painting with the children she was teaching multiple concepts such
as: color, texture, sharing, and small motor development. Since most of the child care
teachers have high school degrees, we forget that what is obvious to us with advanced
training that a lesson plan has multiple concepts being taught. This is not so obvious to
most of the child care staff as they have not had the opportunity to attend child
development classes.

“Can you believe that I taught all that with one lesson? I started putting the colored dots
on my lesson plan and it all was there—right in front of me. I am a teacher. I am
teaching them [the] infants all sorts of things. Wow….laughter…can you believe this…
(silent for a few minutes). I am really glad we got to go.” (Teacher conversation, 2004)

Later when I had the opportunity to speak to several teachers in a group
discussion they were still eager and exciting about being able to attend the professional
seminar.

“We were so excited to get a day off. We didn’t know what to do at first. Where we
suppose to meet at the YWCA or go straight to the gym. I mean…we never get to attend
these things and being with adults was so cool. We are with children all day and that day
we got to be with the ‘big kids’.” (Staff group discussion, 2004)
Town Meetings

Another place where professional development and communication between the teachers is built into the collaboration is the “town meetings”. The “town meetings” are held each week during the regular school hours from September through June at 11:00 am during operating hours. The “town meeting” is a time that teachers can discuss current issues, bring up concerns and be brought up to date on issues within the collaboration. For other teachers in the center this “town meeting” is built into their schedules during time when they do not have children in the classroom.

However, for the staff of the YWCA they are unable to attend the “town meetings”. They expressed concern and frustration over not being able to attend the internal “town meetings” with other staff. And although they expressed that the information is passed along to them via their mailboxes this is not the same as having someone represent the YWCA at the meetings. They hold concern that without their physical presence their “voice” is not being heard at the collaboration site and maybe more importantly, that their “representation” is not being seen or heard at the meetings.

Unfortunately the most convenient time for the rest of the early childhood community at the collaboration site to meet is not convenient for the YWCA staff. The 11:00 o’clock time is during their nap time or eating time. Because of day care licensing laws and regulations, the teachers can’t leave their rooms and be out of ratio (the number established ratio of teachers per child) and even if the children are sleeping—they can’t leave the room and be out of ratio to attend in-site functions. At all times during the day the child care section must be in ratio according to the laws and regulations of the state. Because of the lack of substitute teachers—they do not have the financial resources to
hire a substitute teacher to attend a classroom while a teacher attends the in-site meeting with other early childhood teachers/staff—they do not have any additional help to have a teacher attend the meeting. The teachers at the YWCA see that other childhood professionals are able to attend the meeting, have their voices heard and be represented and this feeling of not being able to attend helps to bring about feelings being “left out”. Not being able to attend meetings is not the only area in which the teachers feel “left out” or isolated from the rest of the site.

“The town meeting is at 11:00 o’clock. We can’t attend—we have children napping or eating at that time. We get a letter in our mailboxes to tell us what is going on but we don’t get a voice. The YWCA is not represented at these meetings. Who speaks for us?” (Staff group discussion, 2004)

Isolation

The child care worker is basically isolated from other adults during the day. Most teachers have a co-teacher to work with and hopefully this is a good working relationship as for most teachers this co-worker is the basic adult contact during the day. There are glimpses of other adults: on the playground, the food service helpers, the administration however; for most of the day the teacher and the co-worker are the adult interactions for the shift. And since the day is filled with routine, the physical demands of the job and caring for the children there is little time for real adult interaction.

The teachers expressed the loneliness and isolation of the job. Since there is only one substitute for breaking teachers at lunch time, they most often eat alone. They express the loneliness of not being able to take a lunch break with another teacher. Because of the lack of interaction with other staff members in the overall collaboration they find that they have made few connections with other adults in the building. So
although someone else in the building might be available to take a lunch break with a YWCA teacher they do not the means to know this and are uncomfortable leaving their neighborhood and being with other staff members. Lack of interaction with other teaches causes them to stay in their “neighborhood” where they know people and it is comfortable. Part of staying within their “neighborhood” is where they are physically located.

“We just really hang out at “Carole’s” office for our breaks. We don’t feel comfortable going anywhere else in the center. Is there a lunch room somewhere—we don’t know? I just try to stay in my area.” (Staff group discussion, 2004)

Physical Location

The YWCA is located within Neighborhood One. Neighborhood One is at the front of the building and is located by itself. No one quite remembers how the YWCA was located in the space they occupy. During initial interviews and surveys the YWCA indicated that it was important for them to be near other agencies especially MRDD and Head Start as they wanted to be integrated with those programs. “Kelly Browne”, coordinator of Early Childhood Education does not remember how the space was decided. She does not remember the YWCA being part of the discussion in which space they would occupy.

“The YWCA was placed in the front of the building for security reasons. The child care center runs long hours and this means that sometimes they are the only ones in the building. They start before most of the center site and their parents pick up later than most of the center. They needed to be in the front of the building for security reasons. Located in the front of the building—they can be seen and reached quickly by police and fire departments. Their parents can also use the front side entrance (not the main entrance—which is locked) to gain access into the building to pick up their children” (Administrator conversation, 2004)
Her personal opinion is that the YWCA was located at the front of the building since the program operates on a different schedule than the rest of the programs with early morning hours and late evening hours. She feels that being in the front of the building is a safety feature for the child care section as they are easily accessible to police and fire departments in the event of an emergency and can be seen from the parking lot during hours when they are alone in the center. Being in the front allows for parents to be accessible to outside doors to pick up children instead of needing the main doors which are closed at a certain hour so that strangers can’t have access to the whole center.

However, being in the front of the building also means that the YWCA is physically isolated from interacting with other neighborhoods. Because of the innovative aspects and design of the building, the YWCA is able to fully function without leaving their neighborhood. Their neighborhood has a kitchenette, laundry services, administration office, art room, small indoor physical areas and doors leading to the outside. These wonderful features also mean that unless the YWCA needs or is forced to enter into another neighborhood they theoretically would not need to leave “home”. Without this push or incentive to leave home and all the amenities being within their reach there is little need to associate with others.

“I don’t really enter into other parts of the building. I’m not comfortable because I don’t know anyone else and that is not my part of the building. If I need to eat or socialize we do it in our own area.” (Teacher interview, 2004)

The YWCA expressed that when they have tried to interact outside of their neighborhood that they have encountered some less than friendly encounters which has
left them with a “bitter taste” in their mouths and reinforces them to stay in their own area.

Being isolated physically and having no reason to leave your “comfort” zone adds to feelings of isolation in general. With the combination of the inherent issues which continue to plague the overall child care profession as well as YWCA child care center within the collaboration (high turnover, low pay, long hours), the additional issues of not being able to participate in professional development seminars and the physically isolation from other neighborhoods adds to the feelings of marginality that the staff feels on both macro and micro-levels.

These feelings of marginalization from both a macro and micro level manifest themselves in various ways at the collaboration site. As the research indicates these feelings of marginalization are shown through investment of the vision, feelings and perceptions of inferiority, feelings of resentment and territorial issues at the collaboration.

**Manifestation of Marginality Issues at the Collaboration**

When I sat down to map out the feelings of marginality at the macro and micro levels, it emerged through the research that these feelings manifest themselves in ways at the collaboration site. Although these issues are primarily felt and experienced through and by the YWCA staff, these issues manifest and enter into the collaboration. The ways that the feelings of marginality from the overall macro-level of the profession in combination with the micro-levels experienced uniquely at the collaboration manifest themselves is through investment of the vision, feelings and perceptions of inferiority of
child care staff, feelings of resentment, and territorial issues. Each of these areas will be displayed through the research and through the “voice” of the teachers at the YWCA.

**Investment in the Vision**

An important part of the collaboration process is that the members of the collaboration invest in the vision for its continued existence. A document in 1998 stated that “structure will be designed to facilitate collaborative partnerships among staff, families and children. A sense of community, light, storage and movement opportunities for children continue to rank high relative to the use of the space” (document, Oct. 1998).

I have been part of partner meetings where it has been discussed on how to invest the next “chapter” of leaders to the collaboration project as they will not have the initial investment that all the original stakeholders have in the project. The investment of the vision must also trickle down to the collaboration level where the staff “lives” and participates in the process each day. The mission statement of “The Partnership” is “to enhance the quality of life for children, their families, and the community by providing collaborative and comprehensive early childhood services that are inclusive, affordable and accessible”. And on this level, all the teachers agree that the collaboration is working and fulfilling this need in the community for children and families.

The YWCA staff recognizes that children and families are receiving the best services available and that the child care section would not be able to receive these benefits and services for their families and children without being a member of this collaboration project. The YWCA staff is appreciative of all the benefits and services that the children and the families receive from the partners of the collaboration.
What is missing is that many of the ideas that sparked the investment of the collaborative partners are missing on the staff level. An important part for the stakeholders was when the delegation went to Italy and was able to visit the Reggio Emilia schools and then came home with the architect and incorporated these ideas into the “Smithville Road” building. The ideas that the stakeholders brought back from Italy regarding space and programming and the aspect of community are lost to the child care staff members as many of them are not from the initial group of teachers. I asked the teachers if they knew what Reggio Emilia was and if they understood why they had a “town meeting”, “community space” and “the neighborhood” design. Each teacher that I asked had little if any idea what the Reggio Emilia approach was or how it is translated into working at the center site. Without investment of the vision which happens in the formation stage of collaboration—there would be no direction setting to continue developing and implementing the collaboration process. It is important that members of the community continue to understand and invest in the original mission statement and vision and that these concepts not been lost or forgotten.

Feelings and Perceptions of Inferiority

Because of the macro levels of marginalization (institutional hindrances, professional silos, societal views, predominately female occupation) that permeates the nature of child care and the combination with micro levels of marginalization (inherent issues—high turnover, low pay and longer hours, professional development and isolation) that occur uniquely to the YWCA child care staff members, they often express feelings and perceptions of inferiority. These feelings which manifest themselves are internalized
and then projected onto other areas of the collaboration which may or may not correctly reflect how the staff actually feels. The YWCA staff expresses their “comfort zone” as their neighborhood and not wanting to leave it and by only associating with their “group”.

“I’m just getting through the day staying in my own neighborhood. People just don’t talk to each other around here. We feel like a small fish in a big ocean…. (Teacher group discussion, 2004)

Part of feeling inferiority is society’s view of child care workers. The teacher’s express that they do not feel appreciated by parents and larger society. Child care and day care positions are still thought of as “glorified” babysitters. Most people do not consider child care workers as “professionals” and they are often viewed as babysitters (normally thought of as a teenage girl job). Although child care needs are great in the Untied States, job training is not needed in most cases and only a high school diploma or GED is required to get a position in a child care center teaching and taking care of children. All teachers at the YWCA have a high school diploma or a GED and some have associate or college degrees. The societal view that the job can be fulfilled by anyone is reflected in how the teachers view themselves.

“We had sign ups for parent teacher conferences and there were parents who thought that was funny. They actually laughed and told us that they didn’t see the need, didn’t have the time or the energy to have a conference….I have also tried to give parents suggestions about their children and they have come back at me with “Do you have any children?” and when I reply that I don’t—they just “nod” their heads like “when you do then you can tell me what to do with my child”—totally forgetting the fact that I am a professional working with their children and I am with them 8 hours a day”. (Teacher group discussion, 2004)
One teacher expressed dismay that she had spent a large amount of time working with infants on a project. She felt she had invested time, energy and herself into working with the infants on art project to take home. She was excited to share that art project with the parents when they came to pick up their child. She was saddened when a parent picked the project up and before she left the room she threw it away into a garbage can.

“Couldn’t she even wait to throw it away when she got home? But to do that right in front of me after I spent all that time and energy was a slap in the face. I mean I had to get them all together and work with six babies—that is not easy to do.” (Teacher, group discussion, 2004)

Feelings of Resentment

Due to the nature of child care with long hours and minimal days off there is some natural resentment from the YWCA teachers to other teachers in the collaboration. While other teachers enjoy adult company daily for lunch breaks, the YWCA is not set up to have two teachers take lunch at the same time. The teachers expressed that they would like to be able to take lunch and discuss with their co-workers issues facing the room or just working on lesson plans together. Not being able to plan with others in a group setting helps contribute to the isolation of the teacher. When the teachers of the YWCA know that other teachers in the collaboration are able to work together and have lunch together this builds some feelings of resentment. Although the teachers understand that due to the nature of child care and lack of substitutes for their room that they can not lunch together—they still see that other teachers in the building are able to on a daily basis.

The teachers also expressed that working a longer day than other teachers in the collaboration is difficult to witness each day. When the other programs are over by 4:00
pm and the child care section is not done until 6:00 pm, the stress of adding those
addition hours is physically demanding for the teachers. And again, while the child care
staff understands that parents are working and that they need to watch children until the
parents are done with their work, it is still difficult to watch teachers leave the building
(the YWCA has windows of the parking lot) and know that you still have time left.

The nature of child care is that it is a 12 month program versus a 10 month
program as other partners in the collaboration are. And although the child care workers
understand that parents need child care all year round it is difficult to see other teachers
leave for extended holiday breaks such as Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Year’s and
Easter breaks and the summer break. The YWCA staff only receives the mandatory
holidays off and they continue to work the summer hours even though other staff
members in the collaboration have these days off.

The YWCA staff themselves find it difficult to understand why at a collaborative
level other staff members from other organizations could not step into their roles so that
one person from each classroom could attend the meetings. The staff is thinking that at a
collaborative level in which all resources (including human) are shared that someone in
the overall collaboration could share themselves in order for the teachers to attend the
bridge building meetings located on site.

“We want the collaboration in general to find a way so that we can attend. We know we
are child care and that makes us different. We know that parents work and that the center
loses money if we shut down to attend functions but the town meeting is held during the
day when we all are there. We don’t understand why there is not a universal subbing list
and schedule. Technically we are a collaboration and under the same building—but we
are still so separate. …We would like to participate as well.” (Teacher, group discussion, 2004)
Territorial

A wonderful feature is that each neighborhood has its own laundry, kitchenette, small motor and art studios. While convenience to “facilities” was high on each partner’s list of space issues there is also the problem of areas contained within the specific neighborhood to convey an aura of “ownership” in these areas.

The YWCA teachers recall a specific incident when their laundry machinery was not operating very well. They used another set in someone else’s neighborhood and the teacher expressed frustration that they were using “her” area. The teachers express repeatedly that they should stay in their area and that they felt uncomfortable when they needed to use something in another neighborhood. These feelings stemmed from incidents that each member recalled quickly when the topic came up in conversation.

“Each place has a kitchenette. Our washer and dryer were broken and so we went to another area to use theirs. I remember going in and a teacher was like…somebody left a bleach bottle in here and we can’t have bleach bottles. So I replied, “I don’t know who left it but I will remove it”. And the teacher replied, “When are you-all going to get yours fixed?” I replied that I didn’t know. I felt like I wasn’t wanted and I shouldn’t have used the unit. I wanted to say—it’s not your personal washer and dryer so why can’t we share it?” (Teacher group discussion, 2004)

Another time the copier was out and they needed to make copies. But because the teachers didn’t want to “ruffle any feathers” they decided to wait until their copier was fixed or until their center director could make the copies for them. Feeling marginalized interferes sometimes in how they feel able to use resources within the center site.

Another teacher related a story where she needed art supplies but she was concerned about going into the main art studio to ask for materials and so she did without and changed the art project instead of asking for more materials. Although she had never
experienced anything negative with the art studio teachers the feeling of being “a bother” permeated into other areas and made her feel as if she couldn’t or shouldn’t ask for materials to finish the art project with the children. Every time a situation like this occurs it perpetuates and reinforces the feelings of marginalization which can indirectly or directly affect how they read incidents that occur with other teachers.

“The last week we were playing outside. A little girl came over to our children and was playing with them. The teacher kept saying “come here, come on over here”. We didn’t understand that—why couldn’t they let her come and play with our children.” We wanted to say—we are friendly and we don’t bite” (Teacher group discussion, 2004).

The teachers express that they enjoy summer hours in the fact that they basically have the whole center to themselves. They don’t have to share space and if they want to use an area they can do so without signing up first. Sometimes during the school year they do not get to use certain perks in the facility such as the COSI room or the large motor area due to the fact that other agencies and organizations are using the space. The teachers expressed frustration in not being able to use special rooms because by the time they get to sign up all the good spots are taken or they are assigned hours after 4:00 pm which do not work for them as parents are coming to pick up their children. While the other programs are done by 4:00 pm and so the rooms are available, the child care section points out that they have to think about parents coming to pick children up from 4:00 to 6:00 pm and it is inconvenient to ask parents to walk across the site to pick up their children in the gym room.

I personally experienced issues of territory when I was observing one day. It was raining outside and the teachers decided to go to an indoor play area. There were not many of us; two adults and four children. A group from another agency came by and saw
that we were in the motor room and said aloud to the children “oh another group is already there so we’ll find somewhere else to go”. The teacher just sighed and looked at the children and replied, “We’re all friendly—are we guys” but the group went on to find another space. Later when I asked the teachers about this, they laughed and replied that events such as that happen a lot. “Sometimes” they replied, “we feel like a cloud is hanging over our heads and our neighborhood and we don’t know why?”

The teachers also recall when they wanted to use a digital camera that they needed to ask for it at the front desk. One particular time they were told that they had used it too much and couldn’t have it anymore that week. The teachers wanted people to understand that they are at the center longer and thus, sometimes they have more pictures to take in accordance with the longer days. They try to document moments during the day regardless of how many times they have used the camera that week in order to share with parent’s special moments of their children’s days. Later after being told about using the camera too much someone told them about a room where the pictures were being developed and they remarked that they didn’t even know about that room. (See Figure 5.6)
Figure 5.6  Micro Level Marginalization
Cooperation versus Collaboration

Winer and Ray (1994) define collaboration as “a mutually beneficial and well-defined relationship entered into by two or more…to achieve results they are more likely to achieve together than alone”. Collaboration involves more intense, long-term efforts than do cooperation or coordination. Collaboration is a process used to reach goals that cannot be achieved by acting alone. It requires that participants (a) jointly develop and agree to a set of common goals and directions, (b) share responsibility for obtaining those goals, and (c) work together to achieve those goals (Brunner, 1995). The outcome of collaboration is more than simple communication or coordination, but shared vision and shared actions resulting in cohesive family policies and practice.

At the cooperation level, organizations work informally together. Often, they have a superficial awareness of one another’s full array of programs and goals (Kagan, 1991). In fact, cooperation can occur despite differing goals (Lanier, 1981). Participants and organizations that cooperate retain their independent full autonomy so that power is neither shared among them nor yielded to a third party (Hord, 1986). Coordination is commonly regarded as a prerequisite for collaboration (Hord, 1986) and is conceptualized as a less complex and sophisticated construct than collaboration. Coordination entails efforts to smooth relationships among organizations and often results in specific modifications in the ways agencies operate. But in coordinated efforts, agencies remain independent (Morris & Lescohier, 1978).

The previous chapter examines the development of the overall collaboration effort and follows the historical events that lead up to the development and the developmental
stages that the collaboration followed and concluded that the project was indeed
collaboration from the administration level. The partners have invested in the
collaboration effort and continue to have partner meetings to discuss issues and concerns
that continue to concern the collaboration.

At the staff level, the YWCA teachers expressed that they would define the site as
collaboration as it provides seamless service for the families and children it serves but in
guard to the staff—cooperation is a better label. In the early planning stages a letter in
October of 1998 stated to the partners that “a goal of the collaboration would be to
“facilitate collaborative partnerships among staff, families and children. A sense of
community, light, storage and movement opportunities…” (Memo, 1998) It seems that
early on in the process a focus of the partnership was to make sure that staff was also
included in this collaboration process.

The word “seamless” is used to indicate services for children and families. When
the administration uses the word “seamless” they are indicating that the services are
provided and maintained by the collaboration. When the staff on the child care center is
asked about the word “seamless” there is less conviction of the overall effort of
collaboration as a whole site.

“I don’t really feel the word ‘collaboration’ or ‘seamless’ from our level. I understand
what it means to be part of the YWCA but I don’t understand what it means to be part of
the collaboration. I think this place is great for kids and families. I don’t know anyone
besides my own group. I couldn’t tell you the names or what they do. When I hear
people say—“this is a great collaboration”—I think—who do we collaborate with. Yes,
the children get services but as a staff we don’t even know what other people do or who
they are. The administration might collaborate—but we don’t on the staff level.”
(Teacher group discussion, 2004)
Another teacher explained how she felt about the word “seamless” as it applies to members at the staff level.

“Seamless…seamless…maybe if you look at it from up above it looks great but it really feels like we are on one side of the wall saying let us in and we want to play too. It might seem seamless at the top but as it gets closer to the bottom it unravels and it seems like the stitches become loose and less tight.” (Teacher group discussion, 2004)

The child care staff does not collaborate with other agencies on a daily or even a weekly basis due to the fact that their schedule are so inherently different from the other agencies that they are unable to participate at weekly “town meetings”, lunch hours or even most professional development seminars. The inherent institutional issues that plague the child care profession run into them forming relationships with other members of the collaboration effort on these on-site practices.

The YWCA staff themselves find it difficult to understand why at a collaborative level other staff members from other organizations could not step into their roles so that one person from each classroom could attend the meetings. The staff is thinking that at a collaborative level in which all resources (including human) are shared that someone in the overall collaboration could share themselves in order for the teachers to attend the bridge building meetings located on site.

“We want the collaboration in general to find a way so that we can attend. We know we are child care and that makes us different. We know that parents work and that the center loses money if we shut down to attend functions but the town meeting is held during the day when we all are there. We don’t understand why there is not a universal subbing list and schedule. Technically we are a collaboration and under the same building—but we are still so separate. …We would like to participate as well.” (Teacher group discussion, 2004)
The focus of the research was to understand the nature of collaboration and the development of the collaboration situated within The “Partnership” which has created an exemplary model of how collaboration at the state and county level can be accomplished. Nested within the early childhood education system of Franklin County Board of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (FCBMRRDD), the “Partnership” is the most extensive partnership in the system combining local, county, and state education, medical, social service and mental health agencies and institutions working together to more effectively serve the community, children and families. The “Partnership” is a partnership of many agencies including the following: Action for Children, Alcohol Drug and Mental Health, Columbus Health Department, Franklin County Board of Health, Franklin County Children’s Services, Franklin County Department of Job and Family Services, Ohio Department of Education, The Ohio State University, Columbus Public Schools, Head Start, MMRD, YMCA, and YWCA.

This study took a comprehensive look at the layers of context in which the collaboration was able to form (which was unique to this situation) and was categorized as: political ripeness, vision and leadership, acknowledgement and support of the
community leaders and investment of the community leaders. These unique layers were described in a timeline fashion to indicate different contexts which occur independently and accounts for the uniqueness of this collaboration.

The study also examined how this unique collaboration followed the linear stages of development of collaboration as outlined by the research literature. This unique collaboration followed other research results in that it seems to pass through the common developmental stages (Kagan, 1991) and that certain mediating variables (goals, resources, power and authority and levels of adaptiveness) were present during the individually distinct collaborative process (Kagan, 1991). The research literature indicates that most collaborations stages and the variables are universal and this particular collaboration followed the same linear development as indicated by the research literature.

Along with studying the nature of the collaboration and its development, this research took a closer look at a “neighborhood” located within the collaboration. In examining the child care section of the collaboration it was revealed through the data that issues stemming at macro-levels (institutional hindrances, professional silos, societal views and being a predominately female occupations) and micro-levels (inherent issues, professional development, and isolation) caused feeling and perceptions of being marginalized within society and the collaboration. These feelings of marginalization manifested themselves in the collaboration in regard to the investment of the vision, feelings and perceptions of inferiority, feelings of resentment and territorial issues.

I relate this discussion to theoretical and methodological implications to the literature base regarding collaboration and the stages of development. I also relate this
discussion to practical implications to this research in changing some of the practices within the collaboration and in thinking about the collaboration not in terms of linear development but in a circular development in regard to this unique collaboration. And finally, I give recommendations for future research regarding this particular collaboration and the continued developmental process of the nature of the collaboration.

**The Problem of the Study**

The initial problem that faced states was having many agencies dealing with children’s issues and hundreds of professional organizations on behalf of children and families and incoherent policies (Kagan, 1991). The result is that many times there is inconsistency, inequitable, insufficient, and ineffective services for children and families. “The Partnership” has addressed those conditions by forming a collaboration in which services, organizations and agencies are located on a single site and provide various services for children and families with and without disabilities. Key administrators who have participated in the formation, development, conceptualization and the implementation of the site have recognized the “pleas for coordination, consolidation, and collaboration in human services (Kagan, 1991). Although the nature of collaboration at the state and county level has been shown to be difficult and problematic, the “Partnership” has shown the field an exemplary model for this kind of collaboration.

The nature of the collaboration is dynamic and ever-changing. To understand the nature of collaboration it is important to not only study the facts surrounding the process but also the contexts in which the collaboration was formed, developed and implemented. In other words, it is important to study the contexts in which the collaboration is
embedded and it is important to take a “situated perspective” (Green & Bloome, 1997; Green & Meyer, 1991) thus, creating the story of the collaboration by locating them within the realities and stories all involved.

Informed by studies that deal with the nature of collaboration that have studied the stages and mediating variables and the linear progression of the development, this study takes a comprehensive look at the nature of a specific collaboration and its linear stages of development and the mediating variables that contributed to the process.

This study extends those studies as it looks at the linear development of the collaboration as suggested in the existing literature and suggests that this unique collaboration continue its developmental path with a circular notion of development in order to continually re-evaluate itself and keep the vision and the investment in the original collaboration alive for new participants and new investors. This idea of circular collaboration will help the collaboration to focus on bringing in the next “generation” of partners in the process. It will also help the staff to reach a collaborative state instead of a coordinated state. Moving into a collaborative level among the staff will help the staff to be more invested in the collaboration and will help to keep the original vision alive and not lost through the years.

The Nature of Collaboration and the Layers of Context

I started this study off with two broad questions: What is the nature of development within the collaboration at The Early Childhood and Education Center among a diverse group of partners? And how is the collaboration playing out daily for the child care partner? Despite the rich nature of collaboration research there is still a
need to study collaborations that are working and a need to re-evaluate the stages of development for these on-going collaborations. The linear model explains the original pathway that the collaboration used to form, conceptualize, develop, implement and evaluate itself and mediating variables which played into the collaboration.

I was guided by the body of research on collaboration (Kagan, 1991, Melaville & Blank, 1993, Bruner, 1995, Winer & Ray, 1994, Lanier, 1981, Derlega & Grzelak, 1982, Hord, 1986) which indicates that all collaborations have much in common structurally. The body of research indicates that all collaborations seem to pass through common developmental stages and that these stages are highly predictable and follow in sequence. The pace and trajectory through which the stages are achieved are idiosyncratic to particular collaborations and this suggests that certain mediating variables (goals, resources, power and authority, and levels of adaptiveness) alter the pace of implementation to yield individually distinct collaborative processes. Like stages, the categories of variables are also universal and less predictable than stages. The mediating variables differ in intensity and in their sources and are a combination of the normal development of the stages and the individual mediating variables that influence the same way; normal human development is the product of universal developmental stages and individual mediating variables. Together they mesh in highly idiosyncratic ways, yielding an infinite variety of personalities.

“The Partnership” follows the path of linear development as outlined by the literature base and contributes four layers of context which are unique to this collaboration and serve as mediating variables. The four layers of context which were identified can be categorized as: political ripeness, vision and leadership, community
acknowledgement and community leader investment and development. These four layers were discussed in detail describing certain critical events that occurred within each layer that helped to demonstrate the macro and micro levels of influences which helped the collaboration to push through the linear stages of development of formation, conceptualization, development, implementation and evaluation.

During the first context which was labeled ‘political ripeness”, the critical events that happened during this time period was the Governor’s Children and Family First Initiative which paved the way for funding for collaborative ventures. The Federal government with the expansion of the Child Care and Development Block grants allowed the legislation to address concerns about the effectiveness and efficiency of child care programs and included fiscal incentives to increase and collaborate child development and education programs. This helped the collaboration to form and paved the way to the next step of development—conceptualization.

When Becky Love and Chris Kloth met at a Future Search Conference it started the second layer of context in which the “vision and the leadership” started to formally discuss a way to collaborate human services and programs for children and families. The vision became clear and several programs were launched which paved the way for a future collaboration on a much larger and grander scale. During this period a council was formed and key stakeholders in the community were identified and brought together for discussions on how this venture could be envisioned. After funding was established through the Ohio Department of MRDD which was granted a 1.5 million dollar matching grant from the state, a huge step was taken by Becky Love and leadership to “share
funding” in order to get this project started. During this context the collaboration was able to conceptualize and formal proceedings began.

Each agency and partner formally committed to the project through verbal and written means which formed the context for community leadership to acknowledge and support the project. It was during this time in the process that the community leaders wrote letters of support and began to attend meetings to discuss the details of the project.

And finally through the context of the fourth layer, a huge giant step for the collaboration project came about when community leaders and stakeholders not only supported the project through verbal and written statements but through financial commitments. During this process the building was designed and the space was designated for each agency and organization. A common mission statement was created and produced by the key stakeholders and partner meetings formally began to evaluate the collaborative process on a regular basis. An outside facilitator was brought into the evaluation process to help guide the key stakeholders and to keep them focused and working on key issues relevant to the collaboration process. This context can at the development and implementation stage in the process of the collaboration.

Each of these layers of context help to understand how this unique collaboration began and the road to its development and implementation. The layers are situated throughout the developmental process and situate the research within contexts and timeframes of the collaboration project.
Re-Conceptualizing the Development of Collaboration

In light of the research, I would like to propose a circular model of development for collaboration that I believe would be a more appropriate model for The “Partnership” as it allows the collaboration to constantly re-evaluate itself and to remember the “history” of the project. Using this circular model of development will enable the collaboration project to remind the participants (staff) about the history, the vision and the mission of the project as the initial investors leave and new partners are brought into the project. This model of development of collaboration will allow for future growth in constant re-evaluating itself and allow that past experiences are not allowed to be forgotten in view of their importance to the development process of the initial collaboration (such as design, space and influences). Too often when new and innovative projects occur, after the initial stakeholders leave the “drive” that was keeping the collaboration going leaves and the new investors are not made aware of past history and thus, keeping those critical moments relevant and pertinent to the present and future state of the collaboration will keep the overall project “healthy”.

The literature on the stages of development describes them in a linear fashion in which the process includes formation, conceptualization, development, implementation, evaluation and termination. However, the stage model assumes that once a stage is reached through milestones that the development continues the linear path and does not need to go back to the first stages. By building on the theoretical and methodological assumptions advocated by a sociocultural perspective, this study provides new insights and a dynamic picture of looking at the development of collaboration as situated through
this particular example as a circular path of development in which the development of the collaboration is always in motion and constantly going through the stages as dictated by external and internal variables that pertain to the collaboration. For example, political climate is an issue that this unique collaboration dealt with in the formation stage however as time progresses and new political mandates come to play, political climate may also pertain to the implementation stage.

One of the challenges for this collaboration project is to keep developing and growing and thus, I would like to propose a model for this specific collaboration in which it can continue its development over time and over various contexts in which it may encounter in the future. This model would also take into account internal and external variables that as time progresses will impact the development of the collaboration. The collaboration does not exist within a vacuum so that once the development has reached the implementation stage—there are no variables that can impact the process but instead in this living and working collaboration model, internal and external variables will be constantly presenting themselves and forcing the collaboration to deal with in some fashion.

Instead of a linear line of progression, the development should be thought of in a circular fashion in which formation, conceptualization, development and implementation and evaluation are continuous. (Please refer to figure 6.1) There is a fluidity among these stages (represented by a dotted line) in which during the initial process of the collaboration a change in mission or direction or a reassessment of the structure may necessitate a transition back to a previous stage (Flynn & Harbin, 1987). And although Kagan (1991) states that these stages are not neat and orderly as on paper and may
overlap I would propose that a circular model would represent a more fluid model between stages of development and that this fluidity be represented by a dotted line to indicate that the stage can transition back to a stage.

I would suggest that the “termination” stage be branch off the circular model as it can occur at any point in the process and for the strength of the collaboration that ‘termination” be linked back to evaluation at whatever point the termination occurred so that the collaboration can understand the variables that caused the termination. I would also propose that the internal mediating variables be situated within the center of the circular model with outstretched arrows to represent that these variables occur at various points in the development of the collaboration and that external mediating variables be placed outside of the circle of development with arrows extending toward the structure. This would represent that internal variables (such as: staff concerns, administration within the partnership, participation in functions) occur throughout the development of the collaboration and continuous as long as the collaboration is “alive” and that external variables (such as political climate, changes in government policies and mandates, social change toward child care) would be affecting the collaboration on an external level that would most likely affect all the organizations connected with the collaboration.

Guided by a sociocultural perspective, I view the nature of collaboration as socially and culturally situated and constituted and thus see the development of collaboration as circular and continuous instead of linear. (See Figure 6.1)
Figure 6.1  Proposed Model: Circular Development of Collaboration
Collaboration Development

Collaborations, are defined as organizational and interorganizational structures where resources, power and authority are shared and where people are brought together to achieve common goals that could not be accomplished by a single individual or organization independently (Kagan, 1991). The literature suggests that reasons for entering into a collaboration fall into four major categories: alleviating scarcity of resources, expanding the narrowness of problem conceptualization, improving inadequacies in human service and achieving organizational reform (Appley & Winder, 1977; Schindler-Rainman, 1981).

The “Partnership” collaboration project had all four major categories as reasons to enter into collaboration with multiple publicly funded programs and the one non-publicly funded agency. Each publicly funded agency competes for the same funding and during the 1990s competition among limited financial resources was strong and remains so today in Ohio due to budget cuts and less governmental spending on early childhood programs. Fiscal stability is a goal of every childhood program and collaboration of services and programs would ideally help to alleviate scarcity of resources as the organizations and agencies that are competing for the same resources would be working together and combining services.

Separately each agency felt they were not meeting the needs of their clients to their satisfaction and working together in collaboration with other agencies and services helped to serve the population they served better. The YWCA child care was able to serve their families and children with additional services that as child care they could not provide them such as serving the special needs population, hearing and speech screenings.
and dental services. The Head Start program does not provide child care or “wrap-around” care for its clients and having the YWCA child care on-site helped them to provide this service for their clients.

The formation of the collaboration was also able to achieve organizational reform in that it provides an innovative approach to serving families with and without children who have disabilities and families who want to afford quality child care services. The “Partnership” is a prime example of a working collaboration and has created an exemplary model of how collaborations at the state and county level and as this collaboration is “alive”, I believe that the collaboration needs to constantly remind itself of the history of the story and of key points that occurred throughout the process of the collaboration. For example, during the formation period the idea for the collaboration was formed and the articulation of the vision was conceived. I believe that as new members enter into the collaboration or as the collaboration progresses during time, the vision should be re-visited and shared with all the participants especially in light of movement of staff and new investors. Also key stakeholders were brought into the collaboration at this point and it is important to remind the staff and the community who and what the collaboration is about and why it was formed at all.

During conceptualization it was important to identify the partners and to agree on a common purpose and a commitment was made. Maybe re-committing through the process would be an important ritual that the collaboration designs much as married couples “renew” vows to each other to “re-commit” to the project. This would be a symbolic gesture but one that could forge bonds and helps staff to understand the scope of the project.
Implementation brought about partner meetings for the collaboration key stakeholders. And as the collaboration grows these partner meetings which allow the key stakeholders to keep in contact and re-evaluate the administration needs will continue to stay important and vital to the future success. The evaluation processes that are in place with partner meetings and retreats will continue to be important to the “health” of the collaboration. Part of evaluation will be to monitor what is working within the collaboration and what is not so that other agencies that try to form such an innovative collaboration will have some guidelines as they begin their pathway of development in collaboration.

**Marginalization of Macro-Level Issues**

Another important part of the collaboration that needs to be told and evaluated so that other agencies can understand the complicated procedure of collaboration is how fundamentally different agencies can work together. In this, the child care section of the collaboration was the only publicly funded program which was situated with multiple publicly funded organizations which caused inherent problems associated at the macro and micro levels which in turn caused feelings of marginalization to occur.

The research indicated that the child care staff felt that they were not “part of the group” as equal partners but that somehow they felt as if they were the “step-sister” in the collaboration and that “a cloud hung over their area”. They felt that “cooperation” between staff members and not “collaboration” defined their particular circumstances at the site. The issues of concern that occurred at the macro-level were categorized as:
institutional hindrances (high turn-over, low pay, long hours), professional silos, societal views and being a predominately female occupation.

Although the other agencies can do little to help the child care staff change these issues, they can acknowledge them and understand about the child care field in general. In regard to the professional silos that are known about and yet, no one wants to talk about and thus, the discriminating notions continue to permeate our teaching profession in that there is an unknown hierarchy that elevates some teaching professions above others, we need to start speaking about such issues and remember that we are all teachers regardless of the age group that we teach. As child care teachers are the base and foundation of our profession and start the learning process and introduction into “schooling” and “learning” the challenge should be to rally around their issues as a profession and make their issues ours. The marginalization of the child care teachers on a macro level is a call to arms to all teachers to help raise the standards and the societal views.

**Micro Levels of Marginalization**

The micro-levels of marginalization that emerged from the data were categorized as inherent issues (high turnover, low pay and long hours), professional development and isolation issues. The following ideas are suggestions that could be used to organize institutional reform and practices on-site.
High Turnover

High turnover affects the YWCA program as training teachers about the mission and ways of teaching at the collaboration in order to get them invested in the project is difficult when the teachers leave after a short period of time. This means that the YWCA agency must constantly re-train employees about the collaboration, its history and the mission of the project. As the Reggio Emilia style of learning is encouraged throughout the collaboration and is prevalent in the history, its design and its mission statement—the staff members should be aware of it and understand what Reggio Emilia style of learning and teaching is all about. However, when I asked the teachers of the YWCA what Reggio Emilia was and if it was a style of teaching that they used, they looked at me as if I spoke another language. These teachers were relatively new and were not invested in the concept.

Since Reggio Emilia is such a part of the collaboration it might be important and prudent for the collaboration to give an orientation once a year to all new employees concerning the history of the center, its mission statement and its style of learning and teaching. Not only would the new teachers be invested in the vision but they would get to meet other teachers from all the agencies and maybe through this interaction make some professional and personal connections. These connections could help to bridge communication and projects of learning across the collaboration.

High turnover of the YWCA child care teachers also makes it difficult for other teachers in the collaboration to make an investment and start a relationship with someone who may not be at the center long. However, the short-term benefits might be that the center as a whole is friendlier, more communicative and more collaborative in projects
that bridge classrooms. Making connections to the child care staff might also help them to network and if qualified find another position within the center. Efforts to get to know each other in the collaboration, even if short-term, can only help the overall collaborative effort.

The collaboration as a whole can not address the low pay issues however; this may be an area in which the YWCA organization re-considers the salary wages of the staff members. Although initial conversations centered around not being able to raise the salaries of the YWCA staff members at the collaboration, institutional reform may be necessary as the staff members at this site are in a unique position and with the added responsibilities of being in the collaborative setting with other agencies raising their salaries to be competitive with other members of the same educational level may be in order. Of course, educational levels in child care in general are not as high as teachers in Head Start (which require higher educational levels) however, for those teachers who have degrees and remain in child care it is important to financially compensate them for their educational level in comparison to others of the same level within the collaboration.

Because of the nature of child care, the organizations are not able to change the long hours or the 12 month schedule of the YWCA staff. However, acknowledging that the child care section works long hours and has a 12-month schedule with sensitive comments may help the YWCA staff members to internalize that others in the collaboration understand their situation. YWCA staff members recalled in the group discussion that often during holiday or summer breaks members of the collaboration from various agencies make insensitive comments most likely unconsciously such as “see you after the holidays”, “have a great break” or “have a great summer—see you in the fall”
when the child care teachers do not get these days off. The teachers also make remarks referring to long weekends that occur due to holidays. The YWCA teachers expressed that they too would like a break for summer or the holidays or even one-day off due to a scheduled holiday to relax and rejuvenate themselves however with the nature of child care this is impossible. Just having teachers acknowledge that not everyone in the collaboration gets holidays off or extended weekends would help the YWCA staff to feel acknowledged and understood.

Professional Seminars

The other members of the collaboration are able to attend professional seminars on a regular basis whereas the YWCA staff is able to attend very limited professional development seminars. Due to the nature of child care the center is not able to close for those days off and maintain fiscal demands. However, not being able to attend professional development seminars hurts the YWCA staff as many of them only have high school degrees and limited child development training at a higher level of study and in attending these professional seminars they can learn child development and teaching methods.

At the collaboration level in which the professional seminars are taught to the members of the agency and new ideas or concepts are brought forward, the YWCA staff is not always able to attend and so, they are not aware of what is happening or they do not learn the new teaching methods or ideas to be brought into the collaboration.

Being flexible in the timing of these professional seminars might be a way for the YWCA teachers to be able to attend some professional development seminars. Perhaps, having a seminar on a weekend would allow the YWCA staff to be able to attend.
Understandably this would cause some issues with teachers of the YWCA and other agencies in having to attend a professional development seminar outside of work hours, however, being a participant in an innovative collaboration requires some flexibility of the participants especially in light of one group not being able to participate in collaboration functions.

**Town Meetings**

One area that needs to be looked at is the absence of the YWCA staff at “town meetings” especially in light of them not feelings as if they have representation or “a voice”. During the summer retreat of 2004, this problem was addressed by the administrators and recognized as a problem area. One solution that seemed to gain strength and merit from an administration level and was proposed was that one teacher from the YWCA be allowed to “represent” the YWCA at these town meetings and thus, bring back information to the organization and the teachers and build a bridge of communication for the teachers of the YWCA and other organizations. This role could be defined and designed and used by the YWCA as a way to extend teacher’s roles into another path for professional growth. Bridging this gap may also help the teachers feel more connected as a whole to the group. The issues still are there on how to design this role and how would it work within the constraints of the child care licensing laws however, being able to designate one teacher seems more practical and feasible than trying to get multiple teachers to attend the town meetings.

**Isolation**

Isolation could be handled within the collaboration in having the teachers leave their “comfort” zones and interact outside of their neighborhoods. This could be done
with the children in having some sort of project-based group activity that bridges the classrooms and brings the community together. An emergent project could involve the agencies and even the art teachers to help build a bridge across neighborhoods. This emergent and collaborative project could also be a showcase for the community.

Although each agency has its schedule and agenda, there must be some time in which the agencies could interact with each other on a weekly basis maybe at the playground or in the large gym. It might be nice to “highlight” a classroom each month and send correspondence around to the other rooms (maybe in a newsletter) in which the classroom that is highlighted introduces its classroom through creative ways to the other staff members. Getting to know each other will make the collaboration seem “smaller” and help to bridge communication between the agencies and organizations.

Teacher Recommendations and Suggestions

This discussion would not be complete unless the teacher suggestions and recommendations for working in the collaboration were presented especially since I wanted to represent their “voice”. Overall the teachers expressed continuously that the collaboration was a great place to work and that they enjoyed working within their own agency. They also felt that the main mission statement to better serve families and children is being met on a daily basis. When they expressed feelings negative comments they were in regard to feelings and perceptions of being in a marginalized group. They expressed being frustrated about societal views of child care workers and being labeled as “glorified babysitters” and not being valued for their contribution to the teaching profession. While the teachers understand that they can’t fix societal views of child care
workers they would like for their own profession of early childhood educators to understand their plight and have appreciation for the important work they do daily.

What seems to be frustrating for the teachers is that they thought that working within such a unique environment with other early childhood educators would elevate their status and their position as child care workers and that it has not has been a source of continuing feelings and perceptions of being in a marginalized group. They indicate frustration on the collaboration working on a staff level. They desire to be included in “town meetings” and in having a “voice” and “representation”. What they desire is truly a universal human desire—to be noticed and valued for what they contribute to this society.

Implications of the Study

Theoretical and Methodological Implications

This study has theoretical implications in that looking at collaboration as circular and not linear in its development will help active collaborations to look at themselves as always developing and growing. The linear model seems to indicate a static approach to the idea of collaboration in that once you reach the milestone you are done with it and do not need to re-invest in the original ideas which brought the collaboration to life.

Using a sociocultural approach and taking a “situated perspective” on the nature of collaboration implies that the collaboration was situated within several unique contexts which helped to understand its individuality. In other words, it demonstrated how this collaboration was “embedded in [and interdependent to] wider environments of
interaction” (Erickson, 1982, p. 151). Thus, it implies that to understand the nature of collaboration, one need to take into account the presence of internal and external layers of context, and how they frame what becomes constituted as collaboration. By being critical and reflective about these layers, those participants involved find that the collaboration is a “live” process in which the original ideas and missions must not be lost to time but re-invested into the next generation of collaborators.

This study has important implications for theory and research in collaboration and building upon prior research in the field of collaboration, this study illuminates the multi-layered and interdependent nature of contexts. This study confirms the work of Kagan’s collaboration research in that the process was linear in its development but extends the research in showing that the continued development could also be considered circular and thus, the collaboration continues to develop and grow. This research extends the literature base by challenging the field to look at collaboration in a new and different way and to continue to evaluate internal variables and external variables that throughout the life of the collaboration will impact the overall collaboration effort.

In sum, this study challenges the research community to re-evaluate the way it sees collaboration development in that the development of the collaboration is a circular set of stages in which the stages will be re-visited as time progresses for the collaboration process. It also challenges the research to consider internal and external variables which will continue to impact the development of the collaboration process as it is seen as continuously developing.
Practical Implications for the Collaboration

This study has important implications for the collaboration at “The Partnership” generally and specifically in how to view its development of the collaboration and how to continue the development as the collaboration continues through time. Generally, the “partnership” needs to recognize that political and economic times are changing in the Midwest and no longer is the “financial resources” plentiful for new collaborations. Some agencies in the collaboration process are currently struggling with their own budget cuts and cutting of services and programs. How this will affect the current set-up for the collaboration is unknown. The collaboration is “at the mercy” of political agendas, party politics and an ever-changing budget cutting of human service programs. This collaboration was formed in bountiful economic times and the future during stressful times is still unknown. Today, in 2004, Ohio faces an economy which has been labeled by some experts as “the weakest state economy in the country” and one in which the unemployment rate is the most of any state in the nation (Columbus Dispatch, September, 2004). According to Mark Zandi, the chief economist for the Pennsylvania consulting firm Economy.com, Ohio is the “weakest state economy in the nature and it doesn’t look like it will get better anytime soon” (Columbus Dispatch, September, 2004). The collaboration could be faced with serious structural issues in the future to face and the test of time and longevity could be whether they face the times alone or pull together to face issues central to the livelihood of the collaboration project.

Specifically, the collaboration needs to address the future and how to keep the vision and the mission alive with future generations. This is an important feature for the future as the partnership grows and members naturally retire from the initial partnership
that was so invested in the project. The question remains will the new stakeholders be
more interested in their own agencies or understand the need to bond together and the
importance of collaboration instead of cooperation.

Another implication for the collaboration is to understand the original sentiments
stated in a 1998 partner meeting which indicated that the collaboration was to include
staff on-site as well as programs and services. The staff will need to view the
collaboration as such and viewing the collaboration as “cooperation” might cause future
issues of concern in the investment of the vision. It is important for the collaboration to
be felt on every level. The partner meetings keep the administration level accountable to
each other and the overall collaboration and the new task is to continue that level of
accountability and to involve the staff in continuing the vision and mission of
collaboration within the site. Keeping the vision alive in both administration and staff
will only help the collaboration project to build stronger bonds and accountability with
each other. The original stakeholders understood that the project would only see reality if
they keep the vision alive and keep believing in the project and the mission. Now that the
reality is seen and being lived each day, the new task is to keep the energy level high and
the commitment to the project strong. Continued evaluation of the developmental
progress will help the collaboration to see any “weak points” before they reach a critical
point. For example, the child care section of the collaboration has expressed wanting to
“have a voice” and be “represented” at town meetings—and since this research has
uncovered the feelings of marginalization—the task is up to the collaboration to address
these issues. Granted, there are some issues at the macro level that the collaboration will
not be able to deal with such as institutional hindrances of the field of child care,
however, making sure that the child care section has a voice in internal “town meetings” is something that can be addressed by the overall collaboration effort.

Another practical implication for this research is my responsibility as a researcher to speak with the partners and the administrators of the collaboration to let them know what I have discovered in my research. Similar to the positivist notion of “debriefing”, I will seek out the partners and the administrators to show them what I have inferred from my observations and field work and to propose a circular model of development and to propose some ideas to help the child care section feel less marginalized. I also feel it is necessary at some point to return to the teachers and discuss this research with them again and to possibly help them with professional development in preparing a seminar for them off-hours which would help “bring them up to speed” on Reggio Emilia approaches and other professional seminars that they have not been able to participate in due to the nature of child care.

**Recommendations for Further Study**

There are many “neighborhoods” involved in this collaboration process. My aim was to study one particular group—child care—involving in the process however, there is the need to study the other neighborhoods in context for their stories. With the story analogy, this research project only looked at one neighborhood or covered one chapter of the “story”. There are many “chapters” and “stories” in regard to all the other agencies and organizations that are a part of this collaboration project that should be studied in order to complete the story. I feel as if I have just written the introduction and left additional stories out there for other researchers to discover and write about.
In addition to writing the “stories” of the other agencies and organizations involved in the collaboration is the need to continue researching how the collaboration addresses the need to help the staff see themselves as a “collaboration” and “seamless” and not as cooperating agencies. I believe that if collaboration permeates all levels of the site then this collaboration will be stronger than before and will be able to stand the test of time in regard to possible political times, agency changes and fiscal issues.

There is also the need to continue studying this collaboration as it tries to promote its uniqueness to other states and agencies that are looking at a collaboration of their federal and state human services. The bottom line is better service for families and children and the need for the collaboration of services has been shown through this site that it can be done, that it is working and that the process is “alive” and growing and that constant evaluation and re-investment of the partners and potential partners is necessary to the continued development of the collaboration.

With Ohio’s difficult economic times ahead, it is important to continue studying this collaboration to see how it “weathers the storm and whether it will pull together or pull apart at the seams”. The goal is still noble and the mission still valued. The task is to continue developing and evaluating both internal and external variables that the collaboration project faces on a daily basis.
APPENDIX A

Initial Interview Questions
INITIAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR KEY PARTNERS

1. Why did you initially get involved with this project?
2. After the initial meetings, why did you continue to stay involved with this project?
3. Have you collaborated with other organizations, and if so, what are they?
4. What did you hope to get out of this project? Partnership?
5. What made you want to stay committed to the project?
6. Was the finalized project different from your initial ideas?
7. Did you have any institutional hindrances?
8. Can you reflect on your involvement with the project? Were there shifts of levels of involvement during the whole process?
APPENDIX B

Example of a Grand Tour
GRAND TOUR OF BUILDING--2002

Today was my site visit to the center. At first, I couldn’t find it and I had to backtrack in order to find the building. I kept looking for a sign that read “Smithville Road Collaboration”. Instead I should have been looking for “The Partnership”. I park the car and cannot believe how big this building is from the outside. Wow… I go in the doors and there is a reception area. Not like most daycares where there is a little space but a rather large, nice open area with two receptionist desks and I am immediately greeted with a “smile” and a “hello, may I help you” from the receptionist. I inform her that I am here to meet with the OSU research team and she lets me know that I should sign in on the visitor pad, put on a visitor name tag and that the rest of the team isn’t here yet, and so I can wait in the conference room or wait in the reception area. I decided to wait for the rest of the team. The reception area is beautiful with pictures and art work from I am guessing the children in the center. I found a bench to sit on and wait for the other team members and to watch what is going on. The bench, itself, looks like some children painted it—it is very colorful and fits well in this setting. Although the building has two receptionists…it has a warm, home feeling and not a sterile feel. I notice parents coming in with children and everyone seems to know the children’s names. This is a nice personal touch that the receptionist can remember the children’s names and greet them when they come inside. I decided to wait outside and view the building again from the outside while waiting for team members. The outside of the building is brick and what is very noticeable when walking up is the windows. The classroom that I can see from walking up to the entrance has windows at different levels and in various placements. I like the way it seems to be airy. I also see a playground that seems to be easily accessible
to from the classrooms. Around the corner of the classroom I can see an awning and a
space for children to sit and observe if it is raining outside or if it is too sunny. There are
strollers so I am assuming that this classroom is for infants.

The research team is all present and so we proceed into the building. We meet in
the conference room which is located not far from the receptionist area. It looks like we
passed offices and a supply room of some kind. The conference room is nice—somewhat
like what you would find at an office building. There is a large conference table and
comfortable chairs in which a large gathering could be present. There are pictures around
the room which show other buildings and organizations. I need to remember to ask what
these pictures represent—I see one of the Learning Tree and I know that is associated
with the YWCA and is located in Westerville.

Our meeting consists of getting to know all the members of the team and
discussing a book that we will be reading. We also start to ask questions about what
exactly this place is and who all is located within these doors. Before this meeting, I
didn’t even know this place existed. I am not quite sure what this whole project is about
however, I am looking forward to visiting the site again and getting to know what
direction I might be taking.
APPENDIX C

Sample Field Note
Introduction Meeting to YWCA Staff

February 10, 2004

I was asked to meet at the “Smithville Road” Center to introduce myself to the teachers at their staff meeting. I arrive at 6:00 pm and the doors to the center are locked. I walk around to the YWCA side and follow a parent into the building. Since most of the teachers have not seen me before—I am expecting that someone will ask me who I am. I am not sure why but nobody does. I walk in with ease and although people look at me—they don’t question that I don’t belong here. I go into the director’s office and wait for her. After a few minutes she arrives and shows me an agenda for the meeting. I am on the agenda as the first item of business. This throws me a bit because I just thought I was attending a meeting. However, quickly mentally preparing myself I throw together a quick introduction to myself. We go to the conference room after the last child is picked up for the night. Everyone takes a seat in the conference room. The director explains to the staff that I am from OSU and that I will be working on a research project and then would I please introduce myself and would I explain what I am researching. I am able to introduce myself quickly and give a bit of my professional background. I want to reassure the teachers that I have worked in the field and that I was a prior child care worker in both non-profit and profit daycare centers. I give a background explanation of my relationship with the YWCA and how my children attended The Learning Tree. As I mention some names of the people that I previously worked with through the YWCA, I notice a slight change in people’s faces. I try to explain that the research will emerge from what I observe and what I see and as such, I don’t really know what the topic will
be except that it will involve the child care portion of the collaboration and them. They seem concerned what will be written and how they will be perceived. I explain to them that I will not be putting staff names in the document. Some teachers want to know how will this benefit our program and I explain to them about qualitative work and how I want to tell their story. …The major concern is too many people in the classroom at one time. The director asks them to put down times and days that they feel would work with someone else in the room. I assure them that I understand the nature of child care and will not interfere with their delivery, pick-up or nap times as these are the most confusing and difficult times of the day. I explain that I wish to observe multiple classrooms and that I will be observing during different parts of the day. The director asks for me to write a letter to the parents about who I am so that she can place it in the windows of the classrooms so that the parents know that I am an approved person in the classrooms.

After my introduction, I am told that I can leave the meeting. I left the building out the front entrance.
APPENDIX D

Reflective Field Note
Reflections

February 16, 2004

9:00 am   Arrival

I arrive at the “Smithville Road” center to find the parking lot basically empty. There is no reception at the desk and I find myself uncomfortable with signing in and walking to the YWCA area with no one knowing that I am in the building. There seems to be no one around and it is unlike other times we have visited with the noise and hustle and bustle of a busy center. The lights are not on in the offices and the place looks deserted but open. I sign myself in, put on a paper name tag and walk to the YWCA area. I walk to “Carole’s” office and do not find her in there. I am hesitant to walk into the rooms since this is a “pop in” visit and not a scheduled time to observe. I basically need to drop off my “resume” and a letter of introduction of myself that can be displayed for the parents. After walking around for a bit—I smell something being cooked in a small room to the left of the YWCA areas. I peek inside and it is Bonita cooking.

9:30 am   Introductions

After speaking to “Carole” and giving her my letter of introduction and pictures of my children (we decided that putting pictures of my children would make parents feel comfortable with my presence in case some of them never actually see me during my times of observation) I ask if it is okay to pop in and visit with the teachers. “Carole” okays this and I start at the first room and make the rounds.
9:45 am    Pop In Visits

Fortunately for me the names and pictures of the teachers are on the doors so that I can remember a teacher’s name as I enter into the room. I first visit the infant/toddler room. In each room, I speak to the teachers for a little bit and re-introduce myself and explain that I am not formally observing today but this is just a pop in visit to see how they are doing and that I am dropping off my letter of introduction (that we discussed at their staff meeting) so that parents will know who I am in the classrooms. All of the teachers were pleasant and expressed that they remembered me from the staff meeting on the 10th of February.

In the infant/toddler room the babies (twins) are crying and I help out by rocking them. The teachers explain that they are excited about the new archway gates they have dividing the cribs from the play area (I also expressed that I liked this new addition) and that they like that they have been able to keep decorations hanging from the ceilings. From my past experiences, fire marshals don’t really like anything hanging from the ceilings and so I can appreciate their eagerness in being able to keep decorations up.

After helping out with the physical needs of the infant/toddler room I move on to the next room with Miss “Lynn”. Miss “Lynn” is busy with her children and we chit-chat for awhile and then I move on to the next room. I spent the most time with Miss “Susie’s” room. A new child (his first day) is reluctant to come out from the lockers. While the teachers are helping the other children to clean up and get prepared to go in the gym, I bend down to talk to him and see if we can get him out. He asks if he can get “moosey” out from his book bag and the teachers okay this and out comes a beloved stuffed animal.
He seems comforted by this bit of home. When the teachers explain that we are going to
the gym he perks up and joins the line (of course with moosey) and we proceed to the
gym. Today however is different as we are the only ones in the building—everyone else
has President’s Day off. The halls are quiet and dissented. We travel to the gym and play
games with the balls. The children are excited to have the opportunity to run around and
play. The new child has found the gym area delightful and he seems at ease. What a
great area to have for a child’s first day. He seemed to like walking around the building
to get to the gym area. After playing for awhile with the children I leave the building. I
try to find “Carole” however, she is not in her office or the kitchen and so I sign out and
leave.

**Main Reflection of the Day**

While everyone else is off and enjoying President’s Day—child care still goes on.
Parents still work and children still need to be watched. Since the teachers mention that
the building is so quiet and deserted I take the opportunity to ask them how they feel
about that (especially in light of the research question that I am looking at in regard to
their feeling like the odd main out). The teachers seem resigned to the fact that they do
not get a day off however, they express that because they do not they feel left out. They
work hard like the other teachers and feel that they too would like a day off. They
express that they couldn’t attend an in-service if it was scheduled on a day off since they
do not receive the day off. I even noticed that Bonita was cooking for them that day—so
they must not get food service on days that other get off. I was a little concerned that I
didn’t see a receptionist at the desk when I signed in or out. I think that this is a safety
concern and that on days like this—the center should lock the door; have a receptionist or have the parents enter through the YWCA doors as they do at 6:00 pm. Talking to the teachers on President’s Day re-emphasized that the teachers are feeling left out—as they were the only ones working. Here was a great example of being different in the collaboration—child care versus other child programs.
APPENDIX E

Sample of an Anecdotal Note
Remember to ask the teachers why they don’t mix with other teachers. Was at the professional development seminar today and didn’t see them mixing with other people. Do they know other people? What did they do for lunch? Did they meet with other teachers? How do they feel about getting the day off today? Did they benefit from the seminar?

March 19, 2004
APPENDIX F

Recruitment Letter for the Research
Dear Staff of the YWCA at “Smithville Road”,

Hello, I am a student at The Ohio State University working with Dr. Rebecca Kantor and Dr. David Fernie. I would like to document the YWCA story of how you became a member of the “Smithville Road” Center site and how child care fits into this collaborative effort.

I am hoping that my project will be able to tell your “story” and help other non-publicly funded child care agencies see a model of collaboration. I am also hoping to provide an opportunity for you to reflect on your experiences in the collaboration process. Because I want to understand your experiences, I would like to visit your classrooms and work alongside you and then ask you to fill out a questionnaire and then talk to you about your experiences in a focus group. Participation in any or all of these methods is totally voluntary.

If you agree to participate in this study, I would like to observe your classroom at various times during a two-week period. I will give the center director a sign-up sheet so that you may write down what time and day you think it will be good for me to observe your classroom. I will not be taking notes in the classroom or using any other research tool. I will simply be working alongside you and learning about your classroom. Your participation is voluntary and a classroom observation will not occur if you do not wish to be observed. I would like to observe a morning and afternoon routine on two to three occasions. I will be observing in two-hour block periods from either 9-11 am or from 4-6 pm in order not to disturb your morning greeting period from parents, lunch time or nap time. If at a time of a scheduled observation, conditions are such that you feel an observation is not advisable, the observation will be cancelled.

After the observations are complete from all participating five classrooms, I will be asking for a voluntary questionnaire to be filled out. This questionnaire will require some general demographic information which will ask you about your gender, age, educational background and professional background. It will then ask open-ended questions about the “Smithville Road” site and working environment. This questionnaire should take about fifteen minutes to fill out. You will be asked to fill out the questionnaire and return it within one week of receiving it.

Your participation is voluntary. You do not have to answer any questions that you are uncomfortable with or do not wish to answer. And you will not be putting your name anywhere on the questionnaire. Your identity will remain anonymous.

If you decide to participate in filling out the questionnaire, a questionnaire will be placed in your mailbox on the site; you will then fill it out and return it in the provided envelope sealing it with the protected mail strip. Stamps and the correct return address have already been provided on the envelope for your convenience in returning the questionnaire.
Remember that you do not have to answer any questions that you are uncomfortable with or do not wish to answer.

The focus group will be conducted after the classroom observations and questionnaire. The focus group will consist of YWCA teachers only and be conducted on site after work hours. The focus group will be audio-taped and video-taped for research purposes. The focus group will last no longer than 1 ½ hours. The focus group will only occur one time. Please remember that your participation in the focus group is totally voluntary and that you do not have to participate in it.

You will choose how many and the types of research methods (classroom observation, questionnaire and focus group) that you wish to participate in. You may choose to participate in none of the activities if you so wish.

All written information (including questionnaire), audio-tapes and video-tapes will be stored on-site at OSU in a locked storage container in the office of Dr. Rebecca Kantor. After transcription (not to exceed five years) all materials will be destroyed by shredding of papers or erasing of tapes. No materials will be seen by anyone other than me, Dr. Kantor and Dr. Fernie. No names will be written on the questionnaires and no names will be identified (no name tags) in the focus group.

If you have any questions about this information, the procedure or the research please feel free to contact either Dr. Rebecca Kantor or Dr. Dave Fernie at (614) 292-8512. If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, I can call the Office of Research Risks Protection at (614) 688-4792.

Thank you,

Debra Dunning
Rebecca Kantor
Dave Fernie
The Ohio State University
College of Education
APPENDIX G

Recruitment Letter to Administrator and Center Director
Dear “Kelly” and “Carole”,

Attached you will find a recruitment letter that will be handed out to each of the ten YWCA staff members at the “Smithville Road” center. Please note that any and all participation in the research study is voluntary and will remain anonymous. In addition, you are being asked to participate in separate interviews that will cover the following questions: why did you initially get involved with this project; after initial meetings, why did you continue to stay involved with this project; have you ever collaborated with other organizations, what did you hope to get out of this collaboration; what made you want to stay committed; was the finalized project different from your initial ideas; did you have any institutional hindrances.

The interviews will be conducted on-site and will last appropriately one to two hours long. They will be audio-taped. Your participation is voluntary. You do not have to answer any questions that you are uncomfortable with or do not wish to answer. Your identity will remain anonymous. You may ask for the audio-tape to be turned off at any point in time.

All written information (including questionnaire), audio-tapes and video-tapes will be stored on-site at OSU in a locked storage container in the office of Dr. Rebecca Kantor. After transcription (not to exceed five years) all materials will be destroyed by shredding of papers or erasing of tapes. No materials will be seen by anyone other than me, Dr. Kantor and Dr. Fernie. No names will be written on the questionnaires and no names will be identified (no name tags) in the focus group.

If you have any questions about this information, the procedure or the research please feel free to contact either Dr. Rebecca Kantor or Dr. Dave Fernie at (614) 292-8512. If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, I can call the Office of Research Risks Protection at (614) 688-4792.

Thank you,

Debra Dunning
Rebecca Kantor
Dave Fernie
The Ohio State University
College of Education
APPENDIX H

Consent Form for Participants
CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH

I consent to participating in research entitled: “Seamless Service: Examining the story of a non-publicly funded child care organization in collaboration and partnership with multiple publicly-funded organizations within a single site”, Rebecca Kantor or Dave Fernie as Principle Investigators or their authorized representative, Debra Dunning, has explained the purpose of the study, the procedures to be followed, and the expected during of my participation. Possible benefits of the study have been described as have alternative procedures, if such procedures are applicable and available.

I acknowledge that I have had the opportunity to obtain additional information regarding the study and that any questions I have raised have been answered to my full satisfaction. Furthermore, I understand that I am free to withdraw at any time and to discontinue participation in the study without any prejudice to me.

Finally, I acknowledge that I have read and fully understand the consent form. I sign it freely and voluntarily. A copy has been given to me.

Date: ___________________________ Signed: ____________________________

(Participant)

Signed: ___________________________ Signed: ____________________________

(Principal Investigator or Authorized Rep.) (Person authorized to consent for participant)

Witness: ___________________________
APPENDIX I

Survey for Staff
Questionnaire for Staff

Section 1. Demographic Information:
Please indicate the correct response in the space provided:

1.  Are you male or female? __________________________
2.  What year were you born? __________________________
3.  What is your ethnic background? Please circle one that applies.
   Caucasian
   African-American
   Asian-American
   Other (please specify) _____________________________
4.  Are you married? _____________________________
5.  Do you have children? _____________________________
6.  Are you the sole provider for your household? ________________

Section 2. Employment Information:
Please fill in the appropriate information in the space provided. Use the back of the page or additional pages if needed to fully answer a question.

1.  What is your staff position with this agency?

2.  How long have you been employed with this agency at this site?

3.  How long have you been employed with this agency (including other sites)?

4.  How long have you been at your current position? Have you been assigned a different position with this same agency at this site? Please explain.
5. How long have you worked with the teachers in your room?

6. What is the highest level of education that you have achieved? Please indicate by placing a circle around the appropriate answer or writing in the appropriate blank.

   - High School or GED
   - Some college
   - College Degree (please specify the degree) ___________________
   - Some graduate work
   - Graduate Degree (please specify the degree) __________________
   - Any other type of degree (please specify the degree) _____________

7. How long have you been in the child care field? Please describe the job positions and organizations that you have been employed with. Please use additional paper if needed to fully explain your answer.

8. Do you feel that child care workers are valued in this society? Please explain your answer?

9. Do you feel that child care workers are compensated financially in accordance to the job duties that are performed and the amount of time spent on the job? Please explain.

Section 3. Collaboration Information

1. What type of interaction do you have on a daily basis with other organizations in the partnership? Please explain what the interactions are and where they occur?

2. What type of interaction do you have with other organizations in the partnership on a monthly basis?
3. Would you like more joint interactions with other organizations in the collaboration? If so, please explain what type of activities you would like to participate in with other groups.

4. Do you plan activities with other organizations? If so, please describe what types of activities are done with other organizations.

5. Do you feel part of the whole organization? What makes you feel as if all of the organizations are “in this together” or do you feel there is a separation of the different organizations? In other words, does this collaboration feel “seamless” as if there is a mosaic and blending of all the participants? Please explain your answer.

**Section 4. Professional Development**

1. Do you wish to participate in professional development seminars with the other organizations or do you wish to participate in those only with your program? Please explain your answer.

2. Would you consider moving to another job in the collaboration if an opening became available? Please explain why you would consider moving to another agency and position.

3. Are you aware of job openings in the other organizations? If so, how are these job openings made aware to you?

4. How does this job in child care seem different than other places you have worked in the field? Please explain.

5. Have you “bonded” or made friends with other teachers/staff in the organization? If so, how did you manage interactions with other organizations? Please explain.
APPENDIX J

Proposed Questions for Group Interview
Proposed Questions for Group Interview

1. In general, how is the collaboration working for you?
2. How is this site different from other places that you have worked in the child care field?
3. How do you feel the collaboration could be better, if any?
4. What do you think the YWCA could do better to be a part of the overall group?
5. Have you dealt with any space issues?
6. How have you dealt with other agencies—good experiences, bad experiences?
7. Do you feel part of the larger group?
8. Do you feel valued at this center?
9. How do you interact with others in the agency?
10. How do you think the YWCA is perceived in this site?
LIST OF REFERENCES


